

Shepherding the Lost: How Catholic YouTube Influencers use
Eudaimonic Messages to Reach Out to Catholic Young Adults

Kathryn F. Schneider

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Beth M. Waggenpack. Chair
John C. Tedesco
Natalia Mielczarek

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ABSTRACT

Millennials are leaving the Catholic Church in great numbers, despite being raised in the faith. When asked for the reason of disaffiliation, young adults do not blame sexual abuse scandals in the Church nor do they cite specific Catholic beliefs and teachings. Instead, they say that they have begun to ask why stay Catholic and what meaning does the Catholic faith provide in their lives. This search for meaning has caused them to leave their faith and seek it elsewhere. However, prominent figures in Catholic media, Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz, use YouTube as a platform to reach out to young adults in the Catholic faith. This thesis aims to understand how the two Catholic YouTube influencers use eudaimonic messages in their videos to provide the meaning that young adults have been missing from their faith. Eudaimonics has been linked to a sense of enjoyment beyond pleasure, focusing on a sense of well-being instead; this provides a deeper sense of meaning for those who view media containing eudaimonics. Using a directed content analysis, videos will be analyzed for the seven dimensions of eudaimonics – *meaning in life/sense of purpose, self-acceptance, autonomy, competence, relatedness, personal growth, and living according to central personal values* – and two transcendent elicitors – *hopefulness* and *religiousness*. Comments left by viewers under the videos will also be analyzed to see if viewers pick up on these meaningful messages. This analysis will evaluate how those messages by the YouTube influencers may impact young adult viewers and their Catholic faith.

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Introduction

Millennials in the Roman Catholic Church are becoming lost lambs of the flock who no longer want to be found; they are searching for something to have faith in and finding themselves elsewhere. In today's increasingly secular world, the number of Catholics regularly attending church continues to decline in the United States. By 2017, an average of 39 percent of Catholics reported to go to mass weekly (Saad, 2018). But it is not just church attendance that is seeing a decline; it is the number of Catholics themselves, especially in the younger generations. The Pew Research Center has reported that Millennials represent the largest number of unaffiliated adults to a religious group with 34 percent of older Millennials (1981-1989) and 36 percent of younger Millennials (1990-1996) identifying as unaffiliated (Lipka, 2015). The same study also found that only 16 percent of both Millennial groups identified as Catholic. More recently, Pew Research Center (2019) saw the number of Millennials claiming to be unaffiliated with any religion grow to 40 percent.

The reasons for young Catholics to leave the faith may not be what many expect. According to research by McCarty and Vitek (2018), the main reasons for disaffiliation for young Catholics were not the sexual abuse scandals of the Church, specific teachings or an unwelcoming parish; rather, the main reasons revolve around the idea of "so what?" Young Catholics are asking why faith is important and what meaning does it provide. They were raised Catholics as children and required to attend mass every Sunday; their faith became more of an obligation rather than part of their identity. Some of the young adults surveyed argue they can be moral without religion or that science and reason provide a sense of meaning that a religion often imposed on them by their own parents cannot. Many (46 percent) of those who left the Catholic faith joined another religion to find meaning elsewhere.

McCarty (2018) wrote further on the findings that the focus in the Catholic school and parish setting should be on “[being] authentic witnesses, accompanying young Catholics on their spiritual journey, and [being] the welcoming, supportive community that might be attractive to them” (p. 27). To drive the point home, he quoted a girl interviewed in the study who said “Finally, you are talking with us, not about us!” (p. 27). Young Catholics say they need to feel engaged with the faith and given reasons to be Catholic beyond parents raising them that way. They seek a sense of meaning that sometimes they feel they cannot achieve with Catholic faith, and that motivates them to leave to seek that feeling elsewhere (McCarty, 2018). Catholic media can be a way to bridge that gap that some young Catholics might feel about their faith if their parents and parish communities are unable to provide them with what they seek.

While research has been conducted on Catholic media, it is often centered around the Catholic Church and its scandals in the media, namely related to sexual abuse (Donnelly & Inglis, 2010; Kane, 2008; Mancini & Shields, 2014) rather than the media of the Catholic Church itself. There is not much research focused on Catholic media specifically. Thorn and Garrison (1983) looked at the roles of Catholic diocesan newspapers based on editor-bishop relations. Pavuk (2007) followed the development and rhetorical techniques of *The Catholic Hour*, which was a popular weekly radio program that featured guest speakers talking about the faith to a large national audience of Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

However, the times when newspapers and radio dominated the media have ceded to the rise of social media. Catholic media has spread across a wide range of social media platforms. Younger generations primarily are watching their favorite Catholic speakers on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram or reading their blogs (Nduka & McGuire, 2017). These modern media platforms allow for an interactivity that books, radio and television never afforded. Now, the

Catholic Church can have a conversation with those they intend to connect with. Though many have used this new form of media to reach out to the younger generation of Catholics, two prominent Catholic social media personalities are Fr. Mike Schmitz and Emily Wilson.

Fr. Mike Schmitz is the chaplain of the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth as well as the director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the Diocese of Duluth. These positions give him the mission of speaking directly to the young Catholic audience with inspirational and educational messages to aid in centering students and young adults' lives around a love of God (Catholic Missionary Disciples, n.d.). Still, his influence stretches far beyond Duluth. Schmitz is a weekly personality on the Catholic YouTube channel Ascension Presents. With more than 287,000 subscribers and almost 36 million views, Ascension Presents is "an evangelistic platform bringing faith-filled, entertaining and dynamic presenters straight to your newsfeed. By providing engaging content for our audience that reflects the good, the true and the beautiful we hope to bring their hearts closer to Christ" (Ascension Presents, n.d.a, para. 1). Fr. Mike Schmitz has contributed more than 200 videos to the channel and gained millions of total views on YouTube alone. His video topics range from educational videos on the Catholic faith such as *Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition* and *Why Catholics Have a Pope*, to life advice videos such as *What's Your Bedtime* and *Mastering Love and Relationships*, to popular culture related videos such as *Bruce Jenner & the Transgender Question* and *I Ain't Afraid of No Ghosts* (Ascension Presents, n.d.b). Though his videos are for a wide range of viewers, his focus is to target young adults as part of his vocational ministry.

Emily Wilson is another prominent Catholic media personality. She started as a youth minister and traveling musician but has since become a speaker, writer and YouTuber as well. Her channel has since garnered more than 110,000 subscribers on YouTube (Emily Wilson,

n.d.). Wilson differs from Fr. Mike Schmitz in that her YouTube channel is more of a traditional YouTube channel with her talking to the camera like Schmitz but also containing vlogs and more insights to her personal life (Emily Wilson Ministry, n.d.). Wilson posted her wedding video, updates about her pregnancy and baby, and explains intimate parts of her marriage with her husband. She predominately targets young women with videos like *To the woman who refuses to settle in dating*, *Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!* and *The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks* (Emily Wilson, n.d.). She got the idea to aim her message at young women when she kept going to conferences that lacked a female voice. Her messages focus on hope, light and restoration (Catholic Speakers Organization, n.d.). Wilson also differs from *Ascension Presents* in that *Ascension Presents* is owned and operated by a Catholic media organization, *Ascension Press*, but Wilson runs her own YouTube channel (Emily Wilson Ministry, n.d.). This allows for a greater freedom of expression for the creator of the content and a greater ability to connect with others.

The focus of this thesis is to analyze videos produced by these two Catholic YouTube influencers, Fr. Mike Schmitz and Emily Wilson, to see whether or not these videos demonstrate aspects of eudaimonics. Eudaimonics describes a sense of happiness and well-being that might resonate with young Catholics struggling to find meaning in their life and the Catholic belief system. Because young Catholics have been turning to social media platforms more, including these eudaimonic messages in YouTube, videos may be a way to better reach and connect with the youth to provide that meaning even beyond what they can get from a parish or church community. To better understand if the audience recognizes and/or responds to those eudaimonic messages, I will also conduct an analysis on the comments of the YouTube videos, utilizing the interactivity of the platform.

Review of Literature

With Catholic media, YouTube, and eudaimonics all being somewhat uncommon topics covered in the academic field, few may be familiar with them and see how the three connect. To build a framework of understanding, I will first give a brief history on the evolution of contemporary Catholic media into multimedia, centered on the two key figures of Bishop Fulton Sheen and Mother Angelica, who pioneered Catholic leaders using modern media to connect with viewers. I then will explain the video streaming platform of YouTube, its impact, and the popular content creators on the site called “influencers”. Then I will look at how religion has been presented on YouTube and how YouTubers use the site to inform their viewers on religious beliefs and traditions. Finally, I will explain the theory of eudaimonics and its dimensions, which will serve as a framework for analysis.

Catholic Media

Recent history of Catholic multimedia. In order to understand the development of Catholic multimedia to its present state, it is important to know about two pioneers of the field. Bishop Fulton Sheen and Mother Angelica both shaped how the Roman Catholic religion was communicated to the masses over multimedia channels.

Contemporary Catholic media found its start with Bishop (then Monsignor) Fulton Sheen. As his oratory skills became widely known, he was offered a spot on the popular radio program, *The Catholic Hour* in 1930 (Catholic University of America, n.d.). The program was a part of NBC’s religious radio triumvirate meant to appeal to the main religions on a national level: *National Radio Pulpit* (Protestantism), *The Catholic Hour* (Catholicism) and *Voice of Israel* (Judaism). Sheen was known for his mastery of interpersonal communication and sometimes his use of contemporary, but abstruse allusions. In his talks, he targeted more than

Catholics, relating Catholicism to a wider audience across America (Pavuk, 2007). With his popularity on the rise, Sheen made his way onto the television screen. On Easter Sunday, March 24, 1940, he appeared in the first broadcast of a Catholic religious service, on which he talked about the spiritual symbolism of television. More than ten years later, in early 1952, Sheen started his own television series, *Life is Worth Living*, only a few months following his consecration as a bishop (Catholic University of America, n.d.). Sheen adapted a more conversational “lowbrow” rhetorical style for television, using simple stories and general lessons (Pavuk, 2007). The show reached an estimated 30 million viewers each week, making it the most watched religious series in the history of television. The popularity of his television show resulted in an Emmy Award for Most Outstanding Television Personality, an appearance on the cover of *TIME* magazine on April 14, 1952, and the road to canonization in the Catholic Church (Catholic University of America, n.d.).

Mother Angelica, a cloistered nun in Birmingham, Alabama, was another prominent figure in Catholic media. Her influence began with giving and recording talks, limiting them to the parlor of her monastery (EWTN, n.d.). The 1965 Second Vatican Council had decreed that religious orders adapt how they live and pray to more modern practices rather than older, “obsolete” practices. This inspired a shift in the mission of the religious life of the Church. On March 22, 1969, Pope Paul VI’s diplomatic delegate to the U.S., Archbishop Luigi Raimondi promised to secure permission for Mother Angelica to give her talks as part of her missionary activity, something out of the norm for a cloistered nun: they usually have limited contact with the outside world. In 1978, Mother Angelica produced her first television show, *Our Heritage*, to be aired by the Christian Broadcast Network. By the end of the year, the nuns of Mother Angelica’s monastery began construction of their own television studio, receiving their license

from the Federal Communications Commission on January 27, 1981. Eternal Word Television Network (EWTN) became the first Catholic satellite television station in America. On August 15, 1983, the show *Mother Angelica Live* debuted on the network every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday night. By 1987, EWTN had expanded to streaming series, documentaries and specials for 24 hours a day, reaching more than 20 million homes. Today, EWTN reaches around the world through television, radio, a website and print media (EWTN, n.d.).

Bishop Fulton Sheen and *Mother Angelica*, in their own ways, brought Catholic teachings beyond the walls of a church to the masses through the media available at the time. The two recognized the new ways to communicate to believers and nonbelievers as technology developed, making the teachings of the Catholic Church accessible to a wide audience. As media advances to now include the interactive social media, others have assumed the roles of leaders in Catholic multimedia, such as the influencers Fr. Mike Schmitz and Emily Wilson. If there is a type of media, a Catholic presence can be found. There are publishing ministries and organizations – such as The Daughters of St. Paul, Dynamic Catholic and Ascension Press – which publish print media like books and devotionals. Listeners can tune into popular Catholic podcasts like *Pints with Aquinas*, *Abiding Together* and *Word on Fire* if they prefer podcasts to listening to music or watching a video. Catholic beliefs and themes can even be seen depicted in popular culture with the popularity of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and the Netflix original show *Daredevil*. These various platforms are able to meet the consumers where they are consuming media, so anyone from any background with any media interest can have access to the Catholic faith.

Though the Catholic Church has had an active multimedia presence throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, Wolff (2010) found that Catholic seminaries in the United States were

significantly less likely to offer media coursework in production/media studies than protestant seminaries. Without this training in their early careers, religious leaders might not have the same understanding of the various types of new media as well as its influence and use as a means for education and evangelization. While Catholic college students have reported using traditional media such as EWTN, they are more likely to seek new media sources – such as the social media sites of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter – to get information about both the Church and their faith in general (Nduka & McGuire, 2017).

YouTube and Its Influence

YouTube is a popular social media platform where users can upload and share video content. According to Ace X, a contributor on the website *Engadget*, every day in 2016 about 5 billion videos were watched, more than 1.3 billion people watched videos, and 432 thousand hours of videos were uploaded, and those numbers are likely to have increased even more (X, 2016). With an international reach, YouTube dominates the distribution of video content globally. However, Miles (2013) argued that the social media site was more than just a video sharing site. Instead, YouTube is a video sharing site, a social networking site and an advertising or marketing site. Through the combination of watching and commenting on videos, the site becomes a participatory culture in which users are able to develop, interact and learn (Chau, 2010).

Using the theoretical framework of uses and gratifications, Jones (2011) analyzed what made people actually tune in and watch YouTube based on YouTube video responses to the question. The majority of viewers admitted they watched videos on the platform because of the desire for entertainment (27 percent), the ability to watch others and share experiences (20 percent), and the diversion from real life (13 percent). Viewers, therefore, use the media site to

escape their everyday life with an entertainment source, often a source that they can connect with in some way.

It is easy to see why YouTube has a big influence over such a large following. This unique form of social media has caused researchers to study the influence it has on those viewers. One way that YouTube impacts viewers is through those content creators on the platform, also known as YouTubers. Any person who uploads to YouTube regularly is a YouTuber; however, some YouTubers rise to a higher level of popularity and recognition, becoming more than just YouTubers, but influencers.

YouTubers and YouTube influencers. The growth of YouTube as a platform has encouraged research in the network's influence. In Spain, YouTube is the preferred network for 70 percent of youth ages 14 to 17. These youth considered YouTubers as their peers and thought they were relatable; therefore, watching YouTube videos and interacting through comments shaped viewers' identities (Pérez-Torres, Pastor-Ruiz & Abarrou-Ben-Boubaker, 2018).

Mahrt and Bock (2017) noticed a similar trend in German youth. They looked at two popular German YouTubers in the four most popular genres in Germany: "gaming, vlogging about beauty and fashion, comedy, and music" (p. 11). The video content of both YouTubers served to reinforce stereotypical gender behaviors in their videos. The relationship between content creators and viewers were observed in the comment sections on videos. Commenters on beauty vlogger Bianca's channel generally addressed her directly to express how much they love and admire her, showing the perceived closeness users can have with YouTubers. Commenters on comedy troupe ApeCrime's videos often did not directly address the males in the video. The analysis revealed how vlogging individuals on YouTube, such as Bianca can "appear more as an idol or role model" to young audiences while the audiences of group sketch creators such as

ApeCrime “take a greater distance to [the creators]” (p. 22). However, behaviors by both popular YouTubers can still leave an impact on their viewers’ behavior.

YouTubers – especially vloggers – can, therefore, experience a kind of celebrification, naming them micro-celebrities (Gamson, 2011; Marwick, 2013). These YouTubers are often “ordinary people” who provide entertainment and information to viewers through the site, and, therefore, they become Internet celebrities (Gamson, 2011). They gain popularity through their vlogging style of video content, focusing on nowness, authenticity and connectedness (Jerslev, 2016). Vloggers also use self-disclosure and self-representation – often through a narrative style – in their videos, even when they are meant to be informative. This technique draws the audience in and allows for that sense of connectedness (Kennedy, 2016). YouTubers elevated to a certain level of popularity can be known as influencers. When successful enough, these influencers monetize their videos and create their own products or partner with existing brands, so the channel becomes more than just a hobby, but a business (Hou, 2018). Both Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz (through the Ascension Presents channel) post videos that are monetized; when a viewer wants to watch them, they first must watch an advertisement or two. They differ slightly from other influencers in that they both are associated with their own products outside of their channel – for instance, Emily Wilson has written books – but they do not advertise for them in their YouTube videos nor have they partnered with other brands in their YouTube videos to promote them; so their videos are monetized, but they are not used to promote other products.

Although YouTube has largely become a platform for these vloggers and influencers, the site still is a video sharing service. Anyone can create a channel and post to the site, so long as the content adheres to the set terms of YouTube. There are many subgenres of content on the site that YouTubers create, with one of them being religion.

Religion on YouTube. While the research on Catholic media is limited, there is more research about religion and religious topics presented on YouTube, albeit still not a great deal. Many religious organizations have a presence on social media, including YouTube, such as the Russian Orthodox Church, Islam and the Roman Catholic Church (Fedorova & Rotanova, 2019). However, YouTube gives the ability for anyone with recording capabilities to upload their opinions about religion or share their personal faith journey. YouTubers create a wide array of religious media, primarily Christian and Islamic, enough that Paolillo (2008) found that it was one the main clusters of content on the site.

Because it is so easy for the public to post to YouTube, the site has become a platform for a wide range of positions on religion. Muslim YouTubers have primarily used the site to create educational/preaching videos to communicate Islam. While the number of these pro-Islamic videos edge out anti-Islamic videos on the site, the margin between the two is very slim. However, if all frames were sorted as pro- or anti-Islam, 51 percent of videos are anti-Islam and 49 percent are pro-Islam (Mosemghvdlishvili & Jansz, 2013). This relatively even distribution of positive and negative opinions on the Islamic religion shows the constant battle of educating viewers in a positive manor when it is equally as easy for them to access potential misinformation that presents religion in a negative light.

When looking at Christian videos on YouTube, Mosemghvdlishvili & Jansz (2011) found a similar battle. Almost half (45 percent) of the sampled videos about Christianity on YouTube were produced by Christian YouTubers and spoke positively about the religion. The other half consisted mainly of Atheists (43 percent) as well as followers of Islam (7 percent) and former Christians (5 percent). The majority of Atheist YouTubers spoke negatively of Christianity, and all Islamic YouTubers spoke negatively of the religion. However, despite looking balanced, “the

overall tone of videos had a negative slant (64 percent vs. 36 percent)” (p. 9). No matter positive or negative, videos predominately used emotional expression and rational arguments to present their opinions on Christianity. YouTube can be a source for people to educate about their religion, which is the usual focus of Fr. Mike Schmitz’s videos, and for people to talk about their personal experiences, often like how Emily Wilson delivers her information. The platform allows multiple voices to be heard, even if some talk negatively about others. The challenge for these religious YouTubers is having their voices listened to over the naysayers of their religion.

YouTube can be used as a platform for religious activism. Van Zoonen, Vis & Mihelj (2010) analyzed the reaction of the Muslim community on YouTube following an anti-Islam video, *Fitna*. The video was produced in 2008 by Geert Wilders, a member of the Dutch parliament, and it played verses of the Quran over footage of Islamic-linked terrorist attacks and anti-Islamic films. In response to the video, more than 700 videos on YouTube were analyzed with more than 10 million views total and almost 250,000 comments. Often, the pro-Islam videos in response to *Fitna* did not even address the original video; rather they were Muslim individuals who posted their personal understanding of Islam as a peaceful religion. These individuals decided to use YouTube as a platform to inform the public of their beliefs and ideas about their religion in order to better educate those who are unfamiliar with the topic and fight ignorance.

The video streaming site can also be used as a platform for religious activism in daily life. Influencers can choose to use YouTube to display their personal lives to their viewers. Notable young Muslim influencers have used YouTube to inform the public about the religious practice of covering their hair with a hijab (Peterson, 2016; Watt, Abdulqadir, Hujaleh & Siyad, 2019). These videos of the aesthetics of Islamic lifestyle can encourage young Muslim women to

see the beauty of their culture and traditions while helping outsiders to understand those same practices. Researchers theorized understanding cultures of others could cause an appreciation, which may lead to destigmatization, all from watching influencers record their everyday life.

In terms of Catholicism on YouTube, researchers Sinche, Carpio-Jimenez and Suing (2019) analyzed the audiovisual content of four Catholic YouTubers from Brazil, the United States, Spain and Poland respectively. In the videos, the YouTubers dress fitting to their personalities/professions: one priest wore a cassock with a Roman collar, the more casual priest wore common attire to reflect his familiarity with his audience, and the two laity wore casual clothes expected of people their age. Videos commonly contain Catholic icons in the background, such as crosses and images of Jesus. The YouTubers generally follow a formal narrative structure to inform the viewers about a topic for each video, even taking the time in some videos to answer questions sent into them from viewers. These videos display similar audiovisual structures used by many other Catholic YouTubers.

Though Sinche, Carpio-Jimenez and Suing (2019) did conduct a general plot analysis as a part of their study on Catholic YouTube videos, their focus was not primarily on the messages found in the videos. These videos by Catholic influencers are used to connect with and teach others about the faith and help viewers in their daily lives. The videos, while entertaining, were created to encourage viewers to grow as people and become the best Catholics and people they can be – themes present in the idea of eudaimonic happiness and well-being.

Eudaimonics and Well-Being

Eudaimonics found its roots in early philosophy with Aristotle (350 B.C./1985) when he opposed the idea of hedonism. He believed humans should not be driven by pleasure as a means of happiness, as it would make people slaves to their desires. Instead, he recognized happiness as

expressing virtue. Since Aristotle's time, eudaimonia has been expanded to refer to a sense of well-being that is distinct from happiness in that some actions or results can bring happiness without also promoting well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Waterman (1993) built on this idea by saying *daimon* is a sense of true self and when a person pursues this sense of excellence as an individual, it can provide meaning and direction in their own life thus provide a type of happiness. To Waterman, another term for eudaimonia was personal expressiveness. When performing an activity, a person might feel personal expressiveness when they gain a feeling of completeness or fulfillment in doing the activity or feeling that they are doing something they were made to do. Therefore, eudaimonia is more likely to occur when activities more closely line up with a person's deeply-held beliefs and values as well as that they offer a challenge and chance for *personal growth*.

In an attempt to understand how people can live well and have a sense of eudaimonic happiness, Ryan, Huta & Deci (2008) proposed a model of eudaimonic living with four motivational concepts. A person must work for intrinsic goals and value for personal benefits such as *personal growth*, health and community. This was as opposed to extrinsic goals such as wealth, glory and power. The individual has to have the option to behave freely and autonomously. The person also must be mindful in how he or she acts. Finally, one has to behave such that it satisfies basic psychological needs. When people achieve this level of eudaimonic living, they in turn benefit both themselves and others. Family and society are also key in strengthening people's ability to live eudaimonic lives based on support and feelings of *autonomy* and acceptance.

Eudaimonics and media consumption. Research has begun to look into how eudaimonics influences viewers in terms of media consumption. Oliver et al. (2017) found that

people may choose to consume media beyond hedonistic reasons of pleasure-seeking, but instead, the entertainment may stir feelings of meaning, insight and introspection. Media can be “transcendent” and encourage “feeling compassionate, inspired or elevated by an awareness of and appreciation of issues beyond the self (e.g., humanity, the universe) ...and that it also involves high levels of cognitive activity such as introspection or contemplation,” (p. 255). Therefore, viewers can seek gratification in various types of media rather than being limited to seeking enjoyment from positive media.

Oliver and Bartsch (2010) sought to expand research in entertainment gratifications beyond hedonistic reasons in terms of appreciation of movies. Studies showed that movie audiences found gratification in movies that created a moving or thought-provoking experience. Moving/thought-provoking (eudaimonic) experiences in movies were linked with appreciation while fun (hedonic) experiences were linked with enjoyment and positive valence. Additionally, the higher a movie was rated in terms of fun, moving/thought-provoking or (to a lesser extent) suspense, the more likely it was considered to leave a lasting impression.

Eudaimonic motivations which influence entertainment selections were defined by Oliver and Raney (2011). The two understood eudaimonic motivations to “reflect greater introspection, seeking of insight, and more mixed affective reactions that likely accompany contemplations of life profundities,” which is why a person might enjoy watching a drama or listening to a sad song (p. 988). This goes along with the assumption of eudaimonic happiness as well-being and providing an individual with meaning in life. Therefore, individuals may use media to contemplate their purpose in life. Those with eudaimonic motivations have been seen to have a greater tendency to contemplation, making them more willing to experience both positive and negative content.

Following the themes in research, when applied to media studies, eudaimonic well-being can be comprised of seven dimensions: meaning in life/sense of purpose, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery/competence, positive relations with others/relatedness, personal growth, and living according to central personal values (Ryff & Singer, 2006, 2008; Wirth, Hofer & Schramm, 2012).

Meaning in life/sense of purpose and self-acceptance. As explained by Waterman (1993), a person may strive for excellence and/or perfection in life. This drive guides the person in a direction and gives them a sense of purpose, which then can lead to a sense of accepting oneself and one's life. Oliver and Raney (2011) purposed that people often choose media beyond entertainment-seeking – or hedonistic – reasons; instead, they may choose to consume media that makes them reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. Watching a meaningful movie that is sad and tragic can cause a person to reflect on the meaning of life and the intrinsic value of a person. It can also lead a person so accept oneself and the life that one lives (Wirth, Hofer and Schramm, 2012).

Autonomy, competence and relatedness. Ryan, Huta and Deci (2008) linked *relatedness*, *competence* and *autonomy* as the three basic psychological needs. First, they define *autonomy* as the sense of choice and volition one has in regard to their behavior. A person needs to have the freedom to make their own choices about how they behave and what decision to make in order to follow set goals. Second, *competency* refers to a “sense of efficacy one has with respect to both internal and external environments” (p. 153). The need for *competence* can be fulfilled when a person can effectively achieve desired outcomes and/or effects (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe & Ryan, 2000). While *autonomy* deals with the need to make one's own choice, *competence* is the ability to successfully act on that choice. A person may perceive a sense of *competence* when

actively giving something to another because it means she or he was in a position to help. Third, *relatedness* is described as a need for feeling “connected to and cared about by others” (Ryan, Huta & Deci, p. 153). Often, this can come about by a sense of likeness or similarity with a character the viewer watches or plays without identifying with them (Wirth, Hofer & Schramm, 2012). Ryan, Rigby and Przybylski (2006) looked at whether the perception of these three needs predicted enjoyment of game play. After surveying individuals who played one, two and four games (depending on the study), each of the three factors independently predicted enjoyment and future game play. *Competence* was linked to the immersive nature of video games, while *autonomy* was linked to the ability to manipulate the character with a controller.

Personal Growth. Ryff (1989) defined *personal growth* as “the need to actualize oneself and realize one’s potentialities” (p. 1071). A person is continually developing over the course of one’s lifespan, becoming something more than what they were before. As one grows, the person continuously develops one’s potential and abilities through an openness to experience. Ryff and Singer (2008) explained that *personal growth* is the closest to Aristotle’s meaning of eudaimonia over the other aspects of well-being because it focuses on self-realization of the individual.

Living according to central personal values. In much of eudaimonic research, only the aforementioned six dimensions are commonly listed; however, Wirth, Hofer and Schramm (2012) introduced this dimension based on previous research. The dimension itself is an outcome of watching meaningful media. Oliver and Hartmann (2010) claimed that meaningful movies can relate to the viewer’s personal life and story, which activates core issues of his or her life values. The researchers found that many movies people thought of as “good” activated core life values, focusing on themes of “love, caring and enduring interpersonal ties” connected to helping and caring for others (p. 137). Tsay-Vogel and Krakowiak (2016) found that viewers who had

eudaimonic motivations and sought meaning in their entertainment were less likely to morally disengage with a morally ambiguous character. Those viewers were more likely to judge the morals of the character based on their own personal values. However, they were more likely to enjoy the movie, possibly because their altruistic nature is more tolerant to human flaws in an attempt to understand a greater meaning in life.

Beyond the seven dimensions of eudaimonics, Dale, Raney, Janicke, Sanders and Oliver (2017) identified the transcendent elicitors of eudaimonic media: *appreciation of beauty and excellence*, feelings of *gratitude*, *hopefulness* and *religiousness*. The researchers defined transcendence as the “dispositional trait associated with striving for and connecting with purpose and meaning greater than ourselves” (p. 898). When viewers see one of these transcendence elicitors in YouTube videos, they could be encouraged to feeling self-transcendence, which may be beneficial to the viewers and the people around them. Experiencing self-transcendence can inspire virtue, character building and prosociality (Dale et al., 2017; Fredrickson, 2001, 2009).

In this research, the two transcendent elicitors most applicable to the present study are feelings of *hopefulness* and *religiousness* based on my previous experience with the videos made by Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz as well as my knowledge of Catholic teachings. Dale et al. (2007) divided *hopefulness* elicitors into two types. First is a sense of positive encouragement, which could be observed either between the characters in the video or between the video and the viewer. The second is overcoming obstacles/perseverance, which is observed when a character triumphs over a setback they had been experiencing. There are also two types of *religiousness/spirituality* elicitors. One type is the appearance of religious symbols used and recognized by an organized religion, such as a crucifix or the Star of David. The second type is a depiction of religious traditions, rituals and practices, such as praying, services and religious holidays.

The seven dimensions of eudaimonics and two transcendent elicitors have been applied to various forms of media, even YouTube videos. However, the dimensions have yet to be applied to religious videos, specifically Catholic YouTube videos. Eudaimonics tends to be utilized in quantitative studies that analyze the content, but the breakdown of dimensions gives clear categories to start a framework for qualitative eudaimonic themes that may be present in videos produced by Catholic YouTube influencers.

With limited studies on modern Catholic media, especially YouTube influencers, there is a gap in the understanding of how Catholic media is reaching out to younger generations. Eudaimonics in other contexts has shown to be a motivating factor for media consumers to choose to watch certain media. Eudaimonic happiness and well-being share similar characteristics of core Catholic beliefs on how to live life and, therefore, can be expected to appear in the videos in some way. By looking at how Catholic influencers may use these techniques on YouTube, we may be better able to understand how they intend to connect with the younger generation of the Church and keep them in the flock. Based on past research, two questions have emerged to fill a gap in the literature:

1. How do two Catholic YouTube influencers, Fr. Mike Schmitz and Emily Wilson, use videos to demonstrate the seven dimensions of eudaimonic well-being and the two transcendent elicitors (*hopefulness* and *religiousness*)?
2. How do viewer comments on the videos reflect an understanding of the eudaimonic messages?

Methods

The two influencers were chosen to reflect the two main types of Catholic YouTubers. Fr. Mike Schmitz is one contributor for a larger YouTube channel, Ascension Presents, which is

owned and operated by a Catholic media organization Ascension Press. Emily Wilson represents a more traditional YouTuber who runs her own YouTube channel, specializing in vlog style videos.

Emily Wilson has uploaded 168 videos to her channel. Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos were sorted into a playlist by Ascension Presents, which lists his number of videos as 233 (once duplicate videos in the playlist were subtracted from the total). It was important to delineate the focus of each of the 401 videos across these two YouTube channels. Each video was classified into one of three categories I created based on the topics identified by the titles of the videos; this allowed a sample of videos that can more accurately represent the variety of topics each of the YouTubers cover. The three categories I delineated the videos into are Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, personal and relationship advice, and popular culture. Catholic beliefs/instructional videos indicate more of a teaching-type video meant to give information of the viewer about beliefs held by Catholics, traditions Catholics follow, the Church's stance on certain issues, etc. Personal and relationship advice videos focus directly on the viewers who may go to the influencers seeking their opinion on personal topics; these can range from personal habits, dating advice, relationships with friends and family, etc. Popular culture videos are directed more toward connecting with the younger audience and addressing topics more relevant to the secular world such as movies, celebrities, books, Internet usage etc., and then relating them back to the faith.

In order to select the actual videos that would fill the three categories, the channels required a slightly different process because of the differences in structure. YouTube sorts popularity based on view counts, so older videos by Fr. Mike Schmitz are disproportionately sorted in a way that Emily Wilson's channel was not, making it difficult to capture his newer

videos in some sample methods. Fr. Mike Schmitz also became a regular contributor to Ascension Presents since he started posting videos, now posting a new video every Wednesday. As a vlogger, Emily Wilson does not follow a regular posting schedule, meaning she may post two videos one month and four videos another. Based on these varying factors, videos were selected similarly with slight modifications in an attempt to balance out the different structures. The goal was to get five videos for each category that represented the various subtopics that are presented by the two YouTubers. Therefore, the sample would consist of 15 videos for each YouTuber and 30 videos overall. On average, these videos range from 4 to 11 minutes depending on the topic. While some videos may be longer, none of the videos selected in the sample ended up being longer than 12 minutes and a few seconds.

Emily Wilson Videos Sample

For Emily Wilson, YouTube videos were first sorted on her channel based on popularity as there was still variability in year among her top videos. I went through the videos one by one, read the titles, and sorted each video into one of the three categories. Videos that seemed to have similar subtopics were skipped to make sure that the widest range of subtopics possible were covered. For instance, the number of videos focusing on virginity and sex in relationships were limited in order to allow for other popular relationship videos to be included. Too many videos on similar subtopics could affect results by seeing the same dimensions used repeatedly in only those videos and miss dimensions that may be present in other subtopic videos. Also excluded from the video sample were videos directly about Emily Wilson's personal life. As she is a more traditional YouTuber, her channel features her wedding videos, videos with her significant other, videos about her pregnancy/baby etc. However, those videos are different from the main content on her page. Only videos featuring Emily Wilson by herself speaking to the camera were

included for consistency and to best be comparable with Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos. The videos chosen on Emily Wilson's YouTube channel for analysis can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Emily Wilson Videos

Category	Title	Link
Beliefs	What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTaaRrN_cGk
Beliefs	The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pHl3hFirWg
Beliefs	Birth Control in Marriage?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99U_TtIBk-0
Beliefs	Ask Emily: Setting Boundaries in a Relationship	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oPXwtTbDSM
Beliefs	I'm Sorry for All the Damaging Purity Talks.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r82MQECTwug
Advice	Was Your Wedding Night Awkward as a Virgin?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Zby8scdozI
Advice	50 MUST-ASK Questions Before Marriage	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eauMp-aud_U
Advice	Ask Emily: How Do You Travel with A BF/GF if You're Living Chastity?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR9-5xlEHhs
Advice	How I Knew My Husband was "The One"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L92t9vsBHGQ
Advice	Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1WLUvUe-MoM
Pop	50 Shades of No Way	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDBC2Xoqaag
Pop	Women Battle Pornography Too.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGt9Ohwf1lo
Pop	The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkBdCRYCseU
Pop	The Bachelor is a Virgin...we get it.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJAuwxl9thQ
Pop	The Insanity of the Women's March	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfbNXk1GmxI

Fr. Mike Schmitz Videos Sample

Because Fr. Mike Schmitz is a contributor and does not have his own YouTube channel, his videos are not as easily sortable as Emily Wilson. However, the YouTube channel his videos are posted on, Ascension Presents, does have a playlist of all of his videos. Videos in playlists are organized by date added with the most recent appearing first. A user cannot sort videos in a preferred way, so I could not see from that playlist the most popular videos; I could only sort Fr.

Mike Schmitz's videos by popularity when they were intermixed with all the other videos on the channel. Because he has so many videos and YouTube does not have a way for the videos to be sorted by popularity, I had to develop a way to choose the videos from the chronological playlist. Therefore, videos in his playlist were counted off and then grouped in sets of ten, starting with November 6, 2019. While the number ten was randomly chosen at first, this gave about the same time range that Emily Wilson's videos had based on when her earliest videos were posted – late 2016 to present time. After ten videos were counted, one video of the set of ten was chosen to fill in one of the three categories. Similar to Emily Wilson, repeated subtopics were limited in order to get the broadest range of topics covered. Because Fr. Mike Schmitz has a larger, more general audience and more videos, this was an easier task to do.

In part, the videos for Fr. Mike Schmitz were selected out of the group of ten based on which topics stood out to me as well as videos I had seen shared by friends before. As millennials, my peers and I are members of the generation the Church is trying to reach through these videos. Some of the videos, I had seen used in the bible studies of my peers. Some videos chosen were ones I have seen shared on social media or in group message applications such as GroupMe. Other videos were chosen because the titles reflected common topics that I have talked about with people my age, whether Catholic, Protestant or non-religious. Often, my choices in videos were mirrored by the view counts, reflecting the popularity of the videos selected. Though this means the videos were purposely selected, it does suggest what a Millennial might chose to watch of the Fr. Mike Schmitz videos on the Ascension Presents YouTube channel. The videos chosen of Fr. Mike Schmitz from Ascension Presents for analysis can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2*Fr. Mike Schmitz Videos*

Category	Title	Link
Beliefs	Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTBud-9Vlzo&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=14&t=0s
Beliefs	Why Catholics Call Mary Their Mother	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGRGv9_60iI&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=36&t=0s
Beliefs	When Mass Feels like Going Through the Motions	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvMIiVdNrBw&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=64&t=0s
Beliefs	Why God Gave Us Bodies	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9rmXFG10fc&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=97&t=0s
Beliefs	Mortal vs. Venial Sin	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGghX65-9Zg&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=153&t=0s
Advice	Do You Want to Be Well	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7uymOmKjKg&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=32&t=0s
Advice	What is Stopping You from Becoming a Saint?	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-8JAnD6jvI&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=46&t=0s
Advice	Why Joy is More Christian Than Happiness	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RleRm-GBOA&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=63&t=0s
Advice	Avoiding Impurity	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Y2S58hTLqA&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=120&t=0s
Advice	The Meaning of Suffering	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tR25hk8NVio&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=148&t=0s
Pop	The Pressure of Public Conversion	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJK0g7Ry5I0&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=3&t=0s
Pop	The Culture of Netflix & Chill	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FetwQJUuo8&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=86&t=0s
Pop	Wonder Woman	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uuYGFah-po&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=115&t=0s
Pop	Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OMO0JDxuPU&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=79&t=0s
Pop	Why Watching MMA Strips Human Dignity	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BzBq7wXPOh4&list=PLeXS0cAkuTPpJ6j3eH59WudJhJ4q1tpwH&index=128&t=0s

Analysis

Method. The type of analysis chosen is a directed content analysis. According to Hsieh & Shannon (2005), this method is ideal for qualitative studies with categories already given based on past research. It also allows for the development of new categories or subcategories if they should emerge through the analysis. As seen in the review of literature, eudaimonics has been broken down into categories in previous research. I analyzed the videos, looking for the seven eudaimonic dimensions – *meaning in life/sense of purpose, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery/competence, positive relations with others/relatedness, personal growth, and living according to central personal values* – as well as two transcendent elicitors – *hopefulness* and *religiousness*. Each instance of a dimension was recorded to capture the pattern of usage. I took detailed notes on each of the videos to see themes emerge such as what dimensions were prevalent throughout the content, whether the YouTubers used different dimensions, and whether different types of videos used different dimensions.

Reliability. To improve reliability, each video was watched two times in the original analysis and collection of notes. Watching these videos through helps to ensure that all dimensions present in the video are recorded in the findings. Following the initial analysis, three Emily Wilson videos and three Fr. Mike Schmitz videos were rewatched to check accuracy of recorded dimensions. Because the dimensions in the videos were found to be the same, the analysis was complete and no further videos needed to be watched.

YouTube Comments

While it was important to see how the two influencers used eudaimonics in their videos, it also was important to evaluate whether YouTube viewers commented with eudaimonic responses in the comment section. All comments appear right under the YouTube video to which

they are referring. The top comments are sorted automatically by YouTube by a certain algorithm it employs. These are the ones generally with the most views and engagement, although they can include the most recent in the top as well depending on the upload date. It is not quite clear the exact algorithm employed by YouTube, but if a video is older, the comments that are shown first remain relatively consistent when viewed by different users. Because these are the comments seen by the most people, they are the ones focused on in this study. To truncate the evaluation, only the first 15 comments posted by unique YouTube accounts were assessed. The comments also had to contain a minimum of 11 words, which is a criterion imposed to increase the chance of quality commentary; originally, comments needed to contain at least 10 words to increase the chance of at least one full, relevant sentence of a complete thought, but when collecting the comments, raising the amount to 11 eliminated all comments that did not express complete thoughts clearly. Comments were excluded if they are solely requests made by viewers for other video topics and do not address the video they were posted on; this helped to collect more relevant comments and avoid repeated ones. Replies under each comment were not included in the analysis as one of the 15 comments. The comments comprising the data set were downloaded at the time of analysis to ensure a static set of comments for review during the research period. While reading through the comments, I took notes on themes present such as the dimension/elicitor usage, whether the video content resonated with the commenter, whether the commenter shared a personal story, whether the video encouraged the commenter, etc.

Reflexivity and Potential Bias

While my analysis was guided by the dimensions of eudaimonics and past research in the field, a directed content analysis is qualitative and, therefore, can be shaped by my own interpretations, experiences and biases. I was baptized Catholic as a baby, and though not

everyone in my family was Catholic, I was raised to be a practicing Catholic. I attended Catholic school from first through eighth grade and continued to be an active member of Catholic youth groups in high school and most of college. During high school and college, I also attended various youth rallies, retreats and conferences for Catholicism; a few of those, I was able to see Fr. Mike Schmitz and Emily Wilson speak in person. Though I am not as knowledgeable as many of my peers on matters of the faith, I am more knowledgeable and connected than the average young Catholic and, understandably, know more than a non-Catholic. These experiences may have caused me to analyze and interpret findings differently than others with more or less knowledge of the Catholic faith. I tried to analyze the content using definition of the dimensions and elicitors as objectively as possible and clearly explained in my analysis and discussion how I came to my findings.

Analysis

All 30 videos by Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz were analyzed to discover the presence of the seven dimensions of eudaimonics and two of its transcendent elicitors. Videos were analyzed by the overall dimensions and elicitors present as well as how they were present in the three predefined categories of videos. For both Catholic YouTuber influencers, each one of the dimensions was present in at least four of the fifteen videos watched from their respective channels. Certain dimensions were present in ten or more videos of their channels, and a few were present in almost every video the influencer produced that was included in this research.

Emily Wilson

Overall use of dimensions. Emily Wilson was consistent with the dimensions that were prominent throughout her videos before even taking the three categories of Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, personal and relationship advice, and popular culture into account. In

the fifteen videos watched, the eudaimonic dimensions that appeared the most in her videos were *relatedness*, *autonomy*, *competence* and *living according to personal values*. Because of the frequency of the certain dimensions in her videos, there was not a noticeable difference in the dimensions used across the three categories of videos; the same ones were consistently high across all of the video categories.

Relatedness. *Relatedness* deals with the need to feel connected to and cared about by others. Viewers may feel a likeness or a sense of similarity with the people they are viewing. Between the two Catholic YouTube influencers, Emily Wilson is more of a traditional YouTuber in that she runs her own channel and has a narrower target audience. Because of this distinction, every video analyzed showed *relatedness* in some form. Wilson prioritizes this connection with her viewers as seen by how frequently *relatedness* is used, even saying “I like sharing with you guys, and...I love being real and raw and honest with you guys” (Wilson, 2018a).

One way that Emily Wilson emphasizes this *relatedness* is opening up to her audience and talking directly on personal experience. Frequently, her videos deal with the topics related to romantic relationships, particularly on purity. In these videos, Wilson freely shares her personal life with her significant other, Daniel; if she ever shares something more personal about Daniel, she also disclaims that he has given her permission to do so. A common theme throughout her videos is her and Daniel’s choice to live chastity and save sex before marriage – both individually before they started dating and throughout their relationship. She talks about her experience as a young woman making the choice to wait for marriage and the judgement that she faced from choosing that path.

One of her most popular videos with slightly more than 2 million views at the time of collection, *Was Your Wedding Night Awkward as a Virgin?*, deals with a question she was asked

from a viewer based on the viewer's personal experiences. That viewer had friends who were accepting of her choice to save sex for marriage, but they warned her that her wedding night would be "painful" and "awkward," and she might not be able to walk for days after her first time (Wilson, 2018d). While the viewer's friends were speaking from their own personal experience, the viewer wanted to reach out to Wilson because of how open she is about her experience in waiting for marriage. Wilson addresses the importance of seeking out someone who has a similar experience to one's own, emphasizing the idea of similarity in *relatedness*: "The only person who can speak to what it will be like to be a virgin on your wedding night is someone who was a virgin on their wedding night" (Wilson, 2018d). She says that while others can guess based on their own experience, they can never know because they did not experience the same thing. After comforting the viewers that there is a huge difference between your first time having sex outside a marriage and having your first time with a spouse, Wilson encourages the viewer who originally asked and all the viewers now to reach out to women they know personally who waited for marriage to hear their experience rather than being scared by what somebody supposed could happen.

It is not just the topics that she discusses that demonstrate a sense of *relatedness* to her audience; it is also how she presents herself to the audience to allow for a genuine feeling of connection. Viewers see Wilson usually in her house or occasionally a park, sitting by herself, talking directly to the camera in a medium closeup shot. This technique allows for the viewer to experience a certain level of perceived intimacy because of the framing of the shot, and it can give the feeling of sitting down with Emily to have a personal conversation. The viewers can see emotions clearly on Wilson's face as she talks directly to the camera in her videos. In the video *What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage*, Wilson allows herself to cry on

camera when telling viewers about the persecution she faced from those around her for her choice (Wilson, 2016b). This shows an openness and vulnerability that many might hide, but it allows her to connect to the audience even more; I started to tear up with her as I identified with her struggles in my own life and saw the same ones in the lives of my friends as well.

Beyond showing *relatedness* back to herself, Emily Wilson opens most of her videos with a question she has been asked by one young woman or many women through social media, email or following a talk. This is often used to start acknowledging to viewers that other young women feel this way or have this question, so the viewer is not alone in her experience. In her video *Women Battle Pornography Too*, Wilson discusses an issue that many young women had reached out to her about. These young women struggle with watching pornography, which is viewed as a sin in the Catholic faith; however, also in Catholic circles, pornography is traditionally viewed as a man's issue (Wilson, 2018e). These viewers reached out because they felt alone in their struggles as though they must be the only female who battle an addiction to pornography. Wilson gives the disclaimer that she personally has never struggled with pornography, but she has talked with many women about their struggles, including those within her personal life or encountering young women at conferences, retreats, through social media or other communication channels. One of the main points that Wilson repeatedly emphasizes throughout the video is that the young women who reached out previously and the viewers now watching the video are not alone in their struggle. She not only assures this similarity, but she also encourages anyone facing this struggle to reach out and connect with someone they trust to disclose this struggle in their life. She then talks about finding an accountability partner, who is someone who walks with a person who is struggling to help and love them and encourage them

to be better (Wilson, 2018e). In this way, Wilson reminds the viewers that not only does she care about them, but others in their lives also care about them and can be there for them too.

As a Catholic YouTuber, Emily Wilson emphasizes another type of *relatedness* beyond family and friends; repeatedly, she mentions her own relationship with God as well as the viewer's *relatedness* to Him. Because she believes that God loves her and cares for her, she often involves Him in her decisions and trusts Him to guide her to what is best for her. Viewers can clearly see that trust in the videos *How I Knew My Husband was "The One"* and *Birth Control in Marriage?* when she explains her decision-making processes on the two topics. In the former, Wilson prays to God, asking things such as if Daniel is a good man, if this is the right relationship, do they make each other better, etc. She then said that God affirmed her choice, so she knew to go ahead and pursue marriage with Daniel (Wilson, 2018b). In the video on the topic of birth control, Wilson explains that as Catholics, she and her husband chose to not use artificial contraceptives – instead using natural family planning – because they trust in God's plan for them. Their faith leads them to believe that God loves them and would only give them a child when they are ready (Wilson, 2018a). These two videos demonstrate this level of importance and implicit trust that Wilson (and her significant other) place in God because He provides the love and care that people who seek *relatedness* desire.

Although Emily Wilson's primary audience are young Catholic or other Christian women who relate to the religious aspects she speaks about, some viewers are also nonreligious; Wilson takes time to also engage with those viewers as well, so they too can experience a sense of *relatedness*. In her video on birth control, she directly mentions that she knows and understands those who do not believe in God may not understand her religious trust in God, and she acknowledges that it is okay. Before mentioning she does not use artificial contraception because

she trusts God's will, she gives secular reasons for her choice such as the risks that can be associated with taking artificial birth control (Wilson, 2018a). In her video *50 MUST-ASK Questions Before Marriage*, she again directly addresses that there may be some viewers who do not share her beliefs. In the video she tells those viewers to feel free to skip over any religious based questions that they feel do not apply to their relationships (Wilson, 2018f).

In recognizing these differences in her viewers, Wilson often emphasizes the ideas of personal choice in the viewer's own life. She does not make the videos to tell viewers what to do or to judge people's choices; rather, her focus is to share her perspective and offer information, help and/or advice to those who seek it.

Autonomy and competence. *Autonomy* is a sense of choice a person feels they have in order make decisions to follow set goals, while *competence* is a sense of efficacy a person has that they may be able to effectively achieve their desired outcomes. The dimension of *autonomy* was present in 12 of the 15 videos, and *competence* was present in 11. Though *autonomy* and *competence* occasionally appeared in Emily Wilson's videos independently, most of the time, the two dimensions were strongly connected in the ways that Wilson presented them in her videos. This relationship between the dimensions in her videos stems from the fact that *autonomy* is the ability to make a decision, and *competence* is if that person is in the position to successfully act on that choice and be confident in it. In the below examples, Wilson explains the importance in making your own decisions as well as being in the best state that you can carry those decisions out.

This relationship can clearly be seen in the video *What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage*, where she talks about her decision to save herself for marriage as well as

the decision by other women she knows to not wait until marriage. The need for *autonomy* is established from the beginning as Wilson opens the video by saying:

I'm not making this video to tell you what to do. I'm not making this video to tell anyone what to do or what not to do. I'm making this video to tell you what I did and why I'm so glad that I did. (Wilson, 2016b)

Wilson wants viewers to know that they have the freedom to make their own choices that reflect what their desired goals and behaviors are. She even later goes on to say that her decision does not make her a better woman than any woman who chose differently. With Wilson's *autonomy*, she chose to wait; however; for her and many, there can be a struggle with the *competence* to successfully carry out that decision. Wilson explains that she dealt with a lot of judgement and criticism for her decision, but she was able to hold strong to her faith and decision, and she successfully saved herself for marriage. She then talks about some of the young women she knows who were not as lucky. They chose to wait for marriage, but they were repeatedly judged by peers and pressured by friends and/or significant others. This caused a lack of control of their external environment, and they were unable to stick to their choice to wait for marriage. In the same video, Wilson also talks about how some women have described the phenomenon that can happen to sexually active couples when they have a biological chemical bond that makes it more difficult to leave their partner, even if they know the relationship is unhealthy (Wilson, 2016b). Even though they had the ability to make the choice to leave (*autonomy*), they were unable to leave the man because of the biological factor that was hindering their ability to act on their decision. The chemical bond they experienced from repeatedly sleeping with their partner made it so they did not have control of the internal environment of their emotions. So, even though

they knew that they needed to leave their significant other and wanted to, the women claimed that, for inexplicable reasons to them at the time, they could not (Wilson, 2016b).

Another video that clearly demonstrates this relationship between the dimensions is the video *Ask Emily: How Do You Travel With A BF/GF if You're Living Chastity?* The video also shows how *autonomy* can apply to the ability of two people to choose. Viewers reached out to Emily Wilson, who was well versed with this topic; her husband, Daniel, is from the Netherlands, so they were often travelling to see each other or travelling around Europe. Because Wilson and her significant other chose to wait for marriage, they also decided together that they would never share a room and sleep in the same bed on trips to help them keep with that decision (2017a, Wilson). The two made the decision together, which requires both people to first make the decision to live chastity (an individual sense of *autonomy*) and then together agree to enact the same behaviors to head to the shared goal (a shared sense of *autonomy*). This togetherness allows for a sense of *competence* that when two people choose the same thing, they have a better ability of succeeding; there is another person to support your decision and encourage you to stick with it. The two then would choose to only travel to places that could accommodate to their needs and allowed them to adhere to their choice – an example of being competent to navigate their environment.

Although most videos paired *autonomy* and *competence*, they can exist apart. Wilson did have a few videos where one dimension was noted while the other was not, as well as a few where one was a primary dimension while the other was more of a side thought. *Autonomy* was more often present without *competence*, likely because a person has to be able to make a decision before being able to act on it successfully.

One of Emily Wilson's videos where *autonomy* was a prominent dimension without *competence* coming much into play is *The Insanity of the Women's March*. The video was not against the idea of the national Women's March, but rather how the organization was responding to an issue that had to do with *autonomy* and morality. Wilson explains how she watched a documentary with her husband called *I Am Jane Doe*, which is about young women being sold into human trafficking/sex trafficking via a website known as backpage.com (Wilson, 2018c). These girls and young women were kidnapped, losing any chance of freewill they deserve as human beings. According to the documentary, the website was one of the biggest facilitators of human trafficking, so people were fighting to get it shut down. Just prior to the video being released, backpage.com was finally shut down. However, the response of the Women's March prompted Emily to center her video on the topic. The Women's March retweeted a tweet from Collective Action for Safe Spaces about how shutting down backpage.com was not about ending sex trafficking but preventing women from doing whatever they want from with their bodies; the Women's March added that "The shutting down of Backpage is an absolute crisis for sex workers who rely on the site to safely get in touch with clients. Sex workers rights are women's rights" (Women's March, 2018). Emily Wilson puts her religious morals aside, at first, which question whether prostitution is in any way women's empowerment, so she can focus on the battle for *autonomy* for women, something a women's rights group should advocate for. Wilson claims that this tweet pushes the agenda of bodily *autonomy* for sex workers while ignoring the bodily *autonomy* of young girls who are forced into sex slavery (Wilson, 2018c). The frequency of the appearance of *autonomy* in Wilson's videos suggests the importance she places on this dimension. It makes sense that she would stand for those who have lost their *autonomy* completely and make a whole video almost solely about the dimension of *autonomy*.

Autonomy may appear more than *competence*, but there is one video in which Wilson shows the dimension of *competence* without much discussing *autonomy*: *Women Battle Pornography Too*. As previously mentioned and indicated by the title, the topic of the video was that pornography is often viewed as a men's issue in Catholic circles (Wilson, 2018e). This has caused a lack of communication on the issue for women, which lead to a lack of information about overcoming the addiction – information readily available to men. Wilson knows that many women struggle, but they lack the “tools” to overcome it, so she wants to give women the resources necessary to achieve their goals. While this may sound like another instance of the relationship of *autonomy* and *competence*, this is an instance where *competence* comes into play before *autonomy*. Because this is not a widely talked about issue in Catholic women's circles, young women have not had access to resources to help them, which creates a chasm of *competence*. These young women who reached out, or potentially viewers at home, may not be able to even choose to overcome their struggle because they do not know how. A person cannot choose to check out a book if they do not know there is a library. Wilson in her video provides resources for those who may be seeking them, such as leaveporn.com, The Victory App and even a talk by a female Christian singer, Audrey Assad (Wilson, 2018e). With these resources and a newfound *competence*, Wilson hopes that viewers will be able to overcome their addiction.

Even though Emily Wilson does often mention she is not trying to tell her viewers how to live or what they should or should not do in dealing with *autonomy* and *competence*, she tries to live her life following her personal values. These values are based on the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and thus, she acts as an example of what *living life according to personal values* looks like. Viewers are clearly introduced to these values throughout her videos as Wilson is open about her personal life and the teachings of her religion.

Living according to personal values. The dimension of *living according to central personal values* is used more to refer to viewers seeing characters live their lives according to a similar set of core values, which activates the viewers' own values. Emily Wilson lives her life according to her own personal values which reflect the teachings of the Catholic Church. By opening up and showing her viewers how she lives her life by exemplifying good values to the Catholic faith, viewers may feel those same values activated in their own lives.

One of the main ways Wilson shows how she lives according to her personal values is by talking about her choice to save sex for marriage. This topic has become one of the most common in her videos because many of her viewers request videos related to her decision as it relates to their own decision to do the same. She adhered to her decision no matter what other people said to her or how they treated her. In her videos, Wilson mentions being persecuted by others around her for her decision (Wilson, 2016b). Others could not understand her viewpoint and sought to change her mind on it:

When people have a set of values that do not align with the values or lack of values that is prominent or popular in our world today, so often people make it their mission or goal to get that person to relinquish that. (Wilson, 2019b)

Wilson says this is a common experience that many people have who choose to follow values or a set of morals that others think are too different. She acknowledges that people waiting for marriage who are in their late twenties are different from most in modern society, but there is nothing wrong with it. To Wilson, it was the most freeing thing to know both she and her husband waited to experience something so intimate only with each other (Wilson, 2019b).

In order for Wilson and her husband to succeed in their choice, they had to be open and honest about their expectations in a relationship. In the video *Ask Emily: Setting Boundaries in a*

Relationship, she discusses how she and Daniel set the physical boundaries for their relationship (Wilson, 2017b). Their personal values were based on a mutual belief in Catholic teachings, which instructs Catholics to work to uplift others, especially when two people enter into a relationship to contemplate the vocation of marriage. When talking about their decision to uphold those values, Wilson said, “Is having a relationship centered on faith difficult? Yes, because faith calls us to great things, and faith calls us to difficult things. But faith calls us to very good things” (2017b). Wilson and her husband, even though they found it difficult, still followed their faith and what was asked of them by God.

Once married, Emily and Daniel still live their lives according to their faith in other aspects. In the video *Birth Control in Marriage?*, Wilson explains how she and her husband have decided to not use artificial contraception. The two are practicing Catholics and were married in a Catholic wedding tradition. As a part of the vows they said on their wedding day, they consented to receive anything God gives them in a marriage, including children (Wilson, 2018a). Artificial birth control has not been allowed by the Catholic faith (Catholic Answers, 2019). Even though many people of faith cannot understand this trust in God, and even those who are religious may not echo the same beliefs, Wilson and her husband willingly adhere to that teaching in their personal lives.

Emily Wilson also allows her faith to guide her in individual aspects of her life. In the video, *The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks*, Wilson talks about her personal reason for dressing modestly: it is not for men, but it is to honor herself and God (Wilson, 2017d). Many modesty talks seem to focus on how women should dress modestly so as not to lead their brothers in Christ into temptation, which Wilson says should not be the primary reason to dress modestly. Instead, because of her faith, she believes that she should dress modestly because she

is “a woman of inherent dignity and worth” and that her “body is a sacred place” because God dwells within her (2017d). She demonstrates these values to her viewers by dressing classy, which is the word she uses to reframe the word “modesty”. Dressing in this way, she seeks to reflect to others that she is a woman of great dignity, value and worth.

Her values and that dignity also shapes what she watches, similar to how Tsay-Vogel and Krakowiak (2016) found that viewers judge characters in movies based on their personal values. Both of the videos *50 Shades of No Way* and *The Victoria Secret's Fashion Show* deal with Emily Wilson's personal desire to not watch certain shows in popular media because they do not align with her personal values. Wilson believes that women have inherent dignity, but neither of those pieces of media the videos talk about acknowledge that. For instance, the movie *50 Shades of Gray* glorifies and romanticizes abuse towards women in relationships as well as making the male lead's manipulative and controlling behavior sexy (Wilson, 2017e). Because women have dignity, they should not be treated like this and deserve more respect. Wilson also says that the movie does not contribute to the purity of hearts, spirits and minds of those who watch it, which goes against her Christian values. Similarly, the Victoria Secret Fashion show (which has since stopped production) also undermines the value and dignity of women by depicting them as “sex objects” who parade around in lingerie for the enjoyment of others (Wilson, 2016a). Wilson will not watch it because she refuses to participate in the culture of “sex sells” and treating women as objects.

Wilson uses her videos in this way to reach young women to assure them of their value, their ability to choose for themselves and act on it, and their connectedness with others around them. While the four dimensions of *relatedness*, *autonomy*, *competence* and *living according to*

central personal values appeared most prominently in Emily Wilson's videos analyzed, she did use other dimensions throughout.

Other dimensions. Possibly because of Emily Wilson's primary focus on relationships in the videos analyzed, *self-acceptance* and *personal growth* do not appear in as many of the videos as the aforementioned dimensions. Still, there are instances of both dimensions in a few of her videos.

Self-acceptance. *Self-acceptance* is when a person accepts who they are and their life while striving for their goals. Though *self-acceptance* was only directly observed in five videos of the fifteen, it is indirectly mentioned in other videos as well. Emily Wilson often talks about the inherent dignity that she has as a person created by God. It becomes *self-acceptance* when she directly embraces her own worth rather than just telling the viewers about the inherent dignity that we all have; it is one thing to know it but another thing to accept it and believe it. Viewers can see this in the video *The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks* when she proudly states who she is and her worth:

I dress as a woman of class and dignity because I am one, because I believe that my body is sacred, that I have infinite worth and value, because I have self-respect and because I love myself and because my body belongs to me. (Wilson, 2017d)

Because of this sense of worth, Wilson embraces who she is as a person and her value, and she encourages her viewers to do the same. A direct instance encouraging her viewers to accept themselves can be seen in the video *The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show*, in which Wilson talks about how young women have posted that watching the show has made them feel so badly about themselves; sometimes those women even claimed to feel a deep sense of self-hatred as well as feeling suicidal (Wilson, 2016a). Wilson directly addresses her viewers' feelings of

inadequacy from seeing these women with a certain “perfect” body type in hopes to help their own *self-acceptance*, saying “You are supposed to look like you, and I’m supposed to look like me, and [we’re supposed to] be happy and healthy and strong” (2016a). Even further than focusing on looks, Wilson wants her viewers to accept who they are as people more so than their physical appearance; *self-acceptance* deals with accepting oneself as a whole not just one’s appearance. Because of her focus on self-acceptance beyond appearance, toward the end of the video, she tells her viewers the following:

We are not the sum of our appearance as women... it is not everything that we are. You are so much more than your body. You’re a soul, and you are a beautiful woman with so much to offer the world [that] it’s amazing. (Wilson, 2016a)

Hopefulness. This sense of hope and positive encouragement are trademarks of the transcendent elicitor *hopefulness*. In Emily Wilson’s videos, *hopefulness* is almost always connected to the dimension of *personal growth* as she encourages her viewers to grow and change their lives for the better. In the video *I’m Sorry for All the Damaging Purity Talks*, Wilson explains the terrible flaws found in the object-metaphor-based purity talks. Those talks compare some object, such as a gift, to a girl’s purity. In the case of a gift, the speaker equates the act of having sex before marriage as tearing at the wrapping of the present. The speaker then guilted the young women by asking if she would want to give that gift to her future husband (2019a). Though Wilson explains that there are many things wrong with the approach to discussing the importance of purity, she emphasizes that a major flaw in these talks is that they do not allow for change. She has heard directly from young women that they thought after having sex before marriage, it was too late for them, so it did not matter: they already lost their purity. Wilson wants her viewers to know though that this assumption is wrong. She tells those

watching that “there is room for repentance. There’s room for change. There’s room for you to say...these decisions are not making me happy, and I want to change” (2019a). She uses *hopefulness* to positively encourage the viewers who need it toward *personal growth* so that they can change how they are now and grow to be who they want to be.

Throughout her videos, Catholic YouTube influencer Emily Wilson emphasizes four eudaimonic dimensions: the three higher order needs of *relatedness*, *autonomy* and *competence* as well as *living life in accordance to central personal values*. She also uses the other dimensions and transcendent elicitors when best suited for the topic of the video. Because her consistency of which dimensions were used most frequently, no patterns emerged in the three categories of videos (Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, personal and relationship advice, and popular culture); each eudaimonic dimension appeared similarly across all categories. However, as an independent YouTuber with a more specific audience, the dimensions most frequently used by Wilson and how she uses them may differ with how Fr. Mike Schmitz, a YouTuber part of a media organization with a broader audience, uses the same dimensions.

Fr. Mike Schmitz

Overall use of dimensions/elicitors. The eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors in Fr. Mike Schmitz’ videos differ from Emily Wilson’s. Only one dimension, *relatedness*, and one elicitor, *religiousness*, appeared in more than ten videos of the 15 watched. *Hopefulness* was close, appearing in nine of the videos. Most of the other dimensions present in the videos were used more prominently in one or two of the three categories the videos were sorted in, resulting in a lower overall use of the dimensions.

Religiousness. *Religiousness* has been noted to appear in religious symbols or depictions of religious tradition. *Religiousness* is the most common dimension/elicitor to appear in Fr. Mike

Schmitz's video. Schmitz's videos are all filmed in a similar manner, with him talking to the camera in the same room that is presumably in an office of one of the places he works – the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota-Duluth or the Diocese of Duluth office (Catholic Missionary Disciples, n.d.). In every video, Fr. Mike Schmitz is wearing traditional Catholic dress for a priest with a black button-down shirt and a Roman collar. The office itself holds some classic Catholic imagery. Clearly visible over Fr. Mike's right shoulder is a picture of the Blessed Mother; it appears to be a close up of Mary's face in the famous *Pieta* statue by Michelangelo. Whether the viewer is Catholic or not, both the apparel of a priest and the *Pieta* can be easily recognizable by others. Their constant presence serves as an indicator of the religious nature of the videos.

There is some religious imagery that comes in and out of the videos over the period of time the videos span, although some examples may be harder to spot for non-Catholic viewers. Any easier symbol to spot is Fr. Mike Schmitz occasionally has a wooden cross on his left side that appears to be a part of his book shelf. Whether the inconsistency of this element's appearance can be explained by the book shelf being shown in frame sometimes and out of frame in others, it is unclear. Fr. Mike sits partially in front of a fireplace in the room, which occasionally contains religious elements appropriate to the season. During Christmas time, the mantel is decorated with garland and stockings – more secular but also has connections to the Christian faith – as well as angel figurines, which are notorious in Christian imagery. Something that non-religious and non-Catholics might not catch is the presence of palms, possibly crosses, on the mantel in the video *Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition*. I was easily able to notice them as I have spent many Palm Sunday masses making crosses and other woven patterns out of palm leaves for my family and friends; however, to be as close to certain as possible that these

were palm leaves, I did go back week by week from the aforementioned video and noted that they first make their appearance in a video that was not analyzed for this study, *Old Testament God vs. New Testament God*. That video premiered a couple weeks after Palm Sunday that year, and assuming the videos are filmed a couple weeks in advance to allow for editing, the timing would fit. However, another individual who was not as familiar with Palm Sunday and making palm crosses might not have noticed them in the background considering it appears that they may be a couple crosses laying on their side and overlapping, therefore, not an immediately clear cross shape. This religious visual is thus limited in who it can elicit a response from.

Relatedness. Similar to Emily Wilson, Fr. Mike Schmitz uses *relatedness* often in his videos; however, he does so in a different way. Schmitz's vocation is the priesthood, which is an experience that most men cannot relate to and no women can. He also has a broader audience than Emily Wilson, so he has more people to attempt to relate to. Instead of focusing on his personal life, he uses anecdotes from his own life or from the lives of others to supplement what he wants the viewers to get from the video. More so than experiencing *relatedness* with himself, Fr. Mike emphasizes experiencing *relatedness* with others and with God.

Perhaps in part because of his job as a college campus chaplain, Fr. Mike Schmitz shows his knowledge of popular culture by incorporating references in his videos to establish a shared connection with his viewers so as to relate to people on a broader scale, such as viewers from nonreligious backgrounds. This helps to create that feeling of similarity with people who he may not seem to have much in common with. Even the videos not specifically on popular culture topics contain these references as a part of their overall lesson. In the video *When Mass Feels like Going Through the Motions*, Schmitz talks about the popular *Karate Kid* movies, both the original from his childhood and the reboot that came out in 2010. He uses the classic "wax on,

wax off' scene and the modern equivalent of putting on and taking off the jacket as a comparison of going through the motions without knowing their purpose. While it teaches them in the movie, in real life, repeating motions does not produce the same result. He admits he wished as a kid that he wanted these gestures to teach him karate/kung fu like it happened in the movie, something many kids wished after seeing the movie too. In the video *Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking*, he makes references to the Inklings, which was a literary discussion group associated with an English university (Schmitz, 2018a). The group included the members J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis who are known across their world for their books and media adaptations by people of all ages, races, genders, religious affiliations, etc.

Beyond references in videos to support the main lesson, Fr. Mike Schmitz covers popular culture topics as the focus for much of his video content. When Kanye West had a public conversion, people asked for him to give his reaction and honest opinion in a video (2019b). Viewers also ask him to comment on other phenomenon in popular culture, or he feels the need to speak up as a consumer as popular culture like most of the population. He created the video on the movie *Wonder Woman* because he felt compelled to speak on the positive aspects of such a popular movie that he enjoyed like many of his viewers (Schmitz, 2017e). Schmitz took an unpopular opinion when he talked about the moral problems of watching MMA fighting as entertainment (Schmitz, 2017d). These topics touch on the similarity aspect of *relatedness* to help a larger audience feel like they share something with Fr. Mike Schmitz, even if it is something as simple as enjoying a movie or rapping along to a song.

Fr. Mike Schmitz's vocation also might make it more difficult to find similarities with his broader audience, but he does sometimes tell personal stories that a broader audience is more likely to relate to based on their own personal life as a part of his videos. This allows a

connection and feeling of mutual understanding, of *relatedness*, that might not have existed between a priest in his mid-40s and young Catholics. In the video *When Mass Feels like Going Through the Motions*, Schmitz tells the viewers about his experience in learning instruments, something a lot of people might have some experience with (Schmitz, 2018c). He says that he had classical guitar lessons, so he knows all of the correct motions, like the way to hold the guitar; however, knowing the motions does not make him a classical guitarist: it opens him up to the possibility of becoming one. Similarly, people may feel that way in their faith life when they feel like they are going through the motions. The sign of the cross is not the prayer, but it puts one in a place to pray. Sitting, standing and kneeling are not just motions to execute, but movements meant to aid in achieving a level of depth and focus in prayer. By comparing this to a common experience of learning an instrument, Schmitz's viewers may be able to better understand how completing the motions are important to help them with the basics, but then they must work at it to feel their desired level of spirituality like one must work to achieve a desired level of skill on an instrument.

Fr. Mike Schmitz also gives an insight to his personal life in emphasizing *relatedness* in the videos *Why Catholics call Mary Their Mother* and *Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking*. In the first video, he talks about his life before seminary when he was dating a girl and first met her family, getting to know them more (Schmitz, 2019d). More of his viewers are able to relate to dating and getting to know their significant other's family than they can to the priestly aspects of his life. In the second video, he tells two stories which mimic the feelings of talking with a friend rather than just an impersonal video on a website (Schmitz, 2018a). First, he tells his viewers about his parents sending a picture from a pub in England called The Eagle and the Child, which happened to be the pub where the group the Inklings met. Later, he talks about a

night where he was with family friends. The husband brought out a high-quality wine, and his wife brought out chocolates and strawberries to pair with the wine to create an experience and an appreciation for the moment. While not all viewers can relate to either experience, especially those who cannot drink, these stories serve as a way to get to know Fr. Mike beyond the Roman collar who talks to them over YouTube almost every Wednesday. He becomes a person who experiences normal things that others also do, and that provides viewers with a sense of *relatedness* that can encourage a connection with Fr. Mike.

Although he does offer personal stories to help viewers feel a sense of *relatedness* with him, Fr. Mike Schmitz tends to focus more on encouraging viewers to feel a sense of *relatedness* with others. He acknowledges this human need for *relatedness* in the video *The Culture of Netflix & Chill*. In it, he talks about how millennials now struggle to date in today's culture if forced to separate dating from the hook up culture like "Netflix and Chill" (Schmitz, 2018b). Schmitz talks about the documentary *The Dating Project*, which features an assignment by Dr. Cronin of Boston College. She challenged her students to ask someone out on a date in person, and the date could not involve drugs, alcohol or sex. She found out that none of her students had done it after two weeks because they said they did not know how to ask someone out on a date, especially one of this variety (2018b). Schmitz says the trouble with dating relationships, and any relationships in general, is a lack in authenticity. People in today's society find it difficult to bare their core even when faced with an epidemic of loneliness. Because there is a struggle to find that authenticity, people connect over social media with their ideal foot forward, but they fail to form real connections and a true sense of *relatedness*. Schmitz encourages his viewers to be more open and present with the people in their lives, whether in romantic relationship or platonic

relationships. This builds this connection that people long to feel and allows for a genuine sense of love.

Because of this connectedness, Fr. Mike Schmitz encourages the loving and caring aspect of *relatedness*, so that viewers may show those actions to the people around them. In the video *Wonder Woman*, Schmitz talks about how the actions of Wonder Woman shows how important it is to care for other people (Schmitz, 2017e). In the movie, Wonder Woman recognizes a problem and does what she can to help others to stop it. In doing that, she raises up the men she fights with alongside of her. Schmitz wants his viewers to see the power of helping others and working together by using Wonder Woman as an example. A true hero raises everyone up alongside of themselves, and then when a hero needs help, those they lifted up can take over and become a hero too. Fr. Mike Schmitz also encourages this idea of connectedness and supporting each other when he talks about Kanye West in the video *The Pressure of Public Conversion* (Schmitz, 2019b). Because Kanye West has chosen to embrace Christianity, viewers should offer him their support and pray for him that he is able to maintain his course despite the pressures he may feel after changing his image and message so publicly. However, Schmitz reminds his viewers that they should not just pray for him because he is a celebrity, but because he is a son of God; as the viewers are all children of God, they are called to care for him too – support him now, and if he falls, help him get back up.

As a part of the vocation to the priesthood, Fr. Mike Schmitz's primary focus in terms of *relatedness* is discussing and encouraging the viewers' relationship with God. Schmitz explains key points of Theology of the Body out in the video *Why God Gave Us Bodies*. A core belief from Theology of the Body is that humans were created by God out of love to have a relationship with God. As God is love – an eternal exchange between Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and

humans were created in His likeness, people were made for love and relationship as well (2018d). Because God loves those He created so much, He promises to always be with them, as Schmitz explains in *Why Joy is More Christian Than Happiness*; a person is never truly alone (Schmitz, 2018e). In the video, Fr. Mike explains that knowing God loves us and is always there for us can give us strength during any time in our lives:

I may be afraid, but I'm not alone because you're with me. I don't know where this path is taking me, Lord, but I'm not afraid because you're with me. I may be in the midst of great pain and great sorrow and great uncertainty, but I am not afraid, God, because you are with me. (2018e)

This love and trust present in a solid relationship with God can give Catholics a sense of real joy in their everyday lives that frees them from fear.

This relationship is far from perfect, as it involves imperfect humans with free will to choose. Fr. Mike Schmitz discusses the effects of sin on one's relationship with God in the video *Mortal vs. Venial Sin*. While venial sins wound a person's relationship with God, mortal sins destroy that relationship; this is because mortal sins involve knowingly committing a grave sin (Schmitz, 2017b). Though the latter is obviously worse, neither one is good for a person. In a relationship, one does not want to repeatedly do something to hurt the other, even though it does not end a relationship. If one truly loves the other in the relationship, they would do anything they could to refrain from hurting them at all. Schmitz also tells his viewers that the relationship is not irreparable because Jesus freely offers God's grace and always forgives sins if a person brings them to him. Jesus suffered on the cross to overcome sin and death. In *The Meaning of Suffering*, Fr. Mike explains how Jesus so loved the world that he went through the ultimate suffering to die on the cross for every person to ever exist (Schmitz, 2017c). In that sacrifice,

Jesus shows his love for others and repairs that relationship that sin damaged and/or destroyed. When a person chooses to walk with Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, their relationship with God is reestablished, their relationship with others is healed, and their relationship with themselves is brought back into order (Schmitz, 2018d).

As *relatedness* is the eudaimonic dimension that appears in the most videos, there are many different examples of how Fr. Mike Schmitz uses *relatedness*. He uses popular culture references and occasional personal stories to connect with his viewers. His primary focus of *relatedness*, though, is encouraging his viewers' relationships with others and with God.

Hopefulness. *Hopefulness* appears in nine of the fifteen videos, three videos in each of the three defined categories, which made it the most evenly spread elicitor or dimension other than *religiousness* and *relatedness*. *Hopefulness* as a transcendent elicitor is seen in the forms of offering positive encouragement and seeing people overcoming obstacles. The elicitor of *hopefulness* is commonly mentioned throughout Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos as he offers positive encouragement to his viewers for overcoming any struggles that they may be facing as well as telling his viewers the redemption that viewers may experience through the grace of God.

In times where faith does not seem as strong or easy to follow, Fr. Mike Schmitz gives his viewers a sense of *hopefulness* that there is a reason for this, and they can gain something from this experience before they ultimately overcome it. In the video *When Mass Feels like Going Through the Motions*, he talks about when going to mass or other spiritual activities begin to feel monotonous. Schmitz says that people come to him saying some version of the following:

I go to pray, or I, specifically, go to mass, but I feel so empty because it feels like I'm just going through the motions...when it comes to my spiritual life [and] my worship of God, there should be more because I think I'm just going through the motions. (2018c)

Though Fr. Mike first explains to his viewers why they might feel this way, he offers a third reason for this feeling that is meant to comfort those experiencing it and encouraging them in their time of difficulty. Just like the rest of people's lives, their spiritual lives are bound to have peaks and valleys, also known to Catholics as periods of consolation and desolation (2018c). While being in consolation is comfortable and easy, it is in the period of desolation that a heart grows. God may be using this time to purify those in desolation or help them grow in virtue. Thus, Schmitz wants to encourage those experiencing desolation to continue to try to worship and pray because that is amazing and will allow for a greater change.

More than just positive encouragement, *hopefulness* also entails the overcoming of obstacles. Fr. Mike specifically lists three obstacles that viewers must overcome if they want to become saints in the video *What is Stopping You from Becoming a Saint?* (Schmitz, 2019c). The three obstacles are the desire for instant gratification, the lack of commitment and the lack of a fighting spirit. In many ways, today's culture encourages instant gratification rather than appreciating the process that is growth. Schmitz then offers positive encouragement as well by saying that the "process is going to involve dryness. It's going to involve distraction. It's going to involve difficulty," but the same process will also "involve joy and consolation" (2019c). The joy will be worth the struggle viewers may face in living according to God's will. However, the second obstacle involves the lack of commitment prevalent in today's society. Without a lack of commitment, Schmitz believes that people are less likely to be willing to give of themselves to God as well as choosing to recommit anytime they fail. Saints became saints by conforming their will to the Father's will, which allowed them to become the best they can be. Schmitz recognizes that viewers might struggle with this idea, but he does not sugarcoat the reality: "To become a saint, it will cost you nothing less than everything (2019c). Saints not only follow God's will, but

they have a fighting spirit that allows them to say yes to God and no to things that may lead them away from God. Satan does not make it easy for followers, but saints succeeded in ultimately overcoming Satan, so other can too. After listing these obstacles, Fr. Mike Schmitz does encourage viewers that they can surrender their lives to God, who offers His heart and grace freely; viewers just have to be willing to do so.

Fr. Mike Schmitz gives his viewers words of positive encouragement, emphasizing *hopefulness*, that they can overcome any obstacles or struggles they may face through the grace and redemption of God. In the video *Mortal vs. Venial Sin*, Schmitz tells his viewers that no one is beyond the reach of God's grace (Schmitz, 2017b) God gives the gift of Confession, which heals a person's relationship with God through forgiveness that God gives freely. If one is struggling with impurity, God's grace can help strengthen them to overcome these obstacles and change their ways as explained in the video *Avoiding Impurity* (Schmitz, 2017a). In the video *Why God Gave Us Bodies*, Schmitz gives the viewers the comforting thought that God sent his Son and gave the Holy Spirit to walk with them and help them stay on the path to God (2018d). This makes the idea of redemption and overcoming obstacles in life seem more feasible than going at it alone. Fr. Mike ends the video by saying the following:

We can't be perfectly healed in this life, but, in this life, there is so much gift of God's grace that we can begin walking and continue to walk every single day with the Theology of the Body, which means to walk every single day, as human beings, redeemed by God's grace. (2018d)

Through God's grace, with the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, anyone can be strong enough to overcome the obstacles present in the world around them in order develop a strong relationship with God and stay on a path to heaven.

Not just offering his viewers the idea of *hopefulness*, Fr. Mike Schmitz also gives an example of a person who demonstrated the ideas of *hopefulness* by overcoming obstacles; Schmitz does this to encourage the viewers that it is more than an idea, and it is, in fact, possible. The video *The Pressure of Public Conversion* covers the conversion to Christianity by the celebrity Kanye West (Schmitz, 2019b). West used to perform songs that glorified a way of life that did not glorify God. However, he wanted to change his life as he started to lean on God more. He changed his mission and changed the type of rap/hip hop music he shared with the masses. Though many on both sides questioned his authenticity and criticized him for changing, West was able to overcome the naysayers and successfully begin his mission to spread the good news with his music. If a famous rapper can successfully change his tune so drastically, then it can be possible for people who might not face the extreme level of objections, criticism and judgement that a famous person will.

Fr. Mike Schmitz uses the dimension of *hopefulness* throughout his videos by encouraging his viewers, especially during times of struggling or suffering. He offers the hope that they can overcome any obstacle so long as they trust in God. He reminds viewers that Jesus has redeemed the world and that God freely offers His grace. With those in mind, viewers can feel confident in their ability to succeed.

Three categories of videos. Fr. Mike Schmitz has fewer eudaimonic dimensions that are present overall than Emily Wilson does in her videos because he uses dimension more in certain video that can be observed base on the three categories I sorted the videos into for analysis: Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, personal and relationship advice, and popular culture. While popular culture videos do not have any prominent dimensions that appear repeatedly, both belief/instructional videos and personal/relationship advice videos saw more instances of select

dimensions in their videos as opposed to instances in other categories. For instance, both *autonomy* and *personal growth* appeared in four of the five personal/relationship videos, which accounted for four of the seven times either of them appeared in all 15 videos. On the other hand, the dimension of *living according to central personal values* appears in four of the five videos under the beliefs/instructional videos category, while accounting for four of the eight times the dimension is used in all 15 videos.

Beliefs/instructional videos. A reason why *living according to personal values* may appear so often in videos that fall under this category is because Fr. Mike Schmitz directly speaks of values that shape the way of life of a practicing Catholic. In the video *Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition*, Schmitz explains the three sources that Catholics derive their beliefs and values from are scripture, sacred traditions and the magisterium (Schmitz, 2019e). While Protestant denominations tend to believe in the idea of *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, Catholics recognize that the Bible alone does not fully reveal God who instead reveals himself through the three aforementioned sources. Schmitz talks about how early Christians did not have a bible to help guide them until what is now known as the magisterium but the book together in various councils in church history, namely the Councils of Rome and Carthage. He proceeds to give an explanation to his viewers why Catholics believe this way and why these values and beliefs shape how practicing Catholics live their lives. In this way, he provides viewers a look at others who *live according to personal values*, which they may be able to see in their own lives.

Another example of Fr. Mike Schmitz using the dimension of *living according to central personal values* when explaining Catholic teachings is in the video *Why God Gave Us Bodies*. In it, Schmitz attempts to summarize St. Pope John Paul II's groundbreaking Theology of the Body in a short YouTube video. Throughout the video, Schmitz informs the viewers how they should

be following Jesus in their everyday lives and learn from his example in how to form a relationship with God and lead a life based around that relationship. Jesus as a man on Earth models how to live according to these shared values that Catholics should have.

A similar sentiment of needing to openly live a life in according to personal values based on Catholic teachings appeared in the video *When Mass Feels Like Going Through the Motions*. Fr. Mike Schmitz talks about the need for the viewers' whole life to reflect their personal values, not just their spiritual life, in order to get most out of spiritual aspects. He explains how viewers may struggle in the following:

If my thoughts in my heart [and] my actions are so far from the Lord when I'm not in prayer or at mass, why do I think that once I've showed up to mass, my heart is going to be rooted, my actions are going to be centered, and my life is going to be...revolving around the Lord. (Schmitz, 2018c)

If viewers do not feel fully present in the mass, Schmitz supposes that they might not be always living their life how they should be when not with God at church. This hurts their relationship with Him which causes them to struggle to find that relationship even when they are in His presence in the mass. Therefore, Schmitz encourages viewers experiencing this to change their lives to go back to following their personal values to limit the dissonance they feel in their spiritual life with their nonspiritual life.

Fr. Mike Schmitz uses his videos to give his viewers something to think about in their personal lives. In the video *Why Catholics Call Mary Their Mother*, he first teaches his viewers about the importance of Mary and how Catholics view her (Schmitz, 2019d). Beyond that, he invites the viewers to evaluate how she is a part of their own personal life. He knowingly addresses his viewers as some may struggle with how Mary fits into their lives, seeing as it is a

common question Catholics get and non-Catholics misunderstand. He asks about their relationship with Mary and how they see her in their own lives. If they realize their relationship with Mary is not where it could be, they can then choose to change how they view her thanks to the information Schmitz provided in the video.

Personal and relationship advice videos. When offering the viewers advice or some kind of insight on living their day-to-day lives, Fr. Mike Schmitz frequently uses the dimensions of *autonomy* and *personal growth*, often in the context of needing to choose to change in order to improve oneself. To Schmitz, everyone is capable of change; the viewers just need to choose to embrace that leading an upstanding life and be willing to change to see the growth in their lives.

In the video *Do You Want to Be Well*, Schmitz talks about the crippled man introduced in chapter 5 of the Gospel of John (Schmitz, 2019a). While the man had been crippled for 38 years, Jesus still asked if he wanted to be well rather than just healing him. This may seem confusing because people would be likely to assume that of course the man would want to be healed and free from the pain. However, Schmitz points out that this state of living is all the man has ever known, so he may be comfortable in what he is used to. He says that “sometimes, we would rather hold on to what we're used to than to allow what's causing us deep pain to be taken away because then we have to change” (2019a). By healing him, Jesus would completely change the man's life, so Jesus wanted to be sure that the man really wanted that. Fr. Mike Schmitz explains that to alive is to change, and to cease to change is to be dead. Therefore, the viewer has to actively make the choice to desire to change in order to grow into their maximum potential.

Choosing to be well is not the only decision Fr. Mike wants his viewers to make; he also invites his viewers to choose joy over happiness. The video *Why Joy is More Christian Than Happiness* explains the difference between joy and happiness, which might have confused the

viewer initially (Schmitz, 2018e). Schmitz explains that while happiness is circumstantial and self-focused, “joy is the aiding and pervasive sense of well-being” (2018e). The difference lies in how the viewers live their lives. Schmitz explains that people tend to chase happiness as if it is something they can achieve, such as “when I get what I want, then I’ll be happy.” However, this can cause a lot of stress and feelings of dissatisfaction as the bar keeps raising every time a person thinks they are close to achieving real happiness. In spite of this desire for happiness, Fr. Mike Schmitz points out that happiness was never guaranteed in the scriptures, but the scriptures do encourage people to rejoice in all circumstances. Even in a time of sorrow or uncertainty, even in the middle of a crisis, one can still feel a sense of joy. Fr. Mike tells viewers they can make the choice of experiencing joy even in hard times because Jesus is always with them. God knows everyone by name and cares about each and every one. Therefore, even in times sadness or stress, people can choose joy by taking comfort in God who loves them and will be there for them through the good times and bad.

The video *The Meaning of Suffering*, extends this topic of struggling by addressing a common question people ask: why do we suffer if God loves us (Wilson, 2017c)? Fr. Mike Schmitz tells the viewers that Jesus came down, not to end suffering but to overcome it and give it meaning. God redeemed the world by Jesus taking on a physical body and conquering death, during which he experienced abandonment, betrayal and loneliness. He has endured all suffering in order to transform it for us. Rather than take away suffering, God invites everyone into the transformative and redemptive part of suffering, as it can inspire change in a person and encourage *personal growth*. Fr. Mike talks about how St. Pope John Paul II taught that the suffering people experience allows them to participate in the redemption of the world, not because Jesus needs it, but because He is extending the dignity and grace; no matter how weak

and powerless one may feel, they are suffering with Jesus to make themselves and the world better.

This idea of betterment that is present in Catholic teachings and Fr. Mike Schmitz's advice videos is why *autonomy* and *personal growth* are two prominently displayed dimensions in these videos. A key element of *personal growth* is the idea of self-actualization. For Catholics, they are fully actualized when they reach sainthood – going to heaven, not necessarily being a canonized saint. Therefore, so long as a Catholic is working to get to heaven, they are experiencing a state of constant *personal growth*. In the video *What is Stopping You from Becoming a Saint?*, Fr. Mike Schmitz tells viewers that anyone can become a saint, but one has to actually choose to become one each and every day (Schmitz, 2019c). A person has to completely surrender their life to God, which almost sounds like a loss of *autonomy*; however, for Catholics, it is a choice they have to choose to make freely and repeatedly. Fr. Mike Schmitz also talks about how becoming a saint is, in fact, a process. *Personal growth* is not instantaneous. A person has to overcome obstacles to grow, and there will be highs and lows along the way, but those can shape a person into their best version and lead them to the road of sainthood.

This strive for sainthood and overcoming obstacles involves avoiding temptation and sin. A common struggle for young men and women is the temptation of impurity, which Fr. Mike Schmitz addresses in the video *Avoiding Impurity*. He starts by saying a lot of couples mention to him that they feel so powerless in the physical aspect of their relationship as they continually struggle to maintain a pure relationship when they know they need to; they question whether they should break up to avoid this sin. Schmitz says they should not feel pressured to end the relationship so long as both agree to work toward changing their relationship to improve it. This is because the two have to choose, both together and individually, to be free from this scene.

They must choose to no longer be a slave to sin and make decisions with courage and boldness. A couple who find that they are likely to sin only at a certain place need to choose to not go to that place to prevent the occasion to sin. To illustrate the idea that it all comes down to the choices a person makes, Schmitz says that “If I’m not willing to do the stuff that I can do, if I’m not willing to say the easy no’s, then I just am not really willing to be free. I don’t really want it badly enough” (Schmitz, 2017a). Just making those smaller choices can ultimately strengthen one’s resolve to make the bigger choices in their lives to avoid sin of all kinds. If one cannot make those small choices, they will be unable to make the bigger ones that free them from sin.

Other dimensions. Though not as prominent as the other dimensions in the 15 videos watched, there were other eudaimonic dimensions present in Fr. Mike Schmitz’s videos.

Meaning in life/sense of purpose. The dimension of finding *meaning in life*/having a *sense of purpose* appears in seven of the videos, most notably in the videos *Why God Gave us Bodies* and *Wonder Woman*. In the former, Schmitz summarizes the key points of Theology of the Body, one of which is the idea that God made each individual out of love and with a purpose: “and you are not an accident, your life has inherent meaning” (2018d). Schmitz explains that because people are made in the image and likeness of God, they are made for love and to love; therefore, what they do with their bodies matters, and they should use their bodies to show real love to those around them. In the video *Wonder Woman*, Schmitz talks about how Diana uses her gifts to show that love and help others (Schmitz, 2017d). Her purpose in life becomes helping others as any hero’s purpose is. She recognized a problem and set out to solve it in any way she could, despite any difficulties she faces along the way because she knew that was what she was meant to do.

Self-acceptance. Perhaps because of the importance of *personal growth* and change as well as the emphasis on relationships, *self-acceptance* only appeared in five videos of the 15 analyzed. Two videos with clear examples of this dimension are *Why Joy is More Christian Than Happiness* and *Do You Want to Be Well. Why Joy*. In the first video, Fr. Mike Schmitz tells his viewers that it is important to feel a sense of joy and well-being instead of striving for an ever-allusive happiness (2018e). In choosing joy, viewers are better able to accept themselves as they are no matter their circumstances, whereas striving for happiness can cause more stress and dissatisfaction with where they are at in their life in the moment. Instead, Schmitz wants his viewers to understand their value they all have. In the video *Do You Want to Be Well*, Schmitz says that “we define ourselves either by our weaknesses or by our wins...by our strength or by our wounds” even though those are traits not who we are (2019a). People are capable of change and growth, which identifying oneself by traits or aspects does not take into account.

Across the 15 videos analyzed, Fr. Mike Schmitz predominately shows the dimension of *relatedness* and the transcendent elicitors of *religiousness* and *hopefulness*. Though the rest of the dimensions appear less often throughout, some dimensions appear more often in certain categories, accounting for their lower number of overall appearances. Personal/relationship advice videos have more instances of both *autonomy* and *personal growth*, and beliefs/instructional videos have more instances of *living life according to central personal values*.

YouTube Comments

While both Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz have eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors present throughout the videos analyzed, those messages need to be understood by their viewers in order for viewers to gain meaning from the video content. YouTube is a platform that allows for an analysis on the opinions of viewers, because viewers

have the ability to comment on the videos directly to the content creators or other viewers. By looking at the comments these viewers make, I can see what elements the viewers are responding to such as the eudaimonic dimensions in the messages or even the influencers themselves.

I will look at the first 15 comments posted under each video analyzed by a unique YouTube account as noted in the methods section; only comments containing 11 words or more will be included to increase the chances of quality commentary. Comments will be excluded if they are solely requests for other video topics from the YouTubers and do not address the video they were posted on; this will help to collect more relevant comments and limited the chances of repeated requests. Replies to comments will not be included as they generally respond more to the original comment rather than the video. By looking at these 450 comments, I will observe what viewers get out of Emily Wilson's and Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos.

Emily Wilson's comment section. The comments left by viewers on Emily Wilson's videos did display the eudaimonic dimensions, some dimensions more than others. *Relatedness* was the most prevalent dimension found in the comments. Viewers even shared personal stories in the comments, showing a higher level of connectedness as a part of the dimension. Although *relatedness* appeared most in comments, each dimension/elicitor was present at least once in the comments analyzed. Some comments had more than one dimension or elicitor present.

Viewers who commented on Emily Wilson's videos primarily responded to her frequent use of *relatedness*. Comments dealing with the eudaimonic dimension of *relatedness* appeared in every video. Some comments focused on a sense of *relatedness* that the viewers felt directly with Emily Wilson and how they liked her as a person. Viewers said that they felt like Wilson cared for them, and she told them what they needed to hear. They appreciated the topics she covered in

her videos and how similar they were to what was happening in their own lives. Examples of *relatedness* in comments can be seen in Table 3.

Dimension	Comment	Video
<i>Relatedness</i>	Alexandrea Derrer: Thank you, being a senior in high school, I sometimes question my own choices to wait. It's things like this that keep me strong and remind me that I can wait and I will. You're such an inspiration Emily!	What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage
	Paul and Morgan: Emily, thanks for making this video. It was real and powerful, and I think people will be able to receive this because of your genuine heart. Like you said, I think it so often comes to down to trust. Do we REALLY trust God with everything? We are almost two years into marriage and we started out on the pill until God convicted us of not trusting Him in this area. Now we're letting Him do His thing in His timing and it feels so good!! Whoop!!	BIRTH CONTROL IN MARRIAGE?
	Anna Zappia Music: I love this video and I needed this. I am nearly 30 and a virgin (I haven't met the right person yet). I'm saving it for marriage. Sometimes I feel lame or weird for not having sex yet, but after seeing this video I feel better. Thankyou ❤️	Was Your Wedding Night Awkward As A Virgin?
	LizziesAnswers: I LOVE your personality soooo much!!!! The direct and intense way you share these questions is SO fun!!	50 MUST-ASK Questions Before Marriage
	Sara Cecelya: I think you did a grand example of voicing the abstract, emotional experiences you have and wisdom on this topic. I think you'll help a lot of girls who need to reflect on what you have to say.	How I Knew My Husband was "THE ONE"
	StarfireToadandAang: If there is a way to be healthily sassy in the holiest way GIRLLL YOU HAVE MASTERED IT	Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!
	Maia Brown: I just want to say thank you for being there for me. I have atheist parents, and since I was called to God, it has been a struggle ever since. Thank you for being the voice in my life that I can't have at home.	Women Battle Pornography, Too.
	Anna Hanson: I absolutely adore your videos because you have practical and empowering advice! It helps me feel more grounded as a Christian young woman. Please keep up the great work!! <3	The INSANITY of the WOMEN'S MARCH

Often, comments on Emily Wilson's videos that demonstrated *relatedness* went beyond simply commenting on Wilson's ability to relate to her viewers with her personality and video topics. Because Wilson is able to relate to her viewers and express a level of caring that the viewers claimed to feel, they respond to her videos with personal stories of their own. These personal stories give more details than a regular comment and share information about a viewer's

life – sometimes information that they may not normally share otherwise. Table 4 shows some comments that clearly tell personal stories of those who posted them.

Dimension	Comment	Video
<i>Relatedness: Personal Stories</i>	Lisha Lana: I lost my virginity when I was 18 years old to a guy that was way older than me and now I'm 19 and even though I knew I only got into a relationship with him because I was very lonely and I just settled for whoever, I gave this guy my body numerous times even when I knew it was wrong. Now that we've broken up, I can say that I'm still in bondage because of the sex we had. I advise everyone to wait until marriage to have sex. The sex I had did not feel like anything and it wasn't pleasurable to me and the relationship lasted for a year but it wasn't real because of our age difference and how I was only allowed to see him at work and talk to him on the phone. We barely hung out; we went on a couple dates. But because i let him take my virginity, I feel like i can't let him go when I know deep down that i should. It's automatic attachment. Please wait until marriage.	What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage
	Katterli Edwards: I also always try to explain to my brothers in Christ that women struggle with lust too. We don't talk about it as much, but one in three CHRISTIAN women struggle with pornography. I love dressing modestly because I care about them and I always ask them to do the same for me. Especially at church camp settings, etc. If I'm wearing a one piece or even a t-shirt in the hot sun, can you at least keep your shirt on? I think we need to start opening this conversation and include men and boys in the modesty talks too.	The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks
	Kaitlyn Thomson: As someone who waited as did my husband, I would never call it awkward either. But my husband and I talked so much before that night about it all he knew what to do when he noticed me getting nervous. The sweet man he stopped what we were doing and prayed with me and for us. Sex was and is so beautiful with my husband.	Was Your Wedding Night Awkward As A Virgin?
	Lauren Hills: I remember being 9 and crying almost every night because I thought God didn't love me because I had been raped by a family member. At the time I didn't really know what rape was, all I knew then was how stomach turning sad I had felt in those moments, to the point where I was crying so hard that I would start gagging. Growing up and hearing most talks regarding abstinence made me feel less than. Like my future husband would be unlucky to have me because I wasn't pure, that I had been tainted. I am now 22 and still trying to work on my past trauma and I just want to say thank you for this video! This video is so so so important.	I'm Sorry for All the Damaging Purity Talks
	sk8rglrteen: I love how much you admire and cherish your husband and I have no doubt that he would say similar things about you if prompted at the drop of a hat. I watch your videos every time you post because your story helps me remember the intention behind my choice to be 28 and single. Never been kissed. Never had a boyfriend. And saving myself for when I am ready to settle down. I have dreams and conviction and desires that I want to come to pass and I believe that I am not ready for them yet. But I press on toward the goal in hopes of becoming ready through the work Christ is doing in my heart	How I Knew My Husband was "THE ONE"

Though *relatedness* was the eudaimonic dimension that appeared the most often, there were examples of other dimensions in the comments as well. The dimensions *meaning in life/sense of purpose* and *competence* each only had one comment that clearly focused on that dimension, and *autonomy* was only the focus of three comments. The others, however, were the focus of six or more comments. Table 5 shows the various ways that the eudaimonic dimensions could be found in Emily Wilson's comment section.

The two transcendent elicitors of *religiousness* and *hopefulness* that were present in Emily Wilson's videos were also present in the comment section. *Religiousness* was only the focus of one comment as the person talks about the Catholic sacrament of marriages itself and not being married in general. *Hopefulness* appeared more frequently than the former, with viewers talking about how they feel that God is always there for them and will heal them. Viewers talk about working towards overcoming and being able to finally overcome their struggles after watching one of Wilson's videos. Other comments with *hopefulness* deal with positive encouragement of others, such as friends and families and other viewers who might need support. Table 6 shows examples of the elicitors in the comment sections.

Table 5		
Dimension	Comment	Video
Meaning in Life/Sense of Purpose	Foremount: Live life with purpose, pursue a relationship with purpose, and find work with purpose	Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!
Self-acceptance	Sophia Tempanaro: I love your perspective of self-love. It inspires me to look at myself differently. I especially liked the part in the video when you stressed that we are so much more than our body image. After a daunting day I know I forget that I have a million more great qualities that make me who I am besides my appearance. Thank you for this uplifting video!!!!	The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show
	LizMargaret: Wow, you made such good points, Emily! Whatever our past or present is, it's NOT our identity/who we are. Identity in Christ first and foremost! Also, I totally agree how sad it is that others try to pressure people to give up values they stand for. Totally have been in that place before.	The Bachelor is a Virgin...we get it.
Autonomy	Mack: As a Catholic teenager, I do not see a lot of women talking about this subject. I really respect how you do not blame or condemn those who have taken another path than you. You really show how important it is to have a servant's heart and share the gospel. Thank you for being such a great role model for me!	What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage
	FearlessAstridHofferson: If the whole Modesty=No Lust thing were true there would be no problem back in the old days where women wore collars to their head and skirts to their ankles. It is a mentality problem. We women are NOT moral gate keepers for men, yes dressing with a bit more modesty can help but men need to work on their mentality on their own too.	The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks
Competence	Taylor Smith: I agree with you that it is important to set boundaries, but I would love to hear your thoughts on what those boundaries should be. No one really talks about that, and the articles or answers I have found are all over the place/provide no clarity at all.	Ask Emily: Setting Boundaries in a Relationship
Personal Growth	Danielle MacMichael: Just came across your videos. As a younger lady I'm struggling with a lot in my life currently. I didn't stay pure but from here on out I'm making the decision to "wait till marriage" again... sounds silly but it's so much better than sleeping around, right? I'm not that type of girl anyways. I struggle with trying to communicate physical boundaries to guys I like/want to date. Especially struggle with sticking to them as well.	Ask Emily: Setting Boundaries in a Relationship
	Jennifer Anaya: after watching this, I realized I was dating a pusher, you opened my eyes in a different way, thank you so much for making this!!	Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!
Living According to Personal Values	RauhlTastic Frandom: I honestly get a lot of crap from guys when they hear I'm saving myself. doesn't change my mind though because if they're going to pressure me then they don't belong in my life. love this video	What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage
	Armed NotTriggered: We always traveled to family or with family, so there was always separate rooms. We never stayed in the same bed either. It could be difficult and one of us (usually him) was stuck on an air mattress on the floor in another room, but we made it work. No regrets.	Ask Emily: How Do You Travel With A BF/GF if You're Living Chastity?
	Grrr Hiss: I think it's really neat you stick to your set of personal principles. The fact you've got morals/boundaries in the first place is highly respectable. It may sound silly as they (morals/boundaries) should be a given, but I tend to find most people I meet don't seem to have many-if any at all.	

Table 6		
Elicitor	Comment	Video
<i>Religiousness</i>	IT'S LITerature: I love how special Catholic weddings are! Life is so sacred, so beautiful, and should be so loved	BIRTH CONTROL IN MARRIAGE?
<i>Hopefulness</i>	CJ Jean: Even the idea that something - anything - is damaged beyond repair goes against what a great healer God is. Whether it was violation, or whether it was making a poor choice and losing your virginity. God is a healer and He's more than capable to completely restoring you.	I'm Sorry for All the Damaging Purity Talks
	Ranger Thompson Music: To anyone who is fighting this battle, I want to reiterate what Emily said in this video. You are never alone; not only are there others going through the same struggle with you, God is always by your side and he is there to help. With his help, this thing can be driven away from you. I know how helpless you feel when the temptation comes. I know how dirty it makes you feel. But please remember, that isn't who you are and you don't have to feel that way anymore. Nothing can stop you from asking for help, whether from your family/friends or from God. You are in my prayers <3	Women Battle Pornography, Too.
	Danielle Roberts: Thank you so much for addressing this. In churches if pornography is even mentioned it's only to men and i have sat next to friends in tears thinking "what about me, who will help me?". I have sent this to some of them in hopes that it will uplift them and encourage them in their struggle.	

While analyzing comments, I noted the presence of a third transcendent elicitor of eudaimonics that was not one of the two that I expected to find when analyzing the videos: *gratitude*. Gratitude is defined as the feeling of thankfulness and appreciation one has in response to something positive in life and/or something that has been done for them (Algoe & Haidt, 2009; Dale et al., 2017). Appearing in a prominent number of comments was this sense of gratitude toward Emily Wilson for making videos that offered advice and encouragement. Viewers thank Wilson for being a role model, especially by showing how young women can live their lives in accordance with Catholic values. They also are thankful that she talks about topics in her videos that are relevant to many young women but do not get talked about enough. Examples of comments that express gratitude can be found in Table 7.

Elicitor	Comment	Video
Gratitude	Sarah M.: ...I appreciate how personal and honest you are. I've been married 10.5 years and we have two kids and it's amazing! You encourage me as a Christian wife and mother. Thank you! 💜	BIRTH CONTROL IN MARRIAGE?
	Maria: Thank you so much for defying society's expectations of being obligated to live and sleep with your partner before marriage. I wish more people would see the true worth in a chaste relationship!!	Ask Emily: How Do You Travel With A BF/GF if You're Living Chastity?
	Katie Evdemon: I prayed to God for an answer last night about this person I'm dating but unofficial with. Your channel came up, and I truly never see any Christian channels in my suggestions. You're such a blessing! Thank you for your honesty and valuable advice Emily 😊🌸	Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!
	Kareen Vargas: Girl. THANK. YOU. I am an ex-porn addict and God used this video to confirm that i should be talking more about how I've been freed, and give hope to those who are caught in it. Thank you for listening to the Holy Spirit <3 people gotta know that freedom is possible!	Women Battle Pornography, Too.
	Madeline Hays: It's so important that you're bringing information like this to us and I can't thank you enough for discussing it, especially since it's hard to make people comprehend the toxicity of the Women's March.	The INSANITY of the WOMEN'S MARCH
	boh 0205: Hi Emily! 🙌 I consider myself more of a silent viewer, but I think I just have to speak out today. I wanted to tell you since forever that you are one of my biggest idols! Your whole personality is so refreshing! I adore your mindset and way of thinking. For younger girls (I'm 17), women/people like you are so important and I am very grateful that I found you. You see i could go on and on...THANK YOU 😊 Pls never stop with the videos 😊 Much love from Germany, Maria ❤️	

The focus on analysis of the videos largely was the presence of eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors. However, there were some common themes in the comments that were discovered to be relevant to the comment analysis as well. Although Emily Wilson's target audience is primarily teenage and young adult women of the Catholic faith, comments showed that Wilson reached viewers beyond that demographic. Across her videos, there were comments from people who identified themselves as non-religious/members of other religious and as male. Comments with viewers who fall outside of Wilson's target audience can be found in Table 8.

Themes	Comment	Video
Non-religious/other religion	TwinkieToes: As a Muslim woman, we are also told that this is the main reason. It makes no sense. Especially when our holy book, the Qur'an, it instructs men first to "Lower your gaze". That tells me that the responsibility is on them first.	The Thing I Couldn't Stand About Modesty Talks
	Camila Gonzalez: I'm an LDS teenager, and though we differ in faith, I've learned so much with you, so thank you!!	Ask Emily: Setting Boundaries in a Relationship
	Dani Perez: I'm not a Christian, but I really enjoy your channel and appreciate your non-judgement. Thanks for making content that is accessible to people from all walks of life.	Ask Emily: How Do You Travel With A BF/GF if You're Living Chastity?
	Amy Dassi: You are by far the most respectful, empathetic, kind, understanding Christian I have ever come across on YouTube. I'm an atheist who watches your videos because I find them to still be something I can learn from and you speak about things that I can still apply to my own life. I really appreciate your videos and love what you do :)	The Bachelor is a Virgin...we get it.
Male Viewers	Grant Olson: I'm a guy entering college next year and have chosen to save myself for marriage. I know the pressures are going to be at an all-time high next year but this video gave me reassurance that others are doing the same. Thank you!	What No One is Saying About Saving Yourself for Marriage
	Tim Fevens: As a father of a young daughter. Thank you for posting this video. My daughter is almost 13 and this will be an issue she will need to deal with. My wife and I have already talked with her but I think this video will really help it hit home coming from another person outside of the family.	
	Tyler Valedon: Ka-PEEESH. This is good to know as a guy to see what a woman is thinking and how to really make your girlfriend, for me, happy.	Dating Red Flags: 3 Types of Guys to Stay Far Away From!

Overall, much like in her videos, the comments on Emily Wilson's videos primarily demonstrate the dimension of *relatedness*, although all dimensions can be found at least once in her comment section. Unexpectedly, *gratitude*, another elicitor that was not discovered in Emily Wilson's videos was found to be prevalent in the comments of viewers. Many viewers expressed a sense of gratitude to Wilson for various reasons. The comment analysis also revealed that Wilson does reach past her target audience as evident by viewers of different sex and religious identity. A common style of comments on Wilson's videos that goes beyond eudaimonic dimensions is that viewers tend to quote her videos and react to them in their own comments on Wilson's videos.

Fr. Mike Schmitz's comment section. The comments on Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos also were analyzed for the eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors. *Relatedness*, again, appeared most often in the comments, and viewers shared personal stories in their comments on Schmitz's videos. All other dimensions appeared at least once, with the exception of *self-acceptance*. Comments could demonstrate multiple dimensions, but most had a focus on one or two dimensions.

Many of the comments analyzed displayed the dimension of *relatedness*. Viewers commented how they felt connected with Fr. Mike and appreciated his personality and the way he delivered the information. Those who commented often claimed the video they watched was what they needed to hear and came into their lives at the right time. Not only did they feel connected with Schmitz, but the videos also made them feel connected to God as well.

Relatedness can be seen in the comments listed in Table 9.

Dimension	Comment	Video
<i>Relatedness</i>	James Ceniza: Thank you father, 🥺🥺 i just realize that God will still love you and give you grace even if you turn your back to him doing mortal sin 😞 GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST!!!!	Mortal vs. Venial Sin
	Emily Faithe: This video was made for me, this day, this minute. Thank you for your kindness and wisdom, Fr. Mike. You have blessed me greatly today.	Do You Want to Be Well?
	Catholics Living Fearlessly: I absolutely love these videos and they come at the times i need them most! The Holy Spirit is truly working through you!	Why Joy Is More Christian Than Happiness
	Ruff Pop: Perfect timing! I was about to fall right back into the cycle but this video notification saved me! Thanks for the tips and I hope to break the addiction for good!	Avoiding Impurity
	rachel Hutchinson: Fr Mike is the master of being brutally honest and super sweet at the same time.	
	Marco Ferreira: This is so true and is getting truer and truer with the passage of time, we just don't know how to have relationships anymore, real relationships. I wish someone could reteach us the script to dating and to non-romantic relationships, so we'd know what to do. Thank you, Father Mike for all your words of wisdom! They are truly appreciated.	The Culture of Netflix & Chill
	Maria I: Through the Grace of God I believe you will help bring my brother to the faith with these videos. Thank you, Fr Mike, for being so relatable. God bless you, Maria	Wonder Woman
	gregory damon: Fr. Mike. I find your commentaries exceptional. It's like you're my best friend I've never met :-)	

Similar to Emily Wilson, Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos had comments containing personal stories of the viewers. Viewers responded to the sense of *relatedness* they claimed to feel and shared a piece of their lives in the comment section for anyone to see. These stories contained more details and a greater level of *relatedness* than the examples in Table 9. They ranged from fun stories of everyday life to stories that were slightly more personal. Table 10 contains a sample of the different types of personal stories that were shared in the comment section of Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos.

Relatedness may have been the most commonly seen dimension in the comments on Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos, but the other dimensions could also be found throughout the comments; the only dimension that did not appear clearly in any comment was *self-acceptance*, possibly because many of the comments dealt with *personal growth* and improvement. The dimension *meaning in life/sense of purpose* only had one instance, and *competence* had three instances; the rest of the eudaimonic dimensions – *autonomy*, *personal growth* and *living according to central personal values* – all appeared at least eight times in the comments. Examples of the various ways that viewers used the five dimensions in their posts in the comment section can be seen in Table 11.

Dimension	Comment	Video
<i>Relatedness:</i> Personal Stories	Philothea Rachel: wow. I can't stop crying ryt now but I need to post this though I've NEVER posted on a public forum. for a long time now I've been going so far away from god and the farther i went the more difficult it was to even approach him. It was so hard to lose my best friend and my father and my rock. today I take my phone to text someone to ask for prayers and I actually type out Is there a point of no return with sin? but I couldn't send it cuz I knew the theoretical answer. but it's so difficult to believe that when u feel like filth. I try to pray and on failing I come on YouTube on an impulse and i find this. Your grace can still find me where I am! I can't thank u enough fr. Mike. love from India.	Mortal vs. Venial Sin
	misstropicanna14: Not to mention I'm 32 years old and was diagnosed with fibromyalgia almost 10 years ago. I lost my house, my job, my body, my lifestyle, even my friends when I got sick. I FULLY understand the paradox of comfortability in all you know even though it's a crippling terrible thing. It would be such a blessing but also terrifying if one day I woke up without so much as a headache. This is such a beautiful message. Sharing with all my fibro warriors on Facebook who NEED to hear this.	Do You Want to Be Well?
	Andrew Vallot: Haven't even watched the video yet, because I like to close my eyes and really listen to it but anyway! I go to a completely secular public university in southern Louisiana. As I was sitting with about 10 or 15 other people waiting for the professor to come and for class to start, the silence breaks with, " Hi my name is Father Mike Schmitz and this is Ascension Presents!" I was so moved and excited to realize that someone else watches these videos and other works by Father Mike! I think that is a good indication of his effectiveness! Thank you, Father!!	Avoiding Impurity
	Gavin Bonar: My girlfriend and I had this same exact conversation the other day. It led to us just talking about who we are as people and what we wanted in our futures instead of going down a path of impurity. Thanks for your words and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through you so vividly! Always inspiring!	
	Joyce the Trucker: Father Mike, thank you for this explanation. I'm 47 years old, have been married for just under two years, and have always wanted to have children. I'm finally realizing that Robert and I may never be parents, but I have also realized that there are so many children in my life now! I still weep sometimes from not having children, but lately I've found myself also weeping with thankfulness for the children of my friends, family members, neighbors, and CCD kids. I think there is a Bible verse about the barren woman having more children than women who have born children. I'm beginning to understand a deeper meaning of this. I still hurt deeply, but now that I see this, I have a greater appreciation for the children around me. Thank you for this video!	The Meaning of Suffering

Table 11		
Dimension	Comment	Video
Meaning in Life/Sense of Purpose	Chris Harris: Thank you so very much! Really has helped to discern the meaning and purpose of life. The second-best video ever after "The Sign of the Cross."	Why God Gave Us Bodies
Autonomy	Helina Michael: We are all called to be a saint but not all of us want to be one. Sainthood is worth the fight!	What is Stopping You from Becoming a Saint?
	Jess D: ...I also love the point about how saints have the courage to say yes to God's grace - I forget that this is something we have to say yes to! I usually think of saying yes to God as being entirely works-based, and usually in an apprehensive light of what it might cost... but that is not all we say yes to! :)	
	ppoisounous: This is so good Father Mike! You are right... I can do more to avoid sin.	Avoiding Impurity
Competence	Coffe addicted Lunatic: I'm a catholic convert. my entire life my friends and trained to fight. We are shooters we carry guns and we train on that as well as hand to hand. However, training and competing are very different. I'm of the opinion that fights like that should be only be for training not entertainment or sport. Just my 2 cents on it. God bless and I love these videos	Why Watching MMA Strips Human Dignity
Personal Growth	DabL0rd Duli: Wow this came out at the perfect time of my life. I've been in a relationship where I've been using a girl just for my own pleasure. I do that as well as looking at porn. I want to change and respect god as well as myself. Brothers and sisters please pray for me tonight ask Jesus to help me walk with him right	Why God Gave Us Bodies
	JuanPabloOrozcoMusic: Totally sweet! I remember the first time I heard a talk on the TOB, in Houston by Christopher West. I was heartbreaking, and life transforming. It resonated in my heart like all good Truth does. Now, I appreciated even more as I prepare to be a priest in seminary.	
	Knight of the King: I drank on and off for 10 years, I don't drink anymore. On Saint Patrick's Day this year I became quite intoxicated, so much so that I was already vomiting in the men's room well before the night was over. I realized then that I needed to stop before it became a serious problem. I have since abstained from drink, and it is one of the best decisions I've ever made, that and returning to the Catholic faith after 12 years of being lapsed and reaccepted Jesus Christ into my life ❤️😊🙏🏻✝️VA	Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking
Living According to Personal Values	Matt Buller: I have been trying to avoid looking at Porn. Not easy to do. Every time I do it, I feel guilty, and feel like God hates what I did. I am a single man, so you probably get this sin from a lot of guys. I am trying to break the cycle, but it is very difficult.	Mortal vs. Venial Sin
	OwenReal G: Well said father Mike, I cannot agree with you more. I'm only 15 and I wish I could experience more in life and not just see it on my phone. Thank you, thank you because you have inspired me to get out and just live more in the outside world as young as I am.	The Culture of Netflix & Chill
	Angela Taylor: My rule of thumb re. what I watch is would Christ be comfortable sitting beside me watching this? Simple!	Why Watching MMA Strips Human Dignity

Comments were also analyzed for the transcendent elicitors of *religiousness* and *hopefulness*. While there were a few instances of *religiousness*, there were many instances of *hopefulness*. *Religiousness* could be seen when viewers talked about the sacraments and Church traditions. *Hopefulness* was mentioned by the viewers when they expressed the desire to overcome obstacles after watching one of Fr. Mike Schmitz's video or talking about how they have overcome obstacles in their life. Viewers also mentioned how God provided a sense of hope when they remembered the love, grace and forgiveness offered to them. Table 12 contains a few examples of how the elicitors appeared in the comment section on Schmitz's videos.

Elicitor	Comment	Video
<i>Religiousness</i>	Robert: Bottom line... Sacred Scriptures comes from TRADITION. Sacred Scripture did not even exist in the form we have today until the 4th century. But the Church existed from year 1. So for 400 years the Church was guided by TRADITION, not scripture. And it is this TRADITION that was used to inform the Catholic Church as to which writings would be considered the word of God and thus Sacred Scripture.	Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition
	Jesse Velasquez: Absolutely, the Eucharist is such an immense blessing. Can't live without it. You know I have heard Joel Osteen and Joyce Meyers speak, and I enjoy hearing them speak, however, when it comes to really feeling our Lords presence, peace, comfort and closeness, I only feel that in the Catholic Church with the Eucharist. Praise God Almighty...	Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking
<i>Hopefulness</i>	Lininomartino: I heard a preacher say "you can't outsin God's grace." I like that saying a lot, and it keeps the door to God open to me. (I'm not Catholic but I learn a lot from Fr. Mike and his talks.)	Mortal vs. Venial Sin
	Josh Bowman: I've been struggling with lust recently so this really spoke to me. It's easy to say you want to change but actually allowing Him to change your life is so hard. Especially when it comes to such addictions as mine. I like to think of it as pushing a boulder. God will help you, but He won't push the boulder for you. You still have to put in the effort and struggle to change.	Do You Want to Be Well?
	IVORY123100: I feel The Lord led me here. Such a joyous priest that through him offers hope and understanding ... I cried last night	The Meaning of Suffering

Just like in the comments on Emily Wilson’s videos, Fr. Mike Schmitz also had a large number of comments that contained the transcendent elicitor of gratitude. Viewers expressed how appreciative they were of his videos for giving them information on their faith. They mentioned that they learned ideas from Schmitz that they had never been taught or been able to understand before. Some even thanked Schmitz for either bringing them back to the faith or convincing them to convert to Roman Catholicism. Viewers offered thanks to Schmitz for providing comfort in his videos by assuring them of God’s love and forgiveness. Some of the different ways that viewers expressed gratitude can be seen in Table 13.

Elicitor	Comment	Video
Gratitude	Raul Nunez: Apologetics is key for us the youth now a days to learn so that we can have strong roots in our faith! Thank you, father, we need more videos like this.	Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition
	Ka Mi: Father, the teachings of the Church are so extensive and it can easily be daunting sometimes. You always offer guidance and direction to walk through all of this. Thank you so much.	Why God Gave Us Bodies
	Gillian Pedersen: Father Mike has led me back to the Church and has saved me so many times. Thank you, father	What is Stopping You from Becoming a Saint?
	Rebecca Scherrer: I hardly ever make comments anywhere on the Internet, but I wanted to thank you, Father, for making your wonderful videos. I'm a chaplain and I feel comforted and inspired by your messages and look forward to watching every week, after long, emotionally draining days. Many of my patients wonder if they are suffering because God actually favors them/or testing their faith; or, if their suffering is caused by Satan trying to draw them away from God by wreaking havoc in their lives. I hope you would consider making a video on this topic, I'd love to hear your viewpoint :-).	
	Tori: Thank you for this video, Father. I've been struggling with depressive feelings, self-injury, and borderline suicidal thoughts off and on for the past four or five years, and it gives me a lot of hope to think of being united with Jesus and to offer up these sufferings to Him. Happy Lent and God bless!	The Meaning of Suffering
	Brigadier Beefcake: Another awesome video, father! You are the reason I've converted to Catholicism. I've never been happier, thank you father you've changed my life!	Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking

While analyzing the comments for the eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors, some themes emerged that were similar to that of Emily Wilson. Fr. Mike Schmitz has a more general audience than Emily Wilson does. The comments, though, revealed just how broad the demographic makeup of his audience may be. Schmitz might primarily target Catholics, but he attracts viewers who identify with different religions or identify as not religious. His viewers also vary greatly in age in the comments, from adolescents to older adults. Examples of comments revealing the differences in the demographics of viewers can be seen in Table 14.

Other Themes	Comment	Video
Non-religious/other religion	Seyi Bammeke: You have a gift Fr Mike. I'm dating a Catholic. And I always have all these questions that she can't answer and you always explain them in a way that is easy to understand without making protestants feel defensive. I'm quietly considering converting, I would greatly appreciate more videos in the subject. For example. Does it really matter whether we're Catholic or Protestant in terms of our salvation? Keep up the great work. God bless you and keep giving you wisdom!	Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition
	Alix Germana: I am not religious at all, but there is something about Mary I find very intriguing, I just can't figure out what it is	Why Catholics Call Mary Their Mother
	Omar Allwazzani: I'm Muslim but I'm subbed cause Fr. Mike has so much to say that is so relevant to everyone, regardless of religion. Peace to everyone on this comment page.	The Culture of Netflix & Chill
	Austin Tyler: Here's a Mormon who absolutely loves your videos! Thank you and keep up the good work!	Wonder Woman
Different Ages	Teresa Baker-Carl: I played one of you videos for my granddaughter, 19, and all she could say was "wow! He's good-looking!" I really hope that's not all she got out of it.	Why Catholics Use Scripture and Tradition
	Jake Jenrich: Hi Fr. Mike! This is a 7th grade class from Chicago. Our awesome teacher shows us your videos during our religion class. We would like to thank you for all the lessons you have taught us. Your videos inspire us to become better Catholics. This video specifically spoke to us on how to accept change. We do want to be made well. God Bless.	Do You Want to Be Well?
	RealGianella Cerriteno: Love this video!! As a young woman in my 20's this is a perfect reminder that saying no, is being courageous :)	Avoiding Impurity
	Robert Sparkes: I've been sober for 31 years now and my Faith couldn't be stronger. Praise the Lord!	Catholics, Alcohol, and Drinking

Throughout the comments on Fr. Mike Schmitz's videos, the eudaimonic dimension of *relatedness* is the most prominent as well as the transcendent elicitor of gratitude. Viewers

expressed how they connected to Schmitz, to the topic of the video or with God. Sometimes they connected on a level that allowed them to share more detailed personal stories. The dimensions of *autonomy*, *personal growth* and *living according to central personal values* as well as the transcendent elicitor of *hopefulness* also appeared often in the comment section. There was a lack of the dimensions *meaning in life/sense of purpose* and *competence*, and *self-acceptance* did not appear clearly at all in the comments. The comments did show how broad Fr. Mike Schmitz's audience might be beyond that of young Catholics. There was also a common style of comments that appeared in his comment section similar to that in Emily Wilson's: viewers could be seen commenting quotes from other prominent Catholic figures, Catholic works or Fr. Mike Schmitz from his own videos.

Discussion

After analyzing 30 videos from Catholic YouTube influencers Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz as well as 450 comments posted by viewers under the videos, I am better able to answer my two research questions: how do the two influencers demonstrate the eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors in their videos, and do their viewers pick up on those dimensions? Based on those findings, especially the reactions of viewers, and past research on eudaimonics and YouTube, I can begin to infer how using eudaimonics in videos may affect the young Catholic population that has been leaving the Church.

Usage of Dimensions and Elicitors

Both Catholic YouTube influencers Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz use the seven eudaimonic dimensions and two transcendent elicitors in the videos analyzed. The eudaimonic dimensions refer to a sense of well-being people feel when exposed to certain messages (Ryff & Singer, 2006, 2008; Wirth, Hofer & Schramm, 2012), while the transcendent elicitors reveal a

trait that is “associated with striving for and connecting with purpose and meaning greater than ourselves” (Dale et al., p. 898). Though there were differences in how they used the dimensions and elicitors and which ones they focused on, one similarity emerged: both used the dimension of *relatedness* predominately in their videos. Emily Wilson talks *with* her viewers, and Fr. Mike talks *to* his viewers, but neither of them talk *at* their viewers.

The prominence of relatedness. *Relatedness* was the most pronounced dimension across Emily Wilson’s and Fr. Mike Schmitz’s videos, something that is not entirely surprising given that they are Catholic YouTube influencers. *Relatedness* is the need people have to feel connected to others and cared for by them (Ryan, Huta & Deci, 2008). Viewers may experience this feeling when they have a sense of likeness or relatability to a character they see on screen or play as in a game (Wirth, Hofer & Schramm, 2012). Young viewers often see YouTubers as their peers and feel they are relatable (Pérez-Torres et al., 2018), so it is understandable that successful YouTubers would emphasize a sense of *relatedness* with their viewers to encourage that relationship. Wilson and Schmitz have become celebrities in their own right in the Catholic community. They have become some of the most popular speakers at young adult Catholic conferences such as SEEK and SLS, with hundreds of young adults lining up to attend their talks.

Each of Wilson’s videos contained *relatedness* in some form because she is able to connect to her target audience. She is a young woman that viewers can see navigate relationships and encounter the same experiences they have. Viewers and other young women whom she encounters when speaking across the country ask her questions about living her faith, and she brings those topics to a broader audience. She is open and honest and seems authentic in her videos. The young women watching her videos can feel as though they are having a conversation

with the YouTuber about something they are going through. She acknowledges their struggles and reminds them they do not have to face them alone. Wilson's use of *relatedness* allows for viewers to feel a sense of connectedness and that someone does care for them, a basic need that humans have. As *relatedness* has been seen to enjoyment and a likelihood to engage in the media again (Ryan, Rigby & Przybylski, 2006), viewers may be encouraged to watch more of Wilson's videos and keep hearing her message.

Fr. Mike Schmitz also demonstrates *relatedness* frequently in his videos but in a different way than Wilson. Schmitz is a priest, which most of his viewers may not be able to relate to and will never be able to relate to because it is a vocation only few men and no women are called to. However, perhaps being a chaplain on a college campus has helped him connect to his viewers through the use of popular culture references and small personal stories woven through his lessons. His videos feel like a homily at mass with their instructional messages, but the *relatedness* allows viewers to see the man behind the Roman collar and pulpit. His popular culture references are not just from his time, but he talks about contemporary popular culture and uses references as analogies and examples. He uses personal stories that viewers can see similarities to in their own lives, so they can see he understands where they are coming from when asking questions.

Both YouTubers also use *relatedness* to connect viewers to each other. Though establishing a sense of *relatedness* with Wilson and Schmitz is important to encourage viewers to take in their message and keep coming back, it is important to see that type of connectedness in their videos because it is what young Catholics have been asking for (McCarty, 2018). Young Catholics have expressed a need to feel a sense of community and connection with their church to stay with their faith as they get older. Wilson and Schmitz offer their viewers that by

reminding them that they are not alone in their experiences and struggles; Catholics should support each other, care for each other, pray for each other and encourage each other in life. If viewers hear that from two prominent influencers who they feel a sense of *relatedness* to, they may be encouraged to do the same.

Though Fr. Mike Schmitz talks about it more (being a priest working with a Catholic media organization), both YouTubers also remind their viewers that they can share in a relationship with God, who exemplifies the ultimate ideal of relatedness. He loves and cares for everyone, and no one is beyond His grace and forgiveness. As seen in the comments, young Catholics can forget that connection as they commit acts that go against their faith. They think it is too late for them now, so why change; however, Schmitz and Wilson remind their viewers the God will always love them, and they can always choose to come back to Him.

Audience and overall message shapes dimension usage. The other dimensions appear in varying amounts across the two channels and the different categories of videos. Emily Wilson is a prime example of a Catholic YouTube influencer and vlogger. She knows who her target audience is: young Catholic and Christian women who come to her mostly for personal and relationship advice. This focus causes her videos to primarily emphasize the dimensions of *relatedness, autonomy, competence, and living life according to central personal values*. She speaks of choosing to live chastely and modestly in her life and gives her viewers an example of how both can be achieved successfully, even if their peers judge them negatively for their choice. It is a choice her viewers can make and have to be willing to carry out. Just as with relatedness, encountering these dimensions can increase a consumer's enjoyment and encourage them to engage with the media again (Ryan, Rigby & Przybylski, 2006). Viewers seeing her live her life *according to her personal values* that relate to their own can activate their own good core values

and inspire them to live a similar lifestyle (Oliver & Hartmann, 2010). She also uses the transcendent elicitor of *hopefulness* and the dimension of *personal growth* to encourage her viewers that they can change how they live if they want; they are not defined by their past decisions, and their worth cannot be changed (*self-acceptance*). Wilson can become a role model to young Catholic women who hope to follow in her footsteps in how she lives her life based on Catholic teaching, and she can inspire change in young women who might see her example and want to follow the new path.

Fr. Mike Schmitz has a broader audience and covers more topics in his videos to meet the needs of that audience. This changes the frequency of dimensions he uses across his videos, which can be seen clearly in the three categories the videos were sorted in for analysis (Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, personal and relationship advice, and popular culture). In beliefs/instructional videos, Schmitz frequently uses *autonomy* and *personal growth* because he wants his viewers to know that they have the power to choose to trust in God and to change their lives. Acknowledging that ability to make personal decisions is important to these young Catholics who grew up often practicing their faith out of obligation to their parents (McCarty & Vitek, 2018). Now, they have the ability to choose what they want to practice or believe in. If a friendly priest is teaching them about their faith on a social media site and uses rationality and popular culture references, they might be encouraged to choose their faith again. In the Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, Schmitz helps his viewers make a more informed decision by explaining Church teachings and traditions – a level of instruction on beliefs that viewers might not have had before. He uses the dimension of *living according to central personal values* as he speaks on how practicing Catholics should live their lives. As he answers questions about the faith, he emphasizes the purpose of finding meaning in what viewers do and in what Catholics

believe. This might serve to answer the questions many young Catholics are asking about why choose the Catholic faith and what meaning does it provide (McCarty & Vitek, 2018). If young Catholics have never heard the information that Fr. Mike Schmitz explains, they might not have a reason for believing in a Catholic belief or tradition or practicing the Catholic faith anymore. By Schmitz providing reasons and explanations, he can give that meaning that some viewers might need.

YouTube Comments

The interactive format of YouTube allows for a better understanding of how the audience receives the message, rather than just assuming based solely on supposition and previous research. Looking at the comments that viewers left on the analyzed videos, the viewers did pick up on the dimensions used by the YouTubers in their videos. Each dimension or elicitor was mentioned at least once in the comments, and the frequency of the dimension or elicitor mentioned often mirrored the frequency they were used by Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz. There was a prominence of *relatedness* in the comments like in the videos, but there was also an emergence of an elicitor that was not found in the videos: gratitude. Comments also gave insight to the impact the influencers might have beyond the young adults.

Strong sense of relatedness with YouTube influencer. The viewers mostly displayed the dimensions of relatedness in their comments, supporting the idea that viewers were connecting with Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz on how they presented themselves and their messages. Viewers appreciated their open and honest personalities and admitted to feeling close to and cared for by the YouTubers that they watch, showing how important it is to use the dimension of *relatedness* in videos. They felt comfortable enough with these influencers that they opened up in the comments sections as well, telling personal stories they might not share

otherwise. Though Emily Wilson's greater sense of relatedness with her audience resulted in deeper, more personal stories, Fr. Mike Schmitz also had detailed, personal stories from his viewers as well. That viewers were willing to share their own personal stories shows that they believe that their experiences matter enough that they can tell the influencer and others online. That connectedness made them feel as though they are a part of a conversation in the faith in a way they did not before (McCarty, 2018). The influencers' personalities and the way that they talk about the topics in their videos encourage viewers not only to watch and subscribe to their videos, but viewers mention how they have been inspired to change their lives just from watching videos from YouTubers they like.

Emergence of gratitude. In the analysis for YouTube videos, only the seven dimensions and two of the four transcendent elicitors were expected to be demonstrated and subsequently found. However, in the comment sections of both Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz, the transcendent elicitor of *gratitude* was one of the most frequently used dimension/elicitor, only second to *relatedness*. Transcendent elicitors appeared in past research as viewers seeing them in videos, which in turn, encourages them to feel the same (Oliver et al., 2018); for example, seeing Emily Wilson talking about overcoming obstacles (*hopefulness*) inspires a viewer to feel their own sense of hopefulness. However, in the comment section, viewers were expressing the elicitor of gratitude without seeing Wilson or Schmitz express gratitude themselves. Many viewers voiced how grateful they were for Wilson and for Schmitz, often for putting out a video on a topic in a time they really needed to hear it. This sense of gratitude was often linked to thoughts and behaviors in the viewers' lives. Viewers thanked Emily for being a role model and making videos on topics they needed to hear about but are not often discussed in Catholic circles. Some young women said they were inspired to leave their unhealthy relationships, encouraged to

stick to their decision to save themselves for marriage, or moved to change how they were living their lives to instead reflect their faith and values more. Viewers thanked Schmitz for his instruction and reframing their faith for them. Some viewers commented that watching Schmitz's videos brought them back to the faith or gave them reason to convert to Catholicism, which may be an ultimate achievement for a Catholic YouTube influencer in a time where so many young adults are leaving the faith.

This finding differs from past research in that *gratitude* was not necessary in the video to elicit a sense of gratitude in the viewer. Though the comment section in this analysis revealed that seeing *hopefulness* and *religiousness* begets feelings of *hopefulness* and *religiousness* in the viewers respectively, the same is not necessary for viewers to feel a sense of *gratitude*. These feelings of *gratitude* might stem from that strong sense of relatedness that commenters felt with the YouTubers as they often are thanking them for personal reasons such as inspiring a change, caring for them, teaching them, bringing them back to the faith, etc. *Gratitude*, therefore, plays into the sense of connectedness and community as viewers are grateful for this connection they feel with the influencers and others in the Catholic faith and they express gratitude for the knowledge they gained from and changes inspired by these videos.

An audience beyond young Catholics. Because the primary focus of this research was on Catholic young adults, YouTubers popular with the Catholic young adult community were chosen. The comments revealed, however, that both Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz reach and connect with viewers who do not fall into those categories. Wilson's comment section saw young women who were members of other faiths or no faith at all; she also connected with young men as well despite her intended audience being female. Schmitz had viewers of other faiths as well as those with no faith, and he had viewers of all ages comment on his videos. Their

messages connect with people beyond young Catholics, teaching them Catholic beliefs and traditions and showing them how practicing Catholics live their lives. Comments revealed that the influencers' personalities, other forms of *relatedness*, and other dimensions keep those who identify as members of other religious or not religious coming back to the channel even though they are not Catholic. Fr. Mike even was a major reason for some saying they were converting to Catholicism from other religions. Not only can Wilson and Schmitz use the YouTube platform to encourage and teach Catholic young adults, but people of all ages and faiths.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to see how two Catholic YouTube influencers, Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz, used eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors in their videos and whether their viewers were able to pick up on those dimensions and elicitors. Eudaimonia is happiness beyond a hedonistic pleasure that is instead routed in virtue (Aristotle, 350 B.C./1985) and a sense of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Eudaimonics has since been applied to research on media enjoyment as people can enjoy media that does not make them feel a hedonistic sense of pleasure (Oliver & Bartsch, 2010). Instead, eudaimonic media often causes viewers to experience feelings of meaning, insight and introspect as well as cause viewers to feel compassion and think beyond themselves (Oliver et al., 2017).

In America today, Catholic young adults are leaving the Church in great numbers, with only 16 percent of millennials identifying as Catholic still (Lipka, 2015). Though there are many contributing factors for why an individual may choose to leave the faith they were raised in, the main reasons given by many young Catholics may be surprising. It is not the sexual abuse scandals of the Church nor Catholic teachings causing them to leave; rather, they are leaving because they have lost a sense of meaning in their faith (McCarty and Vitek, 2018). No longer is

it enough for their parents to bring them to mass every Sunday. They need a deeper meaning for being Catholic and a supportive community that they feel engaged with (McCarty, 2018). If they cannot find that meaning in the Catholic faith, they will leave to seek it elsewhere.

As eudaimonic media has been linked to a sense of well-being, enjoyment and especially meaning, its utilization by prominent Catholic media figures may be another way to reach out to those young Catholics before they leave or encourage them back to the flock of followers. The Catholic Church has used media since the 20th century to reach the masses with the teachings of the faith as seen with Bishop Fulton Sheen and Mother Angelica, two notable figures in the history of Catholic media. Now in the 21st century with the advent of new media platforms, it is important for Catholic media figures to be present on those newer platforms, considering Catholic college students reported they were more likely to seek new media sources, such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, for information on the faith (Nduka & McGuire, 2017).

YouTube is one of the leading social media platforms, with its own kind of participatory culture (Chau, 2010). Young viewers have reported feeling as though YouTubers are their peers and are influenced by their videos (Pérez-Torres et al., 2018). YouTubers can, therefore, become role models to those who watch them (Mahrt & Bock, 2017), and they can experience a sort of celebrification to the point of becoming influencers (Gamson, 2011). This extends to popular Catholic YouTubers as well, such as Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz, who have become YouTube influencers in their own right in the Catholic world. This platform gives the two Catholic figures the ability to connect with their viewers and use the media to share messages with eudaimonic meaning to a large audience.

Thirty videos were analyzed between the two Catholic YouTube influencers, looking for the following eudaimonic dimensions and transcendent elicitors: *meaning in life/sense of*

purpose, self-acceptance, autonomy, competence, relatedness, personal growth, living according to central personal values, hopefulness and religiousness. Videos were sorted into three categories based on the common topics both influencers covered on their channel: Catholic beliefs/instructional videos, personal and relationship advice, and popular culture. The analysis revealed that each dimension and elicitor appeared in at least 10 videos of the 30 videos. The two influencers differed in overall content and audience, which caused them to use different dimensions at with varying frequency; however, both of them showed a high amount of *relatedness* across the three categories of videos, likely due to the very nature of being influencers on YouTube. Emily Wilson also emphasized *autonomy, competence* and *living according to central personal values*, while Fr. Mike Schmitz also emphasized *hopefulness* as well as, in two different categories, *autonomy, personal growth* and *living according to central personal values*.

Just seeing how Wilson and Schmitz use the dimensions and elicitors in their videos is not enough to understand the potential impact of their usage. The interactivity of YouTube with the ability of viewers to comment on videos gives an idea of what viewers are getting out of the YouTube video they just watched. Fifteen comments under each of the 30 videos were selected, totaling 450 comments for analysis. Again, each of the dimensions and elicitors were present in the comments on the videos, with a strong prominence of *relatedness*. Also found in the comment section that was not present in the analysis of videos was a third transcendent elicitor of *gratitude*. Viewers did not just feel connected to the influencer, but they felt appreciative of them, the videos they made and how they influenced the viewers.

Overall, Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz used the seven eudaimonic elicitors and two transcendent elicitors in their videos. Their viewers picked up on those messages and thanked the

two for caring for them, inspiring them, encouraging them and giving them a new meaning or something to think about. YouTube as a media platform may be a way to provide young Catholics meaning back to their faith to encourage them to stay in their faith or come back to it; it can even provide meaning to those not in the Catholic faith and lead to a better understanding of Catholic faith and even conversion to it as seen in some comments.

Catholic media could learn from the examples of these two YouTube influencers. The eudaimonic messages seen in these videos are resonating with viewers to a certain extent based on the videos' comment sections. Establishing *relatedness* is important to the viewers and can help inspire change in their lives. They feel grateful for the connection they feel with the influencers and for the information that the two influencers share. If there is something that could be improved on in terms of dimension usage, it may be a greater representation of all seven dimensions of eudaimonics. The dimensions *meaning in life/sense of purpose* and *self-acceptance* were less commonly displayed in the videos of both YouTubers as compared to the other dimensions. This might have happened because Schmitz focuses a lot on *personal growth* and *hopefulness* in his videos, while Emily Wilson talks often about relationships, which at least *self-acceptance* would not be a featured dimension with that topic. However, when the dimensions did appear in the videos, viewers did respond to them in the comments. It is important to remind people of their inherent worth and value even when encouraging them to grow or talking about their relationship with others. Also, if a reason Catholic young adults claimed to be leaving the faith was because they were looking for a greater meaning, *meaning of life/sense of purpose* should be woven more often throughout the videos; the influencers could have encouraged viewers to search for their meaning in life and show them how the Catholic faith can provide them with a full sense of meaning and well-being.

Limitations. There are a few limitations to this study dealing with the sample size and personal bias. In terms of sampling, the videos chosen for analysis were selected purposefully rather than randomly. A different method of sampling could have yielded a different result in dimension/elicitor usage. Also, watching all 401 videos would allow for a complete, comprehensive analysis of dimension/elicitor usage across the two channels; however, the amount of time it would take to watch all of those videos may not necessarily yield significantly different results that would justify watching more than 24 hours' worth of videos multiple times.

In regards to the limitations of personal bias, I am a young adult who is a practicing Catholic. As the nature of qualitative research, I inevitably included my familiarity of Catholic teachings and my personal experiences in the process of analysis. I sometimes chose videos to analyze for Fr. Mike Schmitz based on the fact that friends had shared them in a group chat with 200 other young adult practicing Catholics or that I had seen the video in small group studies. I also was able to connect with the influencers in a similar way that viewers did in that I am their target audience, especially with topics covered by Emily Wilson. I was familiar with both Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz prior to this analysis after hearing them speak at conferences and seeing some of their videos in my personal life. This familiarity allowed me to assume the presence of eudaimonic dimensions and elicitors as well as to see them in ways that others not as acquainted with Catholic teachings might see them in a similar analysis. Though I tried to remain as impartial as possible and clearly explain my analysis so as to be clear to those who do not share my background, I acknowledge there will always be a certain amount of bias, which can benefit my research while still being a limitation.

Further research. While researching this topic, a lot of research and articles focused on why young Catholics or members of other religions are leaving their religions. There was not

much research on what attracts young people or people of any age to decide to practice religion, especially for those who convert to a religion. The best way to know how to reach out to those on the outside to inspire them to convert to Catholicism or how to encourage those already in the religion to stay would be to know what draws people to find religion in the first place. Without this knowledge, it can only be speculated based on what causes people to leave a religion what might encourage them to stay or come to the faith. Catholic influencers could then tailor their messages and eudaimonic usages in order to reach out to a larger audience and be more successful in bringing young adults and others back to the faith or encourage them to stay.

This research was focusing on how influencers reach out to Millennials and young adult Catholics in general. According to Cooper et al. (2016), 90% of people who become disaffiliated from religion do it before the age of 29, which would be the end of Millennials and a lot of Generation Z. However, those leaving the Catholic Church can still fall into other generations as well. Both influencers, but especially Fr. Mike Schmitz, received comments from viewers of all ages. Research could be conducted to see how to reach out to all ages, not just to bring them back to the fold, but to really build that connection between the Catholic Church and its faithful by way of Catholic media. We could learn how the needs of the faithful change throughout their lifetime and what media and messages best meet those needs. Younger generations might need more focus on personal growth as they learn about themselves whereas older generations might need more focus on meaning of life or self-acceptance as they evaluate the lives they have led and decisions they have made to get them to where they are.

The bulk of analysis for this thesis was completed prior to and during the pandemic of COVID-19, during which government lockdowns have drastically changed how Catholics access and participate in their faith. Further research on Catholic media and YouTube channels – by

influencers or otherwise – would be beneficial in understanding how the digital age is impacting worship and participation in religion. Fr. Mike Schmitz on *Ascension Presents* is one of the many priests livestreaming mass on YouTube or other social media to reach others. I have seen a number of free online Catholic conferences regularly being offered on weekends with prominent Catholic speakers trying to connect with Catholics during a time of social distancing and isolation from the Church, both the physical structure and the Church community.

This thesis is only touching the surface of how we apply eudaimonics. There exists a relationship between the qualitative research of looking at how the media uses eudaimonic messages and the quantitative research more commonly used that looks at the media effects and gratification of eudaimonic media. While examining the comments gave some idea of how viewers felt about these videos, further research could be done to better understand what about the messages draws in young Catholics and encourages their faith. Surveys, interviews and even experiments all could be used to study the relationships between eudaimonic messages in Catholic YouTube influencer videos and the thought and behaviors of viewers. That knowledge can be used to help the Catholic Church and Catholic media work to reach the young generations leaving the Roman Catholic Church each day. Though lambs may leave the flock, influencers like Emily Wilson and Fr. Mike Schmitz may become the shepherds who can bring them home.

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