



Deepening Reflection: The Role of Reflective Music in Enhancing “Lectio Divina”

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Abstract

Today, the world is increasingly characterized by advancements in science and technology, while the concept of the Divine and the essence of religiosity are being ignored. With this reality, Christendom, like the Catholic Church, is vigorous in her efforts to rekindle interest in God and deepen spiritual connections through various spiritual exercises. A prime example of such endeavors is among Catholic educational institutions, particularly those that emphasize the role of “Lectio Divina,” a known spiritual practice designed to foster a deeper understanding and relationship with God through reading and contemplating the Gospels in silence. This study explores the role of reflective music in improving the “Lectio Divina” experience of the students, pointing out that music significantly contributes to developing higher-order thinking skills such as reflection and meditation on the Gospel. Through a phenomenological approach, insights were gathered from six students, revealing that reflective and instrumental music plays a vital role in facilitating a deeper connection with the Divine. The findings highlight five thematic reflections that underscore the transformative power of music in spiritual exercises, ultimately affirming “Lectio Divina” as a viable tool for catechesis and holistic development.

Keywords: *Benedictine, Lectio Divina, Liturgy, Music, Reflection*

INTRODUCTION

Filipinos are indeed seen, as evident to the whole world, how they preciously value their Christian roots. They have been characterized as a dominantly Christian country among the Asian territories. As the product of inculturation, traditions and customs majorly circumscribe Philippine culture. One prominent example is how Filipinos truly appreciate and imbibe the great significance of the Holy Scriptures or the Written words of God in their lives. They genuinely believe, in union with the whole of Christendom, that the Scriptures themselves are divine in origin, though written by certain human persons. Keathley (2004) explained this by stating that “the Bible declares or takes the position explicitly or implicitly that it is nothing less than the very Word of God.” St. Peter himself straightforwardly attested to the authenticity of the Scriptures and the unalterable certainty of God’s words written by human authors. Even Jesus Himself gave its tremendous relevance to the Christians’ existential meaning, as He said, “It is written, man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

“Sacred Scripture is in dialogue with communities of believers: It has come from their faith traditions. Its texts have been developed concerning these traditions and have contributed reciprocally to the development of the traditions. It follows that interpretation of Scripture takes place in the heart of the Church: in its plurality and unity, and within its tradition of faith... Dialogue with Scripture, which means dialogue with the understanding of the faith prevailing in earlier times, must be matched by a dialogue with today’s generation.” (Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1993).

This is how vital the Words of God are in the scriptures in the faith and life of the Catholic Church, especially to each faithful. The Church finds its life and its very foundation in the Sacred Scriptures, which are deeply seen to have been written by human authors under the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This high regard for the Holy Scriptures can be proven by various liturgical and devotional activities from the Church’s initiation and several religious congregations and organizations. Moreover, various Catholic schools have also integrated this devotional prayer into students’ overall or holistic formation. One particular example of this is the Benedictine way of reflection and meditation on the words of God, known as *Lectio Divina*. Benedictine schools have this tradition and practice, which is beautifully done so that the students and the whole community can be enriched in wisdom and understanding by the words of God. Other religious institutions and congregations also adopted this benedictine devotional prayer and fit it into their spiritual and academic programs.

This spiritual activity is genuinely beneficial, for it enriches and quenches the hunger and thirst of the children for the spiritual and the Divine. Also, it is a beautiful activity that caters to developing higher-order thinking skills and, most importantly, develops the children’s sense of reflection and meditation. St. Scholastica’s Academy in San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines, is one of the examples of an institution that offers such liturgical service. They utilize this divine service as a start in a student’s whole day’s journey of studying.

With this, how should a particular school or institution utilize the *Lectio Divina* to develop the student’s capacity for a deeper reflection? Silence plays an important part, and much more so when it is cultivated with a piece of reflective

music that provides a better and more profound communication and understanding of God's words. *Lectio Divina* is said to be a meditative and spiritual exercise that helps enhance spiritual reflection and understanding of the sacred scriptures. However, it is known for its focus on silence and solitude in terms of reflection and meditation. On the other hand, some institutions perform this spiritual exercise with reflective and instrumental music playing in the background, specifically St. Scholastica's Academy, Pampanga. This shows that there are limited empirical studies on how music, particularly reflective and instrumental music, affects a deep reflection, much so its benefits when it is integrated into *Lectio Divina*. Several studies emphasized only the benefits of *Lectio Divina* without specifying the effects of music. This gap posits that examining the practice of *Lectio Divina* with the combination of reflective music could provide essential information on how auditory stimuli might affect contemplation's deepening and directly aid students' spiritual and cognitive development.

Sacred Scripture: Core of Catholic beliefs

The skeletal foundation of the whole Christendom, specifically the entire Catholic Church, is founded on the very life of Jesus Christ. However, tradition speaks that when the life of Jesus Christ ended, the mission passed through Oral Tradition because of the scarcity of individuals capable of writing. Years later, the Written Tradition was born, immortalizing what was passed down orally. This shows how the historical rundown of Christianity's beliefs began with Jesus and continued up to the evangelists, who passed down from one generation to another. "The evident apostolic tradition showcases the reality and the rich history of the formation of the Scriptures entrusted to the Apostles, who record the life of Jesus, who is the very initiator of this mission. (Bransfield, 2023). The Catechism of the Church iterates clearly,

"Tradition transmits, in its entirety, the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit" (CCC no 81; Dei Verbum 9).

It is now tantamount to say that the life of the entire Christendom springs forth from the Sacred Scriptures that were taken care of by the apostles themselves and their direct successors to preserve and be truthful to the mission of evangelizing the people by bringing to them the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lectio Divina: Contemplating the Sacred Scriptures

The so-called "*Lectio Divina*" is considered one of the oldest methods or approaches in Bible reading. Tracing back its roots, one will see its origin in the great Saint Benedict of Nursia as he founded his community and his monastic rule. (Klassen, 2021). The more literal translation of this Catholic practice is "sacred reading or divine reading." (Practicing *Lectio Divina*, 1999). This is a good practice as an individual can connect to the Word of God with all the happenings in daily life.

This kind of Bible reading aims to promote a contemplative prayer to reach an intimate and ecstatic conversation and union with God. One among the Benedictine fathers explained it thoroughly, saying:

"*Lectio Divina* is a slow, contemplative praying of the Scriptures. Time set aside in a special way for *lectio divina* enables us to discover an underlying spiritual rhythm in our daily lives. Within this rhythm, we discover an increasing ability to offer more of ourselves and our relationships to the Father and to accept the

embrace that God is continuously extending to us in the person of his son, Jesus Christ” (Dysinger, 2021).

This method gained its fame among Benedictine monastics as they followed the teachings of St. Benedict. In the same way, Benedictine monasteries and convents were not the only ones adopting this rule.

This practice seems simple but offers a complex scheme that engages the students in dialogue with the Lord. Michel de Verteuil, CSSp, has shared the basic principles of *Lectio Divina* (1999). It is a profound, transformative practice that invites a person to connect their life’s experiences with the words of Sacred Scripture, creating a dialogue where God’s message speaks directly to their heart. It encourages the reader to enter each passage with a vivid imagination, allowing the words to move within their soul and spark reflection. Through *Lectio Divina*, people encounter both sin and the grace of redemption, first within the Bible, then within themselves, their communities, and humanity as a whole. This unique practice goes beyond simple reading; it invites a deep, prayerful response that helps individuals understand their faith, engage with God’s salvation story, and grow in awareness. Accessible to everyone, regardless of background or privilege, *Lectio Divina* is a humble way to speak with God, nurturing a personal and communal relationship that resonates deeply within and beyond oneself.

In this way, one can see how *Lectio Divina* is such an active and complex way of understanding and contemplating God’s sacred message in the Holy Scriptures. This instrument allows people to engage and nurture their spiritual relationship with the Lord and satisfies the inner yearning of the soul to be filled by God’s Word.

Music and the Cognitive Development of the Human Person

Music contributes to making understanding and critical thinking much easier. Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences even agrees with this, particularly with those inclined to listen to music and simultaneously aid their studying. This shows that music goes beyond entertainment and comfort and, most importantly, has a deep connection to the cognitive development of a human person. Numerous studies have learned that this contributes to refining human skills, memory, and critical reasoning (Music et al., 2022).

Music is instrumental to the development of a human person, from early childhood until the stages of adulthood. Specifically, various studies focus their research on the impact of music in the early childhood development stages. This involves and influences how one perceives and processes the information acquired. Several benefits are directed to auditory memory, the ability to recognize patterns, emotional intelligence, and even motor skills (Growing Sound, n.d.) Several studies already proved how the brain of a human person is enhanced and adds to the holistic development of the very individual. This disproves the claims and arguments of some that music is limited only to the enjoyment of the senses (Bazemore, 2023). Furthermore, using music is not just instrumental to the development of the student’s cognitive ability and, at the same time, gives a chance to the students learn music too (Song, 2023)

Understanding this aspect of music can aid an individual in seeing why music should not be underestimated. Teachers are increasingly incorporating this in their methodology as a tool to accumulate better understanding. Thus, one can

see how music can be a powerful aspect to plant motivation and engage actively the students in education with the idea of making it lively, fun, and meaningful without compromising the need to impart knowledge and facilitate learning.

Research Objectives

This study analyzed the Benedictine methodology for Lectio Divina to examine the impact of incorporating reflective and instrumental music on the depth of students’ reflection on the Gospel and their overall engagement through the practice of Lectio Divina. It sought to understand the following specific aspects:

- 1. See the relevance of reflective and instrumental music in the more profound reflection of the Gospel reading; and
- 2. Explore the students’ reflecting skills in Lectio Divina through listening to music.

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a qualitative phenomenological approach which discusses the essential aspects of an experience. Delve (2022) states that the qualitative research approach aims “to understand and describe the universal essence of a phenomenon.” This approach focuses on and seeks to evaluate the daily living experiences of human beings while reducing or suspending the prejudices or biases of the researchers on the particular matter. “In other words, phenomenological research studies lived experiences to gain deeper insights into how people understand those experiences” (Gatdula, 2022). Gatdula (2021) expanded that modern phenomenologists like Merleau–Ponty and Martin Heidegger discussed taking the lived experience through hermeneutics and from experience to reflection. Moreover, he further cited Ramirez (2001) in his paper, has elaborately posited that Phenomenology represents a new empiricism that “contrasts with traditional empiricism in [its] epistemological acceptance of intuitive experience, [its] emphasis on the concreteness of ‘lived experience,’ [its] radical openness to modes of consciousness, and [its] inclination to interpret ‘essences.’ To clearly express the phenomenological process.” Therefore, as much as possible, a bias-free examination or analysis of a situation is given.

Participants of the Study

The researcher invited six (6) respondents of the study who were students at the Grade School Department of St. Scholastica’s Academy in the province of Pampanga.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Status	Years as a Benedictine student
STUDENT 1	Female	11	Single	7 years
STUDENT 2	Male	11	Single	7 years
STUDENT 3	Female	11	Single	7 years
STUDENT 4	Female	12	Single	6 years
STUDENT 5	Female	11	Single	5 years
STUDENT 6	Female	11	Single	6 years

Data Collection Techniques

The data for this study were collected using internet-based applications, specifically Facebook Messenger, MS Teams, and Zoom. The researcher approached the respondents to conduct an in-depth interview or storytelling in a conversational manner (Braud,1998). Further, since the respondents are minors, ethical procedures were ensured to protect their well-being. The researcher obtained an assent form, where the parents or guardians of participants, considering that they are minors, were made aware of the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality and anonymity were put into a guarantee to protect their identities and the information they provided. Additionally, the researcher ensured that the interview process was free from coercion and that the data collected were handled with integrity and used solely for the stated research purposes.

The interview sessions were recorded, transcribed, collected, and became the subject of data analysis. Presented below are the questions that served as our springboard and guide during the interview. Although the questions were in English, the researcher used both Filipino and English during the interview based on the preference of the respondents. During the follow-up interviews, the questions were more on clarifications regarding the initial results of the analysis.

1. What do you feel (e.g., calm/irritated) when you listen to music?
2. Do you recall something or able to reflect something when you listen to music?
3. Do you see yourself as more productive while listening to music compared to yourself not listening?
4. What instrument do you prefer to hear during reflection time in lectio divina? (Piano, flute, guitar, organ, and others)
5. Does reflective and instrumental music help you understand the Gospel that was read?

DATA ANALYSIS

“Moustakas’ Phenomenological method of research, organization, and analysis of the data was used to facilitate the development of individual textural and structural descriptions. Even before we started the in-depth interview, the researcher practiced “epoche” (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). There is a need to put aside all the biases to extract the phenomenon’s meaning and essence. Epoche is an invitation to enter a reflection into our respondents’ experiences. To fully obtain its full descriptions, Moustaka’s modified works of phenomenological steps were done:

The First Thematic Reflections. After reflecting on the narrative as a way of transferring information from the interview to a narrative form, thematic reflections emerged as fruits of the respondents’ stories and sharing. The researcher focused on the significant stories, striking words, and thoughts to emphasize their lived experiences. Then, the researcher gave a title for each story describing the respondents, drawing from their experiences’ essence.

The Second Thematic Reflections. Themes emerged from the individual

structural descriptions, which can also be found in the first thematic reflections. The researcher clustered them into a group using the significant experiences, including our respondents’ feelings, thoughts, and consciousness. This composite structural description represented our respondents as a group to understand how they experienced the phenomenon. The textural descriptions were examined from different perspectives (imaginative variation), and a description of the structure (the how) eventually arrived. A textural–structural description that emerges represents the meaning and essence of the experience (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). From the textural description, we constructed the structural epitome of the experiences, which required imagination and reflection on the relationships or themes pertinent to the experiences.

The Eidetic Insights. From the first and second thematic reflections, all the individual textural and structural descriptions were grouped, and themes were integrated. Our contribution is an open-ended and original insight.

RESULTS

Table 2: The table below shows the derived significant statements with their corresponding meaning

Significant Statements	Meaning
I feel relaxed and calm whenever I listen to music.	The respondents showed their expression that music has a soothing effect on them as they listen to it.
I can quickly reflect on some things or experiences in my life in accordance with the tone, melody, and lyrics of the music.	They expressed how music greatly triggers in terms of recalling experiences especially if the music has a tone or melody that suits their mood or feeling.
Each time that I listen to music, I am inspired to do and be focused on my undertakings/tasks/ duties properly.	Most of them uttered how music contributed to them when it comes to doing things, simple or not. It enabled them to focus more.
I prefer to hear the piano in the instrumental music playing in the background while having a Lectio divina.	They shared how instruments provided a much better experience and atmosphere as they pray the lectio divina.
Background music helps me to have a deeper reflection and understanding of the Gospel that was read, especially with the melody that affects my emotions.	Reflective instrumental music for them, allows to better understand the Gospel of that day and be able to connect the story to their daily lives.

The First Thematic Reflections. These are the fruits of stories shared by the respondents. Table 2 presents sample significant statements and the meaning of the experiences. Generally, these responses are the extracted themes in each question. Identifying such has gained benefits in distinguishing the

The Second Thematic Reflections. An analysis of the participants’ experiences revealed a thematic structure composed of five (5) themes that describe their experiences. These five themes emerged from the individual structural descriptions: Music affects the mood/ emotion and the overall condition of a human person. Music triggers the mind to recall various experiences. Focus and attention are the fruit of listening to music. Instrumental music dramatically impacts a person’s higher-order thinking skills and then gaining a deeper reflection.

Table 3. Compilation of the respondents' answers/ responses

Respondents	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Question #4	Question #5
Student 1	Whenever I listen to soft and soothing music, I feel at peace, calm, and relieved.	Yes, sometimes I do recall and reflect on certain things when listening to music, especially if it is mellow and pleasant to the ears.	Although music can sometimes help me gain energy and motivation while doing different activities/ tasks, personally, I prefer working in a more quiet environment since it helps me stay more focused in what I am doing. Therefore I would say I'm more productive without music.	In terms of reflection during lectio divina, I'd prefer hearing the sounds of a piano because it is commonly used in relaxing and calming music, as well as the violin, as both instruments usually produce an emotional sound when played.	Yes, reflective music does somehow help me understand the Gospel being read because it can affect my emotions and thoughts allowing me to better understand and reflect on things.
Student 2	For me, it depends on the flow of the music, or if it matches the event. If it matches, yes, I do feel calm, but if the music doesn't match the event, then I would feel annoyed or irritated. It can also be based on your music taste. If the song doesn't match your taste, then you won't like it. But if it does, you would be interested.	Whenever I listen to music, I only recall or reflect on something if the lyrics or melody is relatable. If I can relate to the lyrics or melody, I would be able to recall or reflect on something because I experienced it. It can also be based on what you're going through in life. If I'm going through a problem or an issue, I would be able to relate to the music that would match my mood. Also, you would be able to express your thoughts or feelings through music; some people aren't really good at expressing on how they feel, so they listen to music in order to express their thoughts or feelings.	Whenever I'm doing a particular task, I always listen to music. So that while I'm doing that particular task, I wouldn't feel bored or it wouldn't feel boring. Although, some people would get distracted while listening to music because they would focus on the music rather than what they are doing. For me, I can focus on my task while listening to music so I don't really have a problem with that. I wouldn't recommend listening to music if you get easily distracted, but it's okay to listen if you can focus on your task while listening.	In my opinion, I would suggest piano whenever reflecting during lectio divina. Many says that playing or listening to the piano can improve mental health, relieve stress, anxiety and can put our body, soul and mind at ease.	Yes, it does help me understand the Gospel. It allows me to be able to understand the word of God and reflect on it more. It also allows me to talk to God more.

Student 3	I feel relaxed and calm whenever I listen to music.	Whenever I listen to calm and soothing music, it helps me meditate and reflect better. So I usually listen to music while I do my school works.	Listening to music makes me more productive, especially since it helps me focus properly.	Piano and violin.	It depends on po, but most of the time, yes.
Student 4	When I listen to music sometimes I feel happy, sometimes calm, and sometimes sad, depending on what kind of music i am listening to. Whenever i listen to relaxing music it makes me feel good because it's calming and it makes me feel free. Whenever I listen to a type of music where the beats are a bit louder than usual it makes me feel energized.	When I listen to music it sometimes it can recall some situations in my life like happy times or sad times. When I listen to music where the singer feels happy singing it, it makes me recall happy times of my life. When i listen to a type of music where it sounds sad or the lyrics are sad it can make me recall sad times of my life.	I can sometimes be a bit more productive when i am listening to music specially when the music makes me feel happy. Whenever i listen to music it motivates me to do my daily duties because i can hear lovely sounds while doing them. I can tell when i don't listen to music that i am bit less productive than when i am listening to music.	In the reflection parts of the lectio divina i prefer hearing the piano. I enjoy hearing the piano because it makes me feel calm and it can help me reflect. The piano is a type of instrument that bring calmness to me and can help me focus on reflecting.	Reflective music helps me understand the Gospel more. It can make me calmer and it helps me to focus on the Gospel. Reflective music helps me realize the meaning of the Gospel and the important lesson that was brought out from the Gospel.
Student 5	I feel calm and at ease while listening to music. It allows me to work easier and understand more efficiently. Listening to music is something fundamental since it is something that makes me feel joyful and at peace.	Yes, it makes me recall memories depending on it's tone. I usually would recall more tame and happy memories. Music allows me to recall the memories that I once forgot through reflecting.	I do see myself being more productive while listening to music as it makes me feel more cooled down. I feel at ease when listening to music and it as well makes me more productive. Working with music allows me to be more expressive and makes my work much more straightforward.	Flutes, harps, instruments that have more soothing sounds. During reflecting, it is crucial to stay focused. Being able to be at ease while reflecting can fixate your thoughts making it easier	Yes, reflective music aids in understanding the Gospel because it is a period of reflection. The soothing tones allow me to really think and understand. I can reflect in peace because of it, and it allows me to be more focused.
Student 6	I feel relaxed and calm and I'm at ease. I usually focus better when listening to music. It makes me peaceful and better at times.	Yes. I reflect about peaceful and good things. I recall the times I prayed, especially during our Lectio Divina.	I do a bit. I find myself more focused on my goal. Music helps me to enjoy while doing my daily tasks.	I prefer to hear the Piano, or violin. For me, it's much more relaxing and calming to hear while I reflect the words of the Lord. It makes me more Peaceful, and it puts my mind at ease.	Yes. I understand the words clearly. Because of the music, it helps me reflect and understand the Gospel that was read in my mind.

DISCUSSION

1. Music affects the mood/ emotion and the overall condition of a human person

The effects of music on mood and emotion are highly subjective and dependent on various factors, such as an individual's music taste, the match between the music and the event or activity, and the tempo or flow of the music. Music's impact can range from annoyance or irritation to joy and peace. In this first theme, it seems like the respondents are indeed affected by the music.

For me, it depends on the flow of the music, or if it matches the event. If it matches, yes, I do feel calm, but if the music doesn't match the event, then I would feel annoyed or irritated. It can also be based on your music taste. If the song doesn't match your taste, then you wouldn't like it. But if it does, you would be interested. (Student 2)

I feel calm and at ease while listening to music. It allows me to work easier and understand more efficiently. Listening to music is very important since it makes me feel joyful and at peace. (Student 5)

Moreover, the respondents found that music can also enhance cognitive abilities, such as improving concentration and understanding, which can positively affect an individual's overall condition. Other studies, too, agree with this observation. According to a study conducted by North and Hargreaves (2008), music's impact on emotions is context-dependent, influencing social behavior and emotional well-being. Moreover, it is posited that, "Unexpected change in musical features like intensity and tempo is one of the primary means by which music provokes a strong emotional response in listeners" (Salimpoor et al., 2015). Thus, when using music to influence emotions and productivity, it is essential to consider personal preferences and situational context.

2. Music triggers the mind to recall various experiences

Music has a powerful effect on memory recall. Listening to music can trigger the mind to recall various experiences, both positive and negative, associated with that music. This suggests that music has the potential to serve as a powerful tool for accessing and processing memories. "The pattern of encoding and retrieving memories triggered by nostalgic music is unique and deeply personal, aiding individuals in reconnecting with their past" (Habibi et al., 2023). Like the first theme, the respondents seem to realize that music can affect emotions and trigger the human person to reminisce about experiences that struck them the most.

Yes, sometimes I do recall and reflect on certain things when listening to music, especially if it is mellow and pleasant to the ears. (Student 1)

When I listen to music, sometimes I can recall some situations in my life like happy times or sad times. When I listen to music where the singer feels happy singing it, it makes me recall happy times in my life. When I listen to a type of music where it sounds sad, or the lyrics are sad it can make me recall sad times of my life. (Student 4)

Moreover, the emotions evoked by the music are considered essential factors in determining the specific recalled memories, highlighting the close relationship between emotion and memory. Another study even examined how familiar music can evoke memories and emotions, even in patients with neurological impairments,

showing music's unique capability in memory retention (Belfi, Karlan, & Tranel, 2016).

3. Focus and attention are the fruits of listening to music

Music can enhance focus and attention during tasks. Listening to music while doing something can create a more relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, which can help reduce distractions and increase productivity. "For most people, relaxing music in the background can help create an atmosphere that supports studying. However, others might find it distracting depending on its tempo, volume, and whether it contains lyrics" (University of California, Berkeley, 2023). This suggests that music is a valuable tool for improving focus and attention and is particularly beneficial for individuals who struggle with maintaining concentration during tasks.

I do see myself being more productive while listening to music as it makes me feel more cooled down. I feel at ease when listening to music and it as well makes me more productive. Working with music allows me to be more expressive and makes my work more straightforward. (Student 5)

I do a bit. I find myself more focused on my goal. Music helps me to enjoy myself while doing my daily tasks. (Student 6)

Others may find music a source of distraction. However, the data shows that music benefits them by helping them become more productive and focused on specific tasks.

4. Musical instruments have a Significant Impact on Igniting a Person's Higher-order Thinking Skills

One cannot underestimate the power of the voice in producing music. Furthermore, musical instruments are much more refined and, at the same time, add to the overall mixture of harmony. In connection with the first theme, music can enrich a student's skills and abilities. The study suggests that learning musical instruments could aid and enhance mental functions like cognitive flexibility, working memory, and reasoning, vital components of higher-order thinking (Bowers & Park, 2019).

Flutes, harps, and instruments that have more soothing sounds. During reflection, it is crucial to stay focused. Being at ease while reflecting can fixate your thoughts, making them easier. (Student 5)

I prefer to hear the Piano, or violin. For me, it's much more relaxing and calming to hear while I reflect the words of the Lord. It makes me more Peaceful, and it puts my mind at ease. (Student 6)

The respondents heard and noticed precisely the melody of the instruments and their preferred instrument/s, which helped them develop their higher-order thinking skills. The first two themes contribute to the enhancement of higher-order thinking skills. This allows the students to focus and make their minds active in engagement. Furthermore, A longitudinal study found that children who participated in music instruction significantly improved their ability to focus and solve problems compared to non-musical peers (Habibi et al., 2018)

5. Reflective and Instrumental music aids in Understanding the Scriptures

Reading the Sacred Scriptures can be exhaustive, tedious, and complex, and

the atmosphere of silence adds to that. This is why many charismatic groups and religious movements think of creative and helpful ways to ignite people's interest in reading the Gospel. Numerous studies have already recorded how music can stimulate and deepen one's consciousness to be in a better disposition in reflection and meditation. "Instrumental music provides a backdrop that allows for uninterrupted contemplation, creating an environment conducive to absorbing and reflecting on scriptural teachings" (Hassan, 2019)

Yes, reflective music does somehow help me understand the Gospel being read because it can affect my emotions and thoughts allowing me to better understand and reflect on things. (Student 1)

Reflective music helps me understand the Gospel more. It can make me calmer, and it helps me to focus on the Gospel. Reflective music helps me realize the meaning of the Gospel and the important lesson that was brought out from the Gospel. (Student 4)

The respondents have expressed the advantage of reflective and solemn instrumental music in their morning prayer. Reflective music supports spiritual practices by promoting the mental quietude and focus necessary for deep engagement with religious texts (Brown & Ryan, 2018). This has had reasonable and practical implications for the students' holistic development and, most importantly, for deepening their understanding of the Word of God.

Eidetic Insight

Music is a gift from God that moves the interior of the soul.

Since time immemorial, music never failed to pose and deliver something in the hearts and minds of people. Some could see its extraordinary relevance in how they were deeply moved and came up with brilliant ideas and concepts. Thanks to the harmony and rhythm of the music. "Music has long been an effective way to communicate to the masses, and lyrics have played a massive role in delivering this communication. However, the opportunity for research on lyrics' role in well-being is vastly underutilized" (Ransom, 2015).

Music has a place and a tremendous role in the community of believers. Its nature and complexity identified its vital importance in the liturgical service and the sacrifice offered to God. The Catholic Church herself has stressed its more significant value in its place and act of worship. The Holy Eucharist itself and other sacramental practices include music. For this reason, music sets "the tone for particular celebrations." It is a factor that helps everyone commune with the atmosphere of various liturgical seasons. For example, the somber tone of Holy Week is celebrated through the selected songs with the theme of repentance and penance. "We sing because we are people of prayer and, according to an ancient proverb, the one who sings prays twice!" (Harrington, 1999).

According to the respondents responses, it is tantamount to say that reflective music has a humongous impact on their morning praise each day. With this, it is highly recommendable to use reflective, solemn, and instrumental music to aid the act of reflecting on the Gospel of the Lord in the context of personal experiences.

CONCLUSION

The practice of Lectio Divina, a Benedictine way of reflection and meditation of the Scriptures, in some Christian educational systems proves how music influences the devotion and religiosity of the community of believers. Integrating reflective music into the devotional practice of Lectio Divina shows a vivid opportunity to develop and nurture the spiritual aspect among students. With a prayerful and meditative atmosphere, the reflective music adds more to the deeper contemplation and personal connection with the Divine, which various studies have suggested. This study's findings shed light on how music enhances the process of meditation and reflection on the Bible and adds more to the prayerful experience of the person. The five thematic reflections discovered in this research show support for the notion that music is seen as a promoter of spiritual and cognitive growth, enabling students to unlock the potential and depth of their minds.

So, the practice of "Lectio Divina," when supplemented with reflective music, provides evidence that it is an effective tool for catechesis and holistic progress in education, where spiritual practices often risk being overlooked or even ignored. With total belief in music's reflective power in spiritual exercises, various academic institutions, especially those rooted in the Benedictine tradition, can promote a more effective and engaging act of faith.

Moreover, it is an excellent way to catechize the students and reignite this generation's consciousness of the Divine. Hence, it is highly recommended that this activity aided with music will be imbibe in them as young as they are to leave a mark on their souls and to continue this legacy generation upon generation. Ultimately, this spiritual activity stands firm on the school's motto, "ora et labora" (prayer and work), which points out everything a Scholastic must do.

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