

**CONTESTING CATHOLICISMS AND COMMUNITAS
AT A CANADIAN SHRINE**

**HEALING THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT:
CONTESTING CATHOLICISMS AND COMMUNITAS
AT A CANADIAN CATHOLIC PILGRIMAGE SHRINE**

By

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ABSTRACT

The Virgin Mary reportedly began to appear at Greensides Farm, just outside the village of Marmora, Ontario, Canada, in 1992. She continues to appear to three central visionaries at the pilgrimage shrine. Catholic pilgrims come from around the world to pray, many of them with the hope of seeing Mary or experiencing a miracle. Countless pilgrims claim to have received spiritual, emotional, or physical healing through their miraculous experiences, events which they attribute to the power of the Holy Spirit.

I argue that contestation is present at the Marmora pilgrimage shrine and occurs over symbols embedded in the activities of individuals and different Catholic groups. *Communitas* also exists at Marmora through the shrine's liminality, but it is normative *communitas*, and not spontaneous *communitas*, because the pilgrimage is structured by outside social, political, and religious influences. Further to this point, most pilgrims retain their status in everyday life at the shrine, and some pilgrims (namely the visionaries) obtain a heightened status that transfers into their mundane lives. My research indicates that contestation and *communitas* among both pilgrims and Catholic groups affect each individual's interpretation of their pilgrimage experience at Marmora, just as individuals' interpretations of their own background and knowledge inform their experiences of contestation and *communitas*. An analysis of pilgrims' miracle and healing narratives demonstrates that it is important to explore individuals' interpretations of their pilgrimage experience, as the journey can have tangible effects on a pilgrim's mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being.

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Preface

The Evolution of a Project

This thesis is a study of a Catholic shrine where pilgrims believe the Virgin Mary is appearing. When I followed my supervisor's suggestion that I focus on this shrine in Marmora, Ontario, Canada for my Master of Arts thesis, I had no idea that my study would take the shape that it has, or that the process of research would teach me so much about myself and about another very different religion than my own.

In anthropology, “self-reflexivity” can be defined as “the revelation of the researcher's identity to both informants and readers and the exploration of how that identity affects her/his research” (Rothenberg 1999: 142, see also Wolf 1996: 35). Through this process, researchers lose their “invisible, anonymous voice of authority [and become] a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests” (Wolf 1996: 35). The aims of this Preface are to discuss my own family and religious background in order to explore how they shaped my positioning in the field. I will investigate how my perceptions of Catholicism were formed and the ways in which they affected my research at the Marmora pilgrimage shrine.

Once religion is understood as a web not of meanings but of relationships between heaven and earth, then scholars of religion take their places as participants in these networks too, together with the saints and in the company of practitioners. We get caught up in these bonds, whether we want to or not. (Orsi 2005: 5)

Although my mother has a Catholic background, I was raised in a very secular household and am now a practising Pagan. By “Pagan”, I am referring to an Earth-centred spiritual path which focuses on living in harmony with nature and observing the Earth’s cycles. The Paganism I practise is polytheistic, based on roots believed to lie in pre-Christian European religions, does not involve belief in a personification of “evil”, and has equal emphasis placed on the feminine divine (through worship of a Goddess or Goddesses) as on the masculine divine (also through worship of a God or Gods). My devotional practises focus on the Celtic spiritual tradition, and I thus have a strong connection to Celtic deities, symbols, seasonal celebrations, and rituals. I chose the path of Paganism in the second year of my undergraduate degree,¹ and it is a religion very close to the undefined spirituality I held before I “officially” chose that path. Other Pagans have told me that they were always Pagan, but didn’t always have a name for it, and this accurately describes my own experience.

I was able to develop my spirituality through a thoroughly non-religious upbringing. My parents made religious texts available to us if we desired to read them, and occasionally introduced us to other group’s religions, but my brother and I were neither baptised nor taken to any sort of religious services. In fact, the first time I experienced a Church service was in October 2003 when I

accompanied my boyfriend's parents to their Baptist Church on Thanksgiving Day. Thus, my knowledge of religion, and Christianity in particular, was largely based on its presentation in popular culture, as well as through brief moments of exposure to it through people in my peer group.

I was certainly not the only person in my generation to be reared by parents who chose not to educate their children in a particular religious tradition. In fact, most of the people I knew in high school did not attend Church, and many people I met in university were not brought up in a particular religious tradition. Of those that had been raised in religiously observant families, many had completely or partially rejected these beliefs as young adults. In contrast, my parents' generation in Canada – “baby boomers” – did grow up attending church services in one Christian denomination or another. However, this pattern of church attendance did not necessarily mean that their parents were particularly religious. Instead, it seems to have had more to do with the idea that it was “the right thing to do” – raising children within a religious institution was seen as the “proper” way to help children develop “good morals” and an appreciation for tradition. However, many baby boomers seem to have discarded formal religious practise themselves, and they chose not to expose their families to the religious institutions in which they were raised. This does not suggest that this generation has no belief in “the supernatural and the mystical”, but rather a disinterest in

¹ Ironically, I became immersed in the Paganism through an ethnographic project for an

organised religion itself (Stark 2004: 124). I am a product myself of this unique generational “trend” of individuals who grew up without immersion in or exposure to a specific religion. I am positioned as someone who is divorced from religious roots in Canadian society.

Yet, my family did expose me to a unique set of beliefs. My mother’s family lived in a “haunted house” for six years in Montréal, Quebec, when she was a child and I grew up hearing tales from my family’s own stock of supernatural folklore. At an early age, I became intensely interested in ghosts and the supernatural, and I read everything I could in our small town’s local library about these phenomena. Furthermore, my father’s mother was a member of the Vancouver Psychic Club for several years and I heard stories about some of their most accurate predictions. I did, and continue to, take the existence of the supernatural for granted.

This belief in the reality of supernatural phenomena is the main reason why I wanted to focus on the Marmora shrine for my thesis research. The idea that divine apparitions and other “miracles” were happening at a farm in rural Ontario fascinated me and piqued my interest in questions such as: what were people experiencing, and how was it affecting their lives? How did pilgrims conceptualise the healing many people believe they attained through these divine experiences? As an anthropologist at the pilgrimage shrine I did not seek to judge

anthropology class.

the validity of the miracles at Marmora, and I personally believe it is likely that some sort of supernatural or preternatural forces are at work there because so many people claim to have experiences that cannot be attributed to natural factors. However, my upbringing outside of the Roman Catholic Church, and outside of Christianity in general, was an inhibition that made it difficult for me to understand and accept the system of beliefs shared by most of the Marmora pilgrims.

My Introduction to Roman Catholicism

For many years I have had difficulty accepting highly structured religious systems that encourage prescribed thought. Both before and during my research at Marmora, my experiences with a close relative who has become a devout Catholic further enhanced my negative feelings toward the Roman Catholic religion. I had limited contact with this relative while growing up, as I did not live in close proximity to her. When I began my Master of Arts degree I had not seen her in twelve years, and our contact during that period was sporadic at best. I knew that she had become increasingly religious since the end of her marriage in divorce, but she was willing and eager to help me with my thesis project, having been to Marmora a few times herself.

In the months prior to my fieldwork, this family member called me and talked endlessly about her religion and the practises of Roman Catholics. She also sent me religious texts and pamphlets about topics such as praying the rosary in

an attempt to “prepare” me for my fieldwork. I appreciated her interest in my project initially, but the volume of information increased to the point that, to me, it felt like she was pushing me in the direction of conversion. She was, interestingly, the member of our family with some of the most vivid and dramatic “ghost stories”, but I noted that now these supernatural experiences were frequently re-interpreted and re-told through the perspective of her Catholic beliefs and presented within a “good versus evil” dichotomy. My relative did not know that I am Pagan, but she learned through my mother that I read tarot cards, and told me several times over the phone that they were “against God” and “one of Satan’s evil influences on the world”. We planned to spend a week together at her home in the town of Pembroke, Ontario, a three or four hour drive from Marmora, just prior to beginning my fieldwork at the shrine itself. However, her righteous attitude made me apprehensive about the time I was going to spend with her, even though I knew her connections to other pilgrims in her community would be a good way to start my research.

The trip began badly with a broken down bus and a late-night arrival at the bus terminal in Ottawa. Hungry and tired, I wanted some food to improve my spirits, but she would not give me any because she believes that Catholics should fast on Wednesdays and Fridays²; having arrived after midnight on Thursday, iced

² According to my relative, fasting on only bread and tea every Wednesday and Friday follows the directions in a message that comes from the Catholic pilgrimage shrine of Medjugorje in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Virgin Mary has allegedly been appearing there since 1981 and she still gives

tea was the only thing I was allowed (and this was followed by nothing but bread the following day). We arrived late at her home and had to carve a path through the clutter inside before getting my suitcase to the bedroom in which I was staying. After making our way upstairs and being given instructions on what not to touch, she made a point of giving me a tour of the attic “so I would not be afraid” and we got to bed shortly after three o’clock a.m. I began to get the impression she had forgotten I was twice the age I had been the last time we had met.

The next morning I was woken at six-thirty a.m. to go to Mass at the local cathedral and, afterwards, we sat in her car for over two hours while she told me about her relationship with her former husband. She believed that they were not actually divorced because divorce is not permitted in the Catholic Church and there is no legitimate reason for her marriage to be annulled. She then showed me a wedding photo which had a rose petal placed over her face and that of her husband under a plastic cover. She asked me if I could see anything on the petal; I couldn’t. But she could: to her, it was an outline of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus that had formed after the petal was placed on the photograph, and she believed this was a sign her marriage would be healed, even after years of legal divorce. I tried to be encouraging, but I felt incredulity at her reasoning.

fairly regular messages to several visionaries in the village (see Bax 1991, 1995; The Medjugorje Web 2005).

Our week continued as uncomfortably as it had begun. She tried to make me feel welcome, but I felt confined. I had little space of my own in the house, and she gave me no key to let myself back in if I left. Furthermore, she used a meeting with a devout Catholic friend, who cautioned me about the evils of Harry Potter and fortune cookies, as an occasion to reiterate her belief in the malevolence of tarot cards and other methods of divination. In her mind, my grandmother's involvement with the Vancouver Psychic Club – “how Satan had gotten into her life” – was the reason for her deteriorating health and alcohol dependence, and my own use of tarot was sure to lead me down the same path. Later that evening my relative and these friends prayed over me in a tight circle, encouraging me to “invite Jesus into my heart”. This experience, for which I was not prepared, in combination with the rest of my week with this family member, essentially shut my mind to the possibility that I wanted to, or was even capable of, immersing myself within the Roman Catholic worldview during my fieldwork. I did not know who “Catholic” people were anymore, nor did I have any idea what constituted “true” Catholicism. Whatever the case, I hoped my relative was not a typical Roman Catholic.

She drove me to Marmora at the end of the week, a trip which was made more interesting by her interpretation that the truck's faulty gas gauge was “Satan trying to prevent us from reaching Marmora”. Before leaving, she told me that she had “consecrated my heart to Mary” while on a pilgrimage in Europe and that my

time in Marmora was not truly about research, but about being on “my own personal pilgrimage”.

The Issue of “Identity”

I felt like my Pagan beliefs were reinforced at this moment and that my opposition to the way she practised and believed in Roman Catholicism was strengthened; I am sure these feelings were rooted more in defiance of her prediction than anything else. From my own perspective, I am the only one who has the right (or the ability) to “consecrate my heart” to any deity. Unfortunately, the experiences I had with this relative seemed to set a tone for the rest of my fieldwork. Until this point, I had simply been outside of institutional religion; now I felt alienated from it. Negotiating the beliefs of people who have a very different worldview than my own was trying in many ways through the duration of my fieldwork, despite the fact that the majority of pilgrims at Marmora were hospitable and generous people who always made an effort to make me feel welcome.

In her investigation of Jerry Falwell’s ministry, Harding (2000) firmly states:

there is no such thing as a neutral position, no place for an ethnographer who seeks ‘information’. Either you are lost, or you are saved... I was naïve enough to think I could be detached, that I could participate in the culture I

was observing without partaking of it... But there was no such ground”.
(2000: 39-40)

I read Harding’s words before I began my fieldwork and they terrified me. What, exactly, do anthropologists mean by “participant observation”, and how much “participating” was I expected to do? Are we supposed to “give up” our personal identities in order to immerse ourselves as fully as we can, even if the beliefs and practises we study strongly contradict what we believe? Feeling like a true “outsider” in the Catholic community, I was continually faced with the question of how much of my own belief system should be compromised for the sake of my research.

I never revealed my Pagan identity to my informants. This situation itself which was something of an anathema to me – I had never been “in the broom closet” about my identity before, especially with young adults who could be considered a part of my peer group. Not only did my covert behaviour make me uncomfortable, but it also made me hyper-aware of the differences between my own worldview and that of Traditionalist and Charismatic Catholics. Some pilgrims, unaware of my Pagan identity, made comments that I found to be offensive; others tried to help me “come to know Jesus” under the impression that I was an agnostic or atheist. However, the majority of people I spoke with assumed that I was Catholic – in terms of their logic, why else would I be studying Catholic pilgrimage?

Thinking retrospectively about my fieldwork experience, I have concluded that Harding's statement is correct for my own case. Because I was not willing – or able, for that matter – to let go of my worldview, I was “lost” in many ways to the symbols I encountered at Greensides Farm. As anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann remarks, “Fieldwork, it is now understood, does not grant a blanket awareness of the hearts and minds of the fieldworker's chosen society... The fieldworker cannot learn what ‘they’ ‘believe’” (1989: 14). I am sure that, as an outsider to Roman Catholicism and Christianity in general, my own interpretation of the symbols that pilgrims to Marmora use to explain miraculous events is partial and incomplete.

But is our analysis and interpretation as anthropologists ever “complete”? Like many others, I argue that it is not (i.e., Geertz 1973). As a Canadian studying Canadians in the general region where I was living, it could be said that I was doing “anthropology at home”. However, since my own experience of religion made me a cultural outsider, my time in Marmora better resembles “traditional” anthropological fieldwork in that it was “distant, exotic, and strange” (Caputo 2000: 22) for me. In constructing the field,

[the] idea of fieldwork in which the ethnographer is expected to break from his/her usual involvements in order to immerse him/herself in the ‘field’ of ‘others’ involvements is an oxymoron...the construction of an ethnographic field involves efforts to accommodate and interweave sets of relationships and engagements developed in one context with those arising in another. (Amit 2000: 6)

In my case, as in the situations of many other anthropologists, the melding of professional and personal roles in the field became “a messy, qualitative experience” (Amit 2000: 7).

Rosaldo (1989) discusses his own dilemma of understanding in the field: he was unable to comprehend the meaning behind the Ilongot need to headhunt to dissipate the rage and grief of bereavement. Rosaldo could not identify with the cultural force of their emotions because his positioning in the field was limited by the fact that he did not have the experience to identify with what the Ilongot felt after the death of a loved one (1989: 2). “Only after being repositioned through a devastating loss of my own could I better grasp that Ilongot older men mean precisely what they say when they describe the anger in bereavement as the source of their desire to cut off human heads” (Rosaldo 1989: 3).

The dramatic repositioning that Rosaldo experienced was triggered by the death of his wife while they were doing fieldwork in the Philippines; the grief and rage that he experienced over her death made Rosaldo truly understand how grief could instigate the practise of headhunting (1989: 9). If I had been open – or if I had become open through repositioning, as Rosaldo was – to learning about the Catholic worldview through experience, could I have witnessed something miraculous or been healed? I believe it is possible. However, the symbols that I connect with from my Pagan background helped me to interpret what I saw and

experienced at the Marmora shrine in a way that was significantly different from those with a Catholic background.

The process of “interpretive drift”, which Luhrmann defines in her study of contemporary witchcraft, is “the slow shift in someone’s manner of interpreting events, making sense of experiences, and responding to the world” (1989: 12). Had I been receptive to this process, which involves “a slow, mutual evolution of interpretation and experience, rationalized in a manner which allows the practitioner to practise” (Luhrmann 1989: 12), and allowed myself to be carried away in the practise of Charismatic Catholicism, I could have rationalised its legitimacy to myself by giving substance, through experience, to the ideas about Catholicism with which I was being presented.

When Miracles Fail to Occur

It is unlikely that people who do not share the Roman Catholic worldview would expect to be healed at Greensides Farm, even if they were witness to an event unexplainable through recourse to positivistic science. Significantly, Waldram points out that symbolic healing can only occur when the medical system being applied can be interpreted by both the healer and patient (1997: 71). As a Pagan who was never part of the Roman Catholic Church, or even Christianity, I was unfamiliar with and thus unable to fully interpret and understand the symbols being employed at the Marmora shrine. Furthermore, my experiences with my relative did not make me want to be able to read my

experiences in a way that would allow me to understand them as a Catholic pilgrim.

During fieldwork, I did not have any expectations that I would take on the role of the “patient” (or pilgrim) and be healed of my own chronic health problems. Like my relative, some of my other informants at the pilgrimage shrine also believed I should “expect the unexpected” and voiced thoughts that I would experience some sort of miracle or healing at Marmora. I can report that, despite being at the site for an entire month, I did not experience miracles of any sort, and that I actually felt more emotionally stressed than usual. My belief in the supernatural had made me open to the possibility of witnessing something out of the ordinary at Marmora, but my experiences with particular individuals, who I eventually realised did not represent “typical” Catholics, made me closed to the possibility of understanding miraculous events there through a Roman Catholic lens.

My Perceptions of the Marmora Shrine and Catholicism

Paradoxically, I believe that I could have experienced healing at Marmora through alternative interpretations of the shrine within the context of my own belief system. To me, the Virgin Mary can be perceived as another aspect of the feminine divine: she is part of Gaia, the earth goddess who is most widely recognised through her maternal attributes in much the same way Catholic pilgrims think of Mary as their “Holy Mother”. Greensides Farm is a lush area of

both dense woods and rolling fields. During the week when it was particularly quiet, it was easy for me to lose myself in the natural beauty of the landscape and thereby feel connected to the Goddess as I understand her. Spending time alone in nature was a spiritual experience for me because of the way I could connect this environment to my own worldview.

Despite this experience, I do not consider myself to have been “healed” in the same way that Catholic pilgrims conceptualise healing because my time at the pilgrimage shrine did not strengthen the religious convictions I already held, nor did it help me to feel well. Have other non-Catholic visitors to Greensides Farm had meaningful religious experiences that fit with their own worldviews? If so, would they define these experiences in terms of “healing”?

To me, Catholicism is one of the most beautiful Christian religions because of its stress on the feminine divine through Mary. Although Catholics say they do not “worship” Mary, they do practise Marian devotion through prayer. If I could intellectually accept Christian beliefs, I think that Catholicism – with its rich regional traditions, emphasis on Mary, and awe-inspiring Church architecture and iconography – would appeal to me. However, the politics and institutional structure of the Roman Catholic Church itself are in conflict with my own belief system: I support same-sex marriage and believe it is a basic human right; I am a feminist who maintains women have a right to choose abortion and use birth control; and I believe that women should be a part of the clerical hierarchy of the

Church. The majority of Catholics at the Marmora shrine, and the official position of the Catholic Church itself, are in staunch opposition to all of my opinions on these social issues. These issues – most particularly the prominence of the pro-life movement at Marmora – made it even more difficult to understand and relate to pilgrims at the shrine.

Anthropologists and the Study of Religion

I differ from many anthropologists both in terms of my socialisation and chosen religious path. Other anthropologists who study religions very different from their own are often not convinced of the reality of their informants' beliefs about the supernatural; they take for granted that these beliefs are real to their informants, but not a part of "reality" itself. Such anthropologists can carry on the tradition of research that employs a scientific approach to ethnography:

There remains, of course, the hardly unimportant question of whether this or that religious assertion is true, this or that religious experience genuine, or whether true religious assertions and genuine religious experiences are possible at all. But such questions cannot even be asked, much less answered, within the self-imposed limitations of the scientific perspective. (Geertz 1973: 123)

In contrast, I am open to the idea that whatever is happening at Marmora is genuine. I share with pilgrims to the shrine a belief in the supernatural – although I think if I were to witness something of that nature I would interpret it differently from many pilgrims because of the significant disparity in our worldviews.

In the past, anthropologists have used scientific detachment as a marker of “professionalism”:

But the effort to separate work and home or the professional and the personal is responsive to a much more pervasive structural bias in capitalist, industrial societies extending well beyond the university gates. Anthropologists whose principal methodology has rested on a maverick, if sometimes uneasy, melding of these domains have nonetheless attempted to uphold their overall separation by compartmentalizing fieldwork spatially, temporally, and textually. (Amit 2000: 3)

Anthropologists are only beginning to write about their own fieldwork experiences with the supernatural and religion in a way that exposes their vulnerability as a researcher (see for examples, Favret-Saada 1977; Turner 1992; McCarthy Brown 2001; Orsi 2005). Why are we afraid of losing credibility through honesty about our experiences?

Research Validity

As an anthropologist doing research close to my geographical home, there is a certain expectation that I will have some sort of “insider” knowledge before entering the field, whereas an anthropologist doing “traditional” anthropology is “thought to study Others whose alien cultural worlds they must painstakingly come to know” (Narayan 1993: 671). Appadurai (1988) asserts that anthropologists at home are often presumed to be “natives”, a concept imbued with the notion of authenticity, and are then expected to forward this “authentic” point of view to other academics (1988: 46).

Noel Dyck (2000) believes that it is important to avoid distinctions between “us” and “them”, concepts which emphasise the strong dichotomy between anthropology “at home” and “away”. Rather, he suggests that

anthropologists, wherever they work, would do well to distinguish between activities and relationships of which they have a substantial understanding and those which they know primarily in terms of a reading knowledge. This approach tends to make “home” far less a matter of birthplace or nationality than of continuing personal engagement in certain types of social aggregations, activities, and relationships. (Dyck 2000: 48)

I entered the field with a good reading knowledge of Catholicism and of what was occurring at the Marmora pilgrimage shrine. I also prepared for my fieldwork in the only ways I knew how to “personally engage” myself: by attending mass occasionally and talking to Catholics I knew about their opinions on the teachings of the Church. I also asked them what they thought of the idea that God was creating miracles close to home in Ontario. Moreover, I also brought a unique religious perspective of my own into the field, that of a person who is not only representative of the first generation of “secularly-raised” Canadians, but also a member of a fast-growing alternative religious movement.

Unfortunately, negative experiences in the first week of my fieldwork led to defensive feelings that carried into some aspects of my time at the shrine itself. Furthermore, with only one month at the pilgrimage shrine – a restriction that was shaped by “conceptual, professional, financial, and relational opportunities and resources available to the ethnographer” (Amit 2000: 6) – I did not have the time

to become more comfortable with the people I studied and immerse myself further in the world of Catholic pilgrimage.

Nevertheless, I believe that my research and the arguments I make are valid. I had good, positive relationships with the pilgrims I met at the Marmora shrine, and my thesis reflects what I saw and experienced through participant-observation. My thesis can, at the very least, be considered a snapshot of a particular time from a particular perspective – like any ethnographic study at its most basic level. Furthermore, my thesis provides an interesting case study of Canadian pilgrimage. More generally, my research can be used to pose further questions in the anthropology of religion about symbolic healing, and encourage studies in this area of inquiry at other pilgrimage shrines. This study may also prompt another anthropologist to conduct a long-term field study at Marmora in order to expand on the ideas I have presented here.

Ultimately, this Preface serves to emphasise that, as anthropologists, “we cannot disconnect ourselves from our lives to live our fieldwork, just as our subjects cannot disconnect themselves from the world and their pursuits to engage with or be abandoned by us” (Amit 2000: 16). Disclosing “messy” personal and professional issues that many – if not most – of us encounter during fieldwork and have the potential to significantly impact our writing is an important part of contemporary anthropology. After all, anthropologists recognise “cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing

explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape” (Geertz 1973: 20). Understanding how we perceive the meanings we are “guessing at” through our own history and experience is the only way our colleagues and audience can truly comprehend and evaluate what we are attempting to say.

I

Introduction

Studying Pilgrimage in Marmora, Ontario

Greensides Farm in the village of Marmora, Ontario, Canada has become known around the world as a place of worship for Roman Catholic pilgrims, particularly for those who are devoted to the Virgin Mary. Beginning in 1992, Our Lady of Marmora¹ began to appear to select individuals, and She continues to appear to three central visionaries at the pilgrimage shrine. On certain days of the year, and particularly the first Saturday of every month, Greensides Farm can attract thousands of people who want to experience the miraculous, escape from everyday life, and express their religious devotion outside the institutional boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church.

In this thesis, I argue that there is significant contestation over the symbols presented at the shrine, and the way both individual pilgrims and groups of pilgrims practise Catholicism at Greensides Farm. I also argue that *communitas* is present at Marmora, but it is normative *communitas*, and not spontaneous *communitas*. Furthermore, I will discuss how contestation and *communitas* among both pilgrims and Catholic groups affect each individual's interpretation of his/her pilgrimage experience at Marmora, just as individuals' interpretations of their own background and knowledge inform their experiences of contestation and

communitas. These interpretations of the pilgrimage are important to explore, as they can have tangible effects on a pilgrim's mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being.

Literature Review

Victor and Edith Turner (Turner 1974; Turner and Turner 1978) were the first anthropologists to develop a complex theoretical model of the study of pilgrimage, which was built upon Arnold van Gennep's concept of the rite of passage (1960). The Turners focused on the transitional phase of a rite of passage and reconceptualised pilgrims as liminal beings who are "betwixt and between" their everyday status during the pilgrimage; they have "symbolically exited one social 'space' or state but have not entered a new one" (Badone and Roseman 2004: 3, see also Turner 1969: 107).

The most controversial part of the Turners' theory of pilgrimage is their claim that the goal of all pilgrims is to attain communitas, a state of unstructured and egalitarian unity, at pilgrimage sites through union with other pilgrims who are also perceived to be in a liminal and status-free position. This assertion remained unchallenged until Eade and Sallnow (1991) convincingly argued that pilgrimage shrines are sites of contestation: "an arena for competing religious and secular discourses" (1991: 2-3). They emphasise that researchers should not assume that the meaning of a pilgrimage is identical for all of its participants, nor

¹ See Figure One.

rely on universal definitions of pilgrimage (1991: 3). A shrine's power therefore originates from its ability to "accommodate[e] diverse meanings and practises" (1991: 15). Through the analysis of numerous case studies, Eade and Sallnow found social boundaries and distinctions to be reinforced and maintained in the context of pilgrimage, rather than reduced to antistructure as the Turners suggest.

Simon Coleman and John Elsner (1995) follow Eade and Sallnow in suggesting that *communitas* is only an ideal and that "many pilgrimages not only involve situations of conflict and social division [but also involve]... a multiplicity of frequently incompatible interpretations" (1995: 202). However, they also note that Eade and Sallnow neglect to explore the structural similarities among pilgrimage sites in cross-cultural studies, and further point out that all pilgrimages have the potential to be sites of contestation *and* *communitas* (1995: 202). In her study of a Greek island pilgrimage shrine, Jill Dubisch (1995) also found that social boundaries are flexible because they are created by the various pilgrims who visit the site, and then dissolve when the pilgrims leave. She, too, believes that liminality and *communitas* are not "inherent feature[s] of pilgrimage to Tinos, but [are] variable, situational, and fluctuating" (Dubisch 1995: 97).

Most recently, Coleman (2002) argues that we should not assume that "over time we shall collectively achieve an ever more precise and universally applicable set of criteria with which finally to pin down 'the' activity of pilgrimage" because "behaviours that make anthropologists (and travellers

themselves) regard people as pilgrims will inevitably change over time” (2002: 362). Coleman concludes that work on the subject of pilgrimage should make points about human behaviour by using pilgrimage as a case study, instead of looking at it as a bounded institution (2002: 363).

Objectives and Results

Although I am using the theoretical models of both the Turners and Eade and Sallnow, I follow Dubisch and Coleman and Elsner by asserting that my case study is a site where pilgrims’ experiences have the potential to be composed of both *communitas* and contestation. At Greensides Farm, regular visits to the pilgrimage shrine are integrated into the structured lives of pilgrims. However, the journey around the Stations of the Cross² remains “special” and outside the realm of everyday life experience and thereby retains a liminal quality.

Visits to the Marmora shrine are therapeutic to pilgrims, in the same way as other “escapist”³ activities can be therapeutic. Shrine visits are both familiar and liminal, in the same way that weekend cottage trips are a routine part of life for many urbanites in Ontario, but are also “special” since these periods are framed as leisure time for “getting away from it all” and can be restorative to a person’s sense of well-being. Indeed, it is true that Marmora is located in Ontario’s beautiful cottage country. Coleman (2002) notes that much work on

² See p. 21 for a description of the Stations of the Cross.

³ I do not intend to imply by the term “escapist” that pilgrims are attempting to “avoid reality”. Rather, I use it to imply that pilgrims are in a space that is liminal and set apart from the mundane.

pilgrimage is “divorced from the routines and habits of daily life”, but that he himself is interested in “the incorporation of pilgrimage into a much wider predictable annual round of religious activity that translates... into a second ‘home’ for many pilgrims” (2002: 364).

Furthermore, I also take up Coleman’s recommendation that anthropologists study particular aspects of human behaviour by using pilgrimage as a case study. In this thesis I examine the process of symbolic interpretation within different Catholic groups, in conjunction with the contestation and *communitas* they encounter at Marmora, in order to explore the ways in which pilgrims may or may not experience miracles and healing at the Marmora shrine.

My research shows that pilgrims use specific symbols that are particular to their religious affiliation to interpret their experiences at the pilgrimage shrine within the context of the miraculous. These interpretations are informed by many factors, including an individuals’ background, upbringing, ancestry, exposure to popular culture, and particular Catholic group affiliation – thus, what one person could interpret to be a miracle, another might not, or might instead perceive it and its significance differently. Interpretation can inform experiences of *communitas* and contestation, just as moments of *communitas* and contestation can also affect an individuals’ interpretation of events at the shrine.

The Fieldwork

After a brief introduction to Greensides Farm on June 5th, 2004 through a bus tour pilgrimage with the Nineveh Holy Rosary Society⁴ from Ottawa to Marmora, I conducted the second part of my fieldwork in the towns of Pembroke and Petawawa, Ontario from June 17th to June 24th. Through a relative in Pembroke with whom I stayed, I secured several interviews with people who had been to the Marmora shrine multiple times. I was also immersed in the daily ritual of morning mass, as well as fasting on Friday and Wednesday.

I began the third and longest phase of my fieldwork in Marmora on June 24th, and finished one month later on July 23rd. During my stay there I boarded with a non-Catholic woman on the outskirts of the village, within walking distance of the pilgrimage shrine. On average, I was there five days of the week, particularly focussing on Saturdays because they are one of the busiest days at Greensides Farm.

Two of the most important pilgrimage days at the shrine coincided with my stay. The first of these was the thirteenth anniversary of the shrine at Greensides Farm on June 26th, and on this occasion I was fortunate to encounter the visionary Roebuck Yumul with his prayer group and accompany them while

they prayed the Stations of the Cross⁵. Through my participation, I witnessed what was explained by a member of the prayer group as Jesus speaking through Yumul at the twelfth station.

The second important day was July 3rd, the first Saturday of the month, when the visionary Dory Tan visited the site to complete the Way of the Cross and receive her monthly message from the Virgin Mary at Marmora. I accompanied her group while they prayed at the stations, and also saw her receive the message from Mary⁶. Although I conducted interviews and participant-observation with other people at different times during my month in Marmora, most of my observations of people completing the stations took place on these two days.

I completed twenty-six interviews in total. Sixteen of these were with women, and ten with men, a reflection of the slightly higher overall presence of women at the site. Many of my informants were of European ancestry, but I also interviewed several people of African and Filipino ancestry. It should be noted, however, that owing to the strong immigrant and international pilgrim presence at the site, I was somewhat restricted in terms of whom I was able to interview. Many of the visitors spoke little or no English, and I was thus unable to interview them. Although I do not feel my sample was fully representative of the cultural

⁴ See Chapter Two for a full narrative account of this bus tour pilgrimage.

⁵ See Figure Two.

⁶ See Figure Three.

and ethnic diversity at the shrine, I found many common beliefs and experiences among the people I did talk to, regardless of their ethnic background.

I had anticipated being able to interview local people in the area of Marmora, but I quickly learned that most people, particularly non-Catholics, had never heard of the shrine. In fact, some first-time pilgrims were completely unaware of the history of Greensides Farm, and even ignorant of the fact that a visionary who claimed to receive messages from the Virgin Mary visited the site – they went there because they heard it was a beautiful place to pray the Stations of the Cross. Although there had been some initial media interest when the apparitions reportedly began at the shrine in 1992 (Alice 11/07/04; Mary 12/07/04; Betty 16/07/04), it seems as though Marmora has generally been forgotten by the public at large. Nevertheless, I did encounter visitors at the site from all over the world. In particular, I was told about one group of Roman Catholics from Hong Kong who visited the Marmora shrine, having heard about Greensides Farm through their local church (Josie 07/04). There are clearly many factors involved in an individual's journey to the shrine, and through the interview process I found that each person has a unique story to share about his/her pilgrimage experience⁷.

⁷ In order to protect the identity of my informants, all names have been changed. Exceptions to this include those individuals who have already been publicly affiliated with the Marmora pilgrimage shrine.

Although my conclusions cannot necessarily be generalised to all of the people who travel to Greensides Farm, they are significant for the people I talked to and deserve serious consideration as indicative of the grass-roots level of religious experience among a group of Canadian Catholics.

Discussion of Chapters

Chapter Two focuses on the history of the Marmora shrine, as well as my own introduction to it through the bus tour pilgrimage. I discuss three distinct “contesting Catholicisms” within the Roman Catholic Church, groups which are said to be part of the “Catholic underground”: Traditionalists, Marianists, and Charismatics. I also discuss these groups in contrast to “mainstream” Catholicism. An understanding of these divisions within Catholicism is essential to my research because the majority of people I interviewed fall into one, or often more than one, of these categories as I have defined them here. In discussing these groups, I recognise the importance of the Second Vatican Council in both their formation and in continuing to shape their ideologies in the present. The Traditionalist and Charismatic perspectives seem to be the dominant influences shaping pilgrims’ experience(s) of Marmora and the meanings they attribute to what they encounter at the shrine. However, there is considerable diversity of opinion concerning the idea of what “true” Catholicism is in regard to the practises and beliefs of those who go to Marmora.

Following this introduction to the “contesting Catholicisms” at Greensides Farm, Chapter Three expands on the specific theories in anthropology which employ the ideas of “contestation” and “communitas” in the study of pilgrimage. In particular, I elaborate on my earlier discussion of two main theoretical constructs – that of Victor and Edith Turner and Michael Eade and John Sallnow – in relation to the Marmora pilgrimage and how they support my own thesis.

Chapter Four explores the miracle and healing narratives related to me by interviewees. Here I survey various miracles that profoundly influenced those who witnessed them, the types of healing taking place at Marmora, how individuals interpreted miracles to make the healing “work”, and how experiences there have affected their lives. I also examine how both the authenticity of miracles, like the apparitions of Mary, and their experienced meanings, are contested among visitors to the shrine, and how shared experiences can encourage liminality and communitas.

In conclusion, Chapter Five summarises the main points of my argument for the existence of contestation and normative communitas at the Marmora shrine and points the way to future research.

II

Marmora and Contesting Catholicisms

A History of the Shrine

The immense popularity of the shrine since its humble beginning in the early 1990s was a surprise to the Greensides family, and their story is engaging.

John and Shelagh Greensides met when John was stationed with the Royal Canadian Electrical Mechanical Engineers in Aldershot, England during World War II (Johnson 1994: 14). Both raised Catholic, the two were married in Manchester, England in 1945, and just over a year later Shelagh came to Canada as a war bride. After reaching their middle years and raising seven children, the couple decided to move to a farm around the villages of Marmora and Madoc, a very rural area in central Ontario, in 1971 (Johnson 1994: 14).

In 1990 the Greensides were given the opportunity to join a group of people going to Medjugorje, the famous Marian apparition site in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Along with one of their daughters, the Greensides made the trip to the Catholic pilgrimage shrine and had a profound experience that deeply enhanced their devotion to the Virgin Mary.

Shelagh was afraid of flying, yet filled with anticipation at being so close to Our Blessed Mother in Medjugorje. Just being there, she felt so close to Our Lord and the Blessed Mother, that she didn't want to leave. It was like a little bit of heaven. She wanted to keep the feeling of peace and happiness by living the messages... Shelagh reflects, "It's not easy because I've done things in a certain way all my life, and it's difficult to change your way of thinking. So it's a daily conversion". (Johnson 1994: 15)

After their first pilgrimage to Medjugorje, the Greensides wanted to have a “day of thanksgiving” for the ongoing visions and messages at Medjugorje. After erecting the fourteen Stations of the Cross on their property with the help of some volunteers, they organised a reunion with those who had gone with them on the pilgrimage. This reunion took place in July 1991, on the tenth anniversary of the Medjugorje apparitions. To the Greensides’ surprise, almost 200 people arrived for the celebration and many people phoned afterward to thank the couple and request another day of “prayer and reunion” (Johnson 1994: 16). Thus, the Greensides began to celebrate feast days and other occasions at their farm with devout friends and family, and the pilgrimage created an ongoing community.

John and Shelagh Greensides completed another pilgrimage to Medjugorje in October 1991. By this time, word of Greensides Farm had spread and Veronica Garcia, a visionary from Denver, came to spend several days with the Greensides beginning June 25th, 1992. During that time over two thousand people came to hear Garcia speak and she saw the first recorded apparition of the Virgin Mary at the farm. According to Zimdars-Swartz,

an apparition is best understood as a specific kind of vision in which a person or being not normally within the visionary’s perceptual range appears to that person, not in a world apart as in a dream, and not as a modification of a concrete object as in the case of a weeping icon or moving statue, but as a part of the environment, without apparent connection to verifiable visual stimuli. (1991: 4)

On August 3rd of the same year, Dory Tan, a Filipino woman from Mississauga, Ontario received her first apparition of Mary while visiting Greensides Farm:

At the Tenth Station, on reaching for her reading glasses to read the prayers, Dory was overwhelmed and rested in the Spirit on the ground. When she opened her eyes the sun descended toward her, and she saw Our Blessed Mother in the sun. Most of the people there witnessed the miracle of the sun. The people were crying... Dory was very happy, and felt an inner urging to return to this place. (Johnson 1994: 36)

Tan received her first public message from Mary on July 27, 1993, and she continues to receive messages on the first Saturday of every month at the tenth station, at approximately two o'clock in the afternoon. She is also said to receive visions of Jesus, as well as Padre Pio (Francis 10/07/04), the Italian stigmatic who was canonised in 2002 and has a pilgrimage shrine devoted to him in Italy (see McKevitt 2000). Although there have been several other self-professed visionaries at Marmora since the site was opened to the public in 1992, there were only two other primary visionaries at the shrine in 2004.

The first of these is Josyp Terelya, a Ukrainian refugee who was persecuted for his Catholic beliefs in his homeland under Communist rule. His involvement at Marmora first began as a guest speaker in September 1991, and he is perceived by many to be a “walking martyr” (Johnson 1994: 17).⁸

⁸ Terelya does not come to Marmora regularly and he did not attend the site while I conducted my fieldwork.

The other main visionary is Roebuck Yumul, a Filipino nurse from Scarborough, Ontario. He has been receiving visions at the farm since December 25th, 1994, but he does not come on a regular schedule like Tan: only “when God calls him there” (Janet 26/06/04). Additionally, Yumul primarily receives messages from Jesus and Padre Pio, and he sometimes physically re-enacts the crucifixion during his visions (Mario 26/06/04).

Marmora is known for the apocalyptic messages that were communicated through numerous visions at the site (Fr. Joseph 22/06/04; Mario 26/06/04; Marcus 17/07/04). These messages predicted that the End Times would commence in the year 2000, and it was (and still is) widely believed by some pilgrims that Mary’s numerous appearances all over the world in the last 150 years have been an indicator of the coming apocalypse⁹. As a result of the failure of the “doomsday” prophecies to come to fruition, pilgrimage to the farm declined dramatically between 2000 and 2004, and many people view this current “plateau” in its popularity as a test of its true authenticity as a Marian apparition site. While some pilgrims would like the site to be officially recognised by the Roman Catholic Church, others do not believe that its formal recognition is important to its lasting success. Significantly, many people at the farm still talk of the End Times and their rapid approach, despite the unrealised predictions for the year 2000.

Although John Greensides passed away in 2000, his family continues to welcome both believers and non-believers to the farm. Shelagh lives alone, although she is regularly visited by her children and grandchildren, many of whom live in Marmora and the surrounding area. They help her with all aspects of maintenance on the property. One of the Greensides' grandsons, Derek, was ordained into the Franciscan Order in 2003 and is now known as Father Michael¹⁰. He visits the site fairly regularly and priests from the Franciscan Order are currently in the process of obtaining permission from the regional Bishop to take over management of the farm and pilgrimage site by 2006 (Josie 07/04). In the meantime, thousands of pilgrims from all over the world continue to visit the shrine year-round.

My Own Introduction to Marmora

The early summer day was proving to be pleasantly warm, but I was jittery as I climbed aboard the tour bus destined for Greensides Farm. The Nineveh Holy Rosary Society pilgrimage, headed by a devout and enthusiastic Catholic named Tim Dooling, is the only established group in Canada that goes to Greensides Farm on the first Saturday of every month year-round, and they have been going almost as long as the apparitions have been occurring. Having found out as much about the history of the site as I could in the previous months, I had heard about

⁹ See Zimdars-Swartz (1991) for a history of modern Marian apparitions.

¹⁰ Bax (1991, 1995) notes that the Franciscan Order has been the main promoter of the Medjugorje pilgrimage shrine.

the “miracles” that people claimed to have experienced, but I had no idea what to expect at the site in-person. I was about to discover that my mental image of the Greensides Farm had very little resemblance to the site I spent a month studying.

The highly structured character of the tour was evident from the moment I boarded the bus. Although I was introduced as a researcher to the other pilgrims on the bus, Dooling explicitly asked them not to approach me; he thought it would be most appropriate if I instigated communication with them first. Furthermore, I was expecting to be able to talk to, and even perhaps interview, pilgrims on the four hour round-trip bus journey, but we were asked to be quiet while Dooling put on Catholic videos for us to watch during the trip. These two videos, one about the anti-abortion movement, and the other of a priest speaking at a conference about the pitfalls of Vatican II, set a Traditionalist Catholic tone that I had not anticipated for the tour.

Dooling also marked this monthly pilgrimage as special because our group was given the privilege of carrying with us one of only four life-sized digital copies of the painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe that had been authenticated and blessed by the Rector of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. This “Missionary Image” (Knights for Life 2004) has travelled the world like the other three replicas and was especially important to these pilgrims because the copies are said to possess the same healing and converting power as the original divine painting. Our Lady of Guadalupe is also perceived by many Catholics to be the

“patron of the unborn” (Knights for Life 2004), and thus the painting had a special significance for this group, as well as for many other Catholics who are involved in the anti-abortion movement.

As the bus took us out of Ottawa’s city limits, it was evident that we were getting into the heart of Ontario’s cottage country. It was beautiful: lush greenery and bulrushes lined the roadside and the sun shone high, promising a spectacular day. The bus eventually slowed and made an awkward left turn down the driveway of the farm, which was marked only by a sign that said “Greensides Lane”. After passing a few small homes at the front of the drive, the road widened and split into two, and the bus turned right while coming to a slow stop in the large gravel parking lot. Dooling gave us explicit directions before we left the bus, asking us to meet at the first Station of the Cross at ten minutes to one, and to be ready to get back on the bus at 4:30pm. As we exited I followed most of the people off the bus to the washroom facilities, which were little more than a cluster of outhouses on the edge of the parking lot, though thoughtfully supplied with a hand sanitizer dispenser. As we waited, Dooling and two of his helpers unloaded Our Lady of Guadalupe and unfolded her, a digital copy mounted on a stiff, sectionalised backing so that it could be carried on the Way of the Cross.

We passed the washrooms and continued on our way to a large open field where the main area of the farm was located. To the left of the edge of the driveway is a low white building with two different sections; the right half of the

building is labelled “Reception Area”, and the left half is similarly described as being the “Prayer Room”. The Reception Area was filled with people looking at the shelves of religious pamphlets lining the wall. There are three spaces on the shelves left for information about each of the shrine’s visionaries. Shelagh Greensides sat behind a desk at the end of the room, as I later learned she regularly does on busy days at the site, congenially talking to anyone who has questions, and selling religious pictures and other souvenirs; small signs note that the proceeds from all of these sales go to the upkeep of the farm.

A doorway near the front of the Reception Area led to the Prayer Room. The first striking thing about this room is the area in the centre, which is marked off by individual prayer benches arranged in a horseshoe that protects a display of flowers and statues up against the wall. The statues flow out of this confined area and essentially circle the room, which is also decorated with prints of well-known religious paintings and photographs.

At the left rear of the Prayer Room is a dark, tiny room where pilgrims can light their own tall candles in glass holders and leave them to burn unattended. These lit candles are a type of votive offering.¹¹ As it is believed that God, Jesus, Mary, and the saints are said to have power over the workings of the world, a personal appeal to them can be made by offering such a gift. Conversely, a votive offering can also be made to give thanks for prayers being answered. The act of

pilgrimage itself is often seen as an offering of thanks, or the result of a promise being kept; some believers will make a vow to go on a pilgrimage if their prayers are answered (Christian 1989, 1991).

While offerings left on the Stations of the Cross at Marmora, such as flowers and figurines, are likely made in gratitude, the lit candles are probably a form of petition for a prayer to be answered. Ultimately, they could be seen as candles lit for hope – a metaphor for finding light in dark times. Other pilgrimage sites have different types of offerings. For instance, the miraculous spring at Lourdes is known for its healing powers (Harris 1999) and pilgrims who are healed will leave their crutches behind both in thanks and in testimony of the miracle that occurred. Healing miracles have also reportedly taken place at Marmora's holy spring, but no material possessions are left in the vicinity of the taps where the water is drawn.

Outside and to the left of the Prayer Room is a tall wooden fence marking the boundary of Shelagh Greensides' personal residence. The area in front of the fence is designated as an area for family parking and the house behind it is white like the rest of the buildings, but set back far enough so that it has some privacy.

Several metres to the right of the Reception Area are the sheltered picnic tables where most of the pilgrims stop to rest and eat lunch. The bus tour group headed over there to talk and eat quickly before beginning the Stations of the

¹¹ Votive offerings are material objects, frequently candles, that are promised or dedicated to God

Cross. The lunch area was teeming with people and from first sight it was clear that the Greensides Farm is not a place of worship for only one community of people: it is highly multicultural, and the majority of people within earshot of our group were not speaking in English – their languages indicated Italian, Chinese, Filipino, Spanish, and many other roots. The multicultural nature of the pilgrimage site is a reflection of the diverse character of Canadian society, as well as the high growth rate of Roman Catholicism in the “Third World” (Spretnak 2004: 116) – a trend that results in a significant number of Catholics among immigrants to Canada.

Just up hill from the picnic area, on a well-travelled gravel path that acts as a “shortcut” to the tenth station, is the tap where the “holy spring water” can be accessed by pilgrims. It is piped from a natural spring that runs on the Greensides farm, and soon after the Marian apparitions began its healing properties became evident:

[The] natural spring on the side of hill [had] served to nourish the Greensides’ two horses. During the spring of 1993 John [Greensides] had a troublesome growth on the third finger of his left hand which bled considerably... He was scheduled for day surgery on his finger. One early Saturday in May, Josie Gooding suggested ‘Put your hand in the water’. He did so. That evening at Mass, John realized that the growth was gone, and believed that Our Blessed Mother healed him. (Johnson 1994: 20)

The holy water tap is a popular place for pilgrims to stop after they have completed the Way of the Cross. Many of them have heard about the healing

or to a particular saint and are, in effect, acts of consecration (Bede 2003).

miracles at Marmora and other Marian apparition sites, and believe the same could happen to them.

After grabbing a quick bite to eat, we headed over to the first Station of the Cross to begin the pilgrimage route. Past the picnic area and the Reception Area is a sign that designates the beginning of the pilgrimage area: “You are now entering a wide open place of worship. Please refrain from talking loud while walking between stations so as not to disturb others who are praying. Thank you”. There is a small shrine to Mary in the far left corner of the field from the sign, and in the opposite direction is the chapel where pilgrims often begin the Stations of the Cross with prayer. Further right of the chapel is a statue of Saint Padre Pio, the famous Italian priest who lived with the stigmata, and this is also a common place for prayer.

The Stations of the Cross begin on the outside perimeter of the field, just past the small shrine to Mary; there are several smaller shrines following that initial one, including a small concrete monument dedicated to aborted fetuses. The first three stations are in the field, and the rest continue up the hill at the far side of the field into the trees.

All of the Stations of the Cross at Greensides Farm are aesthetically similar to one another and each tells a part of the story of the “passion” of Jesus, the route he took in Jerusalem on his way to Golgotha while bearing the

crucifix¹²: “The devotional exercise known as the Way (or Stations) of the Cross consists of following Christ in spirit along this same route and meditating on his sufferings at fourteen designated stations” (Shantz 1991: 25). Each of the fourteen stations includes a small illustration of the part of the story it depicts; for instance the first station exhibits Jesus being condemned to death, the second station shows Jesus being made to carry the cross, and so on, until the fourteenth station, when Jesus is laid in the tomb. Sometimes the Way of the Cross contains fifteen stations, the last of which depicts Christ’s resurrection from death, but the Marmora shrine has only fourteen. At Greensides Farm, each painting on the stations is bordered by a little frame with a glass front and a roof over it, so every station looks like a small house. These “houses” are attached to trees on the property several metres apart, and each house designates a different station on The Way of the Cross.

Each station is distinguished by its location and the way it is decorated by various pilgrims:

Unlike Islam, which has one unifying pilgrimage centre at Mecca which cannot be duplicated, Catholicism has developed a pilgrimage paradigm which can be depicted in any church [or other meaningful location] and which invites diverse artistic representation. (Shantz 1991: 28)

All of the stations at Marmora have been adorned with votive offerings such as personal photographs and flowers (usually plastic), but some of the decorations at

¹² This is essentially the same journey that is depicted in Mel Gibson’s now well known movie, “The Passion of Christ” (2003).

particular stations significantly differentiate one station from another. The most visibly unique stations at Marmora are the tenth and fourteenth Stations of the Cross. The tenth one, where Dory Tan receives her monthly vision and message from the Virgin Mary, receives special material attention from many pilgrims. The “house” at the station is covered with plastic flowers and there is a separate large wooden cross behind it. This large cross is covered with ornate rosaries, photographs, and flowers. Past this cross and slightly beyond the vicinity of the station is a very large plastic cross which, I was told, used to be illuminated at night, although this practise has been discontinued (Francis 10/07/04). This cross was lavishly decorated with personal photographs, as well as some small statues of angels and plastic flowers. Clearly, the tenth station has been singled out by some people for special devotion.

The area around the fourteenth Station of the Cross is similarly unique. The terrain is very rocky and it is not surrounded by trees, as are the other stations (aside from the tenth). Further up the hill, just behind the station, are several donated religious representations which have also become places of worship and feature offerings of plastic flowers, photographs, rosaries, and even small statues. From right to left these include: a large wooden cross; a small shrine with a statue of Mary inside of it; and a prominent larger-than-life statue of Jesus holding a white flag marked with a red cross, which is raised on a stone platform and sheltered by a metal-framed glass roof.

Past these three monuments and to the left in a copse of trees is a wooden hand-crafted rosary. This green painted legacy stands with a twelve-foot cross (not a crucifix) against the side of a large tree, with brick-sized rosary beads strung throughout the branches of surrounding trees. At the centre of the rosary is a large holographic picture of Jesus; one image of Him shows the living Jesus, while the opposite image shows His face as it is represented on the Shroud of Turin¹³. Some pilgrims have attached personal photographs next to this image of Jesus, and others have hung other large rosaries from both the arms of the cross and the rosary beads. As the Greensides' Way of the Cross does not have a fifteenth station and some of the pilgrims are used to praying at fifteen stations, I observed numerous people praying the fifteenth station at this large Rosary.

Just past this large rosary is the Rosary Path, a beautiful (but mosquito-ridden) trek through the woods that is much narrower than the path through the Way of the Cross. It was called the Rosary Path because along it are depicted the three sets of Mysteries of the Rosary: the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries. The Mysteries of the Rosary are not "mysteries" in the sense of being unknown. The term mysteries refers to periods in the life of Christ or the Virgin Mary, and each mystery consists of five events, recalled by reciting one decade (set of ten prayers) of the rosary for every event. Each decade of the rosary should

¹³ The Shroud of Turin is a linen cloth that bears the image of a crucified man. Being centuries old, this cloth is considered by many Christians to be the cloth that covered the body of Jesus before he was resurrected.

bring to mind a different moment in the life of Jesus or Mary, on which the person praying is intended to meditate. For example, the Joyful Mysteries remind Catholics of Christ's birth. The five scenes it represents include the annunciation, the visitation, the nativity, the presentation, and finding the child Jesus in the temple. A fourth set of Mysteries were added to the ritual of praying the Rosary in 2002, which are called the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary. Plans have been made to incorporate these Mysteries into the Rosary Path at Greensides Farm in the near future.

The mysteries on the Rosary Path are presented differently than the Stations of the Cross at Greensides Farm. Rather than idyllic wooden crosses and descriptive paintings sheltered under a little house, each mystery is represented through more popular depictions of religious figures and events. These representations act as symbols to translate the significance of the mystery to the pilgrims walking along the path; here, the mysteries are not necessarily depicted in a literal way, as are the Stations of the Cross. However, these popular illustrations come in many different forms. While one mystery may be represented by a moulded plastic bust of Jesus nailed to a tree, another could consist of a holographic image of Jesus and Mary, along with numerous rosaries and plastic flowers that have been left behind by pilgrims as votive offerings.

I argue that the Way of the Cross' more organised and uniform material presence is a symbol of its status as an "official" Catholic ritual. The Rosary Path,

however, is something that is specific to Marmora. It could be said that walking the Rosary Path is, in a way, akin to praying the rosary, which is an official part of the Roman Catholic liturgy. However, I believe that the Rosary Path differs from the Way of the Cross in that it does not need to conform to any organisational or visual standards as set by the Roman Catholic Church. Although both the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary Path contain elements that make them specific to Marmora (i.e., the types of plastic flowers, statues, and photographs that are left there), the Rosary Path is perhaps more representative of the people who frequent the trail because there is no formalised or set aesthetic element to it.

As our group set forth to begin the Stations of the Cross at ten minutes to one, I immediately noticed a change in the mood of my companions. At lunch I had been talking cordially with many of the younger women on the pilgrimage tour, but as soon as we began the Way of the Cross, those who had been so friendly a few minutes before seemed to be ignoring me – and everyone else there, for that matter – as they focused on the path Jesus took to His death and meditated on its significance in relation to their own lives. I realised that this was what they were supposed to be doing, but the change in their comportment was so noticeable to me that at first I thought I had said something inappropriate and was being personally ignored!

I had never heard the rosary before and was struck by how repetitive it is: at every station Dooling and the group read their prescribed lines from the Way of

the Cross method booklet that we were using, followed by the same prayers in the same order. These consisted of one “Our Father”¹⁴, ten “Hail Marys”, and one “Glory Be”¹⁵. However, Dooling selected a different person at each station to say the prayers, and these people often recited them in different languages. The “Hail Marys” were performed differently than the other two prayers, as the person reciting the prayers would say the first part of the prayer¹⁶, and the group would collectively respond with the second part of the prayer¹⁷. This recitation process seemed to be intuitive for the pilgrims as well, who needed no prompting to perform the correct prayer at a particular time.

We reached an area between the eighth and ninth stations which is particular to the Marmora site and consists of waist-high shrines made of fairly large wooden boxes that have roofs and one open side protected by glass. Inside each shrine are statues or figurines, usually of Mary or Jesus, or Mary with the infant Jesus, as well as countless personal photographs, rosaries, and plastic or real flowers. A few benches were positioned in front of the shrines so that pilgrims could sit in front of them to pray and reflect on aspects of their own lives and/or their journey to Marmora.

¹⁴ “Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, Amen.”

¹⁵ “Glory be to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

¹⁶ “Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

The painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe was set against a tree on the edge of the clearing and Dooling led the group in a series of prayers unfamiliar to me. He asked us to hold each others' hands and pray, and then he began anointing us each with holy oil: he drew an oily cross on the forehead of everyone in our group. At this time, those who had already been anointed or who were waiting for their turn were praying at the replica painting. I felt very strange and out of place as he drew a cross on me; the oil felt warm and heavy as he put pressure on my forehead with his fingers, and then pressed his palm to my head and prayed over me for a few seconds. I did not understand everything he said in the prayer, but I felt relieved when he moved to the next person.¹⁸

It was about this time that the first pilgrim fell over. I had never seen anything like it before, and did not know what was going on. It seemed as though a person, while standing and either in prayer in front of the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe or while being anointed, would suddenly (and seemingly without cause) fall straight backwards to the ground. The individual appeared to lose consciousness for a few moments, sometimes being cared for by the other pilgrims around him/her, and then get up again and return to his/her prayers as though nothing had happened. Even more curious was when one particular

¹⁷ "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

¹⁸ The trace of the cross on my forehead seemed to linger somehow as an uncomfortable presence; my personal rejection of this symbol quickly surfaced in my reaction to it. Shortly after, when I felt that no one was looking at me, I could not resist my "heathen" urge to re-draw the outline of a pentacle with the oil that was still on my forehead.

pilgrim, who had fallen several times, fell and hit her head on a bench that was positioned behind her. Others around her showed concern that she might have been hurt, but no one seemed surprised when she stood up after a few minutes with absolutely no sign that her head had been touched¹⁹. I overheard one pilgrim describe these affected individuals as “resting in the Spirit”, or being “overcome by the Spirit”, which I later learned referred to the Holy Spirit. One of the people I talked to very factually noted that some people are more “susceptible” to this force than others. Although I had understood at the beginning of the bus tour that some of the pilgrims in this group practised a more traditional version of Catholicism than I originally anticipated, I did not expect to encounter such a strong Charismatic Catholic influence as well.

As soon as everyone had been anointed we carried on to the ninth station and the praying continued as it had before. At the end of the Way of the Cross, we passed the group that had come to pray with Dory Tan and was surrounding her, but Dooling went straight past them. We headed to the giant rosary and finished the prayers for the fifteenth station. It was here that Dooling elaborated on the significance of Our Lady of Guadalupe and pilgrims from other groups came to pray at the replica painting as well.

¹⁹ Csordas notes that Charismatics regard this “miracle” of being unhurt as evidence of the Holy Spirit’s presence. In other words, resting in the Spirit is authentic if the person who falls is unhurt and this is evidence that he/she was truly touched by God: “the Lord protects people from harm” (1994:233).

The way home on the bus tour was long as we were worn out by our three hour vigil around the Stations of the Cross; I fell asleep and missed both the last video and the scenery. However, I now understood more about Greensides Farm than I had from the readings I had done previously on the shrine and, although in some ways I felt even more confused about Catholic beliefs and practises, I was no longer nervous about interviewing people on the subject of their time at the Marmora shrine. Everyone seemed willing (and sometimes eager) to discuss their experiences at Greensides Farm with me, and many of them expressed satisfaction that it was being taken seriously by an academic in a way that did not challenge its authenticity as a Marian apparition site. It seemed as though, despite my thoroughly non-Catholic background, I had experienced at least a part of the journey from the perspective of a “true” pilgrim.

Defining Catholicism

In small pockets scattered throughout the country, there exists a sort of Catholic underground made up of people who are in rebellion against the new comforts and freedoms of American Catholicism [since the Second Vatican Council in 1962]... The martyrs and saints of yesterday, in short, have been pushed aside, and American Catholicism today draws its inspiration instead from the phony allures, the cheap salvations, and the discounted commitments of the modern world. (Cuneo 1997: 4)

During my fieldwork at Marmora, I learned that most of the people who go to the pilgrimage shrine regularly are a part of this “Catholic underground”: however, it is composed of many different groups whose characteristics often overlap with one another. Consequently, it is difficult – if not almost impossible –

to assign particular individuals to one faction or another, and individuals themselves will often accept or reject these labels to describe their self-identity within the Roman Catholic Church. Nevertheless, I will provide a loose set of defining characteristics for each of the groups I identify as being present at the Marmora shrine. These different Catholic factions include Traditionalists, Marianists, and Charismatics, the latter of which appear to be the most prominent. It should also be noted that I did encounter a few people at the shrine I would consider to be “mainstream” Catholics, and I will discuss how these people differed from other Catholics at Greensides Farm²⁰.

Most of the Catholic “underground” groups emerged in response to changes resulting from the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

The Second Vatican Council, the twenty-first in the history of the Church, was undoubtedly the most important religious event of the twentieth century to date. It brought some 2,500 of the top leaders of the world’s largest religious body together for four three-month sessions over four years and engaged them in debate on most of the vital religious issues facing mankind. It issued all told some sixteen documents (four constitutions, nine decrees, and three declarations), which won the virtually unanimous consensus of the participants and which when implemented would produce far-reaching changes in Catholic communities around the world. It was the first council in history to assemble with hardly any interference from secular governments, and the first to have other Christians in attendance as official delegates of their respective Churches. (Bokenkotter 2004: 406)

The aim of the Council was to modernise the Roman Catholic Church, to bring it “up to date” and make it more relevant to people in the contemporary Western

²⁰ It is important to note that the categories “Traditionalist” and “Marianist” are Cuneo’s scholarly, etic categories; Catholics themselves might not use these terms when speaking about their identity.

world. Previous to that, the Church had been conceptualised as a rigid, unchangeable structure with specific doctrines, morals, and hierarchy, complete with accompanying rituals (Cuneo 1997: 3). Thus, when the Church finally adapted to the twentieth century as a result of the Council after its recommendations were passed in 1965, many Catholics were happy with these more liberal changes, but others had a difficult time adjusting to a Catholicism they did not recognise:

Once the myth of the Mass as a transhistorical, unchangeable rite was exploded, all sorts of things began to happen. Some were angered and felt betrayed and stopped going to church. Others took the changes as a signal to improvise on their own... At the other extreme stood those who regarded the changes with abhorrence and tried to maintain the Latin Tridentine Mass. (Bokenkotter 2004: 409-410)

Many from the latter group, along with some Catholics from subsequent generations, form the core of these underground groups who “look upon the 1950s as a lost Golden Age of authentic Catholicism: Paradise before the Fall” (Cuneo 1997: 4).

According to Catholic sources, the purpose of the Second Vatican Council was “to ‘renew’ the Church according to the needs of today, that she may bear witness the better to God’s truth and God’s love” (Hastings 1968: 15). Three main concerns emerged out of sixteen final documents. These involved: renewing doctrine focused on both the Church and Scripture; addressing the concerns of

Likewise, “mainstream” is a category that I have defined.

modern society, including socialisation, poverty, and war, among others; and a change in Church structures such as liturgy and seminaries (Hastings 1968: 18). Significantly, Pope John XXIII attributed his calling for the formation of an ecumenical council in 1959 to “an inspiration of the Holy Spirit”²¹, whereas others have re-interpreted this to be his solution to the question of how the Roman Catholic Church (an institution that prided itself on being “unchangeable and antimodern”) could survive in a world rampant with social change (Bokenkotter 2004: 396).

Thomas Bokenkotter (2004), a freelance writer, Catholic historian, and priest, discusses five major changes that resulted from the Council. The first major change he mentions is the change in liturgy that made the Church’s writings and sermons more accessible to laypeople (2004: 406). Second was the Church’s evolution in self-understanding – the separation between clergy and laity was reduced, as was the distance between the Pope and lower-ranking Church officials (Bokenkotter 2004: 406-407). Third, the goal of ecumenism was recognised to be “the reunion of all the separated brethren”, rather than conversion (Bokenkotter 2004: 407). The fourth change involved a greater recognition and regard for the “historical conditioning” of the Church in terms of the development of faith and Catholic lifestyle (Bokenkotter 2004: 407). Lastly, the Council called for

²¹ It is interesting to note that Pope John XXIII’s “inspiration” for the Second Vatican Council came from the Holy Spirit. This type of revelation is typical of those who could be considered

interaction and communication with the modern and secular world, which resulted in the Church coming to accept some of the liberal social movements that have characterised recent history (Bokenkotter 2004: 408).

Andrew Greeley (2004), a liberal Catholic priest, freelance novelist, and sociologist, also notes five significant (and somewhat different) changes that resulted from the Second Vatican Council which helped to transform the Church into its modern day incarnation; the changes he notes seem to better represent the perspectives of the laity. First, Greeley recognises the change in liturgy, which is now performed in local vernacular languages, instead of being said in Latin throughout the world. The other liturgical modification is that the priest faces the congregation instead of having his back to it during Mass (2004: 54).

The second change Greeley identifies is in reference to meat on Friday: instead of abstaining from meat other than fish on Friday, Catholics can now eat any type of meat on that day of the week. Eating fish on Friday and abstaining from meat was a strong symbol of Catholicism itself which distinguished Catholics from other people in Western society (Greeley 2004: 54).

The third alteration that Greeley, like Bokenkotter, focuses on is ecumenism. As a result of Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church recognised the legitimacy of Protestant denominations and developed a policy of respect toward other non-Catholic traditions, which it had denied up to this point (2004: 54).

Charismatic Catholics – a group which, in general, does not support most of the changes imposed

The last two major consequences that Greeley recognises as resulting from the Second Vatican Council were completely unintended by the Church, unlike the previous three which became a part of Church doctrine. Birth control, although never formally included in the Council's recommendations, is the fourth significant change resulting from the Council. According to Greeley, bishops on the Second Vatican Council itself agreed that use of birth control should be addressed by the Council (2004: 55). A committee independent of the Council was formed, composed of both married laypeople and clergy, and they concluded that birth control should be left at the discretion of couples themselves, according to their own consciences (2004: 56). However, the committee was restricted from including this recommendation in the Second Vatican Council by Pope Paul VI (2004: 55). The Roman Catholic Church continues to be strongly opposed to birth control but, nevertheless, many priests told their parishioners in the 1960s to make their own decisions on this issue, and continue to do so today.²² "Catholic laity, with the support of the lower clergy, had decided that it was not wrong to be Catholic on one's own terms" (Greeley 2004: 57). Bokenkotter also recognises that the Pope's stand on birth control, in combination with the minimal degree of change at higher levels of the Church's hierarchy, frustrated many Catholics and encouraged some of them to call for a more democratic restructuring of the Church (2004: 411).

by Vatican II because of their Traditionalist views on religion.

Lastly, the other unintended result of the Second Vatican Council is that, although the Church had always allowed priests to leave the priesthood, more clergy began to take this path than ever before. And, in fact, many of these former priests married former nuns (Greeley 2004: 57). Much of this change was a result of the fact that many priests no longer saw the Church as valid, immutable, and legitimate, given the changes after the Council. This outcome raised the question of why priests should not be allowed to marry while still in the priesthood (Greeley 2004: 57), and the debate over this issue continues today.

Greeley sees the Second Vatican Council as both a blessing and a curse: he believes that the Church was overdue for change, but that the Council should not have tried to make such numerous and drastic changes to Church doctrine at once while maintaining a static facade (2004: 44). As noted in Cuneo, Greeley describes 80 percent of Catholics as practising a “selective Catholicism”²³ that involves “participating in the Church’s ritual life while ignoring whichever of its moral precepts they happen to disagree with” (1997: 17). This so-called “moral decline” within the institution of the Catholic Church itself, and throughout society in general, is what “underground Catholic” groups are predominantly concerned about, and they tend to disagree with all of the major changes to Roman Catholicism that have ensued since the Second Vatican Council. In a 2005

²² It is important to note that this attitude has never been that of the official Church.

²³ This was described to me by several pilgrims at Marmora as “shopping cart Catholicism”. Most of the pilgrims I spoke to did not think highly of people who fit into this category.

article published in the New Yorker, Peter J. Boyer clarifies the ongoing significance of Vatican II for Catholics forty years after the Council:

...the shorthand way of distinguishing progressive Catholic ideas or individuals from conservative ones is by their orientation to Vatican II. Progressives pressing the case for a particular reform will often cite ‘the spirit of Vatican II.’ Conservatives, at the mention of that ecumenical council, tend to smile tightly and change the subject (unless the moment is seized for a full refutation). (2005: 56)

It is essential to examine “underground Catholic” groups in relation to the Second Vatican Council because it provided the main motivation for the formation of these groups²⁴. Their opposition to the Council’s liberalising reforms is united with an opposition to liberal social and political agendas, such as advocacy for legal abortion. These conservative Catholics feel they need to assert what they believe to be “proper” ways of living according to the teachings of the pre-Vatican II Church. In addition, “John Paul’s pontificate undeniably shaped a generation of young Catholics that are more orthodox, and have a clearer understanding of the faith, than the generation they succeeded” (Boyer 2005: 60). The more liberal clergy of the 1960s who supported Vatican II reforms are now retiring and being replaced by a younger and more conservative generation. The

²⁴ However, anthropologist Thomas Csordas importantly notes that, in relation to Charismatics and other underground Catholic groups, the Second Vatican Council cannot be seen as the only factor involved in producing these so-called “crisis cults” (1997: 44). If this were the case, every Catholic would have been a part of these movements away from the formal institution of the Roman Catholic Church, but in reality only certain people were drawn to them.

formal encouragement of more traditional Catholicism may partially explain the expanding popularity of pilgrimage shrines like Marmora in recent years.

The first of the groups I will discuss are Traditionalist Catholics. Cuneo defines them as “laypeople who are committed to revitalising the Church through a moral militancy campaign” (1997: 5). Unlike Catholic Separatists, they hold out hope that “true faith” can be restored to the Roman Catholic Church and are typically very active in the abortion “war” as part of their moral activism. The majority of the people I encountered at Marmora, including those on the bus tour, are firmly opposed to abortion and believe that it is not only a political war, but a spiritual one that focuses on “the sacredness of created life” (Cuneo 1997: 76). Both birth control and abortion have been symbolically “hot issues” since Vatican II. Although contemporary discussions relating to particular social issues, popular culture, and medical technology shape and inform Catholic opinion on the issue of abortion, it was through the Second Vatican Council that the idea of couples making their own decisions about conception became a major issue of contention within the Roman Catholic Church (Greeley 2004: 55-57).

Catholic Marianists focus their religious beliefs and practises around their faith in “miraculous apparitions and mystical prophecy” (Cuneo 1997: 5). They believe that the Virgin Mary has come to Earth in the contemporary era to give devout humans messages that are both helpful and warnings for the future. Marianists see these messages and the apparitions as significant proof of their

beliefs: they are “live-wire evidence that miracles still happen and that forces greater than nature and the human will still rule history” (Cuneo 1997: 5).

Most Catholic Marianist individuals and groups do not promote specific activist causes or doctrines, so Marianism is generally regarded to be the most open to “mainstream” Catholics of the underground Catholic groups (Cuneo 1997: 6). The public accessibility of Marmora and other Marian apparition sites like Medjugorje, Lourdes, and Fatima help to explain their widespread appeal to many different Catholics, and even to non-Catholics. The majority of pilgrims who go to Marmora can be considered Marianists because most of them have come to witness the site of the apparitions of Mary and to experience some of the other miracles attributed to the Virgin that happen there. However, the Second Vatican Council had a major impact on Marian devotion. There has been a significant change in Marian devotion in many parishes around the world: “...a great decline in traditional forms of piety toward Mary: rosaries and medals have been tossed away, statues of Mary have been removed, hymns to Mary have faded out of memory, and May Day celebrations have disappeared” (Bokenkotter 2004: 426-427; also see Greeley 2004 and Orsi 2005). Spretnak (2004) also notes that Mary’s “spiritual presence” has significantly declined since the Second Vatican Council (2004: 1). Of course, quite the opposite exists at Marmora and other sites of Marian devotion, where rosaries, medals, and statues of Mary – depicted with open arms as if she is embracing her earthly children – exist in abundance.

Through their dismissal of Vatican II reforms which only regard Mary as “a fellow member of the Church and not as some kind of semi-divine being exalted above the Church”²⁵ (Bokenkotter 2004: 425), Marianists can in some aspects be considered a form of Catholic Traditionalists.

Catholic Charismatics are the most difficult group to discuss within the context of Marmora. While much has been written about their activities within religious communities, healing seminars, and prayer groups (see Csordas 1994 & 1997), there are limited academic sources about Charismatic practise within the context of a pilgrimage shrine²⁶. However, their history, practises, and beliefs can be described in more general terms.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, also known as Catholic Pentecostalism, began circa 1967 (Csordas 1997: xii, 4). It was adopted directly from Protestant healers and only became popular among Catholics in the early 1970s (Csordas 1994: 230). Francis MacNutt, a Dominican priest, is sometimes viewed as the “founder” of Catholic Pentecostalism, in the sense that his deep involvement in the movement and commitment to it is one of the reasons it has

²⁵ It should be noted that most of the Catholics I spoke with, many of whom could be considered both Marianist and Charismatic, clarified for me that they do not perceive Mary as a divine being who is equal in status to Jesus or God. Rather, she is elevated above humans and honoured as the Mother of God, but still far below her heavenly Son in rank: “Yet devotion to Mary differs essentially from the cult of adoration (‘worship’ in American usage) offered to God alone, such as is given to Christ and to the Father and the Holy Spirit. The cult of the Blessed Virgin is called *hyperdulia* to distinguish it from *latria* (adoration) and *dulia* (veneration of other saints)” (Carrol 2003: 266).

²⁶ See, however, Bax (1995: 13-14) for reference to the influence of the Charismatic Renewal in the early stages of the development of Medjugorje.

reached a relatively high level of popularity and integration within the institution of the Roman Catholic Church (Csordas 1994: 230). MacNutt reportedly saw Charismatic Protestants as “really turned on” Christians who were focused on healing:

The Gospels, he was now convinced, were perfectly clear. During his earthly ministry Jesus had been concerned with liberating women and men not just from sin but also from sickness and both physical and emotional suffering. Healing was an essential part of the Good News that Jesus had come to proclaim; it was a sign of the New Kingdom, and the gift of healing had been transmitted directly by Jesus to the Church.... There was no reason, MacNutt thought, that Catholic charismatics shouldn't do their part as well. And there was also no reason that he himself, as a charismatic priest, shouldn't take the lead. (Cuneo 2001: 97-98)

Part of being a “turned on” Catholic often involves being very Traditionalist as well. The people I spoke to who could be defined as Charismatic Catholics generally have very conservative views on religion and social issues in general, much like Traditionalists. Many of them were also supportive of the Pro-Life movement. However, it is not true that all Traditionalists are Charismatic. In one article, the anonymous author expresses a very Traditionalist Catholic attitude about the apparitions at Medjugorje, along with his/her opposition to the Charismatic movement:

Virtually all of the promoters of Medjugorje are Charismatics. The seers themselves lay hands on in typical Charismatic fashion... this fact alone discredits these apparitions since it is a Protestant innovation introduced into the Catholic Church to subvert it from within in order to bring about a one world religion, which will no longer be the true Church of Jesus Christ. (Apparitions and Eucharistic Miracles: 1)

Charismatics have a special set of practises which, they believe, can promote physical, emotional, or spiritual healing through direct contact with, and influence from, the Holy Spirit. These practises include prophecy (sometimes spoken in glossolalia²⁷), deliverance, and resting in the Spirit (Csordas 1994: 230-231). Deliverance, which focuses on ridding one of his/her personal demons or evil spirits, does not take place at Marmora to my knowledge. However, two of my informants, who are strong supporters of the Marmora and Medjugorje shrines, are missionaries who work in South America as part of a deliverance ministry (Peter and Gloria 19/06/04).

Prophecy, as mentioned previously in connection with the visionaries at Marmora, is an important part of the pilgrimage shrine. However, none of the prophecies at the shrine that I heard in person, or heard of, were spoken in glossolalia.

There are two types of Charismatic prophecy: reported speech, which includes the prophecies transmitted by the Virgin Mary to visionaries such as Dory Tan and then to other pilgrims; and direct speech, which includes messages spoken directly through a visionary by Jesus or Mary (Csordas 1997: 16). This type of prophecy occurs at Marmora when Jesus is believed to speak directly through the visionary Roebuck Yumul. Many of these prophecies, particularly

²⁷ Glossolalia is the technical term for “speaking in tongues”. It is recognised by Charismatics as the language of the angels, a gift from the Holy Spirit, while it is known by more secular and skeptical sources as “gibberish”.

those that were given before the year 2000, refer to the “End Times”, but messages and beliefs about the inevitability of the apocalypse have been voiced by the visionaries and pilgrims at Marmora into 2005. In the transcript of Tan’s “sharing” of the message from Mary on January 1st, 2005, she reportedly says:

[The tsunami in Asia] is already a WARNING of what is happening now in this world. In the New Year, we must PRAY MORE – PRAY HARD. How blessed we are still that what is going to happen is not for us yet! But ALWAYS – ALWAYS – Our Blessed Mother is telling to everybody – BE PREPARED – any second, anytime – it’s coming! Dory emphasizes to us to not be afraid – she is not trying to frighten us – she is just trying to warn all of us – BE PREPARED. What is the meaning of “Be Prepared”? It is NOT preparing food, water or anything material. We are preparing OUR SOULS for when the time will come when we will go with Our Lord and Our Blessed Mother in Heaven! This is not a joke anymore – this is a SERIOUS message from Our Blessed Mother. She is calling every one of us because She LOVES us very much and She wants to SAVE every one of us. All of us who are here now in this place – we are thinking at this time about what is going to happen and Dory is begging all of us, that wherever we are, to continue what we are doing now – to always PRAY, PRAY. It is only through PRAYERS that we are saved. (Email to the author from Jean-Claude Papin, 25/01/05)

There are other central themes in the messages that are supposedly given to Tan by the Virgin Mary. The most important of these, as identified by my informants, include the need for: prayer, conversion, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, peace in the world, reciting the rosary, and repentance.

While these divinely inspired messages and prophecies have obvious connections to Marianist Catholicism, particularly because most of them are revealed to the visionaries by Mary, Csordas also notes in his study of Catholic Charismatics that such “groups integrate liturgy and sometimes Marian devotion

into their ritual life” (1997: 8). He also describes them as being “primed for an episode of world reenchancement”, and credits Charismatic Catholic groups with fostering global support for the Medjugorje pilgrimage (Csordas 1997: 28). It is fairly safe to assume that most Charismatic Catholics are also Marianists, although it must be emphasised that by no means are all Marianists Charismatic. In summary, a person can perceive themselves to hold any one, or a combination of, these different Catholic identities. Furthermore, many people in the Catholic underground perceive the Catholicism they practise to be “mainstream”.

“Resting in the Spirit” is a practise that is unique to Catholic Charismatics and is a widespread phenomenon among pilgrims at Greensides Farm²⁸. It is defined as:

A person [who] is overcome with divine power and falls in a semiswoon characterised by tranquillity and motor dissociation... [It] is an experience of well-being in the presence of the deity as well as an experience during which healing is reported to occur. (Csordas 1994: 229)

Essentially, this state is believed by Charismatics to be caused by God, in the form of the Holy Spirit, with whom the faithful are said to be “in communion” during powerful spiritual encounters or healing sessions (Csordas 1994: 231). “Resting in the Spirit” was directly adopted from Protestant healers and became popular as a central practise within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal during its heyday in the 1970s (Csordas 1994: 230). However, there is evidence that a

²⁸ See Figure Four.

phenomenon similar to resting in the Spirit took place at the Spanish pilgrimage site of Ezkioga in the early 1930s (Christian 1996: 99-102). In this situation though, the act of falling was conceptualised as being a re-living of the crucifixion of Christ: "...dozens of seers, children, men, and women, writhed on the Ezkioga stage in simultaneous agony, feeling imaginary nails being driven through their hands and feet and lances piercing their sides". It happened to them not for the purpose of healing, but so they would suffer for other sinners in their community (Christian 1996: 99).

People rarely rest in the Spirit alone and it usually happens in what Csordas terms "interactive settings", such as when an individual is anointed on the forehead with holy oil (1994: 232). This is exactly what happened with the bus tour group while we stopped to pray at the replica of the painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe: Dooling began a group prayer and then anointed pilgrims with holy oil, causing some of them to fall over and rest in the Spirit.²⁹

The Marmora shrine can be considered an "interactive setting" in general, particularly on the first Saturday of the month when numerous prayer groups complete the Stations of the Cross in anticipation of seeing Dory Tan receive a message from the Virgin Mary at the tenth station. Indeed, on such days pilgrims almost expect the miraculous, and strongly feel that the Holy Spirit is present at

²⁹ See page 27-29 for a full description of these events.

what they consider to be a very sacred place: both the atmosphere and pilgrims' expectations help to enhance feelings of liminality during their experience at Greensides Farm. Resting in the Spirit is understood by Charismatics as "giving oneself over to the divine will not just for the moment, but in a moment that symbolises commitment" – it reveals trust in God and can act as a sign to encourage faith (Csordas 1994: 236).

From my observations at Greensides Farm, particularly on busy days like the first Saturday of the month when this sort of phenomenon was relatively common, women tend to rest in the Spirit more often than men. This difference may have to do with ideas about traditional gender roles within Catholicism – women are idealised as nurturing and very emotional beings – and the idea among Charismatics that some people are more "susceptible" to being overcome by the Spirit than others. However, resting in the Spirit was common among people of all different ethnic groups and seemed to reflect their alliance within the "Catholic underground", rather than their cultural background.

Moving into the Mainstream

Curiously, some people who consider themselves to be "mainstream" Catholics can also be affected by what is perceived to be the presence of the Holy Spirit, even though they do not necessarily interpret it as such.

Samantha (5/06/04) is in her late twenties and working on her second university degree in Toronto. When I met her on the Nineveh Holy Rosary

Society bus tour, it was her first time at the pilgrimage shrine and she was travelling with her sister and a friend. The two of them had no idea about what to expect at the shrine itself; Samantha had heard it was a holy place, but did not know of the apparitions there, and she also expressed surprise that it was located on a farm. Samantha had never considered herself to be a serious Catholic until she attended a retreat in 2003 at the encouragement of her sister. She believes that her faith was first renewed at the retreat, and then just a few weeks before coming to Marmora she had been miraculously healed of deafness in her left ear during Mass.

When our group leader was anointing individuals with holy oil, Samantha reacted in a way that no one who knew her expected: she collapsed when the oil touched her forehead and she rested in the Spirit momentarily. When describing it later, Samantha did not recognise it as being a gift from God. “When my eyes were closed and I was on such uneven ground, I suddenly felt very heavy, like ‘dead weight’, when he touched my forehead. I hit the ground, but I didn’t lose consciousness like the other people” (5/06/04).

Although Samantha did not interpret this event as an “authentic” interaction with the Holy Spirit, Charismatic informants to whom I described this event later in my fieldwork believed that her fall was the work of the Holy Spirit (Peter and Gloria 19/06/04). This perspective follows Csordas’ observation that Charismatics tend to view individuals resting in the Spirit as “forcibly rendered

‘as if dead’ by the power of God” (1994: 231). God is perceived to be loving and gentle so Samantha would not have been hurt in the fall, but He was giving her a sign to encourage her faith and to surrender to His power. However, Samantha’s previous experiences at the retreat and her miraculous healing could have made her open to the idea of resting in the Spirit, no matter how much she identified with mainstream Canadian Catholicism.

In contrast, Tracey (1/07/04) is a working mother with two young boys from the Kingston area and was raised in the Catholic faith. She learned about the Marmora shrine from her parents and was curious about the site, having heard a story about water from the holy spring healing a cut on someone’s hand. Describing the site as “peaceful and calm”, Tracey’s main motivation for coming to Marmora is to retreat from the stress of everyday life. She was told initially that many miracles had happened there and felt that she needed one too – in fact, she believes that she acquired a full-time job as a result of coming to Marmora. Although she has never experienced any miracles at the pilgrimage shrine herself, Tracey feels that her visits to Marmora have increased her faith outside of the Church. Interestingly, despite the fact she has been coming to Marmora since 1994, Tracey had never heard about the Marian apparitions until I mentioned them to her. Despite her previous ignorance of this phenomenon, Tracey told me that, based on what I had told her and how she feels when she is at Greensides

Farm, she does believe Mary is appearing here and that the site is important because it brings people together for prayer.

Tracey is typical of the people I met at Marmora who could be considered “mainstream” Catholics. She maintains an open mind, believing that miracles are possible, but is not primarily interested in that aspect of the shrine. Her faith is not shaken by the fact that she has not witnessed any miracles herself, and she goes to Marmora to relieve some of the stress of daily life, rather than to strengthen her connection to the Holy Spirit. Tracey also places a high importance on her career while raising a small family, which probably means that she has a relatively liberal moral philosophy about issues like birth control and the role of women in the family.

It is challenging to define “mainstream” Catholicism because the term encompasses a diversity of belief and practise. It is important to note that I am defining “mainstream” in terms of what people are actually doing in the practise of their religion and life, and not in terms of official Roman Catholic Church doctrine.

However, I would not define what is happening at Marmora as “popular” Catholicism; “popular”, or “folk”, religion is a devotional activity outside the official religious doctrine of the Church, but it is typically considered very superstitious in nature. Popular religion can be defined as “referring to those informal, unofficial practices, beliefs, and styles of religious expression that lack

the formal sanction of established church structures” (Badone 1990: 6). As the Way of the Cross is the most common activity at the Marmora shrine, it can be said that it is conforming to the institutional practises of the Roman Catholic Church, even if the practise has been “personalised” for many pilgrims through the way prayers are performed and the stations are adorned with offerings. For this reason the pilgrimage cannot be defined as “popular” religious practise. Nevertheless, there are activities practised by pilgrims at Marmora based on informal practises and beliefs, such as photographing the sun in the hope of miraculous images becoming evident through the power of the Holy Spirit. The boundaries between “popular” religious practises and prescribed religious practises at Marmora are blurred; rather than think of them as polar opposites, they should be conceived as “mutual, reciprocal influences between popular and dominant levels within a culture” (Badone 1990: 6) through the way they are able to co-exist and remain accessible to both “mainstream” Catholics and pilgrims in Catholic fringe groups.

Furthermore, “popular” religion has been perceived negatively in the past, making it “difficult to conceive of the popular as a meaningful religious realm in its own right, [and this has] led some scholars to advocate abandoning the concept of popular religion entirely” (Badone 1990: 4). Instead, it is more productive to think of the various religious practises at Marmora in Christian’s terms: “religion as practised” (in reference to practises and beliefs often described as popular

religion), and “religion as prescribed”, when thinking of those practises that are dictated by the Church’s doctrine (Christian 1981b: 178; see also Badone 1990:6). Despite the difficulty (and undesirability) of generalising people into particular categories, it can be said that there are certain values which set mainstream Catholics apart from the underground Catholic groups. Most importantly, the majority of mainstream Catholics embrace the changes which occurred as a result of the Second Vatican Council.

According to Greeley, mainstream North American Catholics at the beginning of the twenty-first century are those who can no longer give “blind obedience” to the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church (2004: 11). This observation refers to both laity and priests.

Greeley has documented changes in the attitude and behaviour of Catholics from 1964 to 1974 (2004: 39). Significantly, his data shows that the opinions of Catholics on several key issues changed dramatically in this ten year period after the Second Vatican Council. For instance, while 74 percent of Catholics in his 1964 sample believed that sex before marriage was wrong, by 1974 that number had dropped to only 35 percent. The same dramatic change is also noticeable in the number of people who believe contraception is always wrong; from 1964 this figure dropped from 56 percent to just 16 percent. Perhaps more surprising is that 72 percent of Catholics in 1974 believed that legal abortion is an acceptable option if the child would be born handicapped. Contrary to this, I

did not meet any people at Marmora who supported any form of abortion, and some pilgrims who talked about their large families expressed the idea that one cannot be a true Catholic while using birth control (i.e., Anita 20/06/04)³⁰. This demonstrates the strong Charismatic and Traditionalist presence at Greensides Farm, groups whose views which conform to the Vatican's stance on these issues.

Although the data Greeley uses to support his thesis is now more than thirty years old, it reveals trends in North American Catholicism which can, in many ways, be considered more liberal on some issues in 2005 than it was in 1974.

Today it is enough to merely affirm oneself as Catholic, and to take from the church whatever one needs, whenever one needs it. Not that there still isn't occasional complaining. Many American Catholics undoubtedly wish that their church were even looser than it now seems, especially in the area of personal morality. (Cuneo 1997: 3)

It would be interesting to see how Catholics today might respond to the questions posed by Greeley and his research team. Perhaps more importantly though, Greeley's data reflects the impact that the Second Vatican Council had on the "average" Catholic churchgoer shortly after such significant changes were implemented in the Church. The majority of American Catholics³¹ seemed to

³⁰ I did not include questions specifically about abortion and birth control in my interviews, but many people volunteered information about their involvement in the pro-life movement, collected money at Marmora on behalf of anti-abortion organizations, or discussed their beliefs within the context of their opposition to abortion. The Marianist/Charismatic newspaper, "Its Time" was also widely distributed at Greensides Farm and contained information pertaining to the importance of voting for a pro-life political candidate in the 2004 Canadian federal election.

³¹ It is important to note that most of sources I employ to support my thesis are American, in contrast to my case study of Canadian Roman Catholics. Unfortunately, scholarly studies of

embrace these changes, and continue to do so, unlike those who have felt a need to participate in underground Catholic movements. Charismatics, Marianists, and many Traditionalists are still a part of the official Roman Catholic Church, and there is much diversity within the institution, despite its apparent unitary, hierarchical character.

But conflicting interpretations of Vatican II have caused increasingly sharp polarization between liberals and conservatives... [focusing] especially around such issues as abortion, clerical celibacy, sexuality, the ordination of women, contraception, and the application of the Church's doctrine on social justice and liturgical reforms. (Bokenkotter 2004: 468)

There is clear contestation among these groups and within the Church itself about what "real" Catholicism is and how to practise it, and these differences translate into enacted forms of contestation at the Marmora pilgrimage shrine. However, individuals are likely to experience *communitas* while praying and completing the Way of the Cross with those of like mind (i.e., pilgrims who are a part of the same Catholic group). Significantly, therefore, we see that both contestation among groups and *communitas* within particular Catholic groups are apparent at the Marmora shrine. This suggests that Coleman (2002) is correct when he concludes that anthropologists should not focus exclusively on either *communitas* or contestation when studying pilgrimage.

Canadian Catholics are limited and I am relying on research about American Catholics to represent North American Catholics as a whole. Canadian and American Catholicism may not be "the same", but there are broad similarities in North American Catholicism. (For sources on Canadian Catholicism, see New Catholic Encyclopedia 2003; Mol 1985.)

III

Contestation and Communitas

Contestation and Theory

Although the phenomenon of pilgrimage has been studied for many years, Victor Turner and Edith Turner (1978) were the first anthropologists to develop an extensive theoretical model through which to analyse these sacred journeys. They define a pilgrim as being

...one who divests himself of the mundane concomitants of religion – which become entangled with its practise in the local situation – to confront, in a special “far” milieu, the basic elements and structures of his faith in their unshielded, virgin radiance. (1978: 15)

To the Turners, this journey to a distant place involves a process similar to that of a rite of passage, as conceptualised by Arnold van Gennep (1960). In a rite of passage there are generally three definable phases: separation, transition, and reintegration. In relation to pilgrimage, the Turners believe that the first phase is instigated through the pilgrims’ separation from their mundane lives – the social structures they are accustomed to, as well as the demands of everyday life – which become non-existent once the pilgrim departs for their spiritual journey. This separation is enhanced through the journey to a far away place.

The transition phase is liminal in that it involves a separation from the previous identity into a position devoid of social status. For the Turners, pilgrims in this phase are “betwixt and between all familiar lines of classification” (1978:

2) and often develop feelings of *communitas*³² as a group, even seeking to become pilgrims so that they can fully experience this state in which “previous orderings of thought and behaviour are subject to revision and criticism, when hitherto unprecedented modes of ordering relations between ideas and people become possible and desirable” (1978: 2). However, Turner and Turner also make it clear that, in the context of pilgrimage, they consider this phase to be “quasi-liminal” or “liminoid” to differentiate pilgrimage from rites of passage.

The reintegration phase involves a return to mundane life and the structure of society. However, as in van Gennep’s model, the Turners propose that pilgrimage could lead to a change in an individual’s social status once they return home.

Turner and Turner’s theory of the pilgrimage was important as the first major anthropological theory to describe Judeo-Christian pilgrimage. However, post-modern theorists have found that there are inconsistencies in their theory which do not describe many contemporary pilgrimage shrines. I encountered the same problem when analysing my data from Greensides Farm.

First, their definition of “pilgrim” is awkward in Marmora’s context because, although it does attract international visitors, the majority of people I interviewed do not come from far away to visit the shrine. Many of them are from the Toronto or Kingston areas, and many of them take day trips to Marmora more

³² “Communitas” can be defined as a state of unstructured and egalitarian unity.

than once per year. Interestingly, some of them have actually moved to Marmora or bought cottage property nearby in order to be closer to the shrine. For instance, Josie is the owner of “St. Joseph’s Cabin”, the on-site religious gift shop at the Marmora shrine. She met the Greensides through two pilgrimages to Medjugorje and was at the first reunion at the Greensides farm before the apparitions began (Johnson 1994: 31). Having owned and operated other shops selling Catholic and religious goods in the past, Josie felt drawn to opening the shop at the shrine when so many people began to come to do the Way of the Cross (07/04). She and her husband now live in a house right next to the Greensides Farm driveway.

Furthermore, some of the pilgrims go to the site on a regular basis. This can be anywhere from twelve times a year on the first Saturday of every month to see Dory Tan receive her message from Mary (i.e., Rose 02/07/04; Dalia 02/07/04), or for two days every week in the situation of one retired individual (Mark 02/07/04). In these cases, the question becomes whether or not these people who seem to have such strong faith actually enter any sort of liminal state having, in a sense, made the pilgrimage a part of their mundane lives. Has the pilgrimage to Marmora become an occasion for routinised and *normative* *communitas*, in contrast to the *spontaneous* *communitas* that the Turners deem to be characteristic of the pilgrimage process? I argue that this is the case.

Liminality and Communitas

In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969), Turner defines

“normative communitas” as being:

[W]here, under the influence of time, the need to mobilize and organize resources, and the necessity for social control among the members of the group in pursuance of these goals, the existential communitas is organised into a perduring social system... it is the fate of all spontaneous communitas in history to undergo what most people see as a “decline and fall” into structure and law. In religious movements of the communitas type [such as pilgrimage], it is not only the charisma of the leaders that is “routinised”, but also the communitas of their first disciples and followers (1969: 152-153)

Turner describes “spontaneous” communitas as “a phase, a moment, not a permanent condition” (1969: 140). I believe that the transfer of particular individuals’ special status from sacred to mundane contexts demonstrates that there is neither widespread anti-structure, nor enduring spontaneous communitas, at the Marmora shrine. Furthermore, individuals often enter a state of liminality and communitas, but it is structured by the contesting social, political, and religious forces at the site which are a part of pilgrims’ mundane lives. Participation at the Marmora shrine has remained a liminal experience for most of its pilgrims, but the communitas that occurs is normative.

From my observations, it is clear that some people at the shrine, particularly the visionaries, have a special status there which crosses over into everyday life within their local Catholic community. According to Sandra Zimdars-Swartz (1991):

[m]odern seers are seen as persons who prior to their visions were not especially talented or devout who are given prophetic gifts and certain paranormal powers at least for the duration of the apparition, and who are presumed in the wake of their experiences to be destined for a religious life. (1991: 8-9)

Both Dory Tan and Roebuck Yumul head prayer groups in their communities and lead these groups to Marmora on a regular or semi-regular basis for prayer; they are both fairly widely regarded as good, holy people who can lead others on the path to God because of their reputations as visionaries at the shrine.

Tan is a retired factory worker, while Yumul is a nurse, and neither of these occupations would normally denote any sort of special aptitude as a religious guide. However, because of their miraculous experiences at Marmora, these two people have acquired a permanently changed status outside the context of the pilgrimage shrine. In this respect, Tan and Yumul correspond to Zimdars-Swartz's characterisation, although these particular visionaries do not necessarily pursue formal religious vocations such as the priesthood. One of my informants called Tan at her house, having found her phone number in the telephone directory under her husband's name, even though they had never met before (Cathy 25/06//04). How many others have been awed by her reputation, or as a result of seeing her humbly receive a message from the Virgin Mary, and done the same thing?

To further emphasise Marmora's status as a site of normative *communitas*, it is interesting to note that even if most pilgrims do not travel a significant

distance to get to the Marmora shrine, it is still “set apart” by the fact that people do not complete the Stations of the Cross at home, nor do they see anyone receiving messages from Mary or Christ³³. Moreover, changes in the behaviour of people on the bus tour when we began the Way of the Cross, as they discontinued conversations and entered a different frame of mind in order to meditate on the messages of each station, marks the pilgrimage as liminal and outside of the pilgrims’ mundane experience. In these ways, the pilgrimage site is, indeed, “far” from the pilgrims’ everyday experiences. When viewed from this perspective, visitors to the Marmora shrine conform to the Turners’ definition of pilgrims.

One could also argue that Marmora pilgrims in the process of conversion to Catholicism or reversion (returning to their faith) are in a constant state of liminality both at the pilgrimage shrine and in their everyday lives. Many pilgrims see their trips to Marmora, whether on a weekly, monthly, or yearly basis, as only one small part of their journey toward becoming what they define to be a “true” Catholic. Their pilgrimage to Marmora is always seen as just one significant event in a series of catalysts on their path toward Catholicism and never as a single, easily defined, life-changing moment.

³³ It should be noted that some of those involved in the Charismatic Catholic Renewal may experience resting in the Spirit at home or in their prayer groups as well as at the Marmora shrine.

Anita and her husband have been to Marmora three times and they had originally heard about the shrine from a friend. Anita felt excited to go to Marmora for the first time:

Although I told you we were both Catholic in the first place, and we were, we both weren't very serious about our faith and underwent a "transformation", I guess, in the early 90s – but mine was two or three years ahead of my husband's. So, at the time we were supposed to go to Marmora, it was at the same time that he was beginning to go through the same process himself. He wanted to go because he was asking, "Show me something... Show me that this is real and that I'm on the right path."... My experience at Marmora just deepened the faith that was in me... that it's more than just something you read, or something you thought about, or even prayed about, but something you experience with your senses. (20/06/04)

Anita and her family did experience several events at the shrine the afternoon of their first visit which they interpreted as miracles. One of the incidents she emphasised involved the chain on her rosary changing from a silver colour to gold; her husband had been carrying it for her and had been silently praying for a miracle while they completed the Way of the Cross so that he would know his faith was true. It was not until they finished their vacation, however, that they thought about these events and realised their significance: "It was then that my husband said this is what he had been praying for while we were there... his faith was strengthened after that, but it was a part of the process. It was God's attempt to show him that he was on the right path" (Anita 20/06/04).

If one were to analyse this type of experience within the conceptual framework of liminality, looking at the progression of an individual's status from

non-believer to full-believer (however an individual or the Church chooses to define these terms), it could be said that these people are in a constant liminal phase that could extend over weeks, months, or even years, and not necessarily be rooted in a pilgrimage to the Marmora shrine. In other words, feeling “betwixt and between” might never really end, simply because the pilgrim may never feel that they have become fully integrated into Catholicism: life itself as a pilgrimage for the faithful. In the case of Anita’s husband this liminal period did end and he is now fully committed to his faith, but full spiritual realization according to an individual’s personal standards may not be attained in all cases.

Conversely, some pilgrims who frequent the Marmora shrine talked about their journeys to the Medjugorje pilgrimage site in Bosnia-Herzegovina in a way that *does* describe these pilgrimages as single, life-changing experiences (Josie 07/04; Peter 19/06/04; Gloria 19/06/04). Thus, do people who travel great distances to Marmora have a more traditional pilgrimage experience that, as described by the Turners, can be liminal in the short-term, life-altering, and involve the attainment of spontaneous communitas? Perhaps geographical distance can be considered a crucial factor that shapes how pilgrimage is experienced. However, most of the people I had the opportunity to interview were within a day’s drive of the pilgrimage shrine, so I cannot tell if foreign pilgrims at Marmora had an experience consistent with that of Canadians in Medjugorje.

For those pilgrims who live within a day's journey of the shrine, *communitas* was not described as the primary goal or achievement of their pilgrimage journey to Marmora. Rather, it occurred as a result of the liminality of their experience there. Many people had highly personal reasons for going to the shrine, including to be healed, to pray for a family member, or to honour a promise made to Jesus, God, Mary, or a saint. Liza, a retired woman who immigrated from Hungary many years ago, began to come to the Marmora shrine after the death of her daughter, who had been handicapped and died at a young age; her visits help her to cope with grief, as well as to have faith that there is something more after death (05/06/04). However, Liza's husband is opposed to her religiosity and, as she puts it, "makes fun of me" as a result (Liza 05/06/04). In this situation, it may be safe to assume that part of the reason Liza goes to Marmora when her husband is out of town is to attain a sense of camaraderie with other equally devout pilgrims. Whether she actively sought or attained *communitas* through the pilgrimage, however, is an entirely different question.

Post-modern Pilgrimage Theory

John Eade and Michael Sallnow cite many difficulties with the Turners' theory of pilgrimage. Their edited volume, *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage* (2000 [1991]), "attempted to set a new agenda for the study of pilgrimage" (1991: 1) and represents a landmark in the

way anthropologists conceptualised and continue to think about sacred journeys.

This new agenda calls for

a recognition that pilgrimage is above all an arena for competing religious and secular discourses, for both the official co-optation and the non-official recovery of religious meanings, for conflict between orthodoxies, sects, and confessional groups, for drives towards consensus and *communitas*, and for counter-movements towards separateness and division. The essential heterogeneity of the pilgrimage process, which was marginalised or suppressed in the earlier, deterministic models of both the correspondence theorists and those who adopted a Turnerian paradigm, is here pushed centre stage and rendered problematic. (Eade & Sallnow 1991: 2-3)

None of the specific case studies in the Eade and Sallnow volume support the Turners' theory that *communitas* occurs. Instead, the anthropologists involved in studying the sites discussed in the volume found that the social boundaries apparent in everyday life do not disappear during pilgrimage, but are often reinforced. Therefore, *communitas* and anti-structure are never fully realised and the authors believe these states are impossible to achieve (1991: 5, 15). Other researchers have since disputed Eade and Sallnow's theory, as they, like me, found that people at particular pilgrimage sites can and do experience feelings of *communitas* and a removal from their mundane lives³⁴; a good example of this type of pilgrimage is the Hajj which Muslims undertake to Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia³⁵.

³⁴ Eade acknowledges this in the new preface of the second edition (2000).

³⁵ See Donnan (1989).

An excellent example of contestation at a pilgrimage site is an article by Sallnow himself on pilgrimage in the Peruvian Andes. One of the three shrines that he examines is a rural shrine called El Señor de Qoyllur Rit'i, or, Lord of the Snow Star, which he believes "is, in a very real sense, an area of competition and struggle between different groups attempting to win control of a crucial cultural resource" (1991: 143). Located beneath a ring of glaciers, the shrine apparently originated from apparitions that a young male shepherd received at that spot and it is now marked by a rock painting of the crucified Christ. While local peasants associate the shrine with the spirit of Mount Ausankati, "the most powerful mountain deity in the region", the shrine became popular with urbanites after being blessed by the archbishop of Cusco in 1944 whose associates are part of the "rural elite" (1991: 143). This group now control activities at the shrine, whipping devotees (either because they have shown some sort of disrespect for the shrine, or because they ask to be flagellated as a penance), and encouraging urban, middle-class pilgrims to come there for festivals. These festivals are now presided over by the archbishop: this pilgrimage site "combines – albeit uneasily – impeccable Catholic credentials with the immanent power of the animate landscape" (1991: 144).

Eade and Sallnow emphasise that those studying pilgrimage must take into account the individual historical and cultural influences that have affected the construction of any given shrine, as well as its multiple and shifting meanings to

those who visit it (1991: 5). Thus, the notion that there are multiple interpretations of the significance of a shrine leads to the idea that these meanings can be a source of conflict for those who go there, those who are located outside of the shrine, and those who are responsible for structuring and regulating shrine activities.

Contestation Over Meaning and Practise

Even though pilgrims do experience normative *communitas* at Marmora, contestation still contributes to how they perceive their experiences there. In this section, I will examine two examples of contestation that I encountered at Marmora, one which focuses on the aesthetic element of the shrine, and another which demonstrates contestation among Charismatic leaders at the shrine itself.

As Eade and Sallnow note,

...a pilgrimage shrine, while apparently emanating an intrinsic religious significance of its own, at the same time provides a ritual space for the expression of a diversity of perceptions and meanings which the pilgrims themselves bring to the shrine and impose on it... [They can] pursue non-official practices – albeit within the constraints of the pilgrimage and shrine organisations. (Eade & Sallnow 1991: 10)

This diversity characterises what Eade and Sallnow refer to as “official power” versus “devotional resistance”, which is essentially created by peoples’ conflicting perspectives about what the shrine itself means (1991: 11-12). In effect, the shrine can be seen as a “religious void” that is able to manage a wide variety of meanings and practises that work to make the shrine significant to

diverse groups and individuals (Eade & Sallnow 1991: 15). In her study of a Greek Orthodox shrine on the island of Tinos, anthropologist Jill Dubisch also emphasises that the rituals surrounding a pilgrimage site should be seen as a process, rather than a structure, owing to the fact that they are constantly changing to reflect the individuals who go there and their own shifting beliefs, values, and needs (1995: 41).

Interestingly, one of the main sources of conflict at Marmora voiced to me by several informants involved the aesthetic component of the shrine. Betty, a retiree and avid gardener who lives in the Marmora area mentioned that she found the plastic flowers and photographs which adorn most of the stations to be “trashy” because she felt a need to “keep the stations as they are in the [Catholic] Church” (16/07/04). Clearly, the root of conflict will differ from person to person, depending on individual preferences and their own relationship with the Catholic Church. It is curious that while other pilgrims may have found differing methods of completing the Way of the Cross to be offensive, this particular pilgrim was instead perturbed by the way that the stations had been personalised because they did not conform to her idea of how the Stations of the Cross “should be”; they lacked authenticity because their physical appearance did not conform to standards set by the Roman Catholic Church. Additionally, many “regular” pilgrims at Greensides Farm voice disdain for those who go straight to the tenth

station where Dory Tan receives her vision on the first Saturday of the month.

These people are not perceived to be true Catholics, but curiosity seekers.

Contestation over authenticity at the Marmora shrine was evident in many forms and was generally connected with the particular devotional practises of different individuals and groups: each had an idea about what the “right” way was to complete the Stations of the Cross. For example, while I was completing the Stations with the Nineveh Holy Rosary Society bus tour, I noticed that our group had purposefully stayed far behind Dory Tan and her followers. When we reached the fourteenth station, more than one hundred pilgrims were clustered around Dory Tan to receive a blessing from her and one of the plastic brown scapulars she distributes. This large group was standing just to the left of the station itself (or where the station had been – the “house” was missing) and as we approached them our leader, Tim Dooling, shouted at the other group: “Can’t anyone else get a chance at the station?” Dooling clearly contested the way that Tan and her followers were worshipping at the Marmora shrine. This is contestation over access to sacred space; Dooling is also implicitly contesting Tan’s authenticity.

I saw this sort of animosity repeated again the following month when I was with Dory Tan’s group instead. The Nineveh Holy Rosary Society bus tour group approached the fourteenth station while our group was still praying. They hiked up the rocky area to the left of the station, rather than making their way through the throng of pilgrims around Tan, and continued on to the large rosary

next to the Rosary Path to pray there. The same type of behaviour, in which Dooling's group followed his lead and completely ignored us, was repeated on their way back down the hill to the picnic area. Although some of the pilgrims I had talked to and interacted with on the bus tour expressed reverence for Dory Tan and disappointment at not seeing her, they made no requests to complete the Way of the Cross with Tan's group despite the fact that both groups were present at the shrine on the same day and at essentially the same time each month. There are divisions between Tan's group and Dooling's group; the question is why and how did they come into being? Further, why do people follow and not challenge their leaders?

Interestingly, other pilgrims I interviewed (Dalia 02/07/04 and Rose 02/07/04) who were part of Tan's following knew who Dooling was, and recommended that I interview him because of his experience and long history as a supporter of the shrine. However, his behaviour suggests that he finds very little to be authentic about Dory Tan, her supporters, and the divine apparitions she claims to receive. This stance is in direct conflict with what some members of his group, as well as other pilgrims, believe, but it does not seem to affect the respect that he has earned as an ardent Catholic. Why does Dooling have these issues with the way other groups worship at Marmora? Why are these same differences not as significant for other pilgrims?

One of the most obvious issues of contention is that of the site itself: are miracles happening at Marmora and should they be officially recognised by the Roman Catholic Church? At this point, the Church has not officially acknowledged the Marmora shrine to be a true Marian apparition site and Church officials are generally hesitant to comment on the site at all. Although virtually every pilgrim I interviewed did believe miracles are happening at Marmora, opinions among supporters of the shrine are divided in terms of whether or not they believe it needs to be validated by the Catholic Church.

There are three perspectives on this issue. The first is that the Church has no need to “approve” the site because pilgrims know it is a truly holy place and its formal authentication is not important. Second is the view that Greensides Farm will eventually be approved because its popularity has reached a plateau and its endurance will be a true “test” of its authenticity. The third perspective is that Marmora should be recognised as an official apparition site because what is happening there is real and holy. The majority of people I spoke to hoped that it would be approved one day, but did not think this would happen anytime soon because of the ongoing tension and debate between regional Church officials, pilgrims, and the Franciscan Order that supports the Marmora shrine.

In his research at Medjugorje, Bax (1991; 1995) explores the “rivalling religious regimes” in existence at this unofficial Marian apparition site which is similar to Marmora in many ways. Despite serious rivalry between the regional

Bishop and his diocese and the Franciscan priests who take care of the Medjugorje shrine, the Roman Catholic Church has assumed a “wait-and-see attitude” regarding the status of the pilgrimage site and has not made any official statements concerning the pilgrims or religious devotion that take place there (Bax 1991: 30).

Furthermore, Bax notes that “[t]he Marian apparitions, or so it appeared in time, not only had to do with intra-church discord, but also with long-standing disputes and conflicts among segments of the local population” (1995: 4). Is this the case in Marmora as well? Most of the pilgrims I interviewed were not from the Marmora area. However, those that were had moved there because of the pilgrimage shrine and were not “native” to the district. Did additional local support of the shrine change any of the regional dynamics between the Franciscans hoping to take over management of Greensides Farm and Church officials? In my brief time at the shrine I did not perceive an improvement in the relationship between shrine supporters and Roman Catholic Church clergy. I was unable to secure an interview with the local priest, who did not seem interested in commenting on the miracles reported to be happening at Greensides Farm, and although local pilgrims seemed to think well of him, some of them expressed frustration at the Church’s ongoing indifference toward the pilgrimage shrine; it is the responsibility of the bishop in the diocese where the vision occurred to

investigate it and determine its legitimacy³⁶ (Zimdars-Swartz 1991: 10). It is difficult to say what kind of consequences this long-term contestation over religion and politics will have within Marmora's local Catholic community.

Despite the contestation between local shrine supporters and regional clergy, the Roman Catholic Church's attitude towards Medjugorje and Marmora is acceptable to many devotees and competing religious factions because although the apparitions have not been proven, nor have they been refuted by the investigations of the Holy See. And, perhaps more importantly, the activities that happen at these shrines do not go against the teachings of the Church. As a result, shrines like these are permitted in the Catholic faith under the classification of "private revelation" (see Catechism of the Catholic Church: 67) and are neither encouraged nor discouraged. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church's official stance towards apparitions was only defined relatively recently (1740-1758) by Pope Benedict XIV when he wrote the treatise *De serorum Dei beatificatione*, which stated that "the approval that the Roman Catholic Church might give to a private revelation... meant only that after a careful investigation permission might be

³⁶ Due to the large number of Marian sightings over the last twenty years (none of which have been officially recognised by the Church), the Vatican's Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith apparently declared in 2003 that it is "preparing new guidelines that will bring greater doctrinal clarity to the process of determining whether such experiences should be judged authentic" (Spretnak 2004: 138). Whether this change will have any concrete consequences at Marmora or Medjugorje, or result in an official declaration by the Church about the validity of either, is unclear at this point in time.

given to publicise the revelation ‘for the instruction and good of the faithful’” (Zimdars-Swartz 1991: 9).

In connection to the Church’s official attitude towards apparitions, Christian (1998) notes:

When watching for the way observers structure visions, one does well to pay attention to ongoing groups that cultivate divine transcendence and the marvellous. The Catholic Church as a whole must maintain a systemic scepticism toward independent revelation, if only to protect its own carefully accredited and well-organized stock of truths. But the institution’s impulse toward consistency and control inevitably provokes a reaction in those seeking more spontaneity and a close involvement with the divine in their daily lives. (1998: 117)

Charismatic Catholic groups provide spaces for those looking for more intense interaction with their religion. “Within such groups the kind of persons whose visions would be denied credibility by outside society have a space in which they are believed” (Christian 1998: 117). Following the inspired procedures of Catholic Pentecostals, visionaries may be “trained” through participation in prayer groups to expect the supernatural before their visions began (Christian 1998: 118). In this way, Charismatic Catholics are able to reinforce their beliefs that the Holy Spirit is active in their lives, while still abiding by the teachings of the Church on “private revelation”.

The specific activities that take place at sites like Marmora and Medjugorje and the meanings they hold for different people, as I have demonstrated, are often the root of contestation. However, within groups of

pilgrims, the visionaries and their supporters can obtain a degree of normative
communitas in which the visionaries hold a privileged status.

IV

Miracles and Healing

What are “miracles”?

Greensides Farm has been seen as a sacred place by the people who go there since the Stations of the Cross were erected in 1991, even though the apparitions did not begin until the following year. As anthropologist Paolo Apolito has remarked,

Signs are the dominant theme of all apparitions. Those who do not see, that is, all those who legitimate the “truth” of the events, often ask for signs, expressing their need to corroborate their nascent belief (or justify their disbelief) through some extraordinary manifestation (or its absence). (Apolito 1998: 82)

However, despite the fact that there was a “sign” at the first reunion at the farm – the sun was reportedly seen to pulsate and spin in the sky during that first gathering (Johnson 1994: 16) – the perceived sacredness of the pilgrimage shrine did not come from this significant miracle alone. It also came from the spiritual and emotional healing, as well as the physical cures, that are believed to continue to occur at the site and are attributed to the power of the Holy Spirit. Many people emphasised to me, however, that the absence of visible miracles at the shrine should not be enough to deter the faith of a “true” Catholic.

Regardless of the seemingly widespread belief in this principle among pilgrims who regularly come to the farm, the majority of my informants initially decided to come to Marmora because they had heard about miracles happening

there from other pilgrims.³⁷ These divine phenomena, which I will discuss in this chapter, include: sun miracles; rosaries changing colour; miraculous photographs; sweet aromas; miracles affecting the environment at Marmora; spiritual, emotional, and physical healing; and, of course, the apparitions themselves. Much of my discussion focuses on narratives about the miraculous from pilgrims at Marmora. These narratives are analysed within the context of contestation over interpretation, and how this contestation, as well as feelings of *communitas*, affects pilgrims' experiences and has the potential to impede or promote healing.

From a believer's perspective, all miracles can affect the well-being of a person by positively reinforcing their belief in God and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. They can therefore be considered a significant part of the pilgrimage "experience" at Marmora that can promote spiritual, emotional, or physical healing, depending upon the individual witness. It is important to note that healing at Marmora, and particularly those of a physical nature, are rarely authenticated by a qualified doctor or scientist: people truly believe that they have been physically healed, and it is not my objective to prove or disprove those claims in this thesis.

What is "healing"?

As Sered (2002) has remarked, there is "no consensus in North America on what it means to be healthy, why people get sick, what it means to be healed,

³⁷ This excludes the pilgrims I spoke with who had accompanied the Greensides on their

or the ways in which one can go about this healing process” (2002: 1-2) However, there is a strong connection between religion and healing.

With the development of scientific medicine and modernization throughout the European Enlightenment and into the twentieth century (Sered and Barnes 2005: 5), trends towards institutional differentiation developed; in other words, “various institutional spheres in society become separated from one another, as each comes to perform specialized functions” (Freund et al. 2003: 219). It was through this process that religion was institutionally separated from healing and how allopathy (biomedicine) became the dominant method of treating illness in Western societies. The biomedical model makes several assumptions about illness, the first being that there is a clear dichotomy between the mind and body (Freund et al. 2003: 220), and that disease is located only in the body, apart from the individual themselves and their environment (Freund et al. 2003: 149).

Many people in contemporary society have not been able to attain “wellness”, however the individual in question chooses to define wellness, through treatments based in Western medicine. Freund, McGuire, and Podhurst (2003) point out that “the experience of illness, even if only temporary, reminds us of our limitations, of our dependencies – present and potential – and of our ultimate mortality” (2003: 148). Owing to illness’ clear connection to themes dealt with in religious belief systems, countless people seek out “alternative”

pilgrimage to Medjugorje and came to the farm for the reunion in 1991.

forms of healing that often incorporate religious or spiritual practices and operate on the assumption that the wellness states of mind and body have a direct impact on each other.

Depending on the religious context, “health” can mean a variety of different things, including:

the absence of symptoms or the absence of pain, a sense or feeling of spiritual well-being, a good relationship with God, contentment with one’s lot in life, ‘clean’ karma, or a lifestyle of abstinence from harmful food or substances... ‘healing’ can mean curing, coping, acceptance of fate or karma, salvation, submission to God’s will, purification, integration and connection among all the elements of one’s being, reestablishing self-worth, connection with one’s tradition, personal empowerment, developing a sense of wholeness, personal moral or spiritual growth, or repairing one’s relationship with God, the community, or the world. (Sered 2002: 3)

McGuire (1998) notes that physicians operating within the biomedical domain are only trained to cure disease, which is defined solely as a biological disorder. This is in contrast to the definition of illness, which is based on how a person feels in the context of their social and cultural reality (1998: 6).³⁸ This distraction is important when one takes into consideration the role that cultural symbols play in healing.

Different cultural and religious groups immigrating to North America brought with them their own traditional ways of dealing with illness, which were then syncretically integrated with the healing practices of their new geographical home (Sered and Barnes 2005: 7). In the case of Catholicism, Catholic migrants

brought with them the practice of praying to saints and God in the hope of receiving divine intercession, as well as a tradition of devotional shrines that has a rich history in Europe and in European colonies. Within the contemporary context of pilgrimage shrines like Marmora, miraculous healing on spiritual, emotional, and physical levels is a taken-for-granted reality for many Catholic pilgrims, particularly for Charismatic Catholics. In cases where healing fails to occur, many pilgrims believe that lack of faith on the pilgrims' part resulted in the absence of a cure.

Healing in any of these three ways could be triggered through a pilgrim witnessing a miracle; conversely, it is equally possible that no healing could occur. How a pilgrim experiences a miracle and subsequently interprets it through symbols in the context of their worldview will determine how it affects them. For instance, a pilgrim who has not attended Church regularly in years who goes to Marmora and witnesses a miracle of the sun could be spiritually healed if (s)he believes the sun miracle is a sign from God. This individual might then find that their faith is strengthened and renewed as a result of the experience. Alternatively, (s)he could go to Greensides Farm in the hope of being healed from a physical affliction; upon seeing a miracle of the sun, this individual may find the miracle to be a reaffirming and comforting experience that promotes physical well-being through the improvement of his or her mental state. Lastly, some pilgrims go to

³⁸ Kleinman (1978) was one of the first to draw the distinction between illness and disease.

Marmora in search of a miracle after they lose a loved one in the hope that the miracle will affirm their Catholic belief system and help them to believe that there is life after death through Jesus, as is taught by the Church. Experiencing a miracle in this instance could promote emotional healing by helping the pilgrim to deal with their grief more quickly and less painfully³⁹.

It is important to recognise that the pilgrims I interviewed considered dramatic physical healings more important than other types of miracles they had heard about or witnessed at Marmora. For these pilgrims, the documented physical healing of an individual that can only be attributed to divine intervention is significant because it provides the most powerful type of authentic and tangible “proof” that miracles are happening at Marmora. This perspective parallels the emphasis placed on physical healings within other Roman Catholic contexts. For example, in the process of canonisation, candidates for sainthood must be credited with performing at least two medically certified physical cures (Woodward 1996: 208). However, physical healings are relatively rare phenomena at Greensides Farm and most of the narrative accounts I heard about the miraculous involved the more common phenomena of spiritual or emotional healing as a consequence of witnessing a miracle.

Miracles of the Sun

³⁹ Also see Liza’s case on page 62 as an example of this type of emotional healing.

The most commonly reported miracle at Marmora involves the sun, and such events are also referred to by more scientific (and frequently sceptical) sources as “solar phenomena”. The term “miracle of the sun” describes instances in which humans perceive the sun to be moving erratically and unnaturally – it may be pulsating, surrounded by a rainbow, or swirling in the sky, and a few of my informants even described its movement as “dancing”.

The association between solar phenomena and Marian shrines developed through the Fatima apparition in Portugal (Apolito 1998: 90) because it was the site of the most widely recognised instance of a sun miracle. On October 13, 1917, 50,000 people simultaneously saw a miracle of the sun at Fatima:

According to a number of reports, some of which came from professional journalists, a majority of those present said that they had seen the sun tremble and dance, and spoke of a variety of colours issuing from the sun and illuminating the crowd. Some, however, said that they had seen the face of the Virgin, and some that the sun whirled like ‘a giant Catherine wheel’, falling toward the earth as if to burn it up in its rays. Many also declared that the sun radiated a great deal of heat, so that by the time the sign had ended (by some accounts, about ten minutes later), everyone who had been soaked by the rain was dry. (Zimdars-Swartz 1991: 82)

In the words of Paolo Apolito, “As a result of Fatima, the nexus between solar prodigies and the presence of the Madonna... was reinforced and became impressed upon the Catholic imagination” (1998: 90) In essence, the sun miracle at Fatima prompted the construction of a symbol that has persisted to become a significant part of other modern Marian apparitions and an indication of their authenticity: “The connection of sun to Madonna thus became the central issue of

the Fatima apparitions, the irrefutable proof, the most accredited testimony of the truth of the apparitions” (Apolito 1998: 90).

Miracles of the sun have played an important role in the experiences of many pilgrims at Marmora. Carmella (2/07/04) has been coming to Marmora on the first Saturday of every month since January 2004 after hearing about Greensides Farm from a co-worker. She initially came to the shrine because she wanted to see the Virgin Mary and was not able to go to Europe to visit one of the famous Marian pilgrimage shrines because of her nursing job. Carmella has continued to come to Marmora even though she has not witnessed an apparition of Mary to date. She now realises that she “did not need to see to believe”. Carmella has, however, witnessed a miracle of the sun on one occasion, which showed her that “God is working here; I was sad before, but now I am at peace through prayer. It has re-inspired my faith and now I can’t wait for the first Saturday of the month” (2/07/04).

Despite the personal benefits and spiritual healing she has gained from visiting the site, Carmella has received negative attention about her spiritual transformation from her family, who thinks she has “gone too far” with religion. Her family is Catholic, but they appear to have difficulty understanding how she suddenly adopted a Marianist perspective after being raised within the “mainstream” of the Roman Catholic Church. Other pilgrims also voiced this dilemma, and some of them talked about the strong affinity they felt with pilgrims

in the prayer groups with whom they met regularly. Carmella's story provides further confirmation that contestation over the meaning and significance of the Marmora shrine is not restricted to the geographical boundaries of Greensides Farm, or solely to the community of pilgrims who frequent it. Even though Carmella feels she has been spiritually healed through her time in Marmora, her renewed faith is causing tension between herself and her family, who do not share her perceptions and experiences of the pilgrimage shrine.

Another of my informants told me an interesting story about why he believes God creates sun miracles for the faithful on Earth. Mark (2/07/04) is retired, but he considers himself to be a "full-time Catholic". Although he came to Marmora as a sceptic who "didn't like ultra-religious people", Mark's mind was gradually changed over the course of his first day there:

I was helping people up the path to the fourth station, the steep and rocky one that goes into the trees, but they were too light – I knew later that the angels had been helping us to get them up the hill. There is no way that people their size and as helpless as they were should have weighed that little. I also saw the clouds moving north, south, and west, all at the same time! I started looking at the sun and I could see it without my eyes hurting, and then I saw the miracle of the sun; I thought that only people who saw miracles were "religious wannabes", but I wasn't, so I couldn't explain it. We started to talk amongst ourselves and discovered that no one had seen the same miracle of the sun – I had seen gold in the clouds and sky, but other people had seen the sun spinning or pulsating. Other people's rosaries turned gold, and photographs people took developed to have Mary's face in them. (2/07/04)

Mark had come to Marmora in 1992 to condemn those who go there, and to convince his mother to stop coming. Instead, because of what he experienced,

Mark's attitudes toward the site were drastically transformed. He explained to me that God uses the sun to show us His power because we know that humans cannot touch it – we know that sun miracles are supernatural and not of the earth, so we must believe in them. Mark believes that the miracles actually take place in one's mind as a gift from God. This theory explains why several people could all see a sun miracle at the same moment, but each individual might perceive it differently. For Mark, a miracle is an aid which can help people, including himself, to grow in their faith and come to truly believe in the power of God (2/07/04).

It is intriguing that Mark sees pilgrims' differing versions of the same sun miracle to be a factor making it more authentic. In contrast, the sun miracles that were witnessed at Fatima were supposed to be more authentic because so many thousands of people saw the same miracle at the same time. Logic follows that if thousands of people see the same miracle at the same instant, this event can be "proven" to be real through science. Mark's theory, on the other hand, is verifiable only through the subjective experience of each individual who witnessed the miracle. Although pilgrims at Greensides Farm tend to take the testimony of other pilgrims for granted on this issue, this belief deviates from trends at apparition sites that use science and scientific "experts" to determine the authenticity of miracles that occur there⁴⁰.

⁴⁰ Harris (1999: 288-356) notes the Lourdes pilgrimage shrine became known as the "Shrine of the Sick" because of the fountain that the visionary, Bernadette, uncovered at Mary's direction. The fountain has been credited with a large number of "miraculous cures" since 1875, when the first

Differences in interpretation regarding the nature of sun miracles demonstrates the contestation at Marmora surrounding such events. Not everyone is willing to believe in every miracle, and some people prefer their own explanations of these events to the rationalisations of other pilgrims. However, when pilgrims simultaneously witness a sun miracle, the fact that they all believe they saw a miracle – and not exactly what they saw – can promote feelings of *communitas*, regardless of whether or not they agree on what was seen. God is perceived to have given them all a blessing through His miracle. These feelings of wonder and equality in the face of God's grace that were conveyed to me during interviews about sun miracles indicates that people experience normative *communitas* as a result of these events at Marmora.

Environmental Miracles

Like miracles of the sun, miracles involving the weather are subject to variable interpretations at Marmora. Because religious worship at Greensides Farm takes place entirely outdoors (aside from the Prayer Room), people notice rapid changes in the weather which they sometimes associate with the influence of the Holy Spirit and Mary. However, as dramatic changes in the weather also

seriously ill individuals began to journey there. Although the apparitions in Lourdes were initially perceived to heighten the conflict between science and religion, the doctors who joined the shrine's Medical Bureau in 1883 took on an important role in confirming the occurrence of miraculous healings and former non-believers would more readily believe in what science could prove.

happen independently of the power of God, people are less likely to openly attribute this phenomenon to divine influence.

Several pilgrims who claim to have experienced weather miracles related their stories to me during interviews. Curiously, some people talked about seeing these weather miracles on their way to Greensides Farm, and not after they had arrived. For instance, Peter (19/06/04) was at a restaurant close to the village of Marmora when he saw a rainbow encircle the sun. He attributed this event to divine influence from the pilgrimage shrine. Similarly, Rose (2/07/04) went to Greensides Farm one day during a horrible hail storm; she kept driving, although many people on the road had pulled over. When Rose arrived at the farm it was actually a sunny, beautiful day, in contrast to the weather along the road to the farm and in the surrounding area.

Rose also experienced a weather miracle on another day while she was following Dory Tan and her prayer group around the Stations of the Cross at Greensides Farm. When they began to pray at the first station, rain had been pouring down. However, as they moved on to the next station, the rain stopped completely. At the tenth station, where Dory Tan received a message during the apparition, Mary told her that the newly sunny day was a divine gift to the faithful who had come out in such poor weather to pray (Rose 2/07/04). Although this particular miracle was “verified” by Mary through Tan, we are only left with testimony about the authenticity of the miracle from a person whose ends are

served by crediting God's power with the change in weather: after all, "the interrogators could not disprove [the] visions any more than [the visionary] could prove them, but they could impugn her signs" (Christian 1981a: 4). Contestation between sceptics and believing pilgrims over "miracles" that are not easily verified through "rational" means has been a common theme at apparition sites.

Anita (20/06/04) and her family also experienced a unique miracle that can be considered "environmental". Due to the dense trees and brush at Greensides Farm, completing the fourth to fourteenth Stations of the Cross in the woods is hazardous to many people because of the black flies and mosquitos. Concern about these insects has risen with the recent increase in the incidence of West Nile virus, a potentially lethal illness that can be transmitted through mosquito bites. During their trek through the trees, Anita, her husband, and their four children were plagued by both flies and mosquitos, as they had not brought their insect repellent. All were bitten numerous times, and they eventually decided not to walk down the Rosary Path because of the mosquitos.

Upon reaching a relative's home where they were staying, Anita put her children into the bathtub in anticipation of having to deal with many angry insect bites the children had been scratching in the car. Instead, she found that none of them, including herself and her husband, had any evidence of bites at all, even though they had been attacked by insects throughout the afternoon. Anita

attributes this occurrence to the Holy Spirit's power to heal, and she believes it is a true miracle.

Miraculous Scents

Miraculous scents are another phenomena at Marmora that is less common than sun miracles, but which is still used as “proof” to verify the shrine's authenticity. These scents occur infrequently and sporadically and, to my knowledge, cannot be verified scientifically. Some pilgrims described smelling two unexpected aromas while completing the Stations of the Cross. These were described as incense “like they have in the Church” and roses, which were associated with the Marian apparitions and, therefore, considered to be signs of the presence of the Virgin Mary (Anita 20/06/04). Other pilgrims I interviewed also mentioned encountering miraculous scents while on pilgrimage at Medjugorje (Cathy 24/06/04; Gloria 19/06/04; Peter 19/06/04).

Perhaps because visual stimuli leave a more tangible impression than does smell, very little has been written about miraculous scents. Thus, they are probably the most underreported type of miracle that people experience at pilgrimage shrines, and possibly one of the most difficult for people outside of the worldview of the Catholic pilgrim to accept. I was only able to locate two references to miraculous scent: Christian (1996) notes that a lily-like fragrance

was identified as the scent of the Virgin at a pilgrimage site in 1931 in Spain (1996: 189). Apolito also documents a similar event when “the pilgrims noticed a ‘most delicate odour of incense’” (1998: 196) after seeing a miracle of the sun at a local Italian shrine, although he does not dwell on this sign or go into any depth in regard to its significance.

Visions and the Authenticity of Miracles

A significant number of pilgrims to Marian shrines are not convinced of the legitimacy of all of the visionaries and their messages:

[r]ecognising that the only direct witness to the supernatural reality that may be manifest in a vision is the visionary, communities and Church officials have for centuries sought and found indirect confirmation of the claims of a visionary in various kinds of signs. (Zimdars-Swartz 1991: 8)

Christian (1981a) discusses the type of criteria used to judge the apparent authenticity of apparitions in late medieval and renaissance Spain; interestingly, the criteria used to appraise the visionaries have not changed significantly since that era, although it is important to note that less stringent methods are used to deal with those judged to be false. In the case of Jeanne d’Arc, Christian notes that her interrogators looked for tangible signs of the divine: “...something that could be seen, smelled, or touched by others besides the seer, some manifestation of divine presence or impingement upon the natural world that could be independently verified” (1981a: 188). The other main criterion used to judge the

authenticity of seers is that of their “character and comportment” (Christian 1981a: 191).

Of course, these are both very subjective criteria and each visionary will be evaluated on an individual basis by other individuals who bring their own interpretations of “proper” Catholicism; of the correct behaviour and demeanour for a person to whom Mary, Jesus, or a saint would appear⁴¹; and of whether the physical signs present were believable or not. In many cases, it also needed to be determined that the person claiming to have divine visions was of sound mind, and doctors became involved in this process in western Europe early in the seventeenth century (Christian 1996: 274).

From my own observations and interactions with pilgrims at Marmora, visionaries today seem to be judged on essentially the same subjective criteria, although as far as I know none of the visionaries at Greensides Farm have been subjected to a mental health examination. Furthermore, judging Marmora’s authenticity is more difficult because the “signs” that are supposed to confirm the validity of apparitions (i.e., sun miracles, miraculous changes in the weather) were present at the site a full year before the apparitions began. Thus, the pilgrims who go to Marmora (and who are not just “curiosity seekers”) generally assume that

⁴¹ According to Christian, a source in the 15th century noted that a visionary would have these five virtues: “humility, willingness to accept counsel, patience, accuracy, and charity” (Christian 1981a: 192).

miraculous signs and apparitions are happening⁴², based on what they have heard from others about Greensides Farm. Most pilgrims believe that the shrine is ultimately a holy place. However, the authenticity of the individual visionaries is subject to more scrutiny by pilgrims, and it seems that people who come to the Marmora shrine regularly, and who have strong connections to one or more of the “underground” Catholic groups, have a more developed opinion about whether certain visionaries or miracles are genuine.

Francis (10/07/04), for instance, has a long history at Greensides Farm as one of John and Shelagh’s many grandchildren. After a troubled life as a teenager, he had a powerful conversion experience and is now in the seminary deciding whether or not he wants to be a priest. Francis has also opened several “Foundations” youth centres (Christian community centres for teens) in the greater Belleville area in Ontario. He holds significantly more liberal attitudes toward contemporary social issues than many of the other pilgrims I interviewed. Francis told me that he does not agree with all of the Catechism teachings and the Church’s interpretations of the Bible, but that he has interpreted them through his own studies in a way that makes sense and helps him to keep his faith.

⁴² Although pilgrims may take for granted the idea that miracles and apparitions happen at Greensides Farm, it is essential to note that the way these miracles are interpreted can lead to contestation between groups and individuals at the shrine. For example, Mark’s case study (p. 82) demonstrates how his interpretation of sun miracles differs significantly from more traditional interpretations which are based on the Fatima apparitions and voiced by other Marmora pilgrims.

Francis has never seen anything miraculous at the Marmora shrine, but he knows that people do have profound experiences there. He believes that Dory Tan is more credible than some of the other visionaries who have visited the farm because of her “modesty and devotion to God over such an extended period of time” (10/07/04). In contrast, Francis has a very negative opinion of Josyp Terelya. Francis overheard him speaking to another person at the shrine about gay individuals, a conversation in which he called them “garbage”. Francis told me in very clear terms that “God does not make garbage”. Even though he has deep faith and could be considered a Marianist in his support of Tan’s apparitions, Francis certainly does not take the messages of all the visionaries for granted.

There are other individuals as well who contest the authenticity of the visionaries and miracles at the shrine. Fr. Joseph (19/06/04), a priest currently heading a parish in the Pembroke area, was formerly Dory Tan’s priest in Mississauga during the mid-1990s when her affiliation with the apparitions became well-publicised. Although Fr. Joseph respects Tan as a very devout individual who encourages others in their faith through her messages and prayer group, he had visited Greensides Farm several times before the year 2000 and was appalled by the strong apocalyptic discourse at the shrine, which he describes as “people caught up in ‘sideshow’”. The problem, he explained to me, was that people were more focused on the hysteria surrounding the year 2000, rather than on the power of the shrine to bring about conversions and strengthen people’s

faith. Fr. Joseph thinks that certain aspects of Greensides Farm, such as the Stations of the Cross, conversions, and encouraging people to attend mass and confession regularly are good for the Church and for Catholic individuals. However, he also remembers people trying to sell “authentic” incense from St. Michael, as well as pickled grapes from the Garden of Eden. From Fr. Joseph’s perspective, the pilgrimage experience is usually helpful to people, but it can also be detrimental to some whose beliefs are in the process of developing and who could be vulnerable to deceit.

Fr. Joseph believes that the Marmora shrine has significantly “matured” since the year 2000 has passed without apocalyptic events, and that Tan is having a positive impact on the people who come to Marmora looking for spiritual renewal. However, he also emphasises that it is important for the clergy to support and be involved in the site, in order to provide it with direction, which he believes Marmora lacks. Other pilgrims at the site have criticised some of Tan’s messages for not completely coinciding with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. These pilgrims believe that this problem could be remedied if Tan had a Spiritual Director to help her. In fact, Josie (07/04), the owner of the “St. Joseph’s Cabin” gift shop, told me that she will not sell Tan’s book about the apparitions (Tan and McLarney 1998) because of the nature of the messages in it which Tan claims were given to her by the Virgin Mary.

Interestingly, all of the Catholics I spoke to who had not directly experienced a miracle or seen Tan receive a message from Mary nonetheless believe that miracles are happening because of the shrine's reputation. From this evidence, it can be inferred that those who are "newer" to Marmora are generally more willing than pilgrims who have been coming to the shrine for longer periods to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to create miracles through the Virgin Mary's intercession. Newer pilgrims take miracles at Marmora for granted. Furthermore, these pilgrims are probably not entangled in the politics between groups at the shrine, and are thus less likely to be involved in the ongoing debates surrounding the legitimacy of different beliefs and practises at the shrine. For instance, Cathy (25/06/04), a very devout informant who has only visited Greensides Farm twice, expressed her high opinion of Josyp Terelya and the messages he relays from the Virgin Mary because of the political persecution he suffered for his devotion to the Catholic faith. She has never heard Terelya speak or met him in person, but she reads his messages on the internet and has gained significant respect for him.

Miraculous Photography

Miraculous photography was another "extra-ordinary" phenomenon which happens frequently at Greensides Farm and is largely taken for granted as "authentic" by most of the pilgrims. Apolito documents the importance to pilgrims at Marian shrines of filming miracles of the sun to prove their existence

(1998: 92). Indeed, as a guest at the home of a Marmora pilgrim, I was shown a videotape of a miracle of the sun seen at Greensides Farm. Furthermore, many pilgrims at Marmora will constantly take pictures of the sun with a camera as they complete the Way of the Cross in the hope that something “miraculous” will develop in the photo.

Unlike other images (such as paintings), photographs appear to contain an essence of the original object and are imbued with an aura of authenticity and authority... As tangible miracles, the photographs affirm [pilgrims'] beliefs and prove that God is active in their lives. (Wojcik 1996: 138)

Polaroid film seems to be the medium of choice when documenting the miraculous at Marmora and other Marian apparition sites. As Mario, a regular pilgrim who is related to one of the visionaries, and his daughter, Janet, told me (26/06/04), Polaroid film adds a level of authenticity to the photographs because they cannot be tampered with the same way that regular film can during the developing process. Wojcik reiterates this point in his own research on miraculous photos at the Bayside apparition site in Queens, New York:

...miracle photos both reveal an invisible, dematerialized reality and verify this reality by offering physical evidence. The Polaroid process in particular exemplifies the apparitional quality of photography, as images appear instantaneously and seemingly of their own accord, through a chemical-optical process that produces spectral doubles of reality. (1996: 137)

Janet gave me a Polaroid photo that she took of the sun at Greensides Farm while I was there on the thirteenth anniversary of the first reunion. Known among others in her prayer group as having a “gift” for taking miraculous

photographs (Mario 26/06/04), Janet will often take a series of photos while completing the Stations of the Cross, as well as numerous photos specifically directed at the sun, whether a sun miracle is happening or not. In the photo she gave me, instead of simply showing the sun, the image showed a large white circle, which was interpreted for me as being a giant communion host⁴³. A subsequent Polaroid photo taken on the same day showed a clearer picture of the sun itself, but with a shaded vertical bar down the centre of the photo, and a luminous oblong figure on either side of the sun; this image was interpreted by Mario as being the gates of heaven with Mary and Jesus watching over entering souls.

According to Wojcik, these photographs are “[r]eferred to as ‘miracle photos’ or ‘Polaroids from Heaven’ by believers... images are said to contain allegorical and apocalyptic symbols and are interpreted as divine communications offering insights of prophetic and personal relevance” (1996: 130). It can be seen as an “innovation” on more traditional forms of popular Catholicism, which have a strong heritage of miraculous images⁴⁴.

How events become “miracles”

⁴³ See Figure Five.

⁴⁴ These more “traditional” miraculous images have included statues and other religious articles that can move, smile, weep, bleed, or “ooze” oil (Johnson 1994: 237; see also Christian 1992), as well as religious images that have miraculously appeared, such as the portrait of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The system of belief that allows some Catholics to interpret photographs in this way is the same system that allows them to interpret events as miracles. In *Religion as a Cultural System* (1973), Geertz defines religion as being

(1) a system which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the (5) moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (1973: 90)

Roman Catholicism can be seen as the system which constructs this “general order of existence” that makes the “facts” and rules it teaches about both mundane and sacred aspects of life become real. Catholics learn to interpret what happens in the course of daily life, whether at work or on a pilgrimage to Greensides Farm, through this paradigm of symbols to which the Catholic Church gives meaning. Of course, it is important to recognise that other influences in peoples’ lives (such as politics, education, socioeconomic status, ethnic traditions, mass media) will also contribute to the ways in which these symbols are interpreted; as Marty (2005) notes, “understandings of faith and healing do not simply follow the lines of denominational membership” (2005: 489). However, in a setting where people go purposefully to see the world through a religious lens, like Greensides Farm, they are likely to interpret their experiences with reference to the religious socialisation process(es) they have experienced from childhood or sought out independently. Contestation among pilgrims occurs over these created meanings, even among Catholics, because differences in religious upbringing, thought, and

teachings among Catholic groups will result in multiple interpretations of the same event. Interpretation not only precedes contestation, but contestation can also influence and change a person's interpretation of what they have experienced.

Furthermore, as Geertz also points out in *Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight* (1973), culture is acted out in public symbols which communicate a society's worldview (2000: 496). Miraculous occurrences at Marmora are interpreted through a Catholic worldview. Moreover, the practises that happen there, such as completing the Way of the Cross and seeing visionaries receive apparitions at scheduled times, are symbolic expressions of what it means to be Catholic for the pilgrims who go to the shrine. Greeley testifies: "Catholics remain Catholic because of the Catholic religious sensibility, a congeries of metaphors that explain what human life means, with deep and powerful appeal to the total person" (2004: 102).

Nevertheless, contestation between groups at the shrine over what constitutes "true" Catholicism and how it should be practised can cause tension between groups and individuals over what should or should not be done at a site widely considered to be holy ground. In particular, I focus here on the practises of Charismatic Catholics in order to illustrate how their specific system of belief helps them to interpret a myriad of events and occurrences as miraculous. In addition to focusing on Charismatic Catholic practises and interpretation at Marmora, I am also going to concentrate on healing rather than on the

interpretation of miracles in general. All miracles witnessed by people at Marmora have the potential to lead to emotional, spiritual, or physical healing, as I discuss below.

The process of interpretation through the belief system of any individual “works” in several ways. For pilgrims at Marmora who perceive events to be “miraculous”, there are four conditions present at the shrine which make such an interpretation possible. These are: expectations created by other pilgrims for the miraculous to occur; a liminal state in which individuals expect things “out-of-the-ordinary” to happen; the performance of rites which can lead pilgrims to an altered state of consciousness; and symbols which help a pilgrim to define the problems in their lives and the solutions to these issues in terms of the Catholic worldview.

i. Expectations

The first way that miracles are perceived to occur by Charismatic pilgrims is through the expectations created by them at the shrine. In his work on Catholic Charismatics, Thomas Csordas notes that Charismatics are concerned about the “authenticity” of resting in the Spirit because it is not always believed to be caused by divine means; their definitions of these other means include “group expectation or crowd psychology... peer pressure when others are falling” (1994: 253-4). Groups of Charismatic pilgrims create an environment in which people

expect to see the miraculous both because of the way they pray at the site and owing to the reputation of the Marmora shrine.

Marty (2005) classifies Charismatic Catholics and others who believe that God has the power to heal them as “Monergists” (2005: 500). Monergists fully attribute all power over health and illness to God and also believe that acts like prayer can tangibly impact their lives.

Monergistic believers are as capable as others of crying or shouting in anger at a deity when a terrible disease takes a beloved child, when visions of the agony of mass starvation or plague confront them, or when they suffer pain. They simply relegate to the realm of mystery any final accounting of why God withholds healing and comfort when God does so, or they may at times blame their own apparent lack of sufficient faith. In either case they reserve the right to assign credit to the same God when they perceive signs and wonders happening. (Marty 2005: 502)

It can be assumed that Charismatic Catholics making a pilgrimage to Marmora with the hope of being healed or witnessing a Marian apparition believe in the absolute power of God to affect their lives through prayer at Greensides Farm. It follows that God – having absolute power over their lives and well-being – will recognise their devotion and effect some change in their lives, whether it materialises immediately or not. Through this belief, Charismatic Catholics create expectations that God will respond to their devotion in one way or another. Non-medical miracles like solar phenomena make sense, or even become anticipated, in terms of the Monergistic belief framework. It explains why so many people

who have never seen a miracle, or even been to the Marmora pilgrimage shrine, believe that miracles are happening and that Mary is appearing there.

Especially penitent pilgrims seem to create greater expectations in both themselves and others that they will be divinely rewarded. During my time at Greensides Farm I saw several people complete the Way of the Cross barefoot, a commendable accomplishment given the rough terrain of the area. Votive offerings that included personal photographs, statues of angels, elaborate rosaries, flowers, and burning candles were also “offered up” by those in search of God’s healing power. In a study of the cult of El Santo Niño de Atocha at a Los Angeles shrine, Polk et al. (2005) focus on the reasons pilgrims come to the shrine and what they leave as offerings:

The apparent desperation of petitioners and the anxious wait for divine power to manifest are especially compelling. Miguel [is] a Mexican national who... comes on a regular basis. ‘Twice a week’, he said, ‘I come to see El Santo Niño de Atocha, to talk with him and pray.’ During these conversations he asks the Holy Child to guarantee the health of his children, parents, and brothers, as well as his own. (Polk et al. 2005: 108-109)

Miguel’s serious commitment to visiting the Holy Child in the hope of achieving regular divine intercession on behalf of his family mirrors the devotion of pilgrims at Marmora who journey to the site on a very regular basis. This type of dedication seems to reassure pilgrims about their expectations that they and those for whom they pray will be helped by God.

ii. Liminality

People also expect miraculous healing at Greensides Farm because of the liminal quality of the pilgrimage site itself. One of the central ideas of a pilgrimage involves a journey that facilitates first a separation from everyday life and an eventual reintegration into it – a central reason Victor and Edith Turner associated pilgrimage with the liminal phase of a traditional rite of passage (1978).

I argue that the *communitas* accompanying feelings of liminality at the Marmora pilgrimage has become normative, rather than spontaneous. The site has been a part of the regional Catholic landscape long enough to have developed multiple and shifting political, economic, and religious boundaries both outside and within the geography of the site itself. Unstructured and egalitarian unity does not occur at the site, and probably never has because of the elevated status of the visionaries. However, people continue to feel removed from the more mundane aspects of their lives, even if journeying to Greensides Farm on a regular basis has, in a sense, become a part of their everyday existence.

The majority of pilgrims describe their journey and time at Marmora as “peaceful”. Other descriptive words used include “joyful”, “renewed”, “calm”, “spiritual”, “tranquil”, “free”, and “elated”. Significantly, Csordas notes that Charismatics tend to associate “peace, relaxation, surrender, and tranquility” (1997: 247) with healing through the Holy Spirit. These phrases communicate the positive emotional and spiritual effects the site has on many pilgrims. The liminal

environment does appear to help pilgrims release built-up stress, enter a more relaxed state, and become open to the possibility of healing.

In combination with the expectations Charismatic pilgrims hold about experiencing something miraculous at the Marmora shrine, it is evident that the liminal state created at the shrine can further predispose pilgrims to experiencing the extraordinary. For some, healing manifests in a physical form that pilgrims attribute to the influence of the Holy Spirit or the Virgin Mary. For others, a visit to the shrine simply provides escape from the stresses of everyday life and existing “betwixt and between” at the shrine eventually allows individuals to re-enter mundane reality with a renewed sense of self. It is clear that the liminal state many pilgrims enter at the shrine contributes to shaping the interpretation of their experience.

iii. Performance

The third way healing is achieved at Marmora is through performance. As Susan Sered and Linda Barnes note, “the performance of a healing ritual creates a ‘special enchantment of experience’ that engages the patient in the therapeutic process” (2005: 12). The particular ritual of the Stations of the Cross leaves pilgrims open to the idea that they are in a sacred place where their prayers may be directly answered by the Holy Spirit. The performance of the highly repetitive prayers involved in saying the rosary at each station can also help to put pilgrims

into an altered state of consciousness,⁴⁵ encouraging them to feel detached from their mundane reality and its problems, closer to God, or even directly in touch with God and His healing power. Taking holy water from the tap connected to the stream at Greensides Farm after completing the Way of the Cross is another ritual enacted by many pilgrims which helps to establish expectations that healing will occur.

Geertz (1973) uses the Rangda-Barong ritual in Bali, a “traditional” performance involving ritual combat between a witch (Rangda) and a monster (Barong), to illustrate how altered states are achieved through performance (1973: 114). At the climax of the presentation, before Rangda has been defeated and when Barong attacks the dancers, members of the audience fall into trance that can involve very unorthodox behaviour. But, as Geertz points out, this trance serves a purpose:

Mass trance, spreading like panic, projects the individual Balinese out of the common-place world in which he usually lives into that most uncommonplace one in which Rangda and Barong live. To become entranced is, for the Balinese, to cross a threshold into another order of existence...”. (Geertz 1973: 116)

⁴⁵ I am conceptualising an “altered state of consciousness” to be any state of consciousness which is different from an individual’s “normal” experience of consciousness and influenced by external stimuli. Atkinson’s (1992) review article provides a comprehensive discussion of the problems with using terms like “altered states of consciousness” and “trance” interchangeably to describe what are often entirely different phenomena (1992: 310). These sentiments are also echoed in Shaara and Strathern (1992:145). I use the term in this thesis because there are few better ways to describe the state of mind of people on the pilgrimage – “intense focus” is perhaps the best way to think of the “state of altered consciousness” common among pilgrims at Marmora.

In this performance, Balinese participants use the ritual dance and music to trigger a type of trance and reach a state of liminality. Geertz's Balinese example can be compared to the way in which pilgrims at Marmora, through their liminal state, repetitive prayers, and meditation on the events depicted in the Stations of the Cross, eventually reach an equally altered (but differently displayed) state of consciousness.

Other specifically Charismatic practises that take place at the site, such as prophecy, laying on of hands, and resting in the Spirit all suggest to pilgrims that God is present as the Holy Spirit and can heal people: "In a ritual, the world as lived and the world as imagined, fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world" (Geertz 1993: 112). Performing these practises at a site considered by many Charismatic Catholics to be holy can encourage pilgrims to believe that the miraculous is more likely to happen. An expectation for miracles to occur is also constructed if people have previously seen something extra-ordinary during certain practises or at a specific location, such as another pilgrimage site like Medjugorje. In fact, this expectation can create pressure on people to recreate that experience, whether it is "authentic" or not.⁴⁶

iv. Symbols

⁴⁶ See page 44 for notes on Csordas' discussion of authenticity and resting in the Spirit.

Finally, Charismatic “symbols” present at the shrine can also make the healing “work” and the miracles appear as “reality”. As James Waldram notes, “Symbolic healing involves... convincing the patient that his problems can be defined in terms of [a particular] world view and treated through the manipulation of healing symbols” (1997: 73). James Dow (1986) notes that Charismatic faith healing is a type of “magical healing”, a category shamanism also fits into. Both of these are a type of symbolic healing operating on “the ritual manipulation of super-human forces” (Dow 1986: 57). When pilgrims see Charismatics praying with their arms raised or people resting in the Spirit after they are overcome in prayer, and then hear the visionaries communicating messages from Mary and Jesus, these actions are interpreted as symbols of what it means to be Charismatic. These symbols serve to reinforce the Charismatic Catholic belief that God is at work in the lives of the faithful. They are also symbols of the different types of healing Charismatics believe are occurring through the Holy Spirit at Marmora. Moreover, characteristic Charismatic behaviours like resting in the Spirit are symbols or indicators of the presence of the Holy Spirit itself.

Dow’s model of symbolic healing is based on the idea that there are ways that symbols affect the mind and, subsequently, the body. He outlines the stages of symbolic healing as follows:

(1) A generalized cultural mythic world⁴⁷ is established by universalising the experiences of healers, initiates, or prophets, or by otherwise generalizing emotional experiences. (2) A healer persuades the patient that it is possible to define the patient's relationship to a particularized part of the mythic world, and makes the definition. (3) The healer attaches the patient's emotions to transactional symbols in this particularized mythic world. (4) The healer manipulates the transactional symbols to assist the transaction of emotion. (1986: 66)

The transactional symbols mentioned here are “[s]acred ideas, beings, and objects” of the cultural mythic world (Dow 1986: 63), but in the case of Catholic pilgrimage at Marmora they are not necessarily transferred from a “healer” to a “patient”, except in situations where a pilgrimage group is led by a faith healer. Instead, the symbols are learned through immersion in Charismatic Catholic groups and activities, and simply by interacting with other pilgrims at Greensides Farm on different levels.

From the perspective that symbolic healing relies on a transference and re-evaluation of cultural symbols, it can be said that “ritual therapy is a process of transformation and empowerment through which people metaphorically move from a state of illness to one of health” (Danforth 1991:5). Although the move to health is metaphorical in one sense, the connection between body and mind can help wellness to manifest in tangible ways.

⁴⁷ The “generalized cultural mythic world” refers to a model of experiential reality that is based on prominent symbols within a particular worldview. It can also be understood as an “explanatory model” through which curing can take place by restructuring a “disorder” in the mythic world (Dow 1986: 59).

It is important to note that, as most Charismatics can be considered Traditionalist as well, many of the pilgrims at Greensides Farm continue to assert their Catholic identity through symbols which the Church, through the Second Vatican Council, has officially dismissed or deemphasised. As previously mentioned, Marian devotion has been discouraged since Vatican II, and the rosary has been equally discouraged in some dioceses. Greeley remarks cynically, “It would be difficult to find a hint in the conciliar documents that Mary was no longer fashionable. But in sad truth we hear very little about her these days, probably for fear that Marian devotion would offend our separated brothers and sisters [in Protestant denominations]” (2004: 137-138).

Other churches have removed many of their religious statues, replacing them with “cold modern icons” (Samantha 5/06/04). Several pilgrims on the bus tour found it difficult to connect with these modern images, unlike the familiar and more traditional religious representations with which they were raised. Similar comments were made by these pilgrims about the removal of ornate crucifixes from above the altar in newer Catholic churches and their subsequent replacement with a plain cross; pilgrims strongly associated the symbol of the crucifix with their identity as Catholics, believing it differentiated them and “the true church” from Protestant denominations.

I believe that continuing to enact these symbols from the pre-Vatican II Church in their lives helps Charismatic and Traditionalist pilgrims to maintain an

identity that they consider to be truly Catholic. Based on Dow's stages of symbolic healing, removing the symbols that help the "patient" to connect to part of their mythic world prevents healing from occurring. In this case, Charismatic pilgrims are less likely to witness a miracle or have a significant religious experience in churches where particular items have been removed or older practises have been discontinued. Understandably, the changes in the Church have become an issue of contention for these people, creating contestation within their own parishes about the representation of their faith.

Case Studies of Healing at Marmora

Two case studies demonstrate how expectations, liminality, performance, and symbols all play a role in creating an experience that can promote healing. In Jeanette's case, the healing is emotional, whereas Susan experiences both physical and spiritual healing.

As part of the original Medjugorje reunion group who met at the farm in 1991, Jeanette (17/07/04) has a long history of pilgrimage to the Marmora shrine. Originally from northern Alberta, Jeanette was raised in the Roman Catholic Church and had always intended to marry another Catholic and raise a family within the Church. However, her husband was not Catholic and, although he converted to the faith when they were married, he refused to attend Church. Her children followed his example and none of them became faithful Catholics either: Jeanette defines this as a major disappointment in her life.

Near the end of her husband's life when he was very ill, Jeanette came to Marmora to pray for him. Having seen miraculous photographs taken at Greensides Farm, she took some photographs and had them developed soon after her visit. In one picture, an image of Jesus on the cross appeared superimposed over the river that she had been photographing. Jeanette's husband died peacefully a few days later, and she knew then that the photograph had been a "warning" from God about this unfortunate event. However, shortly after Jeanette's husband died their daughter, who defines herself as "spiritual but not religious", received a message from her father. In the message, he communicated his happiness at being in another place, and said that he was "learning love" from Jesus. Upon telling this story to her prayer group, Jeanette rested in the Spirit and saw this act of God as a confirmation of the message delivered through the miraculous photograph.

Beginning with the miraculous photograph at the Marmora shrine, Jeanette interprets a series of events through the lens of her Charismatic Catholic symbolism. She was able to discern that her husband's lack of faith in life had not translated into his despair in the afterlife. Furthermore, her husband's post-mortem message to her through her daughter confirmed the image of the afterlife that she has come to believe in through the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. This experience can be said to have promoted Jeanette's emotional healing, in terms of helping her to deal with her grief. Lastly, being overcome by

God through the act of resting in the Spirit confirmed the truth of her previous interpretations of the events in her life through the Charismatic worldview.

Jeanette mentioned to me that she had been ridiculed for her deep faith by her family after being interviewed on television about the pilgrimage to Medjugorje; their distance from the Charismatic Catholic worldview and lack of empathy for it allowed them, as outsiders, to contest what Jeanette understood through her pilgrimage experiences. Although this ridicule had deeply hurt her, she has now emotionally healed from this painful experience through the miraculous events involving her family that began at Greensides Farm.

In a similar case, Susan's (6/07/04) experience exemplifies how Charismatic Catholic ideology, in combination with miraculous photography, can help pilgrims to believe that they have been physically healed by the Holy Spirit. Susan is a relatively recent convert to Catholicism who found out about Our Lady of Marmora in 1994 through a friend in her Charismatic prayer group. As part of this prayer group, and as a member of the same Mississauga parish as Dory Tan, Susan's exposure to Catholicism involved healing and the Holy Spirit from the beginning.

Susan and her sister went to Greensides Farm for the first time because each was suffering from illnesses that they hoped would be healed by their visit: Susan had pain in her legs that would not go away, while her sister's breast cancer was beginning to recur. Making the journey to Greensides Farm on the Feast of

Our Lady of Fatima, the two of them saw a sun miracle as soon as they arrived and they continued to experience the power of the Holy Spirit as they completed the Stations of the Cross. After seeing angels all around them at one point in the woods, they also both experienced seeing the sun as a giant communion host.

Susan showed me photographs from their first visit to the shrine. In some of the photos, both she and her sister are standing in the trees, and there is a strange white blur that looks as though it is swirling around them. The two women interpret this blur of light in the photograph as the Holy Spirit, and they believe that this is the moment their physical ailments were healed – the pain in Susan's legs subsided, and the lump in her sister's breast disappeared, although she did not make it clear whether this healing happened immediately at the shrine, or whether the symptoms gradually went away after the pilgrimage. The two sisters also believe that at this moment they were given several gifts: to discern evil, to speak in tongues, to heal, to discern Christ's presence in the Eucharist, and to discern Mary's presence. Susan sees her gift to discern evil as the most important one and has yet to use her gift of healing, although she knows it is present.

All of these gifts are Charismatic in nature, and Susan's interpretation of the light patterns in the photographs is also characteristic of Charismatic Catholics; it was likely based on the initial symbolic interpretation of someone with more experience at Marmora, or on other miraculous photography Susan has been shown by individuals in her Charismatic prayer group. Through a network of

Charismatic friends who helped Susan to make sense of the symbols she encountered on her pilgrimage, her experience of physical healing was authenticated and made real. It could also be said that she was healed spiritually by having the belief system she was just learning about reinforced.

In the situations of both Jeanette and Susan, all four factors needed to make the healing “work” were present. Both went to the shrine with the expectation that something miraculous was likely to happen. Furthermore, it can be inferred that both of them entered a liminal state through their distance from mundane aspects of their lives, and through the performance of praying the Stations of the Cross. Lastly, their individual experiences with religion presented them with symbols that they were able to interpret in a certain way using the system of belief provided to them through their involvement with Charismatic Catholic prayer groups. Clearly, “healing [can be] elicited through acts that excite the senses, stir the imagination, and induce sensory attentiveness and engagement” (Sered and Barnes 2005: 12).

V

Conclusion

Contestation at Greensides Farm

In this thesis I argue that there is notable contestation among pilgrims and groups at the Marmora pilgrimage shrine over religious symbols and practises. I also argue that normative, and not spontaneous, *communitas* is present at Marmora. Subsequently, I assert that these two factors influencing inter- and intra-group interaction affect each individual's interpretation of their pilgrimage experiences and can have a real, tangible impact on the well-being of pilgrims at the shrine. By conceptualising interactions among pilgrims at Greensides Farm in terms of contested meanings, symbols, interpretations, and practises that can, at the same time, produce shared special moments for these pilgrims, I hope to have provided a complex and multifaceted view of this phenomenon.

Two main theoretical paradigms in the anthropology of religion have influenced my argument. In their theory of pilgrimage, Victor and Edith Turner (1978) argue that pilgrimage is a liminal experience characterised by the egalitarian, unstructured unity of *communitas*. In contrast, I believe that the *communitas* at the Marmora shrine has shifted from spontaneous *communitas*, as the Turners describe it, to normative *communitas* in which structure can exist (Turner 1969: 152-153) alongside feelings of goodwill and camaraderie. Thus, I support their theory that the pilgrimage site has remained a liminal venue for most

pilgrims, even for those who make regular journeys to the site a part of their mundane lives. But, following Eade and Sallnow's (1991) argument against the Turners' conception of Christian pilgrimage, I contend that this liminality exists alongside the contestation among social, political, and religious forces at the shrine. Greensides Farm is not a site of egalitarian unity.

Several instances I encountered while conducting fieldwork at Greensides Farm demonstrate this active and structured contestation. In the narrative account of my first visit to Greensides Farm with the Nineveh Holy Rosary Society bus tour, I feature several examples of contestation between groups at the shrine over what constitute "proper" worshipping practises. I also provide examples of how the politics between groups can disrupt the liminal state of other groups and individuals. Furthermore, visionaries who receive apparitions at Marmora retain their elevated social status outside the context of the pilgrimage shrine, an observation that demonstrates the retention of structure, or the generation of new forms of structure, in this type of *communitas*.

Eade and Sallnow also emphasise the idea that sites of pilgrimage become "religious voids" that allow for "a diversity of perceptions and meanings which the pilgrims bring to the shrine and impose on it" (1991: 10). The contestation among groups about the meanings created at the site by different individuals is apparent in arguments among the four competing Catholic groups at Greensides

Farm – Traditionalists, Marianists, Charismatics, and “mainstream” Catholics⁴⁸.

Contestation emerges from the ideas of each group about how worship should be practised and how “miraculous” events and occurrences should be interpreted.

Inter-group contestation becomes especially pronounced when defining which miracles and visionaries at the shrine are “authentic”. It can be inferred that symbolic interpretation is a highly individualistic and subjective process that is shaped primarily by the religious worldview one subscribes to, as well as the experiential background of the individual. The central question of contention among groups at Greensides Farm has become, “What is ‘real’ Catholicism and how should it be practised?”

Events at the pilgrimage shrine are interpreted by individuals in different ways, based on how a person decodes the symbols embedded in any given occurrence. Additionally, ritual practises at the pilgrimage shrine can also be seen as symbolic representations of a particular worldview (Geertz 1973) and symbols of identity. As a result, contestation can arise between groups with different understandings of “proper” worship. However, shared miraculous experiences among individuals, even if the same event is given different meanings by each person, can promote feelings of *communitas*.

The interpretations of individuals are mediated by their personal system of belief, which constructs a “general order of existence” out of a connected

⁴⁸ It should be noted that none of the pilgrims at Marmora fit neatly into these categories as they

paradigm of symbols. People learn to interpret their lives through the meanings they attach to these symbols; this is how we make sense of the world and our experiences in it (Dow 1986). The process of interpretation through the belief system of any individual “works” in several ways and I argue that there are four circumstances at the pilgrimage shrine that allow people to interpret the events they witness as “miraculous”. These are: the expectation that the miraculous will happen which is constructed through interactions with other pilgrims; a state of liminality in which individuals escape from their everyday realities and expect extraordinary things to occur; the performance of rituals that can promote altered states of consciousness in pilgrims such that they are more engaged in the therapeutic process; and the presence of symbols that prompt a pilgrim to define what they are experiencing in terms of their particular Catholic worldview.

The healing obtained through witnessing miracles can be of a spiritual, emotional, or physical nature. Interviewees’ narratives indicate that an individual’s current life situation, motivations for participating in the pilgrimage, and specific Catholic worldview can result in various healing outcomes, including not being healed at all.

Through my analysis of the Marmora shrine, I have demonstrated that contestation over religious symbols and practises is an inevitable aspect of pilgrimage at Greensides Farm. This situation is due to the various ideological

are defined in this thesis.

differences among Catholic groups present at the shrine, as well as to the widely differing individual interpretations that pilgrims construct based on their own personal circumstances and experiences. Liminality is less likely to occur when contestation is present. However, liminality is also a factor that can affect how miraculous phenomena are interpreted by individuals (i.e., feelings of liminality can encourage discernment of the extra-ordinary by enhancing feelings of removal from the mundane). Liminality within or among groups can result in *communitas*, regardless of whether or not everyone agrees on differing interpretations of miracles, primarily because witnesses share what they perceive to be an exceptional experience and special moment.

Interpretation can both provoke contestation over meaning at the Marmora shrine, as well as encourage *communitas* through the sharing of similar beliefs and practises. However, pilgrims' experiences of contestation and *communitas* are also central to informing individual interpretations of the pilgrimage experience. Understanding how situations of contestation and *communitas* arise in the context of a pilgrimage is important because it allows us to acknowledge that pilgrimages do, in fact, influence pilgrims' perceptions of healing and well-being and we can further investigate how this process occurs and to what extent people are affected.

Further Research

What would a long-term study of contestation, *communitas*, and interpretation at Greensides Farm tell us about symbolic healing and its

effectiveness for Catholic pilgrims? Such a study could further confirm the argument I have made in this thesis for the interplay of these factors and their effects on pilgrims, as well as encourage studies in this area of inquiry at other pilgrimage shrines.

Although it is certain that the current social, political and economic climate in Canada has, and continues to, directly impact the rise and success of the Marmora pilgrimage, I was not able to gather sufficient data to address this issue in my thesis. William A. Christian's work (1996, 1992) importantly focuses on the socio-political climate that triggers the development of apparition sites. In connection with the theme of contestation, it can be asked which factors in Canada specifically, and Western society more generally, influenced the development of the shrine at Greensides Farm in the early 1990s, and helped it to become a renowned site of international pilgrimage. I did not have the means to answer this question with the data from my interviews, nor was my fieldwork of sufficient duration to gather a large enough sample. However, this would be a valuable area for further inquiry that seeks to elucidate the larger social factors in religion and politics that could have prompted the "need" for a site like Marmora, influenced the experiences of visionaries, and shaped the interpretations of their visions by pilgrims and interpreters inside and outside the Roman Catholic Church.

In continuing to theorise pilgrimage in the future, anthropologists need to expand their gaze and way of thinking about pilgrimage past the contestation-versus-communitas dichotomy and, as Coleman recognises, toward “making points about human behaviour *through* using ‘pilgrimage’ as a case-study, rather than focussing *on* the institution itself” (2002: 363). It remains to be seen whether researchers will follow Coleman’s direction on their journey toward the anthropological understanding of pilgrimages. Clearly however, pilgrimages remain ethnographically rich phenomena that vary significantly across religions and geographies – shifting, as culture does, in a myriad of new and interesting ways that will continue to intrigue and challenge both pilgrims and those who observe them.

Appendix I

Questions for Pilgrims

- 1.) Please tell me a little bit about yourself (education, job, origin, etc.)
- 2.) What is your religious/spiritual background?
- 3.) How did you learn about Marmora?
- 4.) What was your reason for initially going to the pilgrimage site? Were there any specific emotional, physical, or spiritual problems that made you want to come to Marmora?
- 5.) How many times have you been to Marmora?
- 6.) What was your initial impression of the pilgrimage site?
- 7.) What did you hear about it from other people before you came to Marmora?
- 8.) Can you tell me a little bit about your personal experience(s) at Marmora?
- 9.) Have you experienced any healing that you attribute to your time at Marmora?
- 10.) What do you think of the supernatural things that go on there? How do you explain them?
- 11.) What feelings are evoked in you when you are there?
- 12.) Do you feel an affinity with other pilgrims that you meet at Marmora? If so, why?
- 13.) Have you kept in contact with the other pilgrims you encountered at the site?
- 14.) Do you think that your personality or perspective on life has been affected by Marmora?
- 15.) How do you think the pilgrimage site is important to the world?
- 16.) What do you think of the Catholic Church's official position on Marmora?

17.) Do you think that most Catholics in your parish are interested in Marian apparitions? Would most of them accept the apparitions as being legitimate?

18.) Do you think that pilgrimages like Marmora strengthen or weaken the international Catholic community? In what ways?

19.) Does the Catholic community view people who have been on pilgrimages any differently than those who have not?

20.) What do you think Mary's reason is for appearing?

21.) What do you believe is Mary's most important message?

Appendix II

Questions for Non-Pilgrims

- 1.) Please tell me a little bit about yourself (education, job, origin, etc.)
- 2.) What is your religious/spiritual background?
- 3.) When and how did you learn about the pilgrimage at the Greensides Farm?
- 4.) Have you heard about the supernatural occurrences that have been said to happen there?
- 5.) What is your opinion of these occurrences?
- 6.) Is there a particular reason you have not gone to visit the pilgrimage site?
- 7.) Do you intend to go in the future? If so, for what reasons?
- 8.) Do you personally know anybody who has gone to the site? If so, what did you think of their decision to go?
- 9.) From the perspective of your particular religious faith, what do you believe is happening at the Greensides Farm?
- 10.) Do you believe that people can be emotionally, physically, or spiritually healed by going there?
- 11.) What do you think of the widespread popularity of the site?
- 12.) Do you think that the presence of the pilgrimage site has affected Marmora and the surrounding region? If so, in what ways? Are these positive or negative influences?



Figure One:
A depiction of Our Lady of Marmora, as described by visionary Dory Tan.
Painting by Aldona Karosas



Figure Two:

Pilgrims pray with visionary Roebuck Yumul (kneeling in front of bench) as they complete the Way of the Cross on the thirteenth anniversary of the shrine.

Photograph by Emily Porth



Figure Three:

A crowd of pilgrims gathered around the Tenth Station of the Cross to witness Dory Tan's (standing near centre) vision of the Virgin Mary on Saturday July 3rd, 2004.

Photograph by Emily Porth



Figure Four:

A woman in Roebuck Yumul's prayer group rests in the Spirit during prayer at one of the Stations of the Cross.

Photograph by Emily Porth



Figure Five:

A miraculous Polaroid photograph of the sun interpreted to be a giant communion host.

Photograph by Janet (26/06/04)

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