WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT: POPULAR SUPPORT FOR CATHOLIC REFORM IN THE VENETO

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Through examination of the unusually rich sources produced by a late seventeenth-century bishop of Padua, this article argues that investigating voluntary devotional practices can demonstrate the spiritual priorities of early modern laypeople. Seventeenth-century rural Paduan parishes experienced both an increase in interest in various devotions and a shift in their focus that reflect the priorities of Catholic Reform. Parishioners eagerly participated in the catechism schools promoted by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and enthusiastically adopted saints promoted by the post-Tridentine Church, demonstrated by their pious bequests, dedication of altars, and membership in confraternities. At the same time, traditional devotions also flourished. While gauging lay interest in reforms in general is difficult and contentious, this article demonstrates that at least when it came to their voluntary practices, rural Paduans were engaged in Catholic Reform and supported a vibrant Catholic culture.

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The reforms of Catholicism implemented in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had widespread and significant effects on the lives of early modern Catholics, but in most cases we

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know very little about how non-elites reacted to these changes.[1] Records produced in rural parishes are rare, while the documentation produced by reforming bishops generally has little to say about the experiences of rural laypeople. Typical visitation records provide the bishop's impression of the church and other parochial structures, sometimes an estimation of the priest's abilities, and occasionally a conversation with one or more members of the clergy about their church and flock, observed over a very short timespan.[2] It is therefore difficult to gauge what parishioners thought of the reforms the Catholic Church hoped to enforce.

Several historians of Catholic Reform have used what little evidence is available to demonstrate that reform was a negotiated process, in which the bishop presented and incentivized what he wanted to see and, sometimes in more or less overt ways, the parochial community chose what they were willing to do and what they preferred to ignore.[3] Evidence of this negotiation can be found either in the occasional parish records or, more commonly, in the

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[1] The exception is the impact of and reaction to Tridentine marriage reforms. See Jutta Sperling, "Marriage at the time of the Council of Trent," *Journal of Early Modern History*, 8 (2004), pp. 67-108. *Suppliche al pontefiche: Diocesi di Trento, 1566-1605*, ed. Cristina Belloni (Bologna, 2007). Joanne Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 2001).

[2] In France visitations typically lasted a few hours, suggesting that bishops were visiting several parishes per day; in the Spanish diocese of Ourense, visitations rarely lasted more than a day. Joseph Bergin, *Church, Society and Religious Change in France, 1580-1730* (New Haven, 2009), p. 177. Allyson Poska, *Regulating the People: The Catholic Reformation in Seventeenth-Century Spain* (Leiden, 1998), p. 52.

[3] See Marc Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque: Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge, UK, 2001), p. 12. Keith Luria, *Territories of Grace: Cultural Change in the Seventeenth-Century Diocese of Grenoble* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 15, 57. Angelo Torre, "Politics Cloaked in Worship: State, Church and Local Power in Piedmont 1570-1770," *Past and Present* 134 (1992), 42-92, here pp. 43-44.

bishop's next visitation, when he discovered which changes had or had not persisted. But with these cases, it is nearly impossible to argue how the laity felt about most of these reforms; when they cooperated with the bishop, was it because they felt coerced, or because they truly wanted that particular change? To get a sense of lay enthusiasm for reform, we must look at particular alterations to devotional practices, those that were both voluntary and quotidian. During the early modern period, particularly after the Council of Trent, there was a renewal of corporate and public religious devotions, tied to an understanding of the sacred as something immanent and palpable, sometimes described as baroque Catholicism. While Protestants typically promoted greater interiority and personal devotion, the Catholic Church "emphasized community in Christ through charity and collective devotions," encouraging laypeople to participate in voluntary activities like donating alms, assisting and attending catechism classes, sponsoring altars, and joining confraternities.[4] When ordinary laypeople gave their time and money to participate in or fund particular devotions, they demonstrated support and even passion for certain elements of Catholic Reform, helping baroque Catholicism to flourish.

As Simon Ditchfield has argued, the historiography of Catholic Reform needs to focus on "local knowledge" rather than large-scale arguments about confessionalization or control.[5] His call for more anthropological methods and for abandoning the idea that power is a simple binary, that in a struggle between center and periphery, the latter is weakened while the former grows stronger, requires historians of Catholic Reform (and of center-periphery connections in early

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[4] Brian Larkin, *The Very Nature of God* (Albuquerque, 2010), p. 94. For a thorough discussion of baroque Catholicism, see the Introduction and Part I of Larkin's book.

[5] Simon Ditchfield, "'In Search of Local Knowledge': Rewriting Early Modern Italian Religious History," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 19 (1998), 255-296, here p. 256.

modern Europe more broadly) to have a nuanced understanding of power relations and look closely not only at cities, as many have done, but also at rural areas.[6] By combining Ditchfield's proposed method with a focus on voluntary devotional activities, I argue that historians can both gain a better understanding of the reality of Catholic Reform as implemented on the ground and trace lay enthusiasm for early modern Catholicism, both traditional and reformed. Laypeople participated in and spoke up about the devotions they wanted while quietly resisting those they did not.

Within a decade of the end of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), Padua had its first reform-minded bishop, Niccolò Ormaneto, who had previously served under Carlo Borromeo. He was bishop from 1570-1577, and was the first to attempt Tridentine Reform in Padua.[7] His term was short, however, and his pastoral visitation records only cover 1571-1572.[8] His records are not overly detailed, but they are better than those kept by pre-Tridentine bishops. In addition to information regarding the state of church property and the clergy, they provide a list of all the altars and confraternities in the diocese. As the visitation occurred early in his episcopacy, the records he created essentially show a pre-reform diocese. Thus the lists of altar dedications and confraternities written during Ormaneto's visitation can be used to assess Padua's pre-Tridentine state.

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[6] Ditchfield, "Search," p. 259.

[7] Paolo Preto, "Un aspetto della riforma cattolica nel Veneto: l'episcopato padovano di Niccolò Ormaneto," *Studi Veneziani* XI (1969), 325-363.

[8] Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Padova (henceforth ACVP), *Visitationes*, bb. 7-8.

To gauge the effects of Tridentine reform in Padua, it is necessary to look a century later. From 1577-1664, Padua experienced an ebb and flow in reforms. While the diocese did not generally suffer from financial difficulties as many others did, it did have its share of worldly bishops, punctuated by the occasional reformer.[9] But in 1664, a new bishop was appointed to the diocese of Padua who would strongly push reform forward. Gregorio Barbarigo was a deeply devout and dedicated reformer who spent the final three decades of his life attempting to implement Catholic Reform according to the ideals discussed at the Council of Trent. Even though he found some evidence of the work of his predecessors, there was still plenty to be done, particularly in rural communities.

What is unusual about this case is the documentation and Barbarigo's commitment to detail. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Barbarigo was interested in speaking with the laity, setting aside time in every parish for open audiences and calling laypeople and clergy alike as witnesses in his episcopal inquisitions. His visitation records, while still only providing an occasional glimpse of parishes for a few days at a time, give us a picture of what the laypeople wanted.[10] Particularly when they appeared at his open audiences with unprompted complaints and requests, we see narratives crafted by the laity, rather than those directed or shaped by the priorities of the central authority. This allows historians to access the rarely heard voices of the laity. However, there is still no guarantee that they were not simply telling the bishop what they thought he wanted to hear in order to achieve some other end. While their complaints are not necessarily straightforward, their participation in various activities, when well recorded, is much less problematic.

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[9] Aldo Stella, "L'età postridentina," in *Diocesi di Padova*, ed. Pierantonio Gios (Padua, 1996), pp. 215-44.

[10] These records are found in ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 30-66; *Inquisitiones*, bb. 84-87.

Fortunately for historians, Barbarigo also required parochial clergy to prepare *relazioni*, detailed records of the state of their churches and parishioners, providing specific information about altar dedications, confraternity dedications and membership, lay catechism instructors, and pious bequests, among other things.[11] The printed form he provided in advance was specific enough to discourage much narrative; stories were more likely to come out in interviews. At the same time, it was also detailed enough to give both Barbarigo and historians a survey of the parish's general state, including lay devotions. In their acceptance of certain devotions and enthusiasm for certain activities, we can see what parts of Catholic Reform resonated with the laity, and when compared to the lists of altar and confraternity dedications provided by Ormaneto's visitations, we can see the change in devotional priorities in the century after Trent.

Although the testimonies Barbarigo heard from laypeople and the documents the priests provided to him are problematic sources, if read carefully they still give us the best chance of understanding quotidian religious experience in the Paduan countryside in the late seventeenth century. In many cases, neither the priest nor the parishioners would have had much incentive to fabricate stories about the funding, membership, and leadership of confraternities or the amount and dedication of pious bequests. The identity of the altars was unambiguous: Barbarigo inspected the entire church, so an altar misidentified in writing would be discovered. Priests

[11] The *relazioni* are collected in Barbarigo's visitation records, and constitute several thousand folios. They include information about parochial property, the local clergy, the existence and suitability of doctors, teachers, and midwives, and the existence of heretics, sinners, and other problems in the church. The form Barbarigo provided to all priests is reprinted in Liliana Billanovich, "Per uno studio delle visite pastorali. Note introduttive alla prima visita (1664-1671)," *Contributi alla storia della Chiesa padovana nell'età moderna e contemporanea* 1 (1982), 33-85, here pp. 65-66.

might have had reason to lie about catechism teachers, as a lack of teachers could put them in violation of Barbarigo's rules, but enough priests openly complained about their parishioners' unwillingness to volunteer for the task that this too seems unlikely. Moreover, a lack of volunteers reflected poorly on the people more than the priest; in some complaints, one gets the sense of the martyr-priest bemoaning an excessive amount of work, as when the priest of Terranegra complained in 1685 that the teachers did not come reliably, "thus often it is necessary for only the parish priest to teach everything to everyone."[12] Both priests and laity had reasons to lie to Barbarigo at various points in his visit, whether to avoid the detection of some flaw in the parish or to use the bishop to gain ground in an unrelated dispute, but neither of these motivations seem likely for the details under discussion here.

Instead, the greatest weakness of these sources is their sometimes fragmentary nature. Barbarigo demanded that each parish priest complete the *relazione* for every visit; most did, but some did not. While complete refusal was unusual, however, laziness was common. Barbarigo sent each priest a printed formula for the *relazione*, which left small blank spaces where priests were intended to include the details of their parish. To complete this document properly, the priest had to copy the model and insert the details as appropriate; there was not sufficient room on the printed sheet. Those who completed detailed reports filled several folios with their responses. Many, however, cut corners, either by including very little detail or even by trying to fill in the original printed form, thus providing only a cursory report. At minimum, even the most perfunctory *relazioni* contain a list of the altars and confraternities, but may not include details about confraternity membership or leadership, pious bequests, or the catechism school (beyond the simple statement that one existed, as this was required in the form). The addition of

[12] "Onde molte volte convien al Parocho solo insegnarla tutta a tutti." ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 53, fol. 229r.

relevant information from witness testimonies, open audiences, letters, and other documents generated during the visit helps to fill in some gaps, but ultimately the evidence regarding certain elements of lay participation remains less extensive than that regarding the devotions of altars and confraternities.[13]

In addition to the participation required of laypeople, such as regular church attendance and annual confession and communication, there were myriad activities available for devout Catholics who wanted more involvement. Some forms of participation demanded more commitment than others, but in general they all required a dedication of time, money, or both. If focusing on the elite, one might argue that these actions are not very significant, as they generally had both resources in abundance. But when examining the rural laity, primarily farmers and craftspeople, the donation of any of these precious resources is much more significant. For people of limited means with demanding labor obligations, choosing to spend more time in devotional activities or to fund them suggests that they felt very strongly about that particular opportunity.

Devoting time by volunteering to teach catechism classes, donating money through pious bequests or by sponsoring altars, or giving both by joining a confraternity were not new activities after the Council of Trent. Most Catholics made some donations to the church or local devotional groups when they died, churches always had altars sponsored by local notables or the

[13] The data used in this article was collected by the author from Ormaneto's 259 visitation records, the roughly twenty-thousand folios of Barbarigo's visitation records, and the 951 *relazioni* provided by priests to Barbarigo. The information in all of these reports was parsed in a spreadsheet and then quantified, allowing for the figuring of totals, averages, medians, and percentages.

parish community, and confraternities enjoyed popularity throughout the medieval and early modern period. Catechism classes also predated the Council of Trent, though they were not widespread until after the Decrees were published in 1563 and mandated their promotion in all dioceses.[14] The Church continued to promote these practices to help "ensure the community's and the individual's proper relationship with God," and the devotions continued to be popular with laypeople who accepted that these practices brought them into closer contact with the holy.[15]

While the general activity of devoting time or money is a longstanding tradition and does not inherently tell us anything about how laypeople reacted to Catholic Reform, shifts in the kinds of devotions laity chose to support can demonstrate their responses to the changes. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in addition to promoting the institution of catechism schools in every parish, the Catholic Church and reforming bishops began encouraging certain devotional practices and specific saints who were best suited to help carry the Church's new image to the people. Although these changes were promoted by the central authority (and in the case of catechism, required), it is unlikely that coercive force played a large role in the laity's adoption of these new practices and devotions. As several historians have shown, enforcement was difficult when bishops and regulars spent little time in parishes, laity had plenty of opportunity to negotiate, alter, and reject certain reforms, and local and traditional devotions

[14] Paul Grendler, "The Schools of Christian Doctrine in Sixteenth-Century Italy," *Church History* 53 (1984), 319-31, here pp. 319-21. Council of Trent, Session 24: Reform, Chapter VII. *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H.J. Schroeder (St. Louis, 1941), pp. 197-98.

[15] Larkin, *Very Nature*, pp. 32, 97.

persisted alongside the new, reformed alternatives.[16] When laity shifted their interest to these particular saints and away from more traditional options, and when they eagerly donated their Sunday afternoons to teaching catechism, their own enthusiasm for Catholic Reform is evident.

For laypeople who preferred or were able only to donate time, the best option for involvement was volunteering to help with catechism classes. Catechism was widely promoted in the diocese of Padua - as in many dioceses with diligent bishops - and most schools were well staffed with lay instructors, officials, and assistants. Regardless of one's education level, there was a suitable role for anyone who wanted to join: the literate could teach or work as administrators, while the illiterate could help escort the children to and from class and maintain a controlled atmosphere during instruction. Although this activity required giving up several hours every feast day, it did not typically require any personal financial contribution. In many dioceses, catechism classes were organized by the Company of Christian Doctrine, a confraternity that, like all such groups, had minor financial obligations for members.[17] In Padua,

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[16] On enforcement, see Forster, *Catholic Revival,* p. 40. On lay ability to negotiate, reject, or manipulate reforms, see Forster, *Catholic Revival*, p. 12. Torre, "Politics," pp. 43-44. Luria, *Territories,* pp. 15, 55. On the persistence of traditional devotions, see William Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1981), p. 177. Forster, *Catholic Revival,* p. 3. Luria, *Territories*, p. 20.

[17] For more on the Company of Christian Doctrine in various locales, see Michela Catto, *Un panopticon catechistico: l'arciconfraternita della Dottrina Cristiana a Roma in età moderna* (Rome, 2003). Christopher Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, UK, 1989), p. 64. Christopher Black, "Confraternities and the Parish in the Context of Italian Catholic Reform," in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain,* eds. John Patrick Donnelly and Michael Maher (Kirksville, MO, 1999), 1-26, here p. 10. Maureen Flynn, *Sacred Charity: Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain, 1400-1700* (Ithaca, 1989), p. 124.

however, these confraternities were exceptionally rare. Instead, laypeople volunteered to teach or assist without the overarching structure - and cost - of a confraternity.

Although catechism schools existed in limited numbers before the Council of Trent, it was the Council that set the expectation that all Catholics would attend.[18] The first Christian Doctrine classes were established in 1536 by Castellino da Castello, a layman who gathered other parishioners to educate children in basic Church doctrine and formed a confraternity in 1539.[19] Recognizing the value of this instruction, the reformers at Trent demanded that bishops endorse and support the creation of schools across their dioceses, to be overseen and administered by the local clergy.

Catechism schools were organized in a way that fostered the easy participation of children and adults. Classes were held on Sundays and feast days, when no one was supposed to work. Instruction typically lasted about two hours, striking a balance between a reasonable amount of instruction and the students' need for some time to rest. Prior to the start of classes, lay assistants designated as *pescatori* (fishermen) walked the streets ringing bells and calling the children to follow them. In most dioceses, boys and girls from about age six to sixteen were expected to attend, and were divided into classes by gender and ability. Boys were to be taught by priests or laymen, while the girls typically had female teachers, though a priest could also lead their classes. Students learned prayers and basic matters of Catholic doctrine required for confirmation. In the best of cases, they were also instructed in reading and writing.[20]

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[18] Council of Trent, Session 24: Reform, Chapter VII. *Canons and Decrees*, p. 197-98.

[19] Grendler, "Schools," p. 320.

[20] Grendler, " Schools," pp. 322-24. Karen Carter, *Creating Catholics: Catechism and Primary Education in Early Modern France* (Notre Dame, IN, 2011), pp. 4-8.

In the diocese of Padua, Gregorio Barbarigo had high hopes for the hundreds of catechism schools across his diocese. He expected them to conform to the requirements set out in *The Catechism of the Council of Trent,* the reformers' teaching manual for priests.[21] His parishes ideally were to have fourteen classes each: six different levels for boys and girls age four to sixteen plus classes for men and women who had not attended as children.[22] They were expected to use Roberto Bellarmino's small catechism, which he provided to poorer parishes.[23] Barbarigo supported the establishment or continuance of the Company of Christian Doctrine, and mandated that all priests with *cura animarum* act as instructors.[24] This drive was fairly successful: by 1697, when Barbarigo died, all but six parishes had their own schools, and children in those very small parishes simply went to a nearby town's classes, so all children had the opportunity to receive basic instruction.[25] Although there were problems in some parishes, in most communities the majority of parents sent their children, the majority of priests accepted

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[21] Liliana Billanovich, "Intorno al governo pastorale di Gregorio Barbarigo," *Ricerche di storia sociale e religiosa* 46 (1994), 77-94, here p. 87.

[22] Billanovich, "Intorno," p. 87. Barbarigo's requirements were more strenuous than many of his contemporaries'. In most dioceses, attendance was expected from age five or six to fourteen, and classes were divided into two or three levels. Grendler, "Schools," p. 323. Carter, *Creating Catholics,* pp. 73, 87. This also seems to be what happened in Padua, though some larger towns complied with Barbarigo's demands.

[23] Bellarmino's small catechism was approved by Pope Clement VIII in 1598 and reprinted all over Europe, including Padua. Barbarigo had thousands of copies printed for distribution in 1676. Ireneo Daniele, "S. Gregorio Barbarigo," in *Diocesi di Padova*, 245-270, here p. 264. A modern edition is available. Roberto Bellarmino, *Dottrina Cristiana breve,* (Chieti Scalo, 2009).

[24] Daniele, "Barbarigo," p. 263.

[25] Daniele, "Barbarigo," p. 265.

teaching as one of their duties, sufficient adults volunteered to teach, and both clergy and laity voiced their displeasure when issues arose.

Staffing all of these classes required a significant amount of lay assistance. No parish would have sufficient numbers of clergy to teach all of these classes, particularly as the ideal class size was around eight to ten students; even in large towns with many priests, the clergy would quickly become overwhelmed by the number of children.[26] They thus needed a substantial number of lay teachers and other assistants to instruct and maintain control over sometimes hundreds of children. In the *relazioni* that priests were expected to prepare for the bishop's visit, one of the sections focused on catechism. During each visit, about eighty-five percent of priests mentioned something about their schools, though the level of detail varied greatly.[27] Across all three visitations, only 167 of 951 reports contained detailed information, representing 140 distinct parishes, about half of the rural parishes in the diocese. Of these 140 parishes, 132 had lay assistance of some kind; only eight complained of no help. At least among parishes with priests who provided details, laypeople were volunteering at an impressive rate.

Having volunteers, however, was only half the battle; the volunteers had to be reliable and capable for the classes to run smoothly. In most cases, it seems that they were. Among all the visitation reports that mention catechism, fewer than twenty percent in each visitation described problems to Barbarigo.[28] Most of these problems, moreover, were related to the

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[26] Grendler, "Schools," p. 323.

[27] Eighty percent (246 of 307 parishes) reported in the first visitation, eighty-seven percent (261 of 304 parishes) in the second, and eighty-eight percent (303 of 340 parishes) in the third. ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 31-66.

[28] Fifty-six parishes (eighteen percent) reported problems in the first, forty-four (14.5 percent) had problems in the second, and by the third only thirty-two (9.4 percent) had issues.

attendance of the students, most frequently attributable to either weather problems or agricultural seasons. Students who lacked appropriate outerwear or who were needed to help with crops or livestock were frequently absent, something that the priests understood but struggled to address.[29] In the village of Canove in 1665, the priest and lay assistants taught those who could attend, while the chaplain went out to the pastures to hold classes with students who had to watch over livestock, but in most villages the priest and his helpers simply waited for the seasons to change.[30] In addition, of course, there were always children who simply did not attend, most commonly those over the age of twelve or fourteen. Particularly if they had already received confirmation, it was often difficult to convince these young men and women that they should still attend classes with the village children.[31]

There were also sporadic complaints about the quality of the teachers. Occasionally the priest claimed the parishioners were disinterested, but more often he cited a lack of educated people; one priest complained in 1664 that his people were "illiterate and ignorant," while several had problems finding literate women to teach the girls.[32] Even these complaints only occur in seven percent of the records. Four percent of the records complain that the lay volunteers were not always diligent about attending classes, a significant problem for the

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[29] ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 33, fol. 427v; b. 41, fol. 185r, b. 50, fol. 83v; b. 61, fol. 210r; b. 65, fol. 259r. Rural France had similar problems. Carter, *Creating Catholics*, p. 131.

[30] ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 32, fol. 113r. Seventy-three reports across the three visitations (eleven percent of records in the first visit, 6.9 percent in the second, and 5.6 percent in the third) mention attendance problems.

[31] ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 47, fols. 151v, 204r; b. 64, fol. 295r.

[32] "Esservi nella Cura persone idiote e ignoranti, non vi sono operari di sorte alcuna." ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 31, fol. 13v. See also ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 43, fol. 459r.

individual parish, but again a very rare occurrence.[33] Finally, fewer than two percent of records complain about illiterate or poorly educated volunteers, mostly women.[34] This, along with the complaint about ignorant parishioners, says more about the educational opportunities for rural residents, however, than about their dedication to catechism. These reports may not completely reflect the reality in each parish (particularly as 141 reports across the three visits are missing, and many more lacked details). Out of the 951 reports Barbarigo collected from 1664-1697, 677 of them claimed that their catechism schools were completely in order. While not impossible, it seems probable that at least some priests were painting the bishop a rosier picture to avoid scrutiny.

In most of the reporting parishes, however, there were plenty of catechism instructors. Roughly equal numbers of men and women volunteered their time. Not all priests provided a count of instructors, but numbers were included in about 160 reports. They mention over five thousand lay assistants, an average of about seventeen men and seventeen women per parish (and a median of twelve of each gender).[35] Parish sizes ranged from about fifty to over four thousand adults, with an average population of 520 and a median population of four hundred adults.[36] Although most priests did not include a number of children who were regularly in attendance at catechism, 803 reports did provide the number of souls in the parish and the number of adult,

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[33] ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 49, fol. 143r; b. 59, fol. 238v; b. 65, fol. 60v.

[34] ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 38, fols. 112r, 180v; b. 46, fol. 328v; b. 50, fol. 233r.

[35] Participation per parish ranged from one to ninety-three men, two to eighty-six women, and two to 132 parishioners whose gender was not specified.

[36] The adult population of villages comes from 813 reports that include the number of communicating parishioners; the rest either provided no demographic data or gave the total number of souls.

confirmed parishioners; the remainder would thus mostly be composed of children who were expected to attend catechism. Using this number, the average student-adult ratio was eleven to one in parishes with lay instructors, while the median ratio was just under seven to one.[37] Often the priests did not differentiate between teachers and lay assistants in general, so the actual student-teacher ratio is probably higher, as some laypeople served as *pescatori*, doormen (*portinari*), and classroom management (*silentieri*), and bigger parishes also frequently appointed a few laypeople as administrators. At least in the sense of maintaining order, however, there were sufficient adults to control large groups of children in most parishes.

Typically, there was also significant interest in supporting the catechism schools. The majority of laypeople did not volunteer to teach the classes, whether because of a lack of ability, time, or interest; on average, just under nine percent of the adult population volunteered, and the median participation rate was just over six percent.[38] Many more laypeople voiced their support (and, in fourteen parishes where catechism classes were not going well, their fear and complaints about it) to Barbarigo during his visitations. Though some historians have noted that catechism classes were unpopular or infrequently offered, Barbarigo did not face resistance on catechism from the majority of his parishioners.[39] Joseph Bergin has noted a generational jump in

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[37] Including those parishes with only clergy as instructors, the ratio increases to twenty-three to one, as many of those priests were - at least theoretically - attempting to teach between fifty and 450 students.

[38] Participation ranged from a mere 0.8 percent to a staggering 45.9 percent, but the average over 134 records was 8.9 percent and the median was 6.3 percent. In thirteen parishes, more than twenty percent of adult parishioners participated. None were big parishes; their adult populations ranged from 115 to 480. None had a Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, and there are no other obvious similarities between them.

[39] See Marc Forster, *The Counter-Reformation in the Villages* (Ithaca, 1992), p. 28, 30-31. Henry Kamen, *The Phoenix and the Flame* (New Haven, 1993), pp. 348-9. Kathleen Comerford has noted that in Tuscany catechism

catechism attendance, arguing that once a critical mass of catechized children grew up and had children of their own, the bishop had an easier time promoting the classes, as parents who had attended in their youth were more willing to send their own children regularly.[40] Perhaps this explains the ardor with which Paduan parents advocated for their children's spiritual education: in one parish, for example, several laypeople complained in 1695 that catechism was not offered in winter, "so the poor children cannot learn the road to paradise and live in total ignorance."[41] Overall, it seems that this part of the Church's reform plan found passionate support among the laypeople, some of whom devoted considerable time to assisting, and many of whom diligently sent their children and valued the education they received on feast days.

While some rural Paduans generously gave up their Sunday and feast day afternoons, others found this obligation less appealing. For those who preferred a less time and labor-intensive way to participate in the parish community and demonstrate their dedication to God, providing financial support was a better option. In the rural parishes, lay financial contributions tended to come in two forms: pious bequests, usually written into a will, and donations to altars, usually provided in life rather than posthumously. The first was in many ways the easiest

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instruction was infrequent and, when attempted, of limited success, though the reason for that struggle is not clear. Kathleen Comerford, *Reforming Priests and Parishes: Tuscan Dioceses in the First Century of Seminary Education* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 42-4.

[40] Bergin, *Church,* p. 303. Marc Forster has also argued that in the baroque period, catechism classes gradually became an expected part of weekly services. Forster, *Catholic Revival,* p. 126. Phillip Hoffman notes that while catechism was exceedingly rare in 1613-1614, by 1719, it seems that every parish was offering classes. Hoffman, *Church*, pp. 50, 100.

[41] "Così le povere creature non possono imparare la strada del paradiso, e vivono in un ignoranza totale." ACVP, *Visitationes*, b. 61, fol. 393v.

method of participation, as it cost the donor nothing and presumably carried spiritual benefits. The second cost the donor something during life, and therefore may have been more difficult for some, but when communities banded together to sponsor an altar it is reasonable to assume that individual contributors putting money in alms boxes were not impoverishing themselves in the process.

In both cases, either the individual or the parish community chose how to spend the money. For pious bequests, the testator could designate any altar, confraternity, or other destination for the money. With altars, the decision might be made by the priest, a local notable, or the community at large, though individual donors still had the opportunity to choose where to direct their money. Although altar dedications were the purview of the wealthy elite in many urban areas, this was not the case in Padua. Elite sponsors elsewhere donated all the money required to build and maintain the altar as a sign of their prominence and devotion. But in the nearly 2500 individual reports priests made (representing over 1700 individual altars), only sixty-four altars in rural Paduan churches were sponsored by noblemen with nearby estates. These patricians typically had little to do with the local community, preferring to hire a chaplain to say mass in their private chapels, while presumably giving charitable donations to urban parishes. Most of the altars in the rural parts of the diocese were sponsored by the parish community. In forty-seven reports, priests explicitly stated that the altar was funded by the community at large; twenty-one more were maintained by elected officials with alms donated by the parishioners. Only sixty-six were sponsored by local individuals or families, while the vast majority (more than 1500) were maintained by the confraternities.[42] In other words, the saints to

[42] In the first and third visitation, Barbarigo collected information on 2474 altars. In thirty percent of these reports (728), priests gave no information about who maintained or sponsored the altars. The remaining few altars were

whom they dedicated their altars indicate the interests of the parish community, not the local elite.[43]

In order to gauge interest in reformed Catholicism, I highlight the prevalence of saints and devotions that were promoted by the Church most fervently after the Council of Trent (though many predated the Council). The Church was most supportive of a few categories of saints and devotions in this period: Christ and those saints most closely connected to him, those devotions that emphasized the Church's authority and power, and a group of new saints relevant to sixteenth and seventeenth century reform efforts.[44] The first group of devotions included those focused on Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, St. Anne, and perhaps most importantly, the Eucharist. In the post Tridentine period, as other historians have found, these flourished across Europe.[45] Not all cults within these categories received equal promotion, however; the Holy Sacrament was favored over Corpus Christi, while the Nativity, Rosary, Holy Belt (Madonna della Cintura), Madonna del Carmine, Madonna of Loreto, and

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sponsored by specific groups (two), the parish priest (two) or a local monastery (one). ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 31-41, 53-66.

[43] Beyond their statistical insignificance, the altars sponsored by nobles (3.6 percent of the 1746 reports with details) include only two of reform relevance: one Madonna del Carmine, and one San Carlo Borromeo (mentioned twice). For the 3.8 percent sponsored by local individuals or families, the situation is similar, though sixteen were relevant to reform. Their sponsored altars included one Madonna del Carmine, nine San Carlo, two Rosary, one Crucifix, one Holy Spirit, one Conception, and one Name of Jesus. Still, the overwhelming majority of individual sponsors chose traditional devotions, and the overwhelming majority of reform-relevant devotions were chosen by the community.

[44] Luria, *Territories,* pp. 126, 129-30.

[45] Luria, *Territories,* pp. 127-32. Flynn, *Sacred Charity,* pp. 122-24. Hoffman, *Church,* pp. 105-6, 118. Black, *Italian Confraternities,* p. 64. Forster, *Counter-Reformation,* p. 71.

Immaculate Conception were preferred by the post-Tridentine Church to other Marian cults that enjoyed popularity in medieval Europe.[46] These promoted the Church's power as well as the saints', as did those dedicated to the Name of God and Name of Jesus and other similar devotions in the second group.[47] Many of these devotions, particularly the confraternities under their names, promoted strict orthodoxy, catechism, and moral policing, and emphasized the Church's priorities and power to assert them.[48] Finally, among the new cohort of saints, the Church promoted Carlo Borromeo, Francis de Sales, Filippo Neri, Ignatius of Loyola, Theresa of Avila, and Gaetano Thiene, among others.[49] As major reformers and founders of new religious orders, these saints promoted the preferred mode of Catholicism, at least in theory; it is much more difficult to know what exactly they meant to the parish communities.[50]

Any layperson could leave a pious bequest in his or her last will giving money for a particular devotional use. These bequests might be substantial or exceptionally small, based on

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[46] While in theory the Corpus Christi and Holy Sacrament are the same, in practice the switch signified a change in the nature of devotion. For more information see footnote 68. Maureen Flynn, "Baroque Piety and Spanish Confraternities," in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France, and Spain*, 233-45, here p. 236. Luria, *Territories*, pp. 127-9.

[47] Flynn, "Baroque Piety," p. 241. Name of God and Name of Jesus confraternities were often tied to anti-blasphemy campaigns, but there is no mention of such campaigns in the Paduan records. Thus these groups may or may not reflect such activities but are certainly in line with the overall priorities of the Church and of Barbarigo.

[48] Christopher Black, "Confraternities Under Suspicion in the Early Modern Period: A Venetian Case Study," in *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas*, ed. Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock (Aldershot, 2006), 171-186, here p. 172. Black, "Confraternities and the Parish," p. 10.

[49] Luria, *Territories*, p. 155.

[50] Luria, *Territories*, p. 204.

the wealth of the giver and his or her level of interest, both of which are hard to gauge without copies of wills. For the most part, these documents are lost, as few rural churches still have records from this period, but when Barbarigo solicited information from his priests about their parishes, he wanted to know how the church and confraternities were funded, and particularly asked about pious bequests. As was the case with all of the questions Barbarigo asked in the *relazione* instructions, many priests failed to answer. During the first visit of 1664-1670, just over sixty priests included information about nearly three hundred pious bequests.[51] During the third visit of 1685-1697, Barbarigo was given information about 270 bequests in thirty-five parishes.[52] Though this data is far from complete, it does yield interesting information about where many parishioners were directing their money posthumously.

Overwhelmingly, the money went to the same sorts of reform-related devotions discussed above, particularly the Holy Sacrament, the Rosary, and particular reformed Marian devotions, most commonly the Madonna del Carmine and the Holy Belt. Occasional donations were also given to Christocentric devotions, an altar for Carlo Borromeo, the schools of Christian Doctrine, and an altar for St. John the Baptist. [Table 1] In total, the reported bequests donated to specific saints, devotions, or the parish church amounted to just over 2430 ducats during the first visit, and just over 1960 ducats in the third.[53] Of these, just over ninety ducats in each visitation were for annual bequests, rather than single gifts. For comparison, Francesco Caffagni has speculated

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[51] ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 31-41.

[52] ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 53-66.

[53] In the first visit, thirty-nine people gave money for masses; thirty-four did the same during the third visit; these are not included in the calculations. All the bequests were given in Venetian currency. One ducat equals six *lire* four *soldi*, one *lira* (also called a *trono* in some documents) equals twenty *soldi*, and one *soldo* equals twelve *denarii*.

that a priest could live decorously with a benefice of seventy or eighty ducats per year in the diocese of Padua under Barbarigo.[54]

Table 1: Pious Bequests

Devotion	**1664-1670**	**1685-1697**
Holy Sacrament	58%	47%
Rosary	21%	31.5%
Marian	8%	14.5%
Other reform related	3%	1%
Non-reform related	10%	6%

Within this overall number, the vast majority of bequests went to reform-related devotions and confraternities. Seventy percent of the donations in the first visit and ninety-three percent in the third visit went to these saints and devotions. Only ten percent in the first visitation and six percent in the second went to saints with no connection to reform, and the rest of the money went to the church fabric fund or to buy specific ornaments for the church. As a rule, it seems that most of the donors described in the *relazioni* were primarily interested in supporting the newer devotions promoted by the Church than the more traditional devotions still active in their communities.

In particular, the majority of donors gave to the Holy Sacrament and the Rosary, either detailing that their money was to go to support those particular altars or that it was to be given to their confraternities in return for masses for their souls. In the first visit, 172 people gave over 770 ducats to the Holy Sacrament altars and confraternities, with an average bequest of just over four ducats. Some bequests were as small as six *soldi*, while others were as large as one hundred ducats or 12,400 *soldi*. In the third visit, Holy Sacrament altars and confraternities received 126

[54] Francesco Caffagni, "Clero curato e benefici parrocchiali nella diocesi di Padova: quadri statistici e linee di tendenza nel XVII secolo," in *Gregorio Barbarigo: Patrizio veneto, vescovo e cardinale nella tarda controriforma*, eds. Liliana Billanovich and Pierantonio Gios (Padua, 1999), 703-722, here p. 719.

bequests totaling over nine hundred ducats, with an average bequest of over seven ducats. During this visitation, the smallest reported bequest was two *lire*, while the largest was again one hundred ducats. In other words, devotion to the Holy Sacrament was high at the start of Barbarigo's episcopacy and only went up during his tenure. A similar pattern arises in the donations to Rosary devotions: during the first visitation, sixty-three donors gave over 720 ducats, for an average donation of over eleven ducats. Donations ranged from five *soldi* to over eighty-eight ducats. During the third visitation, eighty-five donors gave just over 718 ducats, for an average donation of just over eight ducats. Donations in this later period ranged from one *lira* five *soldi* to sixty ducats. Donations to the Rosary were slightly down in the third visitation, suggesting that more people gained an interest in donating to the Holy Sacrament, but the Rosary was still a popular choice.

Giving bequests of these types was common for early modern Catholics, but was not required. Even if many people felt social pressure to donate, where they chose to direct them was a more personal matter.[55] Rather than simply handing over money to the priest for masses or donating to local, traditional saints, the vast majority of donors for whom information exists were giving money to the devotions they found most appealing or powerful. As people expected that their donation would help their souls in the afterlife, whether through the masses said or simply because God would look favorably on their generosity, they likely considered their options carefully and chose the devotion they thought would be best.

[55] People cultivated special relationships with saints for a variety of reasons: the saint once helped them, was the patron of some group with whom they identified, was the focus of their confraternity, was a traditional focus for their family, neighborhood, or guild, etc. These are all socially influenced, but this does not negate the fact that laypeople had choices.

In the diocese of Padua, there was a significant shift in altar devotions between the 1570s and the 1660s that mirrors the prevalence of popular targets of pious bequests. Not all local preferences were dropped, nor were all of the reform-relevant saints adopted. Instead, we see a bit of what Ditchfield argues the Catholic Church hoped to accomplish: the mix of local devotions and traditions with those the Church most actively promoted.[56] In the 1570s, there was almost no trace of any reformed devotions.[57] [Table 2] The most prominent altar devotion was to the Virgin Mary, a popular choice before and after the Council of Trent, but only a handful were to particular Marian devotions. For example, there was only one Immaculate Conception and one Rosary altar among the 258 rural parishes visited by Ormaneto. The Corpus Christi was also popular, while the Holy Sacrament was not particularly prevalent. Moreover, out of a total of 874 altars, fewer than twenty-five were dedicated to anything that might be considered indicative of reform.

Table 2: Rural Paduan Altars, 1571-1572

Devotion	**Number of Altars**
Marian	178
Corpus Christi	95
San Rocco	35
St. Sebastian	29
Holy Spirit	26
St. Anthony	24
St. Peter	20
Saints with fewer than 20 altars	295
Unnamed	172

A century later, the situation looks quite different. At the start of Barbarigo's episcopacy, these devotions were flourishing, particularly the Rosary and Eucharist.[58] By the end of his

[56] Ditchfield, "Search," pp. 295-6.

[57] ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 7-8.

[58] ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 31-41.

episcopacy thirty-three years later, the situation is even clearer. [Table 3] Across 332 parishes, Barbarigo was given information about 1702 altars in total during his first and third visitations.[59] Almost every parish (ninety-two percent) had an altar dedicated to the Holy Sacrament, while there was only one altar remaining dedicated to the Corpus Christi. Nearly half were dedicated to Marian altars, including 281 dedicated to the Rosary. Rural Paduans supported thirty-five different types of Marian altars in the diocese. Many were present in only one or a few parishes, but several were overwhelmingly popular. These included the Madonna del Carmine, the Madonna of the Conception, the Annunciation, the Holy Belt, the Assumption, and the Blessed Virgin of Consolation, all devotions that either stressed Mary's connection to Christ or which were related to a religious order.[60] Other reform-relevant devotions were not as widespread, but had still gained ground: San Carlo Borromeo and the Name of God each had fifty-three altars, while devotions to the Holy Spirit, Crucifix, St. John the Baptist, and Name of Jesus each had between eighteen and thirty-three altar dedications across the diocese.

Table 3: Rural Paduan Altars under Gregorio Barbarigo

Devotion	**Number of Altars, 1664-1670**	**Number of Altars, 1685-1697**
Marian	334	414
Holy Sacrament	247	265
Rosary	180	225
San Carlo Borromeo	40	46
St. Anthony of Padua	35	66

[59] ACVP, *Visitationes*, bb. 31-41, 53-66.

[60] There were thirty-five altars dedicated to the Madonna del Carmine, twenty-two to the Madonna of the Conception, eleven to the Annunciation, nine to the Madonna della Cintura and to the Assumption, and five to the Blessed Virgin of Consolation. It is plausible that many of these devotions were actively promoted in rural Padua, as elsewhere, by the religious orders associated with them, but unfortunately I have found no records to demonstrate this. Barbarigo mentioned the activities of regular clergy infrequently except in cases where they directly served him, for example as Lenten preachers or curates.

Crucifix	22	29
S. Anthony the Great	21	30
San Rocco	19	22
Santa Lucia	18	16
Ss. Rocco and Sebastian	17	18
Name of God	17	24
Holy Spirit	17	14
St. John the Baptist	15	30
St. Anthony (unspecified)	8	29
Name of Jesus	8	19
Other devotions with fewer than 15 altars	353	460

At the same time, however, we see the continued flourishing of local devotions. Certain saints important in the Veneto, including St. Anthony of Padua, St. Anthony the Great, and Santa Lucia, remained prevalent, as did Ss. Rocco and Sebastian, popular for their presumed protection from plague.[61] Furthermore, more than 250 saints had only one to fifteen altars dedicated to them across the diocese. Rural Paduans adopted many of the devotions promoted by their reforming bishops and the Church overall, but they did not do so at the complete expense of local traditions. Certain devotions were completely swapped, such as the replacement of the Corpus Christi with the Holy Sacrament, and others were made more specific, as in the increased diversity of Marian altars, but Padua also maintained its traditional landscape, in many cases simply by adding new altars rather than replacing old ones. Building new altars required both a desire for a new devotion and sufficient funding; those parishes that expanded their altars in the seventeenth century had a vibrant devotional life. As with pious bequests, how laypeople chose

[61] St. Anthony of Padua is an obvious choice for the region; St. Anthony the Great's popularity is likely explained by his patronage of rural laborers, domestic animals and livestock, and sufferers of skin diseases, including ergotism, more common in rural communities. Santa Lucia demonstrates the diocese's connection to Venice, where her relics were located. Finally, the continued popularity of Saints Rocco and Sebastian is unsurprising in a region that continued to be hit by plague and had experienced a particularly virulent epidemic in 1630.

to spend what little money they might have is telling of their priorities and interests, in this case a particular interest in certain reform-related devotions the Church hoped to promote.

For rural parishioners who wanted to give both money and time as a part of an active devotional life, the most popular option was to join a confraternity. Although it might seem a tall order for many rural laypeople, the confraternities in the diocese of Padua were generally large, relatively inexpensive to join, and many were explicitly open to all good Catholics, regardless of gender or social standing. The devotional foci of these confraternities, like those of the altars discussed above, were chosen by the members of the community who wanted to start the group. Most villages had several confraternities to choose from, as well, allowing interested parishioners to choose a confraternity based on its devotion, its activities, or its obligations. The importance of confraternities, and their social, economic, and spiritual benefits to members and the communities at large, have been well documented by many historians of the topic.[62] Given that membership was completely voluntary and most parishioners could actively select from among several options, they also give insight into the spiritual interests of the laity.

As with helping to sponsor an altar dedication or leaving a pious bequest, joining a confraternity required a financial contribution. And unlike the first two, the contribution was often ongoing and could not be taken from one's estate post-mortem. Overall, however, the confraternities were affordable for most people. In the *relazioni* Barbarigo collected from 1664-1670 and 1685-1697, nearly 1150 confraternities were listed, with varying degrees of detail. Approximately one quarter of these results included information about cost and membership. From this sample, the average yearly cost of confraternity membership was a mere nine *soldi*; to

[62] In addition to the works of authors cited above and below, see also the work of Konrad Eisenbichler, John Henderson, Richard Mackenney, and Brian Pullan for more on Italian confraternities.

put this into perspective, a wage laborer in early seventeenth-century Venice was paid an average of forty-five *soldi* per day.[63] Even if rural laborers had not yet caught up to their urban counterparts half a century later, nine *soldi* per year would not put a significant strain on most parishioners; even the most expensive confraternities with a twenty-*soldi* price tag would not have been impossible for too many. Some confraternities charged members fees for funerals and masses when another member died in lieu of annual fees. These were generally around four *soldi* per death, though they could range from one *soldo* to seventy *soldi*, a hefty price for poorer parishioners. However, as most towns had multiple confraternities, those who could not afford to pay seventy *soldi* when someone died could choose another confraternity.

Most rural parishioners could afford to join a confraternity, but this does not negate other obstacles to their membership. In many ways, the Church tried to limit female participation in confraternities after the Council of Trent, wanting to keep closer control over women, and thus denying them leadership roles and opportunities to participate in more public activities. At the same time, certain groups, particularly Rosary confraternities, actively encouraged female membership, and Catholic women responded enthusiastically. Moreover, by the seventeenth century, most of the confraternities in Padua that provided information about members accepted women, thus providing counter-evidence to instances of the exclusion of women.[64] It is

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[63] Caffagni, "Clero," p. 719. Brian Pullan, "Wage-Earners and the Venetian Economy, 1550-1630," in *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Brian Pullan (London, 1968), 146-174, here p. 174. The range of yearly dues was two *soldi* to twenty *soldi*. For an explanation of the currency, see above, footnote 53.

[64] Nicholas Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities and Civic Religion in Renaissance Bologna* (Cambridge, UK, 1995), p. 123. Black, *Italian Confraternities*, p. 38. Ronald Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1982), pp. 212-3. Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 1975), p. 75.

important to remember, however, that "female presence does not guarantee meaningful participation," and that in most confraternities, women were excluded from leadership positions.[65] In Paduan confraternities, women could only hold administrative positions in female-only confraternities and in some confraternities dedicated to catechism, which often had parallel administrative structures to oversee the instruction of boys and girls. All other confraternities were run by the men, although women were invited to join and participate in the confraternity's rituals. Priests noted the gender of members in just under three hundred reports; of these, 264 welcomed men and women, eight were exclusively female, and fourteen were exclusively male. If this is a representative sample, women were not cut out of confraternal piety.

Finally, even if the majority of confraternities were both affordable and open to all, most had a limit to how many members they wanted or could handle. Thus it is necessary to consider whether some people may have been cut out of participation simply for lack of open spots. In Padua, however, this was not the case: there were nearly as many spaces in confraternities as there were adult parishioners, and in some towns spaces outnumbered residents. So while a parishioner may have found his preferred group full, it is almost certain that no one would have been cut out entirely. The average membership size of a confraternity was 175 people, though they ranged from forty to eight hundred members, and the average ratio of adults to confraternities in a given town was two hundred to one. Most towns of a decent size had between two and four confraternities, so all interested adults should have been able to find a

[65] Giovanna Casagrande, "Confraternities and Lay Female Religiosity in Late Medieval and Renaissance Umbria," in *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, ed. Nicholas Terpstra (Cambridge, UK 2000), 48-66, here p. 51.

group that suited their preferences or budget.[66] Complete data for all the confraternities in a given village are only available for seven parishes, but in these seven the average ratio was thirteen spaces per ten adults in the community.

Most Paduans, then, could join a confraternity, and many did. So which confraternities did they choose? In order to gauge their interest in Church reforms, I highlight the prevalence of the same reform-related devotions discussed above, again looking at the change from the episcopacy of Nicolò Ormaneto to that of Gregorio Barbarigo. Under Ormaneto, there was almost no trace of these devotions. [Table 4] The Blessed Virgin Mary, with almost no particular devotions specified, and the Corpus Christi were overwhelmingly popular, but evidence of any reform was thin. Confraternities dedicated to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Sacrament were few in number, and overall, of 245 confraternities in 259 reports, fewer than fifteen were devoted to any other reform-relevant cults. Under Ormaneto, confraternities were not very numerous and showed little to no influence of Catholic Reform.

Table 4: Rural Paduan Confraternities, 1571-1572

Devotion	**Number of Confraternities**
Marian	74
Corpus Christi	72
Holy Spirit	13
Holy Sacrament	12
Ss. Rocco and Sebastian	12
St. Sebastian	11
Other devotions, fewer than six dedications	51

[66] Demographic data for total population was provided in 802 reports. These parishes ranged from seventy to over four thousand parishioners (adults and children), with an average population of just under eight hundred and a median population of just over six hundred people. For communicating adults, see footnote 36 and the associated discussion.

Under Barbarigo, the situation was quite different – there was an explosion of confraternities in general and a significant increase in certain reforms, particularly the Rosary and the Holy Sacrament. [Table 5] In 281 parishes, Barbarigo received information about over 750 confraternities, a nearly three-fold increase from Ormaneto's visit a century earlier.[67] The most popular by far was the Holy Sacrament, and about ninety-two percent of parishes had one of these groups.[68] Close behind were those devoted to the Rosary or Madonna of the Rosary, and a number of other Marian devotions were also quite popular. Others relevant to reform were present, including the Name of Jesus, Name of God, Christian Doctrine, and San Filippo Neri,

[67] While some increase may be attributable to demographics, it is not plausible to attribute this drastic change to population increase alone. Ormaneto did not provide demographic data. In the Venetian *terraferma* in general, the 1630 plague killed approximately twenty percent of the population, and in the late seventeenth century, the population was likely still recovering from this. Overall, however, the population increased by forty-four percent between 1548-1766. Michael Knapton, "The *Terraferma* State," in *A Companion to Venetian History, 1400-1797*, ed. Eric Dursteler (Leiden 2013), 85-124, here p. 108.

[68] The switch from Corpus Christi to Holy Sacrament (or vice-versa) signified a change in activities. In Padua, as in Genoa and other places, Corpus Christi groups were transformed to Holy Sacrament, though in other dioceses, such as Milan, Holy Sacrament groups transitioned to Corpus Christi. Typically, the earlier iterations focused their festivities on the Feast of the Corpus Christi. Newer groups organized the celebrations for all feast days related to Christ and the Eucharist, held monthly processions, accompanied the priest taking the sacrament to the sick, performed forty hours devotions, and often took on the maintenance of other altars in the church. See the confraternity statutes for Holy Sacrament groups in ACVP, *Confraternitatum*, b. 10, fols. 15r-17r, 480r-482r; b. 11, fols. 74v-75r, 111r-112r. For Genoa, see Claudio Bernardi, "Corpus Domini: Ritual Metamorphoses and Social Changes in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Genoa," in *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, pp. 228-242, here pp. 231-232. For Milan, see Danilo Zardin, "Relaunching Confraternities in the Tridentine Era: Shaping Conscience and Christianizing Society in Milan and Lombardy," in *The Politics of Ritual Kinship*, pp. 190-209, here pp. 195, 203.

though not yet in significant numbers. As was common across Europe, the laity had eagerly adopted the Rosary and Holy Sacrament confraternities, and were slowly and selectively adopting some of the others promoted by the Church. Although they may not have joined for the same reasons the Church promoted these devotions, they were still enthusiastic about these new options and the spiritual outlets they provided.

Table 5: Rural Paduan Confraternities under Gregorio Barbarigo

Devotion	**1664-1670**	**1685-1697**
Holy Sacrament	267	323
Rosary	174	231
Marian	161	175
Name of God	16	21
Souls in Purgatory	10	34
Christian Doctrine	10	17
San Carlo Borromeo	7	9
Name of Jesus	7	15
St. Anthony of Padua	5	15
San Filippo Neri	2	0
Other devotions, fewer than 10 dedications	167	175

A few decades later, the evidence of reform was even stronger. The numbers of reform-relevant confraternities grew across the board, with the Rosary, Christian Doctrine, and Name of Jesus experiencing the most significant increases. The Holy Sacrament confraternities, already in most parishes in the 1660s, were in 98.5 percent of parishes by the end of Barbarigo's episcopacy, while the Rosary was a popular devotion in nearly eighty percent of parishes. At the same time, it is important to recognize the continued variety in the diocese, for while large numbers of laypeople were clearly eager to adopt these new devotions, plenty of people continued to prefer St. Anthony of Padua and many other traditional devotions. Individual parishes supported a wide variety of unique saints important only to them or perhaps to a small group of villages - more than one hundred saints had fewer than ten groups dedicated to them. Lots of Paduans supported reform, becoming active members of new confraternities and happily turning over their yearly dues and other fees, while others chose to engage in similar activities,

but stay loyal to older devotions. Yet what is clear, regardless of the group chosen, is that rural Paduans were not deterred by the Church's efforts to reform confraternities; they did not simply walk away as many did in Bologna when the confraternities were brought under parochial control.[69] While the period between Ormaneto and Barbarigo may well have been difficult for some members who did not care for the changes, the damage was not lasting, and in fact Barbarigo's parishioners were much more active than their ancestors a century earlier, fully embracing baroque Catholicism.

This activity and enthusiasm for participating in parish life is seen across rural Padua, and both the prevalence and specifics of lay participation demonstrate what rural laypeople were most excited about within the parochial sphere. Rural laity evinced enthusiasm for devotions to the Holy Sacrament, the Rosary, and a variety of other devotions connected to reform, particularly those of Marian or Christocentric nature. They were also eager to support the spread of catechism and the Catholic education of village children. At the same time, they maintained their interest in time-honored traditions, continuing to support local devotions and their parish church itself. Lay spirituality in rural parishes, the same kind of places reformers often bemoaned as "our Indies," was vibrant, active, and orthodox, not repressed, lackluster, or tinged with heterodoxy. Some of this was simply continuity from the pre-Reformation era, but as the comparison between Ormaneto and Barbarigo's records demonstrate, the seventeenth century saw not only a shift in devotions, but a general flourishing of both reformed and traditional spiritual practices. The precise causes of this shift are difficult to determine based on available sources, but it seems that a combination of sporadic reform efforts beginning with Ormaneto and the concentrated efforts of Gregorio Barbarigo in the late seventeenth century coalesced with lay

[69] Terpstra, *Lay Confraternities,* p. 223.

desires for increased participation in the baroque Church. While perhaps this did not conform exactly to the Catholic utopia envisioned by Tridentine reformers, this was what the laypeople wanted.