

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

**A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO IN THE NKORANZA  
SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

**BY**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON  
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD  
OF MPhil STUDY OF RELIGIONS DEGREE.**



**DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

**JULY 2018**

**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of materials quoted from the other scholarly works which have been duly acknowledged, is the original production of research work by the researcher under the supervision of Prof. Elizabeth Amoah and Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego of the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana.

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## ABSTRACT

For many decades, sacred spaces have become an indispensable part of individuals and collective spirituality. The Roman Catholic Church is not left out in this form of spirituality. The Grottos have become places where some Catholics and also, non-Catholics go to ‘wait upon the Lord’ and to seek spiritual nourishment, growth and breakthroughs in their lives. This study has examined one of such sacred spaces, particularly, the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2 in the Nkoranza South Municipality, and in the Techiman Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana.

The study sought to unearth the complex narratives of identity, programmes, and activities of the Grotto. It also aimed at unravelling the challenges and contributions of this sacred space in the lives of pilgrims, the community, and the church. With Gottlieb S. Roger’s theory on the Sacred Earth, the researcher used interviews, discussions, questionnaires and participant observation as tools for the collection of the primary data that helped to ascertain the spirituality and activities of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2.

The study found out that there are no written documents on the history or the biography of the founder of the Grotto. It also discovered that the leaders of the Grotto engage in teachings that are not in line with the Roman Catholic faith and tradition. Although it appears some of these teachings are influences from both the indigenous worldview of the area and some influences from the Pentecostal/Charismatic church in Ghana, further research is needed to more clearly substantiate these claims. Apart from these, it was revealed that there is some level of financial mismanagement on the side of the leaders that manage the Grotto. Based on

these findings, this study has recommended that more work should be done on sacred sites in Ghana.

## **DEDICATION**

This Thesis is dedicated to my Bishop, Most Rev. Dominic Yeboah Nyarko and the Parishners of St. Arnold Janssen Parish, Kranka.

I also dedicate it to my mother, Mama Agatha Pokuaa Kome and my siblings, James Opoku Brenya, Janet Opoku Takyiwaa, Simon Opoku Boateng and Veronica Opoku Agyeman.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I sincerely give thanks to God for the strength to finish this Thesis. God, to you be glory and honour. I owe a great deal of gratitude to my Bishop, Most Rev. Dominic Yeboah Nyarko, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Techiman for his prayers and financial support. I thank him for the confidence he reposed in me and the opportunity he gave to me to pursue this course. May God bless him. I sincerely owe a great deal of thanks to my assiduous and hardworking supervisors, Prof. Elizabeth Amoah and Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego for their perfect guidelines, encouragement and useful suggestions during the various stages of this Thesis. I cannot forget the huge contribution of Emmanuel Zumegah. Without his contribution, this Thesis would not have seen the light of the day. I am grateful. God bless you abundantly for me.

I thank my family, especially my mother, for their love, prayers and encouragement in the course of writing this Thesis. I express gratitude to my Parishners for their prayers, understanding and patience. I acknowledge the contribution of Miss Lydia Frimpomaa and Isaac Yeboah. I am grateful to them and I ask God to bless them. I wish to thank the leaders of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2 for allowing me to use their Grotto for this research work. I want to thank in a very special way Mr. Francis Asiedu (current leader of the Grotto) and his wife Eno Mary, the two catechists Mr. Anthony Adjei and Mr. Philip Alipo for providing me with most of the information I needed for this research work. Last but not the least, I thank all my friends who prayed for me and motivated me, especially Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Obeng Codjoe, in fact, you are a brother from another mother. God bless you.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Over the centuries, places of pilgrimage such as Grottos and Monasteries have remained an integral part of Catholic worship and spiritual experience. Some Christians including the young and the old, the sick and disabled, find such sacred places as a location to encounter the presence of God. Though, places of religious pilgrimage are a global phenomenon, some undertake them with tourist intentions. In contemporary Christianity, examples of such sacred places can be drawn from different religious traditions. Robert H. Dalton identifies and briefly describes almost all the sacred spaces that are prominent in all the historic or World Religions.<sup>1</sup> These World Religions include Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.<sup>2</sup> In his assertion that seems to support Park's observation about the universal nature of sacred spaces in all religious traditions, Veikko Anttonen writes as follows:

Setting specific times and places apart as sacred is a fundamental structure in human cultures, without which no religion, nation-state or political ideology can insure the continuity of its power, hierarchy and authority. Such universal forms of religious behaviour as fasting, pilgrimage, asceticism, celibacy, religiously motivated forms of seclusion and reclusion and various forms of meditation can also be comprehended in terms of the category of the sacred. These forms of religious behaviour are culturally constituted on the idea of marking one's physical and mental self as separate from the routines of everyday social life.<sup>3</sup>

Central in Anttonen's observation is the notion of sacredness, believed to be an integral component of all religious traditions. Historians and phenomenologists of religion such as

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<sup>1</sup> Robert H. Dalton, ed., *Sacred Places of the World: A Religious Journey Across the Globe*, (India: Abhishek Publications, 2010), 342.

<sup>2</sup> For further reading and/or on these World Religions, see Dean C. Halverson, Gen. ed., *The Compact Guide to World Religions* (Minnesota, USA: Bethany House Publishers, 1996), 13-234. C.f. Michael Molloy, *Experiencing the World's Religions: Tradition, Challenge and Change* (second edition) (USA: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2002), 59-525.

<sup>3</sup> Anttonen Veikko, *A Guide to the Study of Religion*, (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 272.

Nathan Soderblom, Rudolf Otto, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade, according to Anttonen, hold sacrality to be not only a hallmark of religion but its very essence.<sup>4</sup>

On a larger scale, there seems to be a universal appreciation of the notion that much of the scholarly work on sacred space is built upon the foundation established by Mircea Eliade in his book on *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. In this work, Eliade explores how secular or profane space is converted into holy or sacred space, and suggests that this symbolic process reflects the spiritual characteristics associated with both the physical features and the deeper, abstract implications of delimiting a particular site as sacred. Designation of a site as sacred is generally a response to two types of events. Some events (which Eliade calls *hierophanic*) involve a direct manifestation on earth of a deity, whereas in other (*theophanic*) events somebody receives a message from the deity and interprets it for others.<sup>5</sup>

Evidently, visits to these sacred places of prayer are not denomination driven or specific. There are many places where Christians who want to meet their God in prayer go to have this experience. These are prayer centers established by Christian denominations for such experiences. In the Catholic Church, there are places such as Grottos, Monasteries and Retreat Centres where church members go for spiritual fulfilment and nourishment. These places like a Grotto provide the individual the opportunity to commune with the Divine.

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<sup>4</sup> Anttonen, "A *Guide to the Study of Religion*," 272.

<sup>5</sup> Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, (United States of America: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1959), 20 – 27.

Grottos are normally sacred caves or places with interesting natural features and sometimes artificial additions.<sup>6</sup> It is a place of prayer commonly referred to as a shrine or sanctuary.<sup>7</sup> Grottos are places of significant relevance to Roman Catholics because they offer pilgrims the avenue to have a deeper connection with God. They play significant role in pilgrims' active spiritual guidance and growth. Grotto programmes are open to people of all faith. The primary goal of a Grotto programme is to assist individuals to connect to the divine in their spiritual lives and to experience the healing dimensions of faith.<sup>8</sup> Healing is one of the essential divine graces that pilgrims expect at Grottos. Victor and Edith Turner have argued that “[Human] beings are subject to disease and death. They experience guilt as a result of their dealings with one another. From these ills and sins, pilgrimage provides relief. It as well increase prospect of ultimate salvation, (...) Pilgrimage provides a carefully structured, highly valued route to a liminal world where the ideal is felt to be real, where the tainted social persona may be cleansed and renewed.”<sup>9</sup>

There are many popular Grottos around the world. Some of these Grottos are Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto in France and Our Lady of Fatima Grotto in Portugal. In Ghana, mention can be made of the Buoho Grotto in Kumasi, Abono Grotto in Obuasi, Our Lady of Calvary Grotto at Asueyi - Techiman, Sacred Heart Shrine at Dzodze in the Volta Region and Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2 in the Nkoranza South Municipality.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Sudbrack, “Spirituality”, In *The Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, Gordon S. Wakefield, ed., (London: SCM Press, 1983), 76.

<sup>7</sup> Sudbrack, “*Spirituality*”, 76.

<sup>8</sup> <https://thegrotto.org/spirituality-program>.

<sup>9</sup> Victor W. Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 30.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, Nkoranza, like any other Grotto, provides the avenue for people to have an encounter with God. It also provides the environment for pilgrims who go there to pray, to have a deeper encounter with the Divine. Pilgrims claim visiting this Grotto, their spiritual and physical needs are provided. Though it is a Catholic Grotto, it is patronized by non-Catholics as well. This Grotto also seems to have some peculiar things that make the place unique from all the other Grottos in Ghana.

The founder of the Grotto claimed he had special gift of dreams and so almost everything there was revealed to him through dreams. The leaders and the executives have special dress (uniform) that they wear. Though the place is under St. Martin de Porres Catholic Parish at Nkoranza, the management of the place seems semi-autonomous. There seem to be practices that are against the Roman Catholic teachings at the Grotto. There are many complex narratives of identity of the Grotto that need to be studied. Paul Post affirms this complexity at sacred sites by asserting that “Sacred sites have become complex spaces of increased public popularity”.<sup>10</sup> For him, tensions are constantly present at these sacred sites, and that they can lead to conflict. This research studies the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2 in the Nkoranza South Municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region to ascertain these complex narratives of identity underlying this Grotto.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is one of the many Grottos in Ghana that provides the avenue for pilgrims to find spiritual growth. Though it has provided pilgrims with

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<sup>10</sup> Leslie S. Nthoi, “Ownership of the Sacred: Complex Claims and Appropriations,” In *Sacred Spaces and Contested Identities*, Philip Neil, ed., (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2014), 135-54.

diverse opportunities for both spiritual and physical fulfilment, it is seen by Most Rev. Dominic Yeboah Nyarko, the Catholic Bishop of Techiman Diocese, who is the head of the Diocese, as posing some challenges to the Catholic Diocese of Techiman and the Catholic Church in Ghana as a whole. If this Grotto is contributing to the growth of the Catholic Church, why is it at the same time seen by the Bishop and the hierarchy of the Diocese as posing a challenge to the Catholic Church and the Techiman Diocese? There are complex narratives of identity underlying the Grotto. This research seeks to trace the historical perspective and the teachings as well as practices that take place at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Equally, it is to examine the current challenges faced at the Grotto and how they subsequently affect its activities.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The questions that this study seeks to address are;

1. What is the history behind the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto?
2. What are the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto?
3. What challenges does the Grotto pose to the Catholic Diocese of Techiman and the Catholic Church in Ghana as a whole?

### **1.4 Aim and Objectives**

In looking at the research questions underlying the study, the researcher seeks to achieve the following aim(s) and objectives:

1. The aim of this research is to examine the complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto.

2. To examine the contributions of the Grotto to the Catholic Church.
3. To examine the challenges it poses to the Catholic Diocese of Techiman.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The immediate geographical context for this study is the Nkoranza South Municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region and more particularly, the Techiman Diocese of the Catholic Church in Ghana. Particularly, the study focuses on the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Nkoranza South Municipality. Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, Jerusalem No.2 has been chosen for this study as a result of its uniqueness in comparison to other Grottos in Ghana. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is located in the Nkoranza South Municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region. It is about 12 kilometres away from Nkoranza town. It is also situated within the Catholic Diocese of Techiman, formerly under the jurisdiction of Sunyani Diocese. More importantly, this Grotto which is the centre of attraction to both Catholics and non-Catholics alike has been in existence for more than fifty years. It seems to be contributing to the growth of the Catholic Church and at the same time posing some challenges to the Catholic Church in Ghana.

Notwithstanding the fact that every Grotto has a specific devotion and spirituality it performs, the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, Jerusalem No.2 combines the devotion to both the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus with no proper distinction. “Jerusalem No.2” as the name of the Grotto appears is somewhat fascinating in itself. The Grotto has naturally arranged trees and stones that depict the fourteen Stations of the Cross,<sup>11</sup> a prayer devotion in the Catholic Church. The Grotto

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<sup>11</sup> The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ's last day on earth as a man. The 14 devotions, or stations, focus on specific events of His last day, beginning with His condemnation. The stations are commonly used as a mini pilgrimage as the individual moves from station to station. At each station, the individual recalls and meditates on a specific event from

also seems to be the only religious space that has its leader doubling as the “leader” of the village where the Grotto is located.

### **1.6 Methodology**

In this study, two main methodologies were employed by the researcher, the phenomenological and theological approaches. James Cox argues that in the phenomenological method, the researcher begins by performing *epoche*.<sup>12</sup> The researcher suspends or brackets his previous ideas, thoughts, opinions or beliefs. This means suspending personal beliefs and withholding judgements on academic theories about religion.<sup>13</sup> The student observes the phenomena of religion as they appear rather than as they are understood through opinions formed prior to observation.<sup>14</sup> This method employed is most appropriate for this study. The researcher did participant observation in order to observe the day-to-day activities and programmes at the Grotto. However, the researcher was very cautious because of his background as a Catholic priest who has had an encounter or experience in working at the Grotto for some time. Also, the researcher sought to describe the views of respondents from their own experiences. By adopting this approach, the researcher admits that to some extent, the levels of biases would be eliminated thus only reflecting the views of the respondents. The researcher posing as a pilgrim himself had a more suitable opportunity to ensure and assure the worshippers that their views and experiences would be treated as secret and highly confidential.

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Christ's last day. Specific prayers are recited and then the individual moves to the next station until all 14 are complete.

<sup>12</sup>James L. Cox, *Expressing the Sacred: An Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1996), 25.

<sup>13</sup> Cox. *Expressing the Sacred*, 25.

<sup>14</sup>Cox. *Expressing the Sacred*, 26.

In an attempt to understand the complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, one must first gain an understanding of the beliefs and practices of the worshippers in the area of doctrines. Thus, the researcher employed the theological method as well because part of this study involves the doctrines of the Catholic Church. The work discussed some of the doctrines of the Grotto that seem to contradict the general doctrines of the Catholic Church. The doctrines of the Catholic Church are universal and the same in all Catholic Churches all over the world. Thus, the doctrines of the Catholic Church must be placed in a context to ensure that what they teach at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is what the Catholic Church teaches everywhere.

### **1.6.1 Methods of Data Collection**

Creswell has argued that the qualitative method of data collection has become very critical to examine social phenomena within a certain time, context and culture.<sup>15</sup> This study required in-depth information which is rich in data that was needed to appreciate the social issues. This is because qualitative studies help to deeply interrogate issues of doctrine and practices for a deeper understanding and analysis of the research objective set. The study achieved this purpose through the use of interviews, participant observation and questionnaires. Data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included questionnaire, open-ended interviews and participant observation.

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<sup>15</sup> J.W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* 4th Ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2014), 142.

### ***1.6.1.1 Participant Observation***

Data was collected through interviews. As part of data collection, the researcher did participant observation and monitored the activities of the Grotto. This allowed the researcher to apprehend the insider view while at the same time taking an active role in the everyday life of the people at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The researcher joined the pilgrims on two different occasions for their monthly programmes. The researcher stayed with them for a period of five days to observe their day-to-day activities. Apart from joining the monthly programmes on two different occasions, the researcher also visited the Grotto on many different occasions to observe how their programmes are organized on ordinary days.

The researcher, personally, observed the practices of the worshippers at the Grotto as a pilgrim. This allowed the researcher to gather first-hand information about the way and manner in which pilgrims go about their daily activities to understand and appreciate the activities and programmes at the Grotto. Yin, has argued that social reality is embedded within and cannot be abstracted from their social settings, and that an ideal way to understand such reality is to engage in ‘sense-making’ rather than hypothesis testing that is typical of quantitative research.<sup>16</sup> During the participant observation, the researcher engaged fully in the activities being studied but it was known to the participants as a researcher. Thus, permission was sought from the Parish Priest as well as the leaders and managers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto to allow the researcher to observe. The aim was for the researcher to immerse himself into the setting of the Grotto in order that he could see, hear, feel and most importantly experience the daily lives of participants in the research. The researcher

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<sup>16</sup> Yin R. K., *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* 3rd Ed. (USA: Thousand Oaks, 2003), 172.

who has had the opportunity to work there some years ago found that the number of pilgrims keeps increasing.

#### ***1.6.1.2 Interviews***

Interview is another qualitative technique used for data collection. Interview involves face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the respondents. In this research, interview was conducted to solicit information for the research. It is one of the few effective approaches used in data collection especially in a phenomenological study. This is very relevant if the correct questions are asked.

Creswell has argued that the face-to-face approach to data collection allows the researcher to examine emotions and facial expressions of respondents.<sup>17</sup> This allowed the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study and thus made detailed and informed analysis.<sup>18</sup> With this tool, different set of interview guides were used to help collect data from different groups of respondents. The researcher used interview extensively to collect details of the views of respondents. Fifty (50) people were interviewed for this research. Most of the people that were interviewed were thought to have had useful information for the study.

#### ***1.6.1.3 Questionnaire***

Questionnaires were also used as a technique for data collection. Questionnaire could be closed ended or open ended to solicit specific information from respondents. Questionnaire helps to collect and record information about a particular issue. It should always have a specific purpose that relates to the objectives of the research.

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<sup>17</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 143.

<sup>18</sup> Creswell, *Research Design*, 143.

Among its merits are that, basic attitudes or opinions of people or a group are related to specific issues.

### **1.6.2 Sample Size**

Purposeful sampling techniques were adopted to ensure that persons who had useful and relevant information to the study were contacted. Some of these people were also recommended by other people in a snowballing effect.<sup>19</sup> Again, different categories of respondents were contacted for the research. The primary sources of information for this research are the administrators and managers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto located in the Nkoranza South Municipality. This research tool allowed the researcher to gain an understanding and also, appreciated the contributions as well as the challenges faced by the managers of this Grotto.<sup>20</sup> Also, some pilgrims were consulted to understand the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The sample size for worshippers, pilgrims, the Bishop, the Parish Priest, community leaders and elders was fifty (50). Among them twenty (20) were males while thirty (30) were females.

Females who were interviewed were more than the males because of the general impression given by the leaders that female pilgrims dominate male pilgrims, though no figures were given to substantiate this claim due to the leaders' inability to keep records of people who visit the place. The ages of the respondents ranged between eighteen (18) and sixty (60) years. This group of people were selected because they were old enough to choose for themselves what to do. Twenty-five (25) of the

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<sup>19</sup> Creswell John W., *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd ed.,

(London: SAGE Publications Inc., 2007), 87.

<sup>20</sup> Seth Kissi, *Thesis Writing: Addressing some common Problems of Students*, (Accra: Even Media, 2012), 27.

respondents had some form of basic education, fifteen (15) had second cycle education while ten (10) had tertiary education.<sup>21</sup> The Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Techiman, the Parish Priest in charge of the Nkoranza St. Martin de Porres Parish, the Parish Catechist, the Assemblyman of Jerusalem No.2 and the leaders and managers of the Grotto were all interviewed.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

Scholars argue for and against the concept of theory in the study of religion. However, whether for or against, it is axiomatic that the relevance of the application of theories to a researcher's project cannot be overemphasized. Research theories are explanations of natural, environmental, social or religious behaviours. For instance, evolution theory sees religion either as an adaptation of a way of life or just as a by-product.<sup>22</sup> Don Wiebe, studying about the theory of the study of religion strongly argued that there is no one holistic theory that has the necessary tools to comprehensively encompass the study of religion.<sup>23</sup> He, however, recognised the fact that no study could be carried out in religion without the adoption of at least one or more theories.<sup>24</sup>

This particular research focuses on the study of the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2. The undergirding theory for this research work is Gottlieb S. Roger's theory on "sacred earth." According to Roger, religions help situate human beings in both the natural and social worlds. The latter function is served by their moral teachings, while the former by a

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<sup>21</sup> Field Data, Nkoranza South Municipality.

<sup>22</sup> James L. Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion: Key Figures, Formative Influences and Subsequent Debates*, (Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 2009), 87.

<sup>23</sup> Don Wiebe, *Theory in the Study of Religion*, (London: Academic Press Inc. Ltd., 1983), 283-309.

<sup>24</sup> Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion*, 21.

combination of creation myths, narrative accounts of the origin of a particular phenomenon, and norms governing our relation with our natural surroundings.<sup>25</sup> At the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2, there is a combination of plants, flowers, soil, rocks and even the topography all in their natural environments which is not to be touched or destroyed. Everything on that land is considered “holy”.

Consequently, to find out how “traditional” religions viewed nature, we must consult a broad range of stories, philosophical accounts and moral teachings. Roger talks of three tentative generalizations. Roger asserts that, firstly, we see that human beings have taken nature to be something which requires an explanation. The Bible’s account of creation, less than Greek mythology’s story of how the change of the seasons began, shows that people have wanted to put the multiplicity, variability and sheer scope of their natural surrounding into a humanly comprehensive framework.<sup>26</sup> To study and ascertain the complex narratives of identity underlying the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, this theory of Roger is appropriate and would be employed.

The Founder, Opanin George Akwasi Adjei, in particular, used the natural surroundings to create the awareness of the existence of his object of worship, God. Opanin George Akwasi Adjei was living on a vast land surrounded by three rivers. The land size was about 1003 acres.<sup>27</sup> He used his claimed gift of dreams to create this awareness of the divine. Some other accounts also said it was a vision he had from God with specific instructions. For example, the Stations of the Cross which is an important aspect of the spiritual journey of any pilgrim that goes to the Grotto is

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<sup>25</sup> Roger S. Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 89.

<sup>26</sup> Gyekye Kwame, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* (Ghana: Sankofa Publishing Company, 1998), 96.

<sup>27</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2.

represented by specific plant or plants and rocks that have unique stories behind them. From the first station to the seventh station, there are female “dorma”<sup>28</sup> trees while the remaining seven stations have male “dorma” trees. But what is unique and fascinating is that at the fourth station, there is a male “dorma” plant which has germinated on a palm tree.

The explanation they give to the above phenomenon is that what is being portrayed is in the Bible where Jesus met His mother Mary on his way to Calvary and so, the male “dorma” tree here represents Jesus and the palm tree represents Mary spiritually.<sup>29</sup> For Roger, nature requires an explanation<sup>30</sup> and Opanin Akwasi Adjei, though was a non-literate and had no western formal education,<sup>31</sup> used his God-given gifts to give explanation to his natural environment. He did not study any theology or scriptures but he had a unique way of giving even theological explanations to his dreams and his natural environment. It is claimed he was led by the Holy Spirit in all of this.<sup>32</sup>

In addition, one can observe that these accounts, for all their diversity, share a common bond: nature is to be made sense of in a way that directly connects it to the fundamental values of human existence. Opanin George Akwasi Adjei used his talents and gifts of dreams to give meaning and sense to his natural environment. The contrast between the religious view of nature and that of modern science is thus revealed. For science, the natural world serves as a neutral backdrop to human

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<sup>28</sup> The local name of a certain tree at the Grotto.

<sup>29</sup> Philip Alipo - Assistant Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2.

<sup>30</sup> Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*, 78.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Baagyei, wife of the President and Daughter of the Founder of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2.

<sup>32</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2.

activities, to be studied, manipulated and mastered at will. It is, as Albert Camus puts it, “a setting of ‘benign indifference.’<sup>33</sup> To the religious sensibility, the universe is ‘enchanted’: the gift of a loving God, a land destined for a holy people, the cosmic analog of our own mothers, a setting filled with spirit forces that are to be our guardians, or, perhaps, even a temptation to be overcome”.<sup>34</sup>

Roger’s third argument is that religion represents nature in very different ways. These differences hold within nature as well as religions, hardly surprising when we remember for how long and in how many different settings some of these traditions have existed.<sup>35</sup> The natural endowments at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto continue to maintain its originality. The Grotto is so much endowed with natural vegetation. The notion that people are to “master the earth” (Gen. 1:28), even if interpreted as defining a relation which includes responsibility and care, it is different from a view that sees nature as a model for human virtue, or in which animals or parts of the landscape can serve as guides of spiritual development. Thus the directive from the spiritual leader as revealed to him in a dream or vision that he must not cut down any tree or even try to move a rock is still maintained up till present day. This has led to the provision of social cohesion, enforce morals or offer meanings or explanation to existential questions on the minds of worshippers. At the Grotto, there are other human religious items, symbols and signs but all these are protected and maintained, as were the instructions, as revealed in a dream or vision to the founder, Opanin George Akwasi Adjei.

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<sup>33</sup> Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*, 64.

<sup>34</sup> Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*, 65.

<sup>35</sup> Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth*, 64.

## 1.8 Literature Review

According to Yin, literature review sets the tone and serves as a form of synthesis that allows the researcher to show what has been discovered, when it was discovered and by whom in a chronological manner.<sup>36</sup> For the purposes of this research and the fact that little academic writing has been done on Grottos in Ghana, literature was reviewed in four areas. These are: Grottos, contributions of Grottos to the spiritual life of the laity (also known as “lay faithful” in the Roman Catholic terminology), devotions at Grottos and the sacredness of the earth.

### 1.8.1 Grottos

According to an article written by Josef Moroder-Lusenber, titled “Marian Devotions”, the author argues that while the Catholic Church considers the liturgy as central to the life and mission of the Church and encourages Roman Catholics to participate in it as often as possible, it also acknowledges the objective nature of the liturgy. The Catholic Church encourages the cultivation of pious acts and personal devotions. The constitution of the Catholic Church *Sacrosanctum Concilium* states, “The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy... Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church, above all when they are ordered by the Apostolic See.”<sup>37</sup>

The author further argues that “these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy, are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very

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<sup>36</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC 13)

nature far surpasses any of them”.<sup>38</sup> These pious devotions are to compliment the official liturgy of the Catholic Church in bringing the people closer to God. All the devotions at various Grottos are pious programmes that aim at enhancing the spiritual growth of the pilgrims. Grottos provide the environment for the lay faithful to participate in these popular devotions as they are commended by the Church to participate. These devotions should help the devotees to a better understanding of the official liturgy of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church encourages her leaders that as they provide the avenue for the members to participate in various devotions, they should be guided by the laws and norms of the Catholic Church. This would help in reducing abuses and scandals at these devotional centres. Grottos play significant roles in promoting these pious devotions. Grottos are dedicated to fostering spiritual well-being of the pilgrims. They serve as places of peace, serenity and spiritual reflection so that people might renew their spirit in the midst of a busy world.<sup>39</sup>

Grottos have been part of the history of the Roman Catholic Church since the beginning of the early Catholic Church. The Church fathers have considered Gethsemane<sup>40</sup> as a form of Grotto. A fragmentary account of a pilgrimage in the fourth century, preserved by Peter the Deacon (1037), mentions “a Grotto at the place where the Jews arrested Jesus Christ the Savior.”<sup>41</sup> According to the tradition it was in

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<sup>38</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic\\_devotions#cite\\_note-Sacrosanctum-8](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_devotions#cite_note-Sacrosanctum-8)

<sup>39</sup> <https://thegrotto.org/spirituality-program/>

<sup>40</sup> A garden in Jerusalem believed to be the place where Jesus and his disciples prayed the night before his crucifixion

<sup>41</sup> Meistermann B., “Gethsemani”, In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company,

1909) Retrieved March 12, 2018 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm>

this Grotto that Christ went to take refuge with his disciples to pass the night. It was also memorable for a supper and a washing of the feet which, according to the same tradition, took place there.<sup>42</sup>

One church father, Eutychius, Patriarch of Constantinople (d. 583), says in one of his sermons that the Church commemorates three suppers: “The first meal”, he says, “together with the purification, took place at Gethsemane on the Sabbath day, the first day, i.e. when Sunday was already begun. That is why we then celebrate the vigil.”<sup>43</sup> He continues “the second supper was that of Bethany, and the third was that of Holy Thursday at which was instituted the Holy Eucharist.”<sup>44</sup> Theodosius (d. 530) describes this Grotto in these terms: “There (in the valley of Josaphat) is situated the basilica of Holy Mary, Mother of God, with her sepulcher. There is also the place where the Lord supped with his disciples. There he washed their feet.”<sup>45</sup> Theodosius describes these events leading to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ taking place in a place he refers to as Grotto.

He further states “There are to be seen four benches where Our Lord reclined in the midst of His Apostles. Each bench can seat three persons. There also Judas betrayed the Saviour. Some persons, when they visit this spot, through devotion partake of

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<sup>42</sup> Meistermann B., “Gethsemani”, In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company,

1909) Retrieved March 12, 2018 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium ( SC 92).

<sup>44</sup> Sacrosanctum Concilium ( SC 92).

<sup>45</sup> Meistermann B., “Gethsemani”, In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ( New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), Retrieved March 12, 2018 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm>

some refreshment, but no meat. They light torches because the place is in a Grotto.”<sup>46</sup> Other church fathers like Antonius of Plaisance (d.570), Arculf, Epiphanius the Hagiopolite, and others make mention of the well-known Pasch of which the Grotto of Gethsemane was witness. In the Church of the Agony, he states “the stone was preserved on which, according to tradition, Jesus knelt during His Agony”.<sup>47</sup> It is related by the Arculf that, after the destruction of the church by the Persians, the stone was removed to the Grotto and there venerated. In 1165 John of Wurzburg found it still preserved at this spot, and there is yet to be seen on the ceiling of the Grotto an inscription concerning it. In the fourteenth century the pilgrims, led astray by the presence of the stone and the inscription, mistakenly called this sanctuary the Grotto of the Agony.<sup>48</sup>

Mostly, Grottos are started by lay faithful who claim to have apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Others claim to have encountered the Virgin Mary through visions and dreams. Most of the popular Grottos around the world were started by apparitions of the Virgin Mary. These apparitions usually happen on a mountain, in a cave or in the forest. For instance, in 1858 Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, a fourteen-year-old peasant, a child of poor background, at Lourdes, in Southern France at a place far from population.<sup>49</sup> Bernadette Soubirous reported a vision of Our Lady of Lourdes. A simple 14-year-old peasant girl of no significant educational experience, Soubirous claimed she saw "a

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<sup>46</sup> Meistermann B., Gethsemani. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company, (1909) Retrieved March 12, 2018 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm>

<sup>47</sup> Meistermann B., Gethsemani. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company, (1909) Retrieved March 12, 2018 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm>

<sup>48</sup> Meistermann B., Gethsemani. In *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909. Retrieved March 12, 2018 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06540a.htm>

<sup>49</sup> Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol.13, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 299-302.

small maiden" in white, with a Golden Rosary and blue belt fastened around her waist, and two golden roses at her feet.<sup>50</sup>

In subsequent visitations she heard the lady speak to her, saying *I am the Immaculate Conception*, and asking that a chapel be built there. At first ridiculed, questioned, and belittled by Church officials and other contemporaries, Soubirous insisted on her vision. Eventually the Church believed her and she was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1933. After church investigations confirmed her visions, a large church was built at the site.<sup>51</sup> From 1915 to 1917 three peasant children herding sheep near Fatima, a town in Portugal, reported other apparitions. This just goes to affirm the fact that most Grottos begin by apparitions of the Virgin Mary giving instructions to people. Many Marian apparitions, although they may occur in different ages and cultures, they share similarities. Because the apparitions are private and not public revelations, Roman Catholics are not required to believe them. They do not add any additional material to the truths of the Catholic Church as expressed in public revelation.

Notwithstanding the above, some Grottos begin without any apparitions, visions or dreams. The Our Lady of Calvary Grotto at Asueyi, for instance, is claimed not to have started before any of the above mysterious happenings. According to Rev. Fr. Peter Yeboah (the Priest in Charge of this Grotto), the then Parish Priest of Techiman, Rev. Fr. Otmar identified the place and thought could be developed to be a Grotto.

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<sup>50</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Lady\\_of\\_Lourdes#cite\\_note-Burke850-8](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Lourdes#cite_note-Burke850-8)

<sup>51</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Lady\\_of\\_Lourdes#cite\\_note-Burke850-8](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Lourdes#cite_note-Burke850-8)

### 1.8.2 Devotions at Grottos

Anytime there is apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary, there seems to be specific instructions to these individuals she appears to. When she appeared to Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, “she heard the lady speak to her and asked that a chapel be built there”.<sup>52</sup> The kind of devotions at these Grottos is based on the message given to these individuals during the apparitions or the vision or in the dream. It is important to state here that there are some common characteristics of all these apparitions. “The individuals claim to have seen a lady dressed in white, with a Golden Rosary and blue belt fastened around her waist, and two golden roses at her feet.”<sup>53</sup> As it happened at Lourdes, similar descriptions are given by these individuals during other apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. During these apparitions, dreams or visions, specific instructions are claimed to be given by the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the case of Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, the lady asked her to pray the Rosary. Most of these individuals who had these experiences claimed they received the same instructions in different forms. This may have been the reason why Rosary devotions are very prominent at Grottos.

Again at Lourdes, the spring was described to Soubirous by an apparition of Our Lady of Lourdes on 25 February 1858. Since that time many thousands of pilgrims who go to Lourdes have followed the instruction of Our Lady of Lourdes to “drink at the spring and wash in it”.<sup>54</sup> Devotions at Grottos are therefore influenced by these instructions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to these individuals.

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<sup>52</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Lady\\_of\\_Lourdes#cite\\_note-9](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Lourdes#cite_note-9)

<sup>53</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our\\_Lady\\_of\\_Lourdes#cite\\_note-7](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Our_Lady_of_Lourdes#cite_note-7)

<sup>54</sup> [http://www.jstor.org/stable/Michael P. Carroll 20502022](http://www.jstor.org/stable/Michael_P._Carroll_20502022) Accessed: 21-03-2018 16:41

Michael P. Carroll argues that praying the Rosary has been one of the most popular of all Catholic devotions for centuries at Grottos though there have been few if any social scientific investigations aimed at discovering the underlying appeal of this devotion.<sup>55</sup> Rosary devotion has been and continues to be part of the devotions at Grottos. Devotion to saints, with the Blessed Virgin Mary as the most prominent one, is a key characteristic of Roman Catholic Grotto activities. Common examples of Catholic devotions include the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, and the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. All these are devotions that are common at Grottos. A wide range of Marian devotions are practiced by Roman Catholics at Grottos and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 971) states: “The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is intrinsic to Roman Catholic worship.”<sup>56</sup> In 1993 Pope John Paul II encouraged priests to foster devotions to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Catholic Church.<sup>57</sup>

Some beliefs about Marian devotions have been asserted by the saints and theologians, but have not been dogmatically approved by the Church. An example is the belief that Marian devotions are a sign of predestination, supported by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, Saint Bonaventure and Saint Alphonsus Ligouri.<sup>58</sup> This belief has not been approved by the teaching office of the Roman Catholic Church. In his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Pope John Paul II emphasized the importance of Marian devotions in the Catholic Church at Grottos by quoting Saint Louis de Montfort: “Since Mary is of all creatures the one most conformed to Jesus Christ, it follows that among all devotions that which most consecrates and conforms

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<sup>55</sup> <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20502022> Accessed: 21-03-2018 16:41

<sup>56</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic\\_devotions#cite\\_note-35](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_devotions#cite_note-35)

<sup>57</sup> Pope Francis, *Priests Must Foster Devotion to Mary*, General Audience June 30, 1993, Vatican

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.jstor.org/stable>, *The Blessed Virgin Mary in England* by Brother Anthony Josemaria 2008

a soul to our Lord is devotion to Mary, his Holy Mother, and that the more a soul is consecrated to her the more will it be consecrated to Jesus Christ”.<sup>59</sup> The Pope reiterated what his predecessors have written and said about the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This was a motivation to Roman Catholics to join in this devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### **1.8.3 Contributions of Grottos**

According to Nthoi, man has the propensity to communicate with his deity. His religious beliefs and practices often provide an opportunity for such communication. He continues to assert that in almost every religion there exist appropriate places for establishing contact with the supernatural powers. For him, such places attract people who need to establish contact and/or communion with their deities.<sup>60</sup> Grottos provide such places for this contact with the supernatural powers.

Grottos in the Catholic Church have contributed greatly to the spiritual and physical growth of the Roman Catholic Church. They are places of healing and restoration. Sacred site like a Grotto is a place where pilgrims who seek to solve their existential problems visit. According to Ruth Harris, “although never formally encouraged by the Church, Lourdes water has become a focus of devotion to the Virgin Mary at Lourdes”.<sup>61</sup> Since the apparitions, many people have claimed to have been cured by drinking or bathing in it,<sup>62</sup> and the Lourdes authorities provide it free of charge to

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<sup>59</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, General Audience June 30, 1993, Vatican

<sup>60</sup> Leslie S. Nthoi, *Contesting Sacred Space: A Pilgrimage Study of the Mwali Cult of Southern Africa*, (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2006), 69-70.

<sup>61</sup> Harris Ruth, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age*, (Paris: Penguin Books, 2000), 312.

<sup>62</sup> Ruth. *Lourdes*, 312.

anyone who asks for it.<sup>63</sup> Grottos are visited by millions of pilgrims each year, and they have become prominent pilgrimage sites of the world.

Miraculous healings have been claimed, and a number of these healings have been documented by some of these Grottos like Lourdes that has a Medical Commission. Large numbers of sick pilgrims travel to Grottos each day in the hope of physical healing or spiritual renewal. At Grottos, individual and confidential sessions are available for all who wish to deepen their spiritual life, explore their connection to God, and examine their relationships with others and the world in light of gospel values. These Grottos provide the serene and quiet environment for pilgrims to enhance their relationship with God. Grottos play the role of improving the local economy as a result of persons that engage in the various economic activities in and within its jurisdiction. When pilgrims visit Grottos for prayers, they buy food and water, they buy farm produce and they also hire Taxis. Because of this buying and selling, there is growth in the local economy.

#### **1.8.4 Sacredness of the Earth**

According to Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye, there is a relationship between religion and the environment, which many commentators refer to as the emergence of religious environmentalism and religious environmental discourse.<sup>64</sup> The environment should have positive effects on the spiritual life of the people. Awuah-Nyamekye agrees with Gottlieb who, for instance, sees religious environmentalism as a “diverse, vibrant, global movement” of ideas and activism that “roots the general environmental

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<sup>63</sup> Clarke Richard, *Lourdes, Its Inhabitants, Its Pilgrims, and Its Miracles* (Brookfield: New York Press, 2009), 38.

<sup>64</sup> Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye, *Managing the Environmental Crisis in Ghana: The Role of African Traditional Religion and Culture with Special Reference to the Berekum Traditional Area*, (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 11.

message in a spiritual framework.<sup>65</sup> There should be conscious efforts by religious people to care for the environment since they are stewards of the earth. The earth is sacred and therefore, should be considered as such.

This sacredness of the earth is also seen in some of the beliefs and practices such as some taboos in Ghanaian societies. According to T.N.O. Quarcopome, generally, the term taboo is used to apply to any kind of prohibition but specifically it refers to a prohibition of a special kind.<sup>66</sup> Some of these taboos are associated with the earth. Because the earth is considered as sacred, certain actions are considered as “dirty” and therefore ought to be avoided. For instance, it is a taboo among the Akan to have sexual relations in the bush. This view on the sacredness of the earth is upheld by the leaders of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, after all, they are Akan. They revere the place as sacred to the point that some of the pilgrims walk barefooted as soon as they get to the Grotto. For them, the Grotto is so sacred that anything found there is considered holy. This explains why they have “holy soil” and “holy flower”. According to them, because of the sacredness of the Grotto, and the fact that the land on which it is situated is holy, they do not see the need for priests to bless their “holy water”. For them, the sacredness of the Grotto makes the water holy.

Quarcopome goes on to say that these taboos are related to the divinities. Each divinity has several taboos which the worshippers have to observe, failure of which means a breach of covenant relations and propitiatory or appeasement sacrifices have

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<sup>65</sup> Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye, 11.

<sup>66</sup> T.N.O. Quarcopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, (Ibadan: African Universities Press, 1987), 169.

to be performed by the individual or the community.<sup>67</sup> At the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, they have things they consider taboo. This makes one to wonder if they are being influenced by their traditional beliefs or by the Catholic teachings. These are some of the complexities that need to be resolved, because they contribute to the complex narratives on the identity of the Grotto. As the management try to understand and interpret their environment meaningfully, they combine their traditional beliefs with Christian beliefs.

According to Rose Mary Amega-Etego, in the traditional Akan religion, there is an inter-relationship between nature and the well-being of people and that total well-being is possible in an environmentally friendly context.<sup>68</sup> This implies that all people, including religious and secular leaders, should ensure that all the natural resources are properly managed for all. The earth is sacred therefore, it is incumbent on all to protect and uphold this sacredness.

Amega-Etego further opines that, from the indigenous African world-view, religion and the environment are inter-connected. She is of the view that some Africans believe that nature has a sacred origin, and that some of the spirits reside in nature therefore the sacred and the secular interact in nature.<sup>69</sup> Pilgrims who go to Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto affirm this view when they identify with the management that some of the physical objects like trees and rocks are divine.

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<sup>67</sup> Quarcopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 1987, p. 169.

<sup>68</sup> Rose Mary Amega-Etego, "Nankani Women's Spirituality and Ecology," *Worldviews* 20, (2016): p. 22.

<sup>69</sup> Rose Mary Amega-Etego, "Nankani Women's Spirituality and Ecology," *Worldviews* 20, (2016): p. 22.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

The busy nature of some of the respondents was a major setback since they were main sources of primary information for this research. Most of the respondents were farmers. Their farming activities make them very busy during the week days and even on weekends. As a result, this situation, to some extent, delayed in the period of the data collection. Again, accessing of documentation to back some of the claims made were also challenging. Sometimes, people that had information were unwilling to give the information since the issues under research was seen or viewed as sensitive. Nobody was forced to give information against his or her wish. But with persistence and assurance of the purpose of the exercise, information was given for the work.

Some other limitations of the study included inadequate detailed documentation of history and development of the Grotto. Finding information also on Grottos was rare since most of the information available were more on sacred spaces and not Grottos as a specific research area. Lack of confidence of some respondents for the interviews was another difficulty. Most of them could not give an intellectual response to the issues investigated and this also affected the quality of the data collected though it also remained as asset in the analysis. This required more time than expected from the researcher to do a very detailed work. Some were worried about the confidentiality of their views. However, this did not affect the study negatively because the researcher assured them of the confidentiality of their views.

### **1.10 Structure of the Study**

The research is organized into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the General Introduction to the research work. It includes background to the study, statement of

the problem, aim and objectives of the study and research questions. The others are scope of the study, methodology and methods of data collection, theoretical framework, literature review, limitations, and structure of the research and relevance/significance of the study.

Chapter two discusses Grottos as key devotional centers. Issues that were looked at included Grotto Devotions as well as the programmes and activities of Grottos and role of Grottos. Chapter three looked at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2. Under this chapter, geographical location and population of Jerusalem No.2 were discussed. The historical background of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto was also discussed. Again, this chapter dealt with the origin and founder of the Grotto, the environment of the Grotto as well as the management of the Grotto was deliberated. The programmes and activities at the Grotto were also examined as well as the “signs and symbols” of the Grotto. Chapter four discussed the contributions and the challenges of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Finally, chapter five captured the summary, findings, conclusions and recommendations of the work.

### **1.11 Significance of the Study**

The study is important because since very little academic work has been done on Grottos in Ghana, this research presents the opportunity to come out with a written document on Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2 as well as Grottos in Ghana in general for future posterity. Again, this research work serves as an index for further studies of Catholic Grottos in Ghana.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GROTTOS AS KEY DEVOTIONAL CENTERS

#### 2.1 Introduction

Historically, Grottos have played a central role as devotional centers among Catholics over the years. According to Park Chris, almost all religions have special places designated as sacred or holy, and this designation often encourages believers to visit those places in pilgrimage.<sup>70</sup> Grottos are some of the most important spiritual places of the Roman Catholic Church where the members go for personal and communal prayers. There are statues and pictures at Grottos and these are mostly the statues of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary. As a sacred place for devotion and divine encounter with the Lord, Grottos, according to people's testimonies and experiences, have helped them to gain various spiritual support in the areas of marriage, education, business, employment, healing among many others. This chapter presents Grottos as key devotional centers in the Roman Catholic Church. The chapter examines amongst other things, Grottos in general, various devotions at Catholic Grottos with special attention on Marian devotion and the Sacred Heart of Jesus devotion. Other thematic areas discussed are the programs and activities of Grottos as well as the significance of Grottos to the Catholic Church.

#### 2.2 Grottos

Grotto is a key component of the Catholic way of worship. Grottos are normally sacred cave or place with natural and interesting features.<sup>71</sup> There are sometimes

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<sup>70</sup> Park Chris, 'Religion and Geography' in Hennels, J. (ed) *Routledge Companion to Study of Religion*, (London, Routledge 2004) in Philip Kwadwo Okyere (MPhil Thesis, "Reconstructing Sacred Space: The Place and Relevance of Abasua Prayer Mountain in Contemporary Ghanaian Christianity, University of Ghana, 2012), 52.

<sup>71</sup> Sudbrack, *Spirituality*, 5.

artificial designs at Grottos. Some Grottos usually start by individuals who claim to have visions, apparitions or dreams in which the Blessed Virgin Mary instructs them to do something. Mostly, Grottos are located in their natural environment.<sup>72</sup> Grottos derived from natural caves were regarded in antiquity as dwelling places of spirits. They were often constructed from fantastic arrangement of rocks. Probably, this explains why rocks are found at most of Grottos.<sup>73</sup>

Some Grottos start by the founders claiming having mysterious experiences. In some cases too some Parishes build their Grotto not based on any such experiences. If the Grotto starts by an individual going through such experiences as apparitions, visions or dreams, the church would have to give the approval before the place could be called a Catholic Grotto. The Catholic Church is cautious in confirming or denying these apparitions, visions or dreams. As the process goes on, the laity may manage it for a while. Probably, this could explain why Grottos are mostly managed by laity for some time before the Catholic Church takes over the leadership.

Some Parishes have started building their Parish Grottos. Mention can be made of St. Paul Cathedral Grotto at Techiman. Again, St. Margaret Mary Parish, Dansoman and Christ the King Church Cantonments, all in Accra have Grottos. These are mostly found around the church premises. Some Dioceses also have Diocesan Grottos where they meet as a Diocese for Marian Feasts celebrations and other celebrations. In fact, some Dioceses like Obuasi Diocese, Techiman Diocese and Sekondi-Takoradi Diocese, have more than one Diocesan Grottos. It is significant to indicate that there is a date set aside in every year for the Diocese to meet as one body of Christ at these

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<sup>72</sup> Ampaw-Asiedu, and Henry Atwea, *The Mountain of God's Presence* (Accra: Modern Dynamics Printing and Telecom Services, 2010), 87.

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/grotto>

Grottos.<sup>74</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> of August is the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary when most Dioceses meet at Grottos to celebrate and honour the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Grottos are normally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Indeed, the Catholic Church sees Grottos as special places for prayer.<sup>75</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) indicates that, for pilgrims seeking fulfilment in life, Grottos, sometimes known as shrines or sanctuaries are special places for serious prayer to have that kind of spiritual fulfilment. The Catholic Church perceives Grottos as places where pilgrims can really meet God.<sup>76</sup>

One of the characteristics of a Grotto is the construction of many statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints. Roman Catholics argue that, these statues at Grottos are only mere symbols meant to significantly represent and consciously remind them of the sacrifices of the forebears of the faith.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, there are various forms of statues in the Catholic Churches and at Catholic Grottos. Statues ranging from Jesus, Mary Mother of God, other Apostles and Saints, mother Theresa, Patron Saints of Parishes and the Popes are found in the Catholic Church and Grottos. For the Roman Catholics, these are not meant to be worshipped, but to help them to focus, meditate and pray.

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.dominicavibes.dm/news-126777/> (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

<sup>75</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2691)

<sup>76</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2692)

<sup>77</sup> Bainvel 1910, II. Historical Ideas on The Development of the devotion para (3-4) (Accessed on February 10, 2018).

According to Barkley, these images are not the object of worship but they help the pilgrims to focus more on God.<sup>78</sup> Helena Vilaca also indicates that “statues at Grottos make the environment conducive for prayer. These statues help the pilgrims to think about God when they are praying”.<sup>79</sup> Helena continues to assert that there is tension within the Catholic Church with regards to believing and belonging as well as authority of the church and individual preferences.<sup>80</sup> The pilgrims sometimes appear as if they are worshipping these images. The devotees of these saints claim by emulating the good lives of them, and trying to live as they lived, they too could find favour with God and finally a place in the Heavenly Kingdom. The lives of the saints serve as guide to these devotees. As far as the Catholic Church is concerned, Grottos are considered as Key Devotional centres. According to Maria Peon Arceo, people make journeys to these sacred places usually in search of divine power, intervention, personal transformation or moments of self-meditation or soul searching.<sup>81</sup>

### 2.3 Grotto Devotions

Devotions are expressions of love and fidelity that arise from the intersection of one’s own faith, culture and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>82</sup> It is also defined as love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person or activity.<sup>83</sup> Devotion, according to Catholics, is when one dedicates his/her life to a particular saint or religious figure and prays through that saint to God. When one is devoted to a particular saint, the person promotes the teachings and works of that saint. He or she also gives special reverence to that saint

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<sup>78</sup> William Barkley, *The Old Law & The New Law* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 11-12.

<sup>79</sup> Helena Vilaça, “Pilgrims and Pilgrimages: Fatima, Santiago De Compostela and Taizé.” *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 23, no. 2 (2010): 137-155.

<sup>80</sup> Vilaça, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimages: Fatima, Santiago De Compostela and Taizé*, 138

<sup>81</sup> Maria, Peon Arceo, “New Modes of Experiencing Pilgrimage: Devotional Tourism in Yucatan, Mexico” (PhD Desertation, University of Florida, 2009) in Doris E. Yalley, “Sacred Site Visitation and the Renewal Programme of Methodist Church Ghana” (PhD Desertation, University of Ghana, 2015), 53.

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/topic/devotions>

<sup>83</sup> Bible Dictionary

believing and trusting in the saint's intercession. There are various forms of devotions within the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>84</sup> Some of these devotions are either approved by the church and thus are universal though not compulsory to every Catholic whilst others are unique to specific churches with special interest and faith.

According to The Congregation for Divine Worship,<sup>85</sup> "Roman Catholic devotions are external practices which are not part of the official liturgy of the Catholic Church".<sup>86</sup> It goes on to say that these devotions are a part of the popular spiritual practices of many Catholics. Catholic devotions do not become part of the official liturgy even when it is performed in the presence of a priest. Common examples of Catholic devotions include the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, wearing of scapulars, Novena to various saints, and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>87</sup>

On devotions, the Catholic Church teaches that besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, teachings (thus, catechesis) must take into account the forms of devotions among the laity. Clear teachings should be given to the laity to differentiate between official liturgy and devotions. The religious sense of Roman Catholics has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to Grottos or shrines or sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary and Medals.<sup>88</sup> The Catholic Church encourages the laity to join in these various devotions in the church.

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<sup>84</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1674-6)

<sup>85</sup> The body that is in-charge of the liturgy of the Catholic Church which has its office at Vatican

<sup>86</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1673)

<sup>87</sup> <https://thegrotto.org/st-peregrine-devotions/>

<sup>88</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1674)

There are various forms of specific devotions and prayers that are said at various Grottos and for their specific intentions and spiritual requests.<sup>89</sup> As in any other religion, there are types of prayers for a particular day and even for a particular time. For example, one of the useful days for devotional prayers at the Grotto is the Friday. Prayers on the first Friday of every month are believed to have special benefits.<sup>90</sup> This is because first Friday of every month is the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Some of the most widely practiced devotions within the Catholic Church are devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Stations of the Cross and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. There is also devotion to the saints. For instance, devotion to St. Anthony, devotion to St. Joseph and devotion to St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, to mention but a few. Members of these devotional groups promote the life and teachings of their patron saints. Liturgical worship is different from devotions in the Catholic Church. The most prominent devotion in the Catholic Church is the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Catholic Church teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary responded in obedience to God. She called herself the Lord's "handmaid" (Luke 1:38, 48) - a humble title that sets the tone for the rest of the New Testament accounts and became the foundation for centuries of Marian devotion.<sup>91</sup> Mary recognized that she had become, like Enoch (Gen. 5:22) and Noah (who "found grace in the eyes of the LORD" [Gen. 6:8]), one "highly favored" by God (Luke 1:28, 30). She saw that she would forever be recognized as one "blessed ... among women" (Lk 1:28, 42). This blessing was not

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.jstor.org/stable>, Jenifer Gamber, *Your Faith, Your Life: An Invitation to the Episcopal Church*, Bill Lewellis 2009, Access February 2017, 8292-2321-2.

<sup>90</sup> <http://www.jstor.org/stable>, Kasten Patricia Ann., "Linking Your Beads: The Rosary's History, Mysteries, and Prayers", 2011, Access January 2017

<sup>91</sup> [http://catholicherald.com/News/Local\\_News/What\\_are\\_Marian\\_devotions\\_and\\_how\\_can\\_they\\_enrich\\_your\\_faith](http://catholicherald.com/News/Local_News/What_are_Marian_devotions_and_how_can_they_enrich_your_faith)

for her alone, as she sang in her Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55), but for all God's children. She was the one woman, out of all women, through whom God would fulfill his covenant love and promise.<sup>92</sup>

“This obscure Jewish girl, Blessed Virgin Mary, became, through the work of the Holy Spirit and her willing obedience, the instrument of divine grace. Through her, the majesty and unapproachable holiness of God joined the frail impermanence of fallen humanity. She was the chosen vessel of the Incarnation, at the pivot point of God's saving plan.”<sup>93</sup> The author of an article, David Jeffery, who is a professor of Literature and the Humanities at Baylor University, a Baptist college, while tracing the rise of Marian devotion, affirmed that Mary received special grace from God. The author maintains that devotion to Mary flowed naturally from the Bible's description of her.<sup>94</sup> Devotions include prayers, meditation and silence, novena<sup>95</sup> or activities which do not involve praying, especially that of wearing of a medal of a particular saint. The wearing of medals of saints does not involve prayers but it is a form of devotion. Other devotions involve veneration of the saints.

### **2.3.1 Sacred Heart of Jesus Devotions**

The Sacred Heart of Jesus devotion is one of the many devotions within the Catholic Church. The Sacred Heart of Jesus devotees believe that, the Holy Heart of Jesus is the fountain of every blessing. They therefore, offer Jesus their hearts and pray he

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<sup>92</sup>[http://catholicherald.com/News/Local\\_News/What\\_are\\_Marian\\_devotions\\_and\\_how\\_can\\_they\\_enrich\\_your\\_faith](http://catholicherald.com/News/Local_News/What_are_Marian_devotions_and_how_can_they_enrich_your_faith)

<sup>93</sup>[http://catholicherald.com/News/Local\\_News/What\\_are\\_Marian\\_devotions\\_and\\_how\\_can\\_they\\_enrich\\_your\\_faith](http://catholicherald.com/News/Local_News/What_are_Marian_devotions_and_how_can_they_enrich_your_faith)

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[http://catholicherald.com/News/Local\\_News/What\\_are\\_Marian\\_devotions\\_and\\_how\\_can\\_they\\_enrich\\_your\\_faith](http://catholicherald.com/News/Local_News/What_are_Marian_devotions_and_how_can_they_enrich_your_faith)

<sup>95</sup> A novena is an ancient tradition of devotional prayer in Christianity, consisting of private or public prayers repeated for nine successive days or weeks.

makes their hearts humble, patient, pure and wholly obedient to His will.<sup>96</sup> Sacred Heart of Jesus also known as Most Sacred Heart of Jesus (*Sacratissimum Cor Iesu*,) is a devotion based on the passion of Christ especially with the amount of love he showed to save humanity from sin. It is a devotion used primarily in the Catholic Church. Its modified version is also prayed by Anglicans, Lutherans and Eastern Orthodox Catholics.<sup>97</sup> It is a devotion started by Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French Nun. Saint Margaret Mary is said to have received the prayers of the devotion through a series of apparitions of Mary (the mother of Jesus) to her during the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>98</sup> Another apparition happened in the 19th century to another Catholic Nun in Portugal. It is claimed that the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to this Nun and this apparition is called mystical revelation.<sup>99</sup> This however made it irresistible for the pope at the time<sup>100</sup> Pope Leo XIII to consecrate to the entire world the Sacred Heart of Jesus and accept as a part of Roman Catholic devotions.

The picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is represented by a symbol of the heart flaming with shining light, pierced by lance in the wound of Jesus on the Cross, encircled by the crown of thorns of Jesus on the Cross with symbol of blood oozing from Jesus' wound on his rib. The Sacred Heart of Jesus devotion started as a devotion to the wounds of Jesus on the Cross which was believed to be sacred wounds. Around the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and Saint Francis of Assisi promoted this devotion. In the beginning, it was devotion for

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<sup>96</sup> <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred-Heart> (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

<sup>97</sup> <http://catholicerald.com/News/Local>, Sander William, "The Sacred Heart of Jesus", the Arlington Catholic Herald, October 13 1994, (Accessed on, February 10, 2018)

<sup>98</sup> <http://catholicerald.com/News/Local>, Croiset S.J. John, The Devotion to the Sacred Heart, 1691. (Accessed on February 10, 2018).

<sup>99</sup> Jenkins, B Eve, *The Problem of Writing the Sacred Heart, Essay in The Medieva Studie*, Vol. 14. Illinois: B. Medieval Association, 1997.

<sup>100</sup> <http://www.catholictraditions.org/two-Hearts/Sacred-Hearts12htm>. (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

individual groups and not the whole church. Individual groups like the Franciscans, Dominicans and Cathusians promoted this devotion and made the effort to spread the devotion to other places.<sup>101</sup> In 1353 Pope Innocent VI instituted a Mass to honour the Consecration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was extended and expanded by Pope Pius IX and Pope Pius X. These popes had significant roles to play in the acceptance of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus into the Roman Catholic Church. Finally, Pope Leo XIII asked that the devotion be practiced at every time and be accepted in the Catholic Church. He therefore established June as the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to promote first Friday devotion.<sup>102</sup>

One of the criticisms is that people or Catholics were worshipping the image of the physical heart of Jesus and not Jesus himself. The Sacred Heart of Jesus has three major prayers that they recite amongst other forms of prayers such as the Hail Mary and the Lord's Prayer. Principally, these three prayers are the original prayers as they were received by the persons that were believed to have received the apparitions. These are the Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Consecration to the Heart of Jesus and Memorare to the Sacred Heart. These prayers adore the Sacred Heart of Jesus which is the source of all blessings. Again, the prayers express that those who seek the mercy of Jesus are never abandoned. And that Jesus always answers prayer. Encouraged with this confidence, the person makes his/her requests believing that Jesus would grant. In reciting these prayers, there are specific spiritual benefits or answers that came with the apparitions that doers of this shall receive from the Lord.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Frederick Howweck, "*The Five Sacred Wounds*": *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Vol. 15. New York: Robert Press, 2001, 128.

<sup>102</sup> Howweck, *The Five Sacred Wounds*, 167.

<sup>103</sup> See Appendix one (1) for the whole prayer.

The devotees to these prayers try to imitate Jesus Christ so that just as He was pure and unblemished, their lives too could be considered worthy to stand before Him (Jesus) on the day of judgement. Whiles all these devotions in the Catholic Church have their specific prayers, it is almost not uncommon to see a devotee pray without reciting the Rosary.<sup>104</sup> That is to say almost all the other devotional groups in the Catholic Church recite the Rosary. The Rosary devotion is for all Roman Catholics. The Catholic Church encourages all her members to make Rosary devotion part of their spiritual life.

### **2.3.2 Marian Devotions**

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is the most prominent of all devotions and venerations within the Catholic Church. Though not all Catholics are Marian devotees, the church encourages all Roman Catholics to have a deeper relationship and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Marian devotion is one of the commonest and popular forms of prayers and devotions within the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church believes that the Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, serves as an intercessor or mediator between them and God. This is so because according to them, Mary is more pure, holy, honourable and virtuous than any other person for God of the Heavens to choose to dwell within her. Roman Catholics hold that Mary is full of grace.<sup>105</sup>

The Catholic Church believes that the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is fundamental to Catholic worship.<sup>106</sup> The Catholic Church honours the Blessed Virgin

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<sup>104</sup> [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Histor\\_of\\_The\\_Rosary](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Histor_of_The_Rosary) (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

<sup>105</sup> Lk 1:28 (NJB)

<sup>106</sup> Lk 1:48 (NJB)

Mary with special devotion.<sup>107</sup> “From the most ancient times the Blessed Virgin Mary has been honoured with the title of ‘Mother of God’, to whose protection the church members fly in all their dangers and needs”.<sup>108</sup> This special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary differs essentially from the adoration which is given to Jesus Christ (the Incarnate Word) and equally to the Father and the Holy Spirit.<sup>109</sup> The liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God (Mary), such as the Rosary, express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.<sup>110</sup> The Catholic Church dedicates October as Rosary Month when Roman Catholics all over the world are encouraged to intensify the praying of the Rosary.<sup>111</sup>

According to Vilaça, a story is told of three little shepherd children (pastorinhos) who claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary appear to them.<sup>112</sup> This happened on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1917, in *Cova da Iria*, Fatima (located in the central western region of Portugal). According to the Catholic history, in 1917, October 13<sup>th</sup>, the Blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, appeared and she is believed to have uttered these words “Do not offend the Lord anymore, pray the Rosary to Our Lady, build a chapel to the Lady of the Rosary and the World War I would come to an end”.<sup>113</sup>

One of the numerous prayers known as Fatima prayer, *O My Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of Hell and lead all souls to Heaven, especially those who are in most need of Thy mercy* prayed by the Catholics was first rejected by the

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<sup>107</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 971)

<sup>108</sup> Lumen Gentium No.66

<sup>109</sup> Lumen Gentium No.66, CCC 971

<sup>110</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 971)

<sup>111</sup> Herbert Thurston and Andre Shipman, “The Rosary”, In *The Catholic Encyclopaedia* 13, 153-73, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912.

<sup>112</sup> Thurston, *The Rosary*, 162.

<sup>113</sup> Vilaça, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimages: Fatima, Santiago de Compostela and Taizé*, 137–155.

Church but was later accepted and approved.<sup>114</sup> This Marian prayer is considered by Roman Catholics as very important prayer. It is recited often at the Grottos when they are praying the Rosary. Any Catholic Church that does honour Mary less than she is required in the eyes of the congregation brings and breeds discontent in the Church. The popular and major prayer of the Blessed Virgin Mary is the Hail Mary prayer as inscribed below.

Hail Mary  
Full of grace  
The Lord is with you  
Blessed are you amongst women,  
And blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus  
Holy Mary, Mother of God  
Pray for us sinners  
Now and at the hour of our death  
Amen.<sup>115</sup>

The Rosary is made up of “decades”. A decade is made up of one “the Lord’s prayer” and ten “Hail Marys” with a glory be to the Father prayer. The normal thing for Catholics is to pray five decades at a time since the Rosary which is the prayer beads is made in such an arrangement.<sup>116</sup> But it is critical to note that it is better to say one decade very well rather than five or more decades as an ordinary recitation without any meaningful impact.<sup>117</sup>

To recite a Rosary prayer as a devotional prayer in the Roman Catholic Church, one needs to begin with the sign of the Cross, then recite the “Apostles’ Creed” while holding the cross at both ends of the prayer bead. One then continues with one “The Lord’s Prayer”, three “Hail Marys” and a glory be to the Father prayer. This is then followed by one “The Lord’s Prayer” and ten “Hail Mary” to complete one decade.

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<sup>114</sup> <http://catholicherald.com/News/Local>, “Linking Your Beads: The Rosary’s History, Mysteries, and Prayers”, 2011, Accessed Decemer, 2017.

<sup>115</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 435).

<sup>116</sup> <https://books.google.com.gh/books/> (Accessed on February 10, 2018).

<sup>117</sup> [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Histor\\_of\\_The\\_Rosary](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Histor_of_The_Rosary) (Accessed on February 10, 2018).

There are stories in the Gospels about Mary and Jesus which the Rosary mysteries are built around (Cf. Lk 1:26ff, 26:36). While one prays the Rosary, one would have to reflect on these stories and how it enhances their faith. They have the “Joyful Mysteries”, the “Sorrowful Mysteries”, the “Glorious Mysteries” and the “Luminous Mysteries” of the Rosary.

In reciting the Joyful Mysteries, they meditate on the annunciation of Gabriel that Mary was going to conceive and give birth to Jesus (Cf. Lk 1:26-31). They also meditate on Mary’s visitation to her cousin, Elizabeth (Lk 1:39-42), the birth of Jesus (Lk 2:6-7, Mtt 1:25), the presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:22-23) and the finding of the child Jesus in the temple (Lk 2:46-49). As one recite the sorrowful mysteries, one meditates on the agony of Jesus in the garden (Lk 22:44-45), the scourging of Jesus at the pillar (Jn 19:1), the crowning of Jesus with a crown of thorns (Mtt 27:28-29), Jesus carrying his Cross to Calvary (Jn 19:17) and the death of Jesus on the Cross (Lk 23:46). The glorious mysteries meditate on the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Mk 16:6), the ascension of Jesus (Mk 16:19), the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4), the assumption of Mary (Apocalypse 12:1) and the coronation of Mary (Judith 15:9-11). The mysteries of Light are Christ’s baptism in the Jordan (Mk 1:10), Christ’s self-revelation at the marriage of Cana (Jn 2:11), Christ’s proclamation of the kingdom of God with his call to conversion (Mk 1:15), Christ’s transfiguration (Mtt 17:2) and Christ’s institution of the Eucharist (Lk 22:19).<sup>118</sup> These are the mysteries of the Holy Rosary which is one of the prominent prayers recited at the Grotto.

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<sup>118</sup> Catholic Hymnal, 381-384.

## **2.4 Programmes and Activities of Grottos**

There are various programmes and activities that are organized at the Grottos every now and then. While some Grottos cannot keep up with the programmes and activities just because they may be one too many, some other Grottos have controlled programmes and activities for their pilgrims. There are daily, weekly, monthly, fortnight, quarterly and yearly programmes among others. Within all these programmes there are specific activities. This section is going to examine the various and general activities at Grottos which take place within the programmes that are organized and held at the various Catholic Grottos. Depending on the focus of the Grotto for example, Marian Grottos have more pilgrims in May and October relatively than other times except there are special programmes organized for pilgrims on other times. On the other hand, Sacred Heart of Jesus Grottos have more visitations on either first Fridays of every month or last Fridays of same month but more importantly on Good Friday since that is the time Christ Jesus was crucified. There are no special reasons for naming a Grotto as Marian or Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The church decides which patron saint to choose and name the Grotto after him/her.

### **2.4.1 Stations of the Cross**

Stations of the Cross involve the fourteen stations according to the Roman Catholic Church where Jesus Christ went through the ordeal of His suffering and death. The stations are fourteen in all and each station has specific prayers and bible readings.<sup>119</sup> The stations begin from the time Jesus was sentenced to death by Pilate (Mk 15:15) to when Jesus was laid in the tomb (Mk 15:46-47). In between these, there are other stations that portray an aspect of Jesus' passion, suffering and death on the cross. At

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<sup>119</sup> <http://catholicherald.com/News/Local> , Sander William, "The Sacred Heart of Jesus", the Arlington Catholic Herald, October 13 1994(Accessed on February 10, 2018).

the first station, Jesus is condemned to death. There is a moment of silence to meditate on this and then a prayer is said. At the second station, they meditate on Jesus taking up his cross. Jesus falls the first time at the third station. Jesus falls again at the seventh and the ninth stations. Jesus meets His sorrowful mother who accompanied Him to Calvary at the fourth station. When the soldiers realized that Jesus could not walk because of the beating and torture, they forced Simon of Cyrene to help Jesus to carry His Cross. This is placed at the fifth station. Veronica saw Jesus bleeding and sweating and she gave Him towel to wipe His face at the sixth station. Jesus met the women of Jerusalem at the eighth station and asked them not to weep for Him but for themselves. Jesus is stripped of his garment at the tenth station. After Jesus was stripped of His garment, He was nailed to the cross. This led to Jesus dying on the Cross. Jesus was taken down from the Cross and was laid in the tomb. The above are the fourteen Stations of the Cross.

At each station, a picture depicting what happened at that station is showed. Pilgrims therefore meditate on the image being portrayed. Stations of the Cross could be prayed at any time. But the Stations of the Cross are mostly prayed during Lenten Season in preparation for Good Friday and Easter.<sup>120</sup> Prayer like “We adore you O Christ, and we praise you, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world” is important during the Stations of the Cross. Other prayers are also said within the walk.

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<sup>120</sup> <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sacred-Heart> (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

#### **2.4.2 Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is another programme that is central to the programmes of Grottos. It is a practice and a form of devotion within the Roman Catholic Church. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is where the “Consecrated Host” or Blessed Body of Jesus Christ is placed on the Altar in the chapel for veneration. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as a devotion by the Catholic Church is done by various parishes. Some parishes do this devotion weekly while others choose to do it monthly. It is where the Body of Christ<sup>121</sup> is displayed on the Altar of God in the chapel and the laity come before it to pray, ask for blessings and ask for forgiveness of sins. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed at Grottos for personal meditation and prayers as well as for communal prayers.

#### **2.4.3 Confessions**

One other activity that is organized at Grottos is the Sacrament of Confession. There are specific days that leaders organize this sacrament as part of the programmes for the pilgrims to go and confess their sins to Priests and receive absolution. Confessions are part of the seven sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholics who have sinned go before their Priests to confess their sins, ask for counsel and then absolution is given by the Priest. It is only Bishops and Priests that have the faculty (authority) to listen to confessions and give absolution. Indeed Bishops and Priests, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, have the power to forgive all sins ‘in the name of the

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<sup>121</sup> Catholics believe in Transubstantiation where the bread and wine changes completely to the Body and Blood of Christ. Protestants however believe in Consubstantiation where the bread and wine represents the Body and Blood of Christ.

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit' according to the Roman Catholic belief.<sup>122</sup> This is an important sacrament administered all year and at all times.

## **2.5 Retreat and Recollection**

Retreat and recollection are basically an act of moving to a quiet or secluded place where one could rest or relax and commune with God. It could be that one is withdrawing to give up or strategize and regroup for more power. It could also mean someone moving away from other people so that he/she could focus and meditate on God and on their life. Retreat and Recollection are mostly used interchangeably. These are programmes that are organized to help pilgrims commune with God.

Retreats and recollections are sometimes organized at Grottos so that anybody who wants to be part could join and have an encounter with their God. Groups and individuals can also organize their own retreat at the Grotto. Managers of Grottos give opportunity to people to organize retreat and recollections at the Grottos. Sometimes, these retreats are directed by the leaders of the Grotto or the group can go with their own retreat director. That is, Grottos serve as retreats and recollections centres as well. This offers the opportunity to people, Catholics and non-Catholics alike to live with nature. In this way they are allowed to be in constant reflection and meditation mood with God.

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<sup>122</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1461)

## 2.6 The Significance of Grottos

A Grotto is a serene and peaceful ground for solemn prayers. Its significance cannot be underestimated. There are a lot of testimonies (physical and emotional healing, childbirth, promotion, success in exams, etc.) given by those who visit these Grottos. Grottos afford pilgrims the opportunity to pray to God. Eucharistic celebration and other programmes are organized at Grottos to lead pilgrims to encounter the Divine. Grottos are very critical in the spiritual journey of any believer who wants to have a deeper relationship with God. Grottos are places pilgrims go and pray and they claim their prayers are answered. Pilgrims also go to Grottos for physical, spiritual and emotional healing. Grottos provide the avenue for people to grow in their spiritual life and to deepen their faith in God.

According to Barkley, “Grottos provide an opportunity for pilgrims to enhance their prayer lives”. For Barkley, the splendor of God is found in natural environment. He continues to assert that mountains, forest, trees, waterfalls and caves are some of the things that reveal the wonders of God to people.<sup>123</sup> This view is shared by the pilgrims who visit Grottos. They claim that natural environment reveals the glory of God to His people. At Grottos, the splendour of God is revealed through natural environment.

The Priest in charge of Our Lady of Calvary Grotto, Asueyi near Techiman, Rev. Fr. Peter Yeboah<sup>124</sup> claimed that another role that Grottos play is the boosting of the local economy. Since this priest works at a Grotto, his claim may be true of all other Grottos. Economic activities such as buying and selling are one non-spiritual role that is performed by Grottos. Due to the fact that people from all walks of life converge at

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<sup>123</sup> William Barkley, *The Old Law & The New Law*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1972), 21.

<sup>124</sup> Rev. Fr. Peter Yeboah, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Calvary Grotto, Asueyi, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Techiman.

one place for some specific number of days, there is the need for some economic activities to support their movement. Such services as transportations, accommodation and hospitality services, provision of food and consumables amongst others, all help the growth of the local economy. There is improvement in the local economy in the sense that the people that live there provide all forms of services to the pilgrims at a fee. There is also buying and selling in the local communities where Grottos are situated. The development of the town is to a large extent influenced by the existence of these Grottos.

Grottos are significant in the sense that they stand to bring development to areas that otherwise may not have seen development. Grottos help in the development of local communities. Infrastructure like roads, electricity and potable water are provided as a result of the existence of these Grottos. Grottos help in the improvement of the social life of the people due to building and development of medical facilities.

Some Grottos provide ready market for farm produce and other goods and services. Pilgrims who travel to these Grottos buy from the local people. Other significance is the provision of communication service such as telephone and internet services (because a lot of pilgrims visit Grottos, service providers provide service to them as they also grow their business), educational facilities such as schools and play grounds as well as a general improvement in the quality of lives of the people in these communities.

Again, Grottos provide an avenue for tourism. Tourists, who hear about Grottos and the natural and artificial crafts, can decide to visit these places just to relax and admire

the beautiful scenery. The Role of Grottos in the development of the town or otherwise is in terms of their contribution or challenges they faced either during their operation in the area or their existence. This would be discussed more in chapter four. But it is imperative to indicate that the existence of Grottos have brought education to their particular geographical location which otherwise could still by now not have any school. For instance, Rev. Fr. Peter Yeboah<sup>125</sup> claimed that the existence of Our Lady of Calvary Grotto at Asueyi influenced the establishment of school in the community.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

Generally, this chapter has highlighted the devotions within the Roman Catholic Church with special emphasis on the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Marian devotions. It went further to discuss the relevance of Grottos in the development of the local communities where Grottos are located. Other issues discussed were the origin of the prayers that are said at the Grotto. It is made clear here that these prayers have been within the Catholic Church for generations. This chapter also discussed the significance and role of Grottos in the communities where they are located.

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<sup>125</sup> Rev. Fr. Peter Yeboah, Parish Priest of Our Lady of Calvary Grotto, Asueyi, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Techiman.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTA

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents information on the place where the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is situated. The name of the village is called Jerusalem No.2 named after Jerusalem in Israel (claimed to be the birth place of Jesus Christ)<sup>126</sup> and the Grotto is called the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This is located at the outskirts of the Nkoranza town. The history of the village and its people is linked to the existence of the Grotto. The people of Nkoranza are mostly Bono and so it is expected that the majority of the actors here would also be Bono people. The chapter presents a brief survey of the Indigenous Religion of Nkoranza, the Geographical Location of the context of our study and the Population of Jerusalem No.2. It also gives a Historical Background of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, the Founder and Origin of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, The Environment of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, the Management of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, and Programmes and Activities of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto.

#### 3.2 A Brief Survey of the Indigenous Religion of Nkoranza

Similar to other African people, the indigenous people of Nkoranza had their own religious beliefs and practices before Christianity was introduced to the area. This has persisted till today. Even though Christianity and Islam seem to be publicly visible in the area, the indigenous religious systems still persist. In the 1920s, R.S. Rattray did an extensive work on the indigenous religion of the Ashantis of which Nkoranza was

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<sup>126</sup> Mtt 2:1

part.<sup>127</sup> The general belief system of Nkoranza indigenous people is that there are several spirit powers. These spiritual powers are part and parcel of the human community. Among these spirit powers, *Onyame*, God also known as *Oboadee*, the Creator is supreme and the Creator of the universe.<sup>128</sup> Besides this Creator Spirit, there are other categories of spirit powers. These are the deities also known as divinities or gods and goddesses. Among the people of Nkoranza these are called the *abosom*.<sup>129</sup> These *abosom* are believed to predominantly reside in natural objects such as rocks, plants, caves, rivers, forest, etc.<sup>130</sup> The *abosom* can be benevolent or malevolent, hence the need to be in good relations with those in one's family or clan. The *abosom* are believed to select people, men and women known as priests and priestesses, as their intermediary who operates at their shrine.

There is also the belief in the ancestors - *nananom nsamanfoɔ*. The underlying belief is that the dead continue to live and some of them are recognized as *nananom nsamanfoɔ*. These are said to be the cream of the society, those who lived exemplary lives. Ancestorhood is an honour given to the dead whose exemplary lives is worthy of emulation. The ancestors are the moral custodians of the family; and they punish and reward members according to their deeds. Besides these, there is also the belief that certain plants and animals are created by spirit powers, Rattray describes these in his book as *sasa*.<sup>131</sup> Some medicine men and women or other religious functionaries use some of these plants and animals to make various physical objects known as *suman* (amulets and talisman) for their clients.<sup>132</sup> Though these are seen as physical

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<sup>127</sup> Rattray R.S., *Religion and Art of the Ashanti*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 1.

<sup>128</sup> Rattray, *Religion and Art of the Ashanti*, 1.

<sup>129</sup> Rattray, *Religion and Art of the Ashanti*, 1.

<sup>130</sup> Rattray, *Religion and Art of the Ashanti*, 8.

<sup>131</sup> Rattray, *Religion and Art of the Ashanti*, 2.

<sup>132</sup> Rattray, *Religion and Art of the Ashanti*, 23.

objects, they are another category of spirit powers. In addition to the above spirit powers are the dwarfs, *mmoatia*, which are believed to reside mainly in the forest. Known to be a powerful source of medicine and divination yet mischievous in nature, they are said to capture people mysteriously for training at their own will before relinquishing or returning them to their communities. Closely associated with this group of indigenous spirituality is witchcraft (*abayie*). Those who are said to have *bayie* are witches and they are believed to use their powers for evil and anti-social activities generally.

The various spirit powers some of which are listed above are believed to influence human beings positively or negatively depending on how human beings behave in the communities and react to them. The indigenous belief system puts a lot of emphasis on moral behavior and conformity to community spirituality, norms and morality. These norms and values, most of whom are based on their spirituality, are set aside by the communities for its members, who are both physical and spiritual to ensure harmony, peace and continuity of the community. Therefore, individuals and groups who go contrary to these communal norms and values, are not simply seen as anti-communal or social but those who seek to put the entire community in harms way. In such instances, those individuals or groups may be punished and fined for ritual restitution or banished from the community.

### **3.3 Geographical Location and Population of Jerusalem No.2**

The population of Brong Ahafo Region according to 2010 census is about 2,310,983.<sup>133</sup> This however, represents about 9.4% of the total population of Ghana.

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<sup>133</sup> Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana Statistical Service 2010

There are about 1,145,271 Males (49.6%) and 1,165,712 Females (50.4%). This is an increase of 27.3 % from the year 2000 population Census of 1,815,408.<sup>134</sup> The Brong Ahafo Region also has area population density of 39,557 per square kilometer.<sup>135</sup> Nkoranza is politically divided into Nkoranza North and South Constituencies. Nkoranza South has a total population of 100,929 made up of 50,071 males and 50,858 females, while Nkoranza North has a total population of 65,895 made up of 33,263 males and 32,632 females.<sup>136</sup>

However, an updated data from the Nkoranza South Planning Department of the Municipal Assembly in 2018 indicates that, on their records, they have Jerusalem and Jerusalem (Canaan) and that they are not aware of Jerusalem No.2. By their reference, the old settlements is what they referred to as the Jerusalem and the new place where the Grotto is currently located is called Jerusalem (Canaan) as it is known within the community. It is also important to indicate that both the old site and the new site are all within the same area, they are on the same one big land.

According to the District Planning Officer,<sup>137</sup> on their records, there are about 761 people as the total population of Jerusalem No.2 with Jerusalem (old site) having 722 total population, and Jerusalem (Canaan - new site) having 39 people.<sup>138</sup> They are made up of 426 males and 335 females. There are also about 157 houses in all with 137 of these houses in Jerusalem and 21 in Canaan. There are 153 households with 13

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<sup>134</sup> Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana Statistical Service 2000

<sup>135</sup> Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana Statistical Service 2010

<sup>136</sup> Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana Statistical Service 2010

<sup>137</sup> Lumor Alfred, Municipal Planning Officer (MPO) of Nkoranza Municipal Assembly.

<sup>138</sup> It is important to indicate that George has settled at one part of the land and was led by the spirit in a dream to move the grotto and invariably his residence to a new location. Thus the Stations of the Cross starts from his old residence and ends at the Canaan where the church building is currently located.

of these in Canaan.<sup>139</sup> Jerusalem No.2 is about 12 kilometers from Nkoranza Township. The people are predominantly farmers on a subsistence level.

According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census Local Enumerator, Jerusalem No.2 has a population of six hundred and thirty six (636) people.<sup>140</sup> Out of this number, three hundred and fifty six (356) are males while the remaining two hundred and eighty (280) are females. Some of these people are made up of the northern tribes, namely; Dagaaba, Frafra, Sisaala and Dagomba.

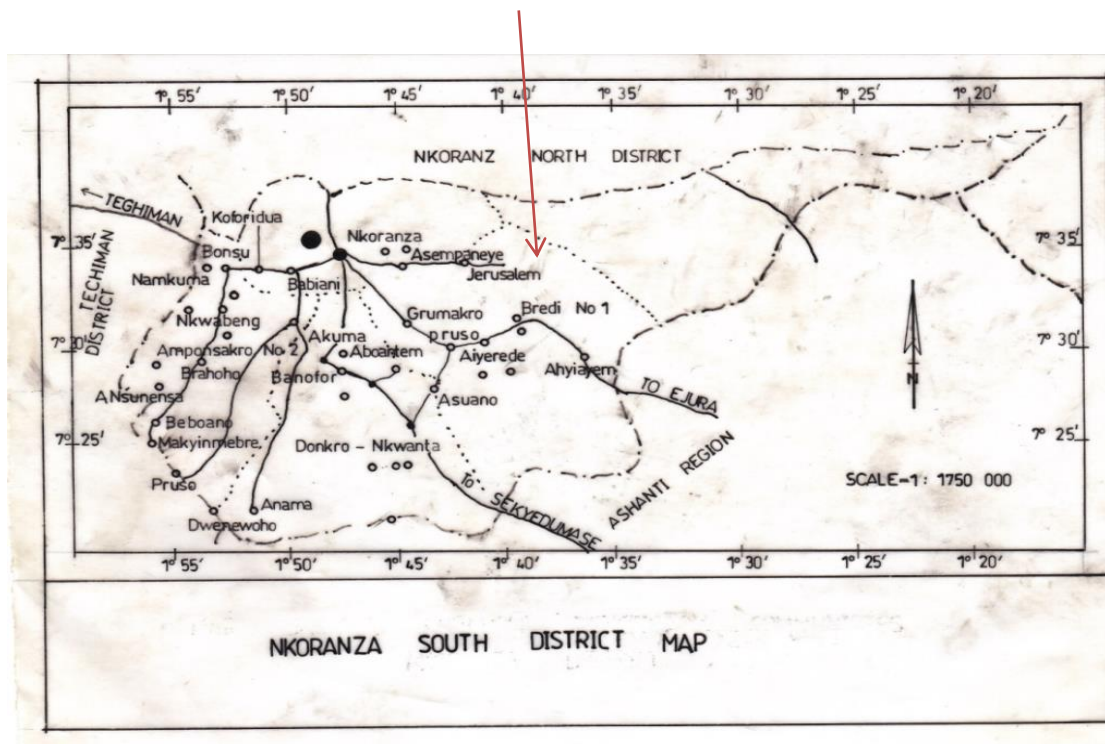
However, majority of the population are indigenes from Nkoranza and family members of George Akwasi Adjei popularly known as Wofa George, the founder of the village.

Below is the map of Nkoranza South Municipality indicating Jerusalem No.2. The arrow shows the location of Jerusalem and Asempaneye.

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<sup>139</sup> Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana Statistical Service 2010.

<sup>140</sup> Population and Housing Census (PHC), Ghana Statistical Service 2010.



**Figure 1: Map of the Nkoranza South Municipal of the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana<sup>141</sup>**

### 3.4 Historical Background of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is located in Jerusalem No.2, a village near Nkoranza. According to the Works Engineer of the Nkoranza Municipal Assembly, it is about 12 kilometers from Nkoranza.<sup>142</sup> According to Mr. Francis K. Asiedu (the Church President), his wife Mary Baagyei and Mr. Anthony Adjei (the Catechist), the history of Jerusalem No.2 is linked to that of the history of the Catholic Church at Jerusalem No.2. Mr. Asiedu,<sup>143</sup> claimed that the village came to be as a result of the presence of the Catholic Church in the area. It all started around the late 1940s when Opanin George Akwasi Adjei (popularly known as Wofa George) who was a native of Akonkonti travelled to Kwaamang. When he returned from Kwaamang, a village

<sup>141</sup> Lumor Alfred, Municipal Planning Officer (MPO) of Nkoranza Municipal Assembly

<sup>142</sup> Michael Otu Amoah, Road Engineer at the Nkoranza South Municipal Assembly.

<sup>143</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2

near Offinso in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, he decided to establish a Catholic Church in Akonkonti, a village near Nkoranza.

At Kwaamang, Wofa George worshipped and fellowshiped with the Catholic Church and he fell in love with the way and manner the services were organized. His aim of establishing a Catholic Church was that he wanted people at his new settlement to benefit from what he had received and experienced in Kwaamang. When he started the church, people started to worship with him but unfortunately, the leaders of the traditional gods sacked him from the village. He then decided to move to Asempaneye to begin a Catholic Church in that village. Initially, Nana Akwasi Poku, the chief of Asempaneye gave him a piece of land to start the Catholic Church.

However, when many people of the village, especially, the youth were following him and worshipping with him at the time, he was seen as a threat to their traditional worship. The people of Asempaneye and its surrounding areas were traditional worshippers and would not take kindly with anyone misbehaving and disobeying their gods and offending the spirits of the ancestors.

And so, the elders and the chief thought it wise to teach him a lesson. The name of their traditional shrine was *Ntoa* and it was located at *Sessiman*, Nkoranza. Below (figure 2) is the picture of the traditional shrine that houses the god *Ntoa* in present day *Sessiman* near Nkoranza that Wofa George was alleged to have been disturbing.



**Figure 2: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Sessiman near Nkoranza**

According to a story which the researcher found on a one-page paper claimed to have been dictated by Wofa George, in 1952, he was summoned to the then Nkoranza chief, Nana Kwame Baffoe. This was because they (the Catholic Church members) ate all the foods that were forbidden by their gods, *Sessiman Ntoa*. The chief of Asempaneye, Nana Akwasi Poku and his elders with the traditional priests of *Sessiman Ntoa* sought every way possible to excommunicate or “eliminate” Wofa George from the village.<sup>144</sup> All attempts to do so were not successful. And when all their attempts failed, they summoned him at the Nkoranzahene’s palace. According to the document, in 1955, he was found guilty at the Nkoranzahene’s palace for disturbing and disobeying the rules of the traditional gods. He was then asked to pay Fifty Pounds Sterling (£50) as penalty.

After the payment, the Omanhene of Nkoranza, Nana Kwame Baffoe ruled that he should relocate his church from Asempaneye to a piece of land which lied between three rivers *asubone, yentreso and fiaa* and worship his God there. This piece of land

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<sup>144</sup> Document on the origin and history of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto retrieved on the 15th of December, 2017 in Jerusalem No.2.

was called *Yentreso*.<sup>145</sup> It is alleged that this vast piece of land (forest) was not farmland due to the presence of a lot of rocks and wild animals. In effect, Wofa George was banished from Asempaneye. According to the current leadership, the intention of sending him to that forest was for him to go and die.

They claimed that a cow was sacrificed by the traditional priests to signify the death of Wofa George. Efforts made by the researcher to contact the traditional priest to verify this claim proved futile. Many attempts were made by the researcher but the traditional priest did not avail himself for this. His wife, Veronica Adwoa Twaah's family did not allow her to follow her husband to the forest. According to the said document, Wofa George, during his prosecution said "I stand before you Nana Nkoranzahene and your elders to say that the place where I am being sent to, *Yentreso* would be called Jerusalem No.2 after the one in the Holy Bible, and my God, The Holy Trinity, whom I worship would be there to protect and guide me." They claimed he went to the forest alone.

Fortunately for him, he did not die. In the forest, according to this document, he recited his Rosary and prayed alone. He started the Catholic Church alone in the forest and at some point, introduced himself to the Parish Priest who came all the way from Techiman (the then Parish center) to visit him. It is alleged that it was revealed to Wofa George in a dream that he was sent there for a purpose. Through his dreams, various "signs" and "symbols" were revealed to him. These included all the Fourteen Stations of the Cross. In the dream, he would see human beings but when he woke up,

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<sup>145</sup> A vast piece of land where no one could live. Indeed oral tradition has it that even when your name was mentioned there in the night, you would die before the next morning. It was an evil forest and only the chief priest at the time could visit there for spiritual sacrifice.

in reality, he found trees and stones. He interpreted the trees to represent the people he saw in the dream as human beings. He named the church Holy Trinity Catholic Church and the Grotto, Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. According to Mr. Asiedu, people who came to him for prayers had their prayers answered. People who were suffering from all sorts of sickness came to him for prayers and got healed.<sup>146</sup>

His wife, Veronica Adwoa Twaah decided to join him in the forest to continue their life as couple. Some of the people who came there and got healed decided to stay there and never went back. Laborers likewise came and worked, and never went back. This is how the village, Jerusalem No.2 came into being. In 2001, Wofa George was called to eternity at the age of 104.

Before he died, he chose Mr. Francis K. Asiedu (the current church president) and his wife Mary Baagyei (the daughter of Wofa George) to manage the activities of the place.

These two people have been in charge of the Grotto since the demise of the founder till now. They are the two main leaders of the Grotto.

The picture below (figure 3) shows where Wofa George was buried. Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017.

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<sup>146</sup> Mr. Francis Asiedu – Current Church President and Leader of the Grotto



**Figure 3: Burial place of Wofa George**

The two people he chose, Mr. Francis Asiedu and his wife Mary Baagyei, to lead the prayers are the same people who still lead the prayers for pilgrims who visit there. It is important to indicate that aside these two people, no one can lead the prayers.

### **3.5 The Founder and Origin of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

It is claimed that before he went to the forest, Wofa George was convinced in his spirit that the hand of God was on him and would show His wonders through him. Thus, when he moved to the current location and started his church, testimonies kept coming and people got intrigued. For example, it is alleged sick people came to him and got healed. And when people came to Wofa George for prayers and their prayers were answered, many people kept coming occasionally.<sup>147</sup> Again, people who came and got spiritual fulfillment went as witnesses of the place. Their testimonies motivated other people to also visit the place for healing and spiritual breakthrough.

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<sup>147</sup> Mary Baagyei (Daughter of the founder, Wife of current President and One Half of current Leadership), interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 at in Jerusalem No.2

Wofa George was a very strong devotee of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Confraternity (a Catholic devotional society whose members are devoted to the praying to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which symbolizes His love for humanity). Due to this strong devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he named the place after Sacred Heart, thus, Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto and Prayer Centre. Because of this strong devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, there is a celebration on every first Friday of every month in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This explains why according to Mr. Francis Asiedu, most of the Catholics who come there are members of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Confraternity.<sup>148</sup>

Mr. Asiedu indicated during the interview that, currently, all categories of people; Catholics (especially Catholics from Kumasi), Pentecostals, Charismatics, non-Christians as well as Muslims and politicians come from all walks of life to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2 for prayers and spiritual encounter.<sup>149</sup>

Mr. Asiedu indicated in the interview that majority of the Catholics from St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church - Nkoranza, which is the Parish centre do not patronize the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Some of the people the researcher interviewed attributed the low patronage to the alleged malpractices at the Grotto. Miss Eva Frimpomaa retorted “how can a laity like me ask me whether I have committed abortion before when only priests have the faculty to listen to confessions?”<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>149</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>150</sup> Miss Eva Frimpomaa, a parishner of St. Martin de Porres Church interviewed on 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Nkoranza

Wofa George, until his death, served as the leader of the village since he was the first settler and the village has no other traditional ruler or a chief. Communal disputes were settled by him and currently, disputes are settled by the leaders of the church.<sup>151</sup> There is also, now an Assemblyman who is responsible for Jerusalem No.2 and two other villages (Nyinase and Kwafre) in the area. But largely matters relating to this specific village where the Grotto is are administered by the church president and his executives. Of course issues that are higher than the leaders are sent to the Parish Priest at the parish center at Nkoranza.

Over the past few years, there has been a legal tussle among some family members of Wofa George and the leadership of the church regarding the ownership of the land. Whiles some members of Wofa George's family who are no more attendees of the Grotto believe that the Catholic Church and the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in Jerusalem No.2 is a personal property of Wofa George, other members of the family including the daughter and current church president believe that it was and still remains the property of the Catholic Church. This court case was initiated by Wofa George but he did not live to witness the verdict. Just before the completion of this research work, the court gave its verdict on the land case in favour of the church. This, apparently, indicates that the church now continues to assume the full ownership of the Grotto and all the facilities at the Grotto. However, it is also not clear whether there will be an appeal to this court verdict or not.

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<sup>151</sup> Mary Baagyei (Daughter of founder, Wife of Current President and One Half of current Leadership), interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 at Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2 in Jerusalem No.2

The current leadership is continuing with the instructions of the founder. According to them, Wofa George asked them to be good stewards of the Grotto. As a result of this advice, there seems to be no change in the management style or structure except to say that, it used to be one person, now they are two leaders, Mr. Francis Asiedu and his wife Mary Baagyei. Whiles some members of the leadership think that the son in-law of Wofa George is the one in-charge, others think that it is the wife who is in-charge and that Mr. Asiedu is only playing a supporting role. However, through the interview, it was revealed that the founder handed over to his son in-law, Mr. Francis Asiedu.<sup>152</sup>

In an interview with the leader of the opposing faction, who is a nephew to Wofa George, he made it clear that the land was given to Wofa George not as a gift.<sup>153</sup> He claimed the fifty pounds sterling (£50) as penalty that Wofa George was made to pay in 1955 because he was found guilty at the Nkoranzahene's palace for disturbing norms and customs, was a payment for the land. This is rather, somewhat strange because Mr. Asiedu and his wife whom Wofa George is believed to have handed over the land to, are claiming the property belongs to the Church. However, the land litigation is in no way visibly or directly affecting the operations and management of the Grotto. Everything seems calm at the Grotto.

The current church president is on top of management of the place and the village and all other pilgrims seem to have confidence in him regarding the management of the place.

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<sup>152</sup> Mary Baagyei – Daughter of the founder of the Grotto interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>153</sup> Mr. Daniel Oppong, Nephew to Wofa George (Founder of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2), interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2



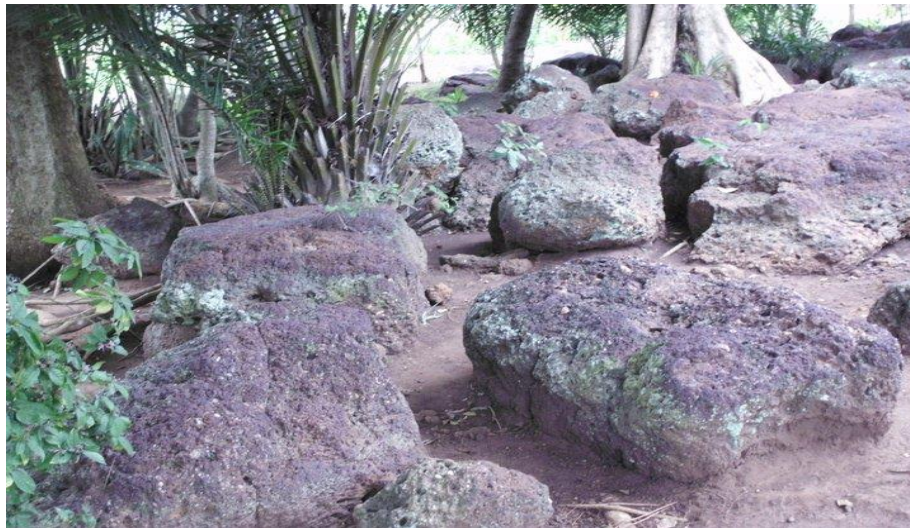
**Figure 4: This picture shows Eno Mary feeding her father. Picture given by Mary Baagyei on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

### **3.6 The Environment of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

According to the current leader, Mr. Asiedu, the land size of the area is about 1003 acres of land. The area is located and surrounded by three rivers namely *asubone*, *yentreso* and *fiaa*. The vegetation there is mostly forest. There is electricity connectivity in the area, mechanized borehole, school building (Kindergarten, Primary up to Junior High School) at the village. There are also mango and cashew plantations on part of the land.

There is a feeder road that leads to the area. However, a large proportion of the area is still a forest zone with plants such as “dorma” tree, palm tree and a good number of cassia trees. Some portions of the land are rocky. This makes these portions difficult to farm on. There are a number of rocks arranged in a very exceptional way. The founder gave his own theological interpretations to these arrangements of the rocks. It is interesting how a non-literate with no theological studies could give such theological interpretations to his natural environment.

The arrangement of the rocks, according to some of the pilgrims makes the Grotto a very unique one. Some of the stones are arranged as if people intentionally arranged them. According to the leaders, these arrangements have spiritual significance. They claim that, these arrangements reflect the order in spirituality. The picture below (figure 5) shows some of the rocky portions of the land.



**Figure 5: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

### **3.7 The Management of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

As indicated earlier, the current leader of the Grotto is Mr. Asiedu who is popularly referred to as *Akonta*.<sup>154</sup> At the time Wofa George was managing the place, he selected some of the regular pilgrims to help him in the day-to-day activities of the Grotto. On some occasions, priests from the parish occasionally came to the Grotto to administer the sacraments. Part of the money that was collected at the Grotto was given to the Parish Priest but not all was given to him.

The current group of people who support Mr. Asiedu and his wife in the management and activities of the Grotto were chosen by Wofa George before his demise.

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<sup>154</sup> Meaning brother in-law.

According to the current leader, Mr. Asiedu, he has no intension to choose any other person(s) in addition. They are twelve in number and they were given a unique dress or particular attire (uniform) which they should wear.<sup>155</sup> Women are included in the number.

The picture below shows some of the leaders of the Grotto in their official dress (uniform).



**Figure 6: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

*The arrow points to the current leader of the Grotto Mr. Francis K. Asiedu. The rest in red attire are some of the leaders of the Grotto*

Mr. Asiedu and all the other executives wear the same colour of dress as prescribed to them by the founder. However, he has a metal he uses as a staff which, according to him, was handed over to him by the founder. According to the assistant catechist, they are supposed to be in this attire until according to Wofa George, something would happen one day and they would not be wearing it again. As to exactly what would happen and when, they are unable to tell.

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<sup>155</sup> Augustine Agyapong - Member of the Leadership team of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto and Holy Trinity Church at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2. The dress was a red attire sown like cassock with a cap. Though they tell you the colour is red, it looks more of wine colour than red colour.

It was obvious during the research that because of its name, *Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto*, the authorities combine both Marian and Sacred Heart of Jesus spiritualities. The researcher also observed that praying in tongues was not allowed at the Grotto. In fact, anything “charismatic” is opposed by the leaders of the Grotto. They really speak against Catholic Charismatic Renewal.<sup>156</sup>

These are the members of the current leadership team headed by Mr. Francis Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader, Rev. Fr. Andrews Addae (A strong devotee of the Grotto), Mary Baagyei (Daughter of Founder and wife of the current leader), Anthony Adjei - Senior Catechist and Philip Alipo - Assistant Catechist. Others include Augustine Agyapong - Member, Stephen Baffour - Member, Peter Owusu Ansah - Member, Anthony Nyarko - Member, and Esther Manu - Member. These were the persons that were chosen by the founder and are allowed to help the leader and/or the wife in the offering of the “*Ntuhye*” prayer.<sup>157</sup> The Parish Priest is part of the executives. However, from the interviews, the researcher observed that he is not really into the activities of the Grotto.

There is also a development committee that is supposed to see to the physical development of the Grotto.<sup>158</sup> These are persons who have volunteered themselves to the work at the Grotto for several years. These are Isaac Adjei Frimpong, Chairman of Development Committee, Mrs. Effah Frimpong - Vice Chairperson, Philip Phantamor, Secretary, and Emmanuel Owusu - Member. According to the current leader, the development of the Grotto is not supervised by the Parish Priest but by

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<sup>156</sup> A devotional society in the Catholic Church

<sup>157</sup> Anthony Adjei – Snr. Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>158</sup> Philip Alipo - Assistant Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

themselves, which sounds a bit strange as far as the administration in the Catholic Church is concerned.

The land has no proper layout. Pilgrims who can afford are just building houses at the Grotto without any regulations. This may be a challenge in future to the Diocese of Techiman. The land is not sold to them. In future the relatives of these people can come and claim the ownership of the house as well as the building plot of their relatives.

Again, they do not make account to the Parish Priest all the monies they receive at the place. According to the leader, 1<sup>st</sup> collection, Mass stipends and annual harvest are accounted for. Other monies like *Ntuhye* money, thanksgiving money, tithe, appeals, June harvest (a mid-year harvest that is organized in the month of June), name day-born collections and other monies are kept by him. The researcher in his observation counted more than fifteen collections when they met for the monthly programme, from Tuesday evening to Saturday morning. Most of these collections were taken in the evenings when the Parish Priest was not around. It must be mentioned here that almost all the leaders the researcher interviewed hoped that a resident priest would be posted there soon.

The leader indicated that the Bishop has told them that he would appoint a resident priest but he is waiting for the verdict from the land litigation before any such appointment is made. A confirmation to this planned arrangement was made during an interview with the Bishop of Techiman Diocese. His reason for the delay was that he would not want to appoint a resident priest to the Grotto until after the court case.

He also indicated plans to add few outstations to the Grotto and then create it as a Parish.

### **3.8 Programmes and Activities of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

Programmes and activities of the Grotto involve the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Retreats and Recollections, Stations of the Cross, teachings on doctrines of the Catholic Church and the dos and the don'ts of the Grotto, Confessions and more importantly the *Ntuhye*<sup>159</sup> prayer. Like any other Catholic Grotto, Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto organizes various programmes that are common to other Grottos, though the details may differ. All the programmes and activities that have been discussed above in chapter two are found at Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Some of these programmes and activities are Holy Mass, Stations of the Cross, and Confessions, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and praying of the Rosary. Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto has various programmes and within the programme, various activities are undertaken. The Grotto has monthly programme for pilgrims, they also organize a programme during Holy Week, Good Friday and Easter and then in June, they organize another programme for pilgrims.

Apart from these programmes, societies and individuals can go there for their own programmes any day and any time. One programme that makes the place distinct is the *Ntuhye* prayer (prayer of dedication). One other activity is the “showing of signs and symbols” where pilgrims are taken round the Grotto so that the leaders would explain all the various “signs and symbols” at the Grotto to them. The leaders also use that time to narrate the history of the founder and the Grotto to pilgrims. Again,

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<sup>159</sup> The Sacred Heart of Jesus prayer of dedication which is said for pilgrims who go to the Grotto

programmes like retreats, prayer sessions, seminars, talks and recollections are organized at this Grotto to enhance the spiritual growth of the laity. In recent times, various societies in the Diocese, on some occasions organize their own programmes at this Grotto. This is because the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto provides serene and conducive environment for spiritual exercises.

Mention must be made here of the fact that there are programmes which are organized by the authorities at the Grotto as well as programmes organized by the various associations and then held at the Grotto. Sometimes these groups/societies who organize their own programmes go to the Grotto with their own facilitator. On other occasions they collaborate with the leaders of the Grotto and then ask them to organize a retreat or other programmes for them. In the Catholic Church, every first Friday of the month is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Due to this, a programme is organized on every first Friday of the month at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. It begins on the Tuesday preceding the first Friday of the month till the Saturday after the first Friday of the month. Eucharistic celebration on the first Friday which is preceded by Stations of the Cross devotion climaxes the whole programme.

However, majority of the pilgrims leave on the following Saturday after the morning Mass. During these five days, activities such as Holy Mass, teachings, Stations of the Cross, “showing of signs and symbols”, individual prayers as well as communal prayers (Rosary and Divine Mercy prayers) and confessions are organized for the pilgrims. The pilgrims also help in putting the place in order by weeding, sweeping and scrubbing. On Thursday afternoon, new pilgrims are taken round to see the “signs and symbols” of the Grotto. In the night of that same day, a time is allowed for

individual testimonies and redeeming of pledges by the pilgrims. On some occasions, time is allowed for pilgrims to ask questions bothering them concerning the activities of the prayer centre as well as the Catholic Church in general. Throughout these days, *Ntuhye* prayer can be said any day and at any time, provided the leader and his wife are available. Since programmes and activities of Grottos have been discussed in Chapter two, only two programmes would be highlighted and discussed. These two are discussed because of their importance and uniqueness to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. These are *Ntuhye* and Stations of the Cross.

### **3.8.1 Ntuhye (Prayer of Dedication)**

*Ntuhye* is the prayer of dedication to the Holy Trinity that is said for any pilgrim that visits the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. According to the current leader, Mr. Francis Asiedu, Wofa George, the founder, had the belief that those who go to the Grotto be dedicated to the Holy Trinity. Dedication, they mean a prayer to offer someone to God. It was something he did and commanded the current leadership to do before he died. During the *Ntuhye*, a prayer is said for the pilgrim. The statues of Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary are enthroned at where the prayers are said. There are two chairs or stools beside the two statues. Another chair is placed in front of the two stools/chairs. The church president and his wife<sup>160</sup> (who are both the spiritual leaders at the Grotto) sit on the two stools/chairs and then the pilgrim who has come for prayers sits in front of them on the other chair. One of them (either the church president or his wife) or both lead the *Ntuhye* prayers.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup>Augustine Agyapong-Member of the Leadership team of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto and Holy Trinity Church at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>161</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

In the absence of these two people, no one leads the *Ntuhye* prayers. In their absence therefore, the catechists write the intentions and collect the money to be paid so that when they return, they would say the prayers for the person. According to them, the founder gave them the rule that they are the only people that should lead the prayers. Before a person is prayed for, the person is led through a kind of examination of conscience. A special emphasis is laid on those who have committed sin of abortion to ask God for forgiveness for the person. In fact, they ask whether the pilgrim has ever committed abortion.

They hold and teach that abortion is a grave sin. Therefore, one needs to be forgiven by God before that person can be found worthy to present his/her intentions. A prayer of forgiveness is said for the person if the answer is in the affirmative. Below is the prayer that is said for a person who has committed abortion.

It is said in twi as follows;

Otumfoɔ Domankoma Nyankopɔn, hwɛ wo Ba a wo dɔ no  
Akoma yi, ne nkamfoɔ ne mpatadeɛ a wagyina adebɔneyɛfoɔ  
anan mu de ama wo; na wo bo anya atɔ wo yam yi, fa wɔn a wɔ  
su frɛ wo yi bɔne kyɛ wɔn. Enam Jesus Christ korɔ no ara din  
mu, ɔno a ɔne wo te ase di hene mmerɛ a eni awiɛɛ. Enyɛ hɔ.<sup>162</sup>

This is the translation in English;

O Almighty and Eternal God, look upon the Heart of your dearly beloved son, and upon the grace and satisfaction he offers you in the name of sinners; be thou appeased, and grant us pardon in the name of the same Jesus Christ your son, who lives and reigns with you, world without end. Amen.

In the Catholic Church, sins are confessed to a priest only. However, the leaders of this Grotto ask the pilgrims to confess their sins to them, especially the sin of abortion for them to be prayed for. They would then recommend after they have prayed for

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<sup>162</sup> Sacred Heart of Jesus Prayer Book – 2013, 10.

you, to see a priest for confession and absolution (if the person is a Catholic). All the leaders the researcher interviewed confirmed this but for them, it is not an “abuse” to ask somebody whether the person has committed the sin of abortion but a requirement for their ritual which the founder commanded them to do. The pilgrim would be asked to mention his/her prayer requests. After that he/she is asked to pay some amount for the prayer request before the prayer is said. According to my investigations, the person is not charged but he/she is asked to give whatever amount he/she wants to pay as prayer request money just as one pays something for Mass stipends.

The Sacred Heart Confraternity’s *Prayer of Dedication to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* is then said for the person in Twi. Below is the prayer in Twi;

Awurade Jesus Christ, wo na wo gyina yen ne Agya no ntam,  
na w’ayi w’aberewa, Ɔhoteni Ɔbaabunu Mary, se ɔnye yen nso  
yen aberewa na ɔnnyina yen ne wo ntam; fa mmɔborɔhunu hwe  
ma obiara a ɔde n’abisadee beba abeto W’anim no, ne nsa nka  
ne nyinaa mfiri Ɔbaabunu korɔ no ara hɔ, na ɔnni de. Enye hɔ.  
<sup>163</sup>

Its English translation is as follows;

O Lord Jesus Christ, our mediator with the Father, you have been pleased to appoint the most Blessed virgin, your mother, to be our mother also, and our mediatrix with you. Mercifully grant that whoever comes to you seeking your favours may rejoice to receive all of them through her. Amen.

After this prayer, the person is asked to go to Mary’s shrine and ask for Our Lady’s intercession. He/she is asked to make a private pledge for an answered prayer. During the monthly programme, one of the evenings (Thursday evening) is used for those whose prayers have been answered to redeem their pledges. Again, the person is asked to come back and tell those who lead the prayers whatever dream they dreamt

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<sup>163</sup> Sacred Heart of Jesus Prayer Book – 2013, 41.

after they have visited the place for prayers. On the first Friday evening, pilgrims share their dreams with other pilgrims. *Ntuhye* is one of the most important rituals or activities of the Grotto that attracts pilgrims to the Grotto.

### 3.8.2 Stations of the Cross

At Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, they have all the fourteen Stations of the Cross. These stations are represented by trees and stones. According to Mr. Anthony Adjei,<sup>164</sup> all the stations were revealed to the founder through dreams. They are able to show trees and stones to represent the prosecutors of Jesus Christ, the soldiers, etc. The kind of interpretation and theology they give to these symbols are interesting. They have a tree called “*dorma*”<sup>165</sup> in *twi* to represent Jesus Christ at the Stations of the Cross. They have a stone that symbolizes the stone that was used to cover the tomb of Jesus Christ at His burial.<sup>166</sup> The pilgrims are asked to kiss this stone after the Stations of the Cross prayer.

This is one of the important devotions at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Even pilgrims who are sick would not want to miss it. They claimed after going through all the Fourteen Stations they receive blessings. Some of the pilgrims claimed that they got their healing after the Stations of the Cross devotion. They consider it as one of the powerful healing rituals at the Grotto. This prayer is led by the current leader himself. He does the introduction and the Catechists lead the prayers with songs. They start the devotion at the station where Jesus was condemned to death and end at the fourteenth station where Jesus was laid in the tomb. Below (figure 7) is a picture

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<sup>164</sup> Snr. Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>165</sup> “*Dorma*” in *twi* means my beloved. They interpret it to mean the beloved son of God

<sup>166</sup>Mtt 27:60

showing pilgrims kissing the stone that is believed to have been used to cover the tomb of Jesus Christ.



**Figure 7: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

*The first arrow shows a pilgrim kissing this stone. The second arrow shows the stone they claim represents the stone that was used to cover the tomb of Jesus at His burial.*

### **3.9 “Signs and Symbols” at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

The “signs and symbols” as referred here are the things that are very peculiar and unique to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. These are the things that the Grotto could be identified with. All these “signs and symbols” are claimed to have been revealed to the founder through dreams. These are the Stations of the Cross, Sacred Heart of Jesus “Rock”, the dressing of the leader and his executives, “Holy Water”, “Holy Flower”, and “Holy Soil”.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is no doubt a Catholic prayer center,<sup>167</sup> however, at first sight, there are certain things that may make one not sure about its Catholic identity. One of these things that seemingly confuse pilgrims is the dress (uniform) which the leaders at the Grotto wear. The leaders wear red long attire. According to them, the red colour signifies the persecution that Wofa George went through in the hands of his persecutors, the traditional people who banished him into the forest.

### **3.9.1 Holy Water**

There is a special rock where water is stored when it rains for the pilgrims who come there. This water is seen and considered as *holy*, therefore, all the pilgrims who go to the place rush for this *holy water*. There are a lot of testimonies about this water by pilgrims who use it. It is interesting to note that at times the Church President sprinkles people, cars, motor bikes and other items with this *holy water*. Pilgrims who go there are asked to use palm branches or brush to sprinkle their houses and their stores by themselves with this *holy water*.

Those who are preparing to attend interviews or are to face a serious panel are asked to wash their faces with some of this *holy water*. It is interesting to note that no priest blesses this water. For them, it is naturally blessed by God. They get this water when it rains, therefore, in dry season there is shortage of the *holy water*. The water looks unhygienic but the leaders convince the pilgrims that it is hygienic. Pilgrims who go there and collect some of this *holy water* are forbidden to eat meat and egg on Fridays. They are to eat only fish on Fridays.

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<sup>167</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2

This is one of the unique things about them. According to them, once you use their *holy water* you are forbidden, by their ritual, to eat meat and egg on Fridays. The picture below shows how the pilgrims present their containers and leave them for this *holy water*. Pilgrims leave their bottles there as we see in the picture below and come back after the first Friday Mass to pick their water.

They have people who are in charge of the distribution of this *holy water*. The picture below (figure 8) shows how pilgrims arrange their rubber containers for the *holy water*.



**Figure 8: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2.**

### **3.9.2 Holy Soil**

There is a place where soil is taken by pilgrims. According to some of the pilgrims the researcher interviewed, the *holy soil* serves as medicine for them. Some of the respondents gave various testimonies about this soil. When one is sick, the person is advised to mix some of the *soil* and the *holy water* and drink, and according to some

of the respondents, it works for them. They claimed that they get healing through this. They alleged that the combination of the *holy water and the holy soil* cures various kinds of diseases such as malaria, headache and stomach ache.

Probably, this is why even those who have not visited the Grotto yet but have heard about it are alleged to request for some of the *holy water and holy soil* from pilgrims who go to the Grotto. They claimed the *holy water and the holy soil* have naturally been blessed by God. They do not ask priests to bless them before they use them. Below (figure 9) is a picture of the *holy soil*.



**Figure 9: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

### **3.9.3 Holy Flower**

A plant called *pepegya* in twi grows there and it is believed to drive away evil spirits. Pilgrims, who go to this Grotto to pray, take some of this plant to their homes. They refer to this plant as *holy flower*. The pilgrims are asked to plant this *flower* in their houses and it is believed that it will drive away any evil spirit that “fights” them, especially witches and wizards.

It is interesting to note that pilgrims who rent houses are advised not to take some of this flower but those who have their own houses. Below (figure 10) is a picture of this *holy flower*.



**Figure 10: Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

#### **3.9.4 Sacred Heart of Jesus Rock**

According to Mr. Anthony Adjei,<sup>168</sup> one morning, when the founder was alive, he asked them to follow him to a place. After reaching the place, he asked them to weed and dig where he had shown them. After digging, he showed them a rock that had a symbol like the heart on it. He then told them that that was the symbol of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. According to him, it was revealed to him in a dream that is why he asked them to weed and dig.

There are two pictures below. The first picture shows this rock with the symbol of the heart on it. Currently, a huge statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has been mounted at

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<sup>168</sup> Snr. Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2

this place. The second picture shows this statue. Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2



**Figure 11: Picture 1**

**Picture 2**

*The above pictures show the mysterious rock and the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue. Picture 1 shows the mysterious rock with the symbol of the heart and picture 2 shows the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue that has been mounted and one of the Catechists showing pilgrims where the mysterious rock is located.*

### **3.9.5 Lamb of God**

According to Mr. Adjei,<sup>169</sup> after the founder of the Grotto was banished from the village Asempaneye, the traditional worshippers sacrificed a cow and killed it. By their belief, they claimed that the cow they sacrificed was Wofa George so that as they killed the cow, Wofa George would die. The leaders claimed Wofa George said on that day that one day he would see the symbol of that cow they have sacrificed. He later found a rock that resembles a cow and according to him, that rock symbolizes

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<sup>169</sup> Snr. Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2

the cow they sacrificed during his banishment. They refer to this symbol as the “lamb of God”. The Stations of the Cross devotion ends at where this “symbol” is located.

All the pilgrims, after the devotion has ended go to where this symbol is, say a prayer and then touch the symbol and make the sign of the cross.



**Figure 12:** *The picture above (Figure 11) symbolizes the cow that the chiefs sacrificed during the banishment of Wofa George. Picture taken by the researcher on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2.*

### 3.9.6 Miraculous Picture

According to Mr. Adjei,<sup>170</sup> about twenty years ago when the founder was alive, during one of their monthly programmes, they decided to take a photograph. One of the men got out to take the photograph. When they printed the photograph, the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary was found at where the man got up from to take the picture. Even though before they took the photograph, there was no such image there. This is one of the miracles that is believed to have ever happened at the Grotto.

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<sup>170</sup> Snr. Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2

The picture below (figure 12) shows this miraculous appearance of the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the photograph. Most of these leaders are still alive and continue to be fervent devotees of this Grotto.



**Figure 13: This is the miraculous picture given to the researcher by Mary Baagyei on 15<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 at Jerusalem No.2**

### **3.9.7 Other Relevant Information**

Specific Grottos have specific devotions and spirituality. But most Grottos are Marian shrines or sanctuaries that promote devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Few Grottos promote the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It is important to mention here that there is no Grotto that can have a devotion to only the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Sacred Heart of Jesus. At the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto (Jerusalem No.2), they combine the devotion to both the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus with no proper distinction. Probably, this is because the name of the Grotto is Sacred Heart of Jesus, that may have accounted for this combined devotion.

The Grotto serves as a prayer centre for the Nkoranza Parish, the Techiman Diocese and the surrounding Dioceses in the Brong Ahafo Region, Ashanti Region and the

three Northern Regions. The monies generated through the redemption of pledges and thanksgiving is also used to improve the infrastructural facilities like toilet and chapel at the place.

It is worth noting that one of the strongest devotees of the Grotto is Most Rev. Gabriel Justice Yaw Anokye, the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kumasi. The leaders noted that the Archbishop goes there every year, sometimes more than once in the year, for his personal spiritual growth. He goes to the Grotto to pray.

Though, as indicated, the Grotto is an outstation church which is handled and managed by the Parish Priest at Nkoranza Parish, the arrangement at the Grotto is somewhat unique in a sense. There seems to be tension which is not talked about due to the importance attached to the Grotto. Although this would be analysed later in the work, its introduction here is very necessary to paint a certain picture of how the Grotto seems to be drifting away from the control and management of the Catholic Church. However, the Grotto is very central to the survival of the church in this village, the Parish and the Techiman Diocese as a whole, due to its spiritual and financial importance. The Grotto at Jerusalem No.2 is very prominent in the programmes and activities of the Techiman Catholic Diocese but also more importantly in the spiritual journey of individual members of the various associations in the Catholic Church. The Parish Priest is the highest authority of the Parish in the Catholic Church. In fact it is only Bishops and Priests that have the faculty to listen to confessions.

The leaders at the Grotto are not ordained ministers of the Roman Catholic Church, they are lay. It is not even that pilgrims confess their sins to them but the leaders rather ask whether the pilgrim has committed the sin of abortion before or not. They claim the founder held that abortion is a serious sin against God. He considered abortion to be destroying of human life. Therefore, anybody who commits the sin of abortion must repent and ask God for forgiveness. For them, they have to pray for forgiveness for the person before he/she can ask for any favours from God. The leaders confirmed that, even Catholic Priests and Bishops who have gone through the *Ntuhye* are asked this question.<sup>171</sup> Once you go through the *Ntuhye* prayer, they ask this question. This implies that the Priests and Bishops who have ever gone through this prayer have by themselves confessed their sins to lay persons, which is contrary to the doctrines and teachings of the Church. Interestingly, it was revealed through the interviews that no priest has ever questioned this practice. Some have argued that this is not an “abuse” or disobedience to the teachings and doctrines of the Catholic Church but the norm of the Grotto which the founder handed to them and commanded them to do.<sup>172</sup>

There is also diversity of beliefs and combination of beliefs at the Grotto. Other Pentecostal and Charismatic church doctrines teach that a man must not confess his sins to another and that the bible demands that sins are confessed to only God and He is willing and able to forgive all iniquities. But surprisingly enough, one sees pastors and members of the protestant church, for example Pentecost Church, Methodist

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<sup>171</sup> Mr. Francis K. Asiedu, Church President and Spiritual Leader of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No. 2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No. 2

<sup>172</sup> John Opoku, a male regular pilgrim to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto interviewed on 1st December 2017, in Nkoranza

Church, New Apostolic Church members coming to the Grotto and confessing their sin of abortion to these two persons before any prayer is said for them.

Again, in the Catholic jurisdictions, Bishops and Priests have the faculty to celebrate the Holy Mass and pray for the healing of any form of illness or disease.<sup>173</sup> Priests and Deacons have the faculty to bless Rosaries, religious articles (like scapular and medals) and holy water for the faithful. But here in Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, some pilgrims go to the leader to ask that he blessed these items for them. The spiritual needs of the people are taken care of by these two leaders, including the spiritual needs of Priests who go there.

Lastly, they have a strict rule of not receiving Holy Communion with their palm, which is not a general rule in the Catholic Church. For them, the Holy Communion is holy therefore, it is not proper for the laity to use their palm in receiving it. They teach that everybody should use their tongue to receive the Holy Communion. For them, receiving Holy Communion with the palm is sinful which is contrary to the general teachings of the Catholic Church. The church gives the option to the individual to choose whether to receive the Communion with your palm or tongue.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The chapter has presented the history of not only the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto but also the community. The chapter also discussed the programmes and activities of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Two of these programmes, *Ntuhye* and Stations of the Cross were highlighted. It was discussed that this Grotto is a Roman Catholic Grotto

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<sup>173</sup> <http://www.catholictraditions.org/two-Hearts/Sacred-Hearts12htm>. (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

therefore, almost all the programmes organized at Catholic Grottos are organized there. However, they have their unique programmes like the *Ntuhye ritual* and Stations of the Cross that are not common to other Grottos. Again, it was also indicated that the various “signs and symbols” that are found at this Grotto are only peculiar to this Grotto and thus, could hardly be found at other Grottos in Ghana. The chapter also highlighted the many “signs and symbols” at this Grotto and their spiritual implications on the lives of pilgrims who visit the Grotto. The theological interpretation of these “signs and symbols” was also discussed.

Roger’s theory on sacred earth used for this research indicates that nature requires explanation. From the discussions so far, it is evident that the founder of this Grotto, Wofa George discovered nature and gave explanations to his natural environment. His explanations have made a meaningful significance on the spiritual life of those who visit the Grotto. For this reason, Roger’s theory is appropriate for this work.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONTRIBUTIONS AND CHALLENGES OF THE GROTTA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter encapsulates some of the challenges facing the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto and the contributions of this Grotto to the life of pilgrims, the host community as well as the Catholic Church. These contributions and challenges are discussed with regard to the concept of human development in terms of socio-economic development and infrastructural improvement. In the light of this, improvement in conditions of life, quality of life of the people, and creation of employment through the various economic life of the village are examined. How these challenges and contributions affect the activities and programmes of the Grotto and the Catholic Church in general were considered.

Before the discussion of the challenges and the contributions of this Grotto, it must be indicated here that there are complex narratives of identity surrounding the activities and the programmes of this Grotto. The kind of dress they wear, their teachings, some of the interpretations they give to their natural surroundings, these are all part of the complex narratives. Even in giving the historical background of the Grotto, they gave varying and incoherent stories. The researcher had to synchronize to come out with a coherent history of the Grotto. Though the Grotto has complex narratives of identity surrounding it, it contributes to the spiritual, economic and social growth of pilgrims. Notwithstanding these and other contributions, it also poses a number of challenges to the Catholic Diocese of Techiman and the Catholic Church in Ghana as a whole.

## **4.2 Contributions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto has contributed immensely not only to the spiritual development of the people but also, to the other aspects of the life of the people, such as economic and social life of the people. The Grotto helps in the growth of the local economy of Jerusalem No.2 as well as the Nkoranza Township and Brong Ahafo as a whole. These contributions of the Grotto to the area were examined in three main dimensions, namely; spiritual, social and economic dimensions. These three dimensions were also examined bearing in mind the significance of these contributions to the Grotto itself, the St. Martin de Porres Parish, the Catholic Diocese of Techiman and the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana as a whole.

### **4.2.1 Spiritual Contributions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto contributes immensely to shaping and moulding the spiritual lives of the people that visit and worship there. The story behind the establishment of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto alone is enough motivation to invoke the faith of many pilgrims who go there. How the founder was banished to the forest, his perseverance in faith and the claim that he conquered his persecutors through prayers and his survival in the forest, motivates pilgrims and strengthen their faith in God. Pilgrims who visit the Grotto claim they see the founder as a man who had strong faith. Some said they can relate their life story to the life story of the founder. Sometimes pilgrims see themselves as being persecuted by their situations in life. However, the founder's perseverance in faith serves as a motivation for these pilgrims.

The “signs and symbols” at the Grotto such as holy water, holy soil, holy flower and the Sacred Heart of Jesus rock amongst others trigger a lot of faith in the pilgrims. Pilgrims and leaders of the Grotto give passionate testimonies and convincing teachings respectively and these seem to strengthen the faith of those who go there. In contemporary Ghana, many pastors, prophets and “powerful men of God” in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches sell religious items like holy water, handkerchiefs and anointing oils hence it has become a very common practice. Pilgrims who go to Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto get some of these items free. If other pastors are selling these items for higher prices but they are free at this Grotto, it is obvious that pilgrims would prefer to go to the Grotto. Again, pilgrims do not pay any consultation fee when they go to this Grotto. However, at other prayer centers people pay consultation fees to pastors. The Grotto gives them solace which they do not get from other prayer centres. This probably explains why many people go to this Grotto for prayers.

The leaders of the Grotto have a way of presenting an already known fact in a different way that makes more sense to the pilgrims. This presentation inspires the faith and increase the belief of pilgrims. During the fieldwork, the researcher interacted with a number of pilgrims who expressed strong faith in the programmes of the Grotto. Some of the pilgrims believe that their prayers are answered when they are presented at the Grotto more than when they are presented outside the Grotto land. When their requests are made within the land of the Grotto, they claim they receive immediate answers. For instance, the researcher interviewed a seventy-six year retired police officer who has been visiting the Grotto monthly for the past four years, who

claimed he got healed from stroke after visiting the Grotto.<sup>174</sup> According to him, he cannot afford to miss any of the monthly programmes because of this miraculous healing that happened to him at the Grotto.

There was also a woman who had been visiting the Grotto for the past twenty-eight years.<sup>175</sup> This woman and her husband are from Kumasi. They have built a five-bedroom house on the Grotto grounds for themselves and their family and other pilgrims who need a place to stay. Their decision to build such house at the premises of the Grotto is influenced by their claim that their regular visitation to the Grotto as well as their involvement in the programmes and activities organized at the Grotto has impacted their lives spiritually and physically. She claimed that she was able to conceive her only child (a daughter) when she came to the Grotto about twenty five years ago to pray. For this woman, no medicine could make her conceive but when she prayed on the soil of this Grotto she conceived. Although the house is a welcome addition to the Grotto, it is reasonable to ask at this point what happens to this house that is built at the Grotto in future? Would the house be for the family or the church? These are some of the challenges that would be discussed later in this work.

Some of the pilgrims claimed that when they are sick and they come to the Grotto to pray, they get healed. Some of the respondents claimed that they got their healing after going through the Stations of the Cross devotion. For some, they got healed when they drunk the *holy water*. Some further claimed that anytime they visit this Grotto, they make a lot of profit in their businesses. When the question was asked whether these people who gave testimonies have been to the hospital to verify their

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<sup>174</sup> Kofi Amoako, a retired police officer, interviewed at Jerusalem No.2 on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018.

<sup>175</sup> Mama Theresa Akosah, a female regular pilgrim to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018, in Jerusalem No.2

healing, the response was that, they are convinced and that there was no need for any doctor to verify. For them, verifying would mean to tempt and to doubt the power of God which they cannot do.

They believe their prayers are answered, especially when they pray on the Grotto ground. They claimed the Grotto provides them with spiritual protection. For these regular devotees, they believe they get more protection spiritually anytime they visit this Grotto. Some claimed that when they are at home, they have frightening dreams but when they come to the Grotto, their dreams are normal dreams and not scary. One respondent said anytime she is sick and she is admitted at the hospital, just after she is discharged by the hospital, her husband will drive her to the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto before she goes home to continue with her medication. She claimed that anytime she does that, she gets healed in no time. More importantly, she claimed she feels more protected when she goes to the Grotto.

The leaders encourage pilgrims, especially, Catholics to be communicants, thus Catholics who receive Holy Communion.<sup>176</sup> This they say would make one closer to God and God closer to that individual. According to the leaders of the Grotto, “you cannot claim you love God, and that your body is the temple of God, and yet you are not even receiving the Holy Communion also known as the Eucharist (which in the Catholic Teaching they refer to as the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ). For the leaders this was what Jesus commanded Christians to do.”<sup>177</sup> The Catholic Church teaches that “the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is the source and summit of Christian

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<sup>176</sup> Catholics who receive Holy Communion

<sup>177</sup> Augustine Agyapong - Member of the Leadership team of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2. (He quoted this to support his assertion Cf. Jn 6:54)

life”.<sup>178</sup> The Eucharist (Holy Communion) is one of the seven sacraments according to the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that “the other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and work of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist (Holy Communion) and are oriented towards it. For in the blessed Eucharist (Holy Communion) is contained the whole spiritual good of the church, namely Christ Himself, the Paschal lamb.”<sup>179</sup>

This teaching of the Catholic Church on the Holy Communion seems to be cherished by the leaders of the Grotto. The leaders of the Grotto are very particular about the spirituality of the people who visit the Grotto. Probably, the above teaching explains why the leaders at the Grotto stress the reception of Holy Communion by all Catholics who visit the Grotto. Their teaching on Holy Communion has influenced many inactive Catholics who visit the Grotto to come back to the Church, go for confession and become communicants. The Grotto therefore restores Catholic pilgrims who have relapsed in the faith or left the church to return.

Apart from the monthly programme at the Grotto, other Parishes and non-Catholics, schools, associations/societies and others organize pilgrimage to this Grotto to enhance their spiritual life. The people who visit the Grotto receive various forms of healing; spiritual, physical and emotional healing. There are testimonies of abundance of healing of people from mental disorders to all kinds of diseases including ulcer, hepatitis B, skin rashes, to mention but a few. There were many testimonies. Some women who were once barren claimed they conceived and gave birth after going to pray at the Grotto. Many pilgrims claimed they receive miracles when they go to the

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<sup>178</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1324)

<sup>179</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1324)

Grotto. Some Bishops and Catholic Priests confirmed claims of receiving miracles as a result of their going to the Grotto to pray. Many people give various testimonies. Though other factors could have turned around, they are convinced of the miracles of the Grotto.

A prominent member of the ordained ministers of the Catholic Church gave this testimony.

I have had many spiritual interventions or miracles in my life. One of the most fundamental one that is so unique happened when I visited Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2. There was a time I had serious problems in my Diocese. My Diocese was on the verge of breaking down. My visitation to this Grotto and the performance of the *Ntuhye* prayers turned around events. I am so grateful to God for giving us this sacred Grotto for prayers.<sup>180</sup>

Another respondent disclosed that:

As the Parish Priest, I visit the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto every month to celebrate Mass with them and for them and also perform my pastoral duties. I have never undertaken the *Ntuhye* prayer before but yes I personally experienced a miracle which I believe is a result of prayers I offered there. I found my sister who had been missing for a little over two years after I went there to make the prayer request to God.<sup>181</sup>

All these testimonies demonstrate how pilgrims and some worshippers have benefited spiritually from the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The pilgrims give a lot of testimonies and these testimonies they claim are just simply the manifestation of true hand of God at work at the Grotto. The Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto offers the environment for the individuals and various associations/societies in the Techiman Diocese to have their spiritual programmes such as retreats and recollections. The

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<sup>180</sup> Augustine Agyapong - Member of the Leadership team of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2.

<sup>181</sup> Rev. Fr. Samuel Kofi Adjei, current Parish Priest of the Nkoranza Parish interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Nkoranza.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto offers the above benefits to the pilgrims who go there. The Grotto contributes to the spiritual growth of the pilgrims, the Catholic laity (lay faithful) of the Diocese and all those who go there for spiritual revival.

There are certain things like kissing stones, sprinkling of holy water by the leader, smearing of soil on their body, which they claimed give them healing. The man sprinkles pilgrims with their *holy water*. In the Catholic Church, blessing and sprinkling of holy water is done by Priests and Deacons but nobody questions when the leader does it. One wonders if their claimed healing is related to the leader or the church. The kind of reverence and respect pilgrims give to the man is amazing.

In addition, the Grotto has also contributed greatly to the spread of Catholicism in the Nkoranza South Municipality. It has also made the Catholic faith popular in the Municipality. The leader claimed that there are a lot of non-Catholic pilgrims who have come there to pray and have ended up becoming Roman Catholics. He could not give any statistics or document to substantiate this claim. However, the Parish Priest confirmed this claim by the leader and indicated that in the baptismal register of the Parish, there are many non-Catholics who have been converted to the Catholic Church and have been baptized at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto.

The Parish Priest also added that many of these Catholic pilgrims again celebrate their holy matrimony at the Grotto. Jerusalem No.2 Church is an Outstation of St. Martin de Porres Church at Nkoranza. If a couple at Jerusalem No.2 wants to celebrate their marriage, all the documentation is done at the Parish centre, Nkoranza before the celebration is done at the Grotto. He further claimed that some couples even do the

documentation in Kumasi Archdiocese but would prefer to celebrate the marriage at Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The Parish Priest claimed that the Parish statistics show that baptism and holy matrimony at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is higher every year as compared to other Outstations of the Parish. This may probably confirm the claim that non-Catholics are converted to Catholicism when they visit this Grotto.

#### **4.2.2 Social Contributions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

Another relevant contribution of this Grotto to the area and its people is social cohesion. Until his demise, Wofa George was the leader and ruler of both the Catholic Church at Jerusalem No.2 and the entire community. Everyone in that community was either a relative of his or they have settled there because of him. Because of the Grotto, there was some kind of social cohesion in the community. People in the community lived in peace and harmony. This social cohesion is still evident in the community. One may wonder if the land litigation did not have any effect on this social cohesion. The land litigation could not or did not have any effect regarding the relationship of the citizens in the community because the man who was at the center of this litigation did not stay in the community. He stays at Nkoranza, therefore the land litigation has no effect on the social cohesion of the community members.

Wofa George had told his people that it was the direction of the Holy Spirit for them not to waste the natural resources within the area and that they should take good care of them. This seems to have entered deep in the minds of the people in the community, even till now.

The people have over the years been good stewards of their natural environment. They have protected and promoted their local vegetation. There was and still is communal security as everyone knows each and every member of the community except the pilgrims. They seem to see themselves as one people. They seem to protect each other claiming the Holy Spirit would punish anyone who commits any crime.

There is no police station in the village but crime seems non-existent in the community as a result of the presence of the Grotto. They claimed the Holy Spirit has been their “police” and it was and is a widely held belief that anything one does in the Grotto even those private stuffs done in people’s room, once it is not a good thing, Wofa George was aware and would tell you about it in open secret after you have committed the act. Even after his death, the people in the community or the Grotto still have this kind of belief. The community has no traditional leadership. There is no chief in the community. They have only political leadership, thus Assemblyman and Unit Committee.

There were also an interdependent relationships and a social orientation that allows a brother to be a brother’s keeper within the community. Wofa George was there to resolve any matter that cropped up either between friends or couples or families. Because they saw themselves as a family it was easy to resolve issues. The kind of faith and trust that the people had in Wofa George made it a bit easier for him to resolve all the family conflicts in the village. Mr. Francis Asiedu who succeeded Wofa George is currently the man who settles most of the conflicts in the community. He is the leader of the Grotto. At the same time he is the President of the Catholic Church which is an Outstation with no resident priest.

The only basic school, Roman Catholic Basic School at Jerusalem No.2, was started by Wofa George. The school has developed and expanded to Junior High School and has been taken over by government. The school is helping develop and train the next generation of leaders in the community. This school was established as a result of the presence of the Grotto because the founder of the Grotto started it. The current leader revealed that Wofa George had the welfare of his people at heart. He tried to do everything possible to improve the living conditions of his people.

The people of the community are subsistent farmers. Majority of the people in the community have not gone through tertiary education. Most of them have completed only Senior High School or Junior High School. They therefore have to resort to farming since farmland is available. They may have had challenges getting certain basic social amenities.

However, the presence of the Grotto has led to the community having some social amenities. These include mechanized borehole for potable water. This borehole was donated to the Grotto by *MINOS UNIDAS*, an NGO in Spain and the community is now benefiting from it.



**Figure 14: The picture below shows the water project.**

Others include electricity connection in the area and a feeder road that was constructed by the Nkoranza South Municipal Assembly. Though these basic social amenities would have been supplied, the presence of the Grotto facilitated them. The Nkoranza South Municipal Planning Officer<sup>182</sup> indicated that because of the number of pilgrims that go to the Grotto, the Assembly had to provide these social amenities. These social amenities enhance the quality of life of the community members. This allows them to have peace of mind to worship God and to go about their economic activities.

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<sup>182</sup> Alfred Lumor - Municipal Planning Officer (MPO) of the Nkoranza South Municipal Assembly, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 at Nkoranza

The Parish Priest opined:

One critical social contribution that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto has made is its impact on the Christianity of the community's traditional religion. Many people have embraced Christianity. Christianity has brought education into the community.<sup>183</sup>

According to another local executive of the church, all the developmental projects are to some extent as a result of the Grotto. He recounted:

The first time I came to this Grotto, there was nothing in this community, and I mean absolutely nothing. That time we were at the old site. Then Wofa George said no and he started the school you see there. Even though he was interested in building the Catholic Church and the Grotto, he was also interested in other areas of the lives of the children generally. He said he did not go to school but any child that wanted to go to school must be supported. Because of the Grotto they brought all these nice facilities you can see here. Now you see all these houses, these are built by people from Kumasi, Sunyani, Accra, Tamale and Wa. Just because they know what their coming here do for them.<sup>184</sup>

The social interaction at the Grotto is also encouraging. When you visit the Grotto, once the people who have houses still have rooms left, you could stay with them free of charge as long as you wanted. That love for a brother/sister is very evident among the pilgrims at the Grotto. The regular pilgrims have established a kind of bond between themselves and they support themselves during weddings and funerals.

#### **4.2.3 Economic Contributions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

The location and establishment of the Grotto in the area has led to the growth of the economic life of the people in the community. It has also helped to improve the infrastructural development of the area. To get easy access to the area, a feeder road

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<sup>183</sup> Rev. Fr. Samuel Kofi Adjei, current Parish Priest of the Nkoranza Parish interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Nkoranza.

<sup>184</sup> Augustine Agyapong - Member of the Leadership team of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2.

of about 12 kilometres<sup>185</sup> was constructed. Farmers are able to transport their farm produce to Nkoranza market with the help of this access road. This enhances their economic life since their farm produce gets to the market on time for sale.

Again, the Grotto is surrounded with other communities who are farmers. The Grotto provides ready market for these farmers to sell their farm produce every month. This is due to the number of people that come to the Grotto every month. There are about three hundred people on average worshipping there every month. Apart from the monthly programme, other individuals and groups visit the Grotto for their retreats and recollections as well. These groups also buy from the farmers. During Easter season, Christmas and New Year, the number of pilgrims increase to about five hundred.<sup>186</sup>

The senior Catechist observed:

My happiness is with the farmers of this area. We have between 200 to over 300 people visiting this place on almost monthly basis. Farmers whose produce in the past could have gone rotten have now a ready market where they could sell their farm produce. If you look around, you can see a market out there. These are places where people sell their goods. This place is like a small market on its own where everything you need and want is available.<sup>187</sup>

Apart from these farmers, there are other people whose economic life is boosted every month. There are a lot of drivers who bring these pilgrims. Their economic life is also enhanced. There are other traders who come to the Grotto to do business every month.

All the people visiting the Grotto would in one way or the other eat, take taxi and

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<sup>185</sup> Alfred Lumor - Municipal Planning Officer (MPO) of the Nkoranza South Municipal Assembly, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 at Nkoranza

<sup>186</sup> Mary Baagyei (Daughter of the founder, Wife of Current President and a member of current Leadership), interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 at Jerusalem No.2

<sup>187</sup> Anthony Adjei - Senior Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

even buy other consumables. It is somewhat normal for some of these pilgrims to buy most or all of their consumables from Nkoranza market.

This in turn creates more jobs for taxi drivers, traders, head porters, farmers and store owners among others in the Nkoranza South Municipality. This has also improved the economic lives of the people in the area. There is an increase in sales at the Nkoranza market every month when the pilgrims come to the Grotto for their programmes. This was confirmed by a number of women who were interviewed at the Nkoranza market. Though these women could not give any figures to back their assertion, they claimed that during the monthly programme at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto their sales go up. If their sale on normal market day is say Five Hundred Ghana Cedis (GhC 500.00), they are able to make a double-sale like One Thousand Ghana Cedis (GhC 1,000.00).

One respondent posited that:

This Grotto has been very helpful most especially in the area of our spiritual lives. It has also been helpful in the area of provision of employment for taxi drivers, ready market for the farmers especially the yam farmers in the area. When we come to pray, we also buy a lot of things from the Nkoranza Township and if not for the location of this Grotto here, the Nkoranza market and Nkoranza township could have been less busy than it currently is. This is because, every month, we have people traveling from all over the country especially from Kumasi, Wa, Tamale, Accra, Sunyani and even far away Cote D'Ivoire. The road you see has not been there. This used to be a forest but now we have roads, schools and people frequenting here every now and then.<sup>188</sup>

Another respondent also claimed that:

The Grotto has also been very beneficial to the community in the sense that strangers come to interact with the people in the community which more or less opens up the community. Economic activities are growing in the

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<sup>188</sup> Augustine Agyapong - Member of the Leadership team of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

community. The peasant farmers get ready market for their farm produce. Due to the market, farming activities are booming not only in the community but also in Nkoranza and its environs as a whole.<sup>189</sup>

The Grotto also offers strong financial support to the St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church and the Techiman Diocese as a whole. Though they do not account for all the monies they receive, they still support the Parish enormously. The contributions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto to the development of the spiritual, physical, economic as well as social life of the community cannot be overemphasized. The Grotto contributes to the growth of the Nkoranza South Municipality, the Catholic Diocese of Techiman and the Catholic Church in Ghana as a whole.

#### **4.3 Challenges of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto**

Though the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto contributes massively to the development of the Nkoranza South Municipality and the Catholic Church in general, there are also a number of challenges facing the Grotto. Some of these challenges are from the programmes and activities of the Grotto. Consequently, the challenges facing the Grotto have been categorized under leadership and management, financial issues, ownership, sustainability and accommodation. Some of these challenges that need attention include inadequate remuneration of leaders, type of religious teachings that are offered and how the Diocese can take total control of the Grotto to enhance effective management of the place.

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<sup>189</sup> Rev. Fr. Samuel Kofi Adjei, current Parish Priest of the Nkoranza Parish interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Nkoranza.

#### **4.3.1 Leadership and Management**

Mr. Asiedu and his wife and the other executives are responsible for the day-to-day management of the Grotto. They therefore need all the support they can get from the Nkoranza Parish and the Techiman Diocese to properly manage the place to ensure that results, returns and outputs are maximised. However, they are sometimes limited in terms of their technical expertise, resources, support systems, structured management systems and inadequate logistics to do the job well. For proper management of a place as important as this Grotto, that on an average, host not less than three hundred pilgrims every month, one would expect that leaders in charge of managing the place should have some basic managerial skills, training and education. Surprisingly, most of the leaders especially the president and his wife have very little formal education. They are thus, left to use their own experiences to manage the place.

Also, most of the leaders at the Grotto are not well motivated. The leaders of the Grotto are not paid. The current head keeps all the monies that are not accounted to the Parish Priest. The two catechists and the executives are not on salary. He only gives them allowances for all their services yet they are supposed to be there every month and every other time that their services are needed. The catechists and the other leaders are supposed to be doing other works at their respective places. But the demands of the work at the Grotto in recent times have made it very difficult for them to combine it with any meaningful employment. Besides, any of the two catechists can be called at any time to service. Despite the efforts and the sacrifices of the catechists to help ensure and enhance the smooth management of the Grotto, they are not given any better remuneration.

According to the assistant catechist, Philip Alipo, it is the hope of the leaders of the Grotto and indeed the management that the Bishop appoints for them a resident priest who would be in a position to streamline everything so that they in turn could be properly catered for. He noted:

You see, when Wofa George was around, that time, the thanksgiving that were being received were meagre. Even in those days, the population that visited this area was very small and he used to encourage us that we are doing a sacrificial job and a day would come when we would be properly catered for. Now the numbers have increased tremendously and collections have accordingly increased yet, since 2001, we are being told to hold on. Around 2001, the average number of pilgrims was claimed to be hundred but now averagely, every month about three hundred pilgrims come here. We are praying for the day the Bishop would take over and assign a resident priest to this place so that things would improve for us. But it is obvious that the Bishop only wants to send a resident priest here after the land litigations issues are resolved.<sup>190</sup>

Clearly, one can see that there is a genuine desire for things to improve. But the current leadership can also not just do anything on their own volition without any proper authorizations from the Parish Priest or the Bishop. There seem to be leadership crisis between the Parish Priest and the President though silent. Nobody, talks about this but through the interview with the Parish Priest he indicated that the President seems not to give proper accounts to the finances of the Grotto. The President controls half of the Grotto but the Parish Priest is supposed to be the overall administrator of the Grotto. This seemingly confusing issue should be resolved to ensure free flow of decision making and consistency.

Rev. Fr. Andrews Addae is claimed to be an adopted son of Wofa George and sees Jerusalem No.2 as his hometown. Because of the many benefits he claims to have received from the Grotto, he decided to offer himself to the founder as his son. He has

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<sup>190</sup> Philip Alipo - Assistant Catechist of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto at Jerusalem No.2, interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Jerusalem No.2

also worked at the Grotto, as Parish Priest of Nkoranza, and is known to almost everyone at the Grotto as “a son of the Grotto”. The Grotto is an outstation and it is under the direct jurisdiction of the Parish Priest of St. Martin de Porres, Nkoranza. The leaders seem to be more “close” to Fr. Andrews Addae, than their Parish Priest. Sometimes when there is an issue, they consult Fr. Andrews first before coming to the Parish Priest. The Grotto seems to be semi-autonomous. The President and leader of the Grotto only reports and submits some monies to the Parish Priest without others against the governing guidelines of the Catholic Church.

#### **4.3.2 Financial Issues**

There is also a complex relationship between the Grotto and the church. The name of the church at the Jerusalem No.2 is Holy Trinity Catholic Church while the Grotto is called the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. Since the activities of the Grotto are difficult to separate from that of the church, collections and thanksgivings are equally complex to separate. Accounts are given to the Parish Priest on only mass intention, annual harvest and first collections. However, thanksgiving monies, tithe, *Ntuhye* monies and other monies paid to the leaders are not accounted for. While the Parish Priest wished that these monies are accounted for, it is also important to indicate that these are the only source of livelihood of these persons and so the Parish Priest is cautious in handling the issue. The Parish Priest suggested that, he sees nothing wrong with them using the monies to maintain the church and other petty things but he wished these monies are properly recorded so that everyone is fully aware of what is going on.

### 4.3.3 Doctrinal Issues

The leaders at the Grotto are against loud prayers. They argue “if it is normal and respectable for people to ask for a gift from their father with a loud voice and that if everyone is talking at the same time, which one would God listen to.”<sup>191</sup> As a result they condemn and reject loud prayers which the universal church seems to accept. The Catholic Church is a universal church and promotes all kinds of devotional groups in the Catholic Church. Interestingly, the leaders at the Grotto, as part of their teachings, condemn the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. They also condemn and reject Catholic Charismatic Renewal, a devotional society in the Catholic Church. This rejection of Catholic Charismatic Renewal contradicts the church’s acceptance of loud prayers. They believe in solemn prayers.

The Parish Priest was very concerned about the type of teachings that are given to the pilgrims, some of whom are non-Catholics.

The Parish Priest noted:

I have problem with the way and manner in which some of the teachings of the leaders of the Grotto are organised. They (leaders of the Grotto) teach against some of the doctrines of the church. For example, the leaders teach against receiving Holy Communion with the hand, they also ask pilgrims whether they have committed the sin of abortion which is strictly against the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. I hope I could talk to them to reduce some of these excesses and abuse at the Grotto. I have spoken to them but there are still more to be done.<sup>192</sup>

They also make sure that no one uses their hand and more especially, left hand to receive the Holy Communion. This is not a general rule in the Catholic Church. But the teachings at the Grotto indicate that no one should take Holy Communion with

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<sup>191</sup>Mary Baagyei (Daughter of founder, Wife of Current President and One of the current Leadership), interviewed on 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 at in Jerusalem No.2

<sup>192</sup>Rev. Fr. Samuel Kofi Adjei, current Parish Priest of the Nkoranza Parish interviewed on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in Nkoranza

their hands let alone use their left hands. They even insist that this is sinful. This teaching contradicts the general teachings of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church teaches that Holy Communion can be received with the tongue or with the palm with reverence. Thus, it is a matter of choice by the individual which to opt for. However, at Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto, they claim it is sinful to receive Holy Communion with the palm.

In addition, one abuse and controversial thing at the Grotto is that the leaders ask the pilgrims to confess their sin of abortion to them. The Catholic Church teaches that the sacrament of penance or confession can only be administered by an ordained priest of the Catholic Church.<sup>193</sup> But before the *Ntuhye* prayers are said, a question of whether one has committed an abortion before is always asked. They ask everybody whether you are a man or woman or even a Catholic Priest. It is unclear why this question is asked except to say that the founder of the place Wofa George has asked them to do so. They claimed the founder said it was revealed to him that abortion is a serious sin therefore anybody who commits sin of abortion needs the forgiveness of God. Though absolution is not given by them, one still wonders if we can call that part of the *Ntuhye ritual* as “confession”. Whatever the case is, there is a declaration of sin to a person who is not a priest.

#### **4.3.4 Ownership**

The Techiman Diocese was carved out of the Sunyani and Konongo-Mampong Dioceses which were both under the Archdiocese of Kumasi in the past. But currently, Nkoranza Parish and the Jerusalem No.2 church are under the jurisdiction

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<sup>193</sup> Canon 569

of the Techiman Diocese under the control of His Lordship Most Rev. Dominic Yeboah Nyarko. Some of the difficulties facing the Grotto have been brought to the doorsteps of the Bishop. According to the Bishop of the Techiman Diocese, it is necessary to send a resident priest there but he is not in a haste to do so. He wanted to see to the end of the court case before taking the final decision to appoint a resident priest to the Grotto. However, with the court ruling in favour of the church, one would expect that in no time, a priest will be posted there to help manage and organize the programmes and activities of the Grotto.

#### **4.3.5 Sustainability**

Should the Bishop decides to take absolute control of the Grotto now, how would the President and his family as well as the catechists survive? According to the Bishop, these people have devoted their whole lives at this Grotto and so proper arrangement should be made before taking over so that they will have meaningful life after the total takeover.

The Bishop indicated;

I am careful and cautious to ask them to hand over the place fully to the Diocese. This has been their only source of livelihood for all these years. I don't know how practical it would be to take over the place from them completely. As far as the offering of the *Ntuhye* is concerned, they are the very ones responsible. They lead the prayers and as such, it is complicated. It is a very complex issue because if the Diocese takes over completely, how are we going to manage these persons who have had this as their only form of employment for all their lives? That is why I am very cautious in dealing with the issues at this Grotto.<sup>194</sup>

It is clear that the Bishop is concerned about the issues at the Grotto as well as the people who have dedicated their lives to the growth of this Grotto. It could be realized

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<sup>194</sup> Most Rev. Dominic Yeboah Nyarko, Catholic Bishop of Techiman, interviewed on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 at Techiman

that the lay leadership dominance can be attributed to the concern the Bishop has for them. He is concerned about how they will survive after taken total control of the Grotto, since their livelihood depends on it.

The land litigation is another thorny issue bothering the Diocese and the Bishop. The land litigation was one of the biggest challenges facing the full functioning of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. When Wofa George was banished, he was given a vast forest to do his church. In his life time, he attempted to register the area that he was initially occupying. This was about one thousand acres of land. It is alleged that he asked his nephew to do the land registration for him. His nephew subsequently used his own name to register the land documents.

When that was brought to the attention of Wofa George, he was very furious. Subsequently, Wofa George sent the matter to court because the nephew thought that once his name has been dully registered with lands commission, the notion that the first persons to formalize his land title would hold. When it became clear that the case was not going in his favor (his nephew), he organized his elders to come and plead with Wofa George that what he did was wrong and that he should take the matter out of court for out of court settlement. The case was subsequently withdrawn from the court. This was because the families were clear that what the nephew did was wrong and if the matter was allowed at open court, the punishment would be severe and terrible.

However, Wofa George was unable to correct the mistake and change the registration of the land into his name or the name of the church before his demise. The matter

became more complex after the demise of the founder and leader of the Grotto Wofa George. After his death, his nephew first approached the leaders of the Grotto to have a share of proceeds that came into the Grotto since he is also a family member of the founder. The leaders told him that could not be possible because they had no such instructions from his uncle. He then wrote to the Catholic Church at Nkoranza, copied the Parish Priest and the Bishop that the family of the founder would like to have a share of the proceeds from the Grotto. He then requested for a meeting where the details could be finalized. The church absolutely denied his request and asked that things would be the way the founder has left it.

However, the daughter of the founder and the husband and other leaders of the Grotto are on the side of the church. Initially, some members of the family of the founder were in support of what the nephew of the founder was doing because they thought it was an opportunity for them to have a fair share of what their son, uncle, father and family member toiled for. This has affected the development of the Grotto. It brought about some cracks and divisions into the church. Some of them even stopped attending the church. At the time, almost all of them (family of Wofa George) were living at the Grotto or at Nkoranza. But as of today, all the children of the founder no longer support their uncle against the church. They all support the position that everything remains the way it is. That is to say that the land and properties thereon should remain the property of the Roman Catholic Church. It is therefore not surprising that the ruling went in favour of the Catholic Church. This long standing litigation has been one of the reasons for lay leadership dominance. The Bishop wanted to see to the end of the litigation before appointing a priest to the Grotto.

Mr. Asiedu and his wife are the only two people who lead the *Ntuhye* prayer/ritual. Apart from them nobody is permitted to lead. The catechists can only write people's intentions in their absence. In case they get old, who will take over their role? This is a question that they could not answer. They have not put in place any plan as to who would take over from them in case they are not there. The sustainability is therefore an issue.

#### **4.3.6 Accommodation**

There is insufficient accommodation for the pilgrims who visit this Grotto. There are few individuals who have built their private houses at the Grotto. They generously offer accommodation to those in need but these are not sufficient for all the pilgrims. This makes most of the pilgrims to sleep in the church. Another challenge is the fact that there is no proper lay out of the land. Pilgrims who have money to put up their own houses have just built without building permit from the Municipal Assembly. These houses are built without proper agreement between the church and the individuals as well.

This trend may lead to litigation between the church and the families of these individuals in future if proper care is not taken and measures put in place to curtail any future litigation issues. For pilgrims who have the means and are building houses seem to have no problem or do not intend to pursue any litigation resulting in any tension between them and the church. But the question now is who owns these houses? Is it the church or the individuals? It is likely that in the future, any family member of these people can create confusion by claiming ownership of these houses and that may lead to litigation between them and the church.

#### **4.4 Other Challenges**

Other challenges that seem not to be a direct challenge of the Grotto but that affect the Grotto includes the lack of a clinic, an increasing rate of school dropout, child labour and teenage pregnancy. The absence of a clinic in the community makes it difficult to handle emergency situations (sickness) at both the Grotto and the community. The people have to travel 12 kilometres to Nkoranza to seek medical attention. Even in situations where a pilgrim falls sick in the night, he or she is taken to Nkoranza for medical attention.

Again, school dropout and child labour are evident in the village. School children are seen selling at the Grotto especially during the monthly programmes. There are also children who are sent by their parents to sell instead of going to school. Some of these children are from the community as well as some from the church. These have contributed to rising teenage pregnancy rate in the community. A number of the girls in the community give birth during their adolescent age.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has focused on the contributions and challenges of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The discussion on the contribution and challenges at the Grotto was, generally, placed in the context of how the problems of pilgrims and worshippers were solved and/or addressed. The discussion also focused on the improvement in social cohesion and provision of social amenities, the availability of ready market for farm produce which help to create employment and boosting the local economy for the people of Nkoranza and its environs. Though the leaders claimed that the existence of the Grotto was solely for proclamation of the gospel for

people to attain eternal salvation, it has other accompanying benefits which otherwise were not initially contemplated. Notwithstanding these contributions, the challenges of the Grotto were also discussed. These challenges included management, finance, land, insufficient accommodation and lack of clinic.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

The main objective of this research was to investigate the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto specifically to examine the contributions of the Grotto as well as examine the challenges it poses. Again, the history of the Grotto and its people were also looked at. The research was conducted at Jerusalem No.2 in the Nkoranza South Municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region. The undergirding theory for this research work was Gottlieb S. Roger's theory on Sacred Earth. According to Roger, religions help situate human beings in both the natural and social worlds. The latter function is served by their moral teachings, while the former by a combination of creation myths, narrative accounts of the origin -of a particular phenomenon, and norms governing one's relation with one's natural surroundings.<sup>195</sup>

The founder of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto had a great regard for the natural environment. He believed that God communicates with human beings through nature. His view on natural environment is in line with Roger's theory on the sacred earth which was the underlying theory for this work. Through his natural environment, he gave his own explanation on how God communicates to his people in their own environment. In his day-to-day encounter with his natural environment, he claimed God manifested his powers to him through trees, rocks and the soil. In all his dealings Wofa George interpreted nature as something that reveals the power of God in ordinary natural objects such as plants and rocks. Therefore, Roger's theory that

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<sup>195</sup> Gottlieb, *This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment*, 152.

human beings have the tendency to interpret nature in relation to their religious beliefs and practices is appropriate for this research. Research tools such as interviews, discussions and questionnaires were administered. Fifty (50) people in all were actively engaged as respondents. The researcher also employed the participant observation tool because he participated in the activities at the Grotto during the period of the research.

The work discussed Grottos in general. Two main important devotions, namely Marian and Sacred Heart of Jesus devotions were discussed. Contributions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto were also discussed in the area of spiritual, social and economic contributions. The challenges that were discussed include leadership and management as well as financial challenges. Doctrinal, ownership, sustainability and accommodation challenges were also discussed.

From the discussions in the previous chapters, it is evident that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto is complex and has its own uniqueness. The *Ntuhye* ritual, the red uniform of the leaders, leadership and administrative structure put in place by the founder and the way they manage their finances are some of the features that make them unique and distinct from other Catholic Grottos.

The composition of the leadership group and how they were selected by the founder is also unique. The way the leaders manage their finances is also unique. They give accounts to only part of the money and the rest is kept by them without any accounts to the Parish Priest. Their understanding of some teachings of the Catholic Church and how they explain them to suit their purpose is distinct. For instance, their teaching

that Holy Communion should not be received by the palm but by the tongue is exclusive to them. All these give the Grotto complex narratives of identity.

## **5.2 Major Findings**

A careful study of the activities and programmes at the Grotto reveal the following findings;

Firstly, the leaders have no written document on the founder and the origin of the Grotto. Though the Grotto has been in existence for more than fifty years, the biography of the founder as well as how the Grotto started and has developed up to this level are in oral form. The non-literate background of the founder and the pioneering members may have accounted for this non-documentation.

Debrunner asserts that ordinary people expect four things from religion: social fellowship, emotional experience, healing and security against real or imagined evil forces.<sup>196</sup> These were evident in the findings of this research.

It was also discovered during the study that certain teachings that are not in accordance with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church are given to pilgrims though the Grotto is seen as a Roman Catholic Grotto. For example, the teaching that receiving Holy Communion with the palm is sinful. The Catholic Church does not forbid the reception of the Holy Communion with the palm. What is good however is the emphasis they put on the reception of the Holy Communion. The leaders of the Grotto encourage every Roman Catholic who goes there to make the effort to receive the Holy Communion. Those who do not belong to the Roman Catholic Church, the

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<sup>196</sup> Debrunner, Hans, *Witchcraft in Ghana*, (Accra: Presbyterian Book Depot, 1959), 2.

Non-Catholics are also taught the significance of the Holy Communion. This has led to the conversion of some non-Catholic pilgrims to Roman Catholicism. The Parish Priest confirmed this and indicated that Baptism and Holy Matrimony are on the increase at Jerusalem No.2.

One of the Sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church is the Sacrament of Reconciliation and only the ordained clergy can administer. Thus, in the Catholic Church, no lay person is allowed to listen to the confession of another. According to the Roman Catholic teachings and traditions, only the ordained priests have the faculty (are authorized) to listen to the confessions of the members of the Roman Catholic Church. The Priests who have the faculty (the authority) to listen to confessions cannot ask the sins of members unless members approach them to confess themselves. But strangely enough, the leaders of the Grotto ask all pilgrims who go there whether they have committed abortion before. As long as the person affirms or denies imply that that person has confessed to the leaders during the *Ntuhye* ritual.

It was also revealed that Priests and Bishops who go there are asked to confess the sin of abortion like any other pilgrims. However, such Priests and Bishops never confront the leaders of going against a major Catholic doctrine namely, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The research revealed that the leaders who are lay and as Catholics are not allowed to administer the Sacrament of Reconciliation proudly do it, going against a major Catholic doctrine. They do not consider this as going against their own church's doctrine which may in some cases lead to excommunication that is, throwing them out of the Roman Catholic Church. For the leaders at the Grotto, as long as they see it as an essential part of the *Ntuhye* ritual, they continue to go against the Catholic

doctrine of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. However, one wonders why the Catholic Church, especially the Techiman Diocese has allowed the leaders of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto to continue to flout a major Catholic sacrament.

Another major tradition of the Roman Catholic Church that the leaders at the Grotto vehemently preach against is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has its way of praying, especially praying loudly. Even though their prayers seem to be very loud, the Catholic Church accepts the loud praying of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal society. However, the leaders of the Grotto “hate” Charismatic way of praying aloud. They teach and convince the pilgrims who go there to shun away from the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Society. Interestingly, some of the respondents who go to the Grotto to pray are members Catholic Charismatic Renewal. And when they go there they comply with the rules of the Grotto by not praying loudly.

Though the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto belongs to the Catholic Church, it welcomes people from different religious traditions – it is ecumenical in nature. But the leaders of the Grotto try as much as possible to maintain its Catholic nature. They are able to convert some of the members who do not belong to the Catholic Church to become Catholics.

Other findings of this research were that, there is no proper accountability by the leaders to their Parish Priest. Apart from collections within Mass, Mass stipends and annual harvest, all other moneys like thanksgiving, tithe, *Ntuhye* money, June harvest

and other monies received are not accounted for. These monies are however used in the development of the Grotto but no proper records are kept.

It was also revealed that though the Grotto financially supports the Parish, the leaders at the Grotto keep greater portion of the funds raised at the Grotto. The collection for the monthly programme is high as compared to collections of other outstations of the Parish. It has also been discovered that the Jerusalem No.2 Grotto is the next biggest financier of the Parish apart from the Parish center, Nkoranza. Even though they support the Parish financially, the greater part of the monies raised is not accounted to the Parish Priest. It was revealed that the Parish Priest has no idea how the *Ntuhye* money is used.

Further, it was also found out that the Grotto serves as a retreat centre for the Parish, the Diocese and the Catholic Church as a whole. Other members from other churches do go there for their programmes. Opportunity is given to everybody who goes there to have their programme without difficulty. There is low patronage of Catholics within Nkoranza South Municipality due to certain practices at the Grotto. The majority of the pilgrims who come there are from other Dioceses especially, the Kumasi Archdiocese.

Again, it was also found that the Grotto helps the growth of the local economy because there is buying and selling by some of the pilgrims and the local people. The study further reveals the existence of the Grotto has helped in the development of the place as far as social amenities are concerned: they have primary school, electricity, mechanized borehole and relatively good feeder road. The study also revealed that the

Grotto also serves as tourist center though tourists who go there do not pay any amount.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Looking at the entire study, it can be concluded that, the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto in the Nkoranza South Municipality serves as a place of prayer where pilgrims go and have experience with the Divine. The Grotto, though has some challenges, also contributes greatly to the spiritual, social, emotional and economic life of pilgrims as well as the people of the community.

It can also be concluded that the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto has over fifty years been a place of restoration for many pilgrims. Many people who have visited the Grotto claim to have had spiritual and financial breakthrough. It continues to serve as a place where pilgrims find fulfilment.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

This research is relevant in that it has contributed to the study of sacred spaces in religion especially in the Catholic Church. Therefore, from the findings made, the researcher recommends that further research is made on Catholic Grottos in Ghana to reveal some of the complexities at these sacred sites.

Again, the importance of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto and the prayer centre to the local community and Nkoranza South Municipality cannot be overemphasized. There is therefore the need for further research to investigate the implications of this Grotto

on the quality of lives of the local people as well as its impact on the socio-economic development in the Nkoranza South Municipality.

Finally, the researcher recommends that the Catholic Church in Ghana as the owners of the Grottos should take up the responsibility to streamline the activities and programmes of these Grottos in Ghana.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix One

#### PRAYERS FOR THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

##### *Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

O most Holy Heart of Jesus, fountain of every blessing  
I adore you, I love you and with a lively sorrow for my sins,  
I offer you this poor heart of mine.  
Make me humble, patient, and pure and wholly obedient to Your will.  
Grant, good Jesus that I may live in You and for You.  
Protect me in the midst of danger; Comfort me in my afflictions;  
Give me health of body; assistance in my temporal needs,  
Your blessings on all that I do and the grace of a Holy Death.  
Amen.

##### *Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Most Sweet Jesus, Redeemer of the human race, look down upon us humbly prostrate before You. We are Yours and Yours we wish to be; but to be surely United with You. Behold each one of us freely consecrates himself today to Your Most Sacred Heart.

Many indeed have never known You; many, too, despising Your precepts have rejected You. Have Mercy on them all, Most Merciful Jesus and draw them to Your Sacred Heart. Be King of those who are deceived by erroneous opinions, or whom discord keeps aloof and call them back to the harbour of Truth and Unity of Faith, so that soon there may be but one flock and one Shepherd.

Grant, O Lord, to your Church, assurance of freedom and immunity from harm; give peace and order to all nations, our families and our confraternity and make the truth resound from pole to pole with one cry: Praise to the Divine Heart that wrought our salvation: to it be Glory and Honor Forever.  
Amen.

##### **Memorare to the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

Remember, O Most Sweet Jesus, that no one who has recourse to Your Sacred Heart, implored its help, or sought its mercy was ever abandoned. Encouraged with confidence, O most tender Heart of Jesus, we present ourselves before You, crushed beneath the weight of our sins. In our misery, O sacred Heart of Jesus, despise not our simple prayer, but grant our requests.

Take away, O my Jesus, the blindness of my heart, that I may know You; take away the hardness of my heart that I may fear You; take away the coldness of my heart, that I may love You; take away its heavy, earthly sluggishness and selfishness, that I may be capable of heroic sacrifice for Your Glory and for the souls whom You have redeemed with Your Own Most Precious Blood.  
Amen.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> <http://www.catholictraditions.org/two-Hearts/Sacred-Hearts12htm>. (Accessed on February 10, 2018)

**Appendix Two: Interview Guide**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

**TOPIC: A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO IN THE  
NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE BISHOP OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
TECHIMAN ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO AT  
JERSALEM NO.2 IN NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY OF THE  
BRONG AHAFO REGION**

This interview guide is designed to solicit views and to investigate the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The researcher is a Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Study of Religions student of the University of Ghana. He would be very glad if you could help by supplying information for this study. This is purely for academic purpose and your responses would be treated with the utmost academic ethical confidentiality.

Thank you for your participation and co-operation.

Researcher: Eric Opoku Aning (**Rev. Fr.**) (Phone: 0243089881) Email:  
littleparvus@yahoo.com

1. Please what is your full name?
2. Kindly tell me the history of Jerusalem No.2 as a community.
3. Please tell me the nature of Religion in the community before Christianity was introduced here.
4. Please when did Christianity come to this community?
5. Kindly tell me the impact of Christianity on the community's traditional religiosity.
6. Please kindly tell me about the history of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto.
7. In what ways is the Grotto beneficial to the development of the community?
8. In what ways is the Grotto relevant to the development of the Diocese?

9. How did you hear about Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto?
10. Please why do you come to Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto? Is it for pastoral reasons or for personal prayers?
11. Are you also aware of the rituals pilgrims go through especially the “*ntuhye*”?
12. Have you on any of your visitations to the Grotto gone through the “*ntuhye*” before?
13. Please have you personally experienced any miracle or divine revelation on this sacred place before? If yes, please tell me. ....
14. Please is the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto relevant to Jerusalem No.2 community? If yes, in what specific ways is it relevant?.....
15. If no why.....
16. Are there any plans for the Catholic Diocese to take control of the management of the place?
17. Do you intend sending a resident priest there for the shepherding of the faithful at the Grotto?
18. Are you also aware of any form of abuses at the prayer centre?
19. Are you also aware of the current legal tussle over the ownership of the place?
20. What are the challenges you face with regard to founders/managers/Parish Priest of the Grotto?.....
21. What are the challenges you face with regards to management of the place?.....  
.....  
.....
22. In spite of these challenges, do you still think this Grotto is relevant? Yes ( )  
No ( ).
23. What are your suggestions for solutions to these challenges?  
.....  
.....  
.....

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS  
TOPIC: A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO IN THE  
NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PARISH PRIEST OF SAINT MARTIN DE  
PORRES, NKORANZA ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO AT  
JERUSALEM NO.2 IN NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

This interview guide is designed to solicit views and to investigate the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The researcher is a Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Study of Religions student of the University of Ghana. He would be very glad if you could help by supplying information for this study. This is purely for academic purpose and your responses would be treated with the utmost academic ethical confidentiality.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation.

Researcher: Eric Opoku Aning (**Rev. Fr.**) (Tel: 0243089881) Email:  
littleparvus@yahoo.com

24. Please what is your full name?
25. Kindly tell me the history of Jerusalem No.2 as a community?
26. Kindly tell me the history of Nkoranza Parish?
27. Please tell me the nature of Religion in the community before Christianity was introduced here.
28. Please when did Christianity come to this community?
29. Kindly tell me the impact of Christianity on the community's traditional religiosity.
30. Please kindly tell me about the history of Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto.
31. In what ways is the Grotto beneficial to the development of the community?
32. In what ways is the Grotto relevant to the development of the Parish?
33. Please how long have you been a Parish Priest here?

34. How often do you visit the faithful at the Grotto?
35. Do they account to your office like the other outstations?
36. Do they account on all the collections?
37. Are you also aware of the rituals pilgrims go through especially the “*ntuhye*”?
38. Have you on any of your visitations to the Grotto gone through the “*ntuhye*” before?
39. Please have you personally experienced any miracle or divine revelation on this sacred place before? If yes, please tell me. ....
40. Have you made any recommendations to the Bishop to send a resident priest there?
41. Please is the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto relevant to Jerusalem No.2 community?.....
42. Are you also aware of any form of abuses at the prayer centre?
43. Are you also aware of the current legal tussle over the ownership of the land?
44. What are the challenges you face with regard to founders/managers/Parishners of the Grotto?.....
45. What are the challenges you face with regards to management of the place?.....  
.....  
.....
46. In spite of these challenges, do you still think this Grotto is relevant? Yes ( )  
No ( ).
47. What are your suggestions for solutions to these challenges?  
.....  
.....

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS

**TOPIC: A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO IN THE  
NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE LEADER/HIS WIFE/CATECHISTS OF THE  
SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO AT JERUSALEM NO.2 IN NKORANZA  
SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

This interview guide is designed to solicit views and to investigate the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The researcher is a Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Study of Religions student of the University of Ghana. He would be very glad if you could help by supplying information for this study. This is purely for academic purpose and your responses would be treated with the utmost academic ethical confidentiality.

Thank you for your participation and cooperation.

Researcher: Eric Opoku Aning (**Rev. Fr.**) (Tel: 0243089881) Email:  
littleparvus@yahoo.com

**History of the Grotto**

48. Please what is your full name?
49. How was Jerusalem no.2 Grotto start?
50. Why did Wofa George travel to Obuase?
51. What necessitated his banishment?
52. Did anybody follow him to the forest?
53. How did people get to know him?
54. For how long has the Grotto been in operation?
55. When did the priests begin to come here for Mass?
56. What is the main purpose of the Grotto?
57. Is the Grotto separate from the church?

58. What are the major sources of funding for the Grotto?

### **Management**

59. Who is now the leader of this Grotto?

60. Do you have a board that oversees the activities and programs of the Grotto?

61. If yes, what is the composition of the board?

62. Do you have any formal guidelines or a constitutional framework guiding the operations of the Grotto?

63. Do you have committees in charge of your programmes?

64. Do pilgrims who come here pay any amount?

65. How do you manage your funds?

66. Do you account to your Parish Priest?

67. Why do the leaders dress this way?

68. Does your dress have any story behind it?

69. Are there some things unique about this Grotto?

70. Can you mention and describe some of these unique things?

### **Programmes**

71. What is the first point of call when a pilgrim visits here?

72. What category of people comes here? Christians in general, Catholics, Muslims, politicians, the sick, etc.

73. What are some of the programs and activities of the Grotto?

74. What is the Parish Priest's involvement in these programs?

75. Have you studied any Theology?

76. Have you gone through any formal training by the Church?

**Prayer procedure**

77. What is the method of your prayers?

78. Who lead the prayers? Can anybody lead the prayers? If no, why?

79. Do you have a format for the prayers?

80. Does anybody who comes here go through the same format?

81. Do you ask pilgrims questions before you pray for them?

82. What questions do you ask them?

**Appendix Three: Questionnaires**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

**TOPIC: A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO IN THE  
NKORANZA SOUTH MUNICIPALITY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PILGRIMS, WORKERS AND WORSHIPPERS AT THE  
SACRED HEART OF JESUS GROTTO AT JERUSALEM NO.2 IN NKORANZA**

This questionnaire is designed to solicit views and to investigate the underlying complex narratives of identity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto. The researcher is a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) study of Religions student of the University of Ghana. He would be very glad if you could help by supplying information for this study. This is purely for academic purposes and your responses would be treated with the utmost academic ethical confidentiality. Thank you for your participation and co-operation.

Researcher: Eric Opoku Aning (Rev. Fr.) (Phone: 0243089881) Email:  
littleparvus@yahoo.com

1. Rank or Position held by the respondent .....
2. Location of the Respondents  Jerusalem No.2  Nkoranza,  Techiman  others specify: .....
3. Gender? Male  Female
4. Age of respondent  18-25years  26-35 years  36-45 years  46-60 years  60+ years
5. Marital Status Married  Single  Widow/widower  Divorced  Separated
6. Level of education:  JHS  SHS/Vocational  Tertiary  Masters  other...
7. Origin? Native  Migrant.
8. If migrant, reasons for migrating: job transfer  Personal  Religion  other (specify).....
9. How long have you been living or working in this Grotto/town?  less than 2 years  3-5 years  5-10 years  more than 10 years
10. Are you a Christian or Not  Christian,  Moslem,  traditional  others specify.....
11. If a Catholic, do you worship within the Nkoranza Parish?  yes  no
12. If you are a non-Catholic, which church do you attend  Pentecost Apostolic/Assemblies  Anglican  Methodist/AME Zion/EP  others specify.....
13. But you still patronise the Sacred Heart Grotto  yes  no

14. What do you consider to be the activities of a Catholic Grotto?  
.....

15. Do you consider the Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto as a Catholic Grotto?  Yes   
No

16. If Yes, please explain? .....  
.....

If no, please, explain

17. What do you consider to be some of the components of a Catholic Grotto?  
.....  
.....

18. What is your opinion on the practices of the founders and leaders of this Grotto?  
.....

19. Has the location of the Grotto helped in the development of the village?  Yes   
No

20. It has helped most in  spiritual  educational  economical  social-cultural   
others specify.....

21. How did you hear about Sacred Heart of Jesus Grotto?  through a friend   
through a family relative,  through radio  through the founder

22. Please have you personally experienced any miracle or divine revelation at this  
Grotto before?  Yes  No

If yes, please tell me.....

23. if no, why do you still come to the Grotto?.....

24. What are some of the personal challenges you face/faced with regard to the Grotto  
 finances  perception  traditional authority.

27. Are the contributions of the Grotto positive or negative?  positive  negative

28. What are some of the things that make you feel it is positive.....  
.....

29. What are some of the things that make you feel it is  
negative.....