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## Font

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out a lot of emotions... I loved the sense of community; I felt very close to everyone and God! ... icons—the art was beautiful and I loved having time to reflect... the music set up the mood.<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps one young woman summarizes it best:

The music set up the mood. We weren't being asked to clear our minds or sing or pray along with anybody. We could just feel God's presence and physically touch the cross to make it more impactful.<sup>71</sup>

One can clearly see the strong effect of the symbols, ritual, and beauty, as well as how it afforded both a personal experience of God and solidarity with others. What these young people have experienced is a "prayer of the heart" as described by Brother Roger:

Another aspect that often touches me when I listen to young people speaking about the prayer in Taizé is the capacity that the time of silence in the middle of the liturgy has to give them the opportunity to focus on what is within them. They know how to describe what that silence makes possible: "to take stock," "to listen to your heart," "to think about your problems," "to empty your mind," "to take a break," "to do some soul-searching," "to drop your masks" ... When they are together, they are not afraid of the silence.<sup>72</sup>

As an accessible, meditative prayer of the heart, Taizé Prayer touches young people in a way that seems elusive in other ritual forms. Without a doubt, it has been the most impactful form of prayer for young people I have seen in my ten years of ministerial experience working with the college population. While Eucharistic adoration with Praise and Worship music is also very meaningful for Millennials, it appears to attract those people who are more traditional in their ritual expression and more privy to Catholic devotions. Taizé Prayer, on the other hand, captures the hearts of all young people, whether practicing Catholics or those estranged from the Church. Additionally, the music never becomes banal—which has a tendency to happen for some with Eucharistic adoration—and the texts of Taizé Prayer are much more substantive theologically.

Personifying the postmodern world, Millennial Catholics are searching: they have a deep spiritual hunger for meaning, purpose, and truth not found in contemporary culture. Although some possess a naïveté about church authority and many are uninformed about their faith, they have a



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<sup>70</sup> Jeffrey Kaster, "Youth in Theology and Ministry Evaluations," email message to author, October 6, 2012.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> "Letter from Brother Roger."