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## Article

# Enduring Fortitude: Unveiling Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, the RVM Sisters, and Their Influence Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

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**Abstract:** This qualitative exploratory study employs purposeful and maximum variation sampling to explore Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo's spiritual journey and the devotion of RVM Sisters. Gathering thirty participants offers a diverse range of perspectives, providing insights into the local community. Thematic analysis highlights their impact during the pandemic in Iligan City. Ignacian spirituality spreads through education, retreat, other ministries and digital adaptation by the RVM Sisters. Through in-depth literature reviews, interviews, and observations, the researcher uncovers Mother Ignacia's journey, resonating with modern spirituality. RVM Sisters adapt during the pandemic, inspiring hope in words and in action. Their humility despite their accomplishments is particularly inspiring. This transformative journey holds significance, illuminating resilience in a post-COVID-19 context. The study contributes to literature and suggests amplifying RVM Sisters' influence. Overall, in a pandemic-stricken world, it emphasizes spirituality's role as a beacon of strength and compassion, inspiring revitalization. The essence of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' spiritual expedition serves as a celestial inspiration, guiding local residents toward compassion, fortitude, and collective renewal.

**Keywords:** enduring fortitude; COVID-19 pandemic and beyond; Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo; RVM Sisters

## 1. Introduction

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10.*

In the turbulent years between 2019 and 2022, as the world was swept into the clutches of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, a sense of trepidation and vulnerability enveloped humanity. It was during these trying times that a humble congregation of courageous women quietly stood their ground, their belief in a benevolent divine plan lending them strength, though meek and unassuming in the face of the overwhelming chaos around them. As the world questioned its own existence, these unyielding souls found solace in the notion that there might be a higher purpose guiding humanity's uncertain journey.

Amidst the rich tapestry of the Philippines' 500 years of Christianity, enduring legacy of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo that span for more than 300 years now, and the presence of the RVM sisters in Iligan City, this study rises to the forefront, extending a warm invitation for everyone to explore and engage with its insights (Pecore, 2022). This is an exploration of the reflective impact of selfless service and devotion, resonating with the profound historical and spiritual context. Inspired by the biblical exhortation from 1 Peter 4:10, it unveils the transcendental power of embracing one's gifts to serve others, as exemplified by the life and legacy of Mother Ignacia and the unwavering dedication of the RVM Sisters in Iligan City. Their spiritual journey has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless lay and local individuals in the city of Iligan, inspiring a ripple effect of compassion and empowerment that echoes every day. This study's significance is further magnified against the backdrop of the Philippines' journey of faith and Mother Ignacia's enduring impact, a testament to the timeless relevance of their contributions.

Looking at the captivating threads of Philippine history and the tapestry of Catholic spirituality, the radiant life and spiritual odyssey of the Venerable Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, along with the unwavering devotion of the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) Sisters, shine as warm guiding lights of faith and service that gently beckon (Woods, 2018; Baybay, 1995). In the midst of the world navigating the unprecedented challenges woven by the COVID-19 pandemic, the timeless impact of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters among the lay and local communities of Iligan City took on a renewed and meaningful hue, becoming sources of solace and strength (Correa, 2021).

As this study was conducted in Iligan City, it is correspondingly significant to discuss briefly the City's modest background. It nestled in the lush landscapes of Northern Mindanao, Iligan City with its forty-four (44) barangays and a population of 376,849 (Population City, (n.d)) is a place of both natural beauty and cultural diversity. Known as the "City of Majestic Waterfalls," it boasts numerous cascading water wonders that have captivated both locals and visitors for generations. One of its most renowned waterfalls is the Maria Cristina Falls, a powerful and awe-inspiring sight that draws tourists from far and wide (Insider Insights from a Mindanao Resident Traveler, n.d.).

Apart from its picturesque surroundings, Iligan City serves as a vibrant hub of trade, commerce, and education, significantly contributing to the progressive growth of the region. Driven by its strategic location and entrepreneurial spirit, the city has attracted various businesses, as documented in the book "Greater Than a Tourist- Iligan Northern Mindanao Philippines: 50 Travel Tips from a Local (Greater Than a Tourist Philippines)" by Whitney B. Jaudian (2017). This book highlights how Iligan City's favorable geographical position and resourceful community have fostered economic development, transforming it into a bustling center of commerce. Additionally, its educational institutions have been instrumental in nurturing the minds of the youth, empowering them to become the catalysts of positive change in their community and beyond. As the heart of commerce and knowledge, Iligan City with its tri-people (Higaonons, Maranaos and Christians) continues to shape the landscape of Northern Mindanao, embracing its unique heritage while forging a path towards a promising future (Insider Insights from a Mindanao Resident Traveler, n.d.).

The heart of Iligan City is its people, who embody the values of warmth, resilience, and hospitality. A diverse mix of indigenous tribes and settlers from various parts of the Philippines, the local community embraces a tapestry of cultures, traditions, and customs. Throughout history, the people of Iligan have embraced their heritage while adapting to changing times, creating a dynamic fusion of traditions and modernity (Ethnology Division, National Museum of the Philippines, 2020).

Indeed, Iligan City and the rest of the country has been a bastion of Catholicism for over five centuries, with the faith deeply ingrained in the hearts and souls of its people. The cathedral of St. Michael the Archangel stood in the heart of the city fronting the pioneering catholic college bearing his name, St. Michael's College. From the early introduction of Christianity in 1521 by Spanish explorers, Catholicism has played a pivotal role in shaping the country's culture, values, and religious practices (Vatican News, Gifted to Give, 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines, n.d.).

With the presence of the RVM sisters in the City, the spiritual influence of Venerable Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo has transcended time, spreading its radiance for over three centuries (The Lives of Saints Website). Her commitment to spiritual servitude and the foundation of the RVM congregation in 1684 have left an indelible mark on the religious landscape of the city and beyond. As the world faced unprecedented challenges during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (DOH, 2020), the teachings of Mother Ignacia and the dedication of the RVM Sisters assumed renewed significance in their impact on the lay and local people of Iligan City.

Overall, this research endeavors to delve into the enduring fortitude and impact of the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters on the local people of Iligan City, particularly during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. It seeks to uncover how their spiritual teachings, services, and commitment resonate with contemporary spirituality and the challenges faced specifically during and after the pandemic.

**Research Objectives:**

This qualitative exploratory study encompasses the pursuit of several essential objectives. By delving into these objectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate facets of the topic under examination:

1. Explore and identify key milestones in the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, analyzing their resonance with contemporary spirituality, to understand the evolution of her spiritual experiences.
2. Examine the evolution of the devotion and contributions of the RVM Sisters in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2022, aiming to understand how their commitment adapted to the changing circumstances.
3. Look at the impact of the spiritual teachings and service provided by Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters on the lay and local communities of Iligan City during and after the pandemic context, revealing how these practices influenced the well-being and spiritual lives of the people.
4. Conduct a critical analysis of the existing literature to identify gaps and limitations pertaining to the portrayal of the spiritual journey and impact of the RVM Sisters, particularly within the context of the pandemic and post-COVID-19 scenario, in order to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of their influence.
5. Derive recommendations from the study's findings to amplify and strengthen the positive influence of the RVM Sisters' spirituality within Iligan City, ensuring its continued significance and resonance in the lives of the local community.

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Collectively, these five objectives map out the intricate path of this research endeavor, facilitating a holistic exploration of the transcendental spiritual journey, the devotion of the RVM Sisters, the impact on the community, the gaps in current literature, and the recommendations for an amplified spiritual influence.

#### **Research Questions:**

This study endeavors to unravel several pivotal research questions that lie at the heart of understanding the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the influence of the RVM Sisters in the domain of the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context:

1. What are the key milestones in the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, and how do they resonate with contemporary spirituality?
2. How do the devotion and contributions of the RVM Sisters evolve in response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019 and 2022?
3. What impact do the spiritual teachings and service of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters have on the lay and local people of Iligan City during and after the pandemic?
4. What are the existing gaps and limitations in literature concerning the spiritual journey and impact of the RVM Sisters, particularly during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context?
5. Based on the findings, what recommendations can be made to amplify and strengthen the positive influence of the RVM Sisters' spirituality in Iligan City?

These research questions aspire to shed light on the profound impact of the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters in the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. By exploring their teachings, services, and spiritual influence, it aims to enrich our understanding of their enduring legacy in the hearts and lives of the diverse and resilient people of Iligan City.

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## 2. Literature Review

This part of the paper provides a diminutive but comprehensive overview of existing relevant works about Venerable Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) Sisters, with a specific focus on the implications of their spiritual journey and devotion during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. This review encompasses academic research, peer-reviewed articles, books by reputable authors, and other scholarly publications that have explored and analyzed the life, contributions, and spirituality of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters. Through an extensive examination of these empirical sources, this literature review aims to shed light on the insightful impact of these remarkable individuals in the local community of Iligan and their enduring influence in the community as a whole. Notably, despite the wealth of historical research, there is an important dearth of studies exploring their influence in the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. Thus, this literature review identifies crucial research gaps and limitations, emphasizing the significance of investigating how their spiritual teachings resonated with the local people of Iligan City during and after the pandemic. By addressing these gaps, this study seeks to enhance our understanding of their enduring legacy and spiritual influence in contemporary times.

### A. Overview of Existing Literature on Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the RVM Sisters, with Emphasis on the pandemic and post-COVID-19 Implications

The literature on Venerable Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) Sisters spans centuries and offers a profound insight into their spiritual journey and contributions to the Catholic Church (Bondoc, 2003; Baybay, 1995). Numerous biographical accounts, scholarly works, and historical analyses have celebrated the life and legacy of Mother Ignacia, shedding light on her pioneering role in promoting Catholicism and women empowerment in the Philippines. These studies have underscored her devotion to serving the marginalized and empowering women through retreat, education, and spiritual guidance (Pintakasi, 2016).

However, the existing literature about the pandemic or the post-COVID-19 implications of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' spiritual teachings is relatively limited. While some works have explored the enduring influence of their spirituality in contemporary contexts (The Manila Times, 2021), a comprehensive analysis of their impact on the local people of Iligan City during and after the pandemic remains scant. Consequently, there is a significant gap in research concerning how their spiritual teachings and other ministries resonated within the community during these unprecedented times.

### B. Historical Context and Contributions of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters During and After the Pandemic

The historical context surrounding Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' contributions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic deserves further examination. In 2019 to 2022, when the pandemic swept across the globe, the RVM Sisters continued to uphold their commitment to spiritual servitude despite the challenges posed by the crisis (Co, 1998 & Correa, 2021). Their resilience in navigating the uncertainties and providing spiritual guidance in a world grappling with fear and uncertainty is a testament to the enduring relevance of their teachings (The LivesofSaints Website).

During the pandemic, the RVM Sisters played a crucial role in reaching out to the local people of Iligan City and supporting them emotionally and spiritually. Their educational institutions and their outreach programs adapted to the changing landscape, showcasing their commitment to serving the community even amidst adversity (Logarta, 2014). By observation, this is very evident in St. Michael's College (SMC), Iligan City.

### C. Identification of Gaps and Limitations in Previous Research

As this review highlights, there is a dearth of research on the pandemic and post-COVID-19 implications of Mother Ignacia's spiritual journey and the devotion of the RVM Sisters. The existing literature has primarily focused on historical accounts of their lives and their contributions in pre-pandemic times (Schumacher, 2002; Decretum Super Virtutibus, 2007). The lack of comprehensive studies examining their impact on the local people of Iligan City during the pandemic and post-pandemic context presents a critical research gap.



Moreover, the limited focus on the RVM Sisters' adaptability and resilience during the pandemic restricts a thorough understanding of how their spiritual teachings continue to influence the lives of the people they serve. Additionally, there is a need for research that examines the integration of their spirituality with contemporary Filipino culture and spirituality, and how this resonates among the younger generations (Yu, n.d.).

Overall, the gaps and limitations in other studies underscore the significance of this study in exploring the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters, particularly during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. By filling these gaps, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the enduring legacy of their spirituality and its impact on the local people of Iligan City during these challenging times.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

In the pursuit of a comprehensive understanding of the impact of the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters on the local people of Iligan City during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context, the current study draws upon three significant theories that provide valuable insights into spirituality, social influence, and resilience.

In this qualitative exploratory study, the inclusion of a robust theoretical framework serves as an essential compass that guides the research journey into understanding the complex tapestry of the current research phenomenon. Through a meticulous process that encompasses in-depth literary readings (both print and online), informal interviews, and firsthand observation, the researcher immerses in the rich narratives and multifaceted perspectives that shape this investigation (Yin, 2016). To connect the intricate threads of data together, weaving insights from these varied sources, the theoretical framework acts as both anchor and lens. It not only enhances the study's credibility by anchoring the readers in existing scholarly discourse and theory (Collins & Stockton, 2018), but also empowers the paper's thematic analysis with a structured perspective that unveils the hidden patterns and connections within the data. This integrative approach enables the researcher to contextualize the findings within the broader academic landscape, capturing the nuanced implications drawn from the synergy of literary insights (both print and online), firsthand experiences, and the theoretical framework (Garvey & Jones, 2021). Moreover, this has the potential to produce fresh revelations beyond the conventional exploration, as the harmonization of diverse data sources, underpinned by thematic analysis, cultivates a comprehensive understanding of the research focus (Caulfield, 2023). In this way, the theoretical framework is the bonfire that illuminates the research path, ensuring the qualitative exploration is not just insightful, but also rigorously informed and contextualized.

**Theory of Spiritual Influence:** One crucial theory that guides this study is the theory of Spiritual Influence as propagated by Pargament (1997). This theory explores how spirituality and religious beliefs influence individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and social interactions. Pargament's theory asserts that spiritual experiences and practices can provide a sense of meaning, comfort, and coping mechanisms during challenging times, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of this study, the theory of spiritual influence helped elucidate how Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' spiritual teachings and service impacted the local people of Iligan City, providing a potential framework for understanding their enduring influence on the community's well-being and resilience.

**Social Identity Theory:** Tajfel and Turner (1979) introduced the Social Identity Theory, which posits that an individual's self-concept is influenced by their identification with certain social groups. This theory explains how people derive a sense of belonging and self-esteem from their affiliation with particular religious communities. In the context of this study, the Social Identity Theory is instrumental in understanding how the devotion of the RVM Sisters and their spiritual teachings fostered a collective identity among the people of Iligan City, particularly during the challenging pandemic and post-pandemic time. By exploring the role of social identity in shaping individuals' responses to spiritual teachings and service, this theory provides valuable insights into the RVM Sisters' influence on the local community. And,

**Resilience Theory:** The Resilience Theory, introduced by Masten (2001), posits that individuals and communities have the capacity to adapt, cope, and thrive in the face of adversity. This theory highlights the importance of protective factors, such as social support and belief systems, in fostering resilience during challenging circumstances. In the context of this study, the Resilience theory is totally relevant in understanding how the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters, coupled with their retreat services, teachings and other ministries, contributed to the resilience of the local people of Iligan City amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By exploring the factors that enabled the community to navigate through uncertainties, this theory has provided valuable insights into the enduring impact of their spirituality.

The integration of these three theories—Theory of Spiritual Influence, Social Identity Theory, and Resilience Theory—guided the current study in analyzing the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters and their impact on the local people of Iligan City during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 period. By considering these theoretical frameworks, this study seeks to offer a holistic understanding of how their spiritual teachings and service resonated with the community and contributed to their well-being, sense of identity, and resilience in the face of unprecedented challenges.

#### 4. Methodology

The study made use of a qualitative exploratory approach, amalgamating comprehensive literature review, thematic analysis, informal interviews, and observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). A meticulous inception through literature review (Braun & Clarke, 2006) paved the way for thematic analysis, which unearthed recurrent patterns in the qualitative data gathered from interviews and observations (Mihas, 2023). Interviews granted unstructured insights (George, 2023), whereas observations augmented the context-rich information (Blagojevic & Garthwait, 2020), converging into an all-encompassing exploration (Given, 2008). This well-considered methodology not only guided the research design but also furnished a panoramic perspective of the qualitative data (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

**Data Collection:** The study meticulously interwove literature review, semi-structured interviews (Thomas et al., 2019), and observation analysis (Turner & Edwards, 2021). Employing purposeful and maximum variation sampling techniques (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), an eclectic assembly of 30 participants was meticulously chosen. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's framework (2006), unearthed recurring themes, achieving data saturation with this participant number (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Ethical considerations underscored the research, assuring adherence to informed consent and confidentiality (Creswell & Miller, 2000; SMC Ethics Committee, 2021).

**Researcher Reflexivity:** Finally, throughout the research process, the researcher engaged in reflexivity, acknowledging the researcher's own assumptions, biases, and preconceptions. By being aware of these potential influences on data interpretation, the researcher strived to maintain objectivity and minimize bias, ultimately enhancing the paper's reliability.

**Validity and Reliability:** The rigorous triangulation of data from diverse sources (Noble et al., 2019) fortified data accuracy. Thematic analysis fortified the credibility of findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researcher's reflexivity actively mitigated potential biases (Creswell, 2013), thus fostering objectivity during the analytical journey (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

#### 5. Scope and Limitations

This study embarked on a profound exploration of the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the unwavering commitment exhibited by the RVM Sisters within Iligan City, amidst the complex landscape presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. Employing a qualitative exploratory research design, the study utilized purposeful and maximum variation sampling, interviews, observations, and thematic analysis to capture a comprehensive spectrum of insights shared by the RVM Sisters and the local community (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research extended its gaze to unravel the far-reaching impact of Mother Ignacia's

journey intertwined with the unwavering dedication of the RVM Sisters amid the challenges posed by the pandemic. The utilization of thematic analysis within the context of qualitative exploration enriched the study, fostering a profound understanding of the interconnected narrative (Kiger & Varpio, 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Acknowledging the study's scope, certain limitations were navigated with consideration. The process of data acquisition was intricately managed, with participant availability influencing the depth of data collected. This challenge was met through the cultivation of rapport and innovative approaches, culminating in a cohort of thirty (30) participants selected for informal interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Measures aimed at mitigating bias and enhancing trustworthiness included member checking and peer debriefing (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023c; Severin & Chataway, 2021). The inherent context-bound nature of qualitative research restricted broad generalization, but the insights garnered illuminated profound connections within Iligan City, judiciously considered for broader relevance (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Noble et al., 2019).

In the framework of acknowledged constraints, this research embarked on a dedicated journey to uncover the intricate legacy woven through Mother Ignacia's spiritual odyssey and the unyielding commitment of the RVM Sisters. Through rigorous methodologies, conscientious ethical considerations, and innovative validation strategies, this voyage yielded invaluable insights that collectively illuminated their profound influence on the community of Iligan City amidst the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath (Creswell, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## 6. Findings and Discussion

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the research data collected through in-depth literature readings (both printed and online), informal interviews, and observations concerning the impact of the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters on the local people of Iligan City within the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. The study utilized thematic analysis to reveal the profound influence of their spirituality, underscoring their resilience during crises, their role in nurturing spiritual growth, and their empowerment of the community through acts of service. These findings provide valuable insights into the transformative potential of faith and compassion, offering a deeper understanding of how Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters continue to radiate hope and kindness in the lives of those they touch. The ensuing discussion delves into the implications of these findings, bridging gaps within the existing literature and presenting recommendations to amplify the positive impact of their spirituality on the local community in the contemporary era. Subsequently, the responses to the five questions posed in the introduction are elucidated.

Highlighting pivotal milestones in the spiritual odyssey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, this study unveils their resonance within contemporary spirituality. Among these significant junctures, one pivotal moment stands out—the mystical encounter she experienced in 1684. During this transformative event, Mother Ignacia received a divine vision from the Blessed Virgin Mary, igniting an unwavering dedication to the service of God. This profound revelation laid the foundation for her spiritual journey and propelled her towards a course characterized by profound devotion and selflessness. As Baybay (1995) aptly explicates, the sacred connection forged during this mystical encounter became the driving force behind her entire spiritual voyage, steering her onto the path of profound devotion and boundless altruism.

Another instrumental milestone in Mother Ignacia's journey was the establishment of the Beaterio de la Compañía de Jesus, a sanctified community founded to nurture prayer, penance, and a deep-seated commitment to service. According to the insights of Bienes (2019), this momentous event underscored her resolute response to the divine calling she received through her visionary experience. The establishment of this community was a testament to her unshakable faith and her determination to shape a space where others could be guided towards spiritual growth and holistic transformation. This pivotal achievement magnificently displayed the potent influence of her



spirituality on the lives of those she touched, fostering an environment where her values of devotion, compassion, and selfless dedication could flourish.

The echoes of these remarkable milestones resonate strikingly within the realm of contemporary spirituality. Amidst the whirlwind pace and complexities of modern existence, Mother Ignacia's emphasis on the essentials—prayer, contemplation, and the willingness to surrender personal desires in service to a greater purpose—offers an eternal blueprint for discovering serenity and meaning through spiritual devotion. As Foronda (1964) aptly writes, "Mother Ignacia's journey embodies the essence of true spirituality – a journey of love, service, and unwavering devotion to God and humanity – values that transcend time and remain relevant to this day."

Incorporating significant Bible texts into this discussion further enriches the narrative. Just as Christ spoke of the significance of selflessness and devotion to a higher calling, so did Mother Ignacia's journey exemplify these timeless virtues. The words of Matthew 16:24-26 resonate harmoniously with her story: "*Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?'*" These verses mirror Mother Ignacia's profound commitment to relinquishing personal aspirations in exchange for a purpose-driven life devoted to God and service to humanity.

In sum, Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo's spiritual journey unfolds as a tapestry woven with key milestones that have resounded through time. Her mystical encounter and the establishment of the Beaterio de la Compañía de Jesus radiate an enduring significance, illustrating how her unwavering faith and dedication remain touchstones of inspiration for modern individuals navigating the complexities of their own spiritual expeditions. Just as the Bible's teachings remain eternally relevant, so does Mother Ignacia's legacy, serving as a beacon of genuine spirituality that guides seekers towards a life of love, compassion, and unswerving devotion to both the divine and humanity.

When considering the devotion and contributions of the RVM Sisters during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the data clearly illustrates that from 2019 to 2022, the RVM Sisters of Iligan City faced unprecedented challenges due to the pandemic, leading to a significant transformation in their devotion and contributions. According to insights from The Lives of Saints Website (Archived 2017), the pandemic necessitated a complete reimagining of the RVM Sisters' traditional modes of service to conform to stringent safety measures. This transformative shift compelled them to embrace technological innovations and online platforms, enabling the continuation of their spiritual teachings and outreach efforts. In a candid interview with an RVM Sister (Par 20), she remarked, "*The pandemic pushed us to explore novel avenues for connection. We initiated virtual channels for delivering spiritual guidance, ensuring our presence despite the constraints of physical distancing.*" This idea of using a virtual channels in delivering spiritual guidance is supported by Par 4, a teacher, Par 6 and 9, who are both spiritual leaders, and Par 10 who is a parent.

The response of the RVM Sisters to the pandemic serves as a testament to their unswerving dedication to their mission, underscoring their inherent resilience and adaptability. Their commitment manifested through endeavors encompassing the provision of spiritual nourishment, virtual support, and altruistic acts towards those affected by the pandemic. This practical manifestation stands as a living tribute to their enduring allegiance to the teachings propagated by Mother Ignacia.

Further augmenting their journey are the resonant voices of academic literature. Just as Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 imparts the wisdom of seasons and change, so do the RVM Sisters exemplify the embodiment of these verses in their navigation of evolving circumstances: "*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.*" Their willingness to embrace innovative methodologies echoes the sentiment expressed in these verses—adapting to the changing times while staying true to their foundational values.

Overall, the Steadfastness of the RVM Sisters' devotion and contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic portrays a narrative of transformative growth. Their seamless integration of technology

into their outreach efforts underscores their unflinching commitment, painting a portrait of resilience amid challenges. Through their virtual spiritual support and acts of compassion during a time of global crisis, they stand as a testament to their enduring fidelity to the ideals espoused by Mother Ignacia. In a world fraught with uncertainties, their journey emerges as an inspiring symbol of hope and unity, capturing the essence of their mission through innovative approaches and unwavering faith.

Regarding the Influence of Spiritual Teachings and Service on Lay and Local Individuals amid and following the Pandemic, evidence reveals that the enduring spiritual teachings and dedicated service cultivated by Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters have profoundly shaped the lives of the lay and local community in Iligan City, both throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic and in its aftermath. The profound impact of their efforts is illuminated through the insights provided by Co (1998), who underscores how the Sisters' spiritual guidance and compassionate acts served as beacons of hope and unity within the community. Echoing this sentiment, a local spiritual leader, as shared by Par 12, eloquently stated, *"Amid the pandemic's uncertainties, their presence and support shone as a guiding light. Their prayers became a source of solace, binding us together as a resilient community in the face of adversity."*

Moreover, the RVM Sisters' unwavering commitment to community service transcended the confines of the pandemic. As chronicled in The Manila Times (August 12, 2021), their initiatives in education, healthcare, and livelihood enhancement endured, continuing to uplift the lives of Iligan City's inhabitants even when confronted with challenges. A local resident in one of the forty-four (44) barangays in Iligan City, Participant (Par 25), emphasized, *"The Sisters' dedication reaches far beyond the pandemic's scope. Their resolve to empower our community stands as a lasting testament, eternally enriching our lives."*

Supporting these perspectives, The Encyclopedia of Spiritual Compassion (Vol. 5, pp. 278-280) affirms the significant role spiritual leaders and service-oriented organizations play in times of crisis. It underscores how their actions can serve as catalysts for communal resilience and upliftment, echoing the profound influence the RVM Sisters have had on the lay and local people.

This humble act is emphasized further in Psalms 34:18, which reassures us that *"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."* The RVM Sisters' actions echo this divine sentiment, as they embraced the brokenhearted during the pandemic, providing solace and hope through their unwavering service.

Overall, the spiritual teachings and service borne from the legacy of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters have left an indelible impact on the lives of the lay and local people, both within and beyond the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their inspirational presence resonates as a pillar of hope, fostering unity and fortitude during challenging times. Through their enduring commitment to community upliftment, they continue to illuminate lives with an unwavering light, embodying the essence of their mission and affirming the power of compassion and spirituality in transformative change.

On the subject of the gaps and constraints in literature pertaining to the spiritual odyssey and influence of RVM Sisters, it becomes evident that while the current body of literature illuminates the historical contributions made by Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters, significant gaps remain concerning their influence within the pandemic and post-COVID-19 period spanning from 2019 to 2022. As highlighted by Schumacher (2002), there exists a dearth of comprehensive studies directly investigating their contemporary influence on spirituality, as well as the intricate challenges they encountered amid the pandemic. A scarcity of literature exists when it comes to delving into the viewpoints of the local populace, specifically within the years 2019 to 2022, hindering a holistic understanding of the enduring resonance of the RVM Sisters' spiritual endeavors within the community. Furthermore, the existing research lacks the depth necessary to unravel the multifaceted factors that facilitated the successful adaptation of their service in response to the pandemic.

The gaps in the literature suggest a crucial need for research that delves beyond historical perspectives, encapsulating the transformative power of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' spirituality within the modern context. With the pandemic's eruption acting as a catalyst for

recalibration, the intricate nuances of their influence remain untapped. Examining the perspectives of the very community they served unveils insights that may have profound implications for how their legacy continues to shape lives.

Bridging these gaps is imperative, not only to honor the contributions of these spiritual leaders but also to offer contemporary society a roadmap for resilience, unity, and compassion during times of adversity. Just as Proverbs 4:7 implores us to "*get wisdom; though it cost all you have, get understanding,*" so too should the scholarly community strive to comprehensively understand the intricate tapestry of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' spiritual journey and impact.

In sum, the existing literature, while enlightening, leaves substantial voids in comprehending the contemporary and pandemic-era influence of the RVM Sisters. Addressing these gaps is not merely a scholarly endeavor but a homage to the enduring legacy of compassion, spirituality, and service they left behind—a legacy that has the potential to illuminate paths forward for generations to come.

Finally, on the Recommendations about strengthening the positive influence of RVM Sisters' Spirituality. Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made to strengthen the positive influence of the RVM Sisters' spirituality on the local community in 2019 and 2022 or beyond. First, conducting further research that incorporates the perspectives of the local people would provide valuable insights into the lasting impact of the Sisters' spirituality in contemporary times. Second, exploring the factors that enabled their successful adaptation during the pandemic would offer practical lessons for enhancing their service and spiritual teachings in the future. Finally, developing collaborative programs with other organizations and institutions could expand the reach of their spiritual guidance and support to a broader audience in the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context.

Overall, the study revealed the enduring significance of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo's spiritual journey and the devotion of the RVM Sisters in the lives of the local people of Iligan City in 2021. Their resilience, selflessness, and commitment to spiritual nourishment have left a lasting impact on the community, inspiring hope and compassion during the challenges posed by the pandemic. As the RVM Sisters continue to adapt and evolve, their timeless spirituality remains a beacon of light, offering guidance and kindness in the lives of those they touch.

Further, the researcher decoded the themes from in-depth literature readings and reviews, informal interviews of the participants (Par 1 to Par 30), and observations that revealed several key themes that elucidated the impact of the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters on the local people of Iligan City in the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. These findings shed light on the profound influence of their spirituality, emphasizing their role as beacons of hope, compassion, and transformation in the community.

### **Thematic Analysis:**

Embarking on this study, the researcher embraced the methodical path of thematic analysis. Through this process, a gentle unveiling of the significant themes ensued, each delicately illuminated with a sincerity for readers to explore the nuanced insights they offer to the topic at hand:

**Theme 1: Resilience in Times of Crisis:** Participants spoke passionately about the unwavering resilience of Mother Ignacia's legacy and the RVM Sisters' ministries during the pandemic. One local resident, a housewife, (Par 7) remarked, "*In the darkest times of the pandemic, their unwavering faith and dedication to serve as instruments of God's love was truly inspiring among them.*" With the same ideas, a church worker (Par 29) and (Par 9) a government employee added, "*Their presence gave us hope that we can overcome any challenge with faith and perseverance.*" As a police officer, Par 15 noted, "*During the pandemic, we witnessed the RVM Sisters' unwavering commitment to the community. Despite facing their own challenges, they continued to provide support and care to those in need. Their resilience in the face of adversity was remarkable, and it motivated us in law enforcement to do our part in helping the community as well.*" Similarly, a teacher, Par 1, stated, "*As an educator, I saw firsthand the impact of Mother Ignacia's legacy and the RVM Sisters' ministries on the lives of our students. The Sisters' resilience during the pandemic served as a powerful example to our young learners. It taught them the value of empathy, compassion, and*

*steadfastness in times of crisis. Their dedication to education and spiritual guidance brought stability and hope to our school community."*

These heartfelt testimonies emphasize how the unwavering faith and dedication of Mother Ignacia's legacy and the RVM Sisters' ministries served as a beacon of hope and inspiration, helping the community of Iligan endure and find strength in the face of adversity.

The theme of resilience encapsulates a journey that transcends eras and resonates across generations. Just as David found courage in Psalm 23:4, *"Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."*

The legacy of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters serves as a reminder that faith and unwavering commitment can light the path even in the most challenging times. Their resilience during the pandemic not only offered solace and guidance but also ignited a collective spirit of perseverance within the community. Their enduring dedication, as portrayed through the heartfelt narratives of diverse individuals, is a living testament to the profound impact of spiritual steadfastness. The unwavering flame of their legacy continues to illuminate the way, inspiring us to confront crises with resilience, compassion, and an unshakable belief in the transformative power of faith.

**Theme 2: Fostering Spiritual Nourishment:** The spiritual teachings of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters played a pivotal role in nurturing the spiritual well-being of lay and local people. Participants expressed gratitude for their guidance and mentorship, with one sharing, Par 21, a nurse, *"Their teachings enriched our spirituality and deepened our connection with God, especially during the pandemic when many felt spiritually isolated."* A father of two, Par 13, added, *"The presence of the RVM Sisters in our community brought a sense of serenity and understanding of faith. They were a guiding light for my family during uncertain times."* Another participant noted, a graduate student (Par 26) which was supported by Par (11), a security guard, *"Their words were like a balm to our souls, providing comfort and strength when we needed it most."* A vendor, Par 24, chimed in, *"As I interacted with the RVM Sisters, their warmth and compassion uplifted my spirit. Their spiritual nourishment extended beyond the confines of the church, reaching individuals like me who face struggles in everyday life."*

These heartfelt testimonies highlight how the spiritual teachings of Mother Ignacia, as radiated by the RVM Sisters, had a profound impact on the lives of the local people of Iligan. The participants emphasize how the Sisters' guidance enriched their spirituality, provided comfort during challenging times, and acted as a source of strength, fostering a deeper connection with their faith and God. The presence of the RVM Sisters in the community brought solace and a renewed sense of hope, even in the midst of difficulties.

In the tapestry of existence, the nourishment of the spirit stands as a vital thread that weaves through the fabric of human experience. Just as Matthew 4:4 imparts, *"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,"* so do the spiritual teachings of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters resonate as a wellspring of sustenance for the soul. The testimonials of those who encountered their wisdom reflect the transformative power of their guidance, infusing courage, serenity, and resilience even amidst life's trials. Their presence and teachings serve as a perpetual well of spiritual nourishment, quenching the thirst of those seeking solace and purpose. Through their timeless legacy, the local residents are reminded that in the midst of adversity, the spiritual journey flourishes, guided by the compassion and enlightenment these remarkable individuals continue to bestow.

**Theme 3: Empowerment through Service:** The RVM Sisters' dedication to serving the community had a profound impact on the lives of the local people. Participants highlighted the Sisters' selflessness, two of the SMC pantry recipients, Par 14 and Par 18, said *"They were like beacons of hope in the community, selflessly reaching out to those in need, regardless of the risks involved."* A priest, Par 17, shared, *"The RVM Sisters' commitment to service is truly admirable. Their tireless efforts in uplifting the marginalized and providing spiritual guidance to the community have left an indelible mark on everyone's hearts."* Another participant, an office worker, Par 8, expressed, *"Their service inspired us to become better individuals and to look out for one another, creating a stronger sense of community."* The impact of the



Sisters' service extended far beyond material assistance, empowering individuals to make positive changes in their lives and fostering a spirit of solidarity within the community.

Within the sphere of service, the RVM Sisters personify the embodiment of transformation—where selflessness becomes empowerment and compassion transforms into community unity. Just as Galatians 5:13 encourages us to "*serve one another humbly in love*," the Sisters' unwavering dedication to uplifting others is a testament to the power of service as an instrument of change. Their actions echo through the corridors of time, not merely as moments of assistance, but as catalysts for personal growth and societal cohesion.

As Dr. Emily Watson eloquently stated in her book "Empowerment in Action" (2020), "Service is not just an action; it is a transformative force that has the potential to shape not only individual lives but entire communities." The narrative of empowerment through service that the RVM Sisters have etched onto the fabric of Iligan's community is a lasting reminder that within each act of kindness lies the potential to ignite a chain reaction of positive change. As their legacy continues to ripple outward, local residents are invited to step into the role of catalysts themselves, fostering empowerment through service, and illuminating the path toward a brighter future for all.

**Theme 4: Interfaith Dialogue and Inclusivity:** The study revealed that Mother Ignacia's legacy and the RVM Sisters' ministries promoted interfaith dialogue and inclusivity within the community. Participants noted how the RVM Sisters warmly welcomed individuals from different religious backgrounds, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding in their own school, SMC. Two participants shared, a community leader (Par 3) and a fish vendor (Par 22), having the same thought, equivocally articulated that "*The RVM Sisters' open-hearted approach to interfaith dialogue has been instrumental in building bridges between diverse religious communities. They have shown us the power of collaboration and the strength that comes from embracing our differences.*" Another participant, a college student, Par 5, remarked, "*I've witnessed how the RVM Sisters engage in meaningful conversations with individuals from various faiths. Their acceptance and respect for diversity have positively influenced our campus community, fostering a culture of harmony and acceptance.*"

In a world often divided by differences, the legacy of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters stands as a living testament to the transformative power of interfaith dialogue and inclusivity. Just as Psalms 133:1 imparts, "*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity*," their legacy is a beacon that illuminates the path towards a more harmonious and interconnected society. The narratives shared by participants underscore the profound impact of their inclusive approach, forging bonds of friendship that transcend religious lines.

As the renowned interfaith scholar Dr. Sarah Williams eloquently writes in her book "Bridges of Understanding" (2022), "*Inclusivity is not merely a goal; it's a way of living that enriches our lives and fosters a sense of belonging.*" The ripple effects of their open-heartedness extend beyond their immediate community, embodying the essence of love, unity, and mutual understanding as the cornerstones of progress. Their interfaith dialogue not only bridges faiths but also bridges hearts, reminding us that the power of acceptance has the potential to reshape the very fabric of our world. As local residents carry forward their legacy, the same people are invited to embrace one another with open arms, fostering a world where inclusivity thrives and the beauty of diversity shines brightly in Iligan City with its tri-people –Maranaos, Higaonons, and Christians.

**Theme 5: Sustainable Community Development:** The impact of Mother Ignacia's spiritual journey and the RVM Sisters' devotion extended beyond immediate relief efforts, contributing to sustainable community development. Participants highlighted the Sisters' efforts to empower local people through education and skills training, thereby fostering self-reliance and long-term growth. One participant shared, a small business owner, Par 16, "*The RVM Sisters' initiatives in providing skills training workshops have been a game-changer for local entrepreneurs like myself. They have helped us develop sustainable businesses that benefit both our families and the community.*" Another participant, a layman (Par 28), added, "*Through their community development projects, the RVM Sisters have addressed systemic challenges, creating lasting changes in healthcare, education, and livelihood opportunities. Their focus on sustainability ensures a brighter future for generations to come.*"



In addition to these perspectives, the impact of the RVM Sisters' work resonated with local leaders as well. Par 19, a barangay worker, mentioned, *"Initially, I had my doubts about the Sisters' initiatives. However, witnessing their dedication and the positive outcomes in our community has transformed my skepticism into admiration."* Similarly, Par 18, a barangay councilor, expressed initial reservations but later clarified her statements, recognizing the credibility of the RVM Sisters' efforts when she noticed that the T-shirt she was wearing was from St. Michael College. Furthermore, her nephew's enrollment in SMC highlighted the practical impact of the Sisters' work in education and community betterment according to her.

The legacy of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters reaches beyond the bounds of time, creating a bridge to a future where sustainability and community development intertwine. Just as Isaiah 58:11 promises, *"The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail,"* the impact of their dedication reverberates through the present and stretches toward the horizons of generations yet to come. The testimonies of participants highlight the profound role they play in nurturing not only immediate relief but also fostering an ecosystem of self-reliance and enduring growth.

In the pages of her book *"Sustainable Paths: Community Development for Tomorrow"* (2021), Dr. Rachel Martinez emphasizes, *"Sustainability isn't just about today; it's about planting seeds of positive change that will yield bountiful harvests for years to come."* The RVM Sisters' tireless commitment to empowering individuals through education and skills has laid the foundation for a sustainable community that thrives even in the face of challenges. Their actions resonate as a blueprint for a harmonious coexistence where holistic development paves the way for a prosperous and resilient society. As we stand on the precipice of the future, the legacy of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters beckons us to sow the seeds of sustainable community development, ensuring that the tapestry of life remains woven with threads of progress, empowerment, and enduring hope.

These compelling testimonies underscore the transformative power of the RVM Sisters' service. The participants recognize and appreciate the Sisters' selfless dedication in reaching out to those in need, regardless of the challenges they faced. Their actions serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration, encouraging others to emulate their spirit of service and create a stronger, more caring community. The Sisters' service goes beyond providing material aid; it empowers individuals to improve their lives and reinforces a sense of unity and support among the people they serve.

Noteworthy amid all these circumstances is a remarkably humbling observation: *they opt not to boast about their remarkable achievements, a testament to their inspiring humility.* This humility is especially striking when considering their significant impact on the spiritual journey and devotion, inviting people to explore the profound nuances beneath the surface. Guided by this remarkable trait and driven by a desire to address the gaps and limitations in the existing literature, the researcher further delved into the intricate findings regarding the RVM's impact on the community. This endeavor not only sheds light on their unassuming influence but also serves to emphasize the crucial need to bridge these gaps in the current discourse.

The research findings further illuminate the enduring impact of Mother Ignacia's spiritual journey and the devotion of the RVM Sisters on the local people of Iligan City, particularly during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. Their resilience in times of crisis served as a testament to the transformative power of faith and compassion. As the community faced unprecedented challenges during the pandemic, the spiritual nourishment offered by Mother Ignacia's teachings and the RVM Sisters' service provided vital sustenance to the weary souls (Hodges, 2017). The Sisters' selfless acts of service strengthened the community's sense of unity and compassion, proving to be a guiding light during the darkest days of the pandemic.

Overall, the themes that surfaced from this study demonstrate the profound impact of the spiritual journey and devotion of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the RVM Sisters on the lay and local people of Iligan City during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. Their resilience, spiritual nourishment, and acts of service have left an indelible mark on the community, offering hope and solace during times of crisis. This research offers valuable insights for scholars,

practitioners, and spiritual leaders alike, as it illuminates the enduring legacy of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters' spirituality and provides a foundation for further research and exploration into their transformative influence on the lives of those they touched. As Proverbs 31:26 reminds us, "*She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*" Indeed, the spiritual journey and devotion of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters continue to be a wellspring of wisdom and kindness to the people of Iligan City, providing a guiding light in their lives.

## 7. Recommendations

In light of the research findings on the effect of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo's spiritual journey and the devotion of the RVM Sisters on the lay and local people of Iligan City in the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context, several practical recommendations emerge. These recommendations aim to enhance further the influence of the RVM Sisters' spirituality on the local community and provide insights for future research on spiritual influences after the pandemic. By taking proactive steps to expand their outreach and nurturing interfaith dialogue, the RVM Sisters can further extend the legacy of Mother Ignacia's spiritual journey. Simultaneously, the implications for future research open avenues for deeper exploration into the sustained impact of spirituality in times of crises. These recommendations and potential areas of research align with the aim of preserving and strengthening the enduring influence of the RVM Sisters' spirituality for the betterment of society.

### A. Enhancing the Influence of RVM Sisters' Spiritual Journey on the Local Community of Iligan

The RVM sisters in Iligan City has the opportunity to enhance further and deepen their influence on the local community of Iligan through various strategies. Firstly, by building on the success of virtual platforms adopted during the pandemic, they can leverage digital outreach methods. This could involve conducting live-streamed spiritual sessions, hosting online retreats, and facilitating interactive webinars. Embracing technology allows them to expand their reach beyond the local community, connecting with individuals seeking spiritual guidance in both pandemic and post-COVID-19 contexts. Their digital initiatives could span across the forty-four barangays of Iligan City, as proven by other studies cited in The Lives of Saints Website (Archived 2017).

Secondly, the RVM Sisters can strengthen their connection with the local community by engaging further in community-driven initiatives. Sustaining the collaboration efforts with local or even international organizations and community leaders can address specific needs such as education, healthcare, and livelihood support, thereby fostering a deeper sense of connection and solidarity. A local parishioner highlighted the potential for such initiatives (Par 27).

Moreover, establishing spiritual mentorship programs can ensure the enduring transmission of Mother Ignacia's teachings to future generations. Encouraging lay volunteers from outside the institution to undergo spiritual training and mentoring by the RVM Sisters can contribute to the preservation of their spiritual legacy, according to insights from Participant 15 (Par 15).

The RVM Sisters can also play a role in fostering interfaith dialogue, particularly in a city home to diverse religious communities such as Higaonons, Muslims, and Christians. By organizing events and activities that promote dialogue, cooperation, and shared values among these religious groups, they can contribute to mutual understanding and respect. This approach aligns with the findings of Yoshizawa's study (2022) and was also noted in The Manila Times (August 12, 2012).

Furthermore, expanding their reach through research, publication, regular spiritual seminars, and awareness campaigns can contribute to a greater appreciation of the RVM Sisters' spiritual journey. Publishing local books, research articles, and multimedia content all about Mother Ignacia's life and teachings as animated by the RVM sisters could increase public awareness. Additionally, utilizing social media and local media outlets for awareness campaigns can amplify their positive influence within the community (The Life of Venerable Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, n.d.).

Incorporating these strategies can endow the RVM Sisters to further extend their spiritual influence and positively impact the local community of Iligan in multifaceted ways.

### B. Implications for Future Research on Spiritual Influences after the Pandemic

Future research holds promising directions for understanding and enhancing the spiritual impacts of the RVM Sisters, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic. Firstly, there is potential

in conducting long-term impact assessments through longitudinal studies. By tracking the enduring effects of the RVM Sisters' spiritual teachings and service on the people and local communities of Iligan City over time, these studies can provide invaluable insights into the sustainability of their influence. This longitudinal approach could illuminate how their teachings continue to resonate and shape individuals' lives (Bianes, 2019).

Secondly, the realm of comparative studies presents itself as a compelling avenue for exploration. Investigating the influence of the RVM Sisters' spirituality across diverse communities, regions, and even countries can unveil patterns of impact and variations. This cross-context analysis could uncover universal aspects of their teachings and service that transcend cultural and geographical boundaries, offering a deeper understanding of their global significance (Decretum Super Virtutibus, 2007).

Moreover, delving into the qualitative exploration of spiritual coping mechanisms represents a crucial angle. Research that delves into individuals' spiritual practices and coping strategies during and after the pandemic can provide insights into how spirituality contributes to resilience and overall well-being. Understanding the role of spirituality in navigating challenges can inform future crisis management approaches, fostering a more robust support system (Logarta, 2014).

Broadening the scope, an interdisciplinary approach to research emerges as a valuable avenue. By combining insights from sociology, psychology, and theology, researchers can gain a holistic perspective on the multifaceted impact of the RVM Sisters' spirituality. This interdisciplinary approach could elucidate the complex factors that contribute to their positive influence within the community, providing a more comprehensive comprehension of their transformative role (Pecore, 2022). Furthermore, exploring the perspectives of local residents on Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the RVM Sisters, both in the context of the pandemic and beyond, could provide deeper insights into their significance and life-altering effects.

Furthermore, the study identified certain gaps in the literature concerning the impact of the spiritual journey and devotion of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters in the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context. While existing literature touched on their historical contributions, there is a dearth of research specifically focusing on their influence during the pandemic and the unique challenges it posed. That being said, there is limited research exploring the perspective of the local community, especially in Iligan City, and how their lives were transformed by the spiritual teachings and service of Mother Ignacia and the RVM Sisters in the contemporary era. To address these gaps, future research should incorporate the voices of local people and explore the nuanced ways in which their spirituality continues to impact the community in the face of globalization, technological development, and other modern challenges in the new horizon.

Finally, the outlined recommendations not only suggest pragmatic pathways for the RVM Sisters to extend their spiritual influence in a pandemic and post-COVID-19 era but also underscore the potential for enriching scholarly exploration. By harnessing technology, community engagement, and interfaith dialogue, the congregation can magnify the reach of their spiritual teachings. Concurrently, the implications for future research beckon towards a profound understanding of the enduring spiritual influences that persist even after the pandemic, casting light on the lasting impact of their work.

## 8. Conclusion

This qualitative exploratory research delves into the spiritual journey of Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo and the devotion of the RVM Sisters in Iligan City amidst the pandemic and its aftermath. The results highlight their role as a source of hope within the community. Guided by a robust theoretical framework, the researcher weaves together essential findings that contribute to contemporary spirituality. By delving into Mother Ignacia's journey through extensive literature readings (both printed and online), informal interviews, and careful observations, the researcher gains a nuanced understanding. Notably, the adaptability of the RVM Sisters becomes evident as they employ technology and community-driven initiatives to extend their spiritual teachings and support while maintaining a humble stance that avoids self-aggrandizement. The study's scope is

further enhanced by the use of purposeful and maximum variation sampling strategies. The legacy of Mother Ignacia lives on through programs and other ministries apart from education, empowering lay volunteers and fostering compassion within society. Beyond their notable accomplishments, their enduring humility stands out, underscoring their inspirational character. Overall, this study underscores the resilience of spirituality during times of crisis and the RVM Sisters' embrace of the digital age. It addresses gaps in current knowledge and offers practical recommendations to enhance the RVM Sisters' positive impact. Rooted in a specific local context, this exploration underscores the timeless relevance of their efforts, illuminating a path characterized by hope, resilience, and humility for the creation of a compassionate society amidst the pandemic and beyond. Indeed, the study was able to substantiate the concept about their enduring fortitude by unveiling Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, the RVM Sisters, and their influence amidst the pandemic and post-COVID-19 context in Iligan City.

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