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Some things about the church are out of my control

by Tom Roberts

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In interviews earlier this year with young Catholics (most were in their 20s and 30s, two were in their mid-40s) at Our Lady of Czestochowa Parish in Jersey City, N.J., it seemed clear that some ideas about church membership are definitely age- or generation-specific. Younger Catholics appear reluctant to use such labels as conservative or liberal in describing themselves or others, while traditional pieties and the church's tradition itself can play an important role in someone's decision to become Catholic.

Those around the table, all of whom had chosen to become active in a particular Catholic community, said they spent little time worrying about hierarchical matters or many of the hot-button issues that might concern those of an older generation. In general terms, they had opted for Catholicism for a host of reasons and, while not ignoring the problems or controversies, did not allow them to get in the way of their participation in church life.

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