

Arch City Religion Project

Proposal

THEO 1000-59

Group 6

Team Members:

Eleanor Roosevelt—Team Leader

Dolly Parton

Abraham Lincoln

Gwen Stefani

Francis Slay

Topic:

Spaces: Parish Bowling Alleys

Research Question:

How have parish bowling alleys contributed to the social life and practice of Catholicism in St. Louis?

Description:

Parish bowling alleys were a unique aspect of Catholic experience in St. Louis through much of the late twentieth century. These sites were places for parishioners to congregate outside of the formal spaces and practices of the church, and yet, we intend to argue, were places where Catholicism was “lived” in ways that were meaningful to the faith of those who gathered there. Parish bowling alleys formed and sustained bonds that traversed boundaries of faith, community, and public life. Our study consists of three stages: Eleanor and Dolly will identify and map parish bowling alleys between the years 1950 and 2016; Abraham and Gwin will locate one bowling alley with extensive archival material in order to understand its daily operation and activities, particularly in relation to overall parish activities; and Francis will locate and conduct interviews with people who “played” in these unofficial religious spaces. Through archival research and oral history, we hope to demonstrate the significance of parish bowling alleys in St. Louis Catholic history.

Plan for Research and Final Product:

We plan to use a shared Google Drive folder during the initial stages of research and to meet every second Wednesday in Pius to touch base on our progress. As we move into writing and compiling our results, we will determine how best to share responsibility at that stage. Francis plans to meet with Dr. Lindsey soon to talk about strategies for conducting interviews and also to investigate resources on campus that will help with technical equipment and audio processing.

Our final product will demonstrate the breadth of these unofficial religious sites in St. Louis and also a deeper profile of a specific site through historical records and oral history. In addition to our final report on our findings, we intend to use images, transcripts, and audio recordings on our page.