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Adoration among Catholic Devotional Practices in Spain: Empirical Insights into Religious Practice and Well-being

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Abstract-

Objective: To examine whether traditional Catholic devotions, and Adoration in particular, predict psychological well-being in a highly religious Spanish sample.
Methods: A cross-sectional mixed-methods survey of 316 Spanish Catholics (56% women; age 17–88, M = 37). Six devotional practices (Mass attendance, personal prayer, the Rosary, personal and communal Eucharistic adoration, and processions) and four belief items were combined into a “devotion + belief” index (α = .86). Correlations and multiple regressions adjusting for age, sex, and education tested links with well-being, empathy, and spiritual struggle; a 15-item Big-Five short form was exploratory. Additionally, 201 written testimonials on adoration were content-analysed with a consensus codebook (κ = .57, PABAK = .76).
Results: The devotion + belief index correlated positively with well-being (r = .26, p < .001) and negatively with spiritual struggle (r = –.39), outperformed any single practice, and predicted all three outcomes after adjustment (β = .24, .24, and –.40 for well-being, empathy, and spiritual struggle). Associations with personality were small, and the devotion–struggle and devotion–empathy links held after controlling for traits. Qualitative analysis showed that 62% of adoration testimonials referred to peace, trust, or clarity, with further themes of connection with God, consolation, and renewed energy.
Conclusions: Despite self-selection, a Spain-centric sample, and a cross-sectional design, the study offers integrated quantitative and qualitative evidence that Catholic devotions, and adoration in particular, are associated with modestly higher well-being and lower spiritual struggle, most clearly when practice is embedded in supportive belief. Longitudinal and experimental research is needed to confirm causality and mechanisms.

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