

Nuns tackle activists to ensure the building of a new church

Carilyn Pointer

11/16/2023



A statue of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Snows

Carilyn Pointer – In a small town in southern France, Roman Catholic nuns from the Missionary Family of Our Lady order, [clashed](#) with climate activists. For over seven years, there have been plans to build a huge church complex to meet the needs to what the Church says is a growing community of Roman Catholics and the 2,000 pilgrims that visit annually. The activists, however, don't want the natural park and landscape "polluted." Tensions arose during the climate activists' protests resulting in the nuns tackling a few of the activists. By understanding the context of the place this conflict is taking place in, motivations and the influence of particular groups becomes clear.

[Location](#) is the role a place plays in the world including major industries and sources of employment. In recent years the role of the town, Saint-Pierre-de-Colombier, has been primarily one of tourism. Visitors come from all over to hike and explore the nature park and many make the pilgrimage to visit the statue of Virgin Mary. The [locale](#) within a location are the institutions such as

clubs, societies, and religious groups that help organize people. In this situation, the Roman Catholics and climate activists formulate the locale. The tension between the two organizations may pressure the citizens of the town to choose one group to identify and support. While these institutions can form the basis for cooperation, they can also be the cause of conflict such as in this example. By understanding the location and locale of the city, it can explain the importance of building a new church for all parties involved. For the Catholics it can support their religion, build prestige, and strengthen the town's economy through increased pilgrimages. From the climate activists' perspective, the natural park is a protected area that would be "polluted" with the installation of a concrete building: Potentially hurting the economy by reducing hikers' attraction to the area.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the role of identity has in the dispute. [Identity](#) is how people view the place in which they live. Identity may be the strongest influencer of them all because the attachment to a place gives a sense of comfort or belonging to a place. The building of a larger church may drastically alter that feeling for those who live in the town by giving religion a larger role in the town than they previously recognized or identified with.

Photo Credit: Distributed via wiki commons, [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0](#)