

THE 111 CATECHETICS

TEACHING MANUAL FOR STUDENTS OF THE 5 YEAR OF BACHELOR IN EDUCATION AT THE JORDAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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I. INTRODUCTION

GDC 143: Divine pedagogy and catechesis

Seven ways in which catechesis accomplishes a connection between the believer and God, Jesus Christ, and the Church:

Catechesis, as communication of divine Revelation, is radically inspired by the pedagogy of God, as displayed in Christ and in the Church. Hence, it receives its constitutive characteristics and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it sets out a synthesis to encourage a true experience of faith, and thus a filial encounter with God. In this way, catechesis:

1) – *is a pedagogy which serves and is included in the “dialogue of salvation” between God and the person, while giving due emphasis to the universal end of this salvation; with regard to God it underlines divine initiative, loving motivation, gratuity and respect for our liberty; with regard to (humanity) it highlights the dignity of the gift received and the demand to grow continually therein; (Ecclesiam Suam (Paul VI, 1964) III)*

2) – *it accepts the principle of the progressiveness of Revelation, the transcendence and the mysterious nature of the word of God and also its adaptation to different persons and cultures;*

3) – *it recognizes the centrality of Jesus Christ, the Word of God made (flesh), who determines catechesis as “a pedagogy of the incarnation”, and through whom the Gospel is to be proposed for the life and in the life of people;*

4)– *it values the community experience of faith, which is proper to the people of God, the Church;*

5)– *it is rooted in inter-personal relations and makes its own the process of dialogue;*

6)– *it conducts a pedagogy of signs, where words and deeds, teaching and experience are interlinked; (Dei Verbum 2)*

7)– *draws its power of truth and its constant task of bearing witness to it, since the love of God is the ultimate reason for his self-revelation, from the inexhaustible divine love, which is the Holy Spirit. (Cf. Redemptoris Missio 15; Catechism 24b-25; General Catechetical Directory 10)*

Thus catechesis takes the form of a process or a journey of following the Christ of the Gospel in the Spirit towards the Father. It is undertaken to reach the maturity of the faith “given as Christ allotted it” (Eph 4,7) and according to the possibilities and the needs of everyone.

II. CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

1. **Religious studies** – objective study of religion, comparative study of religions.
2. **Religious education** – academic approach to religion (Christian Religious Education)
3. **Evangelization** – proclamation of the Gospel to those who did not heard about Jesus Christ

4. **Catechetics** – a science of transmitting the faith
5. **Catechesis** – a process of transmitting the faith – from the Greek meaning “to sound forth,” “eko” – 1) *dialogue between believers* (and not as in evangelization between believer and unbeliever) 2) *maturing of the faith* – ongoing process. Growth in faith and the maturing of the Christian life towards its fullness is a work of the Holy Spirit. Catechesis – not handing on of the doctrine but education to the Christian life. Catechesis is distinct from the first evangelization and has as a task to bring that initial faith to maturity and teaches the Christian to live as true disciple of Christ.

Catechesis is one of the instrument indispensable of the Church’s mission – (CT 15).

Catechesi tradendae nn.30-32: men has a right to receive the Word of God unmodified, un alternated, integral, shown in whole truth. Parish priest is to take care of the catechesis of all the age with the help of other priest, religious and catechists.

6. **Catechism** – textbook (systematic guide)
7. **Catechumen** – person preparing himself for baptism
8. **Catechumenate** – stages of preparation
9. **RCIA** – Rite of Christia Initiation of Adults
10. **Neo – catechumenate** – movment for those who were baptized as children and follow the whole process of catechumenate
11. **Theology** – scientific invstigation of the faith. A good theology is a good base for catechesis but it is not catechesis. Theology deepens my knowledge what deepens my faith is catechetics.
12. **Indoctrination** – depraving people to be critical of faith (lack of challenges or dialogue)

Goals of catechesis:

1. develops knowledge of the Word of God
2. develops knowledge of Tradition, doctrine, magisterium
3. develops ability to pray
4. develops an active participation in the Liturgy (no catechesis without liturgy)
5. leads to the sense of belonging in the Church
6. gives meaning to one’s personal life (life centered)
7. promotes relationship in charity
8. helps to make right moral judgment
9. ecumenical dimention
10. eschatological dimention

Primary or first proclamation and catechesis

Catechesis, "distinct from the primary proclamation of the Gospel", promotes and matures initial conversion, educates the convert in the faith and incorporates him into the Christian community. The relationship between these two forms of the ministry of the word is, therefore, a relationship of complementary distinction. Primary proclamation, which every Christian is called to perform, is part of that "Go" which Jesus imposes on his disciples: it implies, therefore, a going-out, a haste, a message. Catechesis, however, starts with the

condition indicated by Jesus himself: "whosoever believes", whosoever converts, whosoever decides. Both activities are essential and mutually complementary: go and welcome, proclaim and educate, call and incorporate.

Continuing education in faith within the Christian community

Continuing or on-going education in the faith follows upon basic education and presupposes it. Both fulfill two distinct but complementary functions of the ministry of the word while serving the process of continuing conversion. Initiatory catechesis lays the basis for the Christian life of the followers of Jesus. The process of continuing conversion goes beyond what is provided by basic catechesis. In order to encourage this process, it is necessary to have a Christian community which welcomes the initiated, sustains them and forms them in the faith: "Catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith and Christian life welcomes the catechumen at a certain stage of his catechesis". The accompaniment which a community gives to the initiated is eventually transformed into their being totally integrated by the same community.

Various forms of continuing catechesis

The study and exploration of Sacred Scripture, read not only in the Church but with the Church and her living faith, which helps to discover divine truth, which it contains, in such a way as to arouse a response of faith. The "lectio divina" is an eminent form of this vital study of Scripture.

– A Christian reading of events, which is required of the missionary vocation of the Christian community. In this respect the study of the social teaching of the Church is indispensable, since "its main aim is to interpret these realities, determining their conformity with or divergence from the lines of the Gospel teaching".

– Liturgical catechesis, prepares for the sacraments by promoting a deeper understanding and experience of the liturgy. This explains the contents of the prayers, the meaning of the signs and gestures, educates to active participation, contemplation and silence. It must be regarded as an "eminent kind of catechesis".

– Occasional catechesis which seeks to interpret determined circumstances of personal, family, ecclesial or social life and to help live them in the prospect of faith.

– Initiatives of spiritual formation which seek to reinforce conviction, open new prospective and encourage perseverance in prayer and in the duties of following Christ.

– A systematic deepening of the Christian message by means of theological instruction, so as truly to educate in the faith, encourage growth in understanding of it and to equip the Christian for giving the reason for his hope in the present world. In a certain sense, it is appropriate to call such instruction "perfective catechesis".

Catechesis: activity of an ecclesial nature

Catechesis is an essentially ecclesial act. The true subject of catechesis is the Church which, continuing the mission of Jesus the Master and, therefore animated by the Holy Spirit, is sent to be the teacher of the faith. This transmission of the Gospel is a living act of ecclesial tradition:

– The Church transmits the faith which she herself lives: her understanding of the mystery of God and his salvific plan, her vision of man's highest vocation, the style of evangelic life which communicates the joy of the Kingdom, the hope which pervades her and the love which she has for mankind and all God's creatures.

– The Church transmits the faith in an active way; she sows it in the hearts of catechumens and those to be catechized so as to nourish their profoundest experience of life. The profession of faith received by the Church (traditio), which germinates and grows during the catechetical process, is given back (redditio), enriched by the values of different

cultures. The catechumenate is thus transformed into a centre of deepening catholicity and a ferment of ecclesial renewal.

III. FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF CATECHESIS

Helping to know, to celebrate and to contemplate the mystery of Christ

The fundamental tasks of catechesis are:

Promoting knowledge of the faith- who has encountered Christ desires to know him as much as possible, as well as to know the plan of the Father which he revealed. Knowledge of the faith (*fides quae*) is required by adherence to the faith (*fides qua*). Even in the human order the love which one person has for another causes that person to wish to know the other all the more. Catechesis, must, therefore, lead to "the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan", by introducing the disciples of Jesus to a knowledge of Tradition and of Scripture, which is "the sublime science of Christ".

Liturgical education- Christ is always present in his Church, especially in "liturgical celebrations". Communion with Jesus Christ leads to the celebration of his salvific presence in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist. The Church ardently desires that all the Christian faithful be brought to that full, conscious and active participation which is required by the very nature of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood. For this reason, catechesis, along with promoting a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, must also educate the disciples of Jesus Christ "for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for community spirit, for understanding correctly the meaning of the creeds...", as all of this is necessary for a true liturgical life

Moral formation- Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in his footsteps. Catechesis must, therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitudes of the Master himself. The disciples thus undertake a journey of interior transformation, in which, by participating in the paschal mystery of the Lord, "they pass from the old man to the new man who has been made perfect in Christ". The Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus takes up the Decalogue, and impresses upon it the spirit of the beatitudes, is an indispensable point of reference for the moral formation which is most necessary today. Evangelization which "involves the proclamation and presentation of morality", displays all the force of its appeal where it offers not only the proclaimed word but the lived word too. This moral testimony, which is prepared for by catechesis, must always demonstrate the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel.

Teaching to pray- Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had. To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which he turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication and awe for his glory. All of these sentiments are reflected in the Our Father, the prayer which Jesus taught his disciples and which is the model of all Christian prayer. The "handing on of the Our Father" is a summary of the entire Gospel and is therefore a true act of catechesis. When catechesis is permeated by a climate of prayer, the assimilation of the entire Christian life reaches its summit. This climate is especially necessary when the catechumen and those to be catechized are confronted with the more demanding aspects of the Gospel and when they feel weak or when they discover the mysterious action of God in their lives.

Other fundamental tasks of catechesis: initiation and education in community life and to mission

Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church. The Second Vatican Council indicates the necessity for pastors "to form genuine Christian communities" and for catechumens "[to] learn to cooperate actively in building up the Church and its work of evangelization".

– Education for Community Life

a) Christian community life is not realized spontaneously. It is necessary to educate it carefully. In this apprenticeship, the teaching of Christ on community life, recounted in the Gospel of St Matthew, calls for attitudes which it is for catechesis to inculcate: the spirit of simplicity and humility ("*unless you turn and become like little children...*" Mt 18,3); solicitude for the least among the brethren ("*but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin...*" Mt 18,6); particular care for those who are alienated ("*Go and search of the one that went astray...*" Mt 18,12); fraternal correction ("*Go and tell him his fault...*" Mt 18,15); common prayer ("*if two of you agree on earth to ask about anything...*" Mt 18,19); mutual forgiveness ("*but seventy times seven...*" Mt 18,22). Fraternal love embraces all these attitudes ("*love one another; even as I have loved you...*" Jn 13,34).

b) In developing this community sense, catechesis takes special note of the ecumenical dimension and encourages fraternal attitudes toward members of other Christian churches and ecclesial communities. Thus catechesis in pursuing this objective should give a clear exposition of all the Church's doctrine and avoid formulations or expressions that might give rise to error. It also implies "a suitable knowledge of other confessions", with which there are shared elements of faith: "the written word of God, the life of grace, faith, hope and charity, and the other interior gifts of the Holy Spirit". Catechesis will possess an ecumenical dimension in the measure in which it arouses and nourishes "a true desire for unity", not easy irenicism, but perfect unity, when the Lord himself wills it and by those means by which he wishes that it should be brought about.

– Missionary initiation

a) Catechesis is also open to the missionary dimension. This seeks to equip the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives. It also prepares them to lend their cooperation to the different ecclesial services, according to their proper vocation. This task of evangelization originates, for the lay faithful, in the sacraments of Christian initiation and in the secular character of their vocation. It is also important that every means should be used to encourage vocations to the Priesthood, and to the different forms of consecration to God in religious and apostolic life and to awaken special missionary vocations. The evangelical attitudes which Jesus taught his disciples when he sent them on mission are precisely those which catechesis must nourish: to seek out the lost sheep, proclaim and heal at the same time, to be poor, without money or knapsack; to know how to accept rejection and persecution; to place one's trust in the Father and in the support of the Holy Spirit; to expect no other reward than the joy of working for the Kingdom.

b) In educating for this missionary sense, catechesis is also necessary for interreligious dialogue, if it renders the faithful capable of meaningful communication with men and women of other religions. Catechesis shows that the link between the Church and non-Christian religions is, in the first place, the common origin and end of the human race, as well as the "many seeds of the word which God has sown in these religions". Catechesis too helps to reconcile and, at the same time, to distinguish between "the proclamation of Christ" and "inter-religious dialogue". These two elements, while closely connected, must not be confused or identified. Indeed, "dialogue does not dispense from evangelization".

The baptismal catechumenate: structure and progression

Faith, moved by divine grace and cultivated by the action of the Church, undergoes a process of maturation. Catechesis, which is at the service of this growth, is also a gradual activity. "Good catechesis is always done in steps". In the baptismal catechumenate, formation is articulated in four stages:

- *the pre-catechumenate*, characterized as the locus of first evangelization leading to conversion and where the kerygma of the primary proclamation is explained;
- *the catechumenate*, properly speaking, the context of integral catechesis beginning with "the handing on of the Gospels";
- a time of *purification and illumination* which affords a more intense preparation for the sacraments of initiation and in which the "the handing on of the Creed" and "the handing on of the Lord's Prayer" take place;
- a time of *mystagogy*, characterized by the experience of the sacraments and entry into the community.

These stages, which reflect the wisdom of the great catechumenal tradition, also inspire the gradual nature of catechesis. In the patristic period properly, catechumenal formation was realized through biblical catechesis, based on recounting the history of salvation; immediate preparation for Baptism by doctrinal catechesis, explaining the Creed and the *Our Father* which had just been handed on, together with their moral implications; and through the phase following the sacraments of initiation, a period of mystagogical catechesis which help the newly baptized to interiorize these sacraments and incorporate themselves into the community. This patristic concept continues to illuminate the present catechumenate and initiatory catechesis itself. This latter, in so far as it accompanies the process of conversion, is essentially gradual and, in so far as it is at the service of one who has decided to follow Christ, it is eminently christocentric.

The baptismal catechumenate: inspiration for catechesis in the Church

Given that the *missio ad gentes* is the paradigm of all the Church's missionary activity, the baptismal catechumenate, which is joined to it, is the model of its catechizing activity. It is therefore helpful to underline those elements of the catechumenate which must inspire contemporary catechesis and its significance.

In view of this substantial difference, some elements of the baptismal catechumenate are now considered, as the source of inspiration for post-baptismal catechesis.

- the baptismal catechumenate constantly reminds the whole Church of the fundamental importance of the function of initiation and the basic factors which constitute it: catechesis and the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. The pastoral care of Christian initiation is vital for every particular Church.

- The baptismal catechumenate is the responsibility of the entire Christian community. Indeed "this Christian initiation which takes place during the catechumenate should not be left entirely to the priests and catechists, but should be the care of the entire Christian community, especially the sponsors". The institution of the catechumenate thus increases awareness of the spiritual maternity of the Church, which she exercises in every form of education in the faith.

- The baptismal catechumenate is also completely permeated by the *mystery of Christ's Passover*. For this reason, "all initiation must reveal clearly its paschal nature. The Easter Vigil, focal point of the Christian liturgy, and its spirituality of Baptism inspire all catechesis.

- The baptismal catechumenate is also an initial locus of inculturation. Following the example of the Incarnation of the Son of God, made man in a concrete historical moment, the Church receives catechumens integrally, together with their cultural ties. All

catechetical activity participates in this function of incorporating into the catholicity of the Church, authentic "seeds of the word", scattered through nations and individuals.

– Finally, the concept of the baptismal catechumenate as *a process of formation and as a true school of the faith* offers post-baptismal catechesis dynamic and particular characteristics: comprehensiveness and integrity of formation; its gradual character expressed in definite stages; its connection with meaningful rites, symbols, biblical and liturgical signs; its constant references to the Christian community.

Post-baptismal catechesis, without slavishly imitating the structure of the baptismal catechumenate, and recognizing in those to be catechized the reality of their Baptism, does well, however, to draw inspiration from "this preparatory school for the Christian life", and to allow itself to be enriched by those principal elements which characterize the catechumenate.

The term catechesis has undergone a semantic evolution during the twenty centuries of the Church's history. In this Directory the concept of catechesis takes its inspiration from the post-conciliar Magisterial documents, principally from *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Catechesi Tradendae* and *Redemptoris Missio*.

The concept of catechesis which one has, profoundly conditions the selection and organization of its contents (*cognitive, experiential, behavioural*), identifies those to whom it is addressed and defines the pedagogy to be employed in accomplishing its objectives.

IV. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

The Christian faith, through which a person says "Yes" to Jesus Christ, may be analysed thus:

– as an adherence, which is given under the influence of grace, to God who reveals himself; in this case the faith consists in believing the word of God and committing oneself to it (*fides qua*);

– as the content of Revelation and of the Gospel message; in this sense, faith is expressed in its endeavour to understand better the mystery of the word (*fides quae*).

Both aspects, by their very nature, cannot be separated. Maturation and growth in the faith require their comprehensive and coherent development. For methodological purposes, however, they can be regarded separately.

Norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis

The word of God: source of catechesis

The source from which catechesis draws its message is the word of God:

"Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures, for sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the word of God, which is entrusted to the Church".

The source and the "sources" of the message of catechesis

The *word of God*, contained in Sacred Tradition and in Sacred Scripture:

– is mediated upon and understood more deeply by means of the sense of faith of all the people of God, guided by the Magisterium which teaches with authority;

– is celebrated in the Sacred Liturgy, where it is constantly proclaimed, heard, interiorized and explained;

– shines forth in the life of the Church, in her two-thousand-year history, especially in Christian witness and particularly in that of the saints;

– is deepened by theological research which helps believers to advance in their vital understanding of the mysteries of faith;

– is made manifest in genuine religious and moral values which, as "seeds of the word", are sown in human society and diverse cultures.

Criteria for the presentation of the message

The criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis are closely inter-connected with each other as they spring from the same source.

– The message centred on the person of Jesus Christ (*christocentricity*), by its inherent dynamic, introduces the trinitarian dimension of the same message.

– The proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of God, centred on the *gift of Salvation*, implies a message of *liberation*.

– The *ecclesial* character of the message reflects its *historic* nature because catechesis—as with all evangelization—is realized within "the time of the Church".

– The Gospel message seeks *inculturation* because the Good News is destined for all peoples. This can only be accomplished when the Gospel message is presented in its *integrity and purity*.

– The Gospel message is a *comprehensive message*, with its own hierarchy of truth. It is this harmonious vision of the Gospel which converts it into a profoundly *meaningful* event for the human person.

Although these criteria are valid for the entire ministry of the word, here they are developed in relation to catechesis.

Nature and purpose of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Pope John Paul II promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on 11 October 1992.

The *Prologue* to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states its purpose: "This catechism aims at presenting an organic synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine, as regards both faith and morals, in the light of the Second Vatican Council and the whole of the Church's Tradition". The Magisterium of the Church intends to render an ecclesial service for our times with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, recognizing that it is:

– "a valid and legitimate instrument for *ecclesial communion*": it desires to promote the bond of unity in the faith by helping the disciples of Jesus Christ to make "the profession of one faith received from the Apostles";

– "a sure norm for *teaching the faith*": the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* offers a clear response to the legitimate right of all the baptized to know from the Church what she has received and what she believes; it is thus an obligatory point of reference for catechesis and for the other forms of the ministry of the word.

– "a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing local catechisms": the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in fact, "is not intended to replace the local catechism (duly approved)" but "to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to Catholic doctrine".

The nature or character proper to this document of the Magisterium consists in the fact that it is a comprehensive synthesis of the faith and thus it is of universal value. In this, it differs from other documents of the Magisterium, which do not set out to present such a synthesis. It differs also from local Catechisms, which, within the context of ecclesial communion, are destined for the service of a particular portion of the people of God.

Structure of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is structured around four fundamental dimensions of the Christian life: the profession of faith; the celebration of the liturgy; the morality of the Gospel; and prayer. These four dimensions spring from a single source, the *Christian mystery*. This is:

- the object of the faith (*Part One*);
- celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions (*Part Two*);
- present to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions (*Part Three*);
- the basis of our prayer, whose supreme expression is the *Our Father*, and the object of our supplication, praise and intercession (*Part Four*);

This four part structure develops the essential aspects of the faith:

- belief in the Triune God and in his saving plan;
- sanctification by him in the sacramental life;
- loving him with all one's heart and one's neighbour as oneself;
- prayer while waiting for the coming of his Kingdom and our meeting with him face to face.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* thus refers to the faith as believed, celebrated, lived and prayed. It is a call to integral Christian education. The structure of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* derives from the profound unity of the Christian life. It maintains an explicit interrelation between "*lex orandi*", "*lex credendi*" and "*lex vivendi*". "The Liturgy itself is prayer; the confession of faith finds its proper place in the celebration of worship. Grace, the fruit of the sacraments, is the irreplaceable condition for Christian living, just as participation in the Church's Liturgy requires faith. If faith is not expressed in works it is dead and cannot bear fruit into eternal life".

The literary genre of The Catechism of the Catholic Church

It is important to understand the literary genre of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in order to foster the role which the Church's authority gives to it in the exercise and renewal of catechetical activity in our time. The principal characteristics of this follow:

- The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is above all a catechism; that is to say, an official text of the Church's Magisterium, which authoritatively gathers in a precise form, and in an organic synthesis the events and fundamental salvific truths which express the faith common to the People of God and which constitute the indispensable basic reference for catechesis.
- In virtue of being a catechism, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* collects all that is fundamental and common to the Christian life without "presenting as doctrines of the faith special interpretations which are only private opinions or the views of some theological school".
- The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is, moreover, a catechism of a universal nature and is offered to the entire Church. It presents an updated synthesis of the faith which incorporates the doctrine of the Second Vatican Council as well as the religious and moral concerns of our times. However, "by design this Catechism does not set out to provide the adaptation of doctrinal presentations and the catechetical methods required by the differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity and social and ecclesial condition amongst all those to whom it is addressed. Such indispensable adaptations are the responsibility of particular catechisms and, even more, of those who instruct the faithful".

Local Catechisms: their necessity

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is given to all the faithful and to those who wish to know what the Catholic Church believes. It is "meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and Catholic doctrine".

Local catechisms, prepared or approved by diocesan Bishops or by Episcopal Conferences, are invaluable instruments for catechesis which are "called to bring the power of the Gospel into the very heart of culture and cultures". For this reason Pope John Paul II has offered a warm encouragement "to the Episcopal Conferences of the whole world to

undertake, patiently but resolutely, the considerable work to be accomplished, in agreement with the Apostolic See, in order to prepare genuine catechisms which will be faithful to the essential content of Revelation and up to date in method, and which will be capable of educating the Christian generations of the future to a sturdy faith".

V. HISTORY OF CATECHETICS

Remote antecedents

OT – the transmission of the Word of God given as a teaching of life see *Deut 4:10; 11:19-20*.

NT – the Gospels are the first great "Catechism" transmitted orally and then put into writing Mt 5:2; 9:35; Mk 1:21; Lk 21:37;. The mission handed down to Peter with the office of the "keys". In the Acts and Pauline literature "to catechize" = instruction regarding the salvific action of God.

Apostolic times

The first Pentecost witnessed the proclamation of the good news of salvation. Acts 2 and the response of the people Acts 2:37-39. Apostles preoccupation was *handing on* and *preserving* the authentic faith Rm 16:17; Eph 4:3; Phil 4:9; 2Tim 4:3; 2 Pt 2:1. There was never an absolute uniformity but adaptation according to the experience of the apostles, the nature and needs of the listeners (eg. The Gospels).

Apostles Creed = confessional statements. In the context of defense against heresies, elaboration of the elements of the faith.

Characteristics of catechesis = **KERYGMA** oral preaching – Acts 10:36-43; 2:17-36, leading to **METANOIA** = conversion of listeners – Acts 2:41-42; set in the **LITURGY** = celebration of the mysteries, and with a Biblical Narrative Style.

In Syria at the end of the 1st century the DIDACHE or "Doctrine of the Apostles" was compiled (1Cor 11:2,23; 15:3)

2nd –3rd century – The catechumentae

At the beginning of 2nd century individual catechesis was substituted by group instruction and Baptism. Converts were Jews, later the Gentiles came in large number without a scriptural and moral background and hence needing more instruction.

Catechumenate of the 3rd century (215AD).

Sources: Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Roma, Justin, Tertulian, Origen. Consists of a rigorous examination of purpose; way of life of the candidate and teaching of Christian doctrine. It could last up to three years. This culminated in the "Handing over" of the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer, never written but memorized (Traditio Symboli).

This was the expression used in the early Church to describe the role of the priest or teacher communicating the faith to an adult catechumen preparing for baptism, done mainly by explaining the Creed. When they were being baptized, the catechumens, in turn, were to recite and profess the Creed. This was called "Redditio Symboli" (giving back the Creed)The candidate had to recite the Creed and Our Father prayer. Then to explain meaning of the truth within the prayer

The 4th-5th c.

characterized by mass conversions. Many entered catechumenate only, but deferred baptism due to the severity of penitential discipline for forgiveness of sin.

St. Augustine: “De catechizandis rudibus” – a guide written for deacon Deo Gratias of Carthage (405AD); (*Catechising of the Uninstructed or For Instructing the Unlearned*); remains a classic narrative style. It is among the first texts on the practice of Christian religious instruction. Augustine even thought to include the content of a sample catechetical teaching session.

There was then the homilies of the Fathers (St. Cyril of Jerusalem 348 AD) and their writings.

Later the “communcation of the Gospels (cfr. Gelasian Sacramentary 6th c.), It is the second oldest western liturgical book that has survived. “Verona sacramentary” also called the “Leonine Sacramentary” is older.

St. Ambrose:

De Sacramentis, De Mysteriis. (to the newly-baptized in Easter week in the nature of the ceremonies and the doctrinal significance of baptism based upon the Old and New Testaments

Councils: of Jerusalem (50 AD),

- Nicea (325 AD), Called by the emperor Constantine I, an unbaptized catechumen. On the occasion of the heresy of Arius (Arianism) It is a concept that Jesus is the Son of God who was begotten y God the Father and is therefore subordinate to the Father.

- Constantinople (381 AD)

Called by Bizantine Emperor Theodosius I, to confirm the Nicene creed.

The first canon of the council and its famous creed (Niceano-Constantinopolitanum).

VI. HISTORY OF CATECHETICS cont.

6th – 10th century (Early Middle Ages)

The Catechumenate begins to decline. Conversion of the Germanic Tribes and Slavs did not follow the old custom; after a few weeks preparation whole tribes baptized and subsequent education left to the community.

Charles the Great the Christian emperor, forced tribes to become Christians.

Charlemagne (c.742-814), also known as Karl and Charles the Great, was a medieval emperor who ruled much of Western Europe from 768 to 814. In 771, Charlemagne became king of the Franks, a Germanic tribe in present-day Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and western Germany. He embarked on a mission to unite all Germanic peoples into one kingdom, and convert his subjects to Christianity. A skilled military strategist, he spent much of his reign engaged in warfare in order to accomplish his goals. In 800, Pope Leo III (750-816) crowned Charlemagne emperor of the Romans. In this role, he encouraged the Carolingian Renaissance, a cultural and intellectual revival in Europe. When he died in 814, Charlemagne’s empire encompassed much of Western Europe, and he had also ensured the survival of Christianity in the West.

Introduction of Infant Baptism. No ecclesiastical catechesis for baptized children, left to the parents close relatives, sponsors, agreed to act as guarantors of the child living Christian life.

Role of the Church now became two-fold: to convert and then to re-educate the masses, forming a new social order based on Christian principles.

10th – 15th century (Middle Ages)

A formal catechesis either for adults or children had passed out of experience, particularly after all entered the Church. The formative religious influence of the Liturgy was

essentially curtailed. Latin introduced as the language of the Church; hence the inability for the people to participate fully. The introduction of the "low masses" and silent liturgies, mainly clergy centered. The education and formation of priests was woefully inadequate. Christianity nevertheless flowered in the Middle Ages.

First, religious training given mainly through parents assisted by the sponsors.

Second, monasteries began to be established. Cloister and cathedral schools already in existence, as a rule for the training of acolytes and candidates for clerical state. A school system was gradually added to this and became an active agent for training the young.

Third, the priests were soon urged to teach the faithful in the vernacular about faith and moral law, on Sundays, through a recitation of formulas and homilies with special focus during Lent.

Fourth, a catechesis through paintings, pictures, ecclesiastical art, stained glass windows, murals, ornate portals, images, richly symbolic liturgical services....helped especially those who were uneducated and illiterate.

Fifth, the sacrament of Penance to some extent prompted religious training, usually allied to an examination of faith. Appearance of "confessional booklets" dominated by the section on the commandments.

Sixth, reading ceased to be a mysterious art, writings and books began to appear; prayer books, books of devotion, posters...

Seventh, a distinctive factor was the communal life. People learned to speak a Christian language; a celebration of popular consciousness eg. Mystery plays; religious customs and atmosphere pervaded the entire life of the faithful.

Johannes Gutenberg was born circa 1395, in Mainz, Germany. He started experimenting with printing by 1438. In 1450 Gutenberg obtained backing from the financier, Johann Fust, whose impatience and other factors led to Gutenberg's loss of his establishment to Fust several years later. Gutenberg's masterpiece, and the first book ever printed in Europe from movable type, is the "Forty-Two-Line" Bible, completed no later than 1455.

In addition to the Bible, Gutenberg's other major achievement was the Psalter (the book of Psalms).

Gutenberg died in Mainz on 3rd of February 1468 and was buried in the church of the Franciscan convent in the nearby town of Eltville, Germany.

To summarize: Formal catechesis was lacking but people grew up in a Christian atmosphere. Formal catechesis revolved around set formulas and too little attention paid to religious formation of the mind. This explains the collapse of religious thought, which the Reformation caused.

Jungmann: "Christianity was ruled far too much by outward conformity to an established order or to the pressure of the environment".

16th century – the Tridentine Reform

Martin Luther (1483-1546) initiated a movement in the 16th century that led whole nations to leave the church: Protestantism. Luther spent his early years in relative anonymity as a monk and scholar. But in 1517 Luther penned a document attacking the Catholic Church's corrupt practice of selling "indulgences" to absolve sin. His "95 Theses" to the door of the Wittenberg Castle church, which propounded two central beliefs—that the Bible is the central religious authority and that humans may reach salvation only by their faith and not by their deeds—was to spark the Protestant Reformation.

In 1529 he published a catechism – the first book reviewed its title for the first time from him in 2 editions, one for pastors the other for children. The content and explanation and orientation. The invention of printing helped him to multiply and spread 100,000 copies within forty years. The question and answer approach popularized its use.

The Council of TRENT (1545-1563) brought out the need for young and old to be more thoroughly instructed in the faith.

- it set the tone for a defensive and apologetic aspects of religious education. Bishops were convinced this was the best way to safeguard the faith of the people
- a call for better education of the priests (seminarians)
- bishops obliged to provide for catechesis especially for adult/children in all parish churches on Sunday/days of obligation
- need for catechisms to be written, no longer as popular devotional books but clear and concise summaries began to appear, but they retained the old devotional style lacking conciseness. In 1555 – the 3 catechisms of St. Peter Canisius condensed in one large Latin catechism (too theological), quotations from scriptures and Fathers. In 1556 he published his “smallest catechism” in Latin as appendix to the grammar for children and soon in German. Finally in 1559 he published a medium sized catechism for youth who attend school. Consisted of 5 essential parts: Faith/Creed, Hope/Prayer, Love/Commandments, Sacraments, Christian Justice.
- In 1556 – the ROMAN CATECHISM or the Catechism of the Council of Trent, under Pope Pius V, written by four theologians under the supervision of St. Charles Borromeo. It was based on 4 sections: Creed, Commandments, Sacraments, Lord’s Prayer. It has come down in use almost to our own days
- In Italy St. Robert Bellarmine composes a catechism in 1598 containing catechetical formulas and “various enumerations”. It was used for a long time in Italy and prescribed for the foreign missions. Other catechisms were written in France and Spain.
- Confraternity of Christian Doctrine was founded in Milan by a layman in 1560. It sought to organize laity as teachers of religion especially for children unable to attend catholic schools. Beginning of Sunday school.
- Special catechesis for children planned to fit within the ordinary parish work. This was vastly helped by the founding of Religious Orders eg. Jesuits, Sulpicians, Christian Brothers... Division of children in age groups became common in cities. The method however was nothing more than explanation of the text and illustrated by examples, sometimes concluded by an admonition or practical application. Emphasis on brainwork and questioning.

17th century

The centuries that followed presented problems in regard to the transmission of the Christian Message. This was especially in the form of different philosophies: Rationalism, Materialism, Atheism, this led to the de-christianization of the social order. (secularization) The growth of Industrialism took people away from their homes and their parish settings which supported their faith. (School for children and fading role of parents) Now they flocked to the towns where they lived anonymously.

Method of St. Sulpice was developed in Paris published in Paris in 1832. A book explaining the system of Catechism classes carried out in the parish of St. Sulpice. He placed emphasis on adapting religious instruction to the age level of children, in the setting of their parishes. They should know the faith and then live it. Catechists are not only to teach them but to install piety in Children.

(Later on John Baptist de la Salle modified the Sulpician method with considerable success).

The exponents of the Sulpician Method have adopted the following division of the Catechism, based on difference in age, circumstances and needs of the children:

1) the Little Catechism, intended for Children from six or seven to ten years of age; 2) First Communion Catechism, for children above the age of ten; and 3) The week Day Catechism for children about to receive first solemn Communion (influence of the decrees of St. Pius X on early and frequent Communion)

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18th – 19th century

A new phase of catechesis of children began with the introduction of universally compulsory school attendance. Religious instruction was linked with elementary schooling. In addition to catechism, “Bible History” begins to occupy a more prominent place. It was gradually recognized that merely fostering a memorized knowledge of the faith was not sufficient since the family no longer supplemented the work of catechist. The secular subjects of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences convinced teachers that they must consider the mental capacity of the child.

20th century – the century of catechesis

There arose around 1900, the Catechetical Movement simultaneously in Munich and Vienna. After courses held in several cities, the first Catechetical Congress was held in Vienna in 1912 and the second in Munich in 1928. (shift from dogmatic approach).

In 1905 Pope Pius X wrote his Encyclical “Acerbo Nimis” that gave catechesis and the faith in general a great impetus. It called for:

- establishment of CCD in every parish. Lay people to be enlisted as teachers;
- a lowering of the age of First Communion to the age of reason – 7 years;
- preparation of the children for the first sacraments;
- use of the missal at Mass (for active participation – in vernacular) and renewal of the liturgy;
- the catechism of Pius X bringing up to date the Roman catechism

There was an attempt at an improved method of catechesis viz., the subject matter should not only be imprinted on the child’s memory but also grasped by the understanding. The teacher was not to begin with the catechism text and then explain its question by question but to use as his starting point an example which appealed to the children and from it to develop the text of the catechism. This was called the Munich Method.

It was not enough to make catechesis understandable for the child; it had to produce long lasting education effective. This inspired the Active or the “Lerning by doing” method. The child learns not only by hearing but also by doing; they are formed not only by words but also life itself. The connection with the liturgy, the entire religious activity of the children was now more fostered. This influenced the arrangement of textbooks. New type of catechisms were written: Deharbe catechism, Baltimore Catechism. Gradually simply memorizing by heart was on its way out.

VII. CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN CATECHESIS

Four stages may be distinguished in the history of catechesis in the 20th c.

1. **Doctrinal stage:** Beginning of the 20th c.

- attention concentrated on Christian Doctrine; oriented to knowledge of the principles of Christian truths and fundamental duties of the baptized
- question and answer form of catechism; list of precise definitions derived from systematic theology.
- Catechetical method based on Deductive – explicative procedure
- All this served to eliminate the grave religious ignorance of the Christians and gave them simple access to the riches of theology

2. **Methodological stage** – up to about 1934

Attention shifted from doctrinal content to Method.

- Influence of the “active school” and congresses of Munich and Vienna led to the Inductive procedure as 3 fold process:
 - presentation of an event, usually biblical explanation to pinpoint the truths contained therein
 - explanation to pinpoint the truths contained therein
 - application to the life of what has been discovered

This development led to a decisive turn in pastoral catechesis; from the explanation of the book, to a way that was more concrete, active and faithful to children. Modern catechetical Pedagogy was born.

3. **Kerygmatic stage** – about 1935 to 1940

Proponents of Biblical Catechesis: Joseph Andreas Jungmann S.J. (1889-1975), Karl Rahner S.J.(1904-1984), Franz Xavier Arnold (1898-1969), Joseph Colomb (1902-1979). Catechetical renewal comes through reflection on the content of faith, not through methodological adaptation. Christianity is above all a message, Good News, neither a system of truths nor a code of laws. At the center of the message is a Person – Jesus Christ: Christocentric. Christ is a synthesis of all history of salvation, fulfilled in Him, not a personage of the past. Historico-biblical catechesis.

4. **Anthropological stage** – 1960's onwards

Preponderant attention on man, his life and his problems. International Catechetical Week of Medellin (1968) introduced the consideration of man's life and problems, of the events of history as echoes of the Word of God, as the content of catechesis. Catechesis is “the action through which a human group interprets, lives and expresses its own situation, in the light of the Gospel” (Audinot)

Africa has a flourishing center set up in Uganda called the Gaba Institute and in Lesotho there is the LUMKO Institute. Tanzania – TAPRI Institute established in 1968.

VIII. CATECHETICS: IDENTITY AND CATEGORIES

The Identity of Catechetics

- The *identity* of Catechetics is derived from the focus of its concern, namely, catechetics in its most varied expressions such as religious teaching, sacramental initiation, catechumenal itineraries, reflection groups, faith journeys, etc.
- More specifically, Catechetics, as a *discipline*, is the systematic scientific reflection on Catechesis with a view to understanding, deepening and implementing this vital educative and pastoral action

Object of Studies

- Catechetics admits of several divisions and modalities according to the different theological and cultural contexts in which it has been developed

Fundamental Catechetics

- It is meant the study of the conditions and the basic presuppositions of catechetical action, as well as its identity and its primary dimension

Material Catechetics

- It has as its object the content of catechesis - the structure and the articulation of the message, the themes to be dealt with, the criteria for selection, the sources of content, etc.

Formal Catechetics

- It deals with the methodological and pedagogical aspects of catechetical transmission or mediation such as methods, structures, agents, language, programs, etc

Other Divisions

- Other authors, instead, simply distinguished between:
- Fundamental (General) Catechetics and
- Special or Differentiated Catechetics

Fundamental (General) Catechetics

- It is distinguished according to the recipients of catechesis such as children, youth, adults, handicapped, parents, etc.

Special and Differentiated Catechetics

- It distinguished on the basis of the various environments or places where catechesis takes place, such as family, school, parish, associations, etc.

The Originality of the Catechetical Discourse

- Catechetics calls for the acknowledgement of the originality and specificity of catechesis, often mistakenly conceived as the simple popularisation of theological content
- The post-Vatican II “Modern Age” (the “epoch of catechism”) has witnessed such a popularisation, and many catechism books, authored or inspired by theologians have been largely the elaboration of theological synthesis
- Theology will always play an important role in catechesis. As a systematic reflection on faith and ecclesial practice, theology plays fundamental role in clarifying and organizing the catechetical process or education of the faith that cannot be ignored

The Distinction Between Theology and Catechetics

- We cannot ignore the essential distinction between these two ecclesial functions that motivate each other and differentiate one from another

Theology and Catechetics

- Systematic Theology responds to the need to establish the scientific foundations that deepen the lived faith

- Catechetics instead is at service of growth in the faith of the persons and groups and involves the existential process of integration of the Christian message in the vital context of their situation, problems and expectations.
- Therefore Theology and Catechetics follow two different methodological paths.
- **Theology** is more intellectual
- **Catechetics** has a transforming and communication agenda

New Challenges For Today's Catechesis

Problems in and for Catechesis in the Cultural and Pastoral Context of Our Times.

It is opportune to begin our reflections on the identity and the nature of catechesis by looking at the actual situation of catechesis in the pastoral ministry of the Church and the place of the Church in the world. Such an approach will enable us to avoid abstract discussions that might lead us away from the actual problems and challenges faced by the Church and pastoral ministry in the varied conditions of our society.

Vatican II -

A Decisive Event

- * The Second Vatican Council remains without doubt the most important ecclesial event of the 20th century and "will prove to have been the council of the third millennium"
- * Although the Council did not deal specifically with the theme of catechesis and although its documents contain very little explicitly on this subject, yet its decisive impact on catechesis has been profound and crucial.
- * The vital contribution of the Second Vatican Council to catechesis consists in clarifying the foundational elements of catechesis.
- * Its **object** or content (the Word of God - inasmuch as catechesis is proclamation of the Word and is called to be at the service of the Word);
- * Its **subject** (the believer - since catechesis is also considered as education to the faith)
- * and its **institutional dimension** (the Church - since catechesis is the action and expression of the Church).

Three major topics of the Conciliar teaching

- the Word
- the Faith
- the Church
- (*Deo Verbum; Ad Gentes; Lumen Gentium; Gaudium et Spes*)

The Catechetical Situation Today

- the boom in *Lay Catechists*
- the flowering of new forms of *community*
- the reawakening of lay ministries
- the increasing demand for religious *formation*
- the new forms of rediscovering and the popular reading of the Bible
- the astonishing growth in the various catechumenal itineraries
- the recognition and acceptance of the role and place of *women*
- the consoling experiences of family catechesis
- the new initiatives of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue

The Crisis of a Church of Many Generations

- * Problem *language* and *its meaningfulness*

- Often one has the impression that the Church uses a language that no one understands, addresses a non-existent audience, answers questions that no one asks and gives solutions that no one practices

* Problems of *language* and *significance*

- Much of the catechesis becomes ineffective since it does not communicate a message that can be understood and become meaningful to persons of our times

The Precariousness of Adult Catechesis

* Even today, many Christians of our communities believe that catechesis is primarily for children; notwithstanding the fact that for so many years, there has been a constant insistence on the urgency and the primacy of the catechesis for adults (cf. GDC59 275) and the need to support a catechesis that promotes the growth of an adult faith in an adult Church.

* But the reality seems to be still very far from the official declarations in this regard. Catechesis of the adult seems to be always only on the point of taking off, while most of the energy is still spent on child and adolescent catechesis.

Difficulties in Pastoral Practice

- The Crisis of Transmission of the Faith and of Religious Socialisations
- The Ideal of Evangelization
- Separation between Faith and Culture
- «The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time» (EN 20)
- The Sacramental Ministry

A Deepening Crisis:

Does Christianity have a Future?

- The current religious situation is complex, varies and rather problematic:
- Massive decrease in religious practice;
- Secularization;
- Dissatisfaction on the part of the young;
- The shortage of vocation;
- The crisis of credibility as regards the Church have given rise to the idea of an irreversible decline of Christian life in many countries.

An Attempt at Understanding

In the face of such problematic situation, one often wonders:

- "Why"!?

- Why has the pastoral system and catechetical work failed?

-What is happening?

Some Inadequate Answers

- To blame the world and today's culture and accuse them of ignoring the religious dimension of the human person;
- To assign the responsibility for the failure by looking within the ecclesial and pastoral realities and point an accusing finger at the Church, priests, its pastoral policies and catechesis;

- To pin down the fault to the recipients of the catechesis and point out that the young and the families are neither open to, nor are they interested in the life of faith. We are sales persons of a product that nobody really wants;
- To trace the blame back to the post-Conciliar transformation of catechesis which has led to the abandonment of certain traditional modes of catechesis;
- To rationalize the situation with the conviction that the young who are alienated will eventually return.

Socio-Political and Economic Factors

- globalization,
- the complexity of a pluralistic society,
- the imbalance and the injustice in the distribution of wealth,
- the scientific and technological developments,
- the expansion of the mediatic and social communication,
- the transformation of the family and the institutions,
- the explosion of nationalism, fundamentalism, and varied forms of intolerance and the (dis)order inset in the international economic systems, etc.

Cultural Changes

- The pastoral action of the Church is always conditioned by the cultural context in which it is developed.
- The complexity of the situations leads it to assume specific contours in different parts of the world; We shall limit ourselves to mentioning the dimensions of cultural transformation in as much as they are related to Modernity, Post-Modernity and the Mediatic Society.
- The values and demands of Modernity such as secularization, the scientific and technical rationality, the growth of subjectivism, the sense of democracy and the desire to participate, are major challenges to the Church in Christian faith. A sincere and effective dialogue between Christian faith and modernity is still very much a pending need.
- Post-Modernity, as a reaction against the excesses and myths of modernity, also challenges the Christian conscience with its characteristics that are sometimes negative, such as the crisis of ideologies, the absence of «mega-stories», «superficial thoughts», the crisis of values and identity, the lack of historical sense, the experience of fragmentation and temporariness, etc. And yet, these can open up to new opportunities.
- Finally the fascinating and the ambiguous world of the Mediatic Society and of communication with their tremendous impact and push for cultural transformations constitute, without doubt, a great challenge to Christianity and to the traditional expressions of Christian faith and life.
- In the context of cultural transformation, it is imperative that the religious element occupy its due position within the contemporary society.

Religion Today - Transformations and Ambiguities

- In a Secularized Society, Religion Loses its Social Relevance
- Religion in a Pluralistic Context, One Option among Many
- The Institutional Crisis - Diminishing Credibility of Official Religions
- In the Post-Modern Culture, Religion is a Short-term Experience
- The «Insignificance» of Religion - the Separation of Faith and Life, Faith and Culture

- In the Mediatic and Digital Culture - Religion, a Fluid «Virtual» and «Spectacular» Reality

Christian Faith in the Context of Multi-faith

- Globalization, technological and mediatic advancements have facilitated also the movement of people from one part of the world to another with greater ease. Such movements bring along with them certain reciprocal influences on the faith of the individuals.
- Coming in contact with persons of other faiths can lead Christians to fall into the temptation of considering the Christian faith as the individual's effort to reach God, while in reality, it is a free gift of God.
- Furthermore, such contacts could promote a perception of Christian faith as a personal individual act and endeavor rather than perceiving it as essentially situated within the community of believers.
- In an effort to live in harmony and collaboration with persons of all faiths, the Christian faith runs the danger of understanding the true nature of dialogue in an exclusivist, lopsided perspective and categorizing and identifying the different aspects of Christian faith in terms of the different ways and stages of life proposed by other religions.
- Such a process runs the risk of turning these ways or stages of life "into a hierarchical order based on a world-negating perspective which sanctions and even privileges a direct movement from the stage of the student to that of the renouncer."

IX. THE PASTORAL ANSWER: WHAT CAN WE DO? WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Some Inadequate Answers

- Responses that the Church is offering
- What we think that the Church, challenged by this situation, should do in order to continue the mission of proclaiming and realizing the Gospel.

Cultural Distancing and Pastoral Routine

- Some pastoral attitudes and answers are dearly inadequate.
- Some pastoral agents tend to undervalue the cultural factors.
- Without seeking to understand the dynamism underlying these transformations and tendencies, they continue to be engaged in the traditional pastoral practices without even a modicum of effort at an analysis and evaluation.

A genuine cultural dialogue does not take place.

- Pastoral activity carries on without evolving a project, programs and evaluative processes, following the beaten path of the routine traditional rules.
- Catechesis in such situation maintains its habitual style with typical doctrinal and systematic characteristics.

Demonizing the World and Culture

- It is the negative attitude that G. Adler summarizes as condemnation without an appeal for a «culture of death», restoration, the horizontal reductionism, the call for untainted interiority.
- These solutions entail serious defects either because they reject modernity or avoid it or else succumb to it without a critical spirit, relegating religion to the private sphere.

- Such postures often deepen the divide of reciprocal mistrust between the Church and the modern world, creating a major obstacle to evangelising efforts.
- A. Fossion affirms that if the image of the Church does not attract a lot of sympathy, it is to be attributed to the fact, that the Church offers to the world a very negative image of itself.
- The degree of sympathy of the world towards the Church seems to correspond perfectly to the degree of sympathy that the Church has towards the world.
- When the current situation is condemned or demonized in the context of a world considered lost, normally fundamentalism and doctrinal rigidity with nostalgia for the past follow as a matter of course.

Two types of attitudes are generally the outcome

- Either a crusade or a desire to re-conquer or re-convert the world and to recuperate the lost spaces;
- Or escape from the world, considered as unredeemable and take refuge within the defensive armour of groups, movements or sects.

X. SITUATING CATECHESIS WITHIN THE RENEWED PASTORAL PROJECT OF EVANGELIZATION

An Articulated Picture Of Pastoral Action

- In view of the new challenges posed for today's catechesis, it is indeed important to situate catechesis within the context of a pastoral project, that is open, courageous and is viewed from the perspective of evangelization and in dialogue with culture and life.
- We do this in order to avoid isolating catechesis from the pastoral action as a whole, and to underline the urgency of a holistic programmed action at the service of a well-conceived pastoral plan or project.

Only in this manner can catechesis offer a valid contribution to the work of evangelization.

- * How does one define the mission of the Church in the world today in adequate terms?
- * How and where does one situate the various actions and activities of the Church in order to envisage a holistic picture of the mission of the Church?
- * What pastoral plan must the Church assume in order to overcome the present crisis of credibility and to be fruitful in its evangelizing mission?
-
- Today's Christians need to clarify for themselves the specificity and the relevance of their mission as persons and as a community.

Furthermore, there is also the question of its future:

- *What type of Ecclesial community does one need to build up?*
- *What is the holistic project that the Church must promote for itself and for its members engaged in pastoral action?*

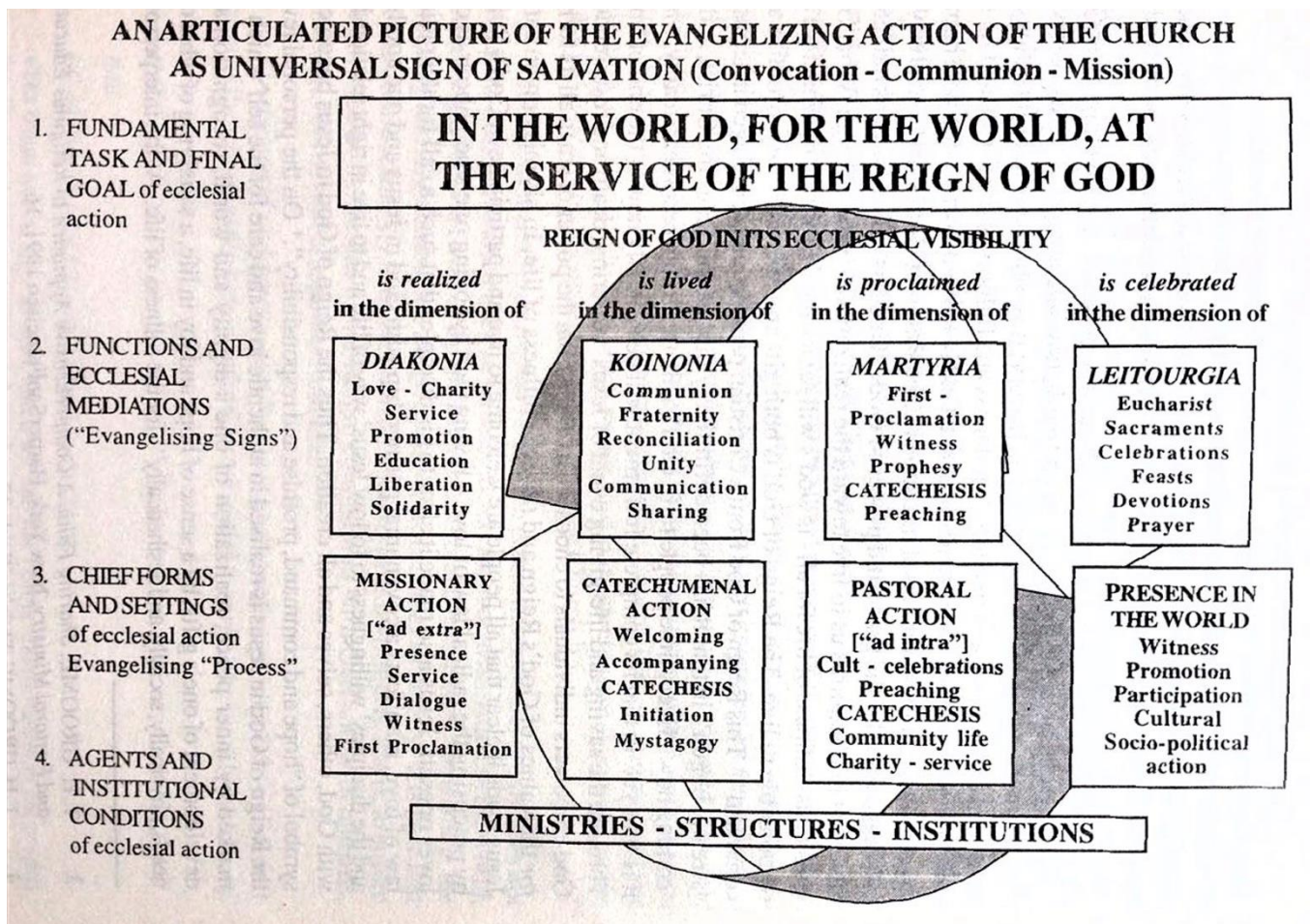
- *An articulated portrait of the evangelising action of the Church (EN 14)*
"Those who evangelize have a 'global vision' of evangelization and identify with the overall mission of the Church" (GDC 46)
- Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium* envisaged the Church as the «universal sacrament of salvation» (LG 48).

This meaningful expression reassumes Vatican II's ecclesiology and conveys its foundational dynamism characterized by its three moments:

- convocation
- communion
- mission.

- The Church primarily is a convocation, that is, «*ekklesia*» (reunion of the called); it is essentially manifested as communion; it is sent out on a mission as messianic people in the midst of the world.

- Convocation, communion and mission are dynamic continuous movements, like the systole and diastole, of a Church that brings in, in order to open out, gathers together in order to feel continuously re-launched into the world and discovers itself in order to lose itself in the humble witness of the Reign, of which it is the first fruit and source.



Towards A Pastoral Project Centred On Evangelization

- A picture of the pastoral priorities focused on evangelization becomes evident when one takes into account the ecclesial praxis of the Church for its immediate future
- In the World, for the World,
- at the Service of the Reign
- (Overcoming Ecclesiocentrism)
- The rethinking of the mission of the Church as «sacrament of the Reign»
- The project of the Reign, inasmuch as it is the destiny of the entire humanity, ought to become the predominant passion and commitment of its ecclesial presence.
- It will be necessary for the Church to assume a missionary orientation, proper of messianic people who are sent into the world to be witnesses and to serve.
- This is not an easy task, since the Church, accustomed to the situation of «Christendom», is always tempted to hold on to its old securities and privileges of the past and to defend its decisive role accomplished in the society in the past.
- It is not easy to abandon, like Abraham, one's own land, kith and kin to journey to a new and open future that is disconcerting, difficult and involves change.

Some consequences of such a fundamental operative option are:

- - Expansion of the Church's care and concern for the service and salvation of all people, of every religion, race and condition with whom it comes into contact;
- - The assumption of the evangelical criteria (the promotion of values of the Reign) when assessing the cultural, economic and political realities;
- - Before the secular state of affairs, an attitude of respect for the legitimate autonomy of the temporal realities (Cf. GS 36) and with freedom and evangelical independence promoting a spirit of dialogue and collaboration and overcoming the traditional dualistic approach (substitution, unwarranted interference, protectionism, formation of political fronts, parallelism, spirit of crusades, etc.);
- - A courageous re-examination, if need be a re-orientation, of its institutions (schools, universities, hospitals, unions, parties, etc.) often perceived solely as defendants of its own institutional rights in front of the progressive autonomy of the civil institutions;
- - A more decisive promotion of the cause of ecumenism overcoming the crystallized attachment of one's presumed «identity» and opening up with sincerity and courage towards the advent of «one holy Reign».

Re-establishing the Signs of Evangelization

(Situating the Sacramental and Devotional Aspects in their true context)

- The comprehension of the ecclesial functions (diakonia, koinonia, martyria and leitourgia) calls for a global revision that overcomes the tendency to give an undue primacy to the celebrative and devotional aspects and reinstates once again, the evangelizing signs of service and communion with their due importance.
- Ecclesial Diakonia
- as a Privileged Sign
- Today, the urgency of evangelization is all the more accentuated from the perspective of person's integral promotion and especially that of the poor.
- Therefore, the emphasis ought to shift to the urgency of service and solidarity with the poor as historical commitment for the integral liberation of humankind. It is an imperative that embraces among other aspects these major demands:

- - The option for the poor and for those excluded is a fundamental feature for a credible witness to the Gospel. Such an option is not in the sense of promoting some activities for the poor but rather recognizing them as the privileged subjects of the ecclesial presence;
- - Relinquishing power could become another imperative for fidelity to the evangelical sense of ecclesial diakonia;
- - The action of Christians needs to be at the service of promotion and integral liberation of all people.
- Today, this commitment, in certain contexts practically constitutes the proof of evangelical authenticity of action and a criterion, in an unambiguous way, for the new pastoral orientation.

Towards an Ecclesial Communion in a Communion of Churches

- The sign of *koinonia* also seeks new expressive forms in order to reflect the values of communion and fellowship among persons.
- Above all, it is manifested in the search for ecumenical communion in order to overcome the prevalent scandalous disunity among the Christians.
- Ecumenism cannot be considered as secondary or marginal aspect. It "is not just some sort of 'appendix' which is added to the Church's traditional activity.
- Rather, ecumenism is an organic part of her life and work, and consequently must pervade all that she is and does."

Cultural Dialogue in Proclamation and in Celebration

- The signs of *martyria* and *leitourgia* will be dealt with later.
- However, already now one can highlight the urgency and the need for a thorough revision of these two pastoral functions that call for greater lucidity and authenticity in the ambit of evangelization.
- Today, one becomes all the more aware of the urgency of inculturation as a process of incarnation of Christian faith in the culture since "*the rupture between the Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time*"(EN 20).

XI. A PASTORAL STYLE WITHOUT A FUTURE: TRADITIONAL PASTORAL MINISTRY

The Primacy of Sacramental and Devotional Activities

- In the pastoral vision, the liturgical-devotional moments have undeniably a place of primacy within the ecclesial actions.
- Sunday Masses, worship, feast, popular and religious devotions had absorbed a major part of the pastoral activity.
- Activities that stimulated religious practices were promoted in order to increase, as far as possible, the so-called «practicing» faithful.
- Less attention was given to personal faith or to the task of evangelization since adhesion to faith was presupposed.
- Many were sacramentalized and only a few were evangelized.
- All the other actions were situated within this primary perspective.

Intra-ecclesial and Centripetal Pastoral Ministry

- The «traditional» pastoral ministry ignored the logic and the dynamics of the process of evangelization.
- The consequences of such a view of pastoral ministry are:
- The missionary action «ad extra» was almost ignored.
- The absence of catechumenal action becomes very evident since there were no adults to be baptized
- Pastoral action «ad intra» occupied the whole space of ecclesial action, thus concentrating on the life and religious practices of the community that maintained its faith.
- The presence and action in the world were limited and frequently conditioned by the cultural and clerical polarization.

Clerical Polarization and Institutional Ballast

- At the institutional level, the pastoral style tended to be clearly distinguished by its clerical character, since almost every action was determined by the clergy (bishops, priests, religious);
- and when extended to the laity, it was on a subordinate plane and solely at the level of implementation.

The Tendency towards Ecclesiocentrism and Self-sufficiency

- In this pastoral vision, the Church, in a certain sense, was at the centre of society, the custodian of truth and salvation, and the owner of the values of the Reign and was practically identified with the Reign of God.
- Some typical manifestations of these ecclesiocentric attitudes are:
- -An overwhelming concern for the possessions of the Church and the defense of the earthly interests rather than the welfare of the person and society in general;
- - Condemnation and distrust towards non-Catholics, non-Christians, non-believers. Ecumenical concern tended to be marginal and secondary;
- - An attitude of opposition and defence against the world and the modern culture with the consequent withdrawal into an ecclesiastical clerical culture and the rigorous separation of tufa itch and culture. (Cf. EN 20);
- - Empower meant and defense of its own institutions and works often in competition and in analogy with the institutions of the civil society.
- This description presented is indeed schematic and almost a caricature.
- But with its distinctive traits, it portrays a style of pastoral ministry that has no future.
- The need of the time calls for a profound conversion and revision in continuity with genuine tradition in order to move towards authentic evangelization.

XII. THE PEDAGOGY OF THE FAITH

Pedagogy of God, source and model of the pedagogy of the faith

Pedagogy of God

“God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (Heb 12:7) The salvation of the person, which is the ultimate purpose of Revelation, is shown as a fruit of an original and efficacious “pedagogy of God” throughout history. Similar to human usage and according to the cultural categories of time, God in Scripture is seen as a merciful Father, teacher and sage.

He assumes the character of the person, the individual and the community according to the conditions in which they are found. He liberates the person from the bonds of evil and attracts him to himself by bonds of love. He causes the person to grow progressively and patiently towards the maturity of a free son, faithful and obedient to his word. To this end, as a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations. Thus he entrusts words of instruction and catechesis which are transmitted from generation to generation. He admonishes with reward and punishment, trials and sufferings, which become a formative influence. *Truly, to help a person to encounter God, which is the task of the catechist, means to emphasize above all the relationship that the person has with God so that he can make it his own and allow himself to be guided by God.*

The pedagogy of Christ

He brought to the world the supreme gift of salvation by accomplishing his redemptive mission in a manner which continued "the pedagogy of God", with the perfection found in the newness of his Person. In his words, signs and works during his brief but intense life, the disciples had direct experience of the fundamental traits of the "pedagogy of Jesus", and recorded them in the Gospels: receiving others, especially the poor, the little ones and sinners, as persons loved and sought out by God; the undiluted proclamation of the Kingdom of God as the good news of the truth and of the consolation of the Father; a kind of delicate and strong love which liberates from evil and promotes life; a pressing invitation to a manner of living sustained by faith in God, by hope in the Kingdom and by charity to one's neighbour; the use of all the resources of interpersonal communication, such as word, silence, metaphor, image, example, and many diverse signs as was the case with the biblical prophets. Inviting his disciples to follow him unreservedly and without regret, Christ passed on to them his pedagogy of faith as a full sharing in his actions and in his destiny.

The pedagogy of the Church

From the her very beginnings the Church, which "in Christ, is in the nature of a Sacrament", (has lived her mission as a visible and actual continuation of the pedagogy of the Father and of the Son. She, "as our Mother is also the educator of our faith". These are the profound reasons for which the Christian community is in herself living catechesis. Thus she proclaims, celebrates, works, and remains always a vital, indispensable and primary *locus* of catechesis.

Throughout the centuries the Church has produced an incomparable treasure of pedagogy in the faith: above all the witness of saints and catechists; a variety of ways of life and original forms of religious communication such as the catechumenate, catechisms, itineraries of the Christian life; a precious patrimony of catechetical teaching of faith culture, of catechetical institutions and services. All of these aspects form part of the history of catechesis and, by right, enter into the memory of the community and the praxis of the catechist.

Divine pedagogy and catechesis

Catechesis, as communication of divine Revelation, is radically inspired by the pedagogy of God, as displayed in Christ and in the Church. Hence, it receives its constitutive characteristics and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it sets out a synthesis to encourage a true experience of faith, and thus a filial encounter with God. In this way, catechesis:

- is a pedagogy which serves and is included in the "dialogue of salvation" between God and the person, while giving due emphasis to the universal end of this salvation; with regard to God it underlines divine initiative, loving motivation, gratuity and respect for our liberty; with regard to man it highlights the dignity of the gift received and the demand to grow continually therein;
- it accepts the principle of the progressiveness of Revelation, the transcendence and the mysterious nature of the word of God and also its adaptation to different persons and cultures;
- it recognizes the centrality of Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man, who determines catechesis as "a pedagogy of the incarnation", and through whom the Gospel is to be proposed for the life and in the life of people;
- it values the community experience of faith, which is proper to the people of God, the Church;
- it is rooted in inter-personal relations and makes its own the process of dialogue;
- it conducts a pedagogy of signs, where words and deeds, teaching and experience are interlinked;
- draws its power of truth and its constant task of bearing witness to it, since the love of God is the ultimate reason for his self-revelation, from the inexhaustible divine love, which is the Holy Spirit.

Thus catechesis takes the form of a process or a journey of following the Christ of the Gospel in the Spirit towards the Father. It is undertaken to reach the maturity of the faith "given as Christ allotted it" (*Eph 4,7*) and according to the possibilities and the needs of everyone.

The original pedagogy of faith

Catechesis, which is therefore active pedagogy in the faith, in accomplishing its tasks, cannot allow itself to be inspired by ideological considerations or purely human interests. It does not confuse the salvific action of God, which is pure grace, with the pedagogical action of man. Neither, however, does it oppose them and separate them. The wonderful dialogue that God undertakes with every person becomes its inspiration and norm. "Catechesis becomes an untiring echo" of this. It continually seeks dialogue with people in accordance with the directions offered by the Magisterium of the Church.

The precise objects which inspire its methodological choices are:

- to promote a progressive and coherent synthesis between full adherence of man to God (*fides qua*) and the content of the Christian message (*fides quae*);
- to develop all the dimensions of faith through which it conveys faith which is known, celebrated, lived and prayed;
- to move the person to abandon himself "completely and freely to God": intelligence, will, heart and memory;
- to help the person to discern the vocation to which the Lord calls him.

Catechesis therefore carries out a complete work of initiation, education and teaching.

Genuine catechesis therefore is that catechesis which helps to perceive the action of God throughout the formative journey. It encourages a climate of listening, of thanksgiving and

of prayer. It looks to the free response of persons and it promotes active participation among those to be catechized.

Evangelize by educating and educate by evangelizing

Being inspired by the pedagogy of faith, catechesis presents its service as a designated educative journey in that, on the one hand it assists the person to open himself to the religious dimension of life, while on the other, it proposes the Gospel to him. It does so in such a manner as to penetrate and transform the processes of intelligence, conscience, liberty and action making of existence a gift after the example of Jesus Christ. Thus the catechist knows and avails of the contribution of the sciences of education, understood always in a Christian sense.

Elements of methodology

Diversity of methods in catechesis

The Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method nor any single method. Rather, she discerns contemporary methods in the light of the pedagogy of God and uses with liberty "everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise" (Phil 4:8). In short, she assumes those methods which are not contrary to the Gospel and places them at its service. This is amply confirmed in the Church's history. Many charisms of service of the word have given rise to various methodological directions. Hence, the "variety of methods is a sign of life and richness" as well as a demonstration of respect for those to whom catechesis is addressed. Such variety is required by "the age and the intellectual development of Christians, their degree of ecclesial and spiritual maturity and many other personal circumstances". Catechetical methodology has the simple objective of education in the faith. It avails of the pedagogical sciences and of communication, as applied to catechesis, while also taking account of the numerous and notable acquisitions of contemporary catechesis.

The content-method relationship in catechesis

The principle of "fidelity to God and fidelity to man" leads to an avoidance of any opposition or artificial separation or presumed neutrality between method and content. It affirms, rather, their necessary correlation and interaction. The catechist recognizes that method is at the service of revelation and conversion and that therefore it is necessary to make use of it. **The catechist knows that the content of catechesis cannot be indifferently subjected to any method.** It requires a process of transmission which is adequate to the nature of the message, to its sources and language, to the concrete circumstances of ecclesial communities as well as to the particular circumstances of the faithful to whom catechesis is addressed.

Because of its intrinsic importance both in tradition and in present day catechesis, mention must be made of the method of approaching the Bible, of "documentary pedagogy", especially of the Creed, since catechesis is a transmission of the faith; of the method of liturgical and ecclesial signs; and of methods proper to the mass media. A good catechetical method is a guarantee of fidelity to content.

Inductive and deductive method

The communication of the faith in catechesis is an event of grace, realized in the encounter of the word of God with the experience of the person. It is expressed in sensible signs and is ultimately open to mystery. It can happen in diverse ways, not always completely known to us. With regard to the history of catechesis, there is common reference today to inductive method and deductive method. **Inductive method consists of presenting facts (biblical events, liturgical acts, events in the Church's life as well as events from daily life) so as to discern the meaning these might have in divine Revelation. It is a method**

which has many advantages, because it conforms to the economy of Revelation. It corresponds to a profound urge of the human spirit to come to a knowledge of unintelligible things by means of visible things. It also conforms to the characteristics of knowledge of the faith, which is knowledge by means of signs. **The inductive method does not exclude deductive method. Indeed it requires the deductive method which explains and describes facts by proceeding from their causes. The deductive synthesis, however, has full value, only when the inductive process is completed.**

In reference to operative means, it has another sense: one is called "kerygmatic" (*descending*), which begins with the proclamation of the message, expressed in the principle documents of the faith (*Bible, liturgy, doctrine...*) and applies it to life; the other is called "existential" (*ascending*), which moves from human problems and conditions and enlightens them with the word of God. By themselves, these are legitimate approaches, if all factors at play have been duly observed; the mystery of grace and human data, the understanding of faith and the process of reason.

Human experience in catechesis

Experience has different functions in catechesis. For this reason, it must be continuously and duly evaluated.

a) It arouses in man, interests, questions, hopes, anxieties, reflections and judgements which all converge to form a certain desire to transform his existence. It is a task of catechesis to make people more aware of their most basic experiences, to help them to judge in the light of the Gospel the questions and needs that spring from them, as well as to educate them in a new way of life. Thus, the person becomes capable of behaving in a responsible and active way before the gift of God.

b) Experience promotes the intelligibility of the Christian message. This corresponds well to the actions of Jesus. He used human experiences and situations to point to the eschatological and transcendent, as well as to show the attitude to be adopted before such realities. From this point of view, experience is a necessary medium for exploring and assimilating the truths which constitute the objective content of Revelation.

c) The above functions indicate that experience, assumed by faith, becomes in a certain manner, a *locus* for the manifestation and realization of salvation, where God, consistently with the pedagogy of the Incarnation, reaches man with his grace and saves him. The catechist must teach the person to read his own lived experience in this regard, so as to, accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to conversion, to commitment, to hope, and to discover more and more in his life God's plan for him.

Memorization in catechesis

Catechetics forms part of that "memory" of the Church which vividly maintains the presence of the Lord among us. Use of memory, therefore, forms a constitutive aspect of the pedagogy of the faith since the beginning of Christianity. **To overcome the risk of a mechanical memorization, mnemonic learning should be harmoniously inserted into the different functions of learning, such as spontaneous reaction and reflection, moments of dialogue and of silence and the relationship between oral and written work.**

In particular, as **objects of memorization, due consideration must be given to the principal formulae of the faith.** These assure a more precise exposition of the faith and guarantee a valuable common doctrinal, cultural and linguistic patrimony. Secure possession of the language of the faith is an indispensable condition for living that same faith. Such formulae, however, should be proposed as syntheses after a process of explanation and should be faithful to the Christian message. To be numbered amongst them are some of the major formulae and texts of the Bible, of dogma, of the liturgy, as

well as the commonly known prayers of Christian tradition: (*Apostles' Creed, Our Father, Hail Mary...*).

The role of the catechist

No methodology, no matter how well tested, can dispense with the person of the catechist in every phase of the catechetical process. The charism given to him by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life, constitutes the soul of every method. Only his own human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other work instruments.

The catechist is essentially a mediator. He facilitates communication between the people and the mystery of God, between subjects amongst themselves, as well as with the community. For this reason, his cultural vision, social condition and lifestyle must not be obstacles to the journey of faith. Rather, these help to create the most advantageous conditions for seeking out, welcoming and deepening the Christian message. He does not forget that belief is a fruit of grace and liberty. Thus, he ensures that his activities always draw support from faith in the Holy Spirit and from prayer. Finally, the personal relationship of the catechist with the subject is of crucial importance.

Community, person and catechesis

Catechetical pedagogy will be effective to the extent that the Christian community becomes a point of concrete reference for the faith journey of individuals. This happens when the community is proposed as a source, *locus* and means of catechesis. Concretely, the community becomes a visible place of faith-witness. It provides for the formation of its members. It receives them as the family of God. It constitutes itself as the living and permanent environment for growth in the faith.

The importance of the group

Groups play an important function in the development processes of people. The same is true of catechesis, both for children where it fosters a rounded sociability, and for young people where groups are practically a vital necessity for personality formation. The same is true of adults where they promote a sense of dialogue and sharing as well as a sense of Christian co-responsibility. The catechist who participates in such groups and who evaluates and notes their dynamics recognizes and plays the primary specific role of participating in the name of the Church as an active witness to the Gospel, capable of sharing with others the fruits of his mature faith as well as stimulating intelligently the common search for faith. Apart from its didactic aspect, the Christian group is called to be an experience of community and a form of participation in ecclesial life. It finds its goal and fullest manifestation in the more extended Eucharistic community. Jesus says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst" (*Mt 18:20*).

Social communication

"The first areopagus of the modern age is the world of communication, which is unifying humanity... The means of social communication have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behaviour as individuals, families and within society at large". For this reason, in addition to the numerous traditional means in use, the media has become essential for evangelization and catechesis. In fact, "the Church would feel herself guilty before God if she did not avail of those powerful instruments which human skill is constantly developing and perfecting... In them she finds in a new and more effective forum a platform or pulpit from which she can address the multitudes".

In this respect, the following can be considered: television, radio, press, discs, tape recordings, video and audio cassettes, Compact Discs, as well as the entire range of audio-visual aids. All of these media offer a particular service and everybody will have his own

specific use for them. It is therefore necessary to appreciate their importance and to respect their demands. In every well planned catechesis, such aids cannot be absent. Reciprocal assistance between the Churches, so as to defray the rather high costs of acquiring and running such aids, is a true service to the Gospel. Good use of the media requires of catechists a serious commitment to knowledge, competence, training and up to date use of them. But, above all, because of the strong influence of the mass media and culture, it must be remembered that "it is not enough to use the media simply to spread the Christian message and the Church's authentic teaching. It is also necessary to integrate that message into the "new culture" created by modern communications... with new languages, new techniques and a new psychology". Only by this, with the grace of God, can the Gospel message have the capacity to penetrate the consciousness of all and obtain a personal acceptance as well as a complete personal commitment.

Those who work in the mass media, as well as those who make use of them should be able to receive the grace of the Gospel. This should cause catechists to consider particular groups of people: media professionals to whom the Gospel can be pointed out as a great horizon of truth, of responsibility and of inspiration; families—who are so much exposed to the influence of the media—for their defence, but more so in view of a growing critical and educational capacity; the younger generations, who are the users and creative subjects of mass media communications. All are reminded that "the use of these instruments by professionals in communication and their reception by the public demand both a work of education in a critical sense, animated by a passion for the truth, and a work of defence of liberty, respect for the dignity of individuals, and the elevation of the authentic culture of peoples".

XIII. DOING CATECHESIS

Important point to be kept in mind why projecting catechesis work in the Local Church or parish:

1. Know the context:

- whom we are addressing
- culture
- abilities
- age
- previous religious knowledge

2. Content

- proper textbook (adapted to the context and updating in teaching)
- Scriptures, Tradition, fathers of the Church and Church's Documents
- Language simple rich in examples and stories
- Transmitting living faith and not simple knowledge

3. Methodology

Method is of great importance in process of catechising.

Deductive – starts from text and gives applications for life (not sufficient)

Inductive – starts from life and goes to the text

What is needed – creativity, active participation and involvement

4. Instruments

- traditional
- mass media
- pedagogy, sociology, psychology

5. Programme
6. Plan
7. Evaluation

XIV. NEW APPROACH TO CATECHESIS

Old

- Focus: textbook and teacher
- Content: truths of our faith
- Process: explanation of texts, (passive reception)
- Product: intellectual assent
- Result: Obligation

New

- Focus: student
- Content: God as person
- Process: probing life experience (what respond Gods is asking from me)
- Product: Conversion, Transformation, Change
- Result: Relationship

Human Approach In Catechesis

Focus on the needs of audience:

Pattern Lk 24:13-25 Two disciples going to Emmaus

4 steps of catechesis:

1. Life experience (listen to audience like Jesus to 2 disciples)
2. Message – Biblical narrative

Discovery (change of heart) Jesus stays with his disciples as long as it is needed then He moves.

3. Activity – Witness

Ex. Zacheus, Samaritan woman, Mary Magdalene

Every catechesis is a saving event. Not obligation but relationship with Jesus.

Preparing a “lesson” of catechesis

1. An interesting starting point
2. Identifying ourselves with people (context)
3. Religious fact – give light upon people experience (re-living Scripture today)
4. Development of the message – participation, questions, discussion, examples
5. Your catechesis (personalized): assimilation, personalize, silence, inculturation
- 6.

The Method Of A Catechist

General Guidelines

Learning – all of us like to learn new things

Ways of learning :

- scientific learning
- learning from other people (what they do and say)

Teaching:

- through actions
- through words

Actions - Your first teaching is what you *are* - before listening to what you say, people will *look* at you. People will first pay attention to the way you act, the way you behave, the way you live. Then, and only then, will they pay attention to what you say.

There is a proverb: “What you are doing speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying” = your actions speak louder than your words, if you teach about kindness to the other people but you yourself are impatient and never ready to help, do you think people will listen to your teaching? ect.

We must remind ourselves that the people we are sent have never seen God, they expect to find him and to know him *through us*.....

Words – it is necessary we know the best ways to pass on the message, God’s message. That the purpose of our course.

Basic To Teaching: *aim or goal*

Before we start teaching we must have clear in our minds what we want to teach in a particular lesson. In other words, *Why* do I teach this lesson? What do I want my people to get from this particular subject? What is a special point I want the people to *understand* – to *remember* – to *imitate*. This special point we call the *aim* or the *goal*.

Ways Of Teaching

- one way of teaching is this one: the teacher stands in front of the class or the group of people and gives his lesson. He tries to pass on to them his knowledge. He talks to them, he explains to them. They are supposed to listen and to receive what he says.
- But there is other way of teaching – it is to make teaching a two-way activity. By this we mean that the teacher shares with the learners the work of teaching. We understand and remember better if we have been asked to *participate*, to *do something* during the teaching period. This will mean that you will not only be talking to the people but also talking with the people. How to do it – do not try to feed them everything; rather, try to get from their personal experience as much food as possible to make the lesson solid and nourishing. This does not mean that you will not teach. There are basic facts; truths that need to be presented and explained but you can do it together with them.

As a religious teacher you are to help the people to receive God’s word, to accept and agree with God’s word and to live according to God’s word.

Hints for good teaching

Senses are the “doors of knowledge” – people of science tell us that we learn 11 per cent through *hearing* and 83 per cent through *seeing*. If you only speak at your lesson people remember 11 words out of 100 but if you choose to teach so that they see (pictures, drawings, writing of the board) they have the chance to remember 83 words out of 100.

There are many ways of repeating the same teaching under different forms:

- telling a story
- showing picture
- making the people repeat some short sentences from the lesson
- singing a song
- drawing on the board
- miming a scene of the Gospel
- having a short discussion

All these ways help you to make the lesson interesting and alive. Because they must use their eyes, their ears, lips, hands – their minds are more open and more able to receive your teaching.

While explaining something yourself, make sure that the people are with you, that you have not left them on the way busy with their own thoughts. You can make sure that they are following you and understand you correctly by:

- asking questions
- making them repeat what you have just said
- asking them to say what they think about what you have just been saying

Teaching method

Method: *life approach*

You start your lesson not with a sentence from the Gospel, not with a question from the small catechism, but with an example taken from the life of the people. You first talk about something that is well known to the people and from there you go on explaining what you want to teach about God or Christ, of the sacraments, etc. Why this method? Because, it is the method used by Christ himself. He used things people knew well, examples from their daily life, he ask the people to look at the flowers, birds of the air, He said I am the door, the light, the shepherd, the vine. He told them to be prudent as serpents and simple as doves, Her spoke about sower, of harvest... He started there and from there spoke to them about God.

This is the method we should use, start from what is known to our people in their everyday life and from there talk to them about God.

Three stages of preparing lesson:

- before lesson
- during lesson
- after lesson

Before lesson – most important thing is to *prepare* your lesson – preparation should be done at *home* and *the day before the lesson* and not on the way to school or few minutes before class. You should choose a quiet place and a moment when you will not be disturbed and you plan you lesson. How to plan? You think of two things:

- **the people you are going to teach** (their age, of their type of the work, education, customs of the area, special needs of the people who will come to listen to you)
- **the message you want to give them** (*what* to say and *how* to say).

What to say = what are the ideas you want to pass on to the people? what are the things you want them to learn and to remember? To begin with, write the *aim* – the main idea – of your lesson on a piece of paper. Then list a few other ideas that will develop, that will enlarge, the basic idea.

How to say it = with what examples, stories and proverbs will you make your teaching clear?

Never go for lesson without preparation – you are God’s representative who bring God’s message do not bring shame. You can never become a really good teacher without preparing your lessons... *preparation or lesson planning is a must!*

During the lesson – the lesson has 3 steps:

1. *an example from the daily life of the people* – whatever you choose, make sure that it is like what you plan to explain afterwards in the Scripture
2. *from example then you pass to the text of the Gospel and you link the two together* – this second part is God’s message. It is the most important part of your teaching and it suppose to take the longest time of your teaching. Your explanation should

center on *one point*. Do not try to teach the whole Christian Doctrine in one period. That one point you explain clearly and you repeat it in many different ways.

3. *then return to the daily life of the people* – and show them with concrete examples how they can live their own lives according to God’s message they have heard today. Pay attention not to be general and vague. If you say: “My brothers, let us love God” or “My brothers, let us always be kind” you have not helped your people. You have still to show them how a Christian loves God and in which way they are to be kind. Example: take care of their children, be patient with troublesome neighbors, use the money for the needs of the family... This third step is called *new life*, the life we live after having met Christ and received his message.

At the end of your lesson, leave the people with one thought to keep on thinking about till the next meeting.

After the lesson – try to judge your lesson: where it went well; how far you have succeeded; what the weak points were; how you could improve and make the next lesson even better.

Result of good teaching – if you followed the 3 steps, the people have understood what you explained; the people have seen that what you explained concerns their life – it is important for them; the people decide to live according to what you explained Christ expects from them.

APPENDIX

GENERAL CATECHETICAL DIRECTORY - 1997

PREFACE

In its present form the *General Directory for Catechesis* seeks to arrive at a balance between two principal requirements:

- on the one hand the contextualization of catechesis in evangelization as envisaged by *Evangelii Nuntiandi*;
- on the other the appropriation of the content of the faith as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The *General Directory for Catechesis*, while retaining the basic structure of that of 1971, is divided as follows:

– The *Introduction* takes its starting point from faith and trust in the power of the Gospel seed, and proposes guidelines for interpreting and understanding human and ecclesial conditions. These are intended to assist mission.

– *Part One* - has three chapters and roots catechesis above all in the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum*, placing it in the context of evangelization as seen in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Catechesi Tradendae*, and proposes, moreover, to clarify the nature of catechesis;

– *Part Two* - contains two chapters, the first of which, under the title *Norms and Criteria for presenting the Gospel message in Catechesis*, puts forward afresh the entire content of the corresponding chapter of the previous text from a new and enriched perspective; the second chapter, which is completely new, serves to present the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a reference point for the transmission of the faith in catechesis and for the preparation of catechisms at local level; this chapter also outlines those fundamental principles to be employed in the redaction of catechisms in particular and local Churches;

– *Part Three* - has also been revised to formulate the main elements of a pedagogy of the faith inspired by divine pedagogy; while this question is primarily a theological one, it also involves the human sciences;

– *Part Four* - is entitled *Those to be catechized*; in five short chapters attention is given to the diverse situations and contexts of those to whom catechesis is directed, to matters arising from socio-religious situations, and in particular, to the question of inculturation;

– *Part Five* - focuses on the centrality of the particular Church and on its primordial duty to promote, organize, oversee and co-ordinate all catechetical activities; of particular significance is the description of the roles proper to the various agents involved in catechesis (who, of course, are always dependent on the Pastors of the particular Churches) and of the requirements necessary for their respective formation;

- The *Conclusion* advocates an intensification of catechetical activity in our times, and concludes with an appeal to faith in the action of the Holy Spirit and in the efficacy of the word of God sown in love.

The object of this Directory is clearly the same as that pursued by the 1971 Directory. It attempts to provide those fundamental theologico-pastoral principles drawn from the Church's Magisterium, particularly those inspired by the Second Vatican Council, which are capable of better orienting and coordinating the pastoral activity of the ministry of the word and, concretely, catechesis. The basic intention of the Directory was (and remains) that of offering reflections and principles, rather than immediate applications or practical directives. This method has been adopted principally for the reason that defects and errors in catechetical material can be avoided only if the nature and end of catechesis, as well as the truths and values which must be transmitted, are correctly understood from the outset.

The Directory is addressed principally to the Bishops, Episcopal Conferences and, in a general way, in accordance with their competence, to those who have responsibility for catechesis. Clearly it will be of use in forming those preparing for ordination to the Priesthood, in the continuing formation of priests and in the formation of catechists.

The immediate end of the Directory is to assist in the composition of catechetical directories and catechisms.

Since the Directory is intended for the use of particular Churches, whose pastoral needs vary greatly, it is obvious that only common or intermediate concerns could be taken into account.

INTRODUCTION

The Actual problems

1. World

- constant changes
- pluralism
- dynamism of our age

5. Church

- traditional faith (Catholics by name)
- religious indifference/atheism

culture – inculturation

Some challenges for catechesis

n. 33. In order to express its vitality and to be efficacious, catechesis today needs to undertake the following challenges and directions:

- Above all it needs to present itself as a valid service to evangelization of the Church with an accent on missionary character;
- It should address itself to those who have been and continue to be its privileged recipients: children, adolescents, young people and adults;
- Based on the example of catechesis in the patristic era, it needs to form the personality of the believer and therefore be a true and proper school of Christian pedagogy;
- It needs to announce the essential mysteries of Christianity, promoting the trinitarian experience of life in Christ as the center of the life of faith;
- It needs to consider as its primary task the preparation and formation of catechists in the deep riches of the faith.

PART ONE CATECHESIS IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION

"Go into all the world; and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 16:15).

Revelation = act where God enters in personal communion with us

Catechesis = to help the people to enter personal communion with God, catechesis link God's communication with our response

Faith = acceptance and response of individual to what God is communicating

Catechesis – ought to be Christ centered; not knowledge about Jesus but personal encounter with Jesus as Person as Savior

Catechesis – its function is to develop in man a living, explicit and active faith, enlighten by doctrine.

I. The meaning and purpose of Part One

n. 35. This first part intends to define the proper character of catechesis.

1. Its first chapter, with regard to theology, recalls briefly the concept of Revelation as set forth in the conciliar constitution **Dei Verbum**. It determines in a specific manner the way in which the ministry of the word is to be conceived. The concepts

- *word of God,*
- *Gospel,*
- *Kingdom of God,*
- *Tradition,*

in this dogmatic constitution, are fundamental to the meaning of catechesis. Together with these, the concept of **evangelization** is an indispensable point of reference for catechesis. The same dynamic is presented with new and profound precision in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

1.1 Revelation: deeds and words

n 38. God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses human events and words to communicate his plan; he does so progressively and in stages,(83) so as to draw even closer to man. God, in fact, operates in such a manner that man comes to knowledge of his salvific plan by *means of the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them.*

1.2 Jesus Christ: mediator and fullness of Revelation

n. 40. God revealed himself progressively to man, through the prophets and through salvific events, until he brought to completion his self-revelation by sending his own Son.

1.3 The transmission of Revelation by the Church, the work of the Holy Spirit

n. 42. The Revelation of God, culminating in Jesus Christ, is destined for all mankind: "He (God) desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (*1 Tim 2,4*) In virtue of his universal salvific will, God has ordained that Revelation should be transmitted to all peoples and to all generations and should remain always in its entirety.

1.4 Evangelization

n. 46. The Church "**exists in order to evangelize**" that is "the carrying forth of the Good News to every sector of the human race so that by its strength it may enter into the hearts of men and renew the human race".

1.5 The process of evangelization

nn. 47-48. The Church, while ever containing in herself the fullness of the means of salvation, always operates "by slow stages". The conciliar decree *Ad Gentes* clarifies well the dynamic of the process of evangelization. Accordingly, in conformity with this, evangelization must be viewed as the process by which the Church, moved by the Spirit, proclaims and spreads the Gospel throughout the entire world. Evangelization:

- is urged by *charity*, impregnating and transforming the whole temporal order, appropriating and renewing all cultures;
- bears *witness* amongst peoples of the new way of being and living which characterizes Christians;
- *proclaims explicitly the Gospel*, through "first proclamation", calling to conversion. *initiates into the faith and the Christian life*, by means of "catechesis" and the "sacraments of Christian initiation", those who convert to Jesus Christ or those who take up again the path of following him, incorporating both into the Christian community;

– constantly nourishes the gift of *communion* amongst the faithful by means of continuous education in the faith (homilies and other forms of catechesis), the sacraments and the practice of charity;

– continuously arouses *mission*, sending all the disciples of Christ to proclaim the Gospel, by word and deed throughout the whole world.

The ministry of the word is exercised in "different forms". The Church, since apostolic times, in her desire to offer the word of God in the most appropriate manner, has realized this ministry in the most varied of ways. All of these, however, perform the essential and fundamental functions of the ministry of the word itself.

1.6 Functions and forms of the ministry of the word

n. 51. The following are the principal functions of the ministry of the word:

– *Called together and called to faith*

This function is the most immediate expression of the missionary mandate of Jesus. It is realized through "**the primary proclamation**", directed to non-believers; those who have chosen unbelief, those Christians who live on the margins of Christian life, those who follow other religions. The religious awakening of the children of Christian families, is also an eminent form of this function.

– *Initiation*

Those who are moved by grace to decide to follow Jesus are "introduced into the life of faith, of the liturgy and of the charity of the People of God". The Church achieves this function fundamentally by catechesis, in close relation with the sacraments of initiation, whether these are about to be received or have already been received. Important forms include: **the catechesis of non-baptized adults in the catechumenate, the catechesis of baptized adults who wish to return to the faith, or of those who need to complete their initiation**; the catechesis of children and of the young, which of itself has the character of initiation. Christian education in families and religious instruction in schools also have an initiatory function.

– *Continuous education in the faith*

In many regions this is also called "**permanent catechesis**".

It is intended for those Christians who have been initiated in the basic elements of the Christian faith, but who need constantly to nourish and deepen their faith throughout their lives. This function is accomplished through a great variety of forms: "systematic and occasional, individual and community, organized and spontaneous".

– *The liturgical function*

The ministry of the word also has a liturgical function since, when realized within the context of a sacred action, it is an integral part of that action. It takes different forms but amongst them the most important is the homily. Other forms in the liturgical context include celebrations of the word and instruction received during the administration of the sacraments. On the other hand, mention must also be made of the immediate preparation for reception of the different sacraments, the celebration of sacramentals and above all of the participation of the faithful in the Eucharist, as a primary means of education in the faith.

– *The theological function*

This seeks to develop understanding of the faith and is to be situated in the dynamic of "*fides quaerens intellectum*", that is, of belief which seeks to understand. Theology, in order to fulfil this function, needs to confront philosophical forms of thought, various forms of humanism and the human sciences, and dialogue with them. It is articulated whenever: "**the systematic treatment and the scientific investigation of the truths of the Faith**" (139) are promoted.

n. 52. The important forms of the ministry of the Word are: the first announcement or missionary preaching, pre and post baptismal catechesis, the liturgical forms and the theological forms. Then, it often happens, for pastoral reasons, that important forms of the ministry of the word must assume more than one function. Catechesis, for example, together with its initiatory forms, has frequently to discharge tasks of mission. The same homily, depending on circumstances, can take on both the functions of convocation and of integral initiation.

1.7 Conversion and faith

n. 53. In proclaiming the Good News of Revelation to the world, evangelization invites men and women to conversion and faith. The call of Jesus, "Repent and believe in the Gospel", (*Mk* 1,15) continues to resound today by means of the Church's work of evangelization. The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ making, of oneself a disciple of him. This demands a permanent commitment to think like him, to judge like him and to live as he lived. In this way the believer unites himself to the community of disciples and appropriates the faith of the Church.

1.8 Socio-religious situations and evangelization

n. 58. The evangelization of the world finds itself placed in a very diversified and changing religious panorama, in which it is possible to distinguish three basic situations requiring particular and precise responses.

a) The situation of those "peoples, groups and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups". This situation requires a "**mission *ad gentes***", where missionary activity is concentrated preferably toward young people and adults. Its particular characteristic consists in the fact that it is directed to non-Christians and invites them to conversion. In this context catechesis is usually developed within the baptismal catechumenate.

b) There are, moreover, situations in which, in a definite socio-cultural context, "**there are Christian communities with adequate and solid ecclesial structures**". They are fervent in their faith and in Christian living. They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the Universal mission". These communities demand an intense "pastoral action of the Church" since they are made up of people and families of profound Christian outlook. In such contexts it is vital that catechesis for children, adolescents and young people develop various processes of well-articulated Christian initiation, which permit these to arrive at adulthood with mature faith, which makes evangelizers of those who have been evangelized. Also in these situations adults are also in need of different types of Christian formation.

c) In many countries of established Christian tradition and sometimes in younger Churches there exists "**an intermediate situation**", where "entire groups of the baptized have **lost a living sense of the faith**, or even **no longer consider themselves members of the Church and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel**". Such situations require "**a new evangelization**". The peculiar nature of this situation is found in the fact that missionary activity is directed towards the baptized of all ages, who live in a religious context in which Christian points of reference are perceived purely exteriorly. Here primary proclamation and basic catechesis are priorities.