

# **FOSTERING THE FAITH OF A PILGRIM PEOPLE**

## **NATIONAL CATECHETICAL DIRECTORY**



**Conference of Catholic Bishops of India**



# FOSTERING THE FAITH OF A PILGRIM PEOPLE

*NATIONAL CATECHETICAL DIRECTORY*  
**CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF INDIA**  
*Prepared by Commission for Catechetics*



**CCBI CENTRE**

P.B. 8490, Hutchins Road 2nd Cross  
Bangalore, Karnataka 560 084, India

**Fostering the Faith of a Pilgrim People**  
*National Catechetical Directory*

**Published by**

Director, CCBI Centre  
P.B. No. 8490, Hutchins Road 2 Cross  
Bangalore- 560084, Karnataka, India

Tel: +91-80-25498282, Fax: +91-80-25498182

Email: [ccbisecretariat@gmail.com](mailto:ccbisecretariat@gmail.com)

Website: [www.ccbi.in](http://www.ccbi.in)

**Text Prepared by**

Commission for Catechetics  
Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

**Cover**

Artist Joyti Sahi

**Copyright to**

The Director, CCBI Centre

**Published on**

3 February 2015

Copies – 3000

Price – ₹ 250

**© CCBI Centre**

All rights reserved to the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the Publisher.

## CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS .....	xvii
DECREE OF PROMULGATION.....	xxi
PREFACE.....	xxiii
GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....	1
Lord Walks with Us.....	1
Fostering the Faith of a Pilgrim People.....	1
National Catechetical Directory of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India .....	2
Origin of the Directory.....	4
Authority.....	6
Structure of the Directory.....	7
Objectives of the Directory.....	7

### Part One

#### THE CONTEXT

Reading the Signs of the Times.....	11
-------------------------------------	----

### Chapter I

#### *India's Heritage and Strengths*

Introduction.....	13
1. Our Rich History and Heritage.....	13
a. Religiosity in all facets of Indian life.....	14
b. Development of media .....	15
c. Environmental consciousness.....	16
2. India's Religious Traditions.....	17
a. Religious sense of interiority.....	17
b. Sense of sacramentality .....	18
c. Spirit of renunciation, austerity and truth .....	19
d. Compassion, non-violence and disinterested dedication .....	19

e. Discernment, cosmic harmony and communion.....	19
f. Silence, joy and peace.....	20
g. Religions in harmony.....	21
Conclusion.....	21

## Chapter II

### *India's Struggles and Challenges*

Introduction.....	23
1. Poverty, Inequalities and Injustices.....	23
a. Problems related to unemployment.....	24
b. Indebtedness in rural households.....	24
c. Rural and urban housing.....	25
d. Lack of health care.....	25
e. Illiteracy and its bitter fruits.....	26
f. Synthesis of scientific and spiritual values.....	26
g. Root causes.....	27
2. Poorest and Marginalized Sections.....	28
a. Scheduled castes.....	28
b. Scheduled tribes.....	29
c. Infants and children.....	30
d. Youth in India.....	30
e. Women and girl-children in India.....	31
3. Current Ideologies.....	32
a. Religious fundamentalism.....	32
b. Communalism.....	33
4. Other Destructive Trends.....	33
a. Corruption.....	34
b. Consumerism.....	34
c. Criminalization of politics.....	35
d. Types of violence.....	35
Conclusion.....	35

## Chapter III

### *Catechetical Situation in India*

Introduction.....	37
1. Journey to the Roots.....	37
2. Heritage of Christianity in India.....	38
a. Emergence of lay participation.....	38

b. Catechesis in villages.....	39
c. Ministry of lay leaders.....	39
d. Service to oppressed people.....	40
3. Catechetical Situation Today: Development and Challenges.....	40
a. Christian churches and religious sects.....	41
b. Catechesis for adults .....	41
c. Catechesis for families.....	42
d. Young people in search of God-experience .....	42
e. Catechesis for children .....	43
f. Need of inculturation .....	43
g. Catechesis and popular devotion.....	44
h. Catechesis and justice .....	44
i. Integration of media and catechesis .....	45
Conclusion.....	45

## Part Two

### THE MISSION

The Church is led by the Spirit .....	49
---------------------------------------	----

## Chapter I

### *Jesus' Mission Handed Down to the Church*

Introduction.....	51
1. Old Testament Vision of the Kingdom of God.....	51
God as Saviour and Liberator .....	52
2. Meditation on Jesus the Missionary.....	52
a. Mission tour with Jesus Christ .....	54
<i>i. Christ's vision of the Kingdom .....</i>	55
<i>ii. Threefold role of Jesus Christ.....</i>	56
b. Decisiveness of Jesus' mission for human history.....	57
3. Apostolic Church's Vision and Mission.....	59
Making disciples of all nations .....	59
4. The Church's Mission Consciousness: Reflections on how the Synoptic Gospels Converge .....	60
a. The Church's identity as a people called and sent.....	60
b. The Church as heir to Christ's own saving-mission tasks.....	60
c. A Church with world-horizons.....	61
Conclusion.....	62

## Chapter II

### *The Second Vatican Council and Church Renewal*

Introduction.....	63
1. The Mission of the Church according to the Council.....	63
a. Sources of the Church's life: Hearing and proclaiming God's Word.....	64
b. Proclamation of God's Word.....	65
2. Catholicity and Apostolicity of Mission.....	67
Incarnational mission.....	68
3. Ministry of the Word in Mission of Evangelization .....	69
4. Evangelization: the Mission of the Church .....	71
5. Catechesis in Evangelization .....	71
a. Evangelization as a complex process .....	74
b. Evangelization and witness of life.....	75
Conclusion.....	76

## Chapter III

### *Renewal of Mission in India*

Introduction.....	77
1. Dialogue of Salvation: Expression of God's Universal Love.....	78
Preferential love for poor and oppressed.....	79
2. The Council's Defence of Religious Liberty .....	79
3. Mission in India .....	81
a. The Church's mission in India.....	81
b. Community of faith .....	81
4. Laity as Catechists in Church in India.....	82
a. Role of women in the Church.....	83
b. Social communications in India.....	84
c. Dialogue: A responsibility in evangelization .....	85
d. Characteristics of post-conciliar catechesis .....	85
Conclusion.....	89



## Part Three

### THE MESSAGE

Content of our Faith.....	93
---------------------------	----

#### Chapter I

##### *Symphony of Faith*

Introduction.....	95
1. Nuances of Faith .....	95
2. Sources of Catechesis.....	97
a. Sacred Scripture and Tradition .....	99
b. Patristic Tradition .....	100
3. Catechism of the Catholic Church: Roadmap for every Pilgrim .....	101
a. Creed .....	104
b. Sacraments.....	104
c. Morality.....	105
d. Prayer .....	106
4. Advent of Compendium and Youcat .....	106
5. Other Sources.....	110
a. Local catechisms.....	110
b. Catechetical directory .....	112
Conclusion.....	113

#### Chapter II

##### *Dimensions of Christian Message*

Introduction.....	115
1. Trinitarian Dimension.....	115
2. Christo-centric Dimension.....	116
3. Salvific Dimension .....	118
4. Ecclesial Dimension .....	120
5. Liturgical Dimension .....	121
6. Missionary Dimension .....	124
7. Anthropological Dimension .....	125
8. Moral Dimension .....	126
9. Liberative Dimension .....	127
10. Cultural Dimension .....	128
11. Environmental Dimension .....	129
12 Hierarchical Dimension .....	130
13 Methodological Dimension .....	132
Conclusion.....	133

**Part Four**  
**THE PEDAGOGY**

The Pedagogy of Faith .....	137
-----------------------------	-----

**Chapter I**

***God's Own Pedagogy: Pedagogy of Respectful and Loving Dialogue***

Introduction.....	141
1. God's Pedagogy in the Bible .....	141
a. Old Testament .....	141
b. New Testament .....	143
2. Implication for Catechetical Pedagogy.....	144
a. Pedagogy at the service of God's revelation.....	144
b. Pedagogy of accompaniment.....	145
c. Pedagogy of faith-fostering.....	145
d. Pedagogy of building communities .....	146
e. Pedagogy of dialogue.....	146
3. General Guidelines.....	146
a. Catechesis rooted in local cultures.....	147
b. Catechesis as life-long pilgrimage.....	147
c. Catechesis as an essential ministry.....	148
d. Catechesis as responsibility of entire Christian community.....	149
e. Catechesis as contextualized ministry .....	150
f. Catechesis as personal responsibility .....	151
4. Characteristics of the Catechetical Pedagogy in Indian Context.....	151
a. Pluri-cultural language .....	151
b. Catechesis as an Experience .....	152
c. Person-oriented catechesis .....	153
d. Creative expression of faith .....	153
e. Social orientation .....	154
5. The Language of Catechesis.....	154
a. Remote preparation.....	155
b. Proximate preparation.....	155
c. Immediate preparation .....	157
Conclusion.....	157

## Chapter II

### *Multiple Approaches in Catechesis*

Introduction.....	159
1. Biblical Approach.....	160
a. Presentation of Text.....	160
<i>i. Identification with biblical characters .....</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>ii. Symbolical elucidation.....</i>	<i>161</i>
<i>iii. Focused presentation .....</i>	<i>162</i>
b. Interpretation .....	162
c. Application to life .....	163
d. Characteristics of biblical approach.....	163
2. Doctrinal Approach.....	165
a. Starting point.....	165
b. Support from Scripture and Tradition.....	166
c. Applications to life .....	166
d. Characteristics of the doctrinal approach .....	167
3. Liturgical Approach.....	167
a. Presentation of sign.....	169
b. Interpretation of sign .....	169
c. Expression.....	170
d. Characteristics of the liturgical approach .....	171
4. Experiential Approach.....	171
a. Life situation .....	172
b. Word of God .....	173
c. Impact on our lives .....	173
d. Characteristics of the experiential approach .....	174
5. Historical Approach .....	174
a. Initial stage.....	175
b. Historical development.....	175
c. Implications in today's life.....	176
d. Characteristics of the historical approach .....	176
Conclusion.....	176

## Chapter III

### *Methods of Communication*

Introduction.....	177
1. Importance of Methods of Communication .....	177
2. Media.....	179
3. Activities of Integration .....	181
a. Activities foster responsibility .....	182
b. Activities foster spiritual maturity .....	182
4. Memorization.....	183
5. Assessments .....	184
6. Prayer.....	185
Conclusion.....	185

## Part Five

### THE PILGRIM PEOPLE

Community as Source and <i>Loci</i> of Catechesis .....	189
---	-----

## Chapter I

### *Jesus Christ, the Catechist par Excellence*

Introduction.....	191
1. Jesus the Catechist Knew His People .....	191
2. Christ the Catechist among Our Indian People Today.....	192
Conclusion.....	193

## Chapter II

### *The Christian Community: Fundamental Locus of Catechesis*

Introduction.....	195
1. Community of Love Built on the Risen Lord .....	196
2. Community, a Privileged Place for Fostering Faith .....	196
3. The Catechized as Fellow-Pilgrims.....	197
4. Right to Lifelong Catechesis for All Christians .....	197
5. Two-fold Responsibility of the Community: the Catechists and the Catechized ....	198
6. Many Venues but One Mission .....	200
Conclusion.....	200

## Chapter III

### *Our Pilgrim People through the Ages and Stages of Life*

Introduction.....	201
1. Catechesis according to Age-groups: A Lifelong Pilgrimage.....	201
a. Adults .....	203
<i>Catechesis of adults</i> .....	204
b. Young people .....	206
<i>Catechesis of young people</i> .....	207
c. Adolescents .....	209
<i>Catechesis of adolescents</i> .....	211
d. Children.....	213
<i>Catechesis of children</i> .....	214
e. Catechesis for special groups .....	217
Conclusion.....	219

## Chapter IV

### *Catechists: Identity, Role and Formation*

Introduction.....	221
1. The Identity of Catechists.....	221
2. Categories and Roles of Catechists .....	223
a. Bishop, first catechist of faith community .....	223
b. Priests as catechists of parish community .....	225
<i>Catechetical roles of parish priest</i> .....	226
c. Parents as first catechists in family .....	227
d. Religious as catechists .....	231
e. Laity as catechists .....	232
f. Teachers of faith in educational institutions .....	234
g. Sunday catechists .....	234
h. Lay missionary catechists .....	235
3. Formation of Catechists .....	236
Conclusion.....	238

## Part Six

### OUR ORGANIZATION OF CATECHESIS

Practical Pointers to the Ministry of Catechesis.....	241
---	-----

#### Chapter I

##### *Venues and Occasions for Catechesis*

Introduction.....	243
1. The Parish: Central Place for Catechesis .....	243
a. Liturgy: Main sources of Catechesis .....	244
<i>i. Sacramental Catechesis in the parish.....</i>	244
<i>ii. Effective participation of all.....</i>	245
b. Role of catechists in the Local Church .....	246
2. Irreplaceable Role of Family in Catechesis .....	246
a. Family: The basic community of life and love.....	247
b. Evangelizing influence of the Christian family .....	247
c. Family: Sanctuary of life.....	248
d. Traditional values in the Indian Christian family .....	248
e. Building up Christian family life: First concern of a Particular Church .....	249
f. Promoting family prayer.....	250
3. Small Christian Communities (SCCs).....	251
4. Lay Associations and Groups.....	252
5. Educational Institutions .....	253
a. Nature of a Catholic institution .....	254
b. Locus of Christian formation.....	255
c. Catechesis in Catholic institution.....	255
d. Evangelical function of a Catholic institution .....	256
e. Authentic Catholic institution's distinctive environment .....	256
f. Identity of Catholic institutions.....	257
g. Catholic institution in multi-religious context .....	259
h. Role of Parents in educational institution .....	259
Conclusion.....	260

## Chapter II

### *General Guidelines and Practical Implications*

Introduction.....	261
1. Organization as a Planned and Responsible Activity.....	261
2. Catechetical Activity within the Church's overall Pastoral Ministry.....	262
a. An analysis of the total situation.....	262
b. A programme of pastoral plan.....	263
c. Formation of personnel.....	265
d. Supplying appropriate media and catechetical instruments .....	266
e. Setting up structures for catechetical organization .....	266
f. Co-ordination of catechesis with other pastoral ministries .....	266
g. Promotion of ongoing scientific research.....	267
h. Fostering dialogue and collaborating internationally .....	267
i. Making available the financial resources.....	268
j. Promoting collaboration with other <i>sui iuris</i> Churches .....	268
3. Dimensions of Catechetical Ministry in India .....	268
Conclusion.....	269

## Chapter III

### *Organization at Various Levels*

Introduction.....	271
1. National Catechetical Animation .....	271
a. National Commission for Catechetics .....	272
b. Coordination of resources .....	273
c. CCBI Commission for Catechetics: Animating organism .....	273
d. Body of consulters .....	274
e. Coordination of catechetical texts .....	274
f. Coordination of training of catechists – A Priority.....	275
g. Publications .....	275
h. Annual catechetical conference .....	275
i. Ongoing research.....	276
2. Regional Catechetical Animation .....	276
a. Importance of regional catechetical animation .....	276
b. Organization of regional commission.....	277
3. Diocesan Catechetical Animation.....	280
a. Diocesan faith-vision.....	280
b. Unique vocation and mission of the diocese.....	280

c. Networking with other commissions.....	282
d. Diocesan catechetical commission .....	282
e. Diocesan catechetical centre.....	284
f. The Church's best resources at the service of catechesis.....	286
4. Parish Catechetical Animation.....	287
Parish level organisational structures and guidelines.....	287
Conclusion.....	291
GENERAL CONCLUSION .....	293
Holy Spirit, the Ultimate Catechist.....	293
Mary, the Catechist.....	294
Re-visioning our Catechetical Mission .....	294
APPENDIX .....	297
Meaning of Terms and Concepts .....	297
THEMATIC INDEX .....	301



# ABBREVIATIONS

---

## Biblical Abbreviations

### Old Testament

Gen	Genesis
Ex	Exodus
Lev	Leviticus
Num	Numbers
Deut	Deuteronomy
Josh	Joshua
Judg	Judges
Ruth	Ruth
1 Sam	1 Samuel
2 Sam	2 Samuel
1 Kgs	1 Kings
2 Kgs	2 Kings
1 Chr	1 Chronicles
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
Ezra	Ezra
Neh	Nehemiah
Tob	Tobit
Jdt	Judith
Esther	Esther
1 Macc	1 Maccabees
2 Macc	2 Maccabees
Job	Job
Ps	Psalms
Prov	Proverbs
Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Song	Song of Solomon
Wis	Wisdom of Solomon
Sir	Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Lam	Lamentations
Bar	Baruch
Ezek	Ezekiel
Dan	Daniel
Hos	Hosea
Joel	Joel
Amos	Amos
Obad	Obadiah

Jon	Jonah
Mic	Micah
Nah	Nahum
Hab	Habakkuk
Zeph	Zephaniah
Hag	Haggai
Zech	Zechariah
Mal	Malachi

### New Testament

Mt	Matthew
Mk	Mark
Lk	Luke
Jn	John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Rom	Romans
1 Cor	1 Corinthians
2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Gal	Galatians
Eph	Ephesians
Phil	Philippians
Col	Colossians
1 Thess	1 Thessalonians
2 Thess	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim	1 Timothy
2 Tim	2 Timothy
Tit	Titus
Philem	Philemon
Heb	Hebrews
Jas	James
1 Pet	1 Peter
2 Pet	2 Peter
1 Jn	1 John
2 Jn	2 John
3 Jn	3 John
Jude	Jude
Rev	Revelation (Apocalypse)

## Documents of Vatican II

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> (Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People)
AG	<i>Ad Gentes</i> (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)
CD	<i>Christus Dominus</i> (Decree on the Pastoral office of Bishops in the Church)
DH	<i>Dignitatis Humanae</i> (Declaration on Religious Liberty)
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)
GE	<i>Gravissimum Educationis</i> (Declaration on Education)
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Pastoral Constitution on Church in the Modern World)
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
NA	<i>Nostra Aetate</i> (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian)
PO	<i>Presbyterorum Ordinis</i> (Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests)
SC	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> (Dogmatic Constitution on Sacred Liturgy)
UR	<i>Unitatis Redintegratio</i> (Decree on Ecumenism)

## Other Church Documents

CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> (Encyclical of John Paul II on the Hundredth Anniversary of <i>Rerum Navarum</i> , 1991)
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCCC	Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church
CIC	Code of Canon Law
CF	<i>Christifideles Laici</i> (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II on The Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the Church and in the world, 1988)
CN	<i>Communiois Notio</i> (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion, 1992)
COCL	Code of Canon Law, Latin-English Edition
CT	<i>Catechesi Tradendae</i> (Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II on Catechesis in our Time, 1979)
CV	<i>Caritas in Veritate</i> (Encyclical of Benedict XVI on Charity in Truth, 2010)
DCE	<i>Deus Caritas Est</i> (Encyclical of Benedict XVI on God is love, 2005)
DF	<i>Dei Filius</i> (The First Vatican Council document on the Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Church, 1869-70)

EA	<i>Ecclesia in Asia</i> (Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II on the Church in Asia, 1999)
EE	<i>Ecclesia de Eucharistia</i> (Encyclical of John Paul II on the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church, 2003)
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> (Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis on New Evangelization, 2013)
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI on Evangelisation, 1975)
FC	<i>Familiaris Consortio</i> (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II on the Role of Christian Family in the Modern World, 1981)
FD	<i>Fidei Depositum</i> (Apostolic Constitution of John Paul II on the Deposit of Faith, 1992)
FR	<i>Fides et Ratio</i> (Encyclical of John Paul II on the Relationship between Faith and Reason, 1998)
GC	<i>Guide for Catechists</i> (Congregation of Evangelization of Peoples, 1993)
GCD	<i>General Catechetical Directory</i> (Sacred Congregation for Clergy, 1971)
GDC	<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i> (Congregation for Clergy, 1997)
GSa	<i>Gratissimam Sane</i> (Letter to Families, John Paul II, 1994)
JM	<i>Iustitia in Mundo</i> (1971 Synod of Bishops on Justice in the World)
LC	<i>Libertatis Conscientia</i> (Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on Christian Liberty and Liberation, 1987)
LCS	Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982)
LF	<i>Lumen Fidei</i> (Encyclical of Pope Francis on Faith, 2013)
MC	<i>Marialis Cultus</i> (Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI on the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1974)
MD	<i>Mulieris Dignitatem</i> (Apostolic Letter of John Paul II on the Dignity and Vocation of Women on the occasion of the Marian Year, 1998)
MM	<i>Mater et Magistra</i> (Encyclical of John XXIII on Christianity and Social Progress, 1961)
OA	<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> (Apostolic Letter of Paul VI on Promoting Social Justice, 1971)
PP	<i>Populorum Progressio</i> (Encyclical of Paul VI on Fostering the Development of Peoples, 1967)
RCIA	Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, Congregation for Divine Worship, 1972.
RDE	Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)

RDOE	The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)
RH	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i> (Encyclical of John Paul II on Redeemer of Man, 1979)
RM	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> (Encyclical of John Paul II on the Mission of the Redeemer, 1990)
SCar	<i>Sacramentum Caritatis</i> (Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Benedict XVI on the Eucharist as Source and Summit of the Church's Life and Mission, 2007)
SRS	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> (Encyclical of John Paul II on the Value and Inviolability of Human Life, 1987)
VD	<i>Verbum Domini</i> (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Benedict XVI on the Word of the Lord, 2010)

### Other Sources

BILA	Bishops' Institute for the Lay Apostolate
CATL	<i>Instruction on Certain aspects of the Theology of Liberation</i> (Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, 1984)
CBCI	Catholic Bishops Conference of India
CCBI	Conference of Catholic Bishops of India
CIIT	Church in India Today, National Seminar 1969, CBCI
FABC	Federation of the Asian Bishops' Conference
FATP	<i>For All The Peoples Of Asia: The Church in Asia</i> , Asian Bishops' Statements on Mission and Ministry, 1977
GFSD	<i>Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine</i> (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1984)
NBCLC	National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre
NCOC	The National Convention of Catholics ("The Catholic Community in India towards the 21st Century," 1989)
NCD	National Catechetical Directory, USA
PUEB	<i>Puebla, Evangelization at Present and the Future of Latin American</i> , Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops



**PONTIFICIUM CONSILIUM  
DE NOVA EVANGELIZATIONE  
PROMOVENDA**

**D E C R E E**

Prot. N. Cat / 70 / 2014 / P

Jesus Christ, Revealer and Revelation of the Father, commanded the Apostles to preach the Gospel which He promulgated in His own person in order that, through their preaching, they might communicate the gifts of God to mankind until His return in glory. The Church, faithful to the command of her Lord and in accordance with the tradition of the Apostles, has always held in high esteem catechetical formation as a means of keeping alive the proclamation and transmission of the Word of God. Accordingly, the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, which is charged with the granting of the necessary approval of the Apostolic See for catechism and other writings pertaining to catechetical instruction, has examined *Fostering the Faith of a Pilgrim People*, the National Catechetical Directory, submitted by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India as required by Canon 775 § 2 of the *Code of Canon Law* and Article 3 § 4 of the Apostolic Letter *Fides per doctrinam*, hereby

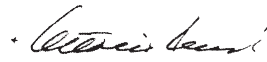
**A P P R O V E S**

and confirms the aforementioned Directory in the version submitted to this Dicastery by His Eminence Oswald Cardinal Gracias, Archbishop of Bombay, President of the same Episcopal Conference, on March 15, 2014.

Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary.

*Given from the Seat of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization on April 29, 2014, Memorial of St. Catherine of Siena, Virgin and Doctor of the Church.*

  
† Salvatore Fisichella  
PRESIDENT

  
† Octavio Ruiz Arenas  
SECRETARY



## PREFACE

*Fostering the Faith of a Pilgrim People*, the National Catechetical Directory prepared by the Conference of the Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) is a companion to the *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) and builds upon some of its core themes: the responsibility of the Church in educating or promoting the faith of the faithful in all ages, relationship of catechesis to evangelization, worship, communion and service and giving practical tools for an effective catechesis.

Containing norms, principles, directives and guidelines for effective and orderly catechesis, the National Catechetical Directory is a useful text for orienting faith formation in the Indian context. One of its main purposes is to promote greater unity in the presentation of the Christian message without sacrificing its creative aspect.

Preparatory work for the formulation of a National Catechetical Directory was initiated in 1986. However, the work was suspended because of the establishment of different *sui iuris* Episcopal Bodies. After the Latin Rite Episcopal Conference (CCBI) established its own Commission for Catechetics, the work on the National Catechetical Directory was resumed in 2007. A Committee of experts headed by Bishop Antony Devotta, Chairman, CCBI Commission for Catechetics, directed the preparation of the Directory. This Directory was finally approved by the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization on April 29, 2014 after incorporating amendments and suggestions made by the same Council and also those of the Congregation for the Clergy.

A significant challenge in preparing the National Catechetical Directory was how to transmit the faith and enable the faithful to deepen their faith in the Indian context. Catechetical instruction today is not the same as it was fifty years ago. Today, we live in a world marked by information technology, religious fundamentalism, consumerism and a decline of respect for traditional family values.

In the midst of these realities, the contents of the faith remain the same because ‘Christ our Lord is the same yesterday, today and forever’ (cf. Heb 13:8). The Church discerns the signs of the times and attempts to respond to changing contexts so that she may effectively proclaim the message of eternal life to all her children. To this effect God invites us to communicate the faith in practical and concrete ways. Fostering the Faith of Pilgrim People is useful in realizing this vision.

One hopes that this Catechetical Directory will be used by all those involved in catechesis or Catholic Education: catechists, teachers, principals, directors of catechetical centres, coordinators of religious education, youth ministry and students. The National Directory, also, needs to be translated into regional languages so that it will have a wider readership.

This book reminds us that all of us are called and sent to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all our peoples. With joy and confidence let us carry out this mission of the Master, who gave us the mandate, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Mt. 28:19). The Catechetical Directory will certainly help us to fulfil this command effectively.

November 1, 2014

Feast of all Saints

**✠Oswald Cardinal Gracias**

Archbishop of Bombay &

President, Conference of Catholic Bishops of India



## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### **The Lord Walks with Us**

*1 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest” (Mt 9:35-38).*

As we introduce this National Catechetical Directory of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, we are convinced that Our Blessed Lord walks with us, his Pilgrim People, in our mission of fostering the faith. This section clarifies the basic terms of the title and the origin, structure and purpose of this Directory.

### **Fostering the Faith of a Pilgrim People**

*2 Fostering the Faith:* The mission of the Catholic Church is expressed in terms of sowing the seed of the Word initiated by Jesus Christ. The *General Directory for Catechesis* introduces the ministry of Catechesis with reference to the parable of the sower, as the source of inspiration for evangelization.<sup>1</sup> Catechesis is *fostering*. Fostering indicates nurturing, nourishing and caring. Through Catechesis, one fosters the roots of faith-life and enables the faithful to receive more substantial nourishment in the ordinary life of the Christian

---

<sup>1</sup> GDC 14, 15, 31; Jn 12: 21.

community.<sup>2</sup> The nurturing and maturing of faith had been always considered the catechetical activity in the Church.<sup>3</sup> But we believe that the effectiveness of Catechesis is and always will be a gift of God, through the operation of the Spirit of the Father and the Son.<sup>4</sup> St. Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, confirms this total dependence on the intervention of God when he writes: “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor 3:6-7). The ministry of the first proclamation of the Word to those who do not know Christ explicitly is likened to the sowing itself. The catechetical ministry is the services rendered under the Holy Spirit’s guidance to help the seed of faith grow. It is a holistic fostering of this precious and living seed by which the new relationship with God, with his body the Church and through it with all people may become mature and strong.

*Pilgrim People:* The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council calls the Church the People of God.<sup>5</sup> Every Christian is a pilgrim in this world. We consider this sacred journey a powerful means to deepen our faith. Catechesis is a journey of faith. Pilgrims, who are enwrapped in the great mystery that surrounds them, seek the face of God by finding the meaning of life. “Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths” (Ps 25:4). The guidelines articulated in this Directory are meant to foster the Faith of this pilgrim people.

### **National Catechetical Directory of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India**

3 *National:* India is a vast country, wonderful, complex, living mosaic of many cultures. The Catholic Church in India shares in this rich pluriformity of traditions. It has been blessed with three

---

<sup>2</sup> GDC 67d.

<sup>3</sup> GDC 75c.

<sup>4</sup> GDC 288.

<sup>5</sup> LG 67.

*sui iuris* Churches: the Syro-Malankara Church, the Syro-Malabar Church and the Latin Church. Though integrally Catholic, each of these Churches has embodied its own unique experience of Christ and its own expression of the inexhaustible mystery, through specific ecclesial traditions and discipleship. Although this Directory is directly meant for the Latin Church, we acknowledge the roles of the other two Eastern Churches in India in the process of Faith formation of the faithful.

*Catechetical:* Catechesis is the word used to describe the fundamental ministry of the Church through which the teachings of Christ have been passed on to believers throughout the ages. St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* offers the following description of the ministry of Catechesis: “Quite early on, the name Catechesis was given to the totality of the Church’s efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the Body of Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Catechesis is an essential moment in the process of evangelization.<sup>7</sup> The *Ministry of the Word* is at the heart of every process of evangelization.<sup>8</sup> Catechesis helps the faithful collaborate with God’s grace in their lives, celebrate their faith within the community through the sacraments, and witness to it in their life-situations. *Catechesis* is a broad term.<sup>9</sup> It takes into consideration the task of promoting the experience as well as the knowledge of faith through liturgical education, prayer, moral formation, community education and missionary initiatives.<sup>10</sup> It is a life-long process. It informs, forms and transforms the Christian life of the faithful towards authentic discipleship.

---

<sup>6</sup> CT 1, 2; CCC 4.

<sup>7</sup> GDC 63; CT 18; CT 20c.

<sup>8</sup> GDC 50.

<sup>9</sup> Differences in terms are explained in the appendix.

<sup>10</sup> GDC 85, 86.

*Directory*: We use the word *Directory*<sup>11</sup> in its ecclesiastical Latin sense of guidelines, norms, principles, directives for proceeding in an orderly, effective manner, based upon proven experience. This *Directory*, *Fostering the Faith of a Pilgrim People*, is intended to provide such norms to the Catechetical ministry in India.

*Conference of Catholic Bishops of India*: The Conference of Catholic Bishops of India (CCBI) is a National Episcopal Body of the Latin Catholic Bishops of India to exchange ideas and information, to deliberate on the Church's broad concerns and to take care of the pastoral needs of the faithful. It is one of the four biggest Bishops' Conferences in the world. The Conference assists the bishops both in their pastoral care and in their missionary activity.

### **Origin of the Directory**

4 The Catechetical Directory traces its origin back to Second Vatican Council where the idea of a Catechetical Directory originated.<sup>12</sup> This resulted in the *General Catechetical Directory* in 1971 published by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, later renewed in 1997 as *General Directory for Catechesis*. There were several reasons for the renewal of the *General Catechetical Directory*. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), was a *decisive milestone for Catechesis*.<sup>13</sup> This document enunciated, among other things, a particularly important principle, namely, Catechesis becomes a fundamental and essential process in the work of evangelization in the context of the mission of the Church. The subsequent document, *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), forms a cohesive unit with *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and fully locates Catechesis

---

<sup>11</sup> The common understanding of *Directory* according to accepted Indian usage is an alphabetical list of persons, groups or companies, along with their addresses and telephone numbers. Clearly, this is not the meaning intended here.

<sup>12</sup> CD 44.

<sup>13</sup> GDC 4.

within the context of evangelization. The encyclical of Blessed St. John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) reaffirms the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate. The publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 1992 necessitated a revision of the *General Catechetical Directory*, with a view to adapting this valuable theological-pastoral document to new situations and needs.<sup>14</sup> Hence, the *General Directory for Catechesis* sought to arrive at a balance between two principal requirements: on the one hand, the meaning of Catechesis through evangelization as envisaged by *Evangelii Nuntiandi*; on the other hand, the fidelity to the content of the faith as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* called for the preparation of Catechetical Directories in every region.<sup>15</sup> The present Directory takes also into consideration the four new Documents that were promulgated after the publication of the *General Directory for Catechesis*. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999) contextualizes our mission of evangelization in the Asian context. The publication of the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2005), re-affirms the importance of the content of faith in Catechesis. The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini* (2010) emphasises the role of the Word of God in Catechesis. The recent publication of the *Youcat* (2011), a summary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for youth, accentuates the significance of Youth Catechesis.

The necessity of a National Catechetical Directory has its origin in the Post-Vatican era of renewal for the Church in India. The work for a National Catechetical Directory was initiated by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) in 1986 and the initial draft was prepared by the National Biblical Catechetical and

---

<sup>14</sup> GDC 7.

<sup>15</sup> GDC 9, 11.

Liturgical Centre (NBCLC). The work could not proceed due to the constitution of three independent Ritual Episcopal Conferences of CBCI in 1988 which assigned the organization of the catechetical ministry to each Ritual Church. The present Directory updates *the draft of the National Catechetical Directory of India* (1990). The updating was completed under the auspices of the newly constituted CCBI Commission for Catechetics.<sup>16</sup>

### **Authority**

5 This Directory is an official document of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India. It has been reviewed and approved by the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization<sup>17</sup> in accordance with the norms established in the *General Directory for Catechesis* and the Apostolic Constitution, *Pastor Bonus*. It is directed to all the Catholic faithful but primarily addressed to the Bishops and Regional Bishops' Councils of the Latin Rite Church in India and to those who have the responsibility of Catechesis at various levels. It will help in forming those preparing for ordination to the priesthood, in the continuing formation of priests and in the formation of catechists.<sup>18</sup>

It needs to be noted, however, that not all parts of this document are of equal importance or have equal theological authority. Some of the content provides the teachings of the Church; some provide pastoral directives. The teachings of the Church, undoubtedly, remain unchanged. The pastoral directives, on the other hand, are prudential judgements, applications, or guidelines that may continue to develop; consequently, they have less inherent authority. As the

---

<sup>16</sup> This Commission was bifurcated from the former CCBI Commission for Catechetics and Bible in 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Till the year 2012 the competence for Catechesis came under the purview of the Congregation for the Clergy. Since January 2013, it was passed on to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization.

<sup>18</sup> GDC 11.

Church continues to provide guidance and direction for renewal of Catechesis and as the cultural context in India continues to change, this directory could be updated periodically.

### **Structure of the Directory**

6 In keeping with the content of the basic structure of the *General Directory for Catechesis*, this Directory is organized in the following manner.

*Part One: The Context* situates the catechetical ministry in the Indian context, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of the Indian Church.

*Part Two: The Mission* places Catechesis as an essential element of the mission received from Jesus through the Church.

*Part Three: The Message* elicits the content of faith as found in the Word of God that is systematically handed on to us through Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium.

*Part Four: The Pedagogy*, beginning from the divine pedagogy, provides catechetical approaches to make Catechesis effective today.

*Part Five: The Pilgrim People* describes the identity and functions of the catechized and catechists.

*Part Six: Our Organization of Catechesis* provides the structures and means for promoting Catechesis in the Indian context.

### **Objectives of the Directory**

7 The principal objectives of this Directory are the following: to provide fundamental theological and pastoral principles drawn from the Church's Magisterium and experience, applying them to the catechetical ministry of the Church in India; to offer guidelines for the application of those fundamental theological and pastoral principles in India in order to promote a constant renewal of

Catechesis; and to set forth the nature, purpose, objectives, tasks, basic content, and various methodologies of Catechesis.

This Directory is not a catechism.<sup>19</sup> It provides guidelines for Catechesis in India. Further, the purpose of this Directory is to foster among all the *catechists*<sup>20</sup> a greater consciousness of the necessity of Catechesis in our Particular Church.<sup>21</sup> It is our hope that this Directory will lead to a continuing and deepening renewal of Catechesis in India. We trust that this Directory will be received and carefully studied in the context of the pastoral needs of the Regional Episcopal Conferences and Particular Churches. We hope that this Directory will promote future study and deepen research in order to respond to the needs of Catechesis. This Directory contains a treasury of practical help for the drawing up of Regional and Local Directories and catechisms with a view to their completeness and soundness both in content and method.

---

<sup>19</sup> A list of related terms is explained in the appendix.

<sup>20</sup> The term, catechists, here refers to all types of catechists. See Appendix and Chapter 4 of Part V for different types of catechists.

<sup>21</sup> The term “Particular Church” refers to dioceses and their equiparates (Canon 368). The term “Local Church” refers to a group of Particular Churches delineated in terms of region or nation or group of Nations united by special links. Cf. GDC 217.



PART ONE

THE CONTEXT



## Reading the Signs of the Times

8 *The Pharisees and Sadducees came and to test Jesus they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times ..."* (Mt 16:1-3).

St. John XXIII underlined the need to *read the Signs of the Times* in his apostolic Constitution of December 25, 1961, convoking the Second Vatican Council, interpreting them as *challenges* and *opportunities*: "We seem to see now, in the midst of so much darkness, a few indications which augur well for the future of the Church and of humanity."<sup>1</sup> The Pope of the Council reminded the bishops that the responsibility of the Church's teaching authority – *The Magisterium* – is not only to guard the faith but also to present it meaningfully and form sensitive consciences in the faithful, all the while being faithful to the substance of the Catholic doctrine. It became a constantly recurring theme in the Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*:

At all times the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if she is to carry out her task. In language intelligible to every generation, she should be able to answer the ever recurring questions which men ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other. We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings, and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> John XXIII, *Apostolic Constitution Convoking Vatican II*, in W. Abbott, (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, G. Chapman, London 1966, 704.

<sup>2</sup> GS 4.

Thus the Church in India, in its prophetic duty of building up the Kingdom of God, has a triple obligation:

- To *identify* the bright spots and strengths of the Church in India
- To *highlight* the challenges for Catechesis that arise from the socio-political, economic, cultural and religious scenario
- To *discern* a positive approach to build positive elements and to devise ways and means of responding to the challenges, for the effectiveness of Catechesis

We have to inspire the disciples of Christ to become agents of change and hope, in collaboration with our brothers and sisters of other religions and all people of goodwill. We, however, do not examine the situation of our pilgrim people as neutral observers, nor as social scientists, economists or political analysts, but as Christian catechists, from the vantage point of catechetical renewal. We are fully aware of how difficult it is to generalize such a vast sub-continent and our perceptions are limited or even unconsciously partial. However, by an objective overview, we can discern certain directions and major trends. We believe that they are important for a comprehensive action plan for an effective Catechesis.

*Part One* of the Directory consists of three chapters. The *First Chapter* deals with the rich heritage and the bright spots in Indian socio-political, economic, cultural and religious spheres. The *Second Chapter* highlights the dark shadows and challenges in India today. The *Third Chapter* deals with the catechetical situation.

CHAPTER I  
*India's Heritage and Strengths*

**Introduction**

9 One of the most striking convergences that emerge from the CBCI and CCBI meetings and the catechetical conferences is Christian optimism. One observes a sense of gratitude for the gifts bestowed by God upon the Church in India and consequent 'pride' and 'confidence' in its future, despite the difficulties and challenges of the present day. Hence in this chapter, we review some of the spiritual possessions which God has so bountifully bestowed upon us in India and identify the bright spots in the Indian situation with a view to building our Catechesis. What is being stressed here is extremely important for national integration and the very survival of the Church, faced with powerful forces of communalism and religious fundamentalism.

**1. Our Rich History and Heritage**

10 Culture involves a whole way of life spelt out in how people relate to each other, to different communities, to the cosmic environment and to God, the Origin and Ultimate Reality. Culture includes not only artefacts - the typical products of each nation's genius - but also the values which guide and inspire the community. Counter-values too are included in any authentic overview of cultures - the elements which obstruct and tend to destroy people from within. Culture may therefore develop a collective consciousness within the group and express itself in its language, traditions, and social institutions.

Indian cultures are manifold with over five thousand distinctive communities living today on the subcontinent. The entire country, however, shares also a precious common heritage, cultural traits for which over 1100 million Indians can be gratefully proud. According

to Conciliar and post-Conciliar reflections, the reality of culture is very rich and has direct bearing on Catechesis.<sup>3</sup> The Christian message has to go back to its roots in human cultures and transform them. Catechesis is an instrument of authentic inculturation.<sup>4</sup>

### **a. Religiosity in all facets of Indian life**

11 *The Fine Arts*: Interiority and a deep God-given sense of religiosity permeate many dimensions of Indian culture and life. From ancient times, all Indian cultures have expressed their religious devotion through the arts. Though in the contemporary West, the arts, the expressions and the disciplines themselves have become highly secularized, in India they still are closely associated with religious expression.

*Politics*: In the 1987 Synod of Bishops on the 'Vocation and Mission of the Laity in the Church,' attention was drawn to the fundamental difference between the concept and reality of "politics" in the East as compared with the West. While in the West, politics tends to be separated from religion, in Asia, religious traditions are at the core and at times form the very basis of cultures and nations. Religion in Asia permeates political life. It is impossible to separate the two. Without caught up in ideologies, the question arises as to how Catholics can promote the religious values of Christ's Kingdom in politics. To cut oneself off from political involvement would be for a Christian often tantamount to denial of both religious identity and Christian duty.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> GS 53-62; EN 20; CT 53

<sup>4</sup> *Final Message of Synod of Bishops 1977*, in *L' Osservatore Romano*, 3/11/77, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> CBCI Goa, 1986, *Final Communication to the Synod of Bishops 1987*, has an enlightening statement about the distinction between secular and religious, between politics and a holistic spiritual vision of life.

## **b. Development of the media**

12 The media remains one of the chief creators of culture. It comprises the electronic media, such as World-Wide Web, Internet, Facebook and Blog and the interactive media, like the television, social-media, video games, art and advertising. A “media revolution”<sup>6</sup> is taking place and in Asia, it has assumed a “reality of gigantic dimension.”<sup>7</sup> St. John Paul II underlined the importance of social communications today:

The first Areopagus of the modern age is the world of communication, which is unifying humanity... The means of social communication have become as 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.<sup>8</sup>

Electronic media is an active and determinant agent in social changes, reflecting existing values and fostering new cultural values. It plays an important role in the integral development of the human person.

In the past, the family and the Church tended to be the *centres of gravity* and were the *key figures* that interpreted religious truths. But today, the media especially the television and internet have assumed this role as interpreters of these realities. They not only inform us but also transform us while they inform us. They create culture instead of being primarily a by-product of cultural consensus. Children used to grow up in homes, where parents told most of the stories. Today we are moving away from that traditional experience of humankind. The television is the means of most of the stories for the world of today.

---

<sup>6</sup> John Paul II, *World Communication Day Address 1985*, in F. Eilers, *Church and Social Communication*, Manila, Logos Publications 1997, 272.

<sup>7</sup> Paul VI, *Address to Commission of Social Communication*, in “*L'Osservatore Romano*,” 18/06/70.

<sup>8</sup> *RM* 37.

The electronic communication media, with its culture, cuts across the existing structures of communities, which are based on kinship, geography and religious identity. It tends to create a global culture, making humankind one. Global communications have the characteristic of immediacy, intimacy and intensity. They broaden human consciousness by expanding one's vision of life and by providing vicarious experiences of other times, places and cultures.

### **c. Environmental consciousness**

13 Drawing one's attention to the beauty of the earth is a way to make God powerfully present. Catholics, of late, have become interested in the ecological movement. Concern for the present ecological crisis has become more than a cause; it involves, a spirituality that inspires activists and even simple lovers of nature to be caretakers of the earth and stewards of God's creation.

Christian spirituality focuses on our relationship with God in the Holy Trinity, who is revealed to us in different ways. Because the divine life of the Trinity extends to all reality, the cosmos is an integral part of the self-revelation of the Creator God. We explore our relationship with God in the whole created universe, knowing that God is in the centre, both as Creator and loving Sustainer of his masterpiece.

The psalmist sang of God's presence in nature and often invited the whole Cosmos to join in celebration: "Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice" (Ps 96:11). India's culture seeks God in nature. Sages of the past and present spent time alone with God in the bosom of nature, seeking to experience oneness with Him. For Christians, finding and respecting God in his creation, in nature and the cosmos, is brightened by "Brother Sun" and "Sister Moon."



## 2. India's Religious Traditions

14 The Second Vatican Council expresses sincere admiration for the ancient religious traditions. Thus the Council encourages Christians in India to become familiar with these national traditions, to appreciate them and to illuminate them with the Gospel. The Christian attitude is one of gladness and respect in discovering the “seeds of the Word,” embedded by the Spirit among these priceless treasures.

Jesus Christ calls himself “the Way, the Truth and the Life” (Jn 14:6). Anyone who believes these words rejoices at the happy convergence of profound religious aspirations between Christians and people of other faiths, as reflected so strikingly in the revered pilgrim hymn of ancient India.

*Asato ma sad gamaya:* Lead me from the Unreal to the Real  
*Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya:* Lead me from Darkness to the Light  
*Mrityor ma amritam gamaya:* Lead me from Death to Life  
Eternal

We may credit such “coincidences” of inter-religious harmony to the interior workings of the Holy Spirit, poured out on the Church at Pentecost but always at work in different ways within human beings, who are created in the image and likeness of God.

### a. Religious sense of interiority<sup>9</sup>

15 Among the inherited gifts which have been and still are influential in forming the mind and heart of India, probably the most characteristic dimension of our Indian spirituality is the great gift of interiority. It begins in the cave of the heart of each person. It is a living experience of God's Word. From this, a growing God-awareness and a consciousness of being linked with all fellow human

---

<sup>9</sup> *CBCI General Meetings on Indian Values*, Bombay, 1983, 70f; Goa, 1986, 71ff; Kottayam, 1988, 167ff.

beings flow. These experiences should deepen and mature into a sense of solidarity with and commitment to the common good of others, bringing the believer into a harmony with the whole created cosmos. This interiority, therefore, should be a gift of an inclusive communion.

It resonates with Eastern Christian traditions, wary of the claim of human intelligence to comprehend the mystery of mysteries, the Godhead. This Indian sense of interiority begins with an *entering* into *oneself* in order to come into spiritual contact with the Ultimate Reality, the Triune God. From this discovery, the movement is *outwards*, to discover all in the light of this same living God.<sup>10</sup> This is a deep spiritual experience, in preference to abstractions, philosophical speculations and concepts, but it is still subject to public Revelation in Christ which respects the human reason.

This gift is also variously described as the Indian “spiritual vision,” its “religious sense,” “intuitive power,” “introversion,” “mystical” and “contemplative” attitude. This shared Indian charism expresses itself abundantly in popular devotions, family prayers and in the Indian sense of childlike wonder. Related to this grace is a whole cluster of other spiritual aptitudes.

### **b. Sense of sacramentality**

16 The tribal cultures, in particular, possess this gift of experiencing God in all creatures, whether persons, places or nature, in an exceptionally remarkable way. For many citizens of India, air, light, earth, fire and water, all these elements have a symbolic spiritual meaning. For all catechists, these natural elements offer very rich opportunities to reveal the mystery of Christ already present within our traditions and awaiting the service of a “dialogue of cultures”<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> “Statement of the Theology Seminar on the Mission of St. Thomas Christians in India Today,” in *Ishwani Documentation Digest* 5 (Sept-Dec. 1987) 3, 14.

<sup>11</sup> CT 53.

thus unveiling the Lord's presence through a respectful study, refinement and mutual discovery of the sacramental meaning of God's creation.

**c. Spirit of renunciation, austerity and truth**

17 The past and present history of India points to the fact that the most respected and beloved persons in this country have not been the strong, rich or powerful but those who embody within themselves selfless service and loving renunciation.

The spirit of sacrifice and standing for truth in building the Kingdom are consummately exemplified in Christ Jesus. He shares these gifts powerfully with the peoples of India, thus assigning to them a special role of witness to his Paschal mystery. Since the prophetic mission has been given to Christians by the Lord, the guidance and strength of the Spirit are much needed to stand for the values of justice and truth.

**d. Compassion, non-violence and disinterested dedication**

18 These values have evolved over millennia in ancient Indian traditions, whatever political interpretation and application, use and abuse, these might have been subjected to. Christ exemplifies these moral qualities. His compassion, for example, as he heals the man with the withered hand in the synagogue on the Sabbath day (cf. Mt 12: 9-14) does not exclude his equally compassionate and non-violent anger and grief over the Pharisees' obstinacy. His compassion allows him to confront his enemies in truth and love, without self-interest.

**e. Discernment, cosmic harmony and communion**

19 A person of spiritual discernment should distinguish evil from good, rejecting the bad and choosing the good (Heb 5:14). This

is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:8-12; Isa 11:2). The virtue of cosmic harmony means wholeness, an all-inclusive communion and participation at all levels according to God's divine law.

#### **f. Silence, joy and peace**

20 Filled with the Spirit, love for and cultivation of *active silence* is certainly one of the marks of God's people. For centuries on, Indians have dedicated themselves to social transformation through prayer and silence. A part of our ascetical tradition is to offer a promise to observe prayerful silence once a week. Indian culture and prophetic ministry understand and appreciate how Jesus, the Teacher, taught and revealed through his silence and gestures as much by his words.<sup>12</sup>

India has a venerable tradition of *silent leaders* who communicated through their presence and "vibrations" of silent joy and peace. Despite the growing cacophony of sound and noise signifying – not only in our cities but also in villages – despite blaring radios, amplified transistors, televisions and cinema sound tracks over loudspeakers, there remains in Indian hearts a privileged and powerful desire for spiritual communion in silence.

For all world religious traditions, *spiritual joy* has always been one of the most attractive and self-authenticating fruits of God's Spirit. Their cheerful service and devotion resonate perfectly with the psalmist. "I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me" (Ps 131:2). "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy, then it was said among the nations, 'the Lord has done great things for them'" (Ps 126:2-3). "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal 5:22-23).

---

<sup>12</sup> CT 9.

### **g. Religions in harmony**

21 India is a land of various religions and it has a rich tradition of respect and openness. The right to Religious Freedom is one of the most central and fundamental rights assured by our Constitution, whereby all citizens have been guaranteed religious freedom to profess, practice and propagate any religion. Moreover, every religious group has the freedom to manage its own religious affairs, to own, acquire and administer property for religious and charitable purposes.<sup>13</sup>

### **Conclusion**

22 To understand the Indian context, it is essential to perceive the strengths and heritage of India. This chapter comprehensively described India's rich history and heritage and its religious traditions. The next chapter will highlight the darker spot, namely India's struggles and challenges.

---

<sup>13</sup> *The Constitutions of India*, art. 16.



## CHAPTER II

### *India's Struggles and Challenges*

#### **Introduction**

23 Catechesis *is a part of announcing* the Good News of Jesus Christ and this can be done by identifying the struggles and challenges that arise from our Indian situation. While it is important to be very clear about our aim, i.e. to build up and contribute to the Faith-development of our Catholic people in India, it is equally important to understand the main weaknesses and wounds, both in our civic and Christian communities. Since this is a challenging context by which we catechize, we need to identify and assess root causes. Then, with God's all-powerful grace, our Catechesis and religious education can contribute to a purposeful remedial action.

The condemnation of social evils and injustices is also part of the ministry of evangelization, which is an aspect of the Church's prophetic role. It should be made clear that proclamation is always more important than condemnation, and the latter cannot ignore the former, which gives it true solidity and the force of higher motivation.<sup>14</sup>

#### **1. Poverty, Inequalities and Injustices**

24 The Indian situation is characterised by poverty, inequality, injustice and oppression. Most people lack the necessities of life: food, clothing, shelter, hygienic conditions and even minimum education. They do not have productive assets like fertile land, irrigation and credit facilities. They also suffer from unemployment, low wages, debts and exorbitant rates of interest for loans. In the era of globalization, farmers are also increasingly deprived of their land through the SEZ policies. The agricultural crisis leads to many

---

<sup>14</sup> SRS 41.

suicides. The Bishops in 1998 highlighted these problems: “The majority of the poor belong to the categories of landless labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans, fishermen, Scheduled Castes (hereafter SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (hereafter STs). They have either no assets or have assets with low productivity.”<sup>15</sup>

Poverty does not consist only in low economic status. It means hunger, disease, illiteracy, lack of shelter and privacy. It implies exclusion, discrimination, powerlessness, a feeling of inferiority and a sense of helplessness. It is a struggle for survival and being enslaved to seeking a meal. It is criminal because it does not allow people to be people. “It is a scar on our face, it is a denial of human rights and the gravest insult to human dignity.”<sup>16</sup>

#### **a. Problems related to unemployment**

25 India’s labour force potential has grown faster than the ability of the economy to provide work for these tens of millions, trained and untrained, illiterates and graduates alike. Added to that, the Minimum Wages Legislation has been duly passed and yet not enforced. The same situation prevails in the legislation of working benefits – to ensure the right to holidays, health care, medical aid and compensation for accidents, hazardous working conditions, pensions and insurance against retirement. Though these rights are acknowledged both in theory and in law, they are not and cannot be enforced due to lack of labour organization.<sup>17</sup>

#### **b. Indebtedness in rural households**

26 Since most of India’s population is in the rural areas, the amount of indebtedness among agricultural households is another sign for

---

<sup>15</sup> *Final Statements of the General Body Meetings, CBCI (1966-2002)*, Delhi, CBCI Centre, 2004, 159.

<sup>16</sup> *Final Statements of the General Body Meetings, CBCI (1966-2002)*.

<sup>17</sup> *IT* 107, 201-2.



the state of the poor health of the economy and nation. The facts illustrate the truth of a saying: 'In India farmers are born in debt, live in it and die in it.'<sup>18</sup>

### **c. Rural and urban housing**

27 Rural housing is poor in quality. Among other things, there is poor protection against the elements of nature; poor lighting and ventilation; little or no sanitation and arrangement for clean drinking water. Often agricultural animals share the same room with human beings. These mud houses are infested with insects and rats, thus making the dwellings hazardous to health; because they are so unsubstantial, maintenance is costly and a constant recurring need.<sup>19</sup>

The urban housing problem presents far greater challenges for its complexity and crisis potential. To begin with, security of legal tenure is a must for slum improvement to take place. Distance for people from their working place is another co-related problem. Thirdly and not without reason, urban slums are directly linked with the overall ecological situation. The larger the slum the worse is the damage done to the environment, starting with the violation of the slum dwellers' right to a dignified domicile.<sup>20</sup> Urban slum dwellers include villagers who have been exported by building contractors as cheap labour to construct luxurious high buildings.

### **d. Lack of health care**

28 Another challenging area for development in rural and urban slums is the want of health services. Reviewing India's Health Industry over the past decades at the national level, we meet with another huge paradox. On the one hand, the infantile mortality rate

---

<sup>18</sup> *IT* 116-117.

<sup>19</sup> *IT* 198.

<sup>20</sup> *IT* 199.

has dropped, thanks to the immunisation programs controlling killer diseases.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, the situation is immensely unjust and unsatisfactory. The poor often lack access to health services. There are huge disparities between the rural and urban population and the investments in health care and education are grossly inadequate.

#### **e. Illiteracy and its bitter fruits**

29 India leads the world with regard to the number of illiterate citizens. Though great efforts have been made, the actual number of illiterates is growing. Illiterate people, by and large, are unemployed and underemployed, easily exploited and oppressed and in an unhealthy manner dependent upon the civil government.<sup>22</sup> There is a very definite pattern of discrimination and inequality in our national illiteracy between the urban and rural population. The Education Policy statement stresses the need of quality education for all, especially for the most deprived ones:

No Catholic child, Dalit/Tribal or otherwise, should be deprived of quality education because of a lack of means. Those disadvantaged, socially, physically or intellectually, will be specially assisted so that they can be integrated into the educational system. We make this preferential option, even if in this process, academic results suffer. All Catholic schools whether run by dioceses, the religious, corporate bodies or individuals, are expected to participate in this project.<sup>23</sup>

#### **f. Synthesis of scientific and spiritual values**

30 The 1966 Education Commission Reports laid great stress on the

---

<sup>21</sup> IT 97.

<sup>22</sup> SRS 15.

<sup>23</sup> CBCI Commission for Education and Culture, *All India Catholic Education Policy*, New Delhi, CBCI Centre 2007.

need for Indian Education to bring together science and spiritual values, the atom and *ahimsa*, the mastery of outer space in the cosmos and the equally vast inner space within the human spirit.<sup>24</sup> This synthesis of modernization and perennial moral/spiritual values is vital for growth in India. It must be harnessed by the human spirit, by values and ideas like non-violence and compassion, justice, tolerance, peace and reverence for all living beings. “If science and *ahimsa* join together in creative synthesis of belief and action, mankind will attain to a new level of purposefulness, prosperity and spiritual insight. This poses a great challenge.”<sup>25</sup>

#### **g. Root causes**

31 There is not the slightest doubt that in India the root cause of poverty, hunger, suffering and malnutrition is not the scarcity of food but that the poor have no purchasing power. Despite making significant progress in the third millennium, practically in all areas – agriculture, industry and technology – India still faces a mounting and massive problem of poverty. India’s development and of late, rapid growth have not been inclusive; they have excluded the poorest sections. The root causes of poverty, inequality, injustice and oppression have to be clearly identified for relevant action.

Furthermore, the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few, the use of power and repression by the dominant sections, biased development policies, which neglect health, education, employment and the social sector; unequal distribution, structured caste inequalities, untouchability, the denial of human rights and unjust economic and political structures, especially caste and class, globalization, debts incurred through usury and landlord power,

---

<sup>24</sup> Government of India, Ministry of Education, *Reports of the Education Commission (R.S. Kottari)*, 1964-66, New Delhi 1966, 1.81-1.87.

<sup>25</sup> Government of India, Ministry of Education, *Reports of the Education Commission (R.S. Kottari)*, 1.83.

wrong customs and traditions and the modern erosion of values, corruption, consumerism and greed add to the increase of poverty. Thus “we see in the world a set of injustices which constitute the nucleus of today’s problems.”<sup>26</sup>

## **2. Poorest and Marginalised Sections**

32 India’s development has been one-sided. It has failed to reach out to several large communities and groups. Huge disparities therefore exist and are even increasing. As the Indian bishops rightly pointed out in 1998, “the majority of the poor belong to the categories of landless labourers, marginal farmers, rural artisans, fishermen, SCs and STs.”<sup>27</sup> In several other declarations, they singled out the SCs, STs, women and children as those most affected by poverty and injustice.<sup>28</sup> The situation of these groups is worse in rural areas and among the illiterates and unskilled. According to the Sachar Committee, the Muslims should be added to this list. Let us now highlight the plight of some of these communities and groups, who numerically make up well over half our country’s population.

### **a. Scheduled castes**

33 India’s Constitution gives brighter promises to the SCs: “Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of ‘untouchability’ shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.”<sup>29</sup> The Constitution legally supports a policy of “positive discrimination” in favour of SCs and STs, making provisions for reservations of appointments and posts at the State levels.<sup>30</sup> The Constitution also

---

<sup>26</sup> *JM* 9, 5, 20.

<sup>27</sup> *Final Statements of the General Body Meetings, CBCI (1966-2002)*, 159.

<sup>28</sup> *Final Statements of the General Body Meetings, CBCI (1966-2002)*, 90-91, 115, 147, 181-182.

<sup>29</sup> *The Constitution of India*, art. 17.

<sup>30</sup> *The Constitution of India*, art. 16.

deals with the promotion of educational and economic interests of SCs, STs and other weaker sections: “The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.”<sup>31</sup>

Untouchability, however, still exists as a state of mind and a motivator of behaviour. Socially, it makes the SCs outcasts; economically, it keeps them dependent as slaves and religiously, it often ostracizes them in God’s name and in some situations keeps them out of places of worship. What gives greatest cause for concern is the mounting violence in most parts of the country against SCs even if they are merely seeking what the law guarantees them. Dalits rightly see *widespread casteism* as the main reason for this atrocity. Dalits are rejected as persons and all social relations with others are often prohibited. Caste minded people block the SC’s from progress and human development systematically, making their life uniquely inhumane.

## **b. Scheduled tribes**

34 The Scheduled Tribes, called “indigenous communities” share common, precious cultural traits. Many also share the unenviable condition that their very survival is a serious question today. Being uncommonly rich in forests and minerals, they remain easy and attractive prey to exploitation by outsiders. Moreover, the tribal literacy rates still remain unsatisfactory. The tribals are also displaced in great numbers, most often without proper rehabilitation in the name of construction of huge dams and other industrial projects. Long-range effects of this alienation are nothing less than genocide, indirect but undeniable. This *de facto* ethnocide, which began during colonial times, continues in independent India.

---

<sup>31</sup> *The Constitution of India*, art. 46.

Linking SCs and STs too closely leads to false assumption that these two sections are basically alike. But culturally and historically, they are very different. Demographically and geographically, too, they are dissimilar. The tribals urgently need to become politically more conscious and organized. They ought to defend their socio-economic and culture-religious rights strongly.

### **c. Infants and children**

35 The present-day conditions of most of India's infants and children very clearly depict the profound and unjust character of our national development programs. This phenomenon is tragic, particularly for the newly born and the young people of the SCs, STs and Backward Communities. The country's growing urban and rural destitute families are still awaiting basic necessities to live and grow as free persons. National statistics on child care underscore the colossal failure of our development, in terms of serving human beings irrespective of race, caste and sex. The data on malnutrition and the health situation are particularly alarming.

India, with high illiteracy rates, has the largest number of child labourers. In spite of the recent law on the abolition of child labour, the situation remains mind-shattering. The law-enforcement agencies are highly defective and almost nonexistent in several areas. Children who should not be working at all are even exploited by miserable wages and inhuman working conditions.

### **d. Youth in India**

36 On the one hand, a large number of the youth in India seek genuine God-experience and stand for justice and social change. They possess the ability to sense and expose duplicity, dishonesty and inhumane behaviour, no matter in whom or where these are found.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, they also feel the frustration, anger

---

<sup>32</sup> CBCI, Goa, 1986, *Final Communication to the Synod of Bishops 1987*, 40.

and outrage at their disadvantaged position in India's highly one-sided development. They are confronted with the reality of unemployment, the high walls separating them from contributing to nation-building. It is, therefore, not surprising that many youngsters express their dissatisfaction through protests, revolts, violence and resort to thefts, drugs and suicides.

In this new millennium drug-abuse and suicides among the youth in India are alarmingly high. Some of the significant causes cited for young Christians being among drug-abusers are the following:

- The lack of love experienced in their families
- Catechetical literature says *practically nothing* about drug-abuse and its harmful effects
- Indian Christian culture is seen as westernized and therefore one in which alcoholic consumption is already deemed socially acceptable.

The tragic phenomenon of suicides among the Christian youth is mainly due to unemployment. The second reason is quarrels with parents and breakdown of family relationships.

### **e. Women and girl-children in India**

37 Women in our country are confronted by paradoxes and contradictions. Certainly, they are a colossal challenge to India's future. The breadth and depth, the quantity and quality of oppression of women and girl-children in our country are the greatest casualty of national planning. The media exposure about injustices meted out to women adds up to a strong conclusion that our feminine population suffers from systematic multiple discriminations. It could be described as severe sexism, bordering at times and in some places as *genocide* such as female foeticide, female infanticide, dowry burnings, *sati* and assault on women leading to homicide or forced suicide.

### **3. Current Ideologies**

38 We need to become aware of the powerful ideologies existing in our society, which challenge and direct our catechetical initiatives. There are different systems, the *producers* of our present social organization and their *by-products*. These contemporary ideologies influence the minds and hearts of our Catholics in a big way. They fire up public behaviour and supply target-values for long-range socio-economic and political goals. Ideologies also, without any doubt, are currents of continual tensions and deadly conflicts among the castes, classes and communities.

#### **a. Religious fundamentalism**

39 Revivalism means returning to a religious text, or collection of revered traditions, to answer life's troubles and recurrent crisis. The sacred words are then interpreted in a most literal sense and proposed as divine oracles to solve people's problems. Being viewed as trustworthy and having solid foundation, these fundamental teachings from a venerated past era are given a new world view. Through them practical implications and decisions are made to provide the believer/s with a fresh beginning, inspire them towards a new society by replacing the old system seen as a failure, dysfunctional or fast-disintegrating.

Fundamentalism, though akin to revivalism, goes much beyond it. For, religious fundamentalists, once formed into a community, impose their narrow understanding of religion on others and on all areas of human activity. They insist that their dogmas have a privileged omni-competence. Their religious leaders claim dictatorial powers for major decisions, whether the topic is sacred or secular. Understood in this way, fundamentalism is a religio-psychological mechanism. It is a regression that can afflict individuals, small groups, large communities and a whole nation. No religious group



can claim to be impregnable or invulnerable to it; because the malady of fundamentalism comes not only from disposition within but from internal circumstances. Today in India, a number of major religions demonstrate unmistakable signs of suffering from this dangerous distortion of religiosity. In the context of religious freedom envisaged by the Constitution of India, fundamentalism is a serious aberration of authentic religion.

### **b. Communalism**

40 Communalism tends to separate people on the basis of religion, language, territory and ethnic origin. This creates a group mentality, generates selfishness and is one of the main obstacles to unity. Communalism has become a critical area of concern in our society because it undermines secularism, which is central to the Constitution. The increase in incidents of communal conflict and violence is linked to a sense of deprivation experienced by religious groups. Religion is often used in communal violence to mobilise people to protect the vested interests of politicians. An important trend in communal tension and conflict is the emergence of religious revivalism and fundamentalism, which poses a serious threat to religious tolerance, pluralism and minority groups.

Communalism is a very complex disorder with a long history and multiple deep roots. It expresses itself differently at many levels of society socio-economically, politically, religio-culturally and psychologically, at the micro and the macro levels and in village, town and city. Communalism is not a superficial malady but a malignant cancer. It eats the very heart of India.

### **4. Other Destructive Trends**

41 The following destructive trends are not new to our country's national scene. Their style of operation, widening popularity and the

destruction they cause to those who surrender to their allurements become a great catechetical challenge.

### **a. Corruption**

42 Corruption subverts truth, justice and right order in the society. Today, corruption in India is distressing and frightening. It appears to be all-pervasive. In the business world, unethical profit, hoarding, black-marketing and tax evasion are rampant.

Corruption has penetrated deeply into the administrative machinery, which more often than not seems to come to a stand-still unless the 'oil' of bribery is poured into it! The helplessness deepens when one discovers such corruption even in the higher section of society and of the government. Individual Christians and groups can easily get sucked into this whirlpool of corruption. Accusations of corruption in the Church have not been wanting. We may be apt to lament our powerlessness in the face of such an overwhelming network of evil but we have to remind ourselves that to capitulate to such a situation is to abdicate our role 'as the salt of the earth and the light of the world.'<sup>33</sup>

### **b. Consumerism**

43 Consumerism is encouraged by liberal capitalism, when this is understood as unlimited competition and an unregulated free-market. Consumerism makes constant and sophisticated use of the media to broadcast its promises of instant happiness through purchases and use of new things, mostly luxurious items. Consumerism therefore promotes idols like *hedonism*, the pursuit of pleasure as life's goal, and *materialism*, the worship of things for themselves rather than as means to serve others.

---

<sup>33</sup> CBCI, *Statement of Mumbai Meeting, 1983*, 72-73.

### c. Criminalization of politics

44 Mutual understanding between corrupt politicians and professional criminals has become an acknowledged phenomenon. Persons with criminal background have joined all major national political parties. The majority of them get themselves elected to village and district governance and to Assembly and Parliaments. Thus the political party system is imbued with persons of criminal background rather than people with the spirit of nation-building. It is time that we, who inherited independence through a glorious freedom struggle, through moral and ethical principles and sacrifices of martyrs, seriously ponder over and realise that the criminalization of politics in India is in the making and may have tremendous impact on our children and on our heritage. History may blame the political leadership in free India, either for total neglect or for legitimizing criminality with politics.

### d. Types of violence

45 A *spiral of mounting violence* exists in our country and around the globe. Deprivation of basic rights, category of attacks affecting life, violation of the integrity of the human person, insults to human dignity, and disgraceful working conditions, all these things and others like them are types of violence indeed. They poison human society, and they do more harm to those who practice them than to those who suffer from the injury. Moreover, they are a supreme dishonour to the Creator. Thus we have the present day “*culture of death*,”<sup>34</sup> threatening our country and the world.

### Conclusion

46 This chapter assisted in understanding briefly India’s struggles and challenges. The Constitutional Assembly laid firm foundations with extra-ordinary foresight and courage for democracy and

---

<sup>34</sup> EV 12.

a state free from established religious affiliation. However, poverty, unemployment, hunger, social inequality, injustice and discrimination in the name of caste and creed still exist in India. These challenges call for a value system that ensures equality, justice, freedom and peace. Having perceived the brighter and darker side of India, the next chapter narrates its catechetical situation.

### CHAPTER III

## *The Catechetical Situation in India*

### **Introduction**

47 In order to understand Catechesis and Indian Christian life as it is being renewed in the light of the Second Vatican Council, it is necessary to situate it historically. It means going back to the roots and early beginnings of the Faith in India and the major stages in the development of Catechesis in the Church for which we are so grateful to God. The rich historical background and the commitment of the missionaries to evangelization, together with the later catechetical development in the Church and the modern Indian situation inspire us to identify the challenges in the catechetical situation of India today.

### **1. Journey to the Roots**

48 The wellsprings of our strengths and weaknesses are found in our history. Both as citizens of India and Christians, it is important to become aware of our historical growth and examine our roots with fresh insight in the spirit of the Gospel.

The Church in India traces its origin back to St. Thomas the Apostle. According to tradition, he came to India in 52 A.D. He evangelized people in Kerala and the coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and was martyred in Chennai. When the adventuresome Portuguese missionaries found a sea route from Europe to India in the 16th century, Catechesis found new vitality. They evangelized India's Western Coast, where they founded flourishing Christian communities. Later on, moving to the south-eastern coast, missionaries found Christians, who had not received ongoing pastoral care. Their children had not received Baptism. Their youth were not properly married. St. Francis Xavier, a young missionary from Europe, arrived in India during this bleak

Christian period and spread the Gospel message, attracting a great number of people to Christianity.

The reach of the Gospel message among the tribals of Chota Nagpur was another important moment in the growth of the Church in India. This community, which was tyrannized and oppressed by non-tribal native landlords, received new birth having embraced Christianity. The evangelization of India's north-eastern region, the "Seven Sister States," remains yet another important milestone in the growth of the Church in India.

## **2. Heritage of Christianity in India**

49 Gradually the presence of Christianity in India paved the way not only for development in educational and social fields but also for the growth of the Church. Dynamic attempts were made in a systematic manner for the propagation of Christian teachings. As a result lay participation in the mission activity emerged, catechesis spread to the villages, lay leaders took up various ministries and the Church began to extend service to the oppressed. These prime developments during the Church's early missionary activities can be considered as the heritage of Christianity in India.

### **a. Emergence of lay participation**

50 The success of evangelization and growth of the Church in India lay in the capacity of reading the signs of the times and responding to them. While answering the local needs, the Church also saw in different cultures, the opportunity to sow the seeds of the Good News of Jesus Christ and build the faith upon the sacrifices and the blood of martyrs and innumerable committed pastors some of whom are canonized.

The Church established charitable organisations like the Confraternity of the Holy Faith whose aim was to support new converts spiritually

and materially, following the teaching of St. Paul, to help the needy. Works of this pious union included the establishment of a seminary for Indian missionary priests. Another charitable foundation was called the confraternity of *Misericordia*. It eventually spread to many parts of India to help catechumens. The Church encouraged inter-caste marriages, took an uncompromising stand against unjust and inhuman customs such as widow immolation and abandonment of infants born on days considered by astrologers as “inauspicious.” Above all, she witnessed to Christ’s love for those in need, regardless of class, caste, sex or social condition.

### **b. Catechesis in villages**

51 The Church’s first concern was for the abandoned people. The pastors not only baptized all the children who lived without necessary priestly care, but they also systematically provided Catechesis for each village. They travelled constantly with the local lay people who eventually became their translators, interpreters and priceless catechetical assistants. With their help, the creed and main prayers were translated into the local language. They catechized the children and enlisted their collaboration as catechists for their elders at home.

They also had simple chapels and churches built in the main villages. They patiently tried to win back the Christians who did not uphold Gospel morality with gentleness. If this did not bring a change, missionaries did not hesitate to hand the offenders sometimes over to the community for corrective measures.

### **c. Ministry of lay leaders**

52 The Church gradually introduced the service of trained lay-catechists, providing for their maintenance as well. There also emerged lay leaders who from the day of their Baptism became apostles to their own families and neighbours. They convinced the

new believers through their preaching that they had an obligation to God and others, to share what the Lord had freely given them. Convinced by this message, many men and women, from humble origins and from royal families, dedicated their lives for the sake of the Kingdom.

#### **d. Service to oppressed people**

53 The oppressed people were the target group of the Church. The Church offered *spiritual support and power* to the baptized against fears and terrors caused by their wrong beliefs in evil spirits. Instead of placating malevolent forces, they were invited to trust in:

- an all-loving, all-good God, who forgives sins completely and makes us children of divine life that never ends
- a divine and human Saviour, Son of God, a Friend and Suffering Servant, who knows our sufferings, and heals us remaining with us always
- a divine Spirit, who raised Jesus from the dead and who will one day raise us, who makes us holy and strong, joyful and hopeful

Believers were offered the consolation of Mary as the Mother of all in the order of grace. Christians were offered the support and intercession of patron Saints. Christian communities were offered the powerful help of the Guardian Angels.

### **3. Catechetical Situation Today: Development and Challenges**

54 There are many positive signs today to indicate that India has gone a long way ahead in catechetical development, especially since the Second Vatican Council. They are: the boom in Lay Catechists, the flowering of new forms of community; the re-awakening of lay ministries; the increasing demand for religious formation; the new



forms of rediscovering and the popular reading of the Bible; the growth in various catechumenal itineraries; the recognition of the role and place of women; the experiences of Family Catechesis and the new initiatives of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue; the media in Catechesis; the renewal of the catechetical movement.

### **a. Christian Churches and religious sects**

55 There are, however, many challenges that we face in the catechetical field. One of the challenges is that there are a growing number of Catholics who leave the Catholic Church and join other Christian Churches, fundamentalist sects and cults. The reasons are many: lack of Catechesis which keeps their faith infantile, prone to acceptance of any faith; lack of pastoral care; finding other Christian Churches or some sects more appealing and attractive, for instance in their ways of praying and breaking the Word, lack of proper Catechesis on the understanding of and approach to the Christian Churches and non-Christian religions. In India today, the “ex-Catholics” who have joined these Christian Churches, sects and cults come from middle and upper-middle class backgrounds. Those most liable who join a fundamentalist group are college youth and adults who are in crisis.

### **b. Catechesis for adults**

56 This is the most important form of Catechesis.<sup>35</sup> The Church in India, however, is aware that poor and inadequate catechetical formation given during the early stages of life with very little or no catechetical follow-up in the later stages can lead to an infantile and imitative faith. As a result there is a tendency towards fixation on the spirituality that has remained imitative, devotional and individualistic. High pastoral priority needs to be given to the building up of this infantile faith-life into one that is community

---

<sup>35</sup> GCD 20.

and kingdom oriented in its dynamic concern for the Church and society, especially the poor and oppressed. Catechesis for adults can transform one's faith into a mature and responsible faith.

### **c. Catechesis for families**

57 Family Catechesis remains a big challenge in India today. Marriage and family life, the sacredness of human sexuality, as the expression of a total loving within the bond of fidelity, and the sacredness of the gift of life in the begetting of children are being attacked as never before. Added to this, one could find the adverse conditions that families face today in our cities as well as in rural areas, among the well-to-do, the economically backward, the oppressed and among the growing inter-faith families in the multi-religious context. These families present a real challenge to catechists whether at parish or institutional levels. Parents either do not practise their religion, or often they do practise in an entirely inadequate way. The fundamental concern of the Church is "to proclaim and to promote the faith among contemporary men and women, who live in a society subject to profound socio-cultural change."<sup>36</sup> The struggle of families in living their faith in such difficult situations arise also due to lack of preparation to the sacrament of marriage and lack of proper marriage and family counselling in the first years of marriage.

### **d. Young people in search of God-experience**

58 Young people are the hope and a great challenge for the future of the Church. In their struggle to acquire freedom and independence, the young people of today are caught up with the strong influence of media, the rapid socio-cultural changes and the permissive culture. They need to be accompanied in their search for meaning, in their longing to establish deeper and lasting relationships. It is precisely here that the unique role of Catechesis for the young becomes

---

<sup>36</sup> GCD 1.

evident. The heart of every Youth Catechesis must be the “explicit proposal of Christ to the young man in the Gospel.”<sup>37</sup>

Today, teenagers are faced with the easy and dangerous escape from reality into the world of drugs, alcohol, pornography in novels, movies and television, growing materialism and consumerism, and quick success through corruption in all its forms. They are confronted with the risk of a future of unemployment, rapid mushrooming of call centres, the need for influence and few job opportunities. The sharp and prolonged separation of the sexes in many Indian communities, together with today’s climate of moral disorientation, makes the journey towards a mature Christian understanding of vocation to love, and a healthy integration of its biological and affective aspects, a long and often hazardous one.

#### **e. Catechesis for children**

59 Today, more than ever, a new challenge is thrown open to the Church in India to dedicate her time and attention to those infants and children who study in international, public or other schools managed by members of other religions. Another challenge that has already been identified and catered to in various parts of our country is the growing number of children belonging to inter-religious or inter-faith families. Devising ways and means of catechising the illiterate and school drop-out children remains another challenge. In most places, there is no clear distinction between Catechesis carried out in Catholic institutions and in the parishes. An effective and systematic sacramental Catechesis is another area of concern.

#### **f. Need of inculturation**

60 The Church has often noted the profound affinity between Indian cultures and foundational tenets of Christianity, especially a Christianity that appreciates their ancient heritage and incorporates

---

<sup>37</sup> GDC 183.

these values into its life and worship. The Church in India, however, has a long way to go towards the inculturation of her life-style, worship and Catechesis.

### **g. Catechesis and popular devotion**

61 As a vital dimension in Catholic life, there exists in Christian communities, particular expressions for the search of God and religious life through fervour and devotion, which can be called “popular piety.”<sup>38</sup> It indicates thirst for God, arouses in the believers a capacity for self dedication and gives them a keen sensitivity to appreciate the ineffable attributes of God.<sup>39</sup> The practice of popular devotion in India is a reality inherent in the psychic and religious mentality of its people due to their need for concrete expressions of relationship with God. Catechesis, therefore, is required to appreciate the inherent nature and desirable qualities of popular devotion. Catechesis is also needed to give direction to express popular piety so that the dangers arising out of its errors through fanaticism, superstition, syncretism, or religious ignorance may be avoided.<sup>40</sup> “When it is wisely directed popular piety of this kind can make a constantly increasing contribution towards bringing the masses of our people into contact with God in Jesus Christ.”<sup>41</sup>

### **h. Catechesis and justice**

62 We are painfully aware of rampant corruption and injustice, at times among the affluent and elite leaders of Indian society. Respect for the human person, considering every created being equal and expression of human solidarity are often sidelined by many. Hence Catechesis is needed to ensure justice, to provide conditions that

---

<sup>38</sup> GDC 195.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. *EN* 48.

<sup>40</sup> GDC 195.

<sup>41</sup> *EN* 48.

allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation.<sup>42</sup> Catechesis can guarantee that justice can be obtained only in respecting the transcendent dignity of human persons, judging every human person equally as created in the image of the one God and expressing human solidarity with socio-economic problems.<sup>43</sup>

### **i. Integration of media and catechesis**

63 It is an undeniable fact that the media brings a new questionable value system with it. They have a role in the fracturing of the family, the school and the parish, in the alienation of parents and children and in the growth of secularization. Relationship in such families is often superficial and manipulative. The electronic media runs the risk of replacing some of the traditional values in Indian families with some of the threatening influences like consumerism, materialism, romanticizing violence and sexism, and subtle propagation of hedonism and individualism. Thus they implicitly denigrate transcendent realities.

While describing the social and economic realities of Asia, St. John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Asia* deplores the negative influences of the mass media. The media are seen as threatening traditional values, especially the stability of the family. “The effect of images of violence, unbridled individualism and materialism is striking at the heart of Asian cultures, at the religious character of the people, families and whole societies. This is a situation which poses a great challenge to the Church and to the proclamation of her message.”<sup>44</sup>

### **Conclusion**

64 The need to situate India’s Catechesis in history necessitated

---

<sup>42</sup> CCC 1928.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. CCC 1929-1942

<sup>44</sup> EA 7.

this chapter, 'Catechetical Situation in India.' It was possible to trace that the roots of Christian Faith go back to the arrival of St. Thomas the apostle in 52 AD but bloomed in the 16th century with the arrival of Portuguese missionaries especially St. Francis Xavier. The heritage of Christianity in India was underlined in its response to the spiritual and material needs of the people, especially the poor. Though the catechetical situation in India shows positive developments especially after the Second Vatican Council, it faces various challenges as well.

*Part Two* of the Directory – The Mission – reflects on the mission of ecclesial catechetical community that Christ has given to the service of God and our nation. We are called to be faithful to our God, our Church and our People. 'Our People' are not just the isolated baptized Catholics, but all who are in relationship with us, the total population of India. *Our Christian Mission is to these people at this time of history.* We believe it is a grace-filled moment, a Kairos.

PART TWO

# THE MISSION





## **The Church is led by the Spirit**

65 *Now when all the people were baptized and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Lk 3:21-22).*

The Church is convinced that the Spirit leads her as the Spirit led Jesus in his life and mission. God speaks to us in and through history and the Spirit helps the Church to interpret correctly these life-events, the real needs and longings of today's human family. In this way the Pilgrim Church discovers God's plan and will for all of us. This is our method and pedagogy.<sup>1</sup> We have examined our situation in the first part. Now we look at our mission.

Listening carefully to what the Lord's Spirit is saying to us as a people-on-mission (Rev 2:29), in the first part we carefully studied the Indian Context. Our Mission flows from the challenges seen in the Indian Context. In the first chapter, we turn to Jesus and seek to understand more clearly his own vision of mission, the task given to him by the Father. We then look at the life and mission of Jesus as it continues in the Church. In the second chapter, we take note of the renewed vision that came with the Second Vatican Council and after and see it percolate down to a renewed vision of mission in the Indian context.

We see here how Christ's mission was handed on, like a living flame, to the first Christians. Guided by the Spirit through a series of grace-filled events and 'little Pentecosts,' the Jewish Christians within a few years matured in their faith from being a culturally bound, exclusive community to become a universal, world-wide and truly Catholic Church.<sup>2</sup> In this way the Second Vatican Council has become a

---

<sup>1</sup> GS 4, 11.

<sup>2</sup> LG 9.

path leading the Church in her mission in the third millennium, towards a civilization of love, truth and justice – illuminated by that “New Pentecost” for which St. John XXIII prayed and laboured. In the third chapter, we cover the mission of evangelization and the renewal of the catechetical ministry in relationship to evangelization in India.

## CHAPTER I

### *Jesus' Mission Handed Down to the Church*

#### **Introduction**

66 The second part of this Directory, namely the Mission of the Church in India, recounts at the outset Jesus' mission handed down to the Church. The salient points of this chapter are the vision of the Kingdom of God in the Old and New Testaments, a meditation on Jesus the missionary, the Apostolic Church's vision of her mission and the Church's mission consciousness.

#### **1. Old Testament Vision of the Kingdom of God**

67 The image of God as King came gradually into Israel's faith, but not without much pain and suffering. For, God's people had to learn the hard way by choosing human kings for themselves, in imitation of the surrounding gentile nations. The Jewish experience of kingship was ambiguous with glory and ignominy. The kings of the Jews imitated other monarchs in their good and bad characteristics, which included despotism and idolatry. A large part of the prophetic denunciations in Israel and Judah is against corrupt kings, who did not follow the ways of the Lord.

A strong tradition was built up around the figure of a messianic-king, the ideal monarch, who would bring to God's people what they most yearned for: peace, justice, victory and joy. This saviour figure became the centre of a promised era, the messianic times, when the expected one would come to deliver his people. It is important to note that the biblical Hebrew and Greek terms for *Kingdom* do not refer to a geographic realm but to the *Reign of God*. Therefore the expectation was fostered not for a place but for God's activity among people, saving them, shepherding them, feeding them, loving them, and their response by fellowship and justice.

Prophecies were made about this shepherd, who would be faithful, uniting a divided people (Ezek 34, 35, 36, 37: 24-28).

### **God as Saviour and Liberator**

68 The core experience of Israel's religious life is of God who-is-present-to-save, to liberate, "for his steadfast love endures forever" (Ps 136). His saving love, faithful and merciful, is remembered in each covenant renewal celebration, in the historical prologue (Ex 6:2-8; Josh 24:2-13). His great deeds liberated the chosen people from their slavery, hunger and thirst in Egypt. He called them into the desert to receive his covenantal law and to offer him worship. The chosen people entered the Promised Land having wandered for forty years in the desert. They returned from the Babylonian exile after being captured by the hostile nations.

As depicted in the Old Testament tradition, creation itself is God's saving-deed. God created the universe from nothing and arranged it in a perfect order. This ordering of nothingness reflects God's power to give new life that the Saviour alone can bestow. As Creator-King and Liberator-King, God promises freedom in the covenant.

### **2. Meditation on Jesus the Missionary**

69 We begin to contemplate Jesus the Christ, the man-on-mission *par excellence*. The Holy Spirit opens us to the hidden depths of the person of Christ who lived in total faithfulness to the Father. The episodes given below are not the only ones that we could select. But for us, who are the privileged heirs to Christ's mission, these events described in the Gospel according to Luke are certainly some of the most influential moments of his life. They profoundly determine Jesus' sense of mission, his self-knowledge of who he was and what sort of life he had to live.

*Jesus' Public Mission begins at the river Jordan* (Lk 3:21-22): We are being taught by the Lord what it means to be a missionary according

to his mind and heart. “Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer” (Lk 3:21). In his personhood, in his life and mission, Jesus always turned toward his Father, with an open, listening heart, alert to hear God’s command (Isa 50:4), ready to say his “Amen!” He is sent to obey the Father in love, and so his life is filled with the prayer-of-loving-presence, poised to fulfil what his Father commands him. Just as Jesus lived his mission being the Son of God, so too Christian mission has its foundational grace in Baptism, whereby people are re-created into children of God. There is no greater dignity possible to human beings than this. “And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ – if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8:17).

*Jesus’ First Proclamation of his Liberating Mission* (Lk 4:14-30): Luke introduces this episode of Jesus’ first preaching in his home village by saying that Jesus returned to Galilee “filled with the power of the Spirit”. For Christ and for his Church, mission is not just being *guided* by the Spirit; it means being *enabled*, *empowered* in every detail. Jesus was certainly conscious of this living-in-the-Spirit, as must be true for each Christian (Rom 8:14f). Luke also adds another prefatory remark that characterizes Jesus’ preaching and catechizing; and this is the people’s joy, enthusiasm and praise of Jesus. Jesus not only announced Good News to all the people; he was the Good News.

Luke wants to portray here a typical preaching and teaching of Jesus. He ends his account by depicting the Nazarenes rejecting their own native son. Instead of unrelieved joy and enthusiasm with which the social outcasts receive this missionary, there is strong confrontation. Hence Jesus remarks that no prophet is ever accepted in his own country. Finally, enraged, the villagers hustle Jesus out to a hill from which they wanted to throw him off and kill him, for making such “outrageous” claims. Both confident of his Father’s protection and

conscious that his mission was just beginning, Jesus walks straight through the crowd of his would-be assassins to Capernaum, a place less hostile.

The description of Jesus' rejection is echoed in Stephen's rejection (Acts 7:58), in Paul's rejection (Acts 13:50), and in the rejection of missionaries of countless times and places. Luke, in other words, is giving us a practical lesson on mission, starting with Jesus' own mission, carried out in poverty and persecution, under the sign of the cross.

#### **a. Mission tour with Jesus Christ**

70 *Jesus teaches* in the Synagogue at Capernaum on the Sabbath, "They were astounded at his teaching, because he spoke with authority" (Lk 4:32). The mission of Jesus essentially was religious teaching. He teaches everywhere, sometimes even everyday (Mt 26:55). He accepts the title of *Rabbi*, Teacher (Jn 13:14). But Jesus becomes radical Teacher. His consciousness of himself as Teacher springs from a core-experience of His Father, His *Abba*, who sent him to share the greatest wisdom, which comes from the Father's heart. He is the greatest Teacher who not only faithfully witnesses to Israel's conviction that there is only one true Teacher, but also illumines their belief to seek new life (Jn 3:16; cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Col 3:1-4), gives them hope to change lives (Jn 4:41) thus proving to them the real source of abundant life (Jn 10:10).

Again and again Jesus attests solemnly, "My teaching is not mine but his who sent me" (Jn 7:16). "I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak" (Jn 12:49). "The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him" (Jn 8:29). In this constant exercise of his mission to teach, Jesus is utterly convinced that what he says is wholly from

the Father and why he says it is wholly for the Father's honour (Jn 7:17-18), and for the world's salvation unto eternal life (Jn 3:16).

*Jesus heals* physically, spiritually; he expels evil spirits. Luke shows two individual healings. First, there is the exorcism of a man in the synagogue possessed of an unclean spirit (Lk 4:33-36). This spiritual oppression does not allow the person to respond to God's invitation to salvation in freedom and joy. Jesus rebukes this malevolent spirit and commands it to depart – and it obeys Jesus immediately. Second, Simon Peter's mother-in-law was down in bed with a high fever (Lk 4:38-39). Again, with sovereign authority, Jesus rebukes the fever. The woman is immediately healed so convincingly that she serves her guests. In a summary scene (Lk 4:40-43), at sunset the people bring to Jesus all those suffering from "one kind or another" ailment. Jesus lays his hands on each and cures them. The possessed and oppressed by the evil spirit also are confronted by Jesus. He expels them and warns them not to shout about his real identity – for Jesus refused to take on an image of a bazaar healer promoting his own reputation. He also absolutely repudiated political power, which would have meant that he was bent on a messianic revolution against the Romans.

### ***i. Christ's vision of the Kingdom***

71 If the Old Testament is well described as a *Book of Hope*, a *Book of Promises* based upon God's own faithfulness, the New Testament can be called a *Book of Love*, of *Promises Fulfilled*. Christ is at the centre of this *Book of Love* and so is the Kingdom of God, which he embodies. Without any doubt, Christ gives first place in his preaching and teaching to this subject: "the Kingdom of God" and its Jewish equivalent found in Saint Matthew, "the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 13:11-52). The kingdom which Christ inaugurates is the Kingdom of God. Christ himself reveals who this God is, the One whom he addresses by the intimate term "Abba," Father (cf.

Mk 14:36). God, as revealed above all in the parables (cf. Lk 15:3-32; Mt 20:1-16), is sensitive to the needs and sufferings of every human being: he is a Father filled with love and compassion, who grants forgiveness and freely bestows the favours asked of him.<sup>3</sup> In the Synoptic Gospels alone the phrases occur about 90 times. The Kingdom of God is the focus of Christ's mission: his preaching, and parables, his sayings, symbolic actions and signs or miracles all of these elucidate and elaborate upon the passion of his life, his dream.<sup>4</sup>

Christ's vision of his mission, then, is to preach, teach and live his Father's love. It is this reign which alone matters, which alone brings salvation to those who accept it. This is why Jesus the Christ is so respectful. The *Reign of God* is an invitation to allow God to do in us what Christ allowed his Father to do in him, to accept God unconditionally, to allow the divine love to rule without hindrance. Thus, Jesus Christ chooses to proclaim the Kingdom in obscurity amongst the poorest – directly contrary to the values and expectations of the worldly wise.

## ***ii. Threefold role of Jesus Christ***

72 Jesus Christ is prophet, priest and king. He is the Prophet who came to this world (cf. Jn 6:14). He is the supreme teacher. He teaches by his words and by the facts of Revelation: Incarnation, Death, Resurrection and Ascension. Christ's prophetic activity continues through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is the high priest *par excellence* (Heb 5:1). As priest Jesus Christ meets our needs, remains holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. He is the redeemer who offered himself for our sins (cf. Heb 7:27). Jesus Christ is the king, "who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed

---

<sup>3</sup> RM 13.

<sup>4</sup> Mt 13:24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47; Mt 4:17, 23; Mt 5:3, 10, 19-20; 6:10, 33; 7:21.



intercedes for us” (Rom 8:34). He is King because he is victorious in the battle over sin and death. He is the king because he exercises full dominion over all (cf. Ps 103:19).

As the Second Vatican Council taught, God sent his Son whom he appointed heir of all things (Heb. 1:12), that he might be teacher, priest and king of all, the head of the new and universal people, God’s sons and daughters. He shares his roles with his beloved Church, so his threefold role continues in the Church through her ministries and mission. Ministry (service) and mission describe the work of the Church in the world. Jesus was conscious that his mission from the Father would continue in us, his disciples, his community. So, through words and actions and through his Person as God and Man, he reveals the characteristics and demands of his Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God is meant for all humankind, and all people are called to become members of it. To emphasize this fact, Jesus drew especially near to those on the margins of society, and showed them special favour in announcing the Good News. At the beginning of his ministry he proclaimed that he was “anointed...to preach the good news to the poor” (Lk 4:18). To all who are victims of rejection and contempt Jesus declares: “Blessed are you poor” (Lk 6:20). What is more, he enables such individuals to experience liberation even now, by being close to them, going to eat in their homes (cf. Lk 5:30; 15:2), treating them as equals and friends (cf. Lk 7:34), and making them feel loved by God, thus revealing his tender care for the needy and for sinners (cf. Lk 15:1-32).<sup>5</sup>

### **b. Decisiveness of Jesus’ mission for human history**

73 The importance of the Christ-Event for all peoples lies in the fact that in the person and mission of Jesus, history has taken a decisive turn. An irreversible saving-process has been set in motion. God’s reign of love has made its definitive appearance. His loving

---

<sup>5</sup> RM 14.

kindness has taken flesh in space and time, here and now (Tit 3:4). That reality has an equally definitive future influence. Till Christ the King's second coming God's reign grows towards its fullness, when the whole of humankind will be transformed (1 Cor 15:28).

The Reign of God refers therefore, to the definitive manifestation of God's unconditional love. It effects in those who welcome it by repentance and faith: an all-around *freedom*, an inclusive fellowship or communion of radical concern that bridges all barriers of caste and class, and enduring relationships of justice among all people of the Kingdom. Thus, the reign of righteousness, peace and joy in the Spirit (Rom 14:17) breaks into our world, almost imperceptibly, and conquers it non-violently.

This is the hope in which we have been saved (Rom 8:24). This Paschal hope manifests itself in a community of believers, disciples who embody the gift of the Kingdom. For this we give thanks and praise to Jesus and for his mission to proclaim in word and deed his Father's love. We turn now to see how, like a living flame, this mission was passed on to the first Christians, and how they nurtured that fire which Christ had brought to the earth that it might blaze in every person and community (Lk 12:49).

The mission of Catechesis is to bring people to know and accept Jesus Christ as the Lord and Saviour, the mediator and the fullness of Revelation. He completed and perfected Revelation by revealing himself in words and deeds, signs and miracles, but above all by his death and glorious resurrection from the dead, and finally by sending the Spirit of truth.<sup>6</sup> Jesus Christ is not merely the greatest of prophets but is the eternal Son of God, made man. He is, therefore, the final event towards which all the events of salvation history converge. He is indeed 'the Father's one, perfect and unsurpassable Word.

---

<sup>6</sup> DV4.

### 3. The Apostolic Church's Vision and Mission

74 The book of the Acts of the Apostles is also called, with good reason, *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*. The central role of the Spirit in maturing the first Christians' faith, in transforming them from being disciples to being apostles is the key to understanding this apostolic community's sense of mission.

The Lucan presentation depicts the disciples as expecting a political messiah (cf. Acts 1:6) before the descending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). They expected the Kingdom primarily from the perspective of their own culture. Luke also answers their anxiety on Jesus' second coming: "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). Thus, Jesus' promise of the Holy Spirit who will enable them to be witnesses-in-power to earth's remotest corners are the final words of Jesus before his Ascension (cf. Acts 1:8).

#### **Making disciples of all nations**

75 The other two Synoptic Gospels, Matthew and Mark, also describe Jesus' great commission given to his disciples. They bring out dimensions which certainly were formative of the early Church's consciousness and identity of being essentially a herald community, sent personally by the Risen Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Matthew's version reflects very clearly what the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem remembered most graphically, the solemn commission and the promise accompanying it: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt 28:18-20).

#### **4. The Church's Mission Consciousness: Reflections on how the Synoptic Gospels Converge**

76 We appreciate the apostolic community's conviction and its vision of being commissioned by Christ himself to continue his work given by the Father. So, we clearly underline several dimensions of this mission, emerging from the synoptic accounts. We do not consider merely the passage given at the end of each Gospel. Throughout the synoptic contexts, we trace the thrust to mission consciousness.

##### **a. The Church's identity as a people called and sent**

77 "Go!" "Go out!" "I am sending you..." "Get up and go..." These formulas and other equivalents are used throughout the Old and New Testament accounts, when prophets and apostles are sent on the Lord's mission. These words ring in the ears and hearts of the apostles. They are at the core of their awareness of who they are individually and as a community. The one sending them is "this Jesus God raised up...exalted at the right hand of God...that God has made him both Lord and Messiah" (Acts 2:32, 33, 36). They are royal envoys, messengers (1 Cor 8:23), ambassadors for Christ (1 Cor 5:20).

##### **b. The Church as heir to Christ's own saving mission tasks**

78 The Church continues the missionary task of Christ placing a responsibility on the entire Church. "The entire Church, pastors and faithful, are responsible for its Revelation, conservation and transmission. The Gospel is conserved whole and entire in the Church...As the Church lives the Gospel, she is continually made fruitful by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit causes her to grow constantly in her understanding of the Gospel, prompts her and sustains the task of proclaiming the Gospel in every corner of the world."<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> GDC 40.

### c. A Church with world horizons

79 Jesus had trained his disciples to be missionaries. With the Lord's Passover – Jesus' going to the Father by way of his reconciling love, his saving sacrifice in the Passion, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Sending of his Spirit – *a new age has dawned*. The Israelites are hereby joined by all Gentile nations. The era of particularistic election of God's People, Israel, now expands to the Gospel call to God's New People, which excludes no race. It is an universal, Catholic community.

This universalistic vision was already seen by Isaiah. It was especially the dark-night-of-the-soul of God's people in the Babylonian exile which opened out its soul to see that Israel would one day be a "light to the nations" (Isa 49:6). The synoptic missionary mandate leaves absolutely no room for hesitation to say that at his Ascension Jesus is, in effect, creating a catholic, i.e. a world-embracing community. He sends his apostles 'to earth's remotest end', 'to the whole world... to all creation,' 'all nations'.

The practical implications of being a world-Church, however, would be realized gradually through many pentecosts – of Jews at Jerusalem (Acts 2:1f), of Samaritans in Samaria (Acts 8:14-17), of Gentiles at Caesarea (Acts 10) and Antioch (Acts 11:19-24) and Ephesus (Acts 6:1-7). The process of being truly catholic is dependent upon the Spirit of Pentecost. It is not just a vision of geographic expansion of the visible Church. As Pope Paul VI reminds us, it is a matter of in-depth leavening of every society.<sup>8</sup> These reflections have special significance for the Church in India living in a pluri-cultural and pluri-religious context.

St. John Paul II in his exhortation, *The Vocation and Mission of the Laity*, states that communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other; they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other:

---

<sup>8</sup> EN 20.

“Communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.”<sup>9</sup> In this insight the Pope follows Pauline theology closely. Anointed and consecrated by Christ’s Spirit in Baptism and Confirmation, each Christian shares by communion the mission of Jesus to be prophet, priest and servant-king.<sup>10</sup> Paul’s vision of faith sees all the faithful as sharers in Christ’s life and mission, their daily life’s sacrifices pleasing to God (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Pet 2:5).

## **Conclusion**

80 The Kingdom of God was the central focus of the mission of Jesus Christ. To realize this Jesus preached and taught to live the love of God the Father. The Church is called and sent to earth’s remotest end, to the whole world, ultimately to all creation and all nations to continue the mission of our Lord until he comes in glory.

---

<sup>9</sup> CL 32.

<sup>10</sup> CL 14.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Second Vatican Council and Church Renewal*

#### Introduction

81 Pope Paul VI saw the Second Vatican Council as focusing on divine truths, namely the Church, her nature and composition, her ecumenical vocation, her apostolic and missionary activity. Ten years later, the same Pope stated that the teachings of the Second Vatican Council can be summed up in this single objective: to ensure that the Church of the twentieth century may emerge ever better equipped to *proclaim the Gospel to the people of this century*.<sup>11</sup> Hence it is fitting to present here the vision of mission according to the Council, then the development of an understanding of mission in the post-conciliar era, in the perspective of Evangelization that began with the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

#### 1. The Mission of the Church according to the Council

82 The Second Vatican Council spoke of the inexhaustible riches of the mystery of Christ. This mystery is made present to humanity today by the Church, Christ's Body. For, the Church, *being in Christ*, is in the nature of a sacrament – a sign and an instrument, a communion with God and all peoples.<sup>12</sup> There can be no renewal in the Church without being rooted in this mystery. If such a realization becomes a fact, then it will bear fruit, as the faithful live the universal call to *holiness* and learn that they all share in the Church's *mission*.” Without such a sense of mystery, there will be a false sociological and political interpretation of the Church and her very nature.

An essential part of the mission of the Church, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, is to preach and to witness to the Good News of God's election, mercy and love, manifested in salvation history.

---

<sup>11</sup> EN 2.

<sup>12</sup> LG 1.

Through Jesus Christ, they reach their culmination and offer salvation to all persons by the grace of the Lord's Holy Spirit. This saving mission given to the Church by the Lord himself must be understood *as an integral whole*. Though it is spiritual, the mission of the Church involves human promotion even in its material aspects. For this reason the mission of the Church cannot be reduced to a single dimension. In this mission there is certainly a clear distinction – but not a separation – between the material and the spiritual.

The work of Christ's redemption concerns essentially the salvation of people. It considers the renewal of the whole temporal order. The mission of the Church, consequently, not only brings the message and grace of Christ but also permeates and improves how people live.

The laity, carrying out this mission of the Church, exercise their apostolate, therefore, in the world as well as in the Church, in the temporal order as well as in the spiritual. These orders are distinct: they are nevertheless so closely linked that God's plan is, in Christ, to take the whole world up again and make of it a new creation, in an initial way here on earth, in full realization at the end of time. A lay person at one and the same time, a believer and a citizen of the world, has a single conscience of being a Christian. By this he/she is guided continually in both spheres, Church and society, the temporal and the spiritual.<sup>13</sup>

#### **a. Sources of the Church's life: Hearing and proclaiming God's Word**

83 Response to the Word of God has two dimensions: First, listening to it in faith; then proclaiming it. The Second Vatican Council rightly states:

---

<sup>13</sup> AA 5,7.



Hearing the Word of God with reverence, and proclaiming it with faith, the sacred Synod assents to the words of St. John, who says, ‘This life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us’ (1 Jn 1:2). This Synod wants the whole world to hear the summons to salvation, so that through hearing it may believe, through belief it may hope, through hope it may come to love.<sup>14</sup>

### **b. Proclamation of God’s Word**

84 The mystery of divine life that the Church brings to all peoples and in which it wants them to participate must be proclaimed. The Church is missionary by her very nature, according to the Council’s Decree on Missionary Activity.<sup>15</sup> This proclamation is the first duty not only of bishops and priests but of all Christians.<sup>16</sup> This proclamation is always a retelling of the story of Jesus Christ. This story becomes the pattern for understanding, interpreting the stories of people for all time.

*The Church, always in need of conversion* is an ancient axiom and a fundamental theme in the Second Vatican Council: “To believers also the Church must ever preach faith and penance.”<sup>17</sup>

Today as well, the Church is not blind to the discrepancy between the message it proclaims and the human weakness of those to whom the Gospel has been entrusted... Guided by the Holy Spirit the Church ceaselessly exhorts her children to purification and renewal so that the sign of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the Church.<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> DV 1.

<sup>15</sup> AG 2, 6.

<sup>16</sup> CD 2.

<sup>17</sup> SC 9.

<sup>18</sup> GS 43.

We hear the call of the Church today for a new evangelization which begins with the Church and then extends to the whole world.

*Communion* is the central and fundamental theme in the Second Vatican Council. From the beginning the Church lived this communion to experience the presence of Christ and to live his commandment of love. Through the saving act of personal faith and the grace received in the sacraments of Christian initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, every member of Christ's faithful is drawn into the communion of the three divine Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and so becomes a member of the communion which is Christ's Church.

The Churches around the world are expressions of a wonderful communion in their very pluriformity of cultures, incarnations of the one apostolic Faith, liturgies of the one Eucharistic mystery, and witnesses of the single mission of Christ given by the one Spirit (Eph 4:3-5). In her communion of life, truth and love,<sup>19</sup> the Church is established by God to be for our very complex world a sign and an instrument of reconciliation, healing and salvation for all nations. In her unity of Faith, sacraments and hierarchical communion, especially with the centre of unity given to us by Christ in the ministry of St. Peter and his successors, the Popes, the Church in truth is a messianic people, a hope for all.

The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of St. John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, eloquently emphasises the call to communion. At the heart of the mystery of the Church exists the bond of communion, uniting Christ, the Bridegroom, to all the baptized. Through this living and life-giving communion, 'Christians no longer belong to themselves but are the Lord's very own' (2 Cor 5:15). United to the Son in the Spirit's bond of love, Christians are united to the Father, and from this communion flows the communion, which Christians share with one another through Christ in the Holy Spirit.

---

<sup>19</sup> LG 9.

The Church's primary purpose then is to be the sacrament of the inner union of the human person with God, and to become people's communion with one another through Christ in the Holy Spirit.<sup>20</sup> In fulfilling this mission, the Church becomes the "inner union of the human with God" and thus the Church becomes the sacrament of "unity of the human race."<sup>21</sup>

## 2. Catholicity and Apostolicity of Mission

85 The Second Vatican Council offers an intense and searching meditation on the mystery of the Church. God's own triune communion of life and love is shared by the Father through the mission of His Son Jesus Christ in the Spirit. The God-centred and Christ-centred vision of the Second Vatican Council incorporates this communion into Christ's mystical body, the Church. This communion is the effect of mission.

The dialogue-of-salvation, begun by God in divine revelation,<sup>22</sup> has to be seen now as an expression of the Church's mission to all nations. This in fact is the sacrament of salvation. By stressing the implications of the Church's mission further in all other constitutions, decrees and declarations, the Council practically re-asserts the Church's foundational characters: one, holy, catholic and apostolic. In particular, three concrete expressions or tasks of the Church are emphasized throughout the Conciliar documents: to be true to who she is, to be faithful to the mission given her by her Founder, pursuing the path of authentic *inculturation*, the dialogue-of-salvation with all and *promotion of justice* for the oppressed.<sup>23</sup>

This mission is fulfilled through participation in the triple roles of Jesus Christ: priestly, prophetic and kingly. Through Baptism, all the

---

<sup>20</sup> EA 24.

<sup>21</sup> EA 24.

<sup>22</sup> DV 2-4; AG 2-4.

<sup>23</sup> EN 25-39.

faithful are called to engage in these three roles. “The baptized, by regeneration and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, are consecrated into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood.”<sup>24</sup> The People of God also share in Christ’s prophetic role, which “spreads abroad a living witness to Him, especially by means of a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the tribute of lips which give honour to his name.”<sup>25</sup> Finally, this mission of Christ continues when all people come together through the shepherding (*Kingly*) role of Christ, continued by the Church.<sup>26</sup>

### **Incarnational mission**

86 The mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is described as a total self-emptying which leads Christ to experience fully the human condition and to accept totally the Father’s plan. This is an emptying of self which is permeated by love and expresses love. The mission follows this same path and leads to the foot of the cross.<sup>27</sup>

The Second Vatican Council inaugurated a new era whereby Churches around the world can be thoroughly rooted in their own soil and develop maturely, indigenously, through a discerning dialogue. For example, *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* opened the way for appropriate adaptation of the liturgy to incorporate the genius and traditions of peoples. Each country and cultural region may use, not only their own languages, but also their inherited cultural riches as they offer worship to God in the liturgy and sacraments.

The *Decree on the Missions* further expands this principle to include not only the celebration of the faith, but its formulation and the way it is lived. At the same time, it avoids every appearance of syncretism

---

<sup>24</sup> LG 10.

<sup>25</sup> LG 12.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. LG 13.

<sup>27</sup> RM 88.

and false exclusiveness, all in the light of the Gospel, which purifies and preserves intact, every cultural beauty, goodness and truth.<sup>28</sup>

Authentic inculturation remains essentially a part of the mission of the Church. This is reaffirmed in *Ecclesia in Asia*:

The Gospel and evangelization are certainly not identical with culture; they are independent of it. Yet the Kingdom of God comes to people who are profoundly linked to a culture. The building of the Kingdom cannot avoid borrowing elements from human cultures. In the process of encountering the world's different cultures, the Church not only transmits her truths and values and renews cultures from within, but she also takes from the various cultures the positive elements already found in them.<sup>29</sup>

### **3. Ministry of the Word in the Mission of Evangelization**

87 The Ministry of the Word must be seen in the larger context of evangelization. The General Directory for Catechesis affirms that the ministry of the Word as a fundamental element of evangelization. Even those who are already Christians need to be further nourished by the Word of God. “Those who are already disciples of Jesus Christ also require to be constantly nourished by the Word of God so that they may grow in their Christian life.”<sup>30</sup> The expressions of the Ministry of the Word are Primary Proclamation, Initiatory Catechesis, Permanent Catechesis, Liturgical Catechesis and Theological Reflection.<sup>31</sup>

*Primary Proclamation*, also called “missionary preaching” or “first evangelization” is the first proclamation. Animated by the Spirit, an

---

<sup>28</sup> AG 22; SC 37.

<sup>29</sup> EA 21.

<sup>30</sup> GDC 50.

<sup>31</sup> GDC 51-52.

apostle of the Word invites those ready and willing to listen to the Word to accept by faith, Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

*Initiatory Catechesis*, turning from self-love to God's love, surrendering oneself in personal faith-commitment to Jesus as saving Lord, the person/community experiences the joy and consolation of Christ's presence, even in times of persecution. With this initial conversion, the proper catechumenate begins for a longer or shorter duration.<sup>32</sup> This Catechumenal Catechesis is holistic: instructional, formational, initiating a person into the mysteries of Christ as professed (creed), as celebrated (liturgy), and as witnessed in life (morality). The whole Christian community is involved in prayer, fasting, exorcisms, instructions and general fellowship with the catechumens. The purpose of this catechumenate is to deepen Faith. Following the reception of the foundational sacraments of Christian life, a period of time is set aside when the newly baptized are helped to deepen their appreciation of the sacraments. Again, the Catechesis is not notional or conceptualistic, nor a time for memorizing by rote, but a time for deepening the Christ-Experience through instruction, initiation and formation for life-in-the-Spirit.

*Permanent Catechesis*, an on-going catechesis, is continued principally in liturgical celebrations, ecclesial and life-events. This is the continuing education in the faith.<sup>33</sup> This is intended for those who are initiated in faith, need constant nourishment of faith through a variety of forms such as Adult Catechesis or *Occasional Catechesis*.<sup>34</sup>

*Liturgical Initiation*, reception of the sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist) is usually celebrated during the Holy Saturday Vigil Mass. The liturgical expression of the Word continues mainly through the homily and liturgical instruction, that is, through "mystagogical catechesis."

---

<sup>32</sup> AG 13-14.

<sup>33</sup> GDC 51.

<sup>34</sup> GDC 71.

*Theological Reflection*, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, saintly and learned men and women help the community of believers through their systematic reflection on God's Word and application of the Word to life. Guided by the Holy Spirit and the Church's supernatural appreciation of the faith, theological ministry helps the pilgrim Church to progress in maturity of faith, in being truly catholic in its life and vision.

#### **4. Evangelization: the Mission of the Church**

88 The Church exists to evangelize.<sup>35</sup> She has the opportunity of bringing the Gospel, by witness and word, to all people and nations.<sup>36</sup> After the paradigm shift in the understanding of Evangelization in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the catechetical document, *Catechesi Tradendae* re-situates the role of Catechesis in the wider mission of evangelization. Catechesis is an essential moment in the process of evangelization.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore the Second Vatican Council acknowledges the Church's constant need of on-going repentance-conversion. In other words, a renewal of the community's Christ-experience and the experience of life-in-the-Spirit. Pope Paul VI puts the point briefly and clearly: If the Church is to preserve the freshness, the ardour and the strength of her own work of preaching the Gospel she must herself be continuously evangelized. Church must evangelize herself by a constant conversion and renewal if she is to evangelize the world convincingly.<sup>38</sup>

#### **5. Catechesis in Evangelization**

89 The missionary is a person of the Beatitudes. Before sending out the Twelve to evangelize, Jesus, in his "missionary discourse"

---

<sup>35</sup> EN 14.

<sup>36</sup> RM 92.

<sup>37</sup> CT 18, 20.

<sup>38</sup> EN 15; AG 5, 11, 12.

(cf. Mt 10), teaches them the paths of mission: poverty, meekness, acceptance of suffering and persecution, the desire for justice and peace, charity – in other words, the Beatitudes, lived out in the apostolic life (cf. Mt 5:1-12).<sup>39</sup>

Catechesis needs to be continually renewed by a certain broadening of its concept, by the revision of its methods, by the search for suitable language, and by the utilization of a new means of transmitting the message. Renewal is sometimes unequal in value; the Synod Fathers realistically recognized, not only an undeniable advance in the vitality of catechetical activity and promising initiatives, but also the limitations or even “deficiencies” in what has been achieved to date.<sup>40</sup>

The central Gospel message, or kerygma, is gradually deepened, developed in its implicit consequences, explained in language that includes an appeal to reason, and channelled towards Christian practice in the Church and the world. The truths studied in Catechesis are the same truths that touched the person’s heart when he/she heard them for the first time. Far from blunting or exhausting them, knowing them better would make them even more challenging and decisive for one’s life.

This broad meaning of Catechesis in no way contradicts but rather includes and goes beyond a narrow meaning which was once commonly given to Catechesis in didactic expositions, namely the simple teaching of the formulas that express Faith. In the final analysis, catechesis is necessary both for the maturation of the faith of Christians and for their witness in the world: it is aimed at bringing Christians to “attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:15).”<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> *RM* 91.

<sup>40</sup> *CT* 17.

<sup>41</sup> *CT* 25.



The General Directory for Catechesis describes the link between evangelization and Catechesis and at the same time draws our attention to the fact that the boundaries between the two are not rigidly demarcated. The primary task “is to proclaim the Gospel and to call to conversion. 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.’ This relationship between the two is of ‘complementary distinction.’<sup>42</sup>

The specific character of Catechesis, as distinct from the Initial Conversion has the twofold objective of maturity: the initial faith and of educating towards the authentic discipleship of Christ. It is acquired by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of the Lord Jesus Christ so as to live as disciples. But in catechetical practice, sometimes the initial evangelization may not have taken place. Besides, temptations to doubt or to abandon their Faith, especially as a result of their unbelieving surroundings might arise even in the life of adults. This means that Catechesis must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the Faith but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace in order to arrive at total adherence to Jesus Christ. This concern will in part decide the tone, the language and the method of Catechesis.<sup>43</sup>

Catechesis is the actual transmission of the message and the ongoing process of faith-nurturing. More definitely, by Catechesis we mean the prophetic ministry of the Christian community by which individuals and communities are enabled to discern, under the guidance of the Spirit, God’s saving presence within its life-situation and environment. These Christians are enabled to interpret the meaning of their lives and the orientation for their future.

---

<sup>42</sup> GDC 61.

<sup>43</sup> CT 19.

### **a. Evangelization as a complex process**

90 “Evangelization is a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative.”<sup>44</sup> These elements may appear to be inconsistent and even mutually exclusive, but in fact they are complementary.<sup>45</sup> Accordingly, it is essential to consider each element in relation to the other, not in contrast to each other but rather as inter-related, in order to arrive at a complete understanding of the work of evangelization on which the Church is engaged.

The Church appreciates the complex, rich and dynamic reality of evangelization. If once it was restricted in its meaning to include mainly – and, even, exclusively – missionary preaching of the Good News to people who have never heard the Gospel, then this oversimplification is no longer valid. The real meaning is far richer and more comprehensive.

In a word, the Church may be truly said to evangelize when, solely in virtue of that news which she proclaims, she seeks to convert both the individual consciences of members and their collective conscience, all the activities in which they are engaged and, finally, their lives and the whole environment which surrounds them.<sup>46</sup>

Evangelization is to be achieved, not peripherally but deeply touching the very centre and root of life. The Gospel must impregnate the culture and the whole life of people. This work must always start with humans, coming back to the inter-relationships between humans and eventually their relation with God.<sup>47</sup>

It is necessary therefore, to devote all our resources and all our efforts to the sedulous evangelization of human culture, or cultures.

---

<sup>44</sup> EN 24.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. EN 24.

<sup>46</sup> EN 134.

<sup>47</sup> EN 20.

Various human cultures must be regenerated through contact with the Gospel. But this contact cannot be effected unless the Good News is proclaimed and through the proclamation, the essence of human culture is transformed.

### **b. Evangelization and witness of life**

91 This proclamation must be made, above all else, by witness. A Christian or a group of Christians, in the midst of the community in which they live, must show that they are capable of understanding and accepting others and of cooperating with all those who are seeking to protect what is noble and good. They can radiate their faith spontaneously through values that transcend common values, hope in things which are unseen and by which even the boldest mind cannot form an image. By bearing such silent witness, Christians can inevitably arouse a spirit of enquiry in those who see their way of life. Witness of this kind constitutes in itself a proclamation of the Good News, silent, but strong and effective. This constitutes a first step in the work of evangelization. This witness is an essential element and often the initial element in the work of evangelization.<sup>48</sup>

But this will never be enough, for witness, no matter how excellent, will ultimately prove ineffective unless its meaning is clarified and corroborated. The meaning of a person's witness will be clarified by preaching the Lord Jesus clearly and unambiguously. The Good News proclaimed by witness of life has to be proclaimed by the Word of Life sooner or later. There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed.<sup>49</sup>

The General Directory for Catechetics sums up the process of evangelization. Evangelization must be viewed as the process by

---

<sup>48</sup> EN 21

<sup>49</sup> EN 22.

which the Church, moved by the Spirit, proclaims and spreads the Gospel throughout the entire world:

- It is urged by charity, impregnating and transforming the whole temporal order, appropriating and renewing all cultures.
- It bears witness amongst people of the new way of being and living which characterises Christians.
- It proclaims explicitly the Gospel, through ‘first proclamation’ calling to conversion.
- It 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 again take up the path of following him, incorporating both into the Christian community.
- It constantly nourishes the gift of communion amongst the faithful by means of continuous education in the Faith...the sacraments and the practice of charity.
- It continuously arouses the sense of mission, sending all the disciples of Christ to proclaim the Gospel, by word and deed throughout the whole world.<sup>50</sup>

## **Conclusion**

92 The vision of the Church articulated by the Second Vatican Council is a harmonious one including Evangelization, worship and Sacramental life, *communio* in a structured Church, and witness in and to the world.

---

<sup>50</sup> GDC 48.

### CHAPTER III

## *Renewal of Mission in India*

### Introduction

93 The Church in India is truly a pilgrim Church; she travels slowly, discerns the Spirit's direction and obeys divine guidance. She realizes, above all, the fact of remaining true to her identity, being authentically Christian, being the priceless treasure-of-faith, entrusted to her by Christ through the apostles. This Faith is handed on to her not only for her own salvation and fulfilment, but for all people.

At the same time, she must remain fully Indian – in her life, worship and witness of service. She should not be – nor even appear to be – some sort of foreign transplant, like a multi-national organization or a colonial mission enterprise. While respecting her history, she also has to be faithful to her ancient, pluriform, cultural heritage and responsible to the fast changing contemporary Indian society which is undergoing such extraordinary burdens. And so, this pilgrim Faith-community strives to live out the Conciliar and post-Conciliar vision of freedom of religion not only amidst plenty of internal tensions, misunderstandings and miscommunications but also externally, with some suspicion and malicious attacks.

The Church in India realises her mission as:

- *a communion of life*, by being more completely inculturated into every civic community in which she strives to live in harmony
- *a communion of truth*, by engaging constantly in a dialogue-of-life with all Catholics, all Christians, all neighbours of other religions, and those of secular ideologies, who have not yet discovered God

- *a communion of love*, by reaching out to those who are most in need of being liberated, thus creating a new civilized Indian society based on the Gospel Values of God's reign – freedom, fellowship, justice, reverence for human life, dignity for all, particularly for the poorest and the most exploited

### **1. Dialogue of Salvation: Expression of God's Universal Love**

94 The Second Vatican Council manifests clearly its Faith-vision as world-wide.<sup>51</sup> There exists no exclusivity of any kind. Its view is inclusive, all peoples as seen within one human community. "This is so because all stem from one stock which God created to people the entire earth (cf. Acts 17:26), and also because all share in a common destiny, namely God."<sup>52</sup>

Moreover, the Church is not only joined by a sacramental bond with all the baptized, no matter what their Church or ecclesial community is, but she is also related to all believers – Jews, Muslims, Hindus and all who seek God with a sincere heart and try through their actions to do the divine will as they know it by the dictates of their consciences. The Second Vatican Council affirms clearly that God affords the possibility of salvation to every person of good will: "Nor shall divine providence deny the assistance necessary for salvation to those who, without any fault of theirs, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, and who, not without grace, strive to lead a good life."<sup>53</sup>

Following the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Church took serious steps in dialogue. It established Pontifical Councils for inter-Religious Dialogue, for Dialogue with Non-Believers, and for Promotion of Christian Unity. The Synod of 1985 stresses that

---

<sup>51</sup> *LG* 15-17; *NA* 2, *GS* 92,40-45, 23-32.

<sup>52</sup> *NA* 1.

<sup>53</sup> *LG* 16; see also *NA* 2-5.

dialogue is not opposed to mission. This certainly was the mind of the Council, Pope Paul VI and St. John Paul II.<sup>54</sup> In the Asian context, dialogue with other religions is seen as a vocation. “Ecumenical dialogue and interreligious dialogue constitute a veritable vocation for the Church.”<sup>55</sup>

### **Preferential love for poor and oppressed**

95 Above all in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, the Second Vatican Council systematically exercises part of its prophetic vocation to examine today’s life-situations in the light of Christ and his Gospel values. The Constitution denounces unjust structures and defends the fundamental human rights of people, particularly of the poor and exploited.<sup>56</sup> *Ecclesia in Asia* sees this with greater urgency:

This is especially so with regard to Asia, a continent of plentiful resources and great civilizations, but where some of the poorest nations on earth are to be found and where more than half the population suffers deprivation, poverty and exploitation. The poor of Asia and of the world will always find their best reason for hope in the Gospel command to love one another as Christ has loved us (cf. Jn 13:34); and the Church in Asia cannot but strive earnestly to fulfil that command towards the poor, in word and deed.<sup>57</sup>

## **2. The Council’s Defence of Religious Liberty**

96 The Council further renews the vision of the Church, her nature and mission in the *Declaration on Religious Liberty*.<sup>58</sup> The document

---

<sup>54</sup> *ES* 73-93.

<sup>55</sup> *EA* 29.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *GS* 27.

<sup>57</sup> *EA* 34.

<sup>58</sup> Ref. *DH* 2

considers each person as sacrosanct because every human being has a moral responsibility before God, individually and as a community, human beings enjoy immunity before civil governments from all forms of coercion in religious beliefs and practices. There are three distinct dimensions of religious liberty in the teaching of this Declaration:

- Religious liberty as a human right
- Religious liberty as a theological principle
- Religious liberty as a political doctrine

*Religious liberty as a human right:* The Church unequivocally states that religious liberty is a fundamental right of all persons, regardless of creed, sex, age or condition. The Church, therefore, does not look at religious liberty as a kind of government-given privilege; it is a God-given, native freedom. The Church understands that she also has a God-given duty to proclaim Christ's Good News (Mk 16:15-18). While the Council admits that there have been times in history when the people of God have behaved in opposition to the Gospel, still it has always maintained the teaching of the Church that no one is to be coerced into believing.

*Religious liberty as a theological principle:* The Declaration teaches that the dignity of each person is precisely found in the God-given power to act responsibly and freely. Only human beings can, among God's earthly creatures, enter into a free dialogue of truth and love with God and with other human beings. No institution or human agent may usurp this sacred right and duty given by God to each person.

*Religious liberty as a political doctrine:* by promoting religious liberty a government promotes the highest form of human activity, by creating an atmosphere in which each person and human community can respond in freedom, love and creativity to the call of God as they understand it.



### 3. Mission in India

97 The Second Vatican Council expresses the identity of the Church, to be based upon Jesus Christ, Saviour and Lord for all the nations. Continuing his mission, the Church is sent to all peoples, on a mission to become truly incarnated in each culture. The Second Vatican Council stresses the nature of each *Local Church* – within a country – and of each *Particular Church*, i.e. the diocese.<sup>59</sup> Each Church – Local and particular – has to become truly and authentically a sacrament of communion, reconciliation, and salvation for everyone.

#### a. The Church's mission in India

98 St. John Paul II, acknowledging himself as a pilgrim to India, recognized publicly her rich cultural heritage and spiritual values as well as her challenges of poverty, diseases, illiteracy and suffering. In such a situation, he proposed a genuine spirituality that would change not only the mind of people but of the world as well. This would bring about a change in living conditions of people and usher in the victory for human freedom, dignity and the possibility of spiritual life. India, enriched with the truths of her religious traditions, is not to be deprived of the gift of the Good News of redemption. The Church therefore, after understanding the minds and hearts of her hearers, their values and customs, invites freely through sincere dialogue those who wish to listen and respond to the Good News of Redemption.<sup>60</sup>

#### b. Community of faith

99 The *communitarian* aspects of Christian discipleship (spirituality, Catechesis and sacramental ministry) should be given greater emphasis to counter-balance the strong individualistic stress of our present approach to evangelization and Church life.

---

<sup>59</sup> CD 11.

<sup>60</sup> John Paul II, *The Pope Speaks to India*, 16, 17.

The formation of Small Christian Communities at all levels of Church's life has to be widely and intensely fostered. They need to be characterized by their openness and outreach to society, through evangelization, social service, dialogue, ecumenical and inter-religious cooperation with peoples of all faiths and through close union with their priests and bishops.

Communities in our presbyteries and religious houses have to be genuine examples of Faith (loving, sharing, caring, being concerned etc.), so that they provide a pattern for a community of faith among the faithful.

Furthermore, Christian communities have to be conscious of communities of other faiths. They need to recognize their belongingness to the social and cultural communities of their neighbourhoods and enter into a true and a real "dialogue of life" with one another. Through mutual dialogue they can enlighten and carry forward and respond effectively to the needs and aspirations of everyone through humble service done with dedication and love.

#### **4. Laity as Catechists in Church in India**

100 The lay faithful with their varied gifts are called in a very special way to enrich the Church and to make her vibrant. At the same time, they feel the need of knowing the Church's mission better and become formed in it. This can be achieved through:

- Catechesis on the renewed ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council with regard to the role of the laity in the Church in India has to be undertaken by every diocese.
- Catechesis for better and deeper mutual understanding and formation has to be made available to both clergy and laity.
- Priests need to participate in the meetings of formation for lay personnel through apostolate organizations.

- Formation for fostering the lay apostolate has to be included in the programmes of major seminaries be they of diocesan clergy or of the formation houses for religious.
- Suitable structures have to be provided so that the laity can be helped to play their proper role in the Church at the diocesan and parish levels (e.g. diocesan and parish councils).
- The establishment of lay organizations has to be encouraged, particularly those of international scope.
- Efforts have to be made to hand over to the laity the responsibility in areas of apostolate which are proper to them, such as, social work, education and Caritas.

#### **a. Role of Women in the Church**

101 Women have been subjugated because human beings are sinful and “the situations in which the woman remains disadvantaged or discriminated by the fact of being a woman”<sup>61</sup> are the continuing consequences of sin. The fact that God chose a woman, the Virgin Mary, to play such an important role in the world’s salvation leaves little doubt about the God-given dignity of women. Christian tradition has found it easier to look at Mary, a woman, and the one presented to us in the New Testament as the model of the perfect disciple and the model for the role of women in the Church. “In the Church, and in the journey of faith, women have had, and still have, a special role in opening doors to the Lord.”<sup>62</sup>

- Every woman, by virtue of the fact that she is a woman, is called to be a mother in the Church and society, spiritually and physically, for physical motherhood is an expression of spiritual motherhood, a way of loving that is nurtured by a spiritual communion with Christ.

---

<sup>61</sup> *MD* 10.

<sup>62</sup> Pope Francis at the weekly general audience in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican April 3, 2013.

- Every woman is graced in a special way to bear, to nurture and to give life to the Church and society.
- Every woman has to make “the discovery of all the richness and personal resources of what it means to be a woman just as God wanted her to be, a person who discovers herself by means of a sincere gift of self.”<sup>63</sup>
- “Man and woman, created as a ‘unity of the two’ in their common humanity, are called to live in a communion of love, and in this way to mirror in the world the communion of love that is God, through which the Three Persons love each other in the intimate mystery of the one divine life.”<sup>64</sup>

## **b. Social communications in India**

102 Social communications are a gift from the Lord for the Church in India. They inform, form and transform humanity. Catechesis needs to be attentive to the new developments in the field of media and use them effectively.

The means of social communication have become so important. It has become for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behaviour as individuals, families and within society at large. The younger generation, in particular, is growing up in a world, conditioned by the mass media.<sup>65</sup>

All media works have to project harmoniously a more realistic view of the Church as a community of Faith deeply rooted in India, appreciating all that is good in the life and cultures of the peoples.

Catholic mass media, by becoming progressively professional, has to increase their credibility, so that they can better project the true

---

<sup>63</sup> MD 11

<sup>64</sup> MD 7.

<sup>65</sup> RM 37.

image of the Christian community. This will make it an efficient instrument in dialogue as well as in the building up of the same Christian community.

### **c. Dialogue: A responsibility in evangelization**

103 The renewal of the Church in India has a fourfold dialogue as its objective:

- A dialogue with cultures – in the process of inculturation which renders the Local Church truly present within the life of our people.
- A dialogue with the great religions of India, bringing them into contact with the Gospel, so that the seed of the Word in them may grow and bear fruit.
- A dialogue with life, with special emphasis on a dialogue of service to the poor, defending the promotion of justice for India's poor and exploited, supporting their integral development.<sup>66</sup>
- Finally, a dialogue with God's creation, seeking to preserve and save the environment from ecological disasters.

### **d. Characteristics of Post-Conciliar Catechesis**

104 These renewed characteristics of post-Conciliar Catechesis spell out the following traits of authentic Catechesis:

*Faithful and Respectful:* to God, to the Church, respectful to the people being catechized: Catechesis does this by being careful, over a definite period of time, and according to the readiness of the catechized, *to tell the whole story*, the total truth, of God's glorious plan for all peoples to become fully human and fully divine

---

<sup>66</sup> Cf. "Evangelization in the Modern Day Asia: Statement and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of Asian Bishops," Taipei, Taiwan, 27 April 1974.

in communion with the Father, through God's Son, Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit. God's will for us is that we be holy as God is holy.

*Evangelizing:* Although Catechesis is a distinct expression of the Word, to nurture and deepen the Faith-relationship between believers and the Lord with his Body, the Church, in actual practice catechesis is constantly inviting the faithful to conversion, which involves three movements:

- Turning from "idols" (self, money, power, superstitions, etc.)
- Turning to the Lord and Master
- Surrendering to God and to the service of God's Reign unconditionally.

*Communitarian:* Catechesis is a permanent, essential ministry of the ecclesial community in obedience to the Lord's command to make disciples of all nations, to baptize and to teach them that He himself through the Spirit had taught them. No Catechesis, at any level, will be effective unless it is situated within a community that provides the proper "soul" to nurture faith unto fullness.

The catechist is a community-builder, a vital link among three communities: family, parish and society. The catechist, therefore, builds communion through the unifying Word of God, the Word of a unifying faith. The catechist cannot know the three inter-linking communities too well. They are communities in constant change. The catechist keeps himself/herself informed of these changes and incorporates them into an always relevant Catechesis. As representative of Christ, the Word, a catechist is like a bridge from family to parish and to civic communities, facilitating vital communication among these three communities. The Church is stressed as an integral Mystery.

*Liberating:* Jesus announced his mission in terms of liberation – the most radical and inclusive liberation starting with freedom from

sin, death and satanic oppression. The integral liberation which the Gospel and the Church's social doctrine proclaim starts with awareness of the need for inner freedom, liberation from whatever enslaves hearts and minds. God's law is violated whenever human beings are oppressed; their basic rights and full human development are blocked and curtailed. Such violations may take a religious, socio-economic, political, or cultural form. Faith-education rejects them as morally wrong, sinful and against God's plan for the human family.

*Creation-centred:* No catechesis today can ignore a Faith-reflection that leads to concrete attitudes and action responding to the growing misuse of the resources of the earth. "Biblical Revelation made us see that nature is the gift of the Creator, who gave it an inbuilt order and enabled man to draw from it the principle needed to 'till it and keep it'" (Gen 2:15).<sup>67</sup> Creation contains a "grammar" which prevents its misuse by human beings.<sup>68</sup> Love for God's creation should become part of all forms of catechetical programmes.

*Missionary:* Every authentic catechetical session sends the catechized on mission not only to *speak the Good News* but, more importantly, to be the Good News by Christian witness. No catechetical session is complete without the catechized being challenged to witness to God's Kingdom and its Gospel values to transform society.

*Biblically-based:* One of the great contributions of the Second Vatican Council is the *Constitution on Divine Revelation*. Its final chapter forcefully promotes a biblical spirituality for Christians. Catechesis, like all theology, finds its food in the Word of God that comes to us through God's inspired Word in the Holy Bible.<sup>69</sup> No matter what kind of Catechesis is imparted, the Bible has its privileged

---

<sup>67</sup> Benedict XVI, *Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, 2010.

<sup>68</sup> CV 48.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. DV 22.

place at the centre of the Faith-community. The narrative style, the concreteness of language, above all, its saving-message, and other characteristics of the Bible, form the central “tool” of Catechesis.

*Catechesis must be ecumenical:* As the sacrament of communion among all peoples, the Church by vocation and mission is engaged in a dialogue-of-life with non-catholic Christians, believers and non-believers. Catechesis principally promotes this dialogue systematically, through its catechetical presentations of other churches and ecclesial communities in their region, other religions and ideological groups. These presentations have to be fair, truthful and respectful, without glossing over differences.

*Catechesis must be dialogical:* A dialogical Catechesis means not only discussions, praying together, and theological dialogue, but includes collaboration for joint-service in works of justice. The Church must necessarily go the same road that Christ went-namely a road of poverty, obedience, service and self-sacrifice even unto death, from which he emerged a victor through his resurrection. The Church strives for this in all countries, especially in those with a Catholic majority, where she has greater influence. But it is not a question of the religion of the majority or the minority, but of an inalienable right of each and every human person.<sup>70</sup>

*Experiential and Renewing itself Continually:* The Church follows her founder who became a humble brother among sisters and brothers. Jesus’ Catechesis usually started with people’s daily-experiences – this is particularly clear in his parables, which were slices of life. People and their life change rapidly. To keep up with new values, new language, new problems of life, faith-educators need to keep abreast. In-service training, then, is essential – particularly for those who serve specialised groups, e.g. professionals in medical and bio-research.

---

<sup>70</sup> RM 39.



## Conclusion

105 The Church is called by God and by events – each of them a call from him – to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bound to offer Catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing efforts, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. “There is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith. And an attitude of faith always has reference to the faithfulness of God, who never fails to respond.”<sup>71</sup> Although one’s zeal must sometimes impose upon oneself the thankless task of denouncing deviations and correcting errors, it will however often win for oneself the joy and consolation of seeing the Church flourishing, because catechesis is given as the Lord wishes.

From “Mission” we move to “Message” in the next section. Having grasped our mission, we are better prepared to comprehend our ‘message’. May the presence of the Holy Spirit, through the prayers of Mary, grant the Church unprecedented enthusiasm in the catechetical work that is essential for her! Thus she will effectively carry out, at this moment of grace, her inalienable and universal mission, the mission given her by her teacher: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:20).

---

<sup>71</sup> CT 15.



PART THREE

THE MESSAGE



## Content of our Faith

106 *Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the Good News that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you – unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (1 Cor 15:1-4).*

Through the above passage Paul refers to the Scripture and Tradition as the source of his teaching. Moreover, the centrality of his message is the person of Christ, contained in Scripture and Tradition. It has only one heart, one centre, Jesus Christ. He is, therefore, the centre of Catechesis whose aim is placing people in communion with God. This is our faith. The message of Catechesis is the content of our Faith. The Christian Faith can be analyzed from two angles, namely, as *Fides qua* (acts of faith) and as *Fides quae* (content of faith). Both aspects, by their very nature, cannot be separated. Maturation and growth in Faith require their comprehensive and coherent development. However, in this section the content of Catechesis (*fides quae*) is considered.

This section looks at a two-fold perspective, namely, the content of Faith and the criteria for presenting it. The significance of the content of Faith is a felt-need in the catechetical ministry of the Church. With the advent of catechetical movements and rejuvenation of methods in Catechesis, there is a tendency to focus more on the method than the content. These methods focus, at times, on *anthropo-centrism* (focus on human life situation) rather than *theo-centrism* (focus on God) or *Christo-centrism* (focus on the Person of Christ). Hence, the purpose here is to clarify what we believe and to reformulate the faith in its objectivity. Based on these objectives, this Part is divided into two chapters.

The *First Chapter* examines the content of Faith as it is presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the doctrinal point of reference for all Catechesis. The chapter introduces the inter-relationship between Faith and reason, Catechesis and the sources of Faith. The relationship among CCC, GDC, CCCC and *Youcat* are presented to delineate their intrinsic character. It also presents some observations which may help the assimilation and interiorization of the Catechism and locates them within the catechetical activity of the Church. All these elements of Faith form the symphony of our Faith.

The *Second Chapter* sets out the norms and criteria which Catechesis must follow to present its content. The Word of God contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition is the single source of criteria for the presentation of the Christian message. These norms are articulated through thirteen dimensions of our message, namely, Trinitarian, Christo-centric, Salvific, Ecclesial, Liturgical, Missionary, Anthropological, Moral, Liberative, Cultural, Environmental, Hierarchical and Methodological.

## CHAPTER I

### *Symphony of Faith*

#### Introduction

107 The Church has always used formulations of Faith which contain the essentials of what she believes and lives by: Biblical texts, creeds or professions of faith, liturgical formulas and Eucharistic Prayers. In the recent past, it was seen as useful to provide more elaborate explanations of the Faith through organic synthesis, with catechisms compiled by numerous Local Churches. During two historical moments, at the Council of Trent and in our own times, it was deemed opportune to furnish a comprehensive presentation of faith in a catechism of a universal nature, which would serve as a reference point for Catechesis for the entire Church. With this intention St. John Paul II promulgated the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC) on 11 October 1992. The CCC with its four pillars of faith forms a *Symphony of Faith* in its structural content. This Symphony of Faith is the basic content of our message. This chapter looks at the relationship of this symphony of Faith with its sources, local catechisms and other Church documents.

#### 1. Nuances of Faith

108 Our message of Catechesis embodies the faith that we teach our people. The word *Faith* has different meanings in our religious language: it stands for the content of Revelation, the Revealed Truth which we believe; it may refer to God's gift, which helps us to believe; and it involves a personal response to God's revelation: the act of Faith by which a person submits to God in total self-surrender.

In the First Vatican Council, Faith had been defined as an *ascent of mind* and *will* and "a supernatural virtue whereby...we believe that what he has revealed is true...because of the authority of God himself

who reveals them.”<sup>1</sup> The Second Vatican Council stresses, together with intellectual assent, the deeply personal nature of this response: “By faith, man freely commits his entire self to God, making the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals and willingly assenting to the Revelation given by him.”<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis reminds us the centrality of Christian Faith: “Christian Faith is centred on Christ; it is the confession that Jesus is Lord and that God has raised him from the dead (cf. Rom 10:9).”<sup>3</sup>

Faith is multi-faceted: living, conscious, and active.<sup>4</sup> Christian Faith involves the engagement of the whole person--head, heart, and hands--and invites a wholesome and holy life after the way of Jesus. Faith is a way of believing, a way of worshipping, and a way of living (*credendi, orandi, vivendi*);<sup>5</sup> it is cognitive, affective, and behavioural;<sup>6</sup> it engages people’s minds, emotions, and wills; it permeates our life, the quality of all our relationships, and the ethic by which we live.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, Catechesis promotes a lived, living, and life-giving faith; it informs, forms, and ever transforms people as faithful apprentices “in communion and intimacy with Jesus”<sup>8</sup> within a community of disciples.

This understanding of Faith has a deep impact on our Catechesis. It not only influences the explicit teaching on Faith but also modifies the entire method of Catechesis. An intellectual understanding is not enough for a successful Catechesis. It requires personal and deep commitment. Catechesis becomes closely linked with prayer,

---

<sup>1</sup> *DF* 3, CCC 156.

<sup>2</sup> *DV* 5.

<sup>3</sup> *LF* 15.

<sup>4</sup> *CD* 14.

<sup>5</sup> *GDC* 122.

<sup>6</sup> *GDC* 35.

<sup>7</sup> *GDC* 16.

<sup>8</sup> *GDC* 80.



personal reflection and the liturgical life of the community, mainly the Eucharist.

The pilgrim people of God in their journey of Faith search for meaning in life. The answers found in their search give meaning to their lives.<sup>9</sup> Faith and reason are inseparable. Faith without reason leads to superstition. Reason, without faith, leads to nihilism and relativism.<sup>10</sup> Faith and reason strengthen each other.<sup>11</sup> There is an intrinsic relationship among reason, meaning of life and Catechesis. In his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, St. John Paul II emphasises the role of meaning of life in Catechesis:

The teaching imparted in Catechesis helps to form the person. As a mode of linguistic communication, Catechesis must present the Church's doctrine in its integrity, demonstrating its link with the life of the faithful. The result is a unique bond between teaching and living which is otherwise unattainable, since what is communicated in Catechesis is not a body of conceptual truths, but the mystery of the living God.<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Sources of Catechesis

109 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

---

<sup>9</sup> FR 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Nihilism* (from the Latin *nihil*, means nothing) is the rejection of all religious and moral principles. *Relativism* is the doctrine that knowledge, truth, morality, etc., are relative and not absolute.

<sup>11</sup> FR 73; LF 32.

<sup>12</sup> FR 99.

to the Church.”<sup>13</sup> This is the *Deposit of Faith*,<sup>14</sup> the treasure of a householder,<sup>15</sup> entrusted to the Church. The Scriptures are not science books. They are intended for one purpose; to be vehicles of the message of salvation.

Scripture, Tradition and the Magisterium (Teaching Authority of the Church), all three of which are closely connected, are “each according to its own way,”<sup>16</sup> the principal sources of Catechesis.<sup>17</sup> Sacred Scripture “is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>18</sup> Sacred Tradition “transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.”<sup>19</sup> The Magisterium has the duty of “giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God,”<sup>20</sup> and in doing so fulfils, in the name of Christ, a fundamental ecclesial service.<sup>21</sup> The subsidiary sources consist of biblical excerpts, liturgical texts, patristic writings, formulations of the Magisterium, creeds, testimonies of the saints and theological reflections. Each of the subsidiary sources of Catechesis has its own proper language which has been shaped by a rich variety of *documents of the faith*. Catechesis is a living tradition of such documents.<sup>22</sup>

A more practical way of catechizing is to present concrete examples of great men and women who were totally transformed by Jesus Christ with their heroic witness. Their inspiring life and work can be of

---

<sup>13</sup> CT 27.

<sup>14</sup> DV 10 a, b, e.

<sup>15</sup> GDC 94 b.

<sup>16</sup> DV 10c.

<sup>17</sup> GDC 96.

<sup>18</sup> DV 9.

<sup>19</sup> DV 9..

<sup>20</sup> DV 10b.

<sup>21</sup> GDC 96.

<sup>22</sup> GDC 96.

great help to the present generation. Personalities should be chosen according to the circumstances of Catechesis. In preparing local catechisms, the lives of local saints should be models of inspiration. The tradition of the Catholic Church in India is itself another great source of Catechesis, along with the local saints and heroes of our times. The catechist should be adequately informed and formed in presenting such sources from the Local Church.

### **a. Sacred Scripture and Tradition**

110 The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* of the Second Vatican Council emphasizes the fundamental importance of Sacred Scripture in the Church's life. It is the "supreme rule of faith" together with Tradition, since it transmits "the very Word of God," "to resound... the voice of the Holy Spirit."<sup>23</sup> The Church desires that in the ministry of the Word, Sacred Scripture should have a pre-eminent position. In concrete terms, Catechesis should be "an authentic introduction to *lectio divina*, that is, a reading from Sacred Scripture done in accordance with the Spirit, who dwells in the Church."<sup>24</sup> "In this sense, to describe Tradition and Scripture as sources for Catechesis means that Catechesis must imbibe and permeate itself with biblical and evangelical thought, spirit and attitudes by constant contact with them. It also means that Catechesis will be as rich and as effective only to the extent that these texts are read with the mind and heart of the Church."<sup>25</sup> Through this ecclesial reading of Sacred Scripture, done in the light of Tradition, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* plays a very important role.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* is based upon Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Sacred Scripture as, "the Word of God written

---

<sup>23</sup> DV 21; GDC 127.

<sup>24</sup> Message of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God 1977, 9c; Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, 1994, IV.31c.

<sup>25</sup> CT 24.

under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,”<sup>26</sup> and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, as a significant contemporary expression of the living Tradition of the Church and a sure norm of teaching the Faith, are called, each in its own way and according to its specific authority, to nourish Catechesis in the Church of today.

Catechesis transmits and interprets the Word of God. Both Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* must present Biblical as well as Doctrinal Catechesis so that they become true vehicles of the content of God’s Word.<sup>27</sup> It is important that catechumens and those to be catechized can have trust in both Sacred Scripture and the local catechism. Catechesis, by definition, is the living and meaningful transmission of the “documents of faith.”<sup>28</sup>

In the past, Catechesis did not need an introduction into the Bible. It was taken for granted. It was simply accepted for what it is, the Word of God. Today, many questions are asked about the origin, content, and reliability of the books of Scripture. In the Catechesis of advanced groups and for people who are exposed to religious controversies with sects, other religions and agnostics, a basic initiation into the Bible is indispensable. It should follow the perspectives given in the *Constitution on Divine Revelation*.<sup>29</sup>

## **b. Patristic Tradition**

111 The whole Tradition of the Church together with Scripture is contained in the “deposit of faith.” “The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and in her prayer.”<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup> DV9.

<sup>27</sup> GDC 128.

<sup>28</sup> Message of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God 1977, 9.

<sup>29</sup> DV 12, 19.

<sup>30</sup> DV 8c.

The wealth of the Patristic and catechetical traditions come together in the actual Catechesis of the Church, enriching her in her own concept of Catechesis and of its contents. These traditions bring to Catechesis the seven basic elements which characterize it: the three phases in the narration of the history of salvation (the Old Testament, the life of Jesus Christ and the history of the Church) and the four pillars of its exposition (the Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue and the Our Father). With these seven foundation stones, both of Initiatory Catechesis and of Continuing Christian Development, various schemes and styles may be devised, in accordance with the different cultural situations of those to whom Catechesis is addressed.<sup>31</sup>

### **3. Catechism of the Catholic Church: Roadmap for every Pilgrim**

112 The CCC contains a systematic presentation of these sources of our message. The CCC contains the Faith that is old (in continuity with the other catechisms) and yet new (relevant to the modern times and attentive to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council). It is a catechism that is based on the line of the *Roman Catechism* (1566). The structure (creed, sacraments, morality and prayer) is the same as that of the *Roman Catechism*. The CCC is the most substantial and authoritative exposition of the contents of Catholic doctrine after the Second Vatican Council. It is a rich tapestry of different expressions of Faith, both ancient and contemporary. The CCC is not a catechism textbook. It is only a reference point for local catechisms. Christ helps one enter eternal life. Christ uses the Church as his sacrament. Since CCC presents the Faith of the Church, it points the way to Christ. It is a proclamation of the Faith of the Church for today.

---

<sup>31</sup> GDC 130.

The CCC is structured around four fundamental dimensions of the Christian life: The Profession of Faith, the Celebration of the Liturgy, Christian Moral Life and Prayer. These four parts correspond to the essential aspects of the Christian mystery: belief in the Triune God and in his saving plan; sanctification by him in the sacramental life; loving him with all our heart and our neighbour as ourselves; praying while waiting for the coming of his Kingdom and our meeting with him face to face.<sup>32</sup> The CCC thus refers to the Faith as believed, celebrated, lived and prayed. They are called four pillars of our Faith.<sup>33</sup> These four pillars correspond to the four basic tasks of Catechesis.<sup>34</sup>

The CCC maintains an explicit interrelation among *lex credendi* (law of belief), *lex celebrandi* (law of celebration), *lex vivendi* (law of life), and *lex orandi* (law of prayer). The four pillars of the CCC are related one to another: the Christian mystery is the object of Faith (first part); it is celebrated and communicated through liturgical actions (second part); it is present to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions (third part); it is the basis for our prayer, the privileged expression of which is the Our Father, and it represents the object of our supplication, our praise and our intercession (fourth part).

The Liturgy itself is prayer; the confession of Faith finds its proper place in the celebration of worship. Just as participation in the Church's Liturgy requires Faith so also, grace, the fruit of the sacraments, is the irreplaceable condition for Christian living. If Faith is not expressed in works, it is dead (Jas 2:14-16) and cannot bear fruit unto eternal life.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> GDC 122.

<sup>33</sup> CCC 13.

<sup>34</sup> The four fundamental tasks of catechesis are: promoting knowledge of faith, liturgical education, moral formation and teaching to pray. Cf. GDC 85.

<sup>35</sup> FD 2e.

These four pillars are interconnected. We profess our Faith using a conceptual language (the Creed); we celebrate it using a sign language (Liturgy and Sacraments); we live it using a language of relationship (Christian life) and thus arrive at communion with God (Prayer). These four pillars develop the essential aspects of our 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; and pray while waiting for the coming of his Reign and our meeting with him face to face. Thus, our Faith becomes profession; profession becomes celebration; celebration becomes life; and life becomes communion through prayer.

St. John Paul II speaks of Catechism as a *Symphony of Faith*.<sup>36</sup> Catechism can be compared to a diptych – on one side a panel depicting the glory of God and his works, on the other side, a panel elaborating our response. The story of God's saving action is told through the creed and the saving work of Christ is again available to us in the liturgy and sacraments. It is significant that these two parts precede those on morality and prayer, identifying the character of our response to God's saving work for us and in us.

Every religion is based on three main elements, namely, Creed, Code and Cult. These three basic elements of religion are articulated in the CCC as profession of faith (creed), sacraments (cult), morality (code) and prayer (cult). Today not only Christians search for a deeper and better knowledge of their own religion but also many people seek their roots. This cannot be termed as fundamentalism. People begin to seek anew the foundations of their own religion and ultimately their own lives. In the multi-religious context of India, true Catholic identity can be achieved through proper understanding and living of these four pillars of Faith.

The doctrinal content of Faith is to be stressed in the Initiatory Catechesis that takes place in family, school, parish and adult

---

<sup>36</sup> FD 1.

catechumenate. It is in these *loci* that the first pillar of Faith has to be stressed. In the multi-religious context of India, Catechesis requires a solid foundation of Doctrinal Catechesis at the initiatory level. Sacraments and Catechesis are interdependent. In our faith journey, Catechesis needs liturgical signs to make our faith-experience tangible. Liturgy, on the other hand, needs Catechesis to make our ritual actions intelligible. In our Indian traditions, celebration of the important moments of life makes it easier for people to understand the inherent relationship between Faith and life.

### **a. Creed**

113 Faith is basically expressed in the Creed. Section one of “the Pillar of the Creed” presents the revelation by which God communicates Himself to humans. Section Two explains in three chapters the baptismal faith in One God, Father Almighty and Creator; in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, Our Lord and Saviour; in the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, and in the Holy Church. Therefore while the first section exposes what it means to confront Revelation and believe in God who reveals, the second section explains in detail the twelve articles of the Apostles’ Creed.

This pillar, in a sense, deals with preliminary issues, offers a framework of reference which situates the truths of the Catholic faith, conditions its presentation and helps towards its understanding. In a nutshell, this part affirms that the human person is capable of knowing God; it is in this context that God meets the human person (Revelation) and the human person responds (Faith). The creeds are organic syntheses, which summarize the Faith that the Christian professes. In the multi-religious context of India, Catechesis requires a solid foundation of Doctrinal Catechesis at the initiatory level.

### **b. Sacraments**

114 Faith is celebrated and communicated in liturgical actions. Section One explains in general the liturgical celebrations of the



Christian Mystery. Section Two explains the seven sacraments as channels of efficacious signs of grace bestowed on those who receive them validly with proper disposition. Here, faith as an act of intellectual assent becomes an event of celebration. The celebration of our faith is expressed mainly through Liturgy and the sacraments.

The first part of the First Section deals with God who reveals himself as the Saviour. The first two chapters of the Second Section state that this Revelation is a concrete historical fact realized in the event of Christ's death and resurrection. Thus the Paschal Mystery becomes the core of this Revelation. The subsequent chapters of the first section follow the unfolding of the content of Revelation. This unfolding takes place through sacramental signs. This element is outlined in the second section.

### **c. Morality**

115 Moral life is inspiringly titled *Life in Christ*. Morality is an ongoing, lifelong call to identify one's life with *life in Christ*. The purpose of this pillar is to enlighten and sustain the children of God in their actions. Along with this section in CCC, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*<sup>37</sup> is an essential source with regard to the moral content of our Faith.

The first section deals with the fundamental dimension of moral principles or ethics. The second deals with the Ten Commandments, creating the specific and relevant moral issues within the framework of the Ten Commandments. With the changing moral trends taking place in the Indian society due to the advent of globalization and media culture, moral formation through Catechesis is an urgent need of the time. The catechist needs to emphasize specially the moral traditions of the local culture that promote reverence for human life and respect for human dignity.

---

<sup>37</sup> For a summary of the teachings of the Church on social doctrine, cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004.

#### **d. Prayer**

116 The fourth part, entitled “Christian Prayer”, summarizes the *lex orandi*, the life of prayer. The Fourth Pillar of Faith is the basis of our prayer, whose supreme expression is the *Our Father*, and the object of our supplication, praise and intercession. This part of the CCC points out that all the other pillars of Faith are realized in Christians in and through their prayer life, both as individuals and as community. Following the example of Jesus, the perfect model of one who prays, the Christian too is called to dialogue with God in prayer.

This pillar explains what prayer is in the first section and draws out the implications of the seven supplications of the *Our Father* in the second section. The Lord’s Prayer is truly the summary of the whole Gospel.<sup>38</sup> One of the duties of the catechists is to teach our people to pray. It is not enough to pray but, Catechesis should provide adequate means and modes to help our people pray. The prayer through silence, interiorization, chanting, meditation and *lectio divina*<sup>39</sup> are to be inculcated in Catechesis. The Synod on the Word of God frequently insisted on the need for a prayerful approach to the sacred text as a fundamental element in the spiritual life of every believer, in the various ministries and states in life, with particular reference to *lectio divina*.

#### **4. Advent of Compendium and the Youcat**

117 The *Compendium* of the Catechism of the Catholic Church offers a concise yet complete presentation of Faith. It presents an overview of the whole Catechism. It provides concisely the content

---

<sup>38</sup> CCC 2761.

<sup>39</sup> The phrase, *lectio divina*, means divine reading. It is a traditional Benedictine practice of prayerful reading of the Bible. It is done in five steps: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (meditation), *oratio* (prayer), *contemplatio* (contemplation) and *actio* (action). Cf. VD 86-87.

of the Faith covered by the CCC. The *Compendium* is not a substitute for the CCC. There are three principal characteristics of the *Compendium*: the close reliance on the CCC; the dialogical format; the use of artistic images in Catechesis. In fact, the *Compendium* is meant to reawaken interest in and enthusiasm for the Catechism. In the wisdom of its presentation and the depth of its spirituality, the *Compendium* always remains the basic text for Catechesis in the Church today.<sup>40</sup> It has the same structure of the CCC.

A second characteristic of the *Compendium* is its dialogical format, reflecting the ancient catechetical literary genre of questions and answers. The idea is to reproduce an imaginary dialogue between master and disciple, through a series of incisive questions that invite the reader to go deeper in discovering ever new aspects of his faith. In our Indian culture, the relationship between *guru-sishya* is an essential dimension in the learning of knowledge (*vidya*). This *apprenticeship*<sup>41</sup> becomes the fundamental basis of Catechesis. This might favour the assimilation and possible memorization of the content. Pope Benedict XVI underlines that the question and answer format encourages brevity, keeping to the essentials, helping the reader grasp the content and possibly memorize them as well.<sup>42</sup>

A third characteristic is the inclusion of some artistic images which mark the elaboration of the *Compendium*. These are drawn from the rich patrimony of Christian iconography. The centuries-old Conciliar tradition teaches us that images enhance the preaching of the Gospel. Artists in every age have offered the principal facts of the mystery of salvation to contemplation and wonder of believers by presenting them through the splendour of colour and in the perfection of beauty. Today more than ever, it is an indication

---

<sup>40</sup> CCCC 3.

<sup>41</sup> The concept of apprenticeship of the Christian life as catechesis is frequently mentioned in General Directory for Catechesis. Cf. GDC, 29, 56, 63, 67, 137.

<sup>42</sup> CCCC 4.

that in a culture of images, a sacred image can express much more than what can be said in words, and be an extremely effective and dynamic way of communicating the Gospel message.<sup>43</sup> Images and icons are the Gospel of the poor. The *Compendium* reminds us that in the process of presentation Catechesis has to enter into the world of images and visuals.

Another richness of the *Compendium* is its list of prayers and doctrinal formulas. These lists of prayers and formulas promote certain knowledge of Faith that provides a better understanding of the pilgrim's spiritual journey. Formulas are important to express our Faith, particularly in times of religious confusion. Faith-formulas elucidate the meaning of one's personal and living Faith in Jesus Christ, whom we encounter in the Bible, in the Liturgy, in personal prayer, and most of all in the service of the Gospel in the world. The knowledge of faith formulas is required for one's spiritual interiorization. Therefore, any doctrinal formula or systematic presentation of the Christian Faith should be understood as an interpretation of the life and message of Jesus Christ and should be seen in its relevance to our life.

The transmission of Christian teaching to the new generations of today is one of the greatest challenges in evangelization. *Youcat* is an accessible, contemporary expression of the Catholic Faith for our youth of today. It is a catechism especially designed for young people, offering a contemporary explanation of the Catholic faith. *Youcat* is a book that contains the content of our Faith in the language of the young. The popular format includes Questions-and-Answers, a highly-readable commentary, margin pictures and illustrations, summary definitions of key terms, Bible citations, and quotes from the Saints and other great teachers. The outline of *Youcat* is the same as for the main Catechism. *Youcat* with its innovative style of the presentation of the content can be an effective tool for youth

---

<sup>43</sup> CCCC 5.

catechesis, youth ministry, youth retreats and youth conventions in India.

The basic content of *Youcat* is exactly the same as the CCC (updated version 1997), namely, the four pillars of Faith, Creed, Sacraments, Morality and Prayer. *Youcat* is structured in Question-Answer format (527 of them), and numbers after each answer refer the reader to the more extensive and in-depth treatments in the CCC. The questions are direct and honest, even at times tough; the answers are straightforward, relevant, and compelling. *Youcat* will likely become the “go-to” place for young people to learn the truth about the Catholic Faith. A commentary following the answer is meant to give the young person an additional help in understanding more, *Youcat* offers in the margin a continuous series of supplementary elements, such as pictures, summary definition, citations from Sacred Scripture, quotations from Saints, reliable teachers of the faith and also from non-religious authors.

The Catechism is a place for “personal encounter,”<sup>44</sup> and it is in and through this encounter that a truly Spirit-led pedagogy can emerge and inspire one’s teaching methods, a pedagogy flowing directly from one’s prayerful understanding of the Faith. It is in and through this encounter that the authentic craft of catechesis can arise. St. John Paul II speaks of the balance between Tradition and *aggiornamento* (updating) in catechism.

A catechism should faithfully and systematically present the preaching of Sacred Scriptures, the living Tradition in the Church and the authentic Magisterium as well as the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors and Saints of the Church, to allow for a better knowledge of the Christian mystery and for enlivening the faith of the people of God.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> CCC 2563

<sup>45</sup> FD 2

However, we should not miss the focus of Sacred Scripture in our Christian Doctrine. The post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini*, aptly states: “Although the Word of God precedes and exceeds Sacred Scripture, nonetheless Scripture, as inspired by God, contains the Divine Word (cf. 2 Tim 3:16) in an altogether singular way.”<sup>46</sup>

## **5. Other Sources**

118 The catechisms in the Church have to be seen in the catechetical ministry of the Church. The relationship between CCC and Sacred Scripture, Fathers of the Church, formulation of local catechisms and catechetical directories have to be seen from a holistic perspective in the catechetical ministry of the Church. These correlations will help us clarify its distinct and complementary nature and functions.

### **a. Local catechisms**

119 The CCC is given to all the faithful and to those who wish to know what the Catholic Church believes.<sup>47</sup> 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.”<sup>48</sup> The CCC is only a resource book. It should not be used as textbook. It is not an end in itself, but only a point of departure. It calls for initiative. It is a catechism meant for teachers of Faith.

The CCC claims that it must be adapted before it can be used with most of the people. The pluralistic views of our multi-cultural/ multi-linguistic/ multi-economical Catholic communities need to be respected and responded to through Catechesis and catechisms.

---

<sup>46</sup> VD17

<sup>47</sup> FD 4c.

<sup>48</sup> FD 4d.

The Pope also noted in his Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*, which accompanied the publication of the Catechism, that the Synod of Bishops desired a catechism that would be “a point of reference for catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in the various regions.”<sup>49</sup> To emphasise this St. John Paul II states: “This catechism is given to them (Church’s pastors) that it may be a sure authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and particularly for preparing *local* Catechisms.”<sup>50</sup>

This Directory provides basic criteria which governs the presentation of the Christian message. The following criteria and norms can be proposed for preparing local catechisms:

- All the catechisms should be based on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* as a reference. The diocese and parishes should take into consideration the contribution of the Compendium in preparing local catechisms.
- The local catechisms provide organic and synthetic view of the Faith.<sup>51</sup> Hence, care should be taken in the preparation of the catechism series to provide a holistic view of the Faith. The Word of God contained in the Scriptures and Tradition should be an integral part of the content of Faith. However, there is no determined structure for catechisms. This leaves creativity for Local and Particular Churches to adapt to a particular aspect of the Faith event.<sup>52</sup> It must, however, be faithful to the deposit of Faith.<sup>53</sup>
- The local catechisms should reflect the fundamental experiences of the lives of the people.<sup>54</sup> The use of Indian icons of faith

---

<sup>49</sup> FD 3.

<sup>50</sup> FD.3.

<sup>51</sup> GDC 132.

<sup>52</sup> GDC 135.

<sup>53</sup> GDC 135.

<sup>54</sup> GDC 133.

must provide proper explanation that goes in accordance with the teachings of the Church.

- The relationship between belief and science must be treated with great care in every catechism.<sup>55</sup>
- The concrete ecclesial situation lived by a Particular Church shall provide the context to which a catechism must make reference.<sup>56</sup>
- There should be a distinction drawn between a catechism which adapts the Christian message to different ages, situations and cultures, and one which is a mere summary of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and serves as an introduction to its study.<sup>57</sup>

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and local catechisms together express a “symphony” of Faith, a symphony inherent above all in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.<sup>58</sup> This symphony manifests the catholicity of the Church: the cultural riches of the peoples are incorporated into the expression of the Faith of the one Church.<sup>59</sup> The best structure for Catechesis must be one which is suitable to particular concrete circumstances. A common catechism cannot be established for the entire Church.<sup>60</sup>

## **b. Catechetical Directory**

120 The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *General Directory for Catechesis* and this Directory are distinct yet complementary instruments that serve the Church’s catechetical ministry. The

---

<sup>55</sup> GDC 133.

<sup>56</sup> GDC 133.

<sup>57</sup> GDC 135.

<sup>58</sup> GDC 136.

<sup>59</sup> GDC 136 b.

<sup>60</sup> GDC 122.



*Catechism of the Catholic Church* is “a statement of the Church’s Faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illuminated by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition and the Church’s Magisterium.”<sup>61</sup> It is a “point of reference” to guarantee the unity of the Faith.<sup>62</sup> The CCC is the most substantial and authoritative exposition of the contents of all Catholic doctrine after the Second Vatican Council. The catechism has been described as ‘a rich tapestry of different expressions of Faith, both ancient and contemporary.’<sup>63</sup> The Catechism of the Council of Trent (*Roman Catechism*) served pastors as a basic guide to the teaching of the Catholic Faith for four hundred years. The CCC may end up being in service for an equally long period. It is surely a resource of the highest importance.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* provides “the basic principles of pastoral theology taken from the Magisterium of the Church, and in a special way from the Second Vatican Council by which pastoral action in the ministry of the Word can be more fittingly directed and governed.”<sup>64</sup> This Directory, which has been prepared by the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, contains the general guidelines for Catechesis for the Churches of the Latin Rite in India.

## Conclusion

121 It is simply not possible to be a disciple of Jesus without the formation to ‘walk the talk’. Though the GDC states often that knowledge of the Faith is important,<sup>65</sup> Christian Faith requires “integral formation rather than mere information,”<sup>66</sup> “an

---

<sup>61</sup> *FD*, 4a.

<sup>62</sup> GDC 134.

<sup>63</sup> Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, “Guidelines for the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church”, Briefing, 24/10 (26 May 1994) 7.

<sup>64</sup> GCD Introduction; GDC, 134.

<sup>65</sup> GDC 85.

<sup>66</sup> GDC 29.

apprenticeship of the entire Christian life” so that “the entire person, at his [her] deepest levels, feels enriched by the word of God.”<sup>67</sup> As such, “formation for Christian life...surpasses mere instruction.”<sup>68</sup>

As the vitality of the human body depends on the proper function of all of its organs, so also the maturation of the Christian life requires that it be cultivated in all its dimensions: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, missionary spirit. When Catechesis omits one of these elements, the Christian faith does not attain full development.<sup>69</sup>

The CCC is our *mother* who teaches the rudiments of Faith and life. St. John Paul II, who was a gifted catechist, dedicated his book on Catechesis to his mother: “In loving memory of my mother, my first catechist.”<sup>70</sup> Every gesture of the Church and of the catechism flows from the saving mercy of the Church. It is a saving book, the saving action of Holy Mother, the Church.

---

<sup>67</sup> GDC 67.

<sup>68</sup> GDC 68.

<sup>69</sup> GDC 87.

<sup>70</sup> CCC 25.

## CHAPTER II

### *Dimensions of the Christian Message*

#### **Introduction**

122 The Word of God contained in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition is the fundamental criterion for the presentation of the Christian message. The presentation of the Christian message contains the following: the Trinitarian dimension, the centrality of Jesus Christ, the salvific nature of the Good News, ecclesiology, the liturgical nature of the Church, its missionary dimension, the dignity of the human person, respect for all forms of life, its liberative nature, cultural dimension, respect for the hierarchy of truths and the methodological dimension.<sup>71</sup> Based on these areas of the Christian message, the following essential dimensions of the Christian message and the norms and criteria for presenting this message in India are proposed.

#### **1. Trinitarian Dimension**

123 The Christian message is inherently Trinitarian because its source is the incarnate Word of the Father, Jesus Christ, who speaks to the world through his Holy Spirit.<sup>72</sup> The Christian life and the Christian message are radically Trinitarian. The entire Catechesis on the Trinity must not be offered merely as an intellectual instruction. It should lead the people to imbibe the spirit of the communion of the Trinity. The invitation to covenant-relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not made to us as isolated individuals but as members of the one great family of God, no person excluded, each one tenderly and unconditionally loved, offered the same divine

---

<sup>71</sup> GDC 97.

<sup>72</sup> The witness of the Eastern Catholic Churches to the explicitly Trinitarian character of Christian theology; liturgy and spirituality has been a fruitful source of inspiration for the whole Church.

sonship, the same right to be called children of our Father - God. The invitation includes the challenge to *love one another*. To love even as God: Father, Son and Spirit, loves us.<sup>73</sup>

In presenting Catechesis as Trinitarian in nature, dioceses and parishes should help all who catechize:

- To understand that the primary subject of Catechesis is Jesus Christ who reveals the mystery of the Holy Trinity, “the central mystery of Christian faith and life.”<sup>74</sup>
- To imply that humanity is called to be a fraternal society, comprising sons and daughters of the same Father and equal in personal dignity.<sup>75</sup>

## **2. Christo-centric Dimension**

124 Jesus Christ not only transmits the Word of God, but he *is* the Word of God.<sup>76</sup> The whole of our catechetical ministry is centred on the person of Jesus Christ, sent by the Father, to proclaim by his saving death and resurrection, the mystery of the saving love of the Father, inviting each and every one of his children to newness of life as his adopted children in Jesus. Therefore Catechesis is completely centred on him. The heart of Catechesis is the person of Jesus.<sup>77</sup> The fundamental task of Catechesis is to present Jesus Christ.<sup>78</sup> He is the centre of the history of salvation.<sup>79</sup> Every catechist is called upon to communicate Jesus and transmit his teachings.

---

<sup>73</sup> DV 4.

<sup>74</sup> CCC 234.

<sup>75</sup> GDC 100.

<sup>76</sup> GDC 98.

<sup>77</sup> GDC 98; CT 5.

<sup>78</sup> GDC 98.

<sup>79</sup> GCD 39, 40, 41 a. 44.

The four Gospels, which narrate the life of Jesus, are central to the catechetical message.<sup>80</sup> Thus, Catechesis must always remain centred on Jesus' person and life, lest it deteriorates to mere conceptual instruction, which no longer leads to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. "Read in the light of Christ, within the unity of Sacred Scripture and in the living Tradition of the Church, these texts (scriptural texts about creation) remain the principal source for catechesis on the mysteries of the "beginning": creation, fall, and promise of salvation."<sup>81</sup> Closely related to the presence of God is the experience of Jesus in the heart. India's ancient spiritual traditions centre on this inner-awareness of God.

In presenting a Catechesis that is centred on Christ, dioceses and parishes should:

- explicitly and consistently proclaim the name, teaching, promises, and mystery of Jesus Christ, as well as his announcement of the coming of the Kingdom of God
- develop, through effective preaching, teaching, Adult Catechesis and catechist formation programmes, the personal relationship that Christ has initiated with each of his disciples;
- promote ongoing conversion to Jesus Christ and communion with him through the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist
- teach in a way that can be understood by the adherents of specific cultures that Christ is the ultimate meaning and purpose of history
- help all who catechize to understand that, like the teaching of Jesus, their teaching is not their own, but rather it comes from God (Jn 7:16)

---

<sup>80</sup> GDC 98.

<sup>81</sup> CCC 289.

- facilitate in awakening the inner-awareness of God's presence in the hearts of the people
- keep alive in their hearts the splendid image of Jesus walking with the disciples to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-34). Jesus entered into their life situation, enlightened it with the Word of God and they recognized Him in the breaking of the bread

### **3. Salvific Dimension**

125 The Christian message proclaims the gift of salvation, our indebtedness to Jesus Christ. Christ's proclamation of salvation is the "centre of the Good News."<sup>82</sup> Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God. Catechesis transmits this message of the Kingdom. Our Lord wills that all be saved.<sup>83</sup> Catechesis should focus on this universal salvific offer of God especially in the multi-cultural and multi-religious context of India. In this salvific dimension of our message, the study of the Last Things has an inherent value. The eschatological dimensions treat of the redemptive power of God. Creation and eschatology are the beginning and end of Salvation History.<sup>84</sup>

The Gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ has a distinctly historical character. Jesus Christ is a historical figure who preached the Good News of the coming of the Kingdom of God in time.<sup>85</sup> The Incarnation, Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ are historical events. Jesus Christ, who died and rose for our salvation, poured out his Holy Spirit and established the Church on Pentecost, thereby ushering in a new era in salvation history; the age of the Church. While the Church transcends history, she is also part of it. For her part, the Church remembers the saving events of the past

---

<sup>82</sup> EN 9.

<sup>83</sup> LG 16.

<sup>84</sup> GDC 115.

<sup>85</sup> DV 19.

and makes them known in every age. These events constitute the “constant memory” of the Church.<sup>86</sup>

In presenting a Catechesis that proclaims the Good News of salvation, dioceses and parishes should transmit the fundamental message of the Kingdom of God by emphasizing several basic points that Jesus made throughout his preaching:

- God is a loving Father who abides with his people.
- God offers us salvation, frees us from sin and brings us into communion with him.
- The call to conversion and belief in the Gospel of the Kingdom – a Kingdom of justice, love and peace, in whose light we shall be judged – is fundamental for Catechesis.<sup>87</sup>
- The Church offers a foretaste of the world to come and human life is a journey back to God.
- Catechesis should proclaim the words and deeds of God throughout history through Biblical Catechesis.
- Catechesis helps to interpret the meaning of the events of salvation history for the present age in the light of Revelation.
- In explaining the Creed, Catechesis should show how the great themes of the faith (creation, original sin, grace, Incarnation, Easter, Pentecost, eschatology) are always sources of life and light for the human being.
- “Eucharist builds the Church and the Church makes the Eucharist.”<sup>88</sup> Through a proper catechesis on the Eucharist, the faithful shall be taught the identity and nature of the Church.

---

<sup>86</sup> GDC 107.

<sup>87</sup> GDC 102.

<sup>88</sup> *EE* 26.

#### **4. Ecclesial Dimension**

126 Catechesis originates in the Church's confession of faith and leads to the profession of Faith of the catechumen and those to be catechized.<sup>89</sup>

When Catechesis transmits the mystery of Christ, the Faith of the whole people of God echoes in its message throughout the course of history: the Faith received by the Apostles from Christ himself and under the action of the Holy Spirit; the Faith of the martyrs who have borne witness to it and still bear witness to it by their blood; the Faith of the Saints who have lived it and live it profoundly; the Faith of the Fathers and doctors of the Church who have taught it brilliantly; the Faith of missionaries who proclaim it incessantly; the Faith of theologians who help to understand it better; the Faith of pastors who conserve it with zeal and love and who interpret it authentically.<sup>90</sup>

All continue these efforts today.

Through the ecclesial message, one should emphasize the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Church. She is the Mother of the Church. Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium* represents a prudent and skilful integration of two stances which characterise contemporary Mariology: one which would emphasise Mary's unique connection with Jesus Christ; and the other, her close link with the Church and all the redeemed. She is the model of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ.<sup>91</sup> She was both Mother and Disciple and in the words of St. Augustine, "her discipleship was more important than her motherhood."<sup>92</sup> That is why St. John Paul II also did not hesitate to call Mary "the Mother and model of catechists."<sup>93</sup> The Apostolic

---

<sup>89</sup> GDC 105.

<sup>90</sup> GDC 105 b.

<sup>91</sup> *LG* 63.

<sup>92</sup> *CT* 73.

<sup>93</sup> *CT* 73.



Exhortation of Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus*, speaks of the Virgin Mary as the model of the Church in divine worship.<sup>94</sup> Mary is also a sign of hope to the Pilgrim Church. We encounter Mary in our faith experience.

In presenting a Catechesis that needs to integrate the ecclesial nature of the message, dioceses and parishes should ensure that it:

- transmits one Faith to all peoples
- introduces catechumens and those to be catechized to the unity of the profession of Faith
- emphasizes the centrality of communion among disciples and the role of the community of disciples within and with other communities
- focuses on the role of Mary in the Church and the Faith experience of the pilgrim people
- integrates pilgrimages to Marian shrines as a part of the expression of their faith experience
- provides proper instruction to the faithful on Marian popular devotions
- introduces multi-ritual Catechesis in our catechetical programme so that the faithful have an adequate knowledge of the rites in the Catholic Church

## 5. Liturgical Dimension

127 Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity.<sup>95</sup> Liturgical Catechesis and guidelines are the responsibility of respective Bishops' Conferences and Regional Bishops' Councils through directories and catechisms.

---

<sup>94</sup> MC section 2.

<sup>95</sup> CT 23.

The ongoing liturgical renewal and inculturation in liturgy is the pastoral responsibility of the Local and Particular Churches. In the early Church it was the catechumenate that gave Initial Liturgical Catechesis. Such a Liturgical Catechesis of a catechumenal nature is absent in the Church today except in the case of adult baptism. As far as Liturgical Catechesis is concerned, the most important thing is to realize that Catechesis is an initiation leading through conversion and that the sacraments themselves are signs of this conversion. As the Second Vatican Council cautions: “Before people come to the liturgy, they must be called to personal faith and conversion.”<sup>96</sup> Baptismal catechumenate is the model and inspiration for catechesis in the Church.<sup>97</sup>

There should be Catechesis on liturgy and Catechesis in liturgy. This is to say faith-formation takes place through *Liturgical Catechesis* and *Catechetical Liturgy*. Liturgy is the summit and the foundation of Christian life.<sup>98</sup> Catechesis is a long but steady climb toward encounter with God. Making our Catechesis liturgical means fixing our eyes on our goal at all times and continually drinking from the fountain which flows from above. Pope Benedict XVI teaches, “The best Catechesis on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself, celebrated well.”<sup>99</sup>

In presenting a Catechesis that involves both Liturgical Catechesis and Catechetical Liturgy, we propose that the parishes and dioceses keep in mind the following:

- Liturgical Catechesis prepares for the sacraments by promoting deeper understanding and experience of the Liturgy. This explains the contents of the prayers, the meaning of the signs and gestures. It enhances active participation, contemplation

---

<sup>96</sup> SC 9.

<sup>97</sup> GDC 59, 90.

<sup>98</sup> SC 10.

<sup>99</sup> SCar 64.

and silence. It must be regarded as an “eminent kind of Catechesis.”<sup>100</sup>

- Liturgical Catechesis shall make constant reference to the great human experiences represented by the signs and symbols of liturgical actions originating in the local culture.
- The Sunday Homily, the Content of the Lectionary and the Structure of the Liturgical Year should be valued afresh and considered as moments of Catechesis, along with other occasions of particularly significant Catechesis (marriages, funerals, visits to the sick, feasts of patron Saints etc.).<sup>101</sup>
- Special attention to be given in Liturgical Catechesis and Catechetical Liturgy, especially to those who are catechumens, *Krist baktas*<sup>102</sup> and adults who come for Sunday liturgy.
- The faithful should be taught the meaning of the structure of the Eucharist, symbols and signs used in liturgy, the sacraments and the liturgical cycle.
- The community expression of Faith is ecclesial in nature. The communal character of the sacraments should be insisted upon in the Catechesis of the faithful.
- The Sunday Liturgy, especially the homily, is a very important moment for Catechesis. The celebrant of the Sunday Liturgy should pay special attention in preparing the homily carefully, with concrete interpretation of the readings of the day in the context of the community. The catechetical aim of the homily should not be forgotten. It is highly recommended that the homily should include the four pillars of faith found in the

---

<sup>100</sup> GDC 71, CT 23, SC 35.

<sup>101</sup> GDC 207.

<sup>102</sup> *Krist baktas* are people (normally found in North India) who love to listen to the Word of God though they are not Christians.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* and some relevant questions from the *Compendium* and *Youcat*.<sup>103</sup> Pope Benedict XVI exhorts all preachers to preach the homily with passion and conviction.<sup>104</sup>

- Hymns do play a very important role in the Faith formation of the faithful. A Diocesan Liturgical Commission should be able to evaluate on a regular basis the content and style of the hymns that are used in the liturgy. A Catechesis on the hymns will be a great help for parish Catechesis.

## **6. Missionary Dimension**

128 Every authentic catechetical session sends the catechized on a mission not only to *speak the Good News* but, more importantly, *to be the Good News* by Christian witness. No catechetical session is complete without the catechized being challenged to witness to God's Kingdom and its Gospel values to transform society. The Indian subcontinent is still a missionary land. The Church in India has to integrate the missionary thrust in the Faith-journey of the faithful. One of the essential tasks of Catechesis is missionary initiation among the catechized.<sup>105</sup>

In presenting the missionary dimension of the message, dioceses and parishes should take into consideration the following elements in Catechesis:

- Catechesis needs to insist on the responsibility of every disciple to be a missionary in their own life situations.
- Catechesis should encourage vocations to the priesthood, to different forms of consecration to God in religious and apostolic life and awaken especially missionary vocations.

---

<sup>103</sup> *SCar* 46.

<sup>104</sup> *VD* 59.

<sup>105</sup> *GDC* 86.

- Catechesis fosters meaningful communication with people of other faiths.
- Catechesis should distinguish between the *proclamation of Christ* and *inter-religious dialogue*.<sup>106</sup>
- The identity, formation and ministry of lay missionary catechists should be promoted at diocesan and parish levels.

## 7. Anthropological Dimension

129 Another criterion for the presentation of the Christian message is that it must convey a profoundly meaningful message for the human person. If we seek to know ourselves and the meaning of our lives, we should look at Christ, for “he worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind. He acted with a human will and with a human heart he loved.”<sup>107</sup> The first theological question we ask ourselves is “who am I?” or “who are we?” It is precisely in our attempt to come to term with the meaning of our own lives that we raise the question of God, of Christ, of Church and of Christian moral behaviour. The question of human existence and the question of God are two sides of the same theological coin.

In presenting a Catechesis that communicates profound meaning to the human person, dioceses and parishes should ensure that:

- Catechesis is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life and its deepest questions
- Initial proclamation of the Gospel is done with an awareness of human nature and shows how the Gospel fully satisfies the aspirations of the human heart<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> GDC 86.

<sup>107</sup> GS 22.

<sup>108</sup> AG 8.

- Biblical Catechesis helps to interpret human experience in the light of the experiences of the people of Israel, of Jesus Christ and his Church
- Doctrinal Catechesis, based on the Creed, shows how the great themes of faith are sources of life and enlightenment for human beings
- Moral Catechesis is a “Catechesis of Beatitudes, for the way of Christ is summed up in the beatitudes, the only path that leads to the eternal beatitude for which the human heart longs”<sup>109</sup>
- Liturgical Catechesis explains the signs and symbols of the sacred rites corresponding to human experiences<sup>110</sup>

## **8. Moral Dimension**

130 Christian life is based on the Decalogue, the basis of moral life. The moral dimension in the content of Catechesis is not separated from the knowledge of Faith or love of God. “As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). Love of God and love of neighbour have become one: in the least of the brethren we find Jesus himself, and in Jesus we find God. Love of God and love of neighbour are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment.<sup>111</sup>

In presenting a Catechesis that helps our Christian life in society, dioceses and parishes should ensure the following norms:

- Catechists have to enable the catechized to progress towards contrition, change of heart (*metanoia*).
- Catechists need to be aware that relationship comes before norms. Catechesis should foster a proper fellowship between

---

<sup>109</sup> CCC 1697.

<sup>110</sup> GDC 117.

<sup>111</sup> DCE 15, 18.

the catechized and the catechist and with the *loci* where they live.

- The concept of sin is never to be watered down. As our society is losing the sense of sin, the content of Catechesis should provide norms and criteria in understanding the changing moral trends in society and the evils that affect the life of a Christian.
- Catechesis has to uphold the value and dignity of human life. A proper Catechesis on the issues related to the ‘culture of death’ is to be provided in presenting our message.
- *Education to love* is a fundamental content in the moral dimension of Catechesis. Catechists, especially parents have a significant role in communicating norms of love to their children. Though *Character Education* (commonly known as *Value Education*) programme cannot substitute Catechesis; it is a fundamental element of Catechesis.

## 9. Liberative Dimension

131 The Good News of the Kingdom of God, which proclaims salvation, includes a message of liberation for all, but especially for the poor. Jesus addressed his announcement of the Kingdom principally to the frail, the vulnerable, the disabled and the poor – not only the economically poor, but the culturally and religiously poor as well.<sup>112</sup> The Beatitudes proclaim the liberation that the Kingdom brings. It is not merely liberation from all the forms of injustice that oppress people; it is especially liberation from sin.

Catechesis helps the Christian faithful to integrate Christ’s message of liberation in several important ways. It first situates his message of liberation within the “specifically religious objective of

---

<sup>112</sup> CA 57.

evangelization.”<sup>113</sup> Therefore, dioceses and parishes should help the Christian faithful to integrate Christ’s message of liberation by:

- situating his message of liberation within the “specifically religious finality of evangelization”<sup>114</sup>
- ensuring the realization that the message of liberation “cannot be contained in the simple and restricted dimension of economics, politics, social or cultural life”<sup>115</sup>
- giving a Catechesis, in the ambit of moral education, that presents Christian social morality as a demand and consequence of the “radical liberation worked by Christ”<sup>116</sup>
- arousing “a love of preference for the poor”<sup>117</sup> in those being catechized
- using the *Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church* as a point of reference in Catechesis

## **10. Cultural Dimension**

132 Inculturation of the Gospel is also a key criterion for the pastoral presentation of the Christian message because the Good News of Jesus Christ is intended for people of all cultures. It is not simply an external adaptation designed to make the Christian message more attractive or superficially decorative. On the contrary, it means the penetration of the deepest strata of persons and peoples by the Gospel which touches them deeply, “going to the very centre and roots”<sup>118</sup> of their cultures.

---

<sup>113</sup> EN 32.

<sup>114</sup> EN 32.

<sup>115</sup> EN 33. The Instruction, *Liberatis Conscientia* is an obligatory point of reference for catechesis.

<sup>116</sup> LC 71.

<sup>117</sup> SRS 42.

<sup>118</sup> EN 20, 63; RM 52.



In presenting a Catechesis that is both an inculturation of the Christian message and a careful preservation of the authenticity of that message, dioceses and parishes should take into consideration the following elements:

- The catechists with a profound religious sense should also possess a living social conscience and are well rooted in their cultural environment.<sup>119</sup> Catechists are to be trained in their native language and cultural situation.
- Local catechisms should respond to the demands of different cultures.<sup>120</sup>
- Catechumenates and catechetical institutes should be “centres of inculturation,” incorporating, with discernment, the language, symbols, and values of the cultures in which the catechumens and those to be catechized live.<sup>121</sup>
- The development and use of culturally appropriate catechetical methods, tools, texts and resources.
- Ensure that Catechesis employs popular devotions and the distinctive symbols of faith common to various cultural groups.

## **11. Environmental Dimension**

133 Life and nature are God’s gifts. The message of Catechesis is to provide life in all its fullness. The fullness of life promoted through Catechesis provides meaning to one’s life. This is realized through the respect for all forms of life. Pope Benedict XVI says, “The environment is God’s gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and

---

<sup>119</sup> GC 12.

<sup>120</sup> CCC 24.

<sup>121</sup> GDC 110.

towards humanity as a whole.”<sup>122</sup> Most significantly, the Pope links natural ecology and “human ecology,” insisting on care for the earth and care for “the least of these” (Mt 25:40). “When human ecology is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits.”<sup>123</sup> The General Directory for Catechesis refers to *Environmental Catechesis*<sup>124</sup> as the need of the hour.

In presenting the environmental dimension of Catechesis, dioceses and parishes should ensure the following:

- Local catechism textbooks should include themes on reverence for the environment as God’s creation.
- In the activity-stage of catechism textbooks, guidelines should be given in respecting nature and human life.
- Dioceses should have adequate aids and resource materials from mass-media to educate the Christian view of creation and the environment.
- Parishes should promote ecological awareness from the initial stage of Catechesis.
- Local catechism textbooks should include references to psalms which indicate the presence of God and greatness of God through nature.

## **12. Hierarchical Dimension**

134 The organic hierarchical character of the Christian message is another vital criterion for the presentation of the Gospel. A fundamental principle of Catechesis, therefore, is that of safeguarding the integrity of the message and avoiding any partial or distorted presentation: “In order that the sacrificial offering of his

---

<sup>122</sup> CV 48.

<sup>123</sup> CV 51.

<sup>124</sup> GDC192.

or her faith should be perfect, the person who becomes a disciple of Christ has the right to receive the words of faith, not in mutilated, falsified or diminished form but whole and entire, in all its rigour and vigour.”<sup>125</sup>

“In the Catholic doctrine there exists an order of *hierarchy of truths*, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.”<sup>126</sup> The existence of a hierarchy of truths does not provide the grounds for ignoring or eliminating some truths of faith. “The hierarchy does not mean that some truths pertain to faith itself less than others, but rather that some truths are based on others as of a higher priority, and are illumined by them.”<sup>127</sup> The whole of our Faith is centred on the person of Jesus Christ. Every doctrinal statement should be presented as an integral part of the one mystery which God revealed in Jesus Christ. It is obvious that not all doctrines are equally central. This does not mean that certain truths of our Creed could be discarded but it means our faith is an organic body. Each part belongs to it, but each part cannot be said to be of equal importance.

In presenting a comprehensive character of the Christian message, dioceses and parishes should ensure the following:

- The Apostles’ Creed demonstrates how the Church has always desired to present the Christian mystery in a vital synthesis. This Creed is a synthesis of and a key to reading all of the Church’s doctrine, which is hierarchically ordered around it.<sup>128</sup>
- Catechesis presents Jesus Christ as the “centre of the history of salvation.”<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> CT 30.

<sup>126</sup> UR 11.

<sup>127</sup> GCD 43.

<sup>128</sup> GDC 115.

<sup>129</sup> GCD 41.

- Catechesis presents the Eucharist, the sacrament of sacraments, to which all the other sacraments are ordered as to their end.<sup>130</sup>
- The love of God and neighbour, which sum up the Decalogue, are lived in the spirit of the Beatitudes and constitute the *magna carta* of the Christian life proclaimed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>131</sup>
- The *Our Father* gathers up the essence of the Gospel. It synthesizes and hierarchically structures the immense riches of prayer contained in Sacred Scripture and in all of the Church's life.<sup>132</sup>

### **13. Methodological Dimension**

135 The CCC is an excellent instrument for learning and teaching. A new catechetical language that respects other sects and people of other faiths is to be used in the content of the message. The inclusive language that considers all in the human family needs to be fostered in every form of Catechesis. Inculturation of the faith, under certain aspects, is also a linguistic task. This implies that Catechesis respects and values the language proper to the message, especially biblical language, as well as the historical-traditional language (*Creed, Liturgy*) and doctrinal language (*dogmatic formulations*) of the Church.<sup>133</sup> It is also the duty of Catechesis “to speak a language suited to today's children and young people in general and to other categories of people – the language of students, intellectuals and scientists; the language of the illiterate or of people of simple culture; the language of the handicapped and so on.”<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> CCC 1211.

<sup>131</sup> EN 8.

<sup>132</sup> CCC 2761.

<sup>133</sup> GDC 208.

<sup>134</sup> GDC 208; CT 59.

In presenting the methodological dimension of Catechesis, dioceses and parishes should ensure the following:

- Care should be taken in articulating an adequate language of Catechesis in textbooks for proper age-groups.
- Catechists should be trained in expressing the language of Catechesis meaningfully and clearly.
- In presenting the message through various methods, catechists should take into consideration the content of the message which should not be lost in the techniques and methods.

## Conclusion

136 In presenting the content of the message, there is no particular pedagogical method. “It is possible to begin with God so as to arrive at Christ, and *vice versa*. Equally, it is possible to start with human being and come to God, and conversely. The selection of a particular order of presenting the message is conditioned by circumstances and by the faith level of those to be catechized.<sup>135</sup> This Directory thus provides a variety of catechetical methods that need to be applied according to circumstances. The effective presentation of the content of the Christian faith depends on the methodology, which will be dealt with in the next section.

---

<sup>135</sup> GDC 118.



PART FOUR

THE PEDAGOGY





## The Pedagogy of Faith

137 *Now on the same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus ... While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them ... And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth' ... Then he said to them, '... Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?'... They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' (Lk 24:13-32).*

Certain key characteristics of an authentic catechetical pedagogy are found in this inspired passage from the Gospel according to Luke. The pedagogy of Faith is basically an accompaniment of the catechized by the catechist. It is meant to foster a deep encounter with the person of Christ. The catechetical community of India calls this the *Christ Experience*. Spiritually, it is the most profound and transforming experience a person can have. It is the basis of the true knowledge of God: not any kind of knowledge, but knowledge in the biblical sense of the term. Such knowledge is holistic, involving the whole person – mind, heart, body and spirit. “For, it is the knowledge of a mystery, knowledge according to the spirit, an organic knowledge of the mystery of Christ in whom it is centred. It is not a system, an abstraction, an ideology.”<sup>1</sup>

This fundamental experience of Christ, coming from the Spirit who works through God’s Word, invites the person to a conversion of mind and heart. Responding to this invitation freely, the person collaborates with the Spirit and enters into a covenant of faith with

---

<sup>1</sup> Message of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God 1977, 2.

God, thus making life's most fundamental commitment and option possible. This experience brings the believer into a joyful, Spirit-filled communion with the ecclesial community. The believer, who puts his Faith into action, lives in harmony and collaboration with believers of all religious traditions through the Church.

A truly contextualized pedagogy of Faith for India has a threefold concern. It must be

- faithful to the Word of God, proclaiming it in relevant ways
- faithful to his Church, the Body of Christ
- faithful to Christ's followers in India

Hence, the task of the catechists in India is not easy. It invites Christians of many different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds respectfully to have that God-experience so that they may grow in maturity of Faith within the complex Indian reality. They will thus become not only committed disciples, but also apostles of God's reign in our country.<sup>2</sup>

No approach, method or technique<sup>3</sup> shall be given absolute importance. Each one of them has its own relative value with regard to the message we proclaim. The ideal method of Catechesis does not exist. One method may be found as useful as another, and several methods can be used together or even integrated with one another. Very importantly the catechists help the faithful to deepen their Faith in Christ and to grow more and more responsive to the promptings of the Spirit. Therefore, priority is to be given for well-

---

<sup>2</sup> GDC 156.

<sup>3</sup> The following terms have to be clarified. An **approach** in Catechesis is the angle or the perspective from which a particular content is appropriated. For example, we may have a biblical, a doctrinal, a liturgical, an experiential or a historical approach. A **method** is the procedure **or the way** followed to appropriate religious knowledge. For example, we may have a lecture, a demonstration, an interview, etc. A **technique** is the concrete arrangement of a presentation. For example, while giving a lecture we may use a DVD, a CD, a tape recording, etc. **Pedagogy** refers to the art and the science of teaching.

chosen and well-trained catechists. Catechists need to be well trained in religious pedagogy, based on a prayerful, guided study of Holy Scripture. They also should know something of the behavioural sciences, so that they may be in a position to make intelligent use of various approaches and methods adapted to our Indian cultures and our people's vastly different life situations. Unless catechists themselves can interpret their own lives in the light of Faith and discern the work of the Holy Spirit in what is best in their own cultures, they will not be prepared to make appropriate use of a variety of methods.<sup>4</sup>

That is why *Part Four* deals with the Pedagogy of Faith, i.e. the art and science of helping the catechized deepen their own Faith. The *First Chapter* begins by describing the characteristic of God's pedagogy in the Bible, a pedagogy of respectful and loving dialogue with humankind. It also draws out the implications of that pedagogy for the ministry of Catechesis today and underlines the general guidelines that have to be taken into account when catechists seek to help the catechized grow in the Faith. In that perspective, the same chapter expounds the special options required in the Indian context as well as the conditions for a relevant learning in the Faith. The *Second Chapter* gives an elaborate description of the main approaches to catechesis: biblical, doctrinal, liturgical, experiential and historical. The *Third Chapter* deals with the important functions of methods in Catechesis: the media, the activities of integration, memorization, assessments and prayer.

---

<sup>4</sup> CT31.



## CHAPTER I

# *God's Own Pedagogy: Pedagogy of Respectful and Loving Dialogue*

### Introduction

138 Catechists, to be faithful to their vocation as teachers of the Faith, have to study and imitate God's own divine pedagogy revealed in the Bible. It is essentially pedagogy of respectful and loving dialogue with human beings. Such a dialogue, in which God always takes the initiative, is patient and progressive. It prepares the minds and hearts of believers for what God wishes to reveal: His divine plan of salvation.<sup>5</sup> From the very beginning, he sustained people with the hope of salvation (Gen 3: 15). He never ceased to take care of the human family. This pedagogy of divine revelation has its climax in Jesus Christ, the great Teacher, who brings this self-gift of God to fullness.<sup>6</sup>

### 1. God's Pedagogy in the Bible

139 Going through the Bible meticulously we are drawn deeply into the quality of divine pedagogy. Both the Old and New Testaments manifest the initiative of God electing, instructing and forming His people.

#### a. Old Testament

140 The Old Testament presents God entering into a dialogue with his chosen people, Israel. God communicates His divine life and reveals His divine plan of salvation for them. While speaking to his people through the prophets, God made a covenant with Israel, through individuals. The centrality of the first covenant with Israel

---

<sup>5</sup> DV2.

<sup>6</sup> CT9.

and the new everlasting covenant of which the Old Covenant was a sign underlining God's pedagogy with the human family. The supreme virtues which God reveals in these covenants are divine faithful love (*Hesed*) and eternal faithfulness (*Hemet*). Therefore, the covenant with Israel is a gratuitous gift from God. Israel was meant to be a paradigm for all the nations so that they might see how God intended to enter into a dialogue with them and "walked with them" (Ex 13: 21-22).

Catechetical pedagogy is modelled after the divine pedagogy manifested in salvation history. The Second Vatican Council teaches:

By this revelation, then, the invisible God, from the fullness of his love, addresses human beings as his friends and moves among them, in order to invite and receive them into his own company. This economy of revelation is realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other. As a result, the works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works and bring to light the mystery they contain.<sup>7</sup>

God's pedagogy with his people can be further illustrated:

God, the inspirer and author of the books of both Testaments, in his wisdom has so brought it about that the New should be hidden in the Old and that the Old should be made manifest in the New. For, although Christ founded the New Covenant in his blood, still the books of the Old Testament, all of them caught up into the Gospel message, attain and show forth their full meaning in the New Testament and, in their turn, shed light on it and explain it.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> DV 2; see also GDC 139.

<sup>8</sup> DV 16.

## **b. New Testament**

141 The divine pedagogy of Revelation finds its climax in Christ. The ministry of Jesus was not restricted to the elite classes of his time, nor was he a mere *spiritualist*, interested only in people's souls. He addressed the uneducated, the oppressed, the poor, adopting images and life situations familiar to them. Those who heard him needed no special intellectual talent to understand his message. They only had to open their hearts and minds to him.

The Gospels show Jesus teaching in deeds and words. His miracles were not performed to win popularity, but to serve as signs that confirmed his teachings. Consequently, Jesus' teaching makes a deep impression on the hearers: "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Mk 1:22). His authority was not that of a highly educated person of social status, but that of an inspired leader. His authority was solidly based on his divine origin and his exceptional character. As a prophet, his teaching revealed an extraordinary revolutionary force. It was a force that came from a person with his saving message of forgiveness, freedom, dignity and love for all.

Jesus continued the dialogical process of Revelation, initiated in the Old Testament. He brought it to perfection through the use of life-oriented parables. They were meant to respect his listeners' freedom, eliciting from them a loving response. Parables challenged people at the deepest level of their consciences. The parabolic symbolism of the Gospel is not meant for this life alone, but it points also to the life to come. Its values are both for now and for eternity. In this sense, Jesus' pedagogy is truly liberative.

He is the Teacher who saves, sanctifies and guides, who lives, who speaks, rouses, moves, redresses, judges, forgives, and goes with us day by day on the path of history, the Teacher who comes and will come in glory.

Only in deep communion with him will catechists find light and strength for an authentic and desirable renewal of catechesis.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, Jesus remains the perfect communicator, because his whole person was the message.

## **2. Implications for Catechetical Pedagogy**

142 The day-to-day applications of this divine pedagogy of Revelation are of great importance for the renewal of Catechesis in India today. Modelling itself upon this divine plan, authentic catechetical pedagogy today should be:

### **a. Pedagogy at the service of God's Revelation**

143 Educational pedagogy should not be confused with catechetical pedagogy. The former is patterned on the findings of the human sciences while the latter is modelled on God's own divine pedagogy used throughout salvation history. The pedagogy of Faith uses approaches and methods proposed by the science of educational pedagogy, but all these are selected and used insofar as they serve the Faith and the communication of God's Revelation.

As we read in *Catechesi Tradendae*:

The pedagogy of faith, therefore, is not a question of transmitting human knowledge, even of the highest kind; it is a question of communicating God's Revelation in its entirety. Throughout sacred history, especially in the Gospel, God himself used a pedagogy that must continue to be a model for the pedagogy of faith.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup> CT 9.

<sup>10</sup> CT 58.



## **b. Pedagogy of accompaniment**

144 As God guided the Israelites in their pilgrim journey to the Promise Land, catechists are entrusted not only with the ministry of helping people to grow to mature Faith, but also with the responsibility of walking with them in their search for truth. Catechists are pilgrim partners. They have to be ready to share the conditions of life of the catechized and accompany them in their joys and sorrows.

Through the Church, the Spirit sends catechists to people as servants and friends, sisters and brothers. They are not there to walk ahead of the community, but to accompany them in their pilgrim journey. It is not to say that the catechists are expected to abdicate their authority. On the contrary, the task of catechists is to help believers gradually take responsibility for their own Faith-formation. That is a graded process in which authority and power are meant for service. This pedagogy of respectful and loving dialogue is discernible in the kind of relationship catechists develop with the people they serve.

## **c. Pedagogy of faith-fostering**

145 Following God's own pedagogy, catechists are sent to the faithful in order to help them foster their Faith. This will enable them to discover their Christian identity and vocation. It will also enable them to grow into and become the effective witnesses for the people of India today. Catechists are not sent to teach their own ideas or impose their own tastes and projects on the people they guide. They are commissioned by the Lord himself and his Church to strengthen the people in their Faith so that they, in turn, may be prepared to bring the Good News of Christ to the poor and the oppressed<sup>11</sup> and become agents of change in today's society.

---

<sup>11</sup> LG 12, 30-37.

#### **d. Pedagogy of building communities**

146 Both a network of interpersonal relationships within a community and unity in the Spirit are required to assure the authenticity of a Christian community. So, a major purpose of Catechesis is to build communities of love in which the members can share and deepen their Faith together and celebrate this community life in prayer and worship and bear witness to Christ in their daily lives. Such goals require small group settings in which structures help build up the life of the community where interpersonal relationships can easily develop.

#### **e. Pedagogy of dialogue**

147 To achieve this goal, catechists in India have to foster an attitude of dialogue with their people. They should not go to them as mere professors of religion or experts in spiritual matters, but as fellow pilgrims who are ready to listen to their people before sharing their own Faith experiences and insights with them. As the prophets and the apostles helped their people to look at every area of their human existence with the eyes of Faith, catechists in India should help the catechized voice their needs and interests, express themselves freely and ask searching questions in order to find answers to life's various challenges.<sup>12</sup> This process is a life-long pedagogy.

### **3. General Guidelines**

148 The Church in India is commissioned to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all peoples of our country. In her ministry of Catechesis, she draws inspiration from the divine pedagogy, which is incarnational. The great catechist, St. Paul, spelt out the meaning of that pedagogy graphically: "To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings" (1 Cor 9: 22-23).

---

<sup>12</sup> GDC 185.

While revealing the mysteries of Faith in fidelity to the Word of God, the Church does not impart a teaching out of touch with the realities of life, but one that takes into account those to whom she is sent, with their needs and interests, their mentalities and individual differences, their age levels and standard of education. In other words, her language and her pedagogy must be adapted to the people of India today in an all-embracing attitude of love, so that they may be led to welcome God's Word into their lives. Consequently, the ministry of Catechesis in India will have to be carried out in various forms and settings: in villages and cities, for the family as well as for interest groups, for children, youth and adults, for the poor as well as for the rich.

#### **a. Catechesis rooted in local cultures**

149 This effort of inculturation will lead catechists in India to convey the message of salvation through symbols, patterns of thought and signs that are rooted in the Indian cultures and critically appraised in the light of Gospel values. In that way, Catholics in India will not feel alienated from their own cultures, but will be led to welcome the Good News of salvation as addressed to their own unique situations today. Catechetical approaches and methods can become more and more inculturated by fostering a deep sense of the sacred and the disposition to interiority through silence, meditation and fasting, which is so much part of the Indian way of life. Thus Faith will remain a distinctive element in the life of Catholics in India, and Indian cultures will be critically assessed by their Faith.<sup>13</sup>

#### **b. Catechesis as life-long pilgrimage**

150 As Catechesis is meant to foster a particular type of knowledge, it involves the whole person.<sup>14</sup> It must help the faithful to progress

---

<sup>13</sup> CT 53.

<sup>14</sup> GDC 171.

more and more in understanding and living their Faith. In other words, Faith has to be formed in a progressive way at different stages of life. The gradual unfolding of Catechesis is meant precisely to help God's people grow in the Faith. Hence the need of using different methods adapted to the psychological and spiritual maturity of those who are catechized.

On the other hand, some individuals and groups may require a different pace, due to the fact that they are not yet ready to assimilate the substantial nourishment of the whole Christian message. That is the case particularly with the differently-abled who require a special type of catechesis adapted to their rhythm of growth.<sup>15</sup>

Even the various parts of the message should be presented progressively with programs that broaden and deepen, step by step, the experience of Faith, so that the unifying kernel of the mystery of Christ may serve as an integrating factor among the various elements of the Christian message.

### **c. Catechesis as an essential ministry**

151 It is always tempting for catechists in India to occupy centre stage especially when people show them so many external signs of appreciation. It will sometimes require a good deal of humility on their part to *decrease* so that Christ may grow in those to whom they are sent, following the attitude of John the Baptist: "He must increase but I must decrease" (Jn 3:30). They have to be aware that it is the Spirit who gives efficacy to their efforts. It is also the Spirit who realizes the interior work of conversion (1 Cor 3:6-7). Their ministry is a service of love offered to God's people and a response to Christ's command, "Feed my sheep" (Jn 21:16). Catechists are but servants whose ministry in the Church is essential and yet they themselves are not indispensable.

---

<sup>15</sup> CT 41.

Catechists cannot communicate Faith to others. That is the work of the Spirit. For God's Word is still active in India today, as it was in the beginning of the Church.<sup>16</sup> The task of catechists is to be channels of Revelation by transmitting carefully the fundamental documents of Faith found in the Bible, the Liturgy, the Teachings of the Church and the Testimonies of Saints, with the hope that the hearts of the catechized will be touched and led to conversion. The more catechists are realistically conscious of their own weaknesses and limitations, the easier it is for them to let the power of God work through them (cf. 1 Cor 2:3-5). Then they are in a position to joyfully follow the promptings of the Spirit who inspires them to seek greater competence in their catechetical ministry. Familiarity with the Word of God will give their teaching a force to which no other method will be comparable. The witness of their own lives will be the best way they can use to help their people grow in the faith.

#### **d. Catechesis as responsibility of *entire* Christian community**

152 Catechesis is not the exclusive responsibility of a few individuals, but of the entire Christian community in a particular place. Without the support of a vibrant community of Faith, Catechesis remains handicapped.<sup>17</sup> Hence the best catechesis will always be the authentic witness given by the Particular and Local Church as well as the liturgical life of that Christian community. Such a model can lead the faithful to get deeper insights into the community dimension of Faith and become conscious of their apostolic responsibilities.<sup>18</sup>

Catechists are delegated by the Church to carry out the ministry of the Word. In performing their function, they should never dissociate themselves from the local community neither should they try to cover up the Church's weaknesses. They should be familiar

---

<sup>16</sup> CT 72.

<sup>17</sup> CT 16.

<sup>18</sup> CT 24.

with the past and present life of the Church and be prepared to clarify its mission in the India of today.

Furthermore, catechists are not the only ones responsible for the Faith formation of Christians. They rightly see their role in relation to other agents and milieu of religious education – the family, the parish, the school – for Catechesis is essentially an ecclesial ministry. Collaborating with all those who, for various reasons, are engaged in the pastoral ministry of the Particular Church – parents, teachers, spiritual animators, counsellors – catechists give their own original contribution to the ministry of the Word. The witness of an authentic catechetical team that radiates joy and unity will always remain one of the best catechetical methods.

Taking into account the important role of the family in shaping the mentalities of Indian Christians, greater emphasis should be given to Family Catechesis so that children may be catechized in the natural environments of their homes.

#### **e. Catechesis as contextualized ministry**

153 The social context in which Catholics in India find themselves is an important factor that needs to be taken into account for a relevant catechetical ministry. Their cultural background, their social relationships, their environment, their personal experiences and the events of current interests are concrete factors which contribute to shaping their personalities. Hence catechists must be attentive to the mentalities that are predominant in particular social contexts<sup>19</sup> so that they will be in a position to refer to the concrete realities of life in initiating group reflection and illustrating their teaching.

The rapid expansion of mass media along with other audio-visual means of communication becomes another important factor that shapes the mentalities of Indians today. Catechesis has to take this

---

<sup>19</sup> Ref. *Part One* of this work.

context, too, into account not only to help believers take a critical stand towards that new culture, but also to make an intelligent use of the media for the spread of the Good News.<sup>20</sup> As people grow in the Faith, their needs and interests change, their learning abilities evolve, their mentalities are transformed. Catechesis in India should be attentive to this factor in order to be relevant, since it is very closely linked with the psychological transformation of the catechized.

#### **f. Catechesis as personal responsibility**

154 Once the catechized reach the age of adolescence, they have to become aware that the main responsibility for learning the Faith belongs to them. Many are still under the influence of certain past habits that lead them to remain rather passive in the process of learning. They want to be autonomous, a quality which is never fully achieved. They need to be helped in order to become the main agents of their Faith-formation and the formation of their conscience.

### **4. Characteristics of the Catechetical Pedagogy in the Indian Context**

155 Taking into account the fundamental tasks of Catechesis, i.e. promoting knowledge of the Faith, preparing for the sacraments, liturgical education, moral formation, initiation to prayer, education for community life and missionary initiation,<sup>21</sup> catechists can use a diversity of approaches, methods and techniques. But there are also specific options that have to be made in every context. The following aspects are taken in reference to the particular context of India and a new vision of Catechesis.

#### **a. Pluri-cultural language**

156 In a country where people express their beliefs through many

---

<sup>20</sup> CT 46.

<sup>21</sup> GDC 85-86.

religious traditions, communication in the Faith cannot be done without integrating a plurality of expressions that are rooted in the multi-religious context of India. Catechesis has to be done in a spirit of dialogue, love and service, gradually opening itself to various forms of religious experience and beliefs.

### **b. Catechesis as an experience**

157 In India, the Catechesis of children and youth has most often been carried out in the context of an institutional set-up. Consequently, it might have placed exclusive emphasis on the intellectual understanding of the message. Yet, the primary aims of Catechesis are to lead the faithful to experience the presence and the action of Christ in their lives, to develop a personal relationship with him and to share their experience of faith with others. One may communicate ideas without necessarily having experienced the realities of Faith. Hence, there arises the need of a religious pedagogy which is more experiential, i.e. closely related to the problems and aspirations of Christians in India today, paying attention to the affective dimension of life since learning takes place through peer groups, especially where young people are concerned. Moreover, we have to remember that the experiential dimension of Faith is deeply rooted in the Indian cultures.

A large number of young people and adults in the rural areas of our country or from the urban poor working class have no access to formal education. The only way to foster their Faith is through non-formal Catechesis. In this context, the catechists need to be open to the opportunities that stem from their concrete life-situations that are full of spiritual implications.

One of the privileged moments of expression of faith by Christians in India is prayer and religious celebrations. This awareness will lead catechists to make use of the various kinds of religious celebrations



– especially the sacraments, Eucharistic adoration, and popular devotions – to help the catechized deepen their Faith.

### **c. Person-oriented catechesis**

158 If the Word of God is meant to help believers find answers to moral problems, deepen the values they personally hold and explore the meaning of the mysteries of faith, Catechesis should always remain a deeply personal experience fostered by direct contact with the person of the Risen Christ, specially through prayer and life. This orientation is very much in line with the way the *gurus* in our country relate with their pupils. Hence catechists have to pay careful attention to the spiritual needs of the individuals. They also have to enter the interior world of the catechized with great respect, making sure that they always remain in close contact with them. Catechists need to know the catechized as shepherds know their flock (Jn 10:14).

Moreover, when we take into account the frequent tendency to ritualism prevailing in a number of Christian communities in India, catechists have to stress the importance of personal involvement in the deepening of one's Faith and its expression, without losing sight of the community dimension of Christian life.

### **d. Creative expression of faith**

159 If Christians in India are to play a prophetic role and become agents of social change, they cannot afford to remain indifferent to the deepening of their Faith and its expression. All have a duty and are called upon to play active roles in integrating the Gospel message into their lives and sharing it with others. Moreover, being aware of the fact that traditions have a very great impact on the Faith of Christians in India, the catechized should be helped to reflect critically on life situations in the light of human sciences, the Gospel message and the teachings of the Church.

### **e. Social orientation**

160 Poverty and destitution prevailing in many parts of India cannot be ignored by those who have the responsibility of helping Christians grow in the Faith. This stark reality has to be the object of attentive reflection and the field of authentic Christian involvement. Catechists must be aware of the social problems prevailing in India and be familiar with the social teachings of the Church, so that their Catechesis may be enlightened by them. Moreover, taking into account the social environment in which our people live, catechists should always make it a point to prepare activities or use methods that are in tune with it. In handing on the Faith to them, they will strive to make the catechized critically aware of their social responsibilities in today's India. This becomes a fundamental demand of the Gospel and the social teachings of the Church.

Imitating the example of Jesus, the Indian catechists will always have to give special attention to the weakest and the poorest in the society. Their authority and credibility should convey in a prophetic way the message of salvation, especially to those who suffer.

## **5. The Language of Catechesis**

161 It is mainly through language – understood as the ability to communicate – that this common bond of destiny between the catechists and the catechized becomes alive. Language reveals what every person understands about the world: its riches, strivings and problems. People reveal themselves through their language – verbal and more significantly non-verbal. This is particularly true of illiterate people. Hence, catechists need to be well acquainted with the culture of the catechized through patient study and in close communion with the community. Learning the people's language means also learning their symbols and signs, their words and silences and other ways of communication. It is necessary to share the Good

News of Christ with them<sup>22</sup> and to translate the official catechetical documents in the vernacular. Without it, a literal translation will give a faulty connotation to the people for whom it is intended.

### **a. Remote preparation**

162 Programs of Faith formation, whether catechumenal or advanced, should never be left to the whims and fancies of every catechist. The lessons have to be well prepared, taking into account the real needs and interests of the catechized, along with the needs of the Church and the larger civic society. The catechetical lessons that constitute a particular program have to be seen as a gradual entry into the mysteries of Faith or an attempt to find proper solutions to moral problems and challenges. Yet every program will have to be flexible, for it supposes a continuous dialogue with the group members. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the catechists to help the catechized arrive at the relevance of particular issues or themes of reflection in Catechesis.

For Indian children and young people the atmosphere prevailing in the group is determinant. It is the role of catechists to prepare and foster that atmosphere of prayerful reflection, joyful unity and active and inclusive participation which will make it possible for those who are catechised to gradually take the responsibility of their faith formation. Even the external settings in which the classes or the meetings take place can help foster that atmosphere.

### **b. Proximate preparation**

163 To plan a lesson is to delineate the procedure that will lead the group members to fulfil the objectives of a particular Catechesis. The catechists have to prepare and develop the sessions by outlining and foreseeing its content, to the best of their ability. For this purpose the catechists need to perform the following essential tasks:

---

<sup>22</sup> CT 59.

- The catechists have to assess the real spiritual needs of the group members along with those of the Christian community to which they belong and translate them into precise objectives. In other words, the catechists have to formulate the direction of change that they hope the participants, collaborating with God's grace, will effect in their lives in terms of attitudes, knowledge or skills. Such concrete objectives, formulated in relation to the learners' tasks, will help the catechists choose the topic of their catechesis, outline the content of the lesson, make a proper choice of activities and facilitate communication between the members of the group.
- They also have to foresee the ways of helping the group members explore the Faith in the light of their experience, become aware of what they have learned from it and continue to probe deeply into it by asking searching questions.<sup>23</sup> Thus they will be led not only to see the value and the limitations of their life experiences but also identify their valuable insights into the meaning of life. Any new knowledge of Faith is necessarily confronted with what we already know, what we already are or what we already do. Giving the group members a chance to become aware of their experience is to give that experience its proper place in Catechesis and make it one of the motivating factors for further search. The length of a particular Catechesis and the number of participants are the most practical criteria for determining the time that should be allotted for the exploration of human experience.
- The catechists have to outline the content of the lesson or identify the salient features of their inputs in view of helping the group members fulfil the objectives of the Catechesis. The ultimate criterion used for determining the content should

---

<sup>23</sup> GDC 152-153.

be the real Faith needs and interests of the group and not the catechist's familiarity with the subject or the availability of good teaching aids.

- The content of the lesson should be planned according to the approach chosen for the presentation of the subject. The catechists should also make a relevant choice of activities that they should propose to the group for integrating the message presented in Catechesis. For this, he could seek guidance from experienced catechists. After every session or class, the catechists together with the catechized should evaluate whether the objectives of the lesson were achieved or not.
- The catechists, without becoming slaves to their lesson plans, should be prepared to offer their guidance to the catechized in a spirit of dialogue, remaining open to new options. The learners themselves may have better suggestions, especially with regard to learning activities.

### **c. Immediate preparation**

164 One or two days before they meet their people, the catechists should read their lesson plan again, make the necessary adjustments if needed, and familiarize themselves with the content of the lesson, so that they are prepared to convey the message of their Catechesis with confidence and authority.

### **Conclusion**

165 The pedagogy of Faith is the art and science of helping the catechized to deepen their faith. The *First Chapter* of this part elicited the characteristics of God's pedagogy in the Bible both in the Old and New Testaments. The pedagogy that we trace in the Bible remains the pedagogy of respectful and loving dialogue with humanity. Jesus exists as the perfect communicator because his

whole person became his message. His person and message turn out to be the pedagogy of the catechetical ministry today: Pedagogy of service, accompaniment, faith fostering, building communities and dialogue. Thus the catechists become the co-pilgrims, agents of grace, transforming people and society.

## CHAPTER II

### *Multiple Approaches in Catechesis*

#### **Introduction**

166 The Faith experience of Israel and the apostolic community, the history of dogmas, the liturgical experience of the Church, the existential situation of people today, and the Faith of the Church in the course of history are five different starting points in Catechesis. Hence it becomes necessary to deepen the Faith in reference to these different approaches: biblical, doctrinal, liturgical, experiential and historical. The approach to catechesis should always remain holistic, which includes various models and dimensions of human growth: knowledge, affectivity and action.

Sometimes, it may be preferable to start the Catechesis with a biblical text or a liturgical sign whereas, in other instances, a concrete life situation may provide a better point of departure. Some people may require more information on certain articles of Faith, while others may need to discern how certain religious practices have evolved in the history of the Church. There can be instances where greater emphasis may have to be given to the Word of God, the Liturgy or the doctrine. The topics of Catechesis in relation to the needs and interests of the catechized and their level of Faith maturity are the main criteria that will determine the choice of a particular approach.

The following five catechetical approaches are the most common approaches used today and are most suited to Catechesis in India. The following presentation will underline what is specific to each one of them. Each one of these approaches has three main steps. Sometimes, however, the catechists can present a particular step in two different stages for greater clarity.

## **1. Biblical Approach**

167 One of the main functions of Catechesis is to proclaim the Word of God, progressively introducing believers into the message of the Bible and its relevance for their lives today. It must also help them to become familiar with the biblical language, underlining the historical character of Revelation and considering the mentalities of Christians in India today. Particular attention is to be paid to the presentation of biblical narratives which bring into light the main events and characters of salvation history.

The biblical approach in Catechesis is a process by which faith is deepened. It begins with a Scriptural passage interpreted in its original context and applied to concrete present day situations of life.

### **a. Presentation of the text**

168 The catechist at the beginning evokes a biblical event, introduces a biblical character or quotes a biblical saying chosen for group reflection. In order to avoid misinterpretations, the catechist presents the Scriptural passage in its proper context: the historical context to discern the original meaning of the text, the social context to understand what the biblical author wanted to say or the literary context to understand the precise meaning of the biblical passage. Since these three contexts are present simultaneously, there are instances when they may be very closely connected. Some of the ways to present biblical texts in Catechesis could be:

#### ***i. Identification with biblical characters***

169 The catechists invite the group members to identify themselves with the character introduced to them and share their own Faith experience. It is a common psychological reaction of our people in India to fashion their lives on the pattern of those they admire by identifying with them.



In this method of presentation, catechists can insist more on the message conveyed by the biblical text than on the psychological reactions of the characters involved. The catechists need to point out how the biblical character can represent a real value for those who are catechized. The catechized begin to realise in their own lives the characters that are presented, finding it easier to identify with them.

Besides serving as *mirrors* that reflect the images they present, catechists should introduce biblical characters of the past as a constant reference to the experience of the catechized, in the context of situations today and in a concrete language so that the catechized may find it easier to relate with the biblical character presented to them.

### ***ii. Symbolical elucidation***

170 This method of Biblical Catechesis is used to help the catechized relive certain events of salvation history by visualizing what might have happened in the past that has relevance for today's life in India. This way of presenting biblical narratives does not dispense catechists from giving an objective presentation of facts. Its purpose is to give food for personal reflection by presenting in retrospect the biblical event.

The catechists can isolate a symbol or a symbolical gesture from the Scriptural text that can be used later as a key to interpretation. Referring to that symbol or symbolical gesture, they then explore the life of the catechized and show how they themselves, living in a modern India, go through the same basic experience described in the biblical passage. After evoking that life situation, the catechists present the biblical event by comparing it to the present-day situation and underlining its points of contact or similarities.

### ***iii. Focused presentation***

171 There are Scriptural passages containing a large number of proverbs or sayings that need to be presented separately without necessarily referring to the circumstances in which they were written. The purpose of this method is to elucidate the full meaning of a particular sentence by exploring its implications. The saying introduced to the catechized should be carefully selected to contain an assertion that stands on its own and has not been abrogated by Christ; for example, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Ps 119:105).

### **b. Interpretation**

172 Once the Scriptural text has been expounded in its own context, it is easier for the group members to interpret that passage and discern its original or intended meaning. It may require additional documents or commentaries so that the intention of the sacred author may be respected.<sup>24</sup> Biblical texts are not pleasant means of entertaining those who are being catechized, for it is always possible to lose sight of the central message of a biblical text by giving too many details about it. Details will distract the attention if they are fanciful and arbitrary.

Catechists should also recall the teachings of the Magisterium related to the Scriptural texts chosen for group reflection. These teachings reflect the Faith of the Church and are expressed in the form of doctrinal statements which can even serve as communitarian professions of Faith and lead to prayer. On the other hand, catechists should avoid drawing too many doctrinal statements from the biblical texts. When they teach children, it is the narratives that should be given more importance, because children’s thought patterns are basically symbolical.

---

<sup>24</sup> DV 11-13.

### **c. Application to life**

173 The last stage of this type of Catechesis consists in applying the biblical message to life. Now the catechized are invited to see how the Word of God can concretely inspire their daily lives, nourish their spiritual life and lead them to conversion. Thus they can be led to understand that “whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4) and they can be prepared to celebrate God’s marvellous designs.

### **d. Characteristics of the biblical approach**

174 The biblical approach is always done in reference to concrete events which took place in salvation history. Whether we refer to the events of the Exodus, the oracles of the prophets, the sayings of Wisdom, the parables of Christ, the events of Easter, the message we proclaim always has a very concrete character. The biblical events reveal to us how God intervened in human history to bring salvation to the world. Consequently, when we follow the biblical approach in Catechesis, the Word of God is not just presented in context but is also proclaimed as a saving deed today for the peoples of India. We are led to discover the marvellous designs that God had for his people and for the whole human family.

The concrete realities of life evoked by biblical texts can serve also as in-depth pointers. They reveal the invisible realities of Faith. It is an approach of signs and symbols. Such a type of Catechesis makes it easier for Christians in India to grasp the spiritual realities of Faith, because it takes its starting point from the concrete situations of salvation history and introduces us to the mystery itself by way of symbolical elucidation which is very much part of the Indian pattern of thought.

God's message is not a system of philosophy, but the revelation of God's love for the human family and an invitation to know Jesus Christ personally as Saviour and Lord. Hence the biblical approach introduces us into a world of relationships between the divine persons themselves as well as between God and human beings. The reality of faith is always evoked in terms of personal relationships between biblical characters and God.

This approach puts us in contact with people in action, for the world of salvation history is not a static world, but a world in movement. God calls, empowers and sends people on a mission. If some are unfaithful to their promises, they must "return to the Lord" (Isa 44:22b). Fidelity to God implies a constant struggle against the forces of evil. Faith is always evoked in terms of choice and decision, commitment and action, for the kingdom of God is a dynamic reality.

Finally, the biblical approach is an initiation into the life of God's people. It leads believers to discern the action of God in his Church today by relating it to the main events of Israel's history. The triumphs and failures of Israel reflect the images of what happens to God's people in India today. Thus those who deepen their Faith in constant reference to God's Word are called to live in solidarity with others.

Whatever may be the impact of the biblical approach in catechesis, it has its own limitations. It cannot replace the formulations of doctrinal truths, which are an integral part of Catechesis. Sometimes, the context of a biblical passage may be difficult for the people of today to understand since the biblical events belong to the past. Hence they have to be shown that the events of salvation history are images of and challenges for the present, which are remembered and celebrated in the liturgy today.

## 2. Doctrinal Approach

175 The doctrinal approach in Catechesis consists in eliciting the theological meaning of a statement which defines a particular point of doctrine and underlines its concrete implications in Christian life. The doctrinal formulas should be referred to in Catechesis, because such formulas express with great precision and objectivity certain important aspects of the Christian mystery. Consequently, changes in the formulation of the doctrine may affect the proper understanding of the mystery, for these formulations are part of a long Tradition and were often the result of acute struggles.

The task of catechists is to form disciples animated by a deep faith in Christ. That is why the Catechesis of children, youth and adults should not end up becoming a summary of abstract theological insights and using the structures and the language of theological treatises. If catechists transmit the message in mere theological language and in doctrinal statements, there is a danger that their message will lack clarity, objectivity and truth. Both the language of theology and that of catechesis have their specific importance. We have to use them in right proportion and respect their specific value.

### a. Starting point

176 The starting point for the group reflection is usually a doctrinal statement found in the teachings of the Church. After quoting that statement, e.g., “The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action”<sup>25</sup> the catechists take time to explain the socio-historical context in which the statement was made. They also clarify the meaning of the terms used and certain expressions that may seem rather abstract to the group members.

---

<sup>25</sup> CCC 1409.

## **b. Support from Scripture and Tradition**

177 The catechists then proceed to explain how the doctrinal statement is based on the Word of God. In order to show how the biblical passages are related to the doctrine expounded, the catechists have to take time to place these passages in their original contexts so that their interpretation may be in line with the intentions of the sacred authors.

Once the original meaning of the biblical passages has been elicited, the catechist may refer to certain chosen texts from the Living Tradition of the Church, the Magisterium, the spiritual heritage of the Fathers, Doctors and Saints to pursue the interpretation of the biblical texts referred to and enliven the faith of the people.

However, catechists should be careful not to present the doctrinal statements of the Church as more important than the Scriptures or the Liturgy. It is the content of Revelation as found in the Scriptures and Tradition that has to be deepened with the help of theology and doctrinal formulas. Revelation is not a system of ideas that Catechesis has to explain. It is rather the foundation of our Faith.

## **c. Applications to life**

178 This type of Catechesis helps the catechized to discern the relevance of a particular doctrinal statement for the Christian life. It should help the learners see the implications of the Christian doctrine in their lives instead of remaining at a purely objective stage of the knowledge of the Faith. Catechesis is a pastoral ministry. So, the language of a catechist is basically that of a messenger, not that of a professor. It is meant not merely to define a doctrine, but to foster a dialogue of life.

If catechists approach the mystery of God as an *object*, i.e. if they remain in the sphere of the knowledge of the faith, then it is no

more a message or an intervention of God that they transmit. They do not speak of a loving personal relationship with God or of a conversion. Their language conveys concepts rather than actions. They speak of logical connections instead of personal relationships. One has always to keep in mind that theology is at the service of Catechesis without imposing its categories or its language on it.

At this stage, the catechists may share their own testimonies of Faith or take illustrations from the lives of Saints to manifest the implications of that doctrine for Christian life today. They can invite the group members sometimes to memorize certain doctrinal formulas of the Christian mystery.

#### **d. Characteristics of the doctrinal approach**

179 It is easy to understand that such a deductive approach to Catechesis will be found more relevant by adults, who have certain ability for abstraction. Some younger people may not respond to the deductive approach. Others who are able to make use of conceptual language appreciate this approach.

On the other hand, the doctrinal approach will prove very useful to clarify the teachings of the Church on certain controversial issues. This approach is often expounded in catechetical text-books in the form of questions and answers. The catechized are expected to memorize the answers given to some questions.

### **3. Liturgical Approach**

180 The Liturgy should always remain one of the permanent sources of Catechesis. Catechesis puts the faithful in contact with the Liturgy by revealing to them the Faith that the Church professes in worship. Thus the liturgical approach can be used to develop a Liturgical Catechesis as well as a Catechetical Liturgy. It can stir up the fundamental attitudes of praise and thanksgiving in the faithful.

As far as possible, catechetical instructions should be related to the liturgical cycle, taking into consideration the most important feasts of the year. Catechesis can also be a support to the sacramental life of those who are being catechized so that they may be led to deepen their understanding of the sacraments, participate more actively in them and harmonize their lives with the mysteries they celebrate.

The liturgical approach to Catechesis consists in revealing the Christian message embodied in the Liturgy. It can be seen as pedagogy of signs. By this approach, the catechized are helped to interpret the signs and symbols used in the liturgy and to understand the mysteries of God within the simplest liturgical actions, e.g., the gestures of welcome, repentance or adoration. An important place must also be given to the liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter, as well as the great feasts of the liturgical year: Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. When these actions, seasons and feasts are explained to the catechized, re-enacted and lived more and more meaningfully through liturgical celebrations, they become channels of Revelation for them.

The sacraments and the liturgical actions can be seen as signs and symbols in the life of a Christian community. The Liturgy of the Church offers a variety of signs and symbols that are meant to nourish the faith of Christians. The actions of the liturgy are very concrete gestures involving the body as well as the soul. They are bearers of profound meaning. However, all these may not necessarily be perceived as signs by believers. Hence catechists reveal to their people the meaning of these sacred signs.

The procedure adopted in a Liturgical Catechesis follows three specific stages: the presentation of the liturgical sign, its interpretation in the light of Faith and its expression in the Liturgy itself or in concrete life situations.



### **a. Presentation of the sign**

181 The Catechesis begins with the presentation of a liturgical sign. The catechized are invited to re-enact a liturgical gesture – e.g. a procession with the paschal candle – since a liturgical gesture is an action in which they should get actively involved. In this perspective, the liturgical action is seen as a sign that reveals the Faith of the Church. The role of the catechist at this stage is to elicit from the participants what the sign evokes.

This presentation of the liturgical sign can be done in various ways. Sometimes it is done in the course of a liturgical celebration. In other instances, the sign can be presented in the context of a liturgical celebration or at the beginning of the meeting as a starting point for a group reflection on Faith.

### **b. Interpretation of the sign**

182 The presentation of signs used in Liturgy is only the starting point for a group reflection on the Faith or for a community celebration. The catechists need to help the catechized discern the mysterious realities that God communicates through these signs and interpret them in such a way so that their Faith may be enlightened and their prayer life nourished, thus helping them to undergo a continuous process of conversion.

As liturgical signs receive their meanings from divine Revelation, they require the light of God's Word to be understood properly. The proclamation of the Word of God, in relation to the sign used in the Liturgy, leads the group members to get new insights into the mysteries of Faith, interpret the liturgical sign and hear the message concealed in it. Thus the liturgical sign helps to interpret the Word of God, and the Word of God gives meaning to the liturgical sign. Hence catechists have to be flexible enough to pass from the sign to the Word and from the Word to the sign. Bible references should

be complemented by material from official liturgical documents, such as the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. But the catechist should use these resources to elicit the relevance of liturgical signs for growth in the Faith.

### **c. Expression**

183 Having discerned the meaning of a liturgical sign in the light of the Bible and the documents of the Church, catechists help the catechized to express how they perceive its central message and how they can relate it to their lives. One of the most efficacious fruits is that of the liturgical celebration itself, because it initiates people into the mysteries of Faith. The Word of God is a call to conversion; the liturgy is an opportunity to enact that conversion in our lives.

In order to help the participants understand the liturgical signs and symbols, the catechists should propose activities of integration related to the pedagogy of the sign. By asking a few questions, the catechists discover whether the catechized have really understood the message.

Young people and adults may be invited to share with one another how the liturgical signs inspire their Christian lives. This reflection leads them to a more meaningful participation in the liturgy and inspires them to share God's gifts with others, since true liturgy is "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows."<sup>26</sup>

In many regions of India, where the priest is not available on Sundays and Feast Days to lead Christians in prayer and liturgical celebration, well-conducted para-liturgies help believers deepen their faith in Christ. They also stir up a desire for the Word of God, deeper experience of God and foster community spirit. As liturgies focus the attention on the Word of God and require active

---

<sup>26</sup> SC 10.

participation on the part of all, they are very relevant to the lives of Christians in India as they provide for wider use of indigenous forms of worship.

#### **d. Characteristics of the liturgical approach**

184 It is mainly in the Liturgy that the Word of God is actualized or co-related to our life today. Hence the liturgical approach authentically interprets the Word of God, because it is the Church that interprets it, not individuals.

The history of salvation is not limited to the past, but is an ever present reality. It is still taking place in India today not only in the concrete realities of our lives, but also in the liturgical celebrations. The Bible shows us signs and the Liturgy leads us to actualize them. The liturgical approach aims at helping believers relate these signs to the liturgical celebrations and to their lives.

#### **4. Experiential Approach<sup>27</sup>**

185 The experiential approach in Catechesis is a process of reflection that starts from a human experience evoked and interpreted in view of helping the catechized get a deeper insight into Revelation, find answers to moral problems or give a deeper meaning to life situations. Such a process of reflection is in line with God's own pedagogy in salvation history. That is the reason it is also called the incarnational approach and follows the inductive way of reasoning.<sup>28</sup> It starts always with people as they are and where they are. We see this exemplified in Jesus' ministry towards all those he came into contact with. He accepted them as they were and then he called them to conversion.

---

<sup>27</sup> The experiential approach is sometimes called the anthropological approach or incarnational approach.

<sup>28</sup> CT 22.

**a. Life situation**

186 It begins with a life situation evoked and portrayed in a concrete manner and in a descriptive language. It does not analyze the situation but describes what happened, making sure that the human experience is evoked in a realistic way, taking the listeners' mentality into account, so that the whole catechesis will rest on a strong and realistic foundation.

Then, the catechists can share their own personal experiences in relation to what was evoked earlier. The participants are also invited to share similar life situations in their lives, so that they may feel more directly involved in the group reflection. The catechized are then led to see these human experiences in a broader context, in India and in other parts of the world.

The catechized then interpret these experiences and discern the meaning evoked by such life situations or the questions arising from them. This initial process of reflection and interpretation requires objectivity and a certain amount of time, so that it can be done with careful reflection. Catechists should help the catechized do this interpretation by themselves, by asking them questions and challenging them to explore the meaning of the human experiences evoked earlier or answer, in the light of reason, the questions that have arisen. The catechists, whenever necessary, should convey a certain amount of information on the situation evoked.

Reference could be made also to the testimonies of other Christians whose similar life situations have been enlightened by Scripture and Tradition. These testimonies may provide a natural transition from reflection on the life experience to the proclamation and the interpretation of the Word of God. In order to see the relevance of a biblical text in our lives, we have first to be put into contact with present-day witnesses and preferably with witnesses from our own cultures. They make it easier for the catechists to reveal the meaning of Christ's words and deeds in relation to a particular experience.

## **b. Word of God**

187 It is not enough for the catechized to understand the psychological or sociological dimensions of their life experiences in order to discern their deeper meaning. They have to reach a point where they can interpret these life situations or answer moral problems in the light of Faith, because Christ alone reveals the ultimate significance of life. Hence the importance of this second stage of reflection during which the catechists are expected to help the group members discover the uniqueness of Christ's message.

The catechists present a biblical passage related to the situations evoked earlier, after evoking briefly its own original context. They proclaim the biblical events, parables or sayings with evocative power in a lively, authentic and personal way, underlining the symbols or symbolical gestures mentioned in the text, as well as the sentiments of the biblical characters referred to. It is intended to present to them the testimonies of people in salvation history who experienced our struggles as well as our joys, and had the unique privilege of coming into contact with God.

## **c. Impact on our lives**

188 This last stage of reflection consists in revealing how the Word of God can help us to get new insights into a particular theme or question and relate it to our lives. The catechized are led to realise that their lives can be enlightened and transformed by the Word of God they are contemplating and that Christ does for them today in India what he did two thousand years ago. Catechists can propose some specific opportunities to the catechized for action or help them identify by themselves concrete ways of experiencing the values of the Kingdom in their own context. The Spirit will inspire each person to find new ways of living the message that was proclaimed and to do it according to each one's capacity and readiness.

#### **d. Characteristics of the experiential approach**

189 While respecting the primacy of public Revelation in Scripture and Tradition, the experiential approach in Catechesis helps in articulating a resonance between the message of the Bible and the experiences, the aspirations and the needs of our people today.

God speaks to us within the world in many ways, especially through events (cf. Lk 13:1-5), but we have to interpret these life situations in the light of public Revelation. And that is precisely one of the main tasks of Catechesis: to help the catechised become attentive to what God wants to tell them today through their experiences or their life situations

A major purpose of Catechesis is also to help the catechized deepen the meaning of God's Word contained in the Scriptures. This can be done in the light of human experiences, a task which may be facilitated by the experiential approach in Catechesis.

The catechists should also keep in mind that human experiences, understood in the light of the Gospel, are radically transformed by God. In other words, the quality of our Christian life depends on our experience of God, not on mere human efforts. On the other hand, our grasp of God's mysteries through the experiential approach is always limited. We have always to grow in the knowledge and love of God. In this perspective, our human experiences play a role of mediation between God and us. Hence, catechists have to feel at ease in the universe of the Bible and be well acquainted with the hopes and aspirations of their people.

#### **5. Historical Approach**

190 Catechesis in the Church will benefit from a fresh emphasis on the historical dimension of the Faith. When certain teachings of the Church or certain religious practices become controversial among

the people of God, the catechists can clarify the matter by helping the faithful see how a particular teaching or practice has developed in the history of the Church. The historical approach serves to clarify such issues related to faith.

### **a. Initial stage**

191 The starting point of this type of Catechesis consists in exploring the Scriptural foundation of a particular teaching (e.g. the Assumption of Our Lady) or a pastoral practice (e.g. the sacrament of Reconciliation) by referring to a few biblical texts that are directly or indirectly related to the issue under consideration. These Scriptural passages are then interpreted first in their own original context, and then in relation to the issue under consideration.

Whenever we make a historical synthesis of a particular doctrine or practice, we should never lose sight of its Scriptural foundation, so that the *Mirabilia Dei*, or the wonderful deeds of God, may serve as primary norms for showing the legitimacy or the irrelevance of certain changes which took place in the course of time, keeping in mind that, for us Christians, the New Testament is more important than the Old in this regard.

### **b. Historical development**

192 The second stage of this presentation consists in giving a factual description of the historical development of that particular doctrine or practice. That description is made by referring to chosen texts which illustrate what happened at every period of history.

On the other hand, the historical development of a doctrine or a practice cannot be limited to a reference to various events of history. They have to be interpreted to explain the development of Christian doctrine or the changes introduced in the pastoral action of the Church.

### **c. Implications in today's life**

193 The catechists may invite the group members to share with one another how they see the connection between the teachings of the Church today on a particular issue and the signs of the times.

### **d. Characteristics of the historical approach**

194 This historical synthesis should be complemented by the doctrinal or the liturgical approach to the issue under consideration. Otherwise, the learners may not be in a position to see the impact of historical facts on the development of the doctrine or the pastoral practices of the Church. For the three approaches – historical, liturgical and doctrinal – can never be totally separated. They are complementary, converge and work together.

There is always a danger to remain at the superficial level of external facts, when we adopt this approach. We refer to these historical facts to come to a better understanding of the development of Christian doctrine or the changes in pastoral practice that took place in the course of centuries. Such an approach can be used easily with young people and adults. Children will not be able to grasp its implications.

### **Conclusion**

195 The divine pedagogy inspires the catechetical ministry to be incarnational by becoming 'all things to all men' as St. Paul said (1 Cor 9:22-23). The catechetical ministry should adapt the language and methods of the people. Catechesis thus becomes a life-long pilgrimage, an indispensable and contextualized ministry and remains rooted in the various cultures of India. It is the responsibility of the entire community and each faithful to convey the message effectively.



## CHAPTER III

### *Methods of Communication*

#### **Introduction**

196 The process of the communication of the Faith is facilitated by the use of different methods, which could address not only the intellect but also the heart of the listeners. Thus the whole person could be catechized. The media occupies a central place in Catechesis today. Furthermore, activities, memorization, assessments and prayers are other methods of Catechesis. Hence it becomes appropriate to learn the methods of communication in this chapter.

#### **1. Importance of Methods of Communication**

197 The ability to communicate with others in depth is particularly important in the field of Catechesis. Catechists have to pay as much attention to the way they communicate the message as to the message itself to help their people personalize the Word of God in relation to their own experiences, questions and aspirations and integrate it into their lives. The process of the communication of the Faith is facilitated by the use of various methods of communication adapted to the level of the participants and the content of the lesson.

Some of these methods are formal (e.g. lecture, question-answer, story-telling), others are non-formal (e.g. interview, panel discussion, role-play, drama, photo-language, group discussion), yet others are informal (e.g. exposure programme, pilgrimage) that give the catechized a chance to respond to what is being presented to them, share their own experiences and insights and describe what changes are being brought about in their lives. Only then will Catechesis be found relevant.

The methods of communication used in Catechesis enable us to attain the objectives of a particular catechetical lesson. Some of these methods help people share their experiences or acquire information and new skills. Others are meant to foster creativity, and still others to identify ways of applying the message to concrete life situations. Even though they have specific functions, some of these methods can even be combined in the course of the same Catechesis.

The use of various methods of communication in Catechesis offers the catechists possibilities of addressing themselves not only to the intellect, but also to the heart. It is the whole person who must be evangelized. The transforming power of the Gospel must touch not only our actions but also our deepest motivations. Ultimately, the purpose of all these various methods of communication in the Faith is to help the faithful open their whole lives to the Spirit's sovereign direction.

The choice of particular methods of communication in catechesis brings variety in the process of learning. The following criteria help in determining that choice: the area of learning, the objectives of the lesson, the number of participants and the time available. Moreover, in order to produce the desired effects, every method used requires a minimum of preparation and materials. Every method should be adapted to the experience, the culture and the abilities of the participants. Moreover, methods of communication that have traditionally been used in India, e.g. the *guru-sishya* method, may prove very helpful in assisting the catechized deepen their faith. Like the alert and dutiful house-holder described in the Gospel (cf. Mt 13:52), well-trained catechists need to continually upgrade themselves in the study of the mentalities of the catechized and in the ways of bringing the Good News of Christ most effectively into their lives.

## 2. Media

198 In this context special mention should be made of the role of the media in Catechesis. During the last centuries, the written word was the most common medium of information. People were taught to read and write. They studied from books. Thus they developed a conceptual approach to reality. They learned to analyze it in order to reach a more precise understanding of the universe. Today, a new type of *language* has been introduced in the field of communication: the language of the media or the audio-visual language.

Catechists should not consider audio-visuals as mere teaching aids and have recourse to them only when they find it difficult to convey the message in a concrete way. Audio-visuals constitute a *language* by themselves. It has its own consistency which must be respected, because it offers opportunities to develop the ability to interact with reality.

Even though the core of Christ's message remains the same, the perception that the catechized have of it will be affected by the medium we use, the same way as the conceptual language affects our understanding of the same message. When we use the audio-visual *language* to teach the faith or share human experiences, we offer a fresh and vivid approach to the message of Christ.

Catechists have to be creative enough to convey the message of salvation in a language which is understandable to the catechized today. Such Catechesis will speak to the intellect, the senses and the feelings of the participants. It will be able to communicate not only information or doctrine, but personal experiences. An audio-visual Catechesis can transmit a sense of the impulses of Faith, particularly the beauty of God, awakening the catechized to a sense of mystery and wonder. Thus catechists will be able to say, as John wrote in his First Epistle: "We declare to you what was from the beginning,

what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life” (1 Jn 1:1).

Media used in a group, whether they are electronic or non-electronic, could be called group media. These media are easier to handle, offer the possibility of dialogue and are more suited for a person-to-person type of evangelization that will evoke truly personal adherence and commitment. Group media are those small and less expensive media which require fewer people to handle them and which are better adapted to group participation, such as photos and posters (photo language), dramatic reading, cassettes and slides (audio-visual), DVDs and CDs and electronic devices such as Internet sites, ipods, etc. “Groups play an important function in the development processes of people ... The same is true of adults where they promote a sense of dialogue and sharing as well as a sense of Christian responsibility... Apart from the didactic aspect, the Christian group is called to be an experience of communion and a form of participation in ecclesial life.”<sup>29</sup>

In the Indian context, the list of group media is still longer. It includes even films projected during Catechesis, radio plays which are available on discs or cassettes, street plays which deal with life problems and invite the participants to collaborate in solution-seeking, songs which deal with a vision of life and which stimulate discussion and exchange. There are other group media: folk songs, flashcards, flannel graphs, puppet shows, posters, cartoons, dramas, role plays, chalk talks using blackboards, case studies, charts, diagrams, models, demonstrations, simulation games, folk dances, recorded radio programmes, flip charts, stories and photo language.

It is not enough to use the latest audio-visual productions in order to facilitate Catechesis in small groups. That would be a very

---

<sup>29</sup> GDC 159.

superficial way of proceeding. Catechists need to learn the audio-visual language so that they may feel at ease with it and, eventually, help the catechized express their faith in an audio-visual way. Then the documents used will not serve to present a *show*, but help the catechized communicate in the faith. Catechists will do well to have their own personal media so that these may be available to them whenever needed.

### **3. Activities of Integration**

199 The Word of God is meant to bear fruit (Isa 55:10-11). For, God's Word is never spoken in vain, neither is it coercive. It always demands a response on our part. That response is facilitated by various kinds of activities conducted in the course of the lessons or after them.

When the believers are in a position to personalize, recreate within themselves and integrate the Gospel message into their lives, they grow in their knowledge of the Lord. Such knowledge is not just a rational or head-level knowledge, but a personal union with Christ. So, if the group members remain passive receivers in the process of learning, with a consumer mentality which leads them to think that they are perfectly free to take or leave the message addressed to them, then the Word of God will have no impact on them and, consequently, they will never succeed in integrating it. On the other hand, a vital adherence to the Word of salvation will touch the depths of their hearts and nurture their faith, hope and love.

The purpose of the activities is not to entertain the participants or to keep them busy all the time, but to give them opportunities to play active roles in the process of learning. Moreover, the inputs given by the catechists should not be dreary or dead but should be a joyful learning, since the Word of God is meant to bring joy and peace because "what we learn with a smile, we learn twice over"

(St. Augustine). However, the best criterion for the selection of activities in Catechesis is the ability of the catechists to help the participants interiorize and integrate what was communicated to them during the catechetical session or class. Here are a few guidelines for an effective use of catechetical activities.

#### **a. Activities foster responsibility**

200 Some activities are meant to help the group members evoke life situations, clarify human values or describe problems prevailing in society or in personal lives. They draw the attention of the group to concrete experiences of life so that the common reflection which follows may be based on facts and not on imagination. Other activities are meant to foster the process of interiorization and help the catechized reflect more objectively on life experiences or ponder more deeply over the Word of God. Finally, certain activities serve the purpose of leading everyone to integrate the message into his/her life, apply it to concrete situations, confide it to memory or act on it in a spirit of service, with the help of the Spirit.

One of the most urgent tasks of catechists in India is to help the catechized gradually become the main responsible agents for their ongoing Faith-formation. This means promoting more mature responsibility among the faithful and helping them take a more active part in their pilgrimage of faith. No catechist can assume this responsibility for another person.<sup>30</sup>

#### **b. Activities foster spiritual maturity**

201 To ensure that the catechized play an active role in their own faith formation, catechists will propose to them activities that are adapted to their age, mentality, capacity, needs and interests. All do not have the same abilities. Some are more active by nature, while others are more inclined to reflection. While taking the psychological

---

<sup>30</sup> GDC 157.

background of the catechized into account, catechists should point out the value of each activity for spiritual development. As facilitators of spiritual growth, catechists will be flexible in conducting activities so that the catechized, at times, may have the possibility of choosing the activities most adapted to them.

The activities that are used in Catechesis should become means of fostering spiritual maturity and fervent contact with God. Some activities may catch the superficial interests of the participants and monopolize their attention, without helping them to express their faith creatively. If activities become unmotivated *business*, they may even spoil the sense of the sacred which is so deeply rooted in our Indian culture. Hence the need of creating a proper atmosphere of reflection and interiority in the group is important, so that the activities used may serve their purpose of fostering spiritual maturity. In such a perspective, pilgrimages to various shrines, like similar pastoral actions, can become wonderful occasions of catechesis.

#### **4. Memorization**

202 In the religious traditions of practically all faiths, there is a very old practice among religious teachers of encouraging small children to amazing feats of memorizing by rote thousands of couplets (*ślokas*) from sacred texts in ancient Sanskrit and Arabic.

Over the past centuries, there has been little confusion among catechists over the role and importance of memory in the process of catechesis. According to God's Word in the Bible, remembering is essential for personal faith and holiness. It means recalling God's great deeds of love for us. It is the sign of a faithful and grateful heart and reaches its climax in the liturgical celebrations, which represent and make available *today* the saving Christ-Event.

The following guidelines have to be taken into consideration to make good use of memorization in catechesis:

- The texts should be preferably biblical or liturgical, e.g. the major events of salvation history, the sayings of Our Lord, simple prayers.
- Special doctrinal formulations of the faith should be committed to memory, so that those to whom Tradition is handed down may remember the marvels the Lord has done.
- The texts given for memorizing should be according to the understanding and the spiritual maturity of the participants. For that purpose, catechists will do well to establish a clear link between various parts of their catechetical instructions and bring out, in each one of them, the central message which can be paraphrased, so that the group members may find it easier to ponder over the Word and memorize it.
- Threats of corporal or psychological punishment should never be associated with activities of memorization in catechesis.
- We should keep in mind that Faith-remembering is a religious act, a loving response to a God of love. It is an act performed with the help of the Spirit, who “will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you” (Jn 14:26).

## **5. Assessments**

203 Most often, examinations evaluate the students’ ability to repeat word by word the content in the text-books without necessarily understanding the matter and without showing much creativity. While those who are intelligent may become proud of their achievements, the weak may feel that their low marks reflect the quality of their Christian life. Examinations are not meant to evaluate the depth of Faith but to evaluate their religious knowledge and certify that the catechized not only profess the same Faith in Christ but also grow in their Faith.



In order to achieve that goal, the catechists should give examinations a new orientation and even a new name (e.g. assessment), explain the purpose of this evaluation to the catechized, use various active methods of evaluation, asking indirect questions and giving a chance to be creative in answering the questions.

## **6. Prayer**

204 Authentic Catechesis should always lead to personal, communal and liturgical prayer, expressing deeper relationship with God. Thus prayer will not be a routine repetition of formulas, but a very inspiring God-experience. The atmosphere in the group will create a thirst for prayer. The catechist's input and his/her proper use of methods and activities will foster a spirit of prayer. Catechists have also the responsibility to initiate the catechized to the riches of the liturgical prayer, so that they may discover plentiful nourishment through it for their own personal prayer life.

Conscientious catechists will often remember the people they catechize in their prayer. It is an irreplaceable expression of a special relationship that exists between the catechists and the catechized. As a person of prayer, the catechist's own example is the best factor to motivate the catechized towards growth in the practice and love for prayer.

## **Conclusion**

205 The key element of our pedagogy is not the approach, the method or the technique we use but the catechist. No particular approach, method or activity can replace the spirit of Faith, carefully nurtured within the catechists in their own Christian pilgrimage of life. The catechists themselves are responsible for their own ongoing formation through study, prayer and personal reflection. As long as they are active catechists engaged in the central ministry of the

Church, they have to set aside time regularly for their own personal and professional renewal.<sup>31</sup> Catechists have no substitute for personal competence, for spirit of a prayer and especially for a deep desire to communicate God's life to their people through personal witness.

With an attitude of respect and understanding for the catechized, catechists should ultimately rely not so much on their own untiring efforts, but on the work of the Holy Spirit (ref. Jn 14:16, 26; 16:7-15). They need to be absolutely convinced that none of their efforts is in vain and are not alone in their ministry. The Lord is with them and working through them always. This deep conviction can sustain them, as nothing else can,<sup>32</sup> in answering the spiritual needs of their people, which will be studied at length in *Part Five*.

---

<sup>31</sup> GDC 234.

<sup>32</sup> CT72.

PART FIVE

THE PILGRIM PEOPLE



## Community as Source and *Locus* of Catechesis

206 *They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).*

The above passage narrates the community life of the early Christians. We see four key characteristics of Christian communal life here:

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching ... many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.* The early Christian community remained faithful to the apostolic teaching. The apostolic teaching was not only the explicit preaching and teaching with words but also through examples and actions of the apostles.

*All who believed were together and had all things in common.* Community fellowship became another important trait of early Christian community. Fellowship consisted in the sharing of possessions, caring for the needs of the poor and holding all things 'in common.'

*They broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts.* The sharing of a meal was perhaps the most intimate form of fellowship one could have with fellow believers. The ritual meal, celebrated in their homes, signified their unity and helped them remember mostly Jesus' Last Supper.

*They spent much time together in the temple ... praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.* The early Christians also devoted time

in worship and prayer. They continued the Jewish practices and traditions of public prayer in the Temple and in their families.

Thus the above-quoted passage indicates that the Christian community grew in Faith with the teaching of the apostles (*kerygma*) and the community activities of *leitourgia* (public worship), *diakonia*, (service of others), and *koinonia* (communion with one another). The role of the community and the community leaders were essential in fostering the Faith of the individual and community.

This part of the Directory speaks about our believing community and is titled as *The Pilgrim People*. Our Community includes both the catechized and the catechists. The Christian Community is the source and *locus* of Catechesis. The First Chapter highlights Jesus as the model of catechists. The *Second Chapter* identifies the *loci* or places for Catechesis. The *Third Chapter* discovers the catechetical needs of various age groups to be catechized. The *Fourth Chapter* reflects on the catechists and their requirements.

## CHAPTER I

### *Jesus Christ, the Catechist par Excellence*

#### **Introduction**

207 Jesus Christ is the catechist *par excellence*. The Church has always recognized Jesus as the Master Catechist who has entrusted to her the mission and power to proclaim the Good News of Salvation to the whole of humanity. Our first task, therefore, as catechists, is to contemplate Jesus the Catechist in order to learn from him how best to educate and form our people in New Life and so build up the Body of Christ. The Gospels present Jesus as on the move with his people and teaching them. He was always concerned about how to make effective the message of the Father's love to every person in their own peculiar situation.

#### **1. Jesus the Catechist Knew His People**

208 From scenes of the four Gospel accounts, the composite picture of Jesus is that of a person deeply rooted in the lives of people he came to serve, offering freely and lovingly God's own Good News (Lk 4:16-19). He fully identified with them. He adapted his ways of presenting the Good News according to their age, their mentality, their socio-cultural and religious background.

Jesus knows his people, those to whom his Father has sent him. He is sensitive to the needs of each person who approaches him: the woman who, fearful yet full of hope, touches the hem of his garment in a milling crowd (Mt 9:20-22), the centurion begging for the healing of his servant (Mt 8:6-13), Zaccheus so eager to get a glimpse of him (Lk 19:1-9). He loves and walks along with his people: He is present to the two disciples of Emmaus searching for meaning and purpose of life (Lk 24:13-35). The young man (Mk 10:

17-22) and the little children (Mk 10:13-1) also become privileged ones to hear Jesus, the Saviour. On these occasions of encounter with people Jesus communicates the message of the Good News according to the situations and needs of his hearers.

## **2. Christ the Catechist among Our Indian People Today**

209 The risen glorified Jesus is among his people in India today: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Mt 28: 20). He is the Teacher; He is the Message, the Saviour and Redeemer, who is at the very heart of all Catechesis. The first and essential objective of Catechesis is the mystery of Christ and its whole aim is to lead us into communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ “who alone can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity.”<sup>1</sup>

Encounter with Christ, the Catechist, challenges the people of India to put on Christ and to penetrate the Indian culture with the values of Christ. Jesus Christ mediator and fullness of Revelation is the one who has embraced true poverty. Contemplating him, Indians will learn to look at poverty from a different perspective. Jesus the true liberator was always at the side of the downtrodden, the voiceless and the marginalized. Jesus is with the Indian people and through His death and resurrection the covenant of love, God made with his people is accomplished. The catechist plays a vital role in ensuring that the encounter with Jesus takes place for those who are catechized in the Indian context and in the Indian culture.

All those who encountered Jesus during his life time have learned to assume the responsibility for their existence. The person of Jesus, his message, and above all his style of relating with people, making life to explode where it was imprisoned because of sin, injustice and violence have offered his friends and followers the possibility to

---

<sup>1</sup> CT5.



taste the love of God the Father for the human family. Encounter with Jesus has the power to transform people. The goodness of God that radiates from the face of his Son Jesus like a light illumines and at the same time generates a great desire within the person to spread the good news of such an encounter. It is sufficient to think of Andrew who accompanied his brother Simon to Jesus and Philip who informed Nathanael the good news of finding Jesus (Jn 1:35-45).

Through a gradual growth in Jesus, the people of India will learn to allow his message to take root in their hearts. Only in this way it is possible to let the message of Christ to penetrate deeply into the Indian culture. Having Christ the catechist among our Indian People today means to gradually accompany our people on their Faith journey so that they can think of Christ the Indian cultural categories. The face of Christ is an inculturated face and our contemplative glance fixed on His face teaches us something of the Indian culture. In Christ, the catechist, the people of India will find a genuine Master who will teach them how to enhance their cultural values.

## Conclusion

210 This chapter has underlined that Jesus Christ is the catechist *par excellence*, always on the move entering many places and encountering the people, who had great hopes, anxieties, struggles, pains and sorrows. He looked to their real needs and they were overwhelmed by his love and compassion. He adapted to their mentality and socio-cultural background but challenged them, whenever necessary (Mk 10:17-22). The next chapter discusses yet another important aspect of our pilgrim people, namely, the Christian community as the fundamental *locus* Catechesis.



## CHAPTER II

### *The Christian Community: Fundamental Locus of Catechesis*

#### Introduction

211 The Directory indicates in this chapter the places in which Initial and Ongoing Catechesis takes place and occasions that offer special opportunities for “catechetical moments.” The places and occasions mentioned are not exhaustive. The aim is to focus attention on some significant and important ones indicating where the teaching of the Church is given.

“The Christian community is the origin, *locus* and goal of Catechesis.”<sup>2</sup> It is the historical realization of the gift of “communion,” which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It comprises the Universal Church and the Particular Churches. The Universal Church, the Church of Christ, is present and active amid the particular characteristics and the diversity of persons, groups, times and places. Among these manifold particular expressions of the saving presence of the one Church of Christ there are those entities which are in themselves Churches, known as Particular Churches. Although they are particular, the Universal Church becomes present in them with all its essential elements.<sup>3</sup>

The Christian community proclaims the Gospel and invites men and women to conversion and the following of Christ. The same community welcomes those who wish to know the Lord and accompanies them in their Faith journey and helps them to find their place in the Local Church. It is to the community and within the context of the community that God reveals his Word; his eternal

---

<sup>2</sup> GDC 254.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *CN* 7; *LG* 23.

plan of love and salvation being worked out gradually in the life of each pilgrim partner on the journey towards fullness. And it is from within the community in an atmosphere of interrelationship, that each person responds to God's Word, celebrates it in worship, and lives it in daily life.

## **1. Community of Love Built on the Risen Lord**

212 The Acts of the Apostles gives us a graphic picture of the early Christian community. The early Christians were looked up to by everyone, and constantly attracted others to listen to and accept the Good News because of their striking witness as a community of love, centred on the Risen Jesus. They prayed together in the Temple, met in their homes to share their meals, celebrated the breaking-of-the-bread, and gladly shared both their food and their material goods with the needy among them.

Paul speaks of this oneness as the Body of Christ, comparing the Mystical Body of Christ to the human body: many members each with its specific function serving the one body, each one needing the other, complementing the other, working in unison for the well being of the whole (1 Cor 12:12-30). Recognition of this central truth of our Christian faith and working together in harmony and love weeds away the social evils such as individualism, competitiveness and animosity that often hinder our catechetical efforts.

## **2. Community, a Privileged Place for Fostering Faith**

213 Catechesis always takes place within the community. The state of this community is that of "the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple."<sup>4</sup> This community does not actually include all people and at times appears as a small flock. However, it is certainly a seed of unity, hope and salvation for the whole human race. It is established by Christ as a

---

<sup>4</sup> LG 9.

communion of life, love and truth. It is taken up by Christ as the instrument of salvation for all, as the light of the world and the salt of the earth (cf. Mt 5:13-16) and it is sent forth to the whole world.<sup>5</sup> Thus God willed from all eternity to save all people through a new covenant in the blood of Christ, his Son. The believing community, re-born through the Word of the living God and sanctified by the power and love of the Spirit – a community of Word, Celebration and Witness – continues the mission of Christ, drawing all people to God, the Father. This is the Living Church.

### **3. The Catechized as Fellow-Pilgrims**

214 A very important insight of the Second Vatican Council and post-Conciliar documents is that all Christians are part of the Listening and Learning Church, growing and maturing in their Faith right through their lives. We learn and listen through our interaction with each other. Our Christian communities in India are diverse and complex in reality. As members of the Body of Christ, His Church on earth, we are called to enter with respect and love into the life of the community to which we belong or are sent as ministers of the Word. Each community then is our community; each person in it is our sister or our brother. As fellow pilgrims, we journey together. We need each other, and finally we will be judged on the basis of our relationship to each other.

### **4. Right to Lifelong Catechesis for All Christians**

215 No one in the Church is excluded from either the right or the duty to receive ongoing Catechesis right through life. We are all called to remain always “humble pupils of the Church, the great giver as well as the great receiver of Catechesis.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> LG 9.

<sup>6</sup> CT 45.

Catechesis is a sacred duty and an inalienable right of the Church...a duty springing from a command given by the Lord to all, and above all to those called to the ministry of being pastors. Every baptized Christian has the right to be catechized all through life; and from the view-point of human rights, every human being has the right to seek religious truth and adhere to it freely.<sup>7</sup>

### **5. Two-fold Responsibility of the Community: the Catechists and the Catechized**

216 The entire Christian community is responsible for all Christian Catechesis and for all of its members.<sup>8</sup> The Christian community is the historical realization of the gift of “communion,” the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Communion is realized and made visible in the rich variety of immediate Christian communities in which Christians are born into the Faith, educated in it and live it: the family; parish; Catholic schools; Christian associations and movements; Basic Ecclesial Communities. These are the *loci* of Catechesis, the community places where initiatory Catechesis and continuing education in the faith are realized.<sup>9</sup>

The Christian community proclaims the Gospel and invites everyone to conversion and to the following of Christ. The same community welcomes those who wish to know the Lord, accompanies them in their Faith journey and helps them to find their place in the Local Church.

It is to the community and within the context of community that God reveals His Word; his eternal plan of love, being worked out

---

<sup>7</sup> CT 14.

<sup>8</sup> GDC 219, 221.

<sup>9</sup> GDC 253.

gradually, in the life of each pilgrim partner, on the journey towards fullness. And it is from within the community, in an atmosphere of interrelationship, that each person responds to God's Word, celebrates it in worship, and lives it in daily life. Catechists need to keep this Faith-reality always in mind. When we speak of venue, we speak of the particular community within that particular venue. The three most important interlinked venues in which Catechesis takes place are: the family, the parish and the Catholic educational institution.

A person, who has given adherence to Jesus Christ by Faith and is endeavouring to nurture and consolidate that Faith by Catechesis, needs to live in communion with those who have taken the first step. Catechesis runs the risk of being barren if there is no community of Faith and if Christian life does not take the catechumen in at a certain stage of his/her catechumenal journey.

Because Catechesis always takes place within a community, the role of the parish community as family of families needs to be understood. Authentic Catechesis can take place only within a community because it implies constant growth and deepening of relationship with God as a Trinitarian community in and through relationship with others who share the same Faith and divine life. God has willed from all eternity to make all peoples holy and to save us, not as separated individuals but as one people who will together, acknowledge and serve him in holiness. In the fullness of time God instituted a new covenant in the blood of his Son, a Kingdom community, re-born through the Word of the living God and sanctified by the power and love of the Spirit - a community of Word, Celebration and Witness - continuing the mission of Christ to draw all peoples through him to the Father.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> LG 9.

## **6. Many Venues but One Mission**

217 These venues of Catechesis are not merely interdependent units but are part of the one same Body of Jesus Christ, the Church present in the local parish. Each one is a different member serving in a particular way according to a specific function. At the same time every member works in communion with the other members for the well-being of the one body. This is a basic and fundamental truth of our Faith that the catechists and the catechized must proclaim constantly not just by word, but by their whole way of living this reality of oneness, unity and communion in the one mission, the continuing mission of Jesus Christ our Risen Lord and Leader. Every channel of Christian formation should converge on the same confession of faith, on the same membership of the Church, and on commitments in society lived in the same Gospel spirit: “One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father” (Eph 4:5-6).

## **Conclusion**

218 The Christian community is a home for Catechesis.

It is realized and made visible in the rich variety of immediate Christian communities in which Christians are born into the faith, educated in it and live it: the family; parish; Catholic Schools; Christian associations and movements; basic ecclesial communities. These are the *loci* of catechesis, the community places where initiatory catechesis and continuing education in the faith are realized.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, the Christian community is the central place of Catechesis. It has primarily a two-fold responsibility, namely, to be catechized and to catechize. The next chapter deals with the people through ages and stages of life.

---

<sup>11</sup> GDC 253.



## CHAPTER III

### *Our Pilgrim People through the Ages and Stages of Life*

#### Introduction

219 An interdisciplinary approach to Catechesis needs to keep in mind the ages and stages of life and the level of maturation of each person. Respecting the rhythm of growth of each person, the content of Faith that needs to be transmitted to each age group has to be chosen carefully and wisely as each developmental stage has got its own characteristics and needs. The catechized has to be given both Initiatory and Ongoing Catechesis. The Initiatory Catechesis is distinct from *Continuing Catechesis (Permanent Catechesis)*.<sup>12</sup> The Initiatory Catechesis provides basic rudiments of Faith at the initial stages of Faith formation. This is normally done in *loci* such as family, school and parish (Sunday Catechesis for children). Adult catechumenate has initiatory nature since the content of Faith nurtured at this stage is an initial level of Faith. Continuing Catechesis is basically addressed to young adults and adults of all other groups where a longer and deeper level of faith is nurtured.

#### **1. Catechesis according to Age-groups: A Lifelong Pilgrimage**

220 No one in the Church is excluded both from the right and the duty to receive ongoing Catechesis throughout life. We are all called, laity, religious, priests, bishops, catechists and the catechized, to remain always “humble pupils of the Church, the great giver as well as the great receiver of Catechesis.”<sup>13</sup> In *Catechesi Tradendae* we read:

---

<sup>12</sup> GDC 67-72.

<sup>13</sup> CT 45.

Catechesis is a sacred duty and an inalienable right of the Church...a duty springing from a command given by the Lord to all, and above all to those called to the ministry of being pastors... Every baptized Christian has the right to be catechized all through life; and from the view-point of human rights, every human being has the right to seek religious truth and adhere to it freely.<sup>14</sup>

The Church adapts her language and pedagogy to the people of India today in an all-embracing attitude of love so that they may be led to welcome God's Word into their lives. This demands that the ministry of Catechesis in India be carried out in various forms, settings for all ages and stages of life. The *General Directory for Catechesis* affirms that:

Catechesis based on different age groups is an essential task of the Christian community. On the one hand, faith contributes to the development of the person; on the other, every phase of life is open to the challenge of de-Christianization and must above all be reinforced by ever new responses of Christian vocation.<sup>15</sup>

Catechesis involves the whole person. It is a lifelong pilgrimage of knowing the Lord more fully. It must help the faithful to progress more and more in the understanding and the living out of their faith. Faith is grace and at the same time a human act.<sup>16</sup> It has to be formed in a progressive way at different stages of life. In the media world, visuals play a very significant role in the lives of the people. We need to use different techniques adapted to the psychological and spiritual maturity of those who are catechized. Our catechized consist of children, pre-adolescence, youth, adults and senior citizens. The visual mentality of our children requires that we impart a Catechesis that is more relevant to them.

---

<sup>14</sup> CT 14.

<sup>15</sup> GDC chap 2.

<sup>16</sup> CCC 153, 154.

In this chapter that speaks of pilgrim people through the ages and stages of life; we intentionally reverse the typical process of commencing with children. We begin with the adults. Over the years, the Church has been stressing the importance of Adult Catechesis and efforts have been made in this direction. The catechism that is imparted and welcomed lovingly is supposed to help gradually to build up a person's understanding of Faith and assist the person to grow in Faith. In this way, Ongoing Catechesis is a must "until we all attain to the unity of the Faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4:13). The *General Directory for Catechesis*, while introducing Catechesis according to age has also opted to begin with adults.

#### **a. Adults**

221 Adulthood is the longest period in one's life and offers the possibility for significant catechetical updating and ongoing formation. The age at which middle or settled adulthood begins differs as in every other age-group, from person to person and group to group depending on various factors like gender. During this stage of life's journey, they are fully immersed in the temporal realities of their chosen way and walk of life, and these are as diverse as the complex reality of our country. At the same time, they have the greatest responsibilities together with the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.

Persons, during middle and later adulthood, begin their inner journey, unifying their personal, social and spiritual life into an integrated whole. There exists the serious danger especially in our multi-religious and pluri-cultural context, to believe that this unity can be achieved by compromising one's personal Faith and Christian values. The urgency to build up one's own religious identity and strengthen one's sense of belonging to the Church are very important at this stage of life.

Young Adulthood is a period that determines personal vocation and profession. Young persons have now to determine or to confirm their 'choice of a particular way' and 'walk' of life. This is the time for the first great decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Although the young may still enjoy the support of the members of their family and friends to a certain extent, they have now to rely on themselves and their own conscience in assuming responsibility for their actions and their destiny in life. This is a stage where their personality is being more stabilized. The young, while continuing to grow in their personal faith, are ready to move on towards a 'mission' oriented faith and make a definitive choice in their vocation, profession and career by committing themselves to Jesus Christ.

### ***Catechesis of adults***

222 The Church in India continues to stress the importance of Adult Catechesis as is seen clearly in the *Third Chapter of Part One* of this Directory. In order to respond to the situation of inadequate catechesis to adults, there is greater need of well planned interventions coupled with efforts to create awareness in adults. Adults are capable of offering a free and fully responsible adherence to Jesus Christ and precisely for this reason Adult Catechesis has to be considered the chief form of Catechesis.

Catechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of Catechesis. All the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it. This implies that the Catechesis of other age groups should have it for a point of reference and should be expressed in conjunction with it, in a coherent catechetical programme suitable to meet the pastoral needs of dioceses.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup> GDC 59.

A primary service to Adult Catechesis is given by the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and by those adult catechisms based on it by the Particular Churches. The tasks of Adult Catechesis are varied.<sup>18</sup> There are different forms of Adult Catechesis such as the Adult Catechumenate (Initiatory Catechesis), Occasional Catechesis (Catechesis during anniversaries, feasts, marriage etc), Liturgical Catechesis (Catechesis during Sunday liturgy), Perfective Catechesis (theology, retreats), the training of catechists, Basic Christian Communities, Catechesis through pious associations, groups and movements etc. None of these would replace the Ongoing and Systematic Catechesis which every ecclesial community must provide for all adults. There are ample opportunities for Informal and Non-formal Catechesis in daily life.

Finally, the Ongoing Catechesis<sup>19</sup> should aim at enabling adults to live their Christian vocation fully within the context of community: family, parish, apostolic and prayer groups within the parish, neighbourhood and place of work. It should proclaim to them with the power of personal conviction that God who is love is really the author of the community of Faith, the Church. It should enkindle a desire to enter into fellowship with every person and should lead them gradually to that mature form of Faith which is our goal as a pilgrim Church, a Faith indefectibly faithful to the Magisterium of the Universal Church, which recognized the work of the Spirit also in believers of the other great religions and all men and women of good will.

---

<sup>18</sup> GDC 175.

<sup>19</sup> GDC 176.

## **b. Young people**

223 It is difficult to determine the exact age group of youth. However, teenagers and those who have not discerned their life choice may come under this category, depending upon the culture and nature of the society.

In general, it is observed that the first victims of the spiritual and cultural crisis gripping the world are the young. It is also true that any commitment to the betterment of society finds its hopes in them. This should stimulate the Church all the more to proclaim the Gospel to the world of youth with courage and creativity.<sup>20</sup>

This is the transition period of life from childhood to adulthood. It is the time of discovering of one's own inner world, the time of generous plans, the time when the feeling of love awakens with the biological impulses of sexuality, the time when the desire for togetherness also awakens and the time for experiencing intense joy in the exhilarating discovery of life. It is at the same time a period of questioning and of anguish, even frustrating, search for the meaning of life. This brings with it a certain mistrust of others, of introspection which can at times reach dangerous limits, and first experiences of painful set-backs, disappointments, doubts and even moral transgressions. Besides the challenges already mentioned in Part 1 Chapter 3 of this Directory, our young people today face serious problems caused by call-centres in so many urban areas. Urban and rural migration of young people affects our society and this too poses a challenge to Catechesis.

The needs of the young pose a constant challenge to both parents and catechists. We have to use their yearnings for creativity, justice, freedom and truth as the starting point of all educational and therefore of all catechetical activity. The Catechesis we offer them must build on their desire to share responsibility in the decisions of

---

<sup>20</sup> GDC 181.

the Church and civil society, as well as on the attraction of love of God and neighbour.

Much depends on the home environment, relationships within the family and the type of early religious formation to enable these teenagers approaching adulthood to face the challenges of growth in the areas of sex, religion and the painful reality of sin in their own lives and in the lives of others. They now need more than ever, competent understanding and the guidance of balanced catechists who are sensitive to their struggles and ideals, and who inspire their trust. Many parents also experience the need to be helped in the guidance of their teenage children. More than ever it is necessary for catechists to collaborate with and to offer them their guidance and assistance.

### ***Catechesis of young people***

224 Teenagers, as they journey towards young adulthood, are capable of much sacrifice and hard work for a cause of which they are convinced of. They possess tremendous goodwill and zeal in reaching out to help the destitute and marginalized. What they often lack is stability. Long-term commitment is very difficult for one who is still searching for his or her identity. Peer groups strongly influence the personal thinking of the individual and social acceptance is important for the group as such. Since group influence is so strong, our catechetical approach to be effective must be adapted to the particular group while recognizing individual needs within it. Catechists have the task of working with these youth groups, which in turn can serve to mediate between young people and the whole community of the Church.

The type of Catechesis given during this period of life should lead youth to search for the real meaning of their lives and to find answers to the fundamental questions of life: Where did I come from? Why

am I here? Where am I going? It should enable them to be open to dialogue in learning how best they can give themselves to the vocation to which God is calling them. It should enlighten their mind so that they themselves will be able to find an answer, in the light of Faith, to their questions on Faith, love and the means of expressing their love in their God-given gift of sexuality. The Revelation of Jesus as friend, guide and model, capable of being both admired and imitated; the Revelation of his message which provides an answer to fundamental questions, the Revelation of the loving plan of Christ the Saviour as the incarnation of the only authentic love and as the possibility of uniting the human race provide the basis for genuine education in Faith. Young people are not only objects of Catechesis, but also protagonists of evangelization and social transformation.

To ensure that the Catechesis of young people is relevant and responding to their life situation, certain criteria need to be respected. The General Directory for Catechesis highlights the following:<sup>21</sup>

- Consider the diversity of the religious situation
- Contextualized Catechesis that respects the wider pastoral care of the young people
- Well oriented group action
- Accompaniment of youth with particular attention to spiritual direction

The value of Eucharistic adoration also needs to be highlighted. It is an experience that has touched the young people profoundly, the unforgettable World Youth Day encounters.

Moreover, today, it is necessary to offer diverse forms of Youth Catechesis like Youth Catechumenate during school years, Catechesis for Christian Initiation, Catechesis on specific themes

---

<sup>21</sup> Cf. GDC 181-184.



and Vocational Catechesis.<sup>22</sup> Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church (*YouCat*) is an accessible, contemporary expression of the Catholic Faith and certainly it has become one of the most referred to and studied catechisms.

Permeating Catechesis at this stage in particular should be the person and message of Jesus presented in a language understood by these young people, forceful in its appeal, and at the same time unswervingly faithful to his person and to his message. Finally, the yearnings of our young people for creativity, justice, freedom and truth must be the starting point of all catechetical activity. Catechesis must build on their desire to share responsibly in the decisions of the Church and of civil society, as well as on the attraction which the love of God and of neighbour have for them. It must lead them to a responsible committed Christian action and to help them assume leadership roles both in ecclesial and civil life according to their natural talents and abilities.

### **c. Adolescents**

225 The pre-adolescent leaves behind the familiar world of childhood and sets out for the promising but unknown world of adolescence somewhere between the ages of 11-13 in girls and 12-14 in boys, depending on physical, psychological and hereditary factors. It is at this stage of puberty that some of life's most important developments in values, aspirations, and interaction patterns take place and the foundations for a mature, balanced and well-integrated adulthood or otherwise, are being laid. Hidden potential is awakened and becomes evident. Intelligence with the capability of new thought process is developing so that religious knowledge can now be seen as linked to and influencing attitudes. There is a strong urge to identify with a hero or heroine outside the family circle in the struggle to find self-identity. This search for personal identity leads inevitably

---

<sup>22</sup> GDC 184.

to a certain pre-occupation with self and to moments of doubt and questioning of one's faith as the journey from imitative to personal faith enters a new phase.

This is a time of intense vitality of enthusiasm and of exciting growth. These young teenagers are brimming over with life, anxious to cross new frontiers and experience new freedom as they move away from the restrictions of childhood. A continued rapid growth of sexual development and of weight and height takes place; the outer sign of dynamic interior growth. There is a growing need for privacy in order to evaluate new experiences together with fluctuations in moods and in feelings.

In their search for personal identity, adolescents begin at this stage their struggle to think and act independently. Values proposed by parents and elders are questioned since they now appear irrelevant and without meaning. They grow in awareness of themselves as individuals and tend to form small intimate groups. There is the beginning of a strong pre-occupation with one's own body and self as sexual instincts develop, together with increasing interest in the 'other' sex. Young girls and boys are now fully aware of the changes taking place within them and tend to become withdrawn and shy as they struggle to find control of the on-rush of growth in so many areas. While they experience a deep need to be understood and helped, their strong desire for personal autonomy makes them tend to reject this help when offered. They swing back and forth between behaviour that is mature and one that is irrational and childish. This is a period of extreme self-consciousness, day-dreaming and fantasy trips centred on love and sexual exploration. Many teenagers may be often overwhelmed by feelings of guilt, loneliness and isolation. These young people are in search of a life that has meaning, of values that are authentic. They want to love and be loved. They are idealistic. They thirst for freedom and for intimate companionship.

This is the time when there is need for adequate instruction on love, human sexuality, marriage and the call to consecrated celibacy, an instruction that continues right through the adolescent years, and is accompanied by sensitive and empathic understanding of the needs and struggles of these teenagers.<sup>23</sup> Right through its various stages, the main task of adolescence is that of coming to grips with the “burden” of autonomy and the joy of personal freedom. The first and most important application of this is the challenge to become a Christian freely, to make a free personal choice for Christ, and a covenant relationship with Christ and his family: the Church. The catechist’s greatest challenge is to handle this growth towards freedom of personal choice and decision with deep respect, while at the same time enabling the young girl or boy to make the right choices and to find true inner freedom and joy.

### ***Catechesis of adolescents***

226 Adolescents need to be guided to move beyond mere external involvement in apostolic activity. The primary aim of Catechesis at this stage is to enable all those being catechized, to build up and deepen continually a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and through him with the Father in the Holy Spirit. A Catechesis of self-discovery, that favours intimate personal relationship with Jesus, that respects and understands the psychological changes affecting relationship with self and others while they search for their own unique identity, is required at this stage.

Puberty is the age of hero worship in the search for personal identity. Therefore, Christian relationship and worship are best presented through the lives and the deeds of Saints and outstanding persons, together with reflections on the actual life of the Church. Topics like the nature of Scripture, the Church, the sacraments, and the

---

<sup>23</sup> Cf. *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality, Guideline for Education within the Family*, Pontifical Council for the Family, 1995.

reasons underlying moral norms can be discussed in greater depth than before, always through concrete experiences in the lives of the persons being catechized.

Above all, Jesus is presented as the Hero and Model who shows us by his life and teaching how to make our own lives happy, meaningful and fulfilling: as children of God our loving Father and as sisters and brothers of Jesus our Risen Lord whose presence, nearness and concern may be experienced both in Word and in Sacrament through the catechist's own attitude of caring and concern. Now is the time when participation in the Eucharistic celebration, sacraments and rituals of the adult community can acquire greater meaning through a more active and responsible participation in planning, preparing and celebrating the Liturgy with the growing sense of personal responsibility. Specific Christian principles become more important and the sacrament of Reconciliation can now take on deeper meaning. Puberty is the most challenging time and critical period of life both for the catechized and the catechist.

The principal task of Catechesis in adolescence is to further a genuinely Christian understanding of life. It must shed the light of the Christian message on the realities which have greater impact on the adolescent, such as the meaning of bodily existence, love and the family, the standards to be followed in life, work, and leisure, justice and peace. More than ever young persons in this phase of life's journey, require catechists who are able to guide them with love, respect and deep understanding. They reject attempts at preaching or advice. They want someone who while walking with them is able to lead them. They require adults who can inspire them not so much by their eloquent teaching as by their own example of committed and mature Christian living. They require a Catechesis that builds positive values present in the particular group to which they belong. A catechesis that enables to build their own personal identity by placing before them the values proposed and lived by Jesus the Friend and Guide, who will gently lead each one to discover his or

her own personal vocation in life, in a deeper personal commitment to Christ and to His Church.

#### **d. Children**

227 Infancy and childhood are a very rich and fruitful period in life.

This age group, traditionally divided into early infancy or pre-school age and childhood, possesses, in the light of Faith and reason, the grace of the beginnings of life, from which ‘valuable possibilities emerge, both for the building up of the Church and for the making of a more humane society’. As a child of God, in virtue of the gift of Baptism, the child is proclaimed by Christ to be a privileged member of the Kingdom of God. For various reasons today, rather more than in the past, the child demands full respect and help in its spiritual and human growth.<sup>24</sup>

Life’s beginning stages are of critical importance to the baby’s growth and development. It is during these first years of life that the foundations of acceptance of self and of the quality of relationship with others are laid. Depending on this foundation is the gradual formation of the basic human and Christian personality, as well as the capacity to relate with God.

An infant is open and vulnerable by ‘absorbing’ as it were, every influence that the home environment (mother, father, sisters, and brothers) transmits. About 60% of what is learnt in life has its beginnings planted within the child by the time it is five years of age. And this happens mainly through this process of absorbing. At 3-5 year the child begins to enter the wider community. They are ready to discover a fascinating world. A home environment in which there is a loving trusting attitude towards God and towards each family member will strongly influence the faith life of the growing infant.

---

<sup>24</sup> GDC 177.

Middle childhood (6-8 years) is one of the most decisive stages in the life of a person. Understanding and reason begin to develop in the ability to judge and to respond, as well as in the emotional capacity for satisfactory relationships within a wider circle of children and adults. The child moves out gradually into a wider world of school, parish, and neighbourhood. Self-acceptance becomes more and more determined by growing awareness of personal gifts and talents in relation to those of others.

Attitudes of significant elders particularly parents determine whether the child will develop a healthy respect or otherwise for self and others. The child's expression of personal freedom becomes modified by the recognition that others too have their rights and freedom. Intellectual capacity begins to gradually expand in the ability to form abstract ideas or concepts based on personal experience. Children in this phase of development continue to be keen observers and to learn much by observing and imitating. Catechesis is a privileged means to nourish the lives of Christian children.

### ***Catechesis of children***

228 The Catechesis of children begins with Christian Initiation that is inaugurated at Baptism. The catechetical process in infancy aims to inculcate a sense of trust, freedom, prayer and learning. The child during infancy and early childhood learns through the senses: seeing, touching, hearing and by imitation. The little one is a keen listener and observer and is quick to imitate. Formation in Faith and development of Christian personality begins from the first months of a child's life. The parents' affective relationship with their little one during the first months of life prepares the ground for a healthy integrated relationship with self, God and others.<sup>25</sup> Tensions, conflicts, violence between the other family members particularly between the parents, are perceived by the infant and can

---

<sup>25</sup> GCD 131.

cause severe emotional confusion and stress giving rise to a number of infant psychosomatic illnesses.

The infant continues to be catechized by what is felt, seen and touched. Watching parents, particularly the mother in recollection and prayer is a learning experience. The sense of wonder develops especially during the childhood and it can foster a sense of the greatness, goodness and love of God as Creator and provident Father. As the child moves from the second into the third year of life the ability to listen, to memorize words and sentences, and to speak, increases rapidly. This is the time to begin regular nurturing to cultivate a habit of prayer adapted to the child's ability to listen, to understand and to remain interested. The prayers should consist of very short simple sentences of praise, thanksgiving, love and petition.

An effective type of Catechesis for the young child is the communicators' (father and mother) loving and unconditional acceptance of the child. This proclamation is done more by deeds and attitudes than by words. The 'tone of voice' is as important as the facial expression. This "infant evangelization" of the child by being lovingly accepted, valued and nurtured for itself is so vitally necessary that its effects last a lifetime. The instinct to explore, to discover, grows as the child begins to move around with rapidly increasing facility.

Children move from 'just receiving' to 'learning to give.' Right through early (and middle) childhood they learn most by observing and imitating. This is the time children begin not so much to learn as to imbibe moral values from parents and elders: values of kindness, generosity in sharing, respect, truthfulness, justice, forgiveness etc. They also learn to share in Faith celebrations. Small children enjoy events and occasions of celebration in the family, parish and neighbourhood. Symbolic actions that bring out the joy of life, of

celebrating together, can be well used to nurture growing faith and loving trust related in God who as creator and provider, gives us opportunities to celebrate our joy in his goodness. They begin to acquire a sense of prayer.

Children are highly imaginative and naturally contemplative in early and middle childhood, and this is the best time for cultivating both a taste for and a habit of personal prayer. They can be gradually helped to build a Christian character through witnessing. It is crucial that Christian attitudes and habits are inculcated from childhood in the multi-cultural and religious context of India.

At this age children are ready to begin sharing directly in the Church and to be admitted to the sacraments of Christian Initiation. They are ready to enter progressively into a personal relationship with God: Father, Son and Spirit. Childhood is the time to begin a Catechesis aimed at deepening the personal relationship of the child with the three Divine Persons of the Trinity, the formation in a life of personal prayer. It is the time to awaken an authentic Christian moral sense; one that develops within a personal relationship with God, and with others. A healthy and correct formation of a moral conscience is important; understanding the sacraments as the presence and action of the Risen Jesus among us today, an action exercised by the Risen Christ to build his Church, and through her to bring all together, into the one “People of God” animated constantly by the Holy Spirit. Childhood is the best time to let the children know that God has a dream for them and they need to get to know what He wants them to be in life.

Children can be also catechized with the help of various methods that are available. “The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd” is one such method widely used in the Catholic arena. It is a Montessori style programme for children’s education. Children work with materials lovingly created at their developmental level that provides



a way for the child to connect with God and learn about the Bible and the Church. “Godly play” is yet another Montessori-influenced children’s Catechesis. In *Godly Play*, one discovers one’s identity as a child created in the image of God. The classroom, then, is a sacred space in which children are encouraged to discover through play the deeper meaning of the traditions, stories, and people that define the Christian religion.

### **e. Catechesis for special groups**

229 Special programmes become necessary for those who require them either for their professional or cultural formation. Hence, “special groups and special peoples”<sup>26</sup> are a special area of concern in the catechetical ministry in India. Organized institutional groups and individual initiatives carry out education and rehabilitation activities for these special groups. However, the area remains vast and complex since the needs are as varied as the complexity of the types of groups. The Church faces the tremendous challenge of meeting the Faith adequately – needs of each of these groups which cannot be separated from the acceptance by and integration into the society in which each group lives.

*Senior Citizens:* In general our senior citizens are known for their wisdom; ready to hand over responsibilities to the younger generation and at the same time keep themselves available for them. In our Indian culture, senior citizens are treated with great respect and their wisdom and experience are cherished. However, in some cases the pressures of modern society force youngsters to leave senior citizens at home and travel to distant places in search of jobs. In many of the parishes today there is a cell or a committee that caters to veteran adults. They have much to contribute to the community by their work which often is not justly appreciated, and by their

---

<sup>26</sup> GDC 191.

witness of quiet serenity and an interiority flowing from their faith-experience.

Catechetical ministry for the senior citizens needs to enable our older people to make the necessary adjustments in the social and spiritual aspects of their lives, to give them a sense of belonging and of still being needed though in a different way, to help them experience the quiet thrill of the apostolate of prayer and patient endurance. Adequately prepared and sensitive catechists are a must for this ministry. Every means to involve our veteran adults in the life of the parish and of the society ought to be used.

*The Victims of Social evil:* Catechesis should cater to all victims of social evil. Here, the Catechesis should have a liberating experience. The victims include child labourers, children neglected by their families, children and adolescents not adjusted to the conditions of life, the mentally challenged, domestic workers, slum dwellers, pavement children, little ones deprived of basic rights from birth, oppressed women, single mothers, victims of legalized prostitution, victims of chemical dependence, street children, refugees, unorganized workers in rural and urban areas, marginalized men and women ignored by society, outcast sisters and brothers, specially the excluded (e.g. HIV), victims of chemical dependence and partners in troubled marriages challenge catechists. The most vulnerable are those groups who have been traditionally marginalized in society: tribals, scheduled castes, and more universally, women.

*The sick, the suffering and the differently abled:* Catechesis can ensure that the sick, the suffering and the differently abled belong to the community of believers and that they are important. They need our special attention and accompaniment. Catechesis can establish spiritual, psychological, emotional and mental support to this special group. The catechists need to be sensitive to the different needs of

the suffering like Mary, Our Mother, who stood at the cross. The catechist stands with those who suffer and listens to them. At the regional, diocesan and parish levels a survey can be made to enlist the sick, the suffering and the differently abled of that specific area. This will assist in drawing up catechetical programmes for them. The Christian health care centres should be centres of Faith counselling and Faith-formation to this special group of people to be catechized. Proper planning and competent personnel are necessary in this regard.

*Person to Person Catechesis:* As society progresses, it creates more and more lonely and unloved people. A proper Faith counselling, due to a variety of reasons, is the need of the hour for the lonely, the unloved and the depressed.

The formidable and challenging task that catechists at every level face today is to penetrate and transform social structures by the values of the Gospel proclaimed first of all through witness of life. Catechesis of these deprived sisters and brothers cannot be separated from the education to awareness of their fundamental rights and obligations towards themselves and society. It cannot be separated from providing them with opportunities for integral development and growth as fully human persons within their own cultural milieu. It cannot be separated from our own insertion into their culture and way of life, and the oneness we experience with them, even as Jesus, the model Catechist did with the downtrodden and oppressed in his own society.

## **Conclusion**

230 This chapter dealt with the people through ages and stages of life. Catechesis remains interdisciplinary and approaches the people as per their age and stage in psychological, physical and Faith life. The Christian community, comprising the Universal and Local Churches

with a rich variety is the source, origin and goal of Catechesis. The Initiatory and On-going Catechesis are the two sides of catechesis and therefore it is life-long as per one's age and stage like children, teens, youth, adults, families and special groups. The next chapter treats of the identity, role and formation of catechists.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Catechists: Identity, Role and Formation*

#### **Introduction**

231 The call to be a catechist is a vocation, given already at Baptism. Therefore, every baptized person is called to catechize. The Bishop is the primary catechist and priests and religious are specially called to be educators of Faith. The laity, being inserted into the world, evangelize and catechize by concentrating on Christian Faith and love in word and deed. Parents are the first catechists of their children. Teachers of Faith in education centres and Sunday schools, lay missionary catechists also play a vital role as Faith formators. These elements are especially emphasized in this chapter.

#### **1. The Identity of Catechists**

232 The vocation of a catechist remains a special call. It is a strong invitation to make Jesus' exhortation, "come to me" (Mt 11:28) and "go therefore" (Mt 28:18-20), a lived reality in one's life. "To ensure the working of the catechetical ministry in a Local Church, it is fundamental to have adequate pastoral care of catechists."<sup>27</sup>

We are called by our baptismal vocation to be Jesus' catechists. It is Jesus whom we teach, and it is he who we must teach with our words and through our life witness, both patterned on his own.<sup>28</sup> With Paul the great Apostle and an incomparable catechist, we too should be able to say: "We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor 1:23-24).

---

<sup>27</sup> GDC 133.

<sup>28</sup> CT 6.

“At the origin of the catechist’s vocation, therefore, apart from the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, there is a specific call from the Holy Spirit, a *special charism recognized by the Church* and made explicit by the Bishop’s mandate. It is important for the catechist candidate to recognize the supernatural and ecclesial significance of this call, so as to be able to respond, like the Son of God, “I have come to do your will, O God” (Heb 10:7), or, like the prophet, “Here am I; send me” (Isa 6:8)!<sup>29</sup>

As already described in *Part One* “Our Context,” India is a vast complex reality of many cultures, religions and social, economic and political situations. Within this widely differing spectrum of the rich, the poor, the educated and illiterate, is our tiny Catholic minority. Indeed it is a challenge to maintain our identity as Catholic Christians. As followers of Jesus Christ we are called to profess, witness, proclaim and celebrate our Faith as response to this unique situation. Like him, we too must enter into the lives of the people to whom we are sent, so that we truly know them.<sup>30</sup>

Catechists need to be men and women of prayer: the expression of a deep personal love of God that flows out in the ministry of Catechesis with untiring zeal for the building up of God’s Kingdom. They need to experience what the apostles did when they said: “for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20). Their spirituality should be one that distinguishes itself by being in tune with the Holy Spirit in the deepest sense. ‘Listening’ to the Spirit will give them a growing facility to be able to see everything in the light of God’s plan, and will enable them to be humbly respectful to the action of the Spirit in the life of each person to whom they minister, as well as to the personal dignity

---

<sup>29</sup> GC 2.

<sup>30</sup> Here only general principles and norms are given. It is the task of regional and diocesan catechetical directories to make them more specific in accord with local conditions and needs. For details, see GCD 77.

and freedom of each of these persons. A strong sense of belonging to the Church is an essential part of this spirituality. The spirituality of catechists is centred on the personal experience of Christ in attentive listening to the Spirit who guides. They nourish themselves constantly on the Living Word, and like Mary reverently treasures God's inspirations, pondering over them in an attitude of humble, obedient listening.

## **2. Categories and Roles of Catechists**

233 The Church is enriched by the presence of a rich variety of catechists. The task of the catechist is a very delicate and time-consuming one. Like any other professional in the field, he/she needs to be trained and remunerated adequately. Besides the pinch of the economic meltdown which is felt all over the world there are other factors too which demand that the work of the catechist be recompensed. Greater accountability, responsible commitment etc. could be expected when the labourer is rewarded for his/her work. Though all the baptized are catechists, we distinguish the different types of catechists according to their ecclesiastical status.

### **a. The Bishop, first catechist of the Faith community**

234 The Second Vatican Council gave much importance to the proclamation and transmission of the Gospel in the *Episcopal Ministry*. It asserts that *Bishops* are the primary catechists of the Church. "Among the principal duties of *Bishops*, that of preaching the Gospel excels."<sup>31</sup> In carrying out this task, *Bishops* are, above all, "heralds of the faith," seeking new disciples for Jesus Christ, and "authentic teachers,"<sup>32</sup> transmitting the faith to be professed and lived by those entrusted to their care. The Bishops are "beyond all others the ones primarily responsible for Catechesis and catechists

---

<sup>31</sup> LG 25; CD 12; EN 68.

<sup>32</sup> LG 25.

*par excellence*.”<sup>33</sup> To be a bishop is to be a pastor. He is the shepherd of the flock. He is not only a guardian of the flock or a guardian of Faith but, he is the leader of the flock, leading them to the Truth. He is a teacher who shows the way. In the earlier times, bishops intervened regularly in the training of catechumens by Occasional Catechesis. Thus as successors of apostles, bishops receive from Christ the mission to teach and preach.

As pastor and first catechist of the community, the Bishop is called before everything else, to be a teacher and witness to Christ before all in his care and to proclaim the Gospel of Christ by his whole way of life and manner by relating to all.

The bishops are heralds of the faith, who draw new disciples to Christ; they are authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ to preach the faith to the people assigned to them, the faith which is destined to inform their thinking and direct their conduct; under the light of the Holy Spirit they make that faith shine forth, drawing from the storehouse of revelation new things and old (cf. Mt. 13:52); they make it bear fruit and with watchfulness they ward off whatever errors threaten their flock (cf. 2 Tim. 4:14).<sup>34</sup>

Through their ministry of the Word, Bishops envisage their primary task as chief animator of the Local Churches, building them up gradually into communities of living witness to Faith. In this way they inspire them, offer them direction and guidance, recognize charisms, acknowledge initiatives etc. As the first catechist of the diocese, the Bishop makes available all the means and resources necessary to carry out the catechetical function in the diocese. It is for him to approve specific resources for Catechesis, to mandate some, if he so chooses, and to forbid the use of unsuitable material.

---

<sup>33</sup> CT 63; GDC 222.

<sup>34</sup> LG 25.



## **b. Priests as catechists of parish community**

235 The function of the catechetical ministry of *priests* arises from the sacrament of Holy Orders which they have received.<sup>35</sup> In catechesis, the sacrament of Holy Orders constitutes priests as *educators of faith*.<sup>36</sup> The sacramental duty of priests has essentially a catechetical role. It is here that they become special ministers of the Word. They have a duty to promote the life and work of the lay catechist too.<sup>37</sup> The CIC also stresses the importance of the duty of priests in ensuring the catechetical formation of adults, young people and children.<sup>38</sup> The Second Vatican Council calls priests *instructors of Faith*.

Priests as sharers in Christ's ministerial priesthood, communicate to others the Word they themselves have meditated upon. Priests are called above all else, especially in the context of our country, to be men of prayer. The priests are called to be holy teachers, practising the appropriate virtues: a contemplative spirit, patience, tolerance, kindness, availability. They are given to their people by priestly ordination and therefore need to become one with them in their lives, living as far as they can, their culture and speaking their language.

Ordained and consecrated to be teachers of the Faith, they fulfil their ministry very especially in the Sunday Liturgy by carefully prepared homilies that hold the interest of the congregation and have practical meaning for them in their particular life-situations. A special duty of parish-priests is to ensure that effective Catechesis precedes the reception of each of the sacraments, especially Baptism, Confession, First Communion, Confirmation and Matrimony.

---

<sup>35</sup> GDC 224.

<sup>36</sup> *PO* 6.

<sup>37</sup> GDC 225.

<sup>38</sup> CIC 776.

They must also ensure of an adequate follow-up after the sacraments of Christian Initiation whether for children or adults.

The parish priests are called by their vocation, to give themselves fully to their people as friends, teachers, pastors and animators of their parish. Effective animators know how to gain the confidence and support of those entrusted to their priestly care, and to enable them to give their best according to their gifts and abilities. There is much that parish priests can entrust to them so that they themselves are freer and therefore better able to fulfil their main role as pastors and chief catechists.

***Catechetical roles of parish priest***

236 Among the many responsibilities and tasks of the parish priest, the following receive more attention:

- He is called to be pastor, friend, leader, guide, shepherd, animator, healer, source of inspiration and encouragement. Above all else, he is called to be truly human, admitting humbly that he too is subject to human frailties and weaknesses, so as to seek forgiveness and to forgive.
- He is called to invite partnership and co-responsibility, to encourage and participate in team ministry, thus lightening considerably his burden of responsibility.
- He is called to take a firm stand against Casteism and separatism, thus finding ways and means to enlist the help of parishioners to bridge the gap created by social and economic status.
- He is called to provide equal opportunities to women in the parish. His own attitude should stipulate right incentive for building up respect, dignity and personhood of women.
- He is called, together with his assistant parish priest(s), to live

in a state of harmony, mutual esteem and affection, as brothers in the Lord working for a common mission. In various parts of India, priests and religious are exhorted to be full time catechists.

### **c. Parents as first catechists in the family**

237 The *family* is the normal place where the young grow in personal and social maturity. “It is the first of the *loci* of Catechesis.”<sup>39</sup> The family is “the domestic Church” (*ecclesia domestica*).<sup>40</sup> The family becomes the hearth of evangelization when the parents strive to come together in moments of prayer, Bible reading and reflection, for appropriate rituals presided over by the parents and for healthy recreation.

Thus parents have a specific catechetical role more than the other lay faithful, because at the time of marriage, the couple respond to the following question: “Will you accept children lovingly from God, and bring them up according to the law of Christ and his Church?” Besides, the Rite of Baptism of Children expresses great hope through the Final Blessing: “God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the fathers of these children! With their wives they will be the first teachers of their children in the ways of Faith. May they be also the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord!” The witness of Christian life given by parents in the family creates tenderness and parental respect.

A fundamental task of the Christian family is its service of building up the Kingdom of God; parents have the prime responsibility in this ecclesial task. It does so as an “intimate community of love” at the service of the Church and society, and ‘through the everyday

---

<sup>39</sup> The other *loci* are the parish and the school; see CT 67-69.

<sup>40</sup> LG 11; EA 46.

realities that concern and distinguish its state of life.’<sup>41</sup> A truly Christian family is the best soil for nurturing priestly, religious and missionary vocations and more generally, for forming children from childhood to recognize God’s love for all people. The sanctifying role of the Christian family is grounded in Baptism and has its highest expression in the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, the family finds the foundation and soul of its “communion” and “mission” when it partakes of the Eucharist, the body of Christ broken for us, and the Blood of Christ poured out for us and to share among the poor, the hungry and the marginalized.<sup>42</sup>

Family prayer has its own characteristic qualities: offered in common, husband and wife together, parents and children together. It has its very own object, family life itself with all its varying circumstances is seen as a call from God to be lived in filial response to his call. In a family a little child learns to pray by observing and imitating the parents at prayer. In learning to love and to care for one another within the family circle, children learn to love and care for those in the wider circle of the parish, the neighbourhood and the school. The vitality of the Church depends greatly on the vitality of the family.

The Church tells us that ‘the Church of the home’ remains the one place where children and young people can receive authentic catechesis. No effort is too great on the part of parents in preparing themselves to be their own children’s catechists and in carrying it out with tireless zeal.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, as has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the heavy demands posed by modern conditions in India in the industrialized and urban areas and the inadequacy of the majority of our Christian parents who live in conditions of poverty and deprivation, the task of many parents

---

<sup>41</sup> *FC* 49-50.

<sup>42</sup> *FC* 57.

<sup>43</sup> *CT* 68.

becomes extremely difficult if not almost impossible. This is where the catechetical community in each diocese and parish needs to get together, study the actual situation in their respective milieu, and plan accordingly.

Parents, first of all, need to become deeply aware of their Faith-obligations as parents, study their own priorities, and take at least some part in the Faith-education of their children. Faith-attitudes, Faith-values and modes of behaviour are imbibed by children at home, more from the example of parents rather than by what they teach. This needs to be well understood, because even our illiterate Catholic parents can be successful Faith-educators in this regard. To this end, Catholic parents-to-be should be led right from the early stage of marriage preparation, to the wisdom of a simple, Gospel-centred life-style. Marriage preparation courses should include testimonies of young parents who are building the Kingdom of God at home and in the community. A simple life-style, besides providing financial resources for works of justice and charity and the spread of the Gospel, giving time and energy for handing on the living faith to the next generation – faith that will endure and bring forth fruit in the Church and in the world

The important point is that catechists (priests, the religious and the laity) must form a team with the parents whose children are entrusted to them. It is the task of these catechists to supplement whatever children receive from their parents, as well as to instruct the parents. God-parents do have a significant role to play in collaborating with the parents to accompany the child and nurture his/her faith.

“Responsible fatherhood and motherhood is an integral part of the civilization of love.”<sup>44</sup> It is the Christian family that nurtures and produces lay women and men who witness to the Gospel in their work and professions, and by the witness of their day-to-day

---

<sup>44</sup> *GSa* 13.

living in all the circumstances of social, civic and political life. It is within the family that Faith and membership in the Body of Christ is normally received and nurtured through infancy, childhood and adolescence. The family is the place where members assist one another in growing towards the fullness of life in Christ through daily circumstances and events, by being aware of the presence of God in these circumstances and events, by listening to God's Word in scripture and by forgetting oneself through sharing and mutual forgiveness.

Speaking to the World Meeting of Families, held in Valencia, Spain,<sup>45</sup> Pope Benedict XVI spoke of the family as a necessary good for peoples and an indispensable foundation for safety, a lifelong treasure for peoples, a unique good for children, a lifelong treasure for couples. He further emphasised that families have a duty to make sure that the Good News of Christ will reach their children with the utmost clarity and authenticity.

The Gospel values and attitudes necessary for growth in faith are first learnt and practised in the family. "From the family the culture of integral life is to be rediscovered, given renewed energy, and re-expressed in our new contexts."<sup>46</sup> Finally, as Christian parents strive to follow and repeat the more methodical Faith teaching received in the parish and school through dialogue and witness, the love and respect with which these truths are impregnated, influence the children for life. In this interaction and catechetical dialogue, both parents and children receive and give, and grow together in their faith. Family Catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of Catechesis. Both pastors and Catholic

---

<sup>45</sup> Apostolic Journey of Pope Benedict XVI to Valencia (Spain) on occasion of the Fifth World Meeting of Families, Holy Mass, Homily of the Holy Father, City of Arts and Sciences, Sunday, 9 July 2006.

<sup>46</sup> FABC 8th Plenary Assembly, *The Asian Family towards a Culture of Integral Life*, 2004, 64.

institutions can never make too great an effort to enable parents to be effective Faith-formators of their children.<sup>47</sup>

#### **d. Religious as catechists**

238 The Church documents point out that the *religious* as individuals and communities are called to catechetical ministry. The Church wishes, “religious communities dedicate as much as possible of what ability and means that they have to the specific work of Catechesis.”<sup>48</sup> In the past, “many religious institutes for men and women came into being for the purpose of imparting faith to children and young people, especially the most abandoned.”<sup>49</sup>

Religious life, lived fully, joyfully and with self-giving service in love, is a powerful Catechesis, witnessing God. In a vital way and by the very nature of their vocation the religious are consecrated to the service of the believing community. This implies constant concern and availability particularly for the ministry of the Word in accordance with the specific charism of each religious family. Placed at the heart of the local community by their religious consecration, all apostolic congregations play a vital role in the Faith-formation of the faithful whom they are entrusted with: children, youth, adults, special groups and in whatever manner they serve: educational, medical, social and care of special groups.

Religious women play a vital role as catechetical ministers to their sisters. In our Indian context, religious women play an irreplaceable role in the integral liberation of women in every stratum of society to which they are called, by their vocation, to serve. The Church today recognizes the indispensable role and contribution of women to the building up of the Church community and the development

---

<sup>47</sup> CT 68.

<sup>48</sup> CT 65; CIC 778; GDC 228.

<sup>49</sup> CT 65.

of society, and calls for a fuller recognition and implementation on the part of the whole Church.

The Church recognizes and draws attention to the fact that women have the task of assuring the moral dimension of culture. This means a culture worthy of the human person. Religious women as animators and enablers of women need first of all to become aware of this special catechetical task entrusted to them as women they need awakening to their own dignity, rights and obligations as consecrated women; they need to be motivated to move out in service to their sisters especially to women belonging to the working and deprived classes, and to exploited groups. Catechesis cannot be separated from the total development and authentic liberation of women.

#### **e. Laity as catechists**

239 The *laity* catechize not only because of *where* they are (absorption in the world), but even more importantly, because of *who* they are: baptized *christifideles*. Sharing all the demands of humanity, they are called to transmit the Gospel to the world with its specific sensitivity and nuances.<sup>50</sup> The Church is grateful to the innumerable lay people engaged in Catechesis. To receive the call to be a catechist requires different levels of dedication, according to their role and their capacity.

In the mission of the Church, lay women and men, as much as clerics and religious, are part of the Church. They evangelize and catechize through Christian presence, attitude and behaviour. The first and essential task of the laity is to live essentially a Christian life in their family, social and professional field. Consequently, they become an evangelizing and catechizing presence, serving Christian values and attitudes, gradually penetrating and transforming

---

<sup>50</sup> GDC 230.



the vast and complicated world of politics, economics, science, arts and mass media. Their evangelizing and catechetical activity becomes powerful and potent. People today, especially our young people, look not for teachers but for witnesses.<sup>51</sup> Exercising fully and effectively their specific function in the ministry of Catechesis, the laity can clearly understand the vision of the Church as the 'People of God.' Bishops, priests, religious and lay persons need to understand, respect and accept their specific and complementary roles in fulfilling the mission of the Church.

The vocation of every lay person includes the work of ongoing social development, forming men and women who are ready to take their place in society, preparing them in such a way to show social commitment, enabling them to work for the improvement of social structures and making these structures more conformed to the principles of the Gospel. Thus, they form human beings, making human society more peaceful, fraternal and communitarian. Today's world has tremendous problems: hunger, illiteracy and human exploitation, inequality among individuals and nations; terrorism, violence, growing drug problem, legalization of abortion and other forces of degradation of the human life. This precarious situation demands the Catholic educator to develop in themselves, and cultivate in their students, a keen social awareness and a profound sense of civic and political responsibility. The Catholic educator, in other words, must be committed to the task of forming men and women to realize the "civilization of love."<sup>52</sup>

The lay person exercises a specific mission within the Church, living in Faith, and receiving a secular vocation. He or she has to exercise his mission with the best possible professional qualifications, with an apostolic intention inspired by Faith, with an attitude of

---

<sup>51</sup> EN 70.

<sup>52</sup> LCS 19.

integral formation of the human person, in communication with culture, exercising a pedagogy that emphasizes direct and personal contact with students, giving spiritual inspiration to the educational community of which she/he is a member.

#### **f. Teachers of faith in educational institutions**

240 *Guide for Catechists* recognizes three types of lay catechists, namely, *Religion Teachers*, *Sunday Catechists* and the *Missionary Catechists*. *Religion Teachers*, mainly lay teachers, teach in schools. They teach both the Christian and non-Christian students. They are found in government schools, where the State allows religious instruction, as well as in Catholic schools.<sup>53</sup> They do not have any formal training. Every diocese should have an adequate way of training Catholic teachers in the schools so that they are able to impart Faith to the students whom they teach. Better formation of teachers in dioceses is a must today.

#### **g. Sunday catechists**

241 *Sunday Catechists* teach in Sunday schools organized by the parish, especially where the State does not allow religious instruction in its schools.<sup>54</sup> The dynamism of young Churches and their social situation stimulate the emergence and continuity of various other services that the catechists can perform. One may find seminarians and the religious in this category because in some areas there is a concentration of the religious. Sometimes, the lay involvement is practically absent, necessitating the religious to enter in. Hence, there should be a proper training of lay leaders to motivate them to become Sunday catechists. It is here that seminarians and religious should take the initiative in training the youth and adults to become responsible catechists of the parish team. Parish priest should see

---

<sup>53</sup> GC 4.

<sup>54</sup> GC 4.

that more and more laity are given opportunities to involve in Sunday Catechesis of the children. Since most of them do voluntary service in the Church, the Sunday catechists should be recognised and honoured regularly at the parish and diocesan level.

#### **h. Lay missionary catechists**

242 The *Missionary Catechist*, as he/she is often called, or simply the lay catechists, is truly a speciality and a peculiarity of the missions in India. Born out of the necessities and difficulties, in conveying and explaining the message of salvation in our country, the foreign missionaries grew to be agents of many and important functions in the work of evangelization and Catechesis. *Catechesi Tradendae* declares that they are absolutely necessary for the growth of the Church. “Churches that are flourishing today would not have been built up without them.”<sup>55</sup> St. John Paul II also remarked that “the term ‘catechists’ belongs above all to the catechists in mission lands.”<sup>56</sup>

The catechists who devote their lives completely to this service are officially recognized as *full-time catechists*. The mission *ad gentes* requires trained full-time catechists, says the Second Vatican Council. They are mostly found in mission territories, considered co-workers of the priestly order. Training in keeping with the cultural progress of the times, is also a required necessity to bring up full-time catechists.<sup>57</sup> The *part-time catechists* offer a more limited, but still precious, collaboration. The proportion between these two categories varies from place to place, but in general there are far more part-time than full-time catechists. As the number of lay missionary catechists is gradually on the decline in the Church in India, due to various reasons, this *apostle ever relevant*<sup>58</sup> should be revamped in

---

<sup>55</sup> CT 66.

<sup>56</sup> CT 66.

<sup>57</sup> AG 17.

<sup>58</sup> GC 1.

every way, so as to bring back the unique and essential identity of the lay missionary catechists in the Church in India.

### **3. Formation of Catechists**

243 There are three dimensions that should be covered in the formation of the catechist:<sup>59</sup>

- The *Person*-Dimension<sup>60</sup> of the catechist
- The *Knowing*-Dimension of the catechist
- The *Savoir-Faire*-dimension of the catechist<sup>61</sup>

In fact, these three comprise the basis to everything that is needed in the holistic formation of the catechist. “Being” and “Knowing” or the ontological and epistemological dimensions were always two important constitutive elements in the study of the person right from the era of ancient Greek philosophy.<sup>62</sup>

To respond to the varied catechetical needs of persons and groups, the choice and the training of catechists to meet these faith needs is of vital importance. Natural aptitudes need to be discovered and developed, and the required training to be effective faith-educators given. This formation is on-going and includes the on-going Faith education of the catechists themselves. “Any pastoral activity for the carrying out of which there are not at hand persons with the right information and preparation will necessarily come to nothing.”<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> GDC 238.

<sup>60</sup> GDC 238: speaks in term of *being* as a need for entering deeply into the very being of the catechist in the formation.

<sup>61</sup> GDC 238.

<sup>62</sup> Both Plato and Aristotle were convinced of these unities and held that true happiness is found only when our knowing forms us as people of virtue. Likewise in the Hebrew and Christian traditions, to know means something far beyond having information, having right relationship with God, self, others and creation.

<sup>63</sup> GCD 108.

We always need to keep in mind that by its very nature, the Christian vocation is a vocation to the apostolate. Therefore when it has been discerned that one or more among a particular local Church community possess the catechetical charism, the community has the duty to encourage others in every possible way. 'These potential catechists must not only be given the initial basic training which includes adequate faith-formation of the catechists themselves, they require continued and regular on-going formation and training. This on-going Faith-education must respond to the Faith-need of the catechists concerned, and also to the specific faith-needs of the particular groups to whom they are sent.

Training and pastoral work should always be as a team and carried out as a team-ministry. This implies planning, evaluating and re-planning with a sense of shared responsibility and accountability. Due respect and recognition should be given to every catechist in the local diocesan team whether the person be lay, cleric or religious women and men. It is vital to both Christian witness and Christian effectiveness that our catechetical ministry is free from any form of distinction on the basis of community, caste, class or status. This ministry like every other ministry in the Church is a call to servanthood in imitation of the model catechist: Jesus Christ. The training of catechists at all levels and of all categories, holds first place in the Church's catechetical renewal.<sup>64</sup>

Any pastoral activity will fail to be effective unless it is carried out by persons who have been adequately given the required formation and training. Text books and catechetical aids no matter how up-dated and well-prepared are of little value in the hands of people who have not been taught how to use them. Every catechist at every level has the need and the right to be given the formation and training required for his or her specific function in this ministry.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> GCD 71, 108.

<sup>65</sup> GCD 108.

Catechists must keep alive in their hearts the splendid image of Jesus walking with the disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24:13-34). Jesus entered into their life situation, enlightened it with the Word of God and in the breaking of the bread they recognized Him. Then they went out to proclaim that He is risen indeed.

The Magisterium of the Church, throughout these years, has never ceased to exercise its pastoral solicitude for Catechesis. Numerous Bishops and Episcopal Conferences in all parts of the world have devoted considerable attention to Catechesis by means of catechisms and pastoral guidelines, by promoting the formation of their priests and by encouraging catechetical research.<sup>66</sup>

## **Conclusion**

244 Catechesis always takes place within a community: in a community of faith and equal partnership. Catechesis is the responsibility of the whole community made up of parish, family, educational institutions, organized and natural groups. This sense of community responsibility needs to be built-up and continually strengthened. Catechesis to be fully effective has to be a team-ministry, each one contributing in his or her own way; organizing, catechizing, supporting and co-operating. All the members of the community concerned should be interested and experience a sense of involvement. A team approach is essential for an effective Catechesis. Together with adequate formation and training of catechists at all levels, constant updating is a must. "All of us, bishops, priests and religious and not only the laity, need to update our vision of the Church and learn new methods and skills to enable us to work together in realising the vision of Vatican II."<sup>67</sup> The set-up and organization of the required infrastructure will be outlined in *Part Six* of the Directory.

---

<sup>66</sup> GDC 3.

<sup>67</sup> BILA 1 1984, *Statement of the Assembly*, 397-398.

PART SIX

OUR ORGANIZATION OF  
CATECHESIS





## Practical Pointers to the Ministry of Catechesis

245 *Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured the sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled (Mt 14:13-20a).*

We draw the principles and practical guidelines for catechetical organization from our Lord in the light of the above passage. Jesus and his apostles were confronted with a life-situation like that of India today: There were huge needs but very limited resources! The passage, moreover, presents practical pointers to carry out the ministry of Catechesis successfully.

*Jesus saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them.* The first principle in pastoral ministry is to know carefully the people we are sent to serve. In other words, we need to take a good and sustained look at their total situation to apprehend their life-situation. Today this would include a scientific, accurate and multi-dimensional analysis of our ecclesial communities. Thus a deep knowledge of our people's actual living circumstances, their aspirations and their deepest needs can be realized.

*He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass.* Jesus promotes discipline and order. Right structure, organization and systematic approach are necessary for peace and harmony. Jesus promotes both

of these even while feeding so many, that everyone may have as much as they need.

*He blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples and the disciples gave them to the crowds.* Jesus made use of the available resources, though they were very little. Quantity does not constitute a major factor in the Lord's work. The determining elements are the Lord's confidence in the Father, his infinite capacity to bless the people and take good care of them in all of their needs. These two traits are characteristic not only of our Lord as Son and catechist but also of every Spirit-filled catechist. Jesus insists on the co-responsibility of the apostles as well. Responsibility is handed over to the apostles, at the same time calling for accountability and transparency.

Drawing insight from Jesus' approach to the people, his organizational skill and sharing of responsibility, this part develops the practical pointers to the ministry of Catechesis. This Directory so far stressed the need of contextualizing our catechetical ministry, the mission given by the Lord, the message that deals with the content of Catechesis, the pedagogy to communicate the message effectively and the people involved in catechetical ministry, both the catechists and the catechized. This part spells out the schematic form of Catechesis: the Church's broad organizational directives for relevant and effective Catechesis in India at different levels, namely, National, Regional, Diocesan and Parish. The *First Chapter* narrates the venues and occasions for Catechesis. The *Second Chapter* elucidates general guidelines and practical implications. The *Third Chapter* explains the organization at various levels.

## CHAPTER I

### *Venues and Occasions for Catechesis*

#### **Introduction**

246 This chapter indicates the places in which Initial and Ongoing Catechesis take place and occasions that offer special opportunities for “catechetical moments.” The places and occasions mentioned are not exhaustive. The aim is to focus attention on some significant and important instances indicating the teaching of the Church where it is given.

#### **1. The Parish: Central Place for Catechesis**

247 The parish community is “the prime mover and pre-eminent place for Catechesis.”<sup>1</sup> The parish community is the family of families and thus it is the heart and centre for all Catechesis. It is where the Faith is born and in which it grows. Despite the radical changes that are taking place in the society, the parish is still a major point of reference for the Christian people, even for the non-practising.

The parish community has to re-discover its vocation of being for all with equal love and respect irrespective of caste, social and economic position and cultural background. Thus it becomes a witnessing community to love and life. It is a family environment where all those who have been baptized and confirmed as family members become increasingly aware of forming the people of God. In this parish home the Word and the Bread of Life are broken and shared in the one act of worship. From this home of reconciling and nurturing love, the members are sent out each day to fulfil their apostolic mission in their respective milieu of ‘way-of-life’ (vocation) and ‘word-of-life’ (profession).<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> CT 67, GDC 257.

<sup>2</sup> CT 67.

### **a. Liturgy: Main source of Catechesis**

248 In a parish, the Liturgy is the main source of regular ongoing Catechesis. Hence well-prepared Eucharistic celebrations are vitally important, especially on Sundays and feast days. A team preparation for Sunday and feast day liturgies as well as for all religious community celebrations facilitates its effectiveness. This, besides being the right of the concerned community, will bring about meaningful and active participation. Besides the Eucharistic celebrations and Eucharistic hours, *para*-liturgical services in preparation for special feasts and novena services are all occasions for fruitful ongoing education in the Faith of the parishioners.

The homilies in particular should be prepared in relation to the actual life-situations and needs of the parishioners. The language should be simple and direct with the central theme of Scripture and interpreted in the particular context. The approach, while challenging and encouraging, must always respect the sensibilities and the personhood of those who are listening. In the words of Pope Francis, “the homily is the touchstone for judging a pastor’s closeness and ability to communicate to his people.”<sup>3</sup> In the homily the pastor has to speak to his people as a mother speaks to her child, for it is a mother’s conversation.<sup>4</sup>

### ***i. Sacramental Catechesis in the parish***

249 Sacramental Catechesis in the parish provides excellent opportunities to put the catechized in close contact with Jesus. The climate of confidence, created in the Parish Catechesis, the interaction between students and the catechists, help to facilitate encounters with each other and with Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life. There is a close interconnection and complementarity

---

<sup>3</sup> EG 138.

<sup>4</sup> EG 139.

between the Catechesis in the school and the parish. Well designed courses that offer systematic formation, the regular updating of those involved in Sacramental Catechesis, the active involvement of the parents of those catechized and week-end retreats before the reception of the sacraments make such Catechesis memorable and effective.

Catechesis in the parish is absolutely important. While intellectual knowledge and acceptance of truth is an essential dimension of Faith, we are aware that it should ultimately lead to love and trust, expressed in relationship. Catechesis in the parish offers the ambience for experience-based Catechesis, leading people to deeper and lasting commitment to the Lord. In the parish ambience, particularly the catechists can take up the challenge to make the Catechesis attractive through an audio visual programme. Catechesis is offered to all age groups – children, adolescents, youth, adults and specialised groups

### ***ii. Effective participation of all***

250 The activity of our laity within Church communities is so necessary that without it the apostolate of the pastors is generally unable to achieve its full effectiveness. The parish is not so much a parish structure, but a community alive in the Spirit of the Risen Christ, its unifying Spirit setting continually ‘on fire’ to proclaim by word and deed ‘the Good News of salvation for all.’ It is bound together sacramentally as the Eucharistic community flowing from and flowing back to the Eucharist, the summit of its corporate worship, uniting it to the whole mystical body, the Church.<sup>5</sup> Only when every person within each parish community recognizes and is able to fulfil effectively her/his role and function, will Christianity in India become an authentic sign of that unity and communion for which Christ prayed: “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are

---

<sup>5</sup> CL 26-27.

in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn 17:21).

## **b. Role of catechists in the Local Church**

251 Every Local Church has to discern what type of catechist is required. There are various types of catechists, particularly necessary today in a missionary country like ours: catechists for young people and catechists for adults in countries of Christian tradition which require a ‘new evangelization,’ catechist for children and adolescents, catechist for pre-sacramental encounter and catechists urgently needed in delicate human situations.<sup>6</sup>

## **2. Irreplaceable Role of Family in Catechesis**

252 The Second Vatican Council calls every Christian family “the domestic Church.”<sup>7</sup> It is the basic cell of both civic and Church communities. It is the place where, by God’s plan, the most precious gift of all, life itself, is communicated and fostered. By their vocation to be partners and co-creators with God, parents are given divine help to be their own children’s foremost catechists. The Synod on Catechesis states strongly that this parental role of catechist is so decisive in the lives of their children that scarcely anything can compensate for it if parents fail to fulfil these catechetical duties.<sup>8</sup> Since the beginning of Christianity, Faith-formation of children by fervent parents began from the tender age. This irreplaceable Catechesis comes not so much from the formal one but from parental witness to God’s love and their own love for God and their children. The way parents interact with each other and with the children, the way they pray, worship and live their faith in everyday life, are the most important channels of true formation in Faith.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> GDC 232.

<sup>7</sup> LG 11.

<sup>8</sup> CT 68.

<sup>9</sup> Directory on Children’s Masses F1 I, 16; CT 68.

### **a. Family: The basic community of life and love**

253 The family is the basic community of life and love, and the essence and role of the family are both specified by love. It is the family that has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love as a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity, and the love of Christ for his bride, the Church. The four general tasks for the family as emphasised by *Familiaris Consortio* are the following:<sup>10</sup>

- Forming a community of persons
- Serving life
- Participating in the development of society
- Sharing in the life and mission of the Church

### **b. Evangelizing influence of the Christian family**

254 The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* affirms that the “Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task.”<sup>11</sup> Christian parents and their children need to be enabled to become more and more deeply conscious of the sacredness and beauty of Christian Marriage in all its aspects, so that the sacrament of Marriage becomes truly central in their lives. “The family is not simply the object of the Church's pastoral care; it is also one of the Church's most effective agents of evangelization.”<sup>12</sup>

St. John Paul II has evidenced this in *Ecclesia in Asia*: “The Christian family, like the Church as a whole, should be a place where the truth of the Gospel is the rule of life and the gift which the family members bring to the wider community.”<sup>13</sup> The evangelizing action

---

<sup>10</sup> FC 17.

<sup>11</sup> CCC 2205.

<sup>12</sup> EA 46.

<sup>13</sup> EA 46.

of the Family has been the Church's object of reflection:

At different moments in the Church's history and also in the Second Vatican Council, the family has well deserved the beautiful name of 'domestic Church'. This means that there should be found in every Christian family the various aspects of the entire Church. Furthermore, the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates.<sup>14</sup>

### **c. Family: Sanctuary of life**

255 The family is acknowledged as the sanctuary of life:

It is necessary to go back to seeing the family as the sanctuary of life. The family is indeed sacred: it is the place in which life - the gift of God - can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life.<sup>15</sup>

### **d. Traditional values in the Indian Christian family**

256 Traditional rich cultural values of families are precious foundations for Catechesis in the family, such as fidelity and trust between the spouses, closely knit family ties, love of children, and respect for the aged, hospitality and generosity towards the poor, love of hard and honest work and defence of the rights of the downtrodden. Catechesis is faced with the task of building on these rich cultural values as a source of strength for our families, and for

---

<sup>14</sup> EN 71.

<sup>15</sup> CA 39.



a life of family commitment to love and communion as disciples of the Risen Lord Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

Some fitting occasions for non-formal Catechesis are: the family rosary along with other daily prayers, Bible reading with the children, preparation for Baptism, Confirmation, Reconciliation, first reception of the Eucharist, births and deaths, weddings and death anniversaries, birthdays and name day celebrations. With these and many other life-cycle occasions, there are ample opportunities for spouses to catechize each other and their family members as well.<sup>17</sup>

**e. Building up Christian family life: First concern of a Particular Church**

257 Encouragement and active support should be given to all those persons and institutions in the parish and diocesan community who in one way or the other enable parents to carry out effectively their irreplaceable task of forming and educating their children in the Faith since they “have the first responsibility for the education of their children.”<sup>18</sup> Catechesis by parents has to begin in the child’s earliest years.<sup>19</sup> Children too have a role to *contribute to the growth in holiness* of their parents.<sup>20</sup> It is a pastoral concern that should cover every dimension affecting family life, principally:

- Preparing young people for all the aspects of married life, by means of organized marriage preparation courses by a team that include experienced and adequately trained married couples, e.g. those already animating marriage-encounter weekends. Personal guidance should also be made available<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> FABC IV, *Statement of the Assembly*, 3.4 ‘*The Laity and the Family*. Tokyo, 16-25 Sept. 1986, FATPA, 320-322.

<sup>17</sup> FC 59.

<sup>18</sup> CCC 2223.

<sup>19</sup> CCC 2226.

<sup>20</sup> CCC 2227.

<sup>21</sup> FC 28-35.

- Counselling and guidance offered for groups of married couples and for individual married couples. These should cover different areas such as husband-wife, parent-children/adolescent relationships, problems of drug-addiction, alcoholism<sup>22</sup>
- Organized talks, short courses, workshops, mission, retreats etc. as part of ongoing instruction and formation in Faith should be held to help the laity to enhance their Faith commitment as a couple, as parents; enabling parents to prepare for and to celebrate various events in family life: Baptism, First Confession, First Communion and Confirmation, and to fulfil their duty as first faith-educators to their children<sup>23</sup>
- Enabling parents to educate their children especially during their growing adolescent years in “love and life,” in love that is self-giving and total in a marital relationship<sup>24</sup>
- Adopting a pastoral approach towards the parents, who are poor, deprived and illiterate, and who eke out a precarious living, with the help of enlightened, well-prepared and zealous lay-persons, the best catechists of parents are other parents.

#### **f. Promoting Family Prayer**

258 The family introduces children into this task through the communication of Faith guiding them “to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet 2:5). The transmission of the Faith is carried out through concrete ways in each family.

Nothing can entirely replace the concrete example and living witness of parents praying together with their children, and praying together as a couple. Habits of prayer formed from earliest childhood will

---

<sup>22</sup> FC 18-27.

<sup>23</sup> FC 38-40.

<sup>24</sup> FC 37.

make an impression for life. Family prayer necessarily has to include Grace before and after Meals, the Rosary, Angelus and Scripture reading. Family prayer must not be taught merely as a duty, but above all as the loving and willing homage of adoration, thanksgiving, praise and petition to a personal God, who loves, cares for, and is concerned about every one of his children. Right from childhood, the habit of prayer should be fostered as a loving dialogue – listening and responding – to a loving God.

There is an urgent need today of re-educating parents to a life of prayer: personal, family, liturgical. There will never be genuine family and liturgical prayer unless both are built upon personal prayer.<sup>25</sup> The Liturgy of the Hours sanctifies the hours of the day. Every Christian family could join in this sanctifying prayer with the clergy and religious to make families become part of the praying community.

### **3. Small Christian Communities (SCCs)**

259 SCCs are the true expressions of communion and a means for the construction of a more profound communion.<sup>26</sup> SCCs are proving to be good centres for Christian formation and missionary outreach. These are groups of Christians that come together in small numbers for prayer, Word of God, Catechesis and discussion on civic and Church matters. SCCs provide community discernment and common commitment for action.

The SCCs are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization and a solid starting point for a new society based on a “civilization of love.” These communities decentralize and organize the parish community to which they always remain united. They take root in less privileged and rural

---

<sup>25</sup> *FC* 60-61.

<sup>26</sup> See, Synod of Bishops in Rome, Extraordinary Assembly of 1985, Final Report, II, C, 6.

areas, and become a leaven of Christian life, of care for the poor and neglected, and of commitment to the transformation of society.<sup>27</sup> The catechist who forms the Christian faithful has a special mission to form these basic cells and to make of them leaven to preserve the goodness of the society and work for its transformation where it demands. Christian Faith will find its witnessing value by working ardently to create just and sacred structures in the society that would honour God and will give dignity to human beings.

In India, the SCC is a group of 20-30 Catholic families of a parish who gather regularly with the help of a volunteer animator, at least once a month, to listen and share Scripture texts, to discover their meaning for Christian life today and for encouraging one another to live God's Word in their lives. Though the SCC is still very young in our country, it is finding new vitality.

#### **4. Lay Associations and Movements**

260 The parish has an important role to play in the Ongoing Catechesis organized and conducted for various groups. The kind of Catechesis depends on the nature of each group and its specific needs: Prayer Group, Charismatic Group, the Neo-Catechumenal Way and Marriage Encounter Group offer excellent opportunities for systematic continued education and formation in faith.

There are the socio-religious groups such as the 'Legion of Mary,' 'St. Vincent de Paul Society' and neighbourhood groups which are a feature of many parishes providing occasions for Liturgical and Biblical Catechesis. Professional groups like those of the doctors, nurses, teachers, traders, mechanics and technicians, would require an adequately specialized training in Catechesis to meet their needs.

Clusters of families in rural and slum areas, natural groupings of industrial workers and labourers on daily wages are among the

---

<sup>27</sup> RM 51, 76.

many deprived groups that require some formation in their Faith. Opportunities could be offered in the form of informal meetings and dialogue, prayer sessions centred on Sacred Scripture, etc. The Church has a special mission to these despised in society but dear to the heart of God. Pastors require the help of their parishioners including religious women and men to reach out to them in a concerted and continued effort to bring them the Good News. Only then will our Christian witness be authentic.

All these lay organizations, movements and groups are important venues for Catechesis whether their aim is the practice of piety, the direct apostolate, charity and relief work, or a Christian presence in temporal matters. They need to become aware of the serious need of ongoing religious formation of the members in order to serve the Church and society more efficaciously. They themselves should take the initiative in this respect, and the Church on her part, should provide them with opportunities for needed training.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. Educational Institutions

261 By *Educational Institutions*, we mean the institutions which come under the auspices of Catholic management, whether at the primary, secondary or higher levels, for general education, technical or professional training. An educational institution is considered to be *Catholic* when an ecclesiastical authority or a public ecclesiastical juridical person supervises or when an ecclesiastical authority recognizes it as such by means of a written document. Moreover, it is necessary that the formation and education given in such an institution be based upon the principles of Catholic doctrine. Its teachers need to be outstanding for their correct doctrine and integrity of life. No school may bear the title “Catholic” without the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.<sup>29</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> CT 68.

<sup>29</sup> COCL c. 803.

### **a. Nature of a Catholic institution**

262 Some implications of this understanding are important for Catechesis:

- Catholic religious formation and education are subject to the authority of the Church; and it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to regularize such education and be vigilant over it.<sup>30</sup> The Bishop exercises this responsibility through his diocesan catechetical office. Regular communication, therefore, is required between the diocesan catechetical secretary and the head of the institution or someone deputed by the principal, e.g. school catechetical coordinator.
- A bishop has the right within his own diocese to name or approve teachers of religion and likewise remove or demand that they be removed if it is required for reasons of Faith and morals.<sup>31</sup>
- According to Church law, the diocesan bishop has the right of vigilance over and visitation of the Catholic institution located in his territory, even those institutions which have been established or are being directed by members of religious congregations. He is likewise competent to issue guidelines and norms dealing with the general regulation of such institutions which are directed by the religious, with due regard to their autonomy regarding the internal management of their schools.<sup>32</sup>

The whole educational process in a Catholic institution is a genuine Christian journey toward living the Faith in its fullness. Whether Christian or belonging to other faiths, interaction at every level and

---

<sup>30</sup> COCL c. 804.

<sup>31</sup> COCL c 805.

<sup>32</sup> COCL c. 806

in all areas of formative education enables students to realize that genuine happiness and human fulfilment is found in searching for and living by the will of a loving God both in their work and in their relationships.<sup>33</sup>

The special character of the Catholic institution, the underlying reason for its existence and the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is the fidelity to and the quality of the Faith-education integrated into the overall education of the students.<sup>34</sup> The Final Statement of the Eighth General Body Meeting of CBCI expressed the hope that “our educational institutions become channels of Good News.”<sup>35</sup>

### **b. *Locus* of Christian formation**

263 The Catholic institution is a very important *locus* for human and Christian formation.<sup>36</sup> The understanding of institution as community and the efforts made to develop an environment animated by a spirit of freedom and genuine love, to accompany young people to have life in abundance (Jn 10:10), to help them discover how the loving hands of God are guiding their lives demand that “teachers, management, administrative and auxiliary staff, parents – central in that they are the natural and irreplaceable educators of their own children – and pupils, are participants and active subjects too of the educational process.”<sup>37</sup>

### **c. Catechesis in a Catholic Institution**

264 The religious education given in a Catholic institution

---

<sup>33</sup> RDE 40.

<sup>34</sup> RDE 66.

<sup>35</sup> CBCI, The Catholic Council of India Eighth General Body Meeting (Vailankanni, January 6-8, 2006). New Delhi, CBCI Centre 2006, 355.

<sup>36</sup> GDC 259.

<sup>37</sup> RDE 32.

enables children and youth to understand and grasp with reason and intelligence the nature of Christianity and how Christians live their lives. It aims to strengthen Faith through knowledge and understanding. Intellectual development cannot and should never be separated from affective growth. What is grasped by the intelligence must also be experienced in the heart, or it will never flow out into life. The Gospel is a way of life. To forget this in the Catechesis imparted in a Catholic institution will and does unfortunately have disastrous consequences. The aim of Catechesis which always includes instruction is spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic maturity. It is here that one sees the absolute necessity for the educational institution and the parish to work in close and unified collaboration.<sup>38</sup>

#### **d. Evangelizing function of the Catholic institution**

265 Finally, it must always be ensured that Catholic educational institutions in general and the schools in particular, by the very nature of their goals participate in the evangelizing function of the Church. It follows that education in the Faith given in the school needs to be co-ordinated always with the Catechesis offered in parishes, in the family and in youth associations.<sup>39</sup>

#### **e. Authentic Catholic institution's distinctive environment**

266 Many Christian parents and those of other religious traditions are aware that there is something special, something distinctive about a real Catholic school. The main reason for this is the *acknowledged presence* of Jesus, the Risen Lord, who alone is the teacher of the Gospel values, which are fully human.<sup>40</sup> When Christ is acknowledged for who he is, the prototype of the new human

---

<sup>38</sup> RDE 67-69.

<sup>39</sup> RDE 69-70.

<sup>40</sup> RDE 25 68; *GE* 8, *GS* 38.



race, there will be an atmosphere within the school permeated with a spirit of Gospel love and freedom.<sup>41</sup> Those mainly responsible for creating and maintaining this atmosphere or environment are the administrative and teaching staff members, animated especially by the principal. It is an atmosphere, first of all, founded upon Faith and religious values. Therefore, managerial abilities, good as they may be, are not enough: they must be combined with Christian commitment and vision.

#### **f. Identity of Catholic Institutions**

267 The Catholic institution is both a *Civic Body* and a *Christian Community*. As a *Civic Institution*, the Catholic institution has educational aims, methods and procedures in common with any other institution: it follows the same regulations and strives to maintain the same professional standards as the best among its neighbouring institutions. As a *Christian Community*, the catholic institution has its objectives rooted in Christ and his values; its mission is to live these values within its educational endeavours, especially in its relationship among the staff, between staff and students and their parents, and between management and the teachers.

Religious Instruction is distinct from Catechesis. Catholic institutions impart mainly Religious Instruction within working hours. Authentic Catechesis is given by the Christian communities from where the students come, such as the family, parish and Catholic youth association. This distinction is important. *Religious Instruction* is informational and does not presume a living Faith or a community witnessing to its Faith, whereas Catechesis “presupposes that the hearer is receiving and experiencing the Christian message as a salvific reality.”<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> GE 1.

<sup>42</sup> RDOE 68.

The religious dimension is not restricted to classes. Scheduled classes for Catechesis do not exhaust the scope of a Catholic institution's religious dimension. The intellectual training and Christian growth of the students need to proceed together.

As students move up from one class into the next, it becomes increasingly imperative that a Catholic institution helps them to become aware that a relationship exists between faith and human culture... For, a believer is both human and a person of faith, the protagonist of culture and the subject of religion. Anyone who searches for the contact points will be able to find them. Helping in the search is not solely the task of religion teachers... everyone should work together, each one developing his or her own subject area with professional competence, but sensitive to those opportunities in which they can help students to those opportunities to see beyond the limited horizon of human reality.<sup>43</sup>

Occasional liturgical and para-liturgical celebrations are needed. In these services, students and staff are expected to participate together. It reflects the nature of the praying community and the importance of being one before God.

Educational guidance and personal counselling need to be given to each student. The value and need of such helping relationships to our youth in India today is beyond question. These sessions are on a one-to-one basis and offered to the youth regularly by trained counsellors.

Christian witness by the staff members: Above all, students need to see the witness of staff members interacting among themselves as well as with the student body in a truly Christian manner. This interaction is characterized by respect, justice and professional integrity.

---

<sup>43</sup> RDOE 51.

### **g. Catholic institution in a multi-religious context**

268 In most Catholic institutions in India, the majority of students are of other faiths. The Church recognizes and respects the personal consciences and religious freedom of such students and of their guardians.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, these institutions do not give up their own freedom, their right and duty to proclaim Christ's love and to witness to Gospel values, which are the very foundation of a Christian education.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the value education, carried on in a spirit of inter-religious dialogue, can and should be offered to our students of other faiths as well. This form of dialogue is an essential part of the Church's ministry of the Word of God. Creating texts and courses for such a vitally important service is one of the most important and challenging tasks for the catechists of our country. It necessarily involves all levels of catechetical organization: national, regional, diocesan and local. In order to produce adequate texts in the new millennium, the Catholic educational community needs thorough inter-disciplinary teamwork in planning, composition and evaluation of those forthcoming inter-religious programmes for our Catholic institutions.

### **h. Role of parents in educational institutions**

269 Parents remain always the first and primary catechists of their children. It is the responsibility of the Catholic institution to recognize their role and give them this awareness. It should initiate meetings and other programmes which will make parents more conscious of their role and help establish a partnership. In addition, the institution should involve the parents as much as possible in the educational aims of the school in helping both to plan these goals and to achieve them. Experience proves that parents, who were

---

<sup>44</sup> *DH* 2, 9, 10, 12.

<sup>45</sup> *RDOE* 6.

once totally unaware of their role, can be transformed into excellent partners.<sup>46</sup>

## **Conclusion**

270 This chapter has underlined the venues and occasions of Catechesis. Parish, liturgy, small Christian communities, family, whose Catechesis is irreplaceable with parents as the first primary catechists, lay associations like the Charismatic, the Neo-catechumenal Way, Marriage Encounter groups, socio-religious groups like the Legion of Mary, St. Vincent de Paul Society and educational institutions with distinctive environment in the multi-religious context of India become the essential components of catechetical venues and occasions for Catechesis.

---

<sup>46</sup> RDE 43.

## CHAPTER II

### *General Guidelines and Practical Implications*

#### Introduction

271 Primarily, the term ‘organization’ stands here for service, for better catechetical service, more effective service rendered to a greater number of people by a caring, responsible community. If catechetical organization does not achieve this goal, then it is not authentic. Secondly, catechetical organization in no way intends to underrate or undermine people’s initiatives for Catechesis, whether these are individual Christians, single families or volunteer groups. The Holy Spirit blows in powerful, mysterious ways. Authentic catechetical organization does not stifle but rather encourages individual creativity.

#### **1. Organization as a Planned and Responsible Activity**

272 When Christ asked the multitude to sit in groups. In doing so, Jesus showed his leadership and organizational capabilities. Organizing the crowd into groups helped him to distribute easily the loaves and fish and collect the leftovers also, without much hassle. Better organization is a better means to communicate and implement a message. In this sense ‘Organization’ implies that:

- The Faith-community, first carefully *analyzes* its own life-situation and that of its neighbours in the light of its mission to share its Christ-experience.
- It then *chooses the best means available*, which it will employ in order to become Christ’s Good-News-People – as the Father created and commissioned his Church to be in the power of the Spirit.
- It then *designates objectives and goals*, in order to be faithful

to its mission both of evangelizing people – herself included – and of transforming the temporal order in which she lives according to Gospel and basic human values.

- Finally, it *assigns responsibilities and roles* to her members, who are in turn given clearly defined job-descriptions. A system of regular communication, accountability and evaluation is set in motion. This is an ongoing process. It is also a demand of healthy community action. Catechists then go about doing what has been planned, guided by the Lord’s Holy Spirit, whose help needs to be asked for every day.

Organization is about purposeful planned catechetical activity by a responsible Faith-community. Authentic catechetical organization is under the direction of the Bishop, the good shepherd. It is not dominated by any sector of the community, but conducted in communion with all the faithful, for the good of all and by active participation, according to each one’s talents and circumstances.

## **2. Catechetical Activity within the Church’s overall Pastoral Ministry**

273 Called by St. John Paul II “the basic document for encouraging and guiding catechetical renewal throughout the Church”<sup>47</sup> the General Directory for Catechesis insists strongly that for any effective ministry of the Word within a territory, certain organizational provisions have to be made. We now list these necessities and indicate some of their practical implications. These hold both for the ecclesial and catechetical renewal in India and these two levels of renewal can never be separated.

### **a. An analysis of the total situation**

274 This is intended to give pastoral planners a clear and complete picture of the situation. The object of such a survey is multi-

---

<sup>47</sup> CT 2.

dimensional: 1) to give an accurate profile of the political, economic, socio-cultural and religious circumstances in which the ministry of the Word is exercised; 2) to make a qualitative inquiry into the effectiveness of the pastoral ministry – as far as such measurements can be made by human instruments.

Such an investigation calls for close inter-disciplinary collaboration throughout the entire project, i.e. in planning the survey, carrying it out and evaluating it. To be sure, there are certain inherent dangers to these inquiries.<sup>48</sup> Not the least of possible hazards is that the complexity and magnitude of the difficulties uncovered by the survey may discourage the pastoral workers by portraying a situation seemingly too sick to be healed. Deductions of this sort are superficial. They fail to take into consideration that all human situations are ambivalent and always remain open both to the law of change and, especially, to the all-powerful influence of God's saving grace. In India today there are available resources to carry out genuine, inter-disciplinary surveys.

### **b. A programme of Pastoral Plan**

275 After the situation has been analyzed multi-dimensionally (economic-politically, socio-culturally, religiously) and evaluated, a detailed Pastoral Plan is to be drawn up. Here again inter-disciplinary skills are needed. The main points of this action plan are designation of clearly defined pastoral goals and the means to attain them.

The shared ecclesial identity of a faith community, in other words, the ecclesiology of the Particular Church, is very important here. Practically speaking, pastoral goals will be chosen according to the prevailing vision of the mission – or absence of it – within a community of Christians. One of the most urgent catechetical tasks in each Particular Church after the Second Vatican Council is to

---

<sup>48</sup> GCD 101.

bring to all the faithful the very rich Conciliar vision of herself which brought renewed self-understanding.

The Church understands that by a divine gift, she is not primarily an institution but the Body of Christ and the People of God. By God the Father's eternal plan, she is a communion of life and service, as sacrament of salvation, a consecrated, priestly and prophetic people. Concretely, how can an Indian diocese go about this task of helping its faithful understand who they are collectively and what their mission in today's India is? To give but one example from a number of practical ways to promote this renewed Faith-awareness, leaders within a diocese (bishop with clergy, religious and a good cross-section of the laity) must gather together in their annual pastoral council or in a diocesan synod. They then prayerfully reflect together for a few days upon key questions such as: "Who are we as Christians in this part of India today?" "What sort of witnessing Church must we be today, if we are to be fully faithful in our response to God's Spirit, to the mission renewed by the Council and to the priority needs of all our people, both Christian and those of other religious traditions?" This process of community Faith-reflection is repeated in each parish.

The people's newly shared vision and consciousness of their destiny as Christian community becomes critically important to their participation in forming an adequate Pastoral Plan and in involving themselves in implementing it. The means to achieve the goals, of course, must not only be the qualities of catechetical programs, but also the multiplication of catechism texts or the production of media tools.

For an effective Catechetical renewal new ways of thinking and collaborating are essential because Faith-awareness in the community remains an ongoing pastoral approach. Hence the actual witness of personal relationships within the community, especially between



clergy and laity, has to remain at the centre of the pastoral plan of catechetical action.

Distribution of responsibilities and job descriptions for all pastoral activities are other necessary aspects of the pastoral plan. A system of regular communication for those engaged in this programme and for the whole community – parish and diocese – is important. It helps more active participation, feedback and periodic evaluation.

This Pastoral Plan of catechetical action has to be made public, that is, somehow it should be communicated effectively to all the faithful. In this way, all will know their rights and responsibilities. A published pastoral plan will, moreover, facilitate the initiation of newcomers into the parish and diocesan communities and into their pastoral services. Regions and the CCBI as a whole can also profit by comparing their pastoral overviews and catechetical programs. Finally, there is the need for adequate financial resources to be made available to carry out the programme properly.<sup>49</sup>

### **c. Formation of personnel**

276 The art of Catechesis cannot be learned from theory alone. *Right formation of catechists* becomes essential for ecclesial and catechetical renewal. For the pastoral activity to bear fruit the agents of pastoral action have to be provided proper training.<sup>50</sup> Most certainly, the personal commitment and authentic spiritual lives of the catechists themselves are fundamental to the notion of this adequate formation. Added to the basic training, there has to be *continuing formation* for all categories of persons, serving in whatever capacity, throughout the whole duration of their catechetical involvement. Responsibility of providing this ongoing formation does not rest alone with the

---

<sup>49</sup> GCD 107.

<sup>50</sup> GCD 108.

clergy but also with the Christian communities themselves.<sup>51</sup> The formation of personnel eventually has to be a guided experience of actual catechizing under expert supervision.<sup>52</sup> This becomes a requirement for learning any art and skill.

#### **d. Supplying appropriate media and catechetical instruments**

277 The main working tools for Catechesis are:

- Catechetical Directories (international, national, regional and diocesan)
- Pastoral Programmes at all levels especially at the parish level
- Catechisms adapted to the mentality of their users
- Catechism texts for different age groups/conditions of life
- Indigenous multi-media in the service of the faith, which can be employed both with large and small groups

#### **e. Setting up structures for catechetical organization**

278 The decision-making channels for catechetical activities need to be established at all levels, starting with mission-stations, parishes, dioceses and regions throughout the country.<sup>53</sup>

#### **f. Co-ordination of Catechesis with other pastoral ministries**

279 Since Catechesis is a permanent and essential activity of the whole Church and since the ministry of God's Word touches every aspect of her life, coordination and integration of Catechesis with all other ministries is a necessary part of any overall Pastoral Plan.<sup>54</sup> To highlight the importance of Catechesis, the Church in India could

---

<sup>51</sup> GCD 110.

<sup>52</sup> GCD 113-15.

<sup>53</sup> GCD 125-28.

<sup>54</sup> GCD 129-30.

mark a day every year as a Catechetical Day. It could be celebrated at the regional, diocesan and parish level.

Catechesis has to be increasingly integrated into the Church in India's overall pastoral ministry. At the national level, the catechetical commission has to visualize long-term programme. The national commission has to become a congenial meeting place for dialogue and encounter, where leaders of various movements and ministries can gather from time to time to explore together ways and means of creating a total, comprehensive vision and plan for pastoral action. Such meetings can help in discovering better our own identities, defining evidently our individualities, realizing more clearly the personal vocations and most importantly, situating ourselves better in the Church's catechetical and liturgical mission.

#### **g. Promotion of ongoing scientific research**

280 This provision acknowledges that human societies today are in a permanent state of change. It is an increasingly more important Christian duty both for the community and for individuals – particularly catechists – to understand these significant changes and to interpret them in the light of Faith.<sup>55</sup>

#### **h. Fostering dialogue and collaborating internationally**

281 The Church as a communion of love and life expresses herself more in deeds than in words. Commercially, politically and culturally, international contacts of every sort are being promoted today as a matter of growth. The Particular Church certainly experiences within herself the need and the challenge for such global exchanges, especially in the pastoral and catechetical fields.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>55</sup> GCD 131.

<sup>56</sup> GCD 132-34.

**i. Making available the financial resources**

282 Care should be taken to see that the annual budget of the parish and the school ensure that enough resources are allotted for the catechetical formation of its members. This undoubtedly enhances catechesis.

**j. Promoting collaboration with other *sui iuris* Churches**

283 The presence of three *sui iuris* churches in India is a blessing as well as a challenge. Effort should be taken to promote unity of faith and harmony with the two Eastern Catholic Churches: the Syro-Malabar Church and the Syro-Malankara Church.

**3. Dimensions of Catechetical Ministry in India**

284 The Word became flesh in a particular time and place through the co-operation and mediation of certain faithful people. And so Jesus will reach the heart of our Indian people only if this same Word as Risen Lord and as Spirit is allowed to enter into the life-situations of our people, that is, into every area of their cultural and religious milieu. A deep, all-around effective ministry of the Word, therefore, demands by the law of Christ's Incarnation that the Commission for Catechetics promotes an authentic inculturation of Catechesis through study, research and experimentation.

The catechetical structures - national, regional, diocesan and parish - should focus on the four dimensions of the Church in India's mission of evangelization, namely, a proclamation that is *incarnational, dialogical, liberative and ecological*. This means that the catechetical centres embody an authentic, properly discerned and ever deepening *Inculturation* of Faith in all its expressions and carry on this process in a spirit of authentic *Inter-Religious Dialogue*. That is, in a spirit of mutual religious understanding, it seeks collaboration with all peoples in the urgent tasks of *Integral Liberation* of society in the light

and spirit of Gospel values. It should also focus on the *environmental* issues leading people to revere and develop God's creation.

## **Conclusion**

285 This chapter spelt out the guidelines for an organized and planned Catechesis. These guidelines in no way undermine the creativity or initiatives of people for Catechesis. Jesus' demand to the multitude to sit in groups expressed his leadership and organizational capabilities. Thereby it was easy to distribute and also collect the left-over. Thus organization is all about purposefully planned catechetical activity for the animation of the faithful.



### CHAPTER III

## *Organization at Various Levels*

### **Introduction**

286 This chapter deals with the organization of catechesis at various levels. The first level involves the National Catechetical Animation that revolves around the National Commission for Catechetics, coordinating resources, catechetical texts, training for catechists, convening an annual catechetical conference and initiating on-going research. The second level of catechetical organization consists of Regional Catechetical Animation where the Regional Commission plays a vital role, having a Regional Secretary, a Regional Catechetical Team and a Regional Catechetical Centre. The third level engages the diocesan catechetical animation. The prominent components of this level are the Diocesan Commission for Catechetics, a Diocesan Catechetical Secretary, a Diocesan Catechetical Team and a Diocesan Catechetical Centre. The fourth level of catechetical organization treats of the parish having its own organizational structures and guidelines. These four levels of organization for Catechesis are explained further in this chapter.

### **1. National Catechetical Animation**

287 National Catechetical Animation programmes become necessary to coordinate all resources and to animate the whole country by coordinating training programmes, providing catechetical material like books and documents and facilitating the on-going research and organizing the Regional Catechetical Commissions and their work of animation. Going to the grass-root level reality of the dioceses, the organization would assist at effectively carrying out the catechetical activities making each diocese realize the responsibility

of the Particular Church with a Faith-vision to further the Kingdom of God.

#### **a. National Commission for Catechetics**

288 It is by all means necessary that every National Conference of Bishops have a permanent catechetical structure, i.e. a national office/centre.<sup>57</sup> The Commission for Catechetics of the CCBI serves as the permanent executive structure for catechetical animation at the national level. At its first General Body meeting in October, 1988, the CCBI established this structure, titling it the National Catechetical Commission.<sup>58</sup>

It has a clearly structured programme of catechetical renewal approved by the CCBI. Some of the tasks assigned to this national office/centre are:<sup>59</sup>

- It works out with the regions a basic plan for catechetical activities, which can and must be inculturated locally since the Particular Church – the diocese – is the discerning body for this adaptation.
- It serves the regions and dioceses by information about initiatives in different parts of the nation and by coordinating programmes through publications, meetings, congresses, etc.
- At the national level, it integrates its ministries with other nationwide pastoral activities and related CBCI organizations

---

<sup>57</sup> GCD 128

<sup>58</sup> The National Catechetical Commission functioned along with the National Liturgical Commission from 1966-1971, and so the national centre was called the NCLC. In 1971 the biblical apostolate was also entrusted with a special commission and it became another department at the national centre, which was then appropriately renamed the NBCLC. In 1982 there was an overall re-structuring of the CBCI's commissions and the national biblical, catechetical and liturgical animation was called "The Commission for Christian Life." In 1988, the three ecclesiastical conferences according to three rites (Latin, Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara).

<sup>59</sup> GCD 129, 132-34.



like the National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC).

- It serves as a liaison with the Universal Church through regular contacts with the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, which serves the Church's catechetical needs internationally by contacts with catechetical commissions and institutes around the world.

### **b. Coordination of resources**

289 The CCBI Commission for Catechetics will strive to coordinate the efforts of pastoral catechetical renewal that are made in the regions and dioceses of India. This will be done with due respect for the autonomy of all concerned, taking into account their historical, geographical, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious differences. While the aspiration for mature growth and self-determination are legitimate, so also the danger of dissipation of both personnel and energies is very real. Resources too are limited. Without jeopardizing the rightful autonomy of regions and dioceses, the CCBI National Commission will encourage a fruitful exchange and sharing of catechetical personnel, equipment and resources at the national, regional and diocesan levels.

### **c. CCBI Commission for Catechetics: Animating organism**

290 It must shine out pre-eminently as an animating organism of pastoral Catechetics through the length and breadth of the country; it should breathe out inspiration, foster initiatives, encourage efforts, co-ordinate isolated activities of a personal or a diocesan or regional nature, and ensure correct orientation. It should constitute a milieu of frank expression of opinions, foster fruitful discussion of ideas and projects, guide researches and experiments and develop a structure in which it may be possible for all the talents, competence

and charisms of the members of the Church to find recognition and to blossom into fruitful services for the People of God.

#### **d. Body of consulters**

291 Keeping in mind the long-term programme for catechetical renewal in India, a body of national consulters is formed. They meet approximately twice every year to discuss, evaluate and plan out yearly programs for Catechesis. The consultors are made up of Episcopal members of the CCBI Commission for Catechetics, the National Executive Secretary, a few of the Regional Secretaries and others who are qualified in Catechetics. They are appointed by the National Chairman of the Commission in consultation with the member bishops, for a term of four years – the duration of the appointment of the national chairman, member bishops and the executive secretary.

#### **e. Coordination of catechetical texts**

292 The CCBI Commission for Catechetics sees to the preparation of catechism texts for different age groups and categories of persons like children, youth in educational institutions and outside, adults, parents and other groups in special situations, and according to contexts – rural, urban – and for training of catechists. This ecclesial task is to be done in a spirit of communion, which means that these catechetical texts are to profit by the discoveries and resources of the catechetical movement of the past, drawing inspiration from authentic pastoral orientation and open-mindedness to others. Such a Catholic attitude embraces all other Christians, those of other religious traditions, and people of good will, including those of secular ideologies and unbelievers. Above all, such a discerning openness means receptivity and fidelity to the doctrinal teaching of the Church and in a special way, that of the Second Vatican Council. It also includes synthesizing the best of our own God-given cultural

and religious traditions, together with present-day aspirations and the signs of the times.

### **f. Coordination of Training of Catechists – A Priority**

293 More important than any syllabus or text-book is the training of competent, experienced and zealous catechists. Hence, though their formation and up-dating are chiefly the task of the diocesan and regional centres, the formation of those who are actually responsible for the catechetical ministries at the levels of the diocese and regions, in religious institutions, orders and congregations, the director of catechists' schools, and professors of Catechetics in the seminaries, should be undertaken by the National Commission.

### **g. Publications**

294 Our catechists need to be well-informed theologically, pastorally and catechetically and they need to remain up-to-date. For this purpose, the Commission will gather and publish relevant documentation. It will also bring out books and other handy catechetical publications. The regular official source of information of the Commission is the quarterly review, Faith Links. Since a periodical in English can reach only a very small number of catechists at the national level, catechetical reviews in the regional languages should be started in order to diffuse this vitally important information. Regional Centres, besides, should see that at least the more important ecclesial documents are translated into the vernaculars.

### **h. Annual catechetical conference**

295 Every year a National Catechetical Conference will be organized for a minimum of three days on a particular theme, suggested at the previous year's annual conference and approved by the Consulters. The participants comprise Commission's consulters, all Regional

Secretaries, Diocesan Catechetical Secretaries and specially invited guests. Included among these are lay representatives from India's different regions. In the midst of such a rich mixture of the People of God, delegates share and evaluate the work done in the recent past. Then, in the light of that experience and the country's long-term integrated catechetical plans, they chalk out nationwide programmes for the following year/s. This intense and prayerful collaboration promotes among representatives of India's catechetical community a spirit of working for a common goal in union of minds and hearts.

### **i. Ongoing research**

296 In order to analyze and keep pace by an ever deepening understanding of the Indian situation, ongoing research should be one of the Commission's first pastoral desires for the Church in India's post-Conciliar renewal. A most difficult and urgent part of this research is to develop instruments (methods) of quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to be able to discern, at least to some extent, the effectiveness of catechetical work. This is an ongoing, inter-disciplinary search. It will be carried out successfully only in close collaboration with all catechetical services at various levels – parish, diocesan, regional and national.

## **2. Regional Catechetical Animation**

297 Regional level animations of catechetical programmes solely depend on the effectiveness and quality of the Regional Catechetical Commission. When the region has a qualified and full time Catechetical Secretary, a Regional Catechetical Team and a Regional Catechetical Centre, the catechetical animation in the region becomes relevant and noteworthy.

### **a. Importance of regional catechetical animation**

298 While the national commission takes care of the national

animation in a complex cultural make up, each of India's regional catechetical commission is setup to serve a different cultural – linguistic community. The prime importance of both language and culture for the whole catechetical ministry was well explained in the 1977 Synod of Bishops on Catechetics and in St. John Paul II's 1979 encyclical *Catechesi Tradendae*.<sup>60</sup>

### **b. Organization of the Regional Commission**

299 The regional organization of Catechetics is to be seen within the framework of the larger ecclesial ministry. The regional catechetical structures include the following bodies:

*Regional Commission for Catechetics:* This is composed of an Episcopal chairman and a Regional Secretary for Catechetics, appointed by the Regional Council of Bishops. This body reports to the regional Episcopal Council annually, informing them of the developments in the catechetical field and seeking a mandate for the new initiatives.

*Regional Secretary for Catechetics:* Every region in India should have a competent full-time director/animator of the catechetical apostolate. He/she is appointed full-timer by and accountable to the regional council of bishops for a minimum office term of four years (once renewable). He/she maintains liaison between the National and Diocesan secretaries and functions at the regional level as does the National Secretary countrywide. Regional catechetical animation is characterized both by its cordiality and professional competence. This requires regular visits to the different dioceses in the region in order to appreciate the needs of various dioceses within the region, which are sometimes much diversified. In keeping with the demands of this level of ministry, the Regional Catechetical Secretary is academically qualified at least with a Master's Degree in Catechetics or its equivalent. He/she should have already had the experience of

---

<sup>60</sup> CT 53, 59.

having served in the capacity of a Diocesan Catechetical Secretary, being well-informed of both the grass-roots and the catechetical ministry at the regional level.

*Regional Catechetical Team:* The Regional Secretary works with a team of collaborators. They should be carefully selected, mature and well-trained. They are made available full-time or part-time to collaborate in this essential task of Church renewal through the ministry of Catechesis throughout the region. This team should comprise representatives of the whole Church – clergy, religious and laity. It will be a visible sign of the responsible and participative community, envisaged by the Second Vatican Council. Each team member has a written contract of service conditions. The witness of ecclesial communion given by the regional team is a powerful stimulus to the People of God for its own renewal.

*Regional Catechetical Centre:* There should be a well-set Regional Catechetical Centre. The functions of a regional catechetical centre include the following catechetical services:

- It serves as *Secretariat for the Regional Catechetical Commission*, maintaining communication among the dioceses within the region and between the regions and with the national secretariat.
- It helps identify, mobilize and employ all available resources, experience and expertise in order to *animate the catechetical ministry in the dioceses* and, in general, to help build up the faith communities throughout the region.<sup>61</sup>
- It sees to the *formation of Church leaders*, especially the diocesan catechetical teams.
- It keeps the bishops informed about the care of catechetical personnel in the region, especially *the Lay catechists*, with

---

<sup>61</sup> GCD 127.

proper training, just salary, equitable service conditions and adequate pension.

- It ensures *relevant research and constant reliable data* on the region's social, ecclesial reality, particularly from the catechetical point of view.
- As the Regional Catechetical Secretariat, it is co-responsible with the dioceses to find finances and personnel for translation and original composition of basic catechetical texts and media productions which will be culturally and religiously relevant to the people of the region.
- Since the Regional Catechetical Centre is not the only body involved in the ministry of the Word, the fruitful exercise of this ministry demands that it *collaborates with other Regional Commissions, Diocesan Institutes and Apostolic Movements*, particularly with associate commissions for Bible, Liturgy, SCC and Charismatic Renewal. Inter-religious and Ecumenical commissions also are to be invited for regular collaboration, especially for sharing information, planning and evaluating the Catechetical Commission.
- The Regional Centre is in a better position than most diocesan centres to promote *Catechesis of the specialized groups* through the production of catechetical programmes and the provision for mobile teams who will train diocesan personnel to carry out this specialized Catechesis. The overriding principle for these specialized groups – physically, mentally or emotionally challenged – is that they are God's children through baptism and anointing of the Holy Spirit and they have God-given right to receive adequate Catechesis throughout their pilgrim lives.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> CT 41.

- The Regional Catechetical Centre (together with the Regional Seminary) is a very important body for evangelization and is at the heart of the regional Church Renewal because it is training persons with proper faith-vision and equipping them with the skills to bring about authentic ecclesial change. The regional centre places before the dioceses the four dimensions of the Church in India's mission of evangelization.

### **3. Diocesan Catechetical Animation**

300 The diocesan catechetical animation functions successfully through a Diocesan Commission for Catechetics, a Diocesan Catechetical Secretary, a Diocesan Catechetical Team and a Catechetical Centre. A valuable catechetical centre and personnel would assist the parishes to prepare and to carry out their programmes to people of different ages and stages.

#### **a. Diocesan faith-vision**

301 To reflect effectively upon the diocesan level of catechetical animation, its organization and structures, we must begin with the Faith-vision of the Local Church. There can be no consistent and fruitful catechetical animation in the diocese unless the community of faithful first knows clearly its identity and what is expected of it for building up the Reign of God. In other words, we are referring to the vocation and mission of a Particular Church.

#### **b. Unique vocation and mission of the diocese**

302 Within the Universal Church and in communion with the See of Peter, every diocese is a portion of the People of God and entrusted for pastoral care to a bishop with the cooperation of the presbyterate (the clergy) so that adhering to its pastor, it constitutes a Particular Church in which the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and operative.<sup>63</sup> We know that

---

<sup>63</sup> COCL 369.



“pastoral” signifies all that expresses the relation of the Church to the world.<sup>64</sup> The Second Vatican Council spells out that the characteristics of Christ’s Church as being one, holy, Catholic and apostolic mean that in Christ, the Body of Faithful is a sacrament of communion. Like Christ, by the anointing of His Spirit, each Particular Church is *called* to be in fact a priestly, prophetic and servant-leader community. Each Church is *sent* to evangelize herself and the world. This is her essential mission<sup>65</sup> to promote both the Father’s glory and the service of all people in the power and guidance of the Lord’s Spirit.

Every authentic Catholic community has some basic traits in common. But each Particular Church is stronger in one or another dimension. It has its own history and its unique life-situation and God-given talents, its challenges, its needs and those of its neighbours of other faiths who share the same territory. Each diocese will and must have a unique blend of charisms and pastoral priorities, in order to be truly faithful to God, to the communion of all other Churches and to its own peoples. These realities help make up a unique vocation – mission of each Particular Church. When this awareness is shared by all in the diocese, the Church is truly alive, active and fruitful. With such a mature and growing faith, the people can and do “listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches.”

Realisation of shared-consciousness and conviction of ecclesial identity and mission in the whole diocese is basically one of the most urgent catechetical tasks in this post-Conciliar era. Diocesan Synods and Annual Pastoral Councils are two vehicles to achieve this task at this level. Whatever the process and instruments used, this sense of ecclesial vocation and mission has to permeate the parish community.

---

<sup>64</sup> GS 1-2.

<sup>65</sup> EN 14; LG 1.

### **c. Networking with other commissions**

303 Catechesis is an irreplaceable expression of the ministry of God's Word. It can only be understood within the context of integration and collaboration with other dimensions of service to the Divine Word in the sacred liturgy, through the biblical apostolate and in the evangelizing world of missions, charismatic retreats, etc. The structure of a diocesan catechetical organization involves these bodies.

### **d. Diocesan Catechetical Commission**

304 The Diocesan Catechetical Commission includes the following structure and personnel:

*Diocesan Commission for Catechetics:* The Diocesan Catechetical Secretary together with his bishop and other collaborators make up this body. Its main tasks are:

- to ensure collaboration and integration of their ministries
- to foster among them a corporate awareness of the Church's vocation and mission
- to promote the triple dimension of the Church's mission
- to carry out the General Directory for Catechesis' requirements as applied to their ministries<sup>66</sup>
- to produce a diocesan catechetical plan

*Diocesan Catechetical Secretary:* He is appointed by the bishop as a valuable co-worker to help him fulfil the duties and responsibilities of his office effectively. The qualities, which make a good diocesan secretary are the following:

- Committed Faith with a strong sense of prophetic mission both personally and corporately

---

<sup>66</sup> Ref. GDC 222-231.

- Pastoral experience of serving in the catechetical ministry at the parish level
- Professionally qualified to the Master's level in Catechetics and updating knowledge and skill through personal study and catechetical conferences
- Appreciation for peoples and their cultures, knowledge of their language and good information about their total life-situation, especially in the area of justice and integral development
- Full-time service in this ministry and taking initiatives in order to fulfil people's faith-needs
- Having a strong community-sense and working well with team-spirit, encouraging others to take responsibility and adapting himself well to different kinds of people in different circumstances, and having cordial relationships with the bishop, priests, religious, lay catechists, school principals, teachers, parents, youth, members of diocesan associations and diocesan pastoral councils
- Having knowledge to formulate policies and to implement them
- Having good communication skills through the spoken and written word, using the media to good effect
- Commitment to long range objectives of the diocese, region and country through regular and active participation in pastoral meetings at these various levels

*Diocesan Catechetical Team:* One of the most striking distinctive traits of the renewal of Catechesis in India is its strong emphasis on team-work. This is in keeping with the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the Church as a communication of life and service.

It implies full participation of all as co-responsible by reason of their Baptism and the charism given them by the Holy Spirit at Confirmation for building-up the Body of Christ. Following the example of the national and regional secretaries, the diocesan secretary also works as animator of a team, whose members are full-time and well-trained to carry out their ministries. They should be representatives of the whole diocesan community – laity, religious, clerics, women and men. Each member of the team enters into a contract with the bishop of the diocese. This written understanding spells out their job description, the conditions of work and the duration of service.

Like the regional catechetical team, the diocesan team personnel are carefully chosen so that together they may give witness to the Church of a pilgrim community, which is dedicated to the prophetic mission of serving Christ's Kingdom through the ministry of the Word, specifically through the renewal of faith-education in all of its dimensions within the diocese.

#### **e. Diocesan Catechetical Centre**

305 This centre serves primarily as the secretariat of the diocese for the catechetical ministry. Its identity flows from its executive functions, namely:

*Helping the diocesan community to train its catechists:* The diocesan catechetical team helps to identify, train and employ catechists of different types, including *specialists* for special groups of the faithful, e.g. mentally, emotionally and physically challenged. All candidates, including clerics, must successfully complete a basic course of formation and they should be given certificates of merit and the bishop should grant the canonical mandate.

*Ongoing Programmes for Catechists of different Categories* have also to be created by the centre. It should have clear criteria and norms in

order to prepare and execute such training courses. Normally this is done in consultation with the regional and national commissions.

*Production of basic catechetical tools that are contextualized* is another prime responsibility of the diocesan catechetical centre. These tools include Sunday and school catechisms for different age levels, youth groups and study guides for adult groups in parishes, and media programs that are relevant for the Catechesis of the parish. The focus for these tools is guided by the triple mission dimension of the Church in India. This entails truly inculturated Faith-educational materials that take into account the socio-economic, political and religious realities and the Gospel message of liberation in Christ, based on justice and the God-given rights of all persons. The special struggles and needs of SCs and STs have to be taken into account for relevant Catechesis. Value education materials, guided by a dialogical mode of Catechesis, are included in this production, as an integral part of the ministry of the Word.

*Ongoing research and evaluation* is sponsored, if not carried out by diocesan centre. The principle for both of these essential dimensions of Catechesis is that this ministry is carried out solely for the good of the people, serving their deepest needs. Research and evaluation, of course, has to be done in collaboration with competent bodies - national, regional and diocesan agencies. Evaluation looks principally to the effectiveness of Catechesis and catechists - lay, religious and cleric. Evaluation is of different types (formal, informal), at different levels (diocesan, parish), and in different areas (the programmes themselves, personnel, catechisms, etc).

No method of evaluation is omni-competent and foolproof. Catechists together with the diocesan catechetical team must first decide what type of evaluation is to be done and within it what limited, clearly-defined aspects are most important and therefore most in need of a qualitative review. Every evaluation should elicit

as much participation as possible, in the planning, execution and application. It is a regular form of self-criticism for the improvement of service to God's People. Research and evaluation have been perhaps the weakest link of post-Conciliar catechetics in India at every level. There are some good reasons for this but there is every reason now to give this part of the ministry extra attention.

*Formation of a diocesan catechetical plan* is among the basic tools needed for effective Catechesis in every Particular Church. It is of extraordinary importance, but usually it cannot be done well unless and until there is a mature Faith-community and a well-established catechetical ministry. Another condition for publishing a diocesan catechetical directory is that both national and regional catechetical directories are produced first. The stage is now set in India for the production of both regional and diocesan catechetical directories.

*Offering all-round support* to catechists of every kind, starting with parents is essential. Encouragement goes out from the bishop, the diocese's number one catechist, to the centre. Then the call goes to the priests, religious, full-time lay catechists in the parishes, Small Christian Communities and schools. This word of encouragement, if offered with the help of the Holy Spirit, will go a long way to fostering apostles and witnesses in the local community.

#### **f. The Church's best resources at the service of Catechesis**

306 The words of St. John Paul, though addressed to the bishops, remind the whole People of God of their responsibility:

Let the concern to foster active and effective catechesis yield to no other care whatever in any way ... Your principal role will be to bring about and maintain in your Churches a real passion for catechesis, a passion embodied in a pertinent and effective organization, putting into operation the necessary personnel, means

and equipment, and also financial resources. You can be sure that if catechesis is done well in your local Churches, everything else will be easier to do. And needless to say, although your zeal must sometimes impose upon you the thankless task of denouncing deviations and correcting errors, it will much more often win for you the joy and consolation of seeing your Churches flourishing because catechesis is given in them as the Lord wishes.<sup>67</sup>

As the Church whether in the local or the universal level gives Catechesis priority over other works and undertakings the results become more spectacular. Catechesis strengthens her internal life as a community of believers and her external activity as a missionary Church. The Church is bidden by God and by events to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer Catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel. This is no mere human calculation; it is an attitude of faith. And an attitude of faith always has reference to the faithfulness of God, who never fails to respond.

#### **4. Parish Catechetical Animation**

307 The presence of a catechetical commission at the parish level would facilitate the parish to prepare its own catechetical programme for the entire parish faith community of different ages.

#### **Parish level organizational structures and guidelines<sup>68</sup>**

308 The following guidelines are pastoral conclusions to the Church's

---

<sup>67</sup> CT 63, 15.

<sup>68</sup> When parish catechists, e.g., the pastor with his catechetical team, spells out the implications of these organizational directives in writing their parish catechetical statements, it will be helpful to cite the Church's teaching for each of these norms.

teaching – the Second Vatican Council’s vision and post-Conciliar official directives for Catechesis. The very process of Catechesis is systematic and dynamic. The better it is organized; the better will be the results. The Teachings of the Church and deductions from the principles given above give us the impetus to organize our apostolate well, which prominently include:

*Each parish prepares its own programme of pastoral action:* In collaboration with the diocesan catechetical director and the catechetical team, each parish prepares its own programme of integrated Faith-education. An important participative process is set in motion in drawing up such a comprehensive programme of pastoral action. First of all, it means that the pastor and his pastoral assistants animate and collaborate well with all adult members of the parish, starting with the parish council - or its equivalent - and the parish level catechetical team. Before such a programme of pastoral action can be drawn up, the guidelines for diocesan catechetical animation need to be adapted and implemented at the parish level. In other words, there can be no effective pastoral planning without prior efforts of parish faith-renewal according to the Second Vatican Council’s vision of Christian identity and mission.

*Each parish has its own catechetical structures:* Corresponding to the national, regional and diocesan levels, the parish level also has its own catechetical structures. These include:

- *A parish secretary for Catechesis, for liturgical and biblical apostolate*, i.e. someone responsible for each of the basic ministries. This may be one and the same person - for example, the parish priest - or he may share these duties with others
- *A parish catechetical team*, which is committed to meeting every dimension of the parish’s catechetical ministry. The parish catechetical team may also serve as the liturgical and biblical apostolate teams. In a large parish, however, these ministries require separate teams



*Renewal of Parish Catechesis requires integrated planning:* Catechesis in India is careful about communicating the basic doctrinal content. At the same time it does not overlook the ‘vast areas of human life which call for reconciliation, healing, wholeness and integration.’ In striving to remain faithful to the full message of Christian proclamation and to her prophetic, priestly and servant identity in Christ, the Church’s Catechesis, therefore, always is planned in an integral way. This means, it announces God’s saving love to all peoples for their total development. Divine love is announced as truly incarnational, redemptive and liberative. To carry out this kind of total and balanced proclamation, the catechetical ministry needs to plan and operate at the parish level in collaboration with the parish pastoral council’s various other commissions: for liturgy, biblical apostolate, social justice, education, etc.

*Catechesis is for all in the parish:* Every faithful in the parish - adult, youth, child and people suffering from disabilities - can be given the opportunity for basic and ongoing Catechesis, adapted to their life-situation. It is the responsibility of the parish priest and the well-trained parish catechetical team to give Catechesis to every faithful in the parish.

*Primacy of Catechesis for adults:* The Catechesis of adults is the principal form of Catechesis, “because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.”<sup>69</sup> And the first among adults are parents, who are assigned by the Lord Himself to be their families’ first and most influential evangelists/catechists. “Family Catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of Catechesis.”<sup>70</sup> At home, parish or school, at every stage of Catechesis for children and youth, close collaboration is needed

---

<sup>69</sup> CT 43; GCD 20.

<sup>70</sup> CT 68.

between the parish catechetical team and parents, since the primary right and duty of parents is Catechesis of their own children.

*All catechists<sup>71</sup> are to be commissioned:* Every catechist – lay person, religious or cleric, who serves the parish, has to be certified through the diocesan catechetical office.<sup>72</sup> All catechists have to be duly trained and approved to impart Catechesis to any age group. This guideline holds true also – and primarily – for the parish catechetical secretary. If this office is held by someone other than the parish priest, the person has to be first certified by the Diocesan Secretary for Catechesis. Adjoining parishes may share the services of the same trained secretary.

*Annual evaluation made of all parish catechetical programmes:* It is not enough that every faithful be served by the parish catechetical service. *The quality of Catechesis is equally important.* Catechetical organization calls for regular evaluations made objectively with clear criteria and norms taken from diocesan guidelines. There are many different dimensions to such evaluations: programs, materials, catechists, the catechized themselves. Behavioural sciences offer valuable help for social enquiry. However, merely borrowing of techniques from the educational and social sciences may not serve the purpose of the quality of Faith-communication. Careful discernment and interdisciplinary collaboration are needed in finding reliable ways to discover the effectiveness of parish Catechesis. Since catechetical organisation looks always towards improving its services, an annual evaluation is a minimal requirement for making steady progress.

*Lay missionary catechists are to be adequately supported:* Since lay missionary catechists render an essential service to the Church, they

---

<sup>71</sup> All catechists include teachers of faith in educational institutions, Sunday catechists and lay missionary catechists. Ref. Nos. 239-242 of this directory.

<sup>72</sup> The dioceses could promote the commissioning of the catechists through specific liturgical ceremony a mission mandate letter, and even providing some religious symbols to be worn.

are to enjoy a respected place within the community. The provision for their adequate support certainly includes a just wage. It includes also security of employment, provision for ongoing formation as long as the person is an active catechist, and availability of needed equipment. The professional dimension demands that the manner of selection, training, leave, health care, discipline and termination of services are regulated by the diocesan policy. A written contract is to be made with every full-time catechist once their basic training is completed. The parish catechetical secretary takes care of these, keeping the parish priest - and through him the parish community - informed about the catechist's work conditions. This information forms part of the secretary's annual written report to the parish.

*The parish policy for Catechesis:* It is important for community-building that every parishioner is very clear about what the parish stands for in its service of the faith. A written statement of policy, therefore, is to be made available to everyone, which includes a description both of parish and diocesan catechetical vision, organization and guidelines.

## **Conclusion**

309 The proposed structures facilitate the catechetical organization in India at various levels – national, regional, diocesan and parochial. The traditional loci of Catechesis are the family, the parish and the educational institution. The new areas that are coming into focus are the Small Christian Communities and the Lay associations. By setting in motion these traditional and the new ones, the Commission for Catechetics strives to implement this program. In this way, along with catechists, the Church in India can become vibrant with the power of the Spirit.



## GENERAL CONCLUSION

### The Holy Spirit, the Ultimate Catechist

310 This Directory serves to foster the growth of faith of the pilgrim people. The guidelines, contained herein, are intended not only to clarify the nature of Catechesis and the norms and criteria which govern this catechizing ministry of the Church but also to foster, with the power of the Word and the interior action of the Holy Spirit, the hope of those who labour in this fundamentally privileged area of ecclesial activity. The ministry of the Word, of which Catechesis is an essential element, is the work of the Holy Spirit whom Christ has promised to his Church: “He will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (Jn 14:26) and “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...he will declare to you the things that are to come” (Jn 16:13).

No Catechesis is possible without the action of God working through his Spirit. We are aware of the fact that the content of Catechesis takes precedence over techniques and methods and that the role of the catechist is more important than the textbooks and methods.<sup>1</sup> But, in Catechesis neither the most advanced pedagogical techniques nor the most talented catechist can ever replace the silent and unseen action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup> It is he who, in truth, is the protagonist of all the Church’s mission; it is he who is the principal catechist; it is he who is *the interior teacher* of those who grow in the Lord. He is, in fact, the principal moving force, inspiring all catechetical work and all who do this work.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> GDC 156; GCD 71; AG 17.

<sup>2</sup> GDC 288.

<sup>3</sup> GDC 288.

## **Mary, the Catechist**

311 The Blessed Virgin Mary was her Son's first catechist. Under her maternal care, the child grew in wisdom, stature and fear of the Lord (Lk 2:40). Mary was not only Christ's first teacher but also Christ's first disciple. As the *Virgin of the Pentecost*,<sup>4</sup> Mary is truly the mother of the Church. "Mary is living catechism, *catechismus vivens*" (St. Augustine). Real catechisms are living, believing human beings. Mary lived her faith. That is why St. John Paul II called Mary "the mother and model of catechists."<sup>5</sup>

A catechist brings God to people through his/her teaching, life and mission. Mary bore God. She brought God to humanity. One of the first titles to our Blessed Mother is *theotokos*, God-bearer. The pilgrim people of God walk with Mary in her *journey of faith*,<sup>6</sup> a journey of search. Catechesis is a *search to see the face of God* (Ps 27:8) in one's daily life. The faithful encounter Jesus through Mary. She is the certain path to Jesus. She is an incomparable sign of hope for the Church. As catechists we need Mary's intercession for us in our sublime task as enablers of the Spirit in forming, fostering and bringing Christ to full stature in the persons of all those who are entrusted to us by the Church, by Christ himself in the ministry of Catechesis.<sup>7</sup> Mary, assumed into heaven, is the principal patroness of India: we implore her help in our journey of faith.

## **Re-visioning our Catechetical Mission**

312 As the Church goes through the third millennium of life in Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit invigorates her to proclaim the

---

<sup>4</sup> CT73.

<sup>5</sup> CT73.

<sup>6</sup> St. John Paul II several times repeats in the encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, this particular attributing phrase to Mary.

<sup>7</sup> CT73.

Word boldly to the people. The faithful in India have to embark on this mission of Christ with a renewed vision and thrust. This Directory provides fundamental theological and pastoral principles from the Church's teaching and offers guidelines for the application of these principles within the catechetical mission of the Church in India. We, the members of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of India, have developed this Directory to be a source of inspiration for a renewed Catechesis in the dioceses and parishes of our country. We hope that its publication fires a new energy and a fresh commitment in our catechetical mission.

We firmly believe that the baptized are privileged members of this catechetical mission. No one who encounters Christ and knows him more can keep that knowledge secret. We must proclaim him openly and confidently testify to his ever abiding presence in our lives. Luke's description of the disciples who meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13-35) represents, in a way, the model of a Catechesis centred on the interpretation of the Scriptures.<sup>8</sup> The *Emmaus Event* indicates that Catechesis is a journey of Faith of the Pilgrim People of God. Like St. Paul, the catechists of the new millennium cry out, "woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1 Cor 9:16)! In this way, the Church will always be renewed and rejuvenated, thanks to the Word of the Lord which remains for ever (1 Pet 1:25; Isa 40:8).

---

<sup>8</sup> VD 74.





## APPENDIX

### Meaning of the terms and concepts

313 *Catechesis*: The word Catechesis is derived from the Greek word, *Katechein* meaning, “to resound,” or “to sound forth.” In Catechesis, one resounds the faith that is already there (through Baptism) in the catechized. It is a concept taken from the Catholic Church’s ancient pastoral heritage. The etymology of the word implies an oral instruction. A similar meaning is applied many times in the New Testament to the action of the Apostolic Church directed to the formation of her members. In time, the word was used to designate the teaching given by the Church. This teaching is the *Catechesis*. Thus the common term traditionally used for the ministry of teaching faith in the Catholic Church is *Catechesis*.

*Catechetics*: The term, Catechetics, refers to the systematic and scientific study of the art of Catechesis. Catechetics is thus the ‘why, what, when, where, who and how’ of deepening of the Faith.

*Catechism*: It is a systematic presentation of the knowledge and experience of faith with the help of the printed text under the guidance of the catechist. The main catechism is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

*Catechist*: Catechist is one who does the work of Catechesis. Thus the bishop, priest, religious or laypersons are all catechists. According to *Catechesi Tradendae*, the term, *catechists* belong to those *lay catechists*

in the mission lands.<sup>9</sup> The Second Vatican Council calls these lay catechists as the *co-workers of the priestly order*.<sup>10</sup> *Religion Teachers* are those who teach Faith in schools. Sunday Catechists teach catechism in the parish.<sup>11</sup>

*Catechumenate:* The term, catechumenate indicates the process by which people are brought into full communion with the Catholic Church. “The catechumenate is an extended period during which the candidates are given a suitable pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life.”<sup>12</sup>

*Education in Faith and Education to Faith:* These terms have their origin in the catechetical movement of the twentieth Century, mainly during the Kerygmatic Period. Among these, the frequently used term is education in faith.<sup>13</sup> The document of the Second Vatican Council mentions of ‘summoning to Faith and confirming in Faith.’<sup>14</sup> In many Church documents, Catechesis is described as ‘education in the Faith.’ There are also other terms used such as education of the Faith, teaching of Faith, transmission of Faith, Faith-formation, Faith-education, communication of Faith, communication in Faith and Faith journey.

*Locus, Loci (Pl.):* It refers to the environment of Catechesis. The traditional *loci* of Catechesis are family, parish and school. The emerging *loci* are Basic Ecclesial Communities, pious associations, community, or any movements.<sup>15</sup>

*Religious Education:* This term is mainly used for teaching of

---

<sup>9</sup> CT 66.

<sup>10</sup> AG 17.

<sup>11</sup> GC 4.

<sup>12</sup> RCIA 75.

<sup>13</sup> GDC 69-71; CT 18.

<sup>14</sup> CD12.

<sup>15</sup> GDC 261, 263.

catechism in the schools. Religious education is done in a multi-religious setting (schools, colleges etc.). “When students and their families become associated with Catholic schools because of the quality of education offered in the school, or for other possible reasons, catechetical activity is necessarily limited and even religious education – when possible – accentuates its cultural character.”<sup>16</sup> However, *Catechesis* and *Religious Education* are not absolutely distinct.

*Religious Instruction*: ‘Instruction’ is the process by and through which learning is caused. It is an activity basically done in educational institutions. Hence the *Religious Instructor* should be professionally qualified and competent in the field of *Religious Instruction*. The *General Directory for Catechesis* uses this term to denote Catechesis done in schools<sup>17</sup> where the focus is on learning and doctrinal content.

*Terms used in General Directory for Catechesis*: The terms used in *General Directory for Catechesis* are *Catechesis* (866 times), *Religious Instruction* (38 times), *Christian Education* (12 times) *Education in the Faith* (2 times) and *Religious Education* (3 times). The *General Directory for Catechesis* makes subtle differences among *Catechesis*, *Religious Instruction*, *Christian Education* and *Religious Education*. *Religious Instruction* and *Religious Education* are the terms preferred for *School Catechesis*.<sup>18</sup> “The relationship between *Religious Instruction* in schools and *Catechesis* is one of distinction and complementarities: “there is an absolute necessity to distinguish clearly between *Religious Instruction* and *Catechesis*.”<sup>19</sup> It mentions *Christian Education* in relation to *Family Catechesis*.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> GDC 260.

<sup>17</sup> GDC 51.

<sup>18</sup> GDC 51, 260.

<sup>19</sup> GDC 73.

<sup>20</sup> GDC 51, 76.



## THEMATIC INDEX

### A

Accompaniment - 6, 41, 87, 88, 99, 100, 106, 108, 137, 139, 141, 145, 149, 157, 158, 160, 169, 170, 171, 174, 183, 217, 218, 227, 249, 279

Adolescents - 209, 210, 211, 211, 218, 245, 246

Adults - 41, 42, 73, 123, 147, 152, 165, 167, 170, 176, 180, 201, 202, 203, 203, 204, 204, 205, 212, 214, 217, 218, 220, 225, 226, 231, 234, 245, 246, 274, 289

Aged - 248

Anthropological - 94, 125

apostles - 39, 59, 60, 61, 77, 98, 138, 146, 189, 190, 222, 224, 241, 242, 286

Apostles - 59, 104, 120, 131, 196

Apostolate - 64, 82, 83, 218, 237, 245, 253, 272, 277, 282, 288, 289

Assessments - 139, 139, 177, 177, 184

Associations and Movements - 198, 200, 252

Audio-visual - 150, 179, 179, 180, 181

Austerity - 19

### B

Baptism - 37, 39, 53, 53, 62, 66, 67, 70, 122, 200, 213, 214, 221, 222, 225, 227, 228, 249, 250, 279, 284, 297

Basic Christian Communities - 205

Beatitudes - 71, 72, 126, 126, 127, 132

Bible - 6, 41, 87, 88, 99, 100, 106, 108, 139, 141, 149, 157, 160, 169, 170, 171, 174, 183, 217, 227, 249, 279

Bishop - 6, 41, 87, 88, 99, 100, 106, 108, 139, 141, 149, 157, 160, 169, 170, 171, 174, 183, 217, 227, 249, 279

### C

Catechesis - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 23, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 58, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 81, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 110, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 138, 139, 144, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 171, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 185, 189, 190, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 211, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, 230, 231, 232, 233, 235, 238, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 248, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 260, 261, 262, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 271, 274, 278, 279, 282, 283, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 293, 294, 295, 297, 298, 299

Catechetical Activity - 2, 72, 89, 94, 206, 209, 233, 262, 262, 269, 287, 299

Catechetical Directory - 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 112

Catechetics - 6, 75, 268, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 280, 282, 283, 291, 297

Catechism - 5, 94, 95, 99, 100, 101, 103, 106, 107, 108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 124, 205, 209, 247, 266, 297

Catechism of the Catholic Church - 5, 94, 95, 99, 100, 101, 106, 111, 112, 113, 124, 205, 209, 247, 297

Catechist - 86, 99, 105, 114, 116, 117, 127, 137, 146, 155, 157, 160, 166, 169, 170, 182, 185, 191, 192, 193, 211, 212, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 232, 236, 237, 242, 246, 252, 286, 290, 291, 293, 294, 297

Catechized - 7, 39, 85, 87, 100, 120, 121, 124, 126, 127, 128, 129, 133, 137, 139, 145, 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 157, 159, 161, 162, 163, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 190, 192, 197, 198, 198, 200, 201, 202, 211, 212, 215, 216, 219, 242, 244, 245, 290, 297

Catechumenate - 70, 104, 122, 201, 205, 208, 298, 298

Catechumens - 39, 70, 100, 121, 123, 129, 224

Catholic institutions - 43, 230, 257, 259

Charism - 18, 222, 231, 237, 284

Charity - 68, 72, 76, 120, 229, 253

Children - 15, 28, 30, 30, 31, 35, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 53, 65, 102, 105, 116, 127, 132, 147, 150, 152, 155, 162, 165, 176, 183, 192, 201, 202, 203, 207, 212, 213, 214, 214, 215, 215, 216, 216, 217, 218, 220, 221, 225, 226, 227, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 235, 245, 246, 246, 247, 248, 249, 249, 250, 251, 255, 256, 259, 274, 279, 289, 290

Children of God - 53, 102, 105, 212

Christ - 1, 2, 3, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23, 38, 39, 43, 44, 46, 49, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 83, 86, 88, 93, 96, 98, 101, 103, 104, 105, 108, 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 125, 126, 127, 128, 131, 133, 137, 138, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 148, 152, 153, 155, 162, 163, 164, 165, 170, 172, 173, 178, 179, 181, 183, 184, 191, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 203, 204, 208, 211, 213, 216, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, 228, 230, 237, 245, 247, 250, 256, 257, 259, 261, 264, 268, 280, 281, 284, 285, 289, 293, 294, 295

Christian Churches - 41

Christian community - 1, 70, 73, 76, 85, 146, 149, 156, 168, 189, 190, 193, 195, 196, 198, 200, 202, 219, 264

Christian identity - 145, 288

Christian initiation - 66, 76

Christian Initiation - 70, 208, 214, 216, 226

Christian life - 3, 37, 69, 70, 76, 102, 103, 107, 114, 115, 122, 126, 132, 153, 165, 166, 167, 174, 184, 199, 227, 232, 252, 298

Church - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 23, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 53, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 128, 131, 132, 138, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 153, 154, 155, 159, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 174, 175, 176, 186, 191, 195, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 209, 211,

213, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 227, 228, 229, 231, 232, 233, 235, 236, 237, 238, 242, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 251, 253, 254, 256, 259, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 267, 268, 272, 273, 274, 276, 278, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 293, 294, 295, 297, 298

Collaboration - 12, 39, 88, 138, 235, 256, 263, 268, 276, 279, 282, 285, 288, 289, 290

Commission for Catechetics - 6, 268, 271, 272, 273, 274, 277, 280, 282, 291

Communalism - 13, 33

Communication - 14, 15, 15, 16, 30, 84, 86, 97, 125, 144, 150, 152, 154, 156, 177, 177, 178, 179, 234, 250, 254, 262, 265, 278, 283, 290, 298

Communion - 18, 19, 20, 58, 61, 62, 62, 63, 66, 66, 67, 76, 77, 78, 81, 83, 84, 86, 88, 93, 96, 103, 115, 117, 119, 121, 138, 144, 154, 180, 190, 192, 195, 197, 198, 198, 199, 200, 225, 228, 245, 249, 250, 251, 262, 264, 267, 274, 278, 280, 281, 298

Confirmation - 62, 66, 70, 222, 225, 249, 250, 284

Consecrated - 62, 68, 211, 225, 231, 232, 264

Consumerism - 28, 34, 43, 45

Conversion - 65, 70, 71, 73, 73, 76, 86, 117, 119, 122, 137, 148, 149, 163, 167, 169, 170, 171, 195, 198

Co-ordination of Catechesis - 266

Co-responsibility - 226, 242

Cosmic - 13, 19, 20

Cosmos - 16, 16, 18, 27

Creativity - 80, 111, 178, 184, 206, 209, 261, 269

Creed - 36, 39, 70, 80, 101, 101, 103, 103, 104, 109, 119, 126, 131, 132

Criminalization - vi, 35, 35

Cultural - 7, 12, 13, 15, 29, 41, 42, 61, 68, 69, 77, 81, 82, 87, 94, 101, 110, 112, 115, 118, 128, 129, 150, 151, 191, 193, 203, 206, 216, 217, 128, 219, 235, 243, 248, 263, 268, 273, 274, 277, 299

Culture - 13, 14, 15, 16, 20, 26, 30, 31, 35, 42, 59, 69, 74, 75, 81, 105, 107, 108, 123, 127, 132, 151, 154, 178, 183, 192, 193, 206, 217, 219, 225, 230, 230, 232, 234, 248, 258, 277

Cultures - 2, 13, 14, 16, 18, 38, 43, 45, 66, 69, 74, 75, 76, 84, 85, 110, 112, 117, 128, 129, 138, 139, 147, 152, 172, 176, 222, 283

## **D**

Decalogue - 101, 126, 132

Deposit of Faith - 98, 100, 111

Dialogue - 18, 41, 67, 68, 77, 78, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, 85, 88, 106, 107, 125, 139, 141, 141, 142, 145, 146, 152, 155, 157, 158, 166, 180, 208, 230, 251, 253, 259, 267, 268

Diocese - 81, 82, 111, 224, 229, 234, 254, 264, 265, 271, 272, 275, 280, 281, 283, 284, 286

Directory - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 7, 8, 12, 46, 51, 69, 73, 75, 107, 111, 112, 113, 130, 133, 190, 195, 202, 203, 204, 206, 208, 238, 242, 246, 262, 282, 286, 290, 293, 295, 299

Discernment - 19, 19, 129, 251, 290

Disciples of Jesus Christ - 69

Doctrine - 11, 80, 87, 97, 101, 105, 105, 110, 110, 111, 113, 128, 131, 142, 159, 165, 166, 167, 175, 176, 179, 253

## **E**

Easter - 119, 163, 168

Ecclesial - 3, 46, 70, 78, 86, 88, 94, 98, 99, 112, 120, 120, 121, 123, 138, 150, 180, 198, 200, 205, 209, 222, 227, 241, 262, 263, 265, 274, 275, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 293, 298

Ecumenism - xviii

Education - 3, 15, 23, 26, 26, 27, 27, 70, 76, 83, 84, 87, 102, 127, 128, 147, 150, 151, 152, 198, 200, 208, 211, 216, 217, 219, 221, 229, 236, 237, 244, 249, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 259, 284, 285, 288, 289, 298, 298, 299, 299

Environmental - 16, 94, 129, 130, 130, 269

Episcopal Conferences - 6, 8, 238

Eschatology - 118, 119

Eucharist - 66, 70, 97, 117, 119, 122, 123, 132, 165, 228, 245, 249

Evangelization - 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 23, 37, 38, 50, 63, 66, 69, 69, 71, 71, 73, 74, 74, 75, 75, 76, 81, 82, 85, 85, 108, 128, 180, 208, 215, 227, 235, 246, 247, 251, 268, 273, 280

Exodus - 163

Experiential - 88, 138, 139, 152, 159, 171, 171, 174

## **F**

Faith - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12, 23, 37, 38, 38, 41, 42, 43, 46, 49, 51, 58, 59, 62, 64, 65, 66, 66, 68, 70, 70, 71, 72, 72, 73,

73, 75, 76, 77, 77, 78, 81, 82, 82, 83, 84, 86, 86, 87, 88, 88, 89, 93, 93, 94, 95, 95, 96, 96, 97, 97, 98, 98, 99, 100, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 116, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 126, 129, 131, 132, 133, 137, 138, 139, 141, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 190, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 208, 209, 210, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 227, 229, 230, 231, 233, 234, 236, 237, 238, 243, 244, 245, 246, 249, 250, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 261, 262, 263, 264, 266, 267, 268, 272, 275, 278, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 290, 291, 293, 294, 295, 297, 298, 299

Family - 15, 18, 31, 41, 41, 42, 42, 45, 49, 86, 87, 103, 115, 132, 141, 142, 147, 150, 150, 163, 164, 193, 198, 199, 200, 201, 204, 205, 207, 209, 211, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 227, 228, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 238, 243, 246, 246, 247, 247, 248, 248, 249, 249, 250, 251, 251, 256, 257, 260, 289, 291, 298, 299

Fathers of the Church - 110

Fides qua - 93, 93

Following of Christ - 195, 198

Formation of Catechists - 6, 220, 230, 236, 265, 289

Fundamentalism - 13, 32, 32, 33, 103

## **G**

God - 2, 3, 5, 7, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 29, 30, 37, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73,



74, 75, 77, 78, 80, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 153, 156, 157, 159, 160, 163, 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 177, 179, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 189, 191, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 202, 203, 205, 207, 208, 209, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 221, 222, 223, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 233, 236, 238, 243, 246, 247, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 255, 258, 259, 263, 264, 266, 269, 272, 274, 276, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 285, 286, 287, 289, 293, 294, 295

Gospel - 11, 17, 37, 38, 39, 43, 52, 60, 61, 63, 65, 69, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 85, 87, 106, 107, 108, 118, 119, 124, 125, 128, 130, 132, 137, 142, 143, 144, 147, 153, 154, 174, 178, 181, 191, 195, 198, 200, 206, 219, 223, 224, 229, 230, 232, 233, 247, 248, 256, 257, 259, 262, 269, 285, 295

Grace - 3, 18, 23, 40, 46, 49, 53, 64, 66, 73, 78, 89, 102, 105, 119, 156, 158, 202, 213, 251, 263

Group - 8, 13, 21, 32, 33, 40, 41, 75, 146, 150, 155, 156, 157, 160, 162, 165, 167, 169, 172, 173, 176, 177, 180, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 201, 203, 206, 207, 208, 212, 213, 217, 218, 219, 252, 252, 290

## **H**

Harmony - 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 77, 138, 196, 227, 241, 268

Health care - 24, 25, 26, 219, 291

Hierarchical - 66, 94, 130, 130

Hierarchy - 115, 131

Historical - 37, 52, 95, 105, 118, 132, 138, 139, 159, 160, 165, 174, 174, 175, 175, 176, 195, 198, 273

History of Salvation - 101, 116, 131, 142, 171

History of the Church - 101, 159, 175

Holiness - 63, 183, 199, 249

Holy Fathers - 100

Holy Spirit - 2, 17, 20, 49, 52, 56, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 86, 89, 98, 99, 100, 104, 115, 118, 120, 139, 186, 195, 196, 198, 211, 216, 222, 224, 261, 262, 279, 284, 286, 293, 294

Homily - 70, 123, 123, 124, 230, 244

Hope - 8, 12, 42, 54, 55, 58, 65, 66, 75, 79, 121, 141, 149, 156, 163, 181, 191, 196, 227, 255, 293, 294, 295

Human person - 15, 35, 44, 45, 67, 88, 104, 115, 125, 232, 234

Human rights - 24, 27, 79, 198, 202

## **I**

illiteracy - 24, 26, 26, 30, 81, 233

Incarnation - 56, 68, 118, 119, 208, 268

Inculturation - 14, 43, 44, 67, 69, 85, 122, 128, 129, 132, 147, 268, 268

India - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 50, 51, 61, 77, 81, 82, 84, 85, 99, 103, 104, 109, 113, 115, 117, 118, 123, 124, 137, 138, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 170, 171, 172, 173, 176, 178, 182, 192, 193, 197, 202, 204, 216, 217, 222, 227, 228,

235, 236, 241, 242, 245, 252, 255, 258,  
259, 260, 262, 263, 264, 266, 267, 268,  
273, 274, 276, 277, 280, 283, 285, 286,  
289, 291, 294, 295

Indian Church - 7

Inequality - 23, 26, 27, 36, 233

Infants - 30, 30, 39, 43

Injustice - 23, 27, 28, 29, 36, 44, 127,  
192

Instruction in schools - 299

Interiority - 14, 17, 18, 147, 183, 218

## J

Jesus Christ - 1, 17, 23, 38, 44, 54, 56,  
58, 59, 62, 64, 65, 67, 69, 70, 73, 76, 81,  
93, 98, 101, 104, 108, 115, 116, 117,  
118, 120, 126, 128, 131, 141, 164, 191,  
192, 193, 199, 200, 204, 211, 222, 223,  
237, 250

Justice - 19, 27, 30, 34, 36, 44, 45, 50,  
51, 58, 67, 72, 78, 85, 88, 105, 119, 206,  
209, 212, 215, 229, 258, 283, 285, 289

## K

Kerygma - 72, 190

Kingdom of God - 12, 51, 55, 56, 57, 62,  
69, 117, 118, 119, 127, 213, 227, 229,  
272

Knowledge of Faith - 108, 126, 156

Knowledge of God - 78, 137

## L

Laity - 14, 61, 64, 82, 82, 83, 201, 221,  
229, 232, 232, 233, 235, 238, 245, 249,  
250, 264, 265, 278, 284

Language - 11, 13, 33, 39, 72, 73, 88, 95,  
98, 103, 108, 129, 132, 133, 147, 151,  
154, 154, 160, 161, 165, 166, 167, 172,  
176, 177, 179, 180, 181, 202, 209, 225,  
244, 277, 283

Lay leaders - 38, 39, 234

Liberation - 57, 86, 87, 127, 128, 231,  
232, 268, 285

Liberative - 94, 115, 127, 143, 268, 289

Liberty - 79, 80

Liturgical - 3, 70, 6, 69, 70, 94, 95, 97,  
98, 102, 104, 114, 115, 121, 121, 122,  
122, 123, 123, 124, 126, 138, 139, 149,  
151, 159, 165, 167, 167, 168, 168, 169,  
170, 171, 176, 183, 184, 185, 205, 244,  
251, 252, 256, 258, 267, 272, 272, 273,  
288, 290

Liturgy - 68, 68, 70, 102, 103, 103, 104,  
105, 108, 115, 122, 122, 123, 123, 124,  
132, 149, 159, 164, 166, 167, 168, 168,  
169, 170, 171, 205, 212, 225, 244, 251,  
260, 279, 282, 289

Loci of Catechesis - 198, 227, 291, 298

Lord's Prayer - 106

Love of God - 62, 126, 126, 132, 174,  
193, 207, 209, 215, 222

## M

Magisterium - 7, 11, 98, 109, 113, 162,  
166, 205, 238

Marriage - 42, 42, 205, 211, 227, 229,  
229, 247, 249, 252, 260

Marriage preparation courses - 249

Mary; Blessed Virgin - 120, 294

Mary, the Catechist - 294

Master; Jesus as the - 86, 191, 193, 277,  
283

Maturity of faith - 71

Media - 15, 16, 31, 34, 41, 42, 45, 84,  
105, 130, 139, 150, 151, 177, 179, 179,  
180, 180, 181, 202, 233, 264, 266, 279,  
283, 285

Memorization - 107, 139, 177, 183, 183,  
184

Memory - 114, 119, 182, 183, 184

Mentality - 33, 44, 172, 181, 182, 191,  
193, 202, 266

Message - 7, 14, 14, 38, 40, 45, 64, 65,  
72, 73, 87, 88, 89, 89, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98,  
99, 100, 101, 108, 111, 112, 115, 115,  
117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 124, 125, 127,  
128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 137, 138,  
142, 143, 144, 147, 148, 152, 153, 154,  
157, 158, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165,  
167, 168, 169, 170, 173, 174, 176, 177,  
178, 179, 181, 182, 184, 191, 192, 192,  
193, 203, 208, 209, 212, 235, 242, 257,  
261, 285, 289

Method - 8, 49, 73, 93, 96, 133, 138,  
149, 161, 162, 178, 185, 216, 285

Methodological - 94, 115, 132, 133

Ministry - 1, 2, 3, 3, 4, 6, 7, 20, 23, 27,  
39, 50, 57, 57, 66, 69, 69, 71, 73, 81, 86,  
93, 99, 109, 110, 112, 113, 116, 125,  
139, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150,  
158, 166, 171, 176, 185, 186, 198, 202,  
217, 218, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226,  
231, 233, 237, 238, 241, 241, 242, 259,  
262, 262, 263, 266, 267, 268, 268, 277,  
278, 279, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 288,  
289, 293, 294, 297

Mission - 1, 4, 5, 7, 7, 14, 18, 19, 38, 46,  
46, 49, 49, 50, 51, 51, 52, 52, 53, 53, 54,  
54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 59, 60, 60, 61, 61, 62,  
63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 69, 71, 72, 76, 77,  
77, 79, 81, 81, 82, 86, 87, 88, 89, 89,  
124, 150, 164, 191, 197, 199, 200, 200,

204, 224, 227, 228, 232, 233, 235, 242,  
243, 247, 250, 252, 253, 257, 261, 262,  
263, 264, 266, 267, 268, 280, 281, 282,  
284, 285, 287, 288, 290, 293, 294, 294,  
295, 298

Missionary - 3, 4, 5, 37, 38, 39, 51, 52,  
52, 53, 60, 61, 63, 65, 65, 69, 71, 74, 87,  
94, 114, 115, 124, 124, 125, 151, 221,  
228, 234, 235, 235, 236, 246, 247, 251,  
287, 290

Morality - 39, 70, 97, 101, 103, 105, 109,  
128

Mystery - 2, 3, 18, 19, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68,  
75, 84, 86, 97, 102, 105, 107, 109, 116,  
117, 120, 131, 137, 142, 148, 163, 165,  
166, 167, 179, 192

## **N**

New Evangelization - 6, 66, 246, 273

New Testament - 55, 60, 83, 142, 143,  
175, 297

Non-Believers – 78, 88

## **O**

Old Testament - 51, 52, 55, 101, 141,  
142, 143

Orders - 64, 225, 275

## **P**

Parents - 15, 31, 42, 45, 127, 150, 206,  
207, 210, 214, 215, 221, 227, 227, 228,  
229, 229, 230, 231, 245, 246, 247, 249,  
250, 251, 255, 256, 257, 259, 259, 260,  
274, 283, 286, 289, 290

Parish - 42, 45, 83, 86, 103, 124, 125,  
150, 198, 199, 200, 201, 205, 214, 215,  
218, 219, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230,

234, 234, 235, 238, 242, 243, 243, 244, 244, 245, 249, 251, 252, 256, 257, 260, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 271, 276, 281, 283, 285, 287, 287, 288, 289, 289, 290, 291, 298

Pastoral care - 4, 37, 41, 208, 221, 247, 280

Pastoral Plan - 263, 264, 265, 265, 266

Patristic - 98, 100, 101

Pedagogy - 7, 7, 49, 109, 135, 137, 137, 138, 138, 139, 139, 141, 141, 142, 143, 144, 144, 145, 145, 146, 146, 147, 151, 152, 157, 158, 158, 168, 170, 171, 176, 185, 202, 234, 242

Penance - 65

Pentecost - 17, 50, 61, 118, 119, 168, 294

People of God - 2, 68, 80, 97, 99, 100, 109, 120, 137, 175, 216, 233, 243, 264, 274, 276, 278, 280, 286, 294, 295

Pluralism - 33

Pope - 11, 61, 62, 63, 71, 79, 81, 83, 96, 107, 111, 122, 124, 129, 130, 230, 244

Popular devotion - 44

Poverty - 23, 23, 24, 27, 28, 36, 54, 72, 79, 81, 88, 154, 192, 228

Prayer - 3, 20, 53, 70, 96, 100, 101, 102, 102, 103, 103, 106, 106, 108, 109, 114, 132, 139, 146, 151, 152, 153, 162, 169, 170, 185, 185, 186, 190, 205, 214, 215, 216, 218, 222, 225, 227, 228, 250, 250, 251, 252, 253

Preaching - 40, 53, 55, 56, 69, 71, 74, 75, 107, 109, 117, 119, 189, 212, 223

Pre-adolescence - 202

Priests - 6, 39, 65, 82, 82, 201, 221, 225, 225, 226, 227, 229, 233, 238, 283, 286

Primary Proclamation - 69, 73

Process - 3, 4, 26, 57, 61, 69, 71, 73, 74, 75, 85, 108, 143, 145, 146, 151, 160, 169, 171, 172, 177, 178, 181, 182, 183, 203, 209, 213, 214, 254, 255, 262, 264, 268, 281, 288, 298, 299

Proclamation - 2, 23, 45, 53, 65, 65, 69, 69, 73, 74, 75, 76, 101, 118, 125, 169, 172, 215, 223, 268, 289

Profession of Faith - 102, 103

## **R**

Reconciliation - 66, 81, 175, 212, 249, 289

Religions - 12, 21, 21, 33, 41, 43, 77, 79, 85, 88, 100, 205, 222

Religious - 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 17, 18, 20, 21, 21, 23, 26, 30, 32, 32, 33, 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 52, 54, 61, 78, 79, 80, 80, 81, 82, 83, 87, 95, 97, 100, 103, 104, 108, 109, 118, 124, 125, 127, 128, 129, 138, 139, 150, 152, 159, 174, 183, 184, 191, 198, 201, 202, 203, 207, 208, 209, 216, 221, 227, 228, 229, 231, 231, 232, 232, 233, 234, 237, 238, 244, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 257, 258, 259, 260, 263, 264, 268, 268, 273, 274, 275, 278, 279, 283, 284, 285, 286, 290, 297, 299, 299

Religious sects - 41

Resurrection - 56, 58, 61, 88, 105, 116, 118, 165, 192

Revelation - 16, 18, 56, 58, 60, 67, 87, 95, 95, 96, 100, 104, 104, 105, 119, 141, 142, 143, 144, 149, 160, 164, 166, 168, 169, 171, 174, 192, 208, 224

Rite of Christian Initiation - xix

## **S**

Sacraments - 3, 66, 68, 70, 76, 101, 101, 102, 103, 103, 104, 105, 109, 117, 122, 123, 132, 151, 153, 168, 211, 212, 216, 222, 225, 226, 245

Saints - 40, 98, 99, 108, 109, 120, 123, 149, 166, 167, 211

salvation - 55, 56, 58, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 77, 78, 78, 81, 83, 98, 101, 107, 116, 117, 118, 118, 119, 127, 131, 141, 142, 144, 146, 147, 154, 160, 161, 163, 164, 165, 171, 173, 179, 181, 184, 191, 196, 197, 235, 245, 264

Salvation History - 58, 63, 118, 118, 119, 142, 144, 160, 161, 163, 164, 171, 173, 184

Salvific - 94, 115, 118, 118, 257

Scheduled Castes - 24, 29, 218

Scheduled Tribes - 24, 29

School - 43, 45, 103, 150, 201, 208, 213, 214, 227, 228, 230, 245, 253, 254, 256, 257, 259, 268, 283, 285, 289, 298, 299, 299

School Catechisms - 285

Science - 27, 98, 112, 138, 139, 144, 157, 233

Scripture - 7, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100, 109, 110, 113, 115, 117, 132, 139, 166, 172, 174, 211, 244, 251, 252, 253

Second Vatican Council - 4, 11, 17, 37, 40, 46, 49, 57, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 71, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 87, 96, 99, 101, 113, 122, 142, 197, 223, 225, 235, 246, 248, 263, 274, 278, 281, 283, 288, 298

Secular - 14, 32, 77, 233, 274

Secularism - 33

Signs of the times - 11, 38, 176, 275

Silence - 20, 20, 106, 123, 147

Sin - 57, 83, 87, 119, 127, 192, 207

Situation - 12, 13, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 34, 36, 37, 37, 40, 45, 46, 46, 49, 73, 81, 93, 112, 118, 129, 159, 161, 172, 191, 204, 208, 222, 229, 233, 234, 238, 241, 261, 262, 263, 276, 281, 283, 289

Small Christian Communities - 82, 251, 286, 291

Social communications - 15, 84

Social Teachings - 154

Society - 15, 32, 33, 34, 35, 42, 44, 57, 61, 64, 77, 78, 82, 83, 84, 86, 87, 105, 116, 124, 126, 127, 130, 145, 154, 155, 158, 182, 200, 206, 207, 209, 213, 217, 218, 219, 227, 231, 232, 233, 243, 247, 251, 252, 252, 253, 260, 268

Socio-cultural - 42, 191, 193, 263

Son of God - 40, 196

Sources for Catechesis - 99

sui iuris Churches - 3, 268

Sunday Catechists - 234, 234, 235, 290, 298

Superstition - 44, 97

## **T**

Task of Catechesis - 116, 212

Teacher - 20, 54, 141, 143, 192

Teaching - 1, 11, 39, 53, 54, 55, 59, 72, 73, 75, 78, 80, 93, 96, 97, 100, 102, 108, 109, 111, 113, 117, 132, 138, 143, 147, 149, 150, 157, 175, 179, 189, 190, 191, 195, 212, 230, 243, 257, 274, 287, 288, 294, 295, 297, 298

Theology - 18, 62, 87, 113, 115, 165, 166, 167, 205

Tradition - 20, 21, 37, 51, 52, 83, 93, 94, 97, 98, 98, 99, 99, 100, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 165, 166, 172, 174, 184, 246,

Transmission - 60, 73, 100, 108, 223, 250, 298

Trinitarian - 94, 115, 116, 199

Trinity - 16, 115, 116, 192, 216

## U

Unemployment - 23, 24, 31, 36, 43

Unity - 33, 66, 67, 72, 78, 84, 110, 113, 117, 121, 146, 150, 155, 189, 196, 200, 203, 245, 268

## V

Values - 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 26, 27, 28, 32, 44, 45, 56, 69, 75, 78, 79, 81, 87, 88, 124, 129, 132, 143, 147, 153, 173, 182, 192, 193, 203, 209, 210, 210, 212, 215, 219, 229, 230, 232, 248, 256, 257, 259, 262, 269

Violence - 19, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 45, 192, 214, 233

Vocation - 14, 43, 45, 61, 63, 79, 88, 141, 145, 202, 204, 205, 208, 213, 221, 222, 226, 231, 233, 237, 243, 246, 280, 281, 282

## W

Witness - 3, 19, 63, 68, 71, 72, 74, 75, 75, 76, 77, 87, 98, 100, 115, 120, 124, 146, 149, 150, 186, 196, 197, 199, 218, 219, 221, 222, 224, 227, 229, 230, 237, 246, 250, 253, 258, 259, 264, 278, 284

Women - 28, 31, 31, 40, 41, 42, 71, 83, 83, 98, 195, 205, 218, 222, 226, 229, 231, 232, 233, 237, 253, 284

Word of God - 5, 7, 64, 65, 69, 86, 87, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100, 106, 110, 111, 115, 116, 118, 123, 138, 147, 149, 153, 159, 160, 163, 166, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 177, 181, 182, 238, 251, 259

Words and Deeds - 58, 119, 172

## Y

Youcat - 5, 94, 106, 108, 109, 124

young people - 30, 42, 42, 108, 109, 132, 152, 155, 170, 176, 206, 206, 207, 208, 208, 209, 210, 225, 228, 231, 233, 246, 249, 255

Youth - 5, 5, 30, 30, 31, 37, 41, 43, 108, 109, 147, 152, 165, 202, 206, 207, 208, 208, 209, 220, 231, 234, 245, 256, 257, 258, 274, 283, 285, 289