

PETER TIRPÁK

**CATECHESIS  
AS A VEHICLE  
OF PROCLAMATION**

**AVALON**

Kraków 2021



**PETER TIRPÁK**

**CATECHESIS  
AS A VEHICLE  
OF PROCLAMATION**

## **Catechesis as a Vehicle of Proclamation**

### **Author:**

doc. ThDr. Peter Tirpák, PhD.

### **Reviewers:**

Mons. Dr.h.c. prof. ThDr. Jozef Jarab, PhD.

Prof. dr hab. Elżbieta Osewska

Prof. ThDr. PaedDr. Ing. Gabriel Paľa, PhD.

Dr hab. Andrzej Kielian

### **Publisher:**

Wydawnictwo Avalon Sp. z o.o.

Kraków

2021

ISBN 978-83-7730-565-2

## **OBSAH**

ABBREVIATIONS .....	7
INTRODUCTION .....	9
1 CATECHESIS – A VEHICLE OF PROCLAMATION .....	11
1.1 The Importance and the Aim of Catechesis .....	11
1.2 The Correlation between Catechesis and Kerygma .....	15
1.3 The Principles of Catechesis – Fidelity to God and Fidelity to the Content of Faith .....	18
1.4 The Christological Focus of Catechesis .....	19
1.5 The Link between the Church, Sacraments and Catechesis .....	21
1.6 Occasional, Didactic and Sacramental Catechesis .....	22
1.7 Distant and Immediate Preparation for Catechesis .....	25
2 AGENTS AND METHODS OF CATECHESIS .....	27
2.1 The Proclaimer of the Kerygma and Catechesis .....	27
2.2 The Profile of the Catechist and Those to Be Catechized .	30
2.3 The Theological and Pedagogical Reflection in Catechesis .....	31
2.4 Catechesis and the Word of God .....	33
2.5 Divine and Human Words in Catechesis .....	34
3 THE ART OF WORD AND SPEECH IN CATECHESIS .....	37
3.1 Using Speech in Catechesis .....	38
3.2 Selected Principles of Speech .....	39
3.3 The Language of Jesus Christ, the Church and Faith .....	42
3.4 The Biblical Language .....	46
3.5 The Theological Language .....	49
3.6 The Liturgical Language .....	51
4 FORMS OF CATECHESIS .....	55
4.1 Kerygmatic Catechesis .....	56
4.2 Anthropological Catechesis .....	60
4.3 Prophetic (Liberation) Catechesis .....	65
4.4 Biblical Catechesis and Working with the Text .....	69

4.5 Liturgical Catechesis .....	71
4.6 Catechumenal Catechesis .....	73
4.7 Factual and Existential Catechesis .....	78
4.8 Catechesis and Renewal of Popular Devotion .....	79
<b>5 LOCI OF CATECHESIS .....</b>	<b>83</b>
5.1 Catechesis in a School Setting .....	84
5.1.1 The aim and tasks of didactics .....	85
5.1.2 The concept of teaching and the development of catechizing .....	86
5.1.3 School catechesis .....	88
5.2 Catechesis in a Family Setting.....	93
5.3 Parish Catechesis .....	97
5.3.1 An outline of parish catechesis .....	99
5.3.2 A project of parish catechesis .....	101
5.4 Catechesis for the Disabled and the Handicapped .....	103
5.5 Catechesis of the Marginalized and Different Groups ...	103
5.6 Urban and Rural Catechesis .....	105
5.7 Evangelization and Catechetical Instruction of the Roma .....	107
5.8 Formation and Catechetical Instruction in Armed Forces and Units.....	109
5.9 Catechesis in Relation to New Movements and Organizations.....	111
<b>6 EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS– BRINGING LIGHT TO DARKNESS.....</b>	<b>115</b>
6.1 The Gospel – the Heart of Proclamation .....	117
6.2 The Magisterium of the Church Calls for Evangelization.....	120
6.2.1 Documents of the Second Vatican Council .....	121
6.2.2 Papal documents .....	129
6.2.3 Documents of the Dicasteries .....	136
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>141</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, <i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> , 1965
AG	Second Vatican Council, Decree on Missionary Activity in the Church <i>Ad Gentes</i> , 1965
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CCEO	The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches
ChD	Second Vatican Council, Decree Concerning the Pastoral office of Bishops in the Church, <i>Christus Dominus</i> , 1965
CT	John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, <i>Catechesi Tradendae</i> , 1979
DV	Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation <i>Dei Verbum</i> , 1965
EN	Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, <i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> , 1975
GDC	General Directory for Catechesis
GE	Second Vatican Council, Declaration on Education, <i>Gravissimus Educationis</i> , 1965
GES	Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, <i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , 1965
LG	Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church <i>Lumen Gentium</i> , 1964
SC	Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy <i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i> , 1963





## INTRODUCTION

In 2020, Pope Francis addressed the faithful in a series of nine catecheses in which he reflected upon the healing the world. The title is rather appropriate, since all catecheses were delivered in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic. In the ninth catechesis entitled *“Preparing the future together with Jesus who saves and heals”*, Pope Francis reminded us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. He emphasised that “the return to normality” that the world calls for must not be the return to the old normality sick with injustice and inequality. The restoration should strive for “the normality of the kingdom of God”. “To emerge from the pandemic, we must find the cure not only for the coronavirus”, the Pope accentuated, “but also for the great human and socio-economic viruses. They must not be concealed by whitewashing them so that they cannot be seen...” It must be the cure of the personal and social “tissue” through the virtues of faith, hope, and love. Instrumental to the healing of society is catechesis that helps the faithful to mature in faith.

As we entered the new millennium, Saint John Paul II called for “Duc in altum!” With this appeal, St. John Paul II was preparing the Church to see new realities in terms of proclamation and reception of the Good News. The appeal to “put out into the deep” (Lk 5:4) is an invitation to rediscover the Gospel, two thousand years old and yet still new. The one whom the Apostles called Rabbi (Master) – Jesus Christ - the first and supreme proclaimer of the Good News, shows us “in his own language and through signs” to the depths of our souls so that we can discover the constant work of the Holy Spirit that wishes to restore the image of God in humanity. He is the initiator and creator of holiness. There is no salvation work that would have not originated in Christ as the highest source. We are constantly guided by His power; whenever we feel the pain of the sins that we have committed and repent, or whenever we turn to Him in the child-like trust. We have all received grace and love from His fullness. Through its exterior forms (sacraments, rites, and catechesis) the Church brings people closer to God, but Jesus Christ is the one who inserts the interior effect that brings about transformation into God’s likeness. This is the very purpose

of every catechesis in which Christ works through the Word and through man whose faith is being strengthened upon hearing the Word. May the monograph you are about to read accompany you on your journey of personal rumination on God's closeness in the same way Jesus walked along the Emmaus disciples and *opened their eyes* so they recognized that He was indeed among them.

the author

## 1 CATECHESIS – A VEHICLE OF PROCLAMATION

To study and then educate in a particular area of knowledge requires to fully grasp the essence and fundamentals of an individual scientific discipline. To understand philosophy one must develop logical and critical thinking first in order to progress towards further research into complexities of human existence. Theology too is complemented by other areas of human knowledge that contribute to its deeper understanding. The same can be said about catechetics that forms an integral part of pastoral theology. This chapter intends to specify the terms and concepts that are essential for further understanding of historical contexts of development of catechesis and for accepting modern tools used in catechesis.

### 1.1 The Importance and the Aim of Catechesis

Proclaiming the Gospel to all people is a primary and natural task of the Church. In doing so, the Church expresses her true nature. Following the first stages of evangelization, catechesis arouses and develops the initial faith; it facilitates and deepens maturation of the evangelized and it is closely linked with the initiation into the Christian life. This organized and systematic transmission of the Christian teaching should take place in a process of mutual communication in which the Good News that is being proclaimed requires a personal response.<sup>1</sup>

Catechesis is one form of proclamation of God's Word. The goal of catechesis is to revive the faith among people and make it living and active through proper instruction. Catechesis just as evangelization brings both communities and individual Christians to maturity in faith. The catechetical function of the Church is very complex and it is accomplished through a variety of forms: individual or community; spontaneous or organized; occasional or systematic. It may take a form of instruction, encouragement, witness, reflection, prophecy and so on.

---

<sup>1</sup> GNERRE, C.: *Il catechismo del pallone*. Pessano con Bornago : Mimep-Docete, p. 43.

Catechesis is an essential moment in the whole process of evangelization: it is a moment of the first proclamation or the initial evangelization and as such presupposes the first kerygmatic proclamation that initiates conversion.

Catechesis is not just a mere religious instruction nor can it be reduced to presentation of religious knowledge. Catechesis stems from and builds upon the kerygma, which is explained and interpreted to those who already believe and want to deepen their faith. Activation directs those being catechized to their free response and engages the whole person.<sup>2</sup> The term catechesis comes from the Greek word “*katecheo*” which literally means to sound through, to echo, to resound. Other related words “*kateche*, *katechein*, *katechezis*” mean to sound from above, to speak, to echo, to sound a thing in one’s ear.

Figuratively, catechesis also means a way of instruction when the instructor’s word is a response to questions that resonate in a learner. It is a sort of mutual and reciprocal interior response. In his first baptismal instruction, St. John Chrysostom accentuated that the word of the one speaking must always echo in the listener’s heart. *“For I do not speak only that you may hear, but that you may remember what I said and give me proof of it by your deeds; rather, you must give proof to God, who knows your secret thoughts. This is why my discourse is called a catechesis, so that even when I am not here my words may echo in your minds.”*<sup>3</sup>

Catechesis has been one of the essential missions of the Church from the days of its inception. It is a dynamic process of preaching the message about the mystery of salvation realised by God. The Church takes the task of catechesis very seriously and constantly seeks the proper ways of preaching a joyful message of Jesus Christ in order to arouse in the catechized a response to faith and enable them to form an intimate bond with Christ. Since the Second Vatican Council, the process of catechizing has been developing rather dynamically. It should be made clear that catechesis must be aimed

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. KONGREGÁCIA PRE KLERIKOV: *Všeobecné direktórium pre katechizáciu*. Trnava : Spolok svätého Vojtecha, 1999, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> VASIL, C.: *Katechéza včera a dnes*. <http://www.zoe.sk/?citaren&id=43> (13.2.2010).

at integral formation rather than mere instruction. It must act as a means of arousing true conversion.

It is of utmost importance today to aim catechesis on all groups of population. The former Communist regime and elements of agnosticism and secularism in our society have left a permanent imprint on people. Being ignorant of the truths of Christian faith and disinterested in Christian life detaches them from the saving faith and leaves them with vague notions that are often grounded in dubious religious beliefs. This leads to pessimism, which, if coupled with serious personal problems, might drive people into despair or even to suicide. But if they live under the wings of the Church in a hope of eternal life, their way of life will change dramatically as they enter the kingdom of God. The one who believes knows that only with Christ and in Christ can we defeat the power of sin and overcome death.<sup>4</sup>

In an attempt to define catechesis in a broader sense of the word, we would say that catechesis is a specific activity of the Church that brings the baptized closer to God in order to strengthen and deepen their faith. In a more narrow sense, catechesis is a religious instruction that nourishes the faith, religious lecturing, or an activity in the catechumenate.

Catechesis is a systematic and organic process. Being systematic means a gradual revelation of the salvific mystery just as God revealed Himself to people in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ teaches his disciples slowly and gradually too. Catechists too should ensure gradual initiation into the mystery of salvation. When referring to the organic nature of catechesis it means to look at it in its entirety. To catechize family only occasionally does not serve the purpose. Catechesis should be more than education and more than theoretical narration. It should be a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.<sup>5</sup> How can one follow someone they have never encountered? Answering the existential questions:

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ZOZULAK, J.: *Katechetické poslanie Cirkvi*. Prešov : Pravoslávna bohoslovecká fakulta, 2001, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> KIELIAN, A. - KOWALCZYK, J.: *Duch przyszłości Kościoła. Nowa ewangelizacja w ujęciu Jana Pawła II i Synodu Biskupów* (2012), In: *Studia Katechetyczne*. Warszawa : Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, 10 (2014) s. 183.

*“what’s the purpose of my life?”* and *“why am I right here, right now?”* is a fundament of every catechesis. Through catechesis, we not only teach, we also preach; we inform as well as ignite. It is therefore essential to constantly rethink and reassess methods and means of expression used in catechetical instruction. If there is no goal and purpose (of life or catechesis), there is no path. Every catechetical programme must have a clearly defined goal and be aimed at concrete recipients.

**In the Scriptures, catechesis is defined as:**

- *systematic* formation and perseverance in faith – 2 Sol 1:3-4;
- *formation in faith and for faith* (catechesis is not mere “instruction” before the reception of the sacraments) – Col 1:9-12;
- a means of *arousing true conversion* in attitudes, opinions and values (Apostle Philip and Ethiopian – the eunuch) – Acts 8:26-39;
- a *locus (a place) of encounter between a person and God* – Jn 8:1-11.
- The aforementioned tell us that catechesis is a systematic formation in faith (and for faith) that leads to conversion of a candidate and a place where the person encounters God.

**The aim of catechesis in the light of the Scriptures:**

- is to arouse, strengthen and nourish faith in a person – *“I speak to sensible people. Judge for yourselves what I say...”* – 1 Cor 10:15;
- the primary aim is not only to transmit knowledge, but to arouse a response of faith – *“Show me your faith without deed, and I will show you my faith by my deeds”* – James 2:18;
- the definite aim of catechesis is to form a communion with God – *communio* – new creation – *“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come...”* – 2 Cor 5:17;

- to gain an understanding of the ultimate meaning of life – *“For whoever wants to save their life, will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me, will find it” – Matt 16:25 .*

To sum up, catechesis should bring the candidate to conscious participation in the liturgy and celebration of the sacraments, and create a climate for personal and communal prayer. It should call for perfection (in God’s image and according to His likeness) and missionary vocation in which you *give what you have freely received* (cf. Matt 10:8).

## 1.2 The Correlation between Catechesis and Kerygma

For a person to be born into a new life, he or she needs to hear *the kerygma* that announces Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead. When the person accepts, gets to know, and encounters the living Jesus and experiences salvation through kerygmatic proclamation, only then can we come in with catechesis and begin to teach and form that person. Today, we keep making the same mistake – we tend to reverse the two. We are trying to feed the one who has not been born yet. Instead of proclaiming the kerygma, we catechize. We want people to follow Jesus and ask them to observe some rules. But how could they if they had not yet encountered Jesus? Our proclamation must not rest on a shaky foundation. The cornerstone of our proclamation is the living Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead. Jesus was the best teacher and the best and supreme evangelizer. He proclaimed the kingdom of God in which God is the merciful Father who loves every single person. That was Jesus’ initial message. People experienced His love so they have come to believe. They started to follow Him and Jesus taught them. The proclamation of the kerygma must always precede catechesis.<sup>6</sup>

Kerygma is a proclamation of salvific mystery. The term comes from the ancient Greek word κήρυγμα – proclamation, message, preaching, good news. In a non-biblical context, kerygma means:

---

<sup>6</sup> IRSÁK, M.: *Kerygma a katechéza*. <http://www.koinonia.sk/sk/rubrika/temy/cyklus-prednasok-o-evangelizacii/kerygma-a-katecheza/> (28.10.2011).

a) *echo of the voice (kerýssein)* – to proclaim as a herald;

b) *content of the proclaimed news* – what must be learnt. The content of the kerygma is:

- God's deeds in salvation history;
- death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- proclamation of the Kingdom of God.

A kerygmatic aspect of witnessing is a dimension that is a source of freshness and novelty and must be a permanent element of every Christian preaching. It creates a community that experiences the richness of life in Christian faith. Announcing the coming of crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ has become the kerygma – the Good News for everybody since it proclaims that the death of our being, slavery of egoism and passions was overcome by the Risen Christ who became *κύριος* over all creation and over all that hinders a person from being happy and living in communion with God.<sup>7</sup> The following passages from Sacred Scripture confirm our introduction of the kerygma:

- *The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and now something greater than Jonas is here!* - Matt 12:41 or *The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and now something greater than Jonas is here!* - Lk 11:32.
- *For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.* - 1 Cor 1:21.
- *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power* - 1 Cor 2:4.
- *And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.* - 1 Cor 15:14.
- *Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my Gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in*

---

<sup>7</sup> KYSELICA, J.: *Obnova farnosti cez neokatechumenát*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1998, p. 97.



*keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past. - Rom 16:25.*

- *...and which now at his appointed season he has brought to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour. - Tit 1:3.*
- *But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. - 2 Tim 4:17.*

The content of the kerygma must be in harmony with the very nature of the Christian message and the basic elements of Christian faith. The Second Vatican Council introduced the notion of hierarchy of truths. Karl Rahner established a principle of what ought to be proclaimed first.

1. *The Risen and Present Christ* – is the central theme that keeps the Church alive. The Church is alive from proclamation of this fact and from faith.
2. *The Scriptures interpreted for the current situation* – the interpretation is to be based on three aspects: it must live the Revelation, it must address the present times (and its people) and must be prophetic (the current state of the Church, society and humanity is subjected to in-depth scrutiny in the prospect of history)
3. *Existential situations* – it is not just a transmission of knowledge or moral encouragement. Proclamation is not a mere word about grace and salvation. It is also a word of grace and salvation.

### 1.3 The Principles of Catechesis – Fidelity to God and Fidelity to the Content of Faith

Catechesis originates in faith and brings to faith. In an act of faith, just as in any other conscious human action, we must discern what the act of faith specifies – *the content and object of faith* and what the act of faith realizes – *the interior principle of faith, “the light” of faith*. It is important for the catechist to acknowledge God’s work and His capacity to enter into the lives of humans.

Fidelity to God is fulfilled through a continuous familiarization with the revealed texts (Sacred Scripture) and a constant going back to the sources. Being faithful to God, the catechist must also be attentive to “pedagogy” through which God revealed Himself to His people. Concreteness, progressiveness, and adaptability are all typical features of divine pedagogy. *Concreteness* means that God does not offer a doctrine; the divine plan of Revelation is realized by deeds and words that God explained in a proper manner using narratives and parables. *Progressiveness* means that God reveals Himself progressively and in stages through concrete images that were realized gradually and found their fullness in Christ. The principle of *adaptability* of divine pedagogy refers to God speaking to His people through events and words they understand based on the type of culture in which they are immersed. To apply the principle of adaptability in catechesis, we must take into account the age, culture and language differences. This presupposes maintaining fidelity to man. Fidelity to God requires of catechists to make a room for God, Christ, and the Church so that they know when to withdraw, wait for, and respect the action of the Holy Spirit. They ought to be patient when it comes to seeing the fruits of their work. The Church grows in patience and hope while respecting dignity of a human person. Respecting human dignity means to be accepted by men and women of our times.

Fidelity to the content of the faith requires the catechist to be acquainted with the content of the teachings of the Catholic Church. This is an essential prerequisite for lay people to obtain a catechetical mission conferred upon them by the eparch (bishop) of a particular eparchy (diocese). All catechists must therefore acquire at

least elementary theological education, constantly broaden their knowledge in theological disciplines (as a part of permanent formation of both priests and lay people provided by methodology and pedagogy centres and other institutions) and be open to guidance from the universal Church and their bishop. If catechesis is to be true to the entire content of the Catholic faith, it must be Christocentric and Trinitarian, ecclesiological, sacramental and using biblical and liturgical language.

#### 1.4 The Christological Focus of Catechesis

One of the essential documents of the Church's Magisterium reveals that there is only one teacher in catechesis and that is Jesus Christ. Saint John Paul II says that at the heart of every catechesis is Jesus Christ - *"the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth"* (Jn 1:14) who suffered and died for us on the Cross and who now, after rising is living with us forever. Jesus who is *"the way and the truth and the life"* (Jn 14:6). To live a Christian life means to follow Jesus Christ (*sequela Christi*). Using an expression dear to Saint Paul, the fundamental object of catechesis is "the mystery of Christ". To catechize means to lead a person to explore the mystery from all angles: to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery... To grasp, together with all the Lord's holy people, how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Ef 3:9,18). It means to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfilment in that Person. It is to seek to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by him as they both conceal and reveal his mystery. In this context, the definite aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us participate in the life of the Most Holy Trinity.

*Christocentricity in catechesis* means that what is transmitted by catechesis is not the truth that comes from some other teacher; it is the teaching of Jesus Christ, the truth that He communicates, or more precisely the Truth that He is (cf. Jn 14:6). It should be noted that in catechesis Christ, the Incarnate Word and Son of God is taught; everything else taught with reference to Him. It is Jesus Christ alone who teaches – anyone else does so to the extent that they are a Christ’s spokesperson, enabling Christ to teach with His lips.<sup>8</sup> Regardless of their levels of responsibility within the Church, all catechists must accurately convey the message of Christ’s teaching and life in their own instruction and daily conduct. They will not draw attention to themselves, to their ideas and personal attitudes. Above all, they will not seek to impose their opinion and personal views as if they were expressing Jesus’ teaching and His life principles. Every catechist should be able to apply to themselves the mysterious words of Jesus: *“My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me”* (Jn 7:16). So did Saint Paul when he said: *“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you”* (1 Cor 11:23).

According to Saint Paul VI, every catechesis must be Christocentric because it must contain, as the foundation, centre, and at the same time, the summit of its dynamism, a clear proclamation of the truth that Jesus Christ, the Son of God was made man, died on the Cross and rose from the dead. In Christ, salvation is offered to all men as a gift of God’s grace and mercy. And it is not only an immanent salvation, meeting material and even spiritual needs that are restricted to our temporal earthly existence and completely identified with temporal desires, hopes, affairs and struggles. It is a salvation which exceeds these limits in order to reach fulfilment in a communion with the one and only absolute being – God. It is a transcendent and eschatological salvation, which has a beginning in this life but is fulfilled in eternity.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> GALIPEAU, J.: *Apprenticed to Christ: Activities for Practicing the Catholic Way of Life*. Franklin Park IL : World Library Publications, 2007, p. 67.

<sup>9</sup> PAUL VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. (art. 27). In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html) (23.08.2021).

## 1.5 The Link between the Church, Sacraments and Catechesis

There is a sanctifying power in the Church that emanates from its very foundation that is the Spirit of Christ. This sanctifying power is in all believers, in their faith, hope, and love. The sanctifying presence of Christ in the Church is neither accidental or secondary, nor superficial. The Church is not just a spiritual reality. The Church is also a human reality, the fullness of Christ as a man. The sanctifying power of the Church manifests itself in its structure. The profession of faith/the Creed encapsulates the very essence and foundation of our faith. The sanctifying power of the Church is expressed in the seven sacraments. Catechesis explains and prepares for the sacraments. In liturgical celebrations, especially in the Eucharist, the faithful become conscious of their faith, their orientation, and eschatological dimension of this sacrament. Liturgy symbolizes what God has given us and, at the same time, it is an expression of people's faith. In the conciliar constitution on the sacred liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Pope Paul VI reminded that all faithful are bound to come together into one place to hear the Word of God and take part in the Eucharist to recall the passion, the resurrection and the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ and thank God who *"has given them new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (cf. 1 Pt 1:3).

There is a close link between catechesis and the sacraments and between liturgy and the words. The word is essential to understand the meaning of the sign. Through the word, liturgical signs become simultaneously a proclamation, memory, promise, and encouragement and they can surely assign a variety of meanings to a liturgical celebration.

In sacraments, there is a close link between liturgy and the word. The liturgy is composed of the words of faith. The word and faith immerse into the celebration of the sacraments so that the service of the word penetrates the heart of the sacraments. Education in the faith and the sacraments lies in revealing the moment where our prayer and faith get expressed in the sacrament. In this

revelation, catechesis teaches *sincerity* (a sign of interiorization of the sacraments that manifests itself in the prayer and the inner desire) and *generosity* (instead of forcing to a frequent reception of sacraments, form the inner condition in authentic faith).

There are three stages of sacramental preparation/catechesis:

- *remote preparation* – is a preparation for the faith with an intention to arouse an interior response of faith as a precondition for the reception of the sacraments; at this stage, sacramental celebrations not need to be explained in great detail;
- *preparation preceding the reception of the sacraments* – at this stage the sacramental celebrations are explained as expressions of the mystery of faith and inner attitude of man;
- *immediate preparation* – ensures that all rituals are performed according to a prescribed order; it seems proper to accentuate a sacred character of all acts that will be performed;

The aim of this type of catechesis is not just the reception of the sacraments but also living with God. The sacraments are only signs that mediate the relationship with Christ the Redeemer. The sacrament is a personal encounter between God and a person. It is a person's response to God's calling.

## 1.6 Occasional, Didactic and Sacramental Catechesis

*Occasional (before feast days) catechesis* is conditioned by particular aspects or circumstances of human life. It can be enriching only when grounded in regular didactic catechesis. Occasional catechesis might be necessary in extraordinary circumstances (such as wars) when the situation requires a formation of a Christian attitude through the Word of God. Occasional catechesis can also be used to address the needs of an individual parish (spiritual retreat, preparation for a town or village festival, wedding anniversaries, etc.) A good occasion for catechesis would also be a day of special significance listed in a religious calendar, such as feasts of Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Mother of God or days that commemo-

rate a saint. What is important to keep in mind regarding this kind of catechesis is the explanation of historical contexts of a given feast and its relevance for everyday life of a modern man.

*Didactic catechesis*, on the other hand, is not based on special circumstances or unpredictable situations that might occur in our lives. This kind of catechesis follows an order set forth by the catechist that addresses the needs of those being catechized. Religious education at schools (and didactic catechesis, too) should present Christian truths with the gravity and depth similar to that of the other disciplines presenting their own knowledge. The time allocated to religious instruction at both state and Catholic schools is regulated by relevant directives. Didactic content differs depending on the focus of an individual subject. Apart from that, there is not a uniform way of defining didactics in general in the scholarly discourse on pedagogy. Some authors define didactics as a science of intellectual education. Others consider didactics to be a theory of teaching and learning. Another group of scholars reduce didactics purely to a theory of teaching. When speaking about didactics of religious education and didactic catechesis, it is important to see it as a *systematic catechetical activity that takes into consideration the age of the catechized*. Didactic catechesis deepens religious knowledge and cultivates religious attitudes in a manner that ensures individual development of the catechized individuals on their path to faith and life in Christ.

*Sacramental catechesis* is a synthesis of occasional and didactic catechesis. It involves a deepening of one's faith while showing them the importance of the individual sacraments whose role is to nourish and strengthen faith. Sacramental catechesis is sometimes rightly referred to as parochial catechesis since its goal is to prepare the faithful (and those growing towards faith – catechumens) to create a community with Jesus Christ at its hearth and where everybody becomes a new creation. There is an evident strong connection between the sacraments and the tasks that the parochial community undertakes. A parish is a first place where the sacraments are administered. A parochial community is a family that,

as recommended by the Church,<sup>10</sup> should actively participate in the celebration of the sacraments, which continually nourish the whole community. Before the administration of the sacraments to new members of the parochial community, the whole community should participate in the sacramental (parochial) catechesis which provokes the candidate to quiet down and be attentive to the greatness of the sacrament he or she is about to receive.

Besides that, we could say that sacramental catechesis is a primary education in faith and immediate preparation for the reception of the sacraments. It teaches the candidate about the essence and role of the sacraments and their proper and fruitful administration and reception. Sacramental catechesis invites to a continuing conversion, to the source of life - to God, to a personal encounter with Christ and to life according to a moral imperative of the received sacraments. It invites to a communion with those who are in Christ, to a communion with the Church. The example of such sacramental catechesis is the pre-baptismal catechesis. It is closely linked to a liturgical catechesis and they commonly overlap. Catechesis is both doctrinal and experiential. It educates to evangelization.

Interpretation of sacramental catechesis requires interconnectedness with the liturgical and sacramental activity since it is in the sacraments and especially in the Eucharist that Jesus Christ brings about transformation of people in its fullness. On the one hand, catechesis is a preparation for the sacraments, and it helps a person to fully experience the sacraments that are profoundly interconnected with the faith. On the other hand, there certainly is a catechetical aspect to a proper celebration of the sacraments. The sacramental life becomes a mere ritual unless it is grounded in detailed knowledge of the true meaning of the sacraments. Without solid sacramental catecheses, the sacramental experience might slide into traditionalism.

---

<sup>10</sup> Cf. CCEO, c. 673.



## 1.7 Distant and Immediate Preparation for Catechesis

*Distant preparation for catechesis* – presents a set of material conditions for catechesis: place, venue, time schedule, number. These factors too should be taken into consideration since they show respect for the Word of God and those who are about to hear the Word. If the catechesis takes place in a church or a chapel, they demonstrate a religious aspect of catechesis and the presence of God's Word. If the catechist chose a family house or a youth club as a venue for catechesis this place represents "a familial aspect" of God's Word and its closeness with the everyday life. If the catechesis takes place in a school setting it underlines a didactic aspect of proclamation and reception of the Word of God.

Surely, the environment does not sanctify the catechesis. Catechesis, a spirit of the catechist and his or her discipline sanctify the environment. Another important factor that needs to be considered here is a number of learners in a class. Large classes are detrimental for catechesis, just like for any other form of profane instruction. If a number of learners exceed twenty-five, it is very hard to create and maintain a personal contact, discipline and so needed "concentration".

The distant preparation requires:

- to be a catechist – to have a theoretical and practical command of catechetical principles,
- to acquire "a habit" in both theory and praxis – to work on theory and experience, to familiarize oneself with pedagogical principles and to grow in faith,
- to study and contemplate the Word of God,
- to know the subject (the recipient of catechesis) – both in theory and praxis,
- to possess a general knowledge of child psychology and apply it in a classroom,
- to know the whole class (who am I speaking to)

*Immediate preparation* – involves a personal preparation of the catechist. The preparation for individual catechetical class of religious education begins with a yearlong curriculum plan, more precisely with the lesson's systematization in the context of the

basic curriculum plan. We need to know exactly what the lesson brings in terms of learning about the message and practical education in faith. Each lesson expands on the previous lesson and prepares for the following one. For instance, the first lesson about the Eucharist focuses on understanding what it means to meet in the family (at dinner table) or in a youth group (pre-catechesis). In the second lesson, we get to know the meaning of encounter in general while moving on to the Eucharistic encounter in which God touches a person and person touches God.

Commonly, the catechists use methods designed by others to facilitate their practical preparation of catechesis. If this is the case, the catechists must be familiar with these methods so that they can use them in a lively and authentic manner. It is essential for catechesis to be delivered clearly; the catechized must believe that what is being proclaimed is not alien or unfamiliar to the catechist.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Cf. KUTARŇA, J.: *Id'te a ohlasujte*. Bratislava : Saleziánske katechetické stredisko, 1994, pp. 148 – 149.

## 2 AGENTS AND METHODS OF CATECHESIS

According to the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* proclaimed by Pope Paul VI we must first acknowledge that the Gospel is the truth. It is therefore important for a preacher of the truth to dedicate all his time and energies to a preparation. The witness that Jesus Christ gave of Himself and that Saint Apostle and Evangelist Luke gathered together in his Gospel (*"I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent"* – Lk 4:34) has, without a doubt, enormous consequences. In one sentence, he sums up the whole mission of Jesus Christ. These words take on their full significance if one links them with the previous verses in which Christ applied to Himself the words of the prophet Isaiah: *"The Spirit of the Lord is in me, because he has anointed me to proclaim the Good News to the poor"* (Lk 4:18 and Iz 61:1).

Jesus declares that the Lord sent him to go from town to town preach to the poorest and frequently the most receptive – the joyful news of the fulfilment of the promises and of the Covenant offered by God to people. And all the aspects of Christ's mystery – the Incarnation, His miracles, His teaching, the gathering together of His disciples, the sending out of the Twelve, the Cross and the resurrection, the permanence of His presence among His own – were the components of proclaiming the Gospel.

### 2.1 The Proclaimer of the Kerygma and Catechesis

The true subject and object of evangelization is Jesus Christ. He is present in the proclamation of God's Word, while the animating power comes from the Holy Spirit. The Christian community is the vehicle of this proclamation. In the Acts we read *"they spoke the word of God boldly."* (Acts 4:31). Besides these proclaimers of the kerygma, there are others whose specific mission makes them the earthly representatives of Christ (*"we are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us"* 2 Cor 5:20). Their role is threefold: proclamation, teaching, and witness.

The kerygma in the Church must be proclaimed by a witness who speaks of his or her own experience and lived faith. Upon hearing their testimony, the moment comes when listeners might start asking: “What should we do?” The kerygma must be proclaimed in a manner that once confronted with the Good News people recognize that they are indeed sinners and learn that there is way out of this state.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout the human history, the Church has strived to proclaim the Gospel while asking *Who to send to preach the mystery of Christ? What language to use? How to make sure the Word of God penetrates the world and is heard by those for whom it is intended?* This proclamation, preaching, or catechesis holds such a special place in the process of evangelization that these terms are sometimes used interchangeably. In truth, it is just a component of evangelization. The joyful news must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. In addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: *Why are they like this? Why do they live this way? What or who is that inspires them? Why are they among us?* Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one. All Christians are called to this witness, and in this way they can be real evangelizers.<sup>13</sup>

In his exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, Saint John Paul II offers an interesting view on agents in catechesis. “Now, beloved brothers and sons and daughters, I would like my words, which

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. SZENTMÁRTONI, M.: *Úvod do pastorálnej teológie*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1999, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> PAUL VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html) (8.11.2011).

are intended as a serious and heartfelt exhortation from me in my ministry as pastor of the universal Church, to set your hearts aflame, like the letters of St. Paul to his companions in the Gospel, Titus and Timothy, or like St. Augustine writing for the deacon Deogratias, when the latter lost heart before his task as a catechist, a real little treatise on the joy of catechizing.<sup>14</sup> Yes, I wish to sow courage, hope and enthusiasm abundantly in the hearts of all those many diverse people who are in charge of religious instruction and training for life in keeping with the Gospel” (CT 62). Throughout his twenty-seven-year papacy, St. John Paul II was an untiring evangelist. Evangelization was the area where he fulfilled his desire to be “Apostle Paul” of the twentieth century leading his spiritual children to the new millennium. St. John Paul’s desire to preach the Good News about Jesus Christ and encourage others to get involved in the ecclesiastical service is clearly expressed in his Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici*. The exhortation is addressed to all those responsible for catechesis, the bishops, priests, deacons, women and men religious and all the lay faithful. The pope had turned to them, almost ten years after the publication of his exhortation on catechesis, and likened them to the labourers of the vineyard (cf. Matt 20:1-16). The pope calls all concerned to come closer to their teacher Jesus Christ and with the recognition that what is his is also their own (cf. Phil 2:5) to participate in His saving mission. The pope’s call is also a concern of lay people – disciples. Today, too, Jesus sends those who decided to follow Him into every town and place where he Himself is to come.

The work that awaits everyone in the Lord’s vineyard is so great that there is no place for idleness. The householder repeats his invitation with even greater urgency: “*You go into my vineyard too*” (Lk 10:1). The voice of the Lord resounds in the depths of every Christian, who through faith and the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist is engrafted into Jesus Christ. At the same time, every Christian is a living member of the Church and has active part in Christ’s salvific mission. Jesus wants us as he

---

<sup>14</sup> Cf. AUGUSTINE, H. – CHRISTOPHER, J. P.: *The First Catechetical Instruction* (De catechizandis rudibus): Westminster, Md. : Newman Bookshop, 1946, s. 324..

wants all of his disciples to be the salt and light of the earth (cf. Matt 5:13-14). The images from the Gospel of salt, light and leaven are applicable to all Jesus' disciples. Before a Christian becomes the salt or the light, he must become a Jesus' disciple. If some is to become a disciple of Jesus, they ought to be courageous and show fruitfulness in preaching the Good News. The expression "to be with Jesus" (to be his disciple) symbolizes a lifelong communion with him, as mentioned in one of the Second Vatican Council decrees (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*). In a more profound meaning, Christians are not simply the labourers who work in the vineyard but as themselves, they are a part of the vineyard. Jesus says: *"I am the vine; you are the branches"* (Jn 15:5).

## **2.2 The Profile of the Catechist and Those to Be Catechized**

Lay faithful play a vital role in catechesis; their vocation springs from the reception of the Sacrament of Baptism. Their immediate insertion in the world allows them to transmit the Gospel into the ordinary life of people they share with them. Catechetical activity of laity originates in knowledge of Christ. From this knowledge springs the desire to proclaim Christ and His message to others and lead them to the Christian faith. The catechist (also includes a Catholic teacher of religion or religious education, hereafter referred to as the catechist) is called to be a witness to Jesus Christ through his entire catechetical activity that leads a person into a communion and intimate bond with Christ. Catechetical service can be entrusted to a Catholic who is mature in his own faith, has received all the Sacraments of Initiation, lives an upright life, has shown an interest in this service and has a desire to further cultivate the service. On a purely human level, through their helpfulness, thoughtfulness, and respect for freedom, the catechists establish a good relationship with teachers, students and their parents regardless of their personal convictions. They strive to be role models for teachers, show the importance of religious inspiration in teaching, and use their presence to promote Christian values in school settings. Oftentimes, they also become spiritual counsellors.

In order for lay catechists to teach the subject of religious education at school, they must also have a valid mission in addition to professional qualification.

The role of the catechist requires an intense sacramental and spiritual life, different kinds of prayers and living the Christian message. Catechists cultivate in themselves virtues of Christian love, humility, and prudence, which activate the work of the Holy Spirit in those being catechized.

Catechesis based on different age groups is an essential requirement of pastoral activities for the benefit of the entire 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 challenges of dechristianization and must respond to every new task of Christian vocation. In order to respond to the pressing needs of our times, catechesis must, in accordance to the recipient's age, systematically propose the Christian faith in its entirety, authenticity and in line with the Church's understanding. The priority must be given to proclamation of salvation, drawing attention to many difficulties, doubts, misunderstandings, prejudices and objections of today. The important task of catechesis is a promotion of formation and maturation of the Christian life in light of the Gospel by adequate means such as sacramental pedagogy, retreats, spiritual direction and so on.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.3 The Theological and Pedagogical Reflection in Catechesis

Thinking about catechesis, one must consider its theological and pedagogical dimension. When speaking of catechesis in *theological reflection*, this is derived from the very nature of catechesis set into the context of pastoral work and is defined as the service of the Word, which is intended for education in the faith. This implies that catechesis precedes theology. Thus, catechesis does not foster theology but faith. In its essence, theology is concerned with

---

<sup>15</sup> TIRPÁK, P.: Médiá a katechéza v procese formácie mladých. In: PAĽA, G. et al: *Vplyv médií na sociálne a kultúrne hodnoty súčasnosti II*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2010, p. 45.

the analysis of catechesis, which is grounded in the Word, which it serves.

Catechesis must revolve around real people, their lives and their living and social conditions. After all, the human person is the true object of catechesis. The role of theology is to remind us that the content of catechesis is indeed the God's Word and help to uncover its hidden power through catechesis. It is impossible to determine the exact confines of catechetics, since catechesis develops in a close conjunction with other pastoral activities (pastoral work with youth, spiritual direction, cultivation of popular piety, etc.).

The nature of catechetics also corresponds with *pedagogical reflection*. In pastoral care of the Church sufficient use should be made of the human sciences, especially in the fields that concern education. The anthropological view on a human person often prompts us to seek ways of bringing that person to embrace permanent values, preservation of which is the means of reaching eternal life. Having said that, we can understand why catechetics is concerned with cultural anthropology, sociology, psychology, and communication sciences. The pedagogical character of catechetical research springs from the very purpose of catechizing – education in the faith that facilitates its maturation. This process is an integral part of the overall dynamics of human development and maturation. Therefore, catechetics can be perceived as a pedagogical science, while keeping in mind its theological nature.<sup>16</sup>

When speaking about different ways of understanding catechesis, it is important to mention Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. When he was still Cardinal Ratzinger, Benedict addressed the negative aspects of inconsistent catechesis. He asserted that the confusion in theology has serious implications in catechesis. Although the cardinal responded to particular cases of his times, the issues have not yet been fully resolved. Theology is somehow unable to provide one universal model of faith and that results in fragmentation of catechesis and ever-changing experiments. Some catechisms and catechists no longer teach the Catholic faith in its harmonic wholeness where each truth presupposes and explains

---

<sup>16</sup> ALBERICH, E. – DRÍMAL, L.: *Katechetika*. Praha : Portál, 2008, pp. 9 – 10.



the other. They rather try to make some elements of the Christian patrimony humanly interesting according to the cultural and social orientations of the moment. Some parts of the Bible are highlighted because they are considered to be more relatable to a today's person. Some, on the other hand, are being omitted or discarded as something distant to the modern world. Such an attitude adopted by some catechist results in the inconsistent formation of the faith.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.4 Catechesis and the Word of God

God revealed Himself to people in Sacred Scripture, which is a written Word of God. Through persons and events, He gradually revealed Himself in the Old Testament as the only true and living God and prepared the chosen nation for the advent of the Messiah. The divine plan of salvation reached its fullness in Jesus Christ. The Son of God brings about the new and definite covenant between God and humankind. Among the books of the New Testament, the four canonical Gospels hold a special place since they provide a factual account of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. They are a product of oral and written transmission of God's Revelation by the Apostles guided by the Holy Spirit. The Church preserves and transmits this Revelation through sacraments, liturgy, and catechesis.

The principal source from which catechesis draws its message is the Scriptures. *"One of the goals of catechesis is to facilitate a better understanding of the Bible and its fruitful reading"*<sup>18</sup> Catechetical instruction and homilies should proclaim the Word of God in a manner that the faithful come to knowledge of the divine truths and respond to them. Therefore, bringing the faithful to regular and personal reading of Sacred Scripture is the essential task of catechesis. The interpretation of texts from the Old and New Tes-

---

<sup>17</sup> Cf. VRABLEC, J.: *O otázkach viery – prednášky podľa kardinála Ratzinger-a*. Bratislava : Lúč, 1992, pp. 50 – 51.

<sup>18</sup> PÁPEŽSKÁ BIBLICKÁ KOMISIA: *Interpretácia Biblie v Cirkvi*. Spišské Podhradie : Kňazský seminár biskupa Jána Vojtaššáka, 1995, p. 129.

taments should never be superficial. It seeks to bring the salvific message to people of today throughout the liturgical year, through pre-sacramental catechesis and the permanent formation that is so relevant today. The vocation to hand down the living treasure of God's Word requires being perceptive to new demands of the faithful and their different age, social and spiritual conditions. Catecheses and homilies should not be limited to imposing duties on the faithful. They should focus on proclamation of God's Word as the good news about the salvation that will cause great joy for all the people (cf. Lk 2:10)

The Word of God comes to us through people who verbalize it in a way they had received it and responded to it in faith: the Word is incarnated in the person's response of faith; it is mixed; but, at the same time, it is inseparably attached to the human word.<sup>19</sup> The primary goal of catechesis is not only to share the knowledge, but also to arouse a response of faith. Thus, catechesis prepares for faith through the Word of God. The ultimate goal of catechesis is to forge a permanent communion with God. The Word of God enlightens a free man and makes him a new creation. The catechist must never forget that he is essentially a mediator between God and the catechized. It is important that the one who is being catechized must always have considerable time to reflect, to understand, to encounter God, and to respond. The catechized should be journeying towards greater perfection, they should be able to "appreciate" the Word of God and discover its beauty as well as its demands.

## 2.5 Divine and Human Words in Catechesis

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (cf. Jn 1:1-14).*

---

<sup>19</sup> Cf. ALBERICH, E. – DŘÍMAL, L.: *Katechetika*. Praha : Portál, 2008, p. 62.

John's Prologue announces joyfully that the Word, which was with God from the beginning, is revealed to us in the fullness of time in the flesh through the Son of God. *"The Word of God can transcend the boundaries of time in order to reveal the future in advance."*<sup>20</sup> The Word of God is eternal, immutable, and the unchanging truth. It is a treasure; nothing and no one comes before it. The Word is revealed to all and gives everyone the opportunity to get to know him, to love him and to become a part of the God's family. Thus, the Word becomes Light and the Light becomes Life. In the Prologue to John's Gospel, alongside the Word, Flesh, Light and Life there is a man who came to this world as a witness to testify. This John the Baptist's figure clearly symbolizes the role of all of us who listen to this Word, who see the Light and receive the Life to bear witness to this revealed reality.

Anyone who does not build his or her life securely upon the Word of God directed to eternal life builds his or her house on sand. The Word of God must pass through our reason and free will before entering our hearts. When God revealed Himself to humankind, He revealed wisdom too. He spoke through the prophets and through His Son who is the Word. The Word still resonates in us today. The Gospel is not solely about God. The Gospel is also a vehicle through which God speaks to us. Our faith comes to us by hearing the Word of God. So do repentance, purgation and a new life. If the Word has the power to cleanse and purify the hearts of people, it also has the power to constantly nourish the living faith since *"...the Word of God comes to people's aid and incites their free will."*<sup>21</sup>

One cannot study the theology of incarnation without studying the humanity of Jesus Christ. In the same vein, one cannot study pastoral theology and catechetics without understanding the vital role of human properties and capacities in proclamation of God's Word.

Two levels need to be taken into consideration here: *human and divine*. On the human level, catechists (theologians) must be well acquainted with psychological and pedagogical principles that are

---

<sup>20</sup> DUFOUR, X.: *Slovník biblickej teológie*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2003, p. 761.

<sup>21</sup> BALÍK, J.: *Na cestě s mladými*. Praha : PAULÍNKY, 2004, p. 362.

crucial for acquiring essential knowledge and for effective and clear proclamation of the Gospel. Catechists will therefore make use of different pedagogical, psychological and sociological elements that are commonly used in secular methodologies. *On a divine level*, on the level of faith (as in catechetics), the human person gives himself fully over in service to God. To be more specific: God will make use of person's abilities since the human being is able to use the principles of psychology, pedagogy, and other knowledge to transmit the Word of God to people in a better and more effective manner. In catechetics (and its application), the principles of psychology, pedagogy and sociology become the principles of pastoral theology and thus spreading the message of salvation.

There are also two catechetical principles:

- a) *Principles of the "divine" order*: catechetical activity mediates the Word of God and must respect all of its characteristics and demands
- b) *Principles of the human order*: catechetical activity turns to an individual person, utilizes human elements and respects their nature and principles.

Respecting "divine" laws defines our fidelity to God, who speaks to us. Respecting human laws defines God's fidelity to people who are called to listen to God. In any catechetical activity, to respect the nature, conditions, and abilities of reception of God's Word means to respect the Word of God since it is the Word that turns to people.

In the Incarnation, the Word of God truly became man. The Word of God is Jesus Christ Himself – both fully divine and fully human. For God's Word to reach man and for man to receive it (and thus possess it) both human and divine nature are needed since the Word of God turns to man. In other words, the divine laws represent the active dimension of catechesis, whereas the human, psychological, and social principles represent the passive dimension.

### 3 THE ART OF WORD AND SPEECH IN CATECHESIS

Human thinking is inextricably linked to words and speech. Speech is a means of interpersonal communication, thought abstraction, and mutual exchange of ideas between people. A word is a means of transferring a sensory experience into a conceptual form. To formulate a thought we need to express it in speech.

Using speech, people preserve their existence through their interaction with the world around them. They are, therefore, equipped with a “device” to receive signals (information) from their surroundings. The communication process occurs between the sender and the recipient. From the perspective of psychology, we distinguish between internal and external speech.

- a) *internal speech* – is a speech for “oneself”, a person’s inner voice we use to formulate our thoughts. We do not verbalise the speech orally or in writing. The internal speech is brief and shortened because we do not need to speak to ourselves in great detail.
- b) *external speech* – people express their thoughts and ideas outwards using sound (through spoken language). Spoken speech is a form of expressing thoughts and opinions aloud. It has its own accompanying features, such as gestures or intonation that complement the speech and help us convey the meaning of our thoughts better. These features enable the listener to understand the speech better.

There is a clear difference between language and speech; yet they are closely linked from the developmental standpoint. Language, as a system, is formed gradually from particular speech acts and language expressions. In these expressions we find its systemic form and its norm, which linguists describe in their normative linguistic works. These norms are then binding for language users when they create actual texts and particular language expressions in the process of communication, that is, when they use the elements of the language system in their speech. In other words - language is formed on speech (language expressions). Language, however, “forces” those engaged in communication to use the system elements in their speech.

The basic instruments of catechetical service are language and speech, since the spoken word is a natural component of every catechesis. Jesus Christ uses language and speech as a vehicle of bringing people closer to God. It is not mere dissemination of information. Given that, the language of catechesis fits into a category of religious language. In religious language, it is not about the analysis of language as such, but it concerns description, interpretation and critical analysis of texts in which it manifest itself. There is a particular feature in religious language and that is its social dimension by virtue of which such language has the ability to transform the society with which it communicates. What occurs in catechesis is the symbiosis between the language of catechesis and language of the catechized; between the divine and human language; between the language of words and gestures and between the language of narration and concentration. Every piece of knowledge concerning speech presented above is closely linked to what Jesus Christ Himself applied in his conversations, admonitions, and encouragements he directed to those that God created in His image – people. Christ comes here as the one who introduces new forms of speech and can be rightly referred to as a new teacher.

### 3.1 Using Speech in Catechesis

The modern era marked by the rapid development of interpersonal contacts, calls for some changes in communication processes. We may say that rhetoric is enjoying a renaissance today. Modern rhetoric hardly compares with its ancient form, even though it surely draws from it. Rhetoric, as a study of good writing and speaking, must fit the demands of the particular time.<sup>22</sup> With a more than two-thousand-year tradition that began in ancient Greece, the art of public speaking has remained the art that appeals to both the reason and emotions of an individual.

Making use of rhetoric in the process of catechesis means to introduce the teaching of Jesus Christ. It is important to bear in

---

<sup>22</sup> STALA, J. (ed.): *Zagadnienia katechetyki materialnej*. Tarnów : Wydawnictwo Biblos, 2011, s. 123.

mind that the existence of God cannot be squeezed into words or identified with those words. Using words, the priest mediates the divine truths, but what is equally important is his personal example of virtues. The authority of rhetoric convention influenced the oldest Christian writers and preachers, even if they criticised the pagan nature of rhetoric. Origen, one of the greatest philosophers of early Christianity, played a vital role in controversy over the use of rhetoric for the benefit of Christianization. He placed the accent on theology over liberal arts and philosophy. The controversy persisted even after the issuance of the Edict of Milan (313). The flowering of Christian preaching came with the Greek patristic theologians in the fourth and fifth centuries. The great preachers were Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Gregory the Theologian and Saint Basil the Great. Their art of preaching can be summarized into the following points (that every catechist should go through): to see proclamation as an irreplaceable means of beneficial effect that a spiritual pastor has on his faithful; to prepare for and be helpful in reaching eternal life with God; to study theology and have a good comprehensive knowledge of human sciences; to know Sacred Scripture; to be a person of integrity and living faith; to give oneself into the service of God's Word; to teach under the guidance of the Magisterium; to be clear and articulate, and to read the signs of the times in the light of God's Word.

### 3.2 Selected Principles of Speech

Contemporary rhetoric is called the theory of communication. Whoever wants to serve the word and speech should be interested in what it has to offer. Many of its findings can be applied in our everyday reality. The way **rhetors** (or those who catechize) present themselves must clearly show that they keep up with the latest advances in the science, and are constantly learning and working on perfecting their art. Rhetors' expertise must also reflect the level of their comprehensive education. It is only to their advantage that they are educated in other disciplines too and their cultural competence is appropriate to their social standing and mission.

Rhetors are able to adapt their expert knowledge to different environments. Such adaptation is not only desirable, but also beneficial. Their expertise is not limited to plain speaking; whenever rhetors find themselves in a challenging or tense situation, they listen first. After all, they speak briefly and concisely. It is a known fact that a person thinks four times faster than a person speaks. When listening, a rhetor ought to use this time to think about what is being said.

Rhetoric **style** is also very important. Every rhetor has their own style that is typical for them. This needs to be considered when uncritically copying someone else's thoughts, motifs, or entire speeches. The style largely depends on vocabulary and it is shaped by questions asked by the rhetor, exclamations, sentences that are used in inverted commas, etc. The rhetoric style is enriched by examples and illustrations from people's lives or nature. The rhetoric style gets disrupted or worsens when the rhetor spends a longer time describing inanimate objects and there is no room for action. It is something to bear in mind since the rhetor can hardly avoid speaking about theoretical and abstract concepts. Without practical examples, however, the speech becomes "heavy" in terms of style.<sup>23</sup> Speech becomes persuasive when it captures a moment whether a listener yearns for change or wishes to remain in his or her current state. The effect of speech depends largely on its delivery. If the rhetor is a fervent advocate of what he is presenting to others, he can arouse and nourish the desire in his audience.

**Speech** must have its target audience in mind. The spoken word requires a direct contact with listeners. Only then, it becomes interesting and engaging. A listener expects a certain structure, composition, and prognosis of the speech. The way the content and purpose of speech are received depends heavily on the way of its delivery. The content and delivery are equally important. Speech must resound in the heart and soul of the listener. If the speech is too abstract, it does not engage the listener. It does not stir a con-

---

<sup>23</sup> PAĽA, G. – BEŇKOVÁ, J.: *Stručné kompendium teórie komunikácie*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2019, s. 113.



science of the listener and it is removed from the reality of life. Monotone speech “turns the rhetor off”.<sup>24</sup>

On contrary, the speech that is adequately loud, clear, and personal has the power to ignite a spark, tune our perception on our journey of inner transformation. To transmit knowledge and theory does not suffice. It is important to recognize the fruits we might reap. Here are some useful tips of how to approach the process of catechizing (preaching). We should remember these principles:

- catechist should exhaust the topic not the audience
- choose a rhetoric style that fits the speech topic or theme
- tailor the language expressions to your audience
- choose your words with care and deliberation
- highlight and repeat the key statements
- give equal importance to the content and form of the speech
- eliminate language and other errors in your speech
- bear in mind the purpose (effect) of the speech – the feedback of your audience
- avoid artificiality, improvisation, and staginess of your speech

In the process of catechesis (especially when considering catechesis according to age), it is essential to be aware of the element of empathy in our speech. By doing so we guarantee that the proclaimed Word truly speaks to a person for whom it is intended. **Empathy** begins when we abandon our own thoughts, emotions, and ideas and start thinking about the other person's feelings. It means to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, immerse into their state both intellectually and emotionally. Rhetors should put themselves in the place of their listeners. It means to walk in their shoes, see the world with their eyes, and look at everything from their perspective. Surely, other means of expression are also important in catechizing, but this chapter intended to introduce those that are inherently catechetical.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> PETRÍK, L.: *Viera je z počúvania a ohlasovania : homiletická interpretácia*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2013, s. 120.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. STANČEK, L. – ŠURÁB, M.: *Rétorika dnes*. Ružomberok : Rektorát Katolíckej univerzity Ružomberku, 2006, pp. 148 – 157.

### 3.3 The Language of Jesus Christ, the Church and Faith

As we entered the new millennium, Pope John Paul II called for “*Duc in altum!*” With this appeal, St. John Paul II was preparing the Church to see new realities in terms of proclamation and reception of the Good News. The appeal to “*put out into the deep*” (Lk 5:4) is an invitation to rediscover the Gospel, two thousand years old and yet still new. In the language that she speaks to her people, the Church wants to introduce Jesus Christ as the first proclaimer who “in his own language and through signs” shows us to the depths of our souls so that we can discover the constant work of the Holy Spirit that wishes to restore the image of God in humanity.

#### *The language of Jesus Christ*

Perfection that we see in the offer to follow Jesus Christ lies not in external deeds, abundance of prayers and ritual precepts, but in inner listening to the Creator and in reflecting and meditating over His words. The well-known Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus proclaimed the Beatitudes, contains new elements related to spirituality that prepared fertile ground for listening to the Word through which man becomes perfect before God.

John the Baptist describes Christ’s perfection and exceptionality when, in a part he dedicates to Christ’s origin, he records opinions and discussion between the teachers of the law and the Israelites: “...on hearing His words, some of the people said, “*Surely this man is the Prophet.*” Others said, “*He is the Messiah.*” Still others asked, “*How can the Messiah come from Galilee? Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David’s descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?*” Thus the people were divided because of Jesus” (Jn 7:40-43). On the other hand, if we speak of Jesus’ language (considering its style and content), the Scripture too *points to* Christ’s exceptionality. Here are some examples:

1. Listening to Jesus Christ, the servants admit that they have not heard anyone speaking this way and share their experience with the Pharisees with whom they discussed the origin of Jesus (cf. Lk 7:46)

2. In a dispute over paying the imperial tax to Caesar, where the Herodians (described elsewhere as disciples of the Pharisees) pretend to seek justice and point to truthfulness and directness of Jesus' speech (cf. Matt 22:15-16).
3. During Jesus' farewell speech, the disciples point to his speaking clearly (without figures of speech) which made them believe that he came from God (cf. Jn 16:29-30).
4. When calming the storm, Jesus tells his disciples about the power of word and faith (cf. Mk 4:35-40).

We may rightly say that Jesus Christ serves as a perfect example because he presents a fusion of all virtues, even those that seem to be contradictory – to the sick and children, he is gentle; to sinners, he is kind and understanding. The Christ's style of speaking and His way of life present a new ideal for a modern man – a new creation - a light that shines out of darkness. This light of Christ's word brings new hope and certitude to man. It is a call for a particular way of new life. Living by Christ's words, we experience God's presence and kindness in our life.

### *The language of the Church*

This section focuses on the language of the Church and the way she speaks to people of our times. In this context, we should not omit one of the essential documents of the Catholic Church – *Lineamenta* – that was written in a preparation for the 13th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. It discusses the new evangelization and transmission of the Christian faith. This document also outlines the discourse of the Church. It was Paul VI who urgently proposed that the Church search for new ways to present the Christian faith. The *Lineamenta* tells us that this gave rise to the idea of 'initial proclamation' that was understood to be an explicit statement, or more precisely, a proclamation of the fundamental content of our faith.

*“At the time, the expression ‘initial proclamation’ was taken over and utilized in restructuring the process of introduction to the faith. Intended to be addressed to non-believers, namely, those who are indifferent to religion, initial proclamation has, generally speaking, the function of both proclaiming the Gospel and call-*

ing to conversion those who until now do not know Jesus Christ. Catechesis, distinct from the initial proclamation of the Gospel, promotes growth in this initial conversion and provides instruction in the faith to those who have converted, thus incorporating them into the Christian community. The relation between these two forms of the ministry of the Word is not, however, always easy to discover; nor is it easily done; nor should it necessarily be stated emphatically. Instead, the relation can be perceived as a two-fold action which is found united in the same pastoral activity. In fact, frequently people who come for catechesis need to live more truly converted lives. Therefore, the programmes of catechesis and introduction in the faith might benefit from putting greater emphasis on the proclamation of the Gospel, which is a call to this conversion and which fosters and sustains it. In this way, the new evangelization can reinvigorate the present programmes of instruction in the faith by accentuating the kerygmatic character of proclamation.”<sup>26</sup>

### *The language of faith*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reads that the Church, which is the pillar and bulwark of the truth, faithfully guards the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. She guards the memory of Christ’s words and hands on the Apostles’ confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith (CCC 171). The Church’s faith precedes, engenders, supports, and nourishes our faith. The Church is the mother of all believers. The proverb *Habere iam non potest Deum Patrem qui Ecclesiam non habet Matrem* (No one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother) can be applied here.

Elsewhere in the Catechism of the Catholic Church we read: “By calling God “Father”, the language of faith indicates two main things: that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent

---

<sup>26</sup> LINEAMENTA – document of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization. In: [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20110202\\_lineamenta-xiii-assembly\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html) (12.08.2021).

*authority; and that He is at the same time goodness and loving care for all His children. God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood, which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature. The language of faith thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for man. But this experience also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure the face of fatherhood and motherhood. We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: He is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although He is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father" (CCC 239).*

Speaking about faith and its language from an anthropological perspective, we must yet again restate that God endowed every one of us with special faculties. Only human, as the pinnacle and crown of creation, has been endowed with reason and free will. Through reason, I can know God from created things. By free will, I can serve God and praise Him for the amazing things He has done. If, by reason, I come to believe that God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us, I have no doubts in trusting Him and seeking refuge in Him throughout my entire life. Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth—in a word, to know Himself—so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.<sup>27</sup> Then those who respond to God's calling become the faithful. They have faith. They do not seek faith. Man responds with faith to the works performed by God in the history of salvation. The attitude of faith manifests itself in various forms. St. Cyril of Jerusalem claims that faith is woven of two dimensions: first, one must have a full trust in Jesus Christ. But one who trusts, accepts all His words and what He reveals (the content of faith) as true. The first dimension of faith comes to fruition in fidelity to Je-

---

<sup>27</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II: *Fides et Ratio*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html) (13.8.2013).

sus Christ and personal dialogue with Him. The second dimension lies in profession of faith, which is the truth.<sup>28</sup>

### 3.4 The Biblical Language

The sacred texts are the principal source for catechesis. They reveal the essential mystery of salvation that the Church received with love and reverence and transmits through catechesis. The biblical language is indispensable since it is a language inspired by the Holy Spirit with the purpose of expressing the true image of God. The language of the Bible ensures that the human language is able to communicate the image of God. The biblical language is divine since through it God revealed himself to humankind. The divine speech is concrete and specific, it does not exaggerate, and it is as close to people as God is. Gestures and God's words are expressed in a similar manner as human thoughts and emotions are. The language of the Bible is rich with symbolism: the Lord is my father, my rock. Jesus is the true vine and we are the branches.

A connecting thread that runs through the Christian exegesis should be "the incarnation of the God's Son". Just at the Word of God assumed human nature, by analogy, the Word of God "incarnated" into a human language. Saint John Paul II taught: "*Catholic exegesis does not focus its attention only on the human aspects of biblical revelation, which sometimes the mistake of the historical-critical method, nor only on the divine aspects as fundamentalism would have it; it strives to highlight both of them, united as they are in the divine 'condescension' (DV 13), which is at the foundation of all Scripture*". Biblical exegesis is a term used in an academic discipline of critical biblical research that focuses on analysis and interpretation of biblical texts. In his treatise *Moralia in Job*, one of the Church Fathers, St. Gregory the Great writes that *Scriptura sacra cum legentibus crescit* [Sacred Scripture grows with its readers]. Martin Heidegger argues that *Auslegen ist das Ungesagte sagen* [To interpret means saying the unsaid] and the

<sup>28</sup> Cf. ŠPIDLÍK, T.: *Katecheze o Církvi*. Olomouc : Refugium, 2008, pp. 16 – 17.

French exegete Xavier Léon Dufour asserts that to interpret a text means to place it within a complex of relations.

When referring to a biblical language it is essential to ask about *the sense of the sacred texts*. The early Christian exegesis distinguished between the literal and spiritual sense of the text. The medieval exegesis identified the literal sense, allegorical (Christological) sense, moral (anthropological) sense, and anagogic (eschatological) sense. The modern historical-critical exegesis accepts only one sense of the biblical text – the literal sense that corresponds with the circumstances in which the text was originally written. Recently, this statement has been challenged by the latest findings in the field of linguistics and philosophical hermeneutics confirming that there are multiple layers of meaning in biblical texts.

*a) The verbal or literal sense (sensus literalis)*

The primary purpose of exegesis is to determine the literal sense of the text that has been expressed directly by the inspired human author. The literal sense is discovered by a careful study of the biblical text, which is always entangled with a certain literary and historical context. Since the literal sense is a product of inspiration, it is identical with the divine inspiration. God Himself is the principal author of the Bible. Usually there is only one literal sense unless the human author intended to introduce various layers of reality (which is typical for poetic biblical texts) or the divine inspiration adds another, new meaning to obvious human expression (cf. Jn 11:50).

*b) Spiritual sense (sensus spiritualis)*

The paschal mystery of Jesus Christ (his death and resurrection) created a brand new historical context that sheds light on many passages of the Old Testament and alters its meaning because it is lifted to the whole of a higher reality. Here we can talk about the spiritual sense. In general, the spiritual sense pertained to the meaning expressed by the biblical texts when read under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in the context of the paschal mystery of Christ and of the new life which flows from it. Thus, the authentic spiritual sense can be revealed only if the three planes

of reality come together: the biblical text, the Paschal Mystery of Christ, and the present circumstances of life in the Spirit. One of the possible aspects of the spiritual sense is typology. What is distinctive about this typology is that according to the divine author of the Bible, certain events, persons, and institutions of the Old Testaments are understood to be types (archetypes) of much more important events and persons in the New Testament (antitypes). They foreshadow events to come: Adam as a type of Christ (cf. 1 Pt 3: 20-21), the flood is seen as a type of the judgment, the people of Israel foreshadows the congregation of the Church, etc. Since they are the types of future events and persons, their typological meaning becomes apparent only in the light of the antitype, which can be known only from the later Revelation.

*c) Fuller sense (sensus plenior)*

The fuller sense is defined as a deeper meaning of the text intended by God but not as clearly expressed by the human author. More precisely, this fuller sense is to be found when a subsequent biblical author attributes to an earlier text a new literal sense (compare, for instance, Matt 1:23 with Isaiah 7:14), or it is a question of the meaning given to a biblical text by an authentic doctrinal tradition (teaching of the Church Fathers and Councils about the Most Holy Trinity gives a fuller sense to teaching of the New Testament about God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit) or conciliar definitions (the Council of Trent's definition of the original sin gives a fuller sense to Paul's teaching about the consequences of Adam's sin for humanity as described in Romans 5:12-21). The fuller sense differs from the literal (verbal) sense in a way that it transcends the meaning of the words used in the biblical text by the human author since the fuller sense comes from God as the creator of the text.<sup>29</sup> The existence of the fuller sense proves that the historical-critical exegesis cannot exhaust the absolute meaning of some biblical texts. It only determines the exact verbal meaning of the Scripture.

---

<sup>29</sup> ŠPIDLÍK, T.: *Spiritualita křesťanského Východu*. Velehrad – Roma : Refugium, 2002, s. 41 – 50.



### 3.5 The Theological Language

The theological language is used in catechesis to express certain “theological formulas.” In reality, the theology of our catechesis must remain faithful to the Scriptures, the history of salvation and close to the life of the Church today. The theological language should be grounded in the words of Sacred Scripture. Theology in catechesis is intended only as an explanation of the words of the Scripture. It is to be an instrument for understanding the Word of God and transmitting the revealed message. If we want to speak about the theological language and theological preconditions for the interpretation of the Scripture, we must bear in mind the following three facts:

1. For effective reading and understanding the biblical texts, one must *believe that the words of Scripture are God breathed or inspired*. It means that the Holy Spirit guided and controlled the human authors so that they wrote faithfully and without errors about faith and salvation. In these areas, Sacred Scripture is inerrant. In other words, the Bible is neither a science book nor a history textbook in which the divine inspiration would make a history out of everything. The Scripture presents the divinely inspired truths and not the historical or scientific knowledge. We sometimes wrongly assume that we must believe that a historical figure of Jonah was indeed swallowed by a huge fish. Facticity of the recorded event would be our concern only if the Book of Jonah was inspired by history. Similarly, even if the first two chapters in the Book of Genesis do not fall under the category of scientific literature (they present pieces of wisdom), we can still embrace the God’s creation of the universe as the inspired truth (I believe in God...creator of heaven and earth). We do not take the Genesis accounts of creation as a scientific explanation about the origin of the universe, since it contains ancient notions about the land being a large plate on the ocean with a vault above.<sup>30</sup> Through these ideas, the Book of Genesis presents the truth that God is the supreme Master of everything and the Creator of the universe. The biblical

---

<sup>30</sup> Cf. MANSINI, G.: *Fundamental Theology*. Washington : The Catholic University of America Press, 2018, s. 214 – 215.

texts are primarily the testimonies of faith. The Scripture is not a normative prescription when it comes to questions of science or history, as are natural sciences, archaeology, or historiography. The Scripture guides us with confidence and inerrancy in questions of faith, morals, and salvation.

2. The second precondition for a proper understanding of biblical texts, especially those from the Old Testament, is *to see the unity between the Old and New Testament*. The same one true God authored both parts of the Bible. In the revelation of the Old Testament, the pedagogical sequence in the God's education of man is evident. For the Lord, in his process of creation and inspiration of the texts, man was not only a passive instrument. He entered the process with His reason, will, and knowledge. The books of the Old Testament are not mere factual accounts in a modern sense. They are theological, literary and historical accounts of the Israelites and their experience with God and other nations.

3. The third theological precondition of a proper understanding of biblical texts is *a communion with the Church*. Sacred Scripture is presented to us by a living community; it did not, figuratively speaking, *fell out of the sky*. The decision of what books were to be sacred was also made by a community of faithful. The Scripture is with us thanks to a living tradition. It is the very nature of community that forces each of its members to open themselves to others. Our Catholicity encompasses our desire to be in communion with other members of the Church when reading and understanding the Bible and when receiving the message of the living faith from the previous generations. *Continuous conversion* is also a useful element of understanding the Scriptures. We can choose to read the Scripture without being engaged, without being willing to let go off our own securities (financial and others) and self-reliance, but then the Sacred Scripture remains a closed book for us. The more a Christian bows down before the Word of God, the closer the Word of God comes to him. The Word of God is unrestricted and attentive. It is capable of becoming a child for children, a young person for the youth, and an adult person for the adults.<sup>31</sup> If we

---

<sup>31</sup> Cf. RATZINGER, J.C.: *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*. San Francisco : Ignatius Press, 1996, s. 110 – 112.

remain firm in our moralization, the Word of God will only reveal some things, nothing more. The Word of God respects our spiritual growth. It reveals himself to us only to the extent we are willing to receive.

### 3.6 The Liturgical Language

The term *ekklesia* (ἐκκλησία) refers to an assembly, a congregation of people.<sup>32</sup> This congregation of faithful comes together in the liturgy, which is an invitation to the breaking the bread and anticipation of the Risen Christ. In one of his catechesis, St. John Chrysostom says: *“We see here (in the liturgy) the heavenly things that are actualized on earth, but they are not any less valuable than those in heaven. How could it be otherwise, when Jesus Christ is sacrificed, the Holy Spirit descends, and the one who sits at the right hand of the Father is truly present here? What do you think about it? Are the songs that are sung here (in the liturgy) truly heavenly or not?”* With that said, we can claim that the liturgical language is the third language used in the Church to celebrate the mystery.

The relationship between liturgy and catechesis in the history of the Church has been multi-layered and intimate. Since the be-

---

<sup>32</sup> *Ek-kaleó* - it literally means to call out forth. According to the sacred texts, it is an expression that denotes those who are called out from all over the world (Acts 20:24). Elsewhere, in the Acts we read that some were shouting one thing, some another since the assembly was in confusion *ἦν γὰρ ἡ ἐκκλησία συγκεχυμένη* (Acts 19:32,39). The genitive form *τοῦ θεοῦ* and in the time of The New Testament its adjunct *ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ* makes it a specifically biblical term. In the New Testament it occurs two times in Mt /16:18; 18:17/, 62 times in the Pauline Epistles, 23 times in the Acts, 2 times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, once in the Epistle of James, 3 times in Johanne Epistles and 19 times in the Revelation. The New Testament term *καλεῖν*, from which *ἐκκλησία* also derives, is a term used to describe a process of salvation: God is the one that “calls out” *καλῶν* and people are *κεκλημένοι* “called out forth” in order to be saved. A noun then emphasises a dynamic character of this “ongoing, continuous salvation”. Cf. JÁGER, R.: *Ekklesia tou Theou - Bohom povolané spoločenstvo (sémantická transformácia terminológie cirkev)*. In: <http://revue.logosnet.biz/logos2-2005-01> (3.11.2012).

ginning of the Church, the Eucharist, together with the other sacraments, and the liturgical year have been the very core of every catechetical activity. We can say that for a long time the primary role of catechesis had been a preparation for and initiation to sacramental life and liturgy. The liturgical language and liturgical texts are contemplative components intended for the entire liturgical assembly.<sup>33</sup> The liturgical texts are complemented with signs (gestures, actions) and they are read in the sacred place within the church adorned with paintings – icons. Teaching Christian truths thus takes on a visible form. That is why the Eastern authors refer to liturgy as to “a living icon”.<sup>34</sup> There is a certain symbolism assigned to every move at the holy liturgy. This is a very important piece of information for a modern man living in the world that offers plenty of images whose spiritual content we are unable to read. That is why we need catechesis explaining what is happening during the ceremonies.<sup>35</sup> The initial, direct, and immediate meaning of words and actions (i.e. the liturgical language) does not penetrate the mind of the clergy and laity anymore. Their thinking instead has been invaded with a strange dichotomy between “the facts” of theology and its interpretation. As a result of this dichotomy, all the “symbolic” explanations of the most basic words and actions have been spreading like a weed while their direct and literal meaning has often not been taken into consideration at all.

The elementary mistake of (not)experiencing the liturgical life is that we assign a greater importance to particularities of our liturgical ceremonies rather than to their essence. The fundamental principles of teaching about the Eucharist are perfectly clear in liturgies. The very essence of the Eucharist remains untainted in liturgy. Our task is not to make changes in a liturgical life. We need to wake up to a true meaning of the Eucharist. We can do so by

---

<sup>33</sup> WAGNER, N.: *Introducing Liturgical Catechesis: Formation Sessions for the Parish*. San Jose CA : Resource Publications, Inc., 2002, p. 25.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. ŠPIDLÍK, T.: *Katecheze o Církvi*. Olomouc : Refugium, 2008, p. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. SIELEPIN, A.: Liturgia jako źródło i spełnienie komunii z Bogiem i człowiekiem. In: KLICH, A. E (ed.): *Powołani do komunii z Bogiem i człowiekiem*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2011, s. 81 - 82.

catechesis: training a candidate in being attentive to the liturgical language expressed in symbols and gestures.

The liturgical language should be a subject of catechesis. The Code of Canons of Eastern Churches<sup>36</sup> and the Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches clearly stress the need for liturgical catechesis. It requires that the special character of the Eastern Churches be taken into account in such a way that the *“catechetical teaching emphasizes the importance of the Bible and liturgy”*. The Instruction also reiterates that *“catechesis cannot be separated from liturgy, since the former takes inspiration from the latter, as the mystery of Christ celebrated ‘in actu’.”*<sup>37</sup>

To conclude this section of the book we can say that liturgy is the primary and irreplaceable source of the Christian spirit and permanent catechesis of the Church.<sup>38</sup> It is a common misconception to think that liturgy is the ultimate goal and source of catechesis. Catechesis does not have to use liturgy as its basic structural form and true catechesis does not have to be reserved for a bishop and his associates. Since catechesis facilitates maturation of the faith and introduces into the life of the Church, it also has an important task of liturgical education (liturgical symbolism, symbolism of the sacraments, the liturgical year). The more is the Christian community mature in faith, the more intensively it lives its cult in spirit and truth in liturgical celebrations and celebrations of the Eucharist.

---

<sup>36</sup> *The Code of Canons of Oriental Churches*. In: <http://www.jgray.org/codes/cceo90eng.html>

<sup>37</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES: Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions In: <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/instruction-for-applying-the-liturgical-prescriptions-of-the-code-of--canons-of-the-eastern-churches-2257> See also: BOHÁČ, V.: Liturgická katechéza v praxi. In: TIRPÁK, P. – PALA, G. (ed.): *Farská a školská katechéza ako prostriedok novej evanjelizácie*. Prešov : GTF, 2012, p. 35.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II.: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. London : Catholic Truth Society, 2003, s. 19 – 22.



## 4 FORMS OF CATECHESIS

In his Apostolic Exhortation on catechesis in our times, St. John Paul II describes catechesis as „...*an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.*“<sup>39</sup> The new reality requires from the particular churches new enthusiasm, a new act of trust in the Holy Spirit who guides them in their journey to resume the principal mission that Jesus entrusted to his disciples and that is to proclaim the Gospel (cf. Mk 16: 15) and preach the message about the kingdom of God (cf. Mk 3:15) joyfully and zealously. Every Christian must realise that Jesus entrusted them with this task and they should respond, guided by the Holy Spirit, in line with their own vocation. In times when it is not easy to decide to follow Jesus and embrace Christian faith, when it is being challenged and even prohibited, the vital role of the community and individual Christians is to follow Jesus' example and be witnesses and proclaimers of the Gospel.

Apostle Peter explains a deeper meaning of this attitude when he calls us to always be prepared to “*give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have*” (1 Pt 3:15). A new approach to witnessing to our faith, new forms of response (*apo-logia*) to the one who asks about *logos* and about the reasons for our faith - these are the paths that the Holy Spirit shows to our Christian communities in order to revive themselves and be more determined to proclaim the hope and salvation that Jesus Christ gifted to us. As Christians, we ought to learn new ways of responding “*with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience*” (1 Pt 3:16), with moderation that springs from a communion with Christ in the Holy Spirit and with determination of these who know that their ultimate goal is an encounter with God in His kingdom. Following Jesus and giving yourself to the service of the Word, you might ask: “*How shall I proclaim? What shall*

---

<sup>39</sup> JOHN PAUL II: Catechesi Tradendae, art.18. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html) (15.05.2010).

*I do so that the person listening to the Word experiences its grace and truth?"* This has led us to various forms of catechesis. They are always flexible depending on different environments in which catechesis is being delivered.

#### 4.1 Kerygmatic Catechesis

The first signs of this movement emerged in the interwar years. A gradual development of critical thinking, even among the common people, together with a growing trend of dechristianization and secularization resulted in the faith being no longer evident for the catechized. The homogenous Christian community is a thing of the past.

The Tridentine Catechism, tied to social conditions where faith is something natural and where the ecclesial community (e.g. a parish) blends with the civic community (at least to a certain degree) loses its effectiveness.

If this was true after the First World War, it could not be any more true today. The Church found herself again at the beginning of her existence. Once again, we must proclaim the Christ's saving work (kerygma) among the nations where Christians were once dominant.

Thus, at the outset of this kerygmatic catechetical movement is the realization that the Tridentine Catechism is no longer effective in today's world. The followers of this catechetical school criticize the traditional catechism for engaging only the human reason and memory without being able to touch the hearts and souls of the new generation. They refer to the traditional form of instruction using questions and answers. This catechism is dry, scholastic and conceptual.

It presents knowledge and teaching removed from the reality of life but it is unable to sow the love for God in people's hearts. It presents faith as a list of formative duties that people must fulfil and not as the Good News that liberates and brings joy.<sup>40</sup> The

---

<sup>40</sup> KLUSKA, B.: Písmo ako „duša“ katechézy: podoby a výzvy súčasnej biblickej katechézy. In: LICHNER, M. (ed.): *Sväté písmo ako duša teológie*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2015, s. 286.



kerygmatic movements rejects this way of transmitting the faith. It is essential to discern theology from preaching.

Contemporary kerygmatic catechesis developed around the “theology of preaching” whose important theological foundations were provided by Jungmann and Rahner at the Faculty of Theology in Innsbruck. Josef Andreas Jungmann was born in South Tyrol, Austria in 1889. After his ordination to the priesthood, he served there as a chaplain. During his days in the parish ministry, he came to believe that there was a huge gap between the joyful nature of the Good News and the legalistic burden-laden reception of faith among his parishioners. In 1917, Jungmann entered the Society of Jesus and was sent to the University of Innsbruck to pursue his studies in catechetics and liturgy. There he studied catechetical and kerygmatic treatises from the first three centuries. In 1936, he published *Die Frohbotschaft und unsere Glaubensverkündigung* (The Good News and Our Proclamation of the Faith) in which he defined catechesis as education in faith. The Church recognized the urgent need for a renewal of catechesis.

It became apparent during the pontificate of Pius X. In 1905, the pope issued the encyclical on teaching Christian doctrine entitled *Acerbo Nimis* and re-established a lay society “Confraternity of Christian Doctrine” that was known already in the sixteenth century. In his encyclical, Pius X complained about adult Christians being ignorant of the Christian doctrine and truths necessary for salvation. He decreed that the first and the most important work of priests (every day or at least three times a week) is the instruction of the faithful on Sundays and on the more solemn days and during the holy seasons of Advent and Lent. To children, the truth of faith must be explained at least on Sundays and feast days; when the Sacraments are to be administered, it needs to be explained in plain and simple language. Pius X clarifies the relationship between the sermon, the explanation of the Gospel, and the teaching of Christian doctrine. The sermon on the holy Gospel is addressed to those who had already received knowledge of the elements of faith (it is “bread broken for adults”). Catechetical instruction, on the other hand, is the milk that the Apostle Peter wished the faithful to desire like new-born babies. The task of the catechist is to explain in all its

parts the truths of faith or of Christian morality in a way that they relate to our lives. He should use examples from Sacred Scriptures, the Church history and the lives of the saints.<sup>41</sup> Worth noting is that it was Pope Pius X who designated St. John Chrysostom the patron saint of Christian preachers (on 18 July 1908).

Surely, the most appropriate response to *Acerbo Nimis* in its times was the one of Jungmann who came to conclusion that catechesis needed to be renewed in a way that it would help people understand the Christian message. He knew that the Christian doctrine was unchanging, but what needed to change was the teaching of the doctrine. Based on the understanding of the Christian message, one can await joyful interest and joyful response in experiencing faith.<sup>42</sup>

### *Benefits of kerygmatic catechesis*

Kerygmatic catechesis makes use of new phrases and expressions. Instead of phrases used in traditional catechism such as: “you must believe”, “you must follow the orders”, “doctrine” or “obligations”, the kerygmatic catechesis opts for new means of expression that are more relatable to a modern man. Some common words were replaced: doctrine – the Good News; orders – responsibility; obligation – witness or a response to God’s calling, etc.

What has also changed was the narrative style in catechesis. The Tridentine Catechism follows a question – answer pattern. Kerygmatic catechesis “tells” the history of salvation of the Old and New Testaments. The history of salvation goes on in a personal history of every faithful.

More attention is also given to a human person: important are the interpersonal relations, encounter, and trust. Catechism is no longer perceived as a lesson in catechism (instruction), but as an encounter. The catechists get involved, they care about living con-

---

<sup>41</sup> PIUS X: *Acerbo Nimis* (Encyclical on Teaching Christian Doctrine), arts. 11-13. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-x\\_enc\\_15041905\\_acerbo-nimis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_15041905_acerbo-nimis.html) (23.7.2013).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. JUNGMAN, J. A.: *Glaubensverkündigung im Lichte der Frohbotschaft*. Innsbruck : Tyrolia, 1963, pp. 13 – 91.

ditions of those being catechized, their challenges in faith, their interests and questions...

With such an approach, the faith becomes more of a personal encounter with living Christ rather than reliance on mere instruction. Moral attitudes are more of an answer to God's call rather than a question of duties that one must fulfil.

### *Catechetical methods of kerygmatic catechesis*

The effort to change the pedagogical methodology is considered to be the first step in the renewal of catechesis in praxis. It is closely linked with the development of human sciences, primarily developmental psychology, sociology and pedagogy itself. These changes occurred in the first three decades of the 20th century. Based on the initial changes, further emphasis is placed on the kerygmatic catechesis being Christ-cantered (or Christocentric). The Catechism is a message. At the heart of this message is the person of Jesus Christ. He brings us to the Father, gives us the Holy Spirit and, through the sacraments, enables us to live among brothers and sisters - in the Church. The Christian faith is presented not as the sum of catechismal articles and moral obligations, but as the message about God's love in Jesus Christ.

The following catechetical methods correspond with this:

- a) The primary purpose of "the catechism" is to present the faith of the Church. Catechists know their learners, their desires, hopes, pains, and dreams of happiness. He presents to them the message of Christ as a response to their deepest desires for happiness. The aim of this step is to reach the hearts of the catechized.
- b) When the catechized person responds in the affirmative, in other words, when he understood that the Good News is indeed a God's gift of a richer life, the catechist moves on to a structured explanation of the Christian faith. He does so in collaboration with the catechized. The faith is presented to them in a way that they are able to express, in a way proper to them, the content of what their beliefs. This expression can take many forms: oral, written, through a drawing, play or an action...

- c) Another form of catechetical methodology involves a practice in the life of faith. This includes training in prayer, sacramental life, moral attitudes, etc. The aim of this phase is to make faith a genuine and living reality that is evident in every moment of our everyday lives.

Kerygmatic catechesis is grounded in the testimonies of Christian life of members of the Church, using biographies of the saints. The testimony of the local ecclesial community, especially the parish, is also required. The kerygmatic approach to catechesis places high demands on catechists. Their theological and pedagogical knowledge does not suffice; they must testify to their own personal relationship with the living God. The kerygmatic approach to catechesis enables to link biblical and anthropological sciences as well as liturgy while always reflecting its specificity – to transmit the Word of God in a way that makes the catechized happy to be a Christian.

## 4.2 Anthropological Catechesis

Humanity is facing many challenges today. We are living in a time of great changes that we have initiated thanks to our ingenuity and creative activity. This human experience (going through changes) gets more intense, the more we become aware of the origin, meaning and essence of our life. Nothing happens without a cause - *Nihil sine causa*. This certainty about the existence of things and causal effects that each of us encounters is also supported by Gottfried W. Leibniz, a German mathematician, diplomat and philosopher of the 18th century. He claims that the phenomenon of chance stems directly from our ignorance of the true causes of what supposedly had to happen, so to speak, by chance. This means that chance does not actually exist. It is only that we do not always know the causes of individual phenomena.

In order to gain a better understanding of theological anthropology, we should consider some specific aspects of a Christian worldview on humans and their mission in the world. In addition to common sense, let us look at the sources of God's Revelation and

the teaching of the Church, especially the Second Vatican Council and other documents of the Magisterium.

- a) *God created humankind in His own image and according to His likeness.* Humans received life from God. They possess something that makes them resemble God – it is the ability to know and love the creation and people around them as well as their Creator.
- b) *God created a human person as a social being, as a man and a woman: “God created mankind in His own image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them” (Gn 1:26-27).* An expression “in God’s image” means that God endowed humans with a reason and free will, the qualities that make them different from all other creatures and make them resemble God.
- c) *The human person is a being at once corporeal and spiritual,* as Council put it in order to reject the Manichean dualism. Through his body, he is connected to the material world and nature. Through his spiritual and immortal soul, he transcends the universe. As a person he is not just a part of nature, nor any anonymous component of humankind; everybody has their own personal dignity.

By his intellect, man surpasses the universe and controls it more and more. He makes great progress and is able to go beyond the experiential and phenomenological phenomena and move towards the understanding of a more profound truth and reality. He reaches perfection in wisdom that reconciles various pieces of knowledge and finds in them the essential elements of truth, good and beauty and even the inner connections with the invisible realities and with the Creator Himself, who is the source of every truth. Based on experience, Christian anthropology claims that in both extreme and everyday situations people relate to *something* that transcends them. In the human language that *something* means God. From this point of view, God denotes the reality that is constantly present throughout the man’s life. From experience then the man knows what or who God is. Contributions of individual religions are crucial in addressing the basic problems of human

existence.<sup>43</sup> The major religions in particular bring for different nations deeper intuitions, wisdom, philosophy, or a tried and tested code of ethics. Apart from myths and errors, they mainly represent the greatest results of human mind in the quest for the absolute. When it comes to Christianity, it brings the precious insights of God's revelation. The anthropological catechesis is instrumental in understanding both the origin and the meaning of human life.

Kerygmatic and catechumenal catechesis too contained some anthropological elements since they considered man as a whole with his personal history and with culture. Anthropological catechesis, however, makes the "human element" a permanent dimension in the process of maturation and growth in the faith. It observes closely the human experience and culture not only in the pre-catechesis but also throughout the catechetical process. This type of catechesis is sometimes referred to as personalist (or existential).

### *Principles of anthropological catechesis*

At the core of kerygmatic catechesis is the proclamation of the God's Word. However, if the proclamation comes from the outside, it does not reach the hearts of those who are being catechized. On the other hand, anthropological catechesis revolves around human life so that the joyous news becomes understood and accepted. The goal of anthropological catechesis is to create an environment in which a man becomes man in the light of faith while interpreting human history against the dynamism of the Gospel. The emphasis is laid on individual human history.

Anthropological catechesis believes that man is unable to comprehend God in a language other than his own. Man is not able to encounter God outside the means of expression to which he is accustomed. One cannot get to know God outside his own culture, in a way other than his own or without prioritizing the needs and interests that are his own.

Anthropological catechesis first seeks to penetrate everyday reality from the viewpoint of creation. Creation is the work of God and as such, it is good and positive. There are seeds of God's truth

---

<sup>43</sup> MERCER, J.: *Catechesis An Invitation to Living Faith*. London : SCM Press, p. 119. ISBN 978-0-334-05941-7.

in all of His creation and in all human realities. At the same time, every culture cherishes some values that can be considered as rudiments of evangelical values. Therefore, catechesis too must take into account the positive in man and society that could be the bearer of the Good News (honesty, sacrifice, sense of self-restraint, hospitality ...).

Secondly, anthropological catechesis seeks to penetrate everyday human life from the viewpoint of the Incarnation. Just as Christ became incarnate in the culture of His people and committed Himself to the Jewish culture in proclaiming the Good News, so must every catechesis seek to permeate daily life, contemporary culture, means of expression, anxieties, and hopes of a particular culture. Anthropological catechesis unites the twofold fidelity: it seeks to be faithful to God's Revelation (What has God revealed about Himself and what has He revealed about man) and be faithful to man (takes into account his life circumstances, listens to his problems and desires).

Although God reveals Himself within the created realities in people's everyday lives, He also encourages them to overcome their current desires, attitudes, and habits. Based on what their present reality is, God guides people to new horizons that surpass the whole creation. The Good News not only sanctifies what was good before his arrival, but also brings a novelty that disturbs, calls for a breakthrough in existing opinions, attitudes, interests and activities. This is the famous *methanoia*<sup>44</sup>, the conversion. In the light of the Good News, many human realities assume a new meaning. In his morning meditation in the Chapel of Santa Marta, Pope Francis reminded us that Jesus makes all things new. His renewal of the law was genuine; the law remained in effect, but more mature and renovated. Pope Francis pointed out that the requirements of Jesus were greater than the requirements of the law. The law permits us

---

<sup>44</sup> From the Greek word *μετάνοια* – composed of *μετά* (after, beyond) and the verb *νοέω* (to perceive, to think, the result of perception or observation) – *metanoia* means “change of mind”. In Christianity, the term refers to spiritual conversion. The word frequently occurs in the New Testament, since it is one of the central motifs in Christ's message in which He calls to conversion.

to hate our enemy, while Jesus teaches us to pray for your enemy. This is the kingdom of God, proclaimed by Jesus. The renewal begins in our hearts, because being a Christian does not mean doing many things. It means letting Jesus to renew us in this new life.<sup>45</sup>

*Benefits of anthropological catechesis and its methodology*

The major benefit is the incarnation of catechesis. Catechesis is built on everyday life. It brings down the wall that separates religion from everyday life and breaks the impression that religion and real life have nothing in common. It enriches the knowledge of God using the knowledge gained through created realities. It fosters the positive talents of creation in the light of faith and leads them to perfection in Christ.

It deepens both the meaning of life and the meaning of faith. Faith helps to understand and experience life in a more profound manner. Life experience helps to deepen faith. Faith questions life and life questions faith and by doing so it purifies it. Human experience and the facts of faith are signs that are interconnected. Human realities are reminiscent of the realities of faith and the realities of faith relate to human realities.

The methodological approach to anthropological catechesis is inductive and based on the lives of the catechized. In a dialogue with them, life challenges and their roots get revealed and analysed. The outcomes of this analysis are then compared with the Gospel message, revealing the light that the Gospel sheds on these realities. Only after the first two phases are completed can the person be presented with the truths of the faith. Although this instruction follows a fixed curriculum, it is no longer a series of mere knowledge unrelated to real life. The first two phases ensure that the religious instruction is not only theoretical, but also linked to a life of the catechized. The subsequent phase of catechesis involves a concrete application, i.e. an authentic preparation for activities in the world according to the precepts of the Gospel.

---

<sup>45</sup> FRANCIS: Saturday morning mediation on *Renewal without fear*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie\\_20130706\\_renewal-without-fear.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130706_renewal-without-fear.html)



### 4.3 Prophetic (Liberation) Catechesis

This catechetical movement originates in Latin America<sup>46</sup> and is a continuation and evolvement of the aforementioned catechetical approaches. It is also referred to as liberation catechesis since it is associated with the theology of liberation. The prophetic catechesis is the youngest of all catechetical schools. It accentuates that catechesis should form an organic part of the overall pastoral plan of any local church. The Church cannot stay distant from anxieties and worries that most of its children experience. Its pastoral plan must address all the realities of life, in a vital and effective manner.

The effective pastoral plan ought to be designed following a social, scientific, economic, political and cultural analysis of particular social conditions. This approach to catechesis lays great emphasis on active love in everyday life. Words need to be followed by deeds both in proclaiming the Good News and in the ecclesial life. This focus on active love is deeply rooted in the environment where this pastoral and theological movement emerged. The majority of its followers come from a very poor background. The authors of this catechetical movement came with strong criticism of the Church in the Latin American context, which is said to live in the unreal world of the sacristy. While the Church concentrates on herself and revolves around the worship services, the majority of her children live surrounded by filth and illiterate or even starve to death.

---

<sup>46</sup> Latin America comprises 34 states with a high percentage of Catholics (62% of a total population). Nearly half of all Catholics (44%) live in Latin America. Therefore, it is sometimes referred to as a continent of hope. The first bishop, Juan de Zumárraga established rectories, schools, charity institutes, and a printing house, where the first Catechism on American soil was printed in the native vernacular. Evangelization of this continent began immediately after its discovery by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Alongside the Spanish and Portuguese colonists came the first missionaries, mostly the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits. The indigenous population comprise the Aztecs and the Maya in Central America and the Incas in South America. At first, it serves the purpose of the missionaries when the indigenous people destroyed the idols of their cult and showed their willingness to become Christians. Catechesis was left for later. Colonization was more intense in Mexico and Peru, so the spiritual care for new Christians came right away. Schools and teaching centres were established even in the smallest of villages.

Catechesis and all pastoral activities are aimed at administering the sacraments, while most Christians are exploited to the point of slavery; oftentimes by other Christians. The first theological reflections on the Church's vocation to live in the midst of society and in collaboration with all people of goodwill to fight against poverty and injustice, and for the fraternity and a more humane life for the poor emerged after the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Therefore, in developing the fundamental rules of this catechesis, emphasis was placed on an active service to the human community. It is essential to realize that the Christian message cannot be understood and accepted unless it is visible in deeds. These deeds alone are the revelation of love. The entire Church must proclaim the Gospel through small communities. These communities are not from the world, but they are in the world and for the world. Catechesis should not be just some special and partial activity. It is to be tied to all ecclesial activities, especially those that benefit society. Growth and maturation in faith of the catechized comes only through the deeds. And in these deeds, their faith is realized. Faith cannot grow outside the environment in which the catechized person lives. Nevertheless, the presented view on the origin and principles of liberation catechesis is not the only one.

On the other hand, there is also a darker side of the liberation theology that should be explained. The fact remains that the theology of liberation was the most popular form of Catholicism in Latin America, especially in Brazil and Central America in the 1970s. In an effort to alleviate the difficult living conditions of the poor in Latin America, it sought to create a so-called "Catholic Action" – a radical political force operating from the bases organized in a similar fashion as the communist cells (ecclesial base communities). In its most radical forms, they even defended the right to use violence to overthrow despotic right-wing regimes. Some priests stood up for the poor and they even took up arms and fought alongside Ernesto Che Guevara.<sup>47</sup> Several ecclesial organizations that directly advocated for the improvement of people's living conditions emerged (Young Christian

---

<sup>47</sup> Dr Ernesto Rafael Guevara de la Serna (\* 14 June 1928, Argentina † 9 October 1967, Bolivia) was an Argentine-Cuban physician and Marxist revolutionary, one of the chief guerrilla commanders during the Cuban Revolution.

Students, Young Christian Workers, Young Christian Farmers, The Movement for Basic Education, and many others).

*Theological foundation of prophetic catechesis:*

1. *The Son of God is one person who united in Himself two natures.* By doing so, He elevated the creation. In his person, God joined time and eternity. Since He sent the Holy Spirit to the Church, the history became one: there is no secular history separated from the history of salvation. God with his salvific intentions is present in the heart of history. All human history thus becomes the history of salvation. Today, salvation history cannot be lived outside the contemporary socio-economic circumstances.
2. *A dynamic concept of revelation in history.* The task of this catechesis is to understand the present in the light of the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church. A contemporary historical reality presents the way of revealing God's will. It is the place where God reveals Himself. His voice can be recognized by the principles and standards offered to us by the Gospel and specified by the living Tradition of the Church.
3. *Unity in diversity.* Diversity of historical circumstances results in the Church showing different faces even within the same community. Everyone receives a special gift of the Holy Spirit for the service of the whole. Therefore, the Church is no longer seen as a pyramid, but as a mysterious body.

*The benefits of prophetic catechesis*

Socio-economic circumstances are seen as a necessary component of catechesis. Let us remember the Israelites enslaved in Egypt. God comes to rescue them from their oppressed circumstances. God appeared as the Redeemer in the real historical circumstances. Their faith in God was born there. The same applies to the catechized. Historical circumstances, or their analysis, should be included in the curriculum of catechesis.

Catechesis should be linked to social activities and political events. Catechesis is a place where the catechized learn to understand the current circumstances, read them as the signs of the times

and judge them in the light of the Good News. At the same time, they learn to respond with personal actions to the movements of the Holy Spirit working in human history. In this obedience and through personal actions, both the individual and the ecclesial community experience the presence of God and his liberating power. The faith of the catechized grows and matures in actions, as a response to the voice of God that one hears in life.

The fruit of this catechesis is the emergence of small communities known as basic ecclesial communities. These communities are the loci of catechesis. The life of the catechized is closely bound to the life of this community. Their faith grows together with the faith of the whole community. These communities offer catechesis to the un-catechized baptized, both adults and children. The aim of this catechesis is not only to build small ecclesial communities, but also to ensure that these communities prepare and deliver catechesis. They make use of various services (charisms) that the Holy Spirit gives individual persons within the community. In other words, a large number of community members are involved in preparation and provision of catechesis.

It is important to note that this catechetical model may also involve some dangers that could completely negate its mission. There are three forms of its “misusing”, particularly: placing emphasis on action instead of a profound understanding of faith; misusing catechesis for ideological or political purposes; over-emphasizing the diversity of the Church. These practices could then threaten the unity of the Church and diminish the importance of obedience to the Magisterium.

#### **4.4 Biblical Catechesis and Working with the Text**

It is our everyday task to pray, to read and hear God’s Word, and act accordingly. Biblical catechesis enables the catechized to listen to the Word of God and decipher the meaning of what God wishes to tell us. Biblical catechesis should proceed from events to mysteries. Various thought processes are used in this form of catechesis. It is also deemed appropriate to proceed from deeds to mysteries,

for instance, to link the deeds of Jesus with the mystery of His redemption.

Sacred Scripture is a great gift to the Church, the faithful and humanity. It is the Word of God written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For its extraordinary origin and rich intellectual content, the Bible was rightly named the Book of Books.<sup>48</sup> What seems to have been an issue in recent years is the notion that while the Bible was written in the past, we live in the present times. How can we then understand and follow the message that was delivered thousands of years ago? To comprehend the Bible means to interpret it as an ancient text from the academic perspective while using all appropriate means so that it can be understood i.e. embraced with our hearts.<sup>49</sup> The message of the Scriptures can be best explained and understood in today's world using the biblical relations.

In biblical catechesis, those being catechized work with the Scriptures and gain the more profound understanding. The Scriptures is a school where we learn to understand God's language. In an effort to understand Sacred Scripture, the following techniques may be applied:

- Incomplete text – some words are left out for a learner to fill the gaps.
- Assembling a text – a written text is cut up and it needs to be assembled so the text and the paper (in a shape of a puzzle) fit.
- Word composition – to compose as many biblical words as possible using a selection of letters written on cards.
- Error correction – a familiar text with deliberately inserted mistakes.
- The Bible quiz – used to verify the knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures.

---

<sup>48</sup> Cf. SLIVKA, D.: Biblická katechéza v praxi. In: PETRO, M. – PALA, G. (ed.): *Školská a mimoškolská katechéza v európskej edukačnej štruktúre*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2008, p. 142.

<sup>49</sup> Cf.: VALČO, M.: Cirkev a fenomén sekularizácie: Máme z neho mať strach?... In: *Křestanská revue*, 2005, no. 7, pp. 197 – 202.

- Unprompted rendition – learners write down or say any words that come to their mind while reading the text or they verbally express their emotions
- Application of the text on our current circumstances – how does the text relate to the current events?

One of the goals of biblical catechesis is to initiate those to be catechized into the reading of the Bible, which can be achieved by respecting the Word of God. Sacred Scriptures speaks of faith. The sacred writers of the Israeli nation called attention to God's presence in the lives of the nation and individuals and testified to their lives of faith. There is one God who loves His people and wants their salvation.<sup>50</sup> Biblical authors chose figures and events from the history of the nation that testify to their faith. This is also true for the creation of the New Testament, the authors of which intended to transmit the faith in living Jesus Christ. The Gospels are the main testimony of the life and teachings of Christ and, at the same time, tell us about the faith of the early Christians. To read the Scriptures means to learn about God and His decision to save man. It also means to listen to Christians who gradually uncovered a personal and loving God in their lives. It means to observe the early Christians, as they recognized Jesus as the Son of God. Christians read the Scriptures so that the covenant between God and his people may continue and be fulfilled. It is also important to realize that Sacred Scripture both informs about God and Christ and strengthens the faith of Christians.

There are different techniques that can be used to analyse biblical texts. We choose the most suitable one, according to the given text and the goal we are trying to accomplish. We distinguish several approaches which can either involve a spontaneous speech based on the read text (we let pure emotions speak) or an objective analysis of the text (structural analysis of the text and historical-critical comparison of the text in its context). We can also try to determine in what way the gospel story calls us to faith, inspires us to love and invites us to hope. Biblical catechesis promotes activity and creativity through actualization of the text and its creative, artis-

---

<sup>50</sup> Cf. KLICH, A. E (ed.): *Dialog Boga z człowiekiem*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2011, s. 21 – 22.

tic and dramatic elaboration. This approach to working with the Scriptures does not only involve reading commentaries on a given text. It is also essential to encourage a personal reading and study of the Scriptures. A short theological or exegetical reflection upon the read passage is a precondition of any preparation for biblical catechesis. At the same time, it is necessary to think about the appropriate ways of conveying the message to the listeners in their situation.<sup>51</sup>

#### 4.5 Liturgical Catechesis

On 4 December 1963, the fathers of the Second Vatican (pastoral) Council approved the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy entitled *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. The constitution urges those in charge to ensure fully conscious and active participation in liturgical celebrations (SC 14) through proper education, which means a concrete application of liturgical catechesis. In a similar vein, on 26 September 1964, the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued an instruction entitled *Inter Oecumenici*, concerning the proper use of this conciliar constitution. The instruction states that “*Especially necessary is a close, living union between liturgy and catechesis...*”<sup>52</sup> An important document regarding catechetical instruction before the administration of the sacraments is the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* issued by Pope Paul VI. In his exhortation, the pope states that solid individual and global catechetical instruction is vital for the reception of holy mysteries (sacraments) so retaining their effectiveness.<sup>53</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that “*the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which*

---

<sup>51</sup> Cf. VALOVIČ, E.: *Náčrt katechetiky II*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2000, pp. 56 – 63.

<sup>52</sup> SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES: *Inter Oecumenici* In: <https://adoremus.org/1964/09/inter-oecumenici/>.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. PAUL VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html)

*all her power flows.” It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the people of God. “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of men” (CCC 1074).*

Liturgical catechesis aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ (it is mystagogy) by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the thing signified, from the “sacraments” to the “mysteries”. Such catechesis is to be presented by local and regional catechisms (CCC 1075). In his post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritas*, Pope Benedict XVI accentuates the importance of mystagogical catechesis. He points to its three basic elements: it interprets the rites in the light of the events of our salvation in accordance with the Church’s living tradition; it must be concerned with presenting the meaning of the signs contained in the rites; and it must bring out the significance of the rites for the Christian life in all its dimensions.<sup>54</sup>

With that said, we should read the words of Boháč in the context of catechesis and liturgy very attentively: *“The Byzantine liturgical tradition, as well as other Eastern traditions, have preserved in an exceptional way, the primacy of divine liturgy as a pinnacle of Christian life, while remaining faithful to the tradition of the Church Fathers. In their times, divine liturgy was the place where catechesis and religious teaching were concentrated and where Sacred Scripture was proclaimed and commented. It was the place where catechumens prepared for Baptism and penitents prepared for Reconciliation. In the pre-paschal season, catechesis was carried out in a perfect synthesis of instructions and symbols. The entire life of the Church tended to concentrate in divine liturgy.”*<sup>55</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> BENEDICT XVI: *Sacramentum Caritatis*. [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20070222\\_sacramentum-caritatis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html)

<sup>55</sup> BOHÁČ, V.: Liturgická katechéza v praxi. In: TIRPÁK, P. – PAĽA, G. (ed.): *Farská a školská katechéza ako forma novej evanjelizácie*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2012, p. 24.



In many Christian countries, large masses of baptized people are losing their religious feelings or do not adhere to the Church because they have distanced themselves from Christ and the Gospel. To address this situation a new perspective on the life of faith is required. In this process of rediscovery, it is necessary to ensure a provision of basic catechesis and to focus on catechumenal form of faith.<sup>56</sup>

#### 4.6 Catechumenal Catechesis

If we were to assess the religious knowledge among adolescents in schools or among adults at different workplaces, we would have to admit that religious or sacramental life has become somewhat of a superficial matter. This poses an important question: “Why?” Why is it that people are not inspired by the message of Jesus Christ as much as their contemporaries were before they had converted and got baptized? Even if many profess their faith, they only see it as some personal characteristic feature. Even a greater number of people are ignorant of what faith and the sacraments have to offer. Today, we are investing enormous effort and considerable resources to the renewal of catechesis. It should be noted that catechesis that is in line with the requirements of the General Directory for Catechesis (GDC), must be coupled with a Christian initiation in accordance with the official document of the Church entitled *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. According to this document, “catechesis must have a catechumenal style” and presuppose the renewal of pastoral care, with Christian initiation at its heart. Such pastoral care allows for the gradual organic growth of the parish.<sup>57</sup>

The extent to which a lay Christian knows the sacraments depends on their purpose. The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* specifies it as follows: the purpose of the sacraments is to sanctify men and to give worship to God. They

---

<sup>56</sup> HUGHES, K.: *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament*. Chicago : Liturgy Training Publications, 1994, p. 28. ISBN 978-1-56854-239-3.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. LENCZ, L.: *Katechumenátna katechéza – katechumenátna pastorácia*. In: <http://www.cirkev.cz/res/data/083/009177.pdf> (22.7.2013).

also have instructional function: they not only presuppose faith, they also nourish, strengthen and express it....so the faithful receive this grace in a fruitful manner, to worship God duly and to practice charity (SC 59). Therefore, it is of the utmost importance, as supported by the Magisterium, that the faithful understands the sacramental signs (and that is the task of the catechumenate) and participate in the sacraments more frequently since they were instituted with the purpose of preserving and nourishing the Christian life. Through these external sensory and perceptible signs, we also receive the invisible grace of God so we can improve our spiritual life.<sup>58</sup> This is, by all means, the duty and pastoral task of every Christian since Jesus Christ who said, “... *you also go and work in my vineyard*” (Matt 20:3-4). Pastoral care involves both the clergy and laity. By cultivating both the internal and external world, which is in symbiosis with the right values, pastoral care is the path to God.<sup>59</sup>

Catechesis must be clearly distinguished from the initial proclamation of the Gospel. What also needs to be taken into consideration, for instance, is that a certain number of children enrolled in catechesis classes (at schools) often have no religious background. What shall we do in such cases? In pastoral practice, however, it is not easy to draw the line between the two activities - the initial proclamation and catechesis. Oftentimes what the catechized person really needs is his or her internal conversion. The Church therefore wants the first stage of the catechetical process be concerned with conversion (cf. CT 19). This does not mean that catechumenal catechesis dispense from evangelization. Even if catechesis assumes these missionary tasks in its initial phase, it does not relieve the particular churches of taking care of the initial proclamation. The tasks and the goal of such catechesis then follow from that (GDC 84-86). The General Directory for Catechesis discusses the fundamental tasks of catechesis: promoting knowledge of the faith; in-

---

<sup>58</sup> Cf. TIRPÁK, P.: Sviatosti z pohľadu iniciácie a integrácie do života. In: *Theologos*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2009, vol. 11, no. 2, p. 216.

<sup>59</sup> PAĽA, G.: Koncepcia mediálnej výchovy v pastorálnej starostlivosti o rodinu. In: MICHANČOVÁ, S.- KUBÍK, F. (eds.): *Pastorálna starostlivosť na počiatku 21. Storočia*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2009, p. 310.

initiation into liturgical celebrations; moral formation; teaching to pray; education for community life; initiation to the Christian mission - that is, to be open to the missionary dynamism of the Gospel.

This tendency requires the renewal of pastoral care, which is constantly facing the challenges of the postmodern and secularized society. This renewal could be seen in individual tasks performed by parishes and priests (or lay people) in line with the recommendation of the Magisterium.<sup>60</sup>

1. The main task is to *create a community*, which can accompany those who profess to serve Christ on their journey to faith and in faith. The community provides stimuli that encourage them in the Christian way of life, help protect them from the lure of liberal society, and invites to Christianity those who live in religious indifference. In order for the parish community to transform, it is first necessary to create a nucleus of mature Christians for whom the pastor should have adequate pastoral care (GDC 258)
2. Another task involves *formation of a living parish community* that requires primarily the converted adults who live from faith. If once the main task of pastoral care was working with children, the primary task of the renewed catechesis is pastoral care of adults. From the standpoint of catechization, catechesis of adults must be considered the chief form of catechesis (GDC 59, CT 43).
3. Thus, the focus of renewed pastoral care shifts to *working with people*, personal contacts and communication. Naturally, the parish office and the church will maintain their role, but they will no longer be the exclusive and privileged environment of pastoral activity. Traditional pastoral care emphasized the priest's ability to preach well and devoutly administer the sacraments. On the other hand, a professional profile of pastoral priest today requires the ability to relate, promote dialogue, form relationships, communicate

---

<sup>60</sup> It comes from the guidance of the previously cited document. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY: General Directory for Catechesis. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html).

and engage in group work. (cf. GDC 239). Anonymous pastoral care addressed to masses will no longer suffice.

4. Changed conditions in the realm of pastoral care demand profound *changes in a formation* of future priests and engaged laity. Formation of a priest as a human being is vitally important given the recipients of his service. This ensures that the priest will be the man of his service and willing to cooperate since *“the more the lay apostolate develops, the more strongly is perceived the need to have well-formed holy priests”*.<sup>61</sup>
5. In line with the Directory, it is important to realize the urgency of changing the perception of the catechumenate. The model for all catechesis is the baptismal catechumenate (GDC 59), and not religious education. This catechumenal formation should inspire other forms of catechesis. The main principles of catechumenal catechesis are:
  - a) initiation into the faith (initial evangelization) leading to conversion,
  - b) integration into the existing community (existence or formation of a community is the first step to the catechumenate),
  - c) acquisition of attitudes and behaviours through active participation in the community life in the light of the Gospel,
  - d) and all that while learning to understand the truth of the faith.
6. The goal of the catechumenate and catechesis will never be accomplished unless catechumens and those receiving catechesis become conscious of the importance of exercising their missionary vocation and their participation in the mission of the Church. This implies that the Christian initiation and catechumenal catechesis are at the heart of pastoral care.

---

<sup>61</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_25031992\\_pastores-dabo-vobis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html) (26.11.2020)

This poses another question: “*Who should enter into the catechumenate? Who is the recipient of catechumenal catechesis?*” Worth noting is that the catechumenate concerns not only those preparing for the reception of the sacraments of initiation. In its broader sense, the catechumenate concerns the entire parish community. It gives the faithful the opportunity to re-examine their faith while being able to experience more profoundly the mystery of Christ and their commitment needed for their life within the community.

In its narrow sense, the catechumenate refers to particular target groups. Thus, adult catechesis, prayer groups, and Bible study groups can function without the catechumenate. If these groups can do without the stages and rites pertaining to the catechumenate, they most probably will not need the institution of the catechumenate either. “*There are four situations in people’s lives (or four target groups) that demand from every person to participate in the catechumenate: the non-baptized, the baptized, the baptized who need to complete their initiation, the faithful who were initiated but did not participate in a systematic catechesis and those who have returned to the Catholic Church.*”<sup>62</sup> In these four situations, the catechumenal catechesis can lay a sound foundation of the faith, arouse true conversion, and deepen one’s conversion.

#### 4.7 Factual and Existential Catechesis

*Factual catechesis* presents and explains the Christian mystery as a “thing” in which we do not directly participate. Factual catechesis may be more difficult to understand because of its structure, so it is not suitable for children. For instance, when speaking about *the Eucharist* we cannot do without mentioning the presence, sacrifice and reception of Christ. When teaching about sacrifice in factual catechesis, the catechist should explain the nature of sacrifice, past sacrifices, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and his sacrifice in the holy

---

<sup>62</sup> Cf. FOGASSY, J.: *Príručka katechumenátnej katechézy*. Bratislava : Komisia pre katechizáciu a školstvo KBS, 2007, p. 69.

liturgy. Factual catechesis makes use of different forms of *dialectics* to move from the event to the mystery:

- a) *Antithetical dialectics* – presents Jesus Christ in his humanity - humiliated, conquered and as an antithesis, it presents Jesus in His greatness and power.
- b) *Progressive dialectics* – in catechesis on marriage, we can show how a simple encounter changes to affectionate and spontaneous love which then moves towards “rational” love before progressing to indivisible love that finds its integration in love of Jesus Christ for the Church.
- c) *Dialectics of perfection* – proclaims the eschatological reality, which, before being realized, finds its new dimension in relation to perfection
- d) *Dialectics based on standpoints* – we arrive at the truth presenting contrasts based on various standpoints. The Church can be introduced by listening to different opinions that people have about the Church. These opinions are then assessed (subjected to criticism). This will lead us to the standpoint of faith.

*Existential catechesis* responds to spiritual orientation, growth, interests, and needs of the catechized. A variety of existential catechesis arises from an array of people’s needs (catechesis on happiness, self-sacrifice, a struggle with evil, freedom, desires, etc.). Existential catechesis will become a catechesis on values when we define a value as corresponding to a certain need of a person. Nevertheless, this form of catechesis may pose a risk of being insufficient in structure for its determined effort to be relatable to the catechized. Every catechesis usually starts with the presentation of an event, fact, action or situation. The role of catechesis is to fill these ideas with faith and give them meaning. Therefore, the first task of catechesis is to properly select *an event* and assign it a proper place in the course of the catechesis.

Firstly, the event selected for catechesis should be the real one. Secondly, the event must relate to the group to which it will be presented. Age, environment, cultural and religious standards should all be taken into consideration here. A link between the event and the particular catechetical lesson needs to be established too. If the

topic of catechesis is, for instance, God's forgiveness, an appropriate profane event to relate to this could be forgiveness in the family. If the topic of catechesis is the Eucharist, then we can relate it to family reunions or celebrations. It is advisable to avoid events that are too attractive for either their activity (especially for boys) or affectivity (for girls): for example, a bicycle accident (boys aged 12 to 14), details of an event of a martyr's death, etc. In a sense, it should not be the catechist who selects the events, since the Word of God is revealed directed at some human events: Baptism is associated with birth, the Eucharist with feast, reconciliation with forgiveness, grace with love, or encounter, etc. The most important though is to select events appropriately for different age groups and emphasize their spiritual meaning and ability to transfer this to life.

#### 4.8 Catechesis and Renewal of Popular Devotion

The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed and the font from which all her power flows. Yet it does not exhaust all of her activities. The spiritual life is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Church also recommends and encourages some forms of popular devotional practices, provided they are accompanied by proper catechesis. The relationship between catechesis and popular devotion is also mentioned in the Catechism: *"besides sacramental liturgy and sacramentals, catechesis must take into account the forms of piety and popular devotions among the faithful. The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics, visits to sanctuaries, pilgrimages, processions..."* (CCC 1674). Some devotional practices spring from the authentic experience of Christian faith and religiosity. Sometimes a certain amount of adaptation from the Church is required to purify these practices of errors, disproportionate exaltations or even elements of superstition.<sup>63</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Cf. BRÁDŇANSKÁ, N. – HANESOVÁ, D. a kol.: *Vybrané katechetické metody*. Banská Bystrica : PF UMB, 2005, s. 84 – 86.

Popular devotion usually refers to traditional piety with a certain dose of “folklore faith” that focuses on rituals rather than on content. People still go to church, but they are rather indifferent to what prayers they are saying or what their belief actually is. They do not need to think or read religious books. They need rituals. But a mature person also needs to understand the very essence of the ritual. Rationality has gradually faded away from popular devotion. People at times do not enter the church because they would have to be there with people whom they consider evil, or people who might have hurt them in the past or with people whose great-grandfathers might have caused grief to their own great-grandfathers. Faith thus becomes egocentric, revolving around the idea of God as a great protector in times of crisis. People give preference to manifestations of faith on pilgrimages and especially in miracles and apparitions. Seeking refuge in this “inner warmth” is the result of separation of God from life and disconnection of religion from daily practice and morality.<sup>64</sup>

Based on its longstanding experience, the Church affirms that healthy popular devotion has borne much fruit in the realm of the Christian life in families and nations. Based on her experience and in the light of the Holy Spirit, the Church believes that this piety can still be of great service to the true inculturated faith, considering a diversity of nations and continents.

There are various manifestations of popular devotion throughout the liturgical year, especially during the Lent, the Holy Week and the Paschal season. There are many forms of pious practices directed to the Most Holy Mother of God, the deceased and the saints. Pilgrimages, visits to sanctuaries and cemeteries, processions, etc. are all expression of popular piety.

A Christian family has always been very closely associated with these expressions of piety, primarily with pilgrimages and visits to Marian shrines, some of which are now recognized worldwide. This tradition has been passed down from parents to children. Today, too, many Christian families come with their children to pilgrimage sites to show their piety but also to receive sacramental

---

<sup>64</sup> HAJDUK, A.: *Ľudová zbožnosť*. In: [http://www.uski.sk/frm\\_2009/ran/2004/ran-2004-1-09.pdf](http://www.uski.sk/frm_2009/ran/2004/ran-2004-1-09.pdf) (20.1.2013).



absolution and the Eucharist. There are other daily manifestations of popular piety such as prayers before meals, communal prayers, house and car blessings, pilgrimages to the shrines of one's patron saint, prayers for rain or protection against natural disasters, etc.

Once the faith gave rise to these religious traditions and practices, it is highly beneficial for Christian parents to observe them, pass them down to their children and experience their intimate relationship with God not only on special occasions, but also in their daily lives. These practices have greatly affected the identity of nations and have shaped the external manifestations of the professed faith. As these manifestations were translated into a social context, they became a joyful testimony of the Christian faith for non-believers and the encouragement for those who live in religious indifference.

According to the official document of the Church, issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, it is important to constantly seek the means to harmonize liturgy and popular piety. In his Apostolic Letter, *Vicesimus Quintus Annus*, dated 4 December 1988, Saint John Paul II asserts that popular piety can neither be ignored nor treated with indifference or contempt because of its richness and since it, per se, gives expression to the religious attitude towards God. John Paul II continues in his deliberation and reminds us that it has to be continually evangelized, so that the faith which it expresses may become more mature and authentic. This way the forms of popular piety do not become substitutes for the liturgical celebrations. An authentic pastoral promotion will build upon the riches of popular piety, purifying and directing them towards the liturgy as the offering of the people.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Vicesimus Quintus Annus* – *Apostolic Letter*, art. 18. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1988/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19881204\\_vicesimus-quintus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19881204_vicesimus-quintus-annus.html) (26.1.2013).



## 5 LOCI OF CATECHESIS

During his life, Jesus Christ did not stay in one place. He did not wait until the crowd came to Him to hear His teaching. This is surely not the way the Church is supposed to fulfil her mission either. Jesus taught and proclaimed the Good News in synagogues, in houses, in the streets, on the shore of the lake... Jesus' "pastoral ministry" was directed towards the world. He strove to reach out to everybody, including those on the fringes of society. Jesus ate a meal with many tax collectors and sinners. He touched those whom the Israelites themselves deemed "unclean" for being different. He entered into the environment to elevate it to cultivate a person whom He encouraged and taught not by abstract interpretations but by various parables provided to Him by his surroundings and given situation.<sup>66</sup> If we wanted to, and this surely is our task, capture this dimension of the loving touch of God and his encounter with man, we need to do so with a new form of pastoral care - the pastoral care of searching and new knowledge.

Since every important act of the Church participates in the ministry of the Word, and since catechesis always has a relation in the universal life of the Church, it is vital that catechetical action must necessarily be coordinated with the overall pastoral action. The aim of this cooperation is to have the Christian community grow and develop in a harmonious way, for, although it has distinct aspects because of the various functions it strives toward a single basic goal. It is, therefore, necessary that catechesis be associated with other pastoral activities such as the lay apostolate and social action. The General Directory for Catechesis addresses this dimension and studies the various loci where catechesis is realized.

---

<sup>66</sup> Cf. VRABLEC, J. – JARAB, J. – STANČEK, L.: *Chod'te aj vy do mojej vinice* I. Trnava : SSV, 1997, pp. 22 – 23.

## 5.1 Catechesis in a School Setting

In 1998, the Congregation for Catholic Education issued a document about the religious education in Catholic schools. It recognizes a didactic and religious dimension that makes the Catholic schools distinctive and that is to be found in: the educational climate, the personal development of each student, the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, and in the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith.<sup>67</sup>

In a similar vein, John Amos Comenius defined his approach to teaching (1657): “*may the guiding star and rudder of our didactic be this: to search out and discover a rule in accordance with which teachers teach less and learners learn more; the school contain less noise and confusion, but more enjoyment and solid progress. The Christian community would suffer less from an all pervading gloom, discord, and derangement, but find more order, light, and tranquillity.*”<sup>68</sup>

Bringing more light, order and tranquillity to the Christian community is not just a matter of the goodwill of the people and the grace of God. It is oftentimes a matter of knowledge and choosing the right methods. The role of catechists is not only to impart knowledge of the faith to children, but also to teach them to connect and evaluate individual pieces of knowledge. The most important is to teach them the art of transferring the content of faith to everyday life.

Catechesis is a dialogical encounter with God, a systematic instruction aimed at deepening the faith, sanctification and education of man. *Didactics of catechesis* is a science of religious education, its aims, subject matter, methods, tools and the organizational frame. It also involves education and formation of teachers of religion, catechists. Discussing school catechesis, the Second Vati-

---

<sup>67</sup> CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION: *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_19880407\\_catholic-school\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html) (22.9.2012).

<sup>68</sup> COMENIUS, J. A.: *The Great Didactics*. New York : Russell & Russell, 1967. In: <http://core.roehampton.ac.uk/digital/froarc/comgre/> (22.9.2012).

can Council speaks of “*an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom.*” In a Catholic school, everyone should experience the living presence of Jesus the “Master” who, today as always, is with us in our journey through history as the one and only “Teacher” and the perfect man in whom all human values find their fullness. It is necessary to proceed from the ideal into the real. The Gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life that permeates every element of the educational climate.

### **5.1.1 The aim and tasks of didactics**

Didactics refers to the science of teaching, learning, and education. “*Then Jesus came to them and said: «All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go 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 I have commanded you».*”(Matt 28:19-20). Remembering the command of their Master, the Apostles amply fulfilled their task and the entire Church continues to do so until today. The Church teaches the nations and baptizes those who found their faith in Jesus Christ.

There is not one strict definition of *didactics* in the scholarly literature concerning educational sciences. Some authors claim that didactics is a science that is concerned with intellectual education, whereas others define didactics as a theory of teaching and learning. It can also be reduced to the theory of instruction. Thinking of didactics in the context of catechetics, it is considered a segment of pedagogical sciences that is concerned with education and the teaching process. In the educational process at schools, usually undertaken by a teacher (catechist) in a form of instruction, a student acquires knowledge, skills and habits (cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains of learning).

The subject matter of the theory of instruction is *the performance aspect of teaching* that too has its tasks and goals. *The task of the theory of instruction* is to examine the educational and learning process as well as to elaborate issues associated with the process of instruction managed by the teacher in a school setting, and by parents in a family setting. The issues involve talents of

young people, learners' motivation, arousing their desires for exploration, and satisfying their interests both in terms of natural and supernatural mission of man in the spirit of the Gospel.

In the domain concerning learning activities of students, the theory of instruction addresses the issues of sensory knowledge, development of knowledge through speech, acquisition of knowledge and skills through student's own experience and learn through discovery.

*The goal of the theory of instruction* is to help students with self-fulfilment so that they can live a fulfilled and, at the same time, Christian life. A Christian school should through learning and acquisition of knowledge, skills and habits create suitable conditions in which the student can become a good practicing Christian who understands the social needs and interests of society in the spirit of the Good News of the Gospel.<sup>69</sup> A Christian school should prepare students for life so that they can be the educated and valid members of the ecclesial community (and of the entire Christian community), citizens of their state and valid members of the entire human family.

A Christian school cannot achieve this educational aim unless the overall educational process is grounded in love.

### ***5.1.2 The concept of teaching and the development of catechizing***

When thinking about a teaching process, we need to consider the content and procedural aspects. The content aspect of a teaching process concerns the question *What to teach?* The procedural aspect concerns the question *How to teach?* *The content aspect* of a teaching process is interconnected with the advancement of scientific knowledge and the way this body of knowledge is selected to be incorporated in the curriculum. The body of knowledge, skills and attitudes expected to be learned are specified in the core curriculum, content standards and textbooks for the individual school subjects. *The procedural aspect* of a teaching process involves the

---

<sup>69</sup> KIELIAN, A.: *Przyszłość nauczania religii. Kontekst kultury cyfrowej, nowa dydaktyka i wskazania dla tworzenia podręczników*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo UNUM, 2021, s. 61 – 63.

organizational framework of teaching, a school timetable, and effective assessment of students' knowledge. The effectiveness of teaching is determined by the time allocated to it, by the energy expended by students during the teaching process, energy expended by a teacher during the instructional process and overall outcomes of the learning activity.

We must keep in mind that the character of teaching is conditioned by the historical development of theories concerning educational process and learning. Each educational concept captures the goal, content, organization and style of a teaching process.<sup>70</sup> There are several approaches to teaching and they all present different views on the student-teacher relationship in a teaching process. Dogmatic, transmissive and verbal-visual approaches to teaching are all forms of a traditional teaching style.

*Dogmatic approach to teaching* prevailed in the Middle Ages in all types of schools, which were primarily church schools at that time.<sup>71</sup> The primary objective of a dogmatic teaching was the preparation of the young for the afterlife and their moral formation in accordance with the Christian morality. The core learning areas included the seven liberal arts: grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, astronomy, arithmetic, geometry and music. Latin, as the universal language of the educated world, was also taught. The instruction in dogmatic schools took place outside of the confines of the classrooms. It was an individual personal teacher-student relationship. The effectiveness of the teaching process was rather low, since most of the students were passive in their work with the teacher. The key method used in this form of teaching was memorizing. In the 17th century, dogmatic instruction was gradually abandoned.

*Transmissive approach to teaching* appears to be a transition from a dogmatic to verbal - visual teaching model. It persisted in the catechism instruction. Some elements of this model of instruction also influenced teaching of other subjects. This approach fol-

---

<sup>70</sup> Cf. OSEWSKA, E.: *Rodzina i szkoła w Polsce wobec współczesnych wyzwań wychowawczych*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2020, s. 163 – 165.

<sup>71</sup> BURIAN, R. – ŠPÁNIK, M.: *Pedagogika pre kresťanské školy*. Trenčín : Naša tlač, 1993, p. 54.

lowed the *question – answer* model. The teacher asks questions. The student learns a very precisely formulated answer.

*Verbal-visual approach to teaching* has been subjected to many changes over the years and it is still the most widely used teaching model. In the past, it was largely influenced by the thoughts of John Amos Comenius (1592 - 1670) and a German educationist Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776 - 1841). The teacher is dominant in this type of instruction. The teacher's word is considered the main tool of instruction, supplemented by visual teaching aids. In contrast to dogmatic teaching students participate more actively in a teaching process, but they still are mere objects of education, not its subjects. This model of teaching revolves around the teacher-student-curriculum relationship. The teacher explains the subject matter; students learn the material by heart and then the teacher checks whether students mastered the material and are able to reproduce it.

The verbal-visual type of instruction is still the most used concept in our schools. Teachers often use it because it is easy to prepare and enables to transfer knowledge quickly. It saves the valuable time in the classroom that can be dedicated to other activities. It gives the teacher maximum activity. The biggest flaw of this type of teaching is the overestimation of the verbal aspect of instruction (verbalism), while the practical aspects are underestimated. The revision is reduced to formal stereotypical operations of the teaching process. Factual knowledge is given preference and it is exaggerated.

### **5.1.3 School catechesis**

Catechesis is a strategic activity of the Church, *“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”* (CCC 4).<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II: Apostolic Exhortation: *Catechesi Tradendae*, arts. 1 – 2.



The Church's universal mission to catechize is in practice carried out on various levels of ecclesial life. We distinguish between catechesis in the family, the parish, and the ecclesial institutions.<sup>73</sup>

The document issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education entitled *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* introduces some changes to Catholic schools. *"In the specifically educational field, the scope of educational functions has broadened, becoming more complex, more specialized. The sciences of education, which concentrated in the past on the study of the child and teacher-training, have been widened to include the various stages of life, and the different spheres and situations beyond the school. New requirements have given force to the demand for new contents, new capabilities and new educational models besides those followed traditionally. Thus education and schooling become particularly difficult today."*<sup>74</sup>

Religious education constitutes an essential part of the educational system in Christian pedagogy. It is directed towards God and salvation of the immortal soul of every young person in the process of education. Religious education or school catechesis is an integral part of the entire educational process and as such cannot be isolated. The subject matter of religious education should be a synthesis of education in its entirety; a time and space where the whole education system culminates and a point of departure from which we determine new directions in education.<sup>75</sup> It is up to the competent ecclesial authorities to determine the subject matter and curriculum of religious education and design its science-based methodology. There are multiple definitions of religious education. Here are some of them: religious education initiates learners into the subject of religion, introduces the basic concepts, moral values and teaches about different churches, church traditions and rituals<sup>76</sup>;

---

<sup>73</sup> Cf. WĘGRZYN, B.: Pojęcie i podstawy formacji ciągłej w życiu zakonnym. Limanowa 2006, p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION: *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1977, art. 2

<sup>75</sup> Cf. MUCHOVÁ, L.: *Úvod do náboženské pedagogiky*. Olomouc : Matice cyrilometodějská, 1994, p. 18.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. PRŮCHA, J.: *Pedagogický slovník*. Praha : Portál, 1995, p. 139.

religious education is a set of educational activities aimed at learning and mastering the principles, norms, moral codes and history of a particular religion; religious education designates a school subject as well out-of-school activities grounded in Christianity.<sup>77</sup>

The purpose of religious education is to encourage learners to the fullness of their personal development so that they would be able to attain the ultimate goal of a human by participating in the Christian creation of the world. The goal of religious education is to bring a person to the fullness of life. The role of religious education is to present to a child the world he or she can trust as a prerequisite for gaining self-confidence.<sup>78</sup>

Every educational effort in religious education is made to ensure that learners accept God in their lives and honour Him. Religion instruction is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate with other areas of knowledge. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge. Religious instruction is developed in various forms depending on the school context and the recipients of this instruction.

The intelligence especially that of children and young people needs to learn through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings and the content of the truth which God has revealed and which the Church has sought to express in a richer fashion. *“No one will deny that this instruction must be given to form patterns of Christian living and not to remain only notional. Truly, the effort for evangelization will profit greatly- at the level of catechetical instruction given at church, in the schools, where this is possible, and in every case in Christian homes- if those giving catechetical instruction have suitable texts, updated with wisdom and competence, under the authority of the bishops. The*

---

<sup>77</sup> Cf. PETRO, M.: Ethical aspects of media education. In: PRIBULA, M. (ed.): *Orbis communicationis socialis*. Lublin : NORBERTINUM, 2006, p. 48; HOTÁR, V. S.: *Výchova a vzdelávanie dospelých. Andragogika. Terminologický a výkladový slovník*. Bratislava : SPN, 2000, p. 279.

<sup>78</sup> NUZZI, R.: *Gifts of the Spirit: Multiple Intelligences in Religious Education*. Washington, D.C. : National Catholic Educational Association, 2005, p. 54. ISBN 1-55833-236-7.

*methods must be adapted to the age, culture and aptitude of the persons concerned.” (EN 44).*

The relationship between the religious instruction in schools and catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity: *“there is an absolute necessity to distinguish clearly between religious instruction and catechesis.”* A distinctive feature of religious instruction in schools is the fact that it is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate with other areas of knowledge. *“Religious instruction seeks to keep in touch with the other elements of the student’s knowledge and education; thus the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the students and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith... It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge... Through inter-disciplinary dialogue religious instruction in schools underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school.”*<sup>79</sup>

Religious instruction makes present the Gospel in a personal process of cultural assimilation. It strives to make use of other elements of knowledge and education so that the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the students and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith. It is necessary that religious instruction in schools be regarded as an academic discipline with the same systematic demands as other disciplines. Religious instruction takes place in diverse school contexts. There are various models of religious instruction in schools. Religious instruction is intended to assist the students to understand better the Christian message, by relating it to the great existential problems, to various visions of life and to major moral questions which confront humanity today. The students who are searching can discover what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is.<sup>80</sup> For students who are non-believers, religious instruction assumes the character of a mission-

---

<sup>79</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY: General Directory for Catechesis. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html)

<sup>80</sup> Cf. WĘGRZYN, B.: Realizacja formacji ciągłej w życiu zakonnym. Limanowa 2006, p. 36.

ary proclamation of the Gospel so that they can make a decision of faith, which will be nurtured by catechesis within a community.

In addition to the supernatural goal, religious education also has a natural goal. The supernatural goal lies in education about God and salvation of immortal souls. The natural goal lies in fulfilling the life attitudes of students and the right channelling of their nature. From a perspective of psychology and sociology, people are, by nature, religious beings who direct their steps towards the truth that transcends them. The academic discipline of religious education has earned a rightful place in the holistic understanding of education.

Religious education teaches responsibility towards oneself, towards other individuals and towards the whole society. It teaches students to think critically, to avoid being manipulated, to understand themselves, other people, and the world they live in. Religious instruction also connects to other social sciences in the school curriculum. Students thus have the opportunity to clarify their moral views on a variety of topics in the current open social discourse. It teaches students to distinguish between what is socially acceptable and what is morally good for the individual and for the whole society.<sup>81</sup>

Religious education, just as any other scholastic discipline, must take into account the fundamental pedagogical principles such as that of accessibility, adequacy, individualized approach, scientificity and systematization, topicality, exemplification, consistency, durability and application in practical life.

Any educational process requires a sensitive and human approach to every young learner. The same applies to religious education. The subject of religious education is concerned with the overall religious formation of students, to which the church documents refer to as catechesis. Today, the question of whether reli-

---

<sup>81</sup> Cf. PETRO, M.: Kresťanská výchova – možnosť zabezpečenia kultúry života. In: SZYMECZEK, J. (ed.): *Křesťanská výchova ve XXI. století. Prosociální a preventivní aspekty výuky náboženství*. Ostrava : Ostravská univerzita Pedagogická fakulta, 2007, p. 41. See also: KATOLÍCKE PEDAGOGICKÉ A KATECHETICKÉ CENTRUM: *Projekt nových učebných osnov predmetu náboženstvo/náboženská výchova pre základné a stredné školy*. Spišská Nová Ves : KPKC, 2006, p. 5.

gious education as a school subject should be catechesis or religious instruction as set forth in the General Directory for Catechesis (cf. GDC, arts. 73-74) has not yet been finalized in Slovakia. The relationship between religious instruction in schools and catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity.

## 5.2 Catechesis in a Family Setting

In accordance with God's plan, the family is an intimate community of life and love. It is the family that receives the mission to guard, express and mediate love as a living echo and a genuine participation in God's love for his people.<sup>82</sup> Every particular task of the family is an expressive and concrete actuation of that fundamental mission.<sup>83</sup> The Church has always been concerned with the family knowing that marriage and the family constitute one of the most precious of human values.<sup>84</sup>

Today, in the world often alien and even hostile to faith, the Christian families are of primary importance. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council uses the ancient expression and calls the family "*ecclesia domestica*". Christian parents are co-operators in grace and witnesses of faith. They are the first to educate their children (cf. AA 11). Since parents have given children their life, they are responsible for their education. This role is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied, where it is lacking. Therefore, parents must create a family atmosphere to impart education in the light of the Gospel (cf. GE 3). To gain a better understanding of the fundamentals of Christian education, it is important to turn our attention to two essential truths: first, man is called to a fullness of life in truth and love. Second, the gift of self is the fullest way

---

<sup>82</sup> Cf. HIŠEM, C.: *Škola života*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 1999, p. 64.

<sup>83</sup> SOTONIAKOVÁ, E.: *Postavenie kresťana v tomto svete*. Prešov : Spolok biskupa Petra Pavla Gojdiča, 1999, p. 74.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II: *Familiaris Consortio*. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html)

to realize one's personal freedom. It applies to both educators and learners. An educator is the person who "procreates" in a spiritual sense. In this regard, education is the genuine and proper apostolate. Parents, cooperating with God the Creator, must be advocates of life and have in mind its constant cultivation. Parents are surely not absolved of their obligations to their offspring by bringing them to this world.<sup>85</sup> In a family setting, parental authority is essential. This authority brings a shared responsibility with special and converging roles of fathers and mothers in raising their children and working together for the proper functioning of family in mutual respect and love.<sup>86</sup>

The importance of Christian education is also discussed in the General Directory for Catechesis written following a prescription by the Second Vatican Council. In a section dedicated to catechesis for children in a pre-school and school age, the Directory accentuates the importance of spiritual development in a form of family catechesis, the central aspects of which are training in prayer and introduction to Sacred Scripture.<sup>87</sup>

In the Sacraments of Matrimony, Christian parents receive the divine gift of wisdom, counsel, fortitude and other gifts of the Holy Spirit so they guide their children in a process of human and Christian maturation. The vocation of Christian parents in education of faith is splendid. Even St. Thomas Aquinas rightly likened it to the ministry of the priesthood: *"There are some propagators and conservators of spiritual life by means of spiritual ministration only, and to that ministration belongs the Sacrament of Orders. There are others who propagate and preserve at once corporal and spiritual life together, and that is done by the Sacrament of*

---

<sup>85</sup> Cf. KASZOWSKI, M.: *Odpowiedzialność za wychowanie dzieci*. <http://www.teologia.pl> (14.3.2006).

<sup>86</sup> VOJTEK, Š.: *Spravodlivost', základný pilier pre rozvoj ľudskej spoločnosti*. Nitra : Kňazský seminár sv. Gorazda, 2004, p. 98.

<sup>87</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY: General Directory for Catechesis. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html)

*Matrimony, whereby man and woman come together to raise and educate children to the worship of God.*<sup>88</sup>

In their mission, Christian parents are empowered by the fact that God is the one who has entrusted to them the responsibility for the growth of the God's child, the brother of Jesus, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the member of the Church. By virtue of their ministry of education, parents are, through the witness of their own lives, the first proclaimers of the Good News. Moreover, by praying with their children, by reading the Word of God with them, and by introducing them, through gradual initiation into Christianity, to the mystery of the body of Christ, both the Eucharistic and the ecclesial, into Christianity, they become fully parents who beget not only the bodily life but also the spiritual one.

Rearing of children should not be limited to the development of the human person. Most importantly, it should ensure that children grow strong in their faith. Let them worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth (cf. Jn 4:23). Religious instruction of children cannot be reduced to "sending them to church". Listening to general facts during catechesis does not suffice either. By way of example and words, parents bring their children to God and teach them how to engage in an intimate and friendly dialogue with God. They should also emphasize the loyalty to the God's commandments and explain the significance of fulfilling God's will. Religious books and illustrations for the youngest children are effective aids in religious education. It is important, however, to explain their content and offer commentary.<sup>89</sup> Their role as educators is so important and is in a sense irreplaceable. Parents must create a family atmosphere animated with love and reverence for God and others. The family is a guarantee of a genuine education that every society needs.

The task giving education is rooted in the primary vocation of married couples to participate in God's creative work. By giving life out of love and in love to a new person who has within himself or herself vocation to growth and development, parents take on the

---

<sup>88</sup> AQUINAS, T.: *On God and His Creatures*. In: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/gentiles.html>.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. KASZOWSKI, M.: *Sakrament małżeństwa*. In: [www.teologia.pl/m\\_k/spis06h.htm](http://www.teologia.pl/m_k/spis06h.htm) (14.3.2006).

task of helping that person to live a fully human life. The main task of educators (parents) is to facilitate this growth. If they, in any way, hamper the growth of the children, there will be no time for them to develop and mature properly. This growth is achieved by a gradual initiation into the mystery of salvation. These activities in *family catechesis* of which St. John Paul II said that it precedes, accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis. The faith of children must be grounded in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Family catechesis should not be merely about the neutral and indifferent presentation of moral and religious doctrines, because faith itself could then be identified with the truths, contents and deeds of the faith. St. John Paul II also reminded that Christian parents can hardly manage to perform their catechetical task alone. Encouragement must be given to individuals or institutions that, through person-to-person contacts and meetings, help parents to perform the task. Their service to catechesis will be beyond price.<sup>90</sup> Besides the gift of faith received through Baptism, we also need to speak about a personal decision to follow Jesus.<sup>91</sup> As the Second Vatican Council recalled “*since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate their offspring. Hence, parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children*”<sup>92</sup>

There is one point here that is worth noting. All references are made to both parents. They have the same responsibility in raising their children and imparting faith to their lives. A mother has always been a symbol of love and reverence. Although mothers represent a more delicate half of humanity, they are the epitome of security, contentment, and happiness. The mother-child relationship is strong and irreplaceable and is established in the first days after

---

<sup>90</sup> JÁN PAVOL II: *Boží plán – Desatoro pre tretie tisícročie*. Bratislava : Lúč, 1996, p. 51 - 52.

<sup>91</sup> KOLEKTÍV AUTOROV: *Katechéza ako špecifická forma ohlasovania evanjelia deťom - zborník prednášok*. Prešov : Diecézne katechetické stredisko, 1998, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II: *Familiaris Consortio*. Art. 36 [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html)



conception. The example of this is a relationship between Virgin Mary and her son Jesus Christ. Mary, living life filled with family concerns and labours, was always intimately united with her Son (cf. LG 61). A father has always fulfilled his role as breadwinner and had his share in raising children. The authority of a father cannot be replaced. The father figure is equally important for raising both sons and daughters. Fathers serve as role models for their sons. Daughters seek protection from their fathers. In his relationship with Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, too, speaks of the importance of the father's role (cf. Jn 5:19).

Despite many challenges families face today, parents must endure in raising their children with confidence and courage and direct them towards the fundamental values of human life. Children must acquire a strong sense of true justice, but primarily, a sense of true love as a sincere care and selfless service to others, especially the poorest and most needy.<sup>93</sup> The family is the first, but not the only educating community. The right of parents to choose an education in conformity with their religious faith must be absolutely guaranteed.

### 5.3 Parish Catechesis

The Church's catechetical documents define catechesis as one form of the ministry of proclaiming the Word in the Church. In that sense, catechesis is essentially an ecclesial act. In addition, catechesis should also be considered in the context of evangelization. It stems primarily from the fact that it is the proclamation of the Gospel that has it systematicity and depth. These attributes of preaching the Gospel are a response to excessive laicization of society and this leads to the development of *the new evangelization*. In addition to education in faith and consecration, evangelization becomes the catechesis of our times. In one of his homilies, St. John Paul II said: *"Thanks to catechesis, the Church can carry out her*

---

<sup>93</sup> Cf. PETRO, M.: Influence of television on moral development of children and youth. In: *Orbis communicationis socialis*. Lublin : Norbertinum 2007, p. 62.

*own evangelizing activity with still greater efficiency and in this way widen the scope of her mission.*"<sup>94</sup>

Catechesis concerns not only those who desire to receive the grace of the Gospel, but also those who have already been initiated, but for whom being Christian means preserving tradition and customs without any effort to confront their own lives with Christian attitudes in the domains of politics, marriage or morality. *Parish catechesis* plays an irreplaceable role in formation of children. Parochial catechetical programmes provide in depth and systematic formation of Christians who will be actively involved in the life of their parochial community and the entire Church.<sup>95</sup> It is, however, doomed to fail without parents – first educators and their fervent participation in this communal family. You reap what you sow. As an institution, the parish has been established by the Church and not by the decree of God. The original parish had been formed under certain historical circumstances and it has changed since. Its theological goal, to create a community of faith, is permanent. Everything else is subject to transformation.<sup>96</sup> The parish is, without doubt, the most important locus in which the Christian community is formed and expressed. It is called to be a fraternal and welcoming family where Christians become aware of being the people of God. In the parish, all human differences melt away and are absorbed into the universality of the Church (AA 10). The parish is also a place in which the faith is born and in which it grows. It is a community space that is adequate for the realization of the ministry of the Word, at the same time, as teaching, education, and life experience.

In the parish, the Church appears as a community of people united by the power of God's Word, liturgy, and everyday fraternal love. The parish is the most visible expression of the Church.

---

<sup>94</sup> From a John Paul II homily at the holy mass in Łowicz, 14.06.1999. In: ZIMNY, J.: *Katecheza w ujęciu Jana Pawła II*. Sandomierz : Instytut teologiczny im. błogosławionego Wincentego Kadłubka, 2004, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKA: *Pastoračný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2007-2013*. Trnava : SSV, 2007, p. 23.

<sup>96</sup> MRÁZ, M.: *Základná praktická teológia*. Bratislava : Aloisianum, 1997, p. 85.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity reminds us that the parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building, but rather the family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit.<sup>97</sup> The Second Vatican Council too affirmed the symbiosis between the parochial community, family and the Church. In one of the conciliar documents, the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, Paul VI said that the well-being of the individual person and Christian society is linked with the healthy condition of that community produced by marriage and family. Many rejoice in helping to foster and perfect this union of love.

In both the family and the parish, children get acquainted with the community life, learn to establish and maintain contacts with others and acquire moral values. Lack of education in virtues results in doubts and uncertainties that modern man experiences today. A deep moral relativism means that young people are, oftentimes by their natural environment, pressured to live on feelings and accordingly to the circumstances in which they found themselves in one moment or another. The primary task of parish catechesis and formation of children in families is to offer people a different direction in life. The direction which helps then find: *the path* that would lead them to a discovery of new beautiful things; *the truth* to follow and not to live in a lie about the “beauty” of their own plan for living, often without God in it; and *the life* that does not end with the loss of physical strength, but begins with accepting Jesus Christ in their hearts.<sup>98</sup>

### **5.3.1 An outline of parish catechesis**

Parish catechesis should have its own plan or structure, so that it is not just a matter of occasional formation. It should be regular, systematic, and living for several generations. This surely would allow for a more profound experience of the parish as a community of

---

<sup>97</sup> THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY: Address of John Paul II to the participants in the plenary assembly. 24 November 2004. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20041125\\_pc-laici.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20041125_pc-laici.html).

<sup>98</sup> TKÁČ, M.: *Na ceste do chrámu - iniciácia kresťanstva*. Prešov : GTF PU v Prešove, 2018, s. 101.

smaller communities, a body made up of many families and their members. Suitable parochial initiatives to promote this idea are:

*Regular monthly meetings* – families can create an ongoing multiannual programme following a particular theme they developed together. It is preferable to involve many families, so as to avoid a situation when certain families become somewhat of an “autonomous elite” of the parish. It must be remembered that it is not the priest alone (or with a help of the catechist) who chooses the topics that would be of interest to the families. It should be about the families and for the families, with participation of the priest. Meeting dates should be scheduled for suitable times and announced several weeks ahead (parish announcements, posters and personal conversations – invitations).<sup>99</sup>

*Spiritual retreats (exercises) and camps* – it is a break from everyday duties, during which the community is to strengthen and experience the depth of the Word offered in catechesis. Such an event cannot be just mere improvisation. It requires a thorough preparation and cooperation with the laity based on clear and open communication.

*Preparation for the reception of the sacraments* – it does not necessarily concern the Sacrament of Baptism (and Confirmation in the Latin rite), the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or the administration of the Eucharist to children. In the praxis of the Greek Catholic Church in Slovakia, children (and of course adults) receive all three Sacraments of Initiation at the same time. Preparation for the reception of the sacraments is in a way an ongoing preparation. Everyone needs to receive God’s forgiveness and encouragement, which is a suitable “material” for the permanent sacramental catechesis.

*Message board, parish newsletters, telephone, parish announcements* – can all be used as means of communication. Invitation and interest need to be aroused in different ways. If a meeting is unconventional, more time should be devoted to its preparation. Children can be involved too, but parents should also be invited to participate. Activities should be of high standard and allow for

---

<sup>99</sup> MOJZEŠ, M.: *Život v Kristovi*. Záborské : Salus Animarum, 2018, s. 84.

parents involvement (making candles, textile painting, tying flower arrangements....).<sup>100</sup>

### **5.3.2 A project of parish catechesis**

Designing a project of parish catechesis ensures the continuation of systematic work concerning the teaching of the faith outlined in that project (in the event of a priest changing parishes). It prevents possible inconsistencies in pastoral care on the part of a priest. The project is useful in situations that might arise due to a shortage of priests (the laity should be involved, too). Having a project of parish catechesis also facilitates the synergy of forces -unified activities and fostering connections between people.

The project of parish catechesis is a proposal based on the guidelines of the Directory for Catechesis and can be modified. It should present the basic principles. These include:

- a) situation in society and in the parish,
- b) agents of catechetical activity,
- c) recipients of catechesis,
- d) aims of catechetical activity,
- e) structures and places for catechetical service,
- f) guidelines for the management of catechesis,
- g) content of catechesis,
- h) methodology and,
- i) formation of catechists.

*Situation.* Every planning activity must have as its point of departure an analysis of the current situation. This is nothing more than naming the main realities that affect the people.

*Agents of catechetical activity.* To know who can work in catechesis. All baptized participate in the vocation of the Church to proclaim the kingdom of God after the example of Jesus Christ (GDC 78). Christian initiation should be the work of the entire Christian community (AG14, GDC 220), with a differentiated responsibility of: *bishop* – he has the primary responsibility (CT 63b, GDC 222), *priest – a catechist of the catechists* (GDC 225), *parents* – primary educators of their children (GDC 226, 227), *cate-*

---

<sup>100</sup> Cf. FOGASSY, J.: *Rodinná katechéza*. Bratislava : Komisia pre katechizáciu a školstvo KBS, 2010, p. 324.

*chists, educators, animators, every Christian* (GDC 230, 233) and *communion*, which is the nucleus of the universal Church and the particular Churches (GDC 253, 228, 141).

*Recipients of catechesis.* The recipient of catechesis is the whole Christian community and every person in it - children, adults, the aged, the poor, the marginalised, families, organizations, seekers... (GDC 168). Taking into account a variety of recipients, the “current situation” of their faith and their individual needs, we chose the proper method, form, and content of catechesis. Important is to help them all. In the project, we highlight “*how*”!

*Aims of catechetical activity.* It is crucial to set clear aims to be accomplished in different groups: direct young people and families towards a good lifestyle teach them what is important, help them acquire the right view on Christian and civic identity.

*Structures and places.* A successful catechetical project needs a place where the education in the faith is realized. These facilities serve people, not vice-versa. They are established with the purpose of sharing faith more effectively. We need working parishes, pastoral centres, /youth clubs/... Here we need to have a nucleus of mature Christians with plenty to offer (GDC 160, 258).

*Guidelines for the management of the individual components of catechesis.* They regulate the activity, harmonize the course of action between the respective components of parish catechesis, and keep priorities (GDC 223, 274).

*Content of catechesis.* It is important to identify the needs of every group within the parish and decide on the content of catechesis accordingly; take into account the basic requirements of catechesis and its integral nature, and the its Christocentric principle.

*Methodology.* It is important to select proper methods and approaches used in education (e.g. individual approach, preventive system...).

*Formation of catechists.* Formation enables the “active laity” to transmit the Gospel (GDC 234, 235, 248). Proper formation programmes need to be designed.<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> LUSCOŇ, J.: *Komplexný model farskej katechézy*. In: <http://www.cirkev.cz/res/data/083/009179.pdf> (13.6.2013).

## 5.4 Catechesis for the Disabled and the Handicapped

It is generally believed that Christian communities consider those who suffer any form of disability as persons particularly beloved by the Lord. A growth in social and ecclesial consciousness, together with progress in specialized pedagogy, makes it possible for the family and other formative centres to provide adequate catechesis for these people, who, as baptized, have this right, and, if not baptized, because they are called to salvation. Catechesis offered to them is to emphasize that the Father's love for them and the continuous presence of Jesus Christ and His Spirit give assurance that every person, in spite of his or her disability, is capable of growth in holiness. Catechesis (as education in faith), which involves the family above all else, requires personalized and adequate programmes which when designed should take into account the findings of pedagogical research, strategies and recommendations. With that said, the preparation of this type of catechesis is very demanding. Regardless of the challenges, it should never be separated from the general pastoral care of the community.<sup>102</sup> It is therefore necessary that the community is aware of such catechesis and be involved in its preparation so the members of their community with any form of disability do not feel left out. In this experience, living Christ reveals Himself when He calls us to the service for others (cf. Matt 10:40-42). To serve by listening to the Word of God, means to create the “*echeo*” (echo) that is inherent in every catechesis.

## 5.5 Catechesis of the Marginalized and Different Groups

When speaking of the catechesis of the marginalized, we address it to migrants, refugees, nomads, homeless people, the chronically ill, drug addicts, etc. Here again, we must turn to Jesus Christ who speaks of the Judgement Day and encourages those who serve brothers or sisters: “*Come, you who are blessed by my Father;*

---

<sup>102</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY: General Directory for Catechesis. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html).

*take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'* (Matt 25:34-40).

A permanent sign of good catechesis is in its capacity to identify different situations, to meet the needs and questions of everyone, and to stress the importance of generous and patient personal contact. It is also good to turn to indirect and occasional forms of catechesis the use of which is also promoted by Pope Francis. To those who are willing to help those in need he said: *"We must hold the hand of the one in need, of the one who has fallen into the darkness of dependency perhaps without even knowing how, and we must say to him or her: You can get up, you can stand up. It is difficult, but it is possible if you want to."* To those on the fringe of the society he said: *"You have to want to stand up; this is the indispensable condition! You will find an outstretched hand ready to help you, but no one is able to stand up in your place. But you are never alone! The Church and so many people are close to you. Look ahead with confidence. Yours is a long and difficult journey, but look ahead, there is "a sure future, set against a different horizon with regard to the illusory enticements of the idols of this world, yet granting new momentum and strength to our daily lives To all of you, I repeat: Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! And not only that, but I say to us all: let us not rob others of hope, let us become bearers of hope!"*<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Taken from the address of Pope Francis visiting St. Francis of Assisi Hospital in Rio de Janeiro, treating people addicted to alcohol and drugs on 24 July 2013. In: <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/>



Catechesis today is confronted by subjects, who because of their specificity, require special programmes. Among the subjects that require differentiated approach are workers, professionals, artists, scientists, university students, etc. All these sectors demand a competent approach and language adapted to those being catechized, while always maintaining fidelity to the message which catechesis transmits. When speaking of university students, apart from the school, there are many other elements influencing the mentality of young people, for instance, leisure time, and the social background and work environment. But those who study are introduced to cultural and moral values within the establishment in which they are taught and are confronted with many diverse ideas. It is important for catechesis to take into account these effects and make real use of the other elements of student's knowledge and education so that the Gospel impregnates the mentality of the students and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith.<sup>104</sup> A vast body of the popes' messages and addresses, pastoral letters, and official declarations issued by Church on episcopal and universal level has been devoted to the need and importance of differentiated approach to catechesis.

## 5.6 Urban and Rural Catechesis

According to the General Directory for Catechesis, the service of the faith today takes careful note of the environment and human habitats. It is in these that the person lives his concrete existence.<sup>105</sup> The Church must carefully observe this diversity of environments, as recalled in the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in Slovakia.

---

2013/july/documents/papa-francesco\_20130724\_gmg-ospedale-rio.html (25.7.2013).

<sup>104</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Apostolic Exhortation Catechesi Tradendae* (arts. 59 and 69). In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html) (6.6.2013).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY: General Directory for Catechesis. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html).

Analysing the findings of quantitative and qualitative research, and holding discussions with representatives of different movements and organizations at the national level, the Church has sought to create an atmosphere for a common reflection of the current reality. *“To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. Thus, in language intelligible to each generation, she can respond to the perennial questions which men ask about this present life and the life to come, and about the relationship of the one to the other.”* (GES 4). This would certainly help to find new opportunities of the renewal of pastoral life in listening to the Holy Spirit.<sup>106</sup>

Very broadly, two major environments must be mentioned: *rural and urban*. They both call for differentiated approach in catechesis. The catechesis of those working on fields, meadows and in forests will necessarily reflect the needs experienced in the country: poverty, fear, and superstition. It must be delivered in a simple way and reflect the life in a sense of solidarity, faith in God and fidelity to religious traditions. The example of such catechesis are parables that Jesus Christ used in rural areas: the parable of the sower, the parable of the weeds among the wheat, the parable of the mustard seed and the yeast, the parables of the treasure in the field, and the parable of the net (cf. Matt 13:1-52). Urban catechesis must take into account a variety of social conditions, e.g. from exclusive areas of prosperity to poverty and marginalization. The rhythm of life that urban catechesis should embrace can be dominated by stress. Anonymity and loneliness are widespread in urban areas. This type of catechesis could benefit from a parish project of catechization, described above in the section about parish catechesis.

---

<sup>106</sup> Cf. KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKA: *Pastoračný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2007 – 2013*. Bratislava : SSV, 2007, p. 10.

## 5.7 Evangelization and Catechetical Instruction of the Roma

St. John Paul II said that the peace that humanity so desires is a God's gift and the fruit of truth and justice. In the spirit of these words, we are convinced that the renewal of society is possible only if these moral values are applied at all levels. It particularly means going to the poor, the abandoned, and the marginalized - the Roma.

Today, the young Roma live without any foothold when it comes to their life orientation. Thus, they often fall prey to different offers. Their lives lack the overall meaning. They feel socially and personally disengaged. As the educational influence of families, schools and the Church weakens, the consequences are felt in the elementary education (both general and religious). The Roma often lack deeper personal relationships and have low self-esteem. They are extremely vulnerable. The young Roma are not sufficiently prepared to start a family, both on a spiritual and material level. Their religious expressions are not easily understood by the majority population. Only in rare cases has the Church been able to enter this environment with evangelization that was not only attractive but also effective. The primary task of catechizing the Roma is to present Christ and foster His in-depth understanding. At the same time, it should bring to the Roma the kingdom of God, that is, to be a clear sign and a bearer of God's love for them. Through patient and systematic work focused on ideals, the catechesis helps them accept co-responsibility, become conscious of their own dignity before God, and thus remove existing tensions not only on the surface, but also in deep within.<sup>107</sup>

There are three basic vocations to which God calls us – *to be a good person, to be a Christian and to be a disciple*. To keep the sequence is very important. One cannot be a good disciple if he or she is not a good Christian. One cannot be a good Christian if he or she is not a good person. This principle also applies to the evangelization process of the Roma. But mistakes are often made in this process. Either the order is changed or the person does not move

---

<sup>107</sup> Cf. KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKA: *Pastoračný a evanjelizačný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2001 – 2006*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2001, pp. 86 – 87.

from one stage to another. The aim of every evangelization process is to make disciples. We can never be satisfied with the sole intent “of humanizing” the Roma. It may be humane, but it is certainly not Christian. Many European organizations and civic associations in Slovakia have attempted that, but for Christ, it does not suffice. Catechesis, which follows evangelization, should focus on the threefold dimension of a person and present it in a suitable form.

*To be a good person* – the starting point of the catechesis is the fact that from the creation everybody is a good person (cf. Gn 1:27-31). Our task is to help the Roma find the good in themselves. Oftentimes we see the attempts to change the Roma, to make in our own image, because, allegedly, only then can they be good people. Maria Theresa in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy did just that. The Roma were given land, agricultural tools, and cattle. They had to wear the Hungarian folk costumes. Some Roma had their surnames changed and they were no longer allowed to speak Romani. It is important to find the goodness that God has instilled into the Roma. Each of us has different talents. However, some Roma are incapable of seeing the goodness in themselves. They need other people to show them. It is a complex issue having multiple historical and contemporary causes.

*To be a Christian – faithful*, since faith comes by hearing, so proclaiming the kerygma – the fundamental truth of Christian faith is essential. The main goal of the evangelization process is for people to have a living faith not just go to church. The purpose of evangelization is personal acceptance of Jesus Christ and coming into full communion with the Church. To enter into a communion does not mean to create a “new” anonymous community. It is to be part of the community of communities.

*To be a disciple* – God wants and can make the Roma his disciples. They too have the potential to become disciples. This can be the hope for the Church in Slovakia. The Church should not care for the Roma just because they are perceived as a threat to our society. The benefit of society can never be superior to taking an active interest in every individual person. It is as if Jesus, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, accentuated the need to help the traveler who was left alongside the road just because he was a threat

to society. He needed our help because he was a child of God and our neighbour. That is the main reason behind our charitable act. Here we see the ideal space for parish catechesis - for a systematic formation to Christian maturity. There are ten key themes that should be the content of this catechesis: Jesus Christ, the Most Holy Mother of God, the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Word of God, prayers, witness, new culture (to be free of everything that destroys human dignity) and Agapé (a sacrificial unconditional love). It is, of course, necessary to take into account specific conditions of the Roma culture, traditions and mentality and adapt the forms and methods of this parish catechesis.<sup>108</sup>

## 5.8 Formation and Catechetical Instruction in Armed Forces and Units

Perhaps the first official document in Slovakia that gives a comprehensive overview of pastoral care in the armed units (army and police) is *the Pastoral and Evangelization Plan of the Catholic Church*, which among other things stresses the need for the proclamation of kerygma in this very specific environment. In Slovakia, the spiritual service was abolished following the Communist takeover in 1948. On 29 September 1994, the Government of the Slovak Republic approved a resolution No. 1014 on renewal and further development of the spiritual and religious service in all sectors of the Ministry of Defence. Recognizing its obligation to ensure proper conditions for permanent and adequate spiritual care for Catholic faithful in the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, the Police Corps, the Prison and Court Guard Service, the Railway Police and for the persons deprived of their liberty by a decision of a state authority, and pursuant to the Basic Treaty between the Holy See and the Slovak Republic, signed in Vatican on 24 November 2000, the Slovak Republic accepts the establishment of the Ordinariate of the Armed Forces and Armed Units to provide the spiritual and

---

<sup>108</sup> HORVÁTH, P.: Katechéza Rómov. In: *Farská katechéza – zborník z interdiecézneho katechetického seminára*. Košice : DKÚ Košického apoštolského exarchátu, 2007, pp. 20 – 27.

pastoral care to the aforementioned groups of faithful. The current Ordinariate was established on 1 March 2003.

The spiritual and religious service is an integral part of overall care of a human being. Institutionalized means to be used in the armed forces to attain the established goals were devised and approved. The person in charge of executing the pastoral care is a military chaplain at individual levels and schools within the authority of the Slovak Army.

In his Apostolic Constitution *Spirituali Militum Curae*, St. John Paul II introduced a new canonical modification of the military pastoral care. Among other things, the constitution notes that the Church has always desired to provide for the spiritual care of military people in a manner suited to their various needs. They constitute a particular social body and they need a concrete and specific form of pastoral assistance, whether they belong to the armed forces permanently by voluntary enrolment, or they are called up temporarily by law.

Catechesis to be provided by the appointed clergy in this special pastoral mission, can contribute to raising moral and patriotic consciousness of military personnel and to restoration of military and religious traditions and customs in the army, while creating a space for lectures, publications and counselling. Among other things, this service is very flexible, as it does not always concerns military and police personnel, but also their family members. This special form of pastoral service concerns also inmates in various types of correctional facilities. In his Christmas pastoral letter addressed to inmates, the Ordinary of the Armed Forces and Armed Units said: *"Perhaps you feel unhappy these days you because you do not feel loved. Accept then with faith in your hearts this message of Christmas - God loves you and invites you, just as He invited the shepherds of Bethlehem, to be heralds and witnesses of His love for people. Make an effort to show a sincere interest and love towards fellow inmates and prison officers. You could write or call someone. And so, with the help of God, you will learn that you can experience the real joy of Christmas not only during the holidays, but also in the new year that is ahead of us. I know you very much desire freedom, or at least be one step closer to*

*freedom. I do understand your desire. I will pray for you that you receive the gift of inner freedom so that you be freed of all evil and be open to accepting the good in life.*"<sup>109</sup> The main pastoral and catechetical activities of the spiritual and religious service in the army are aimed at developing the spiritual life and strengthening the faith of the members of armed and security forces. Priests in special pastoral care strive to create a balanced relationship between their conscience and the nature of their individual professions. They use different forms of catechesis, such as liturgical catechesis, as well as the expressions of popular piety that too are accompanied by proper catechesis (sacramentals, blessings of military symbols, pilgrimages ...).<sup>110</sup>

## 5.9 Catechesis in Relation to New Movements and Organizations

In 1998, on the vigil of the great feast of Pentecost, St. John Paul II said to the faithful: *"In our world, often dominated by a secularized culture which encourages and promotes models of life without God, the faith of many is sorely tested, and is frequently stifled and dies. Thus we see an urgent need for powerful proclamation and solid, in-depth Christian formation. There is so much need today for mature Christian personalities, conscious of their baptismal identity, of their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world! There is great need for living Christian communities! And here are the movements and the new ecclesial communities: they are the response, given by the Holy Spirit, to this critical challenge at the end of the millennium."*<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> RÁBEK, F.: *Pastiersky list ordinára pre odsúdených na Vianoce 2009*. In: <http://www.ordinariat.sk/pastiersky-list-ordinara-pre-odsudenych-na-vianoce-2009> (25.7.2013).

<sup>110</sup> Cf. KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKA: *Pastoračný a evanjelizačný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2001 – 2006*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2001, pp. 88 – 90.

<sup>111</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II on the vigil of the great feast of Pentecost. 30 May 1998*. In: <https://www.vatican>.

Among the important pastoral and theological phenomena in the Church of the 20th and 21st centuries is the emergence of new movements and communities within the Catholic Church. Today, we are witnessing a constant increase in their membership and their growing influence on the life and work of the Church.

These movements are trying to find their footing and become part of the official structures of the Church. Their members and supporters have a profound influence on the transformation of the internal life of the Church and on the Church's stance on many pressing issues and challenges of our times. The emergence and expansion of new religious movements and communities within the Catholic Church are in many ways reminiscent of the times in the Church history when other spiritual movements emerged. Monasticism began to develop in the Early Middle Ages. The 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of many religious congregations. All of these spiritual movements greatly influenced theology and the attitudes of the Catholic Church at that time. Many of them ceased to exist or disappeared after fulfilling their "prophetic" role. Others, however, bore much fruit. They eventually became institutionalized and exist today as religious orders, congregations and the like. We can look at the emergence of modern church communities and movements through the same lens.

The vast majority of these church movements emerged after the Second Vatican Council. One might say that they are the direct outcome of the council. The movements that emerged before the council show the influence of theological thought that culminated in the Second Vatican Council, particularly the emphasis on the apostolate of the laity and their mission in the Church and in the world.<sup>112</sup>

In past decades, we have observed upward trend in lay faithful joining together in various movements, with all the diversity

---

va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf\_jp-ii\_spe\_19980530\_riflessioni.html

<sup>112</sup> Cf. MUCHA, P.: *Fenomén nových komunit v katolícké cirkvi a príklady z Francie*. In: [https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-2016040009\\_Fenomen\\_novych\\_komunit\\_v\\_katolicke\\_cirkvi\\_a\\_prikklady\\_z\\_Francie.php](https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-2016040009_Fenomen_novych_komunit_v_katolicke_cirkvi_a_prikklady_z_Francie.php). pp. 151-154.(25.10.2017).



of their ministries. Alongside the traditional forms of the Church life, new movements and communities with a distinctive character and focus have emerged too. The Church acknowledges the right of the laity to organize themselves into communities and movements, provided that they maintain the necessary connection with the authority of the Church.

The signs of the times that are manifested in the secularized, postmodern society and provoke a crisis of identity have paradoxically become a “stimulus” for the emergence of new movements that show the beauty of the Gospel in their activities. Conservative and doctrinal transmission of faith, inflexibility of ecclesiastical structures, and the like have prompted the awakening of the laity to bring new ways, methods, and forms that point directly to the Gospel and its simple and practical introduction to life. The movements and communities that emerged after the Second Vatican Council are the sign of how to respond to the needs of a modern man. These movements bring new forms of communication and respond to a need for a profound and intimate experience with God.

The Christian community is the historical realization of the gift of *communion* (koinonia), which is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. *Communion* is the most profound nucleus between the universal Church and the particular Churches that altogether make up the Christian community. 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. These communities are places where the permanent catechesis and catechumenate are realized.

The Christian community is the origin, locus and goal of catechesis. Proclamation of the Gospel always begins in the Christian community which invites men and women to convert and follow Jesus Christ. It is again the same community which welcomes those who wish to know the Lord and accept the new life. The Christian community accompanies catechumens and those being catechized on their catechetical journey and with maternal care makes them participate in their own experience of faith and incorporates them into itself.

Catechesis is always the same. However, the locus of catechesis gives it its own distinct characteristic. Hence, it is of utmost importance to know the role of each of these loci.

## 6 EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS– BRINGING LIGHT TO DARKNESS

The Catholic Church rejoices when other Christian communities proclaim the Gospel with her, although knowing that the fullness of the means of salvation is entrusted solely to her (cf. LG 8). The Church is pleased since she strives to change the face of Europe that St. John Paul II aptly described in the following words: *“Many Europeans today think they know what Christianity is, yet they do not really know it at all. Often they are lacking in knowledge of the most basic elements and notions of the faith. Many of the baptized live as if Christ did not exist: the gestures and signs of faith are repeated, especially in devotional practices, but they fail to correspond to a real acceptance of the content of the faith and fidelity to the person of Jesus. The great certainties of the faith are being undermined in many people by a vague religiosity lacking real commitment; various forms of agnosticism and practical atheism are spreading and serve to widen the division between faith and life; some people have been affected by the spirit of an immanentist humanism, which has weakened the faith and often, tragically, led to its complete abandonment; one encounters a sort of secularist interpretation of Christian faith which is corrosive and accompanied by a deep crisis of conscience and of Christian moral practice. The great values which amply inspired European culture have been separated from the Gospel, thus losing their very soul and paving the way for any number of aberrations”*<sup>113</sup>

The text quoted here shows us how important it is today to talk about evangelization and fulfil its mission in society. It resembles the return of the prodigal son to his father’s house, with the father being the one who awaits his son despite his many failures and disappointments outside of his father’s house. From this standpoint, the Gospel is the “father’s open arms” wishing to embrace us and give us back what we have lost in sin.

---

<sup>113</sup> JOHN PAUL II: *Ecclesia in Europa* (art. 47). [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_20030628\\_ecclesia-in-europa.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html)

Evangelization has always been the fundamental mission of the Church not only in the *missionary countries*. It is a service to the entire Church throughout the world. The task of proclaiming the Gospel to all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church. Evangelization is the grace and proper vocation of the Church. Evangelizer is any person who organizes, supports or participates in the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel among nations that do not yet know it.

Evangelization is a process that involves the revival of humanity, witness, open proclamation of the Gospel, acceptance of the Good News in one's heart, initiation into the community, the reception of the sacrament, and apostolic activity. In the broadest sense, we can define evangelization as proclaiming the Gospel by the Church and bearing witness to who she is, what she does, and who she proclaims.<sup>114</sup> The same can be said about the new evangelization. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to give one clear and concise definition of this form of evangelization. Let us reiterate the words of St. John Paul II: *"The new evangelization is not taking up the first evangelization again, or simply repeating the past (re-evangelization). Instead it is the courage to forge new paths in responding to the changing circumstances and conditions facing the Church in her call to proclaim and live the Gospel today."*<sup>115</sup> Being responsive to the signs of the times is a constant challenge for the pastoral work of the Church since only then can she fully realize the true message of the Christ's words about the proclamation of the Gospel (the Good News) to the whole world.

---

<sup>114</sup> PAULEY, J. C.: *An Evangelizing Catechesis: Teaching from Your Encounter with Christ*. Huntington : Our Sunday Visitor, 2020, p. 203. ISBN 978-1681924328.

<sup>115</sup> JOHN PAUL II: Lineamenta. The Evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20110202\\_lineamenta-xiii-assembly\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html)

## 6.1 The Gospel – the Heart of Proclamation

After John the Baptist was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News of God. He said: *“The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the Good News (Mk 1:14).* These are the words of Mark the Evangelist describing the beginnings of Jesus’ preaching ministry and the core message of His proclamation. Matthew the Evangelist describes Christ’s deeds in similar way: *“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people” (Matt 4:23; 9:35).*

Both Evangelists designate Jesus’ preaching with the term evangelion. What does it actually mean? This term has been translated as the ‘good news’. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI mentions that this term figures in the vocabulary of the emperors, who regarded themselves as lords, saviours, and redeemers of the world. The messages issued by the Roman emperors were called in Latin ‘Evangelium’, regardless of whether or not their content was cheerful or pleasant. The idea was that what comes from the emperor is a saving message. It is not just any piece of news. It is something that changes the world for the better.<sup>116</sup> Similarly, the word was used to denote a salary for mercenaries, or the announcement of the messenger who delivered good news of military victory to his master.

The word “Evangelium” (τὸ εὐ αγγελιον) has been used in the Church from the very beginning. Saint Paul refers to the Good News when he speaks about being entrusted by God with the Gospel (cf. 1 Thess 2:4) “in the face of strong opposition” (1 Thess 2:2) and about a completely new work of salvation (cf. 1 Thess 1:5; Gal 1:6-9). Apart from Mark (cf. Mk 1:14-15; 8:35; 10:29; 13:10; 14:9; 16:15) Matthew the Evangelist uses the word Gospel too, often in an expression “the Good News of the kingdom” (Matt 9:35; 24:14; cf. 26:13). Saint Paul mentions the word evangelize (εὐ αγγελίσασθαι; cf. 2 Cor 10:16 – preach the Gospel) that can also be

---

<sup>116</sup> Cf. BENEDIKT XVI.: *Ježiš Nazaretský I.* Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2007, pp. 63 – 64.

found in the Acts (cf. Acts 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40 – preached the Word, proclaim the Good News etc.) whose usage has undergone a major evolution in the history of the Church.

The Gospel in its four canonical renditions has a very special place in Christian religion. Reading from one of the four Gospels is the high point of every liturgy. St. Macrina the Younger said: “*No learning is greater, better, more valuable, or more beautiful than reading the Gospel. This is what you should look at and adhere to what our Lord and Master Jesus Christ did in word or in deed.*”<sup>117</sup>

We can only agree with her words. The revelations presented by the Evangelists are, *prima facie*, of a different kind. God revealed Himself as a man who is no different from others: He travels to Emmaus, allows Thomas to touch Him, asks Luke for a piece of fish to eat and thus he proves that He is truly in the flesh. Even in these narratives, Jesus is not simply a human person who has returned to the state from before His death. The disciples did not recognize Him, when He appeared along the road and started to walk with them. They told the stranger about Jesus who had been crucified and buried. Mary Magdalene and the disciples did not recognize Him at the Sea of Galilee (cf. Jn 21: 4) either. Only when Jesus instructed them to sail did His beloved disciple recognize Him: “Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord’ (Jn 21: 7). It can be said that this is knowing from within, but it still remains shrouded in mystery. After all, even after fishing, when Jesus sent them to eat, there was still some hint of odd reservation. “None of the disciples dared ask Him, ‘Who are you?’ For they knew it was the Lord” (Jn 21:12). They knew it deep within, but not from Jesus’ physical appearance.”<sup>118</sup> Seeing the Gospel with a spiritual sight is the way to truly know Christ

The Gospels are the heart of all the Scriptures because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour (CCC 125). John Chrysostom too sees the great riches in the Scriptures. “*Do you see pearl divers sit quietly on the*

---

<sup>117</sup> CHEREWATUK, K. – WIETHAUS, U. (eds.): *Dear sister. Medieval women and the epistolary genre*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 92.

<sup>118</sup> BENEDIKT XVI.: *Ježiš Nazaretský II*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2011, p. 258.

*shore and count the waves? They sink under the water, descend to great depths to obtain an abundant fishing. The Holy Scriptures is full of spiritual and otherwise precious pearls, there is no danger to run, nor work to bear, and we are assured of a gain immense.*" One can find fondness in reading the Gospel - in a quest for the "precious pearls" the Gospel hides within - only when he or she has trust in God. The relationship between God and His people is expressed in faith. And what is the relationship between faith and the Gospel?

Faith grows by hearing to which we are invited by Jesus Christ. In hearing His Word we can learn about the kingdom of God and eternal life. There are many challenges constraining our efforts. They are in a way we hear and think about the Good News that has a great potential to change our lives. Our earthly worries rob us of our time with the Lord. We see a parable with one such event described in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus and His disciples came to a village where a woman called Martha opened her house to Him. Perhaps from her experience with wayfarers she thought that the most important thing to do was to prepare food for her guest. She wanted to do her best, as written in the Scripture passage: (Martha) "was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made." Jesus did not refuse her hospitality, nor did he say anything bad about it. He just pointed out to what was needed and more important. Martha's sister Mary was sitting at the Lord's feet listening to what he was saying. When Martha complained about her sister not helping, Jesus answered: "Martha, Martha you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (Lk 10, 41:42). This is the reality of today. We desire to have everything prepared and ready. We want abundance of things in life. We seek satisfaction of the needs we deem the most important. Even in the Church, we care about some noble pursuits. But the Lord shows us that the most needed is to listen to what He is trying to tell us. This is why the Gospel – the Good News – must be the source for contemplation and pondering the Words of God. Discerning the meaning of the Scripture, we confront of our life with that proposed to us by the caring Father. We must listen attentive-

ly to His voice showing the path for His bride – the Church and indeed for all of us. The signposts are to be found in the Scriptures, in Tradition and surely in the documents of the Catholic Church whose veracity and depth are guaranteed by the Magisterium.<sup>119</sup>

## 6.2 The Magisterium of the Church Calls for Evangelization

It is important to realize that we are living in times when our culture gives impression of “silent apostasy”, as mentioned in the Apostolic Exhortation **Ecclesia in Europa**. The underlying causes behind the societal changes that have taken place over the last few decades are many. The roots of these changes go back to our past and have profoundly influenced the perception of the modern world. Constant advances in science and technology, expanding the possibilities of life and the areas of personal freedom, profound changes in the economy, the process of mixing ethnicities and cultures brought about by migration and growing interconnectedness between nations - all of these factors have no doubt left their mark on religious life of man of our time. In view of this conciliar teaching, the Church reflects the need to find adequate ways to help people of our time to hear the living and eternal Word of the Lord.<sup>120</sup> The Second Vatican Council teaches that based on Scripture and Tradition, the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation. Only Christ who is present to us in His body (which is the Church) is the mediator and the way of salvation. Just as faith and Baptism are important so is the Church which men enter through Baptism as through a door. Hence those knowing that the Catholic Church was founded as necessary by God through Christ and yet refusing either to enter it or to remain in it could not be saved (cf. CCC 846). This affirmation is not aimed at those who, through no

---

<sup>119</sup> Cf. KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKEJ, Pastoračný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2007 – 2013, 2007, p. 11.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. BENEDIKT XVI.: *Ubicumque et semper* – Apostolic Letter establishing the Pontifical Council for promoting the new evangelization. [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_apl\\_20100921\\_ubicumque-et-semper.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper.html). (24.01. 2011).



fault of their own, do not yet know Christ and His Church or those who have not experienced evangelization – the bringing of the joyful news about Christ and his salvific work.

### **6.2.1 Documents of the Second Vatican Council**

On 25 January 1959, during the pilgrimage at the Basilica of Saint Paul in Rome, John XXIII (as the 261st pope on the Catholic Church) announced his intention to convene a synod of the Diocese of Rome and organize an ecumenical council. The council was to assist the Christian churches separated from Rome to search the unity with the Catholic Church. In addition, it sought to address the relationship with non-Christian religions, atheists, and the modern world. Following the extensive preparations, the Second Vatican Council was officially summoned by the Apostolic Constitution *Humanae Salutis* on 11 October 1961 to the Saint Peter Basilica in Rome.<sup>121</sup> The Council has provided the powerful and necessary impetus for realization of Christ's presence in today's world. The riches of the content were incorporated into individual conciliar documents. The next section will discuss some of these important documents.

There is a common thread that runs through the selected documents and that is the connection between the Council and evangelization. The scope and overall focus of this publication does not allow us to mention every single document, even if nearly all, either explicitly or implicitly, touch upon the theme of the proclamation of the Gospel in its various forms.

The first is the Decree on the Mission Activity of the Church *Ad Gentes*. The whole mission of the Church is explained in the preface of this document. The Church strives to proclaim the Gospel and search for “what was lost”. The Church, which God has sent to the nations (*ad gentes*), seeks to proclaim the Gospel to all people. The Apostles themselves, upon whom the Church was founded, following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ preached the word of truth

---

<sup>121</sup> Cf. BORZA, P.: *Kapitoly z dejín kresťanstva. Od reformácie po 20. storočie*. Prešov : Prešovská univerzita v Prešove. Gréckokatolícka teologická fakulta, 2011, p. 72

and begot churches. It is the duty of their successors to make this task endure “*so that the word of God may run and be glorified*” (2 Thess 3:1), and that the kingdom of God be proclaimed and established throughout the world.

The pilgrim Church is missionary by her nature, since it draws hers origin from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the plan of God the Father. This plan flows from God’s love, through which we are called to share with Him His life and His glory. God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son (cf. Jn 3:16), who “*walked the ways of a true Incarnation that He might make men sharers in the nature of God: made poor for our sakes, though He had been rich, in order that His poverty might enrich us*” (AG 3).

The decree on mission activity also reminds us of the Church’s duty to spread the faith and salvation of Christ, in virtue of His express command (Matt. 28:19-20), which was inherited from the Apostles by bishops assisted by the priests, together with the successor of Peter and the supreme pastor of the Church. Missions are particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church, go around the world to preach the Gospel and plant the Church among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ. They are mostly exercised in certain territories recognized by the Apostolic See. The proper goal of this missionary activity is preaching the Gospel and sowing the seeds of the Church among peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root.

What sometimes brings a person to pondering the missionary vocation, especially when the local church invites material and spiritual support of the mission work, is the question: when will the missions end? There is only one answer to this question and that is *never* – or unless the time comes for the second and glorious coming of Jesus Christ (cf. AG 9). The decree specifies “*In this missionary activity of the Church various stages sometimes are found side by side: first, that of the beginning or planting, then that of newness or youth. When these have passed, the Church’s missionary activity does not cease, but there lies upon the particular churches already set up the duty of continuing this activity and of preaching the Gospel to those still outside.*” (AG 6).

To get a better understanding of individual documents it seems appropriate to outline the overall content of *Ad Gentes*. It comprises six chapters: Principles of doctrines; Mission work itself; Particular Churches; Missionaries; Planning missionary activity; and Cooperation.

The Second Vatican Council was a truly pastoral council. The third document entitled **Apostolicam Actuositatem** was concerned with the apostolate of the laity. Those, who directly participate in proclaiming the Gospel and cooperate with the clergy. The apostolate of the laity derives from the Christian vocation and the Church can never be without it (cf. AA 1). This apostolate becomes very necessary because many areas of human life have become too autonomous, while departing from ethical and religious order. Besides, in many countries with very few priests or where the priests are deprived of their freedom to serve, the Church could hardly exist and be active without the participation of the laity. After the Second Vatican Council, the “sleeping giant” of the laity (the God’s people) was awakened. It is essential for the laity to be conscious of their own responsibility for this world and the salvation of human souls. “Awakened” lay persons, called to bring Christ to every place God sends them become the light of the world, a town built on a hill, leaven and salt that add a unique taste to life.<sup>122</sup>

Besides many insightful comments, the decree invites into cooperation of the laity, clergy and religious brothers and sisters. “*In dioceses, insofar as possible, there should be councils which assist the apostolic work of the Church either in the field of evangelization and sanctification or in the charitable, social, or other spheres, and here it is fitting that the clergy and Religious should cooperate with the laity*”(AA 26).

The conciliar decree also clarifies that spreading the Gospel is a joint effort by all involved, regardless of social and geographical limitations. “*The common heritage of the Gospel and the common duty of Christian witness resulting from it recommend*

---

<sup>122</sup> Cf. OLMSTED, J.T.: Konaj dielo evanjelistu. In: SLOVO – oficiálny časopis Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku. Prešov : Gréckokatolícke arcibiskupstvo Prešov a PETRA, n.o, vol. 39, no. 3, 2007, p. 10.

*and frequently require the cooperation of Catholics with other Christians, on the part of individuals and communities within the Church, either in activities or in associations, in the national or international field” (AA 27).*

In the concluding exhortation, the synodal fathers urge to renew the invitation to all the laity to come closer to Christ, participate in His saving mission and recognize that what is His is also their own (cf. Phil 2:5). Just as Jesus sent out the Twelve to proclaim the kingdom of God, the sacred Council sends the Christian faithful to bring the joyful news into every town and place where He will come (cf. Lk 10:1). By doing so they become His co-workers in the various forms and models of the apostolate of the Church, which must be constantly adapted to the new needs of our times (cf. AA 33).

The decree comprises of six chapters: The vocation of the laity to the apostolate; Objectives of the lay apostolate; The various fields of the apostolate; The various forms of the apostolate; Organization of the apostolate activity; Formation of the apostolate.

The dogmatic constitution **Dei Verbum** (On Divine Revelation) of the Second Vatican Council, emphasized that *“the Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord. [...] maintained the Sacred Scripture, together with sacred tradition as the supreme rule of faith” (DV 21)*. The voice of the Lord, which Adam had heard so clearly in the Paradise before he sinned, weakened. It has become clearer and stronger again in the Word of God. Sacred Scripture of both the Old and New Testaments are like a mirror in which the pilgrim Church on earth looks at God until she sees Him face to face, as He is (cf. 1 Jn 3:2). The Church teaches that the Divine Scripture is inspired by God, committed once and for all to writing. It imparts without change the Word of God Himself. Just as the Twelve sat at Jesus’ feet to hear His word, the sacred synod (the Second Vatican Council) urged all priests, deacons, Religious, and all God’s people to learn by frequent reading of the Sacred Scriptures the noble knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 3:8). For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ (cf. DV 25). The synod fathers recommended that prayer should accompany the reading of the God’s

Word. Just like the Apostles, listening to the word of Jesus, debated with Him, so should every disciple of Christ today communicate with His Master. When we pray we speak to God. When we read the divine Word, we hear Him. The constitution *Dei Verbum* “*For in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them*” (DV 21). He speaks to men as friends so that He may invite them and take them into the communion with Himself. The deepest truth about God and salvation of man shines in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all Revelation. The Church desires that the treasure of God’s Revelation entrusted to her penetrate deep into the hearts of all faithful and other people. A disciple becomes a teacher of others and brings them to Christ only when he or she has a living experience with the Word of God since the kingdom of God is established by deeds and words that are intrinsically interconnected.<sup>123</sup> Just as the twelve disciples of Jesus were lost without Jesus, immature and unable to teach without the Holy Spirit, the Church today would be the same without the Spirit of God. As Jesus was leaving His Apostles, He promised them another comforter, saying, “*And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever*” (Jn 14:16). Jesus calls the Spirit ‘another’ Advocate, meaning the second one, since He, Jesus, was the first bearer of the Good News. The Holy Spirit comes after Him and because of Him, in order to continue, through the Church, the work of the Good News and salvation. The Holy Spirit, therefore, ensures that the same truth, which the Apostles heard from their Master, will always continue in the Church. The Church brings us closer to God and responds to the deep desires He reads in the hearts of a modern man. As with the previous documents, it is important to know the overall content of this dogmatic constitution. In its six chapters, the constitution covers the following: Revelation; Handing on Divine Revelation; Sacred Scripture, its interpretation and divine interpretation; The Old Testament; The New Testament; Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.

---

<sup>123</sup> Cf. DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Dei verbum*. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) (24.01. 2011).

The pastoral constitution **Gaudium et Spes**, focuses on the role of the Church and its members in the modern times. It sees the Gospel as a central element in the transformation of society. It also speaks of the service and abilities of man to understand the world around him and illuminate its “dark places” with the light of Christ. This again is evangelization.

The synod fathers acknowledge the experience of past centuries, the progress of the sciences, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture, by the means of which the nature of man himself is more clearly revealed and new paths to truth opened. All these are beneficial for the Church. Since the beginning of her history, the Church has learnt to express the Christ’s message in the concepts and languages of various nations. Moreover, seeing the potential of human reasoning, she sought to clarify the message with the wisdom of philosophers with the purpose to adapt the Gospel to the understanding of all and to the needs of the wise.

The Council remarks that this adaptability in the proclamation of the revealed Word ought to remain the law of all evangelization. Thus, the ability to express the Christ’s message in his own way is developed. At the same time, this promotes a lively exchange between the Church and the diverse national cultures.

The constitution recognizes that the Church lives in the world, but not from the world, that she preaches something timeless and not mundane by claiming that more effective proclamation of the God’s message requires the help of those who live in the world, are experts of various disciplines in various institutions, both believers or unbelievers. The task of all God’s people, especially pastors and theologians, is, with the help of the Holy Spirit, hear, discern and interpret the many voices of our times and be able to judge them in the light of God’s Word, so that the revealed truth can be better understood and presented more appropriately (cf. GES 3 - 4).

The constitution speaks of the world dominated by liberal lifestyle. As if there was no God. The remedy for atheism is to be sought in the witness of a living faith, in a proper presentation the Church’s teaching and in the integral life of the Church and her members. The great witness to the living faith is that of many martyrs whose activity in faith was proved by permeating the entire life

of the faithful, including its worldly dimension. Such example of true faith can activate them toward justice and love (cf. GES 21).

The constitution opens with a preface, which describes the joys and the hopes of people in the world today. There are nine chapters in the document: The dignity of the human person; The community of mankind; Man's activity throughout the world; The role of the Church in the modern world. The part two of the constitution addresses a selection of pressing issues that need to be enlightened with the joy of the Gospel. These are: Fostering the nobility of marriage and the family; The proper development of culture; Economic and social life; The life of the political community; The fostering of peace and the promotion of a community of nations.

The Church is a hierarchical institution and has been since her early times. There are rules, regulations, and guidelines that affirm this hierarchy and commit her members to the fullness of life in the Church. It is similarly presented in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches which describes the role of eparchial bishops who are obliged to foster various forms of the apostolate.<sup>124</sup> This idea is further developed in yet another conciliar document that is specifically addressed to bishops. It is a decree concerning the pastoral office of bishops in the Church – **Christus Dominus**. The document calls on bishops to make every effort to have the faithful zealously support and promote the works of evangelization and the apostolate (cf. ChD 6). Evangelization is also the task of bishops. It is they who should dedicate themselves to their apostolic ministry as witness of Christ. They should not only care for those who already follow Jesus, but should wholeheartedly devote themselves to those who have strayed in any way from the right path or those who do not yet know the Gospel of Christ and His saving mercy (cf. ChD 11). The Council reminds to let those who have consecrated their lives to God help in this responsible role. This way, the religious brothers and sisters become labourers in the Lord's vineyard,

---

<sup>124</sup> "The eparchial bishop is to urge the obligation by which the faithful are bound to exercise the apostolate according to each one's condition and ability, and to exhort them to participate and help in various Works of the lay apostolate according to the needs of place and time." (CCEO, c. 203 § 2)

who will bring forth their share of the “spiritual harvest” (cf. ChD 33).

The conciliar documents cover the Church’s mission in its entirety. Individual documents beautifully complement one other. The document *Lumen Gentium* proves just that. We can read here about the ministry of bishops - successors of the apostles (cf. LG 20-27) and about the role of Religious (cf. LG 43-47).

The mission of the Church on earth is mentioned in almost every document produced by the Second Vatican Council. To us they are sources of inspiration in our quest to learn the truth about the Church and her irreplaceable and indispensable vocation in humanity. This is how the dogmatic constitution **Lumen Gentium** sees the Church. Christ is and wants to be the Light of the Church but also of nations (cf. LG 1). The constitution also draws attention to non-Catholic Christians. The Church is in many ways linked with those who, although being baptized and honoured with the name Christians, do not profess their faith in its totality or do not preserve the unity of the communion under the successor of Peter (cf. LG 15).

The same is true of those who have not yet received the Gospel but are in various ways related to the people of God. The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, including Muslims in particular, who profess to adhere to the faith of Abraham and along with us worship the one merciful God who will judge humankind on the last day. But this idea of God must be corrected in evangelization and God must be introduced as a loving Father who wants to show his mercy in everyone.

Contentwise, this constitution is very much needed in evangelization, because it gives hope. Attain to salvation can also those who *“through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience”* (LG 16).

The Constitution *Lumen Gentium* describes clearly and in depth the missionary nature of the Church, beginning again (as in many other documents of ecclesiastical nature) with a command to go



and preach to all people (Matt. 28:18-20). The Church continues to send her missionaries until the time when the new churches are fully established and can themselves continue the evangelization. By evangelization, the Church brings all who listen to the profession of faith, prepares them for Baptism, liberates them from the slavery of idols, and engraft them to Christ so they can grow in love with it to full maturity (cf. LG 17).

The Church is not a building or an enterprise; it is a community of faithful, whose mission is to bring the Gospel into this world. *“Just as the sacraments of the New Law, by which the life and the apostolate of the faithful are nourished, prefigure a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Rev 21:1) so too the laity go forth as powerful proclaimers of a faith in things to be hoped for (Hebr 11:1) when they courageously join to their profession of faith a life springing from faith. This evangelization, that is, this announcing of Christ by a living testimony as well as by the spoken word, takes on a specific quality and a special force in that it is carried out in the ordinary surroundings of the world.”* (LG 35)

This constitution comprises eight chapters concerning the following areas: The mystery of the Church; On the people of God; On the hierarchical structure of the Church and in particular on the Episcopate; The laity; The universal call to holiness in the Church; Religious; The eschatological nature of the pilgrim Church and its union with the Church in Heaven; The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church.

### **6.2.2 Papal documents**

Before we shift our focus on the papal documents and documents of dicasteries<sup>125</sup>, let us explain the connection between the official

---

<sup>125</sup> By the word *dicasteries* of the Roman Curia are understood *the Secretariat of State, Congregations, Tribunals, Councils and Offices*. According to the special nature of certain dicasteries, clerics and the faithful can be added. The task of dicasteries and its members is to ponder and explore plans concerning doctrine and pastoral action, apostolic initiatives, and any difficulties obstructing their mission to work for the eternal salvation. In this regard the dicasteries help the Roman Pontiff in the exercise of his supreme pastoral office for the good and service of both the universal Church and the particular Churches. It thus strengthens the unity of the faith and the

teaching office of the Church – the Magisterium and theology. The Church needs her theologians particularly in these challenging times of radical changes in all areas of human life and society. The Lord has entrusted the Church with the task of proclaiming the Gospel and maintaining the unity of faith. The task of the theological research is to examine, present and interpret the truths of the faith that will lead the people of God to the “one sheepfold” where Christ is the shepherd. In all this, one must acknowledge that faith is not the result of one’s own merit. It is built on the foundation of the apostles with Jesus Christ Himself as the cornerstone (cf. Eph 2:20).<sup>126</sup> Theology assists the Church in handing on of the Gospel – the Good News of man’s salvation. At the same time, theology interprets and explains.

In the apostolate of today, the process of evangelization takes the forefront. It is an ongoing commitment for the Church until the time of Christ’s second glorious advent. On 8 December 1975, with the objective to stress the importance of the theme of evangelization, Blessed Pope Paul VI promulgated his Apostolic Exhortation **Evangelii Nuntiandi**. The exhortation was issued on the tenth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council. Another important event behind the writing of the exhortation was the third Synod of Bishops (27 September - 26 October 1974) that was also devoted to evangelization in the modern world. The pope underlines that evangelization seeks to “*convert both the personal and collective consciences of people*”<sup>127</sup>. The objective of this exhortation was to make the Church of the twentieth century more fitted for proclamation of the Gospel to the people of that century. The central framework of evangelization is the fidelity to the message we serve and to the people to whom we must transmit it living and

---

communion of the people of God and promotes the mission proper to the Church in the world. Cf. JOHN PAUL II: *The Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apc\\_19880628\\_pastor-bonus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus.html)

<sup>126</sup> Cf. JÁN PAVOL II.: *Boží plán – Desatoro pre tretie tisícročie*. Bratislava : LÚČ, 1996, pp. 47 – 50.

<sup>127</sup> PAUL VI: The Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html)

intact. This poses three important questions that the 1974 synod fathers kept in mind:

1. In our times, what is the hidden energy of the Gospel that is able to profoundly affect man's conscience?
2. To what extent and in what way is that evangelical force capable of transforming the minds of today's people?
3. What methods should be used in evangelization for the power of the Gospel to change into deeds?

Besides the aforementioned, the entire document explicitly defines other fundamental questions that the Church is to address in her ministry. They correspond with the titles of the seven chapters: From Christ the Evangelizer to the Evangelizing Church; What is Evangelization; The Content of Evangelization; The Methods of Evangelization; Addressees of Evangelization; The Agents of Evangelization; The Spirit of Evangelization.

Towards the end of his exhortation, Blessed Paul VI entrusts the process of evangelization to the hands of the Holy Mother: *"This is the desire that we rejoice to entrust to the hands and the heart of the Immaculate Blessed Virgin Mary, on this day which is especially consecrated to her and which is also the tenth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council. On the morning of Pentecost she watched over with her prayer the beginning of evangelization prompted by the Holy Spirit: may she be the Star of the evangelization ever renewed which the Church, docile to her Lord's command, must promote and accomplish, especially in these times which are difficult but full of hope!"*

Evangelization is not reserved only to the clergy or consecrated persons. The lay members of the Church also play a crucial role. Who are the lay faithful? According to the Scriptures, they are the brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ who take part in the inheritance and do God's will (cf. Mk 3:35). Since the time of Clement of Rome, the term *lay person* has been used within the Church: to denote the baptized, who was neither a deacon nor a priest (cf. CCC 873). A lay person – in Greek λαϊκός (laikós) = belonging to the people, is a member of the Church, in which he has an active function and responsibility. It is this responsibility of lay faithful that Saint John Paul II chose as a main theme of his Apostolic Exhortation **Christi-**

**fideles Laici.** The world is here presented as the vineyard to which all Christians are called to work (cf. Matt 20:1-16). With this exhortation, the Holy Father once again invites all the lay people to come closer to their Master Jesus Christ and participate in His saving mission, recognizing that what is His is also their own (cf. Phil 2:5). This invitation clearly shows a model of a lay faithful - a disciple. Even today, Jesus sends everyone who has chosen to follow Him to every town and place where He was about to go. The work that awaits everyone in the Lord's vineyard is so great that there is no place for idleness. With even greater urgency, the householder repeats His invitation: "You go into my vineyard" (Lk 10:1). The voice of the Lord resounds in the depths of every Christian who, through faith and the sacrament of Baptism, Chrismation and the Eucharist is engrafted into Christ and is, at the same time, a member of the Church where he takes an active part in Jesus' salvific mission. Jesus wants us all, as His disciples, to be the salt of the earth and the light of the earth (cf. Matt 5: 13-14). The images taken from the Gospel of salt, light, and leaven are applicable to all of Jesus' disciples without exception. Before a Christian can be the salt or the light of the earth, he or she must become a disciple of Jesus. One of the conditions for becoming a disciple of Christ is to be courageous and fruitful in proclaiming the message. The expression to "be with Jesus" (to be His disciple) refers to a lifelong union with Him, as explained in one of the Second Vatican Council documents, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. In a more profound sense, Christians are not mere labourers working in the vineyard. They are also a part of the vineyard itself. Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5).

Jesus uses the parable of the vineyard to reveal some of the basic characteristics of the kingdom of God: "*A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to come farmers and moved to another place*" (Mk 12: 1). John the Evangelist takes us deeper to discover the mystery of the vineyard: the vineyard represents the people of God, but importantly it symbolizes Jesus Himself. He is the vine root, and we, His disciples, are the branches; He is the "true vine" into which the branches must be engrafted

(cf. Jn 15:1). According to this biblical parable of the vine root, all members of the Church are branches who are engrafted into Christ; they nourished by Him but also bear fruits for others. Such a relationship is the foundation of a mutual communion of Christians, as our Lord says: *“If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit”* (Jn 15:5).

The most beautiful fruit that branches can bear is a communion with others. This is a gift of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, continues John Paul II.<sup>128</sup> This mystery is hidden in the Eucharist and is both the means and the source of the mysterious communion of Jesus and His disciples. Jesus Christ summons us to the banquet of His Word and the Eucharist, to taste the gift of His presence, to be formed in His school, and to live more united with Him, our Teacher and Lord. He Himself tells us: *“The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them”* (Jn 14:21). Only after this encounter with God’s love that changes our lives can we live in communion with Him and with one another, justifying the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Pt 3:15) and offer a credible testimony to our brothers and sisters. A prerequisite for the creation of new disciples of Christ from all nations is an adult faith, capable of entrusting itself fully to God with a filial attitude. Such a community, centred on the Eucharist, thus becomes a place of prayer, encouragement, growth, personal experience with the living God, His Spirit, and a witness to that experience. For this reason, the Eucharist is the source and summit of the whole Christian life and of its mission. *“For the most holy Eucharist contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth: Christ Himself, our Passover and living bread. Through his own flesh, now made living and life-giving by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men”*<sup>129</sup>

On 21 September 2010, on the Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist, Pope Benedict XVI wrote his Apostolic Letter enti-

---

<sup>128</sup> Cf. JOHN PAUL II: *Christifideles Laici*. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_30121988\\_christifideles-laici.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html) (25.01. 2011).

<sup>129</sup> JOHN PAUL II: Encyclical letter *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (art.1) [https://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/special\\_features/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_20030417\\_ecclesia\\_eucharistia\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html)

tled **Ubicumque et Semper**. By this letter, he also established the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization. It is a Dicasterium (department) of the Roman Curia established in compliance with the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*.<sup>130</sup> The purpose of the council was to encourage reflections on new evangelization, to identify the means to accomplish it. Among the specific tasks of the pontifical council are:

- to examine the depth of the theological and pastoral meaning of the new evangelization;
- in close collaboration with the individual Bishop's Conferences (which may establish a specific body for this purpose) to promote and facilitate the study and implementation of the Papal Magisterium related matters concerning the new evangelization;
- to make known and support activities linked to the new evangelization that are already being carried out in various local churches, and to promote creation of the new projects, by actively involving the resources present in Institutes of Consecrated Life and in societies of apostolic life, as well as in groups of faithful and in new communities;
- to study and encourage the use of modern forms of communication as instruments for the new evangelization;
- to promote the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church as an essential and comprehensive formulation of the content of the faith for the people of our time.<sup>131</sup>

Just as in the previous papal documents, Pope Benedict XVI too looks at the contemporary world that is “struggling with the phenomenon of apostasy, increasingly common in societies and cultures that had been permeated by the Gospel for centuries.” He also mentions those who came to realize that “*an interior desert*

---

<sup>130</sup> It is an apostolic constitution on the Roman Curia promulgated by St. John Paul II.

<sup>131</sup> THE PRESS AGENCY OF THE SLOVAK BISHOP'S CONFERENCE: *Zriadenie Pápežskej rady pre novú evanjelizáciu [The Establishment of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization]*. In: <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20101012026> (10.11.217).

*results whenever the human being wishes to be the sole architect of his nature and destiny.*"<sup>132</sup>

When it comes to the new evangelization, Benedict XVI refers to Blessed Paul VI, who argued that the task of evangelization is "*a result of the frequent situations of dechristianization in our day, also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children, and for many others.*"<sup>133</sup> Towards the end of his letter, the pope recalls that it is of utmost importance to discern in which living and social areas the society has distanced itself from the faith. This has to be done before the evangelization. The basis of all evangelization is then not a human plan of expansion, but rather the desire to share the inestimable gift that God has given us and made us participate in His own life.

In the first year of his pontificate, Pope Francis devoted his time to reflection upon the depth of the Gospel. At the conclusion of the Year of Faith, on 24 November 2013, the solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe he promulgated his Apostolic Exhortation **Evangelii Gaudium**, in which he very clearly speaks of the reasons for the joy of the one who hears the Gospel and wants to become a part of the Gospel, the Good News by which God still speaks to us through His Son.

The Pope opens his exhortation saying that the joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus Christ. Those who accept His offer of salvation are freed from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and isolation. With Jesus Christ, joy is constantly born anew.

---

<sup>132</sup> BENEDICT XVI: Apostolic letter *Ubicumque et Semper*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_apl\\_20100921\\_ubicumque-et-semper.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper.html) (10.11.2017).

<sup>133</sup> PAUL VI: The Apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html)

The aim of this exhortation is to encourage the Christian faithful to be a part of a new phase of evangelization that is full of joy while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in the years to come. Pope Francis emphasises that evangelization is linked with preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected Him. Many of them seek God secretly and want to see His face, even in countries of the ancient Christian tradition.

### **6.2.3 Documents of the Dicasteries**

**The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith** is one of the dicasteries of the Roman Curia. The Congregation issues documents on disciplinary, sacramental and doctrinal questions and editions of documents and studies. One of the doctrinal documents discusses evangelization. It is a Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization, issued on 3 December 2007. The document consists of five parts. The first few lines draw the reader's attention to the mission of the Apostles who continue the Christ's mission of evangelization (cf. Matt 28:19-20; Mk 16:15; Lk 24:4-7; Acts 1:3). This section also explains the term *evangelization*. It does not mean to simply teach the doctrine, but also to proclaim the Lord by words and deeds. Thus, one becomes an instrument of Christ's presence and action in the world. According to the Note, evangelization entails a possibility of enrichment for those who are evangelized and also for the one who evangelizes and for the entire Church. For instance, in the process of inculturation, the universal Church herself is enriched in various areas of life.

Evangelization also involves a dialogue that seeks to understand the reasons and feelings of others. In a dialogue *“people of good will open their hearts more freely and share their spiritual and religious experiences in all sincerity. This experience of sharing, a characteristic of true friendship, is a valuable occasion for witnessing and for Christian proclamation”*.<sup>134</sup> Since the Note

---

<sup>134</sup> CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH: *Doctrinal note on some aspects of evangelization*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documento ts/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20071203\\_nota-evangelizzazione\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documento ts/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20071203_nota-evangelizzazione_en.html) (11.11.2017).



comes from of the body responsible for defending the doctrine, the document also addresses ecumenism, whose aim is defending one's own church against people of different faith. There are some dimensions of the work of ecumenism that can be distinguished: above all there is listening, as a fundamental condition for any dialogue; then theological discussion, in which one must seek to understand the beliefs, traditions and convictions of others, which may eventually lead to an agreement that is sometimes hidden under the dispute.

The document concludes with a note that the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XVI on 6 October 2007 approved the present Doctrinal Note adopted in the Ordinary Session of this Congregation, and ordered its publication.

**The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples** is also helpful in preaching the Good News. It was founded on 22 June 1622 with the bull *Inscrutabili Divinae* issued by Pope Gregory XV. The universal task of the Congregation has been to direct and coordinate the missionary work of the Church and missionary cooperation while respecting the Eastern Churches (cf. AG 29). The part of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples are also the Pontifical Mission Societies, which were established in 1926 as a universal instrument of spreading the faith for the whole Church, while preserving its own autonomy. In a special way, the Pontifical Mission Societies are at the service of the Roman Pontiff, head of the College of Bishops, and of the foundation and sign of the unity and universality of the Holy Church.

Apart from congregations, there are also other institutes actively involved in the life of the Church with their valuable commentaries and suggestions. Such is the **Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization**. At the meeting of those involved in new evangelization held on 15 October 2011, the President of the Council, Rino Fisichella, explained that the new evangelization is not a novelty introduced after the establishment of this Dicastery. It is constantly present in the daily deeds of the thousands of people. He continues by saying that coming up with an exhaustive definition of new evangelization would pose the risk of disregarding the richness and complexity of its nature. Despite difficulties

concerning its definition, we must always convey the very essence of evangelization – the point of departure must be the human person and his or her desire for God.

The Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization also comments on the symbiosis of evangelization and liturgy. Liturgy is the primary vehicle through which the Church expresses to the world her mission to be the mediator of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSION

Saint Leo the Great, the pope and teacher of the Church wrote: *“Just as Christ is born of a virgin mother by the action of the Holy Spirit, so is every Christian born of the Holy Church.”* Catechesis, which has been one of the primary tasks of the Church from the time of its inception until today, is a dynamic process of proclaiming the Gospel message, the mystery of salvation realized by God. The Church is acutely conscious of her role and therefore approaches the process of catechesis very responsibly. At all times, she seeks the proper ways of proclaiming the joyful message of Jesus Christ in order to arouse in the catechized a response to faith and enable them to form an intimate bond with Christ. Since the Second Vatican Council, the process of catechizing has been developing rather dynamically.

Catechesis must be aimed at integral formation and should not be reduced to mere teaching or dry lecturing in faith. It must act as a means of arousing true conversion and a genuine interest in following Christ. In our times, it is essential to aim catechesis and evangelization at all population groups, since the certain aspects of postmodernism, agnosticism, nihilism and secularism leave a permanent imprint on people. Ignorance of the truths of Christ's faith and no interest in the Christian life separate people from the saving faith and leaves them with vague notions, which they often base on dubious religious beliefs. These then become good grounds for pessimism and episodes of extreme despair. But if people trust God and live in the Church with the hope of eternal life, they will radically change their ways and attain the kingdom of God. Those who believe know that only with Christ and in Christ, can they defeat the power of sin and conquer death.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ALBERICH, E. – DŘÍMAL, L.: *Katechetika*. Praha : Portál, 2008. ISBN 978-80-7367-382-6.
- AUGUSTINE, H. – CHRISTOPHER, J. P.: *The First Catechetical Instruction* (De catechizandis rudibus): Westminster, Md. : Newman Bookshop, 1946.
- BALÍK, J.: *Na cestě s mladými*. Praha : PAULÍNKY, 2004. ISBN 80-86025-76-4.
- BENEDIKT XVI.: *Ježiš Nazaretský I*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2007. ISBN 978-80-7141-579-4.
- BENEDIKT XVI.: *Ježiš Nazaretský II*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2011. ISBN 978-80-7141-721-7.
- BOHÁČ, V.: Liturgická katechéza v praxi. In: TIRPÁK, P. – PAĽA, G. (ed.): *Farská a školská katechéza ako prostriedok novej evanjelizácie*. Prešov : GTF, 2012. ISBN 978-80-555-0520-6.
- BORZA, P.: *Kapitoly z dejín kresťanstva. Od reformácie po 20. storočie*. Prešov : Prešovská univerzita v Prešove. Gréckokatolícka teologická fakulta, 2011. ISBN 978-80-555-0396-7.
- BRÁDŇANSKÁ, N. – HANESOVÁ, D. a kol.: *Vybrané katechetické metódy*. Banská Bystrica : PF UMB, 2005. ISBN 80-8083-080-0.
- BURIAN, R. – ŠPÁNIK, M.: *Pedagogika pre kresťanské školy*. Trenčín : Naša tlač, 1993. ISBN 80-966994-2-3.
- DUFOUR, X.: *Slovník biblickej teológie*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2003. ISBN: 80-7141-414-X.
- FOGASSY, J.: *Príručka katechumenátnej katechézy*. Bratislava : Komisia pre katechizáciu a školstvo KBS, 2007. ISBN 978-80-969721-1-1.
- FOGASSY, J.: *Rodinná katechéza*. Bratislava : Komisia pre katechizáciu a školstvo KBS, 2010. ISBN 978-80-970295-8-6.
- GALIPEAU, J.: *Apprenticed to Christ: Activities for Practicing the Catholic Way of Life*. Franklin Park IL : World Library Publications, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-58459-327-0.
- GNERRE, C.: *Il catechismo del pallone*. Pessano con Bornago : Mimep-Docete. ISBN 978-88-8424-260-0.
- HIŠEM, C.: *Škola života*. Prešov : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 1999. ISBN 80-7165-182-X.

- HORVÁTH, P.: Katechéza Rómov. In: *Farská katechéza – zborník z interdiecézneho katechetického seminára*. Košice : DKÚ Košického apoštolského exarchátu, 2007.
- HOTÁR, V. a kol.: *Výchova a vzdelávanie dospelých*. Andragogika. Terminologický a výkladový slovník. Bratislava : SPN, 2000. ISBN 80-08-02814-9.
- HUGHES, K.: *Saying Amen: A Mystagogy of Sacrament*. Chicago : Liturgy Training Publications, 1994. ISBN 978-1-56854-239-3.
- CHEREWATUK, K. – WIETHAUS, U. (eds.): *Dear sister. Medieval women and the epistolary genre*. Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993. ISBN 0-8122-1437-4.
- JÁN PAVOL II.: *Boží plán – Desatoro pre tretie tisícročie*. Bratislava : LÚČ, 1996. ISBN 80-7114-192-5.
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. London : Catholic Truth Society, 2003. ISBN 978-18-6082-210-0.
- JUNGSMANN, J. A.: *Glaubensverkündigung im Lichte der Frohbotschaft*. Innsbruck : Tyrolia, 1963.
- KATOLÍCKE PEDAGOGICKÉ A KATECHETICKÉ CENTRUM: Projekt nových učebných osnov predmetu náboženstvo/náboženská výchova pre základné a stredné školy. Spišská Nová Ves : KPKC, 2006.
- KIELIAN, A. – KOWALCZYK, J.: *Duch przyszłości kościoła. Nowa ewangelizacja w ujęciu Jana Pawła i Synodu biskupów (2012)*. In: *Studia katechetyczne*. Warszawa : Wydawnictwo Naukowe UKSW, 10 (2014). ISSN 0138-0672.
- KIELIAN, A.: *Przyszłość nauczania religii. Kontekst kultury cyfrowej, nowa dydaktyka i wskazania dla tworzenia podręczników*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo UNUM, 2021. ISBN 978-83-7643-213-7.
- KLICH, A. E (ed.): *Dialog Boga z człowiekiem*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2011. ISBN 978-83-7438-289-2.
- KLUŠKA, B.: *Písmo ako „duša“ katechézy: podoby a výzvy súčasnej biblickej katechézy*. In: LICHNER, M. (ed.): *Sväté písmo ako duša teológie*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2015. ISBN 978-80-7141-958-7.
- KÓDEX KÁNONOV VÝCHODNÝCH CIRKVI. CODEX CANONUM ECCLESIAE ORIENTALIIUM. Prešov : Gréckokatolícka teologická fakulta Prešovskej univerzity v spolupráci s Katolíckou

- univerzitou v Ľubline vo vydavateľstve Ľublinskej arcidiecézy Gaudium, 2012, 882 s. ISBN 978-83-7548-090-0.
- KOLEKTÍV AUTOROV: Katechéza ako špecifická forma ohlasovania evanjelia deťom – zborník prednášok. Prešov : Diecézne katechetické stredisko, 1998.
- KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKA: *Pastoračný a evanjelizačný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2001 – 2006*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo Michala Vaška, 2001. ISBN 978-80-7165-310-3.
- KONFERENCIA BISKUPOV SLOVENSKA: *Pastoračný plán Katolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku 2007 -2013*. Trnava : SSV, 2007. ISBN 978-80-7162-695-4.
- KONGREGÁCIA PRE KLERIKOV: *Všeobecné direktórium pre katechizáciu*. Trnava : Spolok svätého Vojtecha, 1999. ISBN 80-7162-264-8.
- KUTARŇA, J.: *Id'te a ohlasujte*. Bratislava : Saleziánske katechetické stredisko, 1994. ISBN 80-85405-24-5.
- KYSELICA, J.: *Obnova farnosti cez neokatechumenát*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1998. ISBN 80-7141-525-1.
- MANSINI, G.: *Fundamental Theology*. Washington : The Catholic University of America Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0-813-22985-0.
- MERCER, J.: *Catechesis An Invitation to Living Faith*. London : SCM Press, p. 119. ISBN 978-0-334-05941-7.
- MOJZEŠ, M.: *Život v Kristovi*. Záborské : Salus Animarum, 2018. ISBN 978-80-972563-3-3.
- MRÁZ, M.: *Základná praktická teológia*. Bratislava : Aloisianum, 1997. ISBN 80-7141-180-9.
- MUCHOVÁ, L.: *Úvod do náboženskej pedagogiky*. Olomouc : Matice cyrilometodějská, 1994. ISBN 80-238-7106-4.
- NUZZI, R.: *Gifts of the Spirit: Multiple Intelligences in Religious Education*. Washington, D.C. : National Catholic Educational Association, 2005. ISBN 1-55833-236-7.
- OLMSTED, J.T.: Konaj dielo evanjelistu. In: *SLOVO – oficiálny časopis Gréckokatolíckej cirkvi na Slovensku*. Prešov : Gréckokatolícke arcibiskupstvo Prešov a PETRA, n.o, vol. 39, no. 3, 2007. ISSN 1335-7492.

- OSEWSKA, E.: *Rodzina i szkoła w Polsce wobec współczesnych wyzwań wychowawczych*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2020. ISBN 978-83-7438-951-8.
- PALA, G. – BEŇKOVÁ, J.: *Stručné kompendium teórie komunikácie*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2019. ISBN 978-80-555-2078-0.
- PALA, G.: Koncepcia mediálnej výchovy v pastorálnej starostlivosti o rodinu. In: MICHANČOVÁ, S. – KUBÍK, F. (eds.): *Pastorálna starostlivosť na počiatku 21. Storočia*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2009. ISBN 978-80-8068-960-5.
- PÁPEŽSKÁ BIBLICKÁ KOMISIA: *Interpretácia Biblie v Cirkvi*. Spišské Podhradie : Kňazský seminár biskupa Jána Vojtaššáka, 1995.
- PAULEY, J. C.: *An Evangelizing Catechesis: Teaching from Your Encounter with Christ*. Huntington : Our Sunday Visitor, 2020. ISBN 978-1681924328.
- PETRÍK, Ľ.: *Viera je z počúvania a ohlasovania : homiletická interpretácia*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2013. ISBN 978-80-555-0882-5.
- PETRO, M.: Ethical aspects of media education. In: PRIBULA, M. (ed.): *Orbis communicationis socialis*. Lublin : NORBERTINUM, 2006. ISBN 83-7222-257-6.
- PETRO, M.: Influence of television on moral development of children and youth. In: *Orbis communicationis socialis*. Lublin : Norbertinum 2007. ISBN 978-83-7222-283-1.
- PETRO, M.: Kresťanská výchova – možnosť zabezpečenia kultúry života. In: SZYMECZEK, J. (ed.): *Křesťanská výchova ve XXI. století. Prosociální a preventivní aspekty výuky náboženství*. Ostrava : Ostravská univerzita Pedagogická fakulta, 2007. ISBN 978-80-3768-311-5.
- PRŮCHA, J.: *Pedagogický slovník*. Praha : Portál, 1995. ISBN 80-7178-029-4.
- RATZINGER, J. C.: *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*. San Francisco : Ignatius Press, 1996. ISBN 978-16-8149-067-0.
- SIELEPIN, A.: Liturgia jako zdroj i spełnienie komunii z Bogiem i człowiekiem. In: KLICH, A. E. (ed.): *Powołani do komunii z Bogiem i człowiekiem*. Kraków : Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 2011. ISBN 978-83-7438-286-1.



- SLIVKA, D.: Biblická katechéza v praxi. In: PETRO, M. – PAĽA, G. (ed.): *Školská a mimoškolská katechéza v európskej edukačnej štruktúre*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2008. ISBN 978-80-8068-928-5.
- SOTONIAKOVÁ, E.: *Postavenie kresťana v tomto svete*. Prešov : Spolok biskupa Petra Pavla Gojdiča, 1999. ISBN 80-88902-10-X.
- STALA, J. (ed.): *Zagadnienia katechetyki materialnej*. Tarnów : Wydawnictwo Biblos, 2011. ISBN 978-83-733298-8-1.
- STANČEK, Ľ. – ŠURÁB, M.: *Rétorika dnes*. Ružomberok : Rektorát Katolíckej univerzity v Ružomberku, 2006. ISBN 80-8084-110-1.
- SZENTMÁRTONI, M.: *Úvod do pastorálnej teológie*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 1999. ISBN 80-7141-259-7.
- ŠPIDLÍK, T.: *Katecheze o Církvi*. Olomouc : Refugium, 2008. ISBN 978-80-7412-006-0.
- ŠPIDLÍK, T.: *Spiritualita křesťanského Východu*. Velehrad – Roma : Refugium, 2002. ISBN 80-86045-84-6.
- TIRPÁK, P.: Média a katechéza v procese formácie mladých. In: PAĽA, G. et al: *Vplyv médií na sociálne a kultúrne hodnoty súčasnosti II*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2010. ISBN 978-80-555-0290-8.
- TIRPÁK, P.: Sviatosti z pohľadu iniciácie a integrácie do života. In: *Theologos*. Prešov : GTF PU, 2009, vol. 11, no. 2. ISBN 978-80-8068-737-3.
- TKÁČ, M.: *Na ceste do chrámu - iniciácia kresťanstva*. Prešov : GTF PU v Prešove, 2018. ISBN 978-80-555-2138-1.
- VALČO, M.: Cirkev a fenomén sekularizácie: Máme z neho mať strach? In: *Kresťanská revue*, 2005, no. 7. ISSN 0023-4613.
- VALOVIČ, E.: *Náčrt katechetiky II*. Trnava : Dobrá kniha, 2000. ISBN 80-7141-286-4.
- VOJTEK, Š.: *Spravodlivosť, základný pilier pre rozvoj ľudskej spoločnosti*. Nitra : Kňazský seminár sv. Gorazda, 2004. ISBN 80-88741-51-3.
- VRABLEC, J. – JARAB, J. – STANČEK, Ľ.: *Chodte aj vy do mojej vinice I*. Trnava : SSV, 1997. ISBN 80-7162-165-X.
- VRABLEC, J.: *O otázkach viery – prednášky podľa kardinála Ratzingera*. Bratislava : Lúč, 1992. ISBN 80-7114-066-X.

- WAGNER, N.: *Introducing Liturgical Catechesis: Formation Sessions for the Parish*. San Jose CA : Resource Publications, Inc., 2002. ISBN: 0-89390-566-6.
- WEGRZYN, B.: Pojęcie i podstawy formacji ciągłej w życiu zakonnym. Limanowa 2006.
- WEGRZYN, B.: Realizacja formacji ciągłej w życiu zakonnym. Limanowa 2006.
- ZIMNY, J.: *Katecheza w ujęciu Jana Pawła II*. Sandomierz : Instytut teologiczny im. błogosławionego Wincentego Kadłubka, 2004. ISBN 83-7300-355-X.
- ZOZULAK, J.: *Katechetické poslanie Cirkvi*. Prešov : Pravoslávna bohoslovecká fakulta, 2001. ISBN 80-8068-058-2.

### Elektronické zdroje

- AQUINAS, T.: *On God and His Creatures*. In: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/aquinas/gentiles.html>.
- BENEDICT XVI.: *Sacramentum Caritatis*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20070222\\_sacramentum-caritatis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html).
- BENEDICT XVI.: *Ubicumque et Semper*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_apl\\_20100921\\_ubicumque-et-semper.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_ben-xvi_apl_20100921_ubicumque-et-semper.html).
- CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION: *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_19880407\\_catholic-school\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19880407_catholic-school_en.html).
- CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY: *General Directory for Catechesis*. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html).
- CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF FAITH: *Doctrinal note on some aspects of evangelization*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documenots/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_20071203\\_nota-evangelizzazione\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documenots/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20071203_nota-evangelizzazione_en.html).

- CONGREGATION FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES: *Instruction for Applying the Liturgical Prescriptions*. In: <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/instruction-for-applying-the-liturgical-prescriptions-of-the-code-of--canons-of-the-eastern-churches-2257>.
- DOCUMENTS OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: *Dei verbum*. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html) (24.01. 2011).
- FRANCESCO: Apostolic Journey to Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on The Occasion of The 28th World Youth Day (22-29 July 2013) [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130724\\_gmg-ospedale-rio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130724_gmg-ospedale-rio.html).
- FRANCIS: Saturday morning mediation on *Renewal without fear*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie\\_20130706\\_renewal-without-fear.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130706_renewal-without-fear.html).
- HAJDUK, A.: Ľudová zbožnosť. In: [http://www.uski.sk/frm\\_2009/ran/2004/ran-2004-1-09.pdf](http://www.uski.sk/frm_2009/ran/2004/ran-2004-1-09.pdf).
- IRSÁK, M.: *Kerygma a katechéza*. <http://www.koinonia.sk/sk/rubrika/temy/cyklus-prednasok-o-evanjelizacii/kerygma-a-katecheza>.
- JÁGER, R.: Ekklesia tou Theou - Bohom povolané spoločenstvo (sémantická transformácia terminológie cirkev). In: <http://revue.logosnet.biz/logos2-2005-01>.
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Catechesi Tradendae*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_16101979\\_catechesi-tradendae.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/special\\_features/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_20030417\\_ecclesia\\_eucharistia\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Ecclesia in Europa*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_20030628\\_ecclesia-in-europa.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html).

- JOHN PAUL II.: *Familiaris Consortio*. Art. 36 [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Fides et Ratio*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_14091998\\_fides-et-ratio.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html) (13.8.2013).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Christifideles Laici*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_30121988\\_christifideles-laici.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Lineamenta. The Evangelization for the trans-mission of the Christian faith*. [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20110202\\_lineamenta-xiii-assembly\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Pastor Bonus*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_constitutions/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apc\\_19880628\\_pastor-bonus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_19880628_pastor-bonus.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_25031992\\_pastores-dabo-vobis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Laity [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20041125\\_pc-laici.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20041125_pc-laici.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Speech of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II on the vigil of the great feast of Pentecost. 30 May 1998*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19980530\\_riflessioni.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980530_riflessioni.html).
- JOHN PAUL II.: *Vicesimus Quintus Annus – Apostolic Letter*. In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1988/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19881204\\_vicesimus-quintus-annus.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19881204_vicesimus-quintus-annus.html).
- KASZOWSKI, M.: Odpowiedzialność za wychowanie dzieci. <http://www.teologia.pl>.
- KASZOWSKI, M.: *Sakrament małżeństwa*. In: [www.teologia.pl/m\\_k/spis06h.htm](http://www.teologia.pl/m_k/spis06h.htm).
- LENCZ, L.: *Katechumenátna katechéza – katechumenátna pas-torácia*. In: <http://www.cirkev.cz/res/data/083/009177.pdf>.

- LINEAMENTA – document of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization.* In: [https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20110202\\_lineamenta-xiii-assembly\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20110202_lineamenta-xiii-assembly_en.html).
- LUSCOŇ, J.: *Komplexný model farskej katechézy.* In: <http://www.cirkev.cz/res/data/083/009179.pdf>.
- MUCHA, P.: *Fenomén nových komunit v katolíckej cirkvi a príklady z Francie.* In: [https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-2016040009\\_Fenomen\\_novych\\_komunit\\_v\\_katolicke\\_cirkvi\\_a\\_priklady\\_z\\_Francie.php](https://www.studiatheologica.eu/artkey/sth-2016040009_Fenomen_novych_komunit_v_katolicke_cirkvi_a_priklady_z_Francie.php).
- PAUL VI.: *Evangelii Nuntiandi.* In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html).
- PIUS X.: *Acerbo Nimis.* In: [https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-x\\_enc\\_15041905\\_acerbo-nimis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_15041905_acerbo-nimis.html) (23.7.2013).
- RÁBEK, F.: *Pastiersky list ordinára pre odsúdených na Vianoce 2009.* In: <http://www.ordinariat.sk/pastiersky-list-ordinara-pre-odsudenych-na-vianoce-2009> (25.7.2013).
- SACRED CONGREGATION OF RITES: *Inter Oecumenici* In: <https://adoremus.org/1964/09/inter-oecumenici/>.
- The Code of Canons of Oriental Churches.* In: <http://www.jgray.org/codes/cceo90eng.html>.
- THE PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR THE LAITY: Address of John Paul II to the participants in the plenary assembly. 24 November 2004.
- THE PRESS AGENCY OF THE SLOVAK BISHOP'S CONFERENCE: *Zriadenie Pápežskej rady pre novú evanjelizáciu [The Establishment of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization].* In: <https://www.tkkbs.sk/view.php?cislocianku=20101012026>.
- VASIL, C.: *Katechéza včera a dnes.* In: <http://www.zoe.sk/?citaren&id=43>.



## **Catechesis as a Vehicle of Proclamation**

### **Author:**

doc. ThDr. Peter Tirpák, PhD.

### **Reviewers:**

Mons. Dr.h.c. prof. ThDr. Jozef Jarab, PhD.

Prof. dr hab. Elżbieta Osewska

Prof. ThDr. PaedDr. Ing. Gabriel Paľa, PhD.

Dr hab. Andrzej Kielian

### **Graphics and Cover Editing**

PhDr. ThLic. Juraj Gradoš, PhD.

### **Publisher:**

Wydawnictwo Avalon Sp. z o.o.

Kraków

2021

ISBN 978-83-7730-565-2

