Inspiration, Organization, and Renewal:
Breaking Open the New *Directory for Catechesis*

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What we’ll cover today

- A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DOCUMENT
- ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW DIRECTORY
- MAJOR THEMES
- APPLICATION TO CATECHETICAL MINISTRY
Some background

• *General Catechetical Directory* (GCD) in 1971, written “to provide the basic principles of pastoral theology...by which pastoral action in the ministry of the word can be more fittingly directed and governed,” including “the correct way of understanding the nature and purposes of catechesis and also the truths which are to be taught by it” (from the Foreword).

• *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC)
  • published in 1997 (following the *Catechism’s* publication in 1993)
  • capitalized on the themes of *Catechesi Tradendae*
  • affirmed the importance of catechesis of adults, discussed evangelization and inculturation of the faith, and listed six essential tasks of catechesis.

**Directory for Catechesis**

• 2015 -- Plenary meeting of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization on the relationship between catechesis and evangelization with representatives from around the world.

• New developments in both the Church and contemporary society led to the need for a new directory

• With the input of a worldwide team of experts, a first draft of a new directory was written and discussed at the 2017 plenary meeting. The revised text was sent to approximately 200 theologians and catechists, and further elaborated and revised.
### Organization of the Document

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<th>Twelve Chapters, divided into three parts of 4 chapters each</th>
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### Part One -- Catechesis in the Church’s Mission of Evangelization

This portion discusses the relationship between catechesis and evangelization and our “missionary mandate” — the Church’s responsibility to go out and share the good news of Jesus Christ.

- **Chapter One**, “Revelation and Its Transmission”: overall vision of evangelization, role of the Church in transmission of divine revelation
- **Chapter Two**, “The Identity of Catechesis,”: nature, process, goals, and sources of catechesis; *kerygma*, and its relationship to catechesis
- **Chapter Three**, “The Catechist,”: identity and vocation of the catechist, description of various participants in catechesis and their unique roles — for example, bishops, priests, parents, and lay catechists
- **Chapter Four**, “The Formation of Catechists,” how we must form ourselves as catechists; various settings where that formation might occur
## Part Two – The Process of Catechesis

This portion discusses how the Faith is handed on, as well as the topics and settings of catechesis.

- **Chapter Five**, “The Pedagogy of the Faith,”: how God teaches us; catechesis as reflection of *divine pedagogy*
- **Chapter Six**, “The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,”: content of the faith that is proclaimed in catechesis; how these topics help us to form an identity as Catholics
- **Chapter Seven**, “Methodology in Catechesis,”: reflection on the variety of methods in catechesis, including the importance of human experience, memory, language, and the arts
- **Chapter Eight**, “Catechesis in the Lives of Persons,”: groups and individuals whose faith is being formed in catechesis; highlights the role of parents as the first and most important teachers of the Faith and the family as “domestic church”; importance of growing in faith throughout our lives; catechesis for persons with disabilities, migrants, and immigrants

## Part Three – Catechesis in the Particular Churches

This portion discusses specific challenges in the local Church.

- **Chapter Nine**, “The Christian Community as Participant in Catechesis”: importance of the ministry of the Word; various communities that carry out this mission (dioceses, parishes, associations and movements, Catholic schools, etc.)
- **Chapter Ten**, “Catechesis in the Face of Contemporary Cultural Scenarios”: cultural and social dimensions of catechesis amid new social and economic challenges (including religious pluralism, bioethical issues, threats to the environment, migration, digital culture); catechesis on Catholic social teaching
- **Chapter Eleven**, “Catechesis at the Service of the Inculturation of the Faith”: reasons and recommendations for inculturation; guidelines for the development of local catechisms as tools to foster inculturation
- **Chapter Twelve**, “The Organisms at the Service of Catechesis”: roles of the structures that oversee catechesis (Holy See, conferences of bishops, dioceses, etc.)
Key themes in the new Directory for Catechesis

**Encounter and Accompaniment**
- *Encounter* is one of the most frequently used words in the document, appearing nearly sixty times
- Encounter with
  - Jesus
  - Scripture
  - the world community
  - Others in the catechetical process
- The latter begins as encounter and continues as accompaniment

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**Kerygma**
“We must not think that in catechesis the kerygma gives way to a supposedly more “solid” formation. Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful, and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma.”

— from the Preface to the Directory for Catechesis

- both initial and ongoing proclamation of the kerygma
- new directory echoes and expands on 1997 GDC’s point that catechesis is not simply a stage in the process of evangelization, but rather evangelization is an integral part of catechesis throughout the lifespan
- We are all in need of a continuous reminder of the core of the Gospel message: “God loves you; Christ is your savior; he is alive” (CV,130).
Key themes in the new *Directory for Catechesis*

**Mystagogy**

“The catechumenal inspiration of catechesis does not mean reproducing the catechumenate in a servile manner, but taking on its style and its formative dynamism, responding also to the need for a mystagogical renewal, one which would assume very different forms based on each educational community’s discernment” – *Directory for Catechesis*, 64

- witness of the Christian community
- immersion in the Paschal mystery
- developmentally-responsive approach
- catechesis of the senses

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**Inclusion**

“Accepting the challenge of evangelization means bringing the Word of God to the farthest reaches, opening oneself to all the peripheries.”

— *Directory for Catechesis*, 295

The *Directory for Catechesis* calls us to share the faith with, and appreciate the dignity and gifts of:

- persons with disabilities (269–272)
- migrants and immigrants (273–278)
- prisoners (281–282)
- indigenous people (332–335)
- persons living in poverty (280)
- others who have been pushed to the margins of society
Key themes in the new *Directory for Catechesis*

**Dialogue with the Arts and Sciences**

“In the logic of the Incarnation, fidelity to God and fidelity to humanity are profoundly interrelated. It should be borne in mind, therefore, that the inspiration of faith itself assists in a correct evaluation of the contribution of the human sciences.” — *Directory for Catechesis*, 181

- The three transcendentals (172)
- Role of music and visual arts in historical and modern catechesis (209-212)
- Contributions that human sciences can make to catechesis (236-238)

**Cultural Change and Challenge**

- role of catechesis and faith in bioethics (373–378)
- general issues related to the dignity of the human person (379–380)
- catechesis and environmental engagement (381–384)
- digital culture (360-371)
  - digital natives and digital immigrants (362)
  - impact of digital world on how we view ourselves and others (359)
  - technology’s potential for involving young people in pastoral initiatives and activities (360)
  - risk of addiction, isolation, and gradual loss of contact with concrete reality (361)
  - proclaim the Gospel in the “language of the new generations” and to invite them “to create a new sense of community” that includes, but “is not exhausted by, what they find online” (370)
  - catechesis might achieve more personalization through technology, it should never be individualistic (370, 372)
  - evangelizing presence in the digital world (371)
Key themes in the new *Directory for Catechesis*

**Missionary Discipleship**

Catechesis, moreover, forms believers for mission, accompanying them in the maturation of attitudes of faith and making them aware that they are missionary disciples, called to participate actively in the proclamation of the Gospel and to make the kingdom of God present in the world.

— *Directory for Catechesis*, 50

Missionary Discipleship is a thread that runs throughout the *Directory for Catechesis*

- missionary role of the family as an agent of evangelization and catechesis (231)
- importance of mission experiences for youth (251)
- the understanding of the pastoral care of youth as a “missionary outreach” (252)
- necessity of proposing concrete missionary exercise of charity and witness in the world as an element of catechesis with adults (262)

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Reformulated list of **Tasks of Catechesis**:

- Leading to knowledge of the faith
- Initiating into the celebrating of the Mystery
- Forming for life in Christ
- Teaching prayer
- Introduction to community life (both building up community and as missionary disciples contributing to its growth)
Some additional tidbits

Tasks of Adult Catechesis
• to elicit faith
• to purify the faith
• to nourish faith
• to assist the sharing and witness of faith

Some Important Points made about Methodology
• Plurality of methods
• Human experience
• Memory
• Language (narrative language and the language of art)
• The group
• Space
DILEMMA A

Miguel is the Director of Religious Education at an urban parish with 1000 families. He is concerned that the kids, teens, and even adults in the parish are not fully engaged in catechesis because they haven’t yet had a life-changing encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. What are some things Miguel can do proclaim the kerygma to the people he serves?

RESPONSES of Catechetical Leaders to Dilemma A

• Small groups
• Faith sharing
• Events with discipleship speakers
• “Am I addressing the head or the heart?”
• Working people into the practice of prayer, importance of adoration
• Gathering around food – mimicking family experience
• Thinking about our language – talking about our hunger, thirst, brokenness
RESPONSES of Catechetical Leaders to Dilemma A

• How do we translate theological language into developmentally-appropriate everyday language that connects with everyday life?
• Not a sage on the stage, but a guide on the side.
• Temptation to think “I have to turn the parish around”, instead, focus on one person at a time – relational.
• Prayer (encouraging prayer and praying ourselves)
• Much hinges on relationships – relationships between people and between the person and Jesus Christ.

DILEMMA B

Veronica is the Parish Catechetical Leader at a parish with 750 families. She has recently seen an increase in the number of learners with autism, ADHD and other diverse learning needs in her program. What can she do to make sure she meets these needs?
Responses of Catechetical Leaders to Dilemma B

- Walk with/accompany family
- Build trust
- Listen
- Wording on registration forms, etc.
- Exploring options
- Looking outward
- Calling forth parishioners/professionals

Responses of Catechetical Leaders to Dilemma B

- Education for the parish/advocacy
- Support for parents
- Intentional about outreach and invitation
- Openness to sacramental preparation and celebration
- Deanery/Parish/ awareness day
- This is a pro-life issue
- What are the strengths? How can persons with disabilities use their gifts?
Dilemma C

Linh works as a Director of Faith Formation in a culturally diverse parish with a number of spiritual movements, such as Christian Family Movement (MFC in Spanish) and ACTS retreats, as well as groups that come together for popular devotions, such as a Divine Mercy group. How might Linh begin to collaborate with these groups in order to strengthen catechesis at her parish?

Responses Of Catechetical Leaders to Dilemma C

• Takes time
• Need to invest time into each group and person
• What are the needs of the people in the parish and the groups in the parish?
• Pastoral sensitivity – especially with different cultural ministries.
• Everyone should be welcomed
• If a change is going to be made, it should be explained.
Responses Of Catechetical Leaders to Dilemma C

• Affirm that each group has something to offer.
• Always seek common ground.
• Bringing the cultures of the parish together to celebrate the patron of the parish.
• Linking different movements and groups to the faith formation program in some way (e.g., Divine Mercy group could pray for Confirmation candidates).
• Have a common experience – family gatherings.

Resources

Directory for Catechesis

Catechist’s Guide to the Directory for Catechesis

“Magnify” virtual event from NCCL and OSV

Follow on social media for regular quotes and tidbits from the Directory. Twitter: @JosephOSV