Catechesis

Introduction to the new Directory for Catechesis
The other Directories

1971 - General Catechetical Directory

1997 - General Directory for Catechesis

2020 - Directory for Catechesis
Why do we need a new one?

Responding to the “signs of the times”

The emerge of digital culture and globalization

The challenge of the New Evangelization
Why do we need a new one?

- Catechesis inspired by the *Catechumenate*
- Relationship between Catechesis and Evangelization
- Kerygmatic Catechesis
- Formation of Catechists
What is Catechesis

Catechesis “has the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Catechetical teaching is intended to “make the faith a vital, explicit, and effective force in the lives of men.”
Revelation and its Transmission

- God is a mystery of love
- Revelation of God as Trinity, and our call to a filial life in Christ (family life of God)
- Offer of salvation to all through the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ
- Call to reunite scattered humanity in the Church, bringing about communion with God
Revelation and its Transmission

Faith in Jesus Christ = The response to God who reveals himself

“When a human being comes within God’s reach, he or she is called to respond with the obedience of faith and to adhere with the full assent of intellect and will, freely welcoming the ‘gospel of the grace of God.’”

Faith is first of all: “welcoming God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ, adherence to his person, and the free decision to follow him.”
Revelation and its Transmission

Yes to Jesus Christ contains two dimensions:

- Trustful abandonment to God
- Loving assent to all that he has revealed to us in a personal relationship with him.
- “We ‘believe in’ Jesus when we personally welcome him into our lives and journey towards him.” Adherence of heart, mind, and action that leads to existential transformation.
The Catechumenate

The Catechumenate is becoming a helpful paradigm in content and structure for teaching and personally internalizing the faith. This is how a Christian and ecclesial identity grows.

We are in a situation where there are those who “although they have already received the gift of baptismal grace, do not actually taste its richness.”

A “post-baptismal” catechumenate, or “Catechumenate of initiation into Christian life.”
The Catechumenate

*Pre-Catechumenate:* “the first evangelization for the sake of conversion takes place, and the kerygma of the first proclamation is presented.”

*Catechumenate:* Comprehensive catechesis

*Purification and Illumination:* Preparation for the sacraments of initiation

*Mystagogy:* Deeper experience of the mysteries of the faith and incorporation into the life of the community
Stages of Evangelization

1. Missionary activity
   a. Witness: Disciples of Jesus sharing life with all bear witness even without words to the joy of the Gospel that elicits questions.
   b. First Proclamation. Raises interest, initial turn towards conversion.
   c. “Dropping the nets”. Interest becomes deliberate choice. “The reception of the proclamation and an initial response and conversion,”

2. Initiatory catechesis: Apprenticeship in the Christian life.
   a. “Those who have already met Jesus Christ feel the growing desires to get to know him more intimately.”

3. Pastoral Action: An “ongoing process of conversion.”
Catechesis in a New Evangelization

“Missionary outreach is paradigmatic for all the Church’s activity.”

Catechesis “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.”
Relationship between Catechesis and Evangelization

“On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: ‘Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.’”

-Pope Francis
A *Kerygmatic Catechesis*

Kerygma is “simultaneously an act of proclamation and the content of the proclamation itself” manifested in “the testimony of the one who proclaims him; the life of the witness.”

Kerygmatic Catechesis is intent on eliciting conversion.
Kerygmatic Catechesis

“Those today who ask for or have already received the grace of the sacraments often do not have an explicit experience of faith or do not intimately know its power and warmth.” That is why we need catechesis today to be Kerygmatic.

Proclamation must be “the essential dimension of every moment of catechesis.”
Tasks of Catechesis

- Leading to knowledge of the faith
- Initiation into the celebration of the Mystery
- Forming for life in Christ
- Teaching Prayer
  - “To learn to pray with Jesus is to pray with the same sentiments with which he turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication and awe for his glory.”
- Introduction to community life
  - “Developing a sense of belonging.”
The Catechist

● A witness of faith and keeper of the memory of God
  ○ The testimony of his life is necessary for the credibility of the mission

● A teacher and a mystagogue
  ○ Introduces others to the mystery of God, revealed in the paschal mystery of Christ
  ○ Twofold task of transmitting the faith and leading others into the mystery itself

● An accompanier and educator
  ○ The catechist is an expert in the art of accompaniment
  ○ Able to listen and enter into the dynamics of human growth, becoming a travelling companion with patience and a sense of gradualness, docile to the action of the Spirit
“Formation sets as its goal: making catechists aware that as baptized persons they are true missionary disciples,” and can “communicate the Gospel and accompany and educate believers in the faith.”

“Formation develops the skills needed to communicate the faith and accompany the brothers in their growth.”
The Formation of Catechists

- **Being and ‘knowing-how to be with’: human and Christian maturity and missionary awareness**
  - Formation of relationality
  - Role is lived out “with the most absolutely respect for the conscience and person of the others, avoiding every kind of abuse, whether of power, of conscience, financial, or sexual.”
  - Respect for the sacred freedom of the other, without violating or manipulating this in any way

- **Knowledge**
  - Study of Scripture, Catechism (4 Pillars), the Narrative quality of the biblical account

- **Savoir-faire: pedagogical and methodological formation**
  - “The catechist is an educator who facilitates maturation of the faith which those being catechized obtain with the help of the Holy Spirit.”
The Formation of Catechists

Catechist Formation Webinars

- November 23, 7:15 - 8:15pm
  - Zoom as an effective tool for Catechesis
  - Presenter: John MacMullen, Office of Catholic Youth - Archdiocese of Toronto
- January - TBD
- February - TBD
- March - TBD
Overview of the rest of the Document

Part 2 - The Process of Catechesis

- Pedagogy of the Faith
- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- Methodology in Catechesis
- Catechesis in the lives of Persons
  - Examples for specific groups (family children, adults, elderly, persons with disabilities, migrants, etc.,)
Overview of the rest of the Document

Part 3 - Catechesis in the Particular Churches

- The Christian Community as Participant in Catechesis
  - The Church, Parishes, Associations/movements, Schools, etc.
- Contemporary Cultural Scenarios
  - Challenges of pluralism, urban/rural, ecumenism, digital culture, bioethics, environmental issues, social engagement
- Organisms at the Service of Catechesis
  - The Holy See, Synods of Bishops, Dioceses
Thank you

“Go and make disciples”
Questions for Reflection

1. What struck you in the presentation? What do you think of the ideas in this new Directory for Catechesis?
2. In your current area of ministry, how can you make your catechesis *kerygmatic*?
3. What kind of formation would benefit you as a catechist?