



Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)
Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines (1521-2021)

CATECHETICAL MODULES

Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission



A *Research-based Intervention Outcome (RIO)* of selected catechists and catechetical leaders inspired by the findings of the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2016-2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* implemented by the Research Center for Social Sciences & Education (RCSSD), University of Santo Tomas (UST).





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Nihil Obstat.

Rev. Fr. Ernesto B. de Leon
Diocese of Balanga

January 28, 2021

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Most Rev. Roberto C. Mallari, DD
Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija

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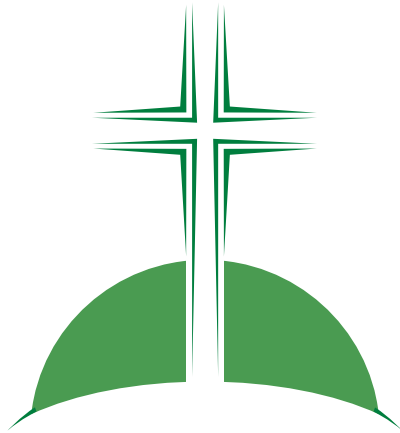
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*For the Faith-driven Servants, Front-liners,
and the hidden treasures of the Philippine
Catholic Church - our beloved Filipino
Catechists*

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OUR GRATITUDE, OUR MODULE STORY

By: Sr. Ma. Jesusa G. Enginco, O.P. & Dr. Clarence M. Batan

Our journey to produce a new set of Catechetical Modules (CM) is inspired by the call of our Holy Fathers – Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis - for a New Evangelization and in Celebration of the 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines. This journey is for our faith-driven servants – the Filipino catechists - made more meaningful by the overflowing support of many people and organizations, whose passion and love to the catechetical ministry deserve our utmost gratitude and respect.

Maraming salamat po sa lahat ng tulong, malasakit, at pagmamahal.

The inspiration of this project roots from the CBCP *Pastoral Exhortation on the Era of New Evangelization* entitled, “Live Christ, Share Christ” (Looking Forward to our Five Hundredth) released last July 23, 2012, by Most Rev. Jose S. Palma, DD, the then CBCP President. This project ushers the start of the nine-year spiritual journey that will culminate with the *Great Jubilee of 2021*, the 5th centenary of the coming of Christianity in our beloved land.

Thus, these Catechetical Modules (CM) respond to the call of the Spirit for a New Evangelization by utilizing the *nine pastoral priorities as key module themes of this project*. These are *Integral Faith Formation* (2013); *Laity* (2014); *The Poor* (2015); *The Eucharist and of the Family* (2016); *The Parish as a Communion of Communities* (2017); *Clergy and Religious* (2018); *Youth* (2019); *Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous Peoples* (2020); and, *Missio ad Gentes* (2021).

Contextually, these themes reflect the Filipino concepts of *Pananampalataya* (2013); *Mga Layko* (2014); *Ang Mga Mahihirap* (2015); *Ang Eukaristiya at Pamilya* (2016); *Ang Parokya Bilang Komunyong mga Pamayanan* (2017); *Klero at Mga Relihiyoso* (2018); *Mga Kabataan* (2019); *Ekumenismo, Dyalogo sa Pagitan ng Mga Relihiyon, at mga Katutubo* (2020), *at Misyong sa mga Bansa* (2021), which these modules hope to bring forth in various spaces of catechesis in the country.



Our gratitude goes to all our Filipino bishops, the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)* led over the past nine years by Archbishop Jose S. Palma, DD (CBCP President 2011-2013), Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, DD (CBCP President 2013-2017), and Archbishop Romulo G. Valles, DD (CBCP President 2017-Present). The CBCP, through the *500 YOC Executive Committee* entrusted the CBCP - Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE) under the chairmanship of Bishop Roberto C. Mallari, DD to spearhead the preparation of the catechetical instruction materials (both in print and electronic forms) as formation tools for prayer, study, and reflection. Our gratitude goes to the *CBCP – Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)* under the leadership of Bishop Roberto C. Mallari, DD (Chair); Msgr. Gerardo O. Santos and Fr. Ernesto B. De Leon (Executive Secretary) as well as to the former Episcopal Commission on Catechesis & Catholic Education (ECCCE) Technical Working Group (TWG) 2017-2018 composed of Dr. Caridad Barrameda; Sis. Rhea Castillo, OP; Fr. Rene De Guzman, SDB; Sis. Silvestra Orbigo, FMM; Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB and Dr. Lysander Rivera; who initially conceptualized and designed this project. Thank you for the inspiration, persistent nudge, and prayers.

The initial outputs of the *ECCCE TWG* were shared with various catechetical offices, centers and institutions offering Catholic religious education. We are thankful to catechetical leaders and catechists from the following institutions who responded to our call for module contributions: *Archdiocese of Caceres; Archdiocese of Cebu; Archdiocese of Manila; Diocese of Cubao; Diocese of Novaliches; Diocese of Parañaque; Diocese of Pasig; Mother Francisca Catechetical & Missionary Formation Center, and the University of Santo Tomas' (UST) Institute of Religion, Research Center for Social Sciences and Education, and the Office of the Vice Rector for Religious Affairs.*

After the production of initial modules, the CBCP 500 YOC Executive Committee suggested to prepare more catechetical lessons which can be used even beyond the 500 YOC 2021. This project evolved as a *Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO) activity of the National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project team*. This initiative responds to one of the salient NCS findings that catechists on the ground are in dire need of fresh and relevant catechetical sources. To ensure the quality of these modules, the NCS Research Team solicited the assistance of education practitioners as reviewers whose valuable insights led to the process of rethinking the general module design of this project. We thank to Dr. Joan Christi Trocio-Bagaipo, Cecilia Balajadia, Pamela Avellanosa, Mc Kenneth Baluyot, Fr. Christian Buenafe, O'Carm, Fr. Antonio Zamora and Fr. Eliseo Mercado, OMI for their valuable insights and contribution.

Special gratitude goes to all our priest-catechists who in one way or another, sent their comments and suggestions, as well as provided a network of key persons who helped in module development. Thank you, too, to Fr. Pablo Tiong, O.P., Fr. Carlomagno Marcelo and Fr. Emmanuel Rico Ayo.

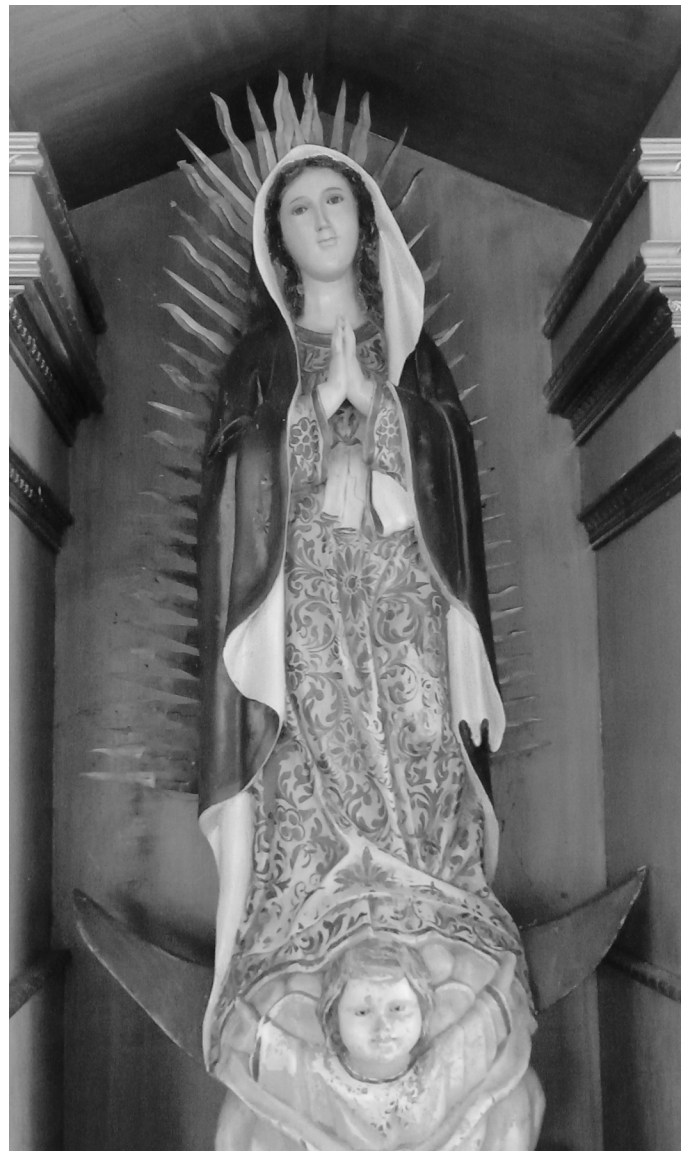
The updated module design was a by-product of a series of consultations and assessments. The laborious technical assistance was provided by Jaycar P. Espinosa whose outputs became the basis for the finalization of modules. At the crucial time of

module synthesis and integration, we were blest by the generous talent and spirit of provided for by Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and three seminarians from the Diocese of Tarlac - Sem. Anthony Paul R. Tawatao, Sem. Gerald A. Cortes, and Sem. Jayson A. Besa. Other contributors who deserve our utmost gratitude are Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario for her specific input on “the laity”, and Richard G. Pazcoguin, for sharing a list of songs related to the module themes.

Despite the pandemic, our *NCS 2021: Research Team* took this RIO activity to heart. We would like to thank everyone for their dedication to the CM production. To Danielle Villena, who designed the initial layout, and Romel Sencio, who creatively made the CM design visually appealing. Our language editors, Pamela Avellanosa and Arcelyn Adriano, also deserve our utmost gratitude for patience and eye for technical errors, idea construction and composition, making our CM clear and readable. And to our team members, Dr. Florence Navidad, Ruth Andaya, Tisha Isabelle de Vergara, Keith Aaron Joven, and Vincent Reuben Valientes, thank you for your untiring dedication to this project.

All the hard work, inspiration, and deep prayers led to the final module version of this project. May these Catechetical Modules be easy-to-understand and be easy-to-use by all those making up all our catechetical ministries across the country and around the world. May this work serve as a seed towards a renewed integral evangelization and renew us all in the Church – bishops, priests, religious, and lay people. May this project encourage us to unceasingly beg the Holy Spirit’s guidance especially for the Filipino-Catholics of today.

As we celebrate our Christians faith’s 5th centenary in 2021, we offer our penultimate gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ, who guided us in the production of these Catechetical Modules as a moment of His loving embrace and overflowing grace.



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FOREWORD

Most Rev. Roberto C. Mallari, D.D.

Bishop, Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija

Chairperson, Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)



My Dear People of God! Grace and peace!

We continue our nine-year journey that began in 2012 which brings us to the 500th year commemoration of Christianity's advent in our country in 2021.

To make this truly a celebration of gratitude for the gift of faith, the *Episcopal Commission for Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)* came up with catechetical modules for our people. The general theme sums up that of our 2021 Jubilee Celebration: Gifted to Give – *Kaloob, Isinasaloob, Ipinagkakaloob*.

It is with hope that this humble contribution will help our faithful understand more what this gift of Christian faith (*kaloob*) requires from us – that by understanding with the heart (*isinasaloob*), they will all the more believe and can pray more through it; manifest it in their daily lives; and thus share their faith with others (*ipinagkakaloob*). We go back to teaching the truth of *lex credendi, lex orandi, lex vivendi* (how we worship reflects what we believe and determines how we will live) to our people.

As our country celebrates its 5th Centenary of Christianity, we are likewise commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Opening of the Second Vatican Council when the now St. John XXIII widely opened the Church's doors and windows to facilitate the Holy Spirit's access in renewing the Church. It was an experience of a New Pentecost indeed. The 30th year Anniversary of our own Second Plenary Council of the Philippines will also coincide this year. PCP II ushered so many promises of renewal, of another Pentecost for the Church in our country. It envisioned the Filipino Church to be a Community of Disciples; a Church of the Poor, embarking on a Renewed Integral Evangelization, and witnessing to Jesus Christ's Gospel of salvation and liberation through words, deeds and lives. "Behold, I make all things new", was the clear message then of the *National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR)*.

May these simple, easy-to-understand and easy-to-use catechetical modules help us all in the work of renewed integral evangelization and help us pin our hopes on the Holy Spirit to renew us all in the Church-- bishops, priests, religious and lay people. Strengthened by prayers, may we share our faith by living it in the midst of all in this vale of tears. May we be encouraged to unceasingly beg for the Holy Spirit's guidance especially for the Filipino Catholics of today so that the celebration of our Christian faith's fifth centenary, becomes a moment of God's grace even now. To inspire us more, let me share one of the touching FB posts which reads: **'IF WE DON'T TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO FOLLOW CHRIST, THE WORLD WILL TEACH THEM NOT TO'!**

We fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, our Redeemer as we make our collective journey with the guidance of His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Star of Evangelization.

All in JESUS' NAME,

INTRODUCTION

Rev. Fr. Ernesto B. De Leon

Executive Secretary

Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

Our nine-year journey, nine-year novena preparation for the 5th Centenary of Christianity in the Philippines began in 2012, which we dubbed as the Year of Faith. A new era indeed for New Evangelization. Reflecting on the essential components of the subsequent years, perhaps we can take cue from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who asked us “to consider the content of faith that is **professed, celebrated, lived** and **prayed**” and to “**reflect** on the act of Faith” as a whole (PF 9). These indispensable elements of Faith give us a glimpse as to the identity that we have as a Church from the moment we have literally received the faith 500 years ago. Not only has the gift of faith prepared the way for us, but even much more, the MANNER in which we give witness to the received faith is ushered to us by Christ, Himself through the intermediary of Spanish Missionaries.



The faith we PROFESS, CELEBRATE, LIVE, and PRAY, summons each of us to authentically recast, recalibrate and revisit whether we have lived the faith sincerely and wholeheartedly [via the sacraments as our focus] or we have simply just accepted it but not evangelized - or have been transformed by it. If ever that we have failed to truly live the core-values of our faith, it should not discourage or even frustrate us, even if we have not achieved our goals as planned. Instead, it should incite us to confront and accept, to exert and be efficient, to magnify for ourselves our multifarious shortcomings, human limitation-related realities that have hindered us to really be God’s instruments in proclaiming the Gospel to all nations (cf. Mk.16:15) and made it fulfilled in our hearing (cf. Lk.4:21).

This only shows us that we still lack that profound ability to REFLECT (PF 9) in order to understand comprehensively the Church’s missionary tasks. However, our human-related efforts from this vantage point are not futile. Why? Because, lest we forget, the Church is vivified by God’s Spirit and that is what makes her dynamic. And so we are called likewise, to be dynamic, to be discernibly creative and realistic enough with our approaches.

The *National Catechetical Study of 2016-2018* not only gave us profiles of our catechetical ministers. It revealed as well the often-insufficient tools, materials and even formation of our important laborers in God’s vineyard. One significant research insight it gave was the necessity for alternative and appropriate catechetical modules. *NCS 2021* came at the right time when the bishop-members of the Executive Committee for the Centenary Celebration tasked ECCCE to provide such modules using the previous years’ theme (Laity, Poor, Eucharist and the Family, Parishes as Communion of Communities, Clergy and Religious, Youth, Ecumenism, Inter-religious Dialogue and Indigenous People)

culminating in *Missio Ad Gentes*, the goal of which is to drum-beat awareness and appreciation apropos the 500 Year of Catholic Christianity through intense catechesis, helping and challenging Filipino Catholics to truly PROFESS, CELEBRATE, LIVE and PRAY the faith.

Such efforts to go back to the sources, foundations (ressourcement) of our faith, will make our witness even more meaningful and relevant. This is because we tirelessly work hand in hand to critically exhaust all possible means to improve our approaches in coming up with new and fresh methods of not only catechizing our faithful but also helping them out to mature in the practice of faith. This return to the source is a mature move for us to allow our faithful [including pastors (i.e., religious and diocesan), catechists, and lay leaders] to be immersed in the language of transformation and conversion, that is, to be piecemeal evangelized!

This humble attempt of Catechetical Directors and ministers from various Catechetical Centers through ECCCE is a vivid proof of our desire as a local Church incessantly working towards *aggiornamento*. Such an aim only validates that we, the Catholic Church in the Philippines, after embracing the Catholic Faith with the Christian spirit, is open to having a profound love for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eventually with gratitude, the present form became one of the interventions of the *NCS 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* implemented by the *Research Center for Social Sciences and Education of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas*.

Let therefore, our confidence in love grow and our hopes be evident as we walk through the challenges of the times with profound faith as we prove ourselves equal to the encouragement of contextualizing and translating these Catechetical Modules to our local dialects and to pursue the promptings of the Spirit. For our nation to have a complete adherence and be enculturated to the Gospel message of the One Great Teacher, Jesus Christ (CT 20) so that we all may be one in this catechetical endeavor, not only for 2021 but even beyond.



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

CATECHETICAL MODULE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to clarify the outline of catechetical lessons and serve as the catechists' convenient resource in teaching catechesis for all ages. In addition, it will help them achieve the goals of teaching catechesis and will introduce them to new strategies in effectively facilitating a catechetical class. The creation of catechetical lessons is a vital fragment of the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)*'s response to their commitment to lead Catholic Filipinos to *Live Christ and Share Christ*, which has been their mission since the commencement of the nine-year era of New Evangelization in 2012.

As stated by Pope John Paul II (1979) in his apostolic exhortation, *Catechesi Trandendae or CT*, the universal catechetical goals are: (1) to strengthen the solidity of the faith and of Christian living; (2) to give fresh vigor to the initiatives on hand; (3) to stimulate creativity with required vigilance; and (4) to help spread in communities the joy of bringing the mystery of Christ to the world. In the same Church document, he also remarked that in terms of its relation to evangelization (or the proclamation of the Good News to the whole humanity), the specific goal of catechesis is to develop initial faith and to advance in fullness and to nourish the daily Christian life of those who receive them (CT 20).

Evangelization in Vatican II

The Church reached a turning point in the modern world with the Second Vatican Council. The Council embraced the optimistic vision of John XXIII of a renewed Church seeking greater unity with all men. This renewal resulted in self-examination and a radical transformation of the Church in many aspects in her life and doctrine (Bokenkotter, 2005). What the Church has today, that is, the presence of faith with various traditions and practices in every corner of the world is due to the evangelical work of the Apostles, their successors, and the various religious men and women missionaries.

The command of Jesus to His Apostles to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world was handed down to the Church and to Her members. The Second Vatican Council was right in saying that "the Church received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the Apostles and must carry it out to the very ends of the earth" (Lumen Gentium 17). Today, the proclamation is more difficult and challenging but the task remains, just as the enthusiasm and courage that moved the Apostles and the first disciples to proclaim did not change.

The spirit of Vatican II is described as renewal, reform, *aggiornamento* (updating), openness, dialogue and reading the signs of the times. Truly, in Vatican II, the Church was able to dialogue with the world of today. The New Evangelization thrust had its origin from the Second Vatican Council. It was the Council's desire to respond to a sense of disorientation experienced by Christians facing powerful changes and divisions which the world was experiencing at that time. The Council appropriately stressed what these new situations

demand from the Church: new zeal, new sensitivity, and new ways of doing evangelizing mission (Canilang, 2013). Therefore, New Evangelization began with Vatican II with its growing awareness of the changes going on with the world and its commitment to dialogue with these changes with the hope of achieving a “new ardor, a new zeal, renewed and re-strengthened commitment to proclaim Jesus Christ and his Gospel of salvation to the world today.”

The New Evangelization

The term “New Evangelization” refers to the unique situation of the Catholic Church in today’s generation. Many Catholics just feel too busy to attend Mass regularly and do not feel particularly connected to the Church. Many have begun to call themselves sacramentalized but not evangelized. These are the new problems in the history of the Church. For many centuries, the Church's evangelical mission has sought to preach the Gospel to the nations of non-Christians who did not know Christ. Now, the Church is called to a New Evangelization, or an evangelization within itself - a re-evangelization.

Many people immediately assume that the New Evangelization is equivalent to the use of social media. New media such as *blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc.* are certainly essential to evangelization today. But John Paul II already called for a New Evangelization over a decade ago, even before online social networking appeared.

John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis now call for an evangelization of those who have already been baptized. The call for New Evangelization is a call for the baptized members of the Church to deepen their faith and reach out to other Christians in grave need of a new encounter with Christ. The audiences for the New Evangelization are those who have already heard Christ being proclaimed, while this does not neglect those who have not yet heard of the Gospel of Christ and in need of evangelization (Evangelii Nuntiandi 52). This New Evangelization had to be directed to all the baptized in order to renew, purify, and strengthen their faith.

Why is there a need for New Evangelization? In the year 2000, Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI, answered this question saying, to evangelize means “to show this path that will teach the art of living. This is why we need New Evangelization; if the art of living remains unknown, nothing else will work. But this art is not the object of science, rather this art can only be communicated by the One, who has life—He who is the Gospel personified” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000).

Thus, in the conference of the Asian Congress on Evangelization, Bishop Teodoro Bacani in his article *The Need for a New Evangelization* stated that a New Evangelization is called for because of change in the situation of the recipients of evangelization, and because of changes in the condition of the Church herself (Bacani, *The Need for a New Evangelization*, 43). Therefore, evangelization must be renewed according to the present circumstances of the world and Church, likewise according to the situation to whom the Word of God is preached.

The Teachings of the Pope on New Evangelization

This part of the discussion exposes the presentation of the Pontiffs who were responsible for the establishment of the New Evangelization. Here are the Popes for the New Evangelization:

Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul VI ushered in a time of reflection on the evangelizing ministry of the Church. Among his many works, it is his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that captures the beginning of the New Evangelization. This Apostolic Exhortation was written after the Third General Assembly of the Synod for Evangelization. Therefore, the basis that he used for the Church to move forward was evangelization. Pope Paul VI emphasized first and foremost that evangelization is central to the Church's identity. It is her essential mission and a task that is made more urgent by the changes in contemporary society (Canilang, 2013). Then, he proposed that the Church's evangelizing activity must constantly seek the proper means and language for presenting, or representing, to them God's revelation and faith in Jesus Christ (Instrumentum Laboris 12). After the death of John XXIII, who called for the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI eagerly continued his works and pursuit for an effective evangelization.



Pope Paul VI had in mind the Christians of the West who have distanced and drifted away from the Church. The existence of many atheists and unbelievers in the 1970s gave bigger problems to the phenomenon of Christians who received the sacraments but not evangelized--Christians only in name. Thus, in order to re-evangelize these Christians who have fallen away from the Church, we must be witnesses of faith. As he exclaimed: "modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers" (EN 41). The good evangelizer is the one who can translate into his/her own life what he/she preaches to his/her audience. Therefore, we could not expect to transform others unless we have had a personal transformation ourselves (Catan & Giordano SJ, 2007). There must be a continuous personal transformation in order to have an effective transformation in others.

There are three points which are important in this discussion of Paul VI's understanding of New Evangelization. The first point is "evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church. It is Her deepest identity. The Church exists to evangelize and through that evangelization process, She grows ever more faithful,

loving and hopeful in the Lord” (EN 14). The second point is the resistance to faith by many atheists and unbelievers takes the form of a certain refusal and an inability to grasp the new order of things, the new meaning of the world, of life and of history. This creates a big problem in the phenomenon of the Christian way of life (EN 56). The third point is the “Church is an evangelizer, but She begins by being evangelized Herself” (EN 15). In order to re-evangelize these Christians who have fallen away from the Church, one has to be a witness to the faith (EN 21). This means that an evangelizer should be the first to be evangelized. The witnessing must not be focused on the pious actions of the Church, but rather it should be seen in the daily ways of life.

Pope John Paul II

The New Evangelization in Pope John Paul II’s concept is a response to new cultural realities. John Paul II is the one who coined the term “New Evangelization” in public. He addressed this in homilies, seminars, public viewings, etc. Then, it easily scattered around the globe and this term became a sign of the beginning of the era of New Evangelization.

Perhaps, the clearest definition of “New Evangelization” is in his Encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*. In section 33 of this Encyclical, John Paul II describes three different circumstances in the evangelization of the people.

The first situation that John Paul II described is the so-called *Missio ad Gentes*. This situation is an essential missionary focus of the Church on proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to those who have not heard it (RM 33).



The second situation focuses on those with strong Christian affiliation who were “fervent in their faith and Christian living. These are Christian communities with adequate ecclesial structure in its activity thus, needing pastoral care” (RM 33). Hence, the clergy, especially the parish priests, must support them for their sustainability and pastoral care so that there will be no isolated communities to the Church/parish.

The third situation is the concern of New Evangelization. This situation is the “on-going evangelization of those in intermediate condition - those who have lost a sense of the faith.” They no longer consider themselves members of the Church. We need to re-evangelize such people who have lived a life far from Christ and His Gospel (RM 33). Many Catholics who were baptized in infancy turned away from the faith when they grew up. They no longer live a personal commitment to Christ and do not

practice the faith as adolescents or adults. The New Evangelization is directed to these fallen-away baptized Catholics.

It is believed that John Paul II repeatedly called for New Evangelization which began in 1983 during his address to the Catholic Bishops of Latin America. He said to the bishops who are present: “The Commemoration of the half millennium of evangelization will gain its full energy if it is a commitment to re-evangelize or to New Evangelization, new in its ardor, methods, and expressions” (Hann, 2014, pp. 15-16). This was how he described New Evangelization: an evangelization with enthusiasm in evangelizing, new in its ardor, effective methods that the faithful can easily and effectively be captured by it, and creative expressions that the faithful may understand it well.

Pope Benedict XVI

Pope John Paul II’s call for a New Evangelization was taken up and reaffirmed by his successor Pope Benedict XVI. During his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the theme: “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” in the 13th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to support and better prepare for the work of the New Evangelization (Hann, 2014, p. 18).



Thus, Pope Benedict XVI pointed out that New Evangelization is an important element of the Church's mission and that the Church exists to evangelize. The fact is, evangelization is what makes the Church a true Church. Hence, if the heart of the Church is to evangelize the Gospel to the whole world, then New Evangelization is one of the vital

processes needed to achieve this goal.

During mass at Saint Peter’s Basilica for the closing of the Synod of Bishops for New Evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the three aspects of the New Evangelization: First, the Pope reminds us that our ordinary pastoral ministry must be more animated by the fire of the Spirit. Second, we are called to proclaim the Gospel to those people who do not know Jesus Christ. Finally, the mission of the New Evangelization is to find new ways to help renew the faith and lives of people who have drifted away from the Church so that they may encounter Jesus Christ anew and rediscover the joy of faith and return to the religious practice of the community of the faithful (Wuerl, 2013, p. 13).

New Evangelization focuses on those who are baptized and have lost their sense of faith. But it does not mean that evangelization is only offered to them. In fact, all are subjects of evangelization. In other words, New Evangelization is sharing and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in today’s changing world.

The New Evangelization for the Life of the Church in the Philippines

Concern with the New Evangelization has been the overall theme of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) in 1991, of the National Mission Congress for New Millennium (NMC) held in Cebu in September/October 2000, and of the National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR) which the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) sponsored in Manila in 2001. Especially since PCP-II, a great number of synods and pastoral assemblies have been established and carried to term in various dioceses. These synods and assemblies called for extensive surveys and studies on "Faith and Church situations" in many sectors of the country. They involved much serious discussions among members, ordained and lay, in Catholic communities on different levels. Reports, summaries of the deliberations and conclusions of these assemblies were sent to the Holy See for review. Religious Orders, congregations, and a good number of lay institutes and organizations have also held, on the national level, analogous conferences since PCP-II.

Thus, we in the Church in the Philippines come to this program of the "New Evangelization" already with considerable prior extensive and intensive study, reflection, deliberation and resolution. In truth we have been trying to earnestly pursue "renewed evangelization" especially in the last twenty-five years.



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

The task of New Evangelization calls us to continue earnestly the initiatives and projects which have been ongoing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. *We are called to examine more deeply the pastoral situation that we all face together as Church in the Philippines. We are asked to explore and discover "the new methods and means for transmitting the Good News" more effectively to our people, always under the guidance of the Spirit. Above all, we are challenged anew to foster in the Church in our country a renewed commitment and enthusiasm in living out the Gospel in all diverse areas of our lives, in "real-life practice", challenged anew to become more and more authentic witnesses of our faith, especially to our Asian neighbors!*

CATECHETICAL MODULE STRUCTURE

The framework employed in teaching catechesis adopted the nine Pastoral Priorities of the Church in the Philippines (that also act as the key themes over the nine-year period of New Evangelization) as a response to Pope John Paul II's emphasis on the need for systematic catechesis, which deals with essentials, and is sufficiently complete and open to all other factors of Christian life (CT 21).

Hence, in making this lesson, we provide a module based on pastoral priorities of the Philippine Church. Every module has four topics consisting of the four themes of New Evangelization. They are: Encountering Christ, Conversion, Communion (sense of belongingness) and Zeal for Mission. To better comprehend these four themes of New Evangelization, let us reflect on the Holy Father Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* as the basis for this study.

Four Themes of New Evangelization

Encountering Christ

Pope Francis said that the first step of evangelization is to have an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. No one can begin an authentic evangelization without having encountered Christ in his/her lives. In fact, the opening sentence of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* states: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness" (EG 1).

The Holy Father moves quickly to say: "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting Him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day (EG 3)." It is important to go back to the basic premise that all of us are created in the image and likeness of God. Everyone is an image of Christ, capable of serving, loving and doing good.

This is the direct challenge of Pope Francis to all Christians, to open the hearts and lives of the faithful to the person of Jesus Christ. Perhaps one needs to be reminded of the simple doctrine of the Church that Christ dwells within each other. One does not have to search for Him or ask for any incredible revelation to know Him (Gaudete et Exsultate 20). Thus, the faithful must seek Him in every moment of every day, in every prayer, worship, work, relationships and in every act of kindness.

One might ask who is God? God is love. God shares His love to His people, and as one who received the love which restores meaning to lives, how can one fail to share that love with others? Jesus came down to the world to show us the extraordinary way of love through the cross. Hence, encountering Christ leads to joy and the fullest possible experience of life.

Each encounter with Jesus is an invitation to follow Him. For that reason, the Church exists for a mission, and that mission is to proclaim Christ by the witnessing of one's own life and proclaiming Him to the world (EG 20). the encounter with a personal God transforms man to evangelize and impels Him to open the hearts and lives of the faithful to the person of Jesus Christ. At the opening synod for the New Evangelization, Benedict XVI points out that: "In every time and place, evangelization has its starting and finishing points, which is Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Conversion

It is very important to encounter Christ in the daily basis of our life. After encountering Christ, the next step to renewal is conversion. When we have already encountered and recognized Christ as significant in our life, that is the point in which man seeks for conversion. What is conversion? The Greek word for conversion is *metanoia*. It means to rethink. It is a process where a person questions one's own and common way of living, allowing God to enter the criteria of one's life and not merely judge according to the current social opinions (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000). This conversion is not a mere change of religion but religion, but rather a conversion of the heart and mind, which is radical conversion, "a conversion which restores the joy of faith in one's heart and inspire commitment to the Gospel" (EG 14).

Thereby, to convert means not to live the mainstream way of life for its own sake or do things just because others are doing it. It is also not feeling justified in doing dubious, ambiguous, or evil actions just because others do the same. Conversion means beginning to see one's life through the eyes of God thereby looking for the good, even if uncomfortable and aiming not for the judgment of men, but for the justice of God. In other words, conversion is to look for a new style of life, a new life (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000).

Hence, to be converted is not only a change of perspective in life but also a change in the way we live our lives to the fullest; how we act, how we behave and how we give meaning to our lives by doing our mission, in accordance with our purpose and calling in life. For example, if one is already converted to Christ, he/she will not be able to cheat his/her neighbor, instead, he/she will think about the goodness he/she can offer to his/her brethren. In this conversion, we do not only follow our own desires in life but we also become aware of the presence of God in our manner of living. "The important thing in this conversion process is not to walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, especially under the leadership of the Church leaders, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment" (EG 33).

Communion (Sense of Belongingness to the Church)

In *Caritas in Veritate* no. 53, Benedict XVI explains that the development of the people depends, above all, on the recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side. When a person sees others as a family member, it becomes a responsibility to give assistance, to offer help, to be there when others are in need.

To evangelize is to make the Kingdom of God present in the world and to proclaim Christ. The Word of God clearly has a social content: at the very heart of the

Gospel is life in community and engagement with others (EG 177). Therefore, one must connect Himself/herself to others in building the Kingdom of God here on earth. One has a personal calling to respond to proclaiming the Good News. Eventually, a person will realize that he/she needs to belong to a community. It is better to have many workers in the vineyard of Christ so that the Gospel can easily be preached to every individual.

The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that all have been created in the image of that Divine Communion. The Gospel is not merely about personal relationship with God. It is rather living in intrinsic interdependence with one another (EG 178-179). With this statement, the value of communion or sense of belongingness to the Church should be regarded highly by every faithful servant of God. To this end, the Holy Trinity God is the model of this communion.

Zeal for Mission

When a person has already encountered Christ, converted to Christ and is in communion with the Church as a child of God, then it is time for him/her to do mission in whatever way he/she can to proclaim the Word of God through his/her daily witnessing of the Gospel.

To pray and to work must be the attitude of every spirit-filled evangelizer. Sometimes, evangelizers get tired easily, to the point that his/her work becomes meaningless. Thus, because of weariness and difficulties, the evangelizer's energy and fervour dies. Thereby, it is important to have moments of adoration, prayerful encounter with the Word, and sincere conversation with the Lord through the sacraments (See EG 262).

Every period of history is marked by the presence of human weakness, self-absorption, complacency and selfishness. We must learn from the wisdom of the saints who confronted their own difficulties (EG 163). It is good to be inspired by the early Christians and the many brothers and sisters who were filled with joy, persistent courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel throughout history.

Pope Francis proposes four spiritual motivations for mission that can help us imitate the saints who continue to proclaim God's Word for mission, even though they encountered a lot of trouble and difficulties.

A. Personal Encounter with the Saving Love of Jesus

The primary reason for evangelization is the love of Jesus, which one has received. The experience of salvation urges even greater love for Him. The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love and reading it with the heart. Its beauty amazes and constantly excites one (EG 264). This amazement and excitement at the beauty of the gospel can lead to a missionary enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ to others. This conviction is then sustained by constantly renewing the experience of savoring Christ's friendship and His message. A person who is not joyful, enthusiastic, certain and in love with God's words will not be able to convince anybody (EG 266). Therefore, the admiration and excitement of proclaiming the Kingdom of God should always be accompanied with great enthusiasm for a true

evangelizer is one who never stops being a disciple of Christ, who always walks with Him, communicates with Christ, and eagerly works with Him.

B. The Spiritual Savour of Being a People

To be an evangelizer of souls, one must develop a spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and discover that this closeness is a source of greater joy. God invites us to acknowledge that we are a people. Jesus Himself is the model of this method of evangelization (EG 268). He opened Himself to others, in whatever state of life they were. It is interesting to recall the closeness of Jesus to everyone. He was very accessible. He draws near to the blind man and the outcasts (Mk. 10:46-52). He ate and drank with sinners (Mk. 2:16), without worrying about being thought of as a glutton and a drunkard Himself. He shows compassion by allowing a sinful woman to anoint His feet (Lk. 7:36-50) and healing a man with a withered hand on a Sabbath (Mt. 12:9-13).

With His inspiration and moved by His examples of sharing in the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually, everyone is called to be committed in building a new world. But this must not come from a sense of obligation or a burdensome duty. Rather, it should be done because of a personal decision which brings joy and gives meaning to the lives of all the faithful (See EG 269).

C. Sense of Mystery

Some people do not commit themselves to mission because they think that nothing will change and so it is useless to make the effort. Sometimes, one misses to inculcate in his/her mind that in the midst of darkness, something new always springs to life and eventually produces fruit; (EG 275) that God is capable of intervening and He does not abandon His people.

This fruitfulness is often invisible, intangible and unquantifiable. One can know quite well that lives will be fruitful, without claiming to know how or where or when. But one thing is for sure, no single act of love for God will be lost, nor any of the acts of sincere concern for others will be lost. Moreover, no generous effort is meaningless and no painful endurance is wasted (See EG 279) because God will repay it with the abundant gift of salvation. This conviction is called a sense of mystery, that when one entrusts himself/herself to God, he/she will bear good fruit.

D. Fervent Prayer

Pope Francis tells everyone the importance of prayer in the mission task of evangelization: "Constant prayer will grant us the guidance to every crisis that one experiences in his/her mission" (EG 282). It is very essential to beg God in prayer. One must not abandon prayer especially in the midst of doubtful moments. The special weapon everyone must always use is prayer so that one may never weary of his/her mission in spreading the Good News. In fact, "when evangelizers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open. Freed from self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others." In short, evangelizers must always stand in their friendship with God in prayer.

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CATECHETICAL MODULES

Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission

CATECHETICAL MODULE 3:

The Poor

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 3: **THE POOR**

Overview

In order to make an authentic commitment to become a Church of the Poor, everybody must learn from the poor and seek to liberate from values, attitudes and lifestyles that discriminate against the poor. As poor among the poor, struggling with them toward integral liberation, the Church shall live, celebrate, and share the common faith in Jesus, who was crucified and raised. Everyone is challenged to be united in the work of restoring integrity and truth, justice, peace and love in our benighted land.

Common Good in Human Society

Pope John XXIII, in his Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, defined human rights as having the right to live with bodily integrity and having the means for the proper development of life (PT 9). In particular, this means food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest and finally, the necessary social services. The rights of every individual in the society must not be deprived. Human rights must always be upheld and recognized in every stage of life. The Church and the State must always safeguard its people and promote common good. The question is, how can common good be promoted in this nation? To exercise common good, the principles of Subsidiarity and Solidarity should be upheld. Subsidiarity is the principle, which encourages larger societies to protect and help the smaller group in the society, especially the poor.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cagayan De Oro

Make first sentence "Subsidiarity encourages the poor to be autonomous by allowing them to decide on matters that greatly concern them. At the same time, it holds them responsible for the outcome of their decisions. Meanwhile, solidarity highlights the equality of all in our dignity and rights. It also emphasizes unity among all peoples. The Filipino "Bayanihan" spirit is a good basis on how the nation can work together to help the needs of every individual and uplift the principle of common good.

The Church of the Poor

Pope John XXIII first proposed the image of the Church as the Church of the poor in a radio message one month before the opening of Second Vatican Council. This proposition happened more than 50 years ago: "Confronted by the underdeveloped countries, the Church presents herself as she is and how she wants to be: the Church of all, and in particular the Church of the poor (Picardal, 2011).

Since 1974, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC) has consistently promoted the theme of the Church of the Poor in Asia. In 1991, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines has likewise adopted the Church of the Poor as part of the vision of a renewed Church. In the Philippines today, God calls the Church most urgently to serve the poor and the needy. What, then, is the "Church of the Poor"? "The Church of the Poor embraces and practices the evangelical spirit of poverty. It is detachment from possessions with a profound trust in the Lord that He is the sole source of salvation. The Church of the poor is one whose members and leaders have a special love for the poor (PCP II 125-126). The faithful must have love for the whole Mystical Body of Christ and, in a special way, for the poor, the suffering, and those who are undergoing persecution for the sake of justice (LG 23). It is a call for everybody, especially Church leaders to have preferential attention and time with the poor.

This love and preference for the poor does not mean that there is no room in a Christian's heart for those who are not poor (PCP II 127). Rather, it only highlights that as one family in the Church, the whole Catholic faithful have a responsibility for those who are in the peripheries and are persecuted. Likewise, Church leaders must always be with the poor, but at the same time never forget the rich who are able to support the projects and activities of the Church.

Building the Kingdom of God on Earth

The Church cannot remain silent to the exploitation of the poor. She condemns the many injustices which even today are committed to the detriment of the poor. The pastors and members of the Church must courageously defend and vindicate the rights of the poor and the oppressed. In return, the poor and those oppressed, will become evangelizers themselves, because they have many things to teach through their witnessing to the poverty of Jesus. The Church of the poor is one that is willing to follow Jesus Christ through poverty and oppression in order to carry out the work of salvation. Although she needs human resources to carry out her mission, she is aware that she "is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim by her own example, the virtues of humility and self-denial (PCP 135).



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog

By being in solidarity with the poor, by evangelizing the poor and by being a humble servant of the people, the Church concretely expresses its commitment to the poor (Picardal, 2011). Let all the people be reminded of this Scriptural passage: "Whatsoever you do to the least of your brothers and sisters, you do to the Lord Jesus Christ" (Mt. 25:40). God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much, so that He Himself became poor in solidarity with the poor (2 Cor. 8:9).

Therefore, the Church's perspective during the Year of the Poor is to build the Kingdom of God on earth and fight against dehumanizing poverty. How can this happen? By being concerned more for the welfare of other people, rather than on one's own benefit. Also, by turning away from arrogance, pride, selfishness, and idolatry of money. Finally, by desiring the good of others, we give special love for the poor.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † The Church must learn to encounter Christ in the poor for Christ Himself became poor to be in solidarity with them. A Church for the poor is the one that is willing to follow Jesus through poverty by her own example, and through her humility and self-denial.
- † The Church must evangelize and be evangelized by the poor. The Church must treat the poor as a theological criterion. Meaning to say, the Church must never neglect them in the society but even more give preferential attention, time, and special love for the poor.
- † Somehow, the poor is called the “modern Magisterium” because the poor can reveal many things that we can learn from. Therefore, the Church has to listen to the poor because they have a lot to teach to everyone. The Church must remember that the entire history of redemption is marked by the presence of the poor as Jesus lives in the community of the poor.
- † Therefore, the Church must manifest Her identity as the Church of the poor. The whole Church must reflect and practice the spirit of poverty that Jesus Christ showed His followers.

Etymology

The word poverty comes from the Old French word *poverte*, which comes from the Latin word *paupertas*, which is composed of pauper, meaning "poor", and *-tas*, a common suffix. The Latin root pauper is the direct root of the modern word pauper, or "poor person". All these connections unite at pauper, which goes back to *pavopars*, a primordial jumble in Old Latin that meant "getting little" and ultimately is from the reconstructed Proto-Indo-European root *pehw*, or "few" (Aleksic, 2017).

Catechetical Context

Love and Compassion, Forgiveness and Challenge CBCP Message on the Opening of the Year of the Poor 2015

When you gaze into the eyes of the Crucified Lord, and he gazes into yours, you encounter the love of the Resurrected Lord. Many prefer not to look. Many recoil at looking into the eyes of a man in deadly pain. Many balk at having to respond to love. However, these are not the eyes of a defeated man, though He was condemned for criminal insurrection. They are the eyes of an unlikely King, who in dealing death its deathblow, still looks into our eyes with challenge. In his love is His call to the Kingdom of his Father, His Kingdom of justice, compassion, peace, and life to the full.

**The Gaze of the
Crucified Lord
and the Lord
turned and
looked at Peter...
(Lk 22:61)**

In the sign of this crucified Lord, now resurrected, we your Pastors, invite you to the celebration of the Year of the Poor. Behold Jesus, poor. No image of Jesus, surpasses this one. Jesus hangs from His Cross stripped of His clothes, His dignity, His possessions, His power, His strength. He is fully one with the unwashed, the oppressed, the scorned, the powerless, the miserable, the outcast. In the Year of the Poor, look into the eyes of the crucified Lord, for there is no experience richer.

You who are poor...

In those eyes, you who are poor, feel His suffering-with-you; From His Cross, He walks with you through crowded alleys, stumbles on mud, and recoils at the stench of unmoved sewerage. He bows to enter your makeshift home hobbled together from salvaged materials; it is for your family, but you share it perforce with rats and cockroaches, an oven in the hot season, a waterfall in the rains.

On His Cross, He is with you – God with you. He has taken on your nakedness, your vulnerability, your hunger, your illness, your shame. You once thought you could escape the hardship of your rural beginnings. Nevertheless, your suffering only increased. Here, you cannot find the camote to chase the hunger of your belly; you cannot find the herbs to stop your baby's vomiting and diarrhea; you cannot find money even to keep your single bulb burning. Here, though amidst thousands, neighbors are distant.

You were once grateful for the backbreaking work you finally found; your work continues to bend you and break your back. However, your debts just continue to grow. The clothes and shoes you bought last year to send your children to school are already worn out. In your home, you have an altar. Mary is there. The Nazareno is there. So is the Sto. Niño. You pray. But you tremble when you hear the shouts of the demolition crews approaching. You cry out for mercy. You look into the eyes of your crucified King.

Looking into His eyes, you feel His gaze into your soul. You do not understand. Why the love for you, but a poor man? Why the energy from the Cross to convince you: you are loved? Why the persisting message like a mantra in the sign of the Cross: *"I have come to bring life, and bring life to the full,"* and, *"Blessed are you who are poor.... Blessed are you who hunger now... Blessed are you when men hate you..."*

Why His silent acceptance of abuse, hatred, rejection, oppression and death in rejection of yours? Why His abiding identification with you, as He calls on His disciples to act to your aid? *"Whatever you do for this poor person that you do for me. ... Whatever you do not do for this poor person that you do not do for me?"* Why does He, on your behalf, to any who follow Him, mandates works of mercy? *"Feed the hungry. Give drink to the thirsty. Clothe the naked. Shelter the homeless. Visit the sick. Ransom the captive. Bury the dead."* For the answers to these questions... look into His eyes, and search within.

You who are weary...

In the Year of the Poor, all you who labor and who are heavily burdened, we your Pastors, invite you, as Jesus Himself did: come to Jesus. *"Come to me,"* Jesus said, *"and I will give you rest."* Life has not reduced you to penury, but life has not lifted you to wealth. Neither, to you also Jesus said, *"I have come to give life, and to give it to the full."*

Thinking of your families, your spouses, your children, the relatives who run to you for help in their unending need, you work long hours, you work overtime, you even take on second and third jobs, just to make ends meet. Often ends do not meet; demands exhaust you; your taskmasters overstress you; worries distress you.

However, you labor on in love. Thinking of the smiles on your children's faces and the promises you have made your spouse to provide adequately, you work on, hoping your sacrifice will bring the full life that Jesus brings. Whenever you can, whenever you remember, you pray. You ask Him to help. You ask His mother for help. He does help. She does come to your aid. You know that. Now, coming to Jesus hanging from His Cross, look into His eyes as He looks into yours with love.

You who are rich...

"I have come to bring life," He said, "life to the full." Some of you, sadly, are unmoved by this. You do not believe this. You do not believe Jesus brings anything. You say you do, but you do not.

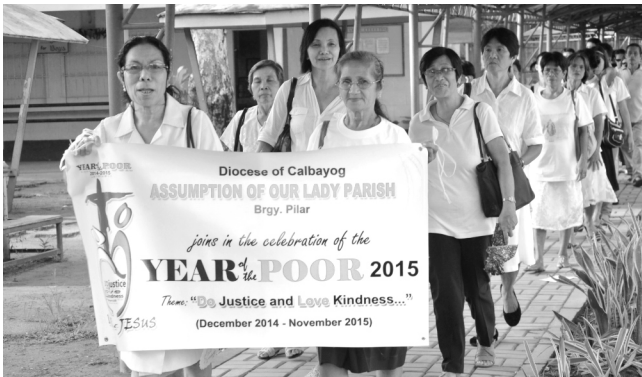


Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

For you, the fullness of life is the good life: "your" doing. It is not gifted, but taken. It is not brought to you as a blessing from above, but seized because of pushing and shoving from below. It is not selfless, but selfish. It is fueled with pride, scheming ambition, the exhilaration of power, the taste of blood. For this you work harder than hard, you push yourselves to the limit, you even push beyond the limit. To achieve "the sweet life," to outdo your ambitions, to over satiate your sycophants, to make them applaud without end, you abuse your bodies, you break the law, you violate your conscience; you ravage creation. Your social life is your needy ego. You manipulate people, exploit their skills; take advantage of their weaknesses and pay them poorly. What is rightly theirs, you steal; what rightly belongs to society, you conceal. What is there for all, you hoard for yourself. For you, there is no common good, only your good!

You build your first house, then your second houses; you provide for your family, then for your second families. You fill your lives with deceit, hypocrisy, and misery, and so glory in your "good life." You take great satisfaction in that you are not like the rest of the rabble. You have no need for prayer; you have no need for God.

In this Year of the Poor, we your Pastors invite you, step back from the rat race, the pressure, the din. Step back, and look into the eyes of the King. His gaze penetrates through your eyes to your heart. It is the same gaze of compassion as His gaze into the

eyes of the poor. Nevertheless, it is not a gaze altered by your own arrogance and cynicism. It is a gaze marked by concern. You may not wish to hear His message, but He says it again for you: *“Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe when society speaks well of you, for your fathers did the same to false prophets.”*

He does not thunder this from loudspeakers, nor embarrass you with this in the media, for you are well-respected and honorable persons. He says it simply in His gaze, knowing fully you can reject it, as you have rejected it before.

However, in the Year of the Poor, where so many poor are poor because of your decisions, He also reminds you that over concern with your humungous investments, your corporate takeovers, your capture of political power and your fine reputations to the detriment or negligence of the poor may have serious consequences. *“Whatever you have done or not done to one of these the least of My brothers and sisters that you have done or not done to Me.”* For not feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, succoring the sick, sheltering the stranger, visiting the imprisoned, the Lord, the Just Judge, may say to you, *“Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire...”* for I was poor, and you did not care.

If you have trouble believing this, look into His eyes gazing at you from the Cross.

Behold Jesus poor...

If that gaze, filled with love, brings you to confusion, shame and repentance in this Year of the Poor, then consider its urgent challenge for you:

With God's grace, turn away from your haughtiness, your pride, your selfishness, your idolatry of money, your all-consuming fascination with power. In love, work to build the Kingdom of God on earth!

In the Philippines, this urgently means stop the corruption.

Stop the misuse of the People's funds. Stop the wanton destruction of the environment. Fight the poverty of the poor. Build vibrant companies that use our resources to create wealth for our people, but distribute that wealth equitably. Build an economy that responds to the unconscionable poverty of the fishermen, the tillers of the soil, the urban laborers. Build an economy that is open to the world, but whose benefits do not exclude the poor. Provide jobs.

Provide education that respects all our people as human beings and children of God, not just cogs in a global production machine. However, provide education relevant to the fight against dehumanizing poverty: basic education to all, and higher education to all who desire it. Build a society of dialogue in our diversity, and especially for our poor, build a society of peace. No more war, for the greatest victims of war are the poor!

Behold Jesus, hope of the poor...

If that gaze, filled with love, brings you in poverty to consolation, encouragement and peace, take heart in Jesus' love. He strengthens you, encourages you, and calls the Christian community to help you progress from destitution to the fullness of life.

However, help the community in helping yourselves. Should you have no work, look for work. Should you have work, work well. Cultivate a personal sense of industry, self-respect, and social responsibility. As the economy allows, continue to provide well for your family in love: nutritious food, adequate clothing, medical care, good education, wholesome recreation. Strive for conditions of work that are humane and just. Continue to contribute to the welfare of your neighbors, your barangay, your municipality, your city, and your nation. Always be helpful. Vote as the common good demands. Together with your spouse, lead your children to the love and respect the Lord through our Catholic communion. Be active in your parish and in your basic ecclesiastical community. Love, as God loves you. Share courageously of your faith in love! You are not just receivers of the Gospel. You are its bearers!

Shepherds looking into the eyes of the Good Shepherd...

Finally, we your pastors, and with us, all priests and religious, look with you into the eyes of the crucified Lord. How often it is that we have look into those tortured eyes and failed to notice their twinkle! We have seen only embarrassing defeat, jaded suffering, and obvious dying, but failed to notice the light that pierces the gloom in our hearts.

In the void that loneliness and isolation brought by our distance from the crucified, we can be misled to fill the gaping abyss with new phones and iPad. We can cover the gaping vacuum with another luxury car or designer jeans, or shoes that are more fashionable than our shoe racks can contain; with a vacation out of the country or another gadget for the bedroom. We can hold on to the whisky bottle and hope that the bottled spirit will exorcise the spirit of boredom in us. It can also be filled up by working like a horse to impress the people, to create a fans' club and move you up higher to a better assignment. It can also increase our interest in bank savings, the stock market and the accumulation of more properties. Church funds and personal funds are deliberately mixed up. The parish crawls in financial difficulties while we sprint and jump with financial security. Our easy and comfortable lifestyles can make us numb to the peril of worldliness. It can make us at ease with ecclesiastical vanities.

How often have we reduced his living eyes to painted plastic on a wall and deprived ourselves of feeling what those eyes twinkling in passion convey: that we are noticed, appreciated, valued, and sent forth. In so doing, we have cheated ourselves of the only treasure in our calling: the felt certainty from the Cross that each of us, individually and totally, is loved.

We have exchanged this prize, this pearl of great price, for the compulsive conservation of conceptual castles, for the anxious pettiness of rules and regulations, for the obsessive preservation of a pecking order, for the selfish defense of private space, for the eccentric collection of quaint things, as well as for the lifelong preparation for our retirement.

Or, we have exchanged this self-emptied Messiah for self-established messiahs on distinguished thrones, ourselves rejecting the folly of the Cross, preferring the authority of

feared prelates or the renown of pious celebrity or the fashionable cynicism of the insecure. For these recognized spiritual professionals, there is really no need for prayer, no need for prophets, and certainly no need for the unlettered and unwashed, for all ultimately is about themselves.

Look at Jesus...

In this year of the poor, we too are being asked in silence to peer into the eyes of the crucified Lord, not plastic, nor wooden, nor closed, but open for me, confusing me, disturbing me, returning me to an original inspiration, healing me, raising me up, making me whole and surprising me anew with unaccustomed joy. In those twinkling eyes, we consider the quiet invitation to be actually poor, one with Him, stripped of His clothes, His dignity, His possessions, His power, His strength, one with the unwashed, the oppressed, the scorned, the powerless, the miserable, the outcast. Of course, we can say no. We can repeat the valid, reasonable excuses. Nevertheless, we can also say yes.

In this Year of the Poor, may our neediness be turned to sanctity, and may our arrogance be turned to service. In all, may the love of the Crucified Lord triumph as He gazes into our hearts and we dare to look into His.

Amen. Amen.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, November 30, 2014 First Sunday of Advent

(SGD)+SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS

*Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan
CBCP President*

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has provided excellent resource material in its pastoral exhortation: "THE GAZE OF THE CRUCIFIED LORD." The opening statement on this Pastoral Letter says "When you gaze into the eyes of the Crucified Lord, and he gazes into yours, you encounter the love of the Resurrected Lord. Many prefer not to look. Many balks at having to respond to this love." This is a great reminder for us to look after our poor brethren. In the Year of the Poor, we looked into the eyes of the crucified Lord.

The year 2015 was focused on the Church's commitment to journey with the poor. The Philippine Bishops assert: "It is the fundamental encounter with Jesus that must guide our response to the poor." Here the bishops echo the words of Pope Francis in his encyclical, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*. "I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ; I ask all of you to do this unflinching each day" (EG 3). Pope Francis continues: "Whenever we take a step towards Jesus and the poor, we come to realize that He is already there, waiting for us with open arms" (EG 3).

Our encounter with Jesus is the foundation of our love for the poor. This insight is basic, as our bishops teach, for a genuine response to our needy brothers and sisters. When we have personally encountered Jesus, we have deeply discovered "the joy that

comes from the Gospel and from sharing the Gospel.” In other words, from our encounter with Jesus flows our desire and commitment to encounter others, especially the poor.

In the Pastoral Letter for the Year of the Poor, Archbishop Socrates Villegas warns the Catholic faithful: “Where so many poor are poor because of your decisions, and concern for your humongous investments, your corporate takeovers, your capture of political power and your fine reputations, even though the detriment or negligence of the poor may have serious consequences.” As members of the Church, all the faithful Catholic must be reminded that they are called to witness evangelical poverty and solidarity with the poor. We also need to inculcate always in our mind that the sole source of all treasures is God Himself.

Pope Francis encourages us to engage in this “double encounter.” He invites us to return to Jesus, “The God who encounters us from the Cross, who gazes into our hearts with love, accepts us unconditionally, and moves us profoundly. It is this love that calls forth our response of love”. Indeed, no other motivation can be strong enough to move our hearts to faithfully love and serve the needy.

Who are the “poor” whom Christians are challenged to serve? The poor are not just the unlettered, the unwashed, the uneducated. They are also the unhealthy, the naked, the exploited, the trafficked, and the infirm. Moreover, they are also those who gaze into our eyes, seeking human recognition. They are those about whom Jesus said, “Truly, I tell you, whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt. 25:40).

“Jesus makes himself one with the poor. From His Cross, Jesus gazes into our eyes and touches our hearts with love. It is His love which calls forth our response in love. It is His love which allows us to admit our personal faults in our shared social woundedness. It is His love which quietly says: ‘Go forth, and heal’.” Thus, we must continually ask: “How do we love our neighbor, especially the poor? We owe them love as God loved May our neediness be turned to sanctity, and may our arrogance be turned to service. In all, may the love of the Crucified Lord triumph as he gazes into our hearts and we dare to look into his.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cagayan De Oro



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

“You will always have the poor among you” (John 12:8). Perhaps, these prophetic words of Jesus are the reason why poverty remains on the face of earth, and is probably here to stay for good. Saturated with images of people who suffer because of poverty, some of us have chosen to be numb and look away. Some have fallen into despair. The last judgment account in the Gospel of Matthew reminds us that the poor is Christ in disguise – whatever we do to the least, we do unto Christ.

HESUS NA AKING KAPATID

Written by Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Song by Himig Heswita

Hesus na aking kapatid sa lupa nami'y bumalik:
lyong mukha'y ibang-iba, hindi Kita nakikilala

Koro:

Tulutan Mo'ng aking mata mamulat sa katotohanan:
Ikaw, Poon, makikilala sa taong mapagkumbaba

Hesus na aking kapatid, putikin man ang 'Yong sapin,
Punit-punit ang 'Yong damit, nawa Ika'y mapasa-akin.

Hesus na aking kapatid, sa bukid ka nagtatanim,
o sa palengke rin naman, Ikaw ay naghahanap-buhay.

Reflection Questions:

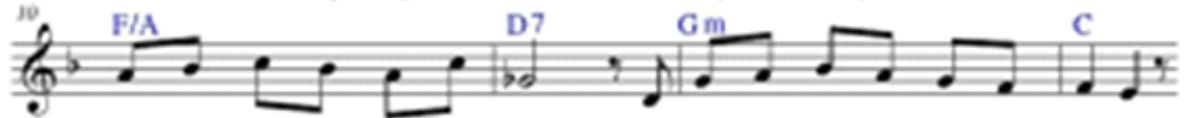
- † Do you help poor people randomly or do you choose the ones you help? Do you help the poor because they are kind or respectful and simply because they are poor?
- † PCP II tells us that all of us, in one way or another, are poor. No one is so rich that he has no need; no one is so poor that he has nothing to give. In what ways are you poor, and how can you “enrich” others despite your poverty?

HESUS NA AKING KAPATID

Eddie Hontiveros, S.J.



1. He - sus na a - king ka - pa - tid sa lu - pa na - mi'y bu - ma - lik: I -



yong muk - ha'y i - bang - i - ba, hin - di Ki - ta na - ki - ki - la - la.



Refrain : Tu - lu - tan Mo'ng a - king ma - ta ma - mu - lat sa ka - to - to - ha - nan: I -



kaw Po - on ma - ki - ki - la - la sa ta - ong ma - pag - kum - ba - ba.



2. He - sus na a - king ka - pa - tid, pu - ti - kin man ang 'Yong sa - pin, Pu -



nit - pu - nit ang 'Yong da - mit, na - wa I - ka'y ma - pa - sa - a - kin.



Tu - lu - tan Mo'ng a - king ma - ta ma - mu - lat sa ka - to - to - ha - nan: I -

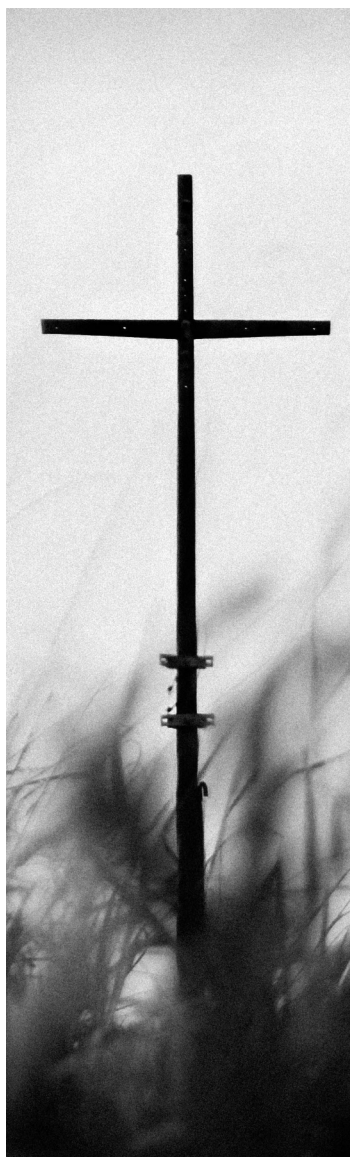


kaw Po - on ma - ki - ki - la - la sa ta - ong ma - pag - kum - ba - ba.

Becoming and being a catechist is an active process of partaking in the educative mission of understanding, learning, and living our Catholic faith. This module part offers an empirical narrative glimpse of the lives of catechists captured in a creative methodological approach called, “research poems”.

Read, recite, listen, and/or reflect on your life as a “catechist” using the selected research poem below. Discuss your views and insights with fellow catechists using the provided guide question/s in relation to the module theme on *the poor (ang mga mahihirap)*.

Guide question for Discussion: When have we decided to follow our Lord Jesus? How have we been carrying His cross?



CROSS

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Jeanette P. Grajo

Every day, she clasped a cross
In her palm, being the catechist
Servant of the Church.
From the house, she would first
Carry out her duties
She would then hastily leave
To get promptly to school
Where the children are waiting.
Though she lacked money for the fare,
She would find a way to get there
Even the money needed for the chalk
She would find means
For the paper they use
The catechist would shoulder
The expense.
Whatever the price,
Even when it appeared
Foolish and illogical.
Difficult it may seem
To bear sacrifice and suffering
Since acceptance of the cross
Adhere to the catechetical mission.
This is the fifth
Way of the Cross
Of the servant-catechist,
For meaningful servitude.

¹This research poem is part of the book, *KATEKISTA: Mga Tulang Pananaliksik Hango sa National Catechetical Study 2016-2018*, produced as a *Research-based Intervention Outcome (RIO)* of the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project*. To access this, you can visit this link: <https://www.ncs2021pariproject.com/katekista-mga-tulang-pananaliksik>.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 1:

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST: BEING TRULY BLESSED



Introduction

Christ demanded His disciples to follow His preferential love for the poor (Luke 6:20-21). This option takes on the greatest urgency in a country where many people are living in poverty and misery while tremendous social privileges and preferences are given to the rich and the powerful (PCP II 312). Through the words of Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Church must learn the ways and life of the poor (EG 97). The poor teaches how the Church should live. Through the presence of the poor in the society, many people encounter Jesus Christ, for He also became poor in solidarity with and for the poor.



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan

Let us look and reflect in Luke chapter eight where Jesus showed compassion to a woman who's been impoverished by her illness. She has spent all she had on doctors who were not able to heal her (Luke 8:43). Her disease had robbed her of her livelihood and caused her social disgrace. Out of desperation, she touched Jesus' cloak, and He healed her. After she was healed, Jesus stops what He's doing and draws His attention to her, giving her the opportunity to share her miraculous healing with the crowd (Luke 8:47).

Jesus went beyond the healing her of her physical afflictions, He restored her reputation too. Her material poverty was paired with an emotional, social, and spiritual poverty from being labeled unclean for so long. Jesus healed her from that as well. Therefore, Jesus' concern for the poor is not only limited to their material needs. It is important that we should also be reminded to help our poor brethren spiritually since their spiritual dryness makes them poor in spirit.



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 6: 20-26

²⁰ Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹ "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. ²² "Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. ²³ Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. ²⁴ "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ²⁵ "Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. "Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. ²⁶ "Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.



Doctrine

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES

† ***Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.***

"Poor in spirit" means being humble. Humility is the realization that all your gifts and blessings come from the grace of God. To be poor in spirit means to be completely empty and open to the Word of God. When we are an empty cup and devoid of pride, we are humble and dependent on God's provisions. Humility brings a sense of openness and inner peace, allowing one to do the will of God. When we humble ourselves, we are able to accept our frail nature and repent. We are also able to allow the grace of God to lead us to conversion. Pride, the opposite of humility brings misery. Pride brings anger and seeks revenge, especially when one is offended. If every man were humble and poor in spirit, there would be no war and discord in our world.

† ***Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.***

If we are humble and we appreciate that all of our gifts and blessings come from God, we grow in love and gratitude for Jesus Christ our Savior. Nevertheless, this can only produce mourning and regret over our own sins and the sins of this world, for they have hurt God who has been so good to us. One also mourns for the suffering of others.

St. Gregory describes another reason to mourn: when one ascends in meditation of the Divine Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and then realizes the poverty of human nature, man can only be left in sorrow. When one contemplates that we were made in the image and likeness of God and lived in Paradise, the Garden of Eden, and compare that to our present state after the fall, one can only mourn our present condition. Nevertheless, the sentence continues that they shall be comforted by the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and hopefully one day, return to the Kingdom of Heaven. Mourning in this context is called a blessing, because mourning for our fallen nature creates a desire in us to improve ourselves and do what is right.

† ***Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."***

St. Gregory of Nyssa saw the Beatitudes as arranged like steps to facilitate ascent from one to another. For example, a humble person learns to be meek or gentle and kind. He exhibits docility of spirit, even in the face of adversity and hardship. Jesus was "meek and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29). A meek person is one who shows self-control.. St. Augustine advises us to be meek in the face of the Lord-- not to resist but to be obedient to him. St. Paul calls for obedience of faith in the beginning and end of his Letter to the Romans (Rom 1:5; 16:25-27). Obedience and submission to the will of God are certainly not popular these days, but they will bring peace in

this world and in the next.

† ***Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.***

Justice and righteousness in the New Covenant indicate the fulfillment of God's will in our heart and soul. It is not the mere observance of the law (Matthew 5:20), but rather an expression of brotherly love (I John 3:10). A continuous desire for justice and moral perfection will lead one to the fulfillment of that desire--a transition and conversion to holiness. This is true for all virtues. For example: if you hunger and thirst for temperance, you will head towards the attainment of that goal. St. Augustine called the Beatitudes the ideal for every Christian life! In his discourse on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount, he noted the correspondence of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and their necessity in fulfilling the Beatitudes. For example, one must have the gift of fortitude so one may be courageous in seeking social justice.

† ***Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.***

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). Mercy is the loving disposition towards those who suffer distress. Love, compassion, and forgiveness towards a family member or neighbor will bring peace in our relationships and in our lives. We say in the Lord's Prayer: Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. When we are merciful to others, we pray that our Heavenly Father will be merciful to us as well! Jesus reminds us that as "you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). Jesus on the Cross extends his mercy to the repentant thief: "Today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). St. James is quite direct in his Letter when he writes: "For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13). The church offers us concrete guides on how to be merciful by doing the following acts:

† ***The Corporal Works of Mercy***

- † Feed the Hungry
- † Give drink to the thirsty
- † Clothe the naked
- † Shelter the homeless
- † Comfort the imprisoned
- † Visit the sick
- † Bury the dead

† ***The Spiritual Works of Mercy***

- † Admonish sinners
- † Instruct the uninformed
- † Counsel the doubtful
- † Comfort the sorrowful
- † Be patient with those in error
- † Forgive offenses
- † Pray for the living and the dead

† ***Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.***

Saint John Paul II wrote that the Beatitudes are in a sense a self-portrait of Christ! St. Paul (I Timothy 6:16) says that no one can see God here on earth. God is hidden. Nevertheless, Jesus says the pure of heart shall see God! To be pure of heart means to be free of all selfish intentions and self-seeking desires. What a beautiful goal! How many times have any of us performed an act perfectly free of personal gain? Such an act is pure love. An act of pure and selfless giving brings happiness to all. Such acts not only help us see God but also allow others to see God in us.



Photo from the Diocese of Cabanatuan



Photo from the Diocese of Iba

† ***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.***

Jesus gives us peace “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you” (John 14:27). Peace is a Fruit of the Spirit. Peacemakers do not only live peaceful lives but also try to bring peace and friendship to others. They also preserve peace between God and man. However, one cannot give to another what one does not possess. Prayers bring peace into our hearts. First, The Lord wants us to be filled with the blessings of peace and then to pass it on to those who have need of it. By imitating God's love of man, the peacemakers become children of God.

† ***Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.***

The biblical passage continues: “Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. Jesus said many times that those who follow Him would be persecuted. “If they persecute Me, they will persecute you” (John 15:20-21). Saul persecuted the early Church in Jerusalem before his conversion. St. Peter advised “Whoever is made to suffer as a Christian should not be ashamed but glorify God because of the name” (I Peter 4:16).

Stephen, Peter and Paul, nearly all of the Apostles, and many Christians in the Roman era suffered martyrdom. Oppressive governments and endless conflicts in the last one hundred years, such as World Wars I and II, and the Middle East wars in Iraq and Syria have seen their share of martyrs, such as Maximilian Kolbe, Dietrich

Bonhoeffer, Latin American martyrs, and Middle East Christians.

However, it is consoling to note that the Lord promised those that suffer for His sake would be rewarded with the Kingdom of Heaven!



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Vulnerable** - To be vulnerable means to put ourselves in a position that could potentially hurt us. Vulnerability is not a sign of weakness and can be our greatest strength. Vulnerability is not concerned with winning or losing; it is having the courage to show up and be seen when we have no control over the outcome. Everyone is vulnerable, no matter how much they try to avoid it. Being vulnerable allows us to understand new perspectives. Being open to new ideas and perspectives means acknowledging that our experiences are not the end-all and be-all of life. Moreover, that can be difficult! There's no shame in not wanting to set aside your beliefs, even shortly, but you must think bigger than yourself.
- † **Contentment** - Contentment is finding joy in what we already have in our lives, feeling or showing satisfaction with our possessions, status, or situation. It is being happy without having to find fulfillment in acquiring more possessions that are material. Scripture says in 1 Timothy 6:6-12 "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."
- † **Five Secrets of Contentment:**
 - † Love people not money and possessions.
 - † Resist the urge to compare yourself with others.
 - † Choose your friends wisely.
 - † Maintain an appreciative attitude.
 - † Satisfy Your Spiritual Needs.



Morals

Church of the Poor

What is the Church of the poor? According to the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines: "A Church that embraces and practices the evangelical spirit of poverty which combines detachment from possessions with a profound trust in the Lord as the only source of salvation. A Church that will courageously defend and vindicate the rights of the poor and the oppressed even when doing so will mean alienation or persecution from the rich and powerful. A Church

where nobody is so poor as to have nothing to give, and nobody so rich as to have nothing to receive.”

By reaching out to the poor and liberating them from their misery, we echo Jesus Christ’s mission: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and give new sight to the blind; to free the oppressed and announce the Lord’s year of mercy” (Lk 4:18). We must be reminded that Jesus’ throne was a wooden cross, His crown was a bouquet of thorns, His scepter a lowly reed, and His ring a rusty nail driven through His palm. Nonetheless, Jesus made it absolutely clear who He was, what His objectives were, and how He intended to accomplish them.

Jesus explained in different ways to different people. To His disciples, He taught loftily, authoritatively. In His sermon on the mount, He leaned in favor of the poor, the sorrowing, the simple-hearted and the peacemakers. He condemned the hypocrite, the arrogant, the proud and the self-righteous. He forgave the repentant and the simple-hearted. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says that we should clothe the poor, feed the hungry, shelter the homeless and have respect for all human beings as we are all the same to God. He loves us all unconditionally. However, He shows preference to those who are needy and discomforted.



Simple Activities

Activity: SHARE WEAR activity

Instruction: One of the participants on the session will request to go in front and ask them to share the history of his/her outfit this day (such as: if he/she wears a watch (Rolex, Swiss) share who gave it or how he budgeted his/her allowance just to buy it. Or if she wears a dress, what is the story behind it? How did it come to his/her possession? What is his/her most memorable experience while wearing it? Be creative. After sharing the story of what they are wearing, another question will be asked: if you are to donate to the poor one of the things that you are wearing right now, what is it and why?

Song Analysis (see next page)



Worship

Almighty and most merciful God, We remember before you all poor and neglected persons whom it would be easy for us to forget; the homeless and the destitute, the old and the sick, and all who have none to care for them. Help us to heal those who are broken in body or spirit and to turn their sorrow into joy. Grant this, Father, for the love of your Son, who for our sake became poor, Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE CRY FOR POOR

Psalm 34:2-3, 6-7, 18-19, 23

Song by John Foley, SJ

The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
Blessed be the Lord.
I will bless the Lord at all times,
with praise ever in my mouth.
Let my soul glory in the Lord,
Who will hear the cry of the poor?

The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
Blessed be the Lord.

Let the lowly hear and be glad:
the Lord listens to their pleas;
and to hearts broken God is near,
who will hear the cry of the poor.

The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
Blessed be the Lord

Every spirit crushed God will save;
will be ransom for their lives;
will be safe shelter for their fears,
and will hear the cry of the poor.

The Lord hears the cry of the poor.
Blessed be the Lord.

We proclaim your greatness, O God,
your praise ever in our mouth;
every face brightened in your light,
for you hear the cry of the poor.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – The deepest form of repentance acknowledges our desperate need for God. Those who are poor in spirit gladly cast themselves on God's grace. To be poor in spirit is the personal acknowledgement of spiritual bankruptcy before God. When we recognize our spiritual poverty, there is nothing there to protect or preserve. We are empty. Jesus teaches us that if we want to achieve wholeness of life, if we want

to be fulfilled human beings, if we want to experience genuine joy, we must accept the reign of God, acknowledge our complete dependence on Him and place our complete trust in His providence.

- † **LIVE** – Practice the seven Corporal Works of Mercy which are: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, comforting the imprisoned, visiting the sick, and burying the dead.
- † **SHARE** – We do not only depend on God for life, but we must trust in God for the sustenance of life. We cannot hope to become fulfilled, whole people on our own. We are unable to cope alone. We need to acknowledge our inherent weakness, pray to God and depend on Him. We need to have enough trust in God to be able to accept His way of fulfillment without reservation. We must not forget that we have an obligation to our brethren. We have an obligation to share what we have to someone who is in need. Make a resolution that if ever someone does a good deed for you, you pay it forward to other people.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: COMING DOWN



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Introduction

In all places and circumstances, Christians, with the help of their pastors, are called to hear the cry of the poor (EG 191). Faith in Christ, who became poor and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected

members (EG 186). Since the poor are the examples to live by which the Church should imitate, the Church must evangelize and be evangelized by the poor. The poor have much to teach to everyone. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei* (sense of the faith), but in their difficulties they come to know the suffering Christ. Evangelically poor is one of the Church's identities. Thus, to promote integral development of the poor, the Church must work to eliminate structural causes of poverty. Solidarity must be lived as a decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them (EG 189). Hence, the poor have the right to receive in abundance spiritual goods from the Church, especially that of the Word of God and the Sacraments (LG 37).

The World Day of the Poor was instituted in 2016 by Pope Francis, and is celebrated annually on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. This year's occurrence marks its fourth iteration and was being observed under the theme: "Stretch forth your hand to the poor." During the mass in St. Peter's Basilica to mark its 4th anniversary, Pope Francis reflected on the day's gospel about the Parable of the Talents (Mt 25:14-30), where Jesus told a parable about a master who entrusts his servants with talents distributed according to their ability.

The Pope said the parable sheds light on the beginning and end of our own lives. In the beginning, we are entrusted with talents. "Everything begins with a great good." The Pope said our lives began with the grace of God, at which moment we were each entrusted with different talents. "We possess great wealth that depends not on what we possess but on who we are: the life we have received, the good within us, the indelible beauty that God has given us by creating us in His image."

Pope Francis also warned against the temptation of only seeing what we lack in life, like a better job or more money. Pope Francis then reflected on what Jesus' parable tells us about the end of our own lives. He said, "When our lives are over and the truth is revealed, 'the presence of this world will fade, with its notion that success, power and money give life meaning. Whereas love, the love we have given will be revealed as true riches.'" "If we do not want to live life poorly," he said, "let us ask for the grace to see Jesus in the poor, and to serve Jesus in the poor."



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 19: 1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it.² A man named Zacchaeus was there. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.³ Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus was, but he could not because he was short in stature and because of the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus pass that way.⁵ When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down for I must stay at your house today.”⁶ So Zacchaeus hurried down and was happy to welcome Jesus.⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.”⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”⁹ Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.”¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”



Doctrine

Social Doctrine of the Church teaches us the **Principle of Subsidiarity** and **Principle of Solidarity**:

† **Principle of Subsidiarity**

The Principle of Subsidiarity: The encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* explains the nature of the Principle of Subsidiarity. “Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, it is also an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of the right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity, by its very nature ought to furnish help to the members of the social body., and never destroy or absorb them” (QA 203).

The Principle of Subsidiarity is that principle which encourages larger societies to help smaller ones—as subsidium to them. The Compendium of the Social Doctrines of the Church 186 states: “...all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help (“subsidium”). It is to support, promote, and develop lower-order of societies with respect.” Subsidiarity also promotes autonomy and a sense of responsibility among smaller communities for the consequences of their decisions/ actions.

Primary function of the Principle of Subsidiarity: For the protection of smaller groups. “The principle of subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfill their duties (CSDC 187). Its denial leads to destruction of freedom and initiative.

Likewise, subsidiarity also protects people from “centralization, bureaucratization, and welfare assistance and from the unjustified and excessive presence of the State in public mechanisms.” Karl H. Peschke (1991), a moral theologian, explained that the principle of Subsidiarity protects the particular rights and competence of individuals against excessive domination by societies, as well as the competence of minor associations against oppressive and totalitarian claims of a larger society. Hence, Subsidiarity strengthens democracy because it means the delegation of power and competence, division of power and sharing it.

† **Principle of Solidarity**

Solidarity is a manifestation of the social nature of human beings and their interdependence: “Solidarity highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity.

Two complementary Aspects of Solidarity:

- † **Social principle** - encourages all to “renounce structures of sin and build structures of solidarity.”
- † **Moral virtue** - a “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.” Solidarity rises to the rank of fundamental social virtue since it places itself in the sphere of justice. It is a virtue directed par excellence to the common good, and is found in ‘a commitment to the good of one's neighbor with the readiness (CSDC 193).

John Paul II explains the concept of solidarity as recognition of the other as ‘person.’ “Those who are more influential, because they have greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, and in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan

attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate groups, in turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others” (SRS 39).

Furthermore, according to John Paul II, Solidarity, enables us to see the other not as an “instrument” to be exploited but as a neighbor. “Solidarity helps us see the “other,” whether a person, people or nation, as our “neighbor,” or a “helper” and not just some kind of instrument, with a capacity to work and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful (Gen 2:18-20). They are to be made sharers, at par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.”



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Solidarity-** Solidarity is about valuing our fellow human beings and respecting who they are as individuals. The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterized with rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism weaken social bonds. They fuel that “throw away” mentality, which leads to a contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those, considered “useless.”

Pope Francis says to a crowd of the very poor, that for believers in Christ “solidarity with the poor is not optional,” we are compelled to listen, even if we have to force ourselves. Pope Francis pointed out that we are called to be in greater solidarity with the poor and with those who suffer. As Catholics we have no choice in the matter. We must work and be with the poor.

- † **Compassionate** - To be compassionate is to feel deeply for others as they experience the vicissitudes associated with life. To be compassionate is not just telling others that you care, but also showing them your concern by being there even before they ask for it. As Scripture says: Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).
- † **Kindness** - Kindness is defined as the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate. Kindness goes beyond merely being nice. Kindness improves our quality of life in the workplace as well as in the community. It brings people together. Doing well for others feels good. Showing kindness to others is just as rewarding as receiving it from someone else. Scripture says about kindness: “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). “Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).



Morals

Common Good: the goal of the society's existence

Common Good is defined as “the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (GS 26, CCC 1906, CSDC 164). The Church's concept of the Common Good rejects all forms of extreme individualism and totalitarianism. Three important conditions: 1. Respect for persons and basic rights, 2. Interpersonal flourishing, and 3. Societal integration. The common good therefore involves all members of society, no one is exempt from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it (CSDC 167).

Why is it “common”?

Catechism of the Social Doctrine of the Church no. 164 explains: “The common good does not consist in the simple sum of the particular goods of each subject of a social entity. Belonging to everyone and to each person, it is and remains ‘common’, because it is indivisible and because only together is it possible to attain it, increase it and safeguard its effectiveness, with regard to the future. Just as the moral actions of an individual are accomplished in doing what is good, so to do the actions of a society attain their full stature when they bring about the common good.”

Ultimately, it consists in goods and values actualized by the members of the society. Thus, genuine progress consists in a sound state of physical and mental health of the society as a whole, a sufficient degree of education and schooling of its members, opportunities of work for all, a favorable condition of religious, moral, and cultural life, good social justice, real freedom and equality among men. All these also pertain to the conditions of social living which enable men more fully to achieve their fulfillment and appointed ends.”

The common good is the goal of civil society and the reason for its existence.

“A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level is a society that aims for common good. Its primary goal is the good of all people and of the whole person. The human person cannot find fulfillment in himself/herself that is because he/she exists “with” others and “for” others.”

The common good is actualized by all the members of the society and supported by favorable social conditions.

The CSDC explains “The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to the respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights.”

“These demands concern above all, the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights, like food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom

of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom.” **The responsibility in actualizing the common good is in the hands of each member and of the political community.**

CSDC 167: “The common good therefore involves all members of society, no one is exempt from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it.

The political community also has the responsibility to safeguard and promote the common good. “The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individual persons, belong also to the State. Since the common good is the reason that political authority exists, the State must guarantee the coherency, unity and organization of the civil society, of which it is an expression, in order that the common good may be attained with the contribution of every citizen. Hence, political institutions are a necessity The purpose of political institutions is to make available to persons the necessary material, cultural, moral and spiritual goods.”

Three important elements to realize the Common Good (CCC 1907-1909):

- † Respect for the dignity and rights of a person
- † The social well-being and the development of the group itself
- † Peace



Simple Activities

Ask the participants, “If God will give them 15 million pesos right now, how will they spend that money? Write in the piece of paper 15 ways on how will they spend the money or what will they buy with that amount?”

TEACH

Sometimes people spend money on crazy things. Ask the participants if they have purchased something that others might consider a waste of money or extravagant. Allow a few responses from the participants. Share a personal story of an instance when they spend money on something “extravagant.” A little research (Diliberto, 2019) yielded the following examples of extravagant spending:

Beyonce spent \$100,000 on a pair of gold Balenciaga leggings – she wore them one time. A British man grew tired of his imaginary friend, so he sold him on eBay... for \$3,000! An Australian man paid \$1.3 million to have a roll of golden toilet paper made for him. We can probably agree that none of those things would be considered as necessity. Yet, it is true that it's very difficult to live in our world without money.

What types of necessities do we use money for? What do we need to buy in order to survive? Allow a few responses from the participants. Practically everything requires money, it's essential in our society. Therefore, God has something to say in the Bible about how we use our money.

Read 1 Timothy 6:18

Ask the participants to use their money to do well. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always ready to share their money with others. The apostle Paul wrote the Book of 1 Timothy as a letter to a young preacher named, Timothy. He is encouraging Timothy to instruct the people in his church what it means to be genuinely generous. The first thing we realize as we read this scripture passage is that if God is telling us to “do good” with our money, then there must be the potential to do bad, as well.

Whether a person has a lot or a little, there is always the possibility that one can become stingy, greedy, or a hoarder, or even be tempted to steal from others. Therefore, Paul tells Timothy one of the keys to make sure that we use our money to do good – be generous. A generous person gives more than anyone would expect... and it is not just limited to money. Generous people share their time, possessions, and even their knowledge and wisdom, with others.

Raise your hand if you are good at “sharing with others.” We know that toddlers aren't very good at sharing. In fact, toddlers think like this:

If I want it, IT IS MINE!

If I give it to you and change my mind later, IT'S MINE!

If I can take it away from you, IT'S MINE!

If it's mine, it will never belong to anybody else, No matter what.

If we are building something together, all the pieces are mine!

If it looks just like mine, IT'S MINE!

If it breaks or needs putting away, IT'S YOURS!

None of us are toddlers, but is there anything that is difficult for us to share? Why? Allow responses from the participants. Be careful to encourage conversation, rather than making them feel guilty for their honesty.

We tend to love the things we own because they have meaning to us. Maybe we own something that we worked hard for, or someone gave us something priceless. So, imagine how much sharing and being generous with those things that have significant meaning to us reflect the heart of God.

God gave us Jesus, His Son, who was very valuable to Him – but He held nothing back because of His love for us. Giving and sharing with others teaches us to trust God to continue providing for us

Ask the participants to recall a time when someone was generous to them. What was given to them? Allow a few responses from the participants. Some of the things that will be mentioned are valuable, and some may not be as valuable, but are very sentimental. It is not about how much we can give because even when we cannot give much, God can do much with it. When we think about what we have, it might not seem like we have a lot, but whatever we have, God can use it. As Mother Theresa once said, “Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love.” It's more about the heart behind giving – whether it's giving to God or others. In addition, God wants us to be generous. To see what other's needs and ask, “How can we help?” To think about our needs last, and those of around us first. To be

ready to serve others generously with our time and resources. Because of what God has done for us, we know that we are truly rich when we share with others.

Song Analysis

God of the Poor (Beauty for Brokenness)

Song by Graham Kendrick

Beauty for brokenness
Hope for despair
Lord, in your suffering
This is our prayer
Bread for the children
Justice, joy, peace
Sunrise to sunset
Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives
Cures for their ills
Work for the craftsman
Trade for their skills
Land for the dispossessed
Rights for the weak
Voices to plead the cause
Of those who can't speak

Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars
Havens from fear
Cities for sanctuary
Freedoms to share
Peace to the killing-fields
Scorched earth to green
Christ for the bitterness
His cross for the pain
Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain

Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Rest for the ravaged earth
Oceans and streams
Plundered and poisoned
Our future, our dreams
Lord, end our madness
Carelessness, greed
Make us content with
The things that we need

Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Lighten our darkness
Breathe on this flame
Until your justice
Burns brightly again
Until the nations
Learn of your ways
Seek your salvation
And bring you their praise

Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame

Friend of the weak
Give us compassion we pray
Melt our cold hearts
Let tears fall like rain
Come, change our love
From a spark to a flame



Worship

Prayer of Saint Mother Teresa to the poor

Mother Teresa, you who have seen Christ Himself in the, Poorest of the Poor and had compassion on them, please help us. Glance upon (person/s needing intercession) with your compassionate eyes and see Christ within (him/her/us, etc.).

As you loved and served Jesus through your work upon earth, we humbly ask that you continue your work in heaven and intercede for us in our needs. After looking upon (person(s) needing intercession), please turn your compassionate eyes to Jesus, as you had adored him in the Holy Eucharist, and present our request for that (state petition).

While we are not as materially destitute as those you served on earth, we reach out to you in the poorness of our souls and seek Jesus through you. Kindly help us St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - The Church's love for the poor is a part of her constant tradition. This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of His concern for the poor. “Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to be able to give to those in need. It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty (CCC 2444).”
- † **LIVE** – The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that there is no absolute ownership of goods here on earth. The right to private property, acquired or received in a just way, does not do away with the original gift of the earth to the whole of humanity. The “universal destination of goods” remains primordial, even if the promotion of the common good requires respect for the right to private property and its exercise (CCC 2403). Goods for production of material or immaterial things, such as land, factories, and practical or artistic skills, oblige their possessors to employ them in ways that will benefit the greatest number. Those who hold goods for use and consumption should use them with moderation, reserving the better part for the guests, the sick and the poor (CCC 2405).
- † **SHARE** – Let us learn from St. Therese of Calcutta when she said “Poverty is not created by God, it is made by you and me when we don’t share what we have. It is our duty to love and care for our brothers and sisters especially those who are in need/less fortunate. So when a brother asks for help, do not call them a stranger. Instead, try to live out our Filipino “bayanihan” spirit, which teaches us the values of common good, solidarity, justice and charity.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: ANNOINTEDNESS



Introduction

Why is it that even today, people still die of hunger?; Some are still condemned to illiteracy and still lack the most basic medical care or live without a roof over their heads? Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning His voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty (Novo Millennio

Ineunte 50). For believers, uniting in this mission should not simply be a matter of economics or politics but of discipleship. We may sometimes differ about the specifics of how best to serve those in need, how to overcome poverty and advance human dignity. It is, however, impossible for a Christian to say, "This is not my task," since this mission is an essential part of what makes us Disciples of Christ. As the Letter of James insists, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:15-17).

The call to overcome poverty and to uphold human dignity is not new. It is as old as the prophets are and as current as today's headlines. Today this challenge is especially compelling because we have the capacity to make a difference and because the impact of rapid globalization makes it more urgent. By building on past progresses and new opportunities, we can make this a time for hope. Hope offers the promise that, with God's help, shared sacrifice, wise investment, and renewed commitment, we can actually substantially reduce the levels of

poverty, hunger, and human deprivation in our own land and around the world as we unite ourselves to move forward together.

Pope Francis reminds us that encountering the poor and those in need constantly challenges us and forces us to think. How can we help eliminate or alleviate their marginalization and suffering? How can we help them in their spiritual need? The Christian community is called to be involved in this sharing and to recognize that it cannot be delegated to others. In order to help the poor,

we ourselves need to experience evangelical poverty. We cannot feel "alright" when any member of the human family is left behind and in the shadows. The silent cry of so many poor men, women and children should find the people of God at the forefront--always and



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

everywhere, in efforts to give them a voice, to protect and support them in the face of hypocrisy and so many unfulfilled promises, and to invite them to share in the life of the community. This is not a time for "just words or mere talk" but for "active and genuine" commitment by Catholics and all Christians in the whole world, to work with others, to make a place at the table for all God's children.

Together, we are all called to "Stretch forth our hand to the poor" (*Sir 7:32*)



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 4: 18-25, 28-29

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."²⁰ And He rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ Then He began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ²² All spoke well of Him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from His mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" ²³ He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to Me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in Your hometown the things that we have heard You did at Capernaum.'" ²⁴ And He said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. ²⁵ But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁸ When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹ They got up, drove Him out of the town, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl Him off the cliff. ³⁰ But He passed through the midst of them and went on His way.



Doctrine

† The Poor (YOUCAT 449) *What significance do the poor have for Christians?*

Love for the poor must be in every age the distinguishing mark of Christians. The poor deserve not just a few alms; they have a claim to justice. For Christians, there is a special obligation to share their goods. Our example of love for the poor is Christ.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Mt 5:3)—that is the first sentence in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. There is material, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual poverty. Christians must look after the needy of this earth with great consideration, love, and perseverance. After all, at no other point, will Christ evaluate them so decisively, as to how they treated the poor: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

† Poverty

CCC 2833 – The bread is the "one" loaf for the "many." In the Beatitudes, "poverty" is the virtue of sharing: it calls us to communicate and share both material and spiritual goods, not by coercion but out of love, so that the abundance of some may remedy the needs of others.

† Poverty as an evangelical counsel

CCC 915 – Christ proposes the evangelical counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple. the perfection of charity, to which all the faithful are called, entails those who freely follow the call to consecrated life, the obligation of practicing chastity, celibacy, poverty and obedience for the sake of the Kingdom. It is in the profession of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church that characterizes the life consecrated to God



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cagayan De Oro

† Poverty of Heart

CCC 2544 - Jesus enjoins His disciples to prefer Him over everything and everyone, and bids them to “renounce all that [they have]” for His sake and that of the Gospel. Shortly before His passion He gave them the example of the poor widow of Jerusalem who, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on. The precept of detachment from riches is obligatory to enter the Kingdom of heaven.

CCC 2545 - All Christ's faithful are to "direct their affections rightly; otherwise, they will be hindered in their pursuit of perfect charity by the use of worldly things and by an adherence to riches which is contrary to the spirit of evangelical poverty."

CCC 2546 - "Blessed are the poor in spirit." The Beatitudes reveal an order of happiness and grace, of beauty and peace. Jesus celebrates the joy of the poor, to whom the Kingdom already belongs: The Word speaks of voluntary humility as “poverty in spirit.”

CCC 2547 - The Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the

abundance of goods. "Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdoms but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow. Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God.



Faith Response

- † From the very beginning Christians have brought gifts to share with those in need as they bring with them bread and wine for the Eucharist. Hence, together, we practice the virtue of generosity, when we share God's gift to us.
- † We have the duty of making ourselves a neighbor to others and actively serving them becomes even more urgent when it involves the disadvantaged, in whatever area this may be (CCC 1932).
- † To complete and do the call of generosity, it is the responsibility of all members of the Church and the family of God to practice and live the simplicity of life like what Jesus did.
- † To have sympathy and compassion for the poor, practicing charity should come earnestly from everyone's hearts.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Detachment** - Detachment has been a central theme in Christianity from the start. Recall the story of the rich young man, found in all three Synoptic Gospels. He asks Jesus what he must do in order to be better. Jesus answers, "Go, and sell what you possess and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me." The young man goes away sad because, the evangelist tells us, "he had great possessions" (Mt 19. 21-22). He wasn't detached – he needed to practice detachment but could not bring himself to do it. Detachment is of crucial importance, not only for the rich young man, but also for all of us who would like to imitate Christ and live by His teaching.

Detachment means a healthy impartiality, a distancing, and an indifference. The opposite of detachment is possessive attachment. A disordered clinging to things, attitudes, habits, and even people that do not bring us closer to God. When one is so possessed by things, one cannot freely make a decision for God.

Practicing detachment entails imitating Christ, always ready to be of service to other people.

- † **Simplicity** - In ordinary speech the word "simplicity" sometimes designates an undesirable characteristic, namely, an incapacity for dealing with ideas or situations of any complexity, an inadequacy that stems from either a defect of intelligence or a want of native shrewdness. In reference to the spiritual life, however, simplicity has two uses, in both of which it signifies commendable qualities. One of these is necessary to the virtuous man, and the other is of counsel. As a necessary quality, it is a disposition firmly opposed to deceit, double-dealing, hypocrisy, dissimulation, and duplicity of every kind. Jesus noted this trait in Nathaniel (Jn 1.47; for other scriptural references, see Jb 1.1; Prv 2.21–22). As a counsel of perfection, simplicity is the undivided intention of heart and the singleness of purpose of those free from voluntary imperfection and who seek God with great purity of intention. For those who lack this quality, God is not loved perfectly, *ex toto corde* (with all one's heart); the eye of the soul is not full of light (Mt 6.22); and intentions are less worthy, even if they are not strictly opposed to the love of God, they still clutter the heart.
- † **Charity** - is held to be the ultimate perfection of the human spirit, because it is said to both glorify and reflect the nature of God. Confusion can arise from the multiple meanings of the English word "love". As other theological virtues, Charity is divinely infused into the soul; it resides in the will. According to Aquinas, charity is an absolute requirement for happiness, which he holds as man's last goal. Charity has two parts: love of God and love of man-both include love of one's neighbor and of one's self.
- In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul places the greater emphasis on Charity (Love). "So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love."
- † **CCC 2013** - "All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity.
- † **CCC 1823** - Jesus makes charity the new commandment. By loving his own "to the end," He makes manifest the Father's love which He receives. By loving one another, the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." and again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
- † **CCC 953** - Communion in charity. In the *sanctorum communion* (communion of saints), "None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individual members of it." "Charity does not insist on its own way."
- † **CCC 1822-1929** – Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God.

As fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the commandments of God

and Christ: "Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love."

Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies." The Lord asks us to love as He does, even our enemies. He asks us to make ourselves neighbors of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ Himself.

The Apostle Paul has given an incomparable depiction of charity: "charity is patient and kind, charity is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Charity does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Charity bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (1Cor 13)."

"If I . . . have not charity," adds the Apostle Paul, "I am nothing." Whatever my privilege, service, or even virtue, "if I . . . have not charity, I gain nothing." Charity is superior to all the virtues. It is the first of the theological virtues: "So faith, hope, charity abide, these three. But the greatest of these is charity."

The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which "binds everything together in perfect harmony." It is the form of the virtues, it articulates and orders them among themselves; it is the source and goal of Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of Divine Love.

The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of being the children of God. He no longer stands before God as a slave, in servile fear, or as a mercenary looking for wages, but as a child responding to the love of Him who "first loved us":

If we turn away from evil out of fear of punishment, we are in the position of slaves. If we pursue the enticement of wages, we resemble mercenaries. Finally, if we obey for the sake of the good itself and out of love for Him who commands . . . then we are in the position of children.

The fruits of charity are joy, peace, and mercy. Charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction. It is benevolent. It fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous. It is friendship and communion. Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. Love is the goal for which we run, we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.



Morals

- † Loving God and solidarity with the poor and suffering are inseparable.
- † Practicing generosity that supports the weak, consoles the afflicted, relieves suffering and restores dignity to those stripped of it, is a condition for a fully human life.
- † The ability to stretch forth our hand shows that we possess an innate capacity to act in ways that give meaning to life.
- † To have love and knowing that love is one of sharing, dedication, and service, we are born to the realization that we were first loved and are awakened to love.



Simple Activities

Activity: Stretch forth our hand

- † This activity includes financial support, by organizing a “Feeding program” to a certain community or group of persons that are in the extreme need of food.
- † Make the learners see and participate in this kind of activity to help them realize the value of generosity and of helping the poor and that, they may appreciate what they have in their own table.

Song Analysis (see next page)



Photo from the Archdiocese of Capiz



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan

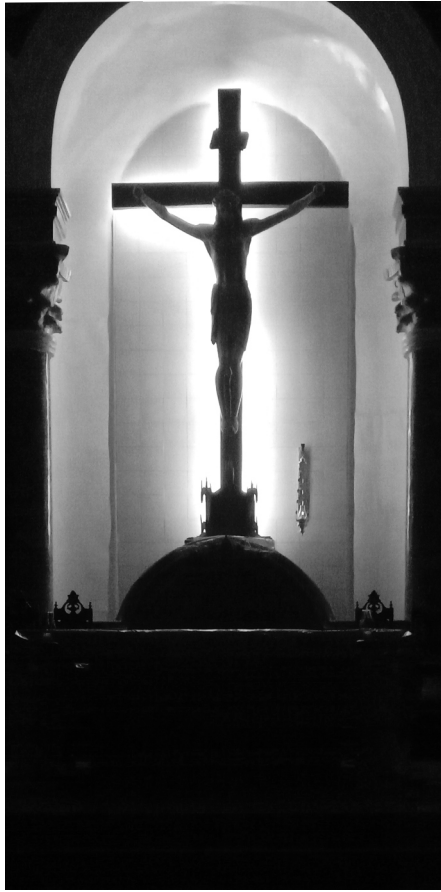


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

One Bread, One Body

Chorus:

One bread, one body,
one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many,
throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.

Gentile or Jew,
servant or free,
woman or man no more.

Many the gifts,
many the works,
one in the Lord of all.

Grain for the fields,
scattered and grown,
gathered to one for all.



Worship

Prayer for the poor and needy

Lord God, You came to give honor to the least, those forgotten, overlooked and misjudged. You came to give first place to the last, to those left behind, misunderstood and undervalued. You came to give a warm welcome to the lost, those who are orphaned, abandoned and destitute. Help us to be your ears to listen to their cries. Help us to be Your voice speaking Out love and acceptance. Help us to be Your feet walking beside those in need. Help us to be Your hands to clothe, feed and shelter them. You came for the least, the lost and last of this world. Lord, hear our prayer. *Amen*



Zeal for Mission

- † • As a member of the Body of Christ, we must **PARTICIPATE** in union with the Universal church to fight against the poverty of body and spirit
- † **PRACTICE** the virtue of poverty as part of detachment to the material world and let God fill the heart of everyone with His love and mercy
- † **INITIATE** with your family, colleagues, and neighborhood or with the parish a program that helps the poor
- † **LIVE** in a simple way of life and have a grateful heart to have a happy heart

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: “YOU DID IT TO ME”

‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ (Mt 25:40)

seeking human recognition. They are those about whom Jesus said, “Whatever you have done or not done to one of these the least of my brothers and sisters that you have done or not done to me” (Mt. 25:40). Jesus makes himself one with the poor (Villegas, 2014b).”

“Our relationship with our neighbor is bound with our relationship with God; our relationship to the love of God, saving us through Christ, is shown to be effective in the love and service of people. The Christian love of neighbor and justice cannot be separated (Synod of Bishops, 1971).” An honest assessment of our ways of dealing with the poor whom God brings in our lives – our neighbors, our colleagues, our students, our employees, our parishioners, our political constituencies – is called for, especially when these ways impact not just individual lives but also the common good. To the poor, we owe love, as God loved us first. That entails not just sentimentality. That entails justice.

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1:26). The scripture makes it clear that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. This radical claim is the source of our belief in the inherent and inviolable dignity of every human person. The dignity of the human person is the cornerstone of all Catholic social teaching.

Being made in God’s image, we are all God’s children. This is true no matter where we are born and no matter what our economic or social circumstance is. It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life, which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards ‘having’ rather than ‘being’ (Centesimus Annus 36). Moreover, it’s the Church’s desire that the poor should rise above poverty and wretchedness, and should better their condition in



Introduction

It is the fundamental encounter with Jesus that must guide our response to the poor. The poor are not just curious ciphers on a statistical report. The poor are not just the unlettered, and unwashed. They are not, the uninitiated, the uneducated, the unhealthy, and the naked. They could also be the exploited, the trafficked, and the infirm. They are also those who gaze into our eyes,



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

life (Rerum Novarum 23). Thus, all the members of the Church and all Christians in the world are called to make, promote and provide a Church of and for the poor, and to fight against the poverty of man, both materially and spiritually.



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 25:34-46

Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw You hungry and gave

You food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and gave You clothing? And when was it that we saw You sick or in prison and visited You?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of My family, you did it to Me.’ Then He will say to those at His left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from Me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave Me no food, I was thirsty and you gave Me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome Me, I was naked and you did not give Me clothing, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”



Doctrine

† *Human Dignity*

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

- † **CCC 357** - Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses Human dignity. He is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. Moreover, he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.

† **YOUCAT 280 - What reasons do Christians give for human dignity?** Every person, from the first moment of his life in the womb, has an inviolable dignity, because from all eternity God willed, loved, created, and redeemed that person and destined him for eternal happiness (CCC 1699-1715). If human dignity were based solely on the successes and accomplishments of individuals, then those who are weak, sick, or helpless would have no dignity. Christians believe that human dignity is, in the first place, the result of God's respect for us. He looks at every person and loves him as though he were the only creature in the world. God has looked upon even the least significant child of Adam. Thus, that person possesses an infinite worth, which must not be destroyed by men.

† **CCC 1930** - Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of moral legitimacy of every authority: by refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy. If it does not respect them, authority can rely only on force or violence to obtain obedience from its subjects. It is the Church's role to remind men of good will of these rights and to distinguish them from unwarranted or false claims.

† ***Common Good***

† **CCC 1906** - Common good is to be understood as "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily." Common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. It consists of three essential elements:

† **CCC 1907** - First, common good presupposes respect for the human person. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of every human person. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, common good resides in the conditions that allow for the exercise of natural freedoms. It is indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as "the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard privacy, and rightful freedom, also in matters of religion."

† **CCC 1908** - Second, common good requires the social well-being and development of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on.

† **CCC 1909** - Finally, common good requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means, the security of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defense.



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

- † **CCC 1910** - Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such. It is in the political community where its complete realization is found. It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, and intermediate bodies.

- † **GS 76; CCC 2246** - It is part of the Church's mission "to pass moral judgments even in matters related to politics, whenever the fundamental rights of man or the salvation of souls requires it. The means, the only means, she may use are those which are in accord with the Gospel and the welfare of all men according to the diversity of times and circumstances."

- † **CCC 1780** - The dignity of the human person implies and requires uprightness of moral conscience. Conscience includes the perception of the principles of morality (synderesis); their application in the given circumstances by practical discernment of reasons and goods; and judgment about concrete acts yet to be performed or already performed. The truth about moral good, stated in the law of reason, is recognized practically and concretely by the prudent judgment of conscience. We call a man prudent whose actions are in conformity with this judgment.

- † **CCC 1781** - Conscience enables one to assume responsibility for the acts performed. Whether man commits good or evil, his conscience remains within him as the witness to the universal truth of the good or evil of his particular choice. The verdict of the judgment of conscience remains a pledge of hope and mercy. In attesting to the fault committed, it calls to mind that forgiveness must be asked, and the good that must still be practice. This is a virtue that must be cultivated constantly with the grace of God: We shall . . . reassure our hearts before Him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and He knows everything.

- † **CCC 1782** - Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom to personally make moral decisions. "He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters."



Faith Response

- † Evangelize, not only in words, but also in action that bring justice to all! The Gospel of God's love is for all. It touches all and uplifts all. It excludes no one.
- † Manifest personal conversion through a concrete sign of love toward those in need, recognizing in them the face of Christ and repeating, as if almost face-to-face: "I was poor, I was marginalized ... and you welcomed me."
- † Live the commandment of love and of respect for human dignity to all the members of the society.
- † Practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy



Human Values/Virtues

† Generosity

- † Generosity inspires gratitude, and gratitude inspires generosity. God is generous to us, and our generosity, as St. Paul tells us, gives proof of our gratitude towards God (2 Cor. 9:11). In gratitude we are human; in generosity we are divine: "You received without pay, give without pay" (Mt. 10:8).
- † Generosity is the virtue of giving not taking. Generosity is giving to another person something of yours as an act of freewill, without obligation. Generosity requires an awareness of your own freedom—I choose to give this gift—and the decision to make good use of that freedom—I choose to do well.
- † Although we may think first of generosity in monetary terms, non-monetary gifts, such as time, encouragement, hope, laughter, hospitality, service, and forgiveness, may have the most value.

If you are giving to right a wrong, then you are acting from justice, not generosity. If you are giving out of a sense of obligation, then you are acting from reciprocity, and not generosity.

If you are giving out of a sense of loyalty, then you are acting from solidarity, not generosity.

If you are giving out of a sense of self-interest, then it is selfishness, not generosity. If you are giving to someone you love, then you are acting from love, not generosity. Generosity is your decision to act in opposition to hate, contempt, envy, anger, and even indifference (Macomber, 2009, p. 224).

† Solidarity

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences are. We are our brothers and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice." The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

† Justice

Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the "virtue of religion." Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of everyone and to establish harmony in human relationships that will promote equity with regard to persons and the common good. Habitual right thinking and the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbor often distinguish the just man, mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, "You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great, but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor." "Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven" (CCC 1807).

Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority (CCC 1928).



Morals

- † As followers of Christ, we are challenged to make fundamental 'option for the poor' – to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenseless, to and to leave a positive impact on the lives of the poor.
- † As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, but those with the greatest needs require the greatest response.
- † As individuals and as a nation, therefore, we are called to make a preferential 'option for the poor'. The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one's neighbor as one's self.
- † God's gifts are given to be shared (2 Cor 9:6-15).
- † Faith without works is dead (James 2:14-18).



Simple Activities

Activity: Bring Me

- † Let the learners think of their most valued thing that they have in their possession.
- † Ask them to give it to the facilitator and let the facilitator keep these things but out of sight of the learners
- † Ask every learner their reason why they choose that particular thing to be their most valued possession
- † Ask them if they are ready to give that thing to other people
- † Explain to them the value of generosity. The love that entails sacrifice and the value of detachment.

Song Analysis

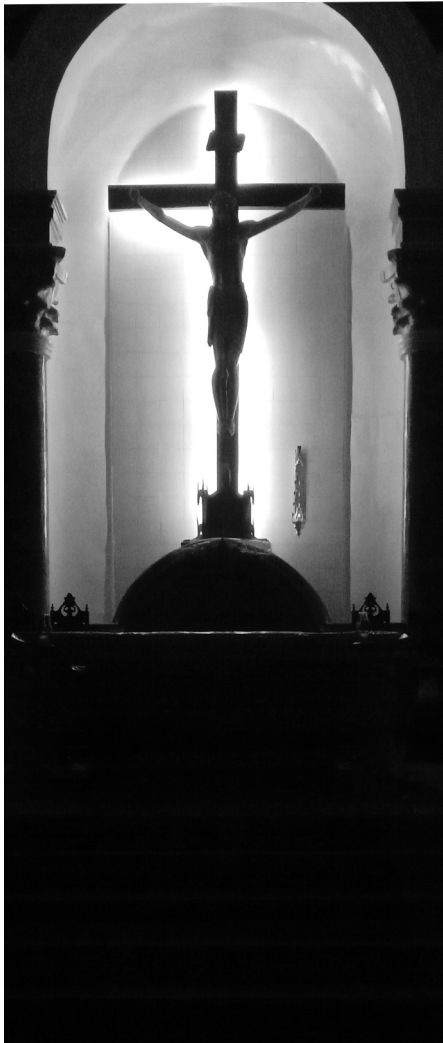


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

Panalangin Sa Pagiging Bukas Palad

Song by Bukas Palad Music Ministry

Panginoon, turuan Mo akong maging bukas palad.
Turuan Mo akong maglingkod sa Iyo.
Na magbigay ng ayon sa nararapat.
Na walang hinihintay mula Sayo.

Na makibakang di inaalintana
Mga hira na dinaranas

Sa twina'y mag sumikap na
Hindi humahanap ng kapalit na kagaghinaan.

Na di naghihintay kundi ang aking mabatid.
Na ang loob mo'y syang sinusundan.

Panginoon, turuan mo akong maging bukas palad.
Turuan mo akong maglingkod sa Iyo.
At magbigay ng ayon sa nararapat.
Na walang hinihintay mula sayo.



Worship

God, thank You for the abundance of life, relationships, health, comfort, and wealth that You have provided. Thank You that even in times of need, despair, and brokenness, You are there. Please, put Your arms around children and families in extreme poverty so they feel comfort and hope. Meet their needs both physically and spiritually. Moreover, Lord, guide me so I can be Your hands and feet pursuing justice for the poor and upholding the cause of the needy. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **TO PROMOTE** a church that is for the poor that loves the poor and shows them mercy in body and soul.
- † **TO MAKE** a church that is poor and is humble before the poor and suffering, a Church that imitates Christ, who in His mercy opens Himself to love and be loved even by sinners.
- † **TO CREATE** a church that is poor and for the poor, that knows the depths of the mercy of God and so understands that ignorance of the poor is ignorance of Christ.
- † **TO PRAY** for a church of the poor that struggles to keep Christ's commandment to care for the poor out of charity. "We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.... We are called to find Christ in them."

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Song Reference

HESUS NA AKING KAPATID

Lyrics: Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Artist: Himig Heswita

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Himig-Heswita-2/Hesus-Na-Aking-Kapatid>

CRY FOR THE POOR

Artist: John Foley, SJ

Information on this song is publicly available @ <http://www.songlyrics.com/john-foley-s-j/the-cry-of-the-poor-lyrics/>

GOD OF THE POOR (BEAUTY FOR BROKENNESS)

Artist: Graham Kendrick

Information on this song is publicly available @ https://hymnary.org/text/beauty_for_brokenness

ONE BREAD, ONE BODY

Artist: John Michael Talbot

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://genius.com/John-michael-talbot-one-bread-one-body-lyrics>

PANALANGIN SA PAGIGING BUKAS PALAD

Artist: Bukas Palad Music Ministry

Information on this song is publicly available @ http://www.bukaspalad.com/songs/panalangin_sa_pagiging_bukas_palad



University of Santo Tomas' (UST) contribution to 500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines

A Research-based Intervention Outcome of selected catechists and catechetical leaders inspired by the findings of the National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2016-2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project implemented by the Research Center for Social Sciences & Education (RCSSD), University of Santo Tomas (UST).