



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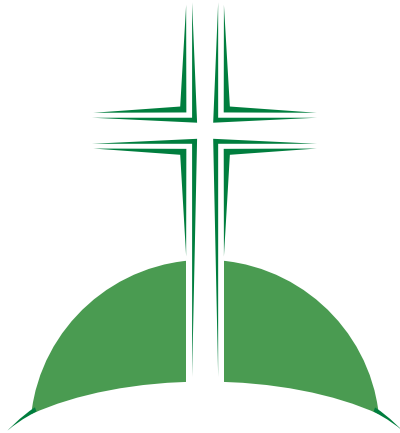
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*For the Faith-driven Servants, Front-liners,
and the hidden treasures of the Philippine
Catholic Church - our beloved Filipino
Catechists*

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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, Diyalogo 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.

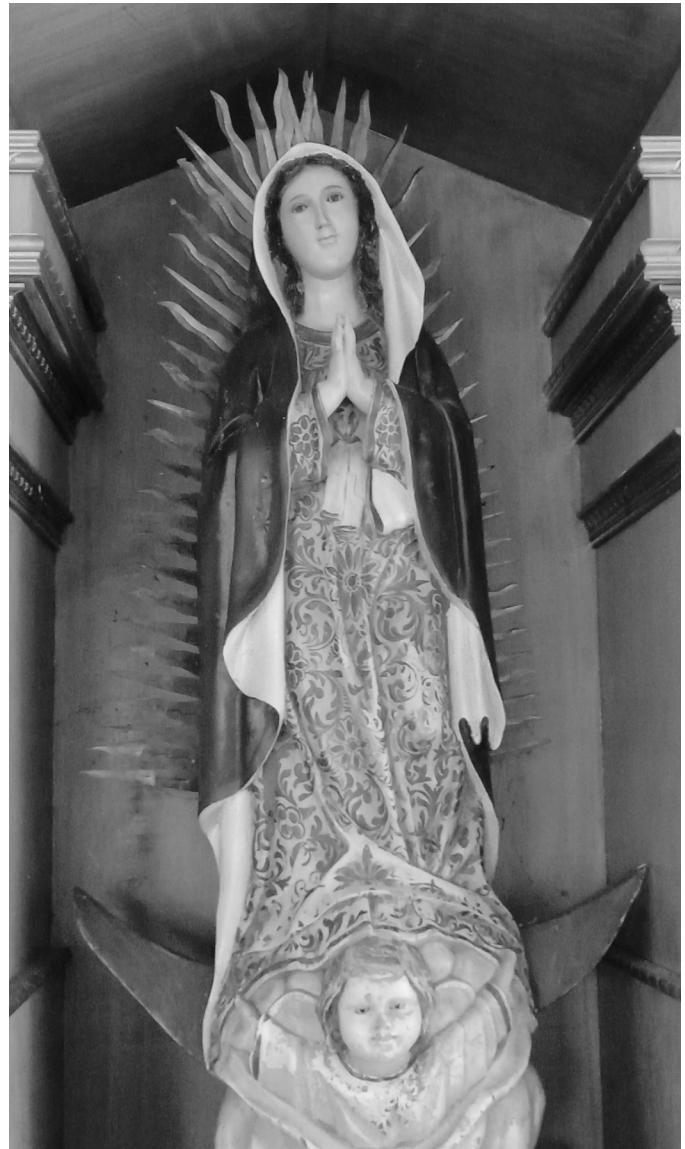
The updated module design was a by-product of a series of consultations and assessments. The laborious technical assistance was provided by Jaycar P. Espinosa whose outputs became the basis for the finalization of modules. At the crucial time of

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 Tradendae* 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 (Evangeliu 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 "ongoing 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 unflinchingly 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 Triune 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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Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)
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500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines (1521-2021)

CATECHETICAL MODULES

Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission

CATECHETICAL MODULE 1: Integral Faith Formation

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 1: INTEGRAL FAITH FORMATION

Overview

The Meaning and Necessity of Faith

What is faith? Faith is first a personal adherence of man to God. At the same time, and inseparably, it is a free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed (CCC 150). In faith, one must surrender one's whole being to God in His love and wisdom. By faith, one freely commits oneself entirely to God (DV 5). This is what it really means when the faithful utters, "I believe in God." Faith is the virtue of saying "yes" to the truth taught in the Sacred Scriptures and in the living Tradition of the Church (See Pastoral Letter on the Year of Faith). Faith, then, involves the total person, his heart and mind. It "touches every part of Him/her--his/her mind (believing), his/her will (doing), and his/her hearts (trusting) (CFC 128).

The Impact of Secularism on Filipino Faith

In truth, the Filipino faith is deep and simple. Filipino Catholics are not embarrassed to perform religious rites, like making the Sign of the Cross in any public place, or to display religious images or articles in vehicles. Many even dare to follow religious practices in places where the faith is banned.

But there is also a danger of a faith that is not well-transmitted to the individuals. The faith now is largely uninformed, prone to ritualism and pietism, tending towards the externals of prayer and sacraments without understanding their meaning (Pastoral Letter on the Year of Faith). Faith that is practiced only externally is hypocrisy and can make people feel alienated. This can lead to secularism which separates the practice of faith from public life. Thus, little knowledge is dangerous, that is why there must be a careful way of practicing such piety in liturgical activities. Likewise, there should be a proper transmission of faith by the competent authority of the Church or a well-informed catechist (CCC 2472). Hence, materialism and secularism are worrisome issues that contradict a life of faith towards conversion of heart and mind to Christ. If the faith is well-informed and has Christ at the center, it would be easier to defeat all challenges that hinder the call to a renewed integral evangelization.

Knowledge and Deepening of Faith

Sacred Scriptures and Tradition, Vatican II Documents, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* supplemented by the Catholic Social Doctrine of the Church are the fundamental references of knowing and deepening the faith (Pastoral Letter on the Year of Faith). In reality, not all Filipino Catholics are able or can be expected to read these books and understand them. There should be guidance from pastors, consecrated persons, catechists, and religion teachers. However, knowledge of faith is not enough. There

should also be a personal encounter with Christ, an eagerness to know Jesus and see how Christ works in the lives of the people. In reading the Catechism for Filipino Catholics it must be noted that what is presented in that book is not theory but an encounter with a Divine Person who lives within the Church (PF 11). God is not a mere concept, thus, an encounter with Him should not only stay in the mind. Rather, God must be experienced in our daily endeavors.

Faith is principally celebrated through the liturgy. It is a good opportunity to strengthen our faith through the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, which is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed to and the source from which all Her power flows (Sacrosanctum Concilium 10). In the Eucharist, we also rediscover the content of faith that is professed, celebrated, lived, and prayed (Fidei Depositum 116). As the Church celebrates the liturgy in accordance with their true profession of faith and correct interpretation, they remember the memorial of the Paschal Mystery of Christ.

Living the Faith

How should the Catholic faithful live out their faith? The Catholic faithful should remember to live a truly moral life, a life of fidelity to God's command. The Ten Commandments of the Lord are summarized into two: love of God and love of neighbor. Therefore, faith demands genuine love of neighbour. Thus, charity is summed up as faith in action. To strive to live a truly moral life is to journey on the way of discipleship, of being united in mind and heart with Jesus (Final



Photo from Archdiocese of Capiz

Statement of 4th Federation of Asia Bishops' Conference Plenary, 4-8). Faith is a gift to be proclaimed, communicated, and shared. That is why the final mandate of the Lord to His Apostles is to go and make disciples of all nations, and to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19-20). It is also the same mandate to all the people of God to become witnesses of a good Christian life and share the same faith to others. The Catholic faithful can live their authentic faith and shared it to others by living witness of poverty and detachment, freedom in the face of the powers of this world and fidelity to the Lord Jesus (*Instrumentum Laboris* 158). In short, it entails that depth of witnessing. When one is truthfully penetrated by the Word of God into his/her mind and heart, he/she is moved to be more concerned, sympathetic and affectionate to the needs of his/her brethren who is an image of God. In result, he/she will never fail to proclaim the Good News to others.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- a. Faith is at the heart of pastoral renewal. Thus, may the faithful see that faith must be authentically formed and renewed based on reading the signs of the times without abandoning the rich tradition of our faith (Contents of God's self-revelation, which is found in Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Tradition, and the meaning of the Creed).
- b. The faithful must realize that the center of our faith is Christ which can be found in the Church, in the classroom, at home, in society/community, in cultures, in politics and even in one's private life.

- c. The faithful must realize that they need a community to belong to because true faith in the Incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving and from membership in the community of the Church.
- d. To translate into action our faith in the Lord, a continuous service to God and others is necessary. This is done, worshiping God, having a love for prayer, practicing the sacraments, reconciling with others and living an authentic Christian life.

Etymology

Faith generally corresponds to the **Greek** noun πίστις (pistis) or to the **Greek** verb πιστεύω (pisteuo), meaning "to trust, to have confidence, to be reliable, or to assure". Faith in Latin word is *fides* and may refer to: Faith, trust, loyalty, or fidelity, or a religious belief.

Faith means belief, firm persuasion, assurance, firm conviction, faithfulness. Faith is confidence in what we hope for and believe in the assurance that the Lord is working, even though we cannot see it. Faith knows that no matter what the situation—in our lives or someone else’s—that the Lord is working in it.

Catechetical Context

CBCP Pastoral Exhortation on the Era of New Evangelization

We look forward with gratitude and joy to March 16, 2021, the fifth centenary of the coming of Christianity to our beloved land. We remember with thanksgiving the first Mass celebrated on Limasawa Island on Easter Sunday March 31 that same blessed

year. We remember the baptism of Rajah Humabon who was given his Christian name Carlos and his wife Harah Amihan who was baptized Juana in 1521. Our eyes gaze on the Santo Niño de Cebu, the oldest religious icon in the Philippines, gift of Ferdinand Magellan to the first Filipino Catholics that same year. Indeed 2021 will be a year of great jubilee for the Church in the Philippines.

We shall, therefore, embark on a nine-year spiritual journey that will culminate with the great jubilee of 2021. It is a grace-filled event of blessings for the Church starting October 21, 2012 until March 16, 2021.

How providential indeed that on October 21 this year, the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI will add another Filipino to the canon of Saints of the Church, our very own Visayan proto-martyr Pedro Calungsod, who gave his life for the faith on the morning of April 2, 1672 in Guam.

The canonization of Pedro Calungsod will take place under the brilliant light of the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11. This same day also marks the twentieth anniversary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the

**Looking Forward to
Our Five Hundredth
Go and make
disciples...
(Mt. 28:19)**

commencement of the Year of Faith that will end on November 24, 2013. These events will take place during the celebration of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that will be held in Rome from October 7 to 28, 2012 on the theme, “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.”

FAITH AND EVANGELIZATION

All these events are bound together by the theme of “faith” and “evangelization”. Evangelization is the proclamation, witness and transmission of the Gospel given to humanity by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the opening up of people’s lives, society, culture and history to the Person of Jesus Christ and to His living community, the Church.

The mission of all of us who are called to take part in the “New Evangelization” is the Church’s own essential mission, as it was the mission of Jesus Himself also. Of this basic truth Pope Benedict XVI reminded us, in his first announcement of the Year of Faith:

“The new evangelizers are called to walk first on this Way that is Christ, to make others know the beauty of the Gospel that gives life. And on this Way, one never walks alone but always in company, an experience of communion and brotherhood that is offered to all those we meet, to share with them our experience of Christ and of his Church. Thus testimony combined with proclamation can open the hearts of those who are seeking the truth so that they are able to arrive at the meaning of their own life.”

Hence, the Pope said that the Year of Faith will be a “moment of grace and commitment for an ever fuller conversion to God, to strengthen our faith in Him, and to proclaim Him with joy to the people of our time” (Benedict XVI, Homily at the Mass for the New Evangelization, October 16, 2011).

THREE FACES OF EVANGELIZATION

To better understand the New Evangelization, let us first place it within the comprehensive context of the Church’s mission of Evangelization. “In its precise sense, Evangelization is the *missio ad gentes* directed to those who do not know Christ. In a wider sense, it is used to describe ordinary pastoral work, while the phrase ‘New Evangelization’ designates pastoral outreach to those who no longer practice the Christian faith” (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization, December 3, 2007, 12).

The New Evangelization, therefore, is primarily addressed to the baptized in the Christian West - who are experiencing a new existential and cultural situation, which, in fact, has imperiled their faith and their witness.” This is a situation which Pope Benedict XVI has described as an ‘interior desert’ which “has virtually eliminated any question of God” (XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris*, 86).

It is a crisis “bearing in itself traces of the exclusion of God from people’s lives, or a generalized indifference toward the Christian faith itself, to the point of attempting to marginalize it from public life” (Benedict XVI, Address to the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, May 30, 2011).

Nevertheless, in fact, the cultural situation so described applies as well to certain parts of Africa, Asia-Oceania, and South America. Referring to Africa, Pope Benedict XVI observed that the situation in the continent call Christians “to reawaken their enthusiasm for being members of the Church...to live the Good News as individuals, in their families and in society and to proclaim it with fresh zeal to persons near and far” (Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* 160, 2011).

While the Christian West must deal with the challenge of secularism, materialism, and relativism leading to the abandonment of faith, the same problem to a lesser degree is posed to the “younger Churches,” especially those sectors that are highly influenced by great social and cultural changes. These, too, are “fertile ground for New Evangelization” (*Instrumentum Laboris* 89).

More specifically, following the lead of Blessed Pope John Paul II (*Redemptoris Missio*, 37-38) the New Evangelization has to be directed to the cultural, social, political, economic civic, scientific and technological, communications and religious dimensions of life. All these have been deeply influenced by the globalizing secularist and materialist culture.

The pastoral situation calls on the whole Church, the faithful, to participate in “overcoming the separation of the Gospel from life and reconstructing, in the everyday activities of the home, work and society, the unity of life which finds its inspiration in the Gospel and, from the same Gospel, the strength to realize it fully” (cf. John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* 30, 1988).

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION FOR THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES

Concern for the New Evangelization has been the overall theme of not only the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) in 1991 but also of the National Mission Congress for the New Millennium (NMC) held in Cebu in September/October 2000. This was also the theme 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 terms 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 and congregations, and a good number of lay institutes and organizations have also held, on the national level, analogous conferences since PCP-II.

Thus we, 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.

This task of New Evangelization calls us to continue more 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 the 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!

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL ROOTS

We need here only to hear again the great commandment for mission, the mission mandate of Christ Jesus Himself, “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (John 20:21) and “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, until the end of time” (Mt 28: 19-20). Indeed the letter to Timothy tells us that “God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (I Tim 2:4). Moreover, Paul says that “everyone who invokes the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom 10:13). However, he goes on to point out that no one can come to believe in Jesus Christ if he has not heard the Word of God. Then the message that awakens faith has to be proclaimed by messengers sent out for the task. “So then, faith comes from hearing the message and the message comes through preaching Christ” (Rom 10:17)

Vatican II taught us that “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature” (LG 2). The Church exists out of her faith in Jesus the Word incarnate sent by the Father, a faith generated by the Holy Spirit. In addition, the Church exists in order to bring the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ to all people under the guidance of the same Spirit. The missionary mandate of the Church, however has assumed new forms and methods in the history of the Church, depending on situations and historical moments.

After the 1974 Synod of Bishops that was devoted to Evangelization in the Modern World, we heard from Pope Paul VI in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* issued in 1975 the immortal words. These words were, “For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence, transform humanity from within and make it new” (EN 18). Therefore, the Church’s evangelizing mission, as always but more so in our contemporary time, should not only cover wider geographic areas but also people’s criteria for judgment, values, and points of interest, mindsets, and lifestyles (EN 19). In other words, evangelization must affect and transform the newly emerging cultures.

At that time Paul VI was already aware that “the split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times” (EN 20). PCP II called it the dichotomy between faith and ordinary life. Blessed Pope John Paul II has constantly repeated this basic insight in his call for a New Evangelization. The Church, in complete fidelity to the Gospel and Tradition, cannot “simply appeal to its former Christian heritage” but must discover how to conform herself “with the person and message of Jesus” in changing cultures (John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa* 2, 2003).

He invites us to a New Evangelization: “new in its ardor, methods and expressions” (John Paul II, Discourse to XIX Assembly of CELAM, Port au Prince, 1983). The New Evangelization was in fact the common theme of the continental Synods that helped

prepare the Church for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 (see John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Asia* 29). For his part, Pope Benedict XVI humbly admits that faith can no longer be taken as “a self-evident presupposition for life in society” in our changed and changing cultures (Benedict XVI, *Porta fidei* 2, 2011). Therefore, by calling for a Year of Faith, he invites the Church to profess, celebrate and transmit her faith in cultural contexts that have become indifferent or even hostile to the faith.

The New Evangelization, therefore, appeals to the Church to muster her spiritual energy received from the Word and the Spirit in order to discover in diverse cultural settings the signs of hope and action of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Church must be cognizant of the new cultural situations that call on her “to look at the way she lives and transmits the faith” (*Instrumentum Laboris* 49).

The Church in the Philippines will heed the call.



Photo from Archdiocese of Palo



Photo from Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija

OF WHAT WILL THIS ERA OF NEW EVANGELIZATION FOR THE PHILIPPINES CONSIST?

As we initiate concrete activities in pursuit of the New Evangelization at this time, four ‘areas’ or ‘dimensions’ of concern are opened up for us:

First, the intensification of promoting *missio ad gentes* in all our communities, among our lay people, our priests and seminarians, and men and women in consecrated life. Post-World War II Roman Pontiffs have insisted that the Church in the Philippines has a clear “missionary vocation” given by Divine Providence by reasons of history, of geographical location, of the presence of Filipino Christians in so many ‘non-evangelized’ regions of the world. In all of human history, it is today that the number of those who have never met Jesus Christ or heard His Gospel is perhaps at its highest level. How imperative and how urgent it is then that Jesus and His Gospel be made known, and His truth and way of life be witnessed to, by us, to whom 500 years ago the Christian Faith was given as gift!

Secondly, in our part of the world, all evangelization must keep in mind the imperative of “bringing Good News to the poor” (*pauperes evangelizantur*). This holds true of all evangelization, but it has a special relevance and urgency for us and our Filipino “missionary vocation”. We are still a long way from the vision to becoming in truth a “church of the poor”—committed to struggle to bring down poverty among our people, committed to striving to do all we can to help bring about “a civilization of justice and love”.

Thirdly, we must reach out to the many Catholics whose faith-knowledge and faith-practice have been largely eroded and even lost. We have to reach out to former Catholics who have drifted from the Church due to scandals, hurts, unresolved confusions and doubts as well as to Catholics who have in fact turned to other religions and religious traditions. We must counteract the creeping effects of glorified moral relativism and secularism now eating up our people. We must protect the youth from the attraction of individualistic sects that ignore all communitarian norms.

Lastly, we must renew our attention and zeal toward the reawakening, fuller formation and animation of young people and youth groups, in both urban and rural settings. The Philippines is a country of the Young. We cannot insist enough how important and significant, how urgent and crucial the evangelization of our youth is. This, indeed, is pastoral task priority.

A NINE-YEAR ERA OF NEW EVANGELIZATION

As we initiate concrete activities of the New Evangelization, we need to emphasize the absolute necessity of three overriding faith imperatives for our evangelizing efforts to be fruitful.

First, the centrality of the Eucharist. For if “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed” and “is also the fount from which all power flows,” it is “especially from the Eucharist” that “grace is poured forth upon us as from a fountain” (Sacrosanctum Concilium, no. 10). The grace that radiates from the Eucharist has to accompany all our evangelizing efforts.

Second, the necessity of Prayer. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the main agent of evangelization. Every evangelizer, therefore, has to be led and driven by the Spirit, even as Jesus was in His proclaiming of the Kingdom of God (Lk. 3:22; 4:1,14). Moreover, it is through prayer that we are able to listen to the Holy Spirit and do his bidding. It is by the Holy Spirit that we are able to call on God, Abba. It is by the Holy Spirit that we are able to follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and tell His story to others. In our context, our people’s fidelity to prayer through religious devotions and practices – through their popular religiosity and piety – is an enduring witness to their acceptance of the Good News of Jesus. Hence, the New Evangelization has to be accompanied by prayer and contemplation. We are called to rekindle the spirit and practice of prayer among us and foster a renewal of popular religiosity and piety in its different forms and practices.

Third, the necessity of Conversion. The journey to discipleship in Christ begins with conversion, a deep metanoia, a change of mind and heart. Conversion into discipleship leads to telling the story of Jesus as one has seen Him, heard Him, and touched Him in the core of one’s heart. Jesus our Lord of Divine Mercy is a testimony that no evangelization can be fruitful without conversion. “Repent and believe in the Gospel” were the first words of Jesus in his public ministry as recorded by Mark. As Church, all the faithful, and especially we as Pastors, should recognize and confess our own “mea culpas,” and our failures to evangelize credibly and effectively.

With these postulates of the New Evangelization, we respond to the call of the Spirit for a New Evangelization by focusing on the Nine Pastoral Priorities of the Church in the Philippines as the key themes over a nine-year period.

Year 2013: Integral Faith Formation. What a blessing it is that this first pastoral priority coincides with this Year of Faith as declared by the Holy Father! Our pastoral concern goes out to the great many whose faith hardly plays a significant role in daily private and public life. We reach out during this year to those who have drifted away from the Christian faith. We note with sadness the erosion of the faith and our need for true conversion. The Sacred Scriptures and Tradition, Vatican II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Catechism for Filipino Catholics will be fundamental references of the New Evangelization. This is the year of San Pedro Calungsod, who with San Lorenzo Ruiz, provides an exemplary model for the mission of the Church in the Philippines. Integral Faith Formation will focus on the “12 articles of Faith” found in the Apostles Creed. Faith Formation has one objective: a more intimate relationship between Jesus and his followers. Blessed John Paul uses the three phrases: evangelization with “new methods, new expressions, and new fervor.” In the end, the Church follows the way of holiness through conversion and discipleship.

Year 2014: Laity. This year especially celebrates both the sacrament of Baptism by which all the faithful become God’s sons and daughters and the sacrament of Confirmation by which they become witnesses of Christ to others. Yet the gifts of the Holy Spirit through these sacraments often remain dormant. This year is to be devoted to the renewal of the laity, to their “empowerment” or more accurately to activating their charisms from the Spirit, so that they may indeed take up their role as co-responsible agents of evangelization and lead in the task of social transformation. In this regard, of paramount global importance is the ecological challenge of climate change.

Year 2015: The Poor. This year was dedicated to committing ourselves more firmly to our vision of becoming truly a Church of the Poor. The new evangelization is also a powerful call from the Lord to follow in His footsteps to be evangelically poor. How far have we journeyed in our vision of Church? How shall we assist the materially poor to face the challenges of hunger and poverty, of globalization and climate change?

In addition, together with them, how will we eradicate the evil of corruption and the economic and political imbalances of our society? At the same time, we realize that the materially poor in our midst have the God-given power to tell the story of the poor Christ who by His poverty liberates and enriches us. The whole Church, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, have to be in solidarity in the work of restoring integrity and truth, justice and peace – love – in our benighted land.

Year 2016: The Eucharist and of the Family. This was a year of great blessing for us. The Holy Father chose Cebu as the host of the Fifty-first International Eucharistic Congress. We focus our pastoral action on making the Eucharist better appreciated and its missionary implication better lived by the Catholic faithful. We especially emphasized on forming the



Photo from Diocese of Urdaneta

Filipino Family as a Eucharistic community of parents and children, true to its name as a domestic church, rooted in the Eucharist. An evangelized family is an evangelizing family. Even as it is increasingly besieged by secularist values, the Family, as PCP-II declared, is “the focal point of evangelization.” We need to intensify our efforts to strengthen marriage and family and protect them from ideas and values that destroy them.

Year 2017: *The Parish as a Communion of Communities*. This was a year when we discerned more deeply not only the structures of governance in our dioceses and parishes but also the quality of faith life in the parish, the fellowship, belongingness, and participation experienced by its members. In a special way, we probed into our efforts of making the parish a communion of communities, a communion of Basic Ecclesial Communities and of covenanted faith-communities and ecclesial movements. We discerned and implemented measures on how communities of consecrated life might be more integrated into the life and mission of the parish. In brief, our focus was the building of a parish that was truly a faith community immersed in the lives of its people.

Year 2018: *Clergy and Religious*. In our culture, clergy and religious are the keys to New Evangelization. Yet they are not immune to the twin errors of a dichotomy of faith and inadequate discipleship of Christ. This was a year dedicated to the integral renewal of the values, mind-sets, behavior, and life-styles of the clergy and the religious. The aim is to become servant-leaders in the manner of the Good Shepherd, to live the spirit of the evangelical counsels and to be authentic prophets of the Good News of Jesus and of the Kingdom. It was a year, too, of revisiting ways of seminary and religious formation, of on-going formation, and of the collaboration of the laity in these crucial approaches to integral growth and development in view of mission and ministry.

Year 2019: *Youth*. It has often been said that the youth are the future of the Church. But at the same time, the youth are also the present of the Church. They are its most numerous members. They inspire us by their active participation in the society and in the Church. The involvement of hundreds of thousands of young people in the various activities of evangelization and social transformation is a call to greater participation in the Church. “New methods, new expressions and new fervor” of evangelization are imperative. We invite the youth to discern deeply their vocation in the world and in the Church, especially the Lord’s invitation for them to the priestly and religious life. How do we, as Church, respond to the aspirations of the youth will shape the third millennium?

Year 2020: *Ecumenism and Inter-Religious Dialogue*. Different faiths and religions are a formidable challenge to a nation that strives to be a community, a human family, a unity in diversity. This year was devoted to exploring new ways of being community through ecumenical and inter-religious relationships and action. Caritas in veritate, open, honest, respectful – loving – dialogue of life, prayer and action is the only way towards community. At stake are the great values of peace and harmony, particularly in areas of armed conflict, solidarity in the struggle for social change, unity in healing social ills, integrity and social justice in our land.

Year 2021: *Missio ad gentes*. We are indeed proud that so many of the Filipino faithful (laity, priests, and religious) are missionaries in all the continents of the world. It is the duty of faith in Christ to tell His story to others, especially to those who have not sufficiently heard of Him. Even as we are deeply inspired by the stories of Overseas Filipino Workers

(OFWs) witnessing to their faith in “ad gentes” regions as well as in highly secularized countries, we need to explore new ways of assisting them as evangelizers. We have been challenged by Blessed John Paul to become the “foremost missionaries” in Asia. This year will be devoted to how we are fulfilling that vocation, how a mission-consciousness in all the faithful can be formed, how each one can be animated into becoming a missionary even at home, and more concretely how parishes and dioceses are supporting our own Philippine-Mission Society.

CALL TO EVANGELIZE

As we launched this nine-year period of New Evangelization for the Church in the Philippines, let us recall the words of Pope Benedict XVI:

Today the world needs people who proclaim and testify that it is Christ Jesus who teaches the art of living, the way of true happiness, because he Himself is the path of life; people who first of all keep their own gaze fixed on Jesus, the Son of God: the word of proclamation must always be immersed in an intense relationship with Him, in the intense life of prayer. Today’s world needs people who speak to God, to be able to speak of God. In addition, we must always remember that Jesus did not redeem the world with beautiful words or ostentatious means but with His suffering and His death.

The law of the grain of wheat that dies in the ground also applies today; we cannot give life to others without giving our own life: “Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel’s will save it,” the Lord tells us (Mark 8:35) It is only through men and women molded in God’s presence that the word of God will continue its journey in the world, bearing its fruit.

Dear friends, being an evangelizer is not a privilege but a commitment that comes from faith Thus I ask you to let yourselves be formed by God’s grace and to respond in docility to the action of the Spirit of the Risen One. Be signs of hope.... Communicate to all the joy of faith to all with the enthusiasm that comes from being driven by the Holy Spirit, because he makes all things new. (Rev 21:5), trusting in the promise that Jesus made to the Church: “And lo, I am with you always, to the end of time!” (Mt. 28:20) [Pope Benedict XVI Address on the New Evangelization, Rome 15 October 2011].

Beloved People of God, we invite you to pray and reflect on what the New Evangelization asks from all of us, from each of us. The Lord of History, without any merits of our own, first gave the priceless gift of the Christian faith to our people and our land, – nearly 500 years ago. Each year, in our own “uniquely Filipino” novena before Christmas Day, our ‘Misa de Gallo’ novena, we thank God’s goodness for this gift of faith, and beg for grace that our people may persevere in it.

In the face of pervasive secularism and materialism, in the midst of billions who have not truly encountered Jesus Christ nor heard of His Gospel, how challenged we must be to embark on the New Evangelization! How can we not want to share Jesus the Way, the Truth and the Life with those who are yet to know and love Him who is the answer to the restlessness of every human heart?

In this Year of Faith and throughout the nine-year period of special New Evangelization – and beyond – let us celebrate our faith. Live Christ, Share Christ!

May our Lady, Mary Mother of Our Lord and the Star of Evangelization intercede for us and guide us in sharing Christ, our Emmanuel, God-with-us now and forever.

Maranatha, AMEN.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

(SGD) † JOSE S. PALMA. D.D.

Archbishop of Cebu

President, CBCP

July 23, 2012

Song for Reflection

“Help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). This was the petition uttered to Jesus by a father, in tears, begging for a healing miracle for his child. Pope Benedict XVI said that the crisis of the Church today is a crisis of unbelief – when many who used to be committed Catholics leave the Church, not so much because they no longer believe the doctrines of the Church, but because they become emotionally insecure, not knowing how their being Catholic can respond to their daily struggles. Even in our Filipino culture, a person stays with a group so long as “*feel ko*”, and leaves when “*hindi ko na feel*.”

Listen to/Sing this song about faith written by Fr. Manoling Francisco, SJ and discover how faith is as much an act of the heart as it is an act of the mind.

PANANALIG

Silvino Borres Jr, S.J.

Manoling Francisco, SJ

Sa puso kong umiibig, walang nananaig,
kundi yaong pananalig sa Sintang iniibig.

KORO:

Hindi Ka man masilayan,
at init Mo'y maglaho nang tuluyan,
pag-ibig ko sa 'Yo at katapan,
mananatili kailan pa man.

Bawat tao'y nalulumbay at di mapalagay,
hangga't hindi nahiHimlay sa puso Mong dalisay.
(Koro)

PANANALIG

Titik : Silvino Borres, nSJ
Manuel Francisco, SJ
Musika: Manuel Francisco, SJ

The musical score is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of ten staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes, and guitar chords are indicated above the staff lines. The lyrics are: "Sa pu - so kong u - mi - i - big, wa - lang na - na - na - ig kun - di ya - ong pa - na - na - lig sa Sin - tang i - ni - i - big. Hin - di ka man ma - si - la - yan, at i - nit Mo'y mag - la - ho nang tu - lu - yan, pag - i - big ko sa 'Yo at ka - ta - pa - tan, ma - na - na - ti - li kai -". The chords used include C, G/B, F/A, C/E, Bb, G7, Am, Am/G, FM7, B4, B7, Em, Am, Dm, G, Fdim, B4, B7, Dm6, G7, FM7, G/F, Em, Am, Dm, Dm7, G7, Gm7, C7, FM7, G/F, Em, Am, Dm, and G7.

lan pa man.

Ba - wat ta - o'y na - lu - lum - bay

at di ma - pa - la - gay

hang - ga't hin - di na - hi - him - lay

sa pu - so Mong da - li - say.

Chords: C, C, 9/B, Am, Am/C, Fm7, B4, B7, Em, Am, Dm, G, Em, Am, F#dim, B4, B7, Dm6, G7

Reflection Questions:

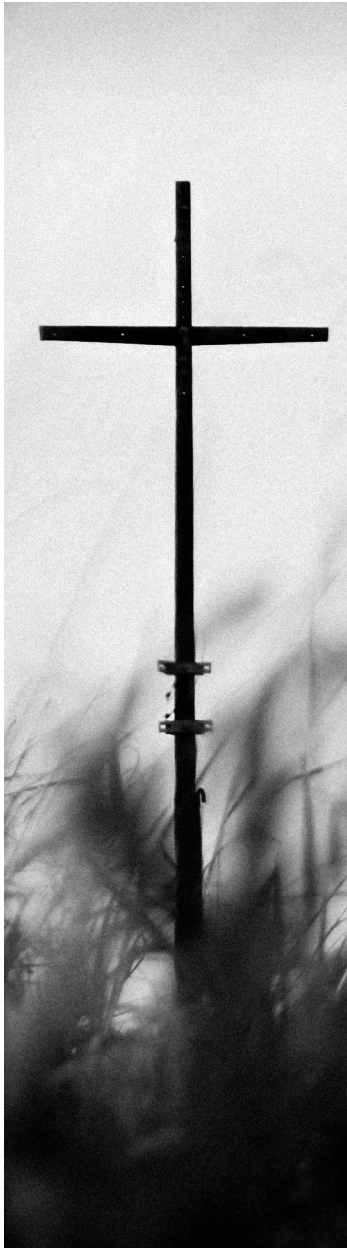
1. Why is a sense of “emotional security” important in keeping Catholics in the Church?
2. How can you grow in this emotional aspect of the faith so as to firm up your membership in the Church?

**“Early in the morning the chief priests met hurriedly with the elders, the teachers of the Law, and the whole Council, and made their plans. They put Jesus in chains, led Him away, and handed Him over to Pilate.”
(Mark 15:1)**

Catechist's Corner

Becoming and being a catechist is an active process of partaking in the educative mission of understanding, learning, and living our Catholic faith. This part of the module offers a glimpse of the empirical narratives in the lives of the catechists, creatively captured in a 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 *integral faith formation (pananampalataya)*.



III SANHEDRIN

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola

When Mother gladly received
Her teaching assignment-
As a new catechist
In a public school,
She prepared for the day
Of her visit to the school
Of her meeting with the principal
To get- the schedule.
Only four time slots to choose from:
Earliest in the morning,
In between breaks,
After lunch,
Or just before dismissal.
Like Jesus
Standing before the Sanhedrin,
She bowed in humble submission
Before the mighty
She held no objection
For her mission to set in motion,
At any given time,
For catechesis to finally begin.
This is the third
Way of the Cross
Of a servant-catechist,
For a meaningful servitude.

GUIDE QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

How many times have we persisted to proclaim our faith in front of our people?

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: WORD MADE FLESH

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of an only Son, coming from the Father, filled with enduring love. (Jn 1:14)



Introduction

It is by the infinite goodness and wisdom of God that pleased Him to reveal Himself and to make known the mystery of His will. His will was that people should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit and thus become sharers in His Divine Nature (CCC 51; DV 2).

The Divine Revelation of God is realized simultaneously "by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other" (DV 2) and shed light mutually for man to be capable of responding to His revelation by knowing Him, loving Him, and adoring Him as his Creator. God reveals Himself to man gradually. He prepares Him by stages culminating in the person and mission of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, (CCC 53) the Son of God made man, the perfect and unsurpassable Word.

God has allowed, through His loving spouse, the Holy Mother Church, that this revelation and faith to One Triune God, arrive in the Philippines. Thus, Filipinos, by virtue of baptism, become followers of Christ. To trace His footsteps in our times means to utter His Words to others, to love with His love, and to live with His life. To cease following Him is to betray our very identity (PCP II 34). Moreover, this expansion of the revelation is actually an accomplishment of the mission of the Church given by our Lord to his disciples, "*go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*" (Mt 28, 19).



Photo from Diocese of Tandag

Our understanding and love of Jesus Christ have been colored by our personal and national historical experiences of pain and struggle, of victory and celebration. All these experiences have somehow defined and clarified our unique identity as persons, as Christians, as Filipinos, and as a nation (CFC 31). Hence, the Plenary Council of the Philippines was held "to take stock of where we are; to look where we are going; to reanimate our life in Christ; and to unite all things in Him (PCP II 7). Our Catholic Faith, therefore, must be "inculturated" within our specific and unique Filipino character which has in part shaped our faith experiences through the years (CFC 32).



Word of God

Gospel of John 1; 1-5,9-14

In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him, and without Him, not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him; yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to what was His own, and His own people did not accept Him. ¹²But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory, the glory as of a father's only Son, full of grace and truth.



Doctrine

To have a deeper knowledge of God's Revelation

What is "Revelation"?

Revelation is God's personal loving communication to us of who He is and His plan to save us all in His love. It is God's reaching out to us in friendship, so we get to know and love Him (CFC, 101).

How does God reveal Himself?

God reveals Himself in:

- † Creating us and everything we see, hear, and touch __ from the beginning till now [natural signs];
- † His words and deeds in Sacred Scripture's record of salvation history, completed and perfected in His Son-made-man, Jesus Christ [Biblical signs];
- † His continuing presence by the Holy Spirit in His people, the Church; [ecclesial signs];
- † The prayer and sacramental worship, doctrine, and moral service of the Church; [liturgical signs];
- † His interior presence (Grace) in our conscience and in all the events of our daily lives, world events, recognized in the "signs of the times" (CFC 102).

How does Christ reveal God to us today?

Christ reveals God to us primarily through the Church, its Sacred Scripture and living Tradition, through which the Holy Spirit comes to us (DV 10; CCC 97; CFC 105).

To understand the role of Jesus, the Word of God in the plan of God's Revelation

How important is Jesus Christ in God's Revelation?

For Christians, it is Jesus who is:

- † the Revealer of God our Father,
- † Himself, the Image and Word of God; and
- † the Final Goal of God's revelation, our ultimate destiny. (CFC 104)

To see clearly the mission and ministry of the Catholic Church in spreading the Gospel.

- † God "wants all men to be saved and come to know the truth" (1 Tim 2:4), and in ways, both hidden and clear, calls all to Christ, who is the goal, the object, and the agent of God's Self-revelation, and "the real light which enlightens every man" (Jn 1:9).
- † Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Scripture grew from the life, worship, and teaching of the early Church. Therefore, the Church is its authentic interpreter, under the active help of the same Holy Spirit (CCC 100; CFC 107).
- † The Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, and all that she believes (DV 8; CCC 98).
- † The mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit (CCC 737).



Faith Response

- † To have the conviction that God, who is the Supreme Being, by His Love and Mercy revealed Himself to man.
- † To have the conviction that God made known His plan of Salvation through Jesus Christ.
- † To have the conviction that God never ceases to establish His friendship with us.
- † To express the Love received from God by loving Him back and our neighbors.



Human Values

The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all moral virtues. God infuses them into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life (CCC 1813).

- † **Faith-** the free, reasonable, personal committed total response to God or the objective of a revealed truth believed in, through the grace of the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:31; Rom 10:9; Heb 11:1; 2 Cor 3:16-18; Acts 16:14; DV 4-5; YOUCAT 21-22).

- † **Hope**-is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1817; YOUCAT 308).
- † **Love** – A theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God (CCC 1822). Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love (CCC 1827; YOUCAT 309).



Morals

- † Man must live in harmony with God and with others, through his faith in the God of love; he is called to put into practice what he believes. The righteous shall live by faith through this reason, the believer seeks to know and do God’s will (Rom 1: 17; Gal 5:6, CCC 1815).
- † To give service and witness to the faith must be considered necessary for the salvation of souls (CCC 1816).
- † Hope for what is infinite, that is, the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love Him and do His will (Mt 7:21; CCC 1821).
- † The believer must imitate the love of Jesus which he, himself has received. Just as how Saint Paul said, “If I have not charity, I am nothing, I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13: 1-4) Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works.



Simple Activities

Activity: Who helps me to know my Faith?

Let the learners get their writing materials and ask them to write all the people whom they think help them to know about God. Let them discuss it one by one and tell the group how that person/s influences their faith.

Song analysis: *Pananalig*

Refer to Module Overview **D. SONG FOR REFLECTION** for the song analysis.

Guide for reflection:

- † How faithful am I with the Lord and with his church?
- † Is my faith based on my feelings or based on the grace of God?
- † What are my actions and words that reflect my faith in God?



Worship

My God, I believe in You, I trust in You, I love You above all things, with all my heart and mind and strength. I love You because You are supremely good and worth loving; and because I love you, I am sorry with all my heart for offending You. Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** the faith by reading the Sacred Scriptures, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Catechism for Filipino Catholics, Social Doctrines, and other documents of the Church
- † **LIVE** the faith by participating in the sacraments especially in the Holy Eucharist
- † **SHARE** the faith through witnessing the Gospel in your daily lives.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2: CONVERSION: SINNERS YET CALLED



Introduction

I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”(Lc 5:32)

Faith-formation must transmit both the content of Christ's moral teachings as well as their implications to bring personal

transformation and conversion to Christian living. The faithful must give witness, both in their private and public lives, to Christ's teaching in everyday life (EG 63). “An authentic faith always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, and to leave this earth somehow better than we found it” (EG 183).

Faith, tied as it is to conversion, is the opposite of idolatry; it breaks away from idols to turn to the living God in a personal encounter. A non-believer may be converted to the faith by rational discourses, or through a heart-felt charity observed from believers, or even through a richly symbolic liturgy faithfully practiced by honorable believers (Lumen Fidei 13). Renewed faith-formation must lead the faithful into a disposition of prayer and reflection. This should be the ordinary environment for all faith formation. This is essential so that the knowledge and practice of the Christian life may be understood and celebrated in its proper context (Pastoral Letter: Year of Faith).

The Gospel reading that is used in this topic came from the account of Luke. It emphasizes that Jesus does not only come to call the righteous people but also the sinners who want to turn away from their sins and repent to God. Hence, repentance is important to *metanoia* or having a change of mind and heart. This should also include virtues that can help us in our conversion, such as: Humility, Acceptance, and Forgiveness. This way, we can continue with our moral life and the zeal of our mission in life as servants of God.



Photos from Diocese of Kalibo



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 5:27-32

²⁷ After this He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth; and He said to him, “Follow me.” ²⁸ And he got up, left everything, and followed Him. ²⁹ Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in His house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table[a] with them. ³⁰ The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to His disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” ³¹ Jesus answered, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; ³² I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance.”



Doctrine

† **SIN** – Sin is more than just an incorrect behavior; it is not just a psychological weakness. In the deepest sense, every rejection or destruction of something good is the rejection of good itself-- the rejection of God. At the core of sin is a rejection of God and the refusal to accept His love. In its most profound and terrible dimension, sin is separation from God. Thus, it is separation from the source of life. That is why death is another consequence of sin. Only through Jesus do we understand the abysmal dimension of sin; Jesus suffered the rejection of God in His own flesh. He took upon Himself the deadly power of sin so that it would not strike us. The term that we use for this is “redemption” (YOUCAT 67).



Photo from Diocese of San Jose (Nueva Ecija)

† **REPENTANCE** – The doctrine of repentance as taught in the Bible as a call for persons to make a radical turn from one way of life to another. The repentance called for throughout the Bible is a summons to a personal, absolute, ultimate, and unconditional surrender to God as Sovereign. The reality of sin is often repressed. Some people even think that guilt feelings should be dealt with merely in a psychological way. But genuine guilt feelings are important. It is like driving an automobile; when the speedometer indicates that the speed limit has been exceeded, the speedometer is not responsible, but the driver is. The closer we come to God, who is all light, the clearer our dark sides come to light as well. Yet, God is not a light that burns but, rather a light that heals. This is why repentance impels us to go into the light wherein we will be completely healed (YOUCAT 229).



Faith Response

We have to admit that all of us have committed mistakes or have done something wrong. We are imperfect human beings. In short, we are all sinners. We need to repent and seek God's forgiveness. God does not qualify. A sin is a sin. Whatever the degree is, it still hurts God. However, as we see in our Gospel reading (Luke 5:32), Christ did not only come for the righteous, but also for sinners who are willing to repent for their sins. As long as He sees us turning away from sins and humbly repenting, He will honor our repentant heart. No matter how grave our sins are, God can and will forgive a truly repentant person. That is how much God loves us.

May we see how sinful we are and how much we hurt God. May we humbly come to Him for forgiveness and may His transforming love penetrate our hearts to heal us from all the hurts and melt away evil in our hearts.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **HUMILITY** – Humility is the quality of being humble. It means putting the needs of another person before our own. It also means not drawing attention to ourselves and acknowledging that we are not always right. In fact, humility is one of the most powerful and significant attributes of growth because being humble helps build trust and facilitates learning. That is why it is important to have this virtue. As Proverbs 11:12 says “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble person comes wisdom. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5).
- † **FORGIVENESS** – When we hold on to hurt, pain, resentment, and anger, it harms us far more than it harms the offender. Forgiveness frees us to live in the present. Reliving the wrong that was done to us only keeps us living in the past and missing today's beauty. Forgiveness allows us to move on without anger or contempt or seeking revenge. As Jesus commanded us, we forgive not seven times, but seventy-seven times. This command actually means everlasting forgiveness.
- † **ACCEPTANCE** – Acceptance is not something that can be forced. Learning how to accept things always begins with not being able to accept them and yet finding a way to do so. It is also important that we accept ourselves for who we really are otherwise; we will only create problems in our life. Acceptance is the key to convert momentary happiness to enduring happiness. It helps us move from feeling happy to actually being happy. We can practice acceptance by acknowledging our own mistakes/sins and turning away from them. Through regular confession, we help ourselves lead a holy life.



Morals

It is very important to maintain a good and healthy relationship with God through worshipping in the Holy Eucharist and communicating with Him in daily prayers. Hardness of heart and not following the commandments of God are the main reasons why sometimes we are aloof in our relationship with Christ. We are loaded with sins that is why we think that we are unworthy of His love. But the truth is, His love is everlasting. When we commit sin, we are putting aside God's love for us. Hence, repentance and other virtues mentioned above are important for conversion (Metanoia). They lead us back into a relationship with Him to become His faithful servants.



Photos from Diocese of Kabankalan

What should we do in repentance? Remember: we can lie to other people and we can lie to ourselves, but we cannot lie to God. If we really want to repent, we need to be humble and admit that we do not always do the right thing. When we are humble before God and know in our hearts what is right, we should live by His Word. We have to believe that God can forgive us and help us lead a better life. If we do not, we will quickly lose motivation to correct our mistakes. Changing bad habits and correcting wrong doings are hard but we have to believe that God is there for us and we will not falter.

It is important to think about why what we did was wrong. Blindly following God's Word only shows Him that we do not acknowledge our sinfulness. Careful reflection on our sins allows us to better see, why it was wrong and helps us in making amends. Think about the people who may have been hurt by our sins and think about what sin does to our soul. Think about the other bad things that that guilt leads us to do.

Repent for the right reasons. Repent because it is good for the soul and it will make life more enjoyable and productive. Do not repent just because of worldly possessions, acclaim, or any other ulterior motives that we hope to get. Repent because our sins have offended God-- He who loves us so much and He to whom we should give all our love. When we repent, we need to correct our erring behavior. We have to stop committing the sins for which we wish to repent from. This is not easy, but we can do it! It will usually take time and a few more mistakes, but if we really mean it and we really wish to repent, we will be able to overcome it and live our life to the fullest.



Simple Activities

Activity: Write a *RESOLUTIONS LIST*

Everyone in the group will write a resolutions list such as: “I will not be lazy,” “I will not utter bad words,” etc. Write as many as you can, even from previous resolutions that you have not done. When all are done writing their resolutions list, the group will form a circle. Members of the group (voluntary) will be encouraged to share their resolutions list with the group. At the center, there is a pot where they will put what they wrote after reading it. After someone has read his/her own resolutions list, the members of the group will affirm the person that even though he/she has committed a mistake, there is still goodness in Him/her. (ex. Adam, I admire your courage for sincerely sharing your resolutions list to us, I want to affirm that even though you made a lot of mistakes in life you are still a lovable person and I believe you can follow through your resolutions). After everyone has shared their resolutions lists, the group must promise to the sacredness of the activity--that they will not tell anybody what they have heard and witnessed, then the facilitator must encourage the group to strive to be true with their resolutions list.

Song Analysis: *Lupa*

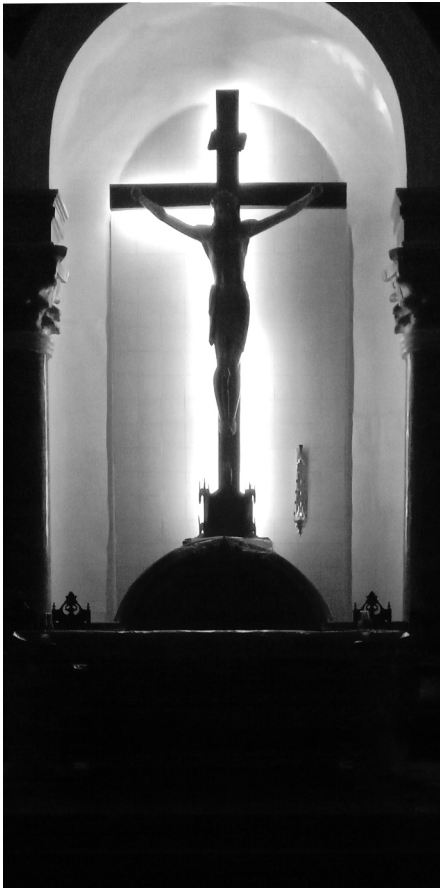


Photo from Diocese of Borongan

LUPA

Rico J. Puno

Nagmula sa lupa
Magbabalik na kusa
Ang buhay mong sa lupa nagmula
Bago mo linisin
Ang dungis ng 'yong kapwa
Hugasan ang 'yong putik sa mukha

Refrain:

Kung ano ang 'di mo gusto
Huwag gawin sa iba
Kung ano ang 'yong inutang
Ay s'ya ring kabayaran

Sa mundong ang buhay
Ay mayroong hangganan
Dahil tayo ay lupa lamang
Kaya't pilitin mong ika'y magbago
Habang may panahon ika'y magbago
Pagamahal sa kapwa ay isipin mo

Guide for reflection:

- † Am I aware that I need to work on my own conversion?
- † Does my encounter with Christ help me see things that I need to change for the better?
- † Do I consider my humble yet Divine Origin and my Divine destination or calling?
- † Does my conversion also encourage others to make amends for their sins?



Worship

Almighty God, Thank you for another day to live. Thank you for another chance to experience Your love. I beg for pardon for all my sins. Sorry for abusing or ignoring Your love. Sorry for hurting You. I humbly come to You with a repentant heart, asking Your forgiveness, and for Your grace to help me live a life pleasing to You. Transform me with Your love and use me to bring Your love to others as well. Heal me and make me whole. AMEN.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW**- To be converted in mind and heart. To follow God's will, it is important to know God's works of salvation or to read inspirational text in sacred scriptures about God's saving love to all humankind.
- † **LIVE** – To live our faith in God, we should always remember that we are weak, and we need God in our lives. Due to our human weaknesses, we commit mistakes. In order to have continuous atonement, we need to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation every time we feel that we are already loaded by our sins.
- † **SHARE** – It is important to have a sense of mission for our brethren. When we encounter our brothers and sisters who are committing sin, we should try to reproach Him/ her and inspire Him/ her to repent. Example: If a person sells a product which is overpriced and is not in good condition, urge him/ her to repent by pointing out to Him/ her that he/ she is not just fooling his/her clients or customers but also God Himself. As the scripture states: "Everything that you do to the least of your brethren, you do it to Me." Likewise, encourage him/her not to cheat again and to confess his/her sins to a priest.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: THE POWER OF ONE



Introduction

From the beginning of man's history, having been created in the image and likeness of God, man, possesses human dignity. He is not just something, but he is someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving Himself and entering into a communion with God, with oneself and with others. Mankind is called by grace into a covenant with his Creator, to offer Him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead (CCC 357).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that catechesis aims to put people in communion with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity (CCC 426).

The concept of communion lies "at the heart of the Church's self-understanding" (Pope John Paul II, 1987). Insofar, as it is the Mystery of the personal union of each human being with the Divine Trinity and with the rest of mankind, initiated with faith (1 Cor 1:9). Likewise, having begun as a reality in the Church on earth, it is directed towards its eschatological fulfillment in the heavenly Church.

"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17: 20-21)



Photo from Diocese of Romblon

If the concept of *communion*, which is not a univocal concept, is to serve as a key to ecclesiology, it has to be understood within the teaching of the Bible and the patristic tradition. *Communion* always involves a double dimension: the *vertical* (communion with God) and the *horizontal* (communion among men). It is essential to the Christian understanding of *communion* that it is recognized, above all, as a gift from God, and as a fruit of God's initiative carried out in the paschal mystery.

The new relationship between man and God, that has been established in Christ and is communicated through the sacraments, also extends to a new relationship among human beings. As a result, the concept of *communion* should be such as to express the sacramental nature of the Church while "*we are away from the Lord*" (Cf. LG 1). It is also this particular unity which makes the faithful into members of one and the same Body, the Mystical Body of Christ (Cf. LG 7), an organically structured community (LG 11), "*a people brought into one by the unity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*" (LG 4), and endowed with suitable means for its visible and social union (LG 9).

Thus, there should be a desire in the community to live with faith, hope and charity that will enable one to uplift his/her communion to the Divine Absolute, and may increase the sense of belongingness of every member of the Church.



Word of God

Gospel of John 17: 14-23

¹⁴I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but I ask You to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; Your Word is truth. ¹⁸As You have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.²⁰ "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As You, Father, are in me and I am in You, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. ²²The glory that You have given Me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³I in them and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. ²⁴



Doctrine

Communion of Man with the Divine Persons

- † **CCC 27** - The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to Himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for: The dignity of man rests above all on the fact that he is called to communion with God. This invitation to converse with God is addressed to man as soon as he comes into being. For if man exists it is because God has created Him through love, and through love, He continues to hold Him in existence. He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts Himself to his creator.
- † **CCC 45** - Man is made to live in communion with God in whom he finds happiness: When I am completely united to you, there will be no more sorrow or trials; entirely full of you, my life will be complete (St. Augustine, Conf. 10, 28, 39: PL 32, 795).

- † **CCC 54** - He invited them to intimate communion with Himself and clothed them with resplendent grace and justice.
- † **CCC 259** - Being a work at once common and personal, the whole divine economy makes known both what is proper to the Divine Persons, and their one divine nature. Hence the whole Christian life is a communion with each of the Divine Persons, without in any way separating them. Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws Him and the Spirit moves Him.
- † **CCC 790** - Believers who respond to God's Word and become members of Christ's Body, become intimately united with Him: "In that body the life of Christ is communicated to those who believe, and who, through the sacraments, are united in a hidden and real way to Christ in His Passion and glorification."
- † **CCC 850** - The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love.
- † **CCC 795** - Christ and His Church thus together make up the "whole Christ" (Christus totus). the Church is one with Christ.

Communion of the Church and Man (Ecclesial Communion)

- † **LG 4** - The Church has been seen as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."
- † **CCC 185** - Communion in faith needs a common language of faith, normative for all and uniting all in the same confession of faith.
- † **LG 27** - The faithful must cling to their bishop, as the Church does to Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, so that all may be of one mind through unity
- † **CCC 780** - The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men.
- † **YOUCAT 129** - Just as there is only one Christ, there can be only one Body of Christ, only one Bride of Christ, and therefore only one CHURCH of Jesus Christ. He is the Head, the Church is the Body. Together they form the "whole Christ" (St. Augustine). Just as the body has many members yet is one, so too the one Church consists of and is made up of many particular churches (dioceses). Together they form the whole Christ.

Communion among Men

- † **LG 1** - The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely-knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission (CCC 775).
- † **CCC 1702** - The divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the unity of the Divine Persons among themselves.
- † **Eph 4: 4-6** - There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.



Faith Response

- † To have the conviction that the Church is One and founded by Jesus Christ
- † To believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, Jesus is the head and we, the faithful are the members
- † To have the conviction that all men are called in communion with God
- † To have the conviction that we are called to live in harmony with God and with other persons and to help one another be holy



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Unity of faith-** The supernatural bond that exists among all who adhere to the one Divine Revelation. This bond exists on two levels: the level of being, in that all participants in this unity share the same supernatural virtue of faith freely given them by God; and the level of conviction, in that these participants cling to the same revealed truth. Grounded in the oneness of God and of His plan of salvation, this bond admits varying degrees of realization that culminate in the full-blown unity of faith that exists among the members of the Catholic Church. A unity of faith exists because faith is the response to revelation, and revelation is one. Scripture says that there is one God and one mediator between God and men (1 Tm 2:5), one Divine plan of salvation (Eph 1.3–14), one Church, and one apostolic authority (Mt 16.13–19; 18:18; 28:19–20). The acceptance by men of this One-God-revealed economy of salvation is what is called faith. And the unity resulting from the attachment of men to the One revealed-Divine-Order is the unity of faith (CCC 823-819).
- † **Wisdom-** The first and highest gifts of the Holy Spirit. It makes the soul responsive to God in the contemplation of Divine things. Where faith is a simple knowledge of the articles of Christian belief, wisdom goes on to a certain Divine penetration of the truths themselves. Built into wisdom is the element of love, which inspires contemplative reflection on these Divine mysteries, rejoices dwelling on them, and directs the mind to judge all things according to their principles.
- † **Understanding-** The infused gift of the Holy Spirit is given to the mind for grasping revealed truths easily and profoundly. It differs from faith because it gives insight into the meaning of what a person believes, whereas faith, as such, merely assents to what God has revealed. This gift produces three principal effects in those who possess it. They are enabled to penetrate to the very core of revealed truths, without ever fully understanding their meaning; they are confirmed in their belief by acquiring great certitude in the revealed word of God; and they are brought to the knowledge of a greater number of truths by drawing numerous conclusions from revealed principles.

- † **Sanctity**- In an absolute sense, the Divinity. The sanctity of God is His total transcendence or total otherness. It is in this sense that the Church prays in the Gloria of the Mass: "You alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High." All other sanctity is by participation, so that a creature has as much sanctity as it shares in the Divinity. Essentially, it consists in the possession of sanctifying grace, although the term is usually applied to persons who practice more than ordinary virtue, especially the love of God and their neighbor.
- † **Holiness - LG 40:** Holiness is the fullness of Christian life, the plenitude of charity and of our condition as God's children. It is nothing but the faithful struggle with God's grace to identify ourselves with Our Lord Jesus Christ, living in, with, and for Him. It consists in imitating the virtues He lived and taught during His life on earth, and in living the Beatitudes, that he taught at the Sermon of the Mount. In short, holiness consists in being an *alter Christus, ipse Christus* (other Christ, Christ Himself) as St. Josemaria puts it. To this all Christians are called, whatever state of life they may be in: young, old, single, married, lay persons, clerics and religious (CCC 2012-2016).



Morals

- † As members of the Catholic Church, sharing and enjoying the graces and blessings of her Founder, Jesus Christ, one must live in unity by participating actively and fruitfully in all the activities of the particular Church and in union with the Universal Church.
- † In union with the Church, one must have the knowledge and wisdom of the teachings of the Church so that we can preserve our doctrines and we can share them with truthfulness.
- † Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to save us from sins and give us new life in Him, we are destined to be united with God from the beginning of time, and thus, we are all called to be holy as He Himself is Holy. The universal call for Holiness is one of our big responsibilities as members of the Body of Christ.



Photo from Diocese of Davao



Photo from Diocese of Alaminos



Simple Activities

The Web of Connection

Goal: This team building exercise will show that you are all connected and have a common goal along with getting to know everybody better.

Materials Needed: Enough space for everybody to sit in a circle; A ball of yarn

Directions:

- † Start with your entire team sitting in a big circle
- † Ask a question to serve as an icebreaker that everybody would feel comfortable answering. (Examples: What is your greatest dream or what is the best thing about you? The facilitator may also think of a light but fun question that inspires the idea of being connected with one another.
- † Give the ball of yarn to somebody who can start and answer the question. He then grabs onto the yarn and throws the ball to someone else who will answer next without letting go of the yarn he is holding. (After answering, each holds on to the yarn and then throws it at somebody else to answer the question and so on).
- † When all have answered, they should have made a web out of the yarn – each is holding. This shows that while they might not always agree with each other, understand what each other does, or know each other well, they are all connected and share the same goal of helping the mission of the Church succeed.

Song Analysis: That They May All Be One *(See on page 36)*

Guide for reflection:

- † As a member of the Church, am I united with her with my whole heart, mind and spirit?
- † Do I reflect the teachings of God on love and unity?
- † Do I really surrender all my life to God, knowing that He is my Lord and my God?



Photos from Diocese of Jaro



Worship

Oh Everlasting and Triune God, I consecrate myself wholly to You today. Let all my days offer You ceaseless praise, my hands move to the rhythm of Your impulses, my feet be swift in Your service, my voice sing constantly of You, my lips proclaim Your message, my eyes perceive You everywhere, and my ears be attuned to Your inspirations. May my intellect be filled with Your wisdom, my will be moved by Your beauty, my heart be enraptured with Your love, and my soul be flooded with Your grace. Grant that every action of mine be done for Your greater glory and the advancement of my salvation. Amen.

Petition prayer:

For every prayer our Response is: Hear our prayer Lord.

- † For an end to the violence perpetrated by the indifference of people. That all may have the grace to see every human being as children of God, regardless of race, language or culture. Let us pray to the Lord.
- † For the wisdom to receive the stories and experiences of those different from ourselves and to respond with respect. Let us pray to the Lord.
- † For our faith community, that we may celebrate and welcome the diverse faces of Christ in our worship, our ministries and that we may respond boldly to the Holy Spirit's call to act together in unity as to act together in unity, as we only have one Father in heaven Father in heaven who created us wonderfully. Let us pray to the Lord.



Zeal for Mission

- † **UNDERSTAND** – to build a rapport or a healthy relationship with each other. Although we are diverse in cultures, languages, characters, and even in faith convictions, we must still aim for unity. How? By understanding our differences that leads us to unite in the love of God. We can indeed learn to be united. Once we acknowledge that each person we meet, despite any outward differences, is of equal worth to God, they will become of equal worth to us as well.
- † **LIVE** – Being good to our neighbor is not something that we still need to study. Rather, being good to our neighbor should already be innate in us as human beings. Moreover, this is developed through prayer and devotion to a particular Saint. It is practiced in the beatitudes, learned at the heart. It does not look at outward appearances. When we place our faith in God, we realize that He has given us the capacity to love all his children as we love ourselves. We become like the prophets who no longer see people in terms of their differences. Instead, we begin to see them as images of God.
- † **SHARE** – We must become a prophet, a messenger of God whose first advocacy is to bring unity, peace and love of our Lord to all the people of God in the world. In

simple ways, we can promote unity within our family, among our classmates, our peer groups or friends etc. and be a sign of harmony in the community.

That They May All Be One

Chorus:

That they may all be one
That they may all be one
The Lord is praying for his church
That they may all be one

He prayed in the garden for His disciples
He prayed for all the blessings they would receive
Oh Righteous Father, I look toward heaven
I pray for unity for those who believe in Me

We're sharing the story, You have given me glory
That only comes from heaven above want those
You've given me in our presence there to be
Manifested by our love

Repeat Chorus

His prayer continued for those coming after
His prayer of longing for the unity
Then they'd believe us, our God sent Jesus
The Holy Father has loved them that the world might see

The Lord said, "Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened
And I will give you rest
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble
In heart and you will find rest for your souls"

All those who believe in Me in our presence there to be
Manifested by our love

That they may all be won
That they may all be won
The Lord is praying for the World
That they may all be won

The Lord is praying for His church
That they may all be one

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: SENT BY THE FATHER



Introduction

**Jesus said to them again,
“Peace be with you. As the
Father has sent me, so I
send you.” (Jn 20, 21)**

At the very moment when by Jesus’ death, He conquers death so that raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, He might immediately give the Holy Spirit by breathing on His disciples. From that hour onward, the mission of Christ and the Holy Spirit becomes the mission of the Church (CCC 730).

Christ founded His Church to continue His saving mission on earth. “The Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder, receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God” (LG 5). This ‘mission’ is built into her very nature as originating from the Blessed Trinity. The mission flows from the Church as a “Sacrament of salvation,” the sign and instrument for achieving intimate union with God (cf. AG 5; LG 1; CFC 1412). Thus, the Church has a mission mandate (cf. Mt 28:19): whose origin and goal is the Blessed Trinity (cf. AG 2); motivated by God’s love (cf. 2 Cor 5:14); and with the Holy Spirit as its Principal Agent (cf CCC 849-56).

The mission of Christ and of the Holy Spirit is brought to completion in the Church, which is the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. This joint mission brings Christ’s faithful to share in His communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Lord’s missionary mandate is ultimately grounded in the eternal love of the Most Holy Trinity: “the Church on earth is by her nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, she has as her origin the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit” (AG 2).

The ultimate purpose of mission is none other than to make men share in the communion between the Father and the Son in their Spirit of love (CCC 850). It is from God’s love that the Church in every age receives both the obligation and the vigor of her missionary dynamism, indeed, God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). That is, God wills the salvation of everyone through the knowledge of the truth. Thus, salvation is founded on the truth (CCC 851).



Photo from Diocese of Kidapawan

This missionary endeavor requires patience. It begins with the proclamation of the Gospel to people and groups who do not yet believe in Christ, continues with the establishment of Christian communities that are a sign of God's presence in the world and leads to the foundation of local churches. It must also stimulate efforts towards Christian unity that implies a respectful dialogue with those who have not yet accepted the Gospel for the glory of God, which are the confusion of the demon and the happiness of man (AG 9).



Word of God

Gospel of John 20:19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ After He said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, so I send you." ²² When He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."



Doctrine

The Mission of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

- † **Joint Mission of Christ and the Spirit: CCC 1299** - So closely do Christ and the Spirit work together that we can rightfully speak of the "joint mission of the Son and of the Spirit" (CCC 689, 702, 727). When the Father sends His Word, He always sends His Breath. From there occurs a joint mission in which the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct but inseparable. Christ appears as the visible Image of the invisible God, but the Holy Spirit reveals Him. The knowledge of the "mysteries of the Reign of God" of which Christ is the fullness, is "given" (Mt 13:11) in the gift of the Holy Spirit (CCC 729). Christ gives the form and content of salvation, while the Spirit makes present and extends this new life.

The Church in God's plan: Origin and her Mission

- † **Nature of The Church: CFC 1355** - The Church can be shown first from its long history. Our Catholic Church traces its origin back to the Old Testament qahal and the New Testament ekklesia (CCC 751f). Both terms mean "the people of God called together," or an "assembly convoked by God." Thus, the Church stresses the action of God in calling the people together. The Church claims to be a faith-assembly whose root cause is God's free call to all to share His Divine goodness and love in Christ. Therefore, the church is not just a social group of people drawn together by cultural values and attitudes. The Church upholds the faith-conviction that God is the ever-present source and ground for the Church and He is the reason for explaining the Church as "mystery" and "sacrament."

† **CFC 1357** - The Church is related to each Person of the Blessed Trinity.

First, to the eternal Father who “resolved to assemble all those who believe in Christ in the holy Church.” In the Father’s plan, the Church was:

- † prefigured from the beginning of the world;
- † prepared wonderfully in the history of Israel,
- † instituted finally in these last times,
- † manifested in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit,
- † to be brought to completion at the end of time (LG 2; CCC 760-69).

† **CFC 1366** - The Church as mystery is further clarified and developed by the notion of sacrament. “By her relationship with Christ, the Church is both a sacramental sign and an instrument of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind” (GS 42; LG 1). Christ then has made the Church the effective sign and symbol of: 1) our union with God; 2) the unity among men; and 3) of salvation.

† **CFC 1454** - What are the essential characteristics of the Church? Traditionally the Church has been described by four basic characteristics, each of which as both gift and task relates the Church directly to Christ. These characteristics are: **ONE, HOLY, CATHOLIC, and APOSTOLIC.**



Faith Response

- † To have the conviction that the Catholic Church is the True Church of Christ
- † To have the conviction that the Church received and has her origin from God, the mission of the Son and of the Spirit.
- † To be loyal to the Doctrine taught by the Church.
- † To work with diligence and patience as member of the Church and as missionary of God.



Photo from Diocese of Capiz



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Truthfulness** - truth as uprightness in human action and speech (CCC 2468). This virtue consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation and hypocrisy (YOUCAT 452-457).
- † **Patience** - the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.
- † **Loyalty** - giving or showing firm and constant support or allegiance to a person or institution.
- † **Obedience** - it requires all to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect insofar as it is deserved with gratitude and good will (CCC 1900).



Morals

- † Live in and with the Church, that is in accordance to the moral teachings of the Church and pray for the missions and missionaries
- † Act and be aware of the responsibilities as a member of the Catholic Church
- † Unite oneself to the mission of the Church as an active member, be an apostle of Christ!



Simple Activities

- † Watch a film about the life of a saint, especially the patron saints of missionaries, like St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, or St. Francis Xavier

Song Analysis: Here I Am Lord *(See next page)*

Guide for reflection:

- † Am I doing a mission in my own community or parish?
- † Am I open to the possible opportunity to do a mission, as a lay faithful or religious or priest?
- † What is God telling me to do for his Church?



Photo from Diocese of Borongan

Here I Am Lord

by Misc Praise Songs

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin,
My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

[Chorus]

Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

[Verse 2]

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
they turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them.
Whom shall I send?

[Verse 3]

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will send the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide,
'Til their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?



Worship

Prayer for the Missions

O God, who would have all Your children saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, send forth, we beseech You, laborers into Your harvest and grant them all confidence to preach the Word. That through their preaching everywhere, Your Gospel may be heard and glorified, and that all nations may know You, the One True God, and Him whom You have sent, Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Queen of the Apostles and all you angels and saints of God, we pray to the Lord of the harvest that He may send laborers into the yield and spare His people. May we all rejoice with Him, the Father, and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **UNDERSTAND** – To participate in the different activities of the parish or of the community
- † **LIVE** – To pray for the missions of the Church and for the intentions and safety of missionaries
- † **SHARE** – To be a missionary to your family and friends by doing little things that help them know, love and praise God

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Song References

PANANALIG

Lyrics: Silvino Borres Jr, SJ & Manoling Francisco, SJ

Music: Manoling Francisco, SJ

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://jescommusic.ruplayers.com/rZ2bnJ2Qd2JnhqM/pananalig.html>.

LUPA

Lyrics: Rico J. Puno

Information on this song is publicly available @ <http://www.songlyrics.com/rico-j-puno/lupa-lyrics/>

THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE

Lyrics: Acapella

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://genius.com/Acappella-that-they-may-all-be-one-lyrics>

HERE I AM LORD

Artist: John Michael Talbot

by Misc Praise Songs

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://genius.com/John-michael-talbot-here-i-am-lord-lyrics>



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 2:

Laity

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 2:

LAITY

Overview

Empowered Laity

Laity refers to all Catholic faithful, who by baptism are incorporated into Christ's Body and share in the three-fold mission of Christ. They carry out the mission of the Church in the world (LG 31). The Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity expresses the fact that with their union with Christ the Head, the laity's rights and duties as apostles come directly from Christ. It is by the Lord Himself that they are assigned to the apostolate (AA 3). The laity need to acknowledge their inherent dignity as Catholic Christians and their responsibilities as baptized Catholics to serve the Church in whatever way they can for the evangelization of many.



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

Hence, St. John Paul II stressed the responsibility of the lay faithful in the Church and the world. Through the dignity that flows from baptism, each member of the lay faithful, together with ordained ministers and consecrated persons, share in the responsibility of the Church's mission (CL 15). Therefore, the lay faithful must be involved in all Church activities because they have a big role in evangelizing the people of God. The presbyters must mobilize the laity in the Church's mission since the lay faithful can contribute a lot to the task of New Evangelization (CL 31).

In his pastoral letter for the Year of Laity, Archbishop Socrates Villegas said that, the mission of the Filipino lay faithful is to make a difference and bring Christ into the world of family, business, economics, politics, education, and social. The lay faithful participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. Hence, they are challenged to be agents of social transformation in the society under the guidance of the Church leaders. This renewal demands all people of God to work together, hand and hand, for the renewal of the society and usher in the Kingdom of God for all humanity (CL 23).

The lay faithful must take the lead in social transformation since they are greater in number. They are the force that makes Christian community alive. "The laity must stand up for Christ not only in religious activities, but also at home, school, in places of work, while they are with the poor and the needy, and even when they are with those who have strayed away from the faith." The whole Philippines cannot be re-evangelized unless the laity takes their proper place and role in the mission of the Church. The *laikos* (lay faithful) must be reminded that the call to holiness is not only reserved to the priests and the religious but also to everyone (GE 11). The two Filipino saints, Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod, who became martyrs of faith are both inspiration to the lay faithful, they were not only called to be saints, but are also sent forth as heroes.

The Impact of Secularism on Filipino Faith

The Year of the Laity was devoted to the renewal of the laity, to their “empowerment” or more accurately to activating their charisms from the Spirit, so that they may take up their role as responsible co-gents of evangelization and lead in the task of social transformation. Pope Francis says, “The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity (EG 52). In describing the situation of the Catholic laity in the Philippines, we could say that it is the paradox of poverty and abundance.

Poverty is a social and spiritual problem in this country. The wealth of this nation has remained woefully maldistributed. While poverty and corruption are real and great evils, politics is riddled with graft and corruption. What could be the cause of these evils? It is the created culture of greed and selfishness which is now prevalent. The socio-economic scenario in the Philippines is like survival of the fittest. It seems like people do not even care about the outcry of the persecuted and poor individuals. The excluded are not only the “exploited” but also the outcast - the leftovers (EG 52). Common good is now ignored and the authority and the wealthy easily falsify the truth. Yet, like what Horacio Dela Costa (1940) said, “Like the sun that sets every evening, it will rise again”. There is always hope in God. We should seek God in our daily endeavor.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

The Empowerment of the laity is an avenue for the laity to encounter Christ. The formation of faith given to the laity, especially spiritual formations, is a direct encounter with Christ. This is done through participation in the Sacraments, or in lay movement programs like, BEC, CFC, YFC and other religious organizations in the Church.

Central to the pastoral work of the laity is the witnessing of the Gospel by their lives. It means that when they encounter Christ, the experience of witnessing Christ should lead them to morally right action. The lay faithful must realize that the Church needs them to be workers of evangelization.

The empowered lay faithful will share the light of Christ with others through the practice of Christian virtues, such as being compassionate, charitable, just, and merciful, among others. With this, the lay faithful becomes more Christ-Like which ultimately has a positive effect in evangelizing others.

Etymology

The word lay (part of layperson, etc.) derives from the Anglo-French *lai*, which is from Late Latin *laicus*, and from the Greek *λαϊκός*, *laikos*, meaning of the people, or from *λαός*, *laos*, meaning the people at large (Boudinhon, 1910).

The word laity means "common people". "The term 'laity' is understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state approved by the

Church. That is, the faithful, who by Baptism are incorporated into Christ and integrated into the People of God, are made sharers in their particular way in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly office of Christ. They have their own part to play in the mission of the whole Christian people in the Church and in the World” (CCC 897).

Catechetical Context

Filipino Catholic Laity: Called To Be Saints... Sent Forth as Heroes!

Our dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

You already know surely that this coming 2021 we shall be celebrating the 500th year of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan arrived in the Philippines. In Cebu, he, a lay person, catechized King Humabon, his wife and their people. The king and his queen were subsequently baptized together with their followers. It was on this occasion that the queen, given the baptismal name Juana, was gifted by Magellan with a statue of the Santo Niño. This image was later found in 1565 by soldiers of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, and today is preserved in the Basilica of the Santo Niño in Cebu.

In preparation for the celebration of this providential event of the first arrival of Christianity in our shores, the Church in the Philippines has planned nine years of intensive evangelization, with a theme for every year. For the year 2013, we celebrated the Year of Faith provided by then Pope Benedict XVI. The Year 2014 was declared as the year of the laity.

OUR SITUATION: THE GOSPEL OF JOY

Pope Francis says, “The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity” (Evangelii Gaudium 52).

If we were given an opportunity to describe the situation of the Catholic laity in the Philippines, it would be the paradox of poverty and abundance. The devastation that typhoon Yolanda brought upon our brothers and sisters in Samar and Leyte has created surges of pain and anguish all over our land and even beyond our shores. The typhoon left us dazed and lost groping in the dark for answers and explanation. Poor as we are, this pauper among the nations of the earth hides two jewels in her rags. One of them is our music. Our other treasure is our faith. As long as there remains in these islands one mother to sing Nena’s lullaby, one priest to stand at the altar and offer God to God, this nation may be conquered, trampled upon, enslaved but it cannot perish. Like the sun that dies every evening, it will rise again from the dead (De la Costa, 1940).

“The joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident. It is a struggle to live and, often, to live with precious little dignity”

- (Evangelii Gaudium 52)

The first and most important truth about You Filipino Catholic laity is not poverty but the greatness of your dignity. This dignity derives from God's unmerited choice for us to belong to God's holy people. God called you in Christ to be united to His Son. When you were baptized, the Holy Spirit united you with our Lord Jesus the Son of God, and thus you became true sons and daughters of God, partakers of the divine nature. There is no greater dignity on earth or in heaven than that of being adopted children of God, and being made truly his children, and thus co-heirs to eternal life with Jesus Christ. This dignity flows from the love of God, and made the author of 1 John exclaim, "Behold, what manner of love God has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are. Beloved we are already the children of God but it has not yet appeared what we shall be, because when we see Him, we shall become as He is." This is what also made St. Leo the Great exclaim, "Recognize your dignity, O Christian..." That grace came to you with your baptism which is a true rebirth to eternal life.

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. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew (EG 1).

When you were united to Christ by the Spirit at baptism, you were also incorporated into the body of Christ, which is the Church, and you became members of the people of God. Your membership in the Church is a full membership. You belong to the Church as much as any pope, bishop, priest, or religious does. You are not second class members of the people of God. When you live the life of grace, you are full citizens of God's kingdom on earth. In fact, the Church teaches, "the greatest in the kingdom of God are not the ministers but the saints".

When you were joined to Christ by the Spirit at baptism, you also became sharers of the threefold mission of Christ teacher, priest and servant. You were baptized not only to share in Christ's dignity as Son of God, but also to share in His mission for the salvation of the world.

You share in Christ's dignity and mission with all others who are likewise united to Him by the Holy Spirit. In uniting you to Him, Christ is also united you to all those who are united with Him. With all those who are united to Christ by faith and baptism, you form one body of Christ, whose head is no less than Christ Himself. Thus, the whole body manifests and prolongs Christ's life and mission in the world.

You, our dear lay faithful, have as your particular mission the sanctification and transformation of the world from within. In fact, many of you are called by the Lord to do service in the Church and for the Church. Such is the case of lay liturgical ministers and catechists, for example, who perform an indispensable service in the Church community and its institutions. Such also is the case of lay people who are asked to participate in the administration of Church property and works.

Yet, your own specific task, and the special responsibility given to you by the Lord is to find your own sanctification in the world, and to sanctify the world and transform it so that this world becomes more and more God's world, God's kingdom, where His will is done as it is in heaven. You are called by Jesus to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Lord Jesus told his disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to make all

nations his disciples. This command to the whole Church falls especially on you, who are in the world.

As Pope Francis has been repeatedly telling Catholics, you must go into the world of the family, of business, of economics, of politics, of education, of the mass media and the social media, to every human endeavor where the future of humanity and the world are at stake and make a difference - the difference that the Gospel and the grace of Christ bring to human affairs.

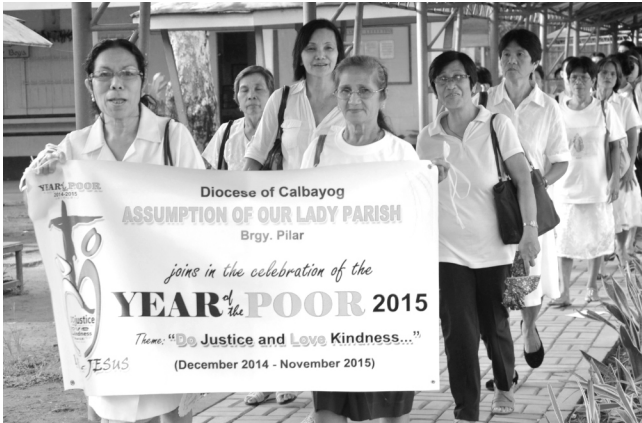


Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose De Antique

OUR SITUATION: THE CHALLENGE OF THE GOSPEL

When we look at our world with the eyes of faith, there are several areas of special concern which you, our lay faithful should direct your attention and action to.

Pope Francis calls our attention to “the great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God’s voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do well fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God’s will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ (EG 2).

POVERTY

Poverty is a social and spiritual problem in our country. A great percentage of our people live below the poverty line. They do not even have the necessities for decent human living. It is estimated that twelve million of our people have gone to foreign countries in their search for adequate income to support their families’ needs. While this has brought many material advantages, it has also resulted in great harm to family life. Likewise, many of our overseas Filipino workers work in conditions of servitude, submitted to humiliations. Still, a vast number of our people are without work, and many are forced to live in slum areas and in miserable situations. A vast number of our children are unable to go to school, and those who do go get sub-standard education in poorly equipped schools. Many have been driven by poverty to cater to the lusts of human predators.

Though there have been significant economic gains, the same percentage of our people have remained mired in poverty over the past several years. The wealth of our country has remained woefully maldistributed. This endemic poverty is gravely contrary to the will of God. You, my dear lay faithful are in the best position to work out solutions creatively, which will satisfy the demands of justice and charity. What are you doing to create wealth, to preserve wealth, and to share wealth? Do the more prosperous among you feel the sufferings of our poor brothers and sisters? Do you think of ways and means to help alleviate their poverty, and help them towards prosperity?

POLITICS

The second is the problem of politics. We say “problem of politics” because, as we have repeatedly pointed out, politics, as it is practiced in our country, is perhaps the single biggest obstacle to our integral development as a nation. Politics as presently practiced, and as it has been practiced for a long time, is riddled with graft and corruption.

Our elections are notoriously noted for their violence, vote buying and for the lack of proper discernment in the choice of candidates. Recent developments have highlighted the corruption connected with pork barrel which those in power are loath to give up despite their blatant misuse for political patronage. It is now clear that our people are poor because our leaders have kept them poor by their greed for money and power. What are you doing to help place worthy people to positions of authority and power? What are you doing to get rid of the politics of patronage, violence and uneducated choices? What are you doing, our dear lay faithful, to rid our country of graft and corruption? Do you perhaps participate in corrupt practices by selling your votes, by buying votes, by bribery and acceptance of kickbacks?

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

Corruption in politics is paralleled and strengthened by corruption in business. We know that our tax collecting agencies are notorious for their extorting practices. Corrupt tax collectors of course imply business people cooperate with their corrupt activities either to survive in business or to reap bigger profits. It is also known that too many of our tax payers do not pay the correct taxes, while the taxes that are collected are often misspent in over-priced or ghost projects. Corruption in business leads to the further impoverishment of the poor and the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor.

GREED AND SELFISHNESS

While poverty and corruption are real and great evils; we must search for their causes. Our culture has been contaminated by the twofold greed for money and power that has characterized much of the modern world. In our consumerist and materialistic society, people are valued according to what they have.

Pope Francis says, “Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a “throw away” culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society’s underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no

longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the “exploited” but the outcast, the “leftovers” (EG 53).

The greed for power is the twin brother of greed for money. Those who have money easily get into power, and when they are in power, they can protect and increase their acquisitions. In our country, winning a government position is often the passport to affluence. Politics in the Philippines is a business proposition.

TRUTH SUFFERS

The first casualty of such greed for money and power is the truth. To get money and power, to keep money and power, to increase their money and power, people have recourse to lies and cheating. The truth is easily disregarded and sacrificed. This is true also of the mass media where what is sought after and broadcast is not so much what is true but what is news; the competition among the networks and the printed media is not so much for accuracy in reporting but for ratings which attract more money to build up greater power.

COMMON GOOD IS IGNORED

The second casualty is the common good. The sense and responsibility for the common good is sadly wanting in our country. The culture of greed for money and power caters to the selfish interests of individuals, families and economic and political groups. Our families, which are characterized by an admirable closeness are also characterized by a closeness that is unmindful of the common good. This being closed to the common good is especially evident in our politics where political dynasties are nurtured and people vote with little consideration for the impact their votes have on the country. Moreover even our mass media are often tools of vested interests rather than instruments for the promotion of the common good. In business, in politics, in the entertainment industry, and in media, profit almost always has priority over service despite protestations to the contrary.

Pope Francis warns us that “Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people’s pain, and feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else’s responsibility and not our own. The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us (EG 54).

CHALLENGE AND MISSION

The renewal of our country thus demands of us all, and especially of you, our lay faithful, a return to truthfulness and the fostering of the sense of the common good. A society that is not founded on truth cannot stand, because a society not founded on truth is either founded on lies or deceit which can provide no stable basis for human relationships and a stable social order. Thus, we must obey the biblical injunction “to do the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15). We must seek the truth, speak the truth, do the truth. This means that we must seek what is right, speak what is right, and do what is right; and to do so “in love”, that is, in solidarity with and service of others.

KNOW THE FAITH

My dear lay faithful, the greatest challenge for you is to know the content of our faith, and to bear witness to your faith by a life of faith. We wrote to you a few months ago praising your simple but deep faith. Yet we had to point out to you two main deficiencies of the faith of our people: first, that the faith of many is uninstructed and, more importantly that this faith has been separated from life.

Many of our people do not even know the fundamentals of our faith! They become very vulnerable to the seductions of other religious groups who find our people easy targets of their recruitment efforts. Many of our Catholics cannot even answer attacks on basic Catholic doctrines like the divinity of Christ, the Eucharist, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the veneration of images.

LIVE THE FAITH

Nevertheless, more harmful even is the separation of faith from life. It is certainly a shameful proof of our failure to evangelize our country that our churches are filled with people, our religious festivities are fervent, our Catholic schools are many, but our country is mired in poverty and in corruption. In fact, many or perhaps a great majority of the corrupt people in politics and in business are graduates of our own Catholic schools. They are even “practicing” Catholics. The majority of those who cheat in elections and those who sell their votes are also baptized Catholics. This is also true of the bribe takers in public offices and the looters of our public coffers. As we noted in our pastoral letter, the criteria for decisions taken by many in politics do not derive from faith but from other sources inimical to the Christian life. The poison of the greed for power and wealth has already pervaded the political and business systems.

We echo the challenge of Pope Francis “We want to challenge “the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism”, who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith. The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel (EG 15).

Thus, we urge you to promote a continuing education towards maturity of faith among our people, starting with our Christian families. Even more importantly, we ask you to make your faith bear on your day-to-day decisions and activities. It is only an integral faith, a faith that believes, a faith that worships, and a faith that works in love (Gal. 5: 6), that will serve as God’s way “to make all things new” in our beloved country.

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Since the corruption in business and in politics that we must fight against is systemic, we your pastors, urge you to unite in groups which through prayer, discernment and concerted action will renew the social and political fabric of our country. Individual goodness is not sufficient anymore. The good individual will only be swallowed up by the evil system. While individual witness is important, it is in unity that good Christian people will get their strength and attain victory.

To sustain and strengthen you in your efforts, we urge you to read the Bible, God's written word. Read it to not only study it but also pray with it. When read prayerfully, the Bible will nourish your life. It will be a lamp to guide you in your journey. It will help you resist temptations; it will help you to know and follow Jesus, our Lord.

Second, we urge you to have recourse to the Sacraments. Value your baptism and prepare well for the baptism of your children. Let parents take seriously the responsibility they undertook at baptism to raise up their children as good Christians.

Christian marriage should be valued not only as a beautiful and solemn ceremony but as a way of welcoming Christ into the life of the couple and their future family. Hence, it must be adequately prepared for by pre-marital instructions. Christian married couples should see their marriage as a public commissioning by Christ to serve and protect life and married love itself.

We ask you to have recourse especially to the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. The Eucharist, participated in actively in faith, is the source of Christian life and strength. It is the bread of life of martyrs. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, on the other hand, will help us heal our moral wounds and give us the grace to fight sin in ourselves and in society.

A Church, which "goes forth" is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others in order to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way. At times, we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it (EG 45).

Finally, we ask you to stand up for Jesus not only in religious activities but also in your private and public life. Speak up for Jesus and his Church in public discussions. Do not be afraid to be identified as Catholic Christians. You have been called to be saints; you are sent forth as heroes. Take courage. Choose to be brave!



Photo from the Archdiocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao

May the example of our two lay Filipino saints Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod be your inspiration always!

May the Jesus and his Mother be with you and with us all, and make us, a “*pueblo amante de Maria*” also truly the land of Jesus in Asia.
For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines,

(SGD) +SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS, D.D.
Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan
CBCP President
December 1, 2013, First Sunday of Advent

Echoing Pope Francis, Archbishop Socrates Villegas said the mission of the Filipino faithful is to make a difference and to bring Christ into the world of family, business, economics, politics, education, and social communications. Villegas said, “You are called to be saints, you are sent forth as heroes. Take courage. Do not be afraid to be Catholics. Be brave” (Santos, 2014).

Song for Reflection

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete Et Exsultate*, Pope Francis wrote, “To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.” Hence, he spoke of “saints next door” – ordinary men and women who show that holiness is attainable. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines exhorts the lay faithful to be a Christian

presence in the world, that he may be a leaven for the transformation of Philippine Society. Listen to this song of Noel Cabangon, giving a profile of a good Filipino.

AKO’Y ISANG MABUTING PILIPINO

Music by: Noel Cabangon
Lyrics by: Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ

Intro: **E G#m7 Amaj7** (2x)

Chorus:

E G#m7 Amaj7
Ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino
E G#m7 Amaj7
Minamahal ko ang bayan ko
E G#m7 Amaj7
Tinutupad ko ang aking mga tungkulin
E G#m7 Amaj7 B7sus
Sinusunod ko ang kanyang mga alituntunin

E G#m7 Amaj7 B7 pause

Amaj7 E

Tumatawid ako sa tamang tawiran

Amaj7 E

Sumasakay ako sa tamang sakayan

C#m7 F#9

Pumipila at di nakikipag-unahan

Amaj7 B7sus

At di ako pasiga-siga sa lansangan

Amaj7 E

Nagbababa ako sa tamang babaan

Amaj7 E

Hindi nakahambalang na parang walang pakialam

C#m7 F#9

Pinagbibigyan ko'ng mga tumatawid sa kalsada

Amaj7 B7sus

Humihinto ako pag ang ilaw ay pula

(Chorus)

Hindi ako nangongotong o nagbibigay ng lagay

Tiket lamang ang tinatanggap kong ibinibigay

Ako'y nakatayo doon mismo sa kanto

At di nagtatago sa ilalaim ng puno

Hindi ako nagkakatat ng basura sa lansangan

Hindi bumubuga ng usok ang aking sasakyan

Inaayos ko ang mga kalat sa basurahan

Inaalagaan ko an gating kapaligiran

(Chorus)

E G#m7 C#7sus

Bmaj7 F#

Lagi akong nakikinig sa aking mga magulang

Bmaj7 F#

Kaya't pag-aaral ay aking pinagbubutihan

Ebm7 G#9

Hindi ako gumagamit ng bawal na gamot

Bmaj7 C#7sus

O kaya'y tumatambay at sa eskwela'y di pumapasok

(Same Chords)

Ipinagtatanggol ko ang aking karangalan
Pagkat ito lamang ang tangi kong kayamanan
Di ko ibinebenta an gating kinabukasan
Ang boto ko'y aking pinahahalagahan

(Chorus 1 step higher)

Ako'y isang tapat at totoong lingkod ng bayan
Pabor o lagay ay di ko pinapayagan
Tapat ang serbisyo ko sa mamamayan
Di ko ibinubulsa ang pera ng bayan

Ipinagtatanggol ko ang mamamayang Pilipino
Mga karapatan nila'y kinikilalako
Iginagalang ko ang aking kapwatao
Ipinaglalaban ko dangal ng bayan ko
(Chorus)

Pagkat ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino...
Ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino
Minamahal ko ang bayan ko
Tinatutupad ko ang aking mga tungkulin
Sinusunod ko ang kanyang mga alituntunin

Tumatawid ako sa tamang tawiran
Sumasakay ako sa tamang sakayan
Pumipila at 'di nakikipag-unahan
At 'di ako pasiga-siga sa lansangan

Bumababa't nagsasakay ako sa tamang sakayan
'Di nakahambalang parang walang pakiaalam
Pinagbibigyan kong mga tumatawid sa kalsada
Humihinto ako 'pag ang ilaw ay pula

KORO:

'Pagkat ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino
Minamahal ko ang bayan ko
Tinatutupad ko ang aking mga tungkulin
Sinusunod ko ang kanyang mga alituntunin

'Di ako nagongotong o nagbibigay ng lagay
Ticket lamang ang tinatanggap kong ibinibigay
Ako'y nakatayo doon mismo sa kanto
At 'di nagtatago sa ilalim ng puno

'Di ako nagkakalat ng basura sa lansangan
'Di bumubuga ng usok ang aking sasakyan
Inaayos ko ang mga kalat sa basurahan
Inaalagaan ko ang ating kapaligiran. (Koro)

Lagi akong nakikinig sa aking mga magulang
Kaya't pag-aaral ay aking pinagbubutihan
'Di ako gumagamit ng bawal na gamot
O kaya'y tumatambay at sa eskwela'y 'di pumapasok

Ipinagtatanggol ko ang aking karangalan
'Pagkat ito lamang ang tangi kong kayamanan
'Di ko ibinebenta ang aking kinabukasan
Ang boto ko'y aking pinahahalagahan. (Koro)

Ako'y isang tapat at totoong lingkod ng bayan
Pabor o lagay ay 'di ko pinapayagan
Tapat ang serbisyo ko sa mamamayan
'Di ko ibinubulsa ang pera ng bayan

Ipinagtatanggol ko ang mamamayang Pilipino
Mga karapatan nila'y kinikilala ko
Iginagalang ko ang aking kapwa tao
Ipinaglalaban ko ang dangal ng bayan ko. (Koro)

Pagkat ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino.
Pagkat ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino.
Pagkat ako'y isang mabuting Pilipino.

Reflection Questions:

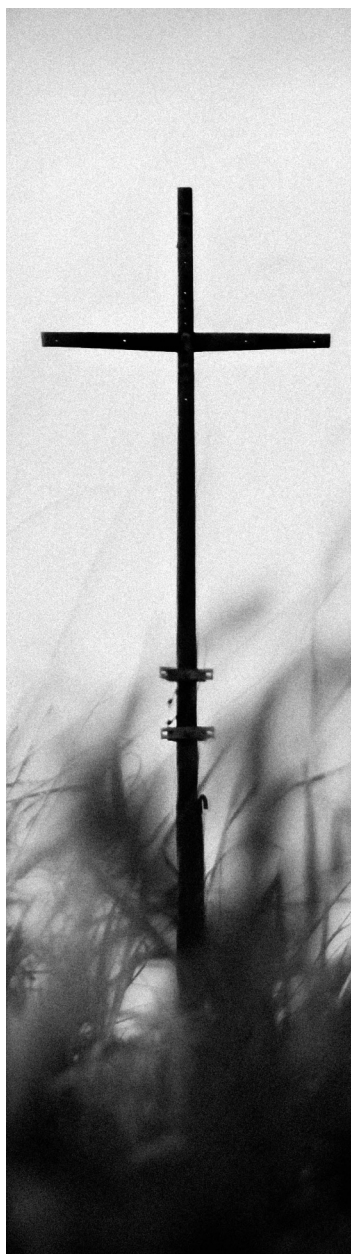
1. Is there a conflict between being a good Filipino and a good Christian? Why do you say so?
2. What are the Filipino cultural traits that may serve as hindrances to the living out of the Gospel on the societal level? How can we transpose these disvalues into Gospel values?

Catechist's Corner

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

“Mary said, ‘ My heart praises the Lord; my soul is glad because of God my Savior, for He has remembered me, His lowly servant! From now on all people will call me happy, because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me.”
(Luke 1:46-48)

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 *laity (layko)*.



SERVANT CATECHIST

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Jeanette P. Grajo

Being a catechist
Is like a song,
Hard work is the lyrics
Words are hymns,
Every movement
And the beat of the mind
Are all for God
Because of the pledge
Songs of love
For every learner
Are aimed to target the very heart
Values and wisdom
Of the Mother Church.
Service is the beginning
And end, until it
Remains felt and heard
Songs sung—are the
Servant-catechists—
The hope of the Church
Defender of the
Faith and
Love, the
Weapon song!

For God,
For the Church,
For the society
Philippines.

GUIDE QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Like Mary’s glorification of the Lord, would you consider your life as an ultimate practice of worship and praise?

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: THE GOOD SHEPHERD



Introduction

On another level, an empowered laity may share the light of Christ to others through the practice of the Christian virtues, especially charity, following Jesus' beatitudes, to give food to the hungry, be a peacemaker in order to bear fruit in Christ life and life in the Church (CL 32). With this, the lay faithful becomes an avenue to transform into being more Christ-Like which ultimately has a positive effect in evangelizing to others.



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

Hence, we must acknowledge God's love for us, in order to empower our will to evangelize others. God is love, those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. We love because He first loved us (1 John 16:19). First, the life of a Christian is a response to the love of God. When we hear the word "responsibility" we often think of obligations and duties, but Christian responsibility ultimately means a response to that original love of God, offered to us in Jesus Christ. Christ expresses this love by incorporating us into His Body in Baptism. We belong to Him and thus, we belong to the community where He is uniquely present in the world. Only with this awareness can we begin to respond to His love. As a good shepherd who loves his flock unconditionally, may we learn to encounter Christ in all humanity and spread constant love, which is the source of willpower of the lay faithful to spread the Good News.



Word of God

Gospel of John 10:11-18

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know My own and My own knows Me. ¹⁵ Just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father, I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason, the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of My own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from My Father."



Doctrine

Threefold Function of the Lay Faithful

In our baptism, we were marked with oil as a sign that we are consecrated to God and anointed by the Holy Spirit. Our anointing is a sign that we join Christ and share in his threefold mission as prophet, priest, and king. LG 31 defines the laity as all the faithful except those in holy orders and those in the state of religious life specially approved by the Church. By baptism, they are incorporated into the One Body of Christ and are constituted among the People of God. Thus, they became sharers in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly functions of Christ. They are to carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Church in the world.

Prophetic Ministry

A prophet is a messenger sent by God, to speak for Him. A prophet gives witness to God; calls people to conversion, and may foretell the future. Prophets are often killed for their message. Jesus fits this description. He is none other than the Word of God in flesh. He sought the world to turn away from their sins and he asked them to return to the Father. In return, he was put to death for it. In Scripture, Jesus is presented as a prophet. Crowds identified him as “Jesus the prophet” (Matthew 21:11). He spoke of himself as a prophet: “No prophet is accepted in his own native place” (Luke 4:24). He also foretold his passion and resurrection.

As a Lay faithful who shares in the prophetic ministry of Christ in the church we are expected to become a messenger/witness of God’s Word in our community, in our particular churches and in our own family.

Priestly Ministry

A priest is a mediator, or bridge, between God and human beings. He offers sacrifice to God on behalf of all. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the Jewish high priest goes into the Holy of Holies in the Temple. There he offers a sacrifice to God to make up for his sins and the sins of the people. Jesus is the greatest High Priest. Because He is both Divine and human, Jesus is the perfect mediator. He is not only the perfect priest, but is also holy and sinless, the perfect sacrifice.

Thus, to share in the priestly ministry of Christ means to offer our joys, our sorrows, our lives, and our very being to God. With the union with the sacrifice of Christ, we may become instruments of reparation for sins and sanctify our lives and the world around us.

Common priesthood and Ministerial Priesthood

Common Priesthood (Laity)

The New Testament describes the baptized as a holy priesthood and a priestly people. 1Peter 2: 9 states, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” Vatican II clearly taught that the baptized becomes a holy priesthood.

Their personal fidelity and lives led by loving obedience to the Gospel become spiritual sacrifices offered along with the body of the Lord in the Eucharist. It is the vocation of all God's disciples to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Ministerial Priesthood

The ministerial priesthood has a greater responsibility than the common priesthood of the faithful. A ministerial priest is ordained by a bishop and must maintain good spiritual life in his service to the Church. They dedicate themselves to works of genuine service and charity to the people of God. They receive the Sacrament of Holy Orders and can perform the rites of the sacraments.

Kingly Ministry

A king is a leader who has supreme authority over a territory. When the Jewish people were ruled by kings, they became a nation. They longed for a Messiah who would again make them great. Jesus is spoken of as a King in the Gospels. Gabriel announced to Mary that the Lord God would give her Son the throne of David His father, and He would rule over the house of Jacob forever. The Magi were looking for the newborn King of the Jews. When Jesus last entered Jerusalem, crowds hailed him as a king. He was arrested for making Himself king and the soldiers mocked Him as one. When Pilate asked if He was the King of the Jews, Jesus replied, "You say so," and he clarified, "My kingdom does not belong to this world" (John 18:36). The charge written against Jesus was "Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews." Jesus announced the kingdom of God. His mission was for God to reign in the hearts of all and to have peace and justice in the world. Jesus exercised this royal office by serving.

As Jesus performed his Kingly ministry by serving the people. We are called to lead others to God's Kingdom through our humble service to others, without discrimination since Jesus offered his heart to all humanity. We are called to be authentic model of service to others. A service which doesn't ask for any reward but doing this service for sacrifice and love.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Faithfulness** - Faithfulness is remaining committed to doing right even when you feel like giving up. It is the concept of living the virtue of truth in our lives. It is committing us to living a virtuous life and then letting the reality of that commitment permeate our lives on a daily basis.
- † **Holiness** - The universal call to holiness is a teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. All people are called to be holy. This is based on the Gospel of St. Matthew "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Hence, holiness consists of living like saints and having a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love". We must follow in Christ's footsteps and devote ourselves to the Glory of God and service of our neighbors.

† **Perseverance** – What does God say about perseverance? “Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). “As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised” (Hebrews 10:36). “But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13). You and I are called to persevere, but not that lonely perseverance of one trying to keep on pursuing even when it no longer makes sense from a human perspective. We are called to a life bathed in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This motivates us to go beyond ourselves. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, perseverance helps us conquer every obstacle and utilize our talents so that we may attain our goals. A life lived with perseverance is a life that tries to exist by mobilizing what natural talents one happens to have, not forgetting that some of the most gifted people in the world are failures because they give up when the going gets tough. In fact, some of them have so much talent, genius and education that they never find their focus. We are called to persevere in specific ways; but first, we have to persevere in our faith so that we can transmit faith to others



Morals

Through Baptism, we become like-Christ (anointed) who have been given Christ’s threefold function of priest, prophet and king. To become like-Christ is a difficult task, which requires effort and struggle. This can be done in two ways: we administer the material world; and we are to shepherd or guide other people.

As a Filipino Catholic lay faithful, we are called to be Saints and sent forth as heroes. We are tasked to manage the whole of material creation according to God’s plan and make use of it to serve others (not oneself) and give glory to God (again, not oneself).

There is a lot of talk about “empowering” the lay faithful. For many, this means giving them parish-based tasks. However if that were the case, the great majority of Catholics would have nothing to do because there are usually more parishioners than available parish-assigned jobs. How about those who do not have the opportunity to serve in the Church? To be empowered means to be given a kind of governing authority, a kind of dominion. While not all of the lay faithful can serve in parish committees, all of them can act as good stewards of God’s creation, as Genesis teaches. One of the practicable ways of empowering the lay faithful, a realistic way by which they can exercise their priestly, prophetic and kingly function is by taking care of the earth wisely and responsibly. They can also do this through their daily lives while practicing their individual vocations/ professions.

The lay faithful need to train to be competent teachers, doctors, accountants, engineers, lawyers, farmers, bricklayers, housekeepers and parents. They should not only know their faith, but they should also continue to acquire skills and knowledge required in their respective occupations to help others and bring them closer to God. A teacher must teach his/her students not only by words also through his / her action. So that he/ she will become a model or inspiration for his/her students. A doctor must cure patients with love and compassion, even

if they are unable to pay. Engineers must construct a building with a strong foundation, not cheating the budget with subpar materials that can cause damages to life and property in the future. A lawyer must defend his/her client truthfully. A parent must constantly strive to live out Christian virtues in their daily lives so that their children would properly imitate them. In this way, lay faithful can be a moral agent of authentic Christian living.

Furthermore, the lay faithful are also called to be shepherds of others. What is the responsibility of the shepherd? Jesus says, “The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). Thus, the lay faithful should set aside his / her personal interests, leave behind his /her ego and do not look for applause. He/She gives even when giving hurts. What did Jesus do as a Good Shepherd? He loved his apostles, loved them to the end (John 13:1). How did He love them? He prayed for them. He taught them. He patiently listened to them. He corrected them when needed. He forgave them time and again. He sacrificed his life for them.

In the prayer of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in the inauguration of his Pontificate on April 24, 2005, He said, “Let us pray for one another, that the Lord will carry us and that we will learn to carry one another. The Lord Jesus, Chief Shepherd, transforms us. The encounter with Jesus is a life-changing experience. Every encounter with Him makes us better shepherds. May we go to that encounter often so that Christ can make us shepherds after His own heart.”



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Simple Activities

Group Sharing

Guide Question:

If you could describe yourself like an object, what would it be and why?

Instruction:

The participants can go out and search for an object that could describe themselves and share with the group why he/she chose this object and what virtue he/she can learn from that object?

Example:

A pencil. Everywhere I go, I ensure that I leave a mark in that place. I let people know me for who I am and of what I am capable. Like the pencil, I am hard on the outside

but can be very soft on the inside. I always let people see me as a strong person but then I also take care of my inner self because I know that I can easily break if things do not work as they should.

I am also the type of person that accepts the reality of life. Just like the pencil, I do not have the ability to stay as I am. The more I complete my purpose in life, the more I realize that sooner or later I will achieve my goal and soon meet my end. I accept mistakes and I always have an eraser to correct them. Just like the pencil, which will not be able to do its purpose without the help of a hand, the hand that helps me and shows me my purpose is that of God's. Thus, I follow His Words and commandments in order for me to stay on the right path.

Song Analysis

SALMO 23

Based on Psalm 23

Music by Fr. Rey C. Magnaye

Koro:

Ang Panginoon ang aking pastol.
Hindi ako magkukulang
Ako ay Kanyang pinagpapahinga
sa mainam na pastulan.

Verse 1

Inakay ako sa tahimik na batis
at dulot Niya'y bagong lakas.
Tapat sa pangakong ako'y sasamahan
Niya sa tuwid na landas.
(Ulitin ang Koro)

Verse 2

Daan may puno ng dilim o ligalig,
hindi ako mangangamba
Tungkod Mo't pamalo
ang s'yang gagabay sa 'kin
at sasanggalang twina.
(Ulitin ang Koro)

Guide for Reflection:

- † Do I encounter God in my life as the Good shepherd?
- † Is my faith greater than my fear?
- † Do I really believe that God fulfills His promises?
- † As I look at my life now, how does God work in my life since the time I received Him and He received me during my baptism?



Worship

PRAYER TO JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

Faithful Shepherd,
You are not a hireling who runs away at the sight of danger,
but Your fidelity was tested
and proven on the wood of the Cross.
Accept the gift of our gratitude
for Your marvelous care.
Help us to hear and follow Your voice.

Watchful Shepherd,
who protects the flock
and searches tirelessly
for those who wander from the fold,
retrieve the lost and bring them home.
Tend and heal their wounds.

Good Shepherd,
who lays down His Life for His sheep,
nourish Your people with the Bread of Life,
that we may reflect Your likeness
and enjoy the spring of Living Water that never ends.

Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - Know your role in the Church and discern God's plan. The responsibility that He asks of us and how to enact it, is not written as a prescribed set of rules. Rather it is revealed to us through our vocation as baptized Catholic Christians. God makes clear what He wants of us in concrete ways in the history of our lives. This requires that we live with awareness of belonging to the Church, for it is in the life of the Church that God makes His intentions clear to us. In this way, the Lord entrusts a great part of the responsibility to the lay faithful, in communion with all the members of the people of God (CL 32). For this reason, our responsibility is a co-responsibility. We fulfill it not only by cooperating with others, but also with a deep consciousness that each baptized person, no matter the state of life, enjoys a weighty responsibility for the life of the Church.



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

- † **LIVE** – The lay faithful exercise their co-responsibility in the Church as well as their responsibilities in the family, workplace, community and beyond. The laity may assume many responsibilities within the Church. These are few examples of the many responsibilities the laity might have within the Church. However, co-responsibility is deeper than these functions. It is a co-responsibility with your brothers and sisters in the Church. To be a co-shepherd of Christ to our brethren, in transforming bitterness into joy, darkness into Hope, doubt into faithfulness, etc.

- † **SHARE** – To become a shepherd for others following the threefold ministry of Christ. A Catholic faithful cannot carry out this mission in isolation, but only in communion with the entire People of God. God calls us to mission in communion with the rest of His Body (People of God). Just as each body is energized by its spirit, so do we, who belong to Christ's Body, are empowered by His Spirit for the task we have been given. As Pope Francis states, “the Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition, Jesus wants evangelizers who can proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence (EG 3).

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: WHAT TO DO



Introduction

Conversion of the laity may mean the conversion of a non-believer to being a believer, and the conversion of a sinner from living in sin to a life with God. It is a change of both heart and mind. A believer who lost connection with the Church, but is given the chance to reconnect through empowerment with the use of his/her God-given talents, might want to come back to being one with the Church and the community. An empowered laity manifests the fruits of the Spirit. They may influence those who have fallen away to return to communion with the Church (CL 30).

Thus, the Church can count on many lay persons, although still not enough, who have a deeply-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of faith (EG 102). The CBCP has taken steps to foster a more active role of the laity in the Church, so that they may actively and responsibly participate as lay faithful in the common concerns and projects of their communities and the Church (CBCP, PCP II 245). Thus, empowering the laity is the main focus of the Church in the Philippines.

When a lay faithful is already empowered, he/she must know his/her great responsibility to the Church; they are always ready to give up everything for Christ alone.



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 19:16-22

¹⁶ Then someone came to him and said, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” ¹⁷ And He said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.” ¹⁸ He said to Him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹ Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”²⁰ The young man said to Him, “I have kept all these; what do I still lack?” ²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” ²² When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.



Doctrine

Pope Benedict XVI presented the essential content of the New Evangelization in the form of how human beings may flourish and attain happiness under four essential themes: conversion, Kingdom of God, Jesus Christ and eternal life (Burgaleta 56). These will be dealt with individually in the succeeding presentation.

† **1. Conversion**

Conversion is first and foremost a personal call to turn back to God who is the source of true happiness. A person becomes willing to make amends with the people he/she may have offended. Conversion is strengthened when each one labors to offer a community of life and a common space for a new style of life--a life towards God's love (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000). Pope Benedict XVI at the opening of the Synod on the New Evangelization says, "The best path to New Evangelization is to let ourselves be reconciled with God and with each other."

† **2. Kingdom of God**

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger stated that the Kingdom of God is a proclamation that God exists, that God is alive. God is present and acts in the world and in one's life. "The Church cannot evangelize with words alone; the Gospel creates life, creates communities of progress. "Merely individual conversion has no consistency" (Ratzinger, *The New Evangelization*, 6). In proclaiming the Word of God, there is the need for a sense of belongingness. Each individual needs conviction that they are part of the Church. The faithful who proclaim and promote the Kingdom of God will definitely inherit God's Kingdom and will belong to that Kingdom. Jesus took up the message of John as the synthesis of His own preaching: "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15).

† **3. Jesus Christ**

Reflecting on the life of Jesus, one is prudent to say that the image of God becomes truly concrete only in Christ and through Christ. For God sent His only begotten Son so that we may encounter Him concretely, face to face (John 3:16). In Jesus Christ, the face of the Father is made clear and made reachable to man. In the Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI reflected that "being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but an encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction". This encounter with a personal God transforms the faithful to evangelize. At the opening of the Synod for the New Evangelization, Benedict XVI summarizes this point further with profound clarity: "In every time and place, evangelization has its starting and finishing points in Jesus Christ, the Son of God." With it, the full schema of the New Evangelization has been laid out including the nature, the context, the agents and participants.

† 4. *Eternal Life*

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger said that God is not a competitor, but the guarantor of man's greatness. The background of this insistence is in the fact that there are many modern concepts of hope that reduce it to an expression of dissatisfaction with the "now." These concepts also provide a view of a better future that is essentially man-made, materialistic, and of illusory value (Catan & Giordano SJ, 2007). In *Spe Salvi*, Benedict XVI, uses the final judgment as a symbol of responsibility for one's life. He said that from the earliest times, the prospect of judgment has influenced Christians in their daily living. They order their present life in the criterion. It also acts as summons to their conscience, and at the same time, as hope in God's justice. The central element of every true evangelization is eternal life because everyone wants to be saved. A true Christian in words and deeds, one should always be zealous because every faithful's goal is to achieve eternal life.



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Military Ordinariate



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Generosity**- Generous people are able and willing to give. They give both financially and themselves, in a way that benefits the recipients. Their gifts may include time, money, things, and encouragement. Generous people are also able to receive in such a way that the giver gains from the interchange. In the scriptures, Acts 20:35 states: "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'". Someone showing generosity is happy to give time, money, food, or kindness to people in need. When we show generosity, we might give away things or money or put others before ourselves. However, we must also remember generosity is more than just about cash and stuff.
- † **Detachment** - Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yours treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves cannot break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be

also.” Jesus does not want us to be attached to possessions, to human honors, or to creatures. He asks for humility. His love and His generosity make this detachment less difficult and less cruel to our nature. If we learn to detach ourselves from our possessions, nothing else will matter. Nothing has any value but only Jesus Himself--no place, nothing, no person, no idea, no feeling, no honor, no suffering, can turn us away from Jesus. Detachment is a very important value for us, Christians.

† **Gratefulness** – An ungrateful person is unhappy. The happiest people do not have the best things in life; they just simply appreciate the things that they have. Positive psychology research showed that gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.



Morals

It is true that if we do good, more good comes from it. When a rich young man approached Jesus and asked, what must he do to gain eternal life, he probably felt overjoyed when Jesus said, “Keep the commandments;” since he had kept these all his life. However, Jesus added, “If you wish to be perfect, go sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.” The man was very rich and he was attached to his earthly wealth. He had probably worked very hard for it and felt he deserved it.

Hence, the rich young man was not able to say “yes” to Jesus Christ. This man could not follow Jesus Christ. If he was only able to say “yes” to Jesus Christ, his life would have undoubtedly been blessed more with his surrender of himself. The rich young man had many things in his life that were good, and he could not say “no” to these, even though it meant being able to say “yes” to the source of all goodness--Jesus Christ.

Our world today challenges us to say “yes” all of the time. Our hectic lives point to this reality, and honestly many of us know that we have said “yes” too much. However, our “yes” is demanded by many good things: relationships, properties, activities and responsibilities. In building our relationship with Jesus, can we say no to the things of this world so that we will not miss Jesus’ invitation for us to follow Him?



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Simple Activities

Activity: Unload my baggiest

Instruction:

In the pieces of small paper write 15 material possessions you consider important. (House, condo, car, bike, camera, phone, motorcycle, credit card, bank account, laptop, businesses etc.) or even the things you want but you don't have yet.

Form a circle, and then place a small pot in the middle of the circle. When done writing, ask the participants to tear two things they can easily forego and put the torn pieces in the pot. Then, ask them again to tear down three “unnecessary” lists from the pieces of paper they still have in their hands.

Then, ask them to reserve three papers which are most important to them. And with those seven small pieces of paper left in their hand, ask them to choose another four to put it into the pot. The remaining six will include the three important things that they have reserved.

In the second part of the activity, in a small box ask the participants to get 1 piece of paper (inside paper will be the printed face of Jesus). Afterwards, ask the participants to choose what they will surrender or put in the pot, the six pieces of paper (material possession) or the face of Jesus. At the end, burn all the pieces of paper in the pot.

Exhortation:

Stewardship

We are just stewards of the treasures, blessings, and graces that we possess here on earth. The real source of all graces is God. When we die, we cannot bring those material possessions with us. All we need is Christ in our heart. How do we become good stewards of God? There are 5 principles that we must follow: 1. We must acknowledge that all of us are given blessings by our Lord. 2. We have freedom on how to use these graces. 3. At the end of the day God will judge us on how we used His given blessings. 4. We must be trustworthy/grateful. 5. Grow with our given graces such as improving our talents and sharing them for the greater glory of God.

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How do I detach myself from worldly things?
- † What do I treasure most in my heart?
- † Am I able to give up everything to follow Christ?
- † Am I aware that my purpose is to love, serve and adore God?

A RICH YOUNG MAN (Simple Living)

Artist: Keith & Kristyn Getty

Album: Hymns for the Christian Life

A rich young man came to ask of Christ:
"Good teacher, will you tell me,
What must I do for eternal life?
I've kept your laws completely."
"Sell all you have, give to the poor,
Then heaven's treasure shall be yours."
How hard for those who are rich on earth
To gain the wealth of heaven.

Now Jesus sat by the offering gate
As people brought their money:
The rich they filled the collection plate;
The widow gave a penny.
"Now she's out given all the rest -
Her gift was all that she possessed."
Not what you give but what you keep
Is what the King is counting.

O teach me Lord to walk this road,
The road of simple living;
To be content with what I own
And generous in giving.
And when I cling to what I have
Please wrest it quickly from my grasp;
I'd rather lose all the things of earth
To gain the things of heaven.



Worship

Make us your worthy servant

Make us worthy, Lord, to serve our brothers and sisters throughout the world, who live and die in poverty and hunger. Give them, through our hands, this day their daily bread, and by our understanding love, give them peace and joy. Make us, Lord, worthy to serve our brothers and sisters, scattered all over the world, who live and die alone and poor. Give them today, using our hands, their daily bread. And, using our love, give them peace and happiness. Amen.



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - The Church shares in Christ's mission of bringing all to the knowledge of God and to salvation. All its members are called to this intrinsic mission bestowed to the entire Church. The lay faithful form the greatest number of the members in the Church and their functions are important in this mission. However, they are beset with numerous setbacks that constitute untold challenges for the Church. In order for the laity to become effective evangelizers in this modern time, we should become critical thinkers to identify issues in our society and find solutions grounded by moral norms and faith in God.
- † **LIVE** – All of us called for mission, especially the lay faithful. The laity can exercise a fruitful apostolate by evangelizing in the areas of their professional, social, and personal lives.
- † **SHARE** – The lay faithful must do apostolate for the mission of the Church. They can do this by simply sharing their experiences with the Lord and then by encouraging others to practice the rosary, attending the mass, novena, bible sharing etc.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: BEING CONNECTED

I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing (Jn 15:5).



Introduction

These simple words reveal the mystery of communion that serves as the unifying bond between the Lord and his disciples, between Christ and the baptized: a living and life-giving communion through which Christians no longer belong to themselves but are the Lord's very own, as the branches are one with the vine.

“Communion’ speaks of a double, life-giving participation: the incorporation of Christians into the life of Christ, and the communication of that life of charity to the entire body of the Faithful, in this world and in the next; in union with Christ and in Christ, and union among all Christians and the Church” (Pope Paul VI, 1966).

Church communion then is a gift, a great gift of the Holy Spirit, to be gratefully accepted by the lay faithful. At the same time, it is to be lived with a deep sense of responsibility. This is concretely realized through their participation in the life and mission of the Church, at whose service the lay faithful put their varied and complementary ministries and charisms. A member of the lay faithful "can never remain in isolation from the community, but must live in a continual interaction with others, with a lively sense of fellowship, rejoicing in equal dignity and with common commitment to bring to fruition the immense treasure that each has inherited” (CL 20).



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao

The communion of Christians with Jesus has the communion of God as Trinity, namely, the unity of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, as its model, source, and the means to achieve this communion. United to the Son in the Spirit's bond of love, Christians are united to the Father. This communion is a wonderful reflection and participation in the mystery of the intimate life of love in God as Trinity that is revealed by the Lord Jesus. For this communion Jesus prays: "that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me" (Jn 17: 21).

Such communion is the very mystery of the Church, as the Second Vatican Council recalls the celebrated words of Saint Cyprian: "The Church shines forth as 'a people made one with

the unity of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit". We are accustomed to recall this mystery of communion at the beginning of the celebration of the Eucharist, when the priest welcomes all with the greeting of the Apostle Paul: "The grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:13).

Thus, communion in the life of the Church will become a sign for the entire world and a compelling *force* that will lead people to faith in Christ. In such a way communion leads to *mission*, and mission itself leads to communion (CL 31).



Word of God

Gospel of John 15:1-11

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vine grower. ² He removes every branch in Me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit He prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the Word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in Me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in Me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in Me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in Me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My Words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become My disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved Me, so I have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete."



Doctrine

Unity in the local Church and in the universal Church

Christ founded the Church as one. The Church, the indivisible body of Christ, is not the sum of single individuals or members or any individual parts. Wherever and whenever an apostle obeys the command to do his preaching mission, the church is realized at any location, there it becomes the One Church of Christ. In this church, which under the leadership of its bishop assemble around the holy Eucharist, there is Christ *totus in capite et in corpore* (the total Christ, Head and Body). Though our knowledge of Christ may only be partial, Christ himself is not divided among us. The church cannot be dismantled into components or parts. The laity and the clergy, the bishop and the Eucharist, doctrine and righteous deeds cannot be separated from one another. Only in the unity of all elements can each part be what it is.

The representation of unity within the local church and from local church to local church in the universal church does not occur in the same way. In the local church, the bishop as the bearer of the highest ecclesial office represents the head of the Church. As the representative of

the head he presides over the remainder of the congregation as the body of Christ. Through communion with the bishop as the visible head of the church, the congregation professes the unity of the Church. Hence, in the Eucharistic assembly around the bishop, is the fullness of the *Totus Christus* (totality of Christ), the One, Holy, and Catholic Church, whose fullness cannot be heightened.

The Ministries, Offices and Roles of the Lay Faithful



Photo from the Diocese of Talibon



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan

The Church's mission of salvation in the world is realized not only by the ministers accorded with the virtue of the Sacrament of Orders, but also by all the lay faithful. Indeed, because of their Baptismal state and their specific vocation, in the measure proper to each person, the lay faithful participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ (CL 23).

The Pastors, therefore, ought to acknowledge and foster the ministries, the offices and roles of the lay faithful that have their foundation on the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, and, for a good many of them, on the Sacrament of Matrimony.

- † **CIC 230 par 3** - When the necessity of the Church warrants it and when ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply for certain of their offices, namely, to exercise the ministry of the Word, to preside over liturgical prayers, to confer Baptism, and to distribute Holy Communion in accord with the prescriptions of the law."
- † **CIC 230 par 3; 517 par 2; 776; 861 par 2; 910 par 2; 943; 1112** - The Church has manifested a deep appreciation for the contribution of the lay faithful, both women and men, in the work of the apostolate, in evangelization, sanctification and the Christian animation of temporal affairs, as well as their generous willingness to supply service in situations of emergency and chronic necessity.
- † **CL 23** - The various ministries, offices and roles that the lay faithful can legitimately fulfill in the liturgy, in the transmission of the faith, and in the pastoral structure of the Church, ought to be exercised *in conformity to their specific lay vocation*, which is different from that of the sacred ministry.

By stimulating the varied collaboration of the lay faithful in the Church's life and mission of spreading the gospel, we recall that "their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and complicated world of politics, society and economics, as well as the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts; as well as, the world of international life, and of mass media. It also

includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, and suffering.”

Charisms

- † **CL 24** - The Holy Spirit, while bestowing diverse ministries in Church communion, enriches it still further with particular gifts or promptings of grace, called *charisms*. These can take a great variety of forms, both as a manifestation of the absolute freedom of the Spirit who abundantly supplies them, and as a response to the varied needs of the Church in history. The description and the classification given to these gifts in the New Testament are an indication of their rich variety. "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues" (1 Cor 12:7-10; 1 Cor 12:4-6, 28-31; Rom 12:6-8; 1 Pt 4:10-11).

Whether they be exceptional and great or simple and ordinary, the charisms are *graces of the Holy Spirit that have, directly or indirectly, a usefulness for the ecclesial community*, ordered as they are for the building up of the Church, for the well-being of humanity and for the needs of the world.

In referring to the apostolate of the lay faithful the Second Vatican Council writes: "For the exercise of the apostolate, the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the People of God through the ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts as well (1 Cor 12:7), "allotting them to each one as He wills (1 Cor 12:11)." So that each might place "at the service of others the grace received" and become "good stewards of God's varied grace" (1 Pt 4:10). Thereby building up the whole body in charity (Eph 4:16) ; LG 63).

For this reason no charism dispenses a person from reference and submission to the Pastors of the Church. "Judgment as to their (charisms') genuineness and proper use belongs to those who preside over the Church, and to whose special competence it belongs." This is not to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to what is good (1 Thess 5:12 and 19-21), so that all charisms might work together, in their diversity and complementarity, for the common good (LG 12, 30)



Faith Response

- † For an adequate participation in ecclesial life, the lay faithful absolutely need to have a clear and precise vision of the particular Church with its primordial bond to the universal Church.

- † The lay faithful together with the clergy and women and men religious, make up the one People of God and the Body of Christ. Being "members" of the Church takes nothing away from the fact that each Christian as an individual is "unique and unrepeatable."
- † Each member of the lay faithful should always be fully aware that being a member of the Church, they are entrusted with a unique task which cannot be done by another and which is to be fulfilled for the good of all.
- † Church communion, already present and at work in the activities of each individual, finds its specific expression in the lay faithful's working together in groups. That is, in activities done with others in the course of their responsible participation in the life and mission of the Church.
- † The freedom of lay people in the Church to form such groups is to be acknowledged. Such liberty is a true and a proper right that is not derived from any kind of "concession" by authority, but flows from the Sacrament of Baptism, which calls the lay faithful to participate actively in the Church's communion and mission.



Human Values/Virtues

To sustain the unity and communion inside the church every member should maintain these human values:

- † **Truth:** The Highest Truth is absolute, changeless in the past, present, and future. It is true at all times and in all places. Truth is not relative. It does not change according to our perceptions and circumstances. Truth manifests as being truthful, honest, and sincere, acting with integrity according to the dictates of our conscience.
- † **Right Action:** True Right Action is speaking and acting on the truth that emerges from the heart, the source of human conscience and human values. When we engage in right action, we treat others the way we wish to be treated, with respect, kindness, compassion, with an understanding and appreciation for the unity of all life.
- † **Peace:** Absolute Peace manifests as inner mental calm, and the ability to maintain equanimity in all situations. When we feel peaceful within ourselves, we will naturally feel peaceful towards others.
- † **Non-Violence:** Avoiding causing harm to anyone or anything in our thoughts, words, and deeds. Non-Violence allows us to appreciate diversity, cultivate tolerance, and recognize the unity of all beings and respect all life.
- † **Love:** The highest form of love is selfless love. It is love that is unconditional, without attachment, not expecting anything in return. All actions emanate from the heart. Love is the force behind all other Human Values, and our actions.



Morals

- † Live in the truth and never allow the evil one take you away or separate you from God, from the Church and from your neighbors by doing sin.
- † Do all the right things and avoid doing what is evil. Obey God first before anyone else.
- † Ensure and keep the peace within you and your community. Help to seek peace and not division.
- † Appreciate everyone's contribution. Help if it is needed and correct others with prudence.
- † Make the love of God reign in your community and keep on promoting love in your Church and in your group.



Simple Activities

Activity: Work as one, We live as one!

Materials: Balloons of different colors and marker

Instructions:

- † Prepare 20-30 balloons of different colors and give every learner their balloon and let them write his/her name on it.
- † Put all the balloons together (with or without the names) in one big space or box where the learners will be able to enter and find their balloons.
- † Give them 15 seconds to find their balloon (Surely, not all will be able to find their balloon).
- † Stop the learners with their corresponding balloons in hand whether they are holding their own balloons or not and let them see the name written in the balloon and ask them to give it to the owner. (Explain to them that helping and working as one, the mission and the unity of the Church is easy and possible.)

Song Analysis (*see next page*)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How do I consider my relationship to the family of God, the Church?
- † Do I act accordingly to the teachings of the Church?
- † How can I help the Church to maintain the ecclesial unity? Do I pray for my brothers and sisters?
- † As a member of the Church, do I consider myself a part and a fruitful member of the Church?

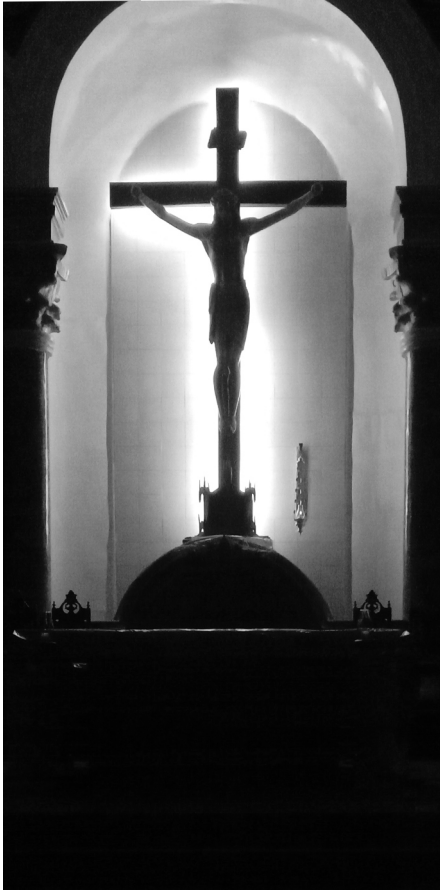


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

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

(As a sign of our communion with the Church, we pray in a very special way for the Pope, the Vicar of Christ on earth and the head of the Catholic Church)

Prayer for Pope Francis

O God, shepherd and ruler of all the faithful,
look favorably on your servant Francis,
whom you have set at the head of your Church as her shepherd;

Grant, we pray, that by word and example
he may be of service to those over whom he presides
so that, together with the flock entrusted to his care,
he may come to everlasting life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Zeal for Mission

As one with the Church, every faithful is called to participate in the one goal and mission of our Mother Church.

- † **KNOW** – The greatest challenge for us is to know the content of our faith, and to bear witness to our faith by a life of faith. While Filipinos have simple faith that is praiseworthy, we have to be aware of the two main deficiencies of our faith. First, the faith of many is uninformed and, more importantly, that this faith has been separated from life. So many of our people do not even know the fundamentals of our faith! Thus, they become very vulnerable to the seductions of other religious groups who find them easy targets of their recruitment efforts. Many of our Catholics cannot even answer attacks on basic Catholic doctrines like the Divinity of Christ, the Eucharist, the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the veneration of images.
- † **LIVE** – We echo the challenge of Pope Francis. “We want to challenge the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism, who lack a meaningful relationship with the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith.” The Church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith in their heart and inspire a commitment to the Gospel (EG 15).
- † **SHARE** – Individual goodness is not sufficient anymore. The good individual will only be swallowed up by the evil system. While individual witness is important, it is in unity that good Christian people will get their strength and attain victory. A Church which “goes forth” is a Church whose doors are open. Going out to others in order to reach the fringes of humanity does not mean rushing out aimlessly into the world. Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way. At times we have to be like the father of the prodigal son, who always keeps his door open so that when the son returns, he can readily pass through it (EG 45).

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: DIVINE COMMISSION

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide" (Jn 15:16).



Introduction

Knowing that communion with Jesus, which gives rise to the communion of Christians among themselves, is an indispensable condition for bearing fruit: "Apart from Me, you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). And communion with others is the most magnificent fruit that the branches can give: in fact, it is the gift of Christ and His Spirit (CL 32).

Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission. Communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion. Always the one and the same Spirit who calls together and unifies the Church and sends her to preach the Gospel "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). On her part, the Church knows that the communion received by her as a gift is destined for all people. Thus, the Church feels she owes to each individual, as a whole, the gift received from the Holy Spirit. From the charity of Jesus Christ, the gift pours into the hearts of believers, as a mystical force for internal cohesion and external growth. The mission of the Church flows from her own nature. Christ has willed it to be so, a "sign and instrument and unity of the entire human race" (LG 1; CL 32). Such a mission has the purpose of making everyone know and live the "new" communion that the Son of God introduced into the history of the world. Therefore, the testimony of John the Evangelist defines in an undeniable way the blessed end towards which the entire mission of the Church is directed: "That which we have seen and heard, we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:3).



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan

In the context of the Church mission, the Lord entrusts a great part of the responsibility to the lay faithful, in communion with all other members of the People of God. This fact, fully understood by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council, recurred with renewed clarity and increased vigor in all the works of the Synod: "Indeed, Pastors know how much the lay faithful contribute to the welfare of the entire Church. They also know that they themselves were not established by Christ to undertake alone the entire saving mission of the Church towards the world, but they understand that it is their exalted office to be shepherds of the lay faithful and

also to recognize the latter's services and charisms that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in this common undertaking with one heart" (LG 1; CL 32).

Pope Francis once again reminded us that "A Christian cannot think of his or her mission on earth without seeing it as a path to holiness, for this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess 4:3). Each saint has a mission – planned by the Father to reflect and embody – at a specific moment in history, a certain aspect of the Gospel" (GE 19).



Word of God

Gospel of John 15:12-17

¹² "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶ You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask Him in My name. ¹⁷ I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.



Doctrine

Mission

The Church's task is to make the kingdom of God, which has already begun with Jesus, germinate and grow in all nations. Wherever Jesus went, heaven touched earth: the Kingdom of God was inaugurated--a kingdom of peace and justice. The Church serves in this kingdom of God. She is not an end in herself. She must carry on what Jesus started. She should act as Jesus would act. She continues the sacred signs of Jesus. She hands on Jesus' words. That is why the Church, for all her weakness, is a formidable bit of heaven on earth (YOUCAT 123).

- † **CFC 1412** - Christ founded his Church to continue his saving mission on earth. "The Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder, receives the mission to proclaim and to establish among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God" (LG 5). This 'mission', built into her very nature originates from the Blessed Trinity. The mission flows from the Church as "Sacrament of salvation," the sign and instrument for achieving intimate union with God (AG 5; LG 1).
- † **CFC 1413** - This mission of the "People of God" is a central theme in all four Gospels. Mark presents the mission as "proclaiming the Gospel to lead others to the faith: "Clearly this man was the Son of God" (Mk 15:39). Matthew's mission stresses the teaching of the Christian community, the Church (Mt 28:19-20; 16:18). Luke emphasizes the Gospel's transforming power to work for conversion to God's merciful love, and liberation from the root of all evil, sin. In John's Gospel, Jesus

sends forth His disciples on mission, just as the Father sent Him (Jn 20:21).

- † **CFC 1414** - PCP II describes the Church in the Philippines as a “Community in Mission” (PCP II 102-6). Since the mission is at the center of the Church's being, the whole Church is missionary. This means that “we are missionaries above all because of what we are as a Church, even before we become missionaries in word or deed” (RM 23). In the past, most Catholics thought of “mission” and “missionary” only in terms of priests, brothers, and religious who were sent to “foreign missions.” It concerned only a few who were specially called. Today, we realize that “each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith to the best of his ability” (LG 17). PCP II asserts: “All are called to mission. all without exception are called to evangelize” (PCP II 402).
- † **CFC 1415** - PCP II goes further to describe the particular mission of the lay faithful within the one universal mission of the Church. It grounds the “Lay Apostolate” in Vatican II’s teaching: The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the Church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to this apostolate by the Lord Himself. The laity has this special vocation: to make the Church present and fruitful in those places and circumstances where it is only through them that the Church can become the salt of the earth (LG 33; CL 14; PCP II 402-11). PCP II then develops the mission of the laity in terms of being called to: 1) a community of families; 2) Christian presence in the world; 3) service and evangelization; and 4) social transformation (PCP II 419-38).
- † **CFC 1417** – The mission of every Filipino Catholic derives from both the Lord’s mandate and the life of God’s grace within us. As Catholics we are privileged to receive the Lord’s charge of bearing witness to the Faith and to the Christian way of life as a service to our brothers and sisters, and as a fitting response to God (RM 11). As members of a missionary Church, we are called to confess the Faith in full adherence to the Word of God, celebrate in the Sacraments, and live in charity, the principle of Christian moral existence” (CL 33). PCP II recalled John Paul II’s words: “the Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the Good News, to carry the light of Christ to the nations.” It added; “while it is true that the Church has a mission towards Philippine society, it also has a very definite mission to the other peoples of Asia” (PCP II 106).

Apostolate – Apostolicam Actuositatem 2

- † In the Church there is a diversity of ministry and a oneness of mission. Christ conferred on the Apostles and their successors the duty of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling in His name and power. But the laity likewise share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office of Christ and therefore have their own share in the mission of the whole people of God in the Church and in the world.
- † They exercise the apostolate by their activity directed towards the evangelization and sanctification of men and to the penetration and perfection of the temporal order through the Spirit of the Gospel. In this way, their temporal activity openly bears witness to Christ and promotes the salvation of men. Since the laity, in accordance with their state of life, live in the midst of the world and its concerns, they are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven, with the ardor of the spirit of Christ.

- † The laity derives the right and duty to the apostolate from their union with Christ the head; incorporated into Christ's Mystical Body through Baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit through Confirmation, they are assigned to the apostolate by the Lord Himself. They are consecrated for the royal priesthood as holy people (1 Peter 2:4-10). Not only do they offer spiritual sacrifices in everything they do, but they also witness Christ throughout the world. The sacraments, especially the most holy Eucharist, communicate and nourish that charity which is the soul of the entire apostolate.
- † One engages in the apostolate through faith, hope, and charity which the Holy Spirit diffuses in the hearts of all members of the Church. Indeed, by the precept of charity, which is the Lord's greatest commandment, all the faithful are impelled to promote the glory of God through the coming of His kingdom and to obtain eternal life for all men. On all Christians, therefore is laid the preeminent responsibility of working to make the Divine message of salvation known and accepted by all men throughout the world.
- † For the exercise of this apostolate, the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the people of God through ministry and the sacraments gives the faithful special gifts as well (1 Cor. 12:7), "allotting them to everyone according to what He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11). From the acceptance of these charisms, including those which are more elementary, there arise for each believer the right and duty to use them in the Church and in the world for the good of men and the building up of the Church. This should be done by the laity in communion with their brothers in Christ, especially with their pastors who must make a judgment about the true nature and proper use of these charisms.
- † The laity carry out their manifold apostolate both in the Church and in the world. In both areas, there are various opportunities for apostolic activity. We wish to list here the more important fields of action, namely, church communities, family, youth, social milieu, and national and international levels. Presently, everyone, regardless of genders, have an ever more active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various fields of the Church's apostolate (AA 9).
- † **CCC 864** - "Christ, sent by the Father, is the source of the Church's whole apostolate"; thus the fruitfulness of apostolate for ordained ministers as well as for lay people clearly depends on their vital union with Christ. In keeping with their vocations, the demands of the times and the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, the apostolate assumes the most varied forms. But charity, drawn from the Eucharist above all, is always "as it were, the soul of the whole apostolate."



Faith Response

- † **Strengthen** one's relationship with God by being faithful to His friendship.
- † Be **conscious** to God's call, He calls everyone to a mission and bear fruit.
- † Be a living **witness** of God's love by manifesting His love in everyday lives.
- † Be **fruitful** in searching souls to save them. Be a Catholic and a sign of salvation for the souls of our brothers and sisters.



Human Values/Virtues

† Zeal for souls

Zeal is the virtue of a missionary. St. Vincent de Paul said “If the love of God is fire, zeal is its flame. If love is the sun, then zeal is its ray.” The burning love fills the heart of Jesus. It is love in practice. We practice it through: a passionate, persevering, faithful love – willingness to seek laborers for the harvest

† Meekness

To be meek does not mean to be overly submissive or to let someone walk all over us. Meekness means the ability to handle anger, by either suppressing it or expressing it in a manner governed by love. It is a combination of gentleness and firmness. We practice it through: the ability to handle anger positively with approachability and gentleness, enduring offences with forgiveness and courage.

† Simplicity

It consists of speaking the truth in saying things as they are, without concealing or hiding anything and in referring things to God alone. We practice it through: speaking the truth, witnessing to the truth, seeking the truth, being in truth, practicing truth in love.

† Mortification

Mortification has gotten a bad name and is often associated with a feeling of shame. By mortification, we need only look at the Gospel of Luke to find a myriad of examples of how to do this. We practice it through: renouncing one good thing in order to do a better thing, recognizing our goals and channeling our limited energies into achieving themselves, learning to let go.

† **CCC 2015** – The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails self-discipline and mortification that gradually lead to living in the peace and joy of the Beatitudes.



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Morals

- † According to each one's own condition, the lay faithful are also bound by a particular duty to imbue and perfect the order of temporal affairs with the spirit of the Gospel and thus to give witness to Christ, especially in carrying out these same affairs and in exercising their secular functions (CIC 225).
- † According to their own vocation, those who live in the marital state are bound by a special duty to work through marriage and the family to build up the people of God (CIC 226).
- † As sharers in the role of Christ as priest, prophet, and king, the laity have their work cut out for them in the life and activity of the Church. Strengthened by their active participation in the liturgical life of their community, they are eager to do their share of apostolic works of that community (AA 10).
- † They bring to the Church people who are perhaps far removed from it, earnestly cooperate in presenting the word of God especially by means of catechetical instruction, and offer their special skills to make the care of souls and the administration of the temporalities of the Church more efficient and effective (AA 10).
- † They should develop an ever-increasing appreciation of their own diocese, of which the parish is a kind of cell, ever ready at their pastor's invitation to participate in diocesan projects (AA 10).



Simple Activities

Activity:

- † Let the learners, with their writing materials, write down the things that they think they can contribute to the church as part of their mission.
- † Explain to them that every single act of goodness, in their simple way, can contribute to the mission of the Church.

Song Analysis *(see next page)*

Guide for Reflections

- † How I express my union with the Church?
- † Am I one with the mission of the Church?
- † Do I accomplish my mission with my status in life?
- † Do I see God works in me to continue his work of salvation?



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

One in Mission

Theme song of Year of the Laity

We are the true stewards of His creation
Serving humanity with joy and compassion
Creating change amidst our horizon
Building a brighter future with youthful
passion

Chorus:

So let us sing and dance for the Lord
Spreading His words through this melody
Uniting His nation
One in faith, hope and charity
Let the love of God reign in our hearts
Shaping the world with the gifts we impart
Beloved, gifted, empowered, through
Jesus
We are one in mission
The Lord is with us
We are one!

Let the spirit of Christ be our guide
Like the spark of light forged in the sky
Together we'll reach our dreams up high

Let the love of God reign in our hearts
Shaping the world with the gifts we impart
Beloved, gifted, empowered, through
Jesus
We are one in mission
The Lord is with us
We are one!



Worship

O Most Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church,
With joy and wonder we seek to make our own
your *Magnificat*, joining you in your hymn of thankfulness and love.

With you we give thanks to God,
"whose mercy
is from generation to generation",
for the exalted vocation
and the many forms of mission
entrusted to the lay faithful.

God has called each of them by name
to live his own communion of love
and holiness and to be one
in the great family of God's children.

He has sent them forth
to shine with the light of Christ
and to communicate the fire of the Spirit
in every part of society
through their life
inspired by the gospel.

O Virgin of the *Magnificat*,
fill their hearts
with a gratitude and enthusiasm
for this vocation and mission.
With humility and magnanimity
you were the "handmaid of the Lord";
give us your unreserved willingness
for service to God
and the salvation of the world.

Open our hearts
to the great anticipation
of the Kingdom of God
and of the proclamation of the Gospel
to the whole of creation.
Your mother's heart
is ever mindful of the many dangers
and evils which threaten
to overpower men and women
in our time.

At the same time your heart also takes notice
of the many initiatives
undertaken for good,
the great yearning for values,
and the progress achieved
in bringing forth
the abundant fruits of salvation.

O Virgin full of courage,
may your spiritual strength
and trust in God inspire us,
so that we might know
how to overcome all the obstacles
that we encounter
in accomplishing our mission.

Teach us to treat the affairs
of the world
with a real sense of Christian responsibility
and a joyful hope
of the coming of God's Kingdom, and
of a "new heaven and a new earth".

You who were gathered in prayer
with the Apostles in the Cenacle,
awaiting the coming
of the Spirit at Pentecost,
implore his renewed outpouring
on all the faithful, men and women alike,
so that they might more fully respond
to their vocation and mission,
as branches engrafted to the true vine,
called to bear much fruit
for the life of the world.

O Virgin Mother,
guide and sustain us
so that we might always live
as true sons and daughters
of the Church of your Son.
Enable us to do our part
in helping to establish on earth
the civilization of truth and love,
as God wills it,
for his glory. Amen.

Prayer from Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Christifideles Laici of His Holiness John Paul II



Zeal for Mission

- † **LIVE** the faith according to the teachings of our Mother Church.
- † **SHARE** the faith to others especially to your loved ones.
- † **PARTICIPATE** in the mission of your family, community and your parish.
- † **PRAY** for the holiness of all members of the church especially the lay faithful.
- † They should especially make **MISSIONARY ACTIVITY** their own by giving material or even personal assistance to those who need it most. It is a duty and honor for Christians to return to God a part of the blessings that they received from Him.

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AKO'Y ISANG MABUTING PILIPINO

Lyrics: Fr. Albert Alejo, SJ

Music: Noel Cabangon

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://tabs.ultimate-guitar.com/tab/noel-cabangon/akoy-isang-mabuting-pilipino-chords-1090743>

SALMO 23

Lyrics & Music: Fr. Rey C. Magnaye

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.catholicsongbook.com/2018/01/salmo-23-magnaye-lyrics-and-chords.html>

A RICH YOUNG MAN (SIMPLE LIVING)

Artist: Keith & Kristyn Getty

Album: Hymns for the Christian Life

Information on this song is publicly available @ <http://www.songlyrics.com/keith-kristyn-getty/simple-living-a-rich-young-man-lyrics/>

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>

ONE IN MISSION

Lyrics and Music: Gino Paulo Buizon

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.cbcplaiko.org/2018/11/28/2019-year-of-the-youth-theme-song/>



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

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.

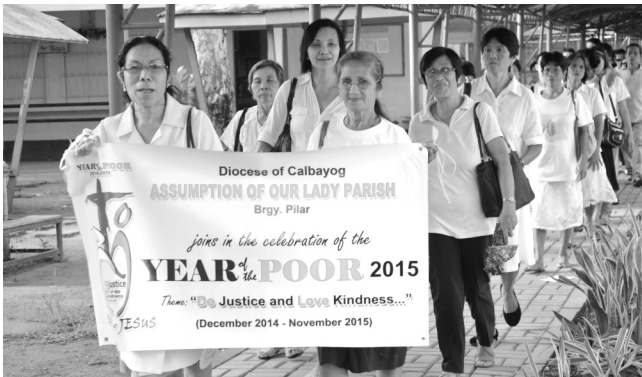


Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



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 unflinchingly 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 -
10 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 -
18 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 -
27 nit - pu - nit ang 'Yong da - mit, na - wa I - ka'y ma - pa - sa - a - kin.

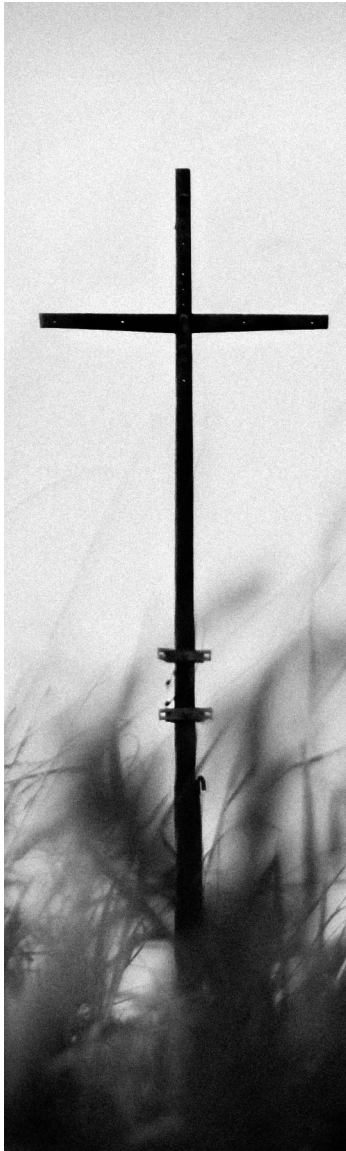
Refrain:

Tu - lu - tan Mo'ng a - king ma - ta ma - mu - lat sa ka - to - to - ha - nan: I -
35 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.



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

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

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. (Luke 4:18)

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

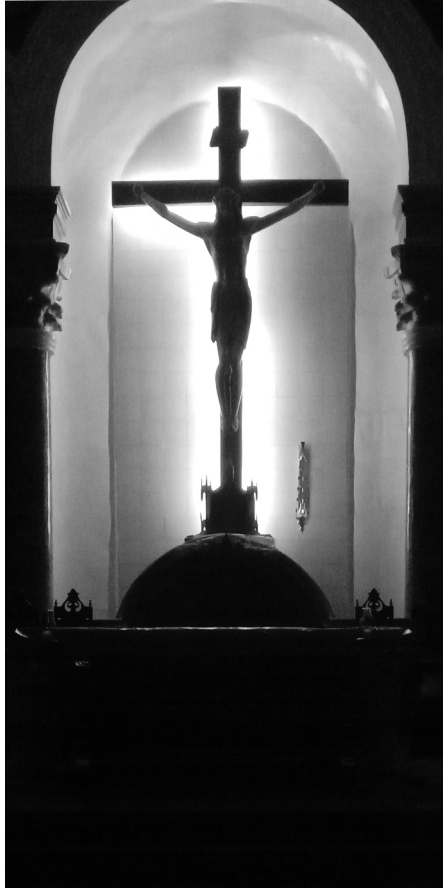


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

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

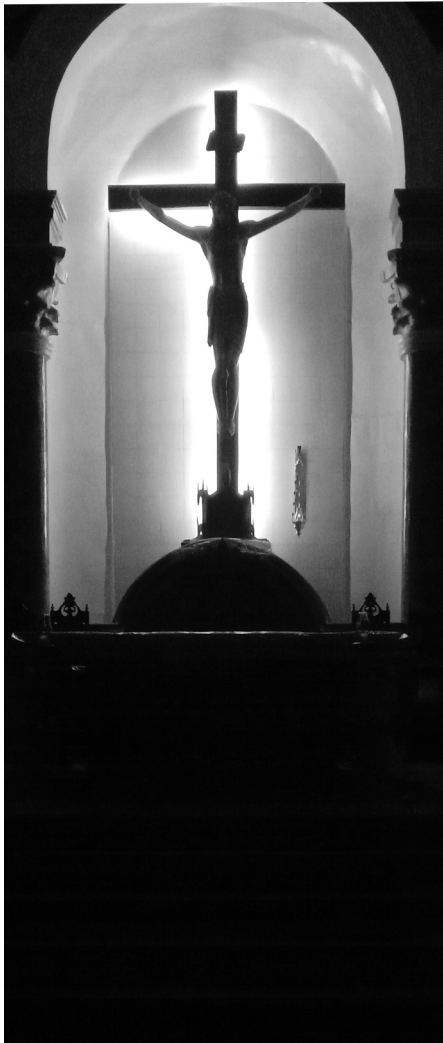


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

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 hirap na dinaranas

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

Na di naghinihintay 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



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 4:

The Eucharist and the Family

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 4: THE EUCHARIST AND THE FAMILY

Overview

Christian Family as Focal Point of Evangelization

“The first and fundamental structure for human ecology is the family because the family is the basic cell of the Church and society (Centesimus Annus 39).” The Gospel has to be shared first in the family because it is an essential “agent of pastoral activity”(Amoris Laetitia 290). Thus, a Christian family should be a “miniature church.” All Christian family members are invited to strengthen one another in faith and to outdo one another in their zeal for God (YOUCAT 373). Through the proper upbringing in the Catholic faith and the guidance of parents, it is possible to form children according to a model that is based on love and service to God and others.



Photo from the Diocese of Butuan

The home is the first venue for the proclamation of the Gospel and the transmission of faith. Parents are the primary evangelizers and catechists of their children. It is also the first school of evangelization where members learn to share the grace and light of Christ. It ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates (EN 71). Christian families can do this through a more intensive evangelization focused on the family. The family has to become a key agent of proclaiming the Gospel. Hence, the family must hold on first to life, marriage, and to the values of Christian family. There should be a renewal in the family in contrast to the modern world, so that whenever the modern world offers a lot of changes, the Christian values in the family will remain (Familiaris Consortio 1).

The Family as Miniature Church

The Christian family is the domestic Church. This is the assertion of Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. In the Post-Synodal Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, he spelled out what this ecclesiological vision on the family means:

“The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion. For this reason, it can and should be called the domestic Church. All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility, day by day, to build, a communion of persons. This is accomplished when there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, and the aged. Where there is mutual service every day, there will be sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows (FC 58-59).”

Every Catholic faithful must promote and intensify the efforts to strengthen marriage and the family so that every evangelized family becomes an evangelizing family. Thus, the Christian family is a realization of communion with Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly mission (Picardal, 2011, p. 371). This communion is concretely expressed in table-fellowship (common meals and celebration). Communion is also expressed in the sharing of material resources and spiritual goods (time, talent and treasure). However, this communion should not become exclusive only to members of the family, but rather it should also be applied to the relationship with other Christian families in the neighborhood and in the wider Church such as parish, diocese, Universal Church (ibid).

The community truly celebrates its being the Body of Christ when the members receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion. According to John Paul II, "participation in the sacrament of reconciliation and in the banquet of the One Body of Christ offers the Christian family the grace and responsibility of overcoming every division, moving towards the fullness of communion willed by God. In this way, we respond to the ardent desire of the Lord: "that they may be one" (Familiaris Consortio 21).

Everyone must be reminded of the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis to the Filipino families on January 16, 2015 at the Mall of Asia Arena. He prompted his awed audience: "In the family we learn to love, to forgive, to be generous and to be open. We learn to move beyond our own needs, to encounter others and share our lives with them" (Pope Francis, 2015a). That is why it is important to pray as one family where all the members of the family gather together in the banquet of Christ, the Holy Eucharist.

In the human sphere, the family is the primordial image of communion. The family is the unique school of living in relationships. Nowhere else do children grow up as well as in an intact family, in which they experience heartfelt affection, mutual respect, and responsibility for one another (Villegas, 2015). Hence, the Church's perspective in this year of the Eucharist and the Family is that the family must be a miniature Church who will become a companion of the Church in spreading the Good News.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** Christ is encountered in the family because Christ is always present in the family. Constantly praying together and actively participating in the Holy Eucharist as one family will strengthen the family's encounter with Christ.
- † **Conversion.** The family must hold on first and foremost to life, marriage, and to the values of Christian family. There should be a renewal in the family in contrast to the modern world, so that whenever the modern world offers a lot of changes, the Christian values in the family will still remain.
- † **Sense of belongingness.** The Christian family, as a domestic Church, connects with the macro-Church, that one family belongs to a bigger Christian family. Moreover, it enables them to participate in the life and mission of the Church.
- † **Zeal for mission.** Families must be taught according to the moral norms of the

Church. A family should be incorporated into the Church to move forward hand-in-hand towards renewal. It means that the family ought to communicate with the Church, issues about modern ideologies (e.g. divorce, in-vitro fertilization, use of contraceptives, etc.) while the Church guides the family in renewal (e.g. sanctity of marriage and the sacredness of life).

Etymology

Family

Family is derived from the Latin, *famulus* meaning servant, and *familia* which means household servants, or the household. In the classical Roman period the *familia* rarely included the parents or the children. Its English derivative was frequently used in former times to describe all the persons of the domestic circle, parents, children, and servants. Present usage, however, excludes servants, and restricts the word family to that fundamental social group formed by the more or less permanent union of one man with one woman, or of one or more men with one or more women, and their children. If the heads of the group comprise only of one man and one woman, we have the monogamous family, as distinguished from those domestic societies which live in conditions of polygamy – one husband-many wives; polyandry – one wife-many husbands, or promiscuity – sexual relations with different partners (Ryan, 1909).

A family is a group of persons who are related by marriage or blood and who typically include a father, mother, and children. A family is a natural society whose right to existence and support is provided for by the Divine law. According to the Second Vatican Council, "the family is the foundation of society" (GS 52). In addition to the natural family, the Church recognizes also the supernatural family of the diocese and of the religious community, whose members are to cooperate in the up- building of the Body of Christ (Lumen Gentium 43; Christus Dominus 34).

Eucharist

The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers a brief definition of the word. The inexhaustible richness of the sacrament of the Eucharist (i.e. the "Mass") is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of the family. It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* and *eulogein* recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim — especially during a meal — God's works: creation, redemption, and sanctification (CCC 1328).

In the original Greek version of the Gospels, Jesus is recorded using a similar word while celebrating the Last Supper, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves ... And Hhe took bread, and when Hhe had given thanks (*εὐχαριστήσας* – *eucharistēsas*) Hhe broke it and gave it to them "(Luke 22:18-19). Essentially, the word "Eucharist" means "giving thanks," but in a Jewish context is directed specifically towards giving thanks to God (Kosloski, 2017).

Jubilee of Blessings, Mission of Renewal CBCP Pastoral Exhortation for the Jubilee of Mercy and Year of the Family and the Eucharist

The Year 2016 was a year of many blessings for us in the Philippines. It will also be a year of mission for the Kingdom.

From December 8, 2015 until November 20, 2016, the Church all over the world will observe an extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy as decreed by Pope Francis in the papal bull, *Misericordiae Vultus*. We stand in faithful communion with the Holy Father as he prays for “the Church to echo the word of God those resounds strong and clear as a message, and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May the Church never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort.

In the Philippines, we shall open today, November 29, 2015, the First Sunday of Advent, the Year of the Eucharist and the Family, as part of our nine- year preparation for the Jubilee of 2021, the five hundredth anniversary of the first Mass and first baptism in the Philippines. We also eagerly await the celebration of the Fifty First International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu, come January 2016.

In 2016 we will also celebrate the twenty-fifth year of the convocation of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, the greatest ecclesial event in the Philippines in the twentieth century.

In this forthcoming year of renewal dedicated to mercy, the Eucharist and the family, under the light of PCP II, how shall we as a people respond?

As brothers and pastors in the faith, our answer is “*If we want renewal, let us learn how to kneel again.*” Our generation seems to have lost the religious gesture of kneeling. We have become more of a clapping generation. We seem to have compromised the virtue of humility with a culture of self-security and independence. Our throwaway consumerist attitude can hardly imagine kneeling down before one another, like the Lord who washed the feet of His beloved ones. If we are to restore a contemplative view of creation as Pope Francis invites us, we must learn to kneel again by the feet of the Lord. We need to be caught in awe at the wonder of His tenderness and mercy.

If we want renewal, let us learn to kneel again in body, heart and attitude.

Begging for mercy, we kneel in repentance. Adoring the Eucharist, we kneel down and worship. Serving others, we kneel before the family and wash each other’s feet. If we dream of renewal, let us kneel again in repentance, in adoration and in service.

Let us kneel
before the
Lord who
made us.

(Psalm 95:6)

For Mercy Let Us Kneel

We cannot celebrate mercy without repentance.

Then Stephen fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”; and when he said this, he fell asleep (Acts 7:60).

Be merciful, like the Father is merciful. We are called upon to pray on behalf of humanity for the forgiveness of sins. We constantly need to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is the wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. “Mercy,” the word itself, reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening their hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite their sinfulness (Misericordiae Vultus 2).

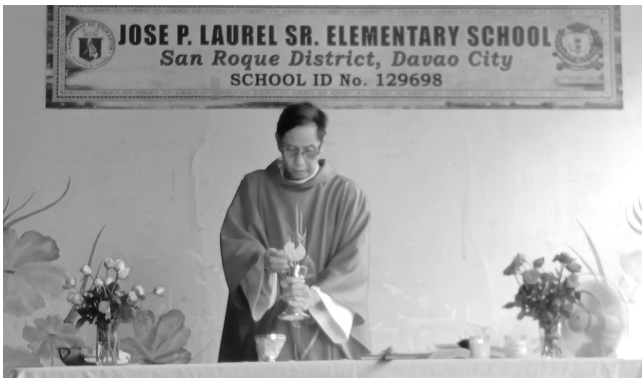


Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

Celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy, we are also invited to kneel down in humility and repentance especially in the sacrament of reconciliation where we kneel down to confess our sins and receive pardon. Kneeling is a very important gesture in our Christian culture that we must regain and safeguard. Origen said kneeling is necessary if we want to admit our sins before God and seek His mercy. Kneeling symbolizes someone who has fallen but trusts in the loving mercy of God. When our bodies fail to move with the prayerful dispositions of the heart; when we lose the importance of kneeling and bowing, our prayer can become dry and even boring. Praying with the body by kneeling, bowing, or raising our hands can ignite the dying embers of our spiritual lives.

John Cassian taught “The bending of the knee is a token of penitence and sorrow of a penitent heart”. Furthermore, St. Ambrose of Milan (Hexaemeron, VI, ix) said: “The knee has been made flexible so that by means of it, more than any other limb, our offenses against the Lord may be mitigated and God’s displeasure may be appeased, grace called forth.”

Kneeling down is not just an act to seek mercy for our sins; it is also a gesture of compassion for our fellow wounded sinners. We are invited to kneel down to bind the wounds of those who are bleeding and hurting. Indeed, mercy is not only an action of the Father; it becomes a criterion for ascertaining whom His true children are (MV 9). Kneeling disposes us to receive and share mercy. Kneeling humbly reminds us that we have fallen and in our fallen yet forgiven condition, we must show mercy to one another.

We must kneel down in contrition before God for our sins against Mother Nature. We kneel down in sorrow for the scars on nature, for the destruction of complex living systems sacrificed on the altar of economic progress.

We kneel down before the poor whom we have ignored; they, whom the Lord assured will inherit the Kingdom. We kneel down in sorrow for our abuses against the weak and the vulnerable. We kneel to seek mercy from those we have marginalized and misjudged, suspected, and gossiped. We need to kneel down and seek pardon for our misplaced prudence and cowardice to stand for the Lord and die with Him.

If we want renewal, we must learn the humility of kneeling from the heart and with the knees. It is easier to remember that we are sinners when we kneel. It is easier to share the same mercy kneeling down, not from a higher moral level but from our shared sinful condition; *Miserando atque eligendo* (by having mercy, by choosing Him).

Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness that she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching



Photo from the Archdiocese of Lipa



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen on how she shows merciful and compassionate love (MV 10). We share this mercy not as dispensers of grace from the our judge's thrones but from the common ground of our sinful condition.

In Adoration Let Us Kneel

In January 2016, our feet and our knees led us to Cebu for the Fifty First International Eucharistic Congress echoing the words of Saint Paul to the Colossians "Christ in you, our hope of glory" (1:27).

If we dream of renewal, let us rediscover the power of kneeling again in silent adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, the Lamb of God. " Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe cry out: "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever." The four living creatures answered, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped (Rev 5:13-14).

In his book, “The Spirit of the Liturgy,” then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (2000, p. 191) wrote that the Hebrews regarded the knee as a symbol of strength. To bend the knee is therefore, to bend our strength before the living God, an acknowledgment of the fact that all that we are, we receive from God.”

Kneeling is part of our Christian culture. We cannot abandon or set aside the culture of kneeling in favor of a culture that says, as freemen we must face God on our feet. Bending the knee before the tabernacle in genuflection, kneeling down at the celebration of the Eucharist, kneeling down to adore the exposed Blessed Sacrament—these are little but sublime acts of adoration that we must preserve and protect.

Kneeling at the consecratory words over the bread and wine is not only an act of humility but giving a bowing welcome to meet the Lord, who Himself has stooped down to reach out to us. Though He was in the form of God, He did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied Himself becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross (Phil 2: 6).

If you want renewal, kneel again. We kneel to atone for the countless profanities against the Eucharist. As we bow down and adore the Eucharist, we also beg for pardon for the many sacrileges and desecrations that the Sacred Species are repeatedly subjected to in many communities. We seek pardon for liturgical experiments and abuses; the narcissism among ordained ministers seeking popularity rather than piety; for taking the Mass for granted; for the irreverent attire and the cold interior disposition, we have when we attend Mass.

According to Cardinal Ratzinger, “there is a story that comes from the sayings of the Desert Fathers. According to the story, God to a certain Abba Apollo compelled the devil. He looked black and ugly, with frighteningly thin limbs, but most strikingly, he had no knees. The inability to kneel is seen as the very essence of the diabolical” (Ibid, p. 193).

All the families of the nations shall bow down before him. “For dominion is the Lord’s and He rules the nations” (Ps 22:28). To Him alone, shall bow down all who sleep in the earth; Before Him shall bend all who go into the dust. If we want renewal in spirituality, we must recover the Christian culture of kneeling.

For Love and for Service Let Us Kneel

In this Year of the Family and the Eucharist, we are invited to kneel down to bring renewal to the family. We kneel to serve like the Lord. We envision every Filipino Catholic family to be missionary disciples of the Eucharist.

Jesus got up from the meal, took off His outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around His waist. After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples’ feet (John 13:4).

Let us kneel again at home for family prayer and for feet washing. Where love and service prevail instead of pride and grudge-keeping; where the humility of pardon and being pardoned prevails over revenge and bitter resentments; where siblings wash one another’s

feet and parents do the same. Where the culture of family kneeling is present, the dream of renewal in family life will not be far from sight.

The family that prays together stays together. The family that kneels together will be refreshed and renewed together. The family that kneels together will remain young, fresh, and new. Kneeling empowers families to stand up against the storms of life. Kneeling is strength.

As it is with the family, so it is with the Church and her pastors. The Church is not ours. The Church is Christ's. We, who are only stewards, not master builders, must return to the spiritual value of kneeling for prayer and stooping for feet washing. The mandate the Lord gave on Holy Thursday to "Do as I have done" is a daily obligation that must be fulfilled with humility with joy, with faith, and with love.

Kneeling for Renewal

In the Jubilee Year of Mercy, this Year of the Family and the Eucharist, let us return to the spiritual value and beauty of kneeling. Tertullian even went as far as saying "No prayer should be made without kneeling". How can we be renewed without prayer? How can we pray without kneeling for repentance? How can we receive mercy if we are proud and self-secure?

How can we worship without kneeling down when the Apostle himself says "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth." How can we show that we are His disciples without kneeling down to wash one another's feet as He has mandated? By this act of love, we will be known as His disciples.

In this Year of Mercy, let us kneel again. If we want renewal, let the heart and body kneel. Let the mind and the legs bend before the Lord. Let the soul and the knees bow together in worship and humility. May Mary Mother of Mercy teach us her humility and lead us by the hand to adore her Son and serve like Him. Amen.

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, November 29, 2015, First Sunday of Advent

Sincerely yours,

+Socrates B. Villegas
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

Song for Reflection

The word “Mass” comes from the Latin “missa” which is part of the words of dismissal in the Eucharistic celebration – “Ite missa est” – “Go, you are sent!” We are fed at the table of the Lord, that we may have the strength to go on mission, that is, to announce the Gospel of Lord by the witness of our lives, first in our families, and then in our grand family, the Church (Green, 2020).

SA PIGING NG PANGINOON

Written by Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Song by Bienvenida Tabuena

KORO

Sa piging ng ating Panginoon
Tayo’y laging natitipon
Upang matutong magmahalan
Sa pag-ibig na nakamtan.

I

Buhay ay inialay N’ya
Sa Dakilang Diyos Ama
Upang atin nang makamtan
Buhay na walang hanggan (Koro)

II

Buhay ay inialay N’ya
Upang tayo’y magkaisa
Sa paghahatid ng ligaya
Mula sa pag-ibig N’ya (Koro)

III

May galak na makakamtan
Sa bawat pagbibigayan
Habambuhay ay ingatan
Ang tapat na samahan (Koro)

Reflection Questions:

- † Should Sunday Mass be a family affair, or should individual members be left free to decide whether or not to go?
- † How does our participation in the Eucharist help us become credible witnesses of the Gospel to our family and friends?

Sa Piging ng Panginoon

Titik ni: Bienvenida V. Tabuena
Himig ni: Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Areglo ni: Redd Salaria
Para sa: Children of Mary Immaculate (COMI) Choir, Limay

f $\text{♩} = 110$ *a la marcha*

C Am F G7 Am F G7

KORO: Sa pi - ging ng a - ting Pa - ngi - no - on Ta - yo'y la - ging na - ti - ti - pon

9 C F E7 Am F C G7 C Fine

U pang ma - tu - tong mag - ma - ha - lan Sa pag - i - big na na - kam - tan.

17 *mf* G7 C G7 C

1. Bu - hay ay i - ni - a - lay N'ya Sa Da - ki - lang Diyos A - ma
2. Bu - hay ay i - ni - a - lay N'ya U - pang ta - yo'ymag - ka - i - sa
3. May ga - lak na ma - ka - kam - tan Sa ba - wa't pag - bi - bi - ga - yan;
4. Ding - gin a - ming da - la - ngin Sa I - yo, Po - ong Ma - hal;

mf Ahh - - - !

25 D7 Em Am D7 G D.C.

1. U - pang a - tin nang ma - kam - tan Bu - hay na wa - lang hang - gan.
2. Sa pag - ha - ha - tid ng li - ga - ya Mu - la sa pag - i - big N'ya.
3. Ha - bang bu - hay ay i - nga - tan Ang ta - pat na sa - ma - han.
4. Ang li - him ng 'Yong pag - i - big Sa - na'y a - ming ma - kam - tan.

Ahh - - - !

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Catechist's Corner

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)*.

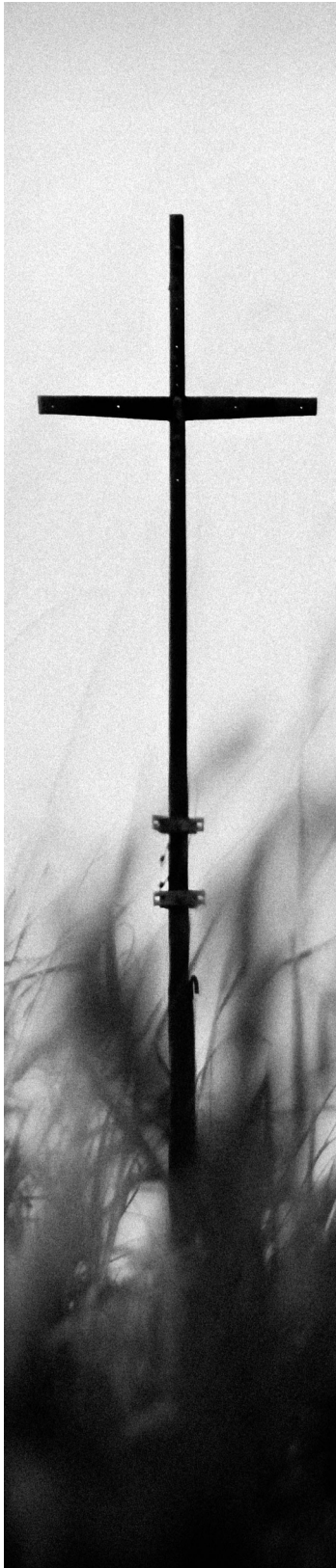
Guide question for Discussion:

- † As children, have you joined your parents in celebrating the Holy Eucharist?
- † As parents, have you broughtdo you bring your children to Holy Mass?

“Every year, the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual.”
(Luke 2:41-42)



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



WHY DO CHILDREN REFUSE ATTENDING THE MASS?

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola

One catechist shared
About how she persevered
Teaching the students stories
About God
About the Church.

A parent shared
About her children
Who are unruly in the house
Disrespectful to the elders
Disinterested to attend mass.

A child narrated
About the situation
Of her beloved family
Parents who always fight,
Parents who feel apart

When the catechist asked
The child, “Why won’t you attend mass?”
She answered in tears,
“They” do not go to Church, they
Who never mature in faith at all.

In sobs and cries, the catechist
Persisted to persuade
The child, so confused about this world
For the parents, it seems like
To face their children with the truth—

About the faith
About the Church
About Christ
Whispering a prayer, the catechist watched the child
Held by her parent
Leading her out of the chapel
Once upon a Sunday
In a place of catechesis

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: “AS I HAVE LOVED YOU”



Introduction

Christ wishes to continue His evangelizing work not only through individuals but also through groups, communities and institutions which He wishes to manifest and transmit His truth and love to. First among these institutions is the Christian family, the Church in the home (PCP II 574). Pope John Paul II calls the Christian Family a “Domestic Church”, which “can be achieved only with God's unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned in prayer” (Familiaris Consortio 59). A family that teaches and forms its members to know and love Christ makes the Church alive in the homes of every Christian family (Familiaris Consortio 43). The center of the family must be Jesus Christ Himself, who is the source of love. Such family will continually grow in encountering Christ through fervent prayer and celebration of the Holy Eucharist, as one family, and will live with the Holy Family as its model.



Photo from the Diocese of Mati

All of us are called to step out of our comfort zones, to stop following the flock, to go against the flow of what we are accustomed. If before, we were just observers in our community, then we are challenged today to express our Christian love. “The first setting in which faith enlightens the human city is the family” (Lumen Fidei 52). Thus, learning to love and care must always begin in our own families.



Word of God

Gospel of John 15: 12-17

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from My Father. ¹⁶You did not choose Me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask Him in My name. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.



Doctrine

LOVE

THREE KINDS OF LOVE:

† EROS

Eros, as a term to indicate “worldly” love. “Agape,” meanwhile, refers to love grounded in and shaped by faith. The two notions are often contrasted as “ascending” love and “descending” love. There are other, similar classifications, such as the distinction between possessive love (*amor concupiscentiae*) and oblation love (*amore benevolentiae*). In philosophical and theological debate, these distinctions have often been radicalized to the point of establishing a clear antithesis between them: descending, oblation love—agape—would be typically Christian. On the other hand ascending, possessive or covetous love —eros—would be typical of non-Christian, and particularly of Greek culture. Yet eros and agape—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. Even if eros is mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing one to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself. It increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, and is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to “be there for” the other.

The element of agape thus enters into this kind of love, until eros is impoverished and even loses its own nature. On the other hand, man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (Jn 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (Jn 19:34).

We have seen that God's eros for man is also totally agape. This is not only because it is bestowed in a completely gratuitous manner, without any previous merit, but also because it is love which forgives. Eros is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with agape.

† PHILIA

While many Greeks viewed Eros as dangerous, they viewed philia as the ideal love. Philia, in today's terms, would resemble brotherly love and the love between parents and their children. It is about showing loyalty, giving sacrifice, showing appreciation, and other more “noble” forms of love not involving sex.

According to Aristotle, a person can feel Philia towards someone for one of three

reasons: Based on utility, based on pleasures, and based on goodness. Aristotle also theorized that one must feel love for himself/herself before being able to feel love for others, something that we have all heard from well-meaning friends when asking them for relationship advice.

† AGAPE

Agape is a bit more abstract than the other two types of love. Agape is sometimes referred to in modern times as universal love, charity, or even altruism (self-sacrifice). Essentially, we give the love inside us freely to others regardless of our relationship with them. The whole idea behind agape love is that we do not need to have met the other person before, but we still want to help them, cooperate with them, or do good deeds towards them without expecting anything in return for our selfless good deeds. Studies show (Rancano, 2015) that Agape can actually benefit us in negating the effects of stress and having an overall positive effect on our mental health.

There is no right or wrong way to love, but there is beauty and fullness in love, that is Love of God. Philia is the highest form of love because it is a two-way road, unlike Eros and Agape. Love is a key attribute of God in Christianity. 1 John 4:8 and 16 state "God is love; and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." John 3:16 states: God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten son; that whoever believes in Him, may not perish but have eternal life. In the New Testament, God's love for humanity or the world is expressed in Greek as agape (ἀγάπη). Hence, let us always be reminded that "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

MARRIAGE / SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

God, who created man out of love, also calls him to love. Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God, who is Himself love (CCC 1604). God tells Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Their love for each other is the image of the love that God has for us.

The matrimonial covenant, establishes, between a man and a woman partnership for the whole of life. Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (CCC 1601) has raised this covenant between baptized persons. Marriage is a sacrament of service and love of both baptized man and woman. In the Sacrament of Matrimony, a man and a woman are united in such a way that they become one flesh, each belonging to one another. Marriage is a celebration of a lifelong partnership in faithful love.

The principal ministers during the exchange of promises in a marriage ceremony are the couple themselves. However, there must be an official Church witness present, either a priest or a deacon, because Matrimony is an act of public worship, a community prayer that brings God's blessings to the couple. Marriage reflects the union of Christ with the Church, His mystical body. Marriage union is used to sanctify both the husband and the wife by drawing them into a deeper understanding of God's love. It is intended to be fruitful, with any number of

children who are to be raised within the teaching of the Church. Once the couple is married, their family becomes a domestic church. The Church as a whole and the family is built upon the foundation of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

While Matrimony is part of the sacramental life that makes it possible for Christians to attain eternal salvation, the purpose of this sacrament is to help couples in this life, as they work to live in faithfulness to God. It also provides them with a foretaste of the divine love that awaits them in paradise.



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan

FAMILY

FAMILY AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH

The term “Domestic Church” refers to the family. It is the smallest body of believers gathered in Christ. Our Early Church Fathers understood that the home is a fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness. Lumen Gentium 11 describes the family as the ‘Domestic Church’ because it is the place where young, baptized Christians first learn about their faith. Families are extremely important centers of living faith. The home is the first Church and the first school of Christian life, where all learn love, repeated forgiveness, and prayerful worship (CCC 1655- 1657).

The Church is nothing other than “the family of God” (CCC 1655). Therefore, the Domestic Church needs the parents in leading souls to heaven. Parents should be the first preachers of the faith to their children by their word and example. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them. They (parents) need to foster with special care the vocation to a sacred state and to cultivate a family life that is centered on Christ (LG 11).

THE FOUR LEVELS OF CHURCH

Four distinct levels of Church. There is the Universal Church led by the bishop of Rome and all the bishops in union with him. There is the local diocesan church, led by its local bishop, who is uniquely positioned to guide us on how best to implement our faith in our own time and culture. There is the local parish church, from which we receive most of our religious instruction and the sacraments. Finally, there is this fourth layer of Church, the Domestic Church, which plays a key role in our sanctification for this is where we practice intimate love for others.

THE FOUR TASKS OF THE FAMILY

Saint John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, identifies the four primary tasks that each family (Domestic Church) should strive to accomplish:

- † Forming a community of persons
- † Serving Life
- † Participating in the development of the society
- † Sharing in the life and mission of the Church

The Catholic Church recognizes that grace builds upon nature. Family is one of the most basic, yet important gifts that God has given us. Through a firm marital commitment between a man and a woman, and through their own active participation in the faith and their pledge to raise their children with a love for Christ and his Church, the domestic Church is one of the first places that young Catholics experience the light of faith in their own lives.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Gratitude** - Gratitude is a feeling of being thankful and appreciative. Gratitude helps people feel emotions that are more positive, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. People feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. Our family is a vital support network, one that provides us with all- important love, care, sympathy and words of kindness. Families should be there to help in times of need.
- † **Intimacy** - Intimacy means deeply knowing another person and it involves feelings of emotional closeness and connectedness with another person. Intimate relationships are often characterized by attitudes of mutual trust, caring, and acceptance. Intimacy in family relationships is a very significant factor for unity and understanding of each member in the family. Family members must have the spirit of familiarity and connectedness to each other.
- † **Prayerful** - Christian family and spouses must raise their children in the likeness of the Lord. Prayer is the source of life and heartbeat of a truly Christian home. It's also one of the best ways to help families flourish. When families pray together, each member of the family learns what it means to be intimate with God. Through answered prayers, they experience His love and presence in their daily lives. Prayer has the effect of deepening interpersonal relationships. It encourages family members to become more sensitive to one another's feelings. The familiar, timeworn saying is true: families who pray together stays together. That is because shared experiences in prayer quickly become opportunities to express mutual love, forgiveness, and grace.



Morals

St. John Paul II (1981) said, “The way of the Church is the family” (1981). Yet, this divine and human institution is being attacked from all sides, both internally and externally. What is our best defense if it is internally destroyed by division which goes to the very core of its existence?

Let us enumerate factors that cause disunity and can destroy the family in this modern day. The influences of hedonism, secularization, consumerism, a throw-away culture, the culture of death, contraceptive culture by promoting irresponsible sex, disrespect for the elderly to the point of euthanasia, and deviated sexual orientations, as well as the reduction of the role of the evil one to a deep physical, psychological and spiritual dysfunction.

Man really seems to be increasingly powerless against these forces of disunity within the family. The best antidote against these assaults is an inner force which comes from above: a gift/grace from God. The family needs help from God, Himself, the creator of the family. To take away God is to take away the source of the family’s life and existence! However, this God who became man in Jesus is continuously and substantially present in the Eucharist



Photo from the Diocese of Naval



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

The Eucharist is Jesus Himself present on this earth, and the family is where we all belong, without which we would only have been individuals alien to our own identity and origin, since we started existence in a family.

The effect of the Eucharist is that union between God and man which also brings unity among everyone. The Eucharist produces this same effect because it transforms us into “another Christ”. Since the love that has been revealed to us in Jesus is the model of love that we should have for one another, we get to love as Christ loves.

In the Eucharist, we learn to love one another as Christ loves us. Though we are sinners, He showed to us His everlasting mercy which cannot but elicit a loving response from us. The Eucharist binds us together in Christ and more so, it helps us become Christ together, within our families. Since the Eucharist makes us love as Christ loves, it helps us become merciful to

one another, and it makes our love for one another grow deeper. It gives us the grace and capacity to forgive one another.

Families could be united and be shielded from the world's negative influences which are present, stronger and dangerous. However, this can only be realized if we humble ourselves and accept that alone we cannot make it. We need God in the Eucharist to help families become ever more united, loving and merciful. Families should be a reflection of the love and unity of the Holy Trinity through the bond of the Eucharist.



Simple Activities

Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

Instruction: This is a great and exciting activity to learn more about friends/peer groups/families. It will allow everybody to get to know one another a little better. Have every member of the participants disclose two things that are true and one thing that is a lie, about themselves. These things about themselves can be their attitude, character, something about their career, status, favorite sports, movies etc. They will write the “two truths and one lie” on a bond paper without giving any clue as to which is true and which is a lie. Then they will tape it on their back with a tape. Everyone now must move around and mark the lie with an X and the truth with a check. Example:

- ✓ Friendly
- X In relationship
- ✓ Chubby

After 7-10 minutes of putting a mark on the paper of all the participants, allow them to stand in front and share their feelings and expectations from the activity. Did they honestly write a truth and a lie about themselves? Were the participants able to guess correctly the truth and the lie on their paper? The catechist may add other questions and exhortations for this activity.

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How do I experience God in my family?
- † How does my family keep God's presence in our home?

THE FAMILY PRAYER SONG

(As for me and my House, Joshua 24:15)

Song by Morris Chapman

Come and fill our homes With Your presence
You alone are worthy of our reverence

As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
We will serve the Lord

Lord, we vow to live holy
Bowing our knees to You only

Staying together; Praying together
Any storm we can weather
Trusting in God's Word
We need each other
Fathers and mothers
Sisters and brothers
In harmony and love



Worship

Prayer for Family centered in Christ

Almighty and ever living Lord, thank You so much for the gift of family and for making each one a part of my life. Lord, I praise Your name for each member of my family that knows and loves You and has placed their trust in the Lord Jesus as savior. How it rejoices my heart with Your grace and goodness, and may we learn day by day to cast all our cares upon You.

We come before You our God and Father, to pray for protection and provision for homes and families throughout our nation and for the sanctity of family life. Bless us with Your love and favor all those families that are seeking to live a good life. Provide for their needs, protect them in Your grace and favor and cover them in the shelter of Your wings.

Bring to light the hidden works of darkness that can cause such untold disunity and distress to family life, and may parents unite as one in prayer and praise to You, as they teach and train their children in the ways of the Lord. May Your grace and Your favor be upon men and women, husband and wives, parents and children as together they seek the things of God in a home that chooses to serve the Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - Family is the domestic Church and the Church exists in order to evangelize. Hence, the role of the family, the mother, father, children and all the members of the family must exercise the priesthood of the baptized by prayers and thanksgiving the reception of the sacraments, the witness of a holy life, self-denial and active charity. Thus, as Christ gave Himself to us, so does the family must exist to give life to the world.

- † **LIVE** – The Family must respond to the urgent call of New Evangelization. One of the purposes of the New Evangelization is the transformation of society in which all Christians, lay people and families are called to be involved. In addition, that transformation is none other than building up together the Kingdom of God. How can we do this? The CBCP pastoral letter for the Year of the Eucharist and Family invited us to kneel down to bring renewal to the family. We kneel to serve like the Lord. We kneel in the Eucharist. It is a constant challenge to every family to be a lover of the Eucharist. Every family must pray and must participate the Eucharistic celebration. As they said the family that prays together stays together. We are challenged to be a model family who always go to Church and pray. Hence, we must also encourage other families to go together as one family and celebrate the love of the family in the Eucharist.

We need goals for the growth of our Christian family such as:

- † For families to know God and His Word;
 - † For families to value relationships and treat others with kindness and respect;
 - † For families to show patience, kindness and humility.
 - † For parents to share with their children, the truths about God so that future generations will put their trust in Him.
-
- † **SHARE** - The New Evangelization demands new models of reference, new wine in new wine skins. Therefore, every family is encouraged to share their time as a commitment to the spiritual growth of their own family members and other neighboring families. Families should pray and eat together during meals. They should encourage every member of their families to pray a simple prayer when they wake up in the morning and when they rest in the evening. Our apostolate should include praying for all families in the whole world every day.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: LOST AND FOUND



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Introduction

The family must be a symbol of unity in forming a community of persons. Christian family must be a model of communion and charity. The family should also be in the service of life through procreation, education of offspring and proper upbringing of the children in the Catholic faith. Likewise, the family is a miniature Church that has the

responsibility of being an agent of development and social transformation in the society. Thus, the family serves as a focal point of evangelization. This means that the family must share in the threefold mission of Christ by spreading the Good News starting with their own family, transmitting it to their neighborhood, and to the parish community.

Christian families must be united and be guarded from the world's negative influences. This can only be realized with the help of God. His living presence during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist leads the Christian families to become more united, loving, and faithful members of the Church. Sad to say, some television programs often negatively influence and undercut the values inculcated in family life (Amoris Laetitia 274).

The family is the focal point of evangelization. Since the family is the basic cell of the Church and the society, the Gospel has to be shared first within the family. Integral faith formation of children, youth and parents must take place within the family. Unfortunately, we must also recognize that the family is the origin of many cultural distortions that brings about many of our problems as a people. Therefore, we need to commit ourselves to a more intensive evangelization of the family, so that the family might become, not just an object, but also an agent of evangelization.



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 15: 11-32

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' Therefore, he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had

spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;" ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' ³¹ Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."



Doctrine

Christian Family life

Most religions consider family life to be a blessing and value the stability of marriage. Christians believe the Church should be a model of family life. Building our families upon a solid foundation of Christian values and principles will give the family security and power to live a genuine life and combat evil affliction in its daily.

† Marriage ceremony and its significance

Many Christians believe that marriage is the foundation of family life. It is a sacrament and is a lifelong commitment. It brings children into the world and these children will be brought up in Christian values in marriage.

Some of the main features of a Christian wedding ceremony are: An exchange of vows, an exchange of rings symbolizing the eternal nature of marriage, and prayers asking for God's blessings on the couple.

Christian values in the family are very important. Children should be brought up in a loving and supportive family, founded on marriage. The Church should be a model of family life.

† **Husband and wives in the family**

Husbands and wives should respect each other's roles within marriage and value each other equally. This respect entails caring for those within the home which is done through earning money to provide for the family. Men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and society should create and develop conditions that prioritize favorable working conditions.

“Men and women are both made in the image of God and should be treated equally—they should share responsibilities and privileges. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

† **Protection and nurture in the Family**

Family is the first place where children can learn about love, companionship and forgiveness. Parents must set a good example on how to live a good Christian life. Families must play an important role in the community. They can provide support for other families, care for the elderly, and adopt children. Responsibility towards elderly, and other family members is especially important. If no one provides for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8).

† **Parent and child relationships; developing spirituality in the family**

The fourth commandment teaches us that children should treat their parents with honor and respect. They should consider their parents' wishes and be obedient. (Children, obey your parents...Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4).



Photo from the Diocese of Antipolo



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando (La Union)

Children are gifts from God. Thus, parents have responsibilities towards them that include, but are not limited to:

- † caring for them properly.
- † teaching them how to live and how to accept authority.
- † teaching them about God.
- † Incorporating them into the Church by having them baptized and promising to raise them up in a loving home.
- † teaching children how to pray
- † celebrating mass with their children in the Church
- † sending their children to a catechism class

Christian values in the Family

† Families Worship Together

The Eucharist is the source of deep love and intimacy that Catholic families are called to live out. To celebrate this, Christian families must participate Mass together on Sundays and holy days (and at other times as they are able). They need to participate actively in the sacramental life of the Church. In addition, recognizing that we sometimes struggle to love one another as we should, families must regularly go to confession (recommended: monthly) to seek God's forgiveness, grace and inspiration to love more and better. The family, together with the catechist and Church authority must teach the 10 commandments of the Lord in order to plant seeds of faith and watch that faith grow in obedience.

† Families that Pray Together

Families should have a habit of eating together and praying together. Families are called to love with the love that flows from God's own heart. Reading the scripture is the best way to unite and educate our family in Christian faith. Parents should desire to build a family with Christian values and fear of God. Reading the Scripture as a family is a good way to bond the family. Setting aside a specific time each day will make this task easier.

In addition to both our individual prayer life and our worship with our parish communities, families should gather for family prayers every day. We use our daily family prayer time to:

- † Praise and thank God for His blessings.
- † Ask forgiveness for the times we did not love as we should.
- † Ask for the grace to love each other and the world better.
- † Pray for both our family's needs and the needs of the Family of God.
- † Seek God's will in our lives.

Let us treat family prayer not as a duty or a chore but as the key to true intimacy and joy in our home.

† Catholic Families: Called to Intimacy

Most importantly, Christian family life is a call to intimate communion (Jn 17:21). Catholic families serve that goal by being schools of love where we learn how to love God and each other with our whole hearts, minds, souls and strength (CCC 1657). To do this, we constantly seek new ways to be even more open and loving with one another as husband and wife, parents, and children.

For instance, children are supposed to be the visible sign of the loving union between husband and wife. Christian families live this out both in openness to life and by working hard on the quality of relationships with one another.

† Put Family First

Because our family relationships are the primary means God use to help us become people He created us to be, we treat family life as the most important activity in our week. We create and protect family rituals, like regular family dinners, time for prayer and worship, weekly game nights and family days, as well as regular scheduled times for communication and relationship-building--to work, play, talk and pray together.

† Christian Family is a witness and sign of the love of God

Through the family's way of life, we can recognize that God wants to change the world through our families. Families can help build a civilization of love in the community. We actively participate in this plan in two ways.

First, we become witnesses of love, joy, and intimacy that every human heart longs for. We share this love in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer. It would be helpful to have some inspiring symbols that uplift our faith like displaying pictures of faith (such as a nice painting of Christ, Crucifix, images of Saints etc.) throughout our homes; reflecting our beliefs with our choices in music, television, movies, books, magazines and websites visited. We should also aspire to create an atmosphere of love and devotion so that our homes will be a piece of Heaven on earth.

Second, we carry this love outside the home by serving our community in a manner that keeps our family together. We intentionally practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy within our home and outside of it. We regularly talk about how we can do a better job of living out our family's mission to be a sign of God's love in the world.



Photo from the Diocese of Cabanatuan



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Unconditional love** - When parents accept, love, and show affection to their children, even when they make mistakes or fall short of expectations, this is unconditional love. In other words, it is a form of love with no strings attached, there is no condition but to love. Therefore, unconditional love is expressed in the family. The whole family loves one another for who they are, no matter what. We should teach families to love unconditionally; this should be shown by example, seeking out the goodness in everyone and always praying for everyone.
- † **Respect** - Respect, also called esteem, is a positive feeling or action shown towards someone or something considered important or held in high regard. It conveys a sense of admiration for good or valuable qualities. Respect also means that we treat others in a thoughtful and courteous way. Respect in the family acknowledges that every member of the family has the same needs and right to exist. This should filter down into all aspects of family living. Thus, mutual respect is a key aspect in a harmonious family foundation. We should all speak kind words to our loved ones, be responsible for our own actions and messes, and value the opinions and wishes of our loved ones.
- † **Forgiveness** - If there is one skill that is essential to having a healthy, happy family, it is learning how to forgive. Forgiveness will determine the future of family relationships. Forgiveness is a two-way street; it requires the ability to both give and receive forgiveness. The key to changing the way family resolves conflict—no matter how broken—lies in building forgiveness into the family culture.

The way to build a culture of forgiveness into the family is by first recognizing that as believers, we forgive because Jesus first forgave us. As scriptures says, “put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive” (Colossians 3:12-13).



Morals

The Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis’ *Amoris laetitia* gives awareness that human life has a sense of incompleteness. He sees families more as works in progress than settled realities. According to him, “no family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need to constantly grow and mature in their ability to love” (AL 325). He knows well that families are imperfect and that they experience many sufferings as well as many joys.

In the course of the document, Pope Francis touches on a wide range of issues that affect family life: from migration to lack of housing; from lack of respect for elders, special

situation of persons with disability; from pornography to sexual abuse; from violence against women to the impact of biotechnology in the field of procreation.

Pope Francis knows the human conditions of our age. The encyclical is both positive and encouraging. It espouses the Church to be amongst people in the realities of their lives. It advocates the Church to reflect Christ who “never fails to show compassion and closeness to frail individuals like the Samaritan woman or the woman caught in adultery” (AL 38).

Pope Francis presents the traditional teaching of the Church on issues about marriage and family. He reaffirms the teaching about the indissolubility of marriage and protecting life in the womb. Citing in particular the teaching of St Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians, he strongly reaffirms that love is the sustaining force of family life. Love within the context of family, takes on many shapes and expressions. Family is, in fact, a “dynamic process”, “one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God.”

He speaks of couples being united in a richly encompassing and lasting union with a “mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures”. Marriage is a life project which he sees as maturing into the human experience of intimacy and love. Pope Francis encourages all families to move forward even from their imperfections and woundedness to “discover a path to personal growth.”

Marriage is a reflection of the joy of love in the contemporary world that will speak to both believers and non-believers alike. As our society debates the nature of marriage and struggles with the needs of those who feel isolated from its traditional expression, this document can be a valuable source for a deeper consideration of just what marriage and family really is.

The spirituality of marriage and the family is called in *Amoris laetitia* as spirituality of communion (AL 314-325).

- † **Spirituality of communion:** Spirituality that becomes incarnated in our personal and communitarian life is rooted in communion with God and is revealed and expanded in communion with others. We need an attitude of openness to God and to others and be guided by the Holy Spirit to overcome our self-centered attitude, division, exclusion, and discrimination. The others merit are complete attention and care in promoting personal relationships and building together a better world, that is more humane and just.
- † **Spirituality of love:** We must find in the love of God, of love in our own lives; God’s love is the ultimate and definitive dimension of our existence.
- † **Spirituality of care and consolation:** We are called to become witnesses and cooperators in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification, transmitting the image of God, defending dignity from all aggression and violence, healing the wounds of division, and taking care of one another.
- † **Spirituality of mercy:** We are called to share God’s love especially with the weak, the least, the poor, the lost, and the last shepherding them with mercy and tenderness.

Holy Family

Family and discipleship ask us to go and be the change in the world. Instead of just seeking change, we must be the change ourselves – to listen to the needy and care for everyone, most especially those near us--our families. To be instruments of God's Words, by sharing His love to others; by telling and retelling the story of Jesus, most especially in the peripheries.

There is no perfect family in this world. Every family has its share of life's endless joys and miseries. No one is exempt from living in this mystery. Not only are few families addressed here. Even the Holy Family– Jesus, Joseph, and Mary – had their fair share of joys, miseries, and mystery. Joseph was in a dilemma, whether to accept Mary as his wife, due to shame and confusion. Mary was startled that she would bear the Son from the Most High. Jesus was born in a lowly manger and was rejected by many. They were even hunted down to death by King Herod. Yet with all of these, the Holy Family became holy for they followed the will of God. They followed the Light of Faith. The faith entrusted by God becomes a hope for love and peace.

In this world, there is no perfect family. Nevertheless, there is one in the world to come and it is not futile to live and enjoy life in this world. Because it is through this world that we can go to heaven; it is through the light of faith that is engendered by a saving hope and God's love that one can enjoy life in this world. When we promise to love forever, we perceive a plan bigger than our own ideas and undertakings, a plan, which sustains us and enables us to surrender our future entirely to God (LF 52). This is God's plan of salvation "which embraces all of humanity and all creation, culminating in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ" (LF 54).



Simple Activities

Activity : Back-to-Back Drawing

This is a classic activity. Have pairs of people sit back to back. Give one person a picture of a random shape, and hand the other person a blank piece of paper and a pen. Have the person with the picture describe what it is while the other person draws what is being described. This exercise helps teams identify communication problems that may hinder unity and trust but which are easier to develop through proper communication.

Take home Family Activity

After saying grace at mealtimes, grasp hands and ask each family member to share what they are grateful for this day.

The next time your family is in the vehicle together, say, "What is one new way we can be kind and loving to each other this week?"

On Sunday afternoon, call a family "media break" and turn off all screens in your home for a set amount of time. See where the Holy Spirit leads your family.

Song Analysis



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

FATHER I HAVE SINNED (PRODIGAL SON)

Words & Music by Eugene O'Reilly

Father I have sinned,
help me find my way.
Remember not my sins,
just let me hear you say:

I forgive you, I love you
You are mine, take my hand.
Go in peace, sin no more,
Beloved one.

Father I have turned,
my back and walked away
Depended on my strength
and lived life my own way

Father I have closed,
my heart to those in need.
Thought only of myself,
a victim of my greed.

Father I have loved,
if love's the word to use.
I've played so many games,
they've left me so confused.

Father I've returned,
I'm home with you to stay.
Standing at your door,
knowing that you'll say.

Guide for Reflection

- † How often do I receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- † Have I asked for forgiveness from people to whom I have sinned?



Prayer

Lord, our hearts' desire is to live in harmony and unity with each other. Bind Your love to our hearts so we can live in perfect unity together. Teach us to care for our family members and forgive others for their mistakes. We ask that You prevent all those that are seeking to undermine family values that are built up on biblical principles. Protect from satanic deceptions and from the schemes and entrapments of the enemy, the hearts and minds of parents and children alike.. Make us grow in your love. Teach us go on a mission and change the World as renewed families, sharing Your Love. Reach out Your arm to each family in the world and draw them back to you. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – We should be able to identify the roles of a Christian family. Many Christians believe that children are a gift from God, and that parents have responsibilities towards them that include: 1. caring for them properly. 2. Teaching them to live with and accept authority. 3. Teaching them about God. 4. Taking them to be baptized and promising to bring them up in a loving home.
- † **LIVE** -To do this, we need to cultivate marriage and good parenting habits that will make each member of the family feel loved and valued. We practice virtues that will help us live life as a gift. For instance, we choose a loving approach that disciplines by teaching virtues rather than punishing. We schedule regular one-on-one time with each family member so that we can get to know each other's thoughts, feelings, and heart's desires on the deepest level possible. We take an active interest in all the things that each family member finds true, good and beautiful, even when those interests do not come naturally to us.
- † **SHARE** – Serve others abundantly. Seek out opportunities to do family service projects. Serve in communities. But most of all, serve in your families. Offer to do chores every day and always give a beautiful smile to family members and neighbors for good vibes. Do these things with a cheerful heart and watch the blessings pour in. If the family has some extra treasures, charitable donations to the church or donating to charities is a great way to teach the kind of selflessness that Christ showed us.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: FINDING JESUS



Introduction

**“They started to look for him among their relatives and friends”
(Luke 2:44).**

Family-centeredness supplies a basic sense of belongingness, stability and security. It is from our families that we Filipinos naturally draw our sense of self-identity. Jesus as both Son of God (*Anak ng Amang Diyos*)

and the Son of Man (*Anak ng Tao*) endears Himself naturally to us, family-oriented Filipinos. As Son of Man, Jesus leads us to His Mother Mary (*Ina ng Diyos*) whom He shares with us (Jn 19:26-27). He also welcomes us into His own household, offers Himself as our brother (*kapatid*), and draws us through the Sacrament of Baptism to a new identity and into the family of His heavenly Father (Jn 3:5-7). What can better remind us, Filipinos, of our early childhood, or respond more directly to our traditional love for children, than Jesus, the Sto. Niño? At twelve, Jesus was a discerning and daring child, yet remained obedient to His parents (Lk 2:41-51). In His public life, Jesus embraced little children and admonished His disciples to be childlike in openness and simplicity (Mt 18:2-4). Since Filipinos are family oriented, we are naturally attracted to Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of Man (CFC 34-36).

The Eucharist forms families and models them after the Holy Family, equipping it to offer the whole family life as a spiritual gift to God, by being an evangelizing family. Pope Paul VI expresses this clearly: “the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. For the family who is conscious of this mission, all members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part” (Evangeli Nuntiandi 71).

Any evangelizing activity of a family should begin within family life. Nothing should replace or come in the way of the parents as the primary and most important transmitters of the faith to their children. Neither the school nor the Church, neither the media nor peer groups, should usurp this special role of the parents. They should be at best a support for the parents’ rights and authentic family life structure. Pope John Paul II explains: “in places where anti-religious legislation endeavors to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, “the church of the home” remains the one place where children and young people can receive authentic catechesis” (Catechesi Tradendai 68). The family has the mission to become more and more that evangelizing place. That is to say, a community of life and lovewhere members find fulfillment, where everything is created and redeemed, in the Kingdom of God. Looking at it that way, we can say that the essence and role of the family are specified in love. Hence the family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love. This is a living reflection of and a real

sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ, the Lord, for the Church, His bride (FC 17).

The Christian family is also called to experience a new and original communion which confirms and perfects natural human communion. In fact, the grace of Jesus Christ, "the first-born among many brethren" is by its nature and interior dynamism "a grace of brotherhood." The Holy Spirit, who is poured forth in the celebration of the sacraments, is the living source and inexhaustible sustenance of the supernatural communion that gathers believers and links them with Christ and with each other in the unity of the Church of God. The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion. For this reason, it can and should be called "the domestic Church." All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, a communion of persons day by day,. They make the family, "a school of deeper humanity". This happens when there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, and the aged. This school of deeper humanity goes deeper in mutual service every day in the sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows (FC 21).



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Photo from the Diocese of Antipolo



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 2: 41-50

⁴¹ Now every year His parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but His parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that He was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for Him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for Him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When His parents saw Him they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Child, why have You treated us like this? Look, Your father and I have been searching for You in great anxiety." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what He said to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.



Doctrine

† The Family as the First and Vital Cell of Society (FC 42; AA 11)

"Since the Creator of all things has established conjugal partnership as the beginning and basis of human society." The family is "the first and vital cell of the society." The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and the family nourishes it continually through its role of service to life. It is from the family that citizens come to birth and it is within the family where they find the first school of social virtues that animates the principle of existence and the development of society itself. Thus, far from being closed in on itself, the family is by nature and vocation open to other families and to society, as it undertakes its social role.

† The Family, Within the Mystery of the Church (FC 49)

Among the fundamental tasks of the Christian family is its ecclesial task: the family is placed at the service of building up the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church.

In order to understand better the foundations, the contents, and the characteristics of this participation, we must examine the many profound bonds linking the Church and the Christian family. We establish the family as a "Church in miniature" (*Ecclesia domestica*), in such a way that in its own way, the family is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church.

It is, above all, the Church as Mother that gives birth to, that educates and builds up the Christian family by putting into effect, in its regard, the saving mission that she has received from her Lord. By proclaiming the Word of God, the Church reveals to the Christian family its identity, what it is and should be according to the Lord's plan. By celebrating the sacraments, the Church enriches and strengthens the Christian family with the grace of Christ for its sanctification to the glory of the Father. By its continuous proclamation of the new commandment of love, the Church encourages and guides the Christian family to the service of love, so that it may imitate and relive the same self-giving and sacrificial love that the Lord Jesus has for the entire human race.

In turn, the Christian family is grafted into the mystery of the Church to such a degree as to become a sharer, in its own way, in the saving mission proper to the Church. By virtue of the sacrament, Christian married couples and parents "in their state and way of life have their own special gift among the People of God." For this reason, they not only receive the love of Christ and become a saved community, but they are also being called upon to communicate Christ's love to their brethren, thus becoming a saving community.

In this way, while the Christian family is a fruit and sign of the supernatural fecundity of the Church, it also stands as a symbol, witness and participant in the Church's motherhood.

† **The Christian Family's Ministry of Evangelization (FC 52- 53)**

To the extent in which the Christian family accepts the Gospel and matures in faith, it becomes an evangelizing community. As Pope Paul VI stated: "The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family, which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. Such a family becomes the evangelizer to many other families, and to the neighborhood of which it forms part." This apostolic mission of the family is rooted in Baptism and receives from the sacrament of marriage, the grace of, new strength to transmit the faith, to sanctify and to transform the present society according to God's plan.



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose Occidental

Particularly today, the Christian family has a special vocation to witness to the paschal covenant of Christ. By constantly radiating the joy of love and the certainty of the hope for which it must give an account, "the Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come." The absolute need for family catechesis emerges with force in certain situations, which the Church unfortunately experiences. This happens in places where anti-religious legislation endeavors to prevent education the faith. It also happens in other places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible. The Church of the home remains the one place where children and young people can receive authentic catechesis."

† **Ecclesial Service**

The ministry of evangelization carried out by Christian parents is original and irreplaceable. It assumes the characteristics typical of family life itself, which should be interwoven with love, simplicity, practicality and daily witness.

The family must educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God. Indeed, the family that is open to transcendent values serves its brothers and sisters with joy, fulfills its duties with generous fidelity, and is aware of its daily sharing in the mystery of the glorious Cross of Christ. Such family becomes the primary and most excellent seed-bed of vocations to a life of consecration to the Kingdom of God.

The parents' ministry of evangelization and catechesis ought to play a part in their children's lives also during adolescence and youth, when the children, as often happens, challenge or even reject the Christian faith received in earlier years. Just as in the Church, where the work of evangelization can never be separated from the sufferings of the apostle, so it is in the Christian family where parents must face, with courage and great interior serenity, the difficulties that their ministry of evangelization sometimes encounters in their own children.

It should not be forgotten that the service rendered by Christian spouses and parents to the Gospel is essentially an ecclesial service. It has its place within the context of the whole Church as an evangelized and an evangelizing community. As far as the ministry of evangelization and catechesis of the family is rooted in and derived from the one mission of the Church, and is ordained for the up-building of the One Body of Christ, it must remain in intimate communion with the Church. It also needs to collaborate responsibly with all the other evangelizing and catechetical activities present and at work in the ecclesial community, both at the diocesan and parochial levels.

† **The Christian Family as a Community in Dialogue with God (FC 55-56)**

† *The Church's Sanctuary in the Home*

The proclamation of the Gospel and its acceptance in faith reach their fullness in the celebration of the sacraments. The Church, which is a believing and evangelizing community, is also a priestly people invested with the dignity of sharing in the power of Christ, the High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant.

The Christian family too, is part of this priestly people, which is the Church. By means of the sacrament of marriage, in which it is rooted and from which it draws nourishment, the Lord Jesus continuously vivifies the Christian family. It is called and engaged by Him in a dialogue with God through the sacraments, through the offering of one's life, and through prayer. This is the priestly role, which the Christian family can and ought to exercise in intimate communion with the whole Church, through the daily realities of married and family life. In this way, the Christian family is called to be sanctified and to sanctify the ecclesial community and the world.

† ***Marriage as a Sacrament of Mutual Sanctification and an Act of Worship***

The sacrament of marriage is the specific source and original means of sanctification

for Christian married couples and families. It takes up again and makes specific the sanctifying grace of Baptism. By virtue of the mystery of the death and Resurrection of Christ, of which the spouses are made part in a new way by marriage, conjugal love is purified and made holy. "This love the Lord has judged worthy of special gifts. It is healing, perfecting and exalting the gifts of grace and of charity" (Gaudium et Spes 49).

The gift of Jesus Christ is not exhausted in the actual celebration of the sacrament of marriage. Rather, it accompanies the married couple throughout their lives. This fact is explicitly recalled by the Second Vatican Council when it says that Jesus Christ "abides with them so that, just as He loved the Church and handed Himself over on her behalf, the spouses may love each other with perpetual fidelity through mutual self-bestowal.

For this reason, Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified where they receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligations, they are also penetrated with the Spirit of Christ, who fills their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus, they increasingly advance towards their own perfection, as well as towards their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God."

Christian spouses and parents are included in the universal call to sanctity. For them, this call is specified by the sacrament they have celebrated and is carried out concretely in the realities proper to their conjugal and family life. This gives rise to the grace and requirement of an authentic and profound conjugal and family spirituality that draws its inspiration from the themes of creation, covenant, cross, resurrection, and sign, which were stressed more than once in the *Familiaris Consortio* (140).

Christian marriage, like the other sacraments, "whose purpose is to sanctify people, to build up the body of Christ, and, to give worship to God," is in itself a liturgical action glorifying God in Jesus Christ and in the Church. By celebrating it, Christian spouses profess their gratitude to God for the sublime gift bestowed on them at being able to live in their married and family lives, the very love of God for people and that of the Lord Jesus for the Church, which is His bride.

Just as husbands and wives receive from the sacrament the gift and responsibility of translating into their daily life the sanctification bestowed on them, the same sacrament also confers on them the grace and moral obligation to transform their whole lives into a "spiritual sacrifice."

† *Marriage and the Eucharist (FC 57)*

The Christian family's sanctifying role is grounded in Baptism and has its highest expression in the Eucharist, to which Christian marriage is intimately connected. The Second Vatican Council drew attention to the unique relationship between the

Eucharist and marriage by requesting ‘marriage normally be celebrated within the Mass.’ To understand better and live more intensely the graces and responsibilities of Christian marriage and family life, it is altogether necessary to rediscover and strengthen this relationship.

The Eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, in fact, represents Christ's covenant of love with the Church, sealed with His blood on the Cross. In this sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, and from which it is interiorly structured and is continuously renewed.

As a representation of Christ's sacrifice of love for the Church, the Eucharist is a fountain of charity. In the Eucharistic gift of charity, Christian families find the foundation and soul of its "communion" and its "mission." By partaking in the Eucharistic bread, the different members of the Christian family become one body, which reveals and shares the wider unity of the Church. In Their sharing of the Body of Christ that is "given up" and in His Blood that is "shed" comes a never-ending source of missionary and apostolic dynamism for the Christian family.



Faith Response

- † An **openness** to the universality of God's family. That is, from a particular Christian family to the universal Church, the family of God.
- † **To seek and look** for Jesus in the other family as the bond of baptism unites every catholic and Christian family.
- † **Letting God** to enter in every Christian family and be the light of the family who cares and loves everyone without exception.
- † **Participate and involve** oneself to the mission cause of the universal Church, a broader sense of responsibility and participation to the universal church and the bigger family of God.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **FRATERNAL LOVE**- The practice of charity with a love that recognizes another person as a child of God, and therefore as brother or sister in the Lord. When Jesus gave the precept of fraternal charity, He Himself set its measure: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 22:39). This measure is so great that it would be difficult to exceed it when we consider how much every person is inclined to love himself/herself. The good that each of us desires for ourselves is so great that if we could succeed in desiring just as much for our neighbor—for any neighbor—our charity would be truly magnanimous. Jesus has said, “Do to others as you would

have them do to you” (Luke 6:31), which, in practice, signifies that we treat others exactly as we wish to be treated ourselves.

† **KINDNESS** - Kindness is being gentle, thoughtful, helpful, and forgiving at times when it would be so easy to be angry. It also displays the same virtues when the sheer inconvenience of the situation would seem to justify non-involvement. Kindness prefers much consideration to anger and leaps enthusiastically over the barriers of inconvenience. The kind person persists in behaving humanely no matter how circumstances may tempt him to behave otherwise. It is only appropriate that Christians should be ambassadors of kindness. As St. Paul advises in Ephesians 4:31: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

† **CHARITY** - In Christian theology, Charity (Latin: *Caritas*) is considered as one of the seven virtues and is understood by Thomas Aquinas as "the friendship of man for God", which "unites us to God". He holds it as "Texcellent of the virtues". Further, Aquinas holds that "the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor". The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) defines "charity" as "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".



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Morals

- † Becoming a disciple of Jesus means accepting the invitation to belong to God's family, and to live in conformity with His way of life.
- † The home is the first school of Christian life and is "a school for human enrichment."
- † Every Christian family plays a key role in our sanctification because it is the primary place where we practice coming to intimately love other persons.
- † The family is to participate in the development of society by becoming a community of social training and hospitality, as well as a community of political involvement and activity.
- † The family is to share in the life and mission of the Church by becoming a believing and evangelizing community, a community in dialogue with God, and a community at the service of humanity.



Simple Activities

Activity: A letter of the heart

- † Give the learners writing materials and coloring materials, let them decorate and write a letter for a family, not necessarily his family, and a letter that he/she wants to say to a family.
- † After doing these letters, put a number in every letter
- † On a separate paper or material write the number that corresponds to the number of letter and learners
- † Let them pick a number. Make sure that they do not pick their own number.
- † NB: Explain to them the importance of a bigger family, not only blood relationship but also the spiritual bond in every family of God. Thus, the letter symbolizes the love and care of every learner to other families.

Song Analysis

ISANG PAGKAIN, ISANG KATAWAN, ISANG BAYAN

Lyrics and Chords by: Lucio San Pedro, Sr.

Katulad ng mga butil na tinitipon
Upang maging tinapay na nagbibigay buhay
Kami nawa'y matipon din
At maging bayan Mong giliw

Koro:
Iisang Panginoon, iisang katawan
Isang bayan, isang lahi
Sayo'y nagpupugay

Katulad din ng mga ubas
Na piniga at naging alak
Sino mang uminom nito
May buhay na walang hanggan
Kami nawa'y maging sangkap
Sa pagbuo nitong bayang liyag
(Koro)

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I welcome God in my life?
- † How can I share God's love to others?



Worship

These prayers can be prayed by different learners.

A Prayer for Protection:

The Lord your God the Mighty Warrior who saves is with you. He will take great delight in you. In His love, He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

Prayer: Thank you Lord for always watching over us. We are amazed at You rejoicing over us with singing right now. You are the mighty warrior who saves. May we rest in Your love from this day onwards.

A Prayer for Peace:

‘May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace’ (Numbers 6:24-26).

Prayer: Lord we know that You are the God of peace. We thank You that even when the earth is trembling we can be still and know You are God. Nothing can separate us from You. We praise You for Your protection and favor. As we sit in Your presence and focus our hearts and minds on You, give us Your perfect peace. We trust that no matter what, You will guide us, protect us and be gracious toward us. Amen.

For Compassion:

“And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another (readily and freely), as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father we thank You for Your everlasting love. We thank You that because of Your love we are able to love others. We pray that You would help us be kind to one another. May we show each other mercy, forgiveness and understanding. Help us to share the love You’ve so generously shared with us. As a family may we treat each other with compassion. Show us any areas where our hearts need to change or repent. May we so freely offer forgiveness to our family and friends as You so freely forgive us. Amen.

For Harmony:

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity (Colossians 3:13-14).

Prayer: Lord our hearts desire is to live in harmony and in unity with each other. Bind Your love to our hearts so we can live in perfect unity together. Teach us to care for our family members and forgive them for their mistakes.

For Wisdom:

Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Acquiring wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment (Proverbs 4:6-7).

Prayer: Dear God, we thank You that when we ask for wisdom, You freely give it to us. We need Your insight. Your ways are higher than our ways and Your thoughts are higher than our thoughts. You see things we do not see. Stir our family's hearts to seek Your wisdom earnestly. Help our family to develop good judgment. Guide our steps and provide us with direction in all areas of our lives. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **LIVE** your life thinking that all persons are your brother and sisters.
- † As member of the big family, **SHARE** the blessings of God to others, knowing that even a little gift, given with love is appreciated by God.
- † **PARTICIPATE** in the activities of your parish, be an active member of the acolytes or choir or even the group who clean the Church facilities.
- † **EVANGELIZE** with actions even in simple ways.
- † **PRAY** together as a family; pray as you begin to work, and always keep in mind that every work you do is for God's glory.
- † **DO SIMPLE SACRIFICES** for protection of the families in the whole world. This simple sacrifice, as long as it is genuine and it is offered to God, can make a difference.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: MY BROTHER, SISTER, AND MOTHER

“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mt 12: 50)



Introduction

We give emphasis on the mission of the family to make their own homes a Christ-centered community with life-witnessing of God’s commandment of LOVE. May our families be united and be shielded from the world’s negative influences which are ever more present, stronger and dangerous. However, this can only be realized if we humble ourselves and accept

that alone we cannot make it. We need God in the Eucharist to help our families become ever more united, loving and merciful. Our families can be a reflection of this love and unity of the eternal family of the Trinity in Heaven through the bond of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic family is the best gift from God to our country. It is also the best gift that we can offer to God for the world’s evangelization.

The Holy Eucharist is the source of all vocations in the Church for Christian witness, and for Evangelization. The smallest unit in the Church and society is the Sanctuary of family life: the ‘Domestic Church.’ The Eucharist sends families on a mission, to proclaim both in word and deed and to share their faith. The Eucharist has the greatest power possible to move the family to love and serve the Lord, to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to all encountered. This means service to the poor; respect and defense of human life at all stages; promotion of human rights; and the building of a civilization of love, justice, and peace. Pope John Paul II explains that, “The Eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, in fact, represents Christ’s covenant of love with the Church, sealed with His blood on the Cross. In this sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, from which it is interiorly structured, and continuously renewed” (FC 57). Catholic families must recognize the Eucharist as a source of charity and the basis of the communion and mission of family life.



Photo from the Diocese of Romblon

Family commitment to life is a necessary consequence of our union with our Eucharistic Lord. The Eucharist teaches us to be sensitive to all human suffering whether it is that of an unborn child, a handicapped person, or the chronically ill. It encourages us to seek ways to deal with injustices and redress them. At times, it means working in communion with and imitating the saints. It means showing in our lives, by personal example, the truths we profess

and the priorities and principles we adhere to. It means being engaged in a more extensive apostolate as part of the whole Church. "Anyone who does the will of the Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:50). It is from the Eucharist that families receive the power and strength to live actively the daily challenge, the daily sacrifice to follow Christ, and to realize our their role as consecrated members belonging to the family of God - the Church.

Young people, on their part, should seek to edify their parents by striving to live their faith fully, centering their family life around the Eucharist; by respecting and honoring their parents; by prompt obedience; by a life of service to God, their family, their neighbors, and their Church; by special attention to the poor, the unborn, the handicapped, the elderly, and the sick. Through Christian witness of a strong family life that is nourished and empowered by "daily bread" - the Eucharist, other families that have lapsed in their faith may be convinced that they too can grow in the practice of their faith and family life, centered on devotion to the Real Presence of Christ (Whalen, 2005).



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 12: 46-50

⁴⁶ While He was still speaking to the crowds, His mother and His brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ Someone told Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ But to the one who had told Him this, Jesus replied, "Who is My mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And pointing to His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!" ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."



Doctrine

† Family as Domestic Church (CCC 1655-58)

Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than "the family of God." From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers "together with all [their] household." When they were converted, they desired that "their whole household" should also be saved. These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world (CCC 1655).

Today, in a world alien and hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family parents are invited to be centers of radiant faith. It is here that parents by word and example, become the first heralds of the faith to their children. They encourage them in the vocation, which is proper to each child, fostering with

special care any religious vocation" (CCC 1656).

- † The family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way "by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving. The witness of a holy life, self-denial and active charity are also fulfilled ." Thus, the home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment." Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generosity, even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life (CCC 1657).

We must also remember the great number of single persons who, because of the particular circumstances in which they have to live - often not of their choosing - are especially close to Jesus' heart and therefore deserve the special affection and active solicitude of the Church, especially of pastors. Many remain without a human family often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the "domestic churches," and the door of the great family, which is the Church, must be open to all. "No one is without a family in this world. The Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who 'labor and are heavily laden" (CCC 1658).

† **Duties of Parents (CCC 2221-2226)**

The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation. "The role of parents in education is of such importance, that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute." The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.

Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they must educate their children to fulfill God's law.

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness,



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose Occidental



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery--the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones." Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them: He who loves his son will not spare the rod He who disciplines his son will profit by him. Parents should not provoke their children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The home is the natural environment for initiating a human being into solidarity and communal responsibilities. Parents should teach children to avoid compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies.

Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith. They should associate them from their tenderest years with the life of the Church. A wholesome family life can foster interior dispositions that are a genuine preparation for a living faith and remain a support for it throughout one's life.

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches all forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.

† **Duties of Children (CCC 2214-2220)**

Divine Fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood; this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. God's commandment require the respect of children- whether minors or adults-, for their father and mother, nourished by the natural affection borne of the bond uniting them.

Respect for parents (filial piety) derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom, and grace. "With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; what can you give back to them that equal their gift to you?" (CCC2215).

Filial respect is shown by true docility and obedience. "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching.... When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you" (Proverbs 6:20-22). "A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Proverbs 13:1).

For as long as a child lives at home with his parents, the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him especially it is for his good or that of the family. "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." Children should also obey the reasonable directions of their teachers and all to whom their parents have entrusted them. But if a child is convinced in conscience that it would be morally wrong to obey a particular order, he must not do so. As children grow up, they should continue to respect their parents. They should anticipate their wishes, willingly seek their advice, and accept their just admonitions. Obedience toward parents ceases with the emancipation of the children; not so respect, which is always owed to them. This respect has its roots in the fear of God, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their responsibilities toward their parents. As much as they can, they must give them material and moral support in old age

and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress. Jesus recalls this duty of gratitude. "For the Lord honored the Father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother. O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him.... Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord" (Sirach 3:1-15).

Filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns relationships between brothers and sisters. Respect toward parents fills the home with light and warmth. "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged" (Proverbs 17:6). "With all humility and meekness, with patience, support one another in charity" (Ephesians 4:2).

For Christians, a special gratitude is due to those from whom they have received the gift of faith, the grace of Baptism, and life in the Church. These may include parents, grandparents, other members of the family, pastors, catechists, and other teachers or friends."



Faith Response

- † A catholic family must be a community of faith, hope, and charity.
- † A family must be a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.
- † The Catholic family must do his evangelizing and missionary task out of love for family, for the Church and for God.
- † The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor.



Human Virtues

All the members of a Catholic family must believe that the love of Christ is more powerful than any other love.

† **Jesus-centered and Jesus-leading family**

Jesus is the Head of this family. Being head does not mean merely a protector and caretaker but rather the leader who guides and takes forward in every respect. Likewise, for a Christian family, Jesus must also be the center and therefore, it must be firmly rooted in the vision of Jesus or the values of His Kingdom like love, sharing, togetherness, fairness, and so on.

† **Family: A Eucharistic life**

The Holy Mass or the Holy Eucharist must have a central and prominent place in the family. We must draw our vitality and energy both spiritually and psychologically from it as our source. . As it has been the case for saints and martyrs, so it must also be the case for every Christian family. But it should not just be a mere ritualistic observation rather it must be a real one and families must reflect the Eucharistic values of love, sharing, and self-sacrifice from it.

† **Brotherhood or human solidarity**

Our value must be that of love and sharing with mutual respect. In any trying circumstance, members of the family must not give up on love, the spirit of sharing and mutual respect. The Apostolicam Actuositatem (11) says: “It will fulfill this mission if it shows itself to be the domestic sanctuary of the Church through the mutual affection of its members and the common prayer, they offer to God...”

† Family that Prays

We have heard several times that a family that prays together, stays together. A Catholic family should never ignore family prayer, where the whole family sits and prays together at least once a day. The Holy Spirit definitely will work wonders in such a family, especially where the Word of God is an integral part of the prayer.



Morals

“The family is placed at the service of building up the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church” (FC 9).

- † Parents are to bring to God their whole family through authentic prayer life, Christian living and witnessing. They have to endeavor to form their homes into a praying community. Parents must exert efforts to instill among their children the importance of the basic prayers once treasured in Filipino Catholic homes.
- † Parents must encourage in their homes, the devout praying of the grace before and after meals. It is important also to revive installation of family altars in every Catholic home which reminds family members of the abiding presence of God.
- † The sacraments of the Church are means of sanctification and parents must see to it that their family is never deprived of the richness of the sacraments especially that of the Holy Eucharist. Parents toned to inculcate to their children love for the Eucharist—the center of a worshipping community.
- † The parents are called to holiness. By their holy life they provide good examples to their children and offer their family as a sacrifice, living, holy and pleasing to God (PCP II 117).



Simple Activities

Activity: A Catholic Filipino Family

- † Organize the learners into different groups depending on the number of the learners.
- † Explain to them the value of family, most especially the family and the Church, working together for the holiness of every member
- † Let them make a simple presentation or demonstration of the family in different situation, such as in the Church, during rosary time, mealtime, and in ordinariness of their daily life as a family.

NB: The goal of this activity is to let the learners see the value of praying together as a family.

Song Analysis

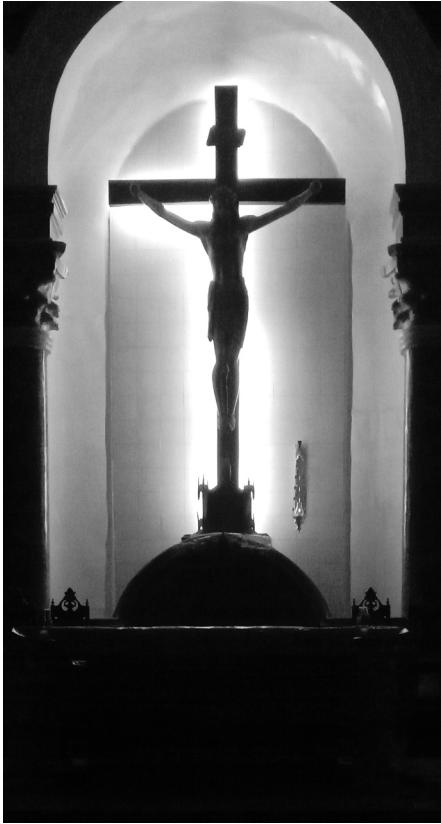


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

The Family Prayer Song

by Morris Chapman

Come and fill our homes With Your presence
You alone are worthy of our reverence
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord

Lord, we vow to live holy
Bowing our knees to You only

Staying together; Praying together
Any storm we can weather
Trusting in God's Word
We need each other
Fathers and mothers
Sisters and brothers
In harmony and love

Guide for Reflections

- † Am I good member of my family?
- † Do I act accordingly to the mission of the Church in my own family?
- † Do I and my family, adore and give thanks to the Lord together?
- † How's our family's relationship to God?



Worship

Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † Make the family a praying community with the **SENSE OF UNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**.
- † **LIVE** the commandment of Love and Respect within the members of the community.
- † Go to Church **TOGETHER** as a sign of thanksgiving to God.
- † **PARTICIPATE** in the activities of the Parish concerning family orientation and development.
- † **ORGANIZE** an outreach program or join any group with a similar activity to widen the horizon of the family in giving and sharing God's grace.

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Song Reference

SA PIGING NG PAGINOON

Lyrics: Bienvenida Tabuena

Music: Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://pdfslide.tips/documents/sa-piging-ng-panginoon.html>

THE FAMILY PRAYER SONG

Artist: Morris Chapman

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://genius.com/Morris-chapman-the-family-prayer-song-as-for-me-and-my-house-lyrics>

FATHER I HAVE SINNED (PRODIGAL SON)

Lyrics & Music: Eugene O'Reilly

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.cjmmusic.com/songs/father-i-have-sinned-the-prodigal-son-song/>

ISANG PAGKAIN, ISANG KATAWAN, ISANG BAYAN

Lyrics & Music: Lucio San Pedro, Sr.

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.catholicsongbook.com/2013/03/isang-pagkain-isang-katawan-isang-bayan.html>



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 5:

The Parish as a Communion of Communities

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 5: THE PARISH AS A COMMUNION OF COMMUNITIES

Overview

Communities as Vehicle of Renewal

The building and strengthening of participatory communities make up the parish as a “Communion of Communities.” The clergy and consecrated persons should support the growth and strength of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) and other forms of faith communities as vehicles of renewal (Villegas, 2016). BECs must also be integrated into the parish. Likewise, Church leaders must support the essential continuity of these communities in their fervent prayer and aspects of devotion.



Photo from the Diocese of Urdaneta

The Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, praises the BECs, describing them as fervent in their faith and in Christian living. They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the Church’s universal mission. Based on the statement, the BECs are necessary communities of faith as a local expression of the Church for renewal (RM 51).

What is a Basic Ecclesial Community? PCP II gives a description of BECs: “They are small communities of Christians, usually of families who gather together around the Word of God and the Eucharist. These communities are united to their pastors but are ministered regularly by lay leaders” (PCP II 138). Each member has a sense of belongingness and responsibility for each other. At the level of the family or in a similarly restricted setting, they come together for prayers, Scripture readings, catechesis, and discussions of human and ecclesial problems with a view to common commitment and other pious devotions. They also find ways to help and serve the underprivileged and those in the peripheries (RM 51).

The Basic Ecclesial Communities, through poverty and faith, urge their members to solidarity with one another, action for justice, and a vibrant celebration of life in the liturgy. Analyzing the PCP II’s vision of BECs, they are servant communities involved in charitable works and social transformation.

In many dioceses today, the Basic Ecclesial Communities are pastoral priority. Though there are many other forms of small faith communities today, BECs are a significant expression of faith in the various parts of the Philippine Church (PCP II 140). As the Catholic Church in the Philippines celebrates five hundred years of faith in the country, all the dioceses in the country are challenged to exert effort and importance in establishing Basic Ecclesial

Integration of the Communities to the Parish

Evangelii Nuntiandi reminds BECs “to remain firmly attached to the local Church in which they are inserted, and to the universal Church, thus avoiding the very real danger of becoming isolated within them” (58). They should “maintain a sincere communion with the pastors whom the Lord gives to His Church, and with the Magisterium which the Spirit of Christ has entrusted to these pastors” (ibid). It is within the Basic Ecclesial Communities that Christians grow in faith through devotional aspects. Of course, it must be accompanied by the pastoral care of the parish priest to ensure the balance between practicing popular religiosity and sacramental worship.

If the BECs will be integrated well in the parish, they become a network of small Christian communities where the Word of God is listened to, proclaimed, and lived. In vibrant liturgies, they are concretely expressed in the action for social transformation for development, for peace, justice and the integrity of creation (Picardal, 2011b, p. 303). Thus, BECs have a vital role to play in the task of New Evangelization, not only in the Philippines or in third world countries, but also in the whole world.

Absolutely, BECs are among those who actively participate in the process of New Evangelization as evangelizing communities (Picardal, 2011b, p. 304). This year, the Church must discern the quality of faith life in the parish, fellowship, belongingness, and participation experienced by its members. Hence, all these various communities must submit themselves to their pastors in order to be integrated into the life and mission of the parish so that the parish truly becomes a faith community immersed in the lives of its people (Palma, 2012).

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** The Basic Ecclesial Community encounters Christ in the breaking of the Word of God through Bible sharing and their sharing of their different stories about life, in connection to the Word of God.
- † **Conversion.** In the gatherings of the BECs in worship, they are led to integrate fully the faith they believe in, with the life they live. Such integration is necessary to those who belong in BEC, so that they may live the Kingdom values of faith, hope, and love; that they may radiate and manifest the Kingdom values in their daily lives.
- † **Sense of Belongingness.** In the integration of the Basic Ecclesial Communities to the parish or particular Churches, Church leaders must welcome the Basic Ecclesial Community. They should also give proper guidance and support for their sustainability which creates a sense of belongingness to the Church.
- † **Zeal for Mission.** There must be a necessary pastoral care for the Christian communities who are fervent in prayer and devotions. The Church must guide them so that everything they do is rooted in witnessing the Gospel of Christ. In return, lay leaders and members themselves become builders of the community for the Church.

Etymology

- † **Community** - The word community is derived from the Latin *communitas*, or fellowship, which, in turn, is derived from *communis*, or "common". The prefix "com" signifies "with", "together", "in conjunction with", or joint". Removing the "com" from the Latin, leaves you with *munis*, which derives from *munire*, meaning "to fortify, strengthen, or defend" (Aronesty, 2004).

The use of the word community emphasizes the communitarian nature of the BECs. These are not merely groups, societies, or associations but local communities whose members live in close proximity and interact with each other regularly. These are not specialized groups but stable environments. Thus, mandated organizations (like Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary), renewal movements and their local branches (Charismatics, Focolare, CFC, Catechumenate, El Shaddai, etc), cannot be considered as BECs (CBCB-BEC) (Picardal, 2011a).

- † **Basic** - The word basic refers to both the size and the social location of the BECs. The BEC are small communities. A basic community is small enough for the members to know each other well and relate deeply as friends but not too small that it turns into a primary group or barkada instead of a community. A BEC may be composed of forty to two hundred families. A BEC may be subdivided into several selda or family groupings of five to ten families. The term basic may also refer to the social location of the BECs – they are at the grassroots, at the base of society, among the poor and the least (Picardal, 2011a).

- † **Ecclesial** – the word Ecclesia (or Ekklesia) in Christian theology means both: a particular body of faithful people, and the whole body of the faithful. Its Latin is *ecclesia*, from Greek *ekklesia*, where the word is a compound of two segments: "ek", a preposition meaning "out of", and a verb, "kaleo", signifying "to call" - together, literally, "to call out". That usage disappeared and is now replaced with "assembly, congregation, council", or "convocation" (Robertson, 1919). The word ecclesial emphasizes the *ecclesiality* of the BECs. They are a way of being Church – the Church that is realized, localized, and experienced at the grassroots of the neighborhood. The BECs are not just administrative units within the parish – they are indeed the microcosm of the Church. Whatever can be said about the Church in general may also be used and appropriated for the BECs (Picardal, 2011a).



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan



Photo from the Diocese of Malolos

Parishes as Wellsprings of Mercy and Renewal

Pastoral Exhortation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines to open the Year 2017 as the Year of Parishes, Communion of Communities

Beloved people of God:

We welcome the year 2017 in our “novena-years” of preparation for the grateful celebration in 2021 of the five hundredth anniversary of the first coming and first receiving among our people of the Gospel of Christ Jesus and of His holy Church.

That forthcoming 2021 celebration, recalling the first Mass and first baptisms in our shores, should be a new and joyous explosion in our lives of faith, hope and love throughout our country. Surely such will be our response to the free and gracious gift from the heavenly Father which made the year 1521, for us Christians first of all, a memorable and incredibly significant “new beginning” in our history.

As we began this “novena” we raised a banner of hope and renewal for the Church in our land with the motto, “Live Christ, Share Christ!” Firm resolve with which we now open the Year 2017, and the cry of all of us, dear brothers and sisters is — “Live Christ, Share Christ!”

This cry can rightfully be the motto for the now-ongoing “new evangelization” in the Philippines, which the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines already proclaimed in 1991. To that “renewed evangelization” we brought with us all the hopes and dreams of our people” for a truly “renewed Christian society, life and culture based on the Gospel Beatitudes, suffused with Christian values of love and peace, of joy and hospitality, of patience and justice.” Thus, we also resolve that the Church in our land would become truly “a church of the poor!” (PCP II 137).

“Live Christ, Share Christ!” As we open the Year 2017, we pray that God may grant us abundant grace to make it a year of fuller fulfillment of that motto and that hope. 2017 has been programmed to focus on the parish, “a community of communities”. As a center and fountain of missionary discipleship and zeal for renewed evangelization, “a genuine center of constant missionary outreach.” in “Evangelii Gaudium” Pope Francis insists that the parish “is not an outdated institution and can possess great flexibility still, depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community” (EG 28).

LIVE COMMUNION, SHARE COMMUNION

The Church is a mystery of communion. Our communion flows from the Trinity overflowing into humanity and sharing a common faith journeying together for the full unfolding of the Kingdom of God. This communion, made possible for us because of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, always has a double dimension—a vertical communion with God and a horizontal communion with our brothers and sisters. The Church’s life of communion is

constantly open to ecumenical and missionary action because this communion is always in a state of mission.

The Church in the Philippines is a part of the communion of Churches which is the universal Church. We are a part of the one Church of Christ. In every particular Church “the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active” (Christus Dominus 11). For this reason, the universal Church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular Churches, or as a federation of particular Churches. Whoever belongs to one particular Church belongs to all the Churches; since belonging to the Communion, like belonging to the Church, is never simply particular, but by its very nature is always universal (Lumen Gentium 13).

In celebrating 2017 as the Year of the Parish as a Communion of Communities we are challenged to deeply discern more not only the structures of governance of our dioceses and parishes but also of the quality of faith life in the parish, the fellowship, belongingness, and participation experienced by its members. In brief, our focus will be the building of a parish that is truly a faith community immersed in the lives of its people (Palma, 2012). In the Philippines our vision of the Church as communion is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement that is the movement to foster Basic Ecclesial Communities” (PCP II 137).

Usually emerging at the grassroots, Basic Ecclesial Communities consciously strive to integrate their faith with their daily life. They are guided and encouraged by regular catechesis. Poverty and their faith urge their members towards solidarity with one another, action for justice, and towards a vibrant celebration of life in the liturgy (PCP II 139).

How can we work at renewing our parish communities so that they can better respond to the challenge of restoring all things in Christ?

CELEBRATE COMMUNION, LISTEN TO THE MOTHER

2017 is the also the centennial year of the apparition of Our Lady to three children in Fatima. At Fatima, Our Lady asked her children to return to Jesus by the threefold path of prayer, daily communion, and reparation. The message of Fatima still rings clearly and strongly for us. If we dream of Church renewal, let us return to prayer, let us receive her Son in Holy Communion and let us offer reparation for our sin.

As we pursue the dream to make every parish community a family of families and a communion of communities, let us avail of the message of Our Lady of Fatima to help us reach our vision.

In the months of May to October 2017, Catholics all over the world, led by Pope Francis, recall and celebrate the centenary of the six apparitions of Our Blessed Mother to the “three children of Fatima”- Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco Marto, and his sister Jacinta. As we, in the Philippines, celebrate our parishes as communion of communities, we will also turn with prayer and devotion, deeper reflection, and rededication to “the Fatima Message” of Our Lady. All these activities will enable us to learn or relearn “what Fatima was all about”; how important and relevant Fatima still is for our time, and

how we can and should put into practice “what Fatima asks of us today”, so we can renew and reinvigorate our parishes in the Philippines.

THE RELEVANCE OF PARISHES, THE CALL OF FATIMA

“The present efforts at Church renewal should center on the parish. Without parish renewal, the family and Basic Ecclesial Communities will not find strong supportive ambience and will continue to feel isolated” (PCP II 604). In the same vein, it would be a lost opportunity if the year of the parish as communion of communities would ignore the clarion call of Fatima for prayer, penance, and communion.

Pope Benedict XVI took pains to spell out the fundamental significance of the Fatima events and of the message of Our Lady of Fatima. He believed that the “point of Fatima” was not directed only to the emergence of the disastrous dictatorship of the twentieth century in Russia and Germany. It referred “to a critical moment in history when the whole power of evil came to a head” not only in and through those godless regimes. “In other ways the evil is still at work today in our time, in the suffering of the Church and the weakening of the forces of good and of the work of God in our world.”



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

If the nation needs healing, the healing will start in our parishes. If the nation needs to crush the forces of evil, it will start in our parishes. If the nation needs to strengthen the presence of God in society, the strengthening of the parishes is the only way.

Pope Benedict has written, “the answer to the power of evil in the world of our time can only come from the transformation of the heart, through faith, hope, and love; through penance and conversion.” In this sense, the message of Fatima is precisely not outdated. The Church continues to suffer ... even now there is tribulation.” “There is the power which tries to trample down the faith.”

What we beg and pray for is this: “that the power of evil be restrained, that the energies of good might regain their vigor. You could say that the triumphs of God and the triumphs of Mary are quiet, but they are real nonetheless,” said Pope Benedict XVI.

Pope Benedict tells us, then, that the framework and meaning of the message of Fatima is the struggle of the work of God in our world today and the struggle of the life of church

and of Christians, that struggle in our own time against the massively spreading active forces of evil and sin in today's world, in our communities and societies, in our own homes, in our own lives.

NEW WELLSPRINGS OF PRAYER AND MERCY

Let us move toward some proposals for a “program of action for our parishes and basic ecclesial communities”, a program which flows from the Fatima message. Pope Paul VI, in his own summing up of the Fatima message, defined it as “a message of prayer and penance”. Let it be so for our parishes! Our communion of communities needs a renewed and passionate program of intense prayer and penance.

Parishes and communities will be renewed only through personal and community prayer. Our first mission in the world is to be a leaven to teach our society to pray. Our first duty in communion is prayer. The prayer of a shepherd for his sheep is always music to the ears of God. Prayer is an act of love. Every prayer whether of praise, contrition, or petition is always a plea for mercy. Prayer is our parish anchor. Prayer is our cornerstone. Parishes and BECs will be renewed as oasis of mercy through reparation for sins, frequent confession, and acts of mercy.

Parishes and communities will be renewed by living the Eucharist whom we receive every day. The Eucharist is the poverty of Jesus disturbing the complacency of the wealthy; it is the wealthy sacrificing house, family, and fortune to lift up the poor from their poverty. It is the Word of God inviting the confused, the lonely, the bored, the suffering to the joy of the Gospel. It is God's life humanized in His incarnation; it is human life divinized in His suffering, death, and resurrection. It is the compassion of the Father touching the life of the sinner; the conversion of the sinner practicing the compassion of the Savior.

Let us envision parish renewal from the Immaculate Heart of Mary and through the means she gave us at Fatima—prayer and penance intensified in every parish.

From every parish and basic ecclesial community, let us raise our voices in prayer “Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls into heavens especially those in most need of your mercy.”

May Our Lady of Fatima whom we also invoke as Mother of the Church pray that for us that every parish truly become oases and wellsprings of renewal and mercy!

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, November 27, 2016, First Sunday of Advent

+ SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS

Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan
President, CBCP

Basic Ecclesial Community Theme Song

(Archdiocese of Manila)

Composed and Arranged by: Lester Delgado

Mula sa isang maliit na pamilya,
binuo ang lipunan nang pag-ibig at pag-asa
masayang nag pupuri nag bubuklod sa pag-ibig,
nag-sisikap maisabuhay ang pagiging simbahan

Koro:

Nag lilingkod sa kapwa organisadong pamilya,
nanatiling tapat sa turo ng ama,
nag iisang damdamin sa iisang hangarin,
ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, nang kaligtasan makamit.

Sama samang kumilos sa pamamahagi,
ng mabuting balita ang tunay pag asa
masayang nananalangin sa pag dirawang ng buhay,
regular na katekesis nakasentro kay Kristo.
(repeat Koro)

Nag lilingkod sa kapwa organisadong pamilya,
nanatiling tapat sa turo ng ama,
nag iisang damdamin sa iisang hangarin,
ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, nang kaligtasan makamit.
(ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, nang kaligtasan makamit).

Reflection Questions:

- † What efforts are we doing to unite our community?
- † In your own little ways, how do we show others (including people from other religions) God's love and mercy?

Catechist's Corner

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 parish as a communion of communities (ang parokya bilang komunyong ng mga pamayanan)*.

Guide question for Discussion:

- † Have you become an intermediary to bring the youth closer to Jesus?

**“Jesus said, Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them”
(Matthew 19:14)**



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



FARE

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola & Jeanette P. Grajo

I am staring at the huddle--
Of children horse playing,
Chattering noisily in the room.

They remained still for a while,
Altogether made the sign of the cross,
Prayed the Hail Mary
Clutching the rosary.

There, in a far-flung barrio
Miles away from the Church
A cathedral of faith.

Shared instead of preached
The lessons about the beloved
Church, expecting nothing.

Because there is no price for service
Except for the fare brought forth
For the love of God.

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: HUNGRY PEOPLE, FEEDING GOD



Introduction

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines devotes two paragraphs to describe the BECs (138-139): “They are small communities of Christians, usually of families who gather together around the Word of God and the Eucharist. These communities are united to their pastors but are ministered regularly by lay leaders. The members know each other by name and share not only the Word of God and the Eucharist, but also their concerns both material and spiritual. They have a strong sense of belongingness and of responsibility for one another.



Photo from the Diocese of Pagadian

Not surprisingly enough, in 1991 during the Second Plenary Council, the Church in the Philippines adopted the establishment of the BECs as the pastoral priority in all its dioceses: “Basic Ecclesial Communities under various names and forms—BCCs, small Christian communities, covenant communities—must be vigorously promoted by the full living of the Christian vocation in both rural and urban areas. Active non-violence was a guiding principle in their approach to social change” (PCP II 109). For this reason, the Council directed the Conference to “issue an official statement on BECs, of their nature and function as recognized by the Church, making it clear that they are not simply another organization” (PCP II 110).

The Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) encounter Jesus Christ in the breaking of the Word of God through Bible sharing that reflects their daily lives and in the breaking of the Bread in the Eucharist, the summit of all encounters and gathering as a community (RM 51). These concrete encounters in the BECs uplift the characteristic of the Church as the community of disciples as realized by the first Christian community.



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 14:13-21

¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd; and He had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵ When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for

themselves.”¹⁶ Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”¹⁷ They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”¹⁸ And He said, “Bring them here to me.”¹⁹ Then He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.²⁰ And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.²¹ And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



Doctrine

Characteristics of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (Robredillo, 2016)

- † **Poor yet Believing—a concrete realization of the Church of the Poor:**
 - † They emerge from among the poor, at the grassroots level;
 - † Yet, they are people of faith, they are a community of faith.
 - † They look at Jesus as the center of their lives—His life is the norm and the inspiration.
 - † They believe in His promise of the Kingdom of God; God cares for them, and He will eventually change this world into a new one.
 - † Contrast feature: They imply that the Church need not always be a Church of the *población*; it is also a Church at the periphery; it need not always be a Church of the learned, the famous, or the moneyed, but also of the illiterate, the neglected, and the scum.
 - † Contrast feature: They do not profess any ideology (like communism, socialism, or capitalism), rather they draw inspiration from the Word of God, from the teachings of the Church, and look at realities from the perspective of their faith.
- † **Community-oriented**
 - † Their members live in proximity or in the same neighborhood, like a squatter area, or a barangay where they know each other by name, and relate to each other regularly. Thus, it is small enough to permit personal relationship among the members, and large enough to contain itself in its basic needs.
 - † They strive to be of one heart and one mind.
 - † They have a strong sense of co-responsibility and solidarity; there is mutual care, sharing and support.
 - † Contrast feature: it is not a church of individuals who do not know each other, who pray alone, who go to mass alone, who think that they go to heaven alone.
- † **Participatory—Consultative**
 - † Participation is necessary. It is based on the understanding of and respect for the various charisms or gifts of each other.
 - † The selection of leaders, process of decision-making, planning, prayer sessions, and implementation of decisions—all these are characterized by the widest member-participation.

- † Charisms are recognized in the ministries: youth, family, liturgy, social action, catechesis, education, etc.
- † Thus, the BECs participate in the life and mission of the Church.
- † Contrast feature: unlike the parish, it is headed by a layperson who leads in the celebration of the Word, the priestless Sunday service, meeting, and other community affairs. Hence, lay ministries are recognized in the small community. It is not hierarchical, but closely connected with the hierarchy in the person of the priest.



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

† **Gathered around the Word of God and the Eucharist**

- † The Gospel is heard, believed, shared, and lived in the community,
- † The participants reflect on the Gospel in order to interpret the life and events in the community and see their life and happenings in the light of the Word of God.
- † They look at realities and events in the light of faith, and their reflection on the Word of God.
- † Once or twice a week, they gather for Bible sharing and reflection, usually in one of the homes of the members.
- † They study the Bible in relation to their daily life and draw inspiration from it for proper Christian action.
- † They denounce the sins of society in the light of the Gospel.
- † They announce the good news to the society.
- † They gather to celebrate the Sunday service without the Priest.
- † Contrast feature: it is not an income-generating endeavor or for the building of a new structure, but they gather primarily to hear the Word, receive the Sacraments, and live the Word and Sacraments in their daily life.
- † They have high regard for popular religiosity—novenas, rosary, celebration of feasts, processions, etc.

† **Sign and Instrument of Development and Liberation**

- † They are also concerned with the material well-being of the members and their community.
- † They try to build a community of peace, based on justice, freedom and love. Thus, they have health care projects, mutual aid funds, programs that introduce

technology in agriculture. Others may have communal farms, or involved in issues of justice and peace, or take position against business malpractices.

- † That is why, during Martial Law, the BECs defended human rights, and protested against oppressive laws, etc.
- † Contrast feature: they are not only concerned with spiritual realities, or with only one aspect of the human person; but with all the aspects that make up the human person—financial, political, cultural, environmental, spiritual, physical, etc. They aim for the total human development and liberation.



Human Virtues

- † **Mutual Support-** Mutual support is the provision of task assistance, social support, and feedback to one or more team members, as needed. In other words, mutual support is a back-up behavior that benefits the individual and, thereby, the greater good of the team. Mutual support is to take care of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We grow when we support each other. It is a facet of love whereby one can do anything with a spirit of love.
- † **Co-responsibility** - Co-responsibility aims at fostering social inclusion and improving the well-being of the members of the community. As Pope Francis said, our hope is that the Church herself might become a culture of formation to a co-responsibility that recognizes both the sanctifying, teaching and governing mission to the responsibility of the laity to “go forth” and reach various peripheries that are less accessible to the clergy (University of Notre Dame, 2020). It is the common responsibility in the common mission of the People of God, which, we all share in Christ.



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose Occidental

- † **Communion** - This communion is captured under the twin images of the “People of God” and the “Body of Christ,” where “People of God” expresses the continuity of the Church's history, and the “Body of Christ” expresses its universality inaugurated in the Cross and in the Lord's Resurrection” (LG 8). It is a communion of the People of God who pray, worship, love God and live in an authentic Christian way of life towards the communion with the Father Almighty.



Morals

Basic Ecclesial Communities

BEC is the most basic realization of the local church (Lakshmanan, 2014). Basic Ecclesial Community characterizes an authentic Vatican II church that espouses participation, dialogue, and co-responsibility. It is a large church community that grew out from the three aforementioned germinal values and dynamisms of Vatican II (Claver, 2008, p. 107). The BEC is a way of being a church that is concerned with all aspects of the life of the person and the community (Lakshmanan, 2014). Thus, BEC is the concrete manifestation that the Church is involved with the joys and hopes, sufferings and sorrows, triumphs, and defeats of the people. In short, a Church that has concern for the lives of the people.

The Nature of BEC

BEC is not an organization like the Catholic Women's League (CWL), the Knights of Columbus (K of C), Legion of Mary, Apostolada, etc. nor a movement like the Cursillo of the Charismatic movement. Its distinguishing element is that BECs are non-exclusive communities "at the lower level of the church" and they are so, "in a participatory way (Claver, 2008, p. 111). BEC is "a community of Christian believers at the grassroots level which meets regularly under the leadership of a lay minister" (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012). The Basic Ecclesial Community is primarily church: people who adhere to the faith in the Gospel and are committed to it not only as individuals but, also principally, as an entire community (Claver, 2008, p. 108). It is thus faith in Christ that brings their members together and what makes and identifies them as a community. It is a community, an organized body, not just a group coming together by happenstance like a mob or a crowd (Picardal, 2011b, p. 9).

Likewise, it is the smallest unit of church and it is in the "grassroots," therefore, it is small enough for members to be in face-to-face relationship and interaction with each other. The regular meetings of the community at set times (usually on Sundays) has a double function of keeping alive the sense of community of its members and of fulfilling the communication needs for social interaction (Claver, 2008, p. 108). BEC has its lay leadership. But this does not exclude clerical leadership by any means. It does acknowledge the need to exercise in the church, leadership roles among the laity, which is distinct from the clerical kind (Clark, 1975, p. 54). But whenever priests are available, organized efforts are made in these communities to take advantage of the Sacraments.

Functions of BEC

"The first function of BEC is common worship: this is why BECs come together—the liturgical expression of asserting in religious worship the community's faith (Claver, 2008, p.108). There is power in the Word of God, something that had not been discovered in the past use of Scripture in the liturgy, and which, for the first time, the ordinary laity are discovering for themselves (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012, p. 151).

The second function of BEC is communal discernment on how to apply the message of the Word to the situation in the community. This needs prayer and discernment, which is participated in by the whole community (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012, p. 110). Problems, opportunities and events that may impinge on the members' life in common or that may help or prevent the full living of the faith are looked at in the light of the Word of God (Clark, 1975, p.58).

The third function is the community's action on its discernment. The participatory deciding, planning, and acting bring out even more clearly and mark BEC as a community, as an organization and a structured body (Claver, 2008, p. 110).

The Effects of BEC

There are four tangible results coming from the development of BECs precisely as participatory communities; first, is vision-formation. In any kind of movement for change and reform, the clarifying of objectives and ends sought is of utmost necessity and importance. The BECs, in the acceptance of themselves as discerning communities, develop a vision of the society or community they want— and even from a cultural as well as a religious point of view.



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin



Photo from the Diocese of Davao

Second is decision making. BECs are not mere debating societies or study clubs. The discerning, reflecting, and praying that go on in their weekly worship are geared, when the need arises, toward common action on common problems. In addition if the action is to be at all effective, the decision for it has to be communal.

Third is power building. The common will acts on their problems. In the acting itself, the BECs soon realize that they can achieve great things by themselves, without having to rely, all the time, on traditional elites in the church or in the society at large, (Clark, 1975, p. 105). When they act together, they are responsible primarily to themselves as a community. They begin to create power for themselves— power which they can use to defend themselves against wrongs and abuses. It is not a power based on arms nor on wealth, but on an abiding sense of unity, common interests, which are reflective and purposive.

Fourth is the sense of dignity. The basis where which the power of the people is formed into BECs is nothing but human dignity. Active assertion and struggling for this dignity certainly do not start or happen in the BEC alone, but it is in the process of building up such faith communities that this dignity is built up in a communal manner and on faith.



Simple Activities

Activity: This is Better than That

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Number of Participants: Any

Tools Needed: Four or more objects

Rules: Pick four or more objects that are different (or similar objects that look different). Group your participants into even teams. Describe a scenario where each team has to solve a problem using only those objects. This can be anything from being stranded on a desert island to saving the world from Godzilla! Have each team rank the objects based on their usefulness in the scenario, along with their reason for ranking the objects.

Objective: This exercise inspires team creativity in problem solving. The idea is to not make the scenarios too easy so it becomes obvious which objects are most useful.

Activity 2: Winner/Loser

Time: 5-6 minutes

Number of Participants: Two or more people

Rules: Partner A shares something negative that happened in their life with Partner B. It can be a personal or work-related memory, but it has to be true. Then Partner A discusses the same experience again, but focuses only on the positive aspect. Partner B helps explore the silver lining of the bad experience. Afterward, they switch roles.

Objective: Participants discover together how to reframe negative situations into learning experiences.

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How involved am I in our community activities?
- † How do I care for my community?

PANANAGUTAN

By: Rev. Fr. Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Walang sinuman ang nabubuhay, para sa
sarili lamang
Walang sinuman and namamatay, para sa
sarili lamang

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos
Na kapiling nya

Sa ating pag mamahalan at panglilingkod
Kay kanino man
Tayo ay magdadala ng balita na kaligtasan

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos
Na kapiling nya

Sabay sabay mag aawitan
Ang mga bansa
Tayo tinuring na panginoon
Bilang mga anak

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos
Na kapiling nya

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos
Na kapiling nya



Worship

Embracing Father, You grace each of us with equal measure of Your love. Let us learn to love our neighbors more deeply, so that we can create peaceful and just communities. Inspire us to use our creative energies to build the structures we need to overcome the obstacle of intolerance and indifference. May Jesus provide us the example we need and send the Spirit to warm our hearts for the journey. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – Basic Ecclesial Community establishes small communities of Christians who are rooted in families who gather around the Word of God and the Eucharist. They are united with the parish priest but are ministered and collaborated by the laity. The members actively participate in the programs and activities held regularly in the parish. They are led to realize and experience a new way of “being church” – that of belonging to one big family, living like brothers and sisters, showing deep concern for both the material and spiritual needs of one another in their respective neighborhoods and knowing the members of each family by name.

- † **LIVE** - Basic Ecclesial Communities should work together to provide formation in stewardship of creation as constitutive of Christian discipleship. The way we deal with creation influences our dealings with human beings too. There is much to learn from the wisdom and practice of other faiths with regard to caring for the earth. The communities should also engage in faith-sharing activities to foster goodwill and unity in evangelizing the people especially the common and poor ones living in these communities.

- † **SHARE** - Living the Eucharist involves a new way of coming together as a family because of God who gathers. We commend and support small Christian communities, basic human communities, ecclesial movements, religious communities, parishes, dioceses, and other committed people that sustain the Eucharistic life of gathering God’s children in fragmented situations. Hence, let us inspire one another to become prayerful Christian communities. If your family is religious and holds some devotional prayer/ practices, encourage your neighbors to join the activity at home and talk to them about their faith life, which may help, create rapport and motivate them to develop the habit of praying/worshipping God.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: JESUS IN THE MIDST



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman



Introduction

Basic Ecclesial Communities must be a pastoral priority in the dioceses and archdioceses because it is visibly a significant expression of ecclesial renewal (PCP II, 138-139). Basic Ecclesial Communities are flourishing not only in rural places but also in urban areas. There are also BECs that are struggling to be born and needing the support of the clergy or the parish priest. There are BECs that have stagnated and needs to be revitalized, yet there still are many signs of hope (EN 58).

These communities can simply be, in their own way, an extension of the spiritual and religious life through worshipping and deepening of faith. Their concerns are both material and spiritual. Likewise, they have a strong sense of communion, a sense of empathy, and a sense of responsibility for one another. BECs are fervent in prayer and the practice of popular religiosity through Bible sharing, novena, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints are evident in their gatherings. This kind of integration will prevent them from concentrating only on one part of the Gospel or the Church, or becoming nomads without roots (EG 29). This is realized through the guidance of Church leaders, that leads them towards the proper reception of the sacraments, such as the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Confessions etc.

The Basic Ecclesial Communities are vital forces in the society for they are not just communities that gather on Sundays or any specific day. Their gatherings are geared towards answering the social problems that beset the lives of the people. In a way, they can move as a group to fight social justice in the society. They can be tapped whenever a social need arises since they are social catalysts in the society. They can make a difference. Hence, these Communities as vehicles of renewal are renewed Christians who persevere in their faith and grow in the Gospel of Christ.



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 18:15-20

¹⁵ "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses the evidence of two or three witnesses may confirm every word. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the

church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there among them.”



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Doctrine

Three situations of Evangelization according to Saint Pope John Paul II

- † **1. Missio ad Gentes** - This is an essential missionary focus of the Church-- to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to those who have not yet heard it. If not all, most of the faithful used to think of evangelization as only for those who have not yet received the Good News or for those who do not yet know Jesus and for those who have no idea about God. This form of evangelization is called *Missio ad Gentes*. However, the New Evangelization does not focus on this form of evangelization but for those who are already baptized (Redemptoris Missio 33).
- † **2. New Evangelization** - This is the “ongoing evangelization of those who have lost a sense of faith, or no longer consider themselves members of the Church in intermediate situation. We need to re-evangelize such people who have lived a life far from Christ and His Gospel.” Many Catholics were baptized in infancy but fell away from the faith when they grew up. They do not live a personal commitment to Christ and do not practice the faith as adolescents or adults. The New Evangelization is directed to this fallen away-baptized Catholics (RM 33).
- † **3. Christian Communities** – This focuses on those with strong Christian affiliation. They are “fervent in their faith and Christian living. These are Christian communities with adequate ecclesial structure in their activity, thus, needing pastoral care. Church leaders must invest with these Christian Communities for these communities are rich in practicing popular religiosity such as: Bible sharing, praying the Holy Rosary,

novena etc. (EN 58). Hence, the clergy, especially the parish priests, must support them in their sustainability and their pastoral care so that there will be no isolated communities in the Church/Parish.

A Spirituality of BEC

The work of building up BECs comes with a very experiential realization of the importance of Spirituality in moving people to get involved in working for the good of the wider community beyond the family (Claver, 2008, p. 156). Thus, a Spirituality that espouses prophetic dialogue and integration of faith and culture is necessary to the formation of BECs.



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

Bishop Claver stated, “The first fact about, spirituality is what makes up the interiority of a human being and of the whole people. Ideally, Spirituality should take place at all levels in the life of the local church, most especially where people live their daily lives in their primary communities (family and basic ecclesial community).

Bishop Claver stated that “the first fact about spirituality is the necessity of prayer. Prayer is an essential aspect for all Christians. Filipino culture involves a prayerful attitude of the people. Their whole life is governed with the culture of religiosity and prayer (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012, p. 130). A Prayerful attitude is a tradition handed down from one generation to another (Claver, 2008, p. 131).

The spirituality of the reign of Christ is common to all who believe in Christ. It is. It consists of promoting the values of the reign that Christ taught his followers. So much so that evangelizers and missionaries are only to help, promote, encourage and bring the process about since the values of the reign of Christ are already deeply embedded in the culture and in the faith of the people. Spirituality consists of the values of faith, hope, and love that guide people in their lives.

Moreover, these values of faith, hope, and love make up the inner values of BEC. Basic Ecclesial Communities is indeed a community of Christian believers who must live and preach their faith not only as individuals, but more so as a community. The purpose of their coming together is to worship, for it is the heart of their gathering. Their worship begins with the service of the Word of God in order to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit geared towards communal action for the common good (Claver, 2008, p. 161).

In addition, the action that flows from the worship they do, is based on service. Their worship is geared to and goes out to the service of the people to care for their spiritual as well as their material needs. Thus, the group's involvement with human needs is an ordinary activity of the BECs for it is a concrete realization of charity.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Sense of Belongingness** – The scripture says: I appeal to you, brothers, and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and heart (1 Corinthians 1:10). The idea of community comes from a sense of responsibility that we have for each other. In the Bible, God encourages us to take care of our brethren while following His Words. We must remember the importance of maintaining connection with our fellow human beings to ensure a thriving community.
- † **Self-giving** - self-giving is the willingness to deprive one's self. It is self-denying, self-sacrificing, and unselfish. It disregards one's own advantages and welfare for those of others. It is becoming detached and concentrating on helping other people in their difficulties. The act of self-giving is a personal power-releasing factor. Hence, we must imitate the self-giving love of Jesus to His flock (John 13:1-17).
- † **Stewardship** – Stewardship is utilizing and managing all resources God provides for His glory and the betterment of His creation. Christian Stewardship concerns the obligation of Christians in managing and intelligently utilizing the gifts that God has given. The Christian steward is not only responsible for the material blessings provided by God, but also the spiritual gifts that are given through the Holy Spirit. God wants humanity to be His stewards in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification. Our stewardship of creation involves taking care of the environment, other creatures, as well as our families and communities. Being a good steward in this world is one way of expressing our love for God and our gratitude to Him.



Morals

Formation for Mission

Living in communion: These are small communities with members in unity and solidarity with their pastors. The members have a strong sense of belongingness and responsibility for one another.

Prophetic/Evangelizing mission: The Church and BEC's are stewards of the Gospel with the responsibility to nurture and share the faith with others.

Priestly Mission: stewards of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist – members share the bread of life.

Kingly/Servant Mission: Sharing of time, talent and resources to care for the needy and the earth, for the defense of life and human rights, and for the promotion of justice and peace.

Church of the Poor: The Church and the BEC's according to PCP II, are called to be a Church of the Poor. This requires the members of the Church and the BEC to embrace evangelical poverty. This means trusting in divine providence, sharing one's good: time, talent, and treasures with others (especially the poor), and living a simple lifestyle. The Church of the Poor requires all to make a preferential option of the poor, to love the poor, to be in solidarity with the poor, and to defend the rights of the poor likewise, empowering the poor for social transformation and making it a civilization of love (Picardal, 2011b, p. 76).

Formation of Faith

- † **Formation of the Head** – to know, understand and accept the teachings of Christ and the Church through evangelization and catechesis, and doctrinal formation.
- † **Formation of the Heart** – to develop a trusting and loving relationship with Christ through prayer and liturgy. This involves a spiritual and liturgical formation.
- † **Formation of the Hands** – to develop the capacity to love and serve others as a concrete expression of faith through social action (Picardal, 2011b, p. 63).

Stewardship formation

The sharing of time, talent and treasure – a term popularized as early as the late 1970s by the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) during lent – has been practiced in varying degrees in many BECs. Sharing of time, talent, and treasure – this is what many lay people are doing as members of the parish BEC formation/animation teams, as BEC lay liturgical leaders, as lay evangelists, catechists, and as members of the parish/BEC social action committees etc. The spirit of voluntarism is very much alive in many parishes and BECs (Picardal, 2011b, p. 101).

There are various forms of sharing treasures and pooling of resources in many BECs: mutual aid systems (*kalipay ug kasakit*), modified-tithing (*balik-halad, Gasa Balik sa Dios, hatag-uli*) are practiced in Romblon, San Carlos, Ipil, Pagadian, Dipolog, and Digos. Other initiatives were the multipurpose cooperatives, food bank, contribution to ordination, charity fund, calamity fund, *Pondo ng Pinoy/Share & Care Program*, Church of the Poor Fund (Ayala Alabang), and other contributions to major BEC events (Mindanao-wide BEC gathering) (Picardal, 2011b, p. 102).

Many BECs have been engaged in environmental advocacy: the anti-logging and reforestation campaign, anti-mining, anti-coal fired power plants, and waste-management. These BECs were motivated by the awareness of being stewards of creation (ibid).



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Simple Activities

Activity : Human Knot

Time: 15 - 30 minutes

Number of Participants: 8 - 20 people

Rules: Have everyone stand in a circle facing one another other, shoulder to shoulder. Instruct everyone to put their right hand out and grab someone's hand randomly across from them. Then, tell them to put their left hand out and grab another random hand from a different person across the circle. Within a set time limit, the group needs to untangle the knot of arms without releasing their hands. If the group is too large, make multiple smaller circles and have the separate groups compete.

Objective: This game for team building relies heavily on good communication and teamwork.

Song Analysis (See next page)

Guide for Reflection

- † In my own little ways, how do I help others in my parish and community be closer to God?



Worship

Prayer for Community

Majesty on high may Your love and compassion flow through us and to those around us. Give us a helping hand and concern for their misfortunes and suffering. Give us compassion and empathy to understand what those in our community are going through. Help us to love them well as You commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. May my community and I seek to center our focus in You. May we strive to live the life You modeled when You walked this Earth. May we reflect Your image and purge anything from us that does not look like You. Amen.

God is Seeking those who thirst for His Appearance

From: The Church of Almighty God

God seeks those who long for Him, who long for Him to appear.
God seeks those who don't resist, obedient as babies before Him.
God seeks those who are able, able to hear His words,
accept what He's entrusted and offer heart and body to Him.
If nothing can shake, nothing can shake your devotion to God,
He'll look down upon you, look down upon you with favor, oh ...
God will bestow His blessings upon you, upon you, oh ...
God will bestow His blessings upon you!

If you are one who though noble, reputed and knowledgeable,
still accept, accept His calling and commission.
If you are one who though wealthy, who though supported by all,
still accept, accept His calling and commission, yeah.
If nothing can shake, nothing can shake your devotion to God,
all that you do will be significant and righteous, oh ...
God will bestow His blessings upon you, upon you, oh ...
God will bestow His blessings upon you! Oh ... oh ... oh ... oh ...

However, reject the call of God for your status and for your own goals,
all you do will be cursed by God, (oh ...)
yeah, all you do will be despised by God.
If nothing can shake, nothing can shake your devotion to God,
all that you do will be significant and righteous, oh ...
God will bestow His blessings upon you, upon you, oh ...
God will bestow His blessings upon you,
His blessings upon you! Yeah ... oh ... oh ... oh ...
from Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - The main Basic Ecclesial Communities task is to aid the people in integrating their faith and life—spirituality. The main purpose of the gatherings of the people in BECs is to integrate their faith into their daily lives. It is a process of sensitizing people to social realities and orienting them to incorporate Gospel values of hope and solidarity in their lives.
- † **LIVE** – The Church is a communion of the people of God, filled with the Holy Spirit. They share with Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly/servant mission. As a sharer of this threefold mission of Christ, we must live always in the presence of the Holy

Eucharist (Priestly). Thus, attending mass is a must for us to always live-in-faithfulness to our God in our daily lives. We must also be a servant leader (Kingly) in our community by always being two, three or four steps ahead in helping other people. If someone needs help, we do not need to wait for him/her to ask for help. We can take the initiative. As Catholic Christians, we have a responsibility to our brethren. Lastly, we must be joyful evangelizers of hope, peace and love, as Pope Francis says, “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from the funeral”.

- † **SHARE** – It is based on an awareness that all we have – time, talent and treasures are not really ours. These are blessings from God. We are not the owners, but stewards called to cultivate, develop, manage, and share them. What are the time, talent and treasures you can offer to your family, community and to the church?

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: KEEPING THE WORD



Introduction

The BECs are local communities of Catholic Christians in the neighborhood and villages within the parish. The members are close to one another and relate to each other as friends, brothers, and sisters in the Lord. They gather regularly to share the Word of God and live it in their daily lives, as well as, to pray and celebrate their faith. They share their resources and find ways to help and serve one another and those who are poor and to address their problems. PCP II recognizes the BECs as an expression of a renewed Church which includes communion. BEC is “our vision of Church as communion, participation and mission with the Church as priestly, prophetic and kingly people, and as Church of the poor. A Church that is renewed, is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement” (PCP II 137).

St. John Paul II describes BECs as part of the effort to decentralize the parish community and regard them as expressions and means for a deeper communion (RM 51): “How can BECs be a genuine expression of communion? The members experience this bond of unity which is based on shared faith, celebrated in the breaking of the bread, and concretely expressed in the sharing of material goods” (Acts 2:42).

There are lots of celebrations and table-fellowships in BECs – from simple common meals to fiesta celebration. The celebration of the Eucharist is more meaningful because it expresses and celebrates a life of communion – of unity, friendship, sharing and participation among members.

The sharing of time, talent and treasure is an essential expression of communion. This means practicing a spirituality of stewardship. This generates a spirit of volunteerism (sharing of time and talent). The BECs may be regarded as a locus of realization of ecclesial communion. In these communities, communion can be experienced more intimately and concretely. There is a sense of belonging and responsibility for one another. The members can live as a community of friends in the Lord. As such, communion may be acculturated with Filipino values of *pakikisama*, *bayanihan*, and *pakikipagkapwa-tao*.

The ecclesiology of communion also ensures that the BECs do not become isolated, autonomous and in-ward looking communities. It promotes unity and solidarity with other BECs. The parish itself becomes a network or communion of different BECs. The ecclesiology of communion requires that the BECs be united to their pastors and maintain their link with the

“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”
(Jn 17: 6)

local and universal Church. Without this linkage, the BECs cannot be considered as ecclesial communities or a way of being a Church.



Word of God

Gospel of John 17: 6-16

6 “I have made Your name known to those whom You gave me from the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word. **7** Now they know that everything You have given Me is from You; **8** for the Words that You gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. **9** I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom You gave Me, because they are Yours. **10** All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. **11** And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them in Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one, as We are One. **12** While I was with them, I protected them in Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. **13** But now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have My joy made complete in themselves. **14** I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. **15** I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but I ask You to protect them from the evil one. **16** They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.



Doctrine

The faithful needs to be familiar and knowledgeable of these doctrines, in order to understand that our faith is not only about sacramental or devotions, to emphasize that our faith comes from Sacred Scriptures, Sacred Traditions and Magisterium.

† THE TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE REVELATION (CCC 74)

God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth": that is, of Christ Jesus. Christ must be proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach the ends of the earth: God graciously arranged that the things He had once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and be transmitted to all generations (DV 7).

† THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION (CCC 75-79)

"Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel. This had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which Jesus fulfilled in His own person and promulgated with His own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men.



Photo from the Military Vicariate



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline."

In the apostolic preaching. . . In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:

- † - orally: "by the apostles who handed on--by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established--what they themselves had received, whether from the lips of Christ, from His way of life, from His deeds, or whether they learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit."
- † - in writing" "by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing . . . continued in apostolic succession."

"In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own position of teaching authority." Indeed, "the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time."

This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, and all that she believes." "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her beliefs and in her prayer."

The Father's self-communication made through His Word in the Holy Spirit, remains present and active in the Church: "God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of His beloved Son. The Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church - and through her in the world - leads believers to the full truth and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness."

† THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITION AND SACRED SCRIPTURE (CCC 80-83)

One common source. . .

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate with each other. "Both of them, flowing out from the same Divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal." Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with His own "always, to the close of age."

† Two Distinct Modes of Transmission

"Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."

"And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."

As a result, the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."

† *Apostolic Tradition and Ecclesial traditions*

The Tradition in question here comes from the apostles who hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition.

Tradition is distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted in different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium.

† THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HERITAGE OF FAITH (CCC 84-95)

The apostles entrusted the "Sacred deposit" of the faith (the *depositum fidei*), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. "By adhering to this heritage, the entire holy people, united to its pastors, always remain faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful."

† ***The Magisterium of the Church***

"The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ." This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome (CCC 85).

"Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed down to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for a belief to be Divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith" (CCC 86)

Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me", the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms (CCC 87).

† ***The dogmas of the faith (CCC 88-90)***

The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christfully when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in Divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these.

There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith.

The mutual connections between dogmas, and their coherence, can be found in the Revelation of the mystery of Christ. "In the Catholic doctrine there exists an order or hierarchy of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith."

† ***The supernatural sense of faith (CCC 91-93)***

All the faithful share in understanding and handing down revealed truths. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who instructs them and guides them into all truth.

"The whole body of the faithful . . . cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (*sensus fidei*) on the part of the whole people, when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals.

† ***Growth in understanding the faith (CCC 94-95)***

Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of both the realities and the words of the heritage of faith is able to grow in the life of the Church: "through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts"; it is in particular "theological research [which] deepens

knowledge of revealed truth."

- "from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which [believers] experience", the sacred Scriptures "grow with the one who reads them."

- "from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth."

"It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls."



Faith Response

- † To the ecclesiastical leaders: the sense of responsibility and concern must be observed as Jesus did to his apostles and disciples.
- † To the faithful, respect and love for the Church must be present in every action.
- † All faithful must be open handed to the needs of every member of the Church.
- † The sense of belongingness and mutual help for a better sustainability and communion
- † Prayers must be offered and the availability of the sacraments in order for all the faithful to live fully their Christian life.



Human Values

- † **Volunteerism** - The doctrine of the primacy of the will. Volunteerism takes on a variety of forms: 1. that in God, the will takes precedence over the intellect. , The result is truth and goodness, the way God wants them.; 2. that one's will, including one's freedom, is what makes that person distinctively human; 3. that the world is the representation of the will, a blind and aimless cosmic power; 4. that each person's free will determines for the individual what is morally good or bad; 5. that what mainly constitutes a human person is his or her lifetime exercise of free will.
- † **Witnessing** - One who can give evidence based on personal and immediate knowledge of a fact, event, or experience. The Christian concept of witness adds to the popular notion that the idea of a religious experience to which a believer testifies by his/her life, words, and actions, and thus gives inspiration and example to others by his/her testimony. Implicit in Christian witness is also the element of courage in giving testimony, either because others are not favorably disposed or because they are openly hostile to the message of faith being proposed.

† **Discipleship** - Catholic discipleship refers to a committed approach of living a Christian life within the Catholic Church. The term is generally applied to Catholics who sincerely attempt to live according to the instructions provided by Jesus in the New Testament. We can describe disciples as those who "make a conscious, firm decision to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves."

Catholic discipleship also requires that the individual be willing to use his talents and blessings in building the "Kingdom of God," which is the goal of all Christian activity on earth. Since talents and blessings are seen as coming from God, the Catholic disciple is expected to be unselfish in using these for appropriate purposes. Another mark of discipleship is an unwillingness to resort to excuses to explain inaction or poor performance. The true Catholic disciple is expected to follow through on all Christian commitments.



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan



Photo from the Diocese of Urdaneta



Morals

- † Make the faithful involved in parish activities and open wide the door of opportunities for them to grow in their faith.
- † Let them know their responsibilities and make them participate in the mission of the Church.
- † Give them also time to share with the community their mission and make their witnessing as a part of the growth of the parish.
- † Give them the opportunity to help and be evangelizing agents especially to the families.



Simple Activities

Activity: Pinoy Henyo

- † Make a list of things, places, persons that are related to the Church (Parish, Catechist, Pope Francis, Parish Priest, Baptismal certificate, altar, cross, etc.)
- † Divide the learners into two groups. Have one group guess what the other has listed (*Pinoy Henyo* style). Prepare some gifts for all of them
- † The reason and objective of this game is for the learners to know the important things, places and persons in the church and after the game you can explain these persons', things' and places' roles in the Church

Song Analysis



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

SA PIGING NG PANGINOON

Bienvenida Tabuena/ Eduardo Hontiveros SJ

KORO

Sa piging ng ating Panginoon
Tayo'y laging natitipon
Upang matutong magmahalan
Sa pag-ibig na nakamtan

I

Buhay ay inialay N'ya
Sa Dakilang Diyos Ama
Upang atin nang makamtan
Buhay na walang hanggan (Koro)

II

Buhay ay inialay N'ya
Upang tayo'y magkaisa
Sa paghahatid ng ligaya
Mula sa pag-ibig N'ya (Koro)

III

May galak na makakamtan
Sa bawat pagbibigayan
Habambuhay ay ingatan
Ang tapat na samahan (Koro)

Guide for Reflection

- † *As a member of the Church, am I doing my duties and responsibilities to maintain the communion/ unity of every member?*
- † *Do I give importance to the unity of every member of my community?*
- † *Do I give my whole self as part of this community especially thanking the Lord in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist?*
- † *Do my actions reflect my desire to be united wholly to the Church?*



Worship

Thank You, God, for the body of believers who are called to serve You, who are proclaiming the Good News to all who will hear. From those who minister across the country to the men, women, and youth at home. Send us out to be a light in the dark. Send us out to speak life. Send us out to extend grace and mercy. Send us out to feed the hungry, to befriend the lonely, to find the lost. Open the doors of this church and fill it with the broken, the angry, and the hurting. Let them find forgiveness and comfort here in the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for where You have placed me at this time. Where I live is no accident. This neighborhood is my mission field, and I declare these streets to be covered by the blood of Jesus. Satan has no power here. Neighbors will embrace neighbors. The strong will stand for the weak. The young will respect the old. The capable will assist the unable. These homes will be safe havens of friendship, kindness, and compassion. No one will go hungry. No one will go unnoticed. Lives here will be changed in the name of Jesus. Amen!



Zeal for Mission

- † To **KNOW** the very meaning and purpose of every Basic Ecclesial Community in union with the particular church and most especially to the Universal Church.
- † To make oneself responsible for the **GROWTH DEVELOPMENT** of the groups and communities within the parish or area.
- † **COOPERATE** with the church leaders on how to make these communities united and have a common goal, which is the proclamation of the Good News.
- † **SHARE** with others the faith by witnessing and by being involved with the movements and activities of the parish or community.
- † **BUILD** a Church group/s and invite friends and colleagues to be part of these small groups in order for them to develop and grow in their faith.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4: MISSION: MADE HIM KNOWN

I pray for those who will believe in me through their message. (Jn 17: 20)

liturgical life, conserves and renews the faith in the people, and serves as a school for teaching the salvific message of Christ. The parish also puts solidarity in practice and the humble charity of good and brotherly works (Christifideles Laici 26). This is also a reminder for the ecclesiastical authorities to give more pastoral care to sustain and make productive the mission of the universal Church.

Pope Francis reminds us that the parish remains the center of pastoral ministry because it fulfills the pastoral needs of the faithful. However, the parish has to review and renew its nature when it does not create an environment of communion and participation, and when it fails to become mission oriented. Pope Francis values BECs as a source of enrichment for the Church and as a center for new evangelization. It has the capacity for dialogue through which the Church is renewed. Referring to the parish as a communion of communities, makes BECs a basic platform for the task of evangelization. It brings the Church nearer to home and makes them springs of renewal (EG 28). The Pope also mentions that BECs bring new fervor to evangelization.



Photo from the Diocese of Cagayan De Oro

world to offer a radiant and an attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you care for one another and how you encourage and accompany one another” (EG 99).

BEC is a new way of being Church and a new way of living the faith. BEC is a community of believers who read the Gospel and try to implement it in their daily lives. The Pope comments,



Introduction

The parish is an old and established structure of the local church which has an indispensable mission of great contemporary importance. The parish creates the basic community of the Christian people, initiates and gathers the people in the accustomed expression of

Pope Francis insists on the union of BECs to the parish. BECs are to participate in all the pastoral activities of the parish since the real root of the BEC is the parish (EG 29).

BECs nurture communion among Christians and they are the best place to build up a genuine fraternal communion and care for one another. BEC serves the neighbors in need and witnesses the Gospel values through love of neighbor. The Pope writes, “I especially ask every Christian in communities throughout the

“the Lord’s disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt 5: 13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel” (EG 92).

In the BEC, every member is evangelized through Gospel sharing. In Gospel sharing, the faithful read the Gospel, reflect on it and share it with others. Speaking about the preacher, the Pope insists on the personalization of the Gospel. The preacher has to develop a great personal familiarity with the Word of God. The Pope writes to the preachers, “Yet, if he does not take time to hear God’s word with an open heart, if he does not allow it to touch his life, to challenge him, to impel him, and if he does not devote time to pray with that Word, then he will indeed be a false prophet, a fraud, or a shadow impostor” (EG 151).

In the BECs, the members express their communion more fully as they unite and actively participate in fulfilling their three-fold mission. This is the prophetic mission – proclaiming and giving witness to the Word of God, as well as denouncing the manifestations of evil in the society. This is the priestly mission – actively participating in the liturgical celebrations. This is the kingly/servant mission – working for the kingdom--for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. This is a mission of social transformation.



Word of God

Gospel of John 17: 20-26

20 ‘My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. **22** I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are One – **23** I in them and You in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. **24** ‘Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world. **25** ‘Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me. **26** I have made You^[e] known to them, and will continue to make You known, in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I, Myself may be in them.’



Photo from the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Doctrine

The vocation of lay people (CCC 898-900)

"By reason of their special vocation, it is proper for the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. In a special way, they illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated so these may be affected and grow according to Christ and for the glory of God."

The initiative of lay Christians is necessary, especially when the matter involves discovering or inventing the means of permeating social, political, and economic realities within the demands of Christian doctrine and life. This initiative is a normal element in the life of the Church.

Lay believers are in the frontline of Church life. The Church is the animating principle of human society for them. Therefore, they ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness of not only belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the common Head, and of the bishops in communion with him.

Since, like all the faithful, God entrusts lay Christians with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or in grouped associations, to work so that the divine message of salvation may be known and be accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it.

† The participation of lay people in Christ's priestly office (CCC 901-903)

"Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit - indeed even the hardships of life, if patiently born - all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrates the world itself to God."

In a very special way, parents share in the office of sanctifying "by leading a conjugal life in the Christian spirit and by seeing to the Christian education of their children."

Lay people who possess the required qualities can be admitted permanently to the ministries of lector and acolyte. When the necessity of the Church warrants it and when ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can

also supply their offices. Namely, they can exercise the ministry of the Word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer Baptism, and distribute Holy Communion, in accord with the prescriptions of law."

† Participation in Christ's prophetic office (CCC 904-907)

"Christ . . . fulfills this prophetic office, not only through the hierarchy . . . but also through the laity. He establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*)".

Every preacher and each believer is tasked to teach in order to lead others to faith. Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, "that is, the proclamation of Christ by words and in the testimony of their lives." For lay people, "this evangelization acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world."

Lay people who are capable and trained may also collaborate with catechetical formation, teaching the sacred sciences, and in using the communications media. "In accord with the knowledge, competence, and preeminence which the laity possesses. They have the right and, even at times, the duty to express to their pastors their opinions on matters which pertain to the good of the Church, They have a right to make their opinion known to other Christian faithful, with due regard to the integrity of faith and morals and reverence toward their pastors, and with consideration for the common good and the dignity of persons".

† Participation in Christ's kingly office (CCC 908-913)

By His obedience unto death, Christ communicated to His disciples the gift of royal freedom, so that they might "by the self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin by them".

That man is rightly called a king who makes his own body an obedient subject and, by governing himself with suitable rigor, refuses to let his passions breed rebellion in his soul, for he exercises a kind of royal power over himself. In addition, because he knows how to rule his own person as king, so too does he sit as its judge. He will not let himself be imprisoned by sin or thrown headlong into wickedness.

"Moreover, by uniting their forces, let the laity so remedy the institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to the norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing, they will impregnate culture and human works with a moral value."

"The laity can also feel called or be in fact called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them".

In the Church, "lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power [of governance] in accord with the norm of law." Therefore, the Church provides for their presence at particular councils, diocesan synods, and pastoral councils, in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, collaboration in finance committees, and participation in ecclesiastical tribunals, etc.

The faithful should "distinguish carefully between the rights and the duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall on them as members of human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since no human activity, even those of the temporal order, can be withdrawn from God's dominion." "Thus, every person, through these gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal'".



Faith Response

- † Participate in the mission of Christ to make known the Kingdom of God to all nations.
- † Make every family a church of God, where love, peace and hope reign and motivate each member.
- † Put all the members of the Church in their respective places, that is to say, respect their rights and give them their responsibilities, respectively.
- † Every member must provide their support and their participation in order to maintain and sustain the communion of every member, while respecting their own office and ministry.
- † A total commitment to the service of God and of His Church.

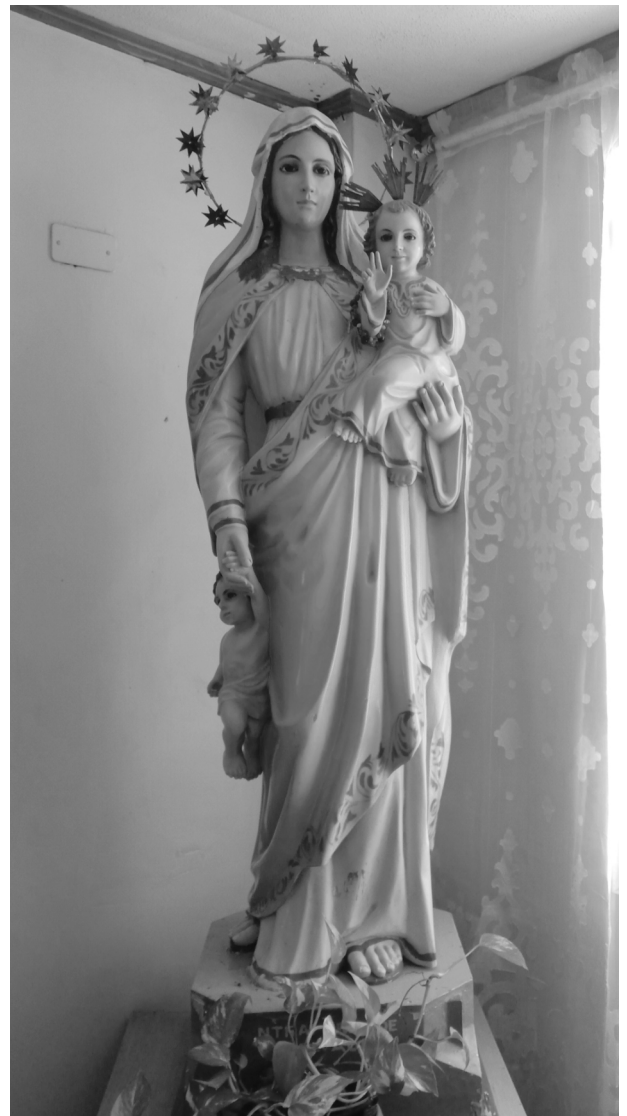


Photo from the Archdiocese of Jaro



Human Virtues

- † **Commitment** - Pledging oneself with a vow, promise, or simple resolution to the performance of some action or allegiance to a cause or co-operation with a person or group of persons. The obligation is morally binding, depending on the gravity of the commitment and the formality under which it is made. (Etym. Latin *committere*, to join, connect, entrust; *com-*, together + *mittere*, to send.)
- † **Involvement/Participation** - 'Participation' is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person (CCC 1913).
- † **Stewardship** - Stewardship is a way of life, a way that begins with acknowledging God as the Creator and Giver of all and responding with generosity through the responsible management of our resources. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are caretakers of all that God has given us. Gratitude for these gifts and blessings is expressed in prayer, worship, offering and even, in the sharing our gifts out of love for God, with one another.

Stewardship is a path to holiness. It makes us more like Christ who came not to be served, but to serve. It is the humble awareness that all we have and all we are, has been given to us freely from God. When we offer our lives back to God in love, He blesses that generosity a hundredfold.



Morals

- † These small communities with members must be in unity and solidarity with one another and with their pastors. The members must have a strong sense of belongingness and responsibility for one another.
 - † The members must share the Word of God and they must be guided with regular catechesis.
- †
- † The communities, which gather around the Eucharist, must have a vibrant celebration of life in the liturgy.
 - † They must share not only their spiritual concerns but also their material concerns. Their poverty and their faith must lead them to a deeper involvement in the action for justice and social transformation.
 - † The faithful must emerge among the poor and empower the poor.



Simple Activities

Activity: Praying the Holy Rosary as a family

- † Let the learners lead the praying of the Holy Rosary with their own intention in every Hail Mary, have them mention a name to offer that Ave Maria to that person.

Song Analysis



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

Basic Ecclesiastical Community Theme Song

(Archdiocese of Manila)

Lyrics & Music: Lester Delgado

Mula sa isang, maliit na pamilya
Binuo ang lipunan ng pag-ibig at pag-asa
Masayang nagpupuri, nabubuklod sa pag-ibig
Nagsisikap maisabuhay ng pagiging simbahan

Naglilingkod sa kapwa, organisadong pamilya
Nananatiling tapat sa turo ng Ama
Nagiisang damdamin sa iisang hangarin
Ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, ng kaligtasay makamit

(Repeat chorus)

Sama-samang kumilos, sa pamamahagi
Ng mabuting balita ang tunay na pag-asa
Masayang nananalangin, sa pagdiriwang ng
buhay
Regular na katekesis, naka-sentro kay Kristo

Coda:

Ipamahagi ang pag-ibig
Ng kaligtasay makamit

Guide for Reflections

- † Do I participate in the mission of the Church in building Christian communities?
- † Am I happy doing this mission entrusted to me by the Church?
- † Is my family an instrument of Hope, Love and Peace?
- † Is the salvation of souls my priority in building basic ecclesial communities?



Worship

Loving God, You gather us as a people of the new covenant sealed with the blood of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You formed us into a community of faith, hope and love; a priestly, prophetic, and kingly people. Humbly we ask You, make our parishes truly a communion of communities, a worshipping community, a witnessing and an evangelizing community, and a servant community. Guide our pastors, the religious and lay leaders, and all those who labor in the parish, with Your wisdom and love. Bless all the parishioners who compose the parish and BEC's, as they offer their time, talents and treasures as stewards of the graces You gifted us, for the building up of Your Church. May the Holy Spirit enlighten, inspire, and invigorate us to actively participate in the mission You entrusted to us in the parish. May we continue to be a discerning community, reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. May we truly become the leaven in society by penetrating all its strata with the Gospel and restoring its order according to the values of the Kingdom. And may the spirit of collaboration and co-responsibility bring us into a fuller and fruitful communion with You and with one another. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **Make the community nourished by the Word of God.** The members continue to hear the Word, share, and proclaim it to others. Christ continues to be their teacher. They learn from Him. The community of disciples is an evangelized and evangelizing community. It witnesses to the coming of God's kingdom. It is a prophetic community proclaiming the message of the kingdom of salvation and liberation.
- † **Make the community a priestly community.** As a community of disciples, the members of the BECs celebrate in the sacraments the presence of Christ. Christ continues to shape the community through the sacraments. Thus, members actively participate in the liturgical celebration. They gather in the memory of Christ and celebrate the Eucharist. They are ready to offer their life in self-sacrifice.
- † **Make the community a community of Christ.** BECs are concerned about the plight of the poor and the needy, those who are sick, who are hungry, who are in prison. They actively participate in the building of the Kingdom of God--a kingdom of justice, peace, and love. The community of disciples is truly a servant community.
- † **To make the church a church of the poor.** The community of disciples follows the way of Christ who is poor. Members live in evangelical poverty, they make a preferential option for the poor, they empower the poor in their midst to actively participate in the mission of Christ.

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Song References

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY THEME SONG

(Archdiocese of Manila)

Lyrics & Music: Lester Delgado

Information on this song is publicly available @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vV64KehEvyE&list=PLKGv0YXEy_tYgzeApmc7aYGZBYSwtmyAr&index=2

PANANAGUTAN

Lyrics & Music: Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.christian-songlyrics.net/2013/11/pananagutan-lyrics.html>

GOD IS SEEKING THOSE WHO THIRST FOR HIS APPEARANCE

Artist: The Church of Almighty God

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://almightygods salvation.altervista.org/2019-gospel-song/>

SA PIGING NG PAGINOON

Lyrics: Bienvenida Tabuena

Music: Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://pdfslide.tips/documents/sa-piging-ng-panginoon.html>

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY THEME SONG

(Archdiocese of Manila)

Lyrics & Music: Lester Delgado

Information on this song is publicly available @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vV64KehEvyE&list=PLKGv0YXEy_tYgzeApmc7aYGZBYSwtmyAr&index=2



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 6:

The Clergy and Consecrated Persons

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 6: THE CLERGY AND CONSECRATED PERSONS

Overview

The Necessity for Continuous Conversion

2018 was declared the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. It was a propitious time to say “*mea culpa*” as the previous and present popes have done in order to repair and prevent the recurring sins of religious leaders (Muares, 2017). The Church does not only need continuous formation but also continuous conversion. Ongoing formation is very significant for Church leaders and those who are aspiring to become a priest, such as constant prayers, regular recollections, spiritual direction, updating, and mentoring. To address the lack of witnessing by some of the clergy, the Church needs to ensure a deeper dialogue of life between the clergy and the poor so that their lifestyle may conform to that of the poor Christ. For genuine servant-leadership, the seminary must provide effective clergy formation in human development, spirituality, scripture, theology, pastoral care and mission (NPCCR 58).



Photo from the Diocese of Malolos

The configuration of priests and religious to Christ the Head does not imply an exaltation which would set them above others (EG 104). They must live a simple lifestyle following Jesus Christ as a model in their way of life. The clergy and consecrated persons should remind themselves that their particular calling is to imitate Christ. Their vows must lead them to seek the values of Jesus Christ, and not their own. Church leaders must be models of values and faith in the society because “when the clergy is corrupt, the society becomes corrupt; but when the religious leaders are holy, the people become holy (PO 8). The Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons had been a year devoted to the integral renewal of moral values, mind-set, character, and lifestyles of the clergy and consecrated persons.

The Call of Witnessing to Holiness

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church asserts that the people of God, through the virtue of baptism, have a universal calling and that is the call to holiness (Lumen Gentium 43). Then then the question arises: how does one become holy? The Pastoral Letter for the Clergy and Consecrated Persons used the image of Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet as an example of an act that leads to holiness. This action of Christ indicates humble service of religious leaders, done out of love for one another and for their flock, so that they could become holy together with their flock (Valles, 2017).

Pope Francis exemplified this when he met with different leaders of nations. Kneeling down to kiss the feet of South Sudan leaders to urge them to keep the peace and not go back to civil war, was a memorable scene of humility and holiness. Truly, Pope Francis showed how the clergy and consecrated persons must serve in humility and genuine love.

Only because of this call to holiness that different forms of life can be articulated. God wants everyone to be saints and not simply settle for a bland and mediocre existence (Gaudete et Exsultate 1). The Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons is an invitation for a deeper discipleship and communion to a common journey towards holiness (Muares, 2017). Following the example of the Good Shepherd, the clergy and the consecrated persons are invited to become servant-leaders who care for their flock, most especially for the least, the lost and the last.

The clergy and consecrated persons are united with Christ in the proclamation of the Word, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and in their spiritual leadership. That is why they are called “*alagad ng Diyos*” (servants of God). It is through their very ministry of sanctification that they, too, are sanctified (CCC 1534). Again, it is not sufficient to proclaim Jesus by words alone. The evangelizer’s proclamation must take the form of witnessing where what he/she proclaims with his/her lips are exemplified in his/her own life and deeds (EN 41).

“Let all pastors of souls bear in mind that by their daily behavior and concerns, they are representing the face of the Church to the world, and from that, people will judge the power and truth of the Christian message” (Gaudium et Spes 43). May all the clergy and consecrated persons continue to abide in Jesus and become perfect disciples of the Lord for the New Evangelization (Pastores Dabo Vobis 26). The clergy and the religious need constant prayer, for they are always in continuous battle in their life as “*alagad ng Diyos*.” Becoming a priest or a religious is not a title nor an honor, but an accountability. Persistent prayers for the Clergy and Consecrated persons would be a great support in helping them to embrace continually the holiness of their ordination and vows.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** The clergy and the consecrated men and women should remind themselves of their particular calling to imitate Christ in their vows and promises. Unless a priest or a Consecrated Persons has a personal encounter with Christ or a religious experience, he/she will not last in this kind of life.
- † **Conversion.** The conversion of the clergy and consecrated persons through constant formation is highly regarded. This could be done through the practice of Eucharistic adoration every single day, retreats, seminars, updating, regular recollection, regular confession, spiritual direction, community interaction and recreation, appropriate self-care, and psycho-spiritual sessions.
- † **Sense of belongingness.** It is significant to reflect on one’s sense of belongingness, whether the clergy and consecrated persons are leading the people to the Church or are they driving them away. In other words, are they the cause of unity or division among their flock? The clergy and the consecrated persons belong to the community. In fact, they were ordained for the community as the representatives of Christ.

- † **Zeal for mission.** Again, it is important for the clergy and consecrated persons to have a constant formation in their ministry. Meaning to say, formation towards priesthood or consecrated life does not just end up in the seminary or the convent, but it is an ongoing formation that goes on even after ordination/profession. Continuous formation is needed to keep their zeal for mission burning.

Etymology

- † **PRIEST** - The word "priest", is ultimately derived from Greek word *πρεσβύτερος* or *presbúteros* via Latin *presbyter*, the term for "elder", especially referring to the elders of Jewish or Christian communities in late antiquity. The regular Latin word for "priest" being *sacerdos*, which corresponds to *ἱερεύς* *hiereús*. The presbyter is the minister who both presides and instructs a Christian congregation, while the *sacerdos*, offer sacrifices, or in a Christian context, the Eucharist and performs "mediatorial offices between God and man (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021c).
- † **CONSECRATE** - late 14c., "make or declare sacred by certain ceremonies or rites," from Latin *consecratus*, which is the past participle of *consecrare* or "to make holy, devote" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021b).
- † **CLERGY** - c. 1200, *clergie* "office or dignity of a clergyman," from two Old French words: *clergié* meaning clerics or learned men, and from Medieval Latin *clericatus*, from Late Latin *clericus* meaning "persons ordained for religious work, persons consecrated to the duties of public administration in the Christian church" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021a).

Catechetical Context

OPENING OF THE 2018 YEAR OF THE CLERGY AND CONSECRATED PERSONS

CBCP PASTORAL EXHORTATION
First Sunday of Advent, 03 December 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and Peace to all of you!



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

We are on the 6th Year of our 9 – year Spiritual Journey towards 2021 – the 500th Year after the arrival of Christianity to the Philippines. It was in 1521 that the Holy Mass was first celebrated, and the Sacrament of Baptism was first administered in the Philippine archipelago. Then the Santo Niño devotion began in Cebu. That was the start of our Evangelization.

The year 2018 is dedicated to the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. They comprise just a small portion of the Church, yet they are fulfilling a vital role in her mission. In our culture, they

are greatly instrumental for the lay to become truly evangelized and an evangelizing community of disciples. Yet they are not immune to the twin errors of a dichotomy of faith and inadequate discipleship of Christ.

Renewed servant – leaders for the New Evangelization – this is the goal of our prayers and activities this year. We aim towards the integral renewal of the values, mindsets, behavior, and lifestyles of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. Following the example of the Good Shepherd, they are invited to become servant – leaders who care most especially for the least, the lost and the last. It will be a year, too, of revisiting the ways of seminary and religious formation and the collaboration with the laity in the work of mission and ministry.

As we embark towards a new evangelization, we have become aware of the bright lights along the way. Our priests faithfully celebrate daily the sacraments in the busy urban areas and in the distant and lonely barangays. Our men and women religious administer church institutions, teach catechism, and serve in the parishes. They bring joy to orphanages, hospitals, and prisons. Some have started working for the rehabilitation of drug dependents. Working without habits, but no less committed, are the members of lay institutes, promoting the Kingdom in their own humble way. They truly inspire and strengthen us, like the priest of Marawi, Fr. Teresito “Chito” Suganob, who almost lost his life caring for his parishioners caught in the crossfires of war. They make us hopeful for tomorrow.

On the other hand, the bright lights undeniably go at times with some dismal shadows, brought about by some of our Clergy and Consecrated Persons themselves. There were occasions of frailty and scandals that sadden us. Such misconducts call for sincere reflection and humble repentance and reparation. May these faults point us to new and vast possibilities of renewal and communion with those who are weak and broken. May our Priests and Consecrated Persons, in their weakness and woundedness, continue to serve and guide fellow sinners with the joy of the Gospel that leads to the fullness of life. Jesus Himself encourages us with his words: “In the world you have tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). Renewal of the Church requires the renewal of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. For this, we take inspiration and example from the tender scene of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet.

JESUS IN COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER

“Fully aware that He comes from the Father...” (Jn 13:3) – Jesus never lost that unity with His heavenly Father while He lived on earth. His communion and intimacy with the Father moved Him to reach out to sinners and needy. It was the source of the impact of His words and the effectiveness of His miraculous deeds (Jn 6:38, 46; Jn 8:19, 29).

As Lay, Clergy and Consecrated persons, we are invited to share in this “communion” and “intimate relationship” between Jesus and the Father. The Clergy and Consecrated Persons are united with Christ in the Proclamation of the Word, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and in their Spiritual Leadership. That is why they are called “*alagad ng Diyos*,” men and women “of God” or even more accurately, “servants of God.” It is through their very ministry of sanctification, that they too are sanctified (CCC 1534).

Nevertheless, at times, they seem far from God and from following his will. Some get entangled in their concern for material possessions, in their need for pleasures and in their desire for power. Instead of becoming servant-leaders of communion they may even lead us to confusion and disharmony. Let us pray that we may remain ever closely united to Jesus as He is in constant communion with the Father! We pray that all the Clergy and Consecrated Persons continue to abide in Jesus and become perfect disciples of the Lord for the New Evangelization (PDV 26).

JESUS STOOD TO SERVE HUMBLY...

“Jesus stood...” (Jn 13:4) – Jesus “rose up from the meal” to wash his disciples’ feet. His love for them moved Him to serve them humbly. With this inexhaustible strength in communion with the Father, Jesus was determined to serve and love those who were given to Him, even to the point of death, death on the cross (Phil 2:8). We, as members of His Church, are invited to actualize the Kingdom of God present in our midst. We are called to reach out to those in greatest need, to love and to serve those considered different and far from us. The Clergy and Consecrated Persons, given their role of leadership in our communities, and who often enjoy privileges and entitlements, should stand up from a comfortable and privileged position to serve generously and humbly. May they stand out in a world that is increasingly indifferent and even hostile to the Good News, and yet hungering for something it knows not. In the end, the Gospel will prevail. Faith in Jesus will be vindicated, for as He said, “fear not, I have already conquered the world” (Jn 16:33).

“...AND HE BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES’ FEET”

“...and He set aside His vestments...began to wash the feet of the disciples...” (Jn 13:4-5) The Lord, kneeling at the feet of his disciples, set aside His garment of protection, and put on the towel of service. Showing His example of humility, He washed their tired and soiled feet. He later admonished them to do the same to one another, “...just as I have done for you, so also should you do” (Jn 13:15).

“How lovely are the feet of him who brings the good news!” (Is. 52:7; Rom 10:15). The Scriptures acknowledges them who come with joyful tidings, who bear the Gospel message. The task of sharing the Good News entails reaching out, and traversing distances, here in our country and in neighboring Asia. We are careful not to neglect anyone needing the joy and hope that the Gospel brings. “To the peripheries!” Let us roll up our sleeves and work! The Church is like a field hospital! “*Duc in altum!*”

My dear people of God, please continue to support our clergy and consecrated persons in their journey as “servants to the servants of the Gospel.” As shepherds to the Lord’s flock, may they “take on the odor of their sheep.” As vulnerable “lovely feet” of the New Evangelization, may they encourage others to mission by serving with humility, by loving in action, and by strengthening the poor, the hopeless, the victims of injustice and oppression (Is 52:7; Rom 10:15).

Let us also pray for the young men and women in the seminaries and formation houses. As they prepare for a life of self-offering and service may their communion with Jesus be the source of their inspiration, strength, and joy.

Let us all together, Lay, Clergy and Consecrated Persons, remain united with Jesus. With Mary let us proclaim the greatness of the Lord and rejoice in God our savior. May we become servants of the new evangelization to one another so that one day, God may finally and truly be overall (1Cor 15:28b).

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, December 3, 2017, First Sunday of Advent.

+ ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.

Archbishop of Davao
President,
Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Imus



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija

Song for Reflection

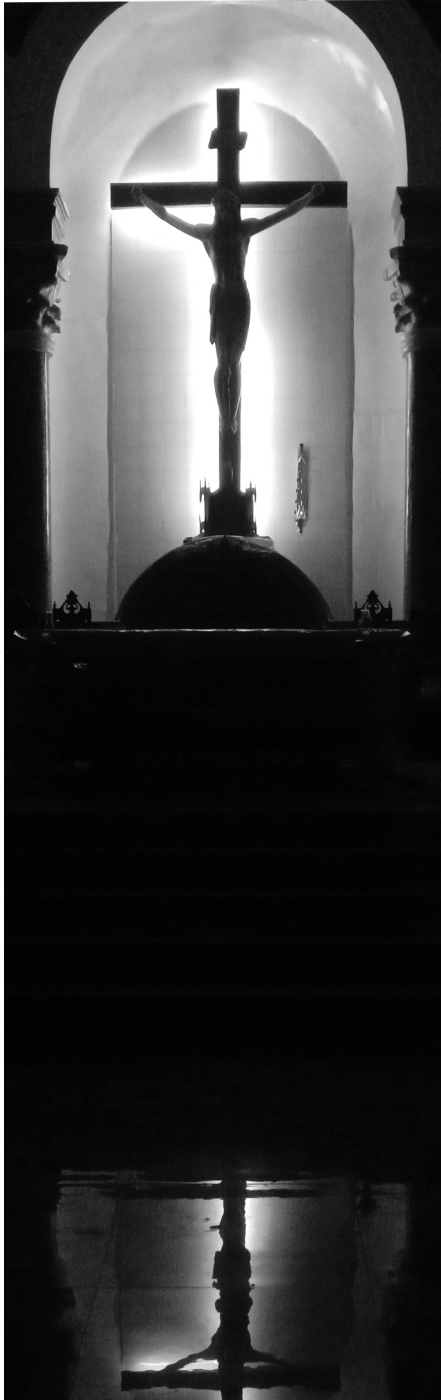


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

ANG MABUHAY SA PAG-IBIG

Sta. Teresita del Niño Jesus

Salin ni Bienvenida Tabuena

Musika ni Eduardo Hontiveros, SJ

Ang mabuhay sa pag-ibig ay pagbibigay
na di nagtatantya ng halaga.
At hindi naghihintay ng kapalit
Pagbibigay walang pasubali.
Naibigay ko nang lahat:
magaan akong tumatakbo.
Dukha man ako sa lahat,
dukha man ako sa lahat
Ang tangi kong yaman ay
mabuhay sa pag-ibig.

Ang mabuhay sa pag-ibig ay paglalayag,
na hantunga'y payapa't may galak.
Sa maalab na udyok ng pag-ibig,
Hinahanap kita sa aking kapwa.
At s'yang tanging tumatanglaw
bituwing sa aki'y patnubay
diwa sa paglalakbay
sandigang lakas at tibay.
Laging awit ang sagisag na
mabuhay sa pag-ibig.

Ang mabuhay sa pag-ibig ay maging bihag
sa tawag ng pagmamahal ng Diyos.
Papawiin N'yang lahat ang panimdim,
Sa gunita, dahas ay limutin
Sisidlang putik man ako, kayamanan ka ng puso ko.
Ang gantimpala ko'y ikaw,
pag-asang natatanaw:
Ang pumanaw sa sarili ay
mabuhay sa pag-ibig.

Reflection Questions:

- † How do you experience God's love?
- † How do you profess your faith in your everyday life?

“The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father’s only Son”

(John 1:14)

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”

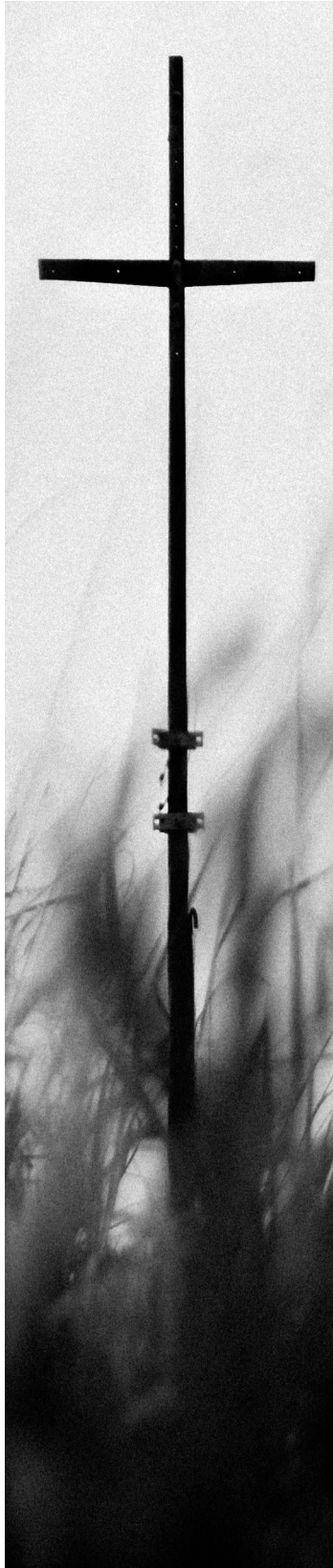
using the selected research poem below. Discuss your views and insights with fellow catechists using the provided guide question/s in relation to the module theme on *clergy and consecrated persons (klero at mga relihiyoso)*.

Guide question for Discussion:

- † Have you found God’s presence in the rituals of the sacraments?
- † Have you become an image of a living Christ to our brothers and sisters?



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



LEADER-CATECHIST

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola

Being a leader
In a catechetical ministry
Compares to a manual guide
of the sacraments:
From baptism
To the acceptance
Of the calling to lead,
The Eucharistic mission
Of sharing
Will always relieve one
From all obstacles.
It has the disposition of a confession,
The admission of weak actuations,
Because the duties of
The catechist
Are severe and austere—
Like in the sacrament of confirmation,
The help and care
Embrace and guidance come
From, the Holy Spirit.
The leader-catechist
A Prophet-priest
Professes at every moment
The sweet catechesis
Like lovers in love,
The matrimonial union
In the teachings of the Church
Is the beloved Christ.
In the end,
Whether tired or weary,
The leader-catechist
Still holds
The sacramental oil
Upon sanctification
And careful application,
To the wavering faith
Revives and revitalizes,
Because one's service as a leader-catechist
Has sweetness and permanence.

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: THE CROSS AND SELF-DENIAL



Introduction

Unless a priest or religious has personal encounter with Christ (or a religious experience), he/she will not last in this kind of life. Even if he/she does continue, perhaps, he/she will lack passion or worst, will be uncertain of his/her desired path. He/she has to pray for that grace of encounter Christ and have a religious experience because that will change his/her life, the way he/she relates with others and the way he/she does his/her ministry. Hence, the clergy and consecrated persons will not be able to become true followers of Christ, unless they become witnesses and dispensers of a life other than earthly life (PO 3).



Photo from the Diocese of Ipil

Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and to follow Him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendor and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties (EG 167). The true minister of Christ works in humility trying to do what is pleasing to God. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he is guided by Him who desires the salvation of all men (PO 15). Thus, the clergy and religious should always remind themselves of their particular calling as a call to imitate Christ, in their vows and promises to have a Christ-like attitude. The laity, on the other hand, will encounter Christ once they see their religious leaders living a more and more Christ-like life—a life that witnesses to the life that Christ Himself lived (CFC 738).



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 16:24-28

²⁴ Then Jesus told His disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? On the other hand, what will they give in return for their life? ²⁷ “For the Son of Man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸ Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”



Doctrine

What is Vocation?

The word vocation comes from the Latin *vocare* which means to call. God calls or invites us towards a particular vocation: single life, married life, priesthood or consecrated life. Although each of us must make a decision about our vocation, that choice is our response to God's invitation. Pope Francis' message for the 2019 World Day of Vocations was: "As with every call, the Gospel speaks of an encounter. Jesus walks by, sees those anglers, and walks up to them. The same thing happened when we met the person we wanted to marry, or when we first felt the attraction of a life of consecration: we were surprised by the encounter and at that moment we glimpsed the promise of a joy capable of bringing fulfillment to our lives."

Three Types of Vocation

† Single- Blessedness

Being single is a vocation that is fully supported by the Catholic Church. An individual who is truly being called to single life will feel strongly about this choice in his or her heart.

There are many reasons why someone might feel drawn to a single life. For example, some would like to have more time for service work, church projects, or activities that require much of their time and attention. While a married person can still do service projects, his/ her priority should be the well- being of his/her spouse and children. Another factor that could lead to single life is choosing to be celibate, which means abstaining from any sexual relations/activity. The Catholic Church teaches that everyone should practice chastity because our sexuality is a beautiful gift from God. It was created and intended for a man and woman in marriage. It is ordered so that the union of the two allows for the blessing of new life. Thus, it is deemed sacred. Therefore, for a consecrated single person, this means devoting one's life to God in a pure and faithful way, one that is free from sexual activity.

† Marriage life

Marriage is the Sacrament of human love that Christ raised to a real efficacious symbol of His love for the Church. "Marriage of the Baptized is one of the seven sacraments of the New Covenant. According to CCC 1638; Neuner & Dupuis 1996; and Familiaris Consortio 13:

Marriage is seen as:

- † an ongoing saving symbolic action
- † grounded in the ministry of Christ and continued in and through the Church,

which;

- † when proclaimed, is realized, and celebrated in faith; and makes present and actually shares in God's love and faithfulness in Jesus Christ, in the pattern of His Paschal Mystery.

Marriage and the family in the Philippines today, as throughout the world, present a sharp contrast. On the one hand, most Filipinos today have a deeper appreciation for personal freedom and the quality of interpersonal relationships within marriage. There is also a serious concern for the upholding of the dignity of women, equality of the spouses, and responsible family planning. On the other hand, Filipino Christian families are brought to greater awareness of their social, moral and political responsibilities, and their mission within the Church (FC 6). Perhaps never before in history has so much emphasis been put on the personal happiness and self-fulfilling love and pleasure that marriage is presumed to offer (CFC 1876).

† **Priesthood/Religious life**

Catholic priests take vows and devote themselves to serving God and the people by administering the Sacraments, working in parishes, and doing service work. Priests can choose to either join a religious community or work for the diocese. An individual who feels called to the religious life feels a deep desire to offer one's entire self to God or devote their life to serving Jesus in a religious community.

Besides the ordained and lay ministries, there are the **Religious Brothers and Sisters**. Those faithful who bind themselves to Christ in a state of life **consecrated to God** by the profession of evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience (CFC 1426).



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Diocese of Romblon



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Discernment** - Discernment is a virtue, which sets the stage for accurate perception and correct expression which includes correct awareness, thought, actions, and lifestyle. The removal of inappropriate and unwholesome actions from behaviors is the consequence of proper discernment. One of the greatest life lessons is learning to discern the boundary between desire and craving, and between compassionate empathy and emotional co-dependency. The presence of suffering in our lives results mainly from attachment to things, people, thoughts, and emotions.
- † **Obedience** - The moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. The duty of obedience requires one to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and good-will. Like any other virtue, obedience must be regulated by prudence. No virtue is virtuous without prudence, which is the virtue of being realistic. Obedience needs prudence in order to be virtuous, just as a student needs a teacher in order to learn. One must know whom he/she should obey.
- † **Holiness** - is endeavoring to place our minds entirely on things above not on things below. Holiness is being of one mind with God – this means we agree with God and His Words, hating what He hates, loving what He loves, measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. The adjective *qādôš*, “*holy*,” refers to God and all that belongs to Him. The Virtue of Holiness offers a roadmap for navigating our everyday activities: work, family, leisure, and other pursuits. It shows how we can reach the heights of Christian life in and through our daily activities.



Morals

Five ways to imitate Christ as Priest and Religious

† Be a man/woman of prayer

To imitate Christ, one must become a person of prayer. In the Gospels, Jesus went up a mountain or withdrew to a deserted place to pray more than twelve times. It was in these moments that He prayed to His Father in heaven, to His Abba. In the Gospel of St. John, we find Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer, in which He prayed that all might be one. Jesus recognized the value of prayer, both personal and intercessory. Prayer is an essential component of being an imitator of Christ.

† Feed others

Jesus fed other people. Most concretely we see this in the multiplication of the loaves

and the fishes, when Jesus feeds the crowd of over 5,000 people. In John 6, Jesus tells the crowd that He is the Bread of Life that they must eat His Body and drink His Blood, and if they do, they will have life forever.

In the Eucharist that we celebrate, Jesus feeds us with His Body and Blood. After Mass, we go out into the world and have the opportunity to feed other people by doing corporal works of mercy, which are charitable actions wherein which we come to the aid of our neighbors in their bodily needs (CCC 2447). This is how Jesus says we will be judged in Matthew 25. Jesus fed others, and if we want to imitate Him, so must we.



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan

† **Be a welcoming disciple**

Jesus constantly invited people in His ministry. He invited the Twelve to follow Him, to leave their ordinary lives as anglers or as a tax collector. Jesus invited people to come to Him, those who were sick or burdened, and He promised them rest.

As priests and consecrated persons and even as laity, we must always invite others to know Jesus and his Words. Let us Invite people to join us in prayer before meals. Invite someone to go with us to Sunday Mass or join us in a parish program or event. Be a person who invites others to know the Lord, and when we do, we will be imitating Christ.

† **Die for your Flock**

When God said, “come follow me”, He actually says come die with me, die with me in the cross. Jesus did die for us, and so we should die for other people. But this type of dying means giving up of ourselves for others. It means letting our worldly wants and desires die within us and allow Christ to live more fully in us. Jesus died for us, so He wants us to be able to give up ourselves--our lifestyles, our pride, and our attachments in order for us to serve others that they might have life!

† Proclaim the Gospel

The people who followed Jesus hungered for His teaching. Jesus taught throughout His ministry in varied ways, especially through parables. He taught people about the Father and about who He (Jesus) truly was. He explained to them the significance of the Israelite people eating manna in the desert. Priests and religious are called to be witnesses of Christ to the flock that has been entrusted to them. He is a minister of the sacraments, proclaimer of the Word, teacher of the faith, and steward of the Church. Priests and Religious are meant to accompany and lead the flock entrusted to their care in this world so that they can reach the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

It has been said that the best homily/preaching that a priest and consecrated person can give is when the words they utter emulate their deeds. It is important that actions accompany our words. Proclaiming the gospel by example is more virtuous and effective than proclaiming it with words. In the lives of the laity, the most concrete way we can teach other people is by signing up to be a catechist. However, that takes a special calling. If that's not how God wants us to teach, then we must still teach with words and actions.



Simple Activities

Activity: *Let us strive to imitate Christ in all that we do!*

Draw the face of Christ in a short/long bond paper. Color it. It is not how good we are at drawing the face of God but on how we give dedication and meaning in sketching the face of God with our own hands. Remember that he with His own hands without any hesitation created us. Then at the back of the drawing, write five concrete ways that we can imitate Christ's Words and deeds during His earthly ministry. Then, ask each of the participants to share in front all their works.

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † As a layperson, how do I answer to God's call of sharing His love to others?
- † How can I be a blessing to others?

PARING FILIPINO

By Fr. Carlo Magno

Paring Pilipino tinawag ng Diyos
mula sa bayan ang daing ay lubos
ikaw ang larawan ng pagbibigay puso
buong-buo, di kulang at hustong husto

Paring Pilipino tapang taglay mo
nakikilala mo ang yong tupa sa lobo
ikaw ang pananggalang sa talim ng kasalanan
salita ng Diyos at panalangin ang pag-asa mo

ikaw ang biyaya ng Diyos sa sambayanan
ikaw ang awit sa labi ng pusong matimtiman
ikaw ang liwanag kung madilim man ang buwan
ika'y Pilipino. Ikaw ay Pari ni Kristo

Lubak-lubak ma't masukal ang iyong daan
ang galak ng puso'y matatagpuan sa
Espiritung iyong taglay
sa ngiti ng Bayang iyong akay
sa labi ng Ina Ng Diyos At Panalangin ng
mga Banal
Ika'y Pilipino...
Ikaw ay Pari ni Kristo...
Ika'y Pilipino isang Pari Ni Kristo...



Worship

Prayer for Priest and Religious

Loving and gracious Father, You are the author of priestly and religious vocation. Be ever near to those whom You have called to follow more closely Your son, Jesus Christ, in serving You and Your people. In spite of their human weaknesses, may they witness to the transforming power of Your love. Give them the strength and consolation of Your Spirit so that in times of trials and difficulties, their fidelity to their calling may remain unshaken. May they anchor their lives only in You, the ever-faithful One, so that they may be humble and dedicated servants of Your Church. Amen.

Prayer for Vocation

O God, Father of all Mercies,
Provider of a bountiful Harvest,
send Your Graces upon those
You have called to gather the fruits of Your labor.
Preserve and strengthen them in their lifelong service of You.

Open the hearts of Your children
that they may discern Your Holy Will,
inspire in them love and a desire to surrender themselves
to serving others in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ.

Teach all Your faithful to follow their respective paths in life,
guided by Your Divine Word and Truth.
Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary,
all the Angels, and Saints, humbly hear our prayers
and grant Your Church's needs, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – To know not only in mind but also in heart the three types of Vocations namely: single blessedness, Married life, and Priesthood or Consecrated Persons. We must study these and acknowledge that your life is a vocation.
- † **LIVE** – To discern what vocation you would want to journey. You may be called to be a teacher, doctor, lawyer, community leader, or social worker. You may be called to be a parent or caregiver. Whatever vocation is, the important thing to know is that God always works in you and through you. Hence, always be open to God's call. Especially, if you feel that God is calling you to become a priest, a religious, a brother or a nun. Pray for your vocation and pray also for all the clergy and Consecrated Person. The true path for sanctification is constant prayer.
- † **SHARE** – To pour ourselves out for the needs of others are very significant especially as servant-leaders of the Church. Likewise, the clergy and consecrated persons need the support and love of his/her parishioners/laity. Your time, talent and treasure must not be hidden, it should be shared. If you have time to engage in parish activities, do it: such as leading a prayer service or bible sharing, cleaning the Church, decorating the Church, being a member of a religious organization in the parish etc. Share your talent in your own parish or in the religious institution/foundation which you belong to. If you have a good voice join the choir, if you love to serve in the altar, join the altar servers and if you want to teach, be a catechist. And if you have enough treasure, learn to detach, and give for the sustainability of the Church/Religious Institution of our brothers and sisters in the Religious life.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: WASHING THE FEET



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cebu



Introduction

The configuration to Christ of ordained priests and consecrated persons who have their perpetual vows as religious do not imply an exaltation which would set them above others. They are to speak and act in the name of Christ with necessary wisdom and standard values.

He/she needs to renew his/her mind and heart by valuing persons as Christ did, by loving especially the poor, the needy, and the abandoned, and by serving others selflessly and generously. As a servant of God, he/she is not only a disciple of the Lord but must teach the Lord's ways to others. He/she can only do this if he/she is like Christ in his/her mind and heart (PCP II 534).

Every vocation has only one direct calling and that is holiness. The clergy and consecrated persons acquire holiness by exercising their functions sincerely and tirelessly in the spirit of Christ, in their mission (PO 13). To achieve this, ongoing formation such as retreats, seminars, updating, regular recollections, confessions, spiritual directions, psycho-spiritual sessions, etc. is very significant for Church leaders and those who are aspiring to become priests.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has established the Galilee renewal program for the clergy and the religious. In that program, there is a psycho-spiritual direction for the participants, as well as community interaction, sports/recreation, and a lot of prayer. An hour every single day is set aside for Eucharistic adoration. If the clergy and consecrated persons can go to that program for two weeks once a year and integrate lessons learned in their parishes and communities, then they become even more an effective, selfless and generous servant of God.



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 13: 1-20

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. ²The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray Him. And during supper ³Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, ⁴got up from the table, took off His outer robe, and tied a towel around Himself. ⁵Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the

disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around Him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to Him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." ¹¹ For He knew who was to betray Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹² After He had washed their feet, had put on His robe, and had returned to the table, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. ¹⁷ If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. ¹⁸ I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' ¹⁹ I tell you this now before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He. ²⁰ Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives the one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me."



Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Doctrine

The Three Evangelical Counsels

The evangelical counsels manifest living the fullness of charity, which is never satisfied with not giving more. They attest to its vitality and call forth our spiritual readiness. The perfection of the New Law consists essentially in the precepts of love of God and neighbor. The counsels point out the more direct ways and the readier means which they are to be practiced in keeping with the vocation of each (CCC 1974). The life consecrated to God is characterized by the public profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, in a stable state of life recognized by the Church (CCC 944).

† Poverty

Poverty may not be considered a necessary or a desirable condition by many, but it must be embraced to reach certain spiritual, moral, or intellectual states. Poverty is often understood as an essential element of renunciation in religious life. The main aim of giving up things of the materialistic world is to withdraw oneself from materialistic view and sensual pleasures as they are considered illusionary and only temporary.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Lipa

The vow of poverty calls the consecrated to detach themselves from the distraction of money and physical possessions in order to attach themselves more fully to God and trust in God's providence. Poverty is not just about being poor, but it is about living a shared life, like Jesus and the apostles who lived out of a common purse (Luke 8:1-3).

† Chastity

Consecrated women and men offer their sexuality and their desire to be a mother or father as gifts to God. Their vow of chastity requires the practice of self-control and self-sacrifice. Laypersons can also exercise chastity from a different perspective. Chastity is about the gift of self to another, not necessarily about forsaking marriage and sex, unless you are a dedicated single person, a religious, or a priest. Priests give themselves to God and to the people they are sent to serve, forsaking marriage and the use of sexuality for the sake of the Reign of God (Matthew 19:12). Therefore, even spouses can imitate Jesus' chastity when they give themselves solely to each other.

† Obedience

When consecrated women and men take a vow of obedience they completely submit to God's will and plan for their lives. Obedience is not about doing what someone in authority tells you, but involves a shift from me to thee, with a readiness to serve, no matter who, whether the other is deserving, asks nicely, is aware of the cost, or is grateful.

Hence, we begin by wanting to be with Jesus, and be taught and formed by Him, and then imitate His example. One way to do this is to imitate Jesus' poverty, chastity, and obedience. Evangelical counsels are invitations, not commandments. Many of people think that only the religious live by these counsels, but some lay people make private vows to live by them, just as priests make promises at ordination to do so. Nevertheless, the entire baptized are invited by Jesus to imitate His poverty, chastity, and obedience. Therefore, there has to be an understanding of these that applies to all, even to married and single people.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Simplicity of Life** - Simple living encompasses a number of different voluntary practices to simplify one's lifestyle. These may include, for example, reducing one's possessions, generally referred to as minimalism, or increasing self-sufficiency. A simple life gives freedom from the issues of life that should not really be of major concern. Simplicity is all about focusing on what is most important and letting go of the rest. A simple life provides freedom. Hence, Proverbs reminds us about simplicity, "If you have little, but you fear the Lord, you have everything! Wealth without God is worthless. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.
- † **Faithfulness** - Faithfulness is the concept of remaining loyal to someone or something and putting that loyalty into consistent practice regardless of extenuating circumstances. Like a married man, priests and consecrated brothers and sisters make solemn promises to God and to the community. Both priests and married men face temptations and discouragement, but they are called to overcome them. In the case of the clergy, they exercise a celibate way of life. They are called to remain in a type of love that conquers all because its ultimate strength is rooted in the love of Christ.
- † **Perseverance in Prayer** - Pope Francis once said, "Vocations are born of prayer and from prayer." Without an active life of prayer, it is impossible to make any progress in discernment. The Catechism chapter dealing with prayer is entitled "The Battle of Prayer," indicating the challenge that prayer presents to every Christian, and certainly in a particular way to the discerner. With the support and guidance of a spiritual director, a daily prayer routine provides an essential foundation to spiritual life. Elements of this prayer routine for the discerner should gradually include the Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary, meditations, and mental prayers, including praying with the Scriptures (*lectio divina*). These forms of prayer, together with the daily Eucharist, form the spirituality of priests, as well as of consecrated persons.



Morals

What does it mean to have a priestly character? The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders impart a character or "indelible mark" on the soul of those who receive them. This idea originated from the ancient world. Material objects, animals, and human beings (i.e. slaves) were typically branded by putting a mark or tattoo in order to mark them as being in the permanent possession of their owner. The idea of character came into Christian theology to express a relationship to an owner. Later Scholastic theology would develop the idea to explain how the three sacraments that impart a sacramental character empower the Christian believer

to perform actions that advance his or her own salvation and that of other believers. For our purposes, it is enough to recognize that having the sacramental character of Holy Orders means that priests belong to Christ in a unique way to build up His mystical body, the Church. As St. Paul says, we do not belong to ourselves; we have been “purchased at a great price” (1 Cor 6:19-20).

What are the implications of having a priestly character? Bishops, priests, and deacons, have been ordained for the service of the Lord, and this reaches into their very own being. For St. Paul, life must be Christ, so that “it is no longer we who live, but rather Christ who lives in us” (Phil 1:21). Priestly ordination and religious profession will make them belong to the faithful in a radical way, so that the faithful, along with the priests and religious, may belong fully to Christ. At the end of the day, they have nothing to give to the people but Christ alone. In each sacrament, it is Christ who either washes, feeds, or reconciles. Priests are merely His instruments. But how wonderful it is to witness the power of God flow through to their humble gestures and words.

Priesthood is never a mere set of functions. Ordination has affected a real change in one’s own being so that he now acts on behalf of Christ, the Servant, and as the servant of His people in whose possession he remains until his last breath. He has been reconfigured as a servant in such a radical way that no secular category can explain the change that has been wrought by Holy Orders. As leader of worship, as teacher of the Word of God, and as shepherd of souls.

Six (6) suggested ways to please God

† Humility and Love for the poor

In all that we do, especially the priests and the religious, we are called to be humble. One of the famous pictures of Pope Francis, which circulated around the Internet within hours of his election was during his visit to a children’s hospital in Palermo, Buenos Aires, in 2006. Wearing a deacon’s stole, he kneels during the *mandatum* before a very sick young boy who holds a handkerchief over his mouth, and whose feet the future pope had just washed. Pope Francis held the child’s right foot in the tenderest fashion, as if it was a sacred vessel, then kissed it. The simplicity of the gesture expresses something profound about priesthood: In all that they do, the religious should imitate the mysteries they celebrate. The encounter with Christ in the suffering and in the poor has been a regular feature of Pope Francis’ episcopal ministry over many years. Humility and love for the poor are perfect ingredients to stay in humble service to the people of God as a servant of God.

† Thank God always with grateful hearts

Gratitude stops pride from growing. We can thank people for the things they do and for who they are. That is important and encouraging for them. However, we are to thank God for that person as well, for the way He has worked in them. Thankfulness is a sign of a believer. Our relationship with God is nurtured in the constant act of thanksgiving. Through thanksgiving, the gracious acts are remembered, and the life of a person is thereby changed. God-centered thankfulness helps us grow in humility.

† **Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often**

Contrition and confession is a reality check that reminds us who we are. Christian confession needs not be overwhelming because the cross was sufficient for all our sins and we have been completely forgiven. While it is at the cross that we understand clearly that we are sinners, it is also at the cross that we realize most clearly that we are deeply loved. When we humbly and sincerely confess our sins to God, we receive pardon through absolution and penance. We gain a deeper appreciation of God's grace and what we have been saved from. God's forgiveness gives us peace and security, and therefore the freedom to grow in humility and love.

† **When People do not understand us easily, be ready to accept judgments and humiliations**

We can be hurt terribly, but they help us become humble. Humiliations can help us become more like Jesus, who was terribly insulted, humiliated, and persecuted. Although we might fail at something, or we might be demoted at work, maligned, and undermined, we should still be ready to accept humiliations as life-giving moments. We can learn a lot when we are at the bottom of the pecking order—, which for many of us is out of our comfort zone.

† **Have a sense of humor**

This is key, yet not often talked about. Have the ability to enjoy every moment of life. While we have to be serious about many things in our day-to-day relationships and works, let us take time to revel on the events of our life. When we are able to laugh, we are also more able to handle different situations lightly and calmly. A healthy sense of humor is a sign of a healthy attitude in life. We can quickly adjust to situations and people. There is always joy and grace in every encounter that we make. We are more in tune with other people, and we recognize their own struggles and hopes. Being able to smile and laugh is important to prevent us from possible burnout and depression. It helps us keep going in life and in our ministry.

† **Listening to God and His message**

When we listen to God through Scriptures, the living Traditions and teachings of the Church, we also listen to God in the signs of our times, and in the day-to-day life of the people of God. Hence, listening to our brothers and sisters mean that we are willing to learn and be enriched by them. We find God in every encounter that we make and do; whether they are Christians or from other faith traditions and religions. They may even be adults, or the young. Regardless of race, gender, class, or beliefs, when we listen and are listened to, we feel accepted and loved. In addition, when we listen to others, it is a sign of loving them and acknowledging that the other person is important and valuable. It is also recognizing that God in His goodness, has made these people part of our lives. God sends us friends and strangers in various ways, and they are always gifts, for true friendship is a gift.

Hence, we, the Church, the people of God and the community of disciples, are being both the evangelized and the evangelizing community with new means, vigor, and enthusiasm together with the priests, consecrated persons, and the laity. Pope Francis (2014) said that “we, both as individuals and as Church, do not only need continuous formation but also continuous conversion. The clergy, consecrated persons and the laity as Disciples of Christ are called to serve and even forgive one another. The action of Christ in washing of the feet shows us the way. It is through the humble service of the religious leaders, done out of love towards one another and towards their flock, that they could become holy together with their flock.”

The call to sanctity and holiness is for all and could be done only through this unique relationship of service towards each other in a reciprocal love and awareness that one could not be without the other. It is not true that the priests and the religious are the “privileged” class in the Church while the rest are the spiritual “proletariat” (working class). This way of thinking has to be avoided.

In other words, we are invited to reflect once more and be resolved that all of us, ordained or non-ordained, are called to holiness. All the members of the Church are called to be saints together. In other words, in this new evangelization, everyone is called to be recipients and active agents of evangelization. Each of us needs to be faithful to our calling to be saints in the One Body of Christ. The Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons is an invitation for a deeper discipleship and communion towards a common journey for holiness. More than ever, let us together take the path to holiness, as clergy, consecrated persons, and as lay faithful who can love and serve the Lord more faithfully and truly if we listen heartily to God’s Word in our world today.



Simple Activities

Activity : *Washing of the Feet*

We will read again the Gospel according to John 13: 1 -20 the washing of the feet of the disciples of Jesus. Then, after that we will do the same rituals of the washing of the feet. The chairs of the participants will be arranged in a circle. They will sit barefoot. Then each of them will experience washing one another’s feet as a sign of service to one another and a reminder that all of us need to serve one another in the humblest way of service. After the rituals or the activity of washing of the feet, asked the participants to write down in a bullet form, their humblest act of service they had done in their life. Then, allow every participant to share their experiences during the activity as well as their list of humble service.

Song Analysis (See next page)



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

Father, Bless Them

By Fr. Carlo Magno

This world is not what it was meant to be
All this pain, all this suffering
There's a better place
Waiting for me
In Heaven

Every tear will be wiped away
Every sorrow and sin erased
We'll dance on seas of amazing grace
In Heaven
In Heaven

I'm goin' home
Where the streets are golden
Every chain is broken
Oh I wanna go
Oh I wanna go
Home
Where every fear is gone
I'm in your open arms
Where I belong
Home

Lay down my burdens, I lay down my past
I run to Jesus, no turning back
Thank God Almighty, I'll be free at last
In Heaven
In Heaven

I'm goin' home
Where the streets are golden
Every chain is broken
Oh I wanna go
Oh I wanna go
Home
Where every fear is gone
I'm in your open arms
Where I belong

Blinded eyes
Will finally see
The dead will rise
On...

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I show my trust in the Lord?
- † How do I help others put their trust in the Lord?



Worship

PRAYER FOR THE 2018 YEAR OF THE CLERGY AND CONSECRATED PERSONS

O God Most Loving Father,
with Your priests and those who consecrated their lives to You,
may we be fully and ever united to Christ.
May they be our constant guides in this oneness with You
through prayer, the Eucharist and personal conversion.

We have sinned and we have failed in so many ways.
There are many brothers and sisters in our midst who continue to suffer.
They hunger for truth and justice, for charity and solidarity.
We pray that we may become bearers of the Gospel
that transforms lives as we reach out to our suffering brethren.
We pray that the Gospel urge us to action,
to be witnesses to charity and compassionate service.

Together, may we all be renewed and learn how to be
Servant-Leaders for the Gospel of Christ.
Like Him who rose from the table to wash the disciples' feet,
may we too rise up to the challenge to take care
of the poor and the weak, to be always approachable
rather than untouchable, and "to imbibe the odor of the sheep."
May our young people who are discerning the gentle call
of the Lord to serve, be filled with courage and determination
to follow You in service with humility and love.
With Mary, Star of the New Evangelization,
may we continue to be instruments of the Gospel
in our country and in the world. Amen.

P A N A L A N G I N (Tagalog version)

PARA SA TAONG 2018, TAON NG KAPARIAN AT NG MGA NAG-KONSAGRA NG BUHAY SA DIYOS

O Diyos, lubhang masintahing Ama,
kaisa ng tanang kaparian at mga nagkonsegra ng kanilang buhay sa Iyo,
lagi nawa kaming lubusang naka-ugnay kay Kristo.
Sila nawa ang maging aming laging patnubay sa pakikiisang ito sa Iyo
sa pamamagitan ng panalangin, sa Eukaristiya, at pangsariling pagbabalik-loob.

hKami ay nagkasala at binigo Ka namin sa maraming pagkakataon.
Di-mabilang sa aming mga kapatid ang patuloy na nagdurusa.
Nauuhaw sila sa katotohanan at katarungan, sa pagmamahalan at pagdadamayan.
Idinadalangin namin na kami'y maging tagapaghatid sa kanila ng Mabuting Balita
na nakapagbabago ng mga buhay sa aming pagtulong sa kanila.
Idinadalangin namin na ang Ebanghelyo ni Kristo ang magbunsod sa aming kumilos,
at magpatotoo sa pamamagitan ng pagmamahalan at mahabaging paglilingkod.

Sama-sama nawa kaming mapagbago at matutunan namin kung papaanong
maging mga tunay na Punong-Lingkod alang-alang sa Ebanghelyo ni Kristo.
Tulad Niyang tumindig mula sa lamesa upang hugasan ang paa ng mga alagad,
kami nawa'y makabangon din sa paghamong kalingain
ang mga dukha at mahihina, lagi nawang malalapitan
sa halip na hindi mahagilap, at tuluyang "akuin ang amoy ng kawan."
Nawa'y ang aming mga kabataan na naririnig ang mahinahong tawag
ng Panginoon upang maglingkod bilang mga pari at relihiyoso,
ay mapuno nawa ng tapang at katibayan ng loob na
tumahak sa landas ng paglilingkod na may kababaang-loob at pag-ibig.
Kaisa ni Maria, ang Tala ng Bagong Ebanghelisasyon,
makapag-patuloy nawa kaming maging mga kasangkapan
ng Mabuting Balita sa aming bansa at sa buong mundo. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** –Priest and Consecrated persons are always ready to serve the people of God as they vow to accompany the faithful in their journey towards God in spirituality and pastoral care. Hence, as a lay faithful it is also good to share and get solutions to some problems or struggles of your parish priest, friend-priests and Religious. Let us show our support and love for them because they also need companions in their ministry--someone that can listen and understand them. We should pray for the priests, religious and the seminarians who are striving to be faithful to their calling for it is such is a great gift to be "*Alagad ng Diyos*," servant of God.

- † **LIVE** – Pray for the gift of wisdom and strength for our priests and religious that they may have the courage to face the different challenging situations of God’s people with love, mercy and compassion and untiringly serve them by doing good works. Offer a Mass for them, remember them during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament or when praying the rosary.

- † **SHARE** - Invite priests and Religious into your life. There are many ways to connect with them on a basic relational level. It could be by sharing small talks with a priest after mass or during parish potluck or providing assistance to some ministry that is being offered by the parish. You can also invite priests and religious over for a family meal or a family celebration. They would appreciate being made part of your family. This is considered a great blessing.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3: COMMUNION: WITH THE LOST SHEEP



Introduction

The Trinitarian foundation of the priestly order reveals and emphasizes not only the Divine origin of Christian priesthood, but also equally its communal character. The communion of the three Divine persons, that of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, is the communion par excellence, and so priesthood in its threefold aspect: bishop, presbyter, and deacon, also portrays an image of the Holy Trinity. Deacons minister to the people of God in the *diakonia* (service) of Word, liturgy, and charity. In the Sacrament of Orders, bishops and priests exercise their ministry in the name and person of Christ, the Head. The priestly *diakonia* (service) is an event of communion. Priesthood, in its essence, is a communal reality. It is a way of communion with God, it is a peculiar communion in terms of the Divine grace conferred in Ordination.

Both the bishops and the presbyters, as celebrants of the Holy Eucharist, are the builders of Ecclesial unity. It is there, in the Eucharistic bond that all believers are united in one Sacred relation to Christ-the living Lord. In the Eucharist, the people of God are in a constant, personal and at the same time communal relation to Christ, the Risen Lord. It is not accidental that all ordinations, from the early Christian times, are liturgically and theologically inseparable from the Eucharistic communion. The fact that the Eucharistic gathering is the unique and exclusive locus of all ministerial consecrations asserts that the priesthood belongs to the Eucharistic community. It is begotten for the community and because of this, every consecration is realized within the context of the Eucharistic assembly. The Eucharistic gathering is the reality of the people of God, gathered in the Eucharistic communion - the basis for the existence of the priestly *diakonia*. Priesthood was born for the Church and within the Church.

Thus, priesthood cannot be considered in itself and for itself, rather, it is a relational reality. In other words, the only way to have an adequate understanding of the priestly charisma is to see it in its prayerful and solemn dimension and in connection with the ecclesial communion (Scouteris, 2017).

**“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
(Mt 10:5-6)**



Word of God

Gospel of Mathew 10: 1-15

Then Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. ⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. ¹¹Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹²As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town.



Doctrine

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS WHY IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED "ORDERS"?

- † **CCC 1537** - The word order in Roman antiquity designated an established civil body, especially a governing body. *Ordinatio* means incorporation into an *ordo*. In the Church, there are established bodies, which, Tradition, not without a basis in Sacred Scripture, has since ancient times called *taxeis* (Greek) or *ordines*. Therefore, the liturgy speaks of the *ordo episcoporum*, the *ordo presbyterorum*, and the *ordo diaconorum*. Other groups also receive this name of *ordo*: catechumens, virgins, spouses, widows.
- † **CCC 1538** - Today the word "*ordination*" is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a man into the order of bishops, priests, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple election, designation, delegation, or institution by the community, for it confers gifts of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a "sacred power" (*sacra potestas*) which can come only from Christ himself through His Church. Ordination is also called *consecratio*, for it is a setting apart and an investiture by Christ, Himself for His Church. The *laying on of hands* by the bishop, with the consecratory prayer, constitutes the visible sign of ordination.



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

- † **CCC 1544** - Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the "One mediator between God and men." The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique "High Priest after the order of Melchizedek"; "holy, blameless, unstained," "by a single offering He has perfected for all time, those who are sanctified," that is, by His unique sacrifice of the cross.
- † **CCC 1545** - The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. The same is true of the one priesthood of Christ; made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood. "Only Christ is the True Priest, the others are only His ministers."

Two participation in the one priesthood of Christ

- † **CCC 1546** - Christ, the High Priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom of priests for his God and Father." The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise of their baptismal priesthood is through their participation, each according to one's own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are "consecrated to the holy priesthood."
- † **CCC 1547** - The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful, participate "each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ." While being "ordered one to another," they differ essentially.

While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace --a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit. The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace for all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason, it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.

† **CCC 1548** - In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, Christ Himself is present to His Church as Head of His Body, Shepherd of His flock, and as High Priest of the redemptive sacrifice, the Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means when it states that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis*.

It is the same priest, Jesus Christ, whose sacred person, His ministers truly represents. The minister, through the sacerdotal consecration which He has received, is truly made like the high priest who possesses the authority to act in the power and place of Christ himself (*virtute ac persona ipsius Christi*). Christ is the source of all priesthood. The priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando, La Union

† **CCC 1549** - Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ, as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.

† **CCC 1550** - This presence of Christ in the ministers is not to be understood as if the latter are preserved from all human weaknesses, spirit of domination, error, or even sin. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. This guarantee, however, extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of its grace. In many other acts, the minister may still leave human traces that are not always signs of fidelity to the Gospel and consequently may harm the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church.

† **CCC 1551** - This priesthood is ministerial. "That office. . . which the Lord commits to be pastors of His people, is in the strict sense of the term, a *service*." It is entirely related to Christ and to men. It depends entirely on Christ and on His unique priesthood. It has been instituted for the good of men and the communion of the Church. The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ. The exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made Himself the least and the servant of all. "The Lord said clearly that concern for His flock was proof of love for Him."

† **CCC 1552** - The ministerial priesthood has the task of not only of representing Christ,

the Head of the Church, before the assembly of the faithful, but also of acting in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.

- † **CCC 1553** - "In the name of the *whole* Church" does not mean that priests are the delegates of the community. The prayer and offering of the Church are inseparable from the prayer and offering of Christ. Christ worships in and through His Church. The whole Church, the Body of Christ, prays and offers herself "through Him, with Him and in Him," in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to God the Father. The whole Body, *caput et membra*, prays and offers itself, and therefore, those who are in the Body, especially His ministers are called ministers not only of Christ, but also of the Church.

THE THREE DEGREES OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

- † **CCC 1554** - "The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons." The Magisterium, and the constant practice of the Church through its liturgy, recognizes that there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ: the episcopacy (Bishops) and the presbyterate (Priests). The diaconate is intended to help and serve them. For this reason, the term *sacerdos* in current usage denotes bishops and priests but not deacons. Yet, Catholic doctrine also teaches us that all three (episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate) are conferred through a sacramental act called "ordination," that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders.
 - † **Episcopal ordination** - fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders makes the bishop a legitimate successor of the apostles and integrates him into the episcopal college to share with the Pope and the other bishops care for all the churches. It confers on him the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling (CCC 1560).
 - † **Ordination to the Priesthood.** The anointing of the Spirit seals the priest with an indelible spiritual character that configures him to Christ the Priest and enables him to act in the name of Christ, the Head (CCC 1563). As a co-worker of the order of bishops, he is consecrated to preach the Gospel, to celebrate divine worship especially the Eucharist from which his ministry, draws its strength, and to be a shepherd of the faithful (ibid).
 - † **Ordination to the Diaconate.** The deacon, configured to Christ, as the servant of all is ordained for the service to the Church. He carries out this service under the authority of his proper bishop by the ministry of the Word, divine worship, pastoral care, and charitable acts (CCC 1570).

THE CONSECRATED LIFE (CCC 914-933)

"The state of life which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to the Church's life and holiness."

† **Evangelical counsels, consecrated life**

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 and celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, as well as poverty and obedience. It is the profession of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church that characterizes life consecrated to God.

Thus, the state of consecrated life is one way of experiencing a "more intimate" consecration rooted in Baptism and dedicated totally to God. In the consecrated life, Christ's faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit, propose to follow Christ more closely. They give themselves to God, who is loved above all, and pursuing the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom, signify and proclaim to the Church the glory of the world to come.

† **One great tree, with many branches**

"From the God-given seed of the counsels a wonderful and wide-spreading tree grows up in the field of the Lord, branching out into various forms of religious life lived in solitude or in community. Different religious families have come into existence wherein which spiritual resources are multiplied for the progress and holiness of their members and for the good of the entire Body of Christ."

From the very beginning, there were men and women in the Church, who set out to follow Christ with greater liberty, to imitate Him more closely, through the practice of the evangelical counsels. They led lives dedicated to God, each in one's own way. Many of them, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became hermits or founded religious families. These the Church, by virtue of her authority, gladly accepted and approved.

† ***The eremitic life***

Without always professing the three evangelical counsels publicly, hermits "devote their lives to the praise of God and salvation of the world through a stricter separation from the world, silent solitude and in assiduous prayer and penance."

They manifest to everyone the interior aspect of the mystery of the Church, that is, a personal intimacy with Christ. Hidden from the eyes of men, the life of the hermit silently witnesses one's faith to the Lord, to whom they have surrendered their life simply because He is everything to them. This is a particular call to find in the desert, in the thick of spiritual battle, the glory of the Crucified One.

† ***Consecrated virgins and widows***

From apostolic times, Christian virgins, and widows, called by the Lord to cling only to Him with greater freedom of heart, body, and spirit, have decided with the Church's approval to live in the respective status of virginity or perpetual chastity "for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven."

"Virgins who are committed to the holy plan of following Christ more closely, are consecrated to God by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite. They are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God, and are dedicated to the service of the Church." By this solemn rite (*Consecratio virginum*), the virgin is constituted as a "sacred person," a transcendent sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of the heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come."

"As with other forms of consecrated life," the order of virgins (or the nun) establishes the woman living in a world of prayer, penance, service of her brethren, and apostolic activity. According to the state of life and spiritual gifts given to her, any consecrated virgin can form associations in order to observe their commitment more faithfully.

† **Religious life**

Religious life was born in the East during the first centuries of Christianity. They lived within institutes canonically erected by the Church, it is distinguished from other forms of consecrated life by its liturgical character, public profession of the evangelical counsels, fraternal life led in common, and witness to the union of Christ with the Church.

Religious life derives from the mystery of the Church. It is a gift received from her Lord, a gift she offered as a stable way of life called by God to profess the counsels. Thus, the Church can both show Christ and acknowledge herself to be the Savior's bride. Religious life, in its various forms, is called to signify the very charity of God in the language of our time.

All religious take their place among the collaborators of the diocesan bishop in his pastoral duty. From the outset of the work of evangelization, the missionary "planting" and expansion of the Church required the presence of the religious life in all its forms. "History witnesses to the outstanding service rendered by religious families in the propagation of the faith and in the formation of new Churches: from the ancient monastic institutions to the medieval orders, all the way to the more recent congregations."

† ***Societies of apostolic life***

Alongside the different forms of consecrated life are "societies of apostolic life whose members, even without religious vows, pursue a particular apostolic

purpose of their society. They lead a life as brothers or sisters in common according to a particular manner of life and strive for the perfection of charity through the observance of the constitutions.

† ***Consecration and mission: proclaiming the King who is coming***

Already dedicated to Him through Baptism, the person who surrenders himself/ herself to God, loves above all else. Thereby, consecrating herself/ himself more intimately to God's service and to the good of the Church. By this state of life consecrated to God, the Church manifests Christ and shows us how the Holy Spirit acts so wonderfully in her. The first mission of those who profess the evangelical counsels is to live out their consecration. Moreover, "since members of institutes of consecrated life dedicate themselves, through their consecration to the service of the Church, they are obliged in a special manner to engage in missionary work, in accord with the character of the institute."

The Church, which is herself a sacrament, is the sign and instrument of God's own life. Consecrated life is seen as a special sign of the mystery of redemption. To follow and imitate Christ more nearly and to manifest more clearly his / her self- emptying is to be more deeply present to one's contemporaries in the heart of Christ. Those who are on this "narrower" path encourage their brethren by their example, and bear striking witness that without the spirit of the beatitudes, the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God."

Whether their witness is public, as in the religious state, or less public, or even secret, Christ's coming remains for all those consecrated.



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose De Antique



Faith Response

- † Respond to the universal call of God to holiness and discern with fervent prayer the vocation God has prepared for us
- † Ask and seek for God's grace for our priests and religious brothers and sisters that they may respond generously to God's call
- † Help and pray for the clergy and religious brothers and sisters
- † Participate in the mission of the Church, especially in nurturing and keeping the burning desire of the young faithful to answer God's call.
- † Open the door of every family to the seed of the vocation for priesthood or the consecrated life.



Human Values/Virtues

- † Holiness - In the Old Testament, the Hebrew Kadosch (holy) meant being separated from the secular or profane, or dedicated to God's service, as Israel was said to be holy because it was the people of God. The holiness of God identified His separation from all evil and among creatures. They are holy by their relation to Him. Holiness in creatures is either subjective or objective or both. It is subjective essentially by the possession of Divine Grace and morally by the practice of virtue. Objective holiness in creatures denotes their exclusive consecration to the service of God: priests by their ordination; religious by their vows; sacred places, vessels, and vestments by the blessing they receive and the sacred purpose for which they are reserved.

All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity." All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (CCC 2013).

In order to reach this perfection, the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that by doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus, the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.

Spiritual progress tends towards an ever more intimate union with Christ. This union is called "mystical" because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments. In the mystery of the Holy Trinity, God calls us all to an intimate union with Him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all (CCC 2014).

The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without

renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails ascetism and mortification that gradually leads to living the peace and joy of the Beatitudes. He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning. Though beginnings have no end, he/she never stops desiring what he/she already knows (CCC 2015).



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

- † Generosity - Derived from the Latin word *generōsus*, which means "of noble birth," which itself was passed down to English through the Old French word, *generoux*. It means extending ourselves to all humankind, especially the neediest. To do so, we are emulating Jesus who went after the one lost sheep. To love is to give. God loves us and He gives us everything we need. When we give, as our Lord encourages, we truly deny ourselves. Generosity must be done in silence in order to merit grace from God and not merely for the praise of men. It is very easy to be generous to our relatives or friends but that is not enough since we are already repaid for that with friendship, thanksgiving, and praise. Generosity must extend to the poor and the needy. It is a quest for justice as we are doing the work of God by providing for those who do not have and could not pay back.

- † Obedience - The moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. Material obedience is merely to carry out the physical action commanded; formal obedience is to perform an action precisely because it is commanded by a legitimate superior. The extent of obedience is as wide as the authority of the person who commands. Thus obedience to God is without limit, whereas obedience to human beings is limited by higher laws that must not be transgressed, and by the competency or authority of the one who gives the orders. As a virtue, it is pleasing to God because it means the sacrifice of one's will, out of love for God.



Morals

- † The priestly vocation is a call to love others. Therefore, to paraphrase St John Mary Vianney: “a man is not a priest for himself – he is a priest for others.”
- † Just as Jesus called and appointed men to follow Him as His apostles, God calls men today to lay down their lives so that others may have life. It is a generous response to God's call by sacrificing oneself for the Kingdom and the service of the Church.
- † Priesthood is not a career it is a way of being. It is a life of sacrifice and service because it is the life of our Lord.
- † No man deserves to be a priest. Like every grace, this vocation can only be accepted as an unmerited gift from God.
- † There is no certain type of man who is called to be a priest. In fact, God calls men with different backgrounds, personalities, temperaments, and gifts to be priests.



Simple Activities

Activity: Vocation Promotion

Coordinate with the parish priest or with the parish coordinator of vocations to invite some seminarians and religious to share their life testimony on why they entered the vocation.

If it is possible, let the parish priest share his vocation story with the learners so that the bond and communion between the learners and the parish in the name of the parish priest can be shown and nurtured.

Song Analysis

Refer to D. Song for Reflection – Ang Mabuhay sa Pag-ibig

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I give myself to the Church?
- † In communion with the Church, do I really pray for the priests and consecrated brothers and sisters?
- † Am I open to the call of God to do missions?
- † Do I participate in the mission of the Church by helping others come closer to God?



Worship

A Prayer for Priestly Vocations

HEAVENLY FATHER, Lord of the harvest, we earnestly ask You to bless our diocese and our world with many priests who will love You fervently, and gladly and courageously spend their lives in service to Your Son's Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We pray that their lives may always be centered on our Eucharistic Lord, that they may always be faithful to the Holy Father, and that they may be devoted Sons of Mary, our mother, in making You known and loved; and that all may attain heaven. Bless our families and our children and choose from our homes those whom You desire for this holy work. We ask this in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

Prayer to know one's Vocation

O God, Who enlightens the mind and inflames the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Spirit, grant that through the same Spirit I may know my true vocation in life, and may have the grace to follow it faithfully. I ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



Zeal for Mission

- † **PRAY** for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. Jesus says in Matthew 9:38 “to beg the master of the harvest to send laborers into the vineyard.” If we want more priests, sisters and brothers, we all need to ask.
- † **TEACH** young people how to pray. Pope Benedict XVI said that unless we teach our youth how to pray, they would never hear God calling them into a deeper relationship with Him and into discipleship with the Church.
- † **INVITE** active young adults and teens to consider a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life. A simple, sincere comment should not be underestimated. An easy way to do this can be remembered by four letters: ICNU. “John, I see in you (ICNU) the qualities that would make a good priest, and I want to encourage you to pray about it.” It is a non-invasive way to encourage *openness* to a religious vocation.
- † **MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE.** Show the priesthood for what it truly is – a call to be a spiritual father to the whole family of faith. Similarly, the consecrated life for a young woman is a call to be united to Christ in a unique way, by being a spiritual mother to those she encounters in her life and service. The challenge for priests and religious is to be joyful models of their vocations.
- † **PREACH IT, BROTHER!** Vocations must be shared regularly if a “vocation culture” is to take root in parishes and homes. This means, primarily, the people need to hear about vocations from priests through homilies, prayers of the faithful, and discussions in the classroom. Vocations kept out of sight are out of mind.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4: MISSION: REKINDLING OUR GIFTS



Introduction

The words of St. Paul to Timothy can appropriately be applied to the ongoing formation to which all priests are called by virtue of being a "gift of God," which they have received at their ordination. The passage helps us to grasp the full truth, the absolute uniqueness of the permanent formation of priests. We are also helped by another text of St. Paul, who once more writes to Timothy: "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given to you by prophetic utterances when the elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tm. 4:14-16). Paul asks Timothy to "rekindle," or stir into flame, the divine gift he has received, much as one might do with the embers of a fire. They are to welcome it and live it out without ever losing or forgetting that "permanent novelty" which is characteristic of every gift from God, who makes all things new (Rv. 21:5), thus living it out in its unfading freshness and original beauty (PDV 70).

This "rekindling" is not only the outcome of a task entrusted to the personal responsibility of Timothy. It is also not only the result of his efforts to use his mind and will. Rather, it is also the



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

effect of dynamism of grace intrinsic to God's gift. In other words, God Himself, rekindles His own gift, to better release all the extraordinary riches of grace and responsibility that is contained in it. With the sacramental outpouring of the Holy Spirit who consecrates and sends forth, the priest is configured to the likeness of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, and is sent forth to carry out a pastoral ministry. In this way, the priest is marked permanently and indelibly in his inner being as a minister of Jesus and of the Church. He is entrusted with a pastoral ministry which is rooted in his being and involves his entire life. The sacrament of Holy Orders confers upon the priest sacramental grace which gives him a share not only in Jesus' saving "power" and "ministry" but also in His pastoral "love." At the same time it ensures that the priest can count on all the actual graces he needs, whenever they are necessary and useful for the worthy and perfect exercise of the ministry he has received (PDV 70).

For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.
(2 Tm 1:6)

In this sense ongoing formation is an intrinsic requirement of the gift and sacramental ministry received, it proves necessary in every age. It is particularly urgent today, not only because of the rapid changes in the social and cultural conditions of individuals among whom priestly ministry is being exercised, but also because of that "new evangelization" which constitutes an essential and pressing task of the Church.

The ongoing formation of priests, whether diocesan or religious, is the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of building a priestly personality which began and was developed in the seminary or the religious house with the training program aimed at ordination. It is particularly important to be aware of and to respect the intrinsic link between formation before ordination to the priesthood and formation after ordination. Should there be a break in continuity, or worse a complete difference between these two phases of formation, there would be serious and immediate repercussions on pastoral work and fraternal communion among priests, especially those in different age groups.

Ongoing formation is not a repetition of the formation acquired in the seminary, neither is it simply a review that comes with expanded, new, and practical suggestions. Ongoing formation involves relatively new contents and especially methods. It develops as a harmonious and vital process, which - rooted in the formation received in the seminary - calls for adaptations, updating and modifications, but without sharp breaks in continuity.



Word of God

Second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2 Tm. 1:3-14)

³ I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴ Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. ⁶ For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; ⁷ for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. ⁸ Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. ¹¹ For this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹² and for this reason, I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the One in whom I have put my trust on, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to Him. ¹³ Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.



Doctrine

THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

(Presbyterorum Ordinis 1-3)

The Lord Jesus, "whom the Father has sent into the world" (Jn 10:36) has made his whole Mystical Body, a sharer in the anointing of the Spirit with which He, Himself is anointed with. In Him, all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood. They offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the perfections of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Therefore, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body; each one ought to follow Jesus in his/her heart, and in the spirit of prophecy bear witness to Him.

The same Lord has established ministers among His faithful to unite His people together into one body since "not all the members have the same function (Rom 12:4)." These ministers are able to offer sacrifice and to forgive sins and perform their priestly office publicly for men in the name of Christ, by the sacred power of Holy Order. Therefore, having sent the apostles, just as the Father has sent He Himself, Christ, through the apostles themselves, made their successors, the bishops, sharers in His consecration and mission. The office of their ministry has been handed down, to the priests. Established in the order of priesthood, they become co-workers of the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission entrusted to them by Christ.

Priests of the New Testament, by their vocation and ordination, are in a certain sense set apart in the bosom of the People of God. However, they are not to be separated from the People of God or from any person, but they are to be totally dedicated to the work for which the Lord has chosen them. They cannot be ministers of Christ unless they are witnesses and dispensers of a life other than earthly life. However, they cannot be of service to the people if they remain strangers to the life and conditions of the people. Their ministry itself, by a special title, forbids that they be conformed to this world; yet at the same time it requires that they live in this world among the people. They are to live as good shepherds that know their sheep, and they are to seek to lead even those who are not of His sheepfold, so that they, too, may hear the voice of Christ, that there might be one-fold and one shepherd. To achieve this aim, certain virtues, which in human affairs are deservedly esteemed, contribute a great deal, such as: goodness of heart, sincerity, strength and constancy of mind, zealous pursuit of justice, affability, and others. The Apostle Paul commends them saying: "Whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever loving, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything is worthy of praise, think upon these things" (Phil 4:8).

The Ministry of Priests (PO 2)

Besides making all the faithful a holy and kingly priesthood, the Lord also appointed certain ministers among the faithful in order to join them together into one body where all the members may not have the same function but they are to complement each other and work together as a cohesive one. These men were to hold in the community of the faithful the sacred power of

Order, that of offering sacrifices and forgiving sins. They would exercise their priestly office publicly on behalf of men in the name of Christ.

Priests' Functions

The ordained, therefore, “by virtue of the sacrament of Orders, after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, are consecrated by God that they might act as His ministers in performing these sacred functions(Lumen Gentium 28):

- † **To proclaim the Gospel:** they are heralds of the Gospel and shepherds of the Church, they are to spend themselves for the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ by teaching them the life, Words, and deeds of Christ.
- † **To Dispense the Sacraments:** He calls them to lead His holy people in love, nourish them by His word, and strengthen them through the Sacraments. By Baptism, men and women are truly brought into the People of God; by the sacrament of Penance sinners are reconciled to God and his Church; by the Anointing of the Sick, the ill are given solace; and especially by the celebration of the Mass they offer sacramentally the Sacrifice of Christ and become partakers of its fruits.
- † **To Shepherd the faithful** – In the name of the bishop, they lead His holy people in love and gather the family of God together as a fellowship enlivened by one spirit. Through Christ, they lead them in the Holy Spirit to God the Father. As for other priestly duties, spiritual power is conferred upon them for the building up of the Church. In building up the Church, priests must treat all with exceptional kindness in imitation of the Lord. They should act not seeking to please people, but in accord with the demands of Christian doctrine and life. They should teach them and admonish them as beloved sons and daughters.
- † **To become educators of faith** - They must see to it, either by themselves or through others that the Holy Spirit leads the faithful individually to a development of their own vocation according to the Gospel, to a sincere and practical charity, and to understand with what freedom Christ has made them free. Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing, will be of little value if they are not directed towards meaningful Christian maturity. In furthering this, priests should help men see what is required and what the will of God is in the important and unimportant events of their lives. In addition, Christians should be taught that they live not only for themselves, but also, according to the demands of the new law of charity; as every man has received grace, he must administer the same to others. In this way, all will discharge in a Christian manner their duties in the community of men.
- † **To build Christian communities** - priests are never to put themselves at the service of some human faction or ideology, but, as heralds of the Gospel and as shepherds of the Church, they are to spend themselves for the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ.

Priests' Relationships with Others

All priests, in union with bishops, share in one and the same priesthood and ministry of Christ. The very unity of their consecration and mission requires their hierarchical communion with the order of bishops. At times, they manifest this communion in liturgical con-celebration, where they join with the bishop when they co-celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Therefore, by reason of the gift of the Holy Spirit which is given to priests in Holy Orders, bishops regard them as necessary helpers and counselors in the ministry and in their role of teaching, sanctifying, and nourishing the people of God.

Priests must stand by their bishops in sincere charity and obedience. This priestly obedience, imbued with a spirit of cooperation, is based on the very sharing of the episcopal ministry which is conferred on priests both through the Sacrament of Orders and the canonical mission.

This union of priests with their bishops is necessary today since apostolic undertakings must not only take many forms but frequently extend even beyond the boundaries of one's parish or diocese. No priest, therefore, can accomplish his mission satisfactorily on his own. He can do so only by joining forces with other priests under the direction of Church authorities.

Priests by virtue of their ordination to the priesthood are united among themselves in an intimate sacramental brotherhood, while in individual dioceses; priests form one priesthood under their own bishop. Even though priests are assigned to different duties, they, nevertheless, carry on one priestly ministry for the people. All, indeed, are united in the building up of the Body of Christ, which, especially in our times, requires manifold duties and new methods. It is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or religious, always help one another. Each one, therefore, is united in special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry, and goodwill. Every priest, therefore, is united with his fellow priests in a bond of charity, prayer, and total cooperation. In this manner, they manifest that unity which Christ willed, namely, that His own be perfected in one so that the world might know that the Son was sent by the Father.



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Faith Response

The People of God therefore are enjoined to pray for all Priests that they:

- † Respond generously to the calling of God specially to serve Him and His Church.
- † Be living witnesses as faithful servants of God with heart and love for others, especially for those who are in need.
- † Learn and love the doctrines of the Church and spread them through their service and with their life witnessing.
- † Be courageous and brave to all the difficulties and challenges of the Christian life.
- † Be responsible to the duties and tasks given by the ecclesiastical leaders as part of our participation and fulfilling one's ministry.



Human Virtues

- † **Fidelity/Loyalty** - Constancy in allegiance to God or the things of God; steadfastness in fidelity to a person or cause, organization, or enterprise. Implicit in loyalty is a strong affection based on firm conviction that the object of one's fidelity deserves allegiance.

Loyalty has a lot to do with a person's constancy, and fidelity to their word, to people and to their own honor. Well-placed loyalty survives difficulties. It weathers setbacks, resists temptation, and does not cave in to attacks. Loyalty engenders trust and preserves friendships. Loyalty is about being faithful to the Catholic Church, being faithful to God, being faithful to family, and not betraying a friend, even when it means to suffer because of it. It is to follow Jesus even when others do not. Jesus says that you prove your loyalty in the little things – keeping your word, arriving on time, or being there for people.

- † **Wisdom** - The first and highest gifts of the Holy Spirit. It makes the soul responsive to God in the contemplation of divine things. Where faith is a simple knowledge of the articles of Christian belief, wisdom goes on to a certain divine penetration of the truths themselves. Built into wisdom is the element of love, which inspires contemplative reflection on these divine mysteries, rejoices dwelling on them, and directs the mind to judge all things according to their principles.

Also, through the gift of wisdom, we see God at work in our lives and in the world.

For the wise person, the wonders of nature, historical events, and the difficulties of our lives take on deeper meaning. It is a matter of judging the truth and being able to see the whole image of God. We see God as our Father and in other people through their dignity. Wisdom is being able to see God in everyone and everything everywhere.

- † **Perseverance** - Remaining in the state of grace until the end of life. The Church teaches that it is impossible, without the special help of God, to persevere in the state of grace until the end. Thus the Second Council of Orange, in A.D. 529, teaches, in opposition to the Semi-Pelagians, that the justified must also constantly pray for God's help so that they may attain a good end. The Council of Trent in 1547 calls perseverance "a great gift" and says that those in the state of grace cannot persist in God's friendship without special divine aid. Finally, perseverance cannot be simply merited, as though a person had a claim on dying in grace because he or she had been faithful all through life. Nevertheless, it can, be achieved with proper prayer, and offered regularly and earnestly in the state of grace with unfailing success. The certainty of the prayer being heard is based on the promise of Jesus (John 16:23). However, since the possibility of fall always remains, one cannot know with infallible certainty whether one will, in fact, persevere unless one receives a special revelation to that effect (Hardon, 2013).
- † **Responsibility** - In matters of responsibilities related to the Church, the person has a sense of accountability not only to the people, but also to God who has endowed him the grace to fulfill his mission on earth.



Morals

Priests are, first, human beings whose very humanity ought to be a bridge for communicating Jesus Christ to the world today (PDV 43). Their humanity reflects a complex make-up, the different dimensions of what it means to be human. Each dimension needs recognition and attention. Here we list the essential dimensions:

- † **Physical:** Priests are embodied persons, whose living and functioning depend on the health and full functionality of their bodies.
- † **Psychological:** The humanity of priests is especially prominent in their psychological capacities, which are cognitive, affective, and value-directed. The cognitive capacity includes the ability to perceive or gather information, to understand, and to make judgments. The affective capacity includes the ability to feel and to connect with other human beings and the world through feeling. The value capacity includes the ability to cultivate attitudes that can direct commitments, actions, and patterns of behavior.
- † **Sexual:** The sexuality of priests links both to physical and psychological life. Sexuality

represents a passion, an energy, and a direction for connecting, belonging, and giving life—in other words, for intimacy and generativity. Physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of life converge in human sexuality.

- † Cultural: Culture provides social tools for understanding the world, in shaping and working on it, and finally, for expressing its realities. In other words, culture provides a framework for exploring the human understanding of the world and acting on it. It is the stuff of science, technology, and the arts. In all of this, culture enables people to connect and collaborate with each other. Culture, however, is not only a tool that people use to shape the world, but the collective values and attitudes that shape people. It can be identified with the spirit of the age or the nation that continuously transmits cues for behavior, ideals to be pursued, and values to be cultivated. Culture, in this sense, can exercise a positive or negative influence in shaping life.
- † Social: Priests live in a social order. They come from families, generally connect with some form of community, and are part of a larger society. Within society, they have a socially defined role. With other citizens or members of society, they are participants in political life through which people seek to live together peacefully and to prosper.



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando, La Union

Simple Activities

Activity: Who is my Spiritual Father?

- † Let the learners draw an image of a priest according to their knowledge of a priest
- † Instruct them to draw things that the priest may have in his pocket
- † Allow them to discuss to the group why they put those things and what the significance of these are in the life of a priest.

NB: this activity will also help the priest know what the learners think of their spiritual father or the parish priest.

Song Analysis (see next page)

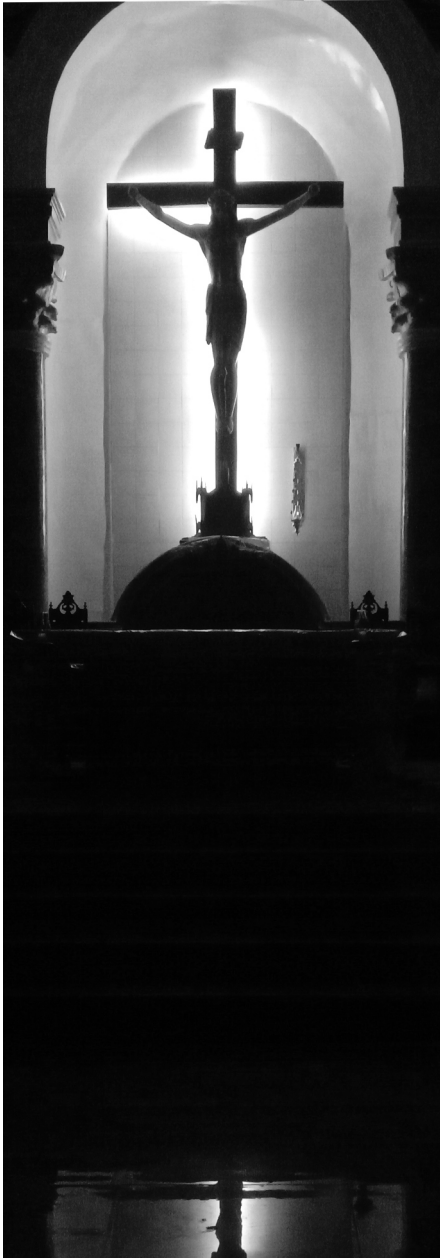


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

I Will Be with You

By The Maranatha! Singers

I will be you, in joy and in pain
your cry for mercy, echoes my name
now and forever, I'll be at hand
I will be with you, I will be with
for that's who I am

I will be with you, I'll be on your side
your prayer for deliverance, will not be deny
I'll fight the battle, that evil might wage
I will be with you, I will be with you
till the end of the age

I will be with you
I will be with you

now and forever, I'll be at hand
I will be with you, I will be you
for that's who I am

I will be with, there's no need to fear
how can they harm you, when I hold you dear,

your life is in my life, come perils or sword
I will be with you, I will be with you
for I am the lord
I will be with you, I will be with you
for I am the lord

I will be with you...

Guide for Reflections

- † Am I aware that the priests and religious are also in need of my prayers?
- † Do I accompany my spiritual father through my prayers?
- † Do I let my spiritual brothers and sisters feel the presence and company of God?
- † Do I feel the presence of God with and through others?



Worship

From Pastores Dabo Vobis

O Mary,
Mother of Jesus Christ and Mother of priests,
accept this title which we bestow on you
to celebrate your motherhood
and to contemplate with you the priesthood
of, your Son and of your sons,
O holy Mother of God.

O Mother of the Church,
in the midst of the disciples in the upper room
you prayed to the Spirit
for the new people and their shepherds;
obtain for the Order of Presbyters
a full measure of gifts,
O Queen of the Apostles.

O Mother of Jesus Christ,
you were with Him at the beginning
of His life and mission,
you sought the Master among the crowd,
you stood beside Him when He was lifted
up from the earth
consumed as the one eternal sacrifice,
and you had John, your son, near at hand;
accept from the beginning those
who have been called,
protect their growth,
in their life ministry accompany
your sons,
O Mother of Priests.
Amen.



Zeal for Mission

† **Practice the faith.** We all need to be reminded that the whole point of our lives is to grow in a deep, intimate, and loving relationship with God. This is the first step for any young person desiring to discern his/her call in life.

- † **Enter into the Silence.** Silence is key to sanity and wholeness. We can only “hear” the voice of God when we are quiet. Young people should try to spend 15 minutes of quiet prayer each day – this is where they can begin to receive clear directions in their lives.
- † **Be a good disciple.** Some bishops say, “We do not have a vocation crisis; we have a discipleship crisis.” Young people can become true followers of Jesus Christ by serving those around them. By discovering our call to discipleship, we also discover our particular call within the Church.
- † **Ask God.** Ask God what He wants for our life and know that He only wants what is good for each of us. If, in fact, a person is called to the priesthood or consecrated life, it will be his/her path to great joy and contentment.
- † In the immortal words of a famous sneaker manufacturer: “**Just do it!**” If you feel that God is inviting you to “**try it out,**” then apply to a seminary or religious order. Remember, the seminary or convent is a place of discernment. You will not be ordained or asked to profess vows immediately; rather, it will provide you ample opportunity to explore the possibility of a call to priesthood or religious life.

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Song References

ANG MABUHAY SA PAG-IBIG

From: "Vivre de Amour" by St. Therese of Lisieux

Translation: Bienvenida Tabuena

Music: Eduardo Hontiveros, SJ

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://soundcloud.com/diocesan-ministry-for-liturgical-music/ang-mabuhay-sa-pag-ibig>

PARING PILIPINO

Lyrics & Music: Fr. Carlo Magno

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://qdoc.tips/paring-pilipinopdf-pdf-free.html>

FATHER, BLESS THEM

Lyrics & Music: Fr. Carlo Magno

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.rockol.com/uk/lyrics-147276428/carlo-magno-feat-st-john-marie-vianney-parish-chorale-father-bless-them>

I WILL BE WITH YOU

Artist: The Maranatha! Singers

Information on this song is publicly available @ <http://www.songlyrics.com/the-maranatha!-singers/i-will-be-with-you-lyrics/>



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 7:

The Youth

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 7: THE YOUTH

Overview

The young people make up for the most number of the population in the Philippines. However, they are also the most vulnerable to the negative effects of developments brought about by a technological society. The youth must affirm their gifts and capacity to pursue Christian ideals in their lives and in building up a society. The Church must dialogue with them, enter their world, and journey with them towards a maturity in Christ since their aspirations will shape the third millennium.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

“Young people need to encounter Christian communities that are truly rooted in friendship with Christ, which leads them to the Father and be in communion with the Holy Spirit (Christus Vivit 62). Parents must be models of faith to their children. This means that parents should make it possible for their children to experience how valuable and beneficial it is to live in the familiar presence of the loving God (YOUCAT 373). As children of God who are growing to become virtuous disciples of God, these children should be given a living with God in the environment through the individuals they meet under the guidance of the Church.

Hence, Filipino youth ministers made an “open letter”. This lengthy and detailed letter is an enlightening contribution of the young people to the fruitfulness of the Year of the Youth. The response to that open letter is a pastoral letter issued by the CBCP for the formal launching of the Year of the Youth. This Pastoral Letter points out that the youth are beloved, gifted, and empowered (Valles, 2018).

Youth are Beloved

The faith of young people is often accompanied by greater devotion and generosity “because the Lord often reveals to a younger person what is better.” That is why the youth are beloved Disciples of Christ, they make the Church young. Just like John, the beloved disciple (John 21:20), who in his youth was called by the Lord to follow Him. Many parishes in the Philippines are filled with young people, serving as altar servers, choir, youth ministers, etc. The Church really loves the youth with a special affection (Valles, 2018). Therefore, the Church must invest in them and give them full support.

“As the Father loves me, so I also love you” (John 15:9). The Gospel of John invites the youth, who probably seeks complete joy in life, to become a loving person. The Church in the Philippines seeks to show the same love of God especially through Her youth ministry, whose

aspiration is to raise the youth and carry them lovingly through life, despite all its trials and tribulations (Episcopal Commission on Youth, 2004, pp. 35-41).

Youth are Gifted

We remember, as inspiration, two brave young lay missionary catechists who proclaimed the Good News by words and deeds; St. Pedro Calungsod was martyred by to because of his faith in God, and Richie Fernando, the young Jesuit who died shielding his students from a grenade explosion. Like them, the youth are called to become courageous witnesses of the faith. The youth are gifted with the Holy Spirit who inflames them in faith, passion, and courage (Valles, 2018). Many people recognize the youth of today for their talented skills or gifts and in many ways that they contribute to the Church and the society. However, the youth needs proper guidance by their parents, the government and the Church. The Church has a big responsibility in accompanying them to grow in faith and love for God.

Youth are Empowered

Everyone is longing for a better world, better society and a renewed Church, and the Church sees the youth as protagonists of this change. The youth, when properly guided, are a dynamic force in the Church for New Evangelization. The inspiration of the life of Darwin Ramos reminds the youth that they could do so much in proclaiming the faith. A young boy who lived his faith and gave witness to Jesus, Darwin Ramos was declared as “Servant of God” on May 31 2019. Bishop Honesto Ongtioco of the Diocese of Cubao said that Darwin developed a deep personal relationship with Christ, taking time every day to pray and entrust himself to God (Union of Catholic Asian News, 2019). Not only was he one of the many street children, he was also afflicted with myopathy. “he is closely united with Christ in his suffering and joy.” Darwin is a model of holiness to the Filipino youth of today’s generation. When the youth genuinely imitate Christ, they are really empowered to do mission and be active workers for renewal in the Church and in the society.

Youth are Missioned

Pope Francis challenged the youth, when he said: “So make a mess! But also help in cleaning it up, a mess that brings a free heart, a mess that brings solidarity, a mess that brings us hope, a mess that comes from knowing Jesus and knowing that God, once I know Him, is my strength” (Pullella & Desantis, 2015). Quite clearly, the youth are really a source of great hope for New Evangelization. Their contribution for social transformation and spreading the Good News with their gifted abilities can make the mission of the Church brighter.

Pope Francis also spoke beautifully and powerfully to the Filipino youth gathered at the University of Santo Tomas on January 18, 2015 when he reminded the young participants of the significant contribution they can make to the life of this country by learning to “act with honesty and fairness in their dealing with others and to learning to love the right way” (Llego, 2015). The pope literally bestowed to the young the duty of building a civilization of love. This message of Pope Francis to the Filipino youth entails great responsibility that calls for accompaniment to assist them in their path towards the love of God.

On the account of the road to Emmaus, Jesus showed that accompanying requires availability to walk a stretch of road together, establishing a significant relationship. It is

therefore the community as a whole that is the prime subject for accompanying the youth such as; All the significant persons in the various spheres of young people’s lives, such as family members, teachers, animators, trainers, pastors and other figures of reference including professional ones (CV 92-93).

The Synod Letter for the Youth says that like the two disciples who were met by Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), “you are invited to open your eyes and ears, your minds and hearts: listen with a disposition of faith in Him, so you may turn your steps from a world of fear and despair towards that of God’s Kingdom (Synod of Bishops, 2018). Thus, by fostering great values and protective spirituality in the Filipino youth, they will become great evangelizers and a hope for New Evangelization. As the national hero of the Philippines Dr. Jose Rizal (1879) would say “*Ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan*”, the Filipino youth must inculcate in their mind and heart this sublime calling of the Church and the society.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** The youth encounter Christ through friendship, because they view Christ as companion and they long for accompaniment. They are the most in need of guidance and accompaniment. Thus, we should be a friend to them, who will patiently accompany them in their journey of life.
- † **Conversion.** The Church must change their outlook on the youth, that is, that the parish will only spend money on them to no avail, that they are stubborn, etc. where in fact they are indeed the hope of the Church, the Church must consider the youth as treasures. The Church must support them and should invest in them.
- † **Sense of Belongingness.** Proper guidance and accompaniment of the youth is given high regards. This will have a great effect in their lives since they will be guided in accordance to the Church’s teaching, especially Christian faith and morals. These foster great values which they really need in, as they, too, have a big role to play in transforming the Church anew.
- † **Zeal for Mission.** The youth are really a source of great hope for New Evangelization. Their contribution for social transformation such as their availability to spread the Good News, skills in social communication and other talents can make the mission of the Church brighter.



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan

Youth

Old English *geoguð* "youth; young people, junior warriors; young of cattle," related to *geong* "young," from Proto-Germanic **jugunthi-* (source also of Old Saxon *juguth*, Old Frisian *jogethe*, Middle Dutch *joghet*, Dutch *jeugd*, Old High German *jugund*, German *Jugend*, Gothic *junda* "youth"), from suffixed form of PIE root **yeu-* "vital force, youthful vigor". Youth is also the freshness and vitality of a young person, young people collectively. (i.e. "*rock music appeals to the young*", "*youth everywhere rises in revolt*"), a young person (especially a young man or boy), early maturity; the state of being young or immature or inexperienced, the time of life between childhood and maturity and an early period of development (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021).

Catechetical Context

Filipino Youth in Mission:

Beloved, Gifted, Empowered

CBCP Pastoral Letter for the 2019 Year of the Youth

Dear young people,

Grace and Peace to you all!

We, your shepherds, thank you from our hearts for coming together to chart the course of our celebration of your year, the Year of the Youth. We commend your courage in expressing your very selves through the "Open Letter of the Filipino Youth to the Catholic Church". We delight in your recognition of your being vital members of the Body of Christ, the Church. As a response to your letter, the Philippine Catholic Church embraces you and your being life-given and life giving, and with you, we affirm that:

You are BELOVED. Just like John the beloved disciple, who in his youth was called by the Lord to follow Him, the Church loves you with special affection, and we share with you the same call from the Lord. You are loved by the Father (Dt. 1:31; Is 40:11; 41:10; 46:4) as Jesus declared to His disciples, "As the Father loves me, so I also love you" (Jn. 15:9), and He then invites you to remain in His love by following His commandments (Jn. 14:15). Only then will you experience the joy that is complete (Jn. 15:9-11). The Church in the Philippines seeks to show you the same love (PCP II 385; Episcopal Commission on Youth, pp. 35-41), especially through her youth ministry, whose aspiration is to raise you up and carry you lovingly through life, with all its trials and tribulations.

You are GIFTED. The Sacrament of Baptism you received initiated you into the life of God and with God. Through the Sacrament of Confirmation, you were gifted with the Holy Spirit who inflames you with faith, passion, and courage. Like the young lay missionary catechist St. Pedro Calungsod and Richie Fernando, the young Jesuit who died shielding his students from a grenade explosion, your fresh and energetic youthfulness is also a gift, enabling you to commit yourselves in service of others, as well as renewing the Church and the world. To the countless

The Road to Emmaus Story (Lk 24:13-35)

youth volunteers and missionaries who share their gifts in the building up of God’s Reign—upholding and defending life and human dignity, the environment, justice, freedom and peace, among others—your families, the Church and our society recognize you, and need more of your willingness and dedication. You clearly remind us that a life embraced and shared wholeheartedly contributes to the ongoing work of creation and glorifies God.

You are EMPOWERED. In the face of so many problems and difficulties today affecting our Christian life, families, social relationships and communities, as well as various personal and socio-cultural concerns you raised in your letter (mental health, substance abuse, HIV-AIDS, access to education, environmental problems, human trafficking, politics, dialogue with cultures, digital community, etc.), you are able to exhibit the humility to seek the support that will lead you to discover your strengths and capabilities to live meaningful lives. Like Mary, you are humble enough to proclaim “How can this be...?” (Lk. 1:34) and still give your assent in faith. This pleases not only the Lord but also your elders, because you are making us an important part of your development into mature individuals, fully aware of being persons called by God, capable of discerning decisions that positively influence your lives and those of others. We all long for a better world and society, for a renewed Church, and we see you as protagonists of this change, as the dynamic force of the Church now, when you reach out to the peripheries to bring Jesus and His message of salvation to the lost, the least and the last, including other young people like you who yearn to be loved, gifted and empowered.



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

You are IN MISSION. We look at you, our young people, so full of dynamism, as disciples sent on a mission to make disciples for Jesus. We pray that your discernment, choices and actions will lead you to a purposeful life—whether in the ordained ministry, consecrated life, marriage and family, or the single state—with the Spirit of the Risen Christ directing your steps in making and leaving a marked difference in the world and society [cf. Mt 28:19-20]. As we look forward to 2021, we envision that the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines will be a time to celebrate a bountiful harvest from your ranks—youth committed to families, to the Church and to the country with a renewed passion to proclaim the Word, ready to work with their communities and the Church, and willing to share in molding a just and peaceful world through missionary involvement. As the Holy Father Pope Francis challenged you, we also say: “So make a mess! Also help in cleaning it up... a mess that brings a free heart, a mess that

brings solidarity, a mess that brings us hope, a mess that comes from knowing Jesus and knowing that God, once I know Him, is my strength” (from the WYD2013). Awaken the shepherds in us, your elders, and rekindle the fire of faith, hope and love in everyone in the Church so that together, we can journey and minister with you, as you serve the Church and your fellow youth.

We appreciate your courage and openness to welcome the Year of the Youth with all its challenges and hopes. May you overflow with joy and trust that can only come from your encounter with Jesus through your moments of prayer, from the celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments, through the reading and study of the Word of God, in your pastoral youth formation activities and gatherings, in your participation in the life of your local churches, and through your works of mercy and charity.

Lastly, like the two disciples who were met by Jesus on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35), you are invited to open your eyes and ears, your minds and hearts: listen with a disposition of faith in Him, so you may turn your steps from a world of fear and despair towards that of God’s Kingdom. Together with the Synod Fathers, we express our wish to “continue the journey now in every part of the earth where the Lord Jesus sends us as missionary disciples” (Synod of Bishops, 2018).

With Mary our Mother who, in her youth trustingly said to the angel “Be it done to me according to your word” (Lk. 1:38), may our own FIAT resound this 2019 and beyond!

For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines

+ ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.

Archbishop of Davao

President, Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines

December 2, 2018

First Sunday of Advent



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Archdiocese of Capiz

Song for Reflection

LIWANAG SA DILIM

By: Rico Blanco

Intro: Em-G-Em-G-A-G-A-G-break
(D,C#m,)A-(Em,F#m,)G-; (3x)
F#-break

A G
Ituring ang iyong sariling

A
Tagahawi ng ulap

G
Sa kalangitang kulimlim

A G
Kampanang yayanig sa bawat nilalang

A G
Magigising ang lupang kulang sa dilig

F#m G
Ikaw ang magsasabing (kaya mo 'to)
F#m G
Tulad ng isang tanglaw sa gitna ng bagyo

Chorus

A
Isigaw mo sa hangin
G A
Tumindig at magsilbing liwanag

G A
Liwanag sa dilim
A G
Harapin mong magiting

A
Ang bagong awitin
G break (A)
Ikaw ang liwanag sa dilim

Interlude: A-G-A-G-break
Oh woh oh...

A
At sa paghamon mo
G A G
Sa agos ng ating kasaysayan

A G A G
Uukit ka ng bagong daan, ohh...

F#m G
Ikaw ang aawit ng (kaya mo 'to)
F#m G
Isang panalangin sa gitna ng gulo

(Repeat Chorus except last line)

G break
Ikaw ang liwanag

Adlib: A-G-A-G-A-G-;
F#m-G-A-;
(D,C#m,)A-(Em,F#m,)G-; (2x)

A
Isigaw mo sa hangin
Bm G
Tumindig at magsilbing

D
Liwanag sa dilim
F#m

Harapin mong magiting
G F#m
Ang bagong awitin
G break D,C#m,A
Liwanag

A
Isigaw mo sa hangin
Bm G
Tumindig at magsilbing

D
Liwanag sa dilim
F#m

Harapin mong magiting
G F#m
Ang bagong awitin
G A-G-A-

Liwanag sa dilim (woh oh oh...)
G A G-A-G-A hold
Liwanag sa dilim (woh oh oh...)

**“Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and placed it on his head, and put a stick in his right hand; then they knelt before him and made fun of him. ‘Long live the King of the Jews’ they said”
(Matthew 27:29)**

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”.

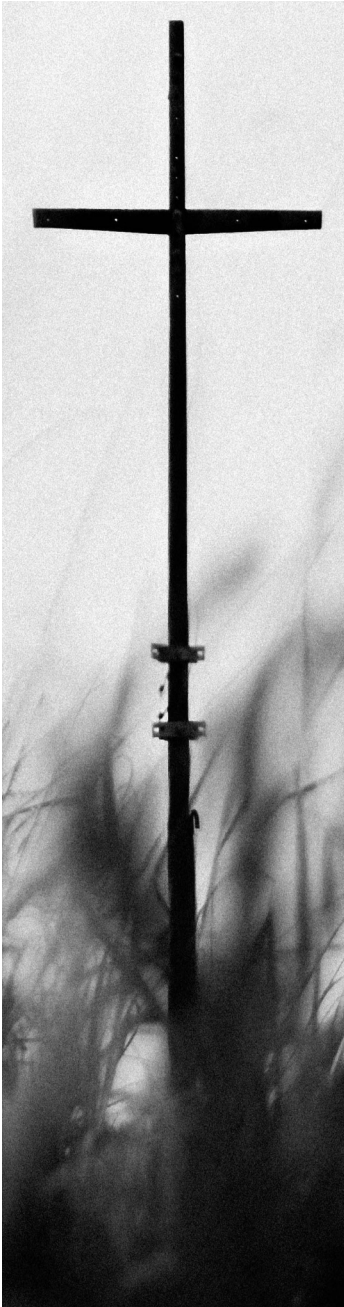
Read, recite, listen, and/or reflect on your life as a “catechist” using the selected research poem below. Discuss your views and insights with fellow catechists using the provided guide question/s in relation to the module theme on *the youth (mga kabataan)*.

Guide question for Discussion:

† Are we prepared to face suffering in order to fulfill the will of God?



Photo from the Diocese of Cabanatuan



CROWN OF THORNS

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola

The first time she taught,
There was so much joy
In every day
Mission of catechizing
The playful children.
But as time passed by
The catechist had observed
The gradual loss
Of the children's
Interest to listen
Children weighed down
Eyes forlorn
Because their lives
Are a wearisome battle
With serious problems at home:
Their parents do not go to mass,
Who are jobless,
Separated, not married.
It seemed to the catechist
That she had been crowned
With thorns that pierced her heart,
Because it seemed not enough
To simply understand the sacraments.
This society that the
Children lived in
Desperately needs catechism.
This is the fourth
Way of the Cross
Of a 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: CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER



Introduction

The youth must also become evangelizers themselves. The best way to evangelize young people is through other young people (Pope Francis, 2013b). Thus, the Church should prepare them and give them opportunities to engage themselves in various apostolates. Even while still young, they should be involved in parish apostolates after due training and must be part of the Parish Pastoral Council (PCP II 650-651). By witnessing and experiencing good examples from Church leaders and other youth, they will be given a sense of direction that may transform them into being aware and sensitive to their environment, and be renewed as faithful servants of God.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

For young people, accompaniment has a great effect in their lives. It ensures continuous and suitable accompaniment for the vocational process of the young people. They need to be guided in accordance with the Church's teachings on Christian faith and morals. These are crucially needed in this generation (CV 242). These will enable them to grow in the right direction and not be lost in the world's sinfulness and distractions.



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 24:13-35

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered Him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be condemned to death and crucified Him. ²¹ But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this

morning,²³ and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Him.”²⁵ Then He said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared,²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into His glory?”²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them the things about Himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, He walked ahead as if he were going on.²⁹ But they urged Him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” Therefore, He went in to stay with them.³⁰ When He was at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.³¹ Then, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight.³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road, while He was opening the scriptures to us?”³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and He has appeared to Simon!”³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.



Doctrine

† Wisdom

Wisdom is the first and highest gift of the Holy Spirit because it is the perfection of the theological virtue of faith. Through wisdom, we come to value properly those things that we believe through faith. The truths of Christian belief are more important than the things of this world, and wisdom helps us to order our relationship to the created world properly, it leads us to love Creation for the sake of God, rather than for its own sake.

† Understanding

Understanding is the second gift of the Holy Spirit, and people sometimes have a hard time understanding how it differs from wisdom. While wisdom is the desire to contemplate the things of God, understanding allows us to grasp, at least in a limited way, the very essence of the truths of the Catholic faith. Through understanding, we gain a certitude about our beliefs that moves beyond faith.

† Counsel

Counsel, is the third gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of the cardinal virtue of prudence. Prudence can be practiced by anyone, but counsel is supernatural. Through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we are able to judge how best to act almost by intuition. Because of the gift of counsel, Christians need not fear to stand up for the truths of Faith, because the Holy Spirit will guide us in defending those truths.

† Fortitude

While counsel is the perfection of a cardinal virtue, fortitude is both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a cardinal virtue. Fortitude is ranked as the fourth gift of the Holy Spirit because it gives us the strength to follow through on the actions suggested by the gift of counsel. While fortitude is sometimes called courage. However, it goes beyond what we normally think of as courage. Fortitude is the virtue of the martyrs that allows them to suffer death rather than to renounce the Christian Faith.

† Knowledge

The fifth gift of the Holy Spirit, knowledge, is often confused with both wisdom and understanding. Like wisdom, knowledge is the perfection of faith, but whereas wisdom gives us the desire to judge all things according to the truths of the Catholic Faith, knowledge is the actual ability to do so. Like counsel, it is aimed at our actions in this life. In a limited way, knowledge allows us to see the circumstances of our life the way that God sees them. Through this gift of the Holy Spirit, we can determine God's purpose for our lives and live them accordingly.

† Piety

Piety, the sixth gift of the Holy Spirit, is the perfection of the virtue of religion. While we tend to think of religion today as the external elements of our faith, it really means the willingness to worship and to serve God. Piety takes that willingness beyond a sense of duty so that we desire to worship God and to serve Him out of love.

† Fear of the Lord

The seventh and final gift of the Holy Spirit is the fear of the Lord, and perhaps no other gift of the Holy Spirit is so misunderstood. We think of fear and hope as opposites, but the fear of the Lord confirms the theological virtue of hope. This gift of the Holy Spirit gives us the desire not to offend God, as well as the certainty that God will supply us the grace that we need in order to keep from offending Him. Our desire not to offend God is more than simply a sense of duty; like piety, the fear of the Lord arises out of love.



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Human Values

- † **Enthusiasm** - Enthusiasm is one of the most divine feelings we can experience. Enthusiasm is energy vibrating at the highest level, energy vibrating in tune with creation. This divine feeling of excitement is our reward for heading towards our soul's true purpose.
- † **Creativity** - Creativity helps us see things differently and helps us to better deal with uncertainty. Studies show that creative people are more able to live with uncertainty because they can adapt their thinking to allow for the flow of the unknown.

Three important reasons to be more creative

- † **Creativity predicts a longer life.** Researchers found that creativity decreases mortality risk. One possible reason why creativity is protective of health is that it draws on a variety of neural networks within the brain (Carver, 2019). James Clear (2021) cites studies and researches that show how art therapy decreases negative emotions, reduces stress and anxiety, and improves medical outcomes. Not only can being creative help you live longer, but also it can improve your quality of health and life too.
- † **Helps solve problems.** Being creative helps, we become a better problem-solver in all areas of life and work. Instead of coming from a linear, logical approach, creativity can help us approach a situation from all angles. Creativity helps us see things differently and better deal with uncertainty. Studies show that creative people are better able to live with uncertainty because they can adapt their thinking to allow for the flow of the unknown.
- † **Develop confidence.** Being creative comes with many vicissitudes along with risks of failure. We allow ourselves to be vulnerable when we share our art. After all, not everyone might be able to appreciate it. Thus, engaging in the creative process is a great confidence builder, because we discover that failure is part of the process. Once we see failure as something that is survivable and something that helps us grow and that makes our work better, we can release our fears and try new things even at the risk of failing.
- † **Optimism** - Optimism is an attitude reflecting a belief or hope that the outcome of some specific endeavor, or outcomes in general, will be positive, favorable, and desirable. Being optimistic, in the typical sense of the word, is defined as expecting the best possible outcome from any given situation. It improves your emotional well-being, fosters better relationships and provides protection against adverse events. Optimism as a practice is self-fulfilling: it leads to greater effort, which in turn leads to better outcomes.



Morals

- † **Accompaniment of the youth** - “By virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples” (EG 120). There is a deep hunger in youth and young adults--a hunger for love, for truth, for meaning, for belongingness, and for a sense of purpose that culture cannot satisfy. This hunger is satisfied only in friendship with Jesus Christ and leads to the community of His Church and helps us to be fruitful in sharing love and care with those in need. Another way to describe this friendship is the invitation to become missionary disciples of and for Jesus Christ. Youth and young adults begin their discipleship journey in baptism and continue with that journey when they come to love Christ and follow His ways. They become missionary disciples when they seek to witness and serve those who are in need the most, beginning with those closest to them. Our engagement with the youth and young adults should help young disciples to encounter Christ. We have to accompany them, promote belongingness in the parish community, and lead them to missionary witness.
- † **Encounter** - “I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least openness to letting Him encounter them” (EG 3). Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, young people are often filled with questions. They long to encounter Christ, and they want to have someone to walk with and listen to their questioning (not necessarily answer them, but just be present for them). They want a first-hand experience of God, and they want that experience to be connected to their everyday life. Young people encounter God in the sacramental life of the Church, in prayer, community, in the Word, nature, service, witnessing, friendship, acts of kindness, hospitality, silence, art, and music etc. Some helpful reflection questions are: 1) How can we rethink our ministries with the youth so that we can provide a series of encounters and opportunities to reflect on these experiences? 2) How can we become architects of encounter for young people?

SOME PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE ACCOMPANIMENT OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

- † **Look broadly at the youth and young adult populations and develop targeted ministries for different segments.** Some youth, and young adults are looking to go deeper and become more engaged in formation and community services, while other young people need deeper prayer experiences. Some young people are anxious to come to weekly gatherings and join communities, still, others resist this kind of participation but are longing to have someone to talk to about their faith. Thus, we need differentiated approaches that begin with the variety of young people in mind.
- † **Engage families and see parents as part of our ministry.** Parents need to be inspired and equipped to take lead in the spiritual formation of their children. This looks different when children are youth and young adults. We can help families make this transition. What can we do to strengthen and support families as they share faith across generations? For families that are struggling with faith and active participation

in the community, our work with the youth can be a spark that evangelizes the whole community. Families with young adults often face different challenges. We can support parents as they continue to foster the faith life of emerging adults.

- † **Look broadly at our community and engage other disciples who are willing to spend time with the youth and young adults.** Notice we did not say "recruit more ministry leaders." Discipleship is about developing the practices of being a disciple of Jesus; something which we learn in community and in relationship with other disciples. We try to identify who are the youth and adults in our community from whom we want our young people to "catch" faith.
- † **Focus on spiritual growth and attend to youth and young adults in a comprehensive way.** Youth and young adults are more than just a family member or learner. Our ministry responses and faith formation need to address and engage each young person and assist them in taking the next step in their journey. It is especially important to invest time in helping youth and young adults who are evangelized to take deeper steps toward accountability, witness, and engagement in mission.
- † **Touch their hearts and make it personal.** Young people yearn to belong and to relate to people who care about them and value them as individuals. To build this relationship, we need to learn names, know youth and young adults, and provide ministries that move, inspire, and engage.
- † **Provide multiple contact points.** Youth and young adults grow in commitment through a variety of relationships. They benefit from hearing different voices that provide an echo of faith.
- † **Listen and include the youth, young adults, families, and leaders from among the diverse cultures within the community.** Dioceses and parishes are learning new ways to come to know and include the needs and gifts of people from various cultures in developing authentic and inclusive ministry responses. The Bishops of the United States are calling ministry leaders to develop intercultural competencies so that we have the capacity to listen, welcome, include, and be formed by people of many cultures. These resources are an important part of our accompaniment to young people (Stanz & East, 2021).
- † **Go where the youth and young adults are, including online.** The roots of youth ministry are to go to the corners where youth hang out. Young adult ministry has a similar history. To do this today, we should be proficient in social media, and use technology as a means to draw them towards gathered participation with the faith community.
- † **Engage youth and young adults in ministries that help them belong, believe, and share their gifts.** These elements address fundamental human needs that profoundly shape the youth and young adults. Ministry that addresses these elements develops the commitment and identity that are foundational to formation as growing young disciples.

- † **Empower them to make a difference.** Young people welcome and value opportunities that empower them to make a difference in the world. To put individuals in situations where their involvement truly affects another person is at the heart of faith. Ensure that many opportunities are given to perform service and ministry that directly influences the life of another.
- † **Be action oriented.** Young people value instant communication, respond quickly to action, and are adept at multitasking. They would rather participate in service than talk about it. If you decide to invite a young person to a parish committee, make sure that your committee is action oriented. Youth and young adults do not respond well to sitting around and talking about ministry; they prefer to make a difference now. Long, drawn out meetings without a clear focus are only certain to drive away youth and young adults!



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cagayan De Oro

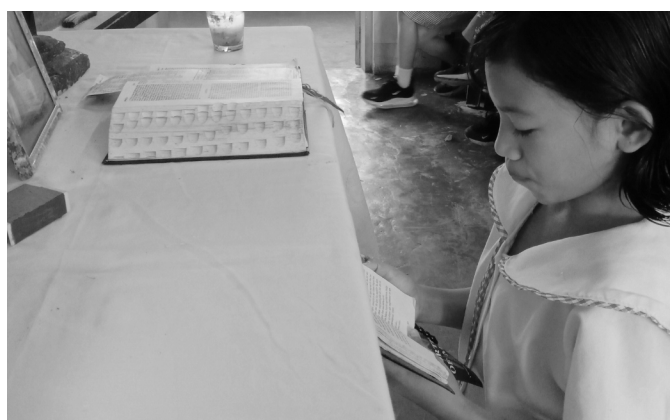


Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo

Simple Activities

Activity: This is Better Than That

Group the teams into pairs. One member of the pair wears a blindfold. The blindfolded member then has to complete a task while his or her partner verbally guides him or her safely through it. For this exercise, you need a large empty area. Fill the area with obstacles such as chairs, boxes or anything else you have on hand. The blindfolded partner needs to navigate the area without bumping into anything, while his or her partner guides him or her safely through the obstacle course.

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How do I become a steward of God's creations?
- † How do I help my fellow youth be closer to God?



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

ONE MISSION

(2019 YEAR OF THE YOUTH THEME SONG)

We are the true stewards of His creation
Serving humanity with joy and compassion
Creating change amidst our horizon
Building a brighter future with youthful passion

Chorus:

So let us sing and dance for the Lord
Spreading His words through this melody
Uniting His nation
One in faith, Hope and Charity

Let the love of God reign in our hearts
Shaping the world with the gifts we impart
Beloved, gifted, empowered through Jesus
We are one in mission
The Lord is with us
We are one!

Let the spirit of Christ be our guide
Like the spark of light forged in the sky
Together we'll reach our dreams up high

Chorus:

So let us sing and dance for the Lord
Spreading His words through this melody
Uniting His nation
One in faith, Hope and Charity

Let the love of God reign in our hearts
Shaping the world with the gifts we impart
Beloved, gifted, empowered through Jesus
We are one in mission
The Lord is with us
We are one!

Let the love of God reign in our hearts
Shaping the world with the gifts we impart
Beloved, gifted, empowered, through Jesus
We are one in mission
The Lord is with us
We are one!
(Repeat chorus)



Worship

A Prayer for Accompanying the Young

Heavenly Father, You call people from all lifestyles to You. You have called me to walk with young people and accompany them on their journey of faith. Nourish me by Your Body and Blood. Sustain me through Your Body the Church Encourage me through Your Word. Help me to be Your hands, feet and voice to all young people I meet. I ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - The life of a young person and the vocation to which God calls each one is “holy ground” that pastors and parents must respect, nurture and encourage. Pope Francis emphasized this in his apostolic exhortation *Christus Vivit* (Christ Lives). Likewise, the pope’s reflections on the 2018 Synod of Bishops on young people, on the faith and on vocational discernment, is a combination of a letter to young people about their place in the Church and a plea to older members of the Church not to stifle the enthusiasm of the young, but rather, to offer gentle guidance when needed.
- † **LIVE** - Help young people do what disciples do and get good at it! Our ministries could focus less on participation and learning information and more on practicing the skills of being a disciple. When youth and young adults are good at praying on their own, reading the Bible, participating in Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation, engaging in service, and witnessing to their faith, they will continue to do these things and seek communities and relationships that support them in being disciples.
- † **SHARE** – For the youth, (those whose age are from 18 to 40), you must not hide your talent. Rather, you should share your giftedness; share with others the talents that God has given you. As the parable of talents teach us, we should not bury into the ground the gift of God to us, rather, we should make it grow not for our own sake but for the Kingdom of God.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: WHEN GOD SPEAKS, WE LISTEN



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo



Introduction

The youth must also become evangelizers themselves. The best instruments to evangelize young people are other young people. The Church should prepare them and give them opportunities to engage themselves in various apostolates. Even while still young, they should be involved in parish apostolates after due training and must be part of the Parish Pastoral Council (PCP II 650-651). By witnessing and experiencing good examples from Church leaders and other youth, they will be given a sense of direction that may transform them into being aware and sensitive to their environment, to be renewed and faithful servants of God.

Accompanying young people has great effect in their lives. It ensures a continuous and suitable complement in the vocational process of the young people. They must be guided in accordance to the Church's teachings and Christian faith and morals which are crucially needed in this generation (CV 242). In this way, they will be able to grow in the right direction and not be lost in the world's sinfulness and distractions.



Word of God

Book of 1 Samuel 3:1-20

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.² At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³ the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" ⁵ and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. ⁶ The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. ⁹ Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if He calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."¹¹ Then

the Lord said to Samuel, “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. ¹² On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹³ For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore, I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.” ¹⁵ Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁶ But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” He said, “Here I am.” ¹⁷ Eli said, “What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, “It is the Lord; let Him do what seems good to Him.” ¹⁹ As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him and let none of His words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beer-Sheba knew that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the Lord.



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Doctrine

Three Theological Virtues

The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. God infuses them into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being (CCC 1813).

† Faith

Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that He has said and revealed to us, and what the Holy Church proposes for our belief, because He is truth Himself (CCC 1814). By faith "man freely commits his entire self to God." The believer seeks to know and do God's will for this reason. "The righteous shall live by faith." We live out our faith through works of charity.

The gift of faith remains in the one who has not sinned against it. However, "faith without work is dead." When it is deprived of hope and love, faith does not fully unite the believer to Christ and does not make him/her a living member of his Body (CCC

1815).

The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it. "All must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow Him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks." Service of and witnesses to the faith are necessary for salvation. "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven" (CCC 1816).

† Hope

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit (CCC 1817).

The virtue of hope responds to our aspiration for happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes hope to inspire men's activities and purify them to order them towards the Kingdom of heaven. Hope keeps man from discouragement, sustains him during times of abandonment, and opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude (CCC 1818).

Christian hope takes up from the fulfilment of the hope of the chosen people. It has its origin and model in the hope of Abraham, who was blessed abundantly by the promises of God fulfilled in Isaac, and who was purified through the test of sacrifice. "Hoping against hope, Abraham believed, and thus became the father of many nations" (CCC 1819).

Christ died out of love for us, while we were still enemies. The Lord asks us to love as He does, even our enemies, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself. The Apostle Paul says: "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, and endures all things." If I have not charity, says the Apostle, "I am nothing." Whatever my privilege, service, or even virtue, "if I do not have 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" (CCC 1825-1826).

† Charity

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. Jesus makes charity the new commandment when He said: "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." Charity is a fruit of the Spirit and the fullness of the Law.

Charity keeps the commandments of Christ: “Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love” (CCC 1822-1823).

Christ died out of love for us, while we were still enemies. The Lord asks us to love as He does, even our enemies, to make ourselves the neighbor of those farthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself. The Apostle Paul says: “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, and endures all things.” If I have not charity, says the Apostle, “I am nothing.” Whatever my privilege, service, or even virtue, “if I do not have 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” (CCC 1825-1826).

The practice of all the virtues is animated and inspired by charity, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of Divine love. The fruits of charity are joy, peace, and mercy. Charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction, it is benevolence. It fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous. It is friendship and communion. Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works (CCC 1828-1829).



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Hopeful** - To have hope is to want an outcome that makes our life better, Not only does it help make a tough situation more bearable but it can also eventually improve our lives, because envisioning a better future motivates us to take the steps to make it happen. Having hope gives us the courage to think that things would get better with time, despite the difficult odds. Hope keeps us moving forward, and gives us the strength and the ability to bounce back from whatever obstacles in life.
- † **Prudent** - It is the virtue that allows us to judge correctly what is right and what is wrong in any given situation. When we mistake the evil for the good, we are not exercising prudence. In fact, we are showing our lack of it. Because it is so easy to fall into error, prudence requires us to seek the counsel of others, particularly those we know to be sound judges of morality. Disregarding the advice or warnings of others, whose judgment does not coincide with ours is a sign of imprudence.
- † **Temperance** - Temperance is the restraint of our desires or passions. Food, drink, and sex are all necessary for our survival, individually and as a specie; yet a disordered desire for any of these goods can have disastrous physical and moral consequences . Temperance is the virtue that attempts to keep us from excess, and,

as such, requires the balancing of legitimate good against our inordinate desire for them. Our legitimate use of such goods may be different at different times; temperance is the "golden mean" that helps us determine how far we can act on our desires.



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia



Morals

Millions of young people listened intently to the words of Pope Francis during the concluding Mass of World Youth Day 2013 held in Brazil. His homily reminds us of the importance of the youth not just to the future of the Church but to present times as well. Pope Francis said: "The Church needs you, your enthusiasm, your creativity and the joy that is so characteristic of you." He also stressed: "Jesus Christ is counting on you! The Church is counting on you! The Pope is counting on you!"

We re-echo the words of Pope Francis to the Filipino youth in the Philippines. The Philippine Church needs the youth and counts them. Being youthful is an important aspect of the Filipino youth's mission. As Pope Francis said, the Church needs their 'enthusiasm and creativity'. The Church needs their youthful approach to life, their ideals and new perspectives on things, especially on faith.

The youth are beloved. Jesus loves you the way you are.

Pope St John Paul II in his homily at the 10th World Youth Day held in Manila Philippines in 1995, would remind us what it means to be loved by the risen Lord. St John Paul said: "Beloved ones, sisters and brothers: build your lives on the one model that will not deceive you! I invite you to open the Gospel and discover that Jesus Christ wants to be your friend (Jn. 15: 14). He wants to be your companion at every stage on the road of life (Lk. 24: 13-35). He wants to be the "way", your path through the anxieties, doubts, hopes and dreams of happiness (Jn. 14: 6). He is the "truth" that gives meaning to your efforts and your struggles. He wants to give you "life", as he gave new life to the young man of Nain (Lk. 7: 11-17), and gave a whole new future to Zacchaeus who was dead in spirit through ambition and greed (Lk 19: 1-10). He is your "resurrection", your victory over sin and death, the fulfilment of your desire to live forever (Jn. 11: 25). Because of this, he will be your "joy", the "rock" on which your weakness will be turned into strength and optimism. He is our salvation, our hope and happiness and peace."

John Paul II (1993) considered the youth as agents of New Evangelization. He tapped the youth of this generation on the eighth gathering of World Youth Day in Denver, U.S.A. In his address to the youth, the venerable Pope said: “Dear young people, with a spirit of generous self-giving, recognize that you are directly involved in the New Evangelization, which demands the involvement of all of us.” The Pope told the young people gathered in that event that the New Evangelization is their special task, a mission entrusted in a singular way to their generation (ibid).

Youth are Gifted.

Find that special gift in you. Find that purpose God has assigned for you. You have the chance to appreciate life and all the good things that may come with it as you go on living. Do not take this for granted. You have the opportunity to invest your time and talents that not only make your life better but also that help better the lives of others. You have all the opportunity to not just dream of good things, but getting up and make those dreams a reality. Be a gift yourself (a good influence to your friends all the time).

Four ways to become a youthful gift

- † Strive to look for what is true, good and charitable.
- † Do the right thing always even if no one is looking.
- † Grow in Faith. Faith is our direct connection to God, a direct link to Jesus.
- † Uphold your Identity. Be who you are. Do not pretend to be someone you are not.

Youth are Empowered.

Youth empowerment is a process where children and young people are encouraged to take charge of their lives. They do this by addressing their situation and then take action in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values, and attitudes. Christ not only loves the youth to be His friends. He also wants them to tell others about him. He wants the youth to bring their friends to Him. He wants them to make Him part of their circle of friends. He wants the youth to take an active part in the process of establishing God’s kingdom. Thus He empowers the youth to share in the values and principles that Christ is passionate about.

How can we empower the youth?

- † 1. Include the youth in decision-making processes.
- † 2. Honor the voice of the youth.
- † 3. Understand and implement their honest opinions and ideas.
- † 4. be willing to share your adult power and privileges in order to make the community a better place for both the young people and adults alike.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo



Simple Activities

Activity :

Game Description:

This is a fun youth ministry game that serves a double purpose: 1. To remind the youth players of things that strengthen or weaken their relationship with God; 2. to have fun as a group of young people who are building their faith in Jesus Christ.

Materials needed

40-50 balloons blown up and tied and markers to write on the good and bad balloons. Use permanent markers so that the ink does not get on the players hands or clothes. Give the ink from the markers time to dry before using.

Instruction

Leaders will have blown up about 40-50 balloons of various colors and shapes. On 20-25 balloons the leaders will write phrases or words that remind players of the ways they can be closer to God. On the remaining balloons, leaders write phrases or words that pull all away from God's influence. Keep the "good" and "bad" balloons in two separate garbage bags.

Divide the youth into two teams, and divide the room with tape on the floor. Leaders will throw both the good and the bad balloons equally on each side. If the word or phrase on the balloon is good, players want to hold onto them. If they are bad, and only pull them away from their relationship with Jesus Christ, the players should throw those balloons over the line on the other team's area. After all of the balloons have been tossed out, give the players a couple of minutes to play the game. Then call, "Stop!" None of the balloons may be picked up or thrown after the "stop" is called. Each of the "good" balloons that are held by a player count as a point. Even good balloons stuffed up in the players' shirts count. Any "bad" balloons held by players or bad balloons on the floor of the team, count as a point against the team's total points. The team with the most points is the winner of the round. The balloons can be gathered and the game can be played again.

Follow-up lesson:

There are many things that draw us closer to Jesus Christ and many things that pull each of us away from Him. It is up to us to make good choices, and to get rid of bad choices. Remind the players, that each follower of Jesus Christ, no matter how young or how old, must make these choices every day, and that some days it is difficult to let go of the bad things that pull us from building a strong relationship with Jesus Christ. We cannot give up and give in; we must keep building our faith, trust, and love in God each day.

Song Analysis (See next page)



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

JAM

By Kevin Roy & Cookie Chua

Hirap umawit mag-isa
And kasabay lumang gitara
Parang walang saysay ang kilos ko sa mundo

Pero ang kinabukasan mo
Tungkulin ba ng ibang tao
Maghanap ng entablado mo
Ngayon

Wag lang pagmasdan ang pangyayari
Gumala't gumalaw
Lamang sa ihip ng damdamin
Sabay sabay ng sumigaw

[chorus]
Kilos kabataan oras natin to
Makialam, makijam, makilahok
Kilos kabataan buhay natin to
Ang mundong dinatnan tayo magpatakbo
Makijam ka pare ko

Gusto ko man maki-isa
Sa paglutas ng mga problema
Anong magagawa ng isang katulad ko

Pero ang kinabukasan mo
Tungkulin ba ng ilang tao
Makibahagi sa bagahe ng mundo

Wag lang pagmasdan ang pangyayari
Gumala't gumalaw
Lamang sa ihip ng damdamin
Sabay sabay ng sumigaw
[repeat chorus]

[bridge]
Matuto ka makisaya
Ang mundo ma'y magka-iba

Sabay sabay kung mag-ingay
Makilahok, magpakilala

[repeat chorus 2x]

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I share my talents?
- † How do I make my fellow youth share their talents?



Worship

Prayer for Youth Ministries

Thank You, Lord, for Christian youth ministries that are being used to share the Gospel with a range of young people. I pray that You would draw each one closer to Yourself as they meet together for fellowship, fun and to learn more about You.

Lord, I pray that you would use such youth ministries to strengthen and encourage all those that have been born again, so that they may grow spiritually. Moreover, Lord, for those youngsters who do not yet know You, I pray that You would convict each one of their need of a Savior, so that they may come to faith through the Word of God and the witness of these youth fellowships and ministries.

Protect them from the wiles of the enemy, who would seek to undermine their trust in You, but rather equip each one to look to Jesus rather than to the things of the world. May they grow in grace and become effective witnesses to friends and family, not only in what they say but also in the way that they behave. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - The need to empower the youth for a better tomorrow is connected, both to the financial elevation as well as spiritual well-being. Awareness is a key factor for this empowerment, with guidance towards developing a wholesome outlook of life. Youth empowerment in any development is imperative not only for national development but also for personal development of an individual. Youth empowerment is pursued by promoting youth rights, youth activism and participation in community decision making. Empowerment is necessarily a process of inculcating values to equip the learner to lead a life that is both fulfilling and in accordance with the cherished values and ideals of the society. At present, this is the most effective means that the society possesses for confronting the challenges of the future.
- † **LIVE** - To the whole Church is addressed by Christ's command: "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mk. 16:15). The whole Church, therefore, is missionary and should be evangelizing; she lives constantly in a state of mission. Youth in this day should be the new missionaries and the new apostles of Christ. It is not enough to discover Christ, they (youth) must bring Him to others by using their exceptional skills and talent in proclaiming the Gospel through social

media, arts, music, facilitating youth encounters etc.

- † **SHARE** - In today's day and age, young minds should have access to resources to transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values, and attitudes. Then only can we believe in making our nation "shine", even in times of adversity. True happiness and selfishness cannot coexist. We must always be looking outward, "watchers of the dawn" with our eyes fixed on Jesus. It is easy to think the next new phone or electronic gadget, a new outfit, or a fun evening out can bring happiness, but these things can only bring pleasure, they do not last. Before looking for the next new piece to give us happiness, we should instead, place our hope in Christ.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: NAZARETH



Introduction

Jesus is “young among the young in order to be an example for the young and to consecrate them to the Lord”. For this reason, *Christus Vivit* (22) states that “youth is an original and stimulating stage of life, which Jesus himself experienced, thereby sanctifying it.” It is important to realize that Jesus was a young person. He gave His life when He was, in today’s terms, a young adult. He began his public mission in the prime of His life, and thus “a light dawned” (Mt 4:16) that would shine most brightly when He gave his life at the end. That ending was not something that simply happened; rather, His entire youth, at every moment, was a precious preparation for it. “Everything in Jesus’s life was a sign of His mystery”; indeed, “Christ’s whole life is a mystery of redemption” (CV 23).

Youth is more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind. That is why an institution as ancient as the Church can experience renewal and a return to youth at different points in her age-old history. Indeed, at the most dramatic moments of her history, she feels called to return with all her heart to her first love. Recalling this truth, the Second Vatican Council noted that, “enriched by a long and living history, and advancing towards human perfection in time and the ultimate destinies of history and of life, the Church is the real youth of the world”. In her, it is always possible to encounter Christ “the companion and friend of youth” (CV 34). The Church is young when she herself receives ever anew the strength born of God’s Word in the Eucharist, and the daily presence of Christ and the power of His Spirit in our lives. The Church is young when she shows herself capable of constantly returning to her source (CV 35).

Certainly, as members of the Church, we should not stand apart from others. All should regard us as friends and neighbors, like the apostles, who “enjoyed the good will of all the people” (Acts 2:47; 4:21.33; 5:13). Yet at the same time we must dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, purity, perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and the common good, love for the poor, and social friendship (CV 36). It is important to note that Jesus does not teach the young people, from afar or from without, but from within their very youth, a youth He shares with them. It is very important for us to contemplate the young Jesus as presented in the Gospels, for He was truly one of us, and shares many of the features of our young people. We see this, for example in the following: “Jesus had unconditional trust in the Father; He maintained friendship with His disciples, and even in moments of crisis, He remained faithful to them (CV 31).

**“Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.”
(Lk 2:51)**

Young people can offer the Church the beauty of youth by renewing her ability to “rejoice with new beginnings, to give unreservedly of herself, to be renewed and to set out for ever greater accomplishments” (CV 37). Every young person who feels called to a mission in this world is invited to hear the Father speaking those same words within his or her heart: “You are my beloved child.”



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 2: 41-52

⁴¹ Now every year His parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but His parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that He was in the group of travelers, they went a day’s journey. Then they started to look for Him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for Him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ When His parents saw Him they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, “Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, Your father and I have been searching for You in great anxiety.” ⁴⁹ He said to them, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what He said to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor.



Doctrine

THE VIRTUES

- † **CCC 1803** - "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." A virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but also to give the best of Him. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.

The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God with God.

† THE HUMAN VIRTUES

- † **CCC 1804** - *Human virtues* are firm attitudes, stable dispositions, habitual perfections of intellect that govern our actions, order our passions, and guide our conduct according to reason and faith. They make possible ease, self-mastery, and joy in



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

leading a morally good life. The virtuous man is he who freely practices the good.

Moral virtues are acquired by human effort. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts; they dispose all the powers of the human being for communion with Divine love.

The Cardinal Virtues

- † **CCC 1805** – Four virtues play a pivotal role and accordingly are called "cardinal"; all the others are grouped around them. They are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. "If anyone loves righteousness, Wisdom's labors are virtues; for she teaches temperance and prudence, justice, and courage." These virtues are praised under other names in many passages of Scripture.

- † **CCC 1806** – *Prudence* is the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern what is true and good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it; "the prudent man looks where he is going." Prudence is having the "right reason in action," writes St. Thomas Aquinas. It is not to be confused with timidity or fear, nor with duplicity or dissimulation. It is called *auriga virtutum* (the charioteer of the virtues) because it guides the other virtues by setting rule and measure. It is prudence that immediately guides the judgment of conscience. The prudent man determines and directs his conduct in accordance with this judgment. With the help of this virtue we apply moral principles to particular cases without error and overcome doubts about the good to achieve and the evil to avoid.

- † **CCC 1807** – *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 each and to establish, in human relationships, harmony that promotes equity with regard to persons and to the common good. The just man, often mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, is distinguished by his habitual right thinking and the uprightness of his conduct toward his neighbor. "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 1808** – *Fortitude* is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens one's resolve to resist temptations and overcome obstacles in moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his life in defense of a just cause. "The Lord is my strength and my song."



Photo from the Diocese of Marbel



Photo from the Diocese of San Juan (Nueva Ecija)

- † **CCC 1809** – *Temperance* is the moral virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures and provides balance in the use of created goods. It ensures the will's mastery over instincts and keeps desires within the limits of what is honorable. The temperate person directs the sensitive appetites towards what is good and maintains a healthy discretion. Temperance is often praised in the Old Testament: "Do not follow your base desires, but restrain your appetites" (Sirach 18:30).

To live well is nothing other than to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul and with all one's efforts. This comes about when love is kept whole and uncorrupted (through temperance), where no misfortune can disturb it (and this is fortitude). It obeys only [God] (and this is justice), and is careful in discerning things, so as not to be surprised by deceit or trickery (and this is prudence).

The virtues and grace

- † **CCC 1810** – Human virtues are acquired by education, by deliberate acts and by perseverance that is ever-renewed by repeated efforts are purified and elevated by Divine grace. With God's help, they forge character and give facility in the practice of the good. The virtuous man is happy to practice them.
- † **CCC 1811** – It is not easy for man, wounded by sin, to maintain moral balance. Christ's gift of salvation offers us the grace necessary to persevere in the pursuit of these virtues. Everyone should always ask for this grace of light and strength, frequent the sacraments, cooperate with the Holy Spirit, and follow His calls to love what is good and shun evil.

† THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

- † Human virtues are rooted in theological virtues, which adapt man's faculties for participation in the Divine nature. The theological virtues relate directly to God. They dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity. They have the One and Triune God for their origin, motive, and object.
- † **CCC 1813** – The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. God infuses them into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as his children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the faculties of the human being. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

Faith

- † **CCC 1814** – Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that He has said and revealed to us, and that Holy Church proposes for our belief, because He is truth Himself. By faith, man freely commits his entire self to God. For this reason, faith moves the believer to seek, to know, and to do God's will. "The righteous shall live by faith." We live our faith through works of charity.
- † **CCC 1815** – The gift of faith remains in one who has not sinned against it. But "faith apart from works is dead": when deprived of hope and love, faith does not fully unite the believer to Christ and does not make him a living member of his Body.
- † **CCC 1816** – The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: "All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks." Service of and witness to the faith is necessary for salvation: "So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Hope

- † **CCC 1817** – Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as true our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful." "The Holy Spirit is poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life."
- † **CCC 1818** – The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness, which God has placed in the heart of every man. Hope inspires men's activities and purifies them to order them to the Kingdom of heaven. It keeps man from discouragement. It sustains him during times of abandonment. Hope also opens up his heart in

expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, humankind is preserved from selfishness and led to happiness that flows from charity.

- † **CCC 1819** – Christian hope takes up and fulfills the hope of the chosen people which has its origin and model in the *hope of Abraham*, who was blessed abundantly by the promises of God fulfilled in Isaac, and who was purified by the test of the sacrifice. "Hoping against hope, he believed, and thus became the father of many nations."
- † **CCC 1820** – Christian hope unfolds from the beginning of Jesus' preaching in the proclamation of the beatitudes. The beatitudes raise our hope towards heaven as the new Promised Land; they trace the path that leads through the trials that await the disciples of Jesus. Nevertheless, through the merits of Jesus Christ and of His Passion, God keeps us in the "hope that does not disappoint." Hope is the "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul . . . that enters . . . where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf." Hope is also a weapon that protects us in the struggle of salvation: "Let us . . . put on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation." It affords us joy even under trial: "Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation." Hope is expressed and nourished in prayer, especially in the Our Father, the summary of everything that hope leads us to desire.
- † **CCC 1821** – We can therefore hope in the glory of heaven promised by God to those who love Him and do His will. In every circumstance, each one of us should hope, with the grace of God, to persevere "to the end" and to obtain the joy of heaven, as God's eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of Christ. In hope, the Church prays for "all men to be saved." She longs to be united with Christ, her Bridegroom, in the glory of heaven.

Charity

- † **CCC 1822** – 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.
- † **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 that they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love." Again: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."
- † **CCC 1824** – Fruit of the Spirit and fullness of the Law, charity keeps the *commandments* of God and his Christ: "Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love."
- † **CCC 1825** – Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies." The Lord asks us to love as He does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbor 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, and endures all things."

- † **CCC 1826** - "If I . . . have not charity," says the Apostle, "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.*"
- † **CCC 1827** – 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 the goal of their Christian practice. Charity upholds and purifies our human ability to love, and raises it to the supernatural perfection of divine love.
- † **CCC 1828** – The practice of the moral life animated by charity gives to the Christian the spiritual freedom of 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 son 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 . . . we are in the position of children.

- † **CCC 1829** – The *fruits* of charity are joy, peace, and mercy; charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion: Love is itself the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run toward it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.



Photo from the Diocese of San Juan (Nueva Ecija)



Photo from the Diocese of San Juan (Nueva Ecija)



Faith Response

- † Be open to the transforming grace of God thru the graces that the Church can offer to all her members.
- † Let the grace and blessings of God be an instrument for the members of the community, especially the youth, to grow in faith, hope and love.
- † Live in accordance with the teachings and examples of Jesus.
- † Keep in touch with the Church and let Her be our guide, as a Mother, she is willing to guide, protect, and help us achieve our goal, which is holiness and a life with God.
- † Look and seek the presence of God at all times and in every situation, place and most especially in every encounter without neighbors. We must see the presence of the Trinity in them.



Photo from the Diocese of Romblon



Photo from the Diocese of Urdaneta



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Faith (CCC 1814)**
Faith is the theological virtue by which we believe in God and believe all that he has said and revealed to us, and what the Holy Church proposes for our belief, because he is truth itself. By faith, "man freely commits his entire self to God." In faith, the believer seeks to know and to do God's will.
- † **Hope (CCC 1817)**
Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.
- † **Love/Charity (CCC 1822)**
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.



Morals

- † For the youth: The youth must find time to be alone for self-reflection or with a group in a quiet recollection. Assess where your lives are headed and the meaning behind it.
- † Community: The community must pray for the youth that they will understand, receive or embrace and celebrate their responsibilities in the Church and for them to see that they are important and blessed by God.
- † The Church must facilitate Youth activities by providing them with material support and facilities that enable them to grow as disciplines (Thompson, 2017).
- † Youth must commit to the Church; the Church must also give back to the youths by committing to their development.
- † Every member must be a living witness to the youth and to all members of the community for a healthy and holy Christian life.



Simple Activities

Activity: Youth Get-Together

- † It is much recommended to give time for the youth to organize an activity that will allow the youth to get together, that is to say, a whole day celebration for the Youth.
- † Let the youth leaders organize this whole day program, taking into consideration the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the praying of the Holy Rosary and the involvement of other ministries so that we can see the unity of the family of God.
- † Give also time for the parish priest to speak and encourage the youth to participate in the mission of the Church.

Song Analysis (See next page)

Guide for Reflection

- † As a baptized Christian, do I tell the world of the good news?
- † How do I fulfill my duties and responsibilities as missionary and disciple of God?
- † Do I consider God as my guide to do my mission on this world?
- † Does Love of God reign in my life?

Tell the World of His Love

Jamie Rivera

For God so loved the world
He gave us Him Only Son
Jesus Christ our Savior
His most precious One

He has sent us His message of love
And sends those who hear
To bring the message to everyone
In a voice loud and clear

Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home

Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love

(Tell the world of His love)
(Tell the world of His love)
Our Lord, our Savior, our King
Emmanuel, Prince of Peace
Begotten of the Father's love

Born to set us free
Let heaven and earth sing His praises
His righteousness proclaims
Let every heart rejoice in His love
And magnify His name



Worship

God our Father, be with us on our pilgrim journey of faith. Give us the grace and courage to step forward in faith and hope on the road ahead. Open our eyes to see your face in all those we encounter. Open our ears to hear your voice in those who are often ignored. Open our hearts that we might be faithful disciples of mercy and truth. Transform us. Empower us to give ourselves to the poor; to welcome the lost; to forgive those who hurt us; to comfort those who suffer and are marginalized. Like the disciples who journeyed up the mountain to witness the Transfiguration, may this experience be an encounter that strengthens us for our work in the world. Through the intercession of Mary, the Immaculate Conception, patroness of our nation,

may we be worthy witnesses of our faith, humble representatives of our country, and inspired missionaries bringing peace, hope, and mercy into our communities. We ask all this through Christ Our Lord. *Amen.*



Zeal for Mission

- † The Church must incorporate contemporary stratagems to the Youth ministry in establishing the growth of youths. Elders' roles have to be flexible and adjust to the ever-changing needs of youths through updating and matching the Youth energy and vitality while avoiding old models.
- † The Youth must therefore, in the end, not dilute the gospel message but discover how to live out the good news and encourage others to do so (Nielson, 2016).
- † The Youth must therefore be involved actively in drawing the congregation both old and young to participate responsibly in the work, life and mission of the Church and the community (Nielson, 2016).
- † The Youth must demonstrate in the family the moral, spiritual as well as overall faith development and act as mentors to adolescents. With love and support from their parents, the youths are to enhance the family to live in faith and love for Christ which brings about novel understanding as well as skills in the family so family life is enhanced (Campbell, 2000; Day & Kurtz, 2017).
- † The Youth must lead other family members in building a community that precipitates Christianity and the love for Christ (Chancey & Bruner, 2017; Day & Kurtz, 2017).

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: STAY WITH US

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. (Mt 24:31)



Introduction

We are all missionary disciples

In all the baptized, from first to last, the sanctifying power of the Spirit is at work, impelling us to evangelization. The people of God are holy, thanks to this anointing, which makes it infallible in credendo (in itself). This means that, the community as a whole, does not err in faith, even though it may

not find words to explain that faith. The Spirit guides it in truth and leads it to salvation. As part of His mysterious love for humanity, God furnishes the totality of the faithful with an instinct of faith (sensus fidei) – which helps them to discern what is truly of God. The presence of the Spirit gives Christians certain innateness with Divine realities, and a wisdom, which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression (EG 119).



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Diocese of Romblon

By virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out only by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for the personal involvement of each of the baptized. Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization. Indeed, no one who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are "disciples" and "missionaries", but rather that we are always "missionary disciples".

If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim Him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah!” (*Jn. 1:41*). The Samaritan woman became a missionary immediately after speaking with Jesus and many Samaritans came to believe in her (*Jn. 4:39*). So too, Saint Paul, after his encounter with Jesus Christ, “immediately proclaimed Jesus” (EG 120).

All of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others constantly evangelize us. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we should postpone the evangelizing mission; rather, each of us should find ways to communicate Jesus wherever we are. All of us are called to offer others an explicit witness to the saving love of the Lord, who despite our imperfections offers us His closeness, His Word and His strength, and gives meaning to our lives. In our hearts, we know that it is not the same to live without Him. What we have come to realize, what has helped us to live and has given us hope, is what we should also communicate to others. Our falling short of perfection should not be an excuse. On the contrary, mission is a constant stimulus not to remain mired in mediocrity but to continue growing. The witness of faith that each Christian is called to offer leads us to say with Saint Paul, “Not that I have already obtained this, or am already perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own” (*Phil 3:12-13* ; EG 121).

Thus, the youth’s increasing number and growing presence in society and likewise the problems assailing them should awaken, in every one of us, the desire to offer them, with zeal and intelligence, the Gospel ideal as something to be known and lived. On the other hand, young people who are well trained in faith and prayer must become more and more the apostles of youth. The Church counts greatly on their contribution, and has often expressed full confidence in them (*Evangelii Nuntiandi 72*).

The Catholic Church has never escaped from her sublime duty of guiding and forming the youths in all places, because the youth play a vital role not only in the Church but also in the world. If society will be better than what we currently have, if the Church and Christianity as a whole will become more and better equipped in her ministry of proclamation and witnessing in this post-modern era of moral/ethical relativism, then youths should have a robust, adequate and well-founded moral, spiritual and intellectual formation.



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 24: 28-35

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, He walked ahead as if He were going on. ²⁹ But they urged Him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” Therefore, He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When He was at the table with them, He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him; but He vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road, while He was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and He has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.



Doctrine



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija

THE SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

- † **CCC 1117** - As she has done for the canon of Sacred Scripture and for the doctrine of the faith, the Church, by the power of the Spirit who guides her "into all truth," has gradually recognized this treasure received from Christ and, as the faithful steward of God's mysteries, has determined its "dispensation." Thus, the Church has discerned over the centuries that among liturgical celebrations there are seven that are, in the strict sense of the term, sacraments instituted by the Lord.

- † **CCC 1118** - The sacraments are "of the Church" in the double sense that they are "by her" and "for her." They are "by the Church," for she is the sacrament of Christ's action at work in her through the mission of the Holy Spirit. They are "for the Church" in the sense that "the sacraments make the Church," since they manifest and communicate to men, above all in the Eucharist, the mystery of communion with God, who is love, One in three persons.

- † **CCC 1119** - Forming "as it were, one mystical person" with Christ the head, the Church acts in the sacraments as "an organically structured priestly community." Through Baptism and Confirmation the priestly people are enabled to celebrate the liturgy, while those of the faithful "who have received Holy Orders, are appointed to nourish the Church with the word and grace of God in the name of Christ."

- † **CCC 1120** - The ordained ministry or ministerial priesthood is at the service of the baptismal priesthood. The ordained priesthood guarantees that it is Christ in the sacraments who act through the Holy Spirit for the Church. The saving mission entrusted by the Father to His incarnate Son was committed to the apostles and through them to their successors: they receive the Spirit of Jesus to act in His name and in His person. The ordained minister is the sacramental bond that ties the liturgical action to what the apostles said and did and, through them, to the words and actions of Christ, the source and foundation of the sacraments.

- † **CCC 1121** - The three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders confer, in addition to grace, a sacramental character or "seal" by which the Christian shares in Christ's priesthood and is made a member of the Church according to different states and functions. This configuration to Christ and to the Church, brought about by the Spirit, is indelible, it remains forever in the Christian as a positive disposition for grace, a promise and guarantee of Divine protection, and as a vocation to Divine worship and to the service of the Church. Therefore these sacraments can never be repeated.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH

- † **CCC 1210** - Christ instituted the sacraments of the new law. There are seven: Baptism, Confirmation (or Chrismation), the Eucharist, Penance, the Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony. The seven sacraments touch all the stages and all the important moments of Christian life: they give birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith. There is thus, a certain resemblance between the stages of natural life and the stages of spiritual life.

- † **CCC 1211** - Following this analogy, we will first expound on the three sacraments of Christian initiation; *second*, on the sacraments of healing; and the *third*, the sacraments at the service of communion and the mission of the faithful. This order, while not the only one possible, allows one to see that the sacraments form an organic whole in which each particular sacrament has its own vital place. In this organic whole, the Eucharist occupies a unique place as the "Sacrament of sacraments": "all the other sacraments are ordered to it as their end."

- † **THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM (CCC 1213-1284)**
 - † **CCC 1213** - Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to *vitae spiritualis ianua* (life in the Spirit), and the door which gives access to the other sacraments. Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission: "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration through water and the Word."

- † **THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION (CCC 1285-1321)**
 - † **CCC 1285** - Baptism, along with the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the "sacraments of Christian initiation," whose unity must be safeguarded. It must be explained to the faithful that the reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For "by the sacrament of Confirmation, the baptized are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength by the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.

- † **THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST (CCC 1322-1419)**
 - † **CCC 1322** - The Holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.

 - † **CCC 1323** - "At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This He did in order

to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until He comes again. This is to entrust His beloved Spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, and a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet 'in which Christ is consumed, where the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.'"

† THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION (CCC 1422-1498)

† **CCC 1422** - "Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against Him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and which by charity, by example, and by prayer labors for their conversion."

† THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK (CCC 1499-1532)

† **CCC 1499** - "By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priests the whole Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that He may raise them up and save them. And indeed she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting their own sufferings to the Passion and death of Christ."

† THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS (CCC 1536-1600)

† **CCC 1536** - Holy Orders is the sacrament through which the mission entrusted by Christ to His apostles continues to be exercised in the Church until the end of time. Thus, it is the sacrament of apostolic ministry. It includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate.

† THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY (CCC 1601-1666)

† **CCC 1601** - "The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring. This covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament."



Faith Response

- † Open the door of your faith, that is to say, open yourself to the works of God and His Church in your life.
- † Discover the spiritual treasures of the Church, such as the sacraments, and the meaning of these to Christian life.
- † Participate actively in the mission of the Church, be a model to your fellow youth and let them know the beauty of life living with God and having encountered Jesus in your

life.

- † Receive actively the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist to grow more on your spiritual life and spiritual journey.
- † Grow in faith with others; that is to say, spread the faith with your colleagues, by your actions and words.



Human Values/Virtues

Youth must be disciples with these marks...

- † **Disciples are called** - Luke 5:1-11 perfectly illustrates this. God always acts first! Jesus came to the anglers and gave them an invitation. It was only after this invitation to discipleship that our choice matters. Jesus has called each of us.
- † **Disciples intentionally respond to Jesus' call** - After we are called, then a disciple must respond positively to the call! If Peter had not dropped his nets and followed Jesus, he would not be a disciple. You cannot follow, if you do not make a choice. Discipleship is never inherited or accidental!
- † **Disciples love** - This is a primary mark of a disciple. Love of God and love of others. Jesus says that others will know we are disciples by our love for one another. (John 13:35).
- † **Disciples are fruitful** - In fact, Jesus says that being fruitful PROVES that you are his disciple. "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples" -John 15:8.
- † **Disciples are obedient** - Go a little farther in John 15 and you find in verse 14 - "you are my friends if you do what I command". Notice, we cannot be intimate with Jesus and be disobedient. It is a non-starter.



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando (La Union)



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo



Morals

- † Youthfulness is a time to discover yourself – your potentialities, your capacities. Try to discover who you are. Know that you are God’s children and you are called to love and serve Him
- † Never forget that there is a God above watching you in all you do and remember that there are many things about you which your friends and enemies do not know but only God knows. Never forget that you are not a product of chance – you are a product of a conscious thought of God. In whatever you do always surrender to his will. Sometimes, it is difficult to decipher the will of God – ask him to guide your steps
- † Know the real doctrines and teachings of the Church and be one of the active members who are willing to do missions and witnessing in your lives.
- † Live in accordance to the will of God. The Church offers the sacraments to deepen our relationship with God. Have a sacramental life, that our actions may reflect the works of God - actions and works of love and out of love.



Simple Activities

Activity: Recollection - Youth - Disciples of Christ!

- † Prepare the learners to have their simple recollection
- † Invite some speakers that can give simple reflections and talks especially about the Christian life and being youth members of the church
- † One-day recollection with Eucharistic adoration and prayer may help also to deepen their relationship to God.

Song Analysis *(See next page)*

Guide for Reflections

- † Do I consider God, the real Light of my Life?
- † Do I participate to the light of God to be light of others?
- † During times of darkness in my life, how do I deal with these moments?
- † Do I keep searching for the real meaning of life despite of the negative things that happen in my life? Do still stand up and look forward?

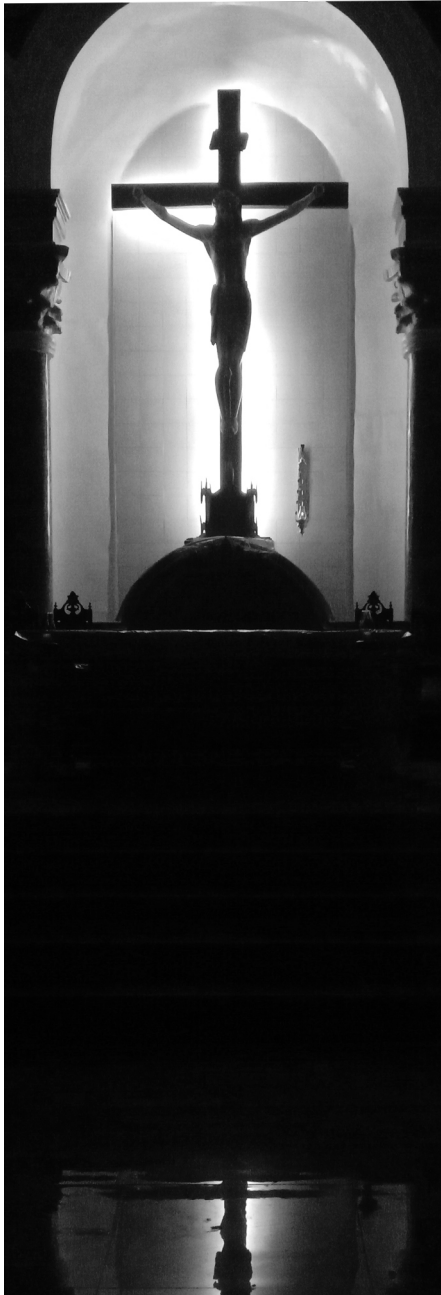


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

LIWANAG SA DILIM

Rico Blanco

Ituring ang iyong sariling
Tagahawi ng ulap
Sa kalangitang kulimlim
Kampanang yayanig
Sa bawat nilalang
Magigising ang lupang
Kulang sa dilig

Ikaw ang magsasabing
Kaya mo to!
Tulad ng isang tanglaw
Sa gitna ng bagyo

Ref:
Isigaw mo sa hangin
Tumindig at magsilbing
Liwanaag
Liwanaag sa Dilim
Harapin mong magiting
Ang bagong awitin
Ikaw ang
Liwanaag sa Dilim

At sa paghamon mo
Sa agos ng ating kasaysayan
Uukit ka ng bagong daan

Ikaw ang aawit ng
Kaya mo to!
Sang panalangin
Sa gitna ng gulo (Ref.)



Worship

PRAYER FOR YOUTH

We offer to you, Loving God, the gifts and needs of youth. Bless them with your guiding grace as they face the challenges and opportunities in their lives. Touch their hearts with the gentleness of your love, that they may know they are valued and valuable beings. Send your spirit of hope to their lives, that they may believe in themselves and know they are needed in this world. Grace them with the gift of joy that they may celebrate life through laughter and

tears alike. Guide us, as we continue to grow in appreciation of the many gifts of young people, in the ministry opportunities we offer to them, in the journey of faith we walk with them, in our shared mission as a community called to discipleship in the world. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † Be disciples sent on a mission to make disciples for Jesus.
- † Discern for the choices and actions that lead you to a purposeful life—whether in the ordained ministry, consecrated life, marriage and family, or the single state—with the Spirit of the Risen Christ directing your steps in making and leaving a marked difference in the world and society (Mt 28:19-20).
- † Be committed to the families, to the Church and to the country with a renewed passion to proclaim the Word, ready to work with their communities and the Church, and willing to share in molding a just and peaceful world through missionary involvement.
- † Help the Church bring hope knowing and believing that God is our strength Awaken the shepherds in us rekindle the fire of faith, hope and love in everyone in the Church so that together, we can journey and serve the Church.
- † Listen with a disposition of faith in Him, so you may turn your steps from a world of fear and despair towards that of God's Kingdom.
- † Invite Mother Mary into your life. She is always there for those who fly to her patronage. She can intercede for you when 'there is no wine' (John 2:3) in your life. Be constant in invoking her intercession especially through the Holy Rosary. Make the Rosary, a prayer close to your heart.

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Song References

LIWANAG SA DILIM

Lyrics: Rico Blanco

Artist: Rivermaya

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/rivermaya/liwanagsadilim.html>

ONE MISSION

(2019 Year of the Youth Theme Song)

Artists: Bro. Migs Ramirez & Sarah Mae de la Torre

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xAB6K-VFWE>

JAM

Artists: Kevin Roy & Cookie Chua

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.jiosaavn.com/lyrics/jam-lyrics/HQ8qdTISTQo>

TELL THE WORLD OF HIS LOVE

Lyrics: Trina Belamide

Artist: Jamie Rivera

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jamierivera/telltheworldofhislove.html>



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 8:

Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue and Indigenous Peoples

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 8: ECUMENISM, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Overview

Christ wills Unity of Divided Humanity

The Church humbly acknowledges the challenges of living amidst different faiths and religions, as we strive for unity and harmony in a community (Valles, 2019). Thus, to achieve the unity that Christ willed, we must strive to eradicate prejudices, grow a deeper understanding and appreciation for other faiths and religious traditions (NPCCR 59).



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

In its prelude, the 2019 CBCP Pastoral Letter defined the meaning of ecumenism, interreligious dialogue and indigenous people. Ecumenism refers to the “various efforts, movements or tendencies by Christians to come together with different Church traditions, journeying toward worldwide Christian unity or cooperation” (ibid).

Dialogue is one of the essential aspects of the Church's mission. Thus, interreligious dialogue is the encounter of Christian brothers and sisters with non-Christian religions (Ecclesia in Asia 31). “This dialogue aims for mutual understanding and friendly relations with a deeper level of the spiritual love and common respect for religious convictions” (Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, 1991a). Consequently, it concerns the notion about the popular religiosity of the indigenous peoples. In history, indigenous people have certain awareness of a hidden power, which lies behind the course of nature, or in the events of human life and acknowledgement of a Supreme Being. This awareness and recognition results in a way of life that is filled with a deep religious sense. The Church’s perspective during the Year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue and Indigenous People is none other than unity among the beloved children of God. One of the very reasons why God sent His Son to this world is to unite all the people and, likewise, to fulfill the promise of salvation for all.

As the Church undertakes Her evangelizing mission, the spirit of dialogue manifests as an attitude of respect and friendship that should permeate all activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the Church (Ecclesia in Asia 9). “The Incarnation of the Lord Jesus is ultimately an image and example of this dialogue. God becoming man, sharing our human life and speaking with us in a human language to bring the Good News, is an example of deep solidarity that inspires the Church’s dialogue with peoples, cultures and religion” (Valles, 2019). Thus, the Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*, Saint John Paul II (1995) stated “the unity of all divided humanity is the will of God.” Therefore, Catholics should refrain from using language and doing acts that might unnecessarily alienate our separated brothers and sisters. This is

because the unity that Christ wills involves charity, that is, having a welcoming heart and concern for all (PCP II 217).

Harmony in Dialogue

The main purpose of dialogue is for the whole humanity to live in harmony and fraternal charity (Ut Unum Sint 39). The call to live in harmony invites everyone to love one another concretely. Fraternal love encourages all to respect each other with all their differences, and to protect the rights and freedoms of all humanity. Thus, the biblical passage of St. Mark reminds everyone “to love our neighbor as ourselves” (Mark 12:31).

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines proposes four forms of dialogue, without claiming to establish among them any order of priority: Firstly, the dialogue of life, where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems, and preoccupations. Secondly, the dialogue of action, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. Thirdly, the dialogue of theological exchange, where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other’s spiritual values. Fourthly, the dialogue of religious experience, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance, with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute (Valles, 2019).

In the exercise of dialogue, we also practice inculturation, where we not only discern and appreciate the seeds of goodness/truth planted by the Holy Spirit in other cultures/religions but also become enriched by this encounter (Nostra Aetate 2). Thus, inter-religious dialogue plays a crucial role in “engaging the truth of other religions (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004, p. 349).

Likewise, while it is important to appreciate the seeds of the Holy Spirit in these ‘other’ religious traditions, one should guard against too much syncretism/relativism, so that the integrity of our Catholic faith/values is not lost. One should always be reminded that interreligious dialogue should be done within the light of the Gospel and should “proclaim the person and message of Jesus at all times” (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004, p. 361)

Fraternal love also requires walking together in building a better world through preserving the name of justice and mercy. This means having the firm conviction that the authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted always in the values of peace. The Catholic



Photo from the Archdiocese of Ozamis



Photo from the Prelature of Marawi

Church is a universal Church. Therefore, She must be a welcoming Church. A relational Church entails an attitude of dialogue for the sake of unity but not to the point of compromising the objective truths revealed and entrusted to the Church (Ut Unum Sint 7).

This way, interreligious dialogue becomes *prophetic* since it now participates in the dialogical life and mission of the Trinity.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † The Church’s perspective in this pastoral priority is none other than unity. Therefore, we must always preserve unity among our brethren in different religions/ denominations, as Christ wills unity of divided humanity.
- † The Church’s invitation is to live always in genuine dialogue, following four forms of dialogue: (1.) Dialogue of life - to live in an open and neighborly spirit. (2) Dialogue of action - Collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people. (3) Dialogue of theological exchange - To deepen the understanding of the respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other’s spiritual values. (4) dialogue of prayer – A dialogue of religious experience, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches (Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, 1991b) whose aim of course, is achieving prophetic dialogue.
- † The Catholic Church must be a welcoming Church. If She is a welcoming Church, it means that She is a Church that is relational. This entails an attitude of openness to dialogue for the sake of unity, in order to build a community of faith living in harmony and understanding.
- † Other Christian denominations, non-Christians, and religious experiences of indigenous people are teaching the Church and She can learn from them. Therefore, the Church has to listen to them. By listening, both can be purified and enriched. Mutual support and helping each party are the best ways to live in unity. But not to the point of compromising the objective truths revealed and entrusted to the Church.

Etymology

Ecumenism

What is Ecumenism? From the Greek *oikoumenē* meaning “inhabited house” and *oikos* “house” and can be traced from the commands, promises, and prayers of Jesus. After the International Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in 1910, Protestants began to use the term ecumenism to describe the gathering of missionary, evangelistic, service, and unitive forces. During and after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Roman Catholics used ecumenism to refer to the renewal of the whole life of the church, undertaken to make it more responsive to “separated churches” and to the needs of the world (Britannica, 2019).

Interreligious dialogue

The term interreligious dialogue (or interfaith dialogue) refers to positive interaction between people of different faith communities, mostly following the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions. Although it is difficult to draw out the aims of the modern interreligious movement, which contains many disparate groups and individuals, certain common goals do seem to emerge. Most participants seek to respect the other's point of view, as well as to share their own. They tolerate or defend the other's right to exist as well as welcoming the benefits to the world rendered by the other religion(s). People involved in dialogue are rarely oriented toward change of core beliefs. There are many points around which dialogue participants can seek common ground and make common cause. One of the most difficult and perhaps most challenging points involves discussion surrounding core beliefs, which if approached incorrectly tends to divide. For this reason, much dialogue revolves around other, easier core values upon which all people of goodwill can agree (New World Encyclopedia, 2020).

Indigenous Peoples

"Born or originating in a particular place," 1640s, from Late Latin *indigenus* "born in a country, native," from Latin *indigena* "sprung from the land, native," as a noun, "a native," literally "in-born," or "born in (a place)," from Old Latin *indu* (prep.) "in, within" + *gignere* (perfective *genui*) "to beget, produce," from PIE root **gene-* "give birth, beget," with derivatives referring to procreation and familial and tribal groups.

Indu "within" is from archaic *endo*, which is cognate with Greek *endo-* "in, within," from PIE **endo-*, extended form of root **en* "in" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021).

Catechetical Context

DIALOGUE TOWARDS HARMONY

As our celebration of the 500 Years of Christianity in the country is fast approaching, we pay attention this year to ecumenism, interreligious dialogue and indigenous peoples. We draw inspiration from the recent apostolic visit of Pope Francis to the Middle East, Thailand, and Japan, which promoted a culture of encounter and solidarity. We humbly acknowledge the challenges of living among different faiths and religions as we strive towards unity and harmony in community.

Our theme this year, Dialogue towards Harmony, expresses well our Lord's desire which we should appropriate for ourselves, "that all may be one" (John 17:21). An open, honest, respectful, loving dialogue of life, prayer and action, is the only way towards harmony in community. At stake are the great values of peace and harmony particularly in areas of armed conflict, solidarity in the struggle for social change, unity in healing social ills, integrity and social justice in our land.

Father, just as you are in me and I am in you; may they also be one in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:21)

Basis for Dialogue

As the church undertakes its evangelizing mission, the spirit of dialogue manifested as an attitude of respect and friendship should permeate all those activities constituting the evangelizing mission of the church (Ecclesia in Asia 9). The Incarnation of our Lord Jesus is ultimately an image and example of dialogue. God becoming man, sharing our human life and speaking in a human language to bring the Good News is an example of deep solidarity that moves the Church's dialogue with peoples, cultures and religion.

Throughout history, there has been found among indigenous peoples a certain awareness of a hidden power, which lies behind the course of nature and the events of human life. At times there is present a latent recognition of a Supreme Being. This awareness and recognition results in a way of life that is imbued with a deep religious sense. The Church, therefore, urges the faithful to enter with prudence and charity into discussions and collaborations with people of other religions and cultures. Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life, acknowledge, preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among peoples of other faith and traditions, and also their social life and culture.

Interreligious dialogue does not merely aim at mutual understanding and friendly relations. It reaches a much deeper level, that of the spirit, where exchange and sharing consist in a mutual witness to one's beliefs and a common exploration of one's respective religious convictions.

Allow us to propose four forms of dialogue, without claiming to establish among them any order of priority:

- † The dialogue of life, where people strive to live in an open and neighborly spirit, sharing their joys and sorrows, their human problems and preoccupations
- † The dialogue of action, in which Christians and others collaborate for the integral development and liberation of people
- † The dialogue of theological exchange, where specialists seek to deepen their understanding of their respective religious heritages, and to appreciate each other's spiritual values
- † The dialogue of religious experience, where persons, rooted in their own religious traditions, share their spiritual riches, for instance with regard to prayer and contemplation, faith and ways of searching for God or the Absolute

Ecumenism refers to the various efforts, movements or tendencies to come together by Christians of different Church traditions, journeying toward worldwide Christian unity or cooperation. Ecumenism comes from the Greek word *oikoumene* meaning, "the whole inhabited world" searching for unity among Christians (Eph 4:3).

Ours is a pluralistic society and a prime factor of our pluralism is the diversity of our cultural heritage. Lowland cultures have been heavily influenced by the three centuries of Spanish colonial rule, the Muslim peoples of the south by Islamic traditions, and the mountain tribes have retained their pre-Spanish characteristics (PCP II 19).

Let us bear in mind that Inculturation is an expression of dialogue with indigenous people's faith communities. Through inculturation, the church makes the gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community (RM 5).

The Call to Human Fraternity

The ultimate purpose of dialogue is for the whole humanity to live in harmony and fraternal love. This fraternal love will ensure peace in our land which seems to be elusive in reality.

This call to live in harmony asks us to love one another concretely. It calls us to respect each other with all our differences, to "love our neighbor as ourselves" (Mark 12:31) and to protect the rights and freedoms of all humanity.

We are also being asked to practice human fraternity by embracing all human beings, trying to be united, and treating each other with respect. This requires preserving and protecting the freedom that is a right of every person, where each individual enjoys the freedom of belief, thought, expression and action.

Fraternal love also asks us to walk together in building a better world through preserving the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith. This means having the firm conviction that the authentic teachings of religions invite us to remain rooted always in the values of peace. It also asks of us to always be ready to ask forgiveness for the wrong that we have said, done and thought to others and to be ready to forgive others for the wrong that they have done to us.

May this season of advent, a season of hope, joy, love and peace keep us strong in faith and courageous enough to face the many challenges we encounter in life. We should never tire in striving to conserve and defend the values of mutual understanding, human fraternity and harmonious coexistence. We should always strive to re-establish wisdom, justice and love, and to reawaken religious awareness among young people so that the future generations may be protected from the pitfall of materialistic thinking and from unbridled greed and indifference that reinforce the law of force and not on the force of law.

May this year of Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and the Indigenous Peoples bring us more closely together so that all may be truly One in God.

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines,

+ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.

Archbishop of Davao

President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines

01 December 2019



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando

Song for Reflection

WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

By: Jamie Rivera

Theme song of Pope Francis' visit in the Philippines 2015

Intro: A Bm7 A/C# DM7 E7 FM7 E7sus E7
A E/D C#m7 F#m
Do you see these chil-dren on the streets?
DM7 Bm7 /A GM7- E7- E
Have you walked the pave-ments where they sleep?
DM7 C#m7 DM7 C#m7 F#m
Do you feel their hands, When you give them alms?
/E B/D# B GM7
Did you e - ver give them bread to eat?
D/E A Bm7 A/C# DM7
Have you seen their homes washed by the floods?
A/E F#m7 GM7 E7 E
While a mother tightly holds her child
DM7 C#m7 DM7 C#m7 F#m
Do you hear the wind of the raging storm?
/E B/D# B E7 E
Can you tell them where it's co-ming from?

Refrain:

DM7 E/D C#m7 F#m7
Let us show our love and mer - cy
Bm7 D/E Em7
With true kind-ness and hu-mi-li-ty
A DM7 C#/F F#m F6 A/E
For God loves the weak and the nee- dy
D/E F Eb/F
just like you and me

Chorus:

Eb/F Bb Cm7 Bb/D EbM7
We are all God's children We are all the same Bb/F
He is calling us by name
Gm7 AbM7 Eb/F F/Eb Dm7 Dm7 EbM7
To help the poor and lame And learn what life is really for
Dm7 Gm7 Cm7 F7 Bb Bb
It's to kno-w and love and serve the lord.

A Bm7 A/C# DM7
Stand together and let's do our pars
A/E F#m7 GM7 E7 E
Hear their voices mend their broken hearts

DM7 C#m7 DM7 C#m7 F#m
 Choose to be brave fight for their rights
 /E B/D# B D/E E
 Give them back their honor and their pride

Coda:
 F#m C#m
 Please do not be blind and just leave them behind
 Bm B/D# E
 To struggle in darkness Or give them empty promises.

Chorus:
 Eb/F Bb Cm7 Bb/D EbM7
 We are all God's children We are all the same
 Bb/F
 He is calling us by name
 Gm7 AbM7 Eb/F
 To help the poor and lame
 F/Eb Dm7 Dm7 EbM7
 And learn what life is really for
 Dm7 Gm7 Cm7 F7 Gm /F Gm/E
 It's to know and love and serve the lord.
 Bb/F Gm7 Cm7 F7 Gm /F Gm/E
 It's to know and love and serve the lord.
 Bb/F Gm7 Cm7 F7 Bb Cm7 Bb/D
 It's to know and love and serve the lord.

Catechist's Corner

“Jesus drank the wine and said, ‘it is finished!’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his head”

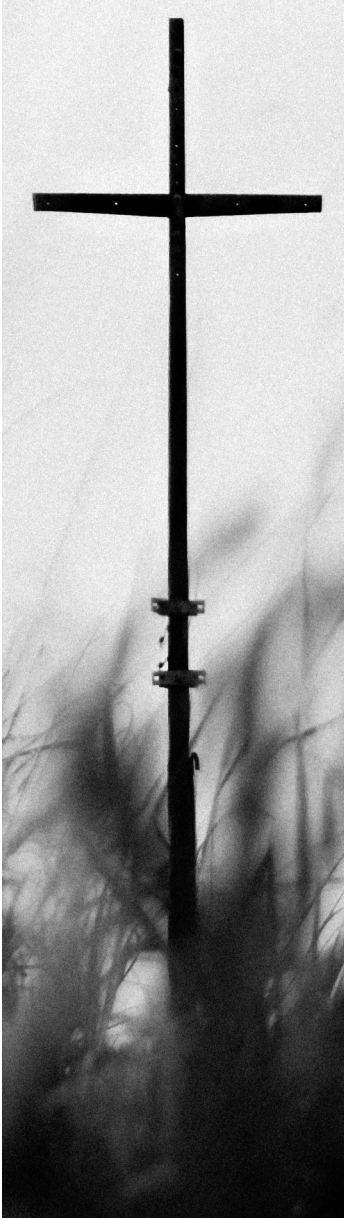
(Matthew 27:29)

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 *ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, and, indigenous peoples (ekumenismo, diyalogo sa pagitan ng mga relihiyon, at mga katutubo)*.

Guide question for Discussion:

† Have we ever lost hope in times of trial?



THE DEATH

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Jeanette P. Grajo

The death of Christ had been
Contemplated a number of times
By the servant-catechists.
In the daily cross
That they hold
For the mission of
Spreading the Word
Of the Living Christ.
But in the death
Of our Lord Jesus Christ,
There is also a lesson conveyed-
There is a destined place
For each one, an inevitable fate.
In our consciousness
There is a preordained end,
And in their prayer
At the end of time,
They should tightly embrace.
The promise of togetherness
In the promised heaven
Because the final mission
Is fulfilled
In thanksgiving!
This is the twelfth
Way of the Cross
Of a servant-catechist,
For a 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: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE



Introduction

Commitment to Ecumenism, Interreligious dialogue and popular religiosity of Indigenous people is a response to the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ “that all may be one” (John 17:21). In order to fulfill this, the Catholic Church must overcome divisions with other Christian denominations and with those who are not in full communion with Her. Nonetheless, they are not separated from Her in faith and mission (Unitatis Redintegratio 4). When the Catholic Church, other Christian religions and non-Christian religions dialogue together, they encounter Jesus Christ who is universal. Therefore, as a Universal Church, it is important to strengthen the relationship with them and constantly be a welcoming Church (Verbum Domini 89).



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

Encountering Christ. It is good to reflect on this Biblical passage, “As the Father and I are one, so you too must be one” (John 10:30). Jesus is a Jew, but He also preached to the Gentile areas because He longs for unity. This means that the Church should be an inclusive Church. This can only be possible through dialogue. The duty to engage in dialogue is a commitment to preserve harmony with all religions. The Book of Psalms states: “how good and pleasant it is for brothers to live in unity” (Psalm 133:1). If Christ who is God came down from heaven and became man in order to live with us and to unite us as one family, He absolutely desires for unity of all religions. Hence, we must also strive to form a community of love as brothers and sisters amidst diversity of religions and customs. We must live as one in charity and harmony.



Word of God

Gospel of John 17:20-26

²⁰ “I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As You, Father, are in me and I am in You, may they also be in Us, so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. ²² The glory that You have given Me, I have given them, so that they may be one, as We are One, ²³ I in them and You in Me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that You have sent me and have loved them even as You have loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that those also, whom You have given Me, maybe with Me where I am, to see My glory, which You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵ “Righteous Father, the world does not know You, but I

know You; and these know that You have sent me. ²⁶ I made Your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”



Doctrine

The Four Marks of the Church:

Before we do dialogue with other religions/sects, it is fundamental to learn important doctrines about our own Catholic Church. These are the four marks of the Church: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. These marks are fully realized in the Catholic Church. While other Christian Churches accept and profess the Creed, and possess elements of truth and sanctification, only the Roman Catholic Church reflects the fullness of these marks. The Second Vatican Council taught, "This Church (which Christ founded), constituted and organized as a society in the present world, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in communion with him" (Lumen Gentium 8). "For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which the universal help towards salvation is that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained" (UR 3).

Our duty then is to make these four marks visible in our daily lives. However, we must never forget our brothers and sisters from different walks of faith-life/religiosity. There are ways of making a good rapport/ dialogue with them and forming relationships with them in good faith. These are: Ecumenism, Interreligious dialogue and Understanding the popular belief/religiosity of the Indigenous people.

- † **ONE** - The "oneness" of the Church is visible. As Catholics, we are united in our Creed and other teachings. The celebration of the sacraments, and the hierarchical structure based on the apostolic succession is preserved and handed on through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. For example, whether one attends Mass in Alexandria, San Francisco, Moscow, Mexico City, or wherever, the Mass has the same readings, structure, prayers, and the like except for the differences in language. They are celebrated by the faithful who share the same Catholic beliefs, and are offered by a priest who is united to his bishop, who is united to the Holy Father, the pope, the successor of St. Peter.

In our oneness, we still find diversity: The faithful bear witness to many different vocations and many different gifts but we work together as one to continue the mission of our Lord. The various cultures and traditions are enriched in our Church by their various expressions of one faith. In all, charity must permeate the Church, for it is through charity that the members are bound together and work together in harmonious unity.

- † **HOLY** - The Church is holy. Our Lord Himself is the source of all holiness: The one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; He is present to us by His Body which is the Church (LG 14). Christ sanctifies the Church, and in turn, through Him and with Him, the Church becomes His agent for sanctification. Through the ministry of the Church and the power of the Holy Spirit, our Lord pours out abundant graces,

especially through the sacraments. Therefore, through her teaching, prayer and worship, and good works, the Church is a visible sign of holiness.

Nevertheless, we must not forget that each of us, as a member of the Church has been called to holiness. The Second Vatican Council exhorted, "Every Catholic must therefore aim at Christian perfection and, each according to ones' station, play ones' part, so that the Church, which bears in her own body, the humility and dying of Jesus, may daily be more purified and renewed, for the day when Christ will present her to Himself in all her glory without spot or wrinkle" (UR 4). Our Church has been marked by outstanding examples of holiness in the lives of the saints of every age. No matter how dark the times may have been for our Church, there have always been saints through whom the light of Christ radiated.

† **CATHOLIC** - The Church is also Catholic. St. Ignatius of Antioch (c. 100) used this word which means "universal" to describe the Church. The Church is indeed Catholic in that Christ is universally present in the Church and that He has commissioned the Church to evangelize the world "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19).

† **APOSTOLIC** - Finally, the Church is apostolic. Christ founded the Church and entrusted His authority to His apostles, the first bishops. He entrusted a special authority to St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome, to act as His vicar here on earth. This authority has been handed down through the Sacrament of Holy Orders in what we call the apostolic succession of bishops, and then by extension, to priests and deacons. The Church is also apostolic in that the deposits of faith found in both Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition were preserved, taught, and handed on by the apostles. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Magisterium (the teaching authority entrusted to the apostles and their successors) has the duty to preserve, teach, defend, and hand over the deposits of faith. Moreover, the Holy Spirit protects the Church from error in its teaching authority. Over the course of time, the Magisterium has had to address controversial issues, such as abortion, nuclear war, euthanasia, in vitro fertilization (IVF) etc., the same truth principles, exercised under the guidance of the Holy Spirit prevail.

Ecumenism - The ecumenical movement seeks to recover the apostolic sense of the early church – unity amidst diversity. It confronts the frustrations, difficulties, and ironies of the modern pluralistic world. Christianity is divided between Eastern and Western theology. In these two divisions there are six branches: Catholicism, Protestantism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, Oriental Orthodoxy, and Assyrians.

Christians believe that Jesus was the ultimate example of reconciliation because His crucifixion and resurrection healed the broken relationship between God and humanity. Ecumenism is a form of reconciliation that aims to bring the different denominations of Christianity together.

Interreligious dialogue - Interfaith dialogue means the communication, dialogue and cooperation between different faiths and religious groups. Since 1964 the Catholic Church has had the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue established. This council aims to promote respect and collaboration between different faiths and religions. Inter-religious, inter-ideological dialogue is a two-sided project within each religious or ideological community and

between religious or ideological communities. Each participant must come to the dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity. To pursue this goal, several initiatives dedicated to interfaith dialogue has happened: Some examples are: The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (1964); The 9th World Assembly of Religions for Peace (2013); Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington (1978); A Papal concert to commemorate the Shoah (1994); and the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (1999).

As an expression of the participants' lived faith-lives, interfaith encounters form communities of awareness. Having a dialogue between followers of different religions means better understanding, through cooperation, of different religious principles and teachings that could benefit humanity through the promotion of mutual respect and tolerance. It means coming together and sharing aspects of their respective faiths and striving to understand each other.

Indigenous people - The Indigenous Spirituality refers to the spiritual beliefs and practices that Indigenous peoples identify with. It is traditional or customary among Indigenous peoples. These traditional practices have since come to take on a more sacred or symbolic meaning in their lives today.

According to Historian, T. Valentino Sityo (1985), Filipinos have three main religious beliefs before Spaniards Christianized the land. First, Filipinos believed in the existence of a parallel spirit world, which was invisible but had an influence on the visible world. Second, Filipinos believed that there were spirits (*anito*) everywhere - ranging from the high creator gods to minor spirits that lived in the environment such as trees or rocks or creeks. Third, Filipinos believed that events in the human world were influenced by the actions and interventions of these spirit beings.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Humility** – Scriptures espouses the virtue of humility. “When pride comes, comes disgrace follows, but with the humble is wisdom.” (Proverbs 11:12). Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble” (1 Peter 5:5). By walking in humility with God, we remind ourselves that we are followers. We don't initiate or design the way, we follow it. We don't continue to “turn our own way” as the prophet Isaiah warned that we are prone to do. Instead, we turn in repentance and faith to follow Jesus. Humility is in fact, one of the most powerful and important attributes of growth. Being humble helps build trust and facilitates learning, which are key aspects of leadership and personal development. Great peacemakers are all people of integrity, of honesty, and humility. As we pursue unity and harmony among different faiths and culture, this virtue is very significant to perform.
- † **Unity** - Unity is being in harmony or one in spirit. Many of us learned about the story of a father who called his four sons and gave each one a stick and asked them to break it. They (four sons) easily broke that one stick but when he asked them to break

100 sticks together (stick broom) they failed to do so. Hence at that time, he said “this is what happens when you stay together, if you brothers fight with each other anyone can easily break you and can take advantage of you but if you four stay together just like those 100 sticks, then it will be harder to harm or break you. Therefore, we must engage in dialogue with every religions and sects in the Philippines and stand with them in unity. Unity is very fragile, it must be handled with care. We must always be kind to one another and help each other. We should always learn and improve ourselves and have an open-mind attitude.



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Morals

There is a deep longing in this prayer of Jesus, which was offered for His disciples as part of the Final Discourse in John’s Gospel. Signs of disunity, even among His closest followers, must have weighed heavily upon Him as He moved towards the cross. Being “one” is a defining mark of the Church. We give witness to this, every time we gather in the great banquet of unity through the dialogue of faith. We come forward despite all of our diversity to be one towards holiness. Unity or communion is at the heart of Jesus’ mission that is why He commissioned us to evangelize every nation.

“So that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me”
(John 17:21)

Hence, **dialogue and unity are substantial tools** to make this dialogue of faith among other religious sects, Catholics, and Indigenous people happen. Working together is the ability to labor towards a common vision; it is to bring our brethren and humankind to holiness and salvation. It is also important to **avoid criticism. We must have mutual understanding** in order to create a civilization of love in different religions and sects.

We must encourage openness and mutual respect in every form of dialogue (life, act, spiritual, and theological exchange) especially the dialogue on theological exchange. Here, all of us Catholics, Christians and non-Catholic Religions can learn from each other on how to deepen and enrich our faith to the Divine Absolute. We must acknowledge that our encounters

with different religions and sects are also encounters with Christ who wills unity of the divided humanity that would be possible through respect, acknowledgment, and appreciation of Christ's presence in other cultures and traditions.



Simple Activities

Activities

† Blind Folded Exercises

The team divides into pairs. One member of the pair wears a blindfold. The blindfolded member then has to complete a task while his or her partner verbally guides him or her safely through it. For this exercise, you need a large empty area. Fill the area with obstacles such as chairs, boxes or anything else you have on hand. The blindfolded partner needs to navigate the area without bumping into anything, while his or her partner guides him or her safely through the obstacle course.

† Human Knot

The human knot is a good exercise for promoting teamwork and unity. Have a group of people stand in a circle facing each other. Each person should lift his or her left hand and reach out and grab the hand of someone who is not standing adjacent to him or her in the circle. Repeat the process with the right hands. The group must then work together to untangle the knot without anyone ever letting go of a hand.

† Tug of wars

This is the multi-way tug-of-war. In this exercise, you tie four ropes to a central steel ring. You then have all four teams compete to try and move the ring over their finish line. This variation depends more on unity and tactics than brute strength. If the facilities and time are available, more complex activities such as team-based scavenger hunts can be used as unifying activities.

Song Analysis (see next page)



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Photo from the Prelature of Isabela Basilan

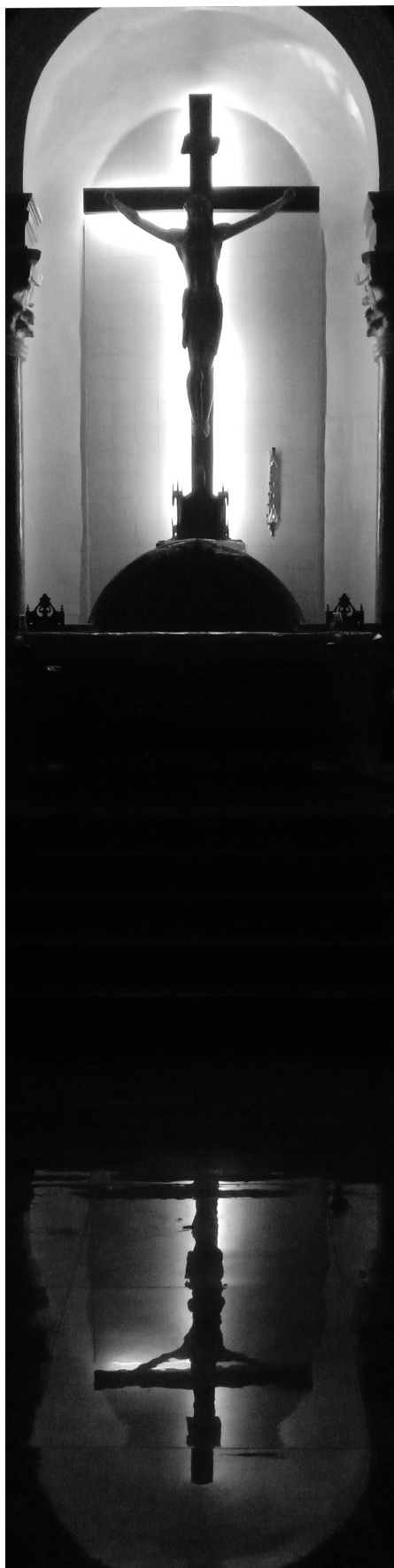


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

We Are Many We Are One

by Omg & XO-IX

I look all around me.
People passing by faces from all races.
I can still trace.
How lucky I must have been.

Living my life.
In a place where rhythm and melody.
Get together.
Like two lovers.

We are many, we are one.
Big family.
Love and peace in unity.
We are many, we are one.
Where wonders of nature.
The people and culture get together.
We are many, we are one.

Living my life.
In a place where rhythm and melody.
Get together.
Like two lovers.

We are many, we are one.
Big family.
Love and peace in unity.
We are many, we are one.
Where wonders of nature.
The people and culture get together.
We are many, we are one

We are many, we are one.
Big family.
Love and peace in unity.
We are many, we are one.
Where wonders of nature.
The people and culture get together.
We are many, we are one.

We are many we are one...
We are many we are one ...
We are many we are one...
We are many we are one.

Guide for Reflection:

- † How do I recognize the presence of God in my brothers and sisters?
- † Am I doing my part to help the Church attain ecclesial unity?
- † How do I consider myself as part of the big family of God?
- † Do I consider myself lucky to be part of God's family?



Worship

Almighty and ever living God, we pray for all Your people that we will always be united in Your name. We ask for Your help. Be our Light in every place You have allowed us to walk. Give us care and wisdom as we live and work with one another. Help us to look for another's needs before our own and grant that we may always be ready to serve those around us, by the power of Your love within us.

We pray for all Church leaders, pastors, and church authority of every religious denomination, that they would be given wisdom and discernment as they lead. We pray that their hearts would be directed to You, that they would recognize that their true help and strength comes from You. We pray for unity, in spite of our differences. May we stay together and live out our days with compassion and grace. May Your face shine upon us Dear Lord, that we may be one. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – It is important to have a firm conviction of our faith in order to have a dialogue of faith with other religions and denominations/sects.
- † **LIVE** - Live our faith not only by words but also by heart and actions. Be a model of unity of faith in our community by being friendly and having a good rapport and building a good relationship with our brethren from other religions. See to it that we build communion in good faith, not forcing them to be converted but to treat them as family.
- † **SHARE** - Organizing a faith-sharing event for different religions, sects etc., at least once a year in the diocese/Archdiocese must be promoted. This is a good step for having a peaceful, charitable, and brotherly dialogue with them so that people can learn to understand them and their faith.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2: CONVERSION: THE MESSIAH



Introduction

The Second Vatican Council was the first ecumenical council in the history of the Church to give serious consideration to the Church's relationship to the followers of other religions and to advocate interreligious dialogue as an integral dimension of her mission. Its positive statements about other faith traditions decisively shaped the Church's understanding of itself and its mission in ways from which there is no return, in spite of some current difficulties and setbacks.

**“You may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name”
(Jn 20, 31)**



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Tabuk

Pope Francis reminds us that "It is the law of love, love for God and love for neighbor ... which isn't a sterile sentimentalism or something vague, but is the recognition of God as the one Lord of life and, at the same time, welcoming others as true brothers and sisters ... the two go hand in hand" (Fox, 2013). Also "Being the church, being the people of God means being God's leaven in this world. It means proclaiming and bearing God's salvation in our world, which is often lost and needful of having encouraging answers, answers

that give hope, that give new energy along the journey (ibid).

"Whatever truth and grace are to be found among the nations, as a sort of secret presence of God, this activity frees all taint of evil and restores Christ its Maker, who overthrows the devil's domain and wards off the manifold malice and corruption. Therefore, whatever good is found to be sown in the hearts and minds of men, or in the rites and cultures peculiar to various peoples, is not lost. More than that, it is healed, ennobled, and perfected for the glory of God" (Ad Gentes 9).

This call for dialogue teaches us that God with His infinite love and mercy opens the door of salvation and of truth to all the people of God. The Catholic Church, as a sacrament of salvation to humanity, invites all members to an inclusive relationship for the glory of God. May the church be the place of God's mercy and love where everyone can feel themselves welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel. In addition, order to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven, and encouraged, the church must have open doors so that all might enter. Still, we must go out of those doors and proclaim the Gospel."



Word of God

Gospel of John 20: 27-31

²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it on My side. Do not doubt but believe." ²⁸ Thomas answered Him, "my Lord and my God!" ²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." ³⁰ Now Jesus did, in the presence of His disciples, many other signs, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in His name.



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Doctrine

† *The universal mission of Jesus*

Turning to the New Testament, we see that Jesus professes to come to gather the lost sheep of Israel (*Mt 15:24*) and while He forbids His disciples, for the moment, to turn to the Gentiles (*Mt 10:5*). He nevertheless, displays an open attitude towards men and women who do not belong to the chosen people of Israel. He enters into dialogue with them and recognizes the good that is in them. He marvels at the centurion's readiness to believe, saying that He has found no such faith in Israel (*Mt 8:5-13*). He performs miracles of healing for "foreigners" (*Mk 7:24-30; Mt 15:21-28*), and these miracles are signs of the coming of the Kingdom. He converses with the Samaritan woman and speaks to her of a time when worship will not be restricted to any one particular place, but when true worshippers will "worship the Father in spirit and truth" (*Jn 4:23*). Jesus is thus opening up a new horizon, beyond the purely local, to a universality which is both Christological and Pneumological in character. For the new sanctuary is now the Body of the Lord Jesus (*Jn 2:21*) whom the Father has raised up in the power of the Holy Spirit.

† ***The calling of all peoples***

References in the New Testament to the religious life of the Gentiles and to their religious traditions may appear to be contrasting but can be seen as complementary. There is, on the one hand, the negative verdict of the Letter to the Romans against those who have failed to recognize God in His creation and have fallen into idolatry and depravity (*Rm* 1:18-32). On the other hand, the Acts testify to Paul's positive and open attitude towards the Gentiles, both in his discourse to the Lycaonians (*Ac* 14:8-18) and in his Areopagus speech at Athens, in which he praised their religious spirit and announced to them the One whom unknowingly, they revered as the "unknown God" (*Ac* 17:22-34). Nor must it be forgotten that the Wisdom tradition is applied in the New Testament to Jesus Christ as the Wisdom of God, the Word of God that enlightens every man (*Jn* 1:9) and who in his Incarnation pitches his tent among us (*Jn* 1:14).

† ***The announcement of the Kingdom of God***

Jesus' message, then, proved by the witness of His life, is that in His own person, the Kingdom of God is breaking through to the world. At the beginning of his public ministry in Galilee, He can say: "The time has come, and the Kingdom of God is close at hand." He also indicates the conditions for entry into this Kingdom: "Repent and believe the Good News" (*Mk* 1:15). This message is not confined only to those who belong to the chosen people. Jesus in fact explicitly announces the entry of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of God (*Mt* 8:10-11; *Mt* 11:20-24; *Mt* 25:31-32, 34). A Kingdom which is to be understood as being, one and at the same time, historical and eschatological. It is both the Father's Kingdom--whose coming, it is necessary to pray for (*Mt* 6:10), and Jesus' Kingdom, since Jesus openly declares Himself to be King (*Jn* 18:33-37). In fact, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, we have the fullness of revelation and salvation and the fulfillment of the desires of the nations.

† ***The Church, universal sacrament of salvation***

The Church has been willed by God and instituted by Christ to be, in the fullness of time, the sign and instrument of the divine plan of salvation (LG 1), the center of which is the mystery of Christ. She is the "universal sacrament of salvation" (LG 48), and is "necessary for salvation" (LG 14). The Lord Jesus Himself, inaugurated her mission "by preaching the good news, that is, the coming of God's Kingdom" (LG 5).

† ***Seed and beginning of the Kingdom***

The relationship between the Church and the Kingdom is mysterious and complex. As Vatican II teaches, "principally the Kingdom is revealed in the person of Christ Himself." Yet the Church, which has received from the Lord Jesus the mission of proclaiming the Kingdom "is, on earth, the seed and the beginning of that Kingdom". At the same time, the Church "slowly grows to maturity (and) longs for the completed Kingdom" (LG 5). Thus, "the Kingdom is inseparable from the Church, because both are inseparable from the person and work of Jesus Himself.



Faith Response

- † Having the conviction that Jesus Christ is the model in every single dialogue towards unity of all cultures and religions
- † Accept the reality that in every religion, we cannot deny that God, through His infinite love and mercy, has bestowed seeds of truth and goodness in other religions that can lead the people to know the Word, made flesh.
- † Never doubt the perfect and mysterious ways of God for Him to reach out to our brothers and sisters of different religions and cultures.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Openness** - “Openness” is a secular virtue. There is a great nobility attached to being a seeker of truth in our society, but an open hostility towards finding it. As Catholics, we believe there is such a thing as objective Truth which exists independent of our feelings or inclinations. We believe that Truth has been revealed to us. One cannot hold something to be true and hold beliefs contradictory to that truth.
- † **Inclusion** - The opposite of being Catholic is not being Protestant. The opposite of Catholic is being narrow, exclusive, and overly selective in our embrace. The opposite of being Catholic is to define our faith family too narrowly. Catholic means wide and universal. It means incarnating the embrace of an abundant and prodigal God whose sun shines on all indiscriminately, the bad as well as the good. Jesus once defined this by saying: "In my father's house there are many rooms." God's heart is wide, abundant, prodigal and universally embracing. To be Catholic is to imitate that.
- † **Trust** - Reliance on someone. It is having confidence in people as persons. It is being able to trust others to be faithful to their commitments, and hopes for the completion of their promises. Applied to God, trust is a form of hope, but with the special nuance that God will not deny His grace to one who does what one can. This means that, provided a person co-operates with Divine grace according to his or her ability, that person will merit further grace from God.
- † **Respect** - Esteem for someone or something, arising out of special regard for a person/ object usually because of his/her, or its excellence. More properly, it refers to persons, and it refers to things only because of the persons with whom they are associated. Thus, we ought to show respect to one another not only because of their rank or because of status, but because we acknowledge that, each person is created in the image and likeness of God.



Morals

- † Dialogue of Life - **Living** with the conviction that with dialogue between every believer, we can promote the virtue of love and solidarity.
- † Dialogue of Action - **Acting** with harmony and love with others in promoting human values and respecting the dignity of human persons.
- † Dialogue of theological exchange - **Being open** to sharing ideas with different religions, and cultures. This is a call to live out the catholicity of our faith, an inclusive church.
- † Dialogue of prayer - **Praying** with others for the good of the people and for the whole human race to keep peace and unity for the glory of God.



Simple Activities

Activity : Unity in Diversity

- † Try to look for a Catholic friend who lives with a family member who is not Catholic. Let the person give his testimonies on how to live in harmony with people of the same blood yet are members of different religion/s.

Song Analysis (See next page)

Guide for Reflection

- † How does my love reflect my faith?
- † How do I open my arms and open the doors of my heart to receive my brother and sisters?
- † How do I see God working in me to be with my brothers and sisters?
- † Am I helping my brothers and sisters to come with me and with others to recognize God in the Table of the Eucharist?



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

Come to the Table

Sidewalk Prophets

We all start on the outside
The outside looking in
This is where grace begins
We were hungry, we were thirsty
With nothing left to give
Oh the shape that we were in
Just when all hope seemed lost
Love opened the door for us

He said come to the table
Come join the sinners who have been redeemed
Take your place beside the Savior now
Sit down and be set free
Come to the table

Come meet this motley crew of misfits
These liars and these thieves
There's no one unwelcome here, no
So that sin and shame that you brought with you
You can leave it at the door
And let mercy draw you near

Just come to the table
Come join the sinners, you have been redeemed
Take your place beside the Savior now
Sit down and be set free
Come to the table
Just come to the table

To the thief, to the doubter
To the hero and the coward
To the prisoner and the soldier
To the young, to the older
All who hunger, all who thirst
All the last, all the first
All the paupers and the princes
All who fail you've been forgiven
All who dream, all who suffer
All who loved and lost another
All the chained, all the free
All who follow, all who lead
Anyone who's been let down
All the lost you have been found
All who've been labeled right or wrong
Everyone who hears this song



Worship

Prayer for Unity of the Church

O God the Abba of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, and the Prince of Peace: give us the grace to lay seriously to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy division. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else that may hinder us from a Godly union and concord. That, as there is but One Body and One Spirit, One hope of our calling, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Creator of us all, so we may all be of One heart and of One soul, united in One holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may we be of one mind and mouth to glorify You; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

Source: The Book of Common Prayer



Zeal for Mission

- † **ENGAGE** oneself to any activity that promotes dialogue of life.
- † **PARTICIPATE** in any program of other religions that promotes good development of life or any activities that promote hope and love.
- † **OPEN** oneself to conversations that promotes unity.
- † **PRAY** for all the people of God, inside or outside the Church since we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: THE WELCOMED STRANGER



Introduction

In the encyclical letter of Pope John Paul II, it was stated that “communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion” (Christifideles Laici 32).



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando (La Union)

This is key to understanding the relationship between koinonia (communion) and mission. The Church is a communion whose mission is to build communion, communion among people, communion of all people with God, and communion of all people with the larger creation. Because of this, works to restore unity among Christian churches; efforts to build relations with other world religions and cultures; works for justice and peace, and works to protect the environment are integral to the mission of the church. These are expressions of the fundamental mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the nations. All of these build communion among people, of people with God and of people with the rest of creation. These communions are centered on and initiated by the Triune God. It is a communion in Christ. The Holy Spirit binds all together with Him. In Christ, all are given a share in his/her relationship with the Father. The mission of the church is to share in the Spirit’s work of extending that communion to the ends of the earth. Everything, which brings people closer together, even if they do not know Christ, is part of this mission.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines Church as the "communion of saints." This expression refers first to the "holy things" (*sancta*) and above all, the Eucharist, by which "the unity of believers, who form one body in Christ, is both represented and brought about" (LG 3). In addition, the term "communion of saints" refers also to the communion of "holy persons" (*sancti*) in Christ who "died for all," so that, what each one who does or suffers in and for Christ bears fruit for all.

Thus, "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims here on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven. Together, we form one Church. We believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and His Saints are always attentive to our prayers" (Credo of the People of God 30).



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 25:35-40

³⁵ 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, ³⁶ 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.' ³⁷ 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? ³⁸ And when was it that we saw You a stranger and welcomed You, or naked and gave You clothing? ³⁹ And when was it that we saw You sick or in prison and visited You?' ⁴⁰ 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.'



Doctrine

To have a common Church understanding of communion

The concept of communion (*koinonia*), which appears with certain prominence in the texts of the Second Vatican Council:

- † Is very suitable for expressing the core of the Mystery of the Church and is certainly a key for the renewal of Catholic ecclesiology.
- † Espouses a deeper appreciation for the fact that the Church, as Communion is, indeed, a task of special importance. This provides ample latitude for theological reflection on the mystery of the Church.

However, some approaches to ecclesiology suffer from a clearly inadequate awareness of the Church as a mystery of communion, especially insofar as they have not sufficiently integrated the concept of communion with the concepts of the People of God and of the Body of Christ, and have not given due importance to the relationship between Church as communion and Church as sacrament (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith 1). Thus, bearing in mind the doctrinal, pastoral and ecumenical importance of the different aspects regarding the Church understood as Communion, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has considered it opportune to recall briefly and to clarify, where necessary, some of the fundamental elements of the Church as Communion (CDF 2).

Bearing in mind the doctrinal, pastoral and ecumenical importance of the different aspects regarding the Church understood as Communion, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has considered it opportune, , to recall briefly and to clarify, where necessary, some of its fundamental elements that are to be considered already settled (CDF 2).



Photo from the Diocese of Baguio



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan

To have a deeper knowledge of the Church as a mystery of communion

The concept of communion lies "at the heart of the Church's self-understanding." It is the Mystery of the personal union of each human being with the Divine Trinity and with the rest of humankind, initiated with faith. Having begun as a reality in the Church on earth, it is directed towards its eschatological fulfilment in the heavenly Church (CDF 3).

- † If the concept of communion, which is not a univocal concept, is to serve as a key to ecclesiology, it has to be understood within the teaching of the Bible and the patristic tradition, in which communion always involves a double dimension: the vertical (communion with God) and the horizontal (communion among men) (CDF 4).
- † It is essential for the Christian understanding of communion that it be recognized, above all, as a gift from God, and a fruit of God's initiative carried out in the paschal mystery. The new relationship between man and God, that has been established in Christ and is communicated through the sacraments. It also extends to a new relationship among human beings (CDF 5).



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Kindness** - In Greek, old wine was called "*chrestos*" which meant that it was mellow or smooth. Christ used this word in Matthew 11:30, "For my yoke is easy, and my burden light." Kindness is doing something and not expecting anything in return. Kindness is respecting and helping others without waiting for someone to help one back. Kindness is goodness in action, sweetness in disposition, gentleness in dealing with others, benevolence, and affability. The word describes the ability to act for the welfare of those taxing your patience.
- † **Peace** – Peace is more than just the absence of conflict or state of rest. It means completeness or wholeness, and it points to the presence of something else (Gen. 15:15; 37:14; 43:27; Judges 18:15; 1 Sam 17:18; 2 Sam 11:7; Mt. 10:13; Mk. 4:39;

Eph. 4:3; Jn. 16:33). Jesus is described as the Prince of Peace, who brings peace to the hearts of those who desire it. He says in John 14:27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid". In Matthew 5:9 he says, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

† **Goodness** – Goodness can often be seen in our actions, but our heart also has to be pure; it is not something we do only for the sake of being virtuous. When we strive to be “good” only for our own benefit, it is not truly goodness that we possess. In Greek, the word goodness, “*agathosune*,” means “an uprightness of heart and life”. it is not just what He does; it is about who He is, and who He is never changes. In Psalm 46, the psalmist says, “God is our refuge and strength, a present help in times of trouble. This is why we can say with absolute confidence that we are good people because we are created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, we must always practice goodness to our brethren.



Morals

Church communion is for Mission. Jesus did not only gather His disciples around Himself as a community, but He sent them out on a mission to make disciples of all nations. The church is not only a community of communion but also a community in mission. Communion prepares for mission and mission aims at strengthening communion. Communion represents both the source and fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion.

All are called to partake in the universal mission of the church. We all have a role to play in the mission of proclaiming the Good News of Christ. The primary mission of the Church is to preach the Good News that the Kingdom of God is here. It has already arrived in part, though its fullness is yet to come to completion. Thus, we have to bring God’s kingdom into the world. This is called evangelization. Evangelizing is the grace and vocation proper to the church. It is her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize (EN 14). Evangelization carries out the Church’s duty to proclaim the Redeemer, Jesus Christ as the center of universe and of history by word, deeds, and witness (Redemptoris Hominis 1). Vatican II stressed the primacy of the proclamation of Jesus Christ in all evangelizing work. First, Evangelization brings the light of the Gospel to places where it has not yet reached, and re-kindles it in places where it may have been extinguished or forgotten. Second, Evangelization encompasses ‘the renewal of society in all strata through the interplay of the Gospel and truths and human’s concrete total life’ (ibid).

The ultimate goal is the establishment of God’s kingdom in its fullness, it will happen if God will rule in the hearts and minds of every people. Evangelization seeks to transform the mind and heart of each individual, making them into the likeness of Christ and to bring humanity and all creation into communion with God.

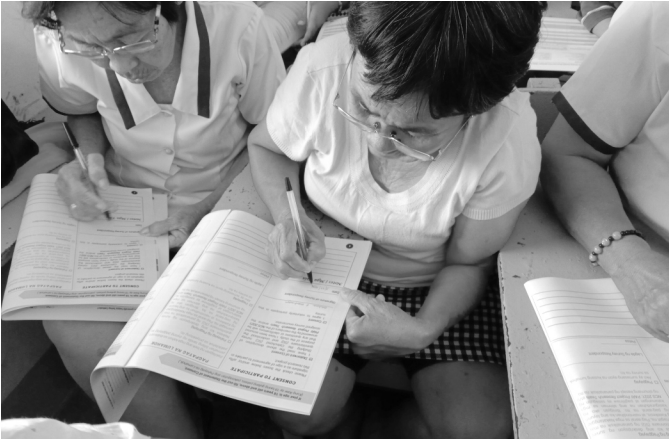


Photo from the Diocese of Talibon



Photo from the Diocese of Malolos

Simple Activities

Activity: Pass the Message of Unity

Instruction: Divide the participants into groups. For each round, let each group send a representative who will receive the message from the trainer. The representative must then pass the message to the first teammate, while the second teammate will have to pass the message to the next and so on. The last member of the group shall go to the white board and write the message. The group/s who wrote the message accurately get/s a point.

Message of Unity:

- † Galatians 3:28 - There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- † Galatians 3:27 -for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.
- † Matthew 18:20 - For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.
- † Psalm 133:1 - How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity.
- † 1 John 4:12 - No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us.

Song Analysis (See next page)

Guide for Reflection

- † Do I consider other Christians as my brothers and sisters?
- † Am I willing to participate and join the activities of my brothers and sisters from different religions and cultures for the good and development of humanity?
- † As a Catholic, do my actions speak of Love and Service?
- † Do I respect and value the others as human beings created by God in His image and likeness?

WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

Artist: Jamie Rivera

Do you see these children on the streets?
Have you walked the pavements where they sleep?
Do you feel their hands when you give them alms?
Did you ever give them bread to eat?

Have you seen their homes washed by the floods?
While a mother tightly holds her child
Do you hear the wind of the raging storm?
Can you tell them where it's coming from?

Let us show our love and mercy
With true kindness and humility
For God loves the weak and the needy
Just like you and me

We are all God's children
We are all the same
He is calling us by name to help the poor and lame
And learn what life is really for
It's to know and love and serve the Lord

Stand together and let's do our part
Hear their voices mend their broken hearts
Choose to be brave, fight for their rights
Give them back their honor and their pride

Please do not be blind
And just leave them behind
To struggle in darkness
Or give them empty promises

We are all God's children
We are all the same
He is calling us by name to help the poor and lame
And learn what life is really for
It's to know and love and serve the Lord
It's to know and love and serve the Lord
It's to know and love and serve the Lord



Worship

God of Love, We pray that we always show love and exclude no one. Let us rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep and live in harmony with one another. Let us not be haughty but associate ourselves with the lowly. We pray that we are never wise in our own sight. We pray that we do not repay evil for evil but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. Let us live peacefully with all and help us always to demonstrate inclusivity within our church, Amen.



Photo from the Prelature of Isabela Basilan



Photo from the Prelature of Marawi



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – To study the religious views of other non-Christian believers and Christian denominations, not to know their weaknesses, but rather for us to learn how we can appreciate and acknowledge the seeds of goodness and truth that God has implanted on them. Not only to understand them, but also to learn from them. Whether we like it or not, individuals and communities are inspired by their religious identities to take action in the world. Those actions can have positive effects on the world, such as social outreach or providing a sense of community to adherents, or negative ones, including violence against rivals or intolerance for others. However, the fact remains, that their actions are often rooted in religious ideals, or their worldview. The principal concern of religious studies is to expose differences in those worldviews so that we might understand the beliefs and practices of a wide variety of cultural actors. Different religious groups imagine the world differently, and that affects how they respond to contemporary concerns. Therefore, it is important to learn and listen to other Religious worldviews such as Muslim, Anglican, Buddhism, Judaism etc.

- † **LIVE** – The Scripture says brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you

also may be tempted (Gal. 6:1). Sometimes, we have a tendency to notice what we think are errors in other religions and become judgmental. Sometimes, this even leads us to discriminating and even aggressive behaviors against that religion to the detriment of maintaining good relationships with them, which we must pursue. It would be a good reminder that we should always be gentle to our brethren from indifferent religions/sects. Gentleness in Greek is *prautes*, or commonly known as meekness. A Divinely balanced virtue can only operate through faith. We must have meekness of heart. Meekness is not an indication of weakness, but of power and strength under control. The person who possesses this quality pardons injuries, corrects faults, and rules his own spirit well.

- † **SHARE** – Show hospitality. Invite missionaries from other faith/sects into your home for lunch or snacks. Spend some time investing in friendship with non-Christian Believers, other Christian denominations and different sects. Engage into a dialogue with them. Get to know them as a friend and let the Lord guide you in sharing faith life.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: LISTENING CHURCH

Whoever is not against us is for US. (Mark 9:40)



Introduction

The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ. All indeed, profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in ways of expressing it, as if Christ Himself were divided (UR 1).

The Second Vatican Council (Nostra Aetate 5) affirms that “the Church reproves, as foreign to the mind of Christ, any discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, color, condition of life, or religion. On the contrary, following in the footsteps of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, the Church ardently implores the Christian faithful to "maintain good fellowship among the nations" (1 Peter 2:12), and, if possible, to live for their part in peace with all men, (Rm 12:18) so that they may truly be sons of the Father who is in heaven (Mt 5:45).

Understood in this sense, dialogue and mission are not opposites, they do not exclude each other. Through every dialogue we do not only intend to share what is most important and dearest for us to others, so that they may partake of it, but with openness, we also welcome God’s revelation of Himself through the seeds of truth/ goodness, He has implanted in them. Hence, in a religious dialogue, while we intend to impart our belief to somebody else, we can only do so by paying unconditional respect to his/her freedom and rights. In this perspective mission, properly understood, is also a dialogic process of mutual exchange and enrichment.

In a dialogue, we do not dare nor are we permitted to impose anything on anybody against his or her will and conviction. It is the same with missionary activities. Since the beginning of Christianity, it has been strictly forbidden to christen anybody against their will. This also implies the inclusion of material promises and gifts as a means of mission. Mission also excludes proselytism. The Christian faith is, according to its inner nature, only possible as a free act.

The Church teaches that Christ, the New Adam, through the mystery of his incarnation, death, and resurrection, is at work in each human person to bring about interior renewal (DP 15). "This holds true not only for Christians but also for all persons of good will, in whose hearts, grace is invisibly active. For since Christ died for all, and since all are in fact called to one and the same destiny, which is the Divine, we must hold that the Holy Spirit offers to all the possibility of being made partners, in a way known to God, in the Paschal mystery" (Gaudium et Spes 22). Thus, all the faithful should remember that the more effort they make to live holier lives according to the Gospel, the better will they further Christian unity and put it into practice.

For the closer their union with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, the more deeply and easily will they be able to grow in mutual brotherly love (UR 7).



Photo from the Diocese of Baguio



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 24: 28-35

³⁸ John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” ³⁹ But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in My name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. ⁴⁰ Whoever is not against us is for us. ⁴¹ For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.



Doctrine

† Inter-religious/ Interfaith dialogue

- † Interfaith dialogue refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions and/or spiritual or humanistic beliefs at both the individual and institutional levels. Also, as in relation with members of the Abrahamic faith (Jewish and Muslim traditions)
- † Inter-religious dialogue is a meeting of people with differing religions, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, in order to listen to the other and to try to understand what the person's religion is all about, and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration in relation with other religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism etc.

† **Ecumenical Dialogue** - this expression is frequently used today to denote various kinds of church contacts and common action among Christians belonging to different

church traditions.

† **Ecumenical Unity** - Some and even many of the significant elements of endowments which go together to build up and give life to the Church itself, can exist outside the visible boundaries of the Catholic Church” (UR 3). Jesus Christ founded One Church and, in the midst of His Passion, prayed, “That they may all be one.” (John 17:21) In fidelity to that, the Catholic Church takes part in an ecumenical movement seeking visible unity among the diversity of Christian Churches and ecclesial communities. Christian faith affirms that, in Jesus Christ, the dialogical nature of the human person, all human desires, longings, expectations and hopes are fulfilled. Jesus Christ is the fullness of time (Gal 4:4), and the very aim of all creation and salvation history (Eph. 1:10). In Him, the ultimate truth on human existence is revealed and realized. Jesus Christ is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6).

† **Inculturation**

CCC 854 - By her very mission, the Church travels the same journey as all humanity and shares the same earthly lot with the world. She is to be a leaven and, as it were, the soul of human society, in its renewal by Christ and transformation into the family of God. Missionary endeavor requires patience. It begins with the proclamation of the Gospel to peoples and groups who do not yet believe in Christ, continues with the establishment of Christian communities that are "a sign of God's presence in the world," and leads to the foundation of local churches. It must involve a process of inculturation if the Gospel is to take flesh in each people's culture. There will be times of defeat.

CCC 856 - The missionary task implies a respectful dialogue with those who do not yet accept the Gospel. Believers can profit from this dialogue by learning to appreciate better "those elements of truth and grace which are found among peoples, and which are, as it were, a secret presence of God." They proclaim the Good News to those who do not know it, in order to consolidate, complete, and raise up the truth and the goodness that God has distributed among men and nations, and to purify them from error and evil "for the glory of God, the confusion of the demon, and the happiness of man."

- † Inculturation is the term that Catholic leaders and theologians have used in recent decades to denote a process of engagement between the Christian Gospel and a particular culture. The term is intended conceptually to both safeguard the integrity of the Gospel and to encourage sensitivity to various cultural contexts.
- † Inculturation as a theological notion that has been specifically associated with John Paul II's strategy for evangelization, including what is known as the "new evangelization" that focuses on cultures that had traditionally been non-Christian.



Faith Response

- † Having the conviction that Jesus Christ is the center of Christianity and the model to imitate in tackling faith-dialogue.
- † Standing with the truth of the teachings of the Catholic Church as the True Church of Christ, every faithful is still asked to be respectful to the beliefs and practices of other Christians, our separated brethren, and other religions.
- † Engaging one to the ecumenical movements or practices, the faithful must be loyal and firm to the teachings of the Catholic Church
- † As member of the Catholic Church, the Universal Church, Catholic Christians are expected to be open-minded to see the seeds of truth in every religion



Human Virtues

Fidelity

- † **CCC 2044** - The fidelity of the baptized is a primordial condition for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the Church's mission in the world. In order for that message of salvation to show the power of its truth and radiance before men, it must be authenticated by the witness of the life of Christians. "The witness of a Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit has great power to draw men to the faith and to God."
- † **CCC 2101** - Fidelity to promises made to God is a sign of respect owed to the Divine Majesty and of love for a faithful God.

Respect

- † **CCC 1930** - Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his/ her dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority: by flouting them, or 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.
- † **CCC 1931** - Respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that "everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self.' Above all bearing in mind, his life and the means necessary for living it with dignity." No legislation could by itself do away with the fears, prejudices, and



Photo from the Diocese of Pagadian



Photo from the Prelature of Marawi

attitudes of pride and selfishness which obstruct the establishment of truly fraternal societies. Such behavior will cease only through charity that finds in every man a "neighbor," a brother.

Solidarity

- † Is a principle of Catholic social teaching that aims at strengthening community and promoting a “civilization of love.
- † **Fratelli Tutti 114** - As a moral virtue and asocial attitude born of a personal conversion, it calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation.
- † **YOUCAT 332** - Solidarity is the practical hallmark of a Christian. Practicing solidarity is not just a command of reason. Jesus Christ, our Lord, identified completely with the poor and the lowly (Mt 25:40). To refuse solidarity with them would be to reject Christ.
- † **PCP II 969** - PCP II teaches this lesson in emphasizing that our catechesis must be “authentically Filipino,” through a process of guided and encouraged inculturation (PCP II 160-62, 202-11). The great truths of the Catholic Faith will motivate Filipinos to practical love of others only if they are presented, and personally grasped, within our Filipino system of cultural values and religious beliefs. For example, Filipinos instinctively recognize that “*Ang pakikiramay (pagkahabag) sa kasawian ng iba ay isang pagkakawang-gawa.*” These natural Filipino qualities of sympathy and compassion can offer practical “Filipino” motivation to love others. At the same time, they can be strengthened and deepened by grace.
- † **CFC 1405** - The Church’s “catholicity” then, is both a gift and a task which involves mission and inculturation. In its mission, the Church manifests a basic respect for local Churches and cultures. Its “catholicity” is not just any monotonous uniformity but reaches out to the cultural wealth of all peoples. “The Church as People of God fosters and takes up to herself the abilities, resources, and customs of each person; she purifies, strengthens, and ennobles them” (LG 13). When the Christian Faith is accepted by the people, they bring their own cultural heritage to bear on it. The

Gospel becomes clothed in a new culture, while at the same time, it purifies what is not authentic and strengthens the culture's true human values. This mutual interaction between the Christian message and human culture is an ongoing, never-completed process through history. Local Churches express the one Christian Faith in distinct ways and forms characteristics of its people. Yet in harmony with all other Christian Churches, they are “giving ever richer expressions to the authentic catholicity of the Church” (UR 4; AG 22).

- † **CFC 1406** - Filipino “Inculturation” was a major theme of PCP II. “The Christian Faith must take root in the matrix of our Filipino being so that we may truly believe and love as Filipino” (PCP II 72). To “inculturate our Faith” is a primary need for the Catholic Church in our country. Inculturation is necessary for the sake of the Church itself. It enriches the Church. This process of inculturation respectfully draws the good elements within a culture, renews them from within and assimilates them to form part of Catholic unity. The Catholicity of the Church is more fully realized when it is able to assimilate and use the riches of a people’s culture for the glory of God (PCP II 208). Practically speaking, “We have to rise up more and more Filipino evangelizers, formed in a ‘Filipino way’” (PCP II 210).



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo



Morals

- † Every catholic is called to be faithful to the mission given by the Lord, to form and build unity of all men and to proclaim the Gospel to those who do not know.
- † Catholics must joyfully acknowledge and esteem the truly Christian endowments of our common heritage which are to be found among our separated brothers and sisters.
- † It is right and salutary to recognize the riches of Christ and virtuous works in the lives of others who are bearing witness to Christ, sometimes even to the shedding of their blood. For God is always wonderful in his works and worthy of admiration.
- † Being open to dialogue and having an ear ready to listen to others for the development and progress of human life and for the common good, is a must to all Christians.



Simple Activities

Activity: We are all Brothers, Children of God

- † If it is possible, try to invite a Christian friend, to share with the learners his spiritual journey of life as a Christian who believes that Christ is God and the model of good and moral life)
- † With their drawing materials, let the learners draw and illustrate their idea, that all people are brothers/ sisters and all are God's children.

Song Analysis *(See next page)*

Guide for Reflections

- † How do I listen to my fellow human beings?
- † Am I open for a dialogue with my Christian and non-Christian brothers and sisters?
- † Am I helping my fellow human beings to see the light of the Truth?



Photo from the Diocese of Dipolog



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

One Love

By: Bob Marley

One love, one heart
Let's get together and feel all right
Hear the children crying (one love)
Hear the children crying (one heart)
Sayin', "Give thanks and praise to the Lord
and I will feel all right"
Sayin', "Let's get together and feel all right"
Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa

Let them all pass all their dirty remarks (one love)
There is one question I'd really love to ask (one heart)
Is there a place for the hopeless sinner
Who has hurt all mankind just to save his own?
Believe me

One love (what about one heart?)
One heart (what about the love?)
Let's get together and feel all right
As it was in the beginning (one love)
So shall it be in the end (one heart)
Alright, give thanks and praise to the Lord
and I will feel all right
Let's get together and feel all right
One more thing

Let's get together to fight this Holy Armageddon (one
love)
So when the Man comes there will be no, no doom (one
song)
Have pity on those whose chances grow thinner
There ain't no hiding place from the Father of Creation

Sayin', one love (what about the one heart?)
One heart (what about the?)
Let's get together and feel all right
I'm pleading to mankind (one love)
One heart (one heart) whoa
Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right
Let's get together and feel all right

Give thanks and praise to the Lord and I will feel all right
Said let's get together and feel all right



Worship

(Encourage the learners to pray an example of ecumenical prayer)

Ecumenical Prayer for Peace

O One God of all nations.
You created the earth and the cosmos,
In their differences, beauty and frailty
The various cultures and religions seek You,
as the origin of all things.
You want all to be for each other, not a threat,
but a blessing.

Our one world should be, by Your will,
an inhabitable and peaceful home.

You chose the Near East to make known to us all
Your Name and Your Path in many places.
Abraham, the Father in faith of Jews, Muslims and Christians,
listened to Your appeal in the region between the
Euphrates and the Tigris, the present-day Iraq.

To the old and new People of Israel, You promised
life and a future in a special way.

As Christian women and men, we thank You
especially for our Lord and Brother Jesus Christ.
He is our Peace.
He came to knock down walls and to give to all, without distinction,
life and a future.

We know ourselves to be in communion with the
Churches of the Near East.
They give testimony to the Gospel of Jesus,
to the liberating power of non-violence
and to the certainty of the Resurrection.

We also pray to You
in unity with all the Brothers and Sisters of those Religions,
which have their origins in the Near East.

You created us all in Your own images and likeness,

we are Your image.
In all those that seek You in truth,
You have inspired hunger and thirst for justice
and a desire for peace.

All, Muslims, Christians and Members of the People of Israel,
earnestly aspire to reconciliation.

All are in mourning for the victims
of hatred and violence.
All, in accordance with Your project, are also called
to collaborate in the construction of a new world.

We, therefore, beseech You:
Have mercy on all the victims and on all the blameworthy.
Put an end to the spiral of violence, of enmity,
of hatred, of vendetta.

Give to all, especially to those responsible for politics,
the conviction that the way to lasting peace
is not that of war,
but of peace with justice.

Awaken in all the Religions
and in the people of today that they should be
instruments and messengers
of a different world.

Cause hearts to open and war to cease,
before it even begins.
Give lasting peace to the Near East.
Make a secure homeland a reality for all.

Lord, have all those of good will from all Religions,
in the North and South, in the East and West, in common responsibility,
to demolish the mountain of misunderstanding,
to fill in the trenches of hatred
and to smooth the paths towards a common future.

Make the guns silent in our one world
and have, instead, the appeal for peace resound ever stronger,
for all, without distinction.
O Lord, the one God.

Prayer intentions:

- † For peace and unity in our country, society, and neighborhood
- † For the grace to speak about our faith in ways that touch the hearts of those we want to dialogue with
- † For greater insight into the truths of our faith as we prepare ourselves for dialogue
- † For patience and love in developing listening skills for dialogue



Zeal for Mission

- † To engage oneself to the ecumenical movements of the parish or of the community
- † To promote mutual respect as an avenue to a unified community of believers
- † To practice solidarity with other Christians in promoting peace, hope, charity and respect to human life and care for the mother Earth

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Song References

WE ARE ALL GOD'S CHILDREN

Lyrics: Jamie Rivera & Noel Espenida

Artist: Jamie Rivera

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jamierivera/weareallgodschildren.html>

WE ARE MANY, WE ARE ONE

Lyrics: Dwiki Dharmawan & Ivan Nestorman

Artists: OMG & XO-IX

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Omg-XO-IX/We-Are-Many-We-Are-One>

COME TO THE TABLE

Lyrics: Dave Frey, Ben Glover & Ben McDonald

Artist: Sidewalk Prophets

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://thefishoc.com/content/music/sidewalk-prophets-come-to-the-table-official-lyric-video>

ONE LOVE

Lyrics: Bob Marley & Curtis Mayfield

Artists: Bob Marley & The Wailers

Information on this song is publicly available and downloaded online @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bobmarley/onelovepeoplegetready.html>



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

CATECHETICAL MODULE 9:

Missio Ad Gentes

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CATECHETICAL MODULE 9: MISSIO AD GENTES

Overview

Missionaries of all Asia

Jesus commanded the Apostles to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations and behold, I am with you always, until the end of age” (Matthew 28:19-20). God entrusts this same commandment to the Church. The Philippine Church is the only country in Asia with a predominantly Catholic population (PCP II 106). Therefore, the Philippine Church



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

is called to a very special role in proclaiming the Gospel. The Church in the Philippines must be zealous in responding to the many challenges this task presents to become the foremost missionary for all Asia (NPCCR 59). Hence, Pope John Paul II spoke with special clarity when he told the Philippine bishops that: “The Philippines has a special missionary vocation to proclaim the Good News and to carry the light of Christ to the nations. From many points of view, dear brothers, you are truly called to be a missionary Church”(Pope John Paul II, 1981). Pope Francis again affirmed the Filipino faithful, as he presided over a *Simbang Gabi* Mass for the Filipino community in Rome last December 15, 2019. He called on to Filipinos, especially those who are living and working abroad, to continue to be “smugglers of the faith” (Esmaqual II, 2019).

There are now about a thousand Filipino missionaries (priests, consecrated persons, and lay faithful) and millions of Filipino migrant workers abroad (PCP II 107). They witness thru their religiosity and piety whenever it is possible for them (ibid 108). Witnessing is one sign of missionary awakening that the Church must enforce. It is a good reminder that mission is not only just for the clergy and the religious missionaries, but rather, it is for all baptized Catholics to participate in, by the witness of their lives and prayers, by supporting vocations, and by helping financially (Maximum Illud 1). The Church always promotes evangelization and the lay faithful is not excluded in this mission. In fact, the lay faithful has an active part to play in the life and activity of the Church, for they are many in number and can reinforce the missionary activity of the Church especially in the Philippines (Christifideles Laici 33).

To Bring the Gospel to the World

The Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* by Pope John Paul II (1990) fortifies the Decree on the Missionary Activity in the Church (*Ad Gentes*). The objectives of *Redemptoris Missio* are: To invite the Church to renew Her missionary commitment to particular churches; to send forth and receive missionaries; to clear up doubts and ambiguities regarding missionary activity; to

encourage theologians to explore and expound systematically on the various aspects of missionary activity; and to assure non-Christians and authorities that missionary activity has only one purpose: to serve man by revealing to him God's love made manifest in Jesus Christ. In turn, it renews the Church, revitalizes faith and refreshes Christian identity.

Evangelization is one of the fundamental missions of the Catholic Church and reaffirms the tie between evangelization and charity for the less-fortunate (Ad Gentes 1). The *Missio ad Gentes* reminds Christians of the urgency of missionary activity because it is the primary service of the Church to every individual and to all humanity. Therefore, all the faithful must speak loud enough about the urgency of the Church's mission at this present time because the Church invites us to bring the Gospel to the whole world especially to those who have not yet heard about Christ (NPCCR 60). An evangelizer can only be effective if he/she undergoes constant formation by witnessing the Gospel in his/her daily life and by living a faithful Christian way of life that leads to the transformation of others (Evangelii Nuntiandi 76).

While there are many things that should be looked into in order to strengthen the Philippine Church and prepare her for the ongoing struggles of this third millennium, all Church leaders and the lay faithful should focus on the most important fundamentals which the National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR) have given. NPCCR listed nine pastoral priorities of the Philippine Church as it celebrates the 500th year of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines.

These nine pastoral priorities encourage everyone to enter thoroughly to the world of New Evangelization for the renewal of every Catholic faithful in the Philippines. The Holy Spirit has been the decisive factor in evangelization from the very beginning. The Holy Spirit can make bloom again the desert created by many contemporary problems brought about by a destructive way of thinking, painful personal experiences in the lives of the faithful, as well as scandalous behaviors manifested by Church ministers. The Holy Spirit can renew the face of the wounded Catholic faithful into a bright way of life as true and genuine Catholic Christians. The Holy Spirit is already doing His part as He stirs up the Church in many signs of new life, new hope, renewed faith, including New Evangelization.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** The key word for this is to encounter Christ in the world because Christ is everywhere in the world. This means that even in countries where Christ has not been proclaimed yet, there is no doubt that Christ is there and that the people there have the opportunity to encounter Christ.
- † **Conversion.** Conversion should begin with the evangelizer. One must be evangelized first and must be re-evangelized if needed. The starting point of evangelization begins with the evangelizer himself/herself. A person cannot evangelize if he/she has not been evangelized in deeds and actions.
- † **Sense of Belongingness.** Christ is universal. He is not just only for one religion, nor for only one culture or one country. Rather, Christ is for the entire Churches, and indeed for the entire world. Everyone has a mission. The Christian faithful has to reach out and introduce other people to the faith by evangelization and witnessing.

- † **Zeal for mission.** Two things must be considered in order to become an evangelizer: constant formation of one's self and constant transformation for others. One can only preach Christ effectively if he/she undergoes constant formation by witnessing to the Gospel and living a Christian life that is faithful to the Gospel. This leads to the ability to transform others, in the hope of transforming all nations and the world.



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Photo from the Diocese of Bangued

Etymology

Missio ad Gentes

Missio is a Latin word for mission and *Ad gentes* is the Second Vatican Council's decree on missionary activity. It is also a Latin word which means, "To the Nations", so *Missio ad Gentes* is a Latin phrase which means "mission to the nations." This is an essential missionary focus of the Church--to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the people of all nations. If not all, most of the faithful have been used to thinking that evangelization is only for those who have not yet received the Good News, to those who do not yet know Jesus and to those who have no idea whatsoever about God. *Missio ad Gentes*, however, also denotes New Evangelization, meaning it does not only focus on this form of evangelization but also evangelization of those who are already baptized.

Discipleship

The term "disciple" comes from the Koine Greek word *mathētēs* (μαθητής) which generally means "one who engages in learning through instruction from another, or a pupil or apprentice." It also comes from the Old English *discipul* (fem. *discipula*), which means "one who follows another for the purpose of learning." However, it means more than just being a learner, a disciple actively imitates both the life and teaching of the master. It is deliberate apprenticeship which makes the fully formed disciple a living copy of the master. In the Biblical world, it often refers to "the personal followers of Jesus Christ who are chosen or called by Him to be His immediate associates." Thus, discipleship means a state or condition of being a follower of another (Jesus Christ) in doctrines, precepts and way of life" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021).

CBCP Pastoral Letter for the 2021 Year of *Missio Ad Gentes*

Becoming Jesus' Missionary Disciples

Dearly Beloved People of God,

The Philippine Church rejoices as it enters a national celebration of the 500 Years of Christianity in our treasured homeland. Five centuries ago we received the marvelous gift of the Christian faith; our hearts overflow with joy and gratitude. Why of all the nations and peoples in Asia was the Philippines chosen by God to be among the first to receive this precious gift? The clear answer is simply this: God's magnanimous, overflowing love.

We recall what God told his people Israel regarding his choice: "It was not because you are the largest of all nations that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you are really the smallest of all nations. It was because the Lord loved you and because of his fidelity..." (Dt 7:7-8). Only God's freely given love can illuminate the choice of the Filipino people to receive this valuable gift of faith!

The Christian faith arrived and prospered in our land through the dedication and heroic sacrifices of thousands of men and women missionaries from various parts of the world. They treasured the gift of faith they had received and desired to share this gift with others. As the theme chosen by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) for this fifth centennial note, all Christians are "gifted to give." This "giftedness" motivated generous missionaries over the centuries; it must also enflame the hearts of all of us today to engage in mission here at home and in other countries (*missio ad gentes*). Indeed, this is part of Jesus' mission mandate to his disciples: "What you have received as a gift, give as a gift" (Mt 10:8). We pray for a *missionary renewal* of our Church—both at home (*ad intra*) and beyond our borders (*ad extra*) during our celebration of the 500 years—and into the future!

Missionary Transformation. Our beloved Pope Francis, who visited us in 2015, is committed to the missionary renewal of the entire Church; we can take inspiration from his document *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*. He asserts that we need an "evangelizing Church that comes out of herself," not a Church that is "self-referential" and "lives within herself, of herself, for herself" (EG 20-24). Francis says: "I dream of a 'missionary option,' that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelization of today's world rather than for her self-preservation.... All renewal in the Church must have mission as its goal if it is not to fall prey to a kind of ecclesial introversion" (EG 27). We seek to renew our mission enthusiasm here at home as well as *missio ad gentes*, mission to other nations and peoples.

Pope Francis continues: "Missionary outreach is *paradigmatic for all the Church's activity*.... We need to move 'from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry'" (EG 15). "I want to emphasize that what I am trying to express here has programmatic significance and important consequences.... Throughout the world, let us be 'permanently in a state of mission'" (EG 25). We must seek to "put all things in a missionary key" (EG 34). We recall the challenge of Pope John Paul II during his 1981 visit to our Church:

“I wish to tell you of my special desire: that the Filipinos will become the foremost missionaries of the Church in Asia.” This is a clear invitation to engage in *missio ad gentes*!

Pope Francis’ insights about Church missionary renewal come from his deep personal relationship with Christ. He writes: “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 unfailingly each day” (EG 3). A pivotal insight of Pope Francis is that “we are all missionary disciples” (EG 119); through baptism, “all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples” (EG 120). All Christians are “agents of evangelization.” Missionary evangelization “calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized.... Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’” (EG 120).



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog

Joy: A Convincing Sign. For Pope Francis, salvation history is a “great stream of joy” (EG 5) which we must also enter. Let the joy of faith be revived, because God’s mercies never end (EG 6). Unfortunately, “there are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter” (EG 6). “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral” (EG 10). We must *not* become “querulous and disillusioned pessimists, ‘sourpusses’” (EG 85). “May the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the good news not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervor, who have first received the joy of Christ (EG 10; EN 75). We all must *not* “end up stifling the joy of mission” (EG 79), both here at home and in other lands!

Mercy: Today’s Pathway in Mission. Pope Francis continually insists that mercy is the very essence of God. In his *Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy)* Francis expresses it this way: *mercy is God’s identity card*. He says: “We need to constantly contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace.... Mercy [is] the bridge that connects God and man” (MV 2). Francis quotes Saint Thomas Aquinas, who asserts that “mercy is the greatest of all virtues; ... all the others revolve around it ... it is proper to God to have mercy” (EG 37). “Mercy is the very foundation of the Church’s life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church’s very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love” (MV 10).

“The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person.... As the Church is charged with the task of the new evangelization, the theme of mercy needs to be proposed again and again with new enthusiasm and renewed pastoral action. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements, in a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy” (MV 12).

Conclusion. Pope Francis’ profound thoughts on *missionary renewal, joy,* and *mercy* provide a solid compass to guide us as individuals and communities during our 500-years celebration and in the year 2021 which is dedicated to *missio ad gentes* (mission to all peoples). With Pope Francis we ask two graces of the Lord: “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary vigor” (EG 109). “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm” (EG 80). We remain constant in prayer, asking our two canonized missionary saints, Lorenzo Ruiz and Pedro Calungsod, to intercede for us so that our loving God will always abundantly bless our Church in the Philippines and all her many missionary endeavours!

For the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines,

+ ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.

Archbishop of Davao

President, Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines

29 November 2020

First Sunday of Advent



Photo from the Vicariate of Calapan

Song for Reflection

Tell the World of His Love

By Jamie Rivera

For God so loved the world
He gave us Him only Son
Jesus Christ our Savior
His most precious One

He has sent us His message of love
And sends those who hear
To bring the message to everyone
In a voice loud and clear
Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home

Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love
(Tell the world of His love)
(Tell the world of His love)
Our Lord, our Savior, our King
Emmanuel, Prince of Peace
Begotten of the Father's love
Born to set us free

Let heaven and earth sing His praises
His righteousness proclaim
Let every heart rejoice in His love
And magnify His name

Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home
Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love
(Tell the world of His love)

Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home
Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love
(Tell the world of His love)
Tell the world of His love.

Catechist's Corner

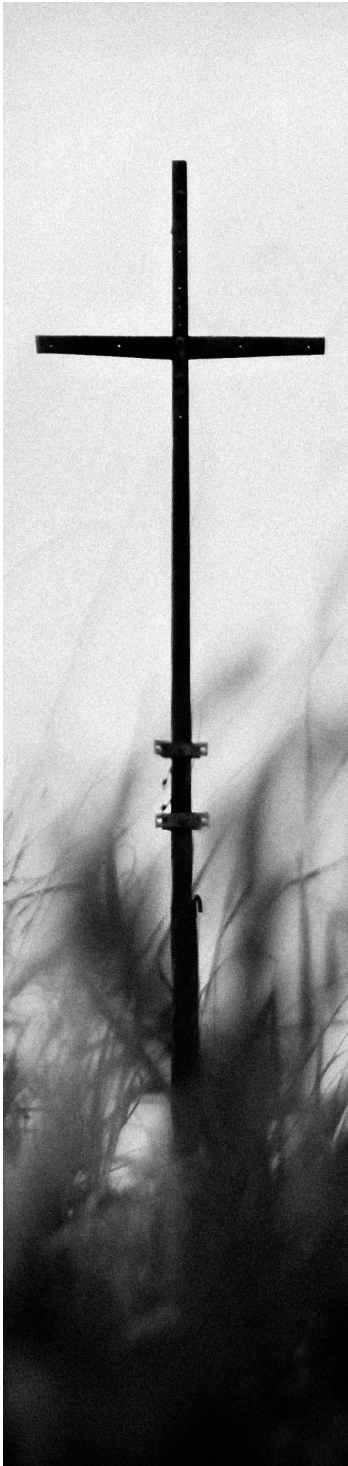
Becoming and being a catechist is an active process of partaking in the educative mission of understanding, learning, and living our Catholic faith. This module part offers an empirical narrative glimpse of the lives of catechists captured in a creative methodological approach called, "research poems".

“Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, “He is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “She is your mother.” From that time the disciple took her to live in his home” (John 19: 26-27)

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 *mission ad gentes (misyon sa mga bansa)*.

Guide question for Discussion:

† Have we considered Mary as our Mother?



BEQUEST

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola

Being a catechist
Entails big responsibility
Given the trust
To carry out His word
For Faith to be imbued,
In every lesson of the Word
In every story in the Bible
In every tradition imparted
In every tale of holiness
He was sustained by
The guidance
Of the apostle John
Who was endeared to
Jesus, his friend.
Clutched in his palm
The love of Mary, our Mother
who is grief-stricken
Her heart was pierced
As she silently witnessed
The sufferings of her Son.
She nurtured the Church
Which Jesus bequeathed,
During the time
When hope was gone
When threat of total disarray
Faced the world of the living.
Mary is the catechist's refuge
Holding rosary in his hand
In a society
in disharmony
Humming the Catechism's hymn.
This is the eleventh
Way of the Cross
Of the servant-catechist,
For her 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: DUC IN ALTUM



Introduction

Through a loving and an embracing attitude with different societies, all the faithful encounter Jesus Christ. The very first mission is to acknowledge God's presence even in those places where Christ has not yet been proclaimed and to bring the message of love towards these communities through our actions (Redemptoris Missio 31). As Jesus commanded "Go into the whole world, preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "The mission of Christ Himself, who preached the Gospel to the poor, is to walk the path of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death, from which He came forth a victor by His resurrection" (AG 5). Thus, the evangelizers must follow the same path of Christ in his/her mission to proclaim the Word of God to the whole world.



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

Missions is the term usually given to those particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church to the whole world, to carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the seeds of faith among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ. These undertakings are brought to completion by missionary activities and are mostly exercised in certain territories recognized by the Holy See. The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization, and the planting of the seeds of faith among those peoples and groups where it has not yet taken root (AG 6).

The chief means of the planting referred to is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To preach this Gospel, the Lord sent forth His disciples into the whole world, that being reborn by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23), men might be joined to the Church through baptism - the Church which, as the body of the Word Incarnate, is nourished and sustained by the Word of God and by the Eucharistic bread (Acts 2:43). In this missionary activity of the Church, various stages sometimes are found side by side: first, that of the beginning or planting, then that of newness or youth. When these have passed, the Church's missionary activity does not cease, but there lies upon the particular churches already set up for the duty of continuing this activity and of preaching the Gospel to those still outside (AG 6).



Word of God

Gospel of Luke 5: 1-11

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, ² He saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the anglers had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then He sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. ⁴ When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” ⁵ Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.” ⁶ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” ⁹ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” ¹¹ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Him.



Doctrine

THE FOUR GOSPELS

† *Mark's Main Themes*

*Written in 70 AD, after the failure of the first Jewish revolt and the destruction of the temple, Mark's Gospel stresses on the deeds, strength, and determination of Jesus to overcome evil forces and defy the power of imperial Rome. Thus, we can ascertain that Mark wrote to strengthen and guide the Jewish-Roman believers who were being persecuted by Nero. Mark's gospel is simple and provides no details or explanations as Luke or Matthew does. It presents Jesus as a Man of action who quickly moves from one scene to another. Even though Mark bases his focus on the humanity of Jesus, he still did not neglect the deity of Christ, in fact, the *Messianic Secret* is one important theme of Mark's Gospel. Here Jesus silences the people and tries to keep them from making His power known (see Mark 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:27-30; 9:29). Why the secret? It is to trample down messianic expectations of the people “in order to define the true (suffering) role of the Messiah.” Yes, He is the King, But He is a different kind of King, He serves by being a servant and He is here to conquer much greater foes than the Roman legions. He is here to destroy humanity’s greatest enemies: Satan, sin, and death (Peacock, 1978). At the same time, Mark also revealed the flaws and failures of Jesus’ disciples. Aside from the fact that they are not part of the elite class, they are also slow in understanding Jesus’ teachings (Mark*

4:13; 7:18; 9:10, 32; 10:10). Even one of his closest allies, Peter, was not exempted. First, Mark reveals Jesus' rebuke of Peter (8:32-33), and then illustrates the depths of Peter's failure and denial of Christ (14:27-31, 66-72).

Thus, Among many other things, what Mark is trying to emphasize is that discipleship to Jesus means abandonment of the self. **Disciples** are not called to be revered leaders or strong heroes of faith. Rather, they are called to accept their own failure, to accept themselves as they really are—weak human beings who may continue to fail yet also continue to rise up with and learn from Christ.

† *Matthew's Main Themes*

The Gospel of Matthew was written in Greek. The writer wrote to a specific group of people mainly, the Greek-speaking Jews. While its author wrote for a certain group of people, its writing has a wider perspective. In fact, in contrast to Luke, Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy back to Abraham, who is the father of all nations. Matthew also presented Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies more than the writers of the other gospels did. In Matthew, Jesus' teachings pointed to the blessings of the Kingdom as being extended to the Gentiles and all nations (Just, 2019). The main purpose of Matthew is to prove that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, or the anointed one. Jesus is also interpreted as *Joshua* which in Greek means, "the Lord will save". Matthews's goal was to influence his readers that the King of kings has come. Thus, he uses words and titles that Jews are aware of such as Son of God, Messiah, Lamb of God, Son of David etc. Likewise, Matthew teaches the Jews more about the significance of Jesus without abandoning their Jewish heritage (Mt 5:17-20).

Matthew's Gospel also contains the five major (5) discourses of Jesus: a discourse on ethics (i.e. Sermon on the Mount) (chaps. 5-7); a discourse on missions (chap. 10); a discourse on the Kingdom (chap. 13); a discourse on community life (chap. 18); and a discourse on the judgment on the last days (chaps. 23-25). These sermons contain key instructions/ information on how we are to fulfill our mission of evangelizing as a church.

Discipleship is also one of Matthew's major themes (Just, 2020). Here we learn that:

- † The ideal disciple is a loyal subject, who obeys the great King and does what the King commands (Mt 5:19; 22:34-40; 7:21; 28:19-20a)
- † The ideal disciple is a good student, who learns from the Teacher and understands what is taught (Mt 13:51; 15: 10; 15: 16; 23:8)
- † Disciples of Jesus are expected to be "righteous" (i.e., live in "right relationship" with God and with other people) (Mt 5:5; 5:10; 5:20; 10:41; 13:43)
- † Authentic discipleship requires putting faith into action as emphasized in various parables and sayings (Mt 5:23-25a; 3:10; 5:16;7: 24-27; 21:28-32)
- † Discipleship is lived not just individually, but in community with other believers

† *Luke's Main Themes*

The Gospel of Luke was written to Theophilus and the message in this Gospel was meant for his own teaching and for those among whom the message would be sent out. Luke was probably written around A. D. 85-95. The publication of Luke would have likely been written in Rome. Luke had an outstanding command line of the Greek terms. Luke's words in general seem to reveal geographical and ethnic sensitivity. Luke's gospel centers on God's plan to provide salvation to the whole planet. Luke was written to strengthen the faith of most believers and to give faith to the unbelievers. It was written to replace and unveil the false records about Jesus. This Gospel reveals the works and teachings of Jesus that are especially essential for understanding of salvation. The first two chapters of Luke highlight the Old Testament and its own promises of Messiah while the third and the fourth chapters portray Jesus as the Messiah, who fights the evil one. The rest of the chapters show the life, works of Jesus, and portrays Him as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies.

For Luke, discipleship is not only taught by Jesus but modeled by Him as well, that is why Luke often highlighted the humanity and compassion of Jesus. Luke's preferred title is "the Son of Man." Luke also presents discipleship in a broader sense than Mark or Matthew in such a way, that Jesus' disciples also include a large number of followers (Lk 10). The disciples were witnesses to this reality and their mission was to share about this Good News with all countries.

Christ's teachings about discipleship

In Luke 9:23 - 27 Jesus points that **discipleship is not easy**. It is difficult and involves suffering. Discipleship is not a one-time thing, rather it involves daily commitment of following Christ even until death (Walker, 2012).

In Luke 9:57-62, we learn that discipleship **requires self-denial and reminds us of the preeminence of proclaiming the Kingdom of God** over all aspects of life, as well as the fact that **discipleship is a life-long commitment**. It is not something that we pick up and put down whenever it is convenient for us. Finally, in Luke 14: 25-35, Jesus stresses that to be His disciple, meant **placing Him above all other aspects of our life**. Further, He also points out that discipleship means being able to give up momentary treasures to look with great expectation to the eternal treasure awaiting us in the Kingdom of God (ibid).

Furthermore, to understand fully the concept of discipleship, we look at the four main ways Jesus' life modelled the concept of discipleship in Luke's Gospel.

- † Discipleship clearly involved building relationships. These relationships were not only limited to the twelve apostles. In Luke we can read about Jesus speaking to crowds that number up to thousands (Luke 12:1; 19:7; 10:1). Even among the apostles, he has chosen to be closer with Peter, James, and John.
- † Discipleship focuses on the personal development of others through teaching and real life scenarios. The disciples are far from perfect, but Jesus patiently

taught them through different situations, He showed them what mercy is all about in the many miracles they witnessed (Lk 18:9). Jesus also challenged them to exercise their faith or lack of, like when Jesus calmed the storm in Lk 8:22.

- † Jesus made prayer a priority in His Ministry. In Luke, we see Jesus in constant prayer, even at a time when it is physically difficult to do so like early morning or late night (Lk 5:16; 6:12), and called His disciples to pray as well (22:40).
- † Discipleship is not self-serving. In Luke 14:11 and 18:14 Jesus stressed, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Jesus exhibited the ultimate form of humility possible by giving up His own life and thus perfectly modelled true discipleship.

Discipleship is something radical, the cost may be far more than some are willing to pay, but for those who are willing to count the cost, we have Jesus’ incredible model of discipleship to show us the way, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

† **John’s Main Themes**

While the other three gospels portray Jesus as the hoped for King, the Suffering Servant, and the Son of Man, John portrays Jesus as the Son of God. John stressed this theme more than any of the other Gospel. For John, eternal life and salvation comes only through belief in Jesus Christ and oneness with Him (John 20:31). But more importantly, John presented another picture of Jesus Christ, one in complete unity with the portraits in the other three gospels, but one that also adds significantly to the Bible’s revelation of Jesus Christ, as the God-man. St. John stresses on this nature of Jesus by including Christ's seven "I am" claims. These occasions equate Jesus with the Old Testament "I AM." Whereas, other gospels relate miracles, performed by Jesus, John recounts seven different miracles, which are called *signs* because they further illustrate Jesus’ Divinity (Swindoll, 2021).

However, just as in the other Gospels, the Gospel of John also provides us with insights on what it means to be a disciple particularly on the six paradigms or characteristics of discipleship as narrated in John 1:35 to 51. By looking at the narrative, we can glean that discipleship is (Marriner, 2015):

- † Following after Jesus. The narrative opened with John and his two disciples seeing Jesus. When the disciples heard John call Jesus the “Lamb of God, they immediately followed Jesus. The verb “follow” in John’s Gospel, denotes discipleship for it does not only mean physically following Him, but also His way of life and teaching.
- † Abiding with Jesus. The term abide does not just mean being in close proximity with Jesus, but living with Him and communing with Him.
- † Bearing witness to Jesus. Disciples publicly testify to the person of Jesus and His work, regardless of its consequence.

- † A response to God’s initiative to call His disciples. The call to become one of Jesus’ disciples begins first and foremost with God drawing that person to Himself through the Holy Spirit.
- † Belief in Jesus. Nathaniel’s skepticism was transformed into belief once he had encountered Jesus. We are also called to believe in Him.
- † Spiritual growth. Like the disciples, we are also fraught with limitations and often misunderstand Jesus. However, just as the disciples also would come to understand especially after Christ’s resurrection, we realize that understanding the person and work of Jesus grow over time through our relationship with Him.

The four canonical gospels are extremely comprehensive and factual about the life and work of Jesus Christ. Mark stressed the humanity and suffering of Jesus to give hope to the suffering Jewish Christians. Matthew wrote to persuade the Jews that Jesus is their Messiah, and focused on His sermons and teachings to help guide the Church focus on its mission as it starts to grow. Meanwhile, the Gospel of Luke presents Jesus as the Savior of all nations. It was written to appeal to both Gentiles and Jews and even the Greek. The Gospel of John, on the other hand, is offered with a prologue or introduction that introduces Jesus not only as the Son of God, but also God Himself, made flesh to call back the fallen humanity for the love of God. While all four Gospels have a unique take on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, they all speak of one person only, Jesus who is the Savior of the Jews and the Savior of the world. Moreover, they offer us clear inspiration on our task of evangelization as Disciples of Christ.

THE SYMBOLS OF FOUR EVANGELIST



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cagayan De Oro



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

*St. Matthew, a divine man;
St. Mark, a winged lion;
St. Luke, a winged ox; and
St. John, a rising eagle.*

† St. Mark

St. Mark is represented by the winged lion. It draws references from the Prophet Isaiah, when he begins his Gospel with “Here begins the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Isaiah the prophet has proclaimed: ‘I send my messenger before you to

prepare your way: a herald's voice in the desert, crying, Make ready the way of the Lord, clear Him a straight path. The voice in the desert crying reminds one of a lion's roar, and the prophetic spirit descending to earth reminds one of a "winged message" (Isaiah 40:3). The lion also signified royalty, the King, the hoped Messiah who reversed conventions to show us what true Kingship really is

† St. Matthew

St. Matthew is represented by a divine man because the Gospel highlights Jesus' entry into this world, first by presenting His family lineage "A family record of Jesus Christ, Son of David, son of Abraham" (Mt 1:1) and His incarnation and birth: "Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about" (Mt 1:18). This then, according to St. Irenaeus, is the Gospel of His humanity; for which reason it is too, that the character of a humble and meek man is kept up through the whole Gospel.

† St. Luke

The winged ox represents St. Luke. Oxen were used in temple sacrifices. For instance, when the Ark of the Covenant was brought to Jerusalem, an ox and a fatling were sacrificed every six steps (2 Sm 6). St. Luke begins his Gospel with the announcement of the birth of St. John the Baptizer to his father, the priest Zechariah, who was offering sacrifice in the Temple (Lk 1). St. Luke also includes the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the fatted calf is slaughtered, not only to celebrate the younger son's return, but also to foreshadow the joy we must have in receiving reconciliation through our most merciful Savior who as Priest offered Himself in sacrifice to forgive our sins. Therefore, the winged ox reminds us of the priestly character of our Lord and His sacrifice for our redemption.

† St. John

Lastly, St. John is represented by the rising eagle. The Gospel begins with the "lofty" prologue and "rises" to pierce most deeply into the mysteries of God, the relationship between the Father and the Son, and the incarnation: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God. He was present to God in the beginning. Through Him all things came into being, and apart from Him nothing came to be" (Jn 1:1-3). And "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us, and we have seen His glory: The glory of an only Son coming from the Father filled with enduring love" (Jn 1:14). Unlike the other Gospels, the Gospel of St. John engages the reader with the most profound teachings of our Lord, such as the long discourses Jesus had with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, and the beautiful teachings on the Bread of Life and the Good Shepherd. Here Jesus also identified Himself as "the Way, the Truth, and the Life," and anyone who embraces Him as such will rise to everlasting life with Him.

While each of these symbols focuses on the particular theme of each Gospel, only in penetrating all four Gospels do we encounter fully our Lord.



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Prayerful** - Every Christian is called to be a missionary through prayer. In one of his homilies, Pope Francis mentioned that prayer is the first missionary work that every Christian can and must do. It is also the most effective, even if this cannot be measured since the Holy Spirit gives prayer efficacy.
- † **Joyful** - Everything is a source of joy. What is joy? The key to understanding joy is in the words of the Gospel: 'Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.' The One who gives us joy is the Holy Spirit. We experience joy when we encounter Christ, when we are aware of the God's presence in the ordinariness of our daily experiences. Without joy, we cannot be free. We will be enslaved by our sorrows and it will be impossible to carry the Gospel any further if we are sad, dejected, and disheartened. Joy comes from praising God as we experience His loving presence in our lives.
- † **Patience** - Patience is a person's ability to wait something out or endure something tedious, without getting riled up. Having patience means you can remain calm, even when you've been waiting forever or dealing with something painstakingly slow. Patience is a virtue because it involves going through suffering, without getting angry or upset. It involves having hope and trusting God's perfect timing.



Morals

Duc in Altum – Put out into the deep!

In the Gospel passage Jesus asked Simon Peter to cast out into the deep and let down the nets to catch fish. This might sound like illogical and impossible since Simon Peter was already fishing all night and was not able to catch any. However, Peter obeyed and caught a lot of fish. Although it seems impossible, we are called to trust in God and be the actor of God's instructions.

Duc in Altum is St John Paul II's message at the turn of the second millennium. Pope Francis echoes this call in asking us to go out to the peripheries to preach the Gospel and be witnesses of God to them. We recall Jesus' promise. "Do not be afraid, I'll make you fishers of men."

Where does God call us to put out into the deep (*Duc in Altum*)? God wants us to go where we don't normally want to go. Be courageous and obedient to the Lord to "*Duc in Altum*" and harvest plenty of people.

Simon, after seeing the great many of fish, fell down at his knees and asked Jesus to depart from him since he is a sinner. We, too, feel unworthy to answer God's call to *Duc in Altum*. However, God always forgives us and does not remember our sins after we confess our sins. Isaiah 43:25 says "I do not remember your sins anymore." We, too, should not be chained by

our past sins, weaknesses, failures, but instead must look forward to being missionaries and answering God's call to *Duc in Altum*. There is no saint without a past, and no sinner without a future.

Jesus first shared the Word of God to Simon before asking him to *Duc in Altum*. We, too, must be attentive to God's word and spend time reflecting on God's words so that we could listen more attentively to the Holy Spirit and discern where is the deep that God wants to call us to. Let us Allow Jesus to come to our boats (lives) and let Him guide us to be missionaries where God wants us to be.

What would it look like if we submitted our entire will to God? What kind of an impact would we have on the world? How fulfilling and peaceful would life become? While these are difficult questions to answer, they are worth considering. The Saints are examples of those who embraced God's will for their lives. They are those who lived fulfilled lives and made a difference. But we tell ourselves that saints are different – that they have a predisposition towards holiness that we don't have. So we become content with our mediocre, lukewarm lives without truly diving into the life that God is offering us. But we are wrong, everyone is called to Holiness. God's plans are infinitely better than anything we can come up with ourselves. Yet, while we continue to be resistant to God's presence in our lives. As St. Augustine once said, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in you" yet, but so often we don't acknowledge the urge to fulfill this deepest desire of our souls.

God wants us to experience the fullness of life that He designed for us, but we have to be open to His direction. We have to be willing to be "put out into the deep."



Simple Activities

Activities:

Matthew 13:44

Activity: Telling others about Jesus

Ask the participants to search for hidden treasure with no direction from their friends, they will learn how important it is to share directions to the most important treasure of all: Jesus.

Opening Game – Hidden Treasure

Supplies:

- † A treasure (something like enough candy for the winning group)
- † Clues written down to the location of the treasure: both true and false

Before the game starts, hide the treasure somewhere in the building, or outside, if that works with your location. Split the students into two groups. Choose one participant from each group and pull them aside. Tell them where the treasure is, but

tell them that they cannot give their teammates any hints at all. Send the surely confused participants back to their groups and tell everyone to start looking for the treasure without giving them any rules or hints to where it may be. After teams have been looking for a while, start passing out clues. Give the participants, a false clue for every true clue you give them. Let the students run around confused for a few minutes, eventually give them enough true clues to allow one of the groups to find the treasure.

Ask:

- † Wasn't that a confusing treasure hunt?
- † Did the false clues make it a lot harder to find what you were looking for?
- † Wouldn't it have been easier if I had given you directions at the beginning of the game?

Teach

Say: Now, I'm going to confuse you all just a little bit more. What if I told you that (names of students you pulled aside at the beginning) knew where the treasure was the entire time?

Pause and allow students to react.

Say: That's right, they knew exactly where the treasure was. They even knew that some of the clues I gave you were wrong!

If they had spoken up, your entire team would be enjoying candy right now!

Ask:

What kind of friend keeps their mouth shut when they know something that could help their friends?

Say: Sadly, a lot of you may be that kind of friend this year.

You see, as you go back to school, you're going to rub elbows with a lot of people who don't know Jesus on a daily basis. You may even become close friends with some of them.

Ask:

What kind of friend would you be if you did not tell them about Jesus?

Say: If you know Jesus, you already have found the greatest treasure in the entire world.

Ask:

What reasons do you have not to tell your friends about Jesus?

Do you agree that knowing Jesus is like having a treasure?

If you think of knowing Jesus as a treasure, does that motivate you more to share Him with others?

Read: Matthew 13:44

“The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”

Say: Isn't that verse so cool? It shows us how excited we should be over the fact that we know about Jesus and Heaven.

The man in this story was so excited that he rushed to give away everything he had so he could get the treasure.

Now, if he was that excited, don't you think he told all of his friends once he got the treasure?

Wrap up

Maybe you've never thought of having a relationship with Jesus as having a treasure. I hope that after reading that verse, you will.

Think of how many people in your school don't know Jesus and are just blindly wandering around looking for something.

Just like in the game, they don't have clear direction on where they should be looking. They are receiving false advice on where they should be going. They are waiting on someone to tell them something that makes sense.

You could be that someone. Someone needs to tell the students in your school about the greatest treasure they could ever have. Is it going to be you?

Song Analysis (See next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How ready am I to give my YES to the Lord?
- † In my own little ways, how do I share God's gifts of mercy, compassion, justice, and peace to my fellow human beings?



Photo from the Diocese of Urdaneta



Photo from the Military Ordinate



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

We Give Our Yes

By Fr. Carlo Magno

We stand before the grand horizon
500 years of faith grateful today
We bear the gift of mission
Totally Yours, we give ourselves
Faithfully Yours until the end
To Your mission LORD,
We give our YES!
Go where the sun rises above the Hills
Share the word and serve those who are in need
Let the morning star accompany our way
Spread the fire of mission for the LORD
We stand before the grand horizon
500 years of faith grateful today
We bare the gift of mission
Totally Yours, We give ourselves
Faithfully Yours until the end
To Your mission LORD,
We give our YES
We are gifted to give and live our gifts Mercy,
compassion,
Justice and peace.
The sign our world today will come to believe
Is the love we have for one and all.
We bear the gift of mission
Mercy, compassion, justice and peace We stand
before the grand horizon
500 years of faith grateful today
We bear the gift of mission
Totally Yours, we give ourselves
Faithfully Yours until the end
To Your mission LORD,
We give our YES
To Your mission LORD,
We give our YES.



Worship

Mission Prayer (Year of Missio Ad Gentes 2021)

God our loving Father, You sent Your Son into the world to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all: To sinners, the poor, oppressed, the sick, the abandoned and neglected. He gave His life in the cross for us and rose again to new life to redeem us and reconcile us with You. You sent Your Holy Spirit to the Apostles to continue the work of Your Son and lead all to salvation.

We thank You, Father, for bringing us from darkness into light, through Your loving plan. Five hundred years ago, missionaries came to our land to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Your Son to our ancestors that made us Your people and part of the Church. The gift of faith has accompanied us through darkness and light, defeats and victories of our history as Your people. Our faith has become for us the light that shines in the darkness.

Renew in us the grace of Your spirit that impels us to be witnesses of Jesus Your Son, to a world broken by greed, violence, injustice, sickness and suffering. May our faith bring us unity as Your Children to care for and love one another. May the Holy Spirit empower us to be proclaimers of the Good News to our brothers and sisters in Asia and to all nations. Give us a sincere desire to help others come to faith in the Lord Jesus to share in Your joy and life.

May the Blessed Mother, the Star of Evangelization accompany us and pray for us as we live and share our faith with others. May our strong love and devotion to her as our mahal na Ina, lead us to be true disciples and witnesses of Jesus to all, always ready to be sent and to be obedient to whatever Jesus asks of us.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – Make the Church the home and the school of communion by means of dialogue between pastors and the faithful. Hence, it is important to read some Church documents or ask guidance from pastors and catechists to explain the documents of the Catholic Church.
- † **LIVE** – Foster charity in word and action as witnesses of love for all persons, especially the poor and marginalized.
- † **SHARE** – The witness of love includes promoting full and visible Christian unity with the Orthodox, Protestants and None Catholics by relying on the prayer of Jesus and promoting the missionary proclamation of the faith by listening and speaking with all

religions, Philosophies and cultures. Proclamation will start first on listening to the faith life of your audience and partaking with them in their life and culture. Genuine proclamation is not imposing but encouragement through the works of the Holy Spirit.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2: CONVERSION: DISCIPLESHIP MAKING



Introduction

First and foremost, to be missionaries, the Church must be a lover of God. The evangelizers must have experienced the unconditional love of God. Regardless of the state of life, education, race, language or religion, God loves His people the way they are (EG 120). How can the evangelizers tell or proclaim to the world of His love and Good News if he/she has not experienced this love? As St. Paul wrote to the first Christians of Rome: “God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.” Thus our “hope does not disappoint us” (Rom. 5:5). Therefore, a missionary should be a lover of the Word of God, so that he/she is able to announce concretely the Good News of salvation. Conversion may be brought to missionary areas by abolishing the wall that creates gaps and building bridges of unity, love and service for all people.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Jaro



Word of God

Gospel of Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”



Doctrine

TWELVE APOSTLES

The 12 apostles, also referred to as the 12 disciples or simply “the Twelve,” were Jesus Christ’s 12 closest followers. Each of them (except Judas Iscariot) were major leaders in the movement which became Christianity and helped spread the gospel throughout the world.

† Peter

The Apostle Peter also known as Saint Peter, Simon Peter, and Cephas. Peter's name literally means "rock" Jesus gave him this name when he first met him in John 1:42. Jesus also later said Peter would be the "rock" on which I will build my Church, solidifying Peter's position as a leader.

When Jesus famously walked on water, Peter boldly stepped out to join him. He walked on water until the wind scared him and he started to sink (Matthew 14: 28-33). Peter is best known for denying Jesus when the pressure was on. Even so, as a disciple he was dearly loved by Christ, holding a special place among the twelve.

Peter, a representative for the twelve, stands out in the Gospels. Whenever the apostles' names are listed, Peter's name comes first. He, with James, and John formed the inner circle of Jesus' closest companions. These three alone were given the privilege of witnessing the transfiguration, along with a few other extraordinary revelations of Jesus.

After the resurrection, Peter became a bold evangelist and missionary, and one of the greatest leaders of the early church. Passionate until the end, historians record that when Peter was sentenced to death by crucifixion, he requested that his head be turned toward the ground because he did not feel worthy to die in the same manner as his Savior.

† James

Each of the synoptic Gospels identifies James as an early disciple of Jesus. James the son of Zebedee is often called James the Greater to distinguish him from the other apostle named James. He was a member of Christ's inner circle, which included his brother, the apostle John, and Peter. Not only did James and John earn a special nickname from the Lord as "sons of thunder" because of their character of being hot tempered. These three; James, Peter and John were privileged to be at the front and center of three supernatural events in the life of Christ (Jesus raises a dead girl in Mark 5:37–43, The Transfiguration in Matthew 17:1–13, The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane Matthew 26:36–46). In addition to these honors, James was also the first of the 12 apostles to be martyred for his faith in A.D. 44.

† John

The apostle John, brother to James, was nicknamed by Jesus one of the "sons of thunder," but he liked to call himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved." John was probably younger than James was since he is usually mentioned after him. Together with their father Zebedee, the brothers were anglers when Jesus called them.

With his fiery temperament and special devotion to the Savior, John gained a favored place in Christ's inner circle. His enormous impact on the early Christian church and his larger-than-life personality, make him a fascinating character study. His writings

reveal contrasting traits. For instance, on the first Easter morning, with his typical zeal and enthusiasm, John raced Peter to the tomb after Mary Magdalene reported that it was now empty. Although John won the race and bragged about this achievement in his Gospel (John 20:1-9), he humbly allowed Peter to enter the tomb. The only one among the apostles who died of natural death, while others are martyred, John died in Ephesus where he preached the Gospel with love and taught against heresy.

† Andrew

The apostle Andrew abandoned John the Baptist to become the first follower of Jesus of Nazareth, but John the Baptist didn't mind. He knew his mission was to point people to the Messiah. Like many of us, Andrew lived in the shadow of his more famous sibling, Simon Peter. All four Gospels identify Andrew as Peter's brother. Andrew came from Bethsaida, a town north of the Sea of Galilee.

Andrew led Peter to Christ, then stepped into the background as his boisterous brother became a leader among the apostles and in the early church. The Gospels don't tell us a great deal about Andrew, but reading between the lines reveals a person who thirst for truth and found it in the living water of Jesus. In the life of Andrew, we discovered how a simple angler dropped his net on the shore to follow Jesus and went on to become a remarkable fisher of men.

† Philip

Philip was one of the first followers of Jesus Christ, and he wasted no time calling others, like Nathanael, to do the same. Philip played a larger role in the Gospel of John than he did in the other three Gospels. In John 14:8-9, Philip asked Jesus, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still do not know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.

Although little is known about him after the Ascension of Christ, Bible historians believe Philip preached the Gospel in Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and died a martyr there at Hierapolis. One thing we know for certain, Philip's search for the truth led him directly to the promised Messiah.

† Bartholomew or Nathanael

Nathanael, believed to be the disciple Bartholomew, experienced a jarring first encounter with Jesus. When the apostle Philip called him to come and meet the Messiah, Nathanael was skeptical, but he followed along anyway. As Philip introduced him to Jesus, the Lord declared, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false." Immediately Nathanael wanted to know, "How do you know me?" Jesus got his attention when he answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Well, that stopped Nathanael in his tracks. Shocked and surprised he declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Nathanael/Bartholomew garnered only a few lines in the Gospels,

nevertheless, in that instant, he became a loyal follower of Jesus Christ.

† **Matthew**

Levi, who became the apostle Matthew, was a customs official who taxed imports and exports based on his own judgment in Capernaum. The Jews hated him because he worked for Rome and betrayed his fellow citizens. But when Matthew the dishonest tax collector heard two words from Jesus, "Follow me," he left everything and obeyed. Like us, he longed to be accepted and be loved. Matthew recognized Jesus as someone worth sacrificing for, so he gave up his comfortable life to serve and follow him.

† **Thomas**

The apostle Thomas is often referred to as "Doubting Thomas" because he refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead until he saw and touched Christ's physical wounds. As far as disciples go, however, history has dealt Thomas a false charge. After all, each of the 12 apostles, except John, abandoned Jesus during his trial and death at Calvary.

Thomas was prone to extremes. Earlier he had demonstrated courageous faith, willing to risk his own life to follow Jesus into Judea. There is an important lesson to be gained from studying Thomas: If we're truly seeking to know the truth, and we're honest with others and ourselves about our struggles and doubts, God will faithfully meet us and reveal himself to us, just as he did for Thomas.

† **James the Less**

James the Less is one of the most obscure apostles in the Bible. The only things we know for certain are his name and that he was present in the upper room of Jerusalem after Christ ascended to heaven. In *Twelve Ordinary Men*, John MacArthur suggests that his obscurity may have been the distinguishing mark of his life.

† **Simon the Zealot**

One puzzling question in the Bible is the exact identity of Simon the Zealot, the Bible's own mystery apostle. Scripture tells us almost nothing about Simon. In the Gospels, he is mentioned in three places, but only to list his name. In Acts 1:13 we learn that he was present with the apostles in the upper room of Jerusalem after Christ had ascended to heaven. Beyond those few details, we can only speculate about Simon and his designation as a Zealot.

† **Jude or Thaddeus**

Listed together with Simon the Zealot and James the Less, the apostle Thaddeus completes a grouping of the least known disciples. In *Twelve Ordinary Men*, John MacArthur's book about the apostles, Thaddeus is characterized as a tender-hearted,

gentleman who displayed childlike humility. At present, the faithful looks up to him as the patron saint of hopeless cases.

† Judas Iscariot

Judas Iscariot is the apostle who betrayed Jesus with a kiss. For this supreme act of treachery, some would say Judas Iscariot made the greatest error in history. Down through time, people have had mixed feelings about Judas. Some experience a sense of hatred toward him, others feel pity, and some have even considered him a hero. No matter how you react to Judas, one thing is certain, believers can benefit greatly by taking a serious look at his life.



Photo from the Diocese of Boac



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Human Values/Virtues

- † **Enthusiasm** - Enthusiasm is one of the most divine feelings we can experience. Enthusiasm is energy vibrating at the highest level, energy vibrating in tune with creation. This divine feeling of excitement is your reward for heading towards your soul's true purpose. Sometimes we may be tempted to allow ourselves to be overtaken by laziness or despondency, especially when faced with the hardships and trials of life. In these cases, do not lose heart, but invoke the Holy Spirit, so that with the gift of fortitude, He can lift our hearts and our lives with new vigor and enthusiasm as we follow Jesus.
- † **Mercy** – Mercy is the pathway towards genuine mission. Pope Francis continually insists that mercy is the very essence of God. In his *Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy)* Francis expresses it this way: mercy is God's identity card. Mercy is the bridge that connects God and man" (MV 2). Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life (MV 10). Mercy is love given even to the unqualified and undeserving. Hence, being a missionary of Christ, we must proclaim the mercy of God in our parishes, dioceses, and communities.

† **Courage** – Courage is the quality of mind and spirit that enables a person to face difficulty, danger, pain, etc., without fear. The other term for it is bravery. In Deuteronomy 31:6 says “Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you.” Hence, Pope Francis reminded us that in this complex situation, where the horizon of the present and future seems threatened by menacing clouds, it is necessary to proclaim courageously and in every situation, the Gospel of Christ., Do not be afraid to bear witness to Jesus even where it is uncomfortable or inconvenient. Witness to Him with your whole life, do not forget that the protagonist of evangelization is the Holy Spirit (Pope Francis, 2020).

Morals

THE GREAT CALL OF APOSTLESHIP

Our Lord Jesus commissioned His apostles: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20).

Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh and Son of the Father has an absolutely unique role in the salvation of the world. Similarly, the Catholic Church uniquely possesses the means of continuing Christ’s saving mission. Christ’s instruction to the apostles was a great call to those who became the first bishops and the first missionaries of the Church. They were told to go *ad gentes*, that is, “to the nations,” to those who did not know Christ and to proclaim the Gospel. Because the apostles were faithful and obedient to Christ’s command, His Church has grown and flourished.



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando, La Union



Photo from the Diocese of Prelature of Infanta

The responsibility of fulfilling that mandate passes on unchanged to the bishops and to all the Catholics of today. Missions are those “particular undertakings by which the heralds of the Gospel, sent out by the Church and going forth into the whole world, carry out the task of preaching the Gospel and planting the seeds of faith among peoples or groups who do not yet believe in Christ. The proper purpose of this missionary activity is evangelization” (AG 6).

However, this mission is far from complete. There are many young churches that need missionaries to develop and grow. There are many dioceses, prelature, and countries struggling with poverty, persecution, oppression, war, and immense suffering that need missionaries who will give witness to the light and love of Christ, bringing hope for the future.

The Church can never “withdraw from her permanent mission of bringing the Gospel to the multitudes--the millions and millions of men and women who have yet to know Christ, the Redeemer of humanity” (RM 31). Therefore, all Catholics, by reason of their incorporation into the Church at Baptism, should fully participate and cooperate in Christ’s ongoing mission “to the nations.”

The Mission of the Church in Evangelization

The Catholic Church’s mission is to carry out and continue the work of Jesus Christ on Earth. The Church, and those in it, must:

- † Share the Word of God
- † Help those in need
- † Live as examples to all

Through this, missionaries aim to evangelize individuals and convert them to the Catholic faith. The sharing of the Gospel and the life of Christ started with the commissioning and sending out of the 12 apostles. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you (Matthew 28:19-20).

At this command, Jesus sends His first disciples out to continue his work and share the Word of God with the whole of humanity. This work and tradition is continued today by missionaries travelling the world, spreading the Gospel message and evangelizing. Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*, a papal document on evangelization, further stresses the importance of missionary work to Catholics: “we cannot forget that evangelization is first and foremost about preaching the Gospel to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected Him.”

The work of missionaries is not limited to any one area, culture or race. Galatians 3:28 shares the message that all of humanity is one in Christ and the work of the missionaries is to share this. So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and free people, between men and women; we are all one in union with Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).

The passage from Galatians also points to the mission of the Church with regards to equality and justice. The Gospel values have to be lived out, which means helping people in need. Throughout the Gospels, Christ is seen with people who have sinned, people in pain and suffering and people who are marginalized in society. Pope Francis emphasizes this point in *Evangelii Gaudium* and outlines the role that all Catholics should undertake.

But to whom should she go first? When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much to our friends and wealthy neighbors, but above all, to the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, “those who cannot repay you” (Lk 14:14). In

Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis states that the Church should be for the poor, and the poor should be at the center of the Church and all its actions.

How do we engage in Evangelization?

First, accept the call to evangelize. Every Catholic must accept that God is calling him/her to evangelize. We have to get over the “not me, I am not prepared” mentality. No one is perfectly prepared to do God’s Will but He will give you the grace to do it. Remember what Our Lord said, “When they deliver you up, do not be anxious about how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour, for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you” (Mt 10: 19-20).

Second, become holy. A Catholic called to evangelize must grow in holiness. Our Lord has given us the means to grow in holiness through His Body the Church and especially through the Sacraments. Remember, you cannot give what you don’t have. You cannot proclaim the Gospel if you are not trying to live it. Here are some great ways to grow in holiness:

- † Go to Holy Mass certainly every Sunday and Holy days but also as often as possible, even daily. If we really believe what we say we believe about the Sacrifice of the Mass, why wouldn't we be there daily? Let the Sacred Liturgy form your mind and your heart.
- † Receive Our Lord in the Holy Communion as often as possible in a worthy manner.
- † Go to confession regularly. Perhaps monthly or every two weeks. Put the date on your calendar like a doctor’s appointment. After all, you are going to encounter the Divine Physician.
- † Pray each day. Pray every morning and evening. Pray the Rosary daily, if possible as a family. Perhaps pray the Liturgy of the Hours (at least Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer). Pray throughout the day. Pray the Angelus or Regina Coeli, or the Divine Mercy Chaplet. Pray in your own words as well as in the prayers that are old friends, like the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be.
- † Visit and pray before the Blessed Sacrament.
- † Foster a tender devotion to and a relationship with the Mother of God. She is our Mother also given to us by Jesus as He hung on the cross.
- † Read the Sacred Scriptures each day in a slow meditative way. Learn about *Lectio Divina*.
- † Read good Catholic literature. Explore the lives of the saints, books on spiritual life, the documents of Church councils, the writings of the popes, the writings of the saints etc.
- † Learn about the Catholic Faith. Read the Catechism of the Catholic Church or the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. Read a good Catholic newspaper or articles on line.
- † Use the sacramental of the Church. Use Holy Water daily. Keep sacred images in your home: a crucifix, your favorite image of Our Blessed Mother, your patron saint. Keep blessed palms (usually behind a crucifix or holy picture) and blessed candles in your home. Wear a blessed medal or scapular. Carry a rosary with you always.

Third, have a conversion of mind and heart. You must share your love for Jesus and faith in Him from your heart. It is really a matter of “Heart to Heart” (*Cor ad Cor*). Be authentic, be real.

It is not necessary that you know everything. It is necessary that you believe in what Jesus Christ teaches through His Church and that you grow in knowledge and love of Him who is the Truth. He will give you what you need.

- † Do not be reluctant from talking about faith or religion, but always with charity.
- † Learn what Christ teaches through the Church, even controversial or unpopular.
- † Proclaim the truth in love.
- † Never condemn, never call out, and never present yourself or your faith in a hostile way.
- † Be kind, be inviting, and be loving as Jesus was loving.
- † Speak to family members and others who are not going to Mass, or receive the Sacraments, about returning but do not badger them.
- † Have inexpensive rosaries or medals, holy cards and good Catholic materials to give to people.
- † Offer to pray for people when they tell you their troubles or sorrows and then pray with them right then and there.
- † Get involved in your parish evangelization efforts.
- † Become part of various parish or other Catholic movements or groups and keep an eye for evangelization. Ask, “How can my being part of this movement or group proclaim the Gospel so that others can come to know and love Jesus Christ?”

Fourth, dedicate yourself to holy relationships. You are called to form good and holy relationships with others in your parish, where you work, where you go to school, in your neighborhood, in your community. Ask God to bless these relationships and encourage your friends to share their faith and their relationship with Christ with others. It's God's arithmetic! For example, I share my faith in Christ and my love for His Body the Church with two others. Each of them share it with two others. Each of them share it with two others and so on. The number of individuals who have heard about faith in Christ and find love and life in His Church just keeps increasing. Is that not how it all started 2,000 years ago when Our Lord founded His Church?

In efforts of this formation of holy relationships:. First, we encounter Jesus, Second, we follow Jesus. Third, we go out and share Him with others. We must believe that Christ wants us to share His life, His love and His grace found in the Church today. All the while we strive to grow in holiness by coming to Mass, by going to confession, by being people of prayer and by sharing His love with others. In doing this, His Church is strengthened and the world is transformed!



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija

Fifth, entreat our Lady. We must place all of your efforts in the hands of Our Immaculate Mother Mary. Pope Francis has asked us to invoke “Mary, Mother of Evangelization.” May she who said her “Yes” to God at the Annunciation and became the Mother of the Savior help us to say our “Yes” to the urgent call to make His Gospel of Mercy and Love known to the whole world!

We can talk about the “Alphabet of Evangelization” to know how we can be involved.

- A – Accept the call to evangelize.
- B – Become holy.
- C – Converse from the heart.
- D – Dedicate yourself to holy relationships.
- E – Entreat Our Lady for her help.

We have everything we need to proclaim the truth of Christ.



Simple Activities

Activity : Trust Fall

Instructions:

- † One person is selected (or volunteers) to try the challenge first. They stand on the raised platform, waiting for their teammates. The rest of the group on ground level should form 2 vertical lines facing each other.
- † The volunteer (faller) should stand with his/her back to the rest of the team, with his/her arms crossed on his/her chest.
- † A stable landing area using their arms should be provided by the rest of the team to protect the volunteer.
- † Once everyone is ready and in position, the volunteer should freely fall in the direction of the catchers.
- † The aim of the catchers is to catch the volunteer , so they may need to adjust themselves to ensure the volunteer lands safely in the landing area.
- † Once the first fall is completed. Take time to discuss it with the group. Asking them how they found it? Allow all members of the team to take turns to fall.

Suggested Review Questions:

- † Did you have any hesitation before falling?
- † How did you feel having to rely on others to support you?
- † How did you manage the safety of the one falling? What did you do to protect him/her?
- † Can you relate this challenge to a time when you had to rely on others?
- † Is there anything that stops you from trusting others around you in the workplace or classroom?

When we play this game of Trust Fall, we allow ourselves to fall into the arms of others, trusting that they will catch us. This activity can also be viewed as a metaphor of life. We trust things in life that we know will “catch us” when we get into difficult circumstances. If we are in a difficult situation at work, we may trust in our own experiences to solve the problem. If we encounter difficulties, may it be a reminder to ourselves that we need to reassure ourselves that we have tackled difficulties in the past and we will prevail once again. Our trust falls may be our education, reputation, jobs, money, families and relationships.

Do we have a similar trust fall with God's promises? Do we truly trust that God will catch us when we fall? Are we willing to substitute this with other trust falls, like money, friends, and education? What happens if those substitutes fail? Who will be there to pick up the pieces of our life?

The scriptures says let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He, Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

God will never leave us or forsake us. He is the only One who can say this and never fail. But we need to come to Jesus Christ first and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. And when we do, the unlimited and unimaginable promises of God will become available to us.

Song Analysis (See next page)

Tell the World of His Love

By Jamie Rivera

For God so loved the world
He gave us His only Son
Jesus Christ our Savior
His most precious One

He has sent us His message of love
And sends those who hear
To bring the message to everyone
In a voice loud and clear
Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home

Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love
(Tell the world of His love)
(Tell the world of His love)
Our Lord, our Savior, our King
Emmanuel, Prince of Peace
Begotten of the Father's love
Born to set us free

Let heaven and earth sing His praises
His righteousness proclaim
Let every heart rejoice in His love
And magnify His name

Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home
Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love
(Tell the world of His love)

Let us tell the world of His love
The greatest love the world has known
Search the world for those who have walked
Astray and lead them home
Fill the world's darkest corners
With His light from up above
Walk every step, every mile, every road
And tell the world, tell the world of His love
(Tell the world of His love)
Tell the world of His love.

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I welcome Jesus in my life?
- † When I love, do I love like how Jesus loves?
- † How do I spread God's message of love to my community?



Worship

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary star of New Evangelization

by Pope Francis

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal One,
help us to say our own “yes”
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.
Filled with Christ’s presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his mother.
Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.
Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.
Obtain for us now a new ardor born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.
Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God’s kingdom.
Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.
Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God’s little ones,
pray for us. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – You could be called a missionary any time that you go into an area that is made up of mostly unbelievers. Your school, your workplace, your neighborhood;, all of these places are filled with not yet believers. Basically, every place that you go has the potential to include at least one unbeliever. So, missionary type work needs to be carried out.
- † **LIVE** – Do good and act with integrity. Live by a moral code that unbelievers may not understand. They may not understand what you're doing, but they still might take note of how you conducted yourself. If a group of people is gossiping about another person, don't contribute. Better yet, say something positive about the same person. Don't just follow along with the crowd; do something righteous.
- † **SHARE** – Find a need and seek to fulfill it. When you see someone in need, rush to help them just like a missionary in a foreign country often brings people medical aid, education, food or clean drinking water. Be conscious of the many needs all around you and then do what you can to help. There are plenty of people with physical needs everywhere and there are multitudes of spiritual needs as well. Whenever there are people, there are plenty of needs. No one is exempt from problems. You have an array of opportunities to help.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: BY TWO



Introduction

All Christians are “agents of evangelization.” Missionary evangelization “calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’” (EG 120). “Christians must always be aware of the influence of the Holy Spirit and be prepared to follow wherever God’s providence and design is leading them. It is the Spirit who guides the evangelizing mission of the Church. The Spirit inspires both the church’s proclamation and its obedience to faith. Thus, we have to be attentive to the promptings of the Spirit. Whether proclamation is possible or not, the Church pursues her mission in full respect of freedom, through interreligious dialogues and witnessing to and sharing Gospel values. In this way, the partners in dialogue proceed in response to the Divine call of which they are conscious. Both Christians and followers of other religious traditions are invited by God to enter into the mystery of His love. “As human beings seek His light and truth, only God knows the times and stages of the fulfillment of this long human quest” (RM 84).

He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. (Mt 6:7)



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

The mission of evangelizing the secular society and the workplace belongs almost exclusively to the laity. It is the Catholic laity who “rub elbows” with their Christian and non-Christian counterparts and who, in that context, are to find suitable means and opportunities to inject an evangelizing moment into those interactions. However, this does not mean that the ecclesiastical leaders must put pressure on the lay faithful. Rather, the mission must be a mission of all and together, we must find ways to evangelize and proclaim the Gospel. “It is appropriate to emphasize the following

points: The first means of evangelization of the Church is the witness of an authentically Christian life, given to God in a communion that nothing should destroy and at the same time given to one’s neighbor with limitless zeal” (EN 41).

While this “witnessing” is critical, it does not fulfill the entire mission. “There is no true evangelization, if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed” (EN 22). The old axiom that actions speak louder than words is certainly appropriate here with the caveat that Jesus must take center-stage. “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses” (EN 41). Those who are sent to different nations in order to be good ministers of Christ, should be nourished with the “truths of faith and good teachings” (1 Tim. 4:6).

They should draw guidance from the Sacred Scriptures, and study the mystery of Christ, whose heralds and witnesses, they will be. All missionaries - priests, brothers, sisters, and the laity, should each, according to their own state, be prepared and trained, lest they will be found unequal to the demands of their future work (AG 26).

Our Catholic faith is always, by necessity, a lived reality. It is never a question of teaching or believing or living but rather it is always a case of teaching, believing, and living the Faith. This is made clear in the Letter of James: “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says, he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?” (James 2:6). Probably, for James the question arises not so much as a conflict between faith and action, but a puzzlement over how someone, having encountered the living Lord, and thus possessing a vibrant, living faith, could somehow fail to translate that faith into concrete action. This mission is for all the members of the Church, to work and live together, and give testimony to being a Christian--as followers and disciples of Christ.



Word of God

Gospel of Mark 6:6-13



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

Then He went about among the villages teaching. ⁷ He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹ but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰ He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.” ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.



Doctrine

THE LITURGY - WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY

The Father-Source and Goal of the Liturgy

- † **CCC 1077-** "Blessed be God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. He destined us in love to be His children through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will.
- † **CCC 1078-** Blessing is a divine and life-giving action, the source of which is the Father; when applied to man, the word "blessing" means adoration and surrender to the Creator in thanksgiving.
- † **CCC 1079-** From the beginning until the end of time, the whole of God's work is a blessing. From the liturgical poem of the first creation to the canticles of the heavenly Jerusalem, the inspired authors proclaim the plan of salvation as one vast divine blessing.
- † **CCC 1080-** From the very beginning God blessed all living beings, especially man and woman. The covenant with Noah and with all living things renewed this blessing of fruitfulness despite man's sin. But with Abraham, Divine blessing entered human history to redirect it toward life, toward its source. By the faith of Abraham, who embraced the blessing, the history of salvation is inaugurated.
- † **CCC 1081-** Divine blessings were made manifest in astonishing and saving events: the birth of Isaac, the escape from Egypt (Passover and Exodus), the gift of the Promised Land, and the election of David, the presence of God in the Temple, the purifying exile, and return of a "small remnant." The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms are interwoven in the liturgy of the Chosen People, who recall these Divine blessings and at the same time respond to them with blessings of praise and thanksgiving.
- † **CCC 1082-** In the Church's liturgy, the Divine blessing is fully revealed and communicated. The Father is acknowledged and adored as the source of all the blessings of creation and salvation. In His Word who became incarnate, died, and rose for us, He fills us with His blessings. Through His Word, He pours into our hearts the Gift that contains all gifts, the Holy Spirit.
- † **CCC 1083-** The dual dimension of the Christian liturgy, as a response of faith and love to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us, is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and "in the Holy Spirit," blesses the Father

"for His inexpressible gifts, in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of His own gifts and to beg Him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so that through communion in the death and resurrection of Christ and by the power of the Spirit, these Divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life "to the praise of His glorious grace."



Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo



Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo

Christ's Work in the Liturgy (CCC 1084-1090)

"Seated at the right hand of the Father" and pouring out the Holy Spirit on his Body which is the Church, Christ now acts through the Sacraments He instituted to communicate His grace. The sacraments are perceptible signs (words and actions) accessible to our human nature. By the action of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, they make present the grace that they signify.

The Holy Spirit and the Church in the Liturgy (CCC 1091-1109)

In the liturgy, the Holy Spirit is the teacher of faith of the People of God and the artisan of "God's masterpieces," the Sacraments of the New Covenant. The desire and work of the Spirit in the heart of the Church is that we may live from the life of the risen Christ. When the Spirit encounters in us the response of faith which He has aroused in us, He brings about genuine cooperation. Through it, the liturgy becomes the common work of the Holy Spirit and the Church.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.

Prayer as God's gift

† **CCC 2559-** "Prayer is the raising up of one's mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God." But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or "out of the depths" of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer, only when we

humbly acknowledge that "we do not know how to pray as we ought," are we ready to receive freely the gifts of prayer. "Man is a beggar before God."

- † **CCC 2560**- "If you knew the gift of God!" The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is He who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; His asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.
- † **CCC 2561**- "You would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." Paradoxically our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God: "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water! Prayer is the response of faith to the promise of free salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God.

Prayer as covenant

- † **CCC 2562**- Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit. But most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.
- † **CCC 2563**- The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place "to which I withdraw." The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life over death. It is the place of encounter, because as images of God, we live in relation. It is the place of covenant.
- † **CCC 2564** - Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.

Prayer as Communion

- † **CCC 2565**- In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with His Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is "the union of the entire Holy and Royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit." Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with Him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. Prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is His Body. Its dimensions are those of

Christ's love.

Prayer as an act of gratitude

- † **CCC 638**- As in the prayer of petition, every event and need can become an offering of thanksgiving. The letters of St. Paul often begin and end with thanksgiving, and the Lord Jesus is always present in it: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"; "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving." Prayer is an act of gratitude for life and for the many blessings received. A grateful heart is a joyful heart that prays with faith.
- † **CCC 2603 - 2604** - two prayers that are more explicit are offered by Christ during his public ministry which begins with thanksgiving. In the first, Jesus thanks the Father and blesses Him because He has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from those who think themselves learned and has revealed them to infants, the poor of the Beatitudes (Mt 11:25-27).

The second prayer happened before the raising of Lazarus, which is recorded by St. John. Once again, thanksgiving precedes the event: "Father, I thank you for having heard me," (John 11:41) which implies that the Father always hears His petitions. Jesus immediately adds: "I know that you always hear me," which implies that Jesus, on His part, *constantly made such petitions*. Jesus' prayer, characterized by thanksgiving, reveals to us how to ask: *before* the gift is given, Jesus commits himself to the One who in giving, gives himself.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Tuguegarao



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao

Prayer is a way of life

- † Prayer is also a way of life, when we seek to live out those that we pray for, especially in the tenets found in the Lord's Prayer (CCC 2854-2903):
- † *Our Father in Heaven*, We bring ourselves to God's presence, by the spirit of adoption, recognizing that we are indeed, God's children drawn to His glory.
- † *Holy be your name*. Do we seek to glorify God's name in everything that we do? How do we make His name Holy? Do we strive to bring people close to Him and

know His Holy name that in the fullness of time, "according to his purpose we might also "be holy and blameless before him in love."

- † *Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.* What are we doing to usher in God's Kingdom in our world? How do we humbly allow His will to take charge of our lives?
- † *Give us today, our daily bread.* How do we use the many blessings that God has given us, and most importantly, do we use them to bless others as well, so that they may sustain us and our neighbors in our daily needs?
- † *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sinned against us.* The power of forgiveness and its effects in our daily lives is something that has already been emphasized so many times. But as we seek God's forgiveness, do we really forgive others, as well as ourselves? How generous are we in showing mercy? We must always remember that in refusing to forgive our brothers and sisters, our hearts are closed and their hardness makes them impervious to the Father's merciful love.
- † *Do not bring us to the test.* As we ask God's grace to deliver us from temptation, how do we use our will so that we are not subjected to it? Or how do we make use of the Holy Spirit's gift of discernment to battle it? Moreover, do we lead others away from temptation or are we a source of temptation ourselves?
- † Such a battle and such a victory become possible only through prayer. Just as by His prayer, Jesus vanquishes the tempter, and through vigilance and perseverance, Christ invites us to victory with Him.
- † *Deliver us from Evil.* This petition opens us to the range of God's economy of salvation. Our interdependence in the drama of sin and death is turned into solidarity in the Body of Christ, the "communion of saints. When we ask to be delivered from the evil one, we pray as well to be freed from all evils, present, past, and future, of which is authored by the devil. In this final petition, the Church brings before the Father all the distress of the world. Along with deliverance from the evils that overwhelm humanity, she implores the precious gift of peace and the grace of perseverance in expectation of Christ's return. Thus, along with this prayer, we ask ourselves, does our way of life lead people away from sin, or cause others (even the little ones) to sin (Mt 18:6)?



Faith Response

- † **Evangelization and Faith Formation:** The future of the Church will depend on a system of Catholic education that nurtures and cultivates the whole person with Catholic faith and culture.
- † **Youth and Young Adult Ministry:** The Church must invest both human and

economic resources into our youth and young adults so that they begin now to participate actively in the Church and exercise leadership.

- † **Vocations:** An active youth and young adult ministry is the most fertile ground for development of lay, religious, and ordained vocations.
- † **Formation of Lay Ministry and Lay Apostolate:** The Diocese requires formation programs that prepare competent pastoral agents from various cultural groups to minister to the Catholic community. The success of youth and young adult ministry will depend on preparing skilled youth ministers who can serve their peers and young people.



Human Values/Virtues

† Cooperation

As members of the living Christ, incorporated into Him through baptism and through confirmation and the Eucharist, all the faithful are duty - bound to cooperate in the expansion and spreading out of His Body, to bring it to fullness as soon as may be (Eph. 4:13). Therefore, all children of the Church should have a lively awareness of their responsibility to the world; they should foster in themselves a truly catholic spirit; they should spend their forces in the work of evangelization. And yet, let everyone know that their first and most important obligation for the spread of the Faith is this: to lead a profoundly Christian life. Their fervor in the service of God and their charity towards others will cause a new spiritual wind to blow for the whole Church, which will then appear as a sign lifted up among the nations (Is. 11:12), "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14) and "the salt of the earth" (Mt. 5:13).

† Unity

It is the state of being one; oneness, a whole or totality as combining all its parts into one. It is the state or fact of being united or combined into one, as of the parts of a whole. That such external signs are necessary to the true Church is plain from the aim and the purpose, which Christ had in view when He made His revelation and founded a Church. The purpose of redemption was the salvation of humankind. Hence, Christ made known the truths which men must heed and obey. He established a Church to which He committed the care and the exposition of these truths, and, consequently He made it obligatory for all people that they should know and hear it (Mt.18:17). It is obvious that this Church must be evidently discernible to all. There must be no doubt as to which is the true Church of Christ, the one which has received, and has preserved intact the Revelation which He gave for man's salvation. Otherwise, the purpose of Redemption would be frustrated, the blood of the Savior shed in vain, and man's eternal destination at the mercy of chance.

† Knowledge of the Faith

Recognize communion with Jesus Christ as the definitive aim of all catechesis. Explore the Scriptures so that adults may be hearers and doers of the Word. Become familiar with the great teachings of Christianity (its creeds and doctrines) and their place in the hierarchy of truths. For example, learn "the mysterythe mystery of God and the Trinity, Christ, the Church, the Sacraments, human life and ethical principles, eschatological realities, and other contemporary themes in religion and morality." Study the Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person in its social doctrine, including its respect for life teachings. Learn the richness of the Church's Ttraditions, explore the theological and cultural heritage in which faith is expressed, and gain perspective on contemporary events and trends through an understanding of the Cchurch history. Develop the philosophical and theological foundations of the faith and appreciate expressions of Christian thought and culture (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

† Missionary Spirit

Cultivate an evangelizing spirit among all the faithful as an integral element of their baptismal calling, of the Church's nature and mission, and of a Catholic way of life. Respond to God's call whether as lay, ordained, or religious, and develop a personal apostolate in family, Church, and society. Motivate and equip the faithful to speak to others about the Scriptures, the tradition and teachings of the Church, and one's own experience of faith. Explore and promote the applications of the Church's moral and social teaching in personal, family, professional, cultural, and social life. Understand the importance of serving those in need, promoting the common good, and work for the transformation of society through personal and social action. Appreciate the value of interreligious dialogue and contacts, and promote the Church's mission Ad Gentes in the local and universal Church (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Morals

- † To encourage and specify ways of carrying out certain initiatives in missionary cooperation in dioceses or territories of with common rights for the benefit of young churches.
- † The Church must be profoundly convinced of her own identity and mission. She lives this experience through the commitment of her sons and daughters.
- † The universal Church, all the particular churches, every ecclesial institution and association, and every individual member of the Church has the duty of spreading the Lord's message to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) so that the Mystical Body may reach the fullness of maturity in Christ (Eph 4:13).
- † Everyone should come to realize that "cooperating in missionary activity means not just giving but also receiving. All the particular Churches, both young and old, are called to give and to receive in the context of the universal mission, and none should be closed to the needs of others"(RM 85).
- † All particular churches must be encouraged to maintain "an effective sense of the universality of the faith, giving and receiving spiritual gifts, experiences of pastoral work in evangelization and initial proclamation, as well as personnel for the apostolate and material resources" (RM 85).



Simple Activities

Activity: Together We Can!

Material: Walis Ting-ting

- † Untie the *walis ting-ting* and give every learner one piece of ting-ting
- † Ask them go out to pick leaves of plants and trees
- † Observe how they do it and give them time to enjoy
- † After some time, call them back together. Ask them to bring back the *walis ting-ting* pieces and tell them to put it back together. Let them observe how easy it is to clean and work using the refurbished *walis tingting*.
- † Explain to them the virtue of unity.

Song Analysis (See next page)

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I help my fellow Catholics be closer to God?

"If We Are the Body"

It's crowded in worship today
As she slips in
Trying to fade into the faces
The girls' teasing laughter is carrying
Farther than they know
Farther than they know

But if we are the body
Why aren't his arms reaching?
Why aren't his hands healing?
Why aren't his words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't his feet going?
Why is his love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way

A traveler is far away from home
He sheds his coat
And quietly sinks into the back row
The weight of their judgmental glances
Tells him that his chances are better out on
the road

But if we are the body
Why aren't his arms reaching?
Why aren't his hands healing?

Why aren't his words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't his feet going?
Why is his love not showing them there is a way?
There is a way

Jesus paid much too high a price
For us to pick and choose who should come
And we are the body of Christ

If we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?

If we are the body
Why aren't His arms reaching?
Why aren't His hands healing?
Why aren't His words teaching?
And if we are the body
Why aren't His feet going?
Why is His love not showing them there is a way?

Jesus is the way



Worship

God our Father, we thank You for the gift of Your love which You give to every person in the world. We thank You that because of Your love, we are never alone and should never feel afraid. We thank You for the gift of faith which allows us to know You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through Your Son, Jesus, our friend and brother, You show us how to love. Give us the strength we need, through Your Holy Spirit, to live lives of love and faith. So that, by our actions and words, we help to build Your kingdom here on earth. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Or

Loving God, You sent Jesus, the first missionary, on His great mission. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples with joy and gave them the courage to witness to Your love

and continue this mission. We now invite the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with joy and energy so that we too might be witnesses to Your love in our daily lives. We pray for the friends of Jesus in faraway countries today. Help them to spread the love of Jesus around the world. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † The People of God, filled with the missionary spirit and aware of its responsibility, cooperate effectively with the missionary activity of the Church through prayer, witness of life, through activity, and through financial support.
- † The whole Church is called to commitment in its missionary activity through active cooperation. Every Christian, by virtue of baptism and confirmation, joins the flow of supernatural activity, in an eternal plan for universal salvation; this is God's own plan, which is being fulfilled day after day for the benefit of the successive generations that forms the great human family.
- † The participation of ecclesial communities and individual believers in the fulfillment of this divine plan is called "missionary cooperation" and can be carried out in different forms: prayer, witness, sacrifice, offering of one's work and help. Cooperation is the first fruit of missionary animation, understood as the spirit and vitality, which opens individual believers, institutions and communities to universal responsibility, which forms missionary awareness and mindset, directed ad gentes.
- † To suggest and encourage suitable initiatives for the missionary formation of the clergy, for supporting missionary Institutes, and for the development of missionary awareness in particular Churches, so that the faithful may be personally involved in the activity of ad gentes and be committed to cooperation.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4: MISSION: FINDING THE LOST SHEEP

“Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Mark 9:40)



Introduction

One is the community of all peoples, one is their origin, for God made the whole human race to live over the face of the earth. One also is their final goal--God. His providence, His manifestations of goodness, His saving design extends to all men, until that time when the elect will be united in the Holy City, the city ablaze with the glory of God, where the nations will walk in His light (Nostra Aetate 1).

The Church was founded by Jesus Christ to be the loving mother of the whole human family and the minister of its salvation. All through the centuries, therefore, whenever

men have yearned for the glory of Almighty God and the eternal salvation of souls, they have naturally made the Church the special object of their devotion and concern (Ecclesiam Suam 1). “The Church is commissioned to announce the mercy of God, the beating heart of the Gospel, which in its own way must penetrate the heart and mind of every person. As the Church is charged with the task of the new evangelization, the theme of mercy needs to be proposed again and again with new enthusiasm and renewed pastoral action. In our parishes, communities, associations and movements. In a word, wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy” (MV 12).

“The Catholic missionary movements both in Christian and pagan lands have gained such force and momentum and are of such proportions as perhaps was never witnessed before in the annals of Catholic missions” (Evangelii Praecones 1). There are many things to be considered: First of all, it is to be observed that the person who had been called by God to evangelize to distant non-Christian lands had received a very great and sublime vocation. He/She consecrates his/her life to God in order to spread His Kingdom to the farthest ends of the earth. He/She does not seek what is his/hers, but what is Christ's. He /She can apply to himself/ herself in a special way, those beautiful sayings of St. Paul: “For Christ . . . we are ambassadors.” “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not walk according to the flesh.” “To the weak, I became weak that I might gain the weak.”

He/She must, therefore, consider the country he/she is going to evangelize as a second homeland love it with due charity. Furthermore, let that person not seek any earthly advantage for his/her own country or religious Institute, but rather seek only what may help the salvation of

souls. Certainly, a person should dearly love his/her homeland and his/her Order, but the Church should be loved with a still more ardent devotion. Moreover, it is necessary that those who are called to this kind of apostolate should not only get the spiritual and intellectual training that befits ecclesiastical students before going out on the mission field, but should also learn, in addition to those subjects, those which will be most useful to them when preaching the Gospel in foreign lands. Hence, they should be given a sound knowledge of languages, especially of those, which they will require in their ministry. Besides, they should also be sufficiently instructed in the sciences of medicine, agriculture, ethnography, history, geography, etc. and most importantly, they need to be trained in intercultural sensitivity.

The object of missionary activity, as we all know, is to bring the light of the Gospel to new races and to form Christians. However, the ultimate goal of missionary endeavor, which we should never lose sight of, is to establish the Church on sound foundations of faith among non-Christian peoples, and place it under its own native Hierarchy (EP 20-22).

In the missions, we should not hesitate to ask the aid of co-workers and other missionaries who may even belong to other religious families, whether priests or lay, they can be called to help in spreading the Faith, to educate native youths, and to engage in other missionary activities. Let religious orders and congregations take legitimate pride in the foreign missions entrusted to them, as well as in the harvest of souls so far won for Christ's Kingdom.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo



Word of God

Gospel of Mathew 10:5-15

⁵ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶ but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷ As you go, proclaim the good news, ‘The kingdom of heaven has come near.’ ⁸ Cure the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. ⁹ Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰ no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. ¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. ¹² As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³ If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴ If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from

your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵ Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town.



Doctrine

THE CHURCH, MOTHER AND TEACHER

Moral Life and the Magisterium of the Church

- † **CCC 2032** - The Church, the "pillar and bulwark of the truth," "has received this solemn command of Christ from the apostles to announce the saving truth." "To the Church belongs the right always and everywhere to announce moral principles, including those pertaining to the social order, and to make judgments on any human affairs to the extent that they are required by the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls."
- † **CCC 2033**- The Magisterium of the Pastors of the Church in moral matters is ordinarily exercised in catechesis and preaching, with the help of the works of theologians and spiritual authors. Thus from generation to generation, under the aegis and vigilance of the pastors, the "deposit" of Christian moral teaching has been handed on, a deposit composed of a characteristic body of rules, commandments, and virtues proceeding from faith in Christ and animated by charity. Alongside with the Creed and the Our Father, the basis for this catechesis has traditionally been the Decalogue which sets out the principles of moral life valid for all men.
- † **CCC 2034**- The Roman Pontiff and the bishops are "authentic teachers, that is, teachers endowed with the authority of Christ, who preach the faith to the people entrusted to them, the faith to be believed and put into practice." The ordinary and universal Magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him teach the faithful the truth to believe, the beatitude to hope for and the charity to practice.
- † **CCC 2035**- The supreme degree of participation in the authority of Christ is ensured by the charism of infallibility. This infallibility extends as far as the deposit of Divine Revelation. It also extends to all those elements of doctrine, including morals, without which the saving truths of the faith cannot be preserved, explained, or observed.
- † **CCC 2036** - The authority of the Magisterium extends also to the specific precepts of the natural law, because their observance, demanded by the Creator, is necessary for salvation. In recalling the prescriptions of the natural law, the Magisterium of the Church exercises an essential part of its prophetic office of proclaiming to the people what they truly are and reminding them of what they should be before.
- † **CCC 2037**- The law of God entrusted to the Church is taught to the faithful as the way of life and truth. The faithful therefore have the right to be instructed in the divine saving precepts that purify judgment and, with grace, heal wounded human reason. They have the duty of observing the constitutions and decrees conveyed by the

legitimate authority of the Church. Even if they concern disciplinary matters, these determinations call for docility in charity.

- † **CCC 2038-** In the work of teaching and applying Christian morality, the Church needs the dedication of pastors, the knowledge of theologians, and the contribution of all Christians and men of good will. Faith and the practice of the Gospel provide each person with an experience of life "in Christ," who enlightens him/her and makes him/her able to evaluate the divine and human realities according to the Spirit of God. Thus, the Holy Spirit can use the humblest to enlighten the learned and those in the highest positions.
- † **CCC 2039 -** Ministries should be exercised in a spirit of fraternal service and dedication to the Church, in the name of the Lord. At the same time, the conscience of each person should avoid confining itself to individualistic considerations in its moral judgments of the person's own acts. As far as possible conscience should take account of the good of all, as expressed in the moral law, natural and revealed, and consequently in the law of the Church and in the authoritative teaching of the Magisterium on moral questions. Personal conscience and reason should not be set in opposition to the moral law or the Magisterium of the Church.
- † **CCC 2040-** Thus, a true filial spirit toward the Church can be developed among Christians. It is the normal flowering of the baptismal grace which has begotten us in the womb of the Church and made us members of the Body of Christ. In her motherly care, the Church grants us the mercy of God which prevails over all our sins and is especially at work in the sacrament of reconciliation. With a mother's foresight, she also lavishes on us, day after day in her liturgy, the nourishment of the Word and Eucharist of the Lord.

MARY - MOTHER OF CHRIST, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

- † **CCC 963-** Since the Virgin Mary's role in the mystery of Christ and the Spirit has been mentioned, it is fitting now to consider her place in the mystery of the Church. "The Virgin Mary . . . is acknowledged and honored as truly the Mother of God and of the redeemer... She is 'clearly the mother of the members of Christ' ... since she has by her charity joined in bringing about the birth of believers in the Church, who are members of its head." Mary, the Mother of Christ is the Mother of the Church."

MARY'S MOTHERHOOD WITH REGARD TO THE CHURCH

Wholly united with her Son . . .

Mary's role in the Church cannot be separated from her union with Christ. In fact, it flows directly from it. "This union of the mother with the Son in the work of salvation is made manifest from the time of Christ's virginal conception up to His death." This is made manifest above all at the hour of his Passion. Thus, the Blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. There she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son, the intensity of His suffering, joining herself with His sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim, born of her. The same Jesus dying on the cross, has given her to be a mother to His disciple, with these words: "Woman, behold your son" (Lumen Gentium 57-58).

- † **CCC 965** - After her Son's Ascension, Mary "aided the beginnings of the Church by her prayers." In her association with the apostles and several women, "we also see Mary by her prayers imploring the gift of the Spirit, who had already overshadowed her in the Annunciation."

... also in her Assumption

"Finally the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, when the course of her earthly life was finished, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things, so that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son, the Lord of lords and conqueror of sin and death." The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is a singular participation in her Son's Resurrection and an anticipation of the resurrection of other Christians: In Giving Birth, you kept your virginity; in your Dormition you did not leave the world, O Mother of God, but were joined to the source of Life. You conceived the living God and, by your prayers, delivered our souls from death (CCC 966).

... she is our Mother in the order of grace

By her complete adherence to the Father's will to His Son's redemptive work, and to every prompting of the Holy Spirit, the Virgin Mary is the Church's model of faith and charity. Thus, she is a "preeminent and wholly unique member of the Church." Indeed, she is the "exemplary realization" of the Church (CCC 967).

- † **CCC 968** - Her role in relation to the Church and to all humanity goes still further. "In a wholly singular way she cooperated by her obedience, faith, hope, and burning charity in the Savior's work of restoring supernatural life to souls. For this reason, she is a mother to us in the order of grace."
- † **CCC 969** - "This motherhood of Mary in the order of grace continues uninterruptedly from the consent which she loyally gave at the Annunciation and which she sustained without wavering beneath the cross, until the eternal fulfilment of all the elect. Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation ... Therefore, the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix.
- † **CCC 970**- "Mary's function as mother of people in no way obscures or diminishes this unique mediation of Christ, but rather shows its power. The Blessed Virgin's salutary influence on people flows forth from the superabundance of the merits of Christ, rests on His mediation, depends entirely on it, and draws all its power from it. "No one could ever be counted along with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer; but just as the priesthood of Christ is shared in various ways both by His ministers and the faithful, and as the one goodness of God is radiated in different ways among His creatures, so also the unique mediation of the Redeemer does not exclude but rather gives rise to a manifold cooperation which is but a sharing in this one source."

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

- † **CCC 971**- "All generations will call me blessed": "The Church's devotion to the Blessed Virgin is intrinsic to Christian worship." The Church rightly honors "the Blessed Virgin with special devotion. From the most ancient times, the Blessed Virgin has been honored with the title of 'Mother of God,' to whose protection the faithful fly in all their dangers and needs. This very special devotion differs essentially from the adoration which is given to the incarnate Word and to the Father and the Holy Spirit, but greatly fosters this adoration." Liturgical feasts dedicated to the Mother of God and Marian prayers, such as the rosary, an "epitome of the whole Gospel," express this devotion to the Virgin Mary.

MARY - ESCHATOLOGICAL ICON OF THE CHURCH

- † **CCC 972**- After speaking of the Church, her origin, mission, and destiny, we can find no better way to conclude than by looking to Mary. In her, we contemplate that the Church is already on her own "pilgrimage of faith," and that she will be in the homeland at the end of her journey. There, "in the glory of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity," and in the communion with all the saints, the Church is awaited by the one she venerates as the Mother of her Lord and as her own mother. In the meantime, the Mother of Jesus, in the glory which she possesses in body and soul in heaven, is the image and beginning of the Church as it is to be perfected in the world to come. Likewise, she shines forth on earth until the day of the Lord shall come, a sign of certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God.

MARY, MOTHER OF EVANGELIZATION (*EVANGELII GAUDIUM*)

- † **EG 284** - With the Holy Spirit, Mary is always present in the midst of the people. She joined the disciples in praying for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:14) and thus made possible the missionary outburst which took place at Pentecost. She is the Mother of the Church which evangelizes, and without her we could never truly understand the spirit of the new evangelization.

JESUS' GIFT TO HIS PEOPLE

- † **EG 285** - On the cross, when Jesus endured in His own flesh the dramatic encounter of the sin of the world and God's mercy, He could feel at his feet the consoling presence of His mother and His friend. At that crucial moment, before fully accomplishing the work which His Father had entrusted to him, Jesus said to Mary: "Woman, here is your son". Then He said to His beloved friend: "Here is your mother" (Jn 19:26-27). These words of the dying Jesus are not merely the expression of His devotion and concern for His mother; rather, they are a revelatory formula which manifests the mystery of a special saving mission.

Jesus left us His mother to be our mother. Only after doing so did Jesus say that "all was finished" (Jn 19:28). At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because He did not want us to journey without a mother. We realize in this maternal image, all the mysteries of the Gospel. The Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood. Mary, who brought Him into the world, and who with great faith also accompanies

“the rest of her offspring and those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus” (Rev 12:17). The close connection between Mary, the Church and every member of the faithful is based on the fact that each in his or her own way brings forth Christ, has been beautifully expressed by Blessed Isaac of Stella: “In the inspired Scriptures, what is said in a universal sense of the Church, is understood in an individual sense of the Virgin Mary. In a way, every Christian is also believed to be a bride of God’s Word, a mother of Christ, His daughter and sister, at once virginal and fruitful. Christ dwelt for nine months in the tabernacle of Mary’s womb. He dwells until the end of the ages in the tabernacle of the Church’s faith. He will dwell forever in the knowledge and love of each faithful soul”.

† **EG 286** - Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings His praises. She is the friend who is ever concerned that wine will not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands all our pain. As mother of all, she is a sign of hope for people suffering the birth pangs of injustice. She is the missionary who draws near to us and accompanies us throughout life, opening our hearts to faith by her maternal love. As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God’s love. Through her many titles, often linked to her shrines, Mary shares the history of the people which had received the Gospel and becomes part of their historical identity. Many Christian parents ask that their children be baptized in a Marian shrine, as a sign of their faith in her motherhood which brings forth new children for God. There, in these many shrines, we can see how Mary brings together her children who with great effort come as pilgrims to see her and to be seen by her. Here they find strength from God to bear the weariness and the suffering in their lives. As she did with Juan Diego, Mary offers them maternal comfort and love, and whispers in their ear: “Let your heart not be troubled... Am I not here, who am your Mother?”

STAR OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

† **EG 287** - We ask the Mother of the living Gospel to intercede that this invitation to a new phase of evangelization will be accepted by the entire ecclesial community. Mary is a woman of faith, who lives and advances in faith, and “her exceptional pilgrimage of faith represents a constant point of reference for the Church.” Mary let herself be guided by the Holy Spirit on a journey of faith towards a destiny of service and fruitfulness. Today we look to her and ask her to help us proclaim the message of salvation to all and to enable new disciples to become evangelizers in turn. Along this journey of evangelization we will have our moments of aridity, darkness and even fatigue. Mary herself experienced these things during the years of Jesus’ childhood in Nazareth: “This is the beginning of the Gospel, the joyful good news. However, it is not difficult to see in that beginning a particular heaviness of heart, linked with a sort of night of faith – to use the words of Saint John of the Cross – a kind of ‘veil’ through which one has to draw near to the Invisible One and to live in intimacy with the mystery. And this is the way that Mary, for many years, lived in intimacy with the mystery of her Son, and went forward in her pilgrimage of faith”.

† **EG 288** - There is a Marian “style” to the Church’s work of evangelization. Whenever we look to Mary, we come to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her, we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong that need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves. Contemplating Mary, we realize that she who praised God for “bringing down the mighty from their thrones” and “sending the rich away empty” (Lk 1:52-53) is also the one who brings a homely warmth to our pursuit of justice. She is also the one who carefully keeps “all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2:19). Mary is able to recognize the traces of God’s Spirit in events great and small. She constantly contemplates the mystery of God in our world, in human history and in our daily lives. She is the woman of prayer and work in Nazareth, and she is also Our Lady of Help, who sets out from her town “with haste” (Lk 1:39) to be of service to others. This interplay of justice and tenderness, of contemplation and concern for others, is what makes the ecclesial community look to Mary as a model of evangelization. We implore her maternal intercession that the Church may become a home for many peoples, a mother for all peoples, and that the way may be opened to the birth of a new world.



Photo from the Diocese of Boringan



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose De Antique



Faith Response

- † We must focus on the Christian mission: to proclaim the faith of the gospel. We’ve already seen that the gospel was the central focus of Paul’s life. In 1 Corinthians 9:23 he says that he does “all things for the sake of the Gospel.”
- † We fulfill the Christian mission by working cooperatively as a group belonging on the same team. “Standing firm in one spirit, with one soul. Striving together for the faith on the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).
- † We fulfill the Christian mission by warring confidently as combatants in the same army against the darkness of sin and the night of unbelief.



Human Values/Virtues

- † Compassion: Providing care, understanding and concern for those we serve in order to honor the God-given life and the sacredness of each person at every stage and condition of life.
- † Diversity: Welcoming the differences of race, culture, faith, and thought with a strong commitment to naming and combating institutional racism and discrimination.
- † Excellence: Providing high quality, professionally competent services with integrity, using best practices.
- † Justice: Defending and advocating for the rights of poor and vulnerable people while working toward the common good.
- † Stewardship: Prudently developing and using the gifts and talents of employees and volunteers and the financial resources needed to live out our mission.



Morals

† Study scripture

Whether you want to deepen your dependence on Christ, learn from missionary examples, or become better equipped to share your faith, you can do no wrong by diving into the Bible and memorizing God's inerrant Word. While on the mission field you will be forced to become more focused and dependent on the Lord. Begin focusing more on the Bible and begin living a life sold out for His glory.



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

† Evangelize

Learn to share your faith. Become accustomed to articulating the gospel and telling how Christ changed your life. Take formal evangelism training on evangelism (Four Laws, EE, Bridge, etc.). Evangelism is like a muscle, the more you use it the stronger it gets. Only when you become experienced at evangelism will you truly embrace the concept that winning souls is God's job, not yours.

† Be uncomfortable

Get out of your comfort zone. Serve the poor, feed the hungry, and build things with your hands. Learn to do new things that do not come natural to you. Most of your time on the mission field will be spent in unfamiliar situations. Get used to it. Learn to

be comfortable as an adult learner. Learn to fail gracefully. Learn to depend on others and rely on Christ.

† **Live with less**

Begin to cut back on your lifestyle. Spend less. Become less dependent on technology. Experience life with fewer options and choices. No matter where you serve in the world you will not experience the same foods, entertainment, and selection you have now. Do not let material goods rule your life so completely that they influence your missionary experience.

† **Serve others**

Develop a spirit of service. Gain the experience of putting the wellbeing of others in front of your own joy. Volunteer at your church or in your community, or simply step forward and help others in your day-to-day life. Learn to serve others so Jesus receives the glory and not yourself. Service is at the heart of almost every missionary's daily experience.

† **Pray more**

Develop a life dedicated to prayer. Make prayer an important, unwavering part of your daily life. Condition yourself to make prayer your first and last response to every situation. Prayer brings glory to God and takes the focus off you. On the mission field you will discover you need prayer more than you ever did before. Condition yourself to the concept that you cannot, but God can.



Simple Activities

Activity: My Logo Mission

- † Let the learners express their concept of mission by allowing them to draw their logo with colors.
- † Give them time to explain their logo, its significance and relation to their life story.

Song Analysis *(See next page)*

Guide for Reflections

- † How do I respond to God's calls?
- † How do I proclaim God's word to my family, friends, and community?

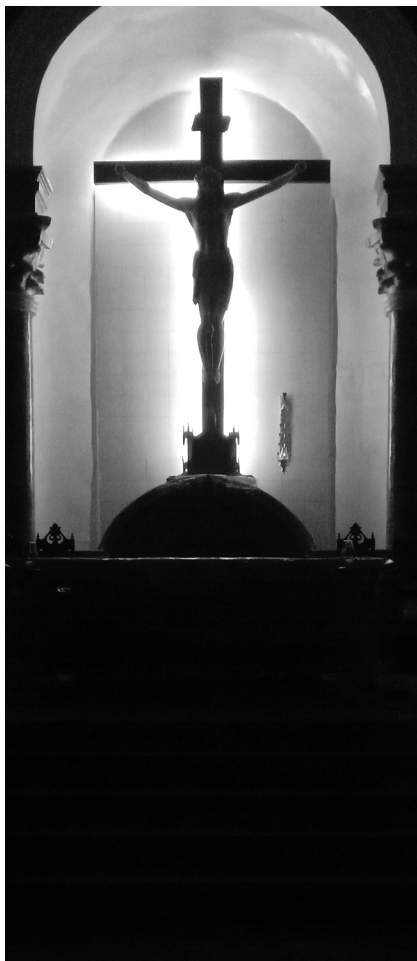


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

To The Ends Of The Earth

Hillsong United

Love unfailing
Overtaking my heart
You take me in
Finding peace again
Fear is lost in
All you are

And I would give the world to tell Your story
Cause I know that You've called me
I know that You've called me
I've lost myself for good within Your promise
I won't hide it
I won't hide it

Jesus, I believe in You
And I would go to the ends of the earth
To the ends of the earth
For You alone are the Son of God
And all the world will see
That You are God
You are God.



Worship

Father God, we lift up our missionaries overseas. Lord, You have called them away from their homeland to follow You. Reveal to them Your purpose in their lives and in their the lives of those they come into contact with. Just as Hebrews 11:8 reminds us of Abraham going by obedience, not knowing what he would find in the journey ahead, overseas missionaries, much like Abraham, have awoken to the call in their own hearts to venture beyond what they have known to follow in obedience to share with others about You. Heavenly Father, we pray for protection over them. We pray for safety and favor as they take every step in obedience into these lands. We pray that the hearts they come into contact with meet would be open and willing to hear and receive the beautiful and life-altering truth of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray for open doors and victory in Your Name so that more of Your children would come to the table of the Lord. May doors that have long been closed to visitors, swing wide open by Your Divine influence, so that Your call to all of Your followers maybe carried out in Your Holy plan. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † Place special attention in Scripture courses on the “sending” passages and explain how these are related to modern mission.
- † Apply to modern ideas the deep sense of mission of the Fathers of the Church in all courses of Patristic studies.
- † Recognize the missiology of the eternal “mission” relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in studies of fundamental theology and Christology.
- † Encourage vocations from among young people to mission-sending religious orders
- † Bible studies and sharing groups can focus on passages dealing specifically with mission.
- † Trust built through love, all Catholics reach out as missionaries and confidently announce the Good News of Christ with words and deeds. The best Christian testimony is love for others.

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Song References

TELL THE WORLD OF HIS LOVE

Lyrics: Trina Belamide

Artist: Jamie Rivera

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/jamierivera/telltheworldofhislove.html>

WE GIVE OUR YES

Lyrics & Music: Fr. Carlo Magno

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.catholicsongbook.com/2021/01/we-give-our-yes-lyrics-and-chords.html>

IF WE ARE THE BODY

Lyrics: John Mark Hall

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/castingcrowns/ifwearethethebody.html>

TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

Lyrics: Alexander Lowell Talmadge, Jr. & Stephen Wesley Amerson

Artist: Hillsong United

Information on this song is publicly available @ <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/hillsongunited/totheendsoftheearth.html>



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).