

Directory of Catechesis

A PPP by Ulrika Erlandsson

Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation

- Earlier Directories were published in 1971 (after the Vatican II) and 1997 (after the Catechism).
- This Directory is in "dynamic continuity" with the earlier Directories.
- Today's challenges: globalisation, digitalisation
- *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013)

Characteristics

- Catechesis – part of **evangelisation** that involves every baptised.
- "All under the sign of **mercy**" (50) "the practice of mercy is already itself authentic catechesis". (51)
- "Should be marked by **joy**." (59)
- **Dialogue** – we are all involved.
- The way of **beauty**
- It should start with **adults**.

Part I Catechesis as a Part of the Evangelisation

- The Church exists in order to evangelize. (28)
- Catechesis must always keep the kerygma at its center.
- Not about passing knowledge, it is about making Christ alive. (29)
- The goal and tasks of Catechesis

Part 2 Process of Catechesis

- Divine pedagogy, sign of his mercy
- The role of the catechism
- Plurality of methods: "laboratory of dialogue" (53)
- Human experience – a starting point
- Different groups: family, adults, persons with disabilities, marginalised, prisoners, migrants.

Part 3 Catechesis in the Diocese

- The life in the local churches, different rites and schools.

- Conditions of catechesis: globalisation, pluralism, digitalisation, urban and rural contexts.
- Basic elements of catechesis: ecumenical work and dialogue with other religions, science, the ecological engagement, the option for the poor.
- Organisation of catechesis: The Holy See, bishops conferences, diocesan level

Catechesis as the Laboratory of Dialogue

- All baptized are invited to share the gospel in an attitude of dialogue and friendship. (40,41)
- dialogue with cultures, believers and nonbelievers, society, science, as a contribution to peace (53)
- Catechesis must “talk” a language of mercy, first action, then words. (51)
- Catechumenate should inspire all catechesis. (31, 61-65)

Catechesis is the Continuation of the First Proclamation.

- Often catechesis is oriented towards those who have already received the first proclamation about the risen Christ. (56)
- Always keep on to the first proclamation, the kerygma, it is not simply the “first stage”, it should be at the center of all catechesis. (57)
- The truth should not be imposed, always appeal to freedom; should be marked with joy. (59)
- The kerygma has a new vision for life, of humanity, of justice, of social existence, all dimensions of life. (60)
- The catechumenal process for unbaptized is suitable also for marginalised Christians. (61)

The centrality of the kerygma for the proclamation leads to several guidelines for catechesis: “it has to express God’s saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines.

This raises questions for the Church herself, called to be the first to rediscover the Gospel that she proclaims: the new proclamation of the Gospel asks of the Church a renewed listening to the Gospel, together with her hearers.” (59)

Goal of Catechesis

At the center of every process of catechesis is the living encounter with Christ. “Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, 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.” (75)

The encounter with Christ involves the person in his totality: heart, mind, senses. It does not concern only the mind, but also the body and above all the heart. (76)

Tasks of Catechesis

Share your love for Christ

Celebrate the liturgy

Actions of mercy

Pray

Build community life (79-89)

Sources of Catechesis

- Bible and Tradition (91)
- The Magisterium that serves The Word of God and the People of God. (93)
The truth remains the same, but the Church understands it better and better. (94)
- Liturgy, bringing to life the love of God (95)
- Testimony of saints and martyrs (99)
- Theology: the revelation of God goes beyond the human capacity to understand it, but is not opposed to human reason. (101)
- Christian Culture: can unify. (103)
- Beauty: all forms of catechesis should attend the way of beauty. (106)

The Catechist – an accompanier

- A witness through her/his life (110)
- Lay catechists: their very life is a form of proclamation. (121)
- All the baptized are involved in the mission, but catechists have a special role. (110)

”...is an expert in the *art of accompaniment*... is able to listen and enter into the dynamics of human growth... with patience and a sense of gradualness... knows the joys and hopes of human beings, their sadness and distress and is able to situate them in relation to the Gospel of the Jesus.” (113)

The formation of the Catechist

- The formation of the catechist is an ongoing process that transforms his/her deepest identity: being God's child and being in profound communion with his brothers and sisters. (131-132)
- It is important that the catechist understands that his or her mission is enabled by the Church. (132)
- Knowledge about Scripture, prayer, the sacraments and the history of the church is needed. (144)
- Education in social studies, pedagogy and psychology. (147)
- "The catechist, recognizing that his hearer is an active participant in whom the grace of God is dynamically at work, will present himself as a respectful facilitator of an experience of faith of which he is not in charge." (148)
- Showing that reason is not opposed to faith (145)
- The catechist is not an individual, but together with the community. (150)

Pedagogy of the Faith

- Revelation is the great educational work of God. (157)
- Jesus is close to the people, evokes a personal response from his hearers. (161)
- God already acts in every person, the catechist should not see the person as a sole recipient, instead establishing a relationship of reciprocity and dialogue, together listening to the Holy Spirit. (197)
- A pedagogy of signs, where actions and words are in mutual relationship. (160)
- The proclamation of the kingdom of God must be one of human liberation. (173)

The methods of Catechesis

- It is important that the methods reflect the message of the gospel. (194)
- The plurality of methods is a sign of vitality, richness and grace. (195)
- Human experience: the place where God speaks. Must be approached with an attitude of love, acceptance and respect. (197)

Human experience is integral to all catechesis

- Jesus encounters people in their concrete life situations and opens their eyes for God's presence there. (198)
- Avoid the danger of separating faith from everyday life. (199)
- Our life is part of Salvation history. (201)

The way of beauty- *via pulchritudinis*

- God is the source of all beauty. (106)
- If a pagan asks you: Show me your faith, take him to a church. (209)
- Music opens our hearts to the divine. (211)
- The Church is open to all literature, theater, film, important involve all senses, join in, let go of intellectualism. (212)

Digital media

- Many search the answers to the meaning of life on the internet, important that the Church is present there. (213-214)
- Digital communication opens up for more interaction that appeals specially to young people. (214)
- Beware of digital manipulation, vulnerable people can be exploited. (361)
- Virtual reality can never replace spiritual, ecclesial and sacramental reality. (217)

Community and the spaces of catechesis

- The environment must be welcoming, climate of familiarity. (222)
- Catechesis should be part of life, avoid class-rooms, have a diversity of environments and locations. (223)

Catechesis in different family scenarios

- Family life is in itself a Gospel in which God's love can be read. (228)
- Important with a kerygmatic Catechesis before the sacrament of marriage. (232)
- The Church reaches out with love to those who participate in her life in an imperfect manner, welcome them to Catechesis. (234-235)

Catechesis with children

- Children are open to God, even without a Christian upbringing. (236)
- Children are "digital natives". (237)
- Good if the Church can support families in need. (238)
- Start with the questions of the children, before offering a systematic Catechesis. (240)
- Be inspired by the Catechumenate: use rites, prayer, community, a wholehearted process. (242)

Catechesis with young people

- Just as Jesus on his way to Emmaus, we should walk beside our young, they rejuvenate the entire Church. (244)
- Catechesis with them requires continual renewal. (245)
- Kerygmat should focus on Jesus as a friend, not somebody who judges. (247)
- Raise issues about: meaning of life, finding balance in life and society, true freedom, solidarity, finding your vocation. (249,252)

Catechesis with adults

- Catechesis with adults is the axis around which revolves all catechesis. (244)
- Adults are called to deepen their faith through all their lives. (257-9)
- Many ways: Catechumenate, pilgrimages, piety, when preparing for sacraments, engaging in society... (264)
- Strive for small groups with the possibility for good dialogues, sharing life experiences. (265)
- Elderly should also be given the chance to deepen their faith. (266)

Catechesis with persons with disabilities

- Jesus presence is manifested in a special way among people with disabilities, they must be seen as active subjects in the communities. (269)
- Develop a culture of inclusion, of welcoming. (271)
- Even with severe disorders, they are welcomed to the fullness of sacramental life. (272)
- Desirable that people with disabilities themselves become catechists. (272)

Catechesis with migrants and prisoners

- Catechesis must find ways to reach out to migrants and other persons, welcoming them in the parishes. (273-5)
- The Church must show concrete help to homeless, the chronically ill, drug addicts, prisoners, slaves of prostitution, always identifying new works of mercy. (279)
- When groups of immigrants continue to celebrate mass and attend catechesis in their home language, it should be in full accord with the local bishop. (277)
- The Church must attend to prisoners, focusing on the kerygma of salvation and forgiveness and liberation. (282)

The Eastern Churches

- The Eastern Churches have a history that goes back to the apostles, with the right and duty to preserve their heritage. (290)
- They must preserve their identity. (290)
- Christians from latin-rites should be instructed on the rites of these Churches. (292)

Associations, movements and groups of faithful

- These movements represent a true gift of God for evangelisation. (304)
- Basic ecclesial communities root the Gospel in the culture and in the local population, a sign of vitality of the Church. (306)
- The groups must remain a part of the Church, avoid danger of exclusivity or excessive sense of identification. (305)

Option for the poor

- Matthew 25: I was hungry... The Church has a long tradition of helping the poor. (386)
- When we help the poor, we are helped ourselves, getting evangelised by them. (387)
- Intimate connection between evangelisation and integral human development. (389-390)
- The Church's social doctrine is a guide. (390)

Organisms at the service of catechesis

- The Dicastery of Evangelisation has the responsibility for catechesis.
- The Bishop's conference must establish a catechetical office whose primary function is to assist the diocese in catechetical matters. (412)
- This should be coordinated with other dimensions of pastoral care in the Church, family, youth ect. (420)
- Catechesis for adults should be the center of all. (422)

Mary – pedagogue of evangelisation

- Mary shines at the heart of catechesis, pedagogue of evangelisation and ecclesial model for the transmission of faith. (428)

