



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 (RCSSSE), University of Santo Tomas (UST).



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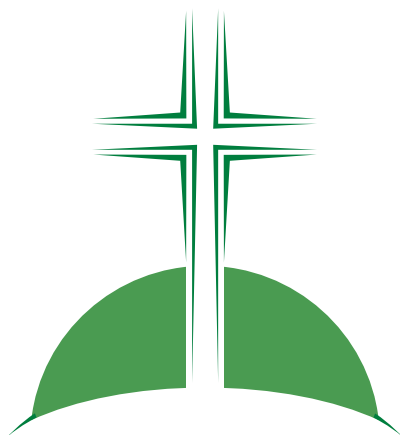
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*For the Faith-driven Servants, Front-liners,
and who may be considered the hidden
treasures of the Philippine Catholic Church,
our beloved Filipino Catechists*

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OUR GRATITUDE, OUR MODULE STORY

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

Inspired by the call for a *New Evangelization* of our Holy Fathers, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, and on the occasion of celebrating our *500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines*. Our journey to produce a new set of *Catechetical Modules (CM)* for our faith-driven servants - our Filipino catechists, was made more meaningful by the overflowing support of the 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 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)*; *Laitiy (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 Komunyon ng mga Pamayanan (2017)*; *Klero at Mga Relihiyoso (2018)*; *Mga Kabataan (2019)*; *Ekumenismo, Dyalogo sa Pagitan ng Mga Relihiyon, at mga Katutubo (2020)*, at *Misyon 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 in the preparation of the catechetical instruction materials (both in print and electronic forms) as formation tools for prayer, study, and reflection. Initially, CBCP-ECCCE's idea was to produce a three-year intensive formation program across Ecclesiastical Territories covering 2018 until 2021. 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 *ECCCE Technical Working Group (TWG)* composed of Fr. Rene De Guzman, SDB; Dr. Caridad Barrameda; Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB, and Dr. Lysander Rivera, Sis. Rhea Castillo, OP and Sis. Silvestra Orbigo, FMM; 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 in 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 owe our deepest thanks 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.

Special gratitude 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, Fr. Pablo Tiong, O.P., Fr. Carlo Magno and Fr. Emmanuel Rico Ayo.

The updated module design was a by-product of a series of consultations and assessments. The laborious technical assistance task was provided by Jaycar P. Espinosa whose outputs became the bases for the finalization of modules. At the crucial time of module synthesis and integration, we were blest by the generosity of talent and spirit

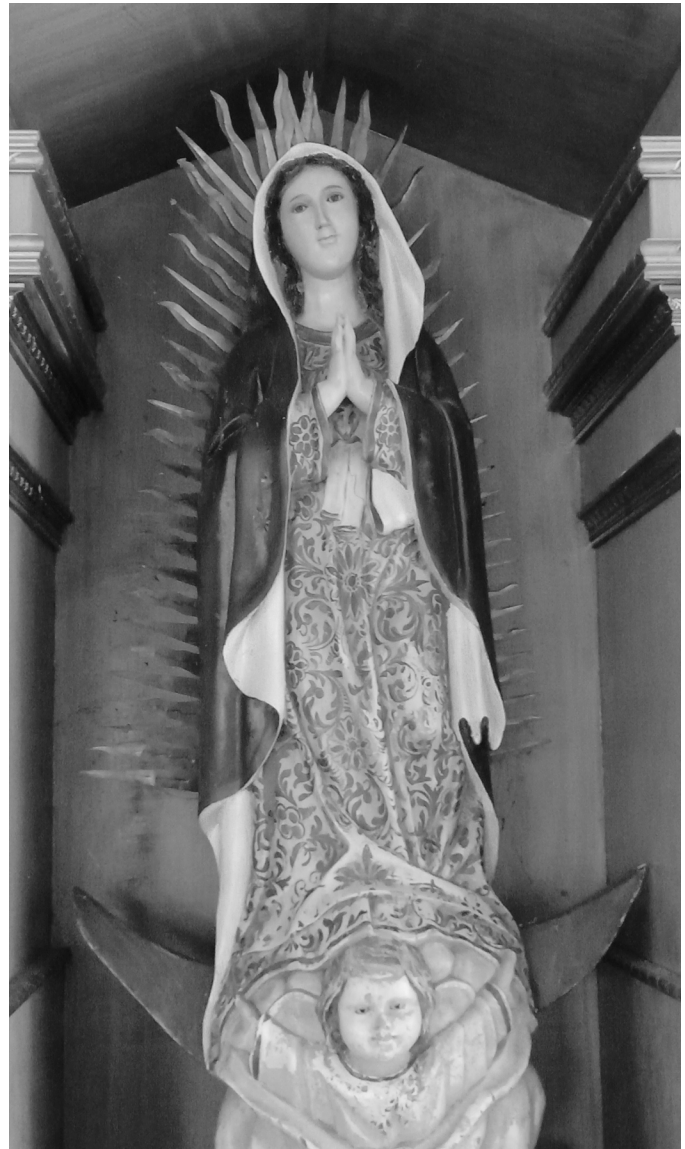


provided for by Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and three seminarians from the Diocese of Tarlac - Sem. Anthony Paul R. Tawatao, Sem. Gerald A. Cortes, and Sem. Jayson A. Besa. Other contributors who deserve our utmost gratitude are Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario for her specific input about “the laity”, and Richard G. Pazcoguin, who provided 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, whose creative talent for design made our CM visually-appealing. Our language editor, Pamela Avellanosa also deserves our utmost gratitude, for the patience and eye for technical errors, idea construction and composition, who made 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 Christian’s faith 5th centenary in 2021, 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 lessons for our people for the next three years as our immediate preparation. 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 lessons 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 our 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 that will serve as the catechists' convenient resource in teaching catechesis for all ages. Also, 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 received them (CT 20).

Evangelization in Vatican II

The Church reached a turning point to 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 a 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 in every corner of the world, with various traditions and practices 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 has been handed down to the Church and to Her members. The Second Vatican Council was right in saying that "the Church has 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 could be 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 may be described by some key words such as renewal, reform, *aggiornamento* (updating), openness, dialogue and reading the signs of the times. Truly, in Vatican II, the Church got to dialogue with the world of today. The New Evangelization thrust has its origin in the Second Vatican Council. It had been 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 had appropriately stressed what these

new situations demand from the Church: new zeal, new sensitivity, and new ways of doing its evangelizing mission (Canilang, 2013). Therefore, New Evangelization began with Vatican II and its awareness of the changes going on with the world and its commitment to dialogue with these changes in the hopes 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 use of 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 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.

There are many people who 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 before online social networking was even possible.

What John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis now call for is 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 deep need of a new encounter with Christ. The audiences for the New Evangelization are those who have already heard Christ being proclaimed, while not neglecting the evangelization of those who have not yet heard the Gospel of Christ (Evangelii Nuntiandi 52). This New Evangelization had to be directed to all the baptized in order to renew, purify, and strengthen their faith.

Why is there a need for New Evangelization? In the year 2000, Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI, answered this question saying that 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 works. 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 must be 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 is evangelization. Pope Paul VI emphasizes 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 proposes 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 has 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 were sacramentalized 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 is the “ongoing evangelization of those in the intermediate situation 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). There are many Catholics who have been baptized in infancy but have fallen 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 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 having an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. No one can begin an authentic evangelization without having encountered Christ in their lives. In fact, the opening sentence of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* states: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness" (EG 1).

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

This is the direct challenge of Pope Francis to all Christians, to open the hearts and lives of the faithful to the person of Jesus Christ. Perhaps one must need 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 revelations to know Him (Gaudete et Exsultate 20). Thus, the faithful must seek Him in every moment, in every day, in 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). It is an encounter with a personal God that 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 for renewal is conversion. When we have already encountered and recognized Christ as significant in our life, it is the starting 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 wherein 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 rather it is a conversion of the heart and mind, which is a radical conversion, "a conversion which restores the joy of faith in their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel" (See 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 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 on the justice of God. In other words: to look for a new style of life, a new life (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000).

Hence, to be converted is not only about the change of perspective in life but it also includes 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 mission, in accordance to our own 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, but rather think about the goodness he/she can offer to his/her brethren. In this conversion we should not only follow our own desires in life but 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 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 in proclaiming the Good News. Sooner or later, a person will realize that he/ she needs a community to belong to. It is better to have many workers in the vineyard of Christ so that the Gospel will be easily 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 others (EG 178-179). With this statement, the value of communion or sense of belongingness to the Church is highly regarded 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 children of God, then it will be the time for Him/ her to do mission in whatever way he/she can to proclaim the Word of God through his/her daily witnessing to the Gospel.

To pray and to work: this must be the attitude of every spirit-filled evangelizers. Sometimes, evangelizers easily get tired to the point that his/her work becomes meaningless to Him/her. Thus, because of weariness and difficulties, the evangelizer's liveliness and fervor dies out. 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 (See EG 163). It is good to be inspired by early Christians and the many brothers and sisters throughout history who were filled with joy, persistent courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel.

Pope Francis proposes four spiritual motivations for mission that can help us imitate the saints who continue to proclaim God's Word, 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 ever 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 Him/her (EG 264). This can lead to a missionary enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ to others. This conviction is 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 will convince nobody (EG 266). Therefore, the admiration and excitement of proclaiming the Kingdom of God should always be accompanied with great enthusiasm. A true evangelizer is the 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 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, whatever state of life they may be in. It is interesting to recall the closeness of Jesus to everyone. He is very accessible. He draws near to the blind man and the outcasts (cf. Mk. 10:46-52). He eats and drinks with sinners (cf. 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 (cf. Lk. 7:36-50) and healing a man with a withered hand during Sabbath (cf. 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 sooner or later 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. 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 doing mission in the task of evangelization: "Constant prayer will grant us the guidance for every crisis that one is experiencing in his/her mission" (EG 282). It is very essential to beg God in prayer. One must not abandon prayer even in the midst of doubtful moments. The special weapon that everyone must always use is prayer so that one may never get tired of his/her mission to spread 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 his/her friendship with God in prayer.



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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 that “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 Church that is relational 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 always live 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 also 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 and 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

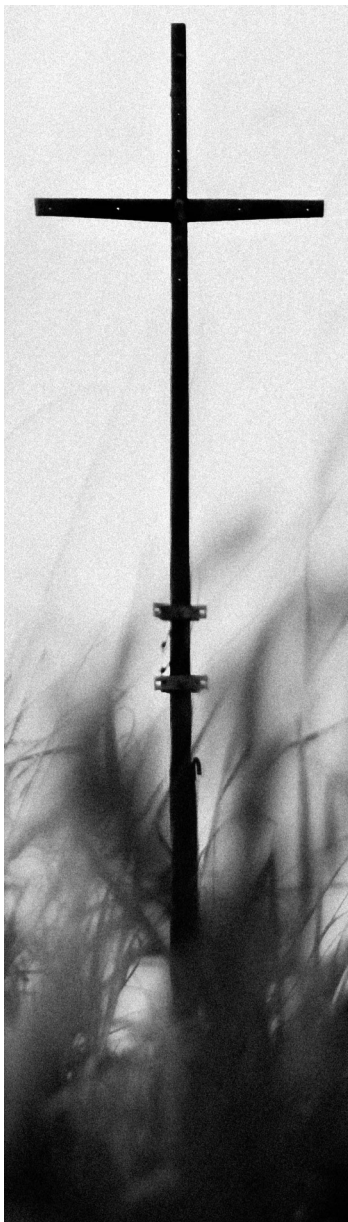
“Jesus drank the wine and said, ‘it is finished!’ Then he bowed his head and gave up his head”
(Matthew 27:29)

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 lost hope during the 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.



Worship

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 is the universal help towards salvation, 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. But 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 forth abundant graces,



especially through the sacraments. Therefore, through its 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

- † **Humility** – Scriptures espouses the virtue of humility. “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, 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 calls his four sons and gave one stick to all of them and ask them to break it, they (four sons) easily broke that 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-minded 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 to holiness and salvation to every humankind. 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 which would be possible through respect, acknowledgement, 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 unification 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 unification activities.

Song Analysis (see next page)



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Photo from the Prelature of Isabela Basilan



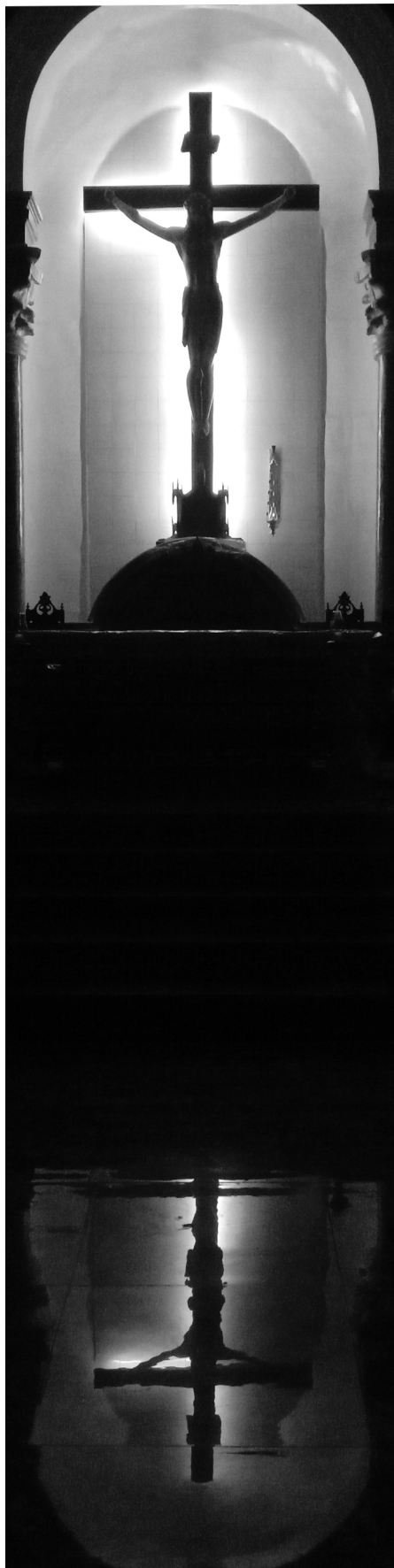


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

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?



Prayer / 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've 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)**

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



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Tabuk

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 of vice. And so, 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. And in 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."



Worship

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 many other signs in the presence of His disciples, 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

- † **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 also 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 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 testimony on how to live in harmony with people of the same blood yet are members of different religion/s.



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

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?



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

Photo from the Diocese of Borongan





Prayer / 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 seriously lay 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. All are bound together with Him by the Holy Spirit. 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, are 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).





Worship

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 mankind, 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

- † **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's 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's not just what He does; it's 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.

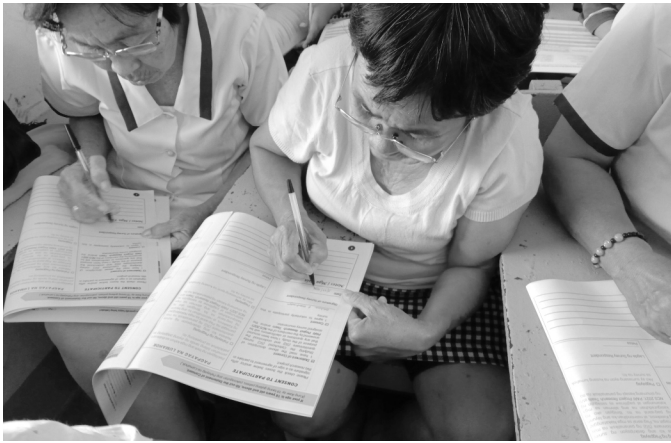


Photo from the Diocese of Talibon



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



Prayer / 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 peaceably with all and help us to always 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. So 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. It is a Divinely balanced virtue that 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 reproveth, 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 dare not nor are permitted to impose anything on anybody against their 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



Worship

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 oneself 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 Values

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 have 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 raise 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



Prayer / 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 touches 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 to develop 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 of respect to human life and the care for the mother Earth

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