

# The Catechist in All of Us

## Initiatives, Impacts, and Implications

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 : Diocese of Cubao

## Chapter Overview

Chapter 8 concludes with reflexive stories about the research journey of the *National Catechetical Study 2016-2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* on (a) the initiatives leading to its implementation as a five-year study, (b) the impacts the project had on the core research focuses - the five Catechetical Ministry (CM) dimensions relative to the implementation of the *Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO)* activities, and (c) the *Pastoral, Action Research, and Intervention (PARI)* implications of the project. It traces the research process of transforming the CM findings and insights using the inset *Sociological Visual Narrative (SVN)* as a heuristic tool, to demonstrate the general message - “The Catechist in All of Us”, which reflects the collective solidarity that our Philippine Catholic Church endures building in the next 500 years of Christianity.

# Initiatives

Our *NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project* started with an invite scribbled in a simple piece of paper from the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' (CBCP) – Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)*. The note was about a proposed survey on the catechists, *The National Catechetical Survey (NCS)*. After a series of meetings between the *University of Santo Tomas (UST) Research Center for Culture, Education, and Social Issues (RCCESI)*, which was later transformed into the disciplinal-based *Research Center for Social Sciences and Education (RCSSSED)*, and *CBCP-ECCCE* officials, the first interdisciplinary *NCS* research team composed of social scientists, theologians, and education experts was convened. In 2016, the conceptualization process of the research design and tools led to changing “survey” to “study” to reflect the employment of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Thus, the project was renamed, *The National Catechetical Study* with the same “*NCS*” acronym. Given the limited time and resources, both parties agreed that the first two priority areas to study are the catechists and catechetical leaders. This brought into attention the familiar yet under-researched term *katekista* as the core working concept of the study.



📷: *NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project*

“Katekista”, thus, became our research problematique, which served as our conceptual basis in interrogating the more encompassing term, “Catechetical Ministry” (CM) in the following years from 2017 – 2021. This disposition was also the rationale behind the publication of the seven-book *Katekista Series* (Batan, 2020, 2021; Batan et al., 2021; Cantillas et al., 2021; CBCP-ECCCE & UST-RCSSD, 2021; Flores, 2021), which included this current monograph.

The first two years of the *NCS* from 2016-2018 proved to be valuable to the catechists and catechetical leaders as our team shared the research findings and insights with various Ecclesiastical Territories (ETs) around the country. These intersections between the *UST* researchers and the catechist and catechetical leader respondents established a network that opened more research opportunities. This led to a more serious search for a research grant, which allowed inquiries on other dimensions of CM.

Fortunately, the *NCS* Research Team was awarded an international grant to continue studying “Catechetical Ministry” (CM) focusing this time on the catechized, catechetical formation programs, and the catechetical human resources. The grant was known as the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project*, which run from 2019-2021.

A visual glimpse of the sections, *Studying and Researching Catechetical Ministry* (see inset *Sociological Visual Narrative*) collated as mosaic of photos from various ETs unravel the many social actors making up Catechetical Ministry (CM). Indeed, it is a ministry of the Catholic faithful shared by all walks of life intersecting with our Church leaders and lay volunteer catechists. The photos vividly capture the research process by portraying the conceptualization, data gathering, analysis, and pandemic challenges that the project successfully endured with the support and assistance of fellow catechist research assistants – the *Katekistang Kalakbay sa Pananaliksik (KKP)*, and with the respondents from all age groups. This visual narrative clearly demonstrates how CM grows into a shared ministry, and its multi-voices could best be captured by a research design that is inclusive and participatory.

This monograph encapsulates the five-year expanse of the project, thus the name, *NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project*, which examined CM in five dimensions, namely the catechists, catechetical leaders, catechized, catechetical formation programs, and catechetical human resources.

From 2016-2021, our five-year research experience unraveled the nature and extent of our “initiatives” conveyed in three-fold interrelated observations. First, our project’s primary intent to conduct a study for both academic and pastoral purposes led us to utilize inclusive and participatory approaches. Second, these approaches proved to be significant when the entire *CBCP* agreed to have each ET give a share to fund the initial *NCS* with *UST* embracing all other research resources needed by the project. Considerably, our international research grant facilitated the completion of the project which allowed the use of research technologies and in a meaningful way, protected the project from the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant pursuance of data analysis,



📷 : NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project

presentation, consultation, validation, and implementation of *Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO)* activities with research team members whose commitment, engagement, and dedication to the project did not falter amidst the pandemic. Third, the overwhelming support and assistance rendered by the *CBCP-ECCCE* and all the bishops in the forms of access, accommodation, attention accorded to the *NCS* Research Team smoothly facilitated the research process from conceptualization, development of tools, data-gathering, analyses, to the presentations and findings to various ETs around the country even during the pandemic. The most humbling of all these presentations were the five-time *CBCP* Plenary Presentations of the *NCS* Research Team from 2017 to 2022, where our ***Katekista Findings and Insights*** were given ample attention. Those many interactions with the bishops led to more fruitful discussions about CM, especially on the welfare and wellbeing of catechists around the country.

Accordingly, these initiatives truly exhibit a form of collective solidarity among us who journeyed the research processes endured in the last five years. In a sense, our shared research experience encapsulates the fuller message this monograph advocates - **"The Catechist in All of Us."** This theme emerges as one of the most sociologically fascinating research insights in this project that promoted, on the one hand, an invitation to encourage all Catholic faithful a re/discovery of the wealth of catechetical knowledge our Church possesses; on the other hand, a plea for action to actively invite meaningful engagements with the catechesis of the New Evangelization.

# Impacts

The *Pastoral Action and Research Intervention (PARI)* component of our *NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project* demonstrated the innovative caring spirit of the project. It took as a symbolic *PARI* acronym to mean the articulation of “priestly” mission in teaching the Gospel and Church doctrines as one of the core tasks of CM. In our project, this *PARI* symbol was combined with the implementation of the *Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO)*, which draws inspiration from the Spanish term “rio,” meaning “river” in English. Similar to the flow of water, our *RIO* signifies the overflowing blessing of God pouring into the ministry of catechists. It also describes the project’s research process starting from the conceptualization and data gathering flowing into research findings and insights, and running into various streams of intervention activities for CM.

Our project envisioned understanding and energizing the Philippine catechetical scene by implementing pastoral research and intervention activities toward a quality CM. Through these initiatives, we hope to generate educative and formative opportunities for new modes of catechesis and evangelization in the country.

Thus, through meaningful collaborations with various religious organizations and ETs, each *RIO* responded to the needs of the catechists, catechetical leaders and the catechized drawn from our study findings and insights. The process of implementation of these interventions was made more fruitful by the active participation of several interventionists. As a case in point, one of the lead interventionists reflects on the journey of completing the Catechetical Modules, inspired by the nine Pastoral Priorities, as a celebration of the abundance of faith in the 500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the country.

## The Intervention Experience

Napaka-exciting talaga. Kahit ako, nae-excite rito sa RIO na naibigay sa amin kasi it's really a privilege, it's really a wonderful opportunity for us to contribute something for the Philippine Church, most especially because say, we've been out celebrating actually this year. Parang nag-tone down 'yung celebration ng 500 years of Christianity because tayo ay nasa panahon ng pandemya, but still we can celebrate our faith now in some other ways ... It's actually the modules for the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. Maganda ito kasi I was informed na itong modules na ito ay hindi lang this year kung hindi even beyond. Ang sabi ko nga to be involved in this kind of project ay para bang nakakataba rin ng puso, kasi alam niyo, maikwento ko lang saglit na ako ay nagpari dahil sa katekista. Kumbaga, ang laki ng impact sa akin ng pagiging katekista, kaya ang reflection ko today o word of the day, "ang bawat Kataliko at bawat Kristiyano ay katekista." Hindi lang isang ministry kung hindi ito ay bumubuhay kasi to echo God's love, to echo God's mercy sa buhay natin by words and deeds and itong intervention na ginawa, it's actually to put together 'yung paglalakbay ng Simbahan sa Pilipinas, 'yung ninth pastoral priorities. We put it in at the catechetical modules na ang yaman pala ng pananampalataya, ang yaman pala ng Kristiyanismo dito sa Pilipinas, na nakita natin na hindi siya hiwalay, 'yung ating pananampalataya doon sa konkretong buhay ng bawat Pilipino.

*It is really exciting, and that's why I am also excited with our RIO because it is really a privilege; it's really a wonderful opportunity for us to contribute something for the Philippine Church, most especially because we've actually been out celebrating this year. It seems that the celebration of 500 Years of Christianity has toned down due to the pandemic, but still we can celebrate our faith now in some other ways ... It's actually the modules for the 500 years of Christianity in the Philippines. This is really good because this module will be used beyond this year. As I said, to be involved in this kind project really warms my heart. As I can recall, I became a priest because of a catechist. Catechists really had a huge impact on me, so my word of the day is "every Catholic and every Christian are catechist." It is not just a ministry, but catechists also give life because they echo God's love or mercy by words and deeds, and this intervention summarizes the journey of the Catholic Church in the Philippines – the nine pastoral priorities of the Philippines. As we wrote in the module, we are abundant with faith, and it cannot be separated from the lives of each Filipino.*

Fr. Richard Lagos, Lead Interventionist, Catechetical Modules

This intervention experience also directed attention on the significant role of catechists in the evangelization mission reaffirming the ideal of **“The Catechist in All of Us.”**

*Table 8.1* below provides a succinct overview of the impacts of our project on the five CM dimensions. The key to understanding these impacts is rooted in the use of research ideas into *RIO* activities. That is, each intervention was specifically formulated as a response to the findings and insights on the five CM dimensions. Here, our project endeavored to the challenge of pastoral sociology in the context of “action research”, which is considered as a process that integrates theory and practice in order to address particular social issues and provide practical solutions (Abdullayeva et al., 2019; Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014).

**Table 8.1.** *Research Grid on NCS 2016-2021 Catechetical Ministry Dimensions, Findings and RIO Activities*

Dimensions	Findings	RIO Activities
Catechists	The findings suggest a “Catholic service ethic” to describe the dedication of faith-based servants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Katekista: Mga Tulang Pananaliksik</li> <li>◦ Katekistang Malikhain</li> </ul>
Catechetical Leaders	Firm dispositions among leaders and engagement practices in directing and organizing the catechists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Katekista in Manus Tuas</li> </ul>
Catechized	Optimistic energies toward the Catholic Church in their disposition and engagements in the CM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Family Catechesis</li> <li>◦ Digital Catechesis</li> <li>◦ Katekistang Agapay-Alagad</li> </ul>
Catechetical Formation Programs	Effective catechetical formation consists of adequate support, parish-based strategies, teaching and learning catechesis, expert formators, and context-based catechetical materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Catechetical Modules</li> <li>◦ Digital Catechesis</li> <li>◦ Family Catechesis</li> <li>◦ Creative Catechesis</li> </ul>
Catechetical Human Resources	Varying recruitment and selection, training, welfare and wellbeing considerations among ETs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Katekista in Manus Tuas</li> </ul>





📷: NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project

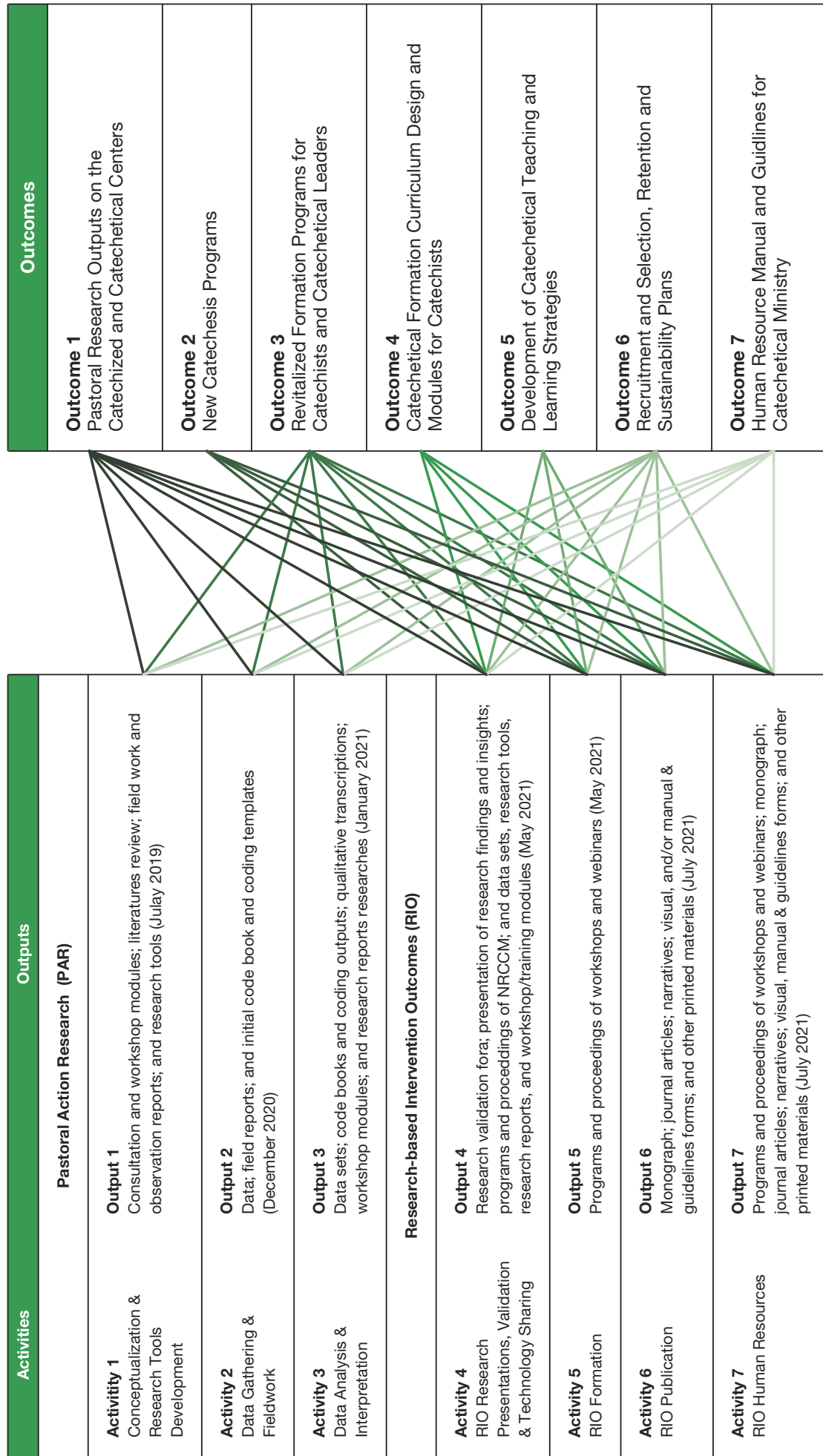
Following the participatory approach, the *NCS 2021: PARI Project* engaged the interventionists, including bishops, priests, catechetical leaders, content-experts, researchers, and catechists (lay and religious) to strategic planning and a series of consultations. The process involved an adaptive intervention research model consisting of six phases from problem analysis and planning to intervention dissemination (Strydom et al., 2014) combined with the knowledge of providing understanding the pastoral needs and seek appropriate pastoral interventions (Ballano, 2020).

Visualizing the five Catechetical Ministry (CM) dimensions, as systematically and creatively chosen for the *Sociological Visual Narrative* (see inset), brings forth the integrated, interacting, and intersecting nature of the catechetical mission. The action photos such as (a) **catechists** portraying their happiness, commitment, and dedication as faith-driven servants; (b) **catechetical leaders** whose multiple roles deepen their pastoral task to catechize despite the challenges; (c) the **catechized** in all age groups engaging with the catechists; (d) **catechetical formation** activities demonstrating the missionary spirit of learning our Catholic faith; and (e) the **catechetical human resources**, can be visually seen and are held together by the communal and loving processes of being, becoming, and belonging to CM. These multifaceted photos echo the multidimensional dynamics of CM as a fundamental and salient component of our Philippine Catholic Church where collective solidarity thrives.

Correspondingly, our project was guided by the Activities-Outputs-Outcomes (AOO) matrix, an implementing frame provided by our grant agency, the *Porticus Asia, Ltd*, which shaped the implementation of our academic research and pastoral intervention initiatives (see *Figure 8.1*). Here, identified research activities are linked to expected outputs, which are then interwoven to the variety of outcomes. The outcomes are impactful *RIO* initiatives, which transformed research findings and insights into intervention initiatives, and were expected to be substantial and meaningful to CM.



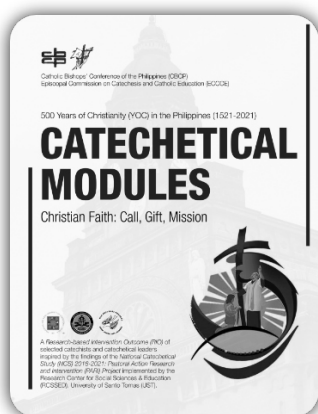
📷: NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project



**Figure 8.1. NCS 2021: PARI Project Activities-Outcomes (A00) Matrix**

While data gathering and analysis process was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project simultaneously accomplished the research outputs and intervention activities via online-based strategies.

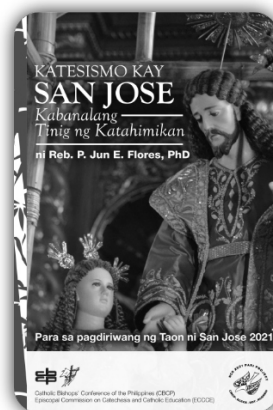
Drawing from the findings on catechists and catechetical leaders, the first *RIO* launched online was the collection of research poems translated into ten languages – the *Katekista: Mga Tulang Pananaliksik Hango Sa National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2016-2018 (Research Poems from the NCS 2016-2018)* (Batan, 2020).

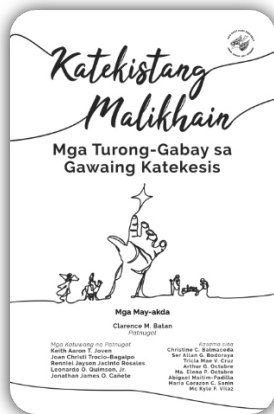


This was followed by the online publication of the *Catechetical Modules (CM): Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission* (CBCP-ECCCE & UST-RCSSED), 2021). As a fruitful collaboration with key religious individuals for the celebration of the nine pastoral years before the 500 YOC in the country, Catechetical

Modules build on the nine pastoral statements released by the *CBCP* to formulate updated catechetical resources. Each module consisted of pastoral discussion, activities, and points for reflection.

Another module that emerged from our consultations was *Katesismo kay San Jose: Kabanalang Tinig ng Katahimikan (Catechism for Saint Joseph: A Blessed Voice of Silence)* (Flores, 2021). The book provides a 30-day formation guide for the journey towards a deeper understanding and appreciation of St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers, and the model for diligent service.

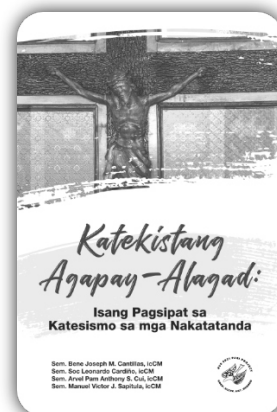




Correspondingly, as a response to the need for a more creative catechesis, *Katekistang Malikhain: Mga Turong-Gabay sa Gawaing Katekesis (Teaching Guide for Doing Catechesis)* (Batan, 2021b) offered alternative pedagogies to assist in the teaching and learning of catechesis in the era of new evangelization. Specifically, this

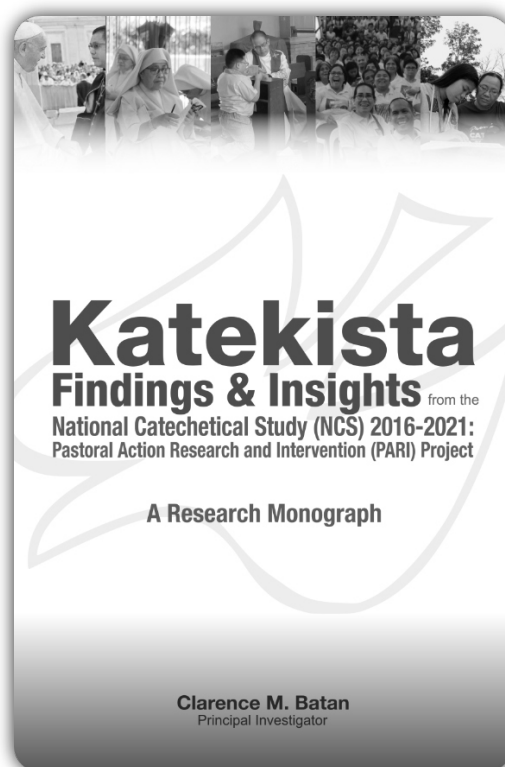
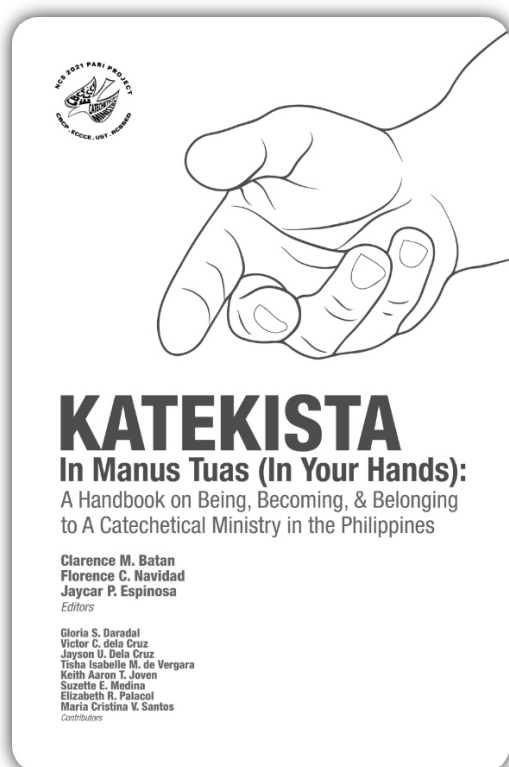
involved volunteer catechists and religious education teachers who rendered their expertise to provide examples of creative catechetical pedagogies such as parable, prayer, lecture, stories, poem, song, dance, theater and films, images and photos, ecology, silence, and life history.

Another module, the *Katekistang Agapay-Alagad: Isang Pagsipat sa Katesismo sa mga Nakatatanda (Catechists as Servant Companions: A Glimpse to the Catechism for Adults)* (Cantillas et al., 2021) contributed by the Vincentian brothers, emphasized the significance of adult catechesis in response to the heavily focused children-based catechetical teaching in the country.



The twin-book publications of this monograph, *Katekista Findings & Insights from the NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project with the Katekista In Manus Tuas (In Your Hands): A Handbook on Being, Becoming & Belonging to A Catechetical Ministry* (Batan et al., 2021) were developed with the help of volunteer catechists from the Diocese of Imus, shepherded the completion of our project where impacts are more pronounced. The research monograph fulfilled the academic intent of studying empirically CM using Sociology and the social sciences as disciplinary

anchors. However, the handbook was a humble contribution to demonstrating how the research findings and insights can serve as foundations in building a community of catechists toward a more pastorally-informed CM. These two books served as living testimonies on how the process of catechesis and the engagements in CM are byproducts of shared social solidarity. Thus, the ultimate underlying message of these publications maintains the core of our Catholic identity and doctrine; that is, there is a “Catechist in All of Us.”



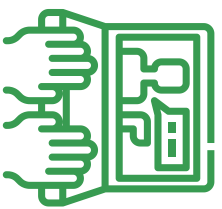
All these seven-book publications and other intervention activities were creatively integrated in our online-based *Kwentong Katekista (KK)* (Catechists’ Stories) webinar series, which were implemented during the peak of COVID-19 pandemic. KK provided an alternative online space for catechesis that involved catechists, catechetical leaders, and the catechized in the virtual world. In a way, KK provided an effective catechetical space between and among the researchers and the researched where sharers discussed the responses and



📷 : NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project

experiences relative to our research findings, insights, and intervention activities along with the narratives of selected catechists and catechetical leaders.

*Figure 8.2* enumerates the list of KK intervention topics with the number of registered audiences reached via FB live streaming platform. This reflects our online active engagements with various ETs around the country during the pandemic. KK thus provided ideas and suggestions for rethinking and doing CM in the country meaningfully and creatively. This included our attempts to introduce catechetical concerns on Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous People, Family Catechesis, Bible Catechesis, Digital Catechesis, and Creative Catechists. Each of these *RIOs* was implemented with the aim to introduce new and alternative forms of catechesis that may energize CM toward the new evangelization.



# Kwentong Katekista Webinar Series

## Intervention Topics

- Fruitful Catechesis Amidst the Pandemic
- Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO) for Catechetical Ministry
- Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous People
- Family Catechesis
- Catechetical Modules
- Bible Catechesis
- Katekesis kay San Jose
- Digital Catechesis
- Katekistang Malikhain
- Pista ng Pananamapataya – A Conference on Catechetical Ministry in the Philippines (GCMF)

## Webinar Dates

- September 14, 2020
- October 5, 2020
- December 14, 2020
- December 28, 2020
- February 22, 2021
- March 22, 2021
- April 30, 2021
- June 28, 2021
- August 2, 2021
- September 28, 2021

## Audience Reached

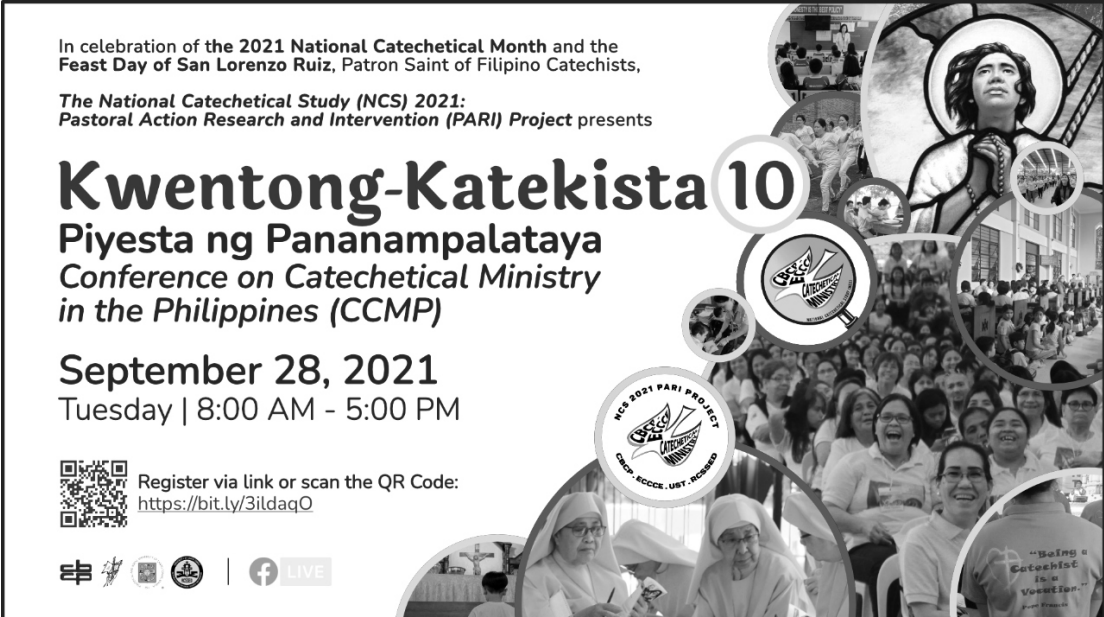
- 15,646
- 5,700
- 4,800
- 7,200
- 4,460
- 6,920
- 1,835
- 4,478
- 4,211
- 6,000
- 61,250

Figure 8.2. Frequency Distribution of Kwentong Katekista Webinar Series Views via Facebook Live





The webinar series concluded with the Conference on Catechetical Ministry in the Philippines participated by key religious organizations, catechists, and interventionists in the celebration of the 2021 National Catechetical Month and the Feast Day of San Lorenzo Ruiz, the patron saint of Filipino catechists. It was a full day of sharing experiences on the five CM dimensions participated by interventionists, catechists, catechetical leaders, catechized, researchers, and the *CBCP-ECCCE* bishops. It was a day where CM became a collective experience, a spiritual solidarity committed to a shared catechetical mission of evangelization.



In celebration of the 2021 National Catechetical Month and the Feast Day of San Lorenzo Ruiz, Patron Saint of Filipino Catechists,  
*The National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* presents

# Kwentong-Katekista 10

## Piyesta ng Pananampalataya

### Conference on Catechetical Ministry in the Philippines (CCMP)

September 28, 2021  
Tuesday | 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Register via link or scan the QR Code:  
<https://bit.ly/3ildaqO>

Logos: CBCP-ECCCE UST-AGSIBAO, NCS 2021 PARI PROJECT, and others.

## Implications

The first seven chapters of this monograph arduously attempted to give a more comprehensive understanding of our research problematique, the *Katekista* (Catechist), which was empirically interrogated under the conceptual rubric of “Catechetical Ministry (CM)”. These chapters explored the history and state of CM; problematized how CM could be studied academically and pastorally; and described CM’s five salient dimensions – catechists,

catechetical leaders, catechized, catechetical formation programs, and catechetical human resources. In so doing, our project contributed to the familiar yet under-researched world of the *Katekista* whose role was recently instituted as a “Ministry of Catechist” by the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Letter, *Antiquum Ministerium* (2021). CM thus continues to play an important role and mission in the life of the Catholic Church.

As our Philippine Catholic Church journeys beyond her 500 years of foundation, this study produced findings and insights that contributed to further understanding the state, dynamics, and complexity of CM in the country. While each chapter on CM dimensions consciously and consistently discussed the relevant findings leading to the discerning insights, this last part of this chapter maximizes the foundational concepts that framed the nature, design and implementing strategies of this project.



 : Most. Rev. Roberto C. Mallari, DD's Facebook account

This monograph is about our use of the *Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI)* approach as the same conceptual guide in articulating the implications of our project to CM, and the future of our Philippine Catholic Church. Here, the metaphor of *PARI*, which means “priest”, becomes more symbolic and instructive as key to shaping CM’s life, mission, and future.

## Pastoral

The idea of being “pastoral” implies a state or disposition of providing “guidance”, which when combined with academic research seems at first problematic. However, in the implementation of our project, we recognized how doing social research was shaped ethically and responsibly by this pastoral idea of the Church. In the context of CM engagements, this observation was made more pronounced by the sentiment expressed by Princess, a catechist from the Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija, who expressed that, *Dumarami ang katekista kapag ang pari at obispo ay may pusong katekista* (The number of catechists increases when the priest and the bishop have hearts for the catechists.)

This quote synthesizes one of the core implications that our project discovered. That is, the key to the welfare and wellness of all CM constituent rests in the good catechetical disposition, attitude, formation, and training of catechetical leaders, especially the so-called first catechists of religious communities – our priests and bishops. This may explain the observed variations in CM structures, formation strategies, teaching and learning resources, and catechetical human resources across ETs as those exhibiting livelier and more engaging CMs are led by leaders “with a catechist’s heart.”

While it may be inferred that the “catechist’s heart” is God’s gift and blessing to CM, pastoral sociology would venture to identifying the contexts that allowed “catechist’s heart” to grow and impact the Catholic faithful. Thus, our study is directed to the inadequate formation of catechetical leaders, particularly those in the seminaries and other religious institutions. These institutions are yet to evolve a curriculum that includes a number of core courses on the many facets of “catechesis” in combination with pastoral immersions as catechists. When given sufficient attention, this relative void in prioritizing catechetical formation among seminarians and/or those religious institutions being prepared to lead church communities such as parishes and Catholic schools, may lead to an early appreciation of CM as one of the core salient ministries of our Church by future catechetical leaders.

The metaphor of the “catechist’s heart” when integrated in a “catechetical approach” makes the process of catechesis truly meaningful, and indeed pastoral. This implies a rethinking of some traditional strategies in formation and CM engagements. Our *Katekista In Manus Tuas (In Your Hands): A Handbook on Being, Becoming & Belonging to A Catechetical Ministry* (Batan et al., 2021) was a case in point where we carefully approached catechetical human resources in an inclusive, participatory, engaging, humane, and spiritual modes. Thus, using our research findings and insights as bases for suggested human resource strategies, we employed terminologies that reflect the voluntary, service-orientation, and missionary nature of CM such as “engagement”, “commendations”, “support”, “assistance”, and “assessment” instead of the usual human resource terms used in corporate organizations.

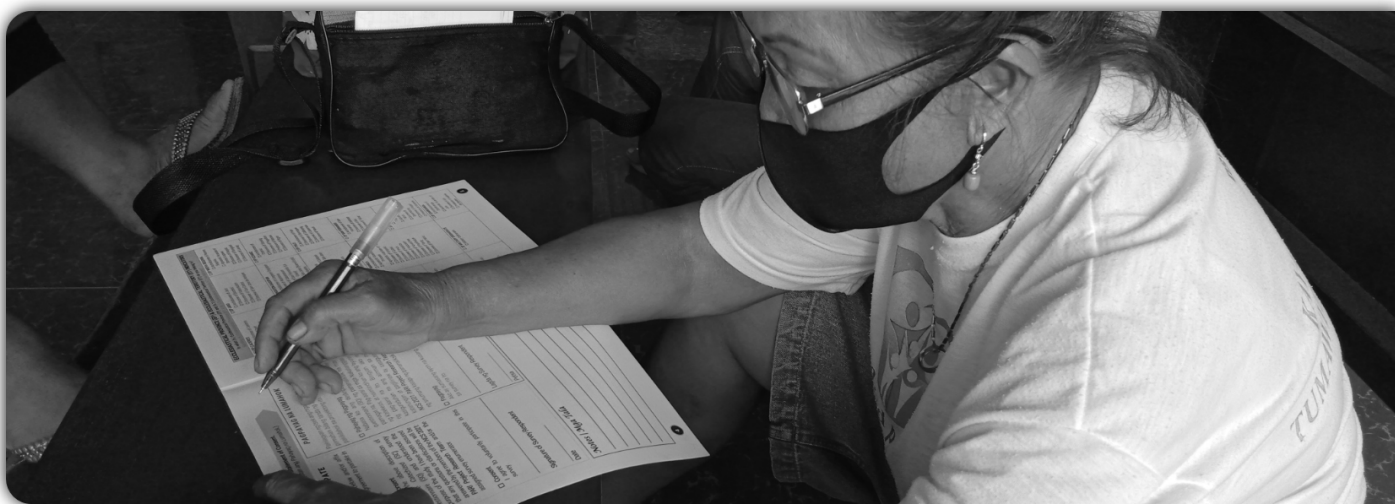
Similar observation can be deduced from the ways religious educational institutions of learning such as the Catholic Schools have in some respect, undermined the use and application of the following terms, “catechesis” and “catechists” in the current school set-up. For instance, some of our catechist respondents complain about the relative low status they were made to feel as they are, *Katekista lang* (Just a catechist). These demeaning words speak volumes on the marginality of *Katekista* even in the realm of supposed-to-be safe religious space of our Church. Changing such disposition implies looking at the systemic structures and attitudes that make up Church leaders and followers who tolerate this situation to persist. The relative solution seems to emerge in religious spaces where our research witnessed synodality among catechists and catechetical leaders on the ground, especially those who are attuned to the contexts and resources of their respective CMs.

Indeed, there is something meaningful in the idea of being pastoral, in nurturing a “catechetical heart”, and in advocating the disposition of seeing and resolving situations and concerns using a catechetical approach.

What better way to communicate the relatively good influence of our *Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* on Catechetical Ministry (CM) than to show the mosaic of photos (see inset *Sociological Visual Narrative*) that represents our project’s initiatives, impacts, and implications. The photos are composite of the *Research-based Intervention Outcome (RIO)* initiatives, the interventionists and beneficiaries, and the seven-book publications that altogether reflect the CM collective spirit of solidarity. “**The Catechist in All of Us**” is a missionary challenge of faith, hope, and love of servant catechists whose potential are embedded in every baptized Catholic.

# Action Research

The idea of “action research” in Sociology and the social sciences is not new. However, in religious and church-related matters, our project’s use of this research approach implies a rethinking of how faith is understood and empirically constructed. In this monograph, our typical kind of doing social research was combined with a design that highlighted how the findings and insights may be of practical use to the subject matter under investigation, which in this case, is CM.



 : *Diocese of Tandag*

While the action component of our project was present in all our studies of five CM dimensions, this experience also brought forth what we observed as research conundrums in our Philippine Catholic Church in need of attention. One striking discovery of our research was the apparent lack of organized and systematic knowledge about Catholicism in the Philippines.

Despite being a country with majority of identified “Catholics,” our initial search of related literature about CM reveals that there is a dearth of empirical knowledge in this particular area. We were more struck to discover that no academic institution of higher learning in our country has established an interest in the field of

“Catholic Studies” in contrast to the many research centers and institutes pursuing this field of knowledge across the world. To demonstrate this matter, a simple Internet search of “Catholic Studies” would take one to the fascinating number of international educational institutions offering degrees and research on this specialization, but interestingly no “hits” on any Philippine-based institutions. The course offerings and specializations in the Philippines are commonly called “religion” or “religious studies,” which in closer analysis meant, our “Catholic religion”. While embracing a more general scope of expertise engenders limited if not a total absence of developing a systematic set of knowledge, in this study case, it is about establishing empirical understanding of our Catholic faith practices, which could have been our springboard to our current study on CM. What puzzled our research team was the relative lack of academic effort to establish Catholic Studies in the country as a legitimate, potent scientific realm of investigation.

In such regard, Catholic universities such as the University of Santo Tomas can take the lead in building a network of institutes and centers across the country to establish “Catholic Studies” that primarily aims to build data repositories on Filipino Catholicism as byproducts of systematic research and documentation processes. This would require inter/multi/trans-disciplinary considerations ushering the research partnership among sacred sciences, social sciences, education, arts and the humanities, and even, natural sciences. We envision, for example, the emergence of the Sociology, Anthropology or History of Filipino Catholicism using a wide array of methodologies.

However, what may distinguish this academic effort from other research initiatives is our insistence of using the logic and application of “action research” in this proposed Catholic Studies. For instance, the many

episcopal commissions, offices, and related concerns of the *CBCP* offer multifaceted research opportunities that may take us to closer examinations of the contemporary social realities and issues in our Philippine Catholic Church. CM is only one of these fascinating research areas, but our Church's future will be more empirically informed by relevant studies about the state and dynamics of Catholicism, its various forms and types, and the lives of Catholics given adequate research attention not only for academic purposes, but also the pastoral intent of building shared communities among the Catholic faithful.

## Intervention

The idea of “intervention” was intricately connected with the concepts of “pastoral” and “action research” as discussed in previous sections. In our project, “intervention” meant as the “outcome” informed by the findings and insights of the five CM dimensions. The interventions in this project took varying forms involving all those constituting the CM who agreed to implement initiatives that respond to their specific identified needs based on research. As the primary intent was pastoral in nature, these interventions were also designed to be inclusive and participatory in order to give CM a renewed energies of faith, hope, and love in the shared catechetical mission. Our selected project intervention narratives (see *Table 8.2.*) are focused on the following:

- How good social research can substantially inform, influence and shape CM initiatives, programs, and projects;
- The significance of consultations with all those involved in CM; and,
- The openness to new and creative ideas to encourage CM engagements.



**Table 8.2.** Selected Research-based Intervention Outcome (RIO) Narratives

**RIO Voices & Feedback**

**On NCS Study**

Nakita natin, ‘no, ‘yung pagpaparikit ng NCS study [sa apoy ng paglilingkod ng mga katekista]. Naging interesado silang lahat [na mga kateksita] hanggang sa nakita natin, naglagablab at umabot tayo sa araw na ito.

*We saw how the NCS study strengthened the flame of service of the catechists. They [catechists] became interested and we can see their passion up to this day.*

Fr. Ernie B. de Leon, CBCP-ECCCE Executive Secretary,  
CCMP Proceedings, p. 80

Thank you for this, NCS, especially ... Doc Yayet [Batan] kasi ‘yung part of the NCS 2016-2021, ‘yung mga interventions, and it’s like giving really [what are] needed for catechists ay ‘yung para bang regalong kaloob sa kanila itong mga interventions na ginawa. Nangyari ngayong pandemya, lalo pang tumingkad ‘yung pagkaregalo ng mga interventions because they were done in the midst of pandemic. ‘Yun bang when hindi na tayo nage-expect ng madami, para bang ang Diyos mismo, binuhos ‘yung madami sa’tin.

*Thank you for this, NCS, especially...Doc Yayet [Batan] because the NCS 2016-2021 and its interventions are like giving really what are needed for the catechists; it’s like giving them gifts through these interventions. Despite the pandemic, the interventions appeared to be gifts because they were done in the midst of pandemic. It’s like when we were expecting little [because of the pandemic]; it’s as if the Lord showered us more.*

Most. Rev. Roberto C. Mallari, DD, CBCP-ECCCE Chair,  
CCMP Proceedings, p. 81



Habang sinusulat ko ‘tong handbook na ‘to ay ang nasa isip ko ay ang pagmamahal at pagmamalasakit ko sa mga kapwa katekista ko.

*While I was writing this handbook, my mind was filled with love and care for my fellow catechists.*

Ms. Elizabeth R. Palacol, *KIMT Contributor, CCMP Proceedings, p. 50*

Kaya po habang ginagawa [ko] po talaga ito, iniisip ko po lagi na, nako, ito ay para sa mga katekistang Pinoy na talaga naming kailangan matugunan ang iba’t iba nilang pangangailangan sa iba’t ibang aspeto ng kanilang pagiging katekista.

*While I was doing this, I was thinking that this is for the Filipino catechists who we really need to help for all their needs as well as other aspects they need in fulfilling their roles as catechists.*

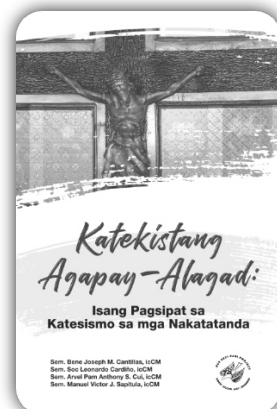
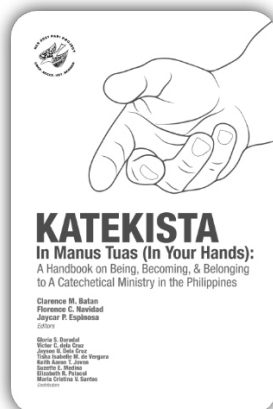
Mr. Victor C. de la Cruz, *KIMT Contributor, CCMP Proceedings, p. 53*

On Adult Catechesis

Ang punto dito para makita ng mga nakatatanda nating mga kapatid na may talab ang pananampalataya sa pang-araw-araw na buhay nila. Dahil kapag nakita natin iyon [at] nakita nila ‘yun, hindi na natin kailangang itulak sila para maging misyonero. Sila mismo ang magbabahagi ng pananampalataya na nakaugat sa sarili nilang karanasan.

*The point of this [intervention] is to make adults and the elderly see the effects of faith in their everyday lives. Because when we see it, we will not need to push them to become missionaries. They will be the ones who will [voluntarily] share the faith that is rooted in their experience.*

Dr. Manuel Sapitula, *KAA Author & Lead Interventionist, CCMP Proceedings, p. 68*



**RIO Voices & Feedback**  
**On Katekista Tulang Pananaliksik**

So, ito ay ang nag-capture ng saloobin ng lived experiences ng mga katekista at napakagaling, napakahusay kasi paano niya na-capture ‘yung buhay ng mga katekista sa pamamagitan ng isang panalangin,

*So, this [KTP] has captured the feelings and lived experiences of the catechists, and it was done beautifully and intelligently like how the author was able to capture all of these through a prayer.*

Mr. Ray Bofill, *KTP Hiligaynon Translator,*  
*CCMP Proceedings, p. 59*

“Malaking bagay ‘yong mga katekista kasi kung wala ang mga katekista kawawa rin ang mga pari kasi ang mga katekista parang sabi, all in one, na diyan tumutugtog, ang barangay masses, na diyan tumutulong kapag may kasal o binyag, nandiyan sila kahalili ng pari. ‘Pagka wala ang katekista, parang ang pari ay pilay sa kaniyang gawain. Kaya, recognition sa mga Katekista ito. Kaya, nung kayo’y dumalaw sa amin, malaking bagay ‘yong naibigay niyo na pagpapaliwanag upang sinuman din ay makapagbigay pahalaga sa mga katekista nila, at sa pagkakataong ito, ako rin ay nagpapasalamat po sa mga katekista. Thank you po.”

*The catechists contribute a big part because if they are not around, the priests will have a hard time [doing their ministry] because the catechists are like “all-in-one”; they are there to play the instruments, to assist barangay masses, to aid weddings or baptism rites, they are present serving as aids for priests. If there were no catechists, a priest seems crippled because of their many responsibilities. So, this is a recognition for the catechists. When you visited us, you significantly enlightened people so that anyone can understand them. Also, I want to take this opportunity to thank all the catechists. Thank you!*

Most Rev. Daniel O. Presto, DD, *CBCP-ECCCE Bishop Member,*  
*CCMP Proceedings, p. 78*

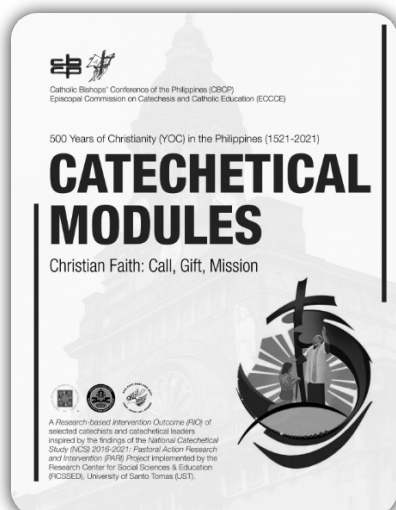


## RIO Voices & Feedback On Catechetical Modules

Napaka-exciting talaga kahit ako nae-excite rito sa RIO na naibigay sa amin kasi it's really a privilege. It's really a wonderful opportunity for us to contribute something for the Philippine Church, most especially because, say, we've been out celebrating actually this year [at] parang nag-tone down 'yung celebration ng 500 Years of Christianity because tayo ay nasa panahon ng pandemya, but still, we can celebrate our faith now in some other ways kasi ang RIO or intervention na aming ginawa...Hindi lang isang ministry kung hindi ito ay bumubuhay kasi to echo God's love, to echo God's mercy sa buhay natin by words and deeds, and itong intervention na ginawa, it's actually to put together 'yung paglalakbay ng Simbahan sa Pilipinas, 'yung nine pastoral priorities. We put it in at the Catechetical Modules na ang yaman pala ng pananampalataya, ang yaman pala ng Kristiyanismo dito sa Pilipinas na nakita natin na hindi siya hiwalay, 'yung ating pananampalataya doon sa konkretong buhay ng bawat pilipino.

*This is very exciting. This RIO assigned to us is really a privilege. It's really a wonderful opportunity for us to contribute something for the Philippine Church, most especially because we've been out celebrating actually this year and it's as if the celebration of the 500 Years of Christianity has toned down because of the pandemic, but still, we can celebrate our faith now in some other ways because of these RIO or interventions that we are doing... This is not just one ministry but it echoes God's love and mercy in our lives by words and deeds. This intervention that we did is actually to put together the journey of the Church in the Philippines through the nine pastoral priorities. We put it in the Catechetical Modules the gift of faith and the gift of Christianity in the Philippines which cannot be separated from the lives of every Filipino.*

Fr. Richard P. Lagos, CM Lead Interventionist,  
CCMP Proceedings, pp. 60-61



Inaamin din po namin na mahina rin po ang aming debosyon kay San Jose kaya po nabuo itong Katekesis kay San Jose, at salamat sa Diyos po ay mahigit isang libong tao na po ang gumagamit ng katekesis na ito, at marami pa pong humihingi sa buong Pilipinas at sa ibang bansa na mga Filipino na gusto nila makilala si San Jose. It's everything dahil ito ay panahon ng Diyos, panahon ni San Jose, panahon ng mga Katoliko, panahon ni Jesus, at panahon ng inang Birhen Maria.”

*We admit that we have a weak devotion to St. Joseph, that is why I came up with this Catechesis to Saint Joseph. Thanks be to God that more than a thousand people have been using this catechesis, and that many other people from the whole Philippines and other countries are wishing to know more about St. Joseph. It's everything because this is the time of our Lord, the time of Saint Joseph, the time of the Catholics, the time of Jesus, and the time of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

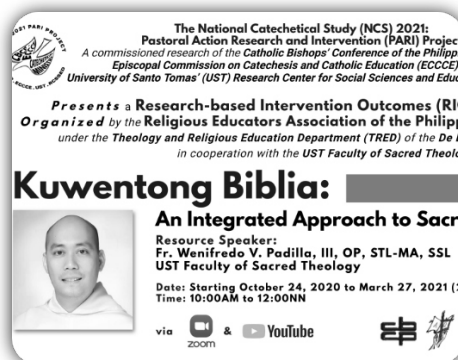
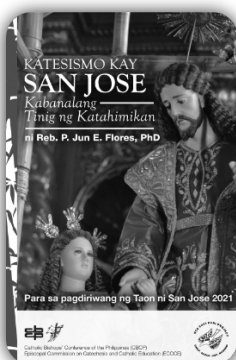
Fr. Jun E. Flores, KSJ Lead Interventionist, *CCMP Proceedings, p. 62*

On Bible Catechesis

Imbitahan ko po ‘yung iba pang mga Bible scholars na napabilang sa Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines. Overwhelming po kasi, napakalaking percentage nung study [ay] ang sabi ng mga katekista, kailangan nila na dagdag na kaalaman tungkol sa Bibliya, kaya po kami ay tumugon. So, ‘yung pinakamarami po atang views is umabot na sa mga 13,000 o 14,000 views. So, patuloy pa rin po.

*I invite all other Bible Scholars to become a member of the Catholic Biblical Association of the Philippines. The work is overwhelming; majority of the catechists reported that they need more knowledge about the Bible which we responded to. So, the video with the most views reached 13,000 to 14,000 views. We will continue doing this.*

Fr. Wenifredo V. Padilla III, OP, Bible Catechesis Lead Interventionist, *CCMP Proceedings, p. 64*



## RIO Voices & Feedback

### On Digital Catechesis (God's Park)

God's Park [ay] tulay. Tulay siya. Nasira ang tulay ng COVID-19. Dati mayroong connect[-ion], na-disconnect. The sacramental preps are in a standstill; 'yung wala naman tayong mga first communion, first confession. 'Yung mga parishes nga [ay] paralyzed. 'Yung mga catechist [ay] parang deactivated, parang very limited ang galaw. Kids [ay] walang outer experience. Ang GP po [ay] 'yun ang naging tulay because naging timely, useful, naging lasting, naging abundant in catechesis, and parang po naging approach niya talaga, parang tulay, catechesis.

*God's Park is a bridge. COVID-19 destroyed the bridge. Previously, there is a connection that got disconnected. The sacramental preps are in a standstill; no first communion, no first confession. The parishes are even paralyzed. The catechists are deactivated; the movement was very limited. The kids have no outer experience. The God's Park became a bridge because of its timely, useful, and lasting. Catechesis became abundant and its approach became somewhat a bridge, a catechesis.*

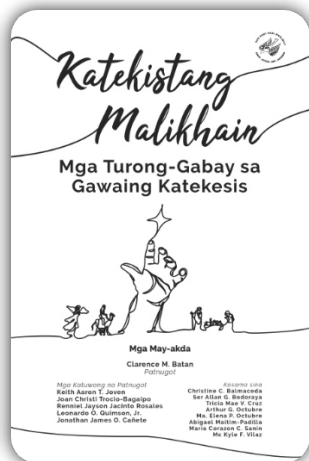
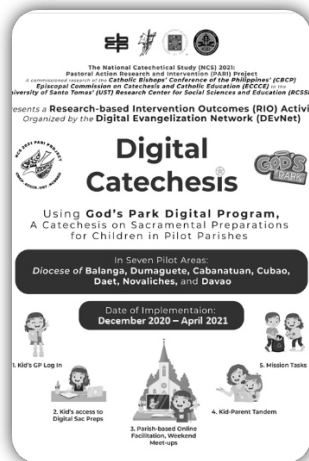
Dr. Lope Lesigues, *Digital Catechesis Lead Interventionist, CCMP Proceedings, p. 65*

### On Creative Catechesis

Para 'to sa lahat ng katekista na punong puno ng ligalig at distraction, para sa mga kabataan, makipagsabayan din tayo, at gawing muling interesado ang ating pananampalataya, at higit sa lahat, maging katekista muli tayo!

*This is for the catechists who are full of troubles and distractions, for the youth. Let us work hand-in-hand and make our faithful interested, and most of all, let us all become catechists!*

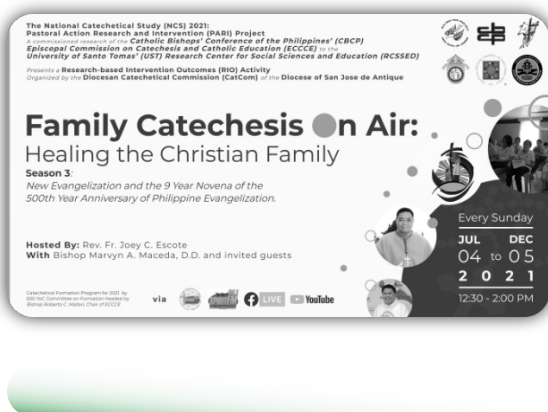
Mr. Rennie Jayson Jacinto Rosales, *KM Co-editor & Author, CCMP Proceedings, p. 75*



‘Yung family catechesis [ay] parang response rate sa deeper relationship with Jesus kasi parang uhaw sila doon, at kung matugunan namin iyon, very happy sila ... Kaya, ang nangyari dito [ay] meron kaming mga activities focused sa catechetical formation program, kaya si bishop, kasama ng team [ay] bumibisita kami sa aming mga parishes, ... mag-introduce ng family catechesis kasi ... may shifting na po from school-based catechesis to family catechesis in various areas.

*The family catechesis is like a response to a deeper relationship with Jesus because the people are longing for this. If we are able to give them that, we see that they are happy about it... So, what happened was we prepared activities focused on catechetical formation program. Hence, our bishop with the team visited different parishes. We introduced family catechesis. There is also a shifting from school-based catechesis to family catechesis in various areas.*

Fr. Joselito C. Escote, *Family Catechesis Lead Interventionist, CCMP Proceedings, p. 66*



Reading the voices of selected intervention participants was like listening to the stories of commitment and passion in CM. The lived experiences of the catechists and catechetical leaders appeared to have been inspired by the renewed catechesis that these intervention experiences brought into the core of CM. We implemented these interventions conscious of building a network of committed volunteer Catholics in CM. What our project gained in return are testimonies of collective solidarity that made us feel and believe in the possibility of a renewed Catholic Church - alive, engaging, and truthfully, catechetical.

Our *NCS 2016-2021: PARI Project* is truly grateful to this research experience of traversing the religious space of CM where we were accompanied by the catechists, catechetical leaders and catechized respondents across the country. This academic undertaking implies that putting to good use the research findings and insights into intervention initiatives results in a greater appreciation of the Ministry of Catechist.

**Thus, in conclusion, our project rests in celebrating the many *RIO* (river) flows that the tributaries of *Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI)* approach have brought, and the spring of water that freshly nurtured our CM engagements, especially those our project considered as the “**faith-driven servants**” and “**hidden gems**” known as “**Katekista**”.**

**May those who discover this monograph, also realize, “**The Catechist in All of Us.**”**



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