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CATECHETICAL  
LEADER



# CATECHESIS THROUGH A SPIRITUAL LENS

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Accept a Life of Peace  
and All that It Embraces

The American Experience  
of "Catechism"

## CATECHETICAL UPDATE:

Alliance for the Certification  
of Lay Ecclesial Ministers

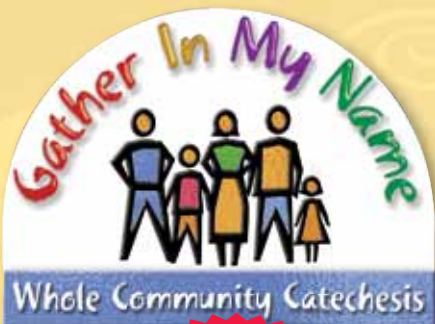
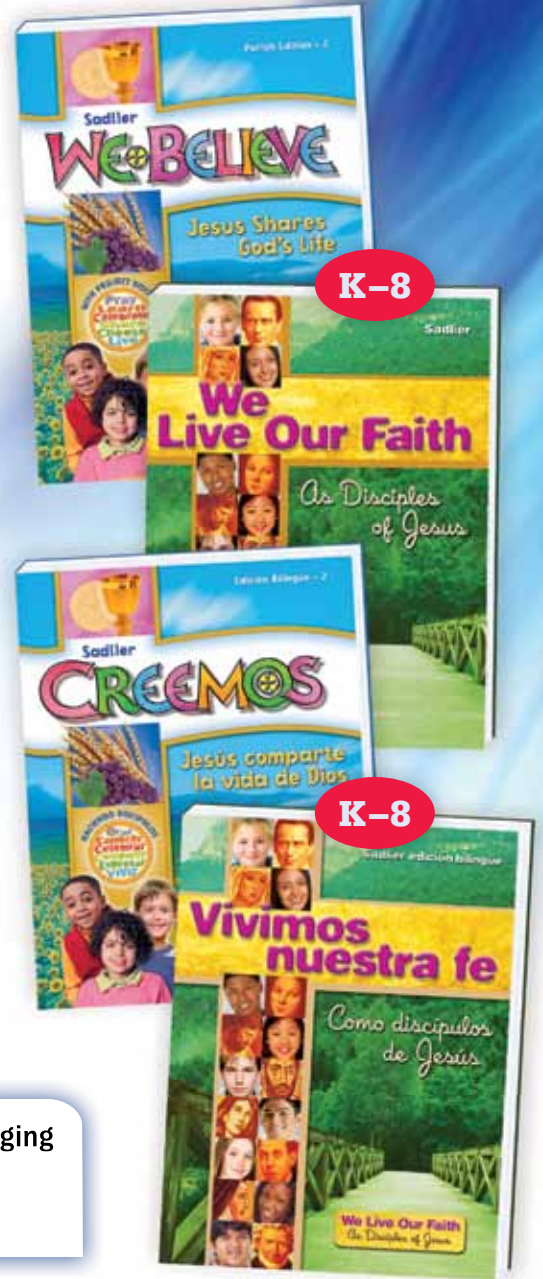


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# RENEW, RECONNECT, AND REFRESH

Anne Roat



## National Conference For Catechetical Leadership



Dear NCCL Members,

The excitement associated with September is in the air. The warm days of summer are coming to an end and the anticipation of new beginnings energizes parish professional staff. Young adults are heading back to college, catechists are preparing for religious education, parish-

es are planning fall activities, and parish staffs are developing formation programs. With summer almost over, catechetical leaders are getting ready to begin again.

In retrospect, my summer was a welcome break from the normal day to day task of running a diocesan catechetical program. I had an opportunity to *renew*, *reconnect*, and *refresh* myself in preparation for a hectic fall schedule. The months of July and August were filled with activities that proved to be just what I needed to feed body, mind, and soul.

Following our 75th Annual Conference and Exposition, I headed back to Indiana and attended the 35th Anniversary Conference of the National Association for Lay Ministry. I saw a number of familiar faces there that I had just seen the week before in Atlanta, Georgia. NCCL members do get around. After that round of conference-going, I managed to put in a couple of weeks in the office and also facilitated an NCCL board Go-To-Meeting. Between times, I conducted an orientation session for Brian Garcia-Luense, our newest NCCL board member.

In order to *renew* myself after this hectic tempo of conferences, meetings, and office work, I attended an eight-day silent retreat. I find that I need to take time each year to re-focus my life on what is most essential. My relationship with God deserves the same attention I give to other relationships in my life. For me, it is important to take

time each year for a retreat that will give me the solitude, silence, and recollection that enable me to open myself completely to the Lord's will.

After my retreat, I began to prepare in earnest for the NCCL face-to-face board meeting in Washington, DC. It is always wonderful to *reconnect* with the extraordinary individuals who serve as trustees of NCCL. However, this is your board's busiest meeting of the year. We gather for

four days and put in ten to eleven hours daily working on the business of NCCL. The agenda I prepared for the meeting was eight pages long! I will be highlighting some of the items we worked on in the next issue of *CL*.

*In order to renew myself  
after this hectic tempo of conferences,  
meetings, and office work,  
I attended an eight-day silent retreat.*

We read in Scripture how, after working long hours, Jesus invited his disciples to go to a deserted place. I too, needed a chance to *refresh* myself after the NCCL marathon board meeting, and the not quite so deserted place I went was in Minnesota. The "2011 Collegeville National Symposium on Lay Ecclesial Ministry" was an outstanding event. NCCL was one of the co-sponsoring organizations, and we were able to have six participants in attendance. The symposium was held to promote effective leadership practices that had been identified within *Co-Workers in the Vineyard of the Lord*. I was truly blessed to be a part of this gathering.

My summer afforded me the opportunity to *renew*, *reconnect*, and *refresh*. However, I am ready for fall and the NCCL Representative Council in November!

God bless,

Anne

President, NCCL

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# RITUAL AND NOVELTY ARE THE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE FORMATION

Leland Nagel



I am writing this on the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, celebrated long before you will read this. As another academic year begins, this feast reminds me of a basic principle that might be helpful for all of us engaged in leadership. In simple terms, it is about *both ... and* rather than *either... or*.

One could easily say that Saint Peter was concerned with the Jews and Saint Paul with the Gentiles, but that is too simplistic. It would be like saying Patrick catechizes the Irish and Benedict the Germans, or Margaret works with the Anglos and Maria with the Latinos. We are not to be separate, but rather we are to be *one* body.

I read a story awhile back of a person who was thirsty. He could hear water bubbling, and he saw that it was coming from the top of a hill. The mouth proclaimed his thirst, the ears heard the direction of the water, and the eyes could see the vegetation. After much cajoling, they convinced the legs to start climbing. It didn't take long before the legs grew tired and complained that they weren't even thirsty, whereupon the person fell to his knees and continued upward. Once the knees started bleeding, the task fell to the hands to try and pull the body up the hill. Ultimately, they too quit and no one part would continue the journey just to satisfy the thirst of the mouth. Several days, later the person died.

Every part of the body was necessary if the thirst was to be quenched. Similarly, one style will not be an effective way to evangelize everyone, yet alone catechize. Brain-based learning theory reminds us that we need both ritual and novelty. If we have only ritual, we become very bored. On the other hand, ritual is important in making us feel safe. When the bell rings, the candle is lit, the music starts, the incense is burning, and the Bible is opened, we are ready to pray. All of our senses have been engaged, and the ritual tells our body how to react because it has happened this way again and again. The reptilian part of our brain loves repetition.

However, without some novelty, we easily get bored, ritual becomes routine, and it is a slippery slope from routine to rut—and we all know how hard it is to get out of a rut! This is part of why we stand, sit, and kneel during Mass. It's also why most catechists have their students get up and move around, turn and talk with a partner, creating a variety of ways that get the learners out of their chairs. Novelty provides a counter balance to the ritual. If it was all novelty,

chaos would reign and an atmosphere of ill-at-ease would permeate the room.

Some feel there was a rivalry between Peter and Paul, but I might suggest that they came to understand the distinctive role each of them played in the growth of the church. If you look at their personalities, their distinct gifts and talents, you can see that God called Peter and Paul to use their personalities to spread the Good News. Peter used his impetuous love to look after the flock, to insure that Tradition was preserved and laws were followed. Paul used his training as a Pharisee, his intellect, and his strength of character to ensure that non-Jews would be welcomed into the church.

The relationship of Peter and Paul is a good model. Once again the wisdom of the church is evident in placing these two men together. Had Paul not come along, many of us Gentiles

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*The relationship of Peter and Paul is a good model. Once again the wisdom of the church is evident in placing these two men together.*

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may never have been allowed to join the faith. Had Peter died quickly and Paul became Pope, we might still be arguing. As you pair people together, think about Peter and Paul. Match someone strong in content with someone who has gazillions of creative ways to teach. Connect a music lover with someone who doesn't sing or even listen to music. Link a visual learner with a kinesthetic learner. Don't be afraid to match the old with the young, the traditionalist with the progressive, the artist with the athlete.

Never forget that the first requirement of a catechist is that she or he has encountered the Risen Lord. Peter's encounter with the Risen Lord was very different than Paul's, but they both encountered the Risen Lord and that commonality not only allowed them to work together but was the bond that kept them together. Don't forget: both Peter and Paul denied Christ.

Whenever you see statues of Peter and Paul, Peter is usually holding a key, symbolizing his duty as head of the church, and Paul is holding the Bible, symbolizing his preaching. We need the law and the prophets. Without both, we will die. It's not *either ... or*, it's *both ... and*. ■



# The Future of Catechesis through a Spiritual Lens

## *Tending Our Relationship with Christ*

Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne



First of all, I would like to thank all of you for your efforts to pass on our faith. Catechesis is one of the main priorities of the church, and I am grateful for all of you who hone your skills and knowledge for advancing the gospel and God's kingdom.

In many ways, to speak of the future of catechesis through a *spiritual* lens is somewhat a lesson in futility, as Christ is the necessary focus, the Beginning and the End, and our God is Eternal, Faithful, Unchanged, and Unchanging. Of this, we are certain. So, as long as we keep our eyes fixed on Christ (Heb 12:2), we know we are on the right track! It is Christ who reveals the Father, and through Christ the Father shares with us his Spirit. This is our starting point and our end.

It is what lies in the "middle," this earthly pilgrimage of faith, that concerns us, this historical moment in time in which God has planted us and tasked us with proclaiming Christ and his truth. Since proclaiming Christ to the world is the starting point for catechesis, I would like to use the image of Christ as teacher and the subject, truth, for our reflection.

One of the main things necessary in looking to the future of catechesis is to be honest about the context in which we minister and the reality of today. We preach the gospel in a tough culture today, one that is more and more secularized and, quite honestly, one that has a certain "practical atheism." In saying this, I am not being negative, just realistic.

### **NEW EVANGELIZATION**

Part of the inherent challenge for us in the church today is we can no longer be satisfied to preach only to those who are coming to us. I'm not advocating proselytizing, but I am all for the New Evangelization. In January, I encouraged the priests of our diocese of Cheyenne, Wyoming, to be more proactive. Gone are the days when we can simply sit in our offices and celebrate the regularly scheduled sacraments and expect the people to come to us. We need to understand why 60 to 70 percent of our registered Catholics are not very visible or engaged in their faith.

To do this, it seems we need to be mindful of the manner in which Jesus himself ministered. He developed relationships. He called people by name, one at a time. He entered into the

lived experience of the people to reveal the face of God, to preach the kingdom, and to be a lived experience of compassion, mercy, and love.

Please understand, I think the majority of our priests and pastoral staff work very hard, as I am sure all of you do. But I believe we need to continually grow in our understanding of the faith-needs of our people, or perhaps to help our people see their faith-needs and to prayerfully discern how the Holy Spirit is leading us to meet those needs. For this reason, a big part of my challenge to catechetical leaders is to be people of prayer. In other words, my primary message is to call each of us to be particularly attentive to our own personal relationship with Christ.

This may sound very basic, and it is. But, because it is so basic, so simple, this aspect of our life and ministry needs focus and encouragement at times. My goal is to renew your own spirit, to challenge your present practice of prayer, to offer some food for thought, and to stress again our own call to holiness, which is a call to live our life in Christ.

A part of the cultural influence on us is the importance placed upon "activity" and "production." We do have work to do, but the work of the church is salvation. The work of the church is truth. Therefore, the priority of our lives and each of our days is to be strongly rooted in the person of Jesus Christ.

Matthew's Gospel tells us that Jesus was not only a teacher but also one who taught with a new authority (Mt 7:28-29). For us who have been entrusted with passing on the faith, it can be easy to overlook this simple and yet foundational need we have to learn from Jesus. If we are to successfully recruit and train other catechists, if we are to successfully pass on our faith in Christ to others, we must first be faithful in our own personal relationships with Christ. We must first sit at the feet of the Master, and allow him to draw us into his truth and love. We must faithfully follow Christ as his disciple if we are to help make disciples of others.

### **OUR FIRST PRIORITY**

Regardless if you are a parish catechist, director of religious education, diocesan director of catechesis, or a deacon, priest, or even bishop, our first priority is our relationship with Christ. We all know the reality of how busy our lives get and

of the great temptation at times to overlook our own personal prayer life. We can fail to be *personally* attentive to Jesus who calls each of us to his classroom of truth and love when we get caught up in developing programs and recruiting catechists so that everything is prepared for our students. We can be well versed in the content of the Catechism and all the textbooks used in our classrooms, but if we are not drinking deeply from the Well of Eternal Life that is Christ, shallow pools of future faith will be the best we can establish.

Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical letter, *Charity in Truth*, teaches: “Truth, and the love which it reveals, cannot be *produced*: they can only be received as a gift” (52). Even the *General Directory for Catechesis* reminds us: “Jesus also cautions, however, that the word of God grows only in a well-disposed heart” (15).

As those who are called to teach the faith, to proclaim Jesus Christ and his truth, we have a great responsibility. We can trust that as we are called to this ministry, it is God’s great desire to give us this “gift.” Ours is to make sure we avail ourselves to receive this “gift.” This means a fidelity to prayer and regular reception of the sacraments. Prayer and sacraments are primary ways in which Christ nourishes his presence within us and strengthens our relationship with him. He obviously does this in other ways, but prayer and the sacraments are the foundations, which allow us to be open and alert to his presence and action—his instructing us in the school of love in other areas of our life.

In his first encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, Blessed John Paul II teaches this delicate balance between *receiving* the precious gift of God’s revelation and *sharing* it with others:

We perceive intimately that the truth revealed to us by God imposes on us an obligation. We have, in particular, a great sense of responsibility for this truth. By Christ’s institution the church is its guardian and teacher, having been endowed with a unique assistance of the Holy Spirit in order to guard and teach it in its most exact integrity (Jn 14:26). In fulfilling this mission, we look towards Christ himself, the first evangelizer, and also towards his apostles, martyrs and confessors. (12)

Christ is our Teacher. Certainly, he teaches us through his word but also through every aspect of his life and ministry, his death and resurrection. I am reminded of two different moments in the life of St. Peter. The first is when he acknowledges his need for Christ after the Bread of Life discourse: “Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and are convinced that you are the Holy One of God” (Jn 6:68-69). The other is after the resurrection when St. Peter reminds us of the central role of Jesus Christ: “There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Again, referring to the *General Directory for Catechesis*, if we are to show Jesus Christ to others, teach them about his life and ministry, and present the Christian faith as the following of his person (41), then we must have an intimate knowledge of Christ as well.

### JESUS AS THE TEACHER

So, how do we do this? Let’s look more closely at this image of Jesus as teacher, our teacher. St. Catherine of Sienna is one of my favorite saints, and she has much to teach us about Christ as teacher. Catherine uses this image and title regularly in her writings. The title of Teacher also goes well with another one of her favorite titles of Jesus: Gentle First Truth. Teaching the truth is what Jesus did. Teaching the truth is what Jesus asks of us. St. Catherine also adapts language and images from St. Augustine, which fit this line of thought and teaching. For example, in one of her letters she says: “Jesus is the Master who has taken his chair to teach us the doctrine of truth. The soul who follows his teaching can never fall into darkness. And he is the way we must walk to get to this school—I mean, by following his example. He said ‘I am the way and the truth and the life’ (Jn 14:6)” (Noffke, Letters, Vol. II, 66).

St. Catherine adopts this image of Christ as the master taking his chair from the writing of St. Augustine, when he said: “That cross was a school, where the teacher taught the thief. The wood on which he hung became a chair for teaching” (St. Augustine, Sermon CCXXXIV (PL XXXVIII, 1116). In the same letter, St. Catherine goes on to say, “For those who follow your way and teaching cannot have death within

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themselves. No, they receive everlasting life within themselves, and they cannot be robbed of it by devils or by other people or by any wrong they may suffer, unless they themselves so choose” (ibid, 67). Finally, St. Catherine reminds us that “Christ came for all humanity, and since he is the Teacher, Gentle First Truth, we are his students, and we sit in his school of love” (cf. Noffke, Letters, Vol. II, 523).

For St. Catherine, part of what we need to receive from this knowledge of Christ and his truth is a rightly tuned free will. Freedom is at the heart of our dignity as persons created in the image of God. St. Catherine says, “So God insists that we bring with us the vessel of our free will, with a thirst and willingness to love. Let us go, then, to the fountain of God’s sweet goodness. There we shall discover the knowledge of ourselves and of God. And when we dip our vessel in, we shall draw out the water of divine grace, powerful enough to give us everlasting life” (Noffke, Letters, Vol. II, 32).

This freedom is another “gift” from God, given to us through and in Christ, and this freedom is intimately connected with truth. Jesus Christ meets every person of every age, including our own, with these words: “You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:32). Blessed John Paul II taught that truth is the necessary condition for authentic human freedom. He has this to say about freedom and truth

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*As teachers dedicated to preparing our people to receive the sacraments of the church, we must never forget the importance sacraments and worship play in our own life and ministry.*

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found in Christ: “Christ is the one who brings man freedom based on truth, frees man from what curtails, diminishes and as it were breaks off this freedom at its root, in man’s soul, his heart and his conscience” (RH, 12).

We encounter the living Christ not only in prayer, but also in our worship and sacraments. As teachers dedicated to preparing

our people to receive the sacraments of the church, we must never forget the importance sacraments and worship play in our own life and ministry. St. John’s Gospel teaches: “The hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth; and indeed the Father seeks such people to worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23-24).

#### IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE

Part of a serious commitment to prayer is a willingness to enter into silence. A part of my lenten journey and “need” was to create a greater space for silence...more time alone with God’s word. I am convinced we need more time in quiet with the Lord. We are continually bombarded with noise, voices, images, messages, demands for “response” to e-mails, voice-mails, constantly checking our favorite sites on the Internet for updates and the latest news. All these things stimulate us in a way that makes it difficult to maintain an interior peace,

making it even challenging for God to clearly communicate his message of good news.

A perfect example of silence from Scripture is the experience of Zechariah. Obviously, he lived in a very different time. We are all familiar with his story, that while serving his time in the temple, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and declared to him that his wife Elizabeth would have a son whom he was to call John. The angel also revealed to him the nature of John's ministry. Now, because of Zechariah's disbelief, he was made unable to speak until after the birth of John. (He was made to maintain silence.)

At first glance, this "gift" of being struck mute appears as a punishment, but I believe it served as a special grace for Zechariah. (Perhaps it was a special blessing for Elizabeth as well?) The silence he endured during those nine months was a part of how God further allowed Zechariah to better formulate the meaning of his experience in the temple. The silence allowed him the requisite interior environment to reflect and formulate the beautiful hymn that is now a part of the church's daily liturgical prayer in the Gospel Canticle, the *Benedictus*: "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel. For he has come to his people and set them free" (Lk 1:68).

Silence is also necessary to better qualify and prepare us to declare the praises of God and to form others for the same task. Silence is a critical element of our prayer life, which seeks not only to know God's word more profoundly, but also to discern how to teach this word in the context of today.

My dear friends, I hope you hear my impassioned plea for all of us to be bound to Jesus, with all our hearts, feeling, will, and intellect. We all share a call in the church in the role of teacher. This being the case, we share a prior call to be *students* of the Master Teacher, Christ. Christ knew his ministry and teaching were rooted in his relationship with the Father, and thus he was able to say: "The word which you hear is not

mine but the Father's who sent me" (Jn 14:24). So must we understand that our ministry and teaching is rooted in Christ.

After Jesus restored the sight of the blind man and was questioned by his disciples, he gave an interesting response: "We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day" (Jn 9:4). Jesus is calling us to share in the work of the Father, to work and speak in his name. This is our call and mission.

Blessed John Paul II writes in *Redemptor hominis*: "Consequently, we have become sharers in this mission of the prophet Christ, and in virtue of that mission we together with him are serving divine truth in the church. Being responsible for that truth also means loving it and seeking the most exact understanding of it, in order to bring it closer to ourselves and others in all its saving power." (19).

My friends, we are *sharers* in the very ministry of Christ. What a precious "gift" God has shared with us in calling us to be at the service of divine truth. As I am learning in my own journey of serving the Lord, the treasure that is Christ is always opening up to new and inspiring horizons. This last decade of my life and ministry as a priest, and now as a bishop, has also reinforced more than ever how much our world is in need of this treasure and the truth that is ours in the person of Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that each of you will continue to grow in your love of Christ; that each of you will be able to inspire those you serve, to always grow in faith. May God bless our efforts to teach this faith to those who come to us, and especially, may God guide us in authentically proclaiming Christ and his truth to the world.

May God bless you all and all you do in his name and service! ■

**Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne** is the bishop of Cheyenne, Wyoming.



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# Accept a Life of Peace and All that It Embraces

Paul Ashton



“Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.” Jn 20:19-23

Jesus tells his petrified and fear-filled disciples who huddle in that upper room: “Peace be with you!” In his own language, his *shalom* grants them a mighty blessing—full of everything that *shalom* means: completeness, wholeness, health, peace, welfare, safety, soundness, tranquility, prosperity, perfectness, fullness, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord. *Shalom* means to be complete, perfect, and full!<sup>1</sup> What a blessing. Jesus knows well the anxiety and fear that have paralyzed the disciples and Mary, his mother. They fear being killed and tortured like he was. They lived through the horrors of his torture, suffering, and death, and live in the aftermath of fear and trauma. They miss and need him, feel lost without him, and now he comes to them and gives them the mighty blessing of fullness. In a most intimate way, he breathes on them his own Spirit of love. Jesus came for them and for us—to liberate us from our upper room filled with anxiety and fear. The invitation: accept a life of *shalom* and all that it embraces.

Sometimes, the cost to move to this place of full peace is overwhelming, and it appears less costly to live with the known anxiety and fear. We, like those first disciples, are paralyzed and live in the post trauma of some awful thing that hap-

pened to us—fearful to move beyond and outside of what we know and experience as comfortable—even if our experience is anything but peaceful.

Jesus empowers his disciples to move from that room of fear and to go forth to spread his good news. With the power of his Spirit, the disciples are moved to go beyond themselves to a place of liberty and freedom in order to continue spreading his message of peace, *shalom*, and love. In our glorious tradition, we, too, are empowered, breath to breath, generation to generation, to move beyond our fear and to accept the mission of the church—to complete on earth the great task that Jesus began for us. Jesus breathes the intimate gift of his Spirit on each of his disciples. A gift of love, we, as his disciples also, are called to take up the charge of love, to accept and live it

in its fullest meaning. Love is a verb meaning understanding, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, affirmation, acceptance, kindness, care, gentleness, and goodness. In accepting and receiving love, we embrace for ourselves the path, which leads out of our own personal trauma and fear.

So many of us are trapped in our own upper rooms, refusing to leave the safety of the world we have created for ourselves, tied up in so much fear and

anxiety that we are comfortable, even in our own pain. We are filled with fear and doubt and are held back from taking the steps we need to take to love ourselves fully. We must forgive ourselves, accept who we are in all of our brokenness, and then move toward the wholeness of forgiving others—while at the same time spreading the good news so that others can break free from fear.

Bernard Lonergan, SJ, stated, “The opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty.” Living in faith is difficult when the anxieties and fears of our lives threaten our very existence. Faith is a step to healing anxiety through wholeness and oneness with each other. This act of trust and belief is healing.

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<sup>1</sup>. *Strong's Concordance with Hebrew and Greek Lexicon*, 7965.



And, we need others to assist us in this process; it cannot be done alone.

We find ourselves together in so many ways, like Mary and those first disciples, wanting desperately for the peace that Jesus brought them, wanting to feel the fullness of shalom, and to know again what it feels like to be whole and to love without agitation or discord. Many of us remain trapped in our own upper rooms. Many people run away, are hiding or lost, or sit lost among us, never speaking due to fear, passivity, and lack of engagement. Dwelling in an interior upper room, the fear of being silenced torments and demeans. For some, when they speak, they speak from a place of anger. Their speech is hard to hear, and their feelings may be too dark to accept. When we hold our hands out to them as disciples of Jesus, we are not rebuked by their strong words and rebuttal. We move, instead, toward them and not away from them,

because we know two things: that this is the call of Jesus; and that we, too, have been in this dark space and only by grace have we been freed.

Christ suffered, died, and rose for all of us. His mission is for all of us. We acknowledge that Christ is dependent on his church and we are all the more dependent on him through every Christian act we undertake. Every living person has the right, by our inheritance directly from Jesus, to be free to live in the wholeness of shalom and in the fullness of love, not in the darkness of a hidden, locked upper-room, but in the clear light of day—living, loving, and embracing a life of freedom and endless possibilities.

It is difficult to accept the great commission of evangelization to call others to wholeness if we can barely forgive ourselves and others the hurt they have done to us. If we cannot embrace our own fear and trauma, it will be very difficult for



us to offer an invitation of welcome to others. We need them, and they need us as Christ needs his church and we need him.

Our history shows us that this is not easy—embracing the call of evangelization can be overwhelming in the face of ignorance, violence, war, destruction, and fear turned into hatred. But from every bad thing can come goodness. A story serves as a guidepost: Following World War II, some German students volunteered to rebuild a cathedral damaged by the Luftwaffe bombings in England. All were very pleased and encouraged as the work came to a successful end, except for a large statue of Jesus in front of the cathedral with his arms outstretched, under which the engraved words welcomed all: “Come Unto Me.” The hands of the statue were broken off, and every attempt to restore them failed. In the end, they decided to leave the statue handless but changed the inscription below to read: “Christ has no hands but ours.”

The prayer of St. Teresa of Avila sums up the work that Jesus is dependent on us to accomplish. May her words become our own to live by:

Lord, Christ,  
you have no body on earth but ours,  
no hands but ours,  
no feet but ours.  
Ours are the eyes through which your compassion  
must look out on the world.  
Ours are the feet by which you may still go about  
doing good.  
Ours are the hands in which you bless people now.  
Bless our minds and bodies, that we may be a blessing  
to others.  
Amen. ■

*Paul Ashton, PsyD, DMin, is the founder of Open Hearts HIV/AIDS Ministry and has supervised support and bereavement groups for over 20 years. He is the author of numerous articles and educational support materials and a book entitled Etched in Hope. Contact him at [AshtonPJ@aol.com](mailto:AshtonPJ@aol.com).*



# CATECHETICAL UPDATE

A publication of the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership



## ALLIANCE FOR THE CERTIFICATION OF LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS

### Project Update

#### PURPOSE:

To provide an update on the revision of the National Certification Standards and the newly proposed process for national certification of lay ecclesial ministers

#### BACKGROUND

**Initial steps and individual work:** In 1990, NFCYM received approval of their standards from the then USCC Commission on Certification and Accreditation for the first parish-based lay ecclesial ministers, youth ministers. The following year, 1991, NALM followed suit and received approval of standards for pastoral associates and parish life coordinators. In 1996, NCCL received approval of parish catechetical leaders' standards.

**Collaborative efforts begin:** In 1999, NALM, NCCL, and NFCYM joined efforts to combine their standards for different fields within lay ecclesial ministry into the National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers, which was released in 2003. These combined standards were for parish

catechetical leaders, pastoral associates, parish life coordinators, and youth ministry leaders. In 2005, NPM joined this effort, and certification standards for directors of music ministries were added to the combined certification standards. NPM successfully sought approval that year from the USCCB CCA for its new standards and existing certification process. In the spring of 2009, FDLC also became a partner after opening its own file with USCCB/CCA.

**ACLEM work begins:** In June, 2007, the five partner organizations of ACLEM (also known as the "Alliance") formed two inter-organizational task groups: one was charged with revising the National Certification Standards and the second was tasked with developing a framework for a shared, national process to certify lay ecclesial ministers serving in the ministry specializations represented by ACLEM partner organizations.

**Creating the final draft:** A draft of the revised standards and certification framework was submitted for broad consultation in November, 2009. The ACLEM partners invited feedback and input from a wide diversity of organizations, including

national ministry associations, especially those representing multicultural concerns, and organizations representing ministry formation programs. Responses were received in March, 2010, and the task groups set to work integrating the feedback into a revised, final draft. The final draft was completed in November, 2010, and submitted to the ACLEM partner organizations for approval.

## CURRENT STATUS

**All five ACLEM partner organizations have approved the revised National Certification Standards and the framework for the national certification process.**

- ◆ NCCL: Board of Directors approval in December, 2010
- ◆ NALM: Board of Directors approval in March, 2011
- ◆ FDLC: Board of Directors approval in February, 2011
- ◆ NFCYM: Membership approval in January, 2011
- ◆ NPM: Approval from Board of Directors and Director of Music Ministries Division Board in January, 2011

*To review the approved draft of this work, please contact the executive director or certification committee chair of the partner organization to which you belong.*

In March, 2011, the executive directors signed a *Memorandum of Understanding*, which formalizes, articulates, and guides the operation of the ACLEM partnership.

## NEXT STEPS

Each partner organization must quickly develop its own infrastructure to support and guide certification within its own organization. This includes the following tasks for each partner:

- ◆ establishing a Partner Certification Review Committee (PCRC), with a representative selected to serve on the National Certification Review Committee (NCRC);
- ◆ developing advocacy and marketing strategies specific to their own organization; and
- ◆ developing clear guidelines for creation and review of portfolios for their specializations.

The approved drafts of the revised National Certification Standards and the national certification process and all supporting materials will be submitted to the USCCB Commission on Certification and Accreditation (USCCB/CCA) by September 1, 2011. USCCB/CCA approval is anticipated at their meeting on September 30, 2011.

Contingent upon USCCB/CCA approval, publication of the revised standards and promotion of the national certification process will commence.

## CERTIFICATION IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

*Initial implementation:*

- ◆ The ACLEM partners expect to formally announce the opening of the certification process in December, 2011.
- ◆ The first applications for certification will be accepted until March 1, 2012.
- ◆ Decisions regarding acceptance of applicants as candidates for certification will be communicated by May 1, 2012.
- ◆ Candidates may then begin compiling their portfolios and submit them when complete.

*Ongoing implementation:*

- ◆ There are two deadlines each year for submission of applications or submission of portfolios: March 1 and October 1.
- ◆ After each deadline:
  - Decisions regarding acceptance of candidacy (approval of initial applications) will be communicated within two months (by May 1 or December 1).
  - Decisions regarding granting of certification (approval of submitted portfolios) will be communicated within three months (by June 1 or January 1). ■



# The American Experience of “Catechism”

Jonathan Morse



Do you remember how CCD used to be? How did we get where we are today?

Jesus himself gave the command to teach the faith when he said: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Generations since have gone forth and done what was commanded.

When Catholics came to the new world, they brought with them a Catholic heritage in faith formation. The form of catechesis used in the English and French colonies followed a catechetical tradition of St. Augustine’s *Enchiridion*. This method was to break down material into small sections that could be memorized. The most common approach was to break a catechesis down into seven parts, as St. Augustine did with the Our Father.

From this, we get the development of the *seven* deadly sins, the *seven* gifts of the Holy Spirit, the *seven* virtues, and the *seven* Beatitudes. All were committed to memory and became the foundation stones of Catholic teaching.

## THE PRINTING PRESS ENABLES CATECHISMS

With the introduction of printing, religious instruction began to use books known as *catechisms*. These were usually written in a question and answer format. Catechisms made written instruction of all ages possible. Most catechisms were written in Latin and some in the vernacular.

In the 16th century, the Protestants discovered a new tool for catechesis—a mass-produced catechism. Due to the use of the catechism by Martin Luther in 1529, the Calvinist *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563, and a catechism for Anglicans included in the Book of Common Prayer, the Catholic Church was impelled to respond with its own mass-produced catechism.

At the forefront of the Catholic response was the Society of Jesus. Their mission was the propagation of the faith with the specific goal of the instruction of young and uneducated persons. The basis of instruction was the Creed, the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Ten Commandments, and the works of mercy. Jesuit schools incorporated a catechetical instruction period of an hour or more each week.

The Jesuits sent missionaries to work among the native population in the French colonies. The missionaries arrived wearing long black robes, a surplice, and biretta and could speak the language of the natives. For example, Father DeBrebeuf would chant the Our Father translated into Huron rhymes, encouraging the children to repeat after him. Then he taught the Sign of the Cross, the Hail Mary, the Apostles’ Creed, and the Commandments.

Like the Jesuits in French America, Andrew White, SJ, arrived at Saint Mary’s City, Maryland, with the intention of starting a school for the Yacomo tribe, where they could learn from a catechism in their own language. In order to do

this, he brought with him a printing press, which gave him the honor of printing the first book in America.

Bohemia Manor Academy, as the school White founded eventually came to be called, influenced and formed the future of the Church in the United States. Among its alumni are the first and second archbishops of Baltimore: John Carroll and Leonard Neale.

The United States may have been conceived in religious liberty, however, that religious freedom did not at first extend to Catholics. Therefore, most religious education was conducted in the home. When religious tolerance became normative, what was being done in the home became the foundation for schools and academies.

Catholic schools were but one of many of Archbishop Carroll’s concerns. In 1792, he issued his first pastoral letter, in which he described the “virtuous and Christian instruction of

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youth as a principal object of pastoral solicitude” and emphasized the “necessity of a pious and Catholic education of the young [sic] to insure their grownin [sic] up in the faith.”

Living in “mission territory,” priests were the ordinary catechists and unable to dedicate their time to produce new catechisms. Jesuit Robert Molyneux is the first known priest to edit an American catechism. He ministered in Maryland and Pennsylvania. It has been speculated that his work was a reprint of *Butler’s Catechism* from Ireland. Noteworthy for its lengthy explanations concerning differences in Catholic and Protestant theology, his American catechism found importance in a land where Catholics were the minority.

After Boston bishop Jean Cheverus translated Claude Fleury’s *Catechisme Historique* in 1808, translating catechisms from Europe became a common practice. Catechisms were also translated into Native American languages. Bishop Frederic Barraga wrote a catechism for the Ottawa tribe in 1832, and Francis Blanchet wrote a Chinook dictionary and catechism in 1838.

## CATECHISM Q&A

The catechism format was always the same: question and brief answer. The methodology of memorization was simply assumed. Memorization was a common form of educational practice and therefore was not unique to religion. There were *catechisms* of history, grammar, and arithmetic, for example.

A strong anti-Catholic wave in the United States existed in the early and mid 1800s. American Catholics withdrew into a ghetto-type of existence. They were born, lived, and died in the local parish. The church grew through waves of immigrants. The Catholic school system was booming, and there was a need for structure and uniformity.

Writing to Cardinal Bartolomeo Cappellari in October, 1827, Archbishop Ambrose Marechal of Baltimore was one of the first to suggest a common catechism.

In December, 1828, Baltimore Archbishop James Whitfield summoned his suffragan bishops to a provincial council. Decree 33 forbade the use of catechisms not approved by the bishop of the diocese and decreed: “A catechism shall be written which is better adapted to the circumstances of this Province; it shall give the Christian Doctrine as explained in Cardinal Bellarmine’s Catechism, and when approved by the Holy See, it shall be published for the common use of Catholics.” The clause recommending Bellarmine’s catechism as a model was added at the special request of the Propaganda Fide. This wish of the bishops was not carried out, and the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore repeated the decree.

The bishops at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) favored a universal catechism. However, at the conclusion, the implementation of a new catechism did not occur. After the Council, the U.S. bishops later met in Baltimore to explore

the implementation of a common catechism for the United States.

Before the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore, Cardinal James Gibbons appointed a committee under the leadership of Archbishop Joseph Alemany of San Francisco and six other bishops<sup>1</sup> to consider:

1. the need for a uniform catechism;
2. the name of a catechism if it was needed;
3. whether or not it should be translated into languages other than English.

At the plenary council, the bishops decreed that parishes should set up schools and that there should be a uniform teaching of religion. It also required Catholics to send their children to these Catholic schools unless there was a serious reason they could not. A minority of bishops wanted to use the Butler catechism, but the majority wanted a new catechism. The council decreed that a catechism be written and that the Catholic schools use it.

Monsignor Januarius DeConcilio, a professor at Seton Hall’s Immaculate Conception Seminary and a pastor in Jersey City, New Jersey, produced the first draft of the catechism. It was submitted to the bishops on December 6, but since the plenary council was closing, the draft received very little attention.

A committee of bishops set about creating a new draft. The draft was circulated to the U.S. bishops for comment and then revised. On April 6, 1885, the *Baltimore Catechism* was given the imprimatur of John Cardinal McCloskey, and Gibbons approved the text. It was published on April 11, consisting of 72 pages and 421 questions.

The new catechism followed the outline of the Roman catechism: Creed, Sacraments, and Commandments. In September, 1885, the *Baltimore Catechism* was condensed to 208 questions in 33 chapters and rearranged the context of the questions. This abridged version was published as *Baltimore Catechism No. 1*, which is not to be confused with *Baltimore Catechism No. 4* that was expanded to 420 questions in 33 chapters and was published in 1891.

Archbishop Sebastian Messmer of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, recalled that at the end of the plenary council, “several objections raised at the meeting that the proposed catechism was imperfect, in fact inferior, answer was made that uniformity was more important and that quite evidently many improvements were to be made in the course of time as experience would show the past deficiencies.”<sup>2</sup> The work was criticized, and the bishops decided it needed to be revised as soon as it was printed. Bishop Gilmour of Cleveland, Ohio, said that it was theologically weak and pedagogically unsuitable for

*continued on page 24*

# A Catechism Timeline

- 1555 Peter Canisius, SJ, develops German-language catechism, translated from Latin, entitled *Handbook of Christian Doctrine*. He also produced a short catechism for children and uneducated persons called the *Catechismus minimus*. This was an abbreviation and contained only 59 questions and answers for memorization, prayers before and after Mass, prayers to be recited daily, as well as some others. Canisius modified this work and broke the words down into syllables so that children could learn it more easily.
- 1597 Robert Bellarmine, SJ, produced *Dottrina Christiana Breve*. This consisted of questions and answers for memorization by children and uneducated adults. A larger volume came out a year later, which was a more in-depth guide for the catechist.
- 1809 Bishop Hay's *Abridgment of Christian Doctrine* appears in Philadelphia in 1800. In 1809, it was republished in Baltimore and entitled *A Short Abridgement of Christian Doctrine Newly Revised for the Use of the Catholic Church in the United States of America* (commonly called the *Carroll Catechism* after John Carroll). This work, approved by Archbishop Carroll, was generally used throughout the United States until close to 1821. The German speaking communities used the catechism of Peter Canisius; the French used the Quebec catechism of 1782.
- 1833 Bishop John Carroll makes the catechism of Saint Louis from Lyons obligatory for French Catholics in the U.S.
- 1852 The First Plenary Council of Baltimore appoints Bishop John Neumann to write a German catechism for use in all German speaking communities in the U.S.
- 1885 The *Catechism of the Council of Baltimore (Baltimore Catechism)* is published. It contained 421 questions and was 72 pages long. Later that year, it was condensed to 208 questions.
- 1891 A revised, expanded version of the *Baltimore Catechism* is published with 420 questions.
- 1898 Peter Yorke develops *Text Books of Religion for the First Five Grades*.

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# BEING WRONG

*Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error*

By Kathryn Schulz  
HarperCollins Publishers

Reviewed by Daniel Thomas

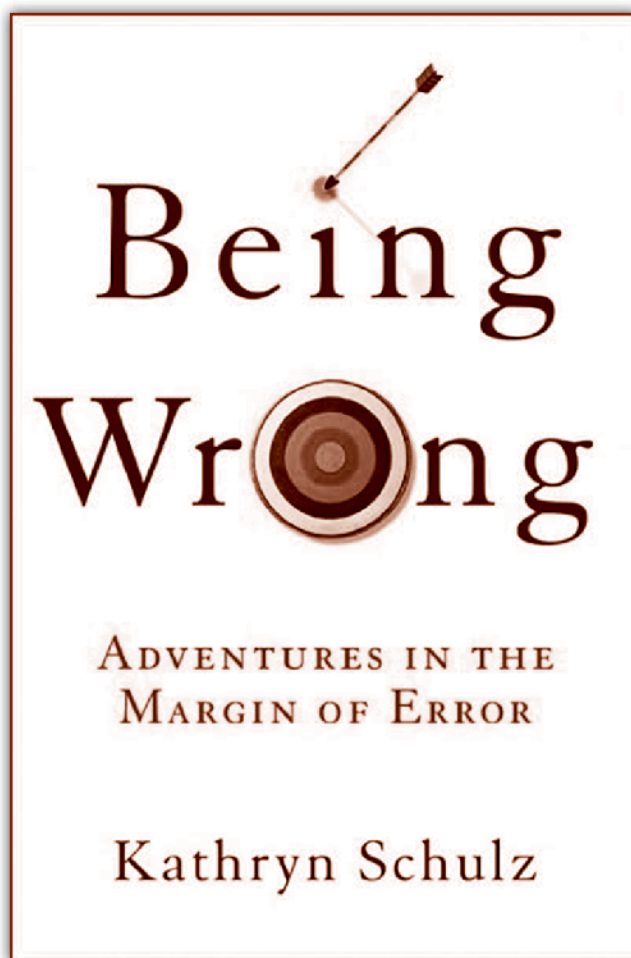
One of the most difficult things in life is to face the fact that we are wrong. “[O]ur steady state seems to be one of unconsciously assuming that we are very close to omniscient” (4). This book takes that difficulty seriously and shows us the blessings and challenges of being wrong. Author Kathryn Schulz studies “wrongology,” exploring its implications and moving to ways of making “wrongology” a powerful, positive event of growth and change:

Of all the things we are wrong about, this idea of error might well top the list. It is our meta-mistake: we are wrong about what it means to be wrong. Far from being a sign of intellectual inferiority, the capacity to err is crucial to human cognition. Far from being a moral flaw, it is inextricable from some of our most humane and honorable qualities: empathy, optimism, imagination, conviction, and courage. And far from being a mark of indifference or intolerance, wrongness is a vital part of how we learn and change. Thanks to error, we can revise our understanding of ourselves and amend our ideas about the world. (5)

Through the use of stories, examples, and scientific research, this book helps us reflect on our experience in order to live life facing the reality of errors and mistakes. “For better and worse, error is already our lifelong companion. Surely, then, it’s time we got to know it” (17).

*Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error* begins by exploring two models of wrongness: the pessimistic “error is both extremely unappetizing and very tough to digest”; and the optimistic “error as surprise, bafflement, fascination, excitement, hilarity, delight” (27); that is, error as part of the enchanting and difficult search for truth.

Part 2 deals with the origins of error: our senses’, our mind’s refusal to face being wrong, the mind as source of our beliefs and its relation to discovering evidence, the place of society in blinding us to our errors, and the unshakeable conviction of rightness.



Our senses don’t always give us accurate information, as in mirages and illusions. We look up and see ourselves on a flat earth covered by a sky bowl and standing on a rock bottom. “We can’t know where our next error lurks or what form it will take, but we can be very sure that it is waiting for us” (66).

Through telling the stories of a blind person who was convinced that she could see; the professor who remembered listening to a baseball game on December 7, 1941; students whose own memories of the Challenger disaster were incor-

rect; and other examples of misremembering, we learn how easy it is to be mistaken and how hard it is to admit our mistakes.

Our beliefs have a powerful influence on how we see reality; we all have models of our world that guide the way we relate to it. Beliefs are “mental representations of our physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and political landscapes” (92). These are our “rules for action.” “Our models of the world extend...into a kind of General Theory of Us: whether we think we are attractive and intelligent, competent or inept, better or worse off than other people; whether we think our parents love us; whether we think a God is watching over us; whether we think we are basically safe and cared for in the world” (95). The danger is “that we have a habit of falling in love with our beliefs once we’ve formed them” (104).

Three assumptions follow from this: the Ignorance Assumption (people who disagree with us have wrong information); the Idiocy Assumption (these people know the facts but are stupid); and the Evil Assumption (these people are willfully ignorant). The most dangerous of these is the third. The key fact is “that our beliefs are not necessarily true. Instead, they are *probabilistically* true” (118).

The society we grew up in has a significant role in determining our beliefs: we think like those around us; our beliefs are not challenged; group-think takes over the individual’s thinking; and breaking with society’s beliefs can mean ostracism. The ultimate danger of questioning beliefs, the author says, is this: “Our mistakes disturb us in part because they call into question not just our confidence in a single belief, but our confidence in the entire act of believing” (156). Our challenge is how to hold a belief with conviction but without fanaticism.

Part 3 deals with the process of being wrong and how it feels to be wrong when we become aware of our wrongness. Two images the author uses that capture its intensity are “melted by fire” and “the lost child in Times Square.” Furthermore, “[w]hen we are stuck inside the space of error, then, we are lost twice over: once in the world, and again in ourselves. As painful as that sounds, it can also be redemptive” (191).

The chapter on wrongness in love, entitled “Heartbreak,” is full of wisdom about what occurs in relationships. This chapter is worth the price of the book itself. For example: “Because we know other people only from the outside, we assume they *can* be known from the outside; we think we can understand people reasonably well based solely on their words and deeds. At the same time, because we know our-

selves from the inside, we think we can *only* be known from the inside” (255-256).

The chapter entitled “The Paradox of Error” begins with a medical mistake story that happens every so often. Schulz draws out the importance of doubt and uncertainty, thus the need to use words like *perhaps*, *probably*, *hypothetically*, *doubtful*, *sometimes*, *occasionally*, and so forth: “We can foster the ability to listen to each other and the freedom to speak our minds. We can create open and transparent envi-

ronments instead of cultures of secrecy and concealment. And we can permit and encourage everyone, not just a powerful inner circle, to speak up when they see the potential for error” (311).

The closing paragraph explains why we need to incorporate error into our lives:

That is why error, even though it sometimes feels like despair, is actually much closer in spirit to hope. We get things wrong because we have an enduring confidence in our own minds; and we face up to that wrongness in the faith that, having learned something, we will get it right the next time. In this optimistic vein, embracing our fallibility is simply a way of paying homage to, in the words of the late philosopher Richard Rorty, “the permanent possibility of someone having a better idea.” The great advantage of realizing that we have told a story about the world is realizing that we can tell a better one: rich with better ideas better possibilities—even, perhaps, better people. (338-339)

This is a wonderful book for both individuals and institutions to use as an examination of conscience. It calls us to honesty, humility, compassion, openness, and care.

(A caution: one of the stories is about a Catholic woman who chooses an abortion, a disturbing decision for this reader.) ■

*Daniel Thomas was a director of religious education for 30 years in four different parishes in the Dayton, Ohio, area of the Cincinnati archdiocese. He retired in 2010. He has been married to Eileen for 35 years, and they have two adult sons. Contact him at danlthomas@sbcglobal.net.*

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*Through the use of stories,  
examples, and scientific research,  
this book helps us reflect on our  
experience in order to live life facing  
the reality of errors and mistakes.*

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# New Year, New Catechists

by Jo Rotunno



This fall, you probably will welcome some new catechists along with new students and their families. The number of new catechists usually is in inverse proportion to the number who have experienced formation and training in previous years. Formation yields longevity and effectiveness in any ministry.

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cost of a single booklet is not much more than the cost of a single Venti beverage at Starbucks.

### 3. "My catechists don't have time."

When I began my own catechetical career over 35 years ago, a 60-hour course was the only path to certification in the Los Angeles archdiocese where I was trained. Today, however, you can offer your catechists simpler entry points. The Program Manual provides a self-evaluation tool that helps your catechists identify what they need most. The CD-ROM included with each module booklet allows them to complete a module at home using their home computers. A single module offers three to six hours of formation. Over a period of several months, are they willing to commit to that?

*Note:* If you choose the home-based option, be sure to provide occasional parish gatherings where your catechists can share their new insights and reflections face-to-face. You are not only training individual catechists; you are building a

dedicated faith community that catechizes, shares, and prays together.

The goal of *Echoes of Faith Plus* is to establish a baseline of basic formation. It is *first things* that you have a right to expect every catechist to know as they accept the responsibility of assisting in the formation of others. Your most important obligation is to the children you serve. Challenge your catechists to step up and participate in setting goals for their own formation. Give them choices; make sure they are willing to grow.

Let *Echoes of Faith Plus* help you change the story your catechetical program is telling, and let us know how you're doing. The *Echoes* team wants to assist you in any way we can. |

*Jo Rotunno serves as Publisher at RCL Benziger. She speaks nationally on catechetical topics and has developed catechist resources throughout her 27-year career in Catholic curriculum publishing. You can reach her at [jrotunno@rclbenziger.com](mailto:jrotunno@rclbenziger.com).*

# Be My Disciples

"If you remain in my word,  
you will truly be my disciples . . ."

JOHN 8:31



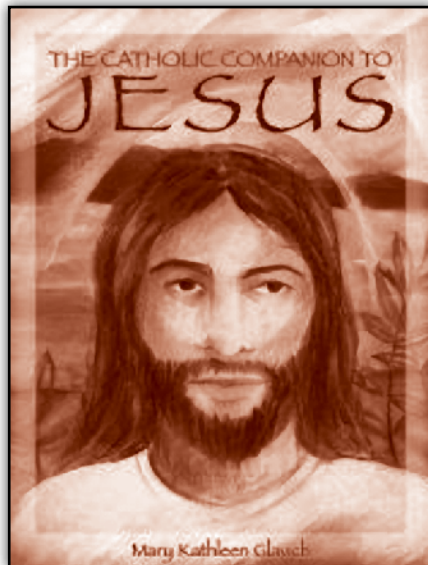
**Books, websites, and media for the enrichment of the parish catechetical leader**

Compiled by Dan Pierson

**Catholic Press Awards**

Every year the Catholic Press Association (CPA) presents awards in various categories for newspapers, magazines, and books. For a complete list of all awards, visit their website at [cpa.org](http://cpa.org). This year marks the 100th anniversary of the CPA.

These 10 book award-winners caught my attention and may be of special interest to all those engaged in catechetical ministry.



This is an excellent work to help us know more about Our Lady of Guadalupe and her people, written by a fine writer with strong credentials as friend and worker with Mexican immigrants. (Popular Presentation of the Catholic Faith, Third Place)

◆ *Full Of Grace*

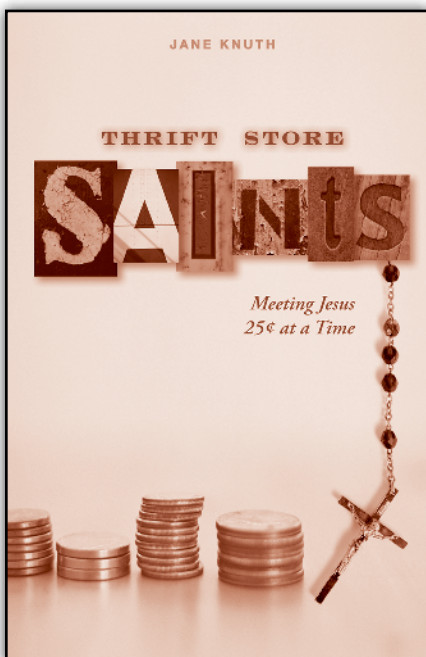
Judith Dupre

In this wonderful tapestry of art, story, theology, and meditation, the author animates and enlivens the never-ending story of Mary, the Mother of God. She helps us deepen our love of and our admiration for this woman of Galilee who continues to inspire. (Spirituality Hardcover, First Place)

◆ *All The Way To Heaven*

Dorothy Day, edited by Robert Ellsberg

The letters of Dorothy Day reveal that this American icon of social justice and inspirational lay leadership was a woman of her time, but also a woman who possessed and nurtured a prophetic voice that expressed her humanity and her sanctity. (Spirituality Hardcover, Second Place)

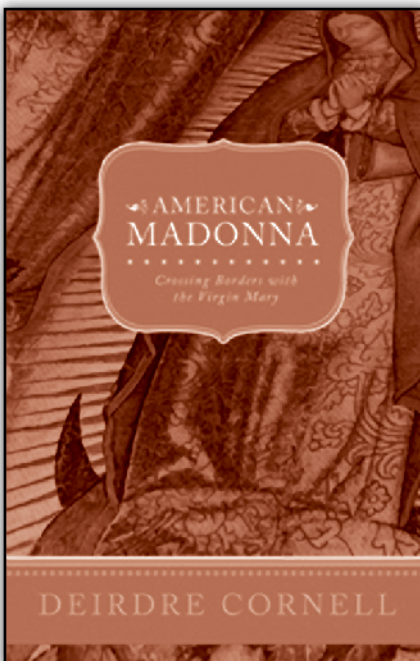


A person who is curious about the person of Jesus, his times, his culture, and his neighborhood will find this book difficult to put down. It is informative, sprightly, and well-written. (Popular Presentation of the Catholic Faith, Second Place)

◆ *Thrift Store Saints*

Jane Knuth

In the Catholic tradition, faith requires and begets works. In this personal reflection on her experiences as a volunteer with a St. Vincent de Paul thrift store, Jane Knuth introduces us to faith at work in a warm, unique way. Here, the Beatitudes spring to life. (Popular Presentation of the Catholic Faith, First Place)

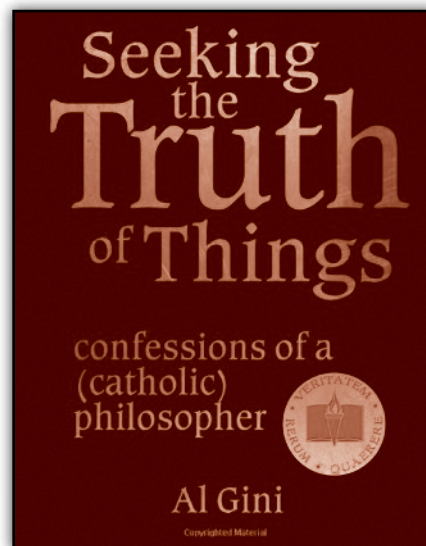


◆ *The Catholic Companion to Jesus*

Mary Kathleen Glavich, SND

◆ *American Madonna*

Deirdre Cornell

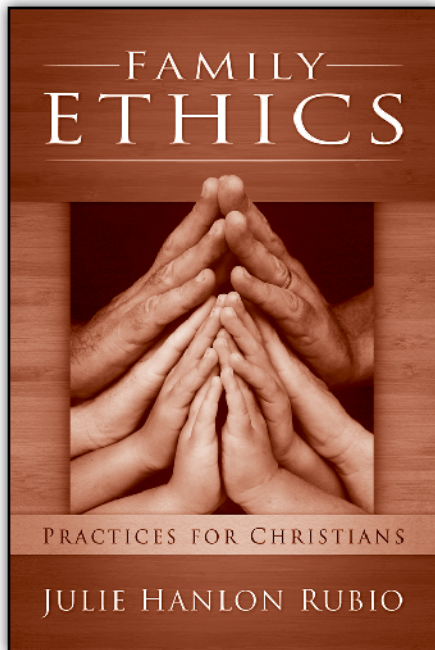


◆ *Seeking the Truth of Things*

Al Gini



It is very refreshing to find a philosopher that can deal with the everyday issues of life in a practical, easy-to-read book. Through personal examples and stories from other authors and philosophers, Al Gini, brings a depth of insight to a range of topics from work and laughter to sin and moral courage. (Professional, First Place)



◆ *Family Ethics*

Julie Hanlon Rubio

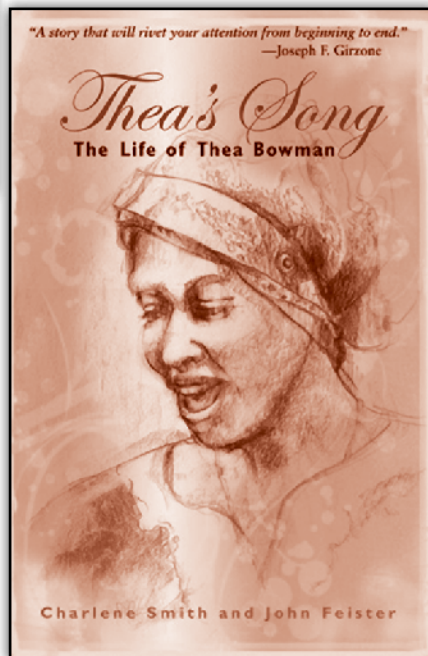
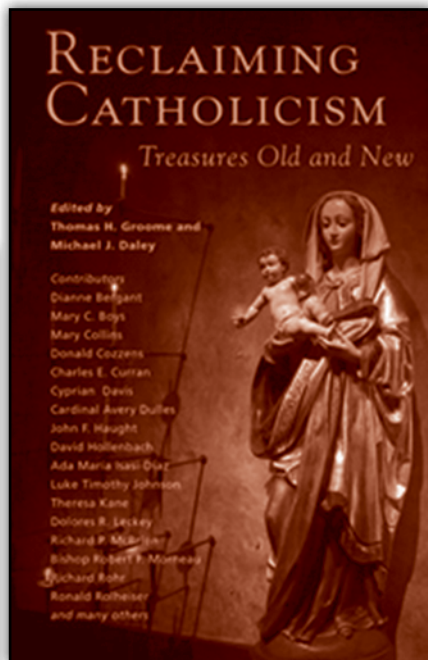
This book is a breakthrough analysis of the place Christian ethics occupies in what is often referred to as ordinary family life. Rubio aptly applies theological and social justice issues to five major areas of family life and demonstrates the significance of the practice of ethics in that context. (Family Life, First Place)

◆ *Reclaiming Catholicism*

Thomas H. Groome and Michael J. Daley, editors

Much more than a nostalgic look at the fallacies of the days before Vatican II, this unique collection of original essays and reflections by leading theologians and spiritual writers brings to life treasures of the past

to meet the challenges of faith today. (History, First Place)

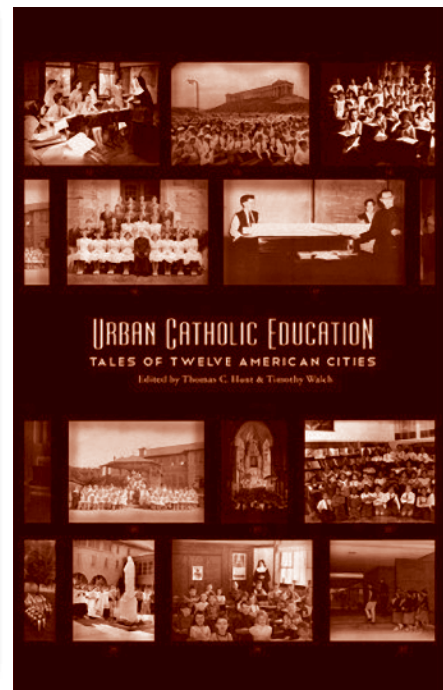


◆ *Thea's Song*

Charlene Smith and John Feister

A unique tone of love pervades this warm and beautiful story of a dynamic African-American girl who became a religious sister when our church was racially divided. It tells how she helped lead us all into a more open,

Christ-like church today. (Biography, Second Place)



◆ *Urban Catholic Education*

This is a superb collection of essays highlighting the accomplishments, achievements, and milestones of Catholic education in 12 major urban areas across the United States. Each fact-filled history notes the individuals and religious communities that brought Catholic education to the poor, immigrants, minorities, and women. (History, Third Place) |

*Dan Pierson* served as director of religious education for the Diocese of Grand Rapids for 17 years and is the founder of *faithAlivebooks.com* and *eCatechist.com*. He is co-author with Susan Stark of *What Do I Do Now? A Guide for the Reluctant Catechist* (Pflaum Publishing).

children. But, the bishops saw the aim as uniformity, which was achieved.

The *Baltimore Catechism* was not copyrighted, and by 1900 there were 15 new catechisms with only slight variations approved by local bishops in use in the U.S. The only one with a significant difference was from Peter Yorke, a priest of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. He developed a graded set of handbooks called *Text Books of Religion for the First Five Grades* (1898). These were the earliest graded series of religion textbooks published in the U.S. The books were written in narrative form with study questions and answers after each lesson. Some of the questions and answers were taken from the *Baltimore Catechism*.

The early 1900s brought a great missionary effort for the Roman Catholic Church. Confraternities were formed in parishes which did not have a Catholic school available. Coming out of this movement meant that American CCDs (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) had a more evangelizing character in contrast to a catechizing focus. CCD depended upon volunteers and expected family involvement. In the 1930s, the Confraternity was established as an independent apostolate, with its own office and staff in Washington, DC. Over the next 50 years, this office produced over 70 publications that shaped the CCD, including the revision of the *Baltimore Catechism*, the *New American Bible*, and other texts. Then in 1935, diocesan CCD directors began meeting annually. The meetings helped build CCD into a national movement and also helped standardize it from diocese to dio-

cese. This gradually developed into the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership (NCCL).

Educational theory in the public sector also changed at this time, and this affected catechesis. Educators started to involve children in learning activities through disciplines such as music, art, creative writing, drama, and more. These developments influenced catechetical programs—and art projects, writing activities, singing, and brief plays became part of the process of religious education. More changes took place as catechists began to use curricula beyond the *Baltimore Catechism*.

Prior to Vatican II, the *Baltimore Catechism* defined who Catholics in America were and what they believed. The U.S. bishops were united behind this text, and so it was the face of catechesis in the United States well into the 1960s. ■

#### ENDNOTES

1. Bishop Goesbriand of Burlington, Bishop Ryan of Buffalo, Bishop Dwenger of Fort Wayne, Bishop Spalding of Peoria, Bishop Kain of Wheeling, and Bishop Janssens of Natchez.
2. As found in Welsh, Janet "Baltimore Catechism". *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. McBrien, Richard P. and Harold W. Attridge, editors. New York: HarperCollins. 1995. p. 131.

*CH (MAJ) Jonathan Morse is a priest of the Eparchy of St. Nicholas in Chicago. He presently serves as the Garrison Catholic Priest at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. He was formerly a diocesan director of religious education and served on the board of NCCL.*



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This book is ideal for adult faith formation and can be a great benefit in RCIA, for catechists, and parents. Besides offering a reflection on the Sunday gospel, this book offers a question with lines for the reader to share some musings. It also includes six pages on key changes in the language of the people's response in the new *Roman Missal, Third Edition*. Rather than simply focus on the change of language, the book offers an excerpt from a story that contains a deeper understanding of the meaning associated with the change of words. This is an exclusive NCCL product.



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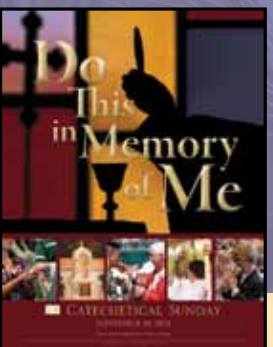
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