



Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)
Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

500 Years of Christianity (YoC) in the Philippines (1521-2021)

CATECHETICAL MODULES

Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission



A *Research-based Intervention Outcome (RIO)* of selected catechists and catechetical leaders inspired by the findings of the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2016-2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* implemented by the Research Center for Social Sciences & Education (RCSSD), University of Santo Tomas (UST).





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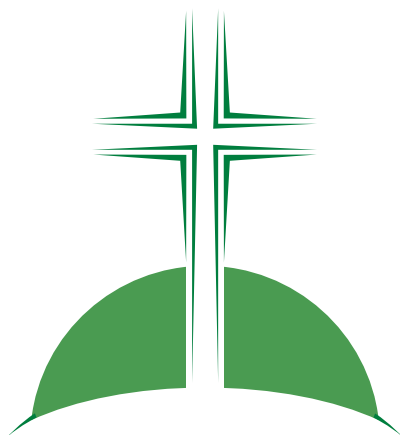
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Book and Layout Design by Romel Sencio

Front Cover The Official 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines Logo for the year 2021 by Br. Edilberto Dionio, SMITH

Recommended entry: *(To be encoded upon registration with the Philippine National Library).*





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

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OUR GRATITUDE, OUR MODULE STORY

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

Inspired by the call for a *New Evangelization* of our Holy Fathers, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis, and on the occasion of celebrating our *500 Years of Christianity (YOC) in the Philippines*. Our journey to produce a new set of *Catechetical Modules (CM)* for our faith-driven servants - our Filipino catechists, was made more meaningful by the overflowing support of the many people and organizations, whose passion and love to the catechetical ministry deserve our utmost gratitude and respect.

Maraming salamat po sa lahat ng tulong, malasakit, at pagmamahal.

The inspiration of this project roots from the CBCP *Pastoral Exhortation on the Era of New Evangelization* entitled, “*Live Christ, Share Christ*” (Looking Forward to our Five Hundredth) released last July 23, 2012, by Most Rev. Jose S. Palma, DD, the then *CBCP President*. This ushers the start of the nine-year spiritual journey that will culminate with the *Great Jubilee of 2021*, the 5th centenary of the coming of Christianity in our beloved land.

Thus, these Catechetical Modules (CM) respond to the call of the Spirit for a New Evangelization by utilizing the *nine pastoral priorities as key module themes of this project*. These are *Integral Faith Formation (2013)*; *Laity (2014)*; *The Poor (2015)*; *The Eucharist and of the Family (2016)*; *The Parish as a Communion of Communities (2017)*; *Clergy and Religious (2018)*; *Youth (2019)*; *Ecumenism, Interreligious Dialogue, and Indigenous Peoples (2020)*; and, *Missio ad Gentes (2021)*.

Contextually, these themes reflect the Filipino concepts of *Pananampalataya (2013)*; *Mga Layko (2014)*; *Ang Mga Mahihirap (2015)*; *Ang Eukaristiya at Pamilya (2016)*; *Ang Parokya Bilang Komunyon ng mga Pamayanan (2017)*; *Klero at Mga Relihiyoso (2018)*; *Mga Kabataan (2019)*; *Ekumenismo, Diyologo sa Pagitan ng Mga Relihiyon, at mga Katutubo (2020)*, at *Misyon sa mga Bansa (2021)*, which these modules hope to bring forth in various spaces of catechesis in the country.



Our gratitude goes to all our Filipino bishops, the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)* led over the past nine

years by Archbishop Jose S. Palma, DD (CBCP President 2011-2013), Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, DD (CBCP President 2013-2017), and Archbishop Romulo G. Valles, DD (CBCP President 2017-Present). The CBCP, through the *500 YOC Executive Committee entrusted the CBCP - Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)* under the chairmanship of Bishop Roberto C. Mallari, DD to spearhead in the preparation of the catechetical instruction materials (both in print and electronic forms) as formation tools for prayer, study, and reflection. Initially, CBCP-ECCCE's idea was to produce a three-year intensive formation program across Ecclesiastical Territories covering 2018 until 2021. Our gratitude goes to the *CBCP – Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)* under the leadership of Bishop Roberto C. Mallari, DD (Chair); Msgr. Gerardo O. Santos and Fr. Ernesto B. De Leon (Executive Secretary) as well as to the former *ECCCE Technical Working Group (TWG)* composed of Fr. Rene De Guzman, SDB; Dr. Caridad Barrameda; Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB, and Dr. Lysander Rivera, Sis. Rhea Castillo, OP and Sis. Silvestra Orbigo, FMM; who initially conceptualized and designed this project. Thank you for the inspiration, persistent nudge, and prayers.

The initial outputs of the *ECCCE TWG* were shared with various catechetical offices, centers and institutions offering Catholic religious education. We are thankful to catechetical leaders and catechists from the following institutions who responded to our call for module contributions: *Archdiocese of Caceres; Archdiocese of Cebu; Archdiocese of Manila; Diocese of Cubao; Diocese of Novaliches; Diocese of Parañaque; Diocese of Pasig; Mother Francisca Catechetical & Missionary Formation Center, and the University of Santo Tomas' (UST) Institute of Religion, Research Center for Social Sciences and Education, and the Office of the Vice Rector for Religious Affairs.*

After the production of initial modules, the CBCP 500 YOC Executive Committee suggested to prepare more catechetical lessons which can be used even beyond the 500 YOC 2021. This project evolved as a *Research-based Intervention Outcomes (RIO) activity of the National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project team*. This initiative responds to one of the salient NCS findings that catechists in the ground are in dire need of fresh and relevant catechetical sources. To ensure the quality of these modules, the NCS Research Team solicited the assistance of education practitioners as reviewers whose valuable insights led to the process of rethinking the general module design of this project. We owe our deepest thanks to Dr. Joan Christi Trocio-Bagaipo, Cecilia Balajadia, Pamela Avellanosa, Mc Kenneth Baluyot, Fr. Christian Buenafe, O'Carm, Fr. Antonio Zamora and Fr. Eliseo Mercado, OMI.

Special gratitude to all our priest-catechists who in one way or another, sent their comments and suggestions, as well as provided a network of key persons who helped in module development. Thank you, Fr. Pablo Tiong, O.P., Fr. Carlo Magno and Fr. Emmanuel Rico Ayo.

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

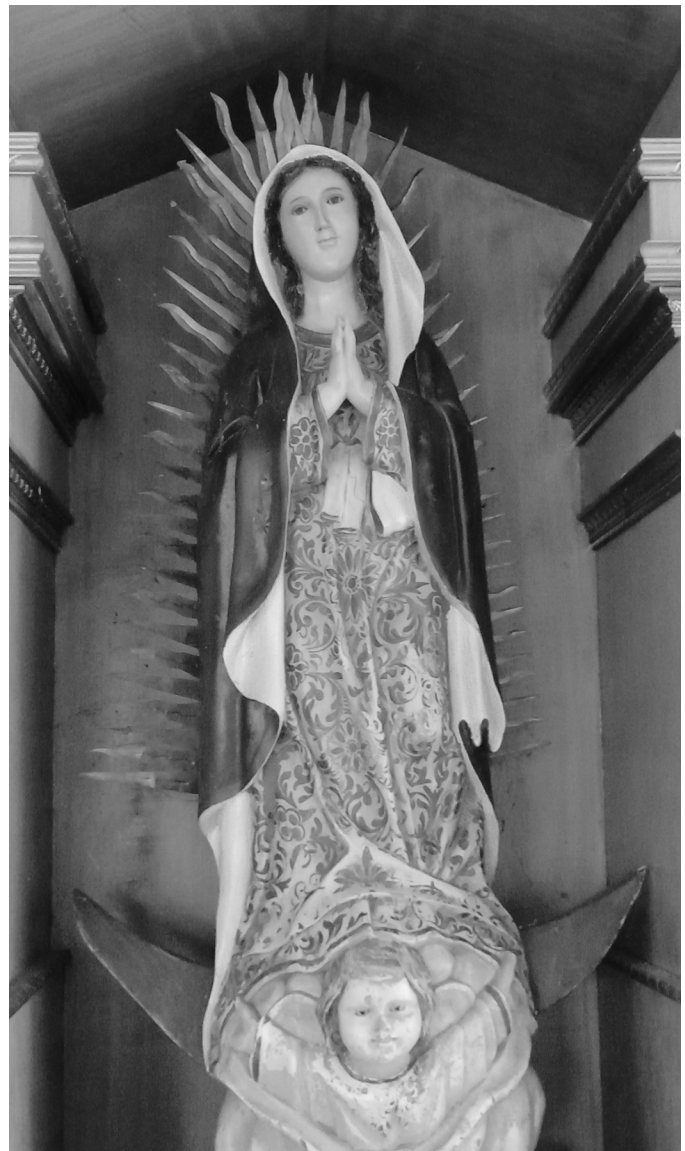


provided for by Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and three seminarians from the Diocese of Tarlac - Sem. Anthony Tawataw, Sem. Gerald Cortez, and Sem. Jayson Besa. Other contributors who deserve our utmost gratitude are Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario for her specific input about “the laity”, and Richard G. Pazcoguin, who provided a list of songs related to the module themes.

Despite the pandemic, our *NCS 2021: Research Team* took this RIO activity to heart. We would like to thank everyone for their dedication to the CM production. To Danielle Villena, who designed the initial layout, and Romel Sencio, whose creative talent for design made our CM visually-appealing. Our language editor, Pamela Avellanosa also deserves our utmost gratitude, for the patience and eye for technical errors, idea construction and composition, who made our CM clear and readable. And to our team members, Dr. Florence Navidad, Ruth Andaya, Tisha Isabelle de Vergara, Keith Aaron Joven, and Vincent Reuben Valientes, thank you for your untiring dedication to this project.

All the hard work, inspiration, and deep prayers led to the final module version of this project. May these Catechetical Modules be easy-to-understand and be easy-to-use by all those making up all our catechetical ministries across the country and around the world. May this work serve as a seed towards a renewed integral evangelization and renew us all in the Church – bishops, priests, religious, and lay people. May this project encourage us to unceasingly beg the Holy Spirit’s guidance especially for the Filipino-Catholics of today.

As we celebrate our Christian’s faith 5th centenary in 2021, our penultimate gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ, who guided us in the production of these Catechetical Modules as a moment of His loving embrace and overflowing grace.



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FOREWORD

Most Rev. Roberto C. Mallari, D.D.

Bishop, Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija

Chairperson, Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)



My Dear People of God! Grace and peace!

We continue our nine-year journey that began in 2012 which brings us to the 500th year commemoration of Christianity's advent in our country in 2021.

To make this truly a celebration of gratitude for the gift of faith, the *Episcopal Commission for Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)* came up with catechetical lessons for our people for the next three years as our immediate preparation. The general theme sums up that of our 2021 Jubilee Celebration: Gifted to Give – *Kaloob, Isinasaloob, Ipinagkakaloob*.

It is with hope that this humble contribution will help our faithful understand more what this gift of Christian faith (kaloob) requires from us – that by understanding with the heart (isinasaloob), they will all the more believe and can pray more through it; manifest it in their daily lives; and thus share their faith with others (ipinagkakaloob). We go back to teaching the truth of *lex credendi, lex orandi, lex vivendi* (how we worship reflects what we believe and determines how we will live) to our people.

As our country celebrates its 5th Centenary of Christianity, we are likewise commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Opening of the Second Vatican Council when the now St. John XXIII widely opened the Church's doors and windows to facilitate the Holy Spirit's access in renewing the Church. It was an experience of a New Pentecost indeed. The 30th year Anniversary of our own Second Plenary Council of the Philippines will also coincide this year. PCP II ushered so many promises of renewal, of another Pentecost for the Church in our country. It Envisioned the Filipino Church to be a Community of Disciples; a Church of the Poor, embarking on a Renewed Integral Evangelization, and witnessing to Jesus Christ's Gospel of salvation and liberation through words, deeds and lives. "Behold, I make all things new", was the clear message then of the *National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR)*.

May these simple, easy-to-understand and easy-to-use catechetical lessons help us all in the work of renewed integral evangelization and help us pin our hopes on the Holy Spirit to renew us all in the Church-- bishops, priests, religious and lay people. Strengthened by prayers, may we share our faith by living it in the midst of all in this vale of tears. May we be encouraged to unceasingly beg for the Holy Spirit's guidance especially for the Filipino Catholics of today so that our celebration of our Christian faith's fifth centenary, becomes a moment of God's grace even now. To inspire us more, let me share one of the touching fb posts which reads: **'IF WE DON'T TEACH OUR CHILDREN TO FOLLOW CHRIST, THE WORLD WILL TEACH THEM NOT TO'!**

We fix our eyes on Jesus Christ, our Redeemer as we make our collective journey with the guidance of His Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Star of Evangelization.

All in JESUS' NAME,



INTRODUCTION

Rev. Fr. Ernesto B. De Leon

Executive Secretary

Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

Our nine-year journey, nine-year novena preparation for the 5th Centenary of Christianity in the Philippines began in 2012, which we dubbed as the Year of Faith. A new era indeed for New Evangelization. Reflecting on the essential components of the subsequent years, perhaps we can take cue from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI who asked us “to consider the content of faith that is **professed, celebrated, lived** and **prayed**” and to “**reflect** on the act of Faith” as a whole (PF 9). These indispensable elements of Faith give us a glimpse as to the identity that we have as a Church from the moment we have literally received the faith 500 years ago. Not only has the gift of faith prepared the way for us, but even much more, the MANNER in which we give witness to the received faith is ushered to us by Christ, Himself through the intermediary of Spanish Missionaries.



The faith we PROFESS, CELEBRATE, LIVE, and PRAY, summons each of us to authentically recast, recalibrate and revisit whether we have lived the faith sincerely and wholeheartedly [via the sacraments as our focus] or we have simply just accepted it but not evangelized - or have been transformed by it. If ever that we have failed to truly live the core-values of our faith, it should not discourage or even frustrate us, even if we have not achieved our goals as planned. Instead, it should incite us to confront and accept, to exert and be efficient, to magnify for ourselves our multifarious shortcomings, human limitation-related realities that have hindered us to really be God’s instruments in proclaiming the Gospel to all nations (cf. Mk.16:15) and made it fulfilled in our hearing (cf. Lk.4:21).

This only shows us that we still lack that profound ability to REFLECT (PF 9) in order to understand comprehensively the Church’s missionary tasks. However, our human-related efforts from this vantage point are not futile. Why? Because, lest we forget, the Church is vivified by God’s Spirit and that is what makes her dynamic. And so we are called likewise, to be dynamic, to be discernibly creative and realistic enough with our approaches.

The *National Catechetical Study of 2016-2018* not only gave us profiles of our catechetical ministers. It revealed as well the often-insufficient tools, materials and even formation of our important laborers in God’s vineyard. One significant research insight it gave was the necessity for alternative and appropriate catechetical modules. *NCS 2021* came at the right time when the bishop-members of the Executive Committee for the Centenary Celebration tasked ECCCE to provide such modules using the previous years’ theme (Laity, Poor, Eucharist and the Family, Parishes as Communion of Communities, Clergy and Religious, Youth, Ecumenism, Inter-religious Dialogue and Indigenous People)

culminating in *Missio Ad Gentes*, the goal of which is to drum-beat awareness and appreciation apropos the 500 Year of Catholic Christianity through intense catechesis, helping and challenging Filipino Catholics to truly PROFESS, CELEBRATE, LIVE and PRAY the faith.

Such efforts to go back to the sources, foundations (ressourcement) of our faith, will make our witness even more meaningful and relevant. This is because we tirelessly work hand in hand to critically exhaust all possible means to improve our approaches in coming up with new and fresh methods of not only catechizing our faithful but also helping them out to mature in the practice of faith. This return to the source is a mature move for us to allow our faithful [including pastors (i.e., religious and diocesan), catechists, and lay leaders] to be immersed in the language of transformation and conversion, that is, to be piecemeal evangelized!

This humble attempt of Catechetical Directors and ministers from various Catechetical Centers through ECCCE is a vivid proof of our desire as a local Church incessantly working towards *aggiornamento*. Such an aim only validates that we, the Catholic Church in the Philippines, after embracing the Catholic Faith with the Christian spirit, is open to having a profound love for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Eventually with gratitude, the present form became one of the interventions of the *NCS 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project* implemented by the *Research Center for Social Sciences and Education of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas*.

Let therefore, our confidence in love grow and our hopes be evident as we walk through the challenges of the times with profound faith as we prove ourselves equal to the encouragement of contextualizing and translating these Catechetical Modules to our local dialects and to pursue the promptings of the Spirit. For our nation to have a complete adherence and be enculturated to the Gospel message of the One Great Teacher, Jesus Christ (CT 20) so that we all may be one in this catechetical endeavor, not only for 2021 but even beyond.



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

CATECHETICAL MODULE GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to clarify the outline of catechetical lessons that will serve as the catechists' convenient resource in teaching catechesis for all ages. Also, it will help them achieve the goals of teaching catechesis and will introduce them to new strategies in effectively facilitating a catechetical class. The creation of catechetical lessons is a vital fragment of the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)*'s response to their commitment to lead Catholic Filipinos to *Live Christ and Share Christ*, which has been their mission since the commencement of the nine-year era of New Evangelization in 2012.

As stated by Pope John Paul II (1979) in his apostolic exhortation *Catechesi Trandendae* or *CT*, the universal catechetical goals are: (1) to strengthen the solidity of the faith and of Christian living; (2) to give fresh vigor to the initiatives on hand; (3) to stimulate creativity with required vigilance; and (4) to help spread in communities the joy of bringing the mystery of Christ to the world. In the same Church document, he also remarked that in terms of its relation to evangelization (or the proclamation of the Good News to the whole humanity), the specific goal of catechesis is to develop initial faith and to advance in fullness and to nourish the daily Christian life of those who received them (CT 20).

Evangelization in Vatican II

The Church reached a turning point to the modern world with the Second Vatican Council. The Council embraced the optimistic vision of John XXIII of a renewed Church seeking greater unity with all men. This renewal resulted in a self-examination and a radical transformation of the Church in many aspects in her life and doctrine (Bokenkotter, 2005). What the Church has today, that is, the presence of faith in every corner of the world, with various traditions and practices is due to the evangelical work of the Apostles, their successors, and the various religious men and women missionaries.

The command of Jesus to His Apostles to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world has been handed down to the Church and to Her members. The Second Vatican Council was right in saying that "the Church has received this solemn mandate of Christ to proclaim the saving truth from the Apostles and must carry it out to the very ends of the earth" (Lumen Gentium 17). Today, the proclamation could be more difficult and challenging but the task remains, just as the enthusiasm and courage that moved the Apostles and the first disciples to proclaim did not change.

The spirit of Vatican II may be described by some key words such as renewal, reform, *aggiornamento* (updating), openness, dialogue and reading the signs of the times. Truly, in Vatican II, the Church got to dialogue with the world of today. The New Evangelization thrust has its origin in the Second Vatican Council. It had been the Council's desire to respond to a sense of disorientation experienced by Christians facing powerful changes and divisions which the world was experiencing at that time. The Council had appropriately stressed what these

new situations demand from the Church: new zeal, new sensitivity, and new ways of doing its evangelizing mission (Canilang, 2013). Therefore, New Evangelization began with Vatican II and its awareness of the changes going on with the world and its commitment to dialogue with these changes in the hopes of achieving a “new ardor, a new zeal, renewed and re-strengthened commitment to proclaim Jesus Christ and his Gospel of salvation to the world today.”

The New Evangelization

The use of the term “New Evangelization” refers to the unique situation of the Catholic Church in today’s generation. Many Catholics just feel too busy to attend Mass regularly and do not feel particularly connected to the Church. Many have begun to call themselves sacramentalized but not evangelized. These are the new problems in the history of the Church. For many centuries, the Church's evangelical mission sought to preach the Gospel to the nations of non-Christians who did not know Christ. Now, the Church is called to a New Evangelization, or an evangelization within itself, a re-evangelization.

There are many people who immediately assume that the New Evangelization is equivalent to the use of social media. New media such as *blogs, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram etc.* are certainly essential to evangelization today. But John Paul II already called for a New Evangelization over a decade ago before online social networking was even possible.

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

Why is there a need for New Evangelization? In the year 2000, Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope-Emeritus Benedict XVI, answered this question saying that to evangelize means “to show this path that will teach the art of living. This is why we need New Evangelization; if the art of living remains unknown, nothing else works. But this art is not the object of science, rather this art can only be communicated by the One, who has life—He who is the Gospel personified” (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000).

Thus, in the conference of the Asian Congress on Evangelization, Bishop Teodoro Bacani in his article *The Need for a New Evangelization* stated that a New Evangelization is called for because of change in the situation of the recipients of evangelization, and because of changes in the condition of the Church herself (Bacani, *The Need for a New Evangelization*, 43). Therefore, evangelization must be renewed according to the present circumstances of the world and Church, likewise according to the situation to whom the Word of God must be preached.



The Teachings of the Pope on New Evangelization

This part of the discussion exposes the presentation of the Pontiffs who were responsible for the establishment of the New Evangelization. Here are the Popes for the New Evangelization:

Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul VI ushered in a time of reflection on the evangelizing ministry of the Church. Among his many works, it is his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that captures the beginning of the New Evangelization. This Apostolic Exhortation was written after the Third General Assembly of the Synod for Evangelization. Therefore, the basis that he used for the Church to move forward is evangelization. Pope Paul VI emphasizes first and foremost that evangelization is central to the Church's identity. It is her essential mission and a task that is made more urgent by the changes in contemporary society (Canilang, 2013). Then, he proposes that the Church's evangelizing activity must constantly seek the proper means and language for presenting, or representing, to them God's revelation and faith in Jesus Christ (Instrumentum Laboris 12). After the death of John XXIII, who called for the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI eagerly continued his works and pursuit for an effective evangelization.



Pope Paul VI has in mind the Christians of the West who have distanced and drifted away from the Church. The existence of many atheists and unbelievers in the 1970s gave bigger problems to the phenomenon of Christians who were sacramentalized but not evangelized--Christians only in name. Thus, in order to re-evangelize these Christians who have fallen away from the Church, we must be witnesses of faith. As he exclaimed: "modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers" (EN 41). The good evangelizer is the one who can translate into his/her own life what he/she preaches to his/her audience. Therefore, we could not expect to transform others unless we have had a personal transformation ourselves (Catan & Giordano SJ, 2007). There must be a continuous personal transformation in order to have an effective transformation in others.

There are three points which are important in this discussion of Paul VI's understanding of New Evangelization. The first point is "evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church. It is Her deepest identity. The Church exists to evangelize and through that evangelization process, She grows ever more faithful,

loving and hopeful in the Lord” (EN 14). The second point is the resistance to faith by many atheists and unbelievers takes the form of a certain refusal and an inability to grasp the new order of things, the new meaning of the world, of life and of history. This creates a big problem in the phenomenon of the Christian way of life (EN 56). The third point is the “Church is an evangelizer, but She begins by being evangelized Herself” (EN 15). In order to re-evangelize these Christians who have fallen away from the Church, one has to be a witness to the faith (EN 21). This means that an evangelizer should be the first to be evangelized. The witnessing must not be focused on the pious actions of the Church, but rather it should be seen in the daily ways of life.

Pope John Paul II

The New Evangelization in Pope John Paul II’s concept is a response to new cultural realities. John Paul II is the one who coined the term “New Evangelization” in public. He addressed this in homilies, seminars, public viewings, etc. Then, it easily scattered around the globe and this term became a sign of the beginning of the era of New Evangelization.

Perhaps, the clearest definition of “New Evangelization” is in his Encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio*. In section 33 of this Encyclical, John Paul II describes three different circumstances in the evangelization of the people.

The first situation that John Paul II described is the so-called *Missio ad Gentes*. This situation is an essential missionary focus of the Church on proclaiming the Gospel of Christ to those who have not heard it (RM 33).



The second situation focuses on those with strong Christian affiliation who were “fervent in their faith and Christian living. These are Christian communities with adequate ecclesial structure in its activity thus, needing pastoral care” (RM 33). Hence, the clergy, especially the parish priests, must support them for their sustainability and pastoral care so that there will be no isolated communities to the Church/parish.

The third situation is the concern of New Evangelization. This is the “ongoing evangelization of those in the intermediate situation who have lost a sense of the faith.” They no longer consider themselves members of the Church. We need to re-evangelize such people who have lived a life far from Christ and His Gospel (RM 33). There are many Catholics who have been baptized in infancy but have fallen away from the faith when they grew up. They do not live a personal commitment to Christ

and do not practice the faith as adolescents or adults. The New Evangelization is directed to these fallen-away baptized Catholics.

It is believed that John Paul II repeatedly called for New Evangelization which began in 1983 during his address to the Catholic Bishops of Latin America. He said to the bishops who are present: “The Commemoration of the half millennium of evangelization will gain its full energy if it is a commitment to re-evangelize or to New Evangelization, new in its ardor, methods, and expressions” (Hann, 2014, pp. 15-16). This was how he described New Evangelization: an evangelization with enthusiasm in evangelizing, new in its ardor, effective methods that the faithful can easily and effectively be captured by it, and creative expressions that the faithful may understand it well.

Pope Benedict XVI

Pope John Paul II’s call for a New Evangelization was taken up and reaffirmed by his successor Pope Benedict XVI. During his pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI addressed the theme: “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” in the 13th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to support and better prepare for the work of the New Evangelization (Hann, 2014, p. 18).



Thus, Pope Benedict XVI pointed out that New Evangelization is an important element of the Church's mission and that the Church exists to evangelize. The fact is, evangelization is what makes the Church a true Church. Hence, if the heart of the Church is to evangelize the Gospel to the whole world, then New Evangelization is one of the vital

processes needed to achieve this goal.

During mass at Saint Peter’s Basilica for the closing of the Synod of Bishops for New Evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on the three aspects of the New Evangelization: First, the Pope reminds us that our ordinary pastoral ministry must be more animated by the fire of the Spirit. Second, we are called to proclaim the Gospel to those people who do not know Jesus Christ. Finally, the mission of the New Evangelization is to find new ways to help renew the faith and lives of people who have drifted away from the Church so that they may encounter Jesus Christ anew and rediscover the joy of faith and return to the religious practice of the community of the faithful (Wuerl, 2013, p. 13).

New Evangelization focuses on those who are baptized and have lost their sense of faith. But it does not mean that evangelization is only offered to them. In fact, all are subjects of evangelization. In other words, New Evangelization is sharing and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in today’s changing world.

The New Evangelization for the Life of the Church in the Philippines

Concern with the New Evangelization has been the overall theme of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) in 1991, of the National Mission Congress for New Millennium (NMC) held in Cebu in September/October 2000, and of the National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR) which the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) sponsored in Manila in 2001. Especially since PCP-II, a great number of synods and pastoral assemblies have been established and carried to term in various dioceses. These synods and assemblies called for extensive surveys and studies on "Faith and Church situations" in many sectors of the country. They involved much serious discussions among members, ordained and lay, in Catholic communities on different levels. Reports, summaries of the deliberations and conclusions of these assemblies were sent to the Holy See for review. Religious Orders, congregations, and a good number of lay institutes and organizations have also held, on the national level, analogous conferences since PCP-II.

Thus, we in the Church in the Philippines come to this program of the "New Evangelization" already with considerable prior extensive and intensive study, reflection, deliberation and resolution. In truth we have been trying to earnestly pursue "renewed evangelization" especially in the last twenty-five years.



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

The task of New Evangelization calls us to continue earnestly the initiatives and projects which have been ongoing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. *We are called to examine more deeply the pastoral situation that we all face together as Church in the Philippines. We are asked to explore and discover "the new methods and means for transmitting the Good News" more effectively to our people, always under the guidance of the Spirit. Above all, we are challenged anew to foster in the Church in our country a renewed commitment and enthusiasm in living out the Gospel in all diverse areas of our lives, in "real-life practice", challenged anew to become more and more authentic witnesses of our faith, especially to our Asian neighbors!*

CATECHETICAL MODULE STRUCTURE

The framework employed in teaching catechesis adopted the nine Pastoral Priorities of the Church in the Philippines (that also act as the key themes over the nine-year period of New Evangelization) as a response to Pope John Paul II's emphasis on the need for systematic catechesis, which deals with essentials, and is sufficiently complete and open to all other factors of Christian life (CT 21).

Hence, in making this lesson we provide a module based on pastoral priorities of the Philippine Church. Every module has four topics consisting of the four themes of New Evangelization. They are: Encountering Christ, Conversion, Communion (sense of belongingness) and Zeal for Mission. To better comprehend these four themes of New Evangelization, let us reflect on the Holy Father Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* as the basis for this study.

Four Themes of New Evangelization

Encountering Christ

Pope Francis said that the first step of evangelization is having an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. No one can begin an authentic evangelization without having encountered Christ in their lives. In fact, the opening sentence of his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* states: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept His offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness, and loneliness" (EG 1).

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

This is the direct challenge of Pope Francis to all Christians, to open the hearts and lives of the faithful to the person of Jesus Christ. Perhaps one must need to be reminded of the simple doctrine of the Church that Christ dwells within each other. One does not have to search for Him or ask for any incredible revelations to know Him (Gaudete et Exsultate 20). Thus, the faithful must seek Him in every moment, in every day, in prayer, worship, work, relationships and in every act of kindness.

One might ask who is God? God is love. God shares his love to His people, and as one who received the love which restores meaning to lives, how can one fail to share that love with others? Jesus came down to the world to show us the extraordinary way of love through the cross. Hence, encountering Christ leads to joy and the fullest possible experience of life.

Each encounter with Jesus is an invitation to follow Him. For that reason, the Church exists for a mission, and that mission is to proclaim Christ by the witnessing of one's own life and proclaiming Him to the world (EG 20). It is an encounter with a personal God that transforms man to evangelize and impels Him to open the hearts and lives of the faithful to the person of Jesus Christ. At the opening synod for the New Evangelization Benedict XVI points out that: "In every time and place, evangelization has its starting and finishing points, which is Jesus Christ, the Son of God."

Conversion

It is very important to encounter Christ in the daily basis of our life. After encountering Christ, the next step for renewal is conversion. When we have already encountered and recognized Christ as significant in our life, it is the starting point, in which man seeks for conversion. What is conversion? The Greek word for conversion is *metanoia*. It means to rethink. It is a process wherein a person questions one's own and common way of living, allowing God to enter the criteria of one's life and not merely judge according to the current social opinions (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000). This conversion is not a mere change of religion but rather it is a conversion of the heart and mind, which is a radical conversion, "a conversion which restores the joy of faith in their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel" (See EG 14).

Thereby, to convert means not to live the mainstream way of life for its own sake or do things just because others are doing it. It is not feeling justified in doing dubious, ambiguous, or evil actions just because others do the same. Conversion means beginning to see one's life through the eyes of God; thereby looking for the good, even if uncomfortable and aiming not for the judgment of men, but on the justice of God. In other words: to look for a new style of life, a new life (Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, 2000).

Hence, to be converted is not only about the change of perspective in life but it also includes the way we live our lives to the fullest; how we act, how we behave and how we give meaning to our lives by doing mission, in accordance to our own purpose and calling in life. For example, if one is already converted to Christ, he/she will not be able to cheat his/her neighbor, but rather think about the goodness he/she can offer to his/her brethren. In this conversion we should not only follow our own desires in life but also become aware of the presence of God in our manner of living. "The important thing in this conversion process is not to walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters, especially under the leadership of the Church leaders, in a wise and realistic pastoral discernment" (EG 33).

Communion (Sense of Belongingness to the Church)

In *Caritas in Veritate* no. 53, Benedict XVI explains that the development of the people depends, above all, on recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side. When a person sees others as a family member, it becomes a responsibility to give assistance, to offer help, to be there when others are in need.

To evangelize is to make the Kingdom of God present in the world and to proclaim Christ. The Word of God clearly has a social content: at the very heart of the



Gospel is life in community and engagement with others (EG 177). Therefore, one must connect Himself/herself to others in building the Kingdom of God here on earth. One has a personal calling to respond in proclaiming the Good News. Sooner or later, a person will realize that he/ she needs a community to belong to. It is better to have many workers in the vineyard of Christ so that the Gospel will be easily preached to every individual.

The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that all have been created in the image of that Divine Communion. The Gospel is not merely about personal relationship with God. It is rather living in intrinsic interdependence with others (EG 178-179). With this statement, the value of communion or sense of belongingness to the Church is highly regarded by every faithful servant of God. To this end, the Holy Triune God is the model of this communion.

Zeal for Mission

When a person has already encountered Christ, converted to Christ and is in communion with the Church as children of God, then it will be the time for Him/ her to do mission in whatever way he/she can to proclaim the Word of God through his/her daily witnessing to the Gospel.

To pray and to work: this must be the attitude of every spirit-filled evangelizers. Sometimes, evangelizers easily get tired to the point that his/her work becomes meaningless to Him/her. Thus, because of weariness and difficulties, the evangelizer's liveliness and fervor dies out. Thereby, it is important to have moments of adoration, prayerful encounter with the Word, and sincere conversation with the Lord through the sacraments (See EG 262).

Every period of history is marked by the presence of human weakness, self-absorption, complacency and selfishness. We must learn from the wisdom of the saints who confronted their own difficulties (See EG 163). It is good to be inspired by early Christians and the many brothers and sisters throughout history who were filled with joy, persistent courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel.

Pope Francis proposes four spiritual motivations for mission that can help us imitate the saints who continue to proclaim God's Word, even though they encountered a lot of trouble and difficulties.

A. Personal Encounter with the Saving Love of Jesus

The primary reason for evangelization is the love of Jesus which one has received, the experience of salvation urges ever greater love for Him. The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love and reading it with the heart. Its beauty amazes and constantly excites Him/her (EG 264). This can lead to a missionary enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ to others. This conviction is sustained by constantly renewing the experience of savoring Christ's friendship and His message. A person who is not joyful, enthusiastic, certain and in love will convince nobody (EG 266). Therefore, the admiration and excitement of proclaiming the Kingdom of God should always be accompanied with great enthusiasm. A true evangelizer is the one



who never stops being a disciple of Christ, who always walks with Him, communicates with Christ, and eagerly works with Him.

B. The Spiritual Savour of Being a People

To be an evangelizer of souls, one must develop a spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and discover that this is a source of greater joy. God invites us to acknowledge that we are a people. Jesus Himself is the model of this method of evangelization (EG 268). He opened Himself to others, whatever state of life they may be in. It is interesting to recall the closeness of Jesus to everyone. He is very accessible. He draws near to the blind man and the outcasts (cf. Mk. 10:46-52). He eats and drinks with sinners (cf. Mk. 2:16), without worrying about being thought of as a glutton and a drunkard Himself. He shows compassion by allowing a sinful woman to anoint His feet (cf. Lk. 7:36-50) and healing a man with a withered hand during Sabbath (cf. Mt. 12:9-13).

With His inspiration and moved by His examples of sharing in the lives of all, listening to their concerns, helping them materially and spiritually, everyone is called to be committed in building a new world. But this must not come from a sense of obligation or a burdensome duty. Rather, it should be done because of a personal decision which brings joy and gives meaning to the lives of all the faithful (See EG 269).

C. Sense of Mystery

Some people do not commit themselves to mission because they think that nothing will change and so it is useless to make the effort. Sometimes, one misses to inculcate in his/her mind that in the midst of darkness, something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit; (EG 275) that God is capable of intervening and He does not abandon His people.

This fruitfulness is often invisible, intangible and unquantifiable. One can know quite well that lives will be fruitful, without claiming to know how or where or when. But one thing is for sure, no single act of love for God will be lost, nor any of the acts of sincere concern for others. Moreover, no generous effort is meaningless and no painful endurance is wasted (See EG 279) because God will repay it with the abundant gift of salvation. This conviction is called a sense of mystery, that when one entrusts Himself/herself to God, he/she will bear good fruit.

D. Fervent Prayer

Pope Francis tells everyone the importance of prayer in doing mission in the task of evangelization: "Constant prayer will grant us the guidance for every crisis that one is experiencing in his/her mission" (EG 282). It is very essential to beg God in prayer. One must not abandon prayer even in the midst of doubtful moments. The special weapon that everyone must always use is prayer so that one may never get tired of his/her mission to spread the Good News. In fact, "when evangelizers rise from prayer, their hearts are more open. Freed from self-absorption, they are desirous of doing good and sharing their lives with others." In short, evangelizers must always stand in his/her friendship with God in prayer.



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CATECHETICAL MODULE 2:

LAITY

Overview

Empowered Laity

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



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

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

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

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

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The Impact of Secularism on Filipino Faith

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

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

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

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

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

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

Etymology

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

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



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

Catechetical Context

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

Our dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

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

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

OUR SITUATION: THE GOSPEL OF JOY

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

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

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

- (Evangelii Gaudium 52)

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

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew (EG 1).

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

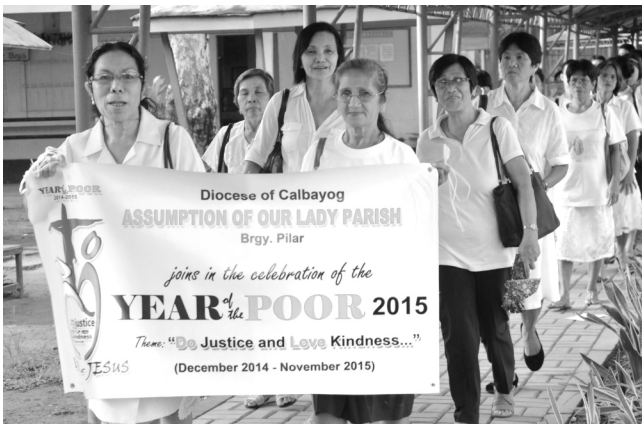


Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose De Antique

OUR SITUATION: THE CHALLENGE OF THE GOSPEL

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

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

POVERTY

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

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

POLITICS

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

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

BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

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

GREED AND SELFISHNESS

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

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



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

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

TRUTH SUFFERS

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

COMMON GOOD IS IGNORED

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

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

CHALLENGE AND MISSION

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



KNOW THE FAITH

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

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

LIVE THE FAITH

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

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

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

COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo from the Archdiocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao

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

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

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

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

Song for Reflection

In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Gaudete Et Exsultate*, Pope Francis wrote, “To be holy does not require being a bishop, a priest or a religious. We are all called to be holy by living our lives with love and by bearing witness in everything we do, wherever we find ourselves.” Hence, he spoke of “saints next door” – ordinary men and women who show that holiness is attainable. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines exhorts the lay faithful to provide a Christian presence in the world so as to become a leaven for the transformation of Philippine Society. Listen to this song of Noel Cabangon giving a profile of a good Filipino.

AKO’Y ISANG MABUTING PILIPINO

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

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

Chorus:

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



E G#m7 Amaj7 B7 pause

Amaj7 E

Tumatawid ako sa tamang tawiran

Amaj7 E

Sumasakay ako sa tamang sakayan

C#m7 F#9

Pumipila at di nakikipag-unahan

Amaj7 B7sus

At di ako pasiga-siga sa lansangan

Amaj7 E

Nagbababa ako sa tamang babaan

Amaj7 E

Hindi nakahambalang na parang walang pakialam

C#m7 F#9

Pinagbibigyan ko'ng mga tumatawid sa kalsada

Amaj7 B7sus

Humihinto ako pag ang ilaw ay pula

(Chorus)

Hindi ako nangongotong o nagbibigay ng lagay

Tiket lamang ang tinatanggap kong ibinibigay

Ako'y nakatayo doon mismo sa kanto

At di nagtatago sa ilalaim ng puno

Hindi ako nagkakalat ng basura sa lansangan

Hindi bumubuga ng usok ang aking sasakyan

Inaayos ko ang mga kalat sa basurahan

Inaalagaan ko an gating kapaligiran

(Chorus)

E G#m7 C#7sus

Bmaj7 F#

Lagi akong nakikinig sa aking mga magulang

Bmaj7 F#

Kaya't pag-aaral ay aking pinagbubutihan

Ebm7 G#9

Hindi ako gumagamit ng bawal na gamot

Bmaj7 C#7sus

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

(Same Chords)

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

(Chorus 1 step higher)

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

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

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

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

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

KORO:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection Questions:

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

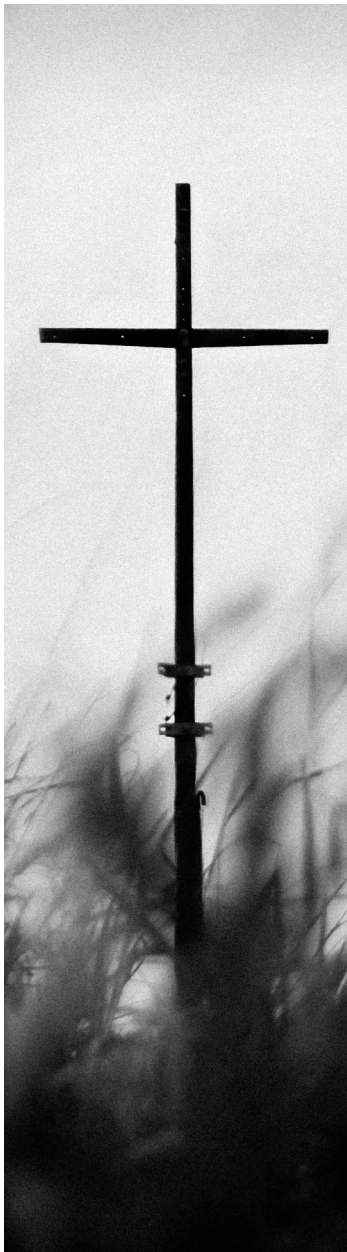
Catechist's Corner

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



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

Read, recite, listen, and/or reflect on your **life as a “catechist”** using the selected research poem below. Discuss your views and insights with fellow catechists using the provided guide question/s in relation to the module theme on *laity (layko)*.



SERVANT CATECHIST

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Jeanette P. Grajo

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

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

GUIDE QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

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

¹This research poem is part of the book, *KATEKISTA: Mga Tulang Pananaliksik Hango sa National Catechetical Study 2016-2018*, produced as a *Research-based Intervention Outcome (RIO)* of the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project*. To access this, you can visit this link: <https://www.ncs2021pariproject.com/katekista-mga-tulang-pananaliksik>.



CATECHETICAL LESSON 1:

ENCOUNTERING CHRIST: THE GOOD SHEPHERD



Introduction

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



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo

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



Worship

Gospel of John 10:11-18

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





Doctrine

Threefold Function of the Lay Faithful

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

Prophetic Ministry

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

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

Priestly Ministry

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

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

Common priesthood and Ministerial Priesthood

Common Priesthood (Laity)

The New Testament describes the baptized as a holy priesthood and a priestly people. 1Peter 2: 9 states that “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s



special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” Vatican II clearly taught that the baptized becomes a holy priesthood. Their personal fidelity and lives led by loving obedience to the Gospel become spiritual sacrifices offered along with the body of the Lord in the Eucharist. It is the vocation of all God’s disciples to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

Ministerial Priesthood

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

Kingly Ministry

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

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



Virtues

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



† **Perseverance** – What does God say about perseverance? “Let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). “As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good” (2 Thessalonians 3:10). “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised” (Hebrews 10:36). “But the one who endures to the end will be saved” (Matthew 24:13). You and I are called to persevere, but not that lonely perseverance of one trying to keep on pursuing even when it no longer makes sense from a human perspective. We are called to a life bathed in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. This motivates us to go beyond ourselves. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, perseverance helps us conquer every obstacle and utilize our talents so that we may attain our goals. A life lived without perseverance is a life that tries to exist by mobilizing what natural talents one happens to have, forgetting that some of the most gifted people in the world are failures because they give up when the going gets tough. In fact, some of them have so much talent, genius and education that they never find their focus. We are called to persevere in specific ways; but first, we have to persevere in our faith so that we can transmit faith to others



Morals

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Simple Activities

Group Sharing

Guide Question:

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

Instruction:

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

Example:

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

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

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

Song Analysis

SALMO 23

Based on Psalm 23

Music by Fr. Rey C. Magnaye

Koro:

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

Verse 1

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

Verse 2

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

Guide for Reflection:

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





Prayer / Worship

PRAYER TO JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

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

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

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

Amen.



Zeal for Mission

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





Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

- † **LIVE** – The lay faithful exercise their co-responsibility in the Church as well as their responsibilities in the family, workplace, community and beyond. The laity may assume many responsibilities within the Church. These are few examples of the many responsibilities the laity might have within the Church. However, co-responsibility is deeper than these functions. It is a co-responsibility with your brothers and sisters in the Church. To be a co-shepherd of Christ to our brethren, in transforming bitterness into joy, darkness into Hope, doubt into faithfulness, etc.
- † **SHARE** – To become a shepherd for others following the threefold ministry of Christ. A Catholic faithful cannot carry out this mission in isolation, but only in communion with the entire People of God. God calls us to mission in communion with the rest of His Body (People of God). Just as each body is energized by its spirit, so do we, who belong to Christ's Body, are empowered by His Spirit for the task we have been given. As Pope Francis states, "the Holy Spirit also grants the courage to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with boldness in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition, Jesus wants evangelizers who can proclaim the good news not only with words, but above all by a life transfigured by God's presence (EG 3).

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: WHAT TO DO



Introduction

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman



Worship

Gospel of Matthew 19:16-22

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





Doctrine

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

† 1. **Conversion**

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

† 2. **Kingdom of God**

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

† 3. **Jesus Christ**

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



† 4. *Eternal Life*

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



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Military Ordinariate



Human Values

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

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

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



Morals

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan





Simple Activities

Activity: Unload my baggiest

Instruction:

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

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

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

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

Exhortation:

Stewardship

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

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

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



A RICH YOUNG MAN (Simple Living)

Artist: Keith & Kristyn Getty

Album: Hymns for the Christian Life

A rich young man came to ask of Christ:

"Good teacher, will you tell me,

What must I do for eternal life?

I've kept your laws completely."

"Sell all you have, give to the poor,

Then heaven's treasure shall be yours."

How hard for those who are rich on earth

To gain the wealth of heaven.

Now Jesus sat by the offering gate

As people brought their money:

The rich they filled the collection plate;

The widow gave a penny.

"Now she's out given all the rest -

Her gift was all that she possessed."

Not what you give but what you keep

Is what the King is counting.

O teach me Lord to walk this road,

The road of simple living;

To be content with what I own

And generous in giving.

And when I cling to what I have

Please wrest it quickly from my grasp;

I'd rather lose all the things of earth

To gain the things of heaven.



Prayer / Worship

Make us your worthy servant

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



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao



Zeal for Mission

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

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: BEING CONNECTED

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



Introduction

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Cubao

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

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



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

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



Worship

Gospel of John 15:1-11

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



Doctrine

Unity in the local Church and in the universal Church

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

The representation of unity within the local church and from local church to local church in the universal church does not occur in the same way. In the local church, the bishop as the



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



Photo from the Diocese of Talibon



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan

The Ministries, Offices and Roles of the Lay Faithful

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

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

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

By stimulating the varied collaboration of the lay faithful in the Church's life and mission of spreading the gospel, we recall that "their own field of evangelizing activity is the vast and

complicated world of politics, society and economics, as well as the world of culture, of the sciences and the arts; as well as, the world of international life, and of mass media. It also includes other realities which are open to evangelization, such as human love, the family, the education of children and adolescents, professional work, and suffering.”

Charisms

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

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

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

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



Faith Response

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



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



Human Values

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

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



Morals

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



Simple Activities

Activity: Work as one, We live as one!

Materials: Balloons of different colors and marker

Instructions:

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

Song Analysis (*see next page*)

Guide for Reflection:

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

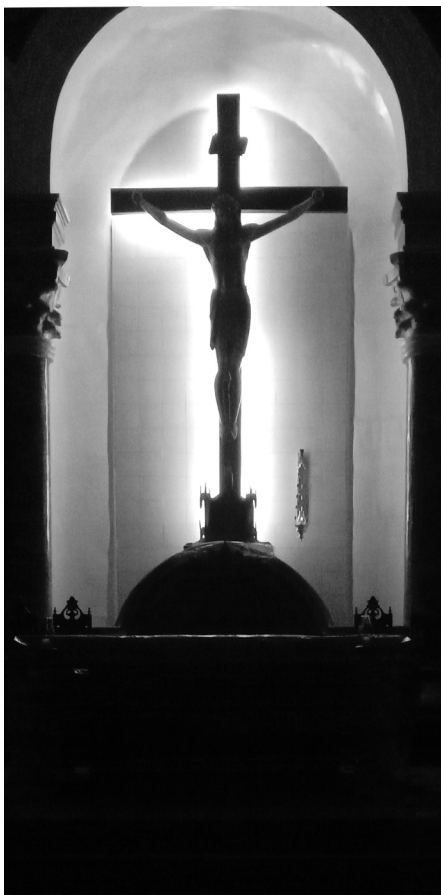


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

One Bread, One Body

Chorus:

One bread, one body,
one Lord of all,
one cup of blessing which we bless.
And we, though many,
throughout the earth,
we are one body in this one Lord.

Gentile or Jew,
servant or free,
woman or man no more.

Many the gifts,
many the works,
one in the Lord of all.

Grain for the fields,
scattered and grown,
gathered to one for all.



Prayer / Worship

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

Prayer for Pope Francis

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

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

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

Amen.

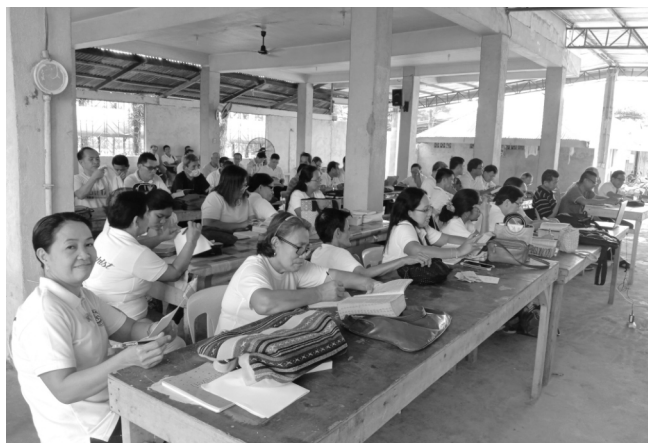


Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Zeal for Mission

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

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



CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: DIVINE COMMISSION

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



Introduction

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



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan

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

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



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

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



Worship

Gospel of John 15:12-17

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



Doctrine

Mission

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

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



forth his disciples on mission, just as the Father sent him (Jn 20:21).

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

Apostolate – Apostolicam Actuositatem 2

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



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



Faith Response

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





Human Values

† Zeal for souls

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

† Meekness

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

† Simplicity

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

† Mortification

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan



Photo from the Diocese of Iligan





Morals

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



Simple Activities

Activity:

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

Song Analysis *(see next page)*

Guide for Reflections

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



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

One in Mission

Theme song of Year of the Laity

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

Chorus:

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

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

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



Prayer / Worship

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

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

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

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

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

Open our hearts
to the great anticipation
of the Kingdom of God
and of the proclamation of the Gospel
to the whole of creation.

Your mother's heart
is ever mindful of the many dangers
and evils which threaten
to overpower men and women
in our time.



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

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

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

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

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

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



Zeal for Mission

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

THIS IS A PRE-PUBLICATION ONLINE DRAFT; SOME PARTS ARE STILL SUBJECT TO CHANGES.

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A Research-based Intervention Outcome of selected catechists and catechetical leaders inspired by the findings of the National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2016-2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project implemented by the Research Center for Social Sciences & Education, University of Santo Tomas.