



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



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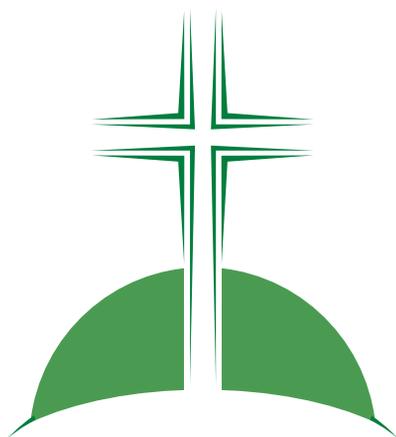
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Book and Layout Design by Romel Sencio

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 Komunyong mga Pamayanan (2017)*; *Klero at Mga Relihiyoso (2018)*; *Mga Kabataan (2019)*; *Ekumenismo, Dyalogo sa Pagitan ng Mga Relihiyon, at mga Katutubo (2020)*, at *Misyon sa mga Bansa (2021)*, which these modules hope to bring forth in various spaces of catechesis in the country.



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



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

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

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

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

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

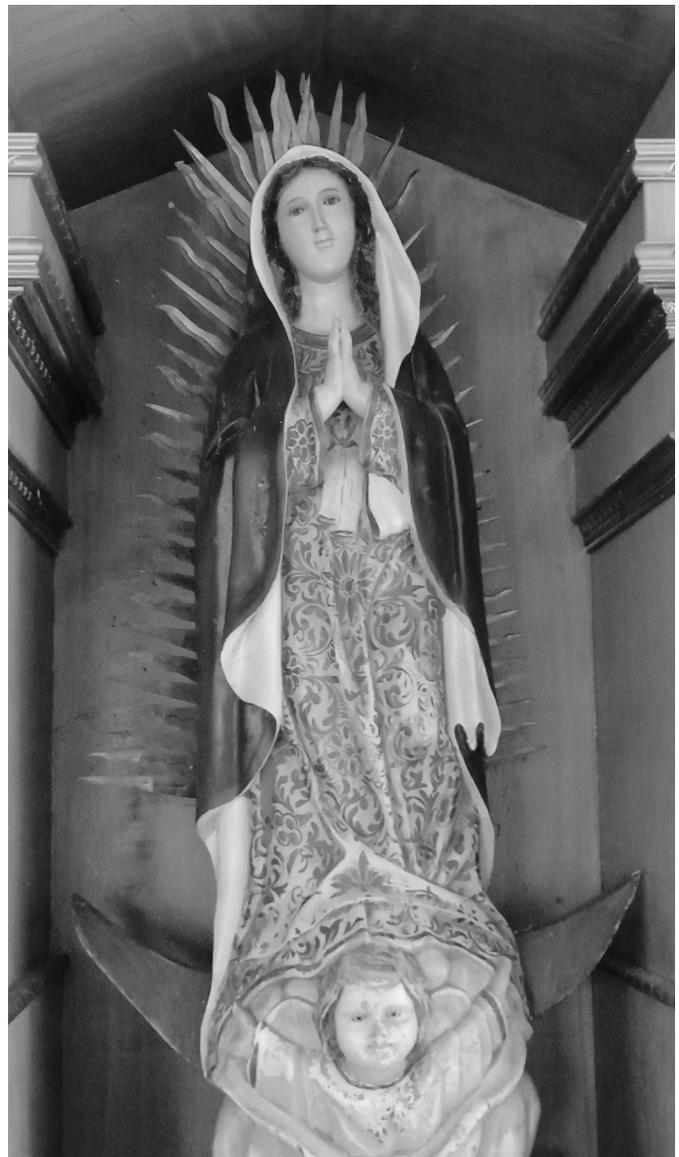


provided for by Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and three seminarians from the Diocese of Tarlac - Sem. Anthony Paul R. Tawatao, Sem. Gerald A. Cortes, and Sem. Jayson A. Besa. Other contributors who deserve our utmost gratitude are Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario for her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

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

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

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



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FOREWORD

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

Bishop, Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija
Chairperson, Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)



My Dear People of God! Grace and peace!

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

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

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

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

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

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

All in JESUS' NAME,



INTRODUCTION

Rev. Fr. Ernesto B. De Leon

Executive Secretary

Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

CATECHETICAL MODULE GUIDE

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

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

Evangelization in Vatican II

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

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

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

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

The New Evangelization

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

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

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

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

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



The Teachings of the Pope on New Evangelization

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

Pope Paul VI

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



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

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

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

Pope John Paul II

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Pope Benedict XVI

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



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

processes needed to achieve this goal.

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

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

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

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



CATECHETICAL MODULE STRUCTURE

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

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

Four Themes of New Evangelization

Encountering Christ

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

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

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

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

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

Conversion

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

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

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

Communion (Sense of Belongingness to the Church)

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

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



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

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

Zeal for Mission

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

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

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

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

A. Personal Encounter with the Saving Love of Jesus

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

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

B. The Spiritual Savour of Being a People

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

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

C. Sense of Mystery

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

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

D. Fervent Prayer

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



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CATECHETICAL MODULE 4: THE EUCHARIST AND THE FAMILY

Overview

Christian Family as Focal Point of Evangelization

“The first and fundamental structure for human ecology is the family because the family is the basic cell of the Church and society (Centesimus Annus 39).” The Gospel has to be shared first in the family because it is an essential “agent of pastoral activity”(Amoris Laetitia 290). Thus, a Christian family should be a “miniature church.” All Christian family members are invited to strengthen one another in faith and to outdo one another in their zeal for God (YOUCAT 373). Through the proper upbringing in the Catholic faith and the guidance of parents, it is possible to form children according to a model that is based on love and service to God and others.



Photo from the Diocese of Butuan

The home is the first venue for the proclamation of the Gospel and the transmission of faith. Parents are the primary evangelizers and catechists of their children. It is also the first school of evangelization where members learn to share the grace and light of Christ. It ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates (EN 71). Christian families can do this through a more intensive evangelization focused on the family. The family has to become a key agent of proclaiming the Gospel. Hence, the family must hold on first and foremost to life, marriage, and to the values of Christian family. There should be a renewal in the family in contrast to the modern world, so that whenever the modern world offers a lot of changes, the Christian values in the family will still remain (Familiaris Consortio 1).

The Family as Miniature Church

The Christian family is the domestic Church. This is the assertion of Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. In the Post-Synodal Exhortation of Pope John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, he spelled out what this ecclesiological vision on the family means:

“The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion. For this reason, it can and should be called the domestic Church. All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, a communion of persons, this happens when there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, the and the aged, where there is mutual service every day, and where there is there is sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows (FC 58-59).”



Every Catholic faithful must promote and intensify the efforts to strengthen marriage and the family so that every evangelized family becomes an evangelizing family. Thus, the Christian family is a realization of communion with Christ's prophetic, priestly and kingly mission (Picardal, 2011, p. 371). This communion is concretely expressed in table-fellowship (common meals and celebration). Communion is also expressed in the sharing of material resources and spiritual goods (time, talent and treasure). However, this communion should not become exclusive only to members of the family, but rather it should also be applied to the relationship with other Christian families in the neighborhood and in the wider Church such as: parish, diocese, Universal Church (ibid).

The community truly celebrates its being the Body of Christ when the members receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion. According to John Paul II, "participation in the sacrament of reconciliation and in the banquet of the One Body of Christ offers the Christian family the grace and responsibility of overcoming every division, moving towards the fullness of communion willed by God. In this way, we respond to the ardent desire of the Lord: "...that they may be one" (Familiaris Consortio 21).

Everyone must be reminded of the message of the Holy Father Pope Francis to the Filipino families delivered at the Mall of Asia Arena on January 16, 2015. He prompted his awed audience: "In the family we learn to love, to forgive, to be generous and to be open. We learn to move beyond our own needs, to encounter others and share our lives with them" (Pope Francis, 2015a). That is why it is important to pray as one family where all the members of the family gather together in the banquet of Christ, the Holy Eucharist.

In the human sphere, the family is the primordial image of communion. The family is the unique school of living in relationships. Nowhere else do children grow up as well as in an intact family, in which they experience heartfelt affection, mutual respect, and responsibility for one another (Villegas, 2015). Hence, the Church's perspective in this year of the Eucharist and the Family is that the family must be a miniature Church who will become a companion of the Church in spreading the Good News.

Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** Christ is encountered in the family because Christ is always present in the family. Constantly praying together and actively participating in the Holy Eucharist as one family will strengthen the family's encounter with Christ.
- † **Conversion.** The family must hold on first and foremost to life, marriage, and to the values of Christian family. There should be a renewal in the family in contrast to the modern world, so that whenever the modern world offers a lot of changes, the Christian values in the family will still remain.
- † **Sense of belongingness.** The Christian family, as a domestic Church, connects with the macro-Church, that one family belongs to a bigger Christian family. Moreover, it enables them to participate in the life and mission of the Church.
- † **Zeal for mission.** Families must be taught according to the moral norms of the



Church. A family should be incorporated into the Church to move forward hand-in-hand towards renewal. It means that the family ought to communicate with the Church, issues about modern ideologies (e.g. divorce, in-vitro fertilization, use of contraceptives, etc.) while the Church guides the family in renewal (e.g. sanctity of marriage and the sacredness of life).

Etymology

Family

Family is derived from the Latin, *famulus* meaning servant, and *familia* which means household servants, or the household. In the classical Roman period the *familia* rarely included the parents or the children. Its English derivative was frequently used in former times to describe all the persons of the domestic circle, parents, children, and servants. Present usage, however, excludes servants, and restricts the word *family* to that fundamental social group formed by the more or less permanent union of one man with one woman, or of one or more men with one or more women, and their children. If the heads of the group comprise only of one man and one woman, we have the monogamous family, as distinguished from those domestic societies which live in conditions of polygamy – one husband-many wives; polyandry – one wife-many husbands, or promiscuity – sexual relations with different partners (Ryan, 1909).

A family is a group of persons who are related by marriage or blood and who typically include a father, mother, and children. A family is a natural society whose right to existence and support is provided for by the Divine law. According to the Second Vatican Council, "the family is the foundation of society" (GS 52). In addition to the natural family, the Church recognizes also the supernatural family of the diocese and of the religious community, whose members are to cooperate for the up- building of the Body of Christ (Lumen Gentium 43; Christus Dominus 34).

Eucharist

The Catechism of the Catholic Church offers a brief definition of the word. The inexhaustible richness of the sacrament of the Eucharist (i.e. the "Mass") is expressed in the different names we give it. Each name evokes certain aspects of the familyit. It is called: Eucharist, because it is an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* and *eulogein* recall the Jewish blessings that proclaim — especially during a meal — God's works: creation, redemption, and sanctification (CCC 1328).

In the original Greek version of the Gospels, Jesus is recorded using a similar word while celebrating the Last Supper, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves ... And Hhe took bread, and when Hhe had given thanks (*εὐχαριστήσας* – *eucharistēsas*) Hhe broke it and gave it to them "(Luke 22:18-19). Essentially, the word "Eucharist" means "giving thanks," but in a Jewish context is directed specifically towards giving thanks to God (Kosloski, 2017).



Jubilee of Blessings, Mission of Renewal CBCP Pastoral Exhortation for the Jubilee of Mercy and Year of the Family and the Eucharist

The Year 2016 was a year of many blessings for us in the Philippines. It will also be a year of mission for the Kingdom.

From December 8, 2015 until November 20, 2016, the Church all over the world will observe an extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy as decreed by Pope Francis in the papal bull, *Misericordiae Vultus*. We stand in faithful communion with the Holy Father as he prays for “the Church to echo the Word of God that resounds strong and clear as a message, and a sign of pardon, strength, aid, and love. May the Church never tire of extending mercy, and be ever patient in offering compassion and comfort.

In the Philippines, we shall open today, November 29, 2015, the First Sunday of Advent, the Year of the Eucharist and the Family, as part of our nine-year preparation for the Jubilee of 2021, the five hundredth anniversary of the first Mass and first baptism in the Philippines. We also eagerly await the celebration of the Fifty First International Eucharistic Congress in Cebu, come January 2016.

In 2016 we will also celebrate the twenty-fifth year of the convocation of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, the greatest ecclesial event in the Philippines in the twentieth century.

In this forthcoming year of renewal dedicated to mercy, the Eucharist and the family, under the light of PCP II, how shall we as a people respond?

As brothers and pastors in the faith, our answer is “*If we want renewal, let us learn how to kneel again.*” Our generation seems to have lost the religious gesture of kneeling. We have become more of a clapping generation. We seem to have compromised the virtue of humility with a culture of self-security and independence. Our throw-away consumerist attitude can hardly imagine kneeling down before one another, like the Lord who washed the feet of His beloved ones. If we are to restore a contemplative view of creation as Pope Francis invites us, we must learn to kneel again by the feet of the Lord. We need to be caught in awe at the wonder of His tenderness and mercy.

If we want renewal, let us learn to kneel again in body, heart and attitude.

Begging for mercy, we kneel in repentance. Adoring the Eucharist, we kneel down and worship. Serving others, we kneel before the family and wash each other’s feet. If we dream of renewal, let us kneel again in repentance, in adoration and in service.

Let us kneel
before the
Lord who
made us.

(Psalm 95:6)

For Mercy Let Us Kneel

We cannot celebrate mercy without repentance.

Then Stephen fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them”; and when he said this, he fell asleep (Acts 7:60).

Merciful like the Father Like the Father is merciful,, we are called upon to pray on behalf of humanity for the forgiveness of sins. We constantly need to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. “Mercy,” the Wword, itself, reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness (Misericordiae Vultus 2).

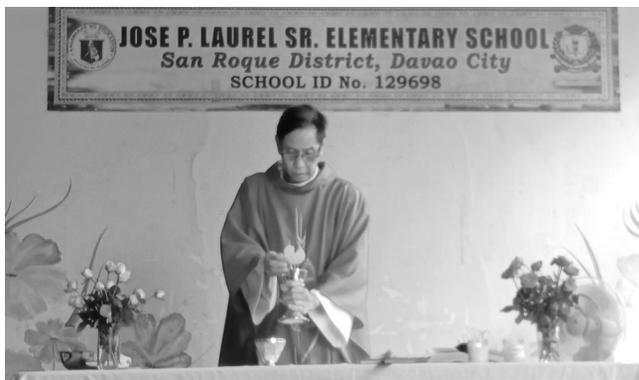


Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao

Celebrating the Jubilee of Mercy, we are also invited to kneel down in humility and repentance especially in the sacrament of reconciliation where we kneel down to confess our sins and receive pardon. Kneeling is a very important gesture in our Christian culture that we must regain and safeguard. Origen said kneeling is necessary if we want to admit our sins before God and seek His mercy. Kneeling symbolizes someone who has fallen but trusts in the loving mercy of God. When our bodies fail to move with the prayerful dispositions of the heart; when we lose the importance of kneeling and bowing, our prayer can become dry and even boring. Praying with the body by kneeling or bowing or raising our hands can ignite the dying embers of our spiritual lives.

John Cassian taught “The bending of the knee is a token of penitence and sorrow of a penitent heart”. Furthermore, St. Ambrose of Milan (Hexaemeron, VI, ix) said: “The knee has been made flexible so that by means of it, more than any other limb, our offenses against the Lord may be mitigated and God’s displeasure may be appeased, grace called forth.”

Kneeling down is not just an act to seek mercy for our sins, it is also a gesture of compassion for our fellow wounded sinners. We are invited to kneel down to bind the wounds of those who are bleeding and hurting. Indeed, mercy is not only an action of the Father, it becomes a criterion for ascertaining who His true children are (MV 9). Kneeling disposes us to receive and share mercy. Kneeling humbly reminds us that we have fallen and in our fallen yet forgiven condition, we must show mercy to one another.



We must kneel down in contrition before God for our sins against Mother Nature. We kneel down in sorrow for the scars on nature, for the destruction of complex living systems sacrificed on the altar of economic progress.

We kneel down before the poor whom we have ignored; they, whom the Lord assured will inherit the Kingdom. We kneel down in sorrow for our abuses against the weak and the vulnerable. We kneel to seek mercy from those we have marginalized and misjudged, suspected, and gossiped about. We need to kneel down and seek pardon for our misplaced prudence and cowardice to stand for the Lord and die with Him.

If we want renewal, we must learn the humility of kneeling from the heart and with the knees. It is easier to remember that we are sinners when we kneel. It is easier to share the same mercy kneeling down, not from a higher moral level but from our shared sinful condition;. *Miserando atque eligendo* (by having mercy, by choosing Him).

Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. All of her pastoral activity should be caught up in the tenderness that she makes present to believers; nothing in her preaching



Photo from the Archdiocese of Lipa



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

and in her witness to the world can be lacking in mercy. The Church's very credibility is seen on how she shows merciful and compassionate love (MV 10). We share this mercy not as dispensers of grace from the our judge's thrones but from the common ground of our sinful condition.

In Adoration Let Us Kneel

In January 2016, our feet and our knees led us to Cebu for the Fifty First International Eucharistic Congress echoing the words of Saint Paul to the Colossians "Christ in you, our hope of glory" (1:27).

If we dream of renewal, let us rediscover the power of kneeling again in silent adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, the Lamb of God. " Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, everything in the universe cry out: "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever." The four living creatures answered, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped (Rev 5:13-14).



In his book, “The Spirit of the Liturgy,” then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (2000, p. 191) wrote that the Hebrews regarded the knee as a symbol of strength. To bend the knee is therefore, to bend our strength before the living God, an acknowledgment of the fact that all that we are, we receive from God.”

Kneeling is part of our Christian culture. We cannot abandon or set aside the culture of kneeling in favor of a culture that says, as freemen we must face God on our feet. Bending the knee before the tabernacle in genuflection, kneeling down at the celebration of the Eucharist, kneeling down to adore the exposed Blessed Sacrament—these are little but sublime acts of adoration that we must preserve and protect.

Kneeling at the consecratory words over the bread and wine is not only an act of humility but giving a bowing welcome to meet the Lord, who Himself has stooped down to reach out to us. Though He was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, He emptied himself... becoming obedient to death, even death on the cross (Phil 2: 6).

If you want renewal, kneel again. We kneel to atone for the countless profanities against the Eucharist. As we bow down and adore the Eucharist, we also beg for pardon for the many sacrileges and desecrations that the Sacred Species are repeatedly subjected to in many communities. We seek pardon for liturgical experiments and abuses; the narcissism among ordained ministers seeking popularity rather than piety; for taking the Mass for granted; for the irreverent attire and the cold interior disposition, we have when we attend Mass.

According to Cardinal Ratzinger, “there is a story that comes from the sayings of the Desert Fathers. According to the story, the devil was compelled by God to a certain Abba Apollo. He looked black and ugly, with frighteningly thin limbs, but most strikingly, he had no knees. The inability to kneel is seen as the very essence of the diabolical”(Ibid, p. 193).

All the families of the nations shall bow down before him. “For dominion is the Lord’s and He rules the nations” (Ps 22:28). To Him alone, shall bow down all who sleep in the earth; Before Him shall bend all who go into the dust. If we want renewal in spirituality, we must recover the Christian culture of kneeling.

For Love and for Service Let Us Kneel

In this Year of the Family and the Eucharist, we are invited to kneel down to bring renewal to the family. We kneel to serve like the Lord. We envision every Filipino Catholic family to be missionary disciples of the Eucharist.

Jesus got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet (John 13:4).

Let us kneel again at home for family prayer and for feet washing. Where love and service prevail instead of pride and grudge-keeping; where the humility of pardon and being pardoned prevails over revenge and bitter resentments; where siblings wash one another’s



feet and parents do the same. Where the culture of family kneeling is present, the dream of renewal in family life will not be far from sight.

The family that prays together stays together. The family that kneels together will be refreshed and renewed together. The family that kneels together will remain young and fresh and new. Kneeling empowers families to stand up against the storms of life. Kneeling is strength.

As it is with the family, so it is with the Church and her pastors. The Church is not ours. The Church is Christ's. We, who are only stewards, not master builders, must return to the spiritual value of kneeling for prayer and stooping for feet washing. The mandate the Lord gave on Holy Thursday to "Do as I have done" is a daily obligation that must be fulfilled with humility, with joy, with faith, and with love.

Kneeling for Renewal

In the Jubilee Year of Mercy, this Year of the Family and the Eucharist, let us return to the spiritual value and beauty of kneeling. Tertullian even went so far as saying "No prayer should be made without kneeling". How can we be renewed without prayer? How can we pray without kneeling for repentance? How can we receive mercy if we are proud and self-secure?

How can we worship without kneeling down when the Apostle himself says "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth." How can we show that we are His disciples without kneeling down to wash one another's feet as He has mandated? By this act of love, we will be known as His disciples.

In this Year of Mercy, let us kneel again. If we want renewal, let the heart and body kneel. Let the mind and the legs bend before the Lord. Let the soul and the knees bow together in worship and humility. May Mary Mother of Mercy teach us her humility and lead us by the hand to adore her Son and serve like Him. Amen.

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, November 29, 2015, First Sunday of Advent

Sincerely yours,

+Socrates B. Villegas
Archbishop of Lingayen Dagupan
President, Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines



Song for Reflection

The word “Mass” comes from the Latin “missa” which is part of the words of dismissal in the Eucharistic celebration – “Ite missa est” – “Go, you are sent!” We are fed at the table of the Lord, that we may have the strength to go on mission, that is, to announce the Gospel of Lord by the witness of our lives, first in our families, and then in our grand family, the Church (Green, 2020).

SA PIGING NG PANGINOON

*Written by Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ
Song by Bienvenida Tabuena*

KORO

Sa piging ng ating Panginoon
Tayo’y laging natitipon
Upang matutong magmahalan
Sa pag-ibig na nakamtan.

I

Buhay ay inialay N’ya
Sa Dakilang Diyos Ama
Upang atin nang makamtan
Buhay na walang hanggan (Koro)

II

Buhay ay inialay N’ya
Upang tayo’y magkaisa
Sa paghahatid ng ligaya
Mula sa pag-ibig N’ya (Koro)

III

May galak na makakamtan
Sa bawat pagbibigayan
Habambuhay ay ingatan
Ang tapat na samahan (Koro)

Reflection Questions:

- † Should Sunday Mass be a family affair, or should individual members be left free to decide whether or not to go?
- † How does our participation in the Eucharist help us become credible witnesses of the Gospel to our family and friends?



Sa Piging ng Panginoon

Titik ni: Bienvenida V. Tabuena
 Himig ni: Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Areglo ni: Redd Salaria
 Para sa: Children of Mary Immaculate (COMI) Choir, Limay

♩ = 110 a la marcha

f C Am F G7 Am F G7

KORO: Sa pi - ging ng a - ting Pa - ngi - no - on Ta - yo'y la - ging na - ti - ti - pon

9 C F E7 Am F C G7 C Fine

U pang ma - tu - tong mag - ma - ha - lan Sa pag - i - big na na - kam - tan.

17 *mf* G7 C G7 C

1. Bu - hay ay i - ni - a - lay N'ya Sa Da - ki - lang Diyos A - ma
 2. Bu - hay ay i - ni - a - lay N'ya U - pang ta - yo'ymag - ka - i - sa
 3. May ga - lak na ma - ka - kam - tan Sa ba - wa't pag - bi - bi - ga - yan;
 4. Ding - gin a - ming da - la - ngin Sa I - yo, Po - ong Ma - hal;

mf Ahh - - - !

24 D7 Em Am D7 G D.C.

1. U - pang a - tin nang ma - kam - tan Bu - hay na wa - lang hang - gan.
 2. Sa pag - ha - ha - tid ng li - ga - ya Mu - la sa pag - i - big N'ya.
 3. Ha - bang bu - hay ay i - nga - tan Ang ta - pat na sa - ma - han.
 4. Ang li - him ng 'Yong pag - i - big Sa - na'y a - ming ma - kam - tan.

Ahh - - - !

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

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 module part offers an empirical narrative glimpse of the lives of catechists captured in a creative methodological approach called, “research poems”.

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

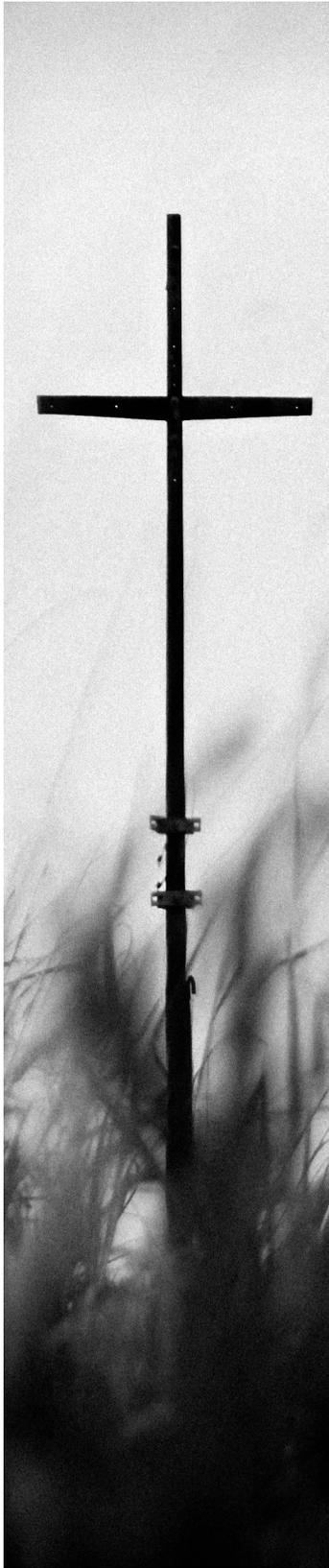
Guide question for Discussion:

- † As children, have you joined your parents in celebrating the Holy Eucharist?
- † As parents, have you broughtdo you bring your children to Holy Mass?

**“Every year, the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual.”
(Luke 2:41-42)**



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



WHY DO CHILDREN REFUSE ATTENDING THE MASS?

By Clarence M. Batan¹

Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola

One catechist shared
About how she persevered
Teaching the students stories
About God
About the Church.

A parent shared
About her children
Who are unruly in the house
Disrespectful to the elders
Disinterested to attend mass.

A child narrated
About the situation
Of her beloved family
Parents who always fight,
Parents who feel apart

When the catechist asked
The child, “Why won’t you attend mass?”
She answered in tears,
“They” do not go to Church, they
Who never mature in faith at all.

In sobs and cries, the catechist
Persisted to persuade
The child, so confused about this world
For the parents, it seems like
To face their children with the truth—

About the faith
About the Church
About Christ
Whispering a prayer, the catechist watched the child
Held by her parent
Leading her out of the chapel
Once upon a Sunday
In a place of catechesis

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: “AS I HAVE LOVED YOU”



Introduction

Christ wishes to continue His evangelizing work not only through individuals but through groups, communities and institutions which He wishes to manifest and transmit His truth and love to. First among these institutions is the Christian family, the Church in the home (PCP II 574). Pope John Paul II calls the Christian Family a “Domestic Church”, which “can be achieved only with God's unceasing aid, which will surely be granted if it is humbly and trustingly petitioned in prayer” (Familiaris Consortio 59). A family that teaches and forms its members how to know and love Christ makes the Church alive in the homes of every Christian family (Familiaris Consortio 43). The center of the family must be Jesus Christ Himself, who is the source of love. Such family will continually grow in encountering Christ through fervent prayer and celebration of the Holy Eucharist, as one family, and will live with the Holy Family as its model.



Photo from the Diocese of Mati

All of us are called to step out from our comfort zones, to stop following the flock, to go against the flow and to what we are accustomed with. If before, we were just observers in our community, then we are challenged today to express our Christian love. “The first setting in which faith enlightens the human city is the family” (Lumen Fidei 52). Thus, learning to love and care must always begin in our own families.



Worship

Gospel of John 15: 12-17

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I 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. ¹⁶You 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. ¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.





Doctrine

LOVE

THREE KINDS OF LOVE:

† EROS

Eros, as a term to indicate “worldly” love. “Agape,” meanwhile, refers to love grounded in and shaped by faith. The two notions are often contrasted as “ascending” love and “descending” love. There are other, similar classifications, such as the distinction between possessive love (*amor concupiscentiae*) and oblation love (*amore benevolentiae*). In philosophical and theological debate, these distinctions have often been radicalized to the point of establishing a clear antithesis between them: descending, oblation love—agape—would be typically Christian. On the other hand ascending, possessive or covetous love —eros—would be typical of non-Christian, and particularly of Greek culture. Yet eros and agape—ascending love and descending love—can never be completely separated. Even if eros is mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing one to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself. It increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, and is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to “be there for” the other.

The element of agape thus enters into this kind of love, until eros is impoverished and even loses its own nature. On the other hand, man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow (Jn 7:37-38). Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (Jn 19:34).

We have seen that God's eros for man is also totally agape. This is not only because it is bestowed in a completely gratuitous manner, without any previous merit, but also because it is love which forgives. Eros is thus supremely ennobled, yet at the same time it is so purified as to become one with agape.

† PHILIA

While many Greeks viewed Eros as dangerous, they viewed philia as the ideal love. Philia, in today's terms, would resemble brotherly love and the love between parents and their children. It is about showing loyalty, giving sacrifice, showing appreciation, and other more “noble” forms of love not involving sex.

According to Aristotle, a person can feel Philia towards someone for one of three



reasons: Based on utility, based on pleasures, and based on goodness. Aristotle also theorized that one must feel love for themselves before being able to feel love for others, something that we've all heard from well-meaning friends when asking them for relationship advice.

† AGAPE

Agape is a bit more abstract than the other two types of love. Agape is sometimes referred to in modern times as universal love, charity, or even altruism (self-sacrifice). Essentially, it's the love inside us that we give freely to others regardless of our relationship to them. The whole idea behind agape love is that we don't need to even have met the other person before, but we still want to help them, cooperate with them, or do good deeds towards them. While we may not expect anything in return for our selfless good deeds. Studies show (Rancano, 2015) that they can actually benefit us in negating the effects of stress and having an overall positive effect on our mental health.

There's no right or wrong way to love, but there is beauty and fullness in love, that is Love of God. Philia is the highest form of love because it is a two-way road, unlike Eros and Agape. Love is a key attribute of God in Christianity. 1 John 4:8 and 16 state that "God is love; and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." John 3:16 states: God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten son; that whoever believes in Him, may not perish but have eternal life. In the New Testament, God's love for humanity or the world is expressed in Greek as agape (ἀγάπη). Hence, let us always be reminded that "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

MARRIAGE / SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

God, who created man out of love, also calls him to love. Love is the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God, who is Himself love (CCC 1604). God tells Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Their love for each other is the image of the love that God has for us.

The matrimonial covenant, establishes, between a man and a woman partnership for the whole of life. This covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (CCC 1601). Marriage is a sacrament of service and love of both baptized man and woman. In the Sacrament of Matrimony, a man and a woman are united in such a way that they become one flesh, each belonging to one another. Marriage is a celebration of a lifelong partnership in faithful love.

The principal ministers during the exchange of promises in a marriage ceremony are the couple themselves. However, there must be an official Church witness present, either a priest or a deacon, because Matrimony is an act of public worship, a community prayer that brings God's blessings to the couple. Marriage reflects the union of Christ with the Church, His mystical body. Marriage union is used to sanctify both the husband and the wife by drawing



them into a deeper understanding of God's love. It is intended to be fruitful, with any number of children who are to be raised within the teaching of the Church. Once the couple is married, their family becomes a domestic church. The Church as a whole, and the family is built upon the foundation of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

While Matrimony is part of the sacramental life that makes it possible for Christians to attain eternal salvation, the purpose of this sacrament is to help couples in this life, as they work to live in faithfulness to God. It also provides them with a foretaste of the divine love that awaits them in paradise.



Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan

FAMILY

FAMILY AS A DOMESTIC CHURCH

The term “Domestic Church” refers to the family. It is the smallest body of believers gathered in Christ. Our Early Church Fathers understood that the home is a fertile ground for discipleship, sanctification, and holiness. Lumen Gentium 11 describes the family as the ‘Domestic Church’ because it is the place where young, baptized Christians first learn about their faith. Families are extremely important centers of living faith. The home is the first Church and the first school of Christian life, where all learn love, repeated forgiveness, and prayerful worship (CCC 1655- 1657).

The Church is nothing other than “the family of God” (CCC 1655). Thus, the role and responsibility of the Domestic Church in leading souls to heaven are: parents by their word and example, should be the first preachers of the faith to their children; they should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them, fostering with special care vocation to a sacred state and t cultivate a family life that is centered on Christ (LG 11).

THE FOUR LEVELS OF CHURCH

Four distinct levels of Church. There is the Universal Church led by the bishop of Rome and all the bishops in union with him. There is the local diocesan church, led by its local bishop, which is uniquely positioned to guide us on how best to implement our faith in our own time and culture. There is the local parish church, from which we receive most of our religious instruction and the sacraments. Finally, there is this fourth layer of Church, the Domestic

Church, which plays a key role in our sanctification because it is the primary place where we practice coming to intimately love other persons.

THE FOUR TASKS OF THE FAMILY

Saint John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation *Familiaris Consortio*, identifies the four primary tasks that each family (Domestic Church) should strive to accomplish:

- † Forming a community of persons
- † Serving Life
- † Participating in the development of the society
- † Sharing in the life and mission of the Church

The Catholic Church recognizes that grace builds upon nature. Family is one of the most basic, yet important gifts that God has given us. Through a firm marital commitment between a man and a woman, and through their own active participation in the faith and their pledge to raise their children with a love for Christ and his Church, the domestic Church is one of the first places that young Catholics experience the light of faith in their own lives.



Human Values

- † **Gratitude** - Gratitude is a feeling of being thankful and appreciative. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. People feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. Our family is a vital support network, one which provides us with all-important love, care, sympathy and words of kindness. Families should be there to help in times of need.
- † **Intimacy** - Intimacy means deeply knowing another person and it involves feelings of emotional closeness and connectedness with another person. Intimate relationships are often characterized by attitudes of mutual trust, caring, and acceptance. Intimacy in family relationships is a very significant factor for unity and understanding of each member in the family. Family members must have the spirit of familiarity and connectedness to each other.
- † **Prayerful** - Christian family and spouses must raise their children in the likeness of the Lord. Prayer is the source of life and heartbeat of a truly Christian home. It's also one of the best ways to help families flourish. When families pray together, each member of the family learns what it means to be intimate with God. Through answered prayers, they experience His love and presence in their daily lives. Prayer has the effect of deepening interpersonal relationships. It encourages family members to become more sensitive to one another's feelings. The familiar, time-worn saying is true: families who pray together stays together. That's because shared experiences in prayer quickly become opportunities to express mutual love, forgiveness, and grace.





Morals

St. John Paul II (1981) said, “the way of the Church is the family” (1981). Yet, this divine and human institution is being attacked from all sides, both internally and externally. What is our best defense if it is internally destroyed by division which goes to the very core of its existence?

Let us enumerate factors that cause disunity and can destroy the family in this modern day. The influences of hedonism, secularization, consumerism, a throw-away culture, the culture of death, contraceptive culture by promoting irresponsible sex, disrespect for the elderly to the point of euthanasia, and deviated sexual orientations, as well as the reduction of the role of the evil one to a deep physical, psychological and spiritual dysfunction.

Man really seems to be increasingly powerless against these forces of disunity within the family. The best antidote against these assaults is an inner force which comes from above: a gift grace from God. The family needs help from God, Himself, the creator of the family. To take away God is to take away the source of the family’s life and existence! However, this God who became man in Jesus is continuously and substantially present in the Eucharist



Photo from the Diocese of Naval



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag

The Eucharist is Jesus Himself present on this earth, and the family is where we all belong, without which we would only have been individuals alien to our own identity and origin, since we started existence in a family.

The effect of the Eucharist is that union between God and man which also brings unity among everyone. The Eucharist produces this same effect because it transforms us into “another Christ”. Since the love that has been revealed to us in Jesus is the model of love that we should have for one another, we get to love as Christ loves.

In the Eucharist, we learn to love one another as Christ loves us. Though we are sinners, He showed to us His everlasting mercy which cannot but elicit a loving response from us. The Eucharist binds us together in Christ and more so, it helps us become Christ together, within our families. Needless to say, since the Eucharist makes us love as Christ loves, it helps us

become merciful to one another, and it makes our love for one another grow deeper. It gives us the grace and capacity to forgive one another.

Families could be united and be shielded from the world's negative influences which are ever more present, stronger and dangerous. But this can only be realized if we humble ourselves and accept that alone we cannot make it. We need God in the Eucharist to help families become ever more united, loving and merciful. Families should be a reflection of the love and unity of the Holy Trinity through the bond of the Eucharist.



Simple Activities

Activity: Two Truths and a Lie

Instruction: This is great and exciting activity to learn more about your friends/peer groups/families. It also allows everybody to get to know each other a little better. Have every member of the participants disclose two things about themselves that are true and one thing that is a lie. These things about themselves can be their attitude, character, something about their career, status, favorite sports, movies etc. They will write the two truths and one lie in a bond paper without giving any clue as to what is truth and what is lie. Then they will put it in their back through a tape. Everyone now must roam-around in order to mark the lie with an X and checkmark on the truths. Example:

- ✓ Friendly
- X In relationship
- ✓ Chubby

After 7-10 minutes of putting a mark on the paper of all the participants. Allow them to go in front and share their feelings and expectations during the activity. Did they honestly write a truth about themselves and a lie about themselves? Are other participants able to rightly guess the truths and the lie on their papers? The catechist may add other questions and exhortations for this activity.

Song Analysis (see next page)

Guide for Reflection:

- † How do I experience God in my family?
- † How does my family keep God's presence in our home?



THE FAMILY PRAYER SONG

(As for me and my House, Joshua 24:15)

Song by Morris Chapman

Come and fill our homes With Your presence
You alone are worthy of our reverence

As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
We will serve the Lord

Lord, we vow to live holy
Bowing our knees to You only

Staying together; Praying together
Any storm we can weather
Trusting in God's Word
We need each other
Fathers and mothers
Sisters and brothers
In harmony and love



Prayer / Worship

Prayer for Family centered in Christ

Almighty and ever living Lord, thank you so much for the gift of family and for making each one a part of my life. Lord, I praise your name for each member of my family that knows and loves You and has placed their trust in the Lord Jesus as savior. How it rejoices my heart with Your grace and goodness, and may we learn day by day to cast all our cares upon You.

We come before you our God and Father, to pray for protection and provision for homes and families throughout our nation and for the sanctity of family life. Bless us with Your love and favor all those families that are seeking to live a good life. Provide for their needs, protect them in Your grace and favor and cover them in the shelter of Your wings.

Bring to light the hidden works of darkness that can cause such untold disunity and distress to family life, and may parents unite together as one in prayer and praise to You, as they teach and train their children in the ways of the Lord. May Your grace and Your favor be upon men and women, husband and wives, parents and children as together they seek the things of God in a home that chooses to serve the Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - Family is the domestic Church and the Church exists in order to evangelize. Hence, the role of the family, the mother, father, children and all the members of the family must exercise the priesthood of the baptized by prayers and thanksgiving the reception of the sacraments, the witness of a holy life, self-denial and active charity. Thus, as Christ gave Himself to us, so does the family must exist to give life to the world.

- † **LIVE** – The Family must respond to the urgent call of New Evangelization. One of the purposes of the New Evangelization is the transformation of society in which all Christians, lay people and families are called to be involved. And that transformation is none other than building up together the Kingdom of God. How can we do this? The CBCP pastoral letter for the Year of the Eucharist and Family invited us to kneel down to bring renewal to the family. We kneel to serve like the Lord. We kneel in the Eucharist. It is a constant challenge to every families to be a lover of the Eucharist. Every family must pray and participate the Eucharistic celebration. As they said the family that prays together stays together. We are challenged to be a model family who always go to Church and pray. Hence, we must also encourage other families to go together as one family and celebrate the love of the family in the Eucharist.

We need goals for the growth of our Christian family such as:

- † For families to know God and His Word;
 - † For families to value relationships and treat others with kindness and respect;
 - † For families to show patience, kindness and humility in the family.
 - † For parents to share the truths about God with their children so that future generations will put their trust in Him.
-
- † **SHARE** - The New Evangelization demands new models of reference, new wine in new wine skins. Therefore, every family is encouraged to share their time as a commitment to the spiritual growth of their own family members and other neighboring families. Families should pray and eat together during meals. They should encourage every member of their families to pray a simple prayer when they wake up in the morning and when they rest in the evening. Our apostolate should include praying for all families in the whole world every day.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

CONVERSION: LOST AND FOUND



Introduction



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

The family must be a symbol of unity in forming a community of persons. Christian family must be a model of communion and charity. The family should also be in the service of life through procreation, education of offspring and proper upbringing of the children in the Catholic faith. Likewise, the family is a miniature Church that has the

responsibility of being an agent of development and social transformation in the society. Thus, the family serves as a focal point of evangelization. This means that the family must share in the threefold mission of Christ by spreading the Good News starting with their own family, transmitting it to their neighborhood, and to the parish community.

Christian families must be united and be guarded from the world's negative influences. This can only be realized with the help of God. His living presence during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist leads the Christian families to become more united, loving, and faithful members of the Church. Sad to say, some television programs often negatively influence and undercut the values inculcated in family life (Amoris Laetitia 274).

The family is the focal point of evangelization. Since the family is the basic cell of the Church and the society, the Gospel has to be shared first within the family. Integral faith formation of children, youth and parents must take place within the family. Unfortunately, we must also recognize that the family is the origin of many cultural distortions that brings about many of our problems as a people. Therefore, we need to commit ourselves to a more intensive evangelization of the family, so that the family might become, not just an object, but an agent of evangelization.



Worship

Gospel of Luke 15: 11-32

¹¹ Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. ¹⁴ When he had

spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. ¹⁶ He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. ¹⁷ But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! ¹⁸ I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.” ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ ²² But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; ²⁴ for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. ²⁷ He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ ³¹ Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”



Doctrine

Christian Family life

Most religions consider family life to be a blessing and value the stability of marriage. Christians believe the Church should be a model of family life. Building our families upon a solid foundation of Christian values and principles will give the family security and power to live a genuine life and combat evil affliction in its daily life.

† The marriage ceremony and its significance

Many Christians believe that marriage is the foundation of family life. It is a sacrament and is intended as a lifelong commitment. It is also intended that marriage will bring children into the world and that they will be brought up in Christian values.

Some of the main features of a Christian wedding ceremony are: An exchange of vows, an exchange of rings to symbolize the eternal nature of marriage, and prayers asking for God's blessings on the couple.



Christian values in the family are very important. Children should be brought up in a loving and supportive family, founded on marriage. The Church should be a model of family life.

† Husband and wives in the family

Husbands and wives should respect each other's roles within marriage and value each other equally. This respect entails caring for those within the home which is done through earning money to provide for the family. Men should truly esteem and love women with total respect for their personal dignity, and society should create and develop conditions that prioritize favorable working conditions.

“Men and women are both made in the image of God and should be treated equally—they should share responsibilities and privileges. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

† Protection and nurture in the Family

Family is the first place where children can learn about love, companionship and forgiveness. Parents must set a good example on how to live a good Christian life. Families must play an important role in the community. They can provide support for other families, care for the elderly, and adopt children. Responsibility towards elderly, and other family members is especially important. If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (1 Timothy 5:8).

† Parent and child relationships; developing spirituality in the family

The fourth commandment teaches us that children should treat their parents with honor and respect. They should consider their parents' wishes and be obedient. (Children, obey your parents...Parents, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4).



Photo from the Diocese of Antipolo



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando (La Union)

Children are gifts from God. Thus, parents have responsibilities towards them that includes, but are not limited to:

- † caring for them properly.
- † teaching them how to live and how to accept authority.
- † teaching them about God.
- † Incorporating them into the Church by having them baptized and promising to raise them up in a loving home.
- † teaching children how to pray
- † celebrating mass with their children in the Church
- † sending their children to a catechism class

Christian values in the Family

† Families Worship Together

The Eucharist is the source of deep love and intimacy that Catholic families are called to live out. To celebrate this, Christian families must participate Mass together on Sundays and holy days (and at other times as they are able). They need to actively participate in the sacramental life of the Church. In addition, recognizing that we sometimes struggle to love one another as we should, families must regularly go to confession (recommended: monthly) to seek God's forgiveness, grace and inspiration to love more and better. The family, together with the catechist and Church authority must teach the 10 commandments of the Lord in order to plant seeds of faith and watch it grow through obedience to the commandments.

† Families that Prays Together

Families should have a habit of eating together and praying together. Families are called to love with the love that flows from God's own heart. Reading the scripture is the best way to unite and educate our family in Christian faith. Parents should desire to build a family with Christian values and fear of God. Reading the Scripture as a family is a good way to bond the family. Setting aside a specific time each day will make this task easier.

In addition to both our individual prayer life and our worship with our parish communities, families should gather together for family prayers every day. We use our daily family prayer time to:

- † Praise and thank God for His blessings.
- † Ask forgiveness for the times we didn't love as we should.
- † Ask for the grace to love each other and the world better.
- † Pray for both our family's needs and the needs of the Family of God.
- † Seek God's will in our lives.

Let us treat family prayer not as a duty or a chore but as the key to true intimacy and joy in our home.



† Catholic Families: Called to Intimacy

Most importantly, Christian family life is a call to intimate communion (Jn 17:21). Catholic families serve that goal by being schools of love where we learn how to love God and each other with our whole hearts, minds, souls and strength (CCC 1657). To do this, we constantly seek new ways to be even more open and loving with one another as husband and wife, parents, and children.

For instance, children are supposed to be the visible sign of the loving union between husband and wife. Christian families live this out both in openness to life and by working hard on the quality of relationships with one another.

† Put Family First

Because our family relationships are the primary means God use to help us become the people He created us to be, we treat family life as the most important activity in our week. We create and protect family rituals, like regular family dinners, time for prayer and worship, weekly game nights and family days, as well as regular scheduled times for communication and relationship-building--to work, play, talk and pray together.

† Christian Family is a witness and sign of the love of God

Through the family's way of life, we can recognize that God wants to change the world through our families. Families can help build a civilization of love in the community. We actively participate in this plan in two ways.



Photo from the Diocese of Cabanatuan

First, we become witnesses of love, joy, and intimacy that every human heart longs for. We share this love in good times and in bad, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer. It would be helpful to have some inspiring symbols that uplift our faith like displaying pictures of faith (such as a nice painting of Christ, Crucifix, images of Saints etc.) throughout our homes; reflecting our beliefs with our choices in music, television, movies, books, magazines and websites visited. We should also aspire to create an atmosphere of love and devotion so that our homes will be a piece of Heaven on earth.

Second, we carry this love outside the home by serving our community in a manner that keeps our family together. We intentionally practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy within our home and outside of it. We regularly talk about how we can do a better job of living out our family's mission to be a sign of God's love in the world.



Human Values

- † **Unconditional love** - When parents accept, love, and show affection to their children, even when they make mistakes or fall short of expectations, this is unconditional love. In other words, it is a form of love with no strings attached, there is no condition but to love. Therefore, unconditional love is expressed in the family. The whole family loves one another for who they are, no matter what. We should teach families to love unconditionally; this should be shown by example, Seeking out the goodness in everyone and always praying for everyone.
- † **Respect** - Respect, also called esteem, is a positive feeling or action shown towards someone or something considered important or held in high regard. It conveys a sense of admiration for good or valuable qualities. Respect also means that we treat others in a thoughtful and courteous way. Respect in the family acknowledges that every member of the family has the same needs and right to exist. This should filter down into all aspects of family living. Thus, mutual respect is a key aspect in a harmonious family foundation. We should all speak kind words to our loved ones, be responsible for our own actions and messes, and value the opinions and wishes of our loved ones.
- † **Forgiveness** - If there is one skill that is essential to having a healthy, happy family, it is learning how to forgive. Forgiveness will determine the future of family relationships. Forgiveness is a two-way street; it requires the ability to both give and receive forgiveness. The key to changing the way family resolves conflict—no matter how broken—lies in building forgiveness into the family culture.

The way to build a culture of forgiveness into the family is by first recognizing that as believers, we forgive because Jesus first forgave us. As scriptures says, “put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive” (Colossians 3:12-13).



Morals

The Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis’ *Amoris laetitia* gives awareness that human life has a sense of incompleteness. He sees families more as works in progress than settled realities. According to him, “no family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need to constantly grow and mature in their ability to love” (AL 325). He knows well that families are imperfect and that they experience many sufferings as well as many joys.

In the course of the document, Pope Francis touches on a wide range of issues that affect family life: from migration to lack of housing; from lack of respect for elders, special



situation of persons with disability; from pornography to sexual abuse; from violence against women to the impact of biotechnology in the field of procreation.

Pope Francis knows the human conditions of our age. The encyclical is both positive and encouraging. It wants the Church to be amongst people in the realities of their lives. It espouses the Church to reflect Christ who “never fails to show compassion and closeness to frail individuals like the Samaritan woman or the woman caught in adultery” (AL 38).

Pope Francis presents the traditional teaching of the Church on issues about marriage and family. He reaffirms the teaching about the indissolubility of marriage and protecting life in the womb. Citing in particular the teaching of St Paul in his Letter to the Corinthians, he strongly reaffirms that love is the sustaining force of family life. Love within the context of family, takes on many shapes and expressions. Family is, in fact, a “dynamic process”, “one which advances gradually with the progressive integration of the gifts of God.”

He speaks of couples being united in a richly encompassing and lasting union with a “mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures”. Marriage is a life project which he sees as maturing into the human experience of intimacy and love., Pope Francis encourages all families to move forward even from their imperfections and woundedness to “discover a path to personal growth.”

Marriage is a reflection of the joy of love in the contemporary world that will speak to both believers and non-believers alike. As our society debates the nature of marriage and struggles with the needs of those who feel isolated from its traditional expression, this document can be a valuable source for a deeper consideration of just what marriage and family really is.

The spirituality of marriage and the family is called in *Amoris laetitia* as spirituality of communion (AL 314-325).

- † **Spirituality of communion:** Spirituality that becomes incarnated in our personal and communitarian life is rooted in communion with God and is revealed and expanded in communion with others. We need an attitude of openness to God and to others and be guided by the Holy Spirit to overcome self-centered attitude, division, exclusion, and discrimination. The others merit complete attention and care in promoting personal relationships and building together a better world, that is more humane and just.
- † **Spirituality of love:** We must find in the love of God, the deepest source for our own lives; God’s love is the ultimate and definitive dimension of our existence.
- † **Spirituality of care and consolation:** We are called to become witnesses and cooperators in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification, transmitting the image of God, defending dignity from all aggression and violence, healing the wounds of division, and taking care of one another.
- † **Spirituality of mercy:** We are called to share God’s love especially with the weak, the least, the poor, the lost, and the last shepherding them with mercy and tenderness.

Holy Family

Family and discipleship ask us to go and be the change in the world. Instead of just seeking change, we must be the change ourselves – to listen to the needy and care for everyone, most especially those near us--our families. To be instruments of God’s Words, by sharing His love to others; by telling and retelling the story of Jesus, most especially in the peripheries.

There is no perfect family in this world. Every family has its share of life’s endless joys and miseries. No one is exempt from living in this mystery. Not only are few families addressed here. Even the Holy Family– Jesus, Joseph, and Mary – had their fair share of joys, miseries, and mystery. Joseph was in a dilemma, whether to accept Mary as his wife, due to shame and confusion. Mary was startled that she would bear the Son from the Most High. Jesus was born in a lowly manger and was rejected by many. They were even hunted down to death by King Herod. Yet with all of these, the Holy Family became holy for they followed the will of God. They followed the Light of Faith. The faith entrusted by God becomes a hope for love and peace.

In this world, there is no perfect family. But there is one in the world to come. Yet it is not futile to live and enjoy life in this world. Why? Because it is through this world that we can go to heaven; it is through the light of faith that is engendered by a saving hope and God’s love that one can enjoy life in this world. How? By promising to love forever, where we perceive a plan bigger than our own ideas and undertakings, a plan which sustains us and enables us to surrender our future entirely to God (LF 52). . This is God’s plan of salvation “which embraces all of humanity and all creation, culminating in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ” (LF 54).



Simple Activities

Activity : Back-to-Back Drawing

This is a classic activity. To perform this exercise, have pairs of people sit back to back. Give one person a picture of a random shape, and hand the other person a blank piece of paper and a pen. Have the person with the picture describe what it is while the other person draws what they think is being described. This exercise helps teams identify communication problems that may make team unity and trust easier to develop.

Take home Family Activity

After saying grace at mealtimes, grasp hands and ask each family member to share what they are grateful for this day.

The next time your family is in the vehicle together, say, “What is one new way we can be kind and loving to each other this week?”

On Sunday afternoon, call a family “media break” and turn off all screens in your home for a set amount of time. See where the Holy Spirit leads your family.



Song Analysis



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

FATHER I HAVE SINNED (PRODIGAL SON)

Words & Music by Eugene O'Reilly

Father I have sinned,
help me find my way.
Remember not my sins,
just let me hear you say:

I forgive you, I love you
You are mine, take my hand.
Go in peace, sin no more,
Beloved one.

Father I have turned,
my back and walked away
Depended on my strength
and lived life my own way

Father I have closed,
my heart to those in need.
Thought only of myself,
a victim of my greed.

Father I have loved,
if love's the word to use.
I've played so many games,
they've left me so confused.

Father I've returned,
I'm home with you to stay.
Standing at your door,
knowing that you'll say.

Guide for Reflection

- † How often do I receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
- † Have I asked for forgiveness from people whom I have committed any sin?



Prayer / Worship

Lord, our hearts' desire is to live in harmony and unity with each other. Bind Your love to our hearts so we can live in perfect unity together. Teach us to care for our family members and forgive others for their mistakes. We ask that You prevent all those that are seeking to undermine family values that are built up on biblical principles. Protect the hearts and minds of parents and children alike from satanic deceptions and from the schemes and entrapments of the enemy. Make us grow in Your love. Teach us go on a mission and change the World as renewed families, sharing Your Love. Reach out Your arm to each and every family in the world and draw them back to You. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – We should be able to identify the roles of a Christian family. Many Christians believe that children are a gift from God, and that parents have responsibilities towards them that include: 1. caring for them properly. 2. Teaching them how to live and accept authority. 3. Teaching them about God. 4. Taking them to be baptized and promising to bring them up in a loving home.
- † **LIVE** -To do this, we need to cultivate marriage and good parenting habits that will make each member of the family feel loved and valued. We practice virtues that will help us live life as a gift. For instance, we choose a loving approach that disciplines by teaching virtues rather than punishing. We schedule regular one-on-one time with each family member so that we can get to know each other's thoughts, feelings, and heart's desires on the deepest level possible. We take an active interest in all the things that each family member finds true, good and beautiful, even when those interests do not come naturally to us.
- † **SHARE** – Serve others abundantly. Seek out opportunities to do family service projects. Serve in communities. But most of all, serve in your families. Offer to do chores every day and always give a beautiful smile to family members and neighbors for good vibes. Do these things with a cheerful heart and watch the blessings pour in. If the family has some extra treasures, charitable donations to the church or donating to charities is a great way to teach selflessness that Christ showed us.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

COMMUNION: FINDING JESUS



Introduction

**“They started to look for him among their relatives and friends”
(Luke 2:44).**

Family-centeredness supplies a basic sense of belongingness, stability and security. It is from our families that we Filipinos naturally draw our sense of self-identity. Jesus

as both the Son of God (*Anak ng Amang Diyos*) and the Son of Man (*Anak ng Tao*) endears Himself naturally to us, family-oriented Filipinos. As Son of Man, Jesus leads us to His Mother Mary (*Ina ng Diyos*) whom He shares with us (Jn 19:26-27). He also welcomes us into His own household, offers Himself as our brother (*kapatid*), and draws us through the Sacrament of Baptism to a new identity and into the family of His heavenly Father (Jn 3:5-7). What can better remind us, Filipinos, of our early childhood, or respond more directly to our traditional love for children, than Jesus, the Sto. Niño? At twelve, Jesus was a discerning and daring child, yet remained obedient to His parents (Lk 2:41-51). In His public life, Jesus embraced little children and admonished His disciples to be childlike in openness and simplicity (Mt 18:2-4). Since Filipinos are family oriented, we are naturally attracted to Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and the Son of Man (CFC 34-36).

The Eucharist forms families and models them after the Holy Family, equipping it to offer the whole family life as a spiritual gift to God, by being an evangelizing family. Pope Paul VI expresses this clearly: “.... the family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. For the family who is conscious of this mission, all members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. And such a family becomes the evangelizer of many other families, and of the neighborhood of which it forms part” (Evangeli Nuntiandi 71).

Any evangelizing activity of a family should begin within family life. Nothing should replace or come in the way of the parents as the primary and most important transmitters of the faith to their children. Neither the school nor the Church, neither the media nor peer groups, should usurp this special role of the parents. They should be at best a support for the parents’ rights and authentic family life structure. Pope John Paul II explains: “.... in places where anti-religious legislation endeavors even to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, “the church of the home” remains the one place where children and young people can receive authentic catechesis” (Catechesi Tradendai 68) .The family has the mission to become more and more what it is. That is to say, a community of life and love, in an effort that will find fulfillment, as is everything created and redeemed, in the Kingdom of God. Looking at it in such a way, we can say that the essence and role of the family are specified by love. Hence the family has the



mission to guard, reveal and communicate love. This is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God's love for humanity and the love of Christ, the Lord, for the Church, His bride (FC 17).

The Christian family is also called to experience a new and original communion which confirms and perfects natural human communion. In fact, the grace of Jesus Christ, "the first-born among many brethren" is by its nature and interior dynamism "a grace of brotherhood." The Holy Spirit, who is poured forth in the celebration of the sacraments, is the living source and inexhaustible sustenance of the supernatural communion that gathers believers and links them with Christ and with each other in the unity of the Church of God. The Christian family constitutes a specific revelation and realization of ecclesial communion. For this reason, it can and should be called "the domestic Church." All members of the family, each according to his or her own gift, have the grace and responsibility of building, day by day, a communion of persons, making the family, "a school of deeper humanity": this happens where there is care and love for the little ones, the sick, the aged; where there is mutual service every day; and, when there is a sharing of goods, of joys and of sorrows (FC 21).



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



Photo from the Diocese of Antipolo

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



Worship

Gospel of Luke 2: 41-50

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³ When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴ Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety." ⁴⁹ He said to them, "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he said to them. ⁵¹ Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.





Doctrine

† The Family as the First and Vital Cell of Society (FC 42; AA 11)

"Since the Creator of all things has established conjugal partnership as the beginning and basis of human society." The family is "the first and vital cell of the society." The family has vital and organic links with society, since it is its foundation and the family nourishes it continually through its role of service to life. It is from the family that citizens come to birth and it is within the family where they find the first school of social virtues that animates the principle of existence and the development of society itself. Thus, far from being closed in on itself, the family is by nature and vocation open to other families and to society, as it undertakes its social role.

† The Family, Within the Mystery of the Church (FC 49)

Among the fundamental tasks of the Christian family is its ecclesial task: the family is placed at the service of building up the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church.

In order to understand better the foundations, the contents, and the characteristics of this participation, we must examine the many profound bonds linking the Church and the Christian family. We establish the family as a "Church in miniature" (*Ecclesia domestica*), in such a way that in its own way, the family is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church.

It is, above all, the Church as Mother that gives birth to, that educates and builds up the Christian family by putting into effect, in its regard, the saving mission which she has received from her Lord. By proclaiming the Word of God, the Church reveals to the Christian family its true identity, what it is and should be according to the Lord's plan. By celebrating the sacraments, the Church enriches and strengthens the Christian family with the grace of Christ for its sanctification to the glory of the Father. By its continuous proclamation of the new commandment of love, the Church encourages and guides the Christian family to the service of love, so that it may imitate and relive the same self-giving and sacrificial love that the Lord Jesus has for the entire human race.

In turn, the Christian family is grafted into the mystery of the Church to such a degree as to become a sharer, in its own way, in the saving mission proper to the Church. By virtue of the sacrament, Christian married couples and parents "in their state and way of life have their own special gift among the People of God." For this reason, they not only receive the love of Christ and become a saved community, but they are also called upon to communicate Christ's love to their brethren, thus becoming a saving community.



In this way, while the Christian family is a fruit and sign of the supernatural fecundity of the Church, it also stands as a symbol, witness and participant in the Church's motherhood.

† The Christian Family's Ministry of Evangelization (FC 52- 53)

To the extent in which the Christian family accepts the Gospel and matures in faith, it becomes an evangelizing community. As Pope Paul VI stated: "The family, like the Church, ought to be a place where the Gospel is transmitted and from which the Gospel radiates. In a family, which is conscious of this mission, all the members evangelize and are evangelized. The parents not only communicate the Gospel to their children, but from their children they can themselves receive the same Gospel as deeply lived by them. Such a family becomes the evangelizer to many other families, and to the neighborhood of which it forms part." This apostolic mission of the family is rooted in Baptism and receives from the sacrament of marriage, the grace of, new strength to transmit the faith, to sanctify and transform our present society according to God's plan.



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose Occidental

Particularly today, the Christian family has a special vocation to witness to the paschal covenant of Christ. By constantly radiating the joy of love and the certainty of the hope for which it must give an account, "the Christian family loudly proclaims both the present virtues of the Kingdom of God and the hope of a blessed life to come." The absolute need for family catechesis emerges with particular force in certain situations, that the Church unfortunately experiences in some places: "In places where anti-religious legislation endeavors even to prevent education in the faith, and in places where widespread unbelief or invasive secularism makes real religious growth practically impossible, 'the Church of the home' remains as the one place where children and young people can receive authentic catechesis."

† Ecclesial Service

The ministry of evangelization carried out by Christian parents is original and irreplaceable. It assumes the characteristics typical of family life itself, which should be interwoven with love, simplicity, practicality and daily witness.



The family must educate the children for life in such a way that each one may fully perform his or her role according to the vocation received from God. Indeed, the family that is open to transcendent values serves its brothers and sisters with joy, fulfills its duties with generous fidelity, and is aware of its daily sharing in the mystery of the glorious Cross of Christ. Such family becomes the primary and most excellent seed-bed of vocations to a life of consecration to the Kingdom of God.

The parents' ministry of evangelization and catechesis ought to play a part in their children's lives also during adolescence and youth, when the children, as often happens, challenge or even reject the Christian faith received in earlier years. Just as in the Church, where the work of evangelization can never be separated from the sufferings of the apostle, so it is in the Christian family where parents must face, with courage and great interior serenity, the difficulties that their ministry of evangelization sometimes encounters in their own children.

It should not be forgotten that the service rendered by Christian spouses and parents to the Gospel is essentially an ecclesial service. It has its place within the context of the whole Church as an evangelized and an evangelizing community. In so far as the ministry of evangelization and catechesis of the family is rooted in and derived from the one mission of the Church, and is ordained for the up-building of the One Body of Christ, it must remain in intimate communion with the Church. It also needs to collaborate responsibly with all the other evangelizing and catechetical activities present and at work in the ecclesial community, both at the diocesan and parochial levels.

† **The Christian Family as a Community in Dialogue with God (FC 55-56)**

† *The Church's Sanctuary in the Home*

The proclamation of the Gospel and its acceptance in faith reach their fullness in the celebration of the sacraments. The Church which is a believing and evangelizing community is also a priestly people invested with the dignity of sharing in the power of Christ, the High Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant.

The Christian family too, is part of this priestly people which is the Church. By means of the sacrament of marriage, in which it is rooted and from which it draws nourishment, the Christian family is continuously vivified by the Lord Jesus. It is called and engaged by Him in a dialogue with God through the sacraments, through the offering of one's life, and through prayer. This is the priestly role which the Christian family can and ought to exercise in intimate communion with the whole Church, through the daily realities of married and family life. In this way the Christian family is called to be sanctified and to sanctify the ecclesial community and the world.

† ***Marriage as a Sacrament of Mutual Sanctification and an Act of Worship***



The sacrament of marriage is the specific source and original means of sanctification for Christian married couples and families. It takes up again and makes specific the sanctifying grace of Baptism. By virtue of the mystery of the death and Resurrection of Christ, of which the spouses are made part in a new way by marriage, conjugal love is purified and made holy. "This love the Lord has judged worthy of special gifts. It is healing, perfecting and exalting the gifts of grace and of charity" (Gaudium et Spes 49).

The gift of Jesus Christ is not exhausted in the actual celebration of the sacrament of marriage. Rather, it accompanies the married couple throughout their lives. This fact is explicitly recalled by the Second Vatican Council when it says that Jesus Christ "abides with them so that, just as He loved the Church and handed Himself over on her behalf, the spouses may love each other with perpetual fidelity through mutual self-bestowal.

For this reason, Christian spouses have a special sacrament by which they are fortified and receive a kind of consecration in the duties and dignity of their state. By virtue of this sacrament, as spouses fulfill their conjugal and family obligations, they are also penetrated with the Spirit of Christ, who fills their whole lives with faith, hope and charity. Thus, they increasingly advance towards their own perfection, as well as towards their mutual sanctification, and hence contribute jointly to the glory of God."

Christian spouses and parents are included in the universal call to sanctity. For them, this call is specified by the sacrament they have celebrated and is carried out concretely in the realities proper to their conjugal and family life. This gives rise to the grace and requirement of an authentic and profound conjugal and family spirituality that draws its inspiration from the themes of creation, covenant, cross, resurrection, and sign, which were stressed more than once in the *Familiaris Consortio* (140).

Christian marriage, like the other sacraments, "whose purpose is to sanctify people, to build up the body of Christ, and, to give worship to God," is in itself a liturgical action glorifying God in Jesus Christ and in the Church. By celebrating it, Christian spouses profess their gratitude to God for the sublime gift bestowed on them at being able to live in their married and family lives, the very love of God for people and that of the Lord Jesus for the Church, His bride.

Just as husbands and wives receive from the sacrament the gift and responsibility of translating into their daily life the sanctification bestowed on them, so the same sacrament confers on them the grace and moral obligation of transforming their whole lives into a "spiritual sacrifice."

† *Marriage and the Eucharist (FC 57)*

The Christian family's sanctifying role is grounded in Baptism and has its highest expression in the Eucharist, to which Christian marriage is intimately connected. The Second Vatican Council drew attention to the unique relationship between the



Eucharist and marriage by requesting that "marriage normally be celebrated within the Mass." To understand better and live more intensely the graces and responsibilities of Christian marriage and family life, it is altogether necessary to rediscover and strengthen this relationship.

The Eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, in fact, represents Christ's covenant of love with the Church, sealed with His blood on the Cross. In this sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, and from which it is interiorly structured and is continuously renewed.

As a representation of Christ's sacrifice of love for the Church, the Eucharist is a fountain of charity. In the Eucharistic gift of charity, Christian families find the foundation and soul of its "communion" and its "mission." By partaking in the Eucharistic bread, the different members of the Christian family become one body, which reveals and shares the wider unity of the Church. In Their sharing of the Body of Christ that is "given up" and in His Blood that is "shed" comes a never-ending source of missionary and apostolic dynamism for the Christian family.



Faith Response

- † An **openness** to the universality of God's family. That is, from a particular Christian family to the universal Church, the family of God.
- † **To seek and look** for Jesus in the other family as the bond of baptism unites every catholic and Christian family.
- † **Letting God** to enter in every Christian family and be the light of the family who cares and loves everyone without exception.
- † **Participate and involve** oneself to the mission cause of the universal Church, a broader sense of responsibility and participation to the universal church and the bigger family of God.



Human Values

- † **FRATERNAL LOVE**- The practice of charity with a love that recognizes another person as a child of God, and therefore as brother or sister in the Lord. When Jesus gave the precept of fraternal charity, He Himself set its measure: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39). This measure is so great that it would be difficult to exceed it when we consider how much every person is inclined to love himself/herself. The good that each of us desires for ourselves is so great that if we could succeed in desiring just as much for our neighbor—for any neighbor—our charity would be truly magnanimous. Jesus has said, "Do to others as you would



have them do to you” (Luke 6:31), which, in practice, signifies that we treat others exactly as we wish to be treated ourselves.

† **KINDNESS** - Kindness is being gentle, thoughtful, helpful, and forgiving at times when it would be so easy to be angry. It also displays the same virtues when the sheer inconvenience of the situation would seem to justify non-involvement. Kindness much prefers consideration over anger and leaps enthusiastically over the barriers of inconvenience. The kind person persists in behaving humanely no matter how circumstances may tempt him to behave otherwise. It is only appropriate that Christians should be ambassadors of kindness. As St. Paul advises in Ephesians 4:31: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”

† **CHARITY** - In Christian theology, Charity (Latin: *Caritas*) is considered as one of the seven virtues and is understood by Thomas Aquinas as "the friendship of man for God", which "unites us to God". He holds it as "the most excellent of the virtues". Further, Aquinas holds that "the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor". The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1997) defines "charity" as "the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God".



Photo from the Diocese of Tandag



Morals

- † Becoming a disciple of Jesus means accepting the invitation to belong to God's family, and to live in conformity with His way of life.
- † The home is the first school of Christian life and is "a school for human enrichment."
- † Every Christian family plays a key role in our sanctification because it is the primary place where we practice coming to intimately love other persons.
- † The family is to participate in the development of society by becoming a community of social training and hospitality, as well as a community of political involvement and activity.
- † The family is to share in the life and mission of the Church by becoming a believing and evangelizing community, a community in dialogue with God, and a community at the service of humanity.





Simple Activities

Activity: A letter of the heart

- † Give the learners writing materials and coloring materials, let them decorate and write a letter for a family, not necessarily his family, and a letter that he/she wants to say to a family.
- † After doing these letters, put a number in every letter
- † On a separate paper or material write the number that corresponds to the number of letter and learners
- † Let them pick a number. Make sure that they do not pick their own number.
- † NB: Explain to them the importance of a bigger family, not only blood relationship but also the spiritual bond in every family of God. Thus, the letter symbolizes the love and care of every learner to other families.

Song Analysis

ISANG PAGKAIN, ISANG KATAWAN, ISANG BAYAN

Lyrics and Chords by: Lucio San Pedro, Sr.

Katulad ng mga butil na tinitipon
Upang maging tinapay na nagbibigay buhay
Kami nawa'y matipon din
At maging bayan Mong giliw

Koro:
Isang Panginoon, iisang katawan
Isang bayan, isang lahi
Sayo'y nagpupugay

Katulad din ng mga ubas
Na piniga at naging alak
Sino mang uminom nito
May buhay na walang hanggan
Kami nawa'y maging sangkap
Sa pagbuo nitong bayang liyag
(Koro)

Guide for Reflection

- † How do I welcome God in my life?
- † How can I share God's love to others?



Prayer / Worship

These prayers can be prayed by different learners.

A Prayer for Protection:

The Lord your God is with you, the Mighty Warrior who saves. He will take great delight in you. In His love, He will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

Prayer: Thank you Lord that You are always watching over us. It is amazing that You are rejoicing over us with singing right now. You are the mighty warrior who saves. May we rest in Your love this day.

A Prayer for Peace:

‘May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace’ (Numbers 6:24-26).

Prayer: Lord we know that You are the God of peace. We thank you that even when the earth is trembling we can be still and know You are God. Nothing can separate us from You. We praise You for Your protection and favor. As we sit in Your presence and focus our hearts and minds on You, give us Your perfect peace. We trust that no matter what, You will guide us, protect us and be gracious toward us. Amen.

For Compassion:

“And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another (readily and freely), as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father we thank You for Your everlasting love. We thank You that because of Your love we are able to love others. We pray that You would help us be kind to one another. May we show each other mercy, forgiveness and understanding. Help us to share the love You’ve so generously shared with us. As a family may we treat each other with compassion. Show us any areas where our hearts need to change or repent. May we so freely offer forgiveness to our family and friends as You so freely forgive us. Amen.

For Harmony:

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity (Colossians 3:13-14).

Prayer: Lord our hearts desire is to live in harmony and in unity with each other. Bind Your love to our hearts so we can live in perfect unity together. Teach us to care for our family members and forgive them for their mistakes.



For Wisdom:

Don't turn your back on wisdom, for she will protect you. Love her, and she will guard you. Getting wisdom is the wisest thing you can do! And whatever else you do, develop good judgment (Proverbs 4:6-7).

Prayer: Dear God, we thank You that if we ask for wisdom, You freely give it to us. We need Your insight. For Your ways are higher than our ways and Your thoughts are higher than our thoughts. You see things we don't. Stir our family's hearts to earnestly seek Your wisdom. Help our family to develop good judgment. Guide our steps and provide us with direction in all areas of our lives. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † **LIVE** your life thinking that all persons are your brother and sisters.
- † As member of the big family, **SHARE** the blessings of God to others, knowing that even a little gift, given with love is appreciated by God.
- † **PARTICIPATE** in the activities of your parish, be an active member of the acolytes or choir or even the group who clean the Church facilities.
- † **EVANGELIZE** with actions even in simple ways.
- † **PRAY** together as a family; pray as you begin to work, and always keep in mind that every work you do is for God's glory.
- † **DO SIMPLE SACRIFICES** for protection of the families in the whole world. This simple sacrifice, as long as it is genuine and it is offered to God, can make a difference.

CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

MISSION: MY BROTHER, SISTER, AND MOTHER

“For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mt 12: 50)



Introduction

We give emphasis on the mission of the family to make their own homes a Christ-centered community with life-witnessing of God’s commandment of LOVE. May our families be united and be shielded from the world’s negative influences which are ever more present, stronger and dangerous. But this can only be realized if we humble ourselves and accept that alone

we cannot make it. We need God in the Eucharist to help our families become ever more united, loving and merciful. Our families can be a reflection of this love and unity of the eternal family of the Trinity in Heaven through the bond of the Eucharist. The Eucharistic family is the best gift from God to our country. It is also the best gift that we can offer to God for the world’s evangelization.

The Holy Eucharist is the source of all vocations in the Church for Christian witness, and for Evangelization. The smallest unit in the Church and society is the Sanctuary of family life: the ‘Domestic Church.’ The Eucharist sends families on a mission, to proclaim both in word and deed and to share their faith. The Eucharist has the greatest power possible to move the family to love and serve the Lord, to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to all encountered. This means service to the poor; respect and defense of human life at all stages; promotion of human rights; and the building of a civilization of love, justice, and peace. Pope John Paul II explains that, “The Eucharist is the very source of Christian marriage. The Eucharistic Sacrifice, in fact, represents Christ’s covenant of love with the Church, sealed with His blood on the Cross. In this sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant, Christian spouses encounter the source from which their own marriage covenant flows, from which it is interiorly structured, and continuously renewed” (FC 57). The Eucharist must be recognized by Catholic families as a source of charity and the basis of the communion and mission of family life.



Photo from the Diocese of Romblon

Family commitment to life is a necessary consequence of our union with our Eucharistic Lord. The Eucharist teaches us to be sensitive to all human suffering whether it is that of an unborn child, a handicapped person, or the chronically ill. It encourages families to seek ways to deal with injustices and redress them. At times, it means working in communion with and imitating the saints. It means showing in our lives, by personal example, the truths we profess

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



and the priorities and principles we adhere to. It means being engaged in a more extensive apostolate as part of the whole Church. "Anyone who does the will of the Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12:50). It is from the Eucharist that families receive the power and strength to actively live the daily challenge, the daily sacrifice to follow Christ, and realize their role as consecrated members belonging to the family of God - the Church.

Young people, on their part, should seek to edify their parents by striving to live their faith fully, centering their family life around the Eucharist; by respecting and honoring their parents; by prompt obedience; by a life of service to God, their family, their neighbors, and their Church; by special attention to the poor, the unborn, the handicapped, the elderly, and the sick. Through Christian witness of a strong family life that is nourished and empowered by "daily bread" - the Eucharist, other families that have lapsed in their faith may be convinced that they too can grow in the practice of their faith and family life, centered on devotion to the Real Presence of Christ (Whalen, 2005).



Worship

Gospel of Matthew 12: 46-50

⁴⁶ While He was still speaking to the crowds, His mother and His brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to Him. ⁴⁷ Someone told Him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ But to the one who had told Him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ And pointing to His disciples, He said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!" ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."



Doctrine

† Family as Domestic Church (CCC 1655-58)

Christ chose to be born and grow up in the bosom of the holy family of Joseph and Mary. The Church is nothing other than "the family of God." From the beginning, the core of the Church was often constituted by those who had become believers "together with all [their] household." When they were converted, they desired that "their whole household" should also be saved. These families who became believers were islands of Christian life in an unbelieving world (CCC 1655).

Today, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith. For this reason, the Second Vatican Council, using an ancient expression, calls the family the *Ecclesia domestica*. It is in the bosom of the family parents are. It is here that parents by word and example, become the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should also encourage them in the vocation, which is proper to each child, fostering with special

care any religious vocation" (CCC 1656).

The family, the mother, children, and all members of the family exercise the priesthood of the baptized in a privileged way "by the reception of the sacraments, prayer and thanksgiving, the witness of a holy life, and self-denial and active charity." Thus, the home is the first school of Christian life and "a school for human enrichment." Here one learns endurance and the joy of work, fraternal love, generosity, even repeated - forgiveness, and above all divine worship in prayer and the offering of one's life (CCC 1657).

We must also remember the great number of single persons who, because of the particular circumstances in which they have to live - often not of their choosing - are especially close to Jesus' heart and therefore deserve the special affection and active solicitude of the Church, especially of pastors. Many remain without a human family often due to conditions of poverty. Some live their situation in the spirit of the Beatitudes, serving God and neighbor in exemplary fashion. The doors of homes, the "domestic churches," and the door of the great family, which is the Church, must be open to all. "No one is without a family in this world. The Church is a home and family for everyone, especially those who 'labor and are heavily laden'" (CCC 1658).

† Duties of Parents (CCC 2221-2226)

The fecundity of conjugal love cannot be reduced solely to the procreation of children, but must extend to their moral education and their spiritual formation. "The role of parents in education is of such importance, that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute." The right and the duty of parents to educate their children are primordial and inalienable.

Parents must regard their children as children of God and respect them as human persons. Showing themselves obedient to the will of the Father in heaven, they must educate their children to fulfill God's law.

Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness,



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose Occidental



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos



respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery--the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones." Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children. By knowing how to acknowledge their own failings to their children, parents will be better able to guide and correct them: He who loves his son will not spare the rod.... He who disciplines his son will profit by him. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The home is the natural environment for initiating a human being into solidarity and communal responsibilities. Parents should teach children to avoid compromising and degrading influences which threaten human societies.

Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. Parents should initiate their children at an early age into the mysteries of the faith,. They should associate them from their tenderest years with the life of the Church. A wholesome family life can foster interior dispositions that are a genuine preparation for a living faith and remain a support for it throughout one's life.

Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis of children and parents.

† **Duties of Children (CCC 2214-2220)**

Divine Fatherhood is the source of human fatherhood; this is the foundation of the honor owed to parents. The respect of children, whether minors or adults, for their father and mother is nourished by the natural affection born of the bond uniting them. It is required by God's commandment.

Respect for parents (filial piety) derives from gratitude toward those who, by the gift of life, their love and their work, have brought children into the world and enabled them to grow in stature, wisdom, and grace. "With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?" (CCC2215).

Filial respect is shown by true docility and obedience. "My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching.... When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you" (Proverbs 6:20-22). "A wise son hears his father's instruction, but a





Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

scoffer does not listen to rebuke" (Proverbs 13:1).

As long as a child lives at home with his parents, the child should obey his parents in all that they ask of him when it is for his good or that of the family. "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." Children should also obey the reasonable directions of their teachers and all to whom their parents have entrusted them. But if a child is convinced in conscience that it would be morally wrong to obey a particular order, he must not do so. As they grow up, children should continue to respect their parents. They should anticipate their wishes, willingly seek their advice, and accept their just admonitions. Obedience toward parents ceases with the emancipation of the children; not so respect, which is always owed to them. This respect has its roots in the fear of God, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The fourth commandment reminds grown children of their responsibilities toward their parents. As much as they can, they must give them material and moral support in old age

and in times of illness, loneliness, or distress. Jesus recalls this duty of gratitude. "For the Lord honored the Father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins, and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother. O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him.... Whoever forsakes his father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers his mother is cursed by the Lord" (Sirach 3:1-15).

Filial respect promotes harmony in all of family life; it also concerns relationships between brothers and sisters. Respect toward parents fills the home with light and warmth. "Grandchildren are the crown of the aged" (Proverbs 17:6). "With all humility and meekness, with patience, support one another in charity" (Ephesians 4:2).

For Christians, a special gratitude is due to those from whom they have received the gift of faith, the grace of Baptism, and life in the Church. These may include parents, grandparents, other members of the family, pastors, catechists, and other teachers or friends."





Faith Response

- † A catholic family must be a community of faith, hope, and charity.
- † A family must be a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.
- † The Catholic family must do his evangelizing and missionary task out of love for family, for the Church and for God.
- † The family should live in such a way that its members learn to care and take responsibility for the young, the old, the sick, the handicapped, and the poor.



Human Values

All the members of a Catholic family must believe that the love of Christ is more powerful than any adversary.

† **Jesus-centered and Jesus-leading family**

Jesus is the Head of this family. Being head does not mean merely a protector and care-taker but rather the leader who guides and takes forward in every respect. Likewise, for a Christian family, Jesus must also be the center and therefore, it must be firmly rooted in the vision of Jesus or the values of His Kingdom like love, sharing, togetherness, fairness, and so on.

† **Family: A Eucharistic life**

The Holy Mass or the Holy Eucharist must have a central and prominent place in the family. It must be the source from which we draw our vitality and energy both spiritually and psychologically. As it has been the case for saints and martyrs, so it must also be the case for every Christian families. But it should not just be a mere ritual observation but rather a real one and families must reflect the Eucharistic values of love, sharing, and self-sacrifice.

† **Brotherhood or human solidarity**

Our value must be that of love and sharing with mutual respect. In any trying circumstance, members of the family must not give up on love, the spirit of sharing and mutual respect. The Apostolicam Actuositatem (11) says: “It will fulfill this mission if it shows itself to be the domestic sanctuary of the Church through the mutual affection of its members and the common prayer, they offer to God...”



† Family that Prays

We have heard several times that a family that prays together, stays together. A Catholic family should never ignore family prayer, where the whole family sits and prays together at least once a day. The Holy Spirit definitely will work wonders in such a family, especially where the Word of God is an integral part of the prayer.



Morals

“The family is placed at the service of building up the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church” (FC 9).

- † Parents are to bring to God their whole family by authentic prayer life, Christian living and witnessing. They have to endeavor to form their home into a praying community. Efforts must be done by parents to instill among their children the importance of the basic prayers once treasured in Filipino Catholic homes.
- † Parents must encourage in their homes, the devout praying of the grace before and after meals. It is important also to revive installation of family altars in every Catholic home which reminds family members of the abiding presence of God.
- † The sacraments of the Church are means of sanctification and parents must see to it that their family is never deprived of their richness especially the Holy Eucharist. It rests upon the parents to inculcate to their children love for the Eucharist which must be at the center of a worshipping community.
- † The parents are called to holiness. By their holy life they provide good examples to their children and offer their family as a sacrifice, living, holy and pleasing to God (PCP II 117).



Simple Activities

Activity: A Catholic Filipino Family

- † Organize the learners into different groups depending on the number of the learners.
- † Explain to them the value of family, most especially the family and the Church, working together for the holiness of every member
- † Let them make a simple presentation or demonstration of the family in different situation, such as in the Church, during rosary time, meal time, and in ordinariness of their daily life as a family.

NB: The goal of this activity is to let the learners see the value of praying together as a



Song Analysis

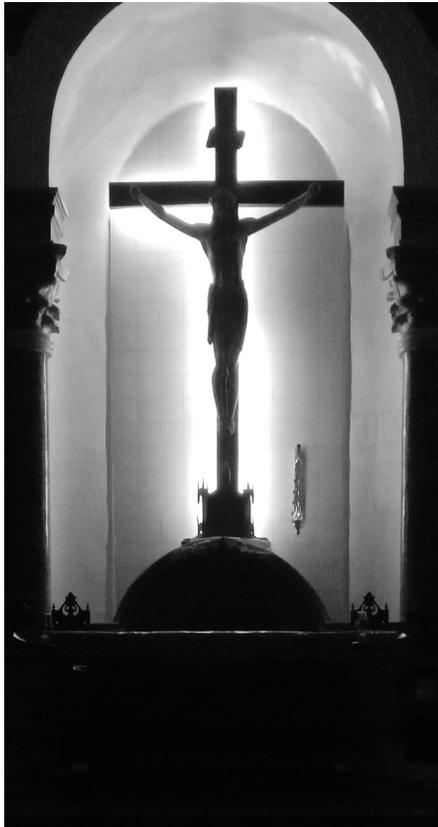


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

The Family Prayer Song

by Morris Chapman

Come and fill our homes With Your presence
You alone are worthy of our reverence
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord
As for me and my house
We will serve the Lord

Lord, we vow to live holy
Bowing our knees to You only

Staying together; Praying together
Any storm we can weather
Trusting in God's Word
We need each other
Fathers and mothers
Sisters and brothers
In harmony and love

Guide for Reflections

- † Am I good member of my family?
- † Do I act accordingly to the mission of the Church in my own family?
- † Do I and my family, adore and give thanks to the Lord together?
- † How's our family's relationship to God?



Prayer / Worship

Prayer to the Holy Family

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendor of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer. Amen.



Zeal for Mission

- † Make the family a praying community with the **SENSE OF UNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY**.
- † **LIVE** the commandment of Love and Respect within the members of the community.
- † Go to Church **TOGETHER** as a sign of thanksgiving to God.
- † **PARTICIPATE** to the activities of the Parish with regards to the family orientation and development.
- † **ORGANIZE** an outreach program or join any group that make an activity similar with so as to open wide the horizon of the family in giving and sharing of God's grace.

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.