



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

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

# CATECHETICAL MODULES

Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission



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







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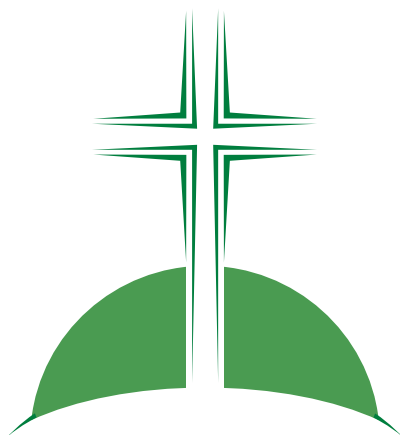
Book and Layout Design by Romel Sencio

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

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







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



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# OUR GRATITUDE, OUR MODULE STORY

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

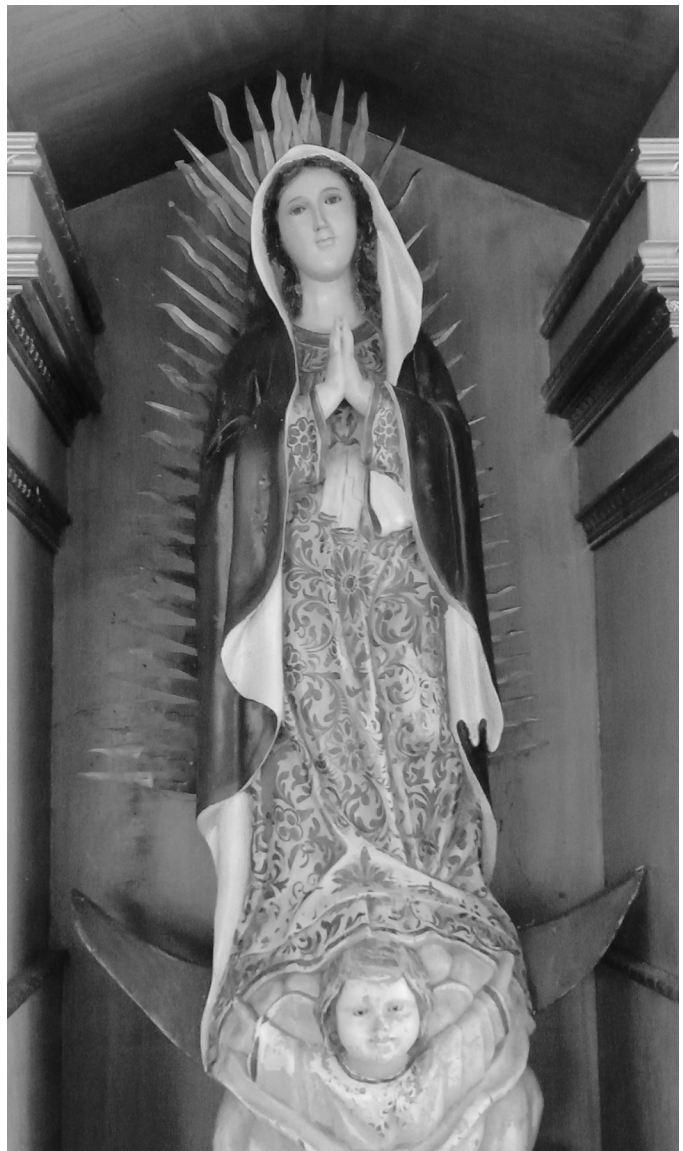


provided for by Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and three seminarians from the Diocese of Tarlac - Sem. Anthony Paul R. Tawatao, Sem. Gerald A. Cortes, and Sem. Jayson A. Besa. Other contributors who deserve our utmost gratitude are Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario for her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





# CATECHETICAL MODULE TEAM

## ■ Concept & Design

- Fr. Rene De Guzman, SDB, Dr. Caridad Barrameda, Ms. Tessi Ponteras of MOL, Fr. Salvatore Putzu, SDB, Dr. Lysander Rivera of BAMCREF DLSU, Fr. Ernesto B. de Leon, Mr. Eduardo Frando & Ms. Noemi Buena of ICAM, Sis. Rhea Castillo, OP of Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, Sr. Silvestra Orbigo, FMM, of Lumen Christi and Sr. Ma. Jesusa G. Enginco OP, *members of the Episcopal Commission on Catechesis & Catholic Education (ECCCE) Technical Working Group (TWG) 2017-2018.*
- Dr. Clarence M. Batan & Jaycar P. Espinosa of the *National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project Research Team*

## ■ Writers

- Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, *of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, YOUCAT PHILIPPINES National Director*
- Sem. Anthony Paul R. Tawatao, *Diocese of Tarlac*
- Sem. Gerald A. Cortez, *Diocese of Tarlac*
- Sem. Jayson A. Besa, *Diocese of Tarlac*
- Dr. Clarence M. Batan, *Principal Investigator, NCS 2021: PARI Project*
- Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario, *Head, Lay Formation Center, Archdiocese of Manila*
- Fr. Emmanuel Rico Ayo, *Dean, San Carlos Seminary, Makati City*
- Ms. Jane Roble, *Executive Secretary, EC-ECUM Affairs*
- Fr. Sebastiano d'Ambra, PIME, *Executive Secretary, ECIRD*
- Mr. Antonio Abuso, *Executive Secretary, ECIP*
- Br. Anthony San Pedro Dameg, *PMS, ECM*
- Assoc. Prof. Richard G. Pazcoguín, *Director, UST Campus Ministry*
- Br. Simon Peter Ramos, OP
- Br. Joenner Paulo Enriquez, OP
- Br. Marc Adrian de la Pena, OP
- **Contributors from the following centers:**
  - Archdiocese of Caceres
  - Archdiocese of Cebu
  - Archdiocese of Manila
  - Diocese of Cubao
  - Diocese of Novaliches
  - Diocese of Parañaque
  - Diocese of Pasig

## ■ Language & Content Editor

- Pamela Guenevere Avellanosa, *Adamson University*
- Keith Aaron Joven, *NCS 2021: PARI Project*

## ■ Reviewers

- Dr. Joan Christi Trocio-Bagaipo, *University of Santo Tomas*

- Dr. Florence Navidad, *University of Santo Tomas*
- Ma. Cecilia Balajadia, *University of Santo Tomas*
- Pamela Avellanosa, *Adamson University*
- Mc Kenneth M. Baluyot, *Department of Education*
- Fr. Christian Buenafe, *Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*
- Fr. Conegundo Garganta, *Executive Secretary, ECY*
- Fr. Antonio Zamora, *Catechetical Director, Archdiocese of Cebu*
- Fr. Eliseo Mercado, *Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate*

#### ■ Consultants

- Bishop Roberto C. Mallari, DD, *Chair, CBCP - ECCCE*
- Fr. Ernesto B. de Leon, *Executive Secretary, CBCP-ECCCE*
- Sr. Ma. Jesusa Enginco, O.P., *Assistant Executive Secretary, CBCP – ECCCE*

#### ■ Layout & Design

- Danielle Villena, *Multimedia Officer, NCS 2021: PARI Project*
- Romel Sencio, *Multimedia Graphic Artist, NCS 2021: PARI Project*

#### ■ Technical Support

- *The National Catechetical Study (NCS) 2021: Pastoral Action Research and Intervention (PARI) Project Research Team: Jaycar P. Espinosa, Ruth Andaya, Tisha de Vergara, Keith Aaron Joven, & Vincent Valientes*



# FOREWORD

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

Bishop, Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija

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



My Dear People of God! Grace and peace!

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

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

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

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

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

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

**All in JESUS' NAME,**





# INTRODUCTION

**Rev. Fr. Ernesto B. De Leon**

Executive Secretary

Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

# CATECHETICAL MODULE GUIDE

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

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

## Evangelization in Vatican II

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

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

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



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

## The New Evangelization

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

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

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

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

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



# The Teachings of the Pope on New Evangelization

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

## *Pope Paul VI*

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



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

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

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

### *Pope John Paul II*

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

### *Pope Benedict XVI*

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



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

processes needed to achieve this goal.

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

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



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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

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



# CATECHETICAL MODULE STRUCTURE

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

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

## Four Themes of New Evangelization

### Encountering Christ

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

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

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

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



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

## Conversion

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

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

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

## Communion (Sense of Belongingness to the Church)

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

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



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

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

## Zeal for Mission

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

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

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

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

### *A. Personal Encounter with the Saving Love of Jesus*

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



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

### *B. The Spiritual Savour of Being a People*

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

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

### *C. Sense of Mystery*

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

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

### *D. Fervent Prayer*

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



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# CATECHETICAL MODULE 5:

## THE PARISH AS A COMMUNION OF COMMUNITIES

### Overview

#### Communities as Vehicle of Renewal

The building and strengthening of participatory communities make up the parish as a “Communion of Communities.” The clergy and consecrated persons should support the growth and the strengthening of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) and other forms of faith communities as vehicles of renewal (Villegas, 2016). They must also be integrated into the parish. Likewise, support from Church leaders are essential to have a continuity of these communities in the Church who are fervent in prayer and in many aspects of devotion.



Photo from the Diocese of Urdaneta

The Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, praises the BECs, describing them as fervent in their faith and in Christian living. They bear witness to the Gospel in their surroundings and have a sense of commitment to the Church’s universal mission. Based on the statement, the BECs are necessary communities of faith as a local expression of the Church for renewal (RM 51).

What is a Basic Ecclesial Community? PCP II gives a description of BECs: “They are small communities of Christians, usually of families who gather together around the Word of God and the Eucharist. These communities are united to their pastors but are ministered regularly by lay leaders” (PCP II 138). Each member has a sense of belongingness and responsibility to each other. At the level of the family or in a similarly restricted setting, they come together for prayers, Scripture readings, catechesis, and discussions of human and ecclesial problems with a view to common commitment and other pious devotions. They also find ways to help and serve one another, particularly the underprivileged and those in the peripheries (RM 51).

The Basic Ecclesial Communities, through poverty and their faith, urge their members towards solidarity with one another, action for justice, and towards a vibrant celebration of life in the liturgy. Analyzing the PCP II’s vision of BECs, it can be concluded that it is the nature of the BECs as servant communities to be involved in action for charitable works and social transformation.

In many dioceses today, the Basic Ecclesial Communities are pastoral priority. Though there are many other forms of small faith communities today, BECs are a significant expression of faith in the various parts of the Philippine Church (PCP II 140). As the Catholic Church in the Philippines celebrates the five hundred years of faith in the country, all the dioceses in the





Philippines are challenged to give effort and importance in establishing Basic Ecclesial Communities as a form of vehicle for Church renewal.

## Integration of the Communities to the Parish

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* reminds BECs “to remain firmly attached to the local Church in which they are inserted, and to the universal Church, thus avoiding the very real danger of becoming isolated within them” (58). They should “maintain a sincere communion with the pastors whom the Lord gives to His Church, and with the Magisterium which the Spirit of Christ has entrusted to these pastors” (ibid). It is within the Basic Ecclesial Communities that Christians grow in faith through devotional aspects. Of course, it must be accompanied by the pastoral care of the parish priest to ensure the balance between practicing popular religiosity and sacramental worship.

If the BECs will be integrated well in the parish, they become a network of small Christian communities where the Word of God is listened to, proclaimed, and lived. In vibrant liturgies, they are concretely expressed in the action for social transformation for development, for peace, justice and the integrity of creation (Picardal, 2011b, p. 303). Thus, BECs have a vital role to play in the task of New Evangelization, not only in the Philippines or in third world countries, but to the whole world.

Absolutely, BECs are among those who actively participate in the process of New Evangelization as evangelizing communities (Picardal, 2011b, p. 304). This year, the Church must discern the quality of faith life in the parish, fellowship, belongingness, and participation experienced by its members. Hence, all these various communities must submit themselves to their pastors in order to be integrated into the life and mission of the parish so that the parish truly becomes a faith community immersed in the lives of its people (Palma, 2012).

## Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** The Basic Ecclesial Community encounters Christ in the breaking of the Word of God through Bible sharing and their sharing of their different stories about life, in connection to the Word of God.
- † **Conversion.** In the gatherings of the BECs in worship, they are led to fully integrate the faith they believe in, with the life they live. Such integration is necessary to those who belong in BEC, so that they may live the Kingdom values of faith, hope, and love; that they may radiate and manifest the Kingdom values in their daily lives.
- † **Sense of Belongingness.** In the integration of the Basic Ecclesial Communities to the parish or particular Churches, Church leaders must welcome the Basic Ecclesial Community. They should also give proper guidance and support for their sustainability which creates a sense of belongingness to the Church.
- † **Zeal for Mission.** There must be a necessary pastoral care for these Christian communities who are fervent in prayer and devotions. The Church must guide them so that everything they do is rooted in witnessing the Gospel of Christ. In return, lay leaders and members themselves become builders of the community for the Church.



# Etymology

- † **Community** - The word community is derived from the Latin *communitas*, or fellowship, which, in turn, is derived from *communis*, or "common". The prefix "com" signifies "with", "together", "in conjunction with", or joint". Removing the "com" from the latin, leaves you with *munis*, which derives from *munire*, meaning "to fortify, strengthen, or defend" (Aronesty, 2004).

The use of the word community emphasizes the communitarian nature of the BECs. These are not merely groups, societies, or associations but local communities whose members live in close proximity and interact with each other regularly. These are not specialized groups but stable environments. Thus, mandated organizations (like Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary), renewal movements and their local branches (Charismatics, Focolare, CFC, Catechumenate, El Shaddai, etc), cannot be considered as BECs (CBCB-BEC) (Picardal, 2011a).

- † **Basic** - The word basic refers to both the size and the social location of the BECs. The BEC are small communities. A basic community is small enough for the members to know each other well and relate deeply as friends but not too small that it turns into a primary group or barkada instead of a community. A BEC may be composed of forty to two hundred families. A BEC may be subdivided into several selda or family groupings of five to ten families. The term basic may also refer to the social location of the BECs – they are at the grassroots, at the base of society, among the poor and the least (Picardal, 2011a).
- † **Ecclesial** – the word Ecclesia (or Ekklesia) in Christian theology means both: a particular body of faithful people, and the whole body of the faithful. Latin *ecclesia*, from Greek *ekklēsia*, where the word is a compound of two segments: "ek", a preposition meaning "out of", and a verb, "kaleo", signifying "to call" - together, literally, "to call out". That usage soon disappeared and was replaced with "assembly, congregation, council", or "convocation" (Robertson, 1919). The word ecclesial emphasizes the *ecclesiality* of the BECs. They are a way of being Church – the Church that is realized, localized, and experienced at the grassroots, in the neighborhood. The BECs are not just administrative units within the parish – they are indeed the microcosm of the Church. Whatever can be said about the Church in general may also be used and be appropriated for the BECs (Picardal, 2011a).



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan



Photo from the Diocese of Malolos



## Parishes as Wellsprings of Mercy and Renewal

### Pastoral Exhortation of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines to open the Year 2017 as the Year of Parishes, Communion of Communities

Beloved people of God:

We welcome the year 2017 in our “novena-years” of preparation for the grateful celebration in 2021 of the five hundredth anniversary of the first coming and first receiving among our people of the Gospel of Christ Jesus and of His holy Church.

That forthcoming 2021 celebration, recalling the first Mass and first baptisms in our shores, should be a new and joyous explosion in our lives of faith, hope and love throughout our country. Surely such will be our response to the free and gracious gift from the heavenly Father which made the year 1521, for us Christians first of all, a memorable and incredibly significant “new beginning” in our history.

As we began this “novena” we raised a banner of hope and renewal for the Church in our land with the motto, “Live Christ, Share Christ!” That is the firm resolve with which we now open the Year 2017, and the cry of all of us, dear brothers and sisters is — “Live Christ, Share Christ!”

This cry can rightfully be the motto for the now-ongoing “new evangelization” in the Philippines, which the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines already proclaimed in 1991. To that “renewed evangelization” we brought with us all the hopes and dreams of our people” for a truly “renewed Christian society, life and culture based on the Gospel Beatitudes, suffused with Christian values of love and peace, of joy and hospitality, of patience and justice.” Thus, we also resolved that the Church in our land would become truly “a church of the poor!” (PCP II 137).

“Live Christ, Share Christ!” As we open the Year 2017, we pray that God may grant us abundant grace to make it a year of fuller fulfillment of that motto and that hope. 2017 has been programmed to focus on the parish, “a community of communities”. As a center and fountain of missionary discipleship and zeal for renewed evangelization, “a genuine center of constant missionary outreach.” in “Evangelii Gaudium” Pope Francis insists that the parish “is not an outdated institution and can possess great flexibility still, depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community” (EG 28).

### LIVE COMMUNION, SHARE COMMUNION

The Church is a mystery of communion. Our communion flows from the Trinity overflowing into humanity and sharing a common faith journeying together for the full unfolding of the Kingdom of God. This communion, made possible for us because of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, always has a double dimension—a vertical communion with God



and a horizontal communion with our brothers and sisters. The Church's life of communion is constantly open to ecumenical and missionary action because this communion is always in a state of mission.

The Church in the Philippines is a part of the communion of Churches which is the universal Church. We are a part of the one Church of Christ. In every particular Church "the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and active" (Christus Dominus 11). For this reason, the universal Church cannot be conceived as the sum of the particular Churches, or as a federation of particular Churches. Whoever belongs to one particular Church belongs to all the Churches; since belonging to the Communion, like belonging to the Church, is never simply particular, but by its very nature is always universal (Lumen Gentium 13).

In celebrating 2017 as the Year of the Parish as a Communion of Communities we are challenged to deeply discern more not only the structures of governance of our dioceses and parishes but also of the quality of faith life in the parish, the fellowship, belongingness, and participation experienced by its members. In brief, our focus will be the building of a parish that is truly a faith community immersed in the lives of its people (Palma, 2012). In the Philippines our vision of the Church as communion is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement that is the movement to foster Basic Ecclesial Communities" (PCP II 137).

Usually emerging at the grassroots, Basic Ecclesial Communities consciously strive to integrate their faith with their daily life. They are guided and encouraged by regular catechesis. Poverty and their faith urge their members towards solidarity with one another, action for justice, and towards a vibrant celebration of life in the liturgy (PCP II 139).

How can we work at renewing our parish communities so that they can better respond to the challenge of restoring all things in Christ?

## **CELEBRATE COMMUNION, LISTEN TO THE MOTHER**

2017 is the also the centennial year of the apparition of Our Lady to three children in Fatima. At Fatima, Our Lady asked her children to return to Jesus by the threefold paths of prayer, daily communion, and reparation. The message of Fatima still rings clearly and strongly for us. If we dream of Church renewal, let us return to prayer, let us receive her Son in Holy Communion and let us offer reparation for our sin.

As we pursue the dream to make every parish community a family of families and a communion of communities, let us avail of the message of Our Lady of Fatima to help us reach our vision.

In the months of May to October 2017, Catholics all over the world, led by Pope Francis, will recall, and celebrate the centenary of the six apparitions of Our Blessed Mother to the "three children of Fatima"- Lucia dos Santos and her cousins Francisco Marto, and his sister Jacinta. As we in the Philippines celebrate our parishes as communion of communities, we will also turn with prayer and devotion, deeper reflection, and rededication to "the Fatima Message" of Our Lady. All these activities will enable us to learn or relearn "what Fatima was all about"; how important and relevant Fatima still is for our time, and



how we can and should put into practice “what Fatima asks of us today”, so we can renew and reinvigorate our parishes in the Philippines.

## THE RELEVANCE OF PARISHES, THE CALL OF FATIMA

“The present efforts at Church renewal should center on the parish. Without parish renewal, the family and Basic Ecclesial Communities will not find strong supportive ambience and will continue to feel isolated” (PCP II 604). In the same vein, it would be a lost opportunity if the year of the parish as communion of communities would ignore the clarion call of Fatima for prayer, penance, and communion.

Pope Benedict XVI took pains to spell out the fundamental significance of the Fatima events and of the message of Our Lady of Fatima. He believes that the “point of Fatima” was not directed only to the emergence of the disastrous dictatorship of the twentieth century in Russia and Germany. No, it referred “to a critical moment in history ... when the whole power of evil came to a head” not only in and through those godless regimes but “in another way is still at work today in our time, in the suffering of the Church and the weakening of the forces of good and of the work of God in our world.”



*Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao*



*Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos*

If the nation needs healing, the healing will start in our parishes. If the nation needs to crush the forces of evil, it will start in our parishes. If the nation needs to strengthen the presence of God in society, the strengthening of the parishes is the only way.

Pope Benedict has written, that “the answer to the power of evil in the world of our time can only come from the transformation of the heart, through faith, hope, and love; through penance and conversion.” In this sense, the message of Fatima is precisely not a thing of the past. The Church continues to suffer ... even now there is tribulation.” “There is the power which tries to trample down the faith.”

What we beg and pray for is this: “that the power of evil be restrained, that the energies of good might regain their vigor. You could say that the triumphs of God and the triumphs of Mary are quiet, but they are real nonetheless,” said Pope Benedict XVI.

Pope Benedict tells us, then, that the framework and meaning of the message of Fatima is the struggle of the work of God in our world today and the struggle of the life of church.





and of Christians, that struggle in our own time against the massively spreading active forces of evil and sin in today's world, in our communities and societies, in our own homes, in our own lives.

## NEW WELLSPRINGS OF PRAYER AND MERCY

Let us move toward some proposals for a “program of action for our parishes and basic ecclesial communities”, a program which flows from the Fatima message. Pope Paul VI, in his own summing up of the Fatima message, defined it as “a message of prayer and penance”. Let it be so for our parishes! Our communion of communities needs a renewed and passionate program of intense prayer and penance.

Parishes and communities will be renewed only through personal and community prayer. Our first mission in the world is to be a leaven to teach our society how to pray. Our first duty in communion is prayer. The prayer of a shepherd for his sheep is always music to the ears of God. Prayer is an act of love. Every prayer whether of praise or contrition or petition is always a plea for mercy. Prayer is our parish anchor. Prayer is our cornerstone. Parishes and BECs will be renewed as oasis of mercy through reparation for sins, frequent confession, and acts of mercy.

Parishes and communities will be renewed by living the Eucharist whom we receive every day. The Eucharist is the poverty of Jesus disturbing the complacency of the wealthy; it is the wealthy sacrificing house, family, and fortune to lift up the poor from their poverty. It is the Word of God inviting the confused, the lonely, the bored, the suffering to the joy of the Gospel. It is God's life humanized in his incarnation; it is human life divinized in his suffering, death, and resurrection. It is the compassion of the Father touching the life of the sinner; the conversion of the sinner practicing the compassion of the Savior.

Let us envision parish renewal from the Immaculate Heart of Mary and through the means she gave us at Fatima—prayer and penance intensified in every parish.

From every parish and basic ecclesial community, let us raise our voices in prayer “Oh my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls into heavens especially those in most need of your mercy.”

May Our Lady of Fatima whom we also invoke as Mother of the Church pray that for us that every parish truly become oases and wellsprings of renewal and mercy!

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, November 27, 2016, First Sunday of Advent

**+ SOCRATES B. VILLEGAS**

Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan  
President, CBCP



## Basic Ecclesial Community Theme Song

*(Archdiocese of Manila)*

*Composed and Arranged by: Lester Delgado*

Mula sa isang maliit na pamilya,  
binuo ang lipunan nang pag-ibig at pag-asa  
masayang nag pupuri nag bubuklod sa pag-ibig,  
nag-sisikap maisabuhay ang pagiging simbahan

Koro:

Nag lilingkod sa kapwa organisadong pamilya,  
nanatiling tapat sa turo ng ama,  
nag iisang damdamin sa iisang hangarin,  
ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, nang kaligtasan makamit.

Sama samang kumilos sa pamamahagi,  
ng mabuting balita ang tunay pag asa  
masayang nananalangin sa pag dirawang ng buhay,  
regular na katekesis nakasentro kay Kristo.  
(repeat Koro)

Nag lilingkod sa kapwa organisadong pamilya,  
nanatiling tapat sa turo ng ama,  
nag iisang damdamin sa iisang hangarin,  
ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, nang kaligtasan makamit.  
(ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, nang kaligtasan makamit).

### Reflection Questions:

- † What efforts are we doing to unite our community?
- † In your own little ways, how do you show others (including people from other religions) God's love and mercy?



## 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 parish as a communion of communities (ang parokya bilang komunyong ng mga pamayanan)*.

### Guide question for Discussion:

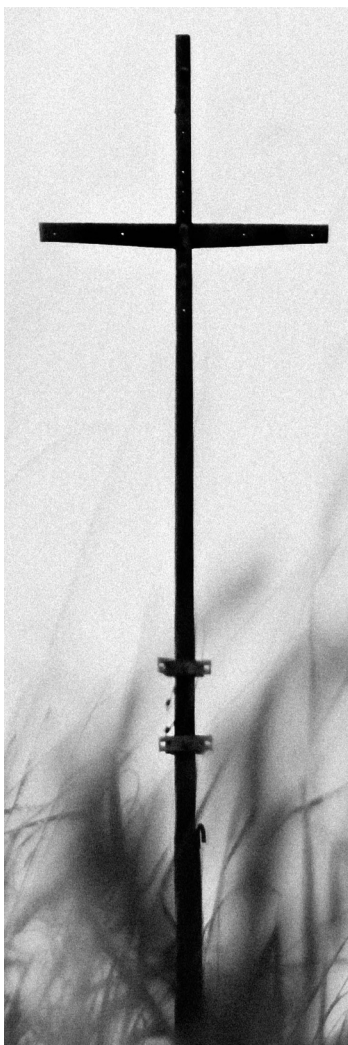
† Have you become an intermediary to bring the youth closer to Jesus?



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija

**“Jesus said, Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them”**  
(Matthew 19:14)

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



## FARE

*By Clarence M. Batan<sup>1</sup>*

*Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola &  
Jeanette P. Grajo*

I am staring at the huddle--  
Of children horse playing,  
Chattering noisily in the room.

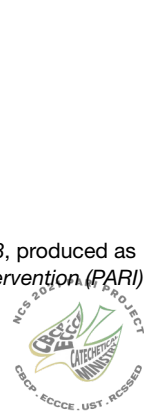
They remained still for a while,  
Altogether made the sign of the cross,  
Prayed the Hail Mary  
Clutching the rosary.

There, in a far-flung barrio  
Miles away from the Church  
A cathedral of faith.

Shared instead of preached  
The lessons about the beloved  
Church, expecting nothing.

Because there is no price for service  
Except for the fare brought forth  
For the love of God.

<sup>1</sup>This 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: HUNGRY PEOPLE, FEEDING GOD



### Introduction

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines devotes two paragraphs to describe the BECs (138-139): “They are small communities of Christians, usually of families who gather together around the Word of God and the Eucharist. These communities are united to their pastors but are ministered to regularly by lay leaders. The members know each other by name and share not only the Word of God and the Eucharist, but also their concerns both material and spiritual. They have a strong sense of belongingness and of responsibility for one another.



*Photo from the Diocese of Pagadian*

Not surprisingly enough, in 1991 during the Second Plenary Council, the Church in the Philippines adopted the establishment of the BECs as the pastoral priority in all its diocese: “Basic Ecclesial Communities under various names and forms—BCCs, small Christian communities, covenant communities—must be vigorously promoted for the full living of the Christian vocation in both rural and urban areas. Active non-violence will be a guiding principle in their approach to social change” (PCP II 109). For this reason, the Council directed the Conference to “issue an official statement on BECs, on their nature and function as recognized by the Church, making it clear that they are not simply another organization” (PCP II 110).

The Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) encounter Jesus Christ in the breaking of the Word of God through Bible sharing that reflects their daily lives and in the breaking of the Bread in the Eucharist, the summit of all encounters and gathering as a community (RM 51). These concrete encounters in the BECs uplift the characteristic of the Church as the community of disciples as realized by the first Christian community.



### Worship

## Gospel of Matthew 14:13-21

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus heard this, He withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed Him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd; and He had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup> When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for



themselves.”<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to them, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.”<sup>17</sup> They replied, “We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.”<sup>18</sup> And He said, “Bring them here to me.”<sup>19</sup> Then He ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, He looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.<sup>20</sup> And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.<sup>21</sup> And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



## Doctrine

### Characteristics of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (Robredillo, 2016)

- † **Poor yet Believing—a concrete realization of the Church of the Poor:**
  - † They emerge from among the poor, at the grassroots level;
  - † Yet, they are people of faith, they are a community of faith.
  - † They look at Jesus as the center of their lives—His life is the norm and the inspiration.
  - † They believe in His promise of the Kingdom of God; God cares for them, and He will eventually change this world into a new one.
  - † Contrast feature: They imply that the Church need not always be a Church of the *población*; it is also a Church at the periphery; it need not always be a Church of the learned, the famous, or the moneyed, but also of the illiterate, the neglected, and the scum.
  - † Contrast feature: They do not profess any ideology (like communism, socialism, or capitalism), rather they draw inspiration from the Word of God, from the teachings of the Church, and look at realities from the perspective of their faith.
- † **Community-oriented**
  - † Their members live in proximity or in the same neighborhood, like a squatter area, or a barangay where they know each other by name, and relate to each other regularly. Thus, it is small enough to permit personal relationship among the members, and large enough to contain itself in its basic needs.
  - † They strive to be of one heart and one mind.
  - † They have a strong sense of co-responsibility and solidarity; there is mutual care, sharing and support.
  - † Contrast feature: it is not a church of individuals who do not know each other, who pray alone, who go to mass alone, who think that they go to heaven alone.
- † **Participatory—Consultative**
  - † Participation is absolutely necessary. It is based on the understanding of and respect for the various charisms or gifts of each other.
  - † The selection of leaders, process of decision-making, planning, prayer sessions, and implementation of decisions—all these are characterized by the widest member-participation.



- † Charisms are recognized in the ministries: youth, family, liturgy, social action, catechesis, education, etc.
- † Thus, the BECs participate in the life and mission of the Church.
- † Contrast feature: unlike the parish, it is headed by a lay person who leads in the celebration of the Word, the priestless Sunday service, meeting, and other community affairs. Hence, lay ministries are recognized in the small community. It is not hierarchical, but closely connected with the hierarchy in the person of the priest.



*Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog*



*Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos*

#### † **Gathered around the Word of God and the Eucharist**

- † The Gospel is heard, believed, shared, and lived in the community,
- † The participants reflect on the Gospel in order to interpret the life and events in the community and see their life and happenings in the light of the Word of God.
- † They look at realities and events in the light of faith, and their reflection on the Word of God.
- † Once or twice a week, they gather for Bible sharing and reflection, usually in one of the homes of the members.
- † They study the Bible in relation to their daily life and draw inspiration from it for proper Christian action.
- † They denounce the sins of society in the light of the Gospel.
- † They announce the good news to the society.
- † They gather to celebrate the Sunday service without the Priest.
- † Contrast feature: it is not an income-generating endeavor or for the building of a new structure, but they gather primarily to hear the Word, receive the Sacraments, and live the Word and Sacraments in their daily life.
- † They have high regard for popular religiosity—novenas, rosary, celebration of feasts, processions, etc.

#### † **Sign and Instrument of Development and Liberation**

- † They are also concerned with the material well-being of the members and their community.
- † They try to build a community of peace, based on justice, freedom and love. Thus, they have health care projects, mutual aid funds, programs that introduce

technology in agriculture. Others may have communal farms, or involved in issues of justice and peace, or take position against business malpractices.

- † That is why, during Martial Law, the BECs defended human rights, and protested against oppressive laws, etc.
- † Contrast feature: they are not only concerned with spiritual realities, or with only one aspect of the human person; but with all the aspects that make up the human person—financial, political, cultural, environmental, spiritual, physical, etc. They aim for the total human development and liberation.



## Human Values

- † **Mutual Support-** Mutual support is the provision of task assistance, social support, and feedback to one or more team members, as needed. In other words, mutual support is a back-up behavior that benefits the individual and, thereby, the greater good of the team. Mutual support is to take care of one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We grow when we support each other. It is a facet of love whereby one can do anything with a spirit of love.

- † **Co-responsibility** - Co-responsibility aims at fostering social inclusion and improving the well-being of the members of the community. As Pope Francis said, our hope is that the Church herself might become a culture of formation to a co-responsibility that recognizes both the sanctifying, teaching and governing mission to the responsibility of the laity to “go forth” and reach various peripheries that are less accessible to the clergy (University of Notre Dame, 2020). It is the common responsibility in the common mission of the People of God, which, we all share in Christ.

- † **Communion** - This communion is captured under the twin images of the “People of God” and the “Body of Christ,” where “People of God” expresses the continuity of the Church's history, and the “Body of Christ” expresses its universality inaugurated in the Cross and in the Lord's Resurrection” (LG 8). It is a communion of the People of God who pray, worship, love God and live in an authentic Christian way of life towards the communion with the Father Almighty.



*Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of San Jose Occidental*



# Morals

## Basic Ecclesial Communities

BEC is the most basic realization of the local church (Lakshmanan, 2014). Basic Ecclesial Community characterizes an authentic Vatican II church that espouses participation, dialogue, and co-responsibility. It is a large church community that grew out from the three aforementioned germinal values and dynamisms of Vatican II (Claver, 2008, p. 107). The BEC is a way of being a church that is concerned with all aspects of the life of the person and the community (Lakshmanan, 2014). Thus, BEC is the concrete manifestation that the Church is involved with the joys and hopes, sufferings and sorrows, triumphs, and defeats of the people. In short, a Church that has concern for the lives of the people.

### The Nature of BEC

BEC is not an organization like the Catholic Women's League (CWL), the Knights of Columbus (K of C), Legion of Mary, Apostolada, etc. nor a movement like the Cursillo of the Charismatic movement. The distinguishing element is that BECs are non-exclusive communities "at the lower level of the church" and they are so, "in a participatory way (Claver, 2008, p. 111). BEC is "a community of Christian believers at the grassroots level which meets regularly under the leadership of a lay minister" (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012). The Basic Ecclesial Community is first and foremost church: people who adhere to the faith in the Gospel and are committed to it not only as individuals but, also principally, as an entire community (Claver, 2008, p. 108). It is thus faith in Christ that brings their members together and what makes and identifies them as a community. It is a community, an organized body, not just a group coming together by happenstance like a mob or a crowd (Picardal, 2011b, p. 9).

Likewise, it is the smallest unit of church and it is in the "grassroots," therefore, it is small enough for members to be in face-to-face relationship and interaction with each other. The regular meetings of the community at set times (usually on Sundays) has a double function of keeping alive the sense of community of its members and of fulfilling the communication needs for social interaction (Claver, 2008, p. 108). BEC has its lay leadership. But this does not exclude clerical leadership by any means. It does acknowledge the need to exercise in the church, leadership roles among the laity, which is distinct from the clerical kind (Clark, 1975, p. 54). But whenever priests are available, organized efforts are made in these communities to take advantage of the Sacraments.

### Functions of BEC

"The first function of BEC is common worship: this is why BECs come together—the liturgical expression of asserting in religious worship the community's faith (Claver, 2008, p. 108). There is power in the Word of God, something that had not been discovered in the past use of Scripture in the liturgy, and which, for the first time, the ordinary laity are discovering for themselves (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012, p. 151).









# Simple Activities

## **Activity: This is Better Than That**

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Number of Participants: Any

Tools Needed: Four or more objects

**Rules:** Pick four or more objects that are different (or the same objects that look different). Split all your participants into even teams. Describe a scenario where each team has to solve a problem using only those objects. This can be anything from, you're stranded on a desert island to you're saving the world from Godzilla! Have each team rank the objects based on their usefulness in that specific scenario, along with their reasoning.

**Objective:** This exercise inspires team creativity in problem solving. The idea is to not make the scenarios too easy so it becomes obvious which objects are most useful.

## **Activity 2: Winner/Loser**

Time: 5-6 minutes

Number of Participants: Two or more people

**Rules:** Partner A shares something negative that happened in their life with Partner B. It can be a personal or work-related memory, but it has to be true. Then Partner A discusses the same experience again, but focuses only on the positive aspects. Partner B helps explore the silver lining of the bad experience. Afterward, they switch roles.

**Objective:** Participants discover how to reframe negative situations into learning experiences together.

**Song Analysis** (see next page)

## **Guide for Reflection:**

- † How involved am I in our community activities?
- † How do I care for my community?

## PANANAGUTAN

By: Rev. Fr. Eduardo P. Hontiveros, SJ

Walang sinuman ang nabubuhay, para sa  
sarili lamang

Walang sinuman and namamatay, para sa  
sarili lamang

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa  
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos  
Na kapiling nya

Sa ating pag mamahalan at panglilingkod  
Kay kanino man  
Tayo ay magdadala ng balita na kaligtasan

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa  
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos  
Na kapiling nya

Sabay sabay mag aawitan  
Ang mga bansa  
Tayo tinuring na panginoon  
Bilang mga anak

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa  
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos  
Na kapiling nya

Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isat isa  
Tayong lahat ay tinpon ng diyos  
Na kapiling nya



## Prayer / Worship

Embracing Father, You grace each of us with equal measure of Your love. Let us learn to love our neighbors more deeply, so that we can create peaceful and just communities. Inspire us to use our creative energies to build the structures we need to overcome the obstacle of intolerance and indifference. May Jesus provide us the example we need and send the Spirit to warm our hearts for the journey. Amen.





# Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – Basic Ecclesial Community establishes small communities of Christians. Communities that are rooted in families who gather around the Word of God and the Eucharist. They are united to the parish priest but are ministered and collaborated by the laity. The members actively participate in the programs and activities held regularly in the parish. They are led to realize and experience a new way of “being church” – that of belonging to one big family, living like brothers and sisters, showing deep concern for both the material and spiritual needs of one another in their respective neighborhoods and knowing the members of each family by name.
- † **LIVE** - Basic ecclesial communities should work together to provide formation in stewardship of creation as constitutive of Christian discipleship. The way we deal with creation influences our dealings with human beings too. There is much to learn from the wisdom and practice of other faiths with regard to caring for the earth. The communities should also engage in faith-sharing activities to foster brotherhood and unity and to evangelize the people especially the common and poor ones living in these communities. The communities must also engage in faith-sharing activities to foster brotherhood and unity and to evangelize the people especially the common and poor ones living in these communities.
- † **SHARE** - Living the Eucharist involves a new way of coming together as a family because it is God who gathers. We commend and support small Christian communities, basic human communities, ecclesial movements, religious communities, parishes, dioceses, and other committed people that sustain the Eucharistic life of gathering God’s children in situations of fragmentation. Hence, let us inspire one another to become prayerful Christian communities. If your family is religious and has some devotional prayer/ practices, encourage your neighbors to join also in this activity at your home and talk with them about their faith life which may help create a rapport and motivate them to have a habit of praying/worshipping God.

# CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

## CONVERSION: JESUS IN THE MIDST



### Introduction



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

Basic Ecclesial Communities must be a pastoral priority in the dioceses and archdioceses because it is visibly a significant expression of ecclesial renewal (PCP II, 138-139). Basic Ecclesial Communities are flourishing not only in rural places but also in urban areas. There are also BECs that are struggling to be born and needing the support of the clergy or the parish priest. There are BECs that have stagnated and needs to be revitalized, yet there still are many signs of hope (EN 58).

These communities can simply be, in their own way, an extension of the spiritual and religious life through worshipping and deepening of faith. Their concerns are both material and spiritual. Likewise, they have a strong sense of communion, a sense of empathy, and a sense of responsibility for one another. BECs are fervent in prayer and the practice of popular religiosity through Bible sharing, novena, devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints are evident in their gatherings. This kind of integration will prevent them from concentrating only on one part of the Gospel or the Church, or becoming nomads without roots (EG 29). This is realized through the guidance of Church leaders, that leads them towards the proper reception of the sacraments, such as the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, Confessions etc.

The Basic Ecclesial Communities are vital forces in the society for they are not just communities that gather on Sundays or any specific day. But their gatherings are geared to answer the social problems that beset the lives of the people. In a way, they can move as a group to fight for social justice in the society. They can be tapped whenever a social need arises since they are social catalysts in the society that can make a difference. Hence, these Communities as a vehicle of renewal are renewed Christians who persevere in their faith and grow in the Gospel of Christ.



### Worship

## Gospel of Matthew 18:15-20

<sup>15</sup> “If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup> But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the





church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”



Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Jolo



Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan



## Doctrine

### Three situations of Evangelization according to Saint Pope John Paul II

- † **1. Missio ad Gentes** - This is an essential missionary focus of the Church-- to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to those who have not yet heard it. If not all, most of the faithful used to think of evangelization as only for those who have not yet received the Good News or for those who do not yet know Jesus and for those who have no idea about God. This form of evangelization is called *Missio ad Gentes*. However, the New Evangelization does not focus on this form of evangelization but for those who are already baptized (Redemptoris Missio 33).
- † **2. New Evangelization** - This is the “ongoing evangelization of those in the intermediate situation who have lost a sense of faith, or even 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.” There are many Catholics who have been baptized in infancy but have fallen away from the faith once 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 this fallen away baptized Catholics (RM 33).
- † **3. Christian Communities** – This focuses on those with strong Christian affiliation. They are “fervent in their faith and Christian living. These are Christian communities with adequate ecclesial structure in its activity, thus, needing pastoral care. Church leaders must invest with these Christian Communities for these communities are rich

in practicing popular religiosity such as: Bible sharing, praying the Holy Rosary, novena etc. (EN 58). Hence, the clergy, especially the parish priests, must support them for their sustainability and their pastoral care so that there might be no isolated communities in the Church/Parish.

## A Spirituality of BEC

The work of building up BECs comes with a very experiential realization of the importance of Spirituality in moving people to get involved in working for the good of the wider community beyond the family (Claver, 2008, p. 156). Thus, a Spirituality that espouses prophetic dialogue and integration of faith and culture is necessary to the formation of BECs.



*Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos*

According to Bishop Claver, “in general, spirituality is what makes up the interiority of a human being and of the whole people. Ideally, Spirituality should take place at all levels in the life of the local church, most especially where people live their daily lives in their primary communities (family and basic ecclesial community).

Bishop Claver stated that “the first fact about spirituality is the necessity of prayer. Prayer is an essential aspect for all Christians. Filipino culture involves a prayerful attitude of the people. Their whole life is governed with the culture of religiosity and prayer (De Mesa & Cacho, 2012, p. 130). A Prayerful attitude is a tradition handed down from one generation to another (Claver, 2008, p. 131).

There is only one spirituality that is common to all who believe in Christ. It is the spirituality of the reign of Christ. And it consists of promoting the values of the reign that Christ taught his followers. So much so that evangelizers and missionaries are only to help, promote, encourage and bring the process about since the values of the reign of Christ are already deeply embedded in the culture and in the faith of the people. Spirituality consists of the values of faith, hope, and love that guide people in their lives.

Moreover, these values of faith, hope, and love make up the inner values of BEC. Basic Ecclesial Communities is indeed a community of Christian believers who must live and preach their faith not only as individuals, but more so as a community. The purpose of their coming together is to worship, for it is the heart of their gathering. Their worship begins with the service of the Word of God in order to discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit geared towards communal action for the common good (Claver, 2008, p. 161).

Also, the action that flows from the worship they do, is based on service. Their worship is geared and must go out to serve the people. To care for their spiritual as well as their material needs. Thus, the group's involvement with human needs is an ordinary activity of the BECs. For it is a concrete realization of charity.



# Human Values

- † **Sense of Belongingness** – The scripture says: I appeal to you, brothers, and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and heart (1 Corinthians 1:10). The idea of community comes from a sense of responsibility that we have for each other. In the Bible, God encourages us to take care of our brethren while following His Words. We must remember the importance of maintaining connection with our fellow human beings to ensure a thriving community.
- † **Self-giving** - self-giving is the willingness to deprive ourselves. It is self-denying, self-sacrificing, and unselfish. It disregards our own advantages and welfare for those of others. It is becoming detached and concentrating on helping other people with their difficulties. The act of self-giving is a personal power-releasing factor. Hence, we must imitate the self-giving love of Jesus to His flock (John 13:1-17).
- † **Stewardship** – Stewardship is utilizing and managing all resources God provides for His glory and the betterment of His creation. Christian Stewardship concerns the obligation of Christians in managing and intelligently utilizing the gifts that God has given. The Christian steward is not only responsible for the material blessings provided by God, but also the spiritual gifts that are given through the Holy Spirit. God wants humanity to be His stewards in the work of creation, redemption, and sanctification. Our stewardship of creation involves taking care of the environment, other creatures, as well as our families and communities. Being a good steward in this world is one way of expressing our love for God and our gratitude to Him.



# Morals

## Formation for Mission

*Living in communion:* These are small communities whose members are in unity and solidarity with one another and with their pastors. The members have a strong sense of belongingness and responsibility for one another.

*Prophetic/Evangelizing mission:* The Church and BEC's are stewards of the Gospel with the responsibility to nurture and share the faith with others.

*Priestly Mission:* stewards of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist – we share the bread of life.

*Kingly/Servant Mission:* Sharing our time, talent and resources to care for the needy and the earth, for the defense of life and human rights, and for the promotion of justice and peace.



*Church of the Poor:* The Church and the BEC's according to PCP II, are called to be a Church of the Poor. This requires the members of the Church and the BEC to embrace evangelical poverty. This means trusting in divine providence, sharing one's good: time, talent, and treasures with others (especially the poor), and living a simple lifestyle. The Church of the Poor requires all to make a preferential option of the poor, to love the poor, to be in solidarity with the poor, and to defend the rights of the poor likewise, empowering the poor for social transformation and making it a civilization of love (Picardal, 2011b, p. 76).

## Formation of Faith

- † **Formation of the Head** – to know, understand and accept the teachings of Christ and the Church through evangelization and catechesis, and doctrinal formation.
- † **Formation of the Heart** – to develop a trusting and loving relationship with Christ through prayer and liturgy. This involves a spiritual and liturgical formation.
- † **Formation of the Hands** – to develop the capacity to love and serve others as a concrete expression of faith through social action (Picardal, 2011b, p. 63).

## Stewardship formation

The sharing of time, talent and treasure – a term popularized as early as the late 1970s by the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA) during lent – has been practiced in varying degrees in many BECs. Sharing of time, talent, and treasure – this is what many lay people are doing as members of the parish BEC formation/animation teams, as BEC lay liturgical leaders, as lay evangelists, catechists, and as members of the parish/BEC social action committees etc. The spirit of voluntarism is very much alive in many parishes and BECs (Picardal, 2011b, p. 101).

There are various forms of sharing treasures and pooling of resources in many BECs: mutual aid systems (*kalipay ug kasakit*), modified-tithing (*balik-halad*, *Gasa Balik sa Dios*, *hatag-uli*) are practiced in Romblon, San Carlos, Ipil, Pagadian, Dipolog, and Digos. Other initiatives were the multipurpose cooperatives, food bank, contribution to ordination, charity fund, calamity fund, Pondong Pinoy/Share & Care Program, Church of the Poor Fund (Ayala Alabang), and other contributions to major BEC events (Mindanao-wide BEC gathering) (Picardal, 2011b, p. 102).



*Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan*

Many BECs have been engaged in environmental advocacy: the anti-logging and reforestation campaign, anti-mining, anti-coal fired power plants, and waste-management. These BECs were motivated by the awareness of being stewards of creation (ibid).





# Simple Activities

## **Activity : Human Knot**

Time: 15 - 30 minutes

Number of Participants: 8 - 20 people

**Rules:** Have everyone stand in a circle facing each other, shoulder to shoulder. Instruct everyone to put their right hand out and grab a random hand of someone across from them. Then, tell them to put their left hand out and grab another random hand from a different person across the circle. Within a set time limit, the group needs to untangle the knot of arms without releasing their hands. If the group is too large, make multiple smaller circles and have the separate groups compete.

**Objective:** This game for team building relies heavily on good communication and teamwork.

## **Song Analysis** (See next page)

## **Guide for Reflection**

- † In my own little ways, how do I help others in my parish and community be closer to God?



# Prayer / Worship

## **Prayer for Community**

Majesty on high, may Your love and compassion flow through us and to those around us. Give us a helping hand and concern for their misfortunes and suffering. Give us compassion and empathy to understand what those in our community are going through. Help us to love them well as You commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. May I and my community seek to center our focus in You. May we strive to live the life You modeled when You walked this Earth. May we reflect Your image and purge anything from us that doesn't look like You. Amen.





## God is Seeking those who thirst for His Appearance

*From: The Church of Almighty God*

God seeks those who long for Him, who long for Him to appear.  
God seeks those who don't resist, obedient as babies before Him.  
God seeks those who are able, able to hear His words,  
accept what He's entrusted and offer heart and body to Him.  
If nothing can shake, nothing can shake your devotion to God,  
He'll look down upon you, look down upon you with favor, oh ...  
God will bestow His blessings upon you, upon you, oh ...  
God will bestow His blessings upon you!

If you are one who though noble, reputed and knowledgeable,  
still accept, accept His calling and commission.  
If you are one who though wealthy, who though supported by all,  
still accept, accept His calling and commission, yeah.  
If nothing can shake, nothing can shake your devotion to God,  
all that you do will be significant and righteous, oh ...  
God will bestow His blessings upon you, upon you, oh ...  
God will bestow His blessings upon you! Oh ... oh ... oh ... oh ...

However, reject the call of God for your status and for your own goals,  
all you do will be cursed by God, (oh ...)  
yeah, all you do will be despised by God.  
If nothing can shake, nothing can shake your devotion to God,  
all that you do will be significant and righteous, oh ...  
God will bestow His blessings upon you, upon you, oh ...  
God will bestow His blessings upon you,  
His blessings upon you! Yeah ... oh ... oh ... oh ...  
from Follow the Lamb and Sing New Songs



## Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** - The main Basic Ecclesial Communities task is to aid the people in integrating their faith and life—spirituality. The very main purpose of the gatherings of the people in BECs is that they are able to integrate their faith into their daily lives. It is a process of sensitizing people to social realities and orienting them to incorporate Gospel values of hope and solidarity in their lives.
- † **LIVE** – The Church is a communion of the people of God, filled with the Holy Spirit. They share with Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly/servant mission. As a sharer of this threefold mission of Christ, we must live always in the presence of the Holy



Eucharist (Priestly). Thus, attending mass is a must for us to always live-in-faithfulness to our God in our daily lives. We must also be a servant leader (Kingly) in our community by always being two, three or four steps ahead in helping other people. If someone needs help, we do not need to wait for them to ask for help. We can take the initiative. As Catholic Christians, we have a responsibility to our brethren. Lastly, we must be joyful evangelizers of hope, peace and love, as Pope Francis says, “An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from the funeral”.

- † **SHARE** – It is based on an awareness that all we have – time, talent and treasures are not really ours. These are blessings from God. We are not the owners, but stewards called to cultivate, develop, manage, and share them. What are the time, talent and treasures you can offer to your family, community and to the church?

# CATECHETICAL LESSON 3:

## COMMUNION: KEEPING THE WORD



### Introduction

**“I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”**  
(Jn 17: 6)

The BECs are local communities of Catholic Christians in the neighborhood and villages within the parish. The members are close to one another and relate to each other as friends, brothers, and sisters in the Lord. They gather regularly to share the Word of God and live it in their daily lives, as well as, to pray and celebrate their faith. They share their resources and find ways to help and serve one another and those who are poor and to address their problems. PCP II recognizes the BECs as an expression of a renewed Church which includes communion. BEC is “our vision of Church as communion, participation and mission with the Church as priestly, prophetic and kingly people, and as Church of the poor. A Church that is renewed, is today finding expression in one ecclesial movement” (PCP II 137).

St. John Paul II describes BECs as part of the effort to decentralize the parish community and regard them as expressions and means for a deeper communion (RM 51): “How can BECs be a genuine expression of communion? The members experience this bond of unity which is based on shared faith, celebrated in the breaking of the bread, and concretely expressed in the sharing of material goods.” (Acts 2:42).

There are lots of celebrations and table-fellowships in BECs – from simple common meals to fiesta celebration. The celebration of the Eucharist is more meaningful because it expresses and celebrates a life of communion – of unity, friendship, sharing and participation among members.

The sharing of time, talent and treasure is an essential expression of communion. This means practicing a spirituality of stewardship. This generates a spirit of volunteerism (sharing of time and talent). The BECs may be regarded as a locus of realization of ecclesial communion. In these communities, communion can be more intimately and concretely experienced. There is a sense of belonging and responsibility for one another. The members can live as a community of friends in the Lord. As such, communion may be inculturated with Filipino values of *pakikisama*, *bayanihan*, and *pakikipagkapwa-tao*.

The ecclesiology of communion also ensures that the BECs do not become isolated, autonomous and in-ward looking communities. It promotes unity and solidarity with other BECs. The parish itself becomes a network or communion of different BECs. The ecclesiology of communion requires that the BECs be united to their pastors and maintain their link with the

local and universal Church. Without this linkage, the BECs cannot be considered as ecclesial communities or a way of being a Church.



## Worship

### Gospel of John 17: 6-16

**6** “I have made Your name known to those whom You gave me from the world. They were Yours, and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your Word. **7** Now they know that everything You have given Me is from You; **8** for the Words that You gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. **9** I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom You gave Me, because they are Yours. **10** All Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. **11** And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, protect them in Your name that You have given Me, so that they may be one, as We are One. **12** While I was with them, I protected them in Your name that You have given Me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled. **13** But now I am coming to You, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have My joy made complete in themselves. **14** I have given them Your Word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. **15** I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but I ask You to protect them from the evil one. **16** They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world.



## Doctrine

The faithful need to be familiarized and know these doctrines, in order to understand that our faith is not only about sacramental or devotions, and to emphasize that our faith comes from the Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and Magisterium.

### † THE TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE REVELATION (CCC 74)

God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth": that is, of Christ Jesus. Christ must be proclaimed to all nations and individuals, so that this revelation may reach the ends of the earth: God graciously arranged that the things He had once revealed for the salvation of all peoples should remain in their entirety, throughout the ages, and be transmitted to all generations (DV 7).

### † THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION (CCC 75-79)

"Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel. This had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which Jesus fulfilled in His own person and promulgated with His own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all men.





*Photo from the Military Vicariate*



*Photo from the Diocese of Catarman*

This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline."

In the apostolic preaching. . . In keeping with the Lord's command, the Gospel was handed on in two ways:

- † - orally: "by the apostles who handed on--by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established--what they themselves had received, whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life, from his deeds, or whether they learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit."
- † - in writing" "by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing . . . continued in apostolic succession."

"In order that the full and living Gospel might always be preserved in the Church the apostles left bishops as their successors. They gave them their own position of teaching authority." Indeed, "the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a continuous line of succession until the end of time."

This living transmission, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called Tradition, since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through Tradition, "the Church, in her doctrine, life and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, and all that she believes." "The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this Tradition, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her beliefs and in her prayer."

The Father's self-communication made through his Word in the Holy Spirit, remains present and active in the Church: "God, who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Spouse of His beloved Son. The Holy Spirit, through whom the living voice of the Gospel rings out in the Church - and through her in the world - leads believers to the full truth and makes the Word of Christ dwell in them in all its richness."





## † THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRADITION AND SACRED SCRIPTURE (CCC 80-83)

One common source. . .

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate with each other. "Both of them, flowing out from the same Divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing, and move towards the same goal." Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with His own "always, to the close of age."

### † Two Distinct Modes of Transmission

"Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."

"And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."

As a result, the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the Holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."

### † Apostolic Tradition and Ecclesial traditions

The Tradition here in question comes from the apostles who hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition.

Tradition is to be distinguished from the various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These are the particular forms, adapted to different places and times, in which the great Tradition is expressed. In the light of Tradition, these traditions can be retained, modified or even abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium.

## † THE INTERPRETATION OF THE HERITAGE OF FAITH (CCC 84-95)

The apostles entrusted the "Sacred deposit" of the faith (the *depositum fidei*), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. "By adhering to this heritage, the entire holy people, united to its pastors, always remain faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing and professing the faith that has been handed on, there should be a remarkable harmony between the bishops and the faithful."

## † **The Magisterium of the Church**

"The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ." This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome (CCC 85).

"Yet this Magisterium is not superior to the Word of God but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed down to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens devotedly, guards it with dedication and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for a belief to be Divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith" (CCC 86)

Mindful of Christ's words to his apostles: "He who hears you, hears me", the faithful receive with docility the teachings and directives that their pastors give them in different forms (CCC 87).

## † **The dogmas of the faith (CCC 88-90)**

The Church's Magisterium exercises the authority it holds from Christ to the fullest extent when it defines dogmas, that is, when it proposes, in a form obliging the Christian people to an irrevocable adherence of faith, truths contained in Divine Revelation or also when it proposes, in a definitive way, truths having a necessary connection with these.

There is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas. Dogmas are lights along the path of faith; they illuminate it and make it secure. Conversely, if our life is upright, our intellect and heart will be open to welcome the light shed by the dogmas of faith.

The mutual connections between dogmas, and their coherence, can be found in the whole of the Revelation of the mystery of Christ. "In Catholic doctrine there exists an order or hierarchy of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith."

## † **The supernatural sense of faith (CCC 91-93)**

All the faithful share in understanding and handing down revealed truths. They have received the anointing of the Holy Spirit, who instructs them and guides them into all truth.

"The whole body of the faithful . . . cannot err in matters of belief. This characteristic is shown in the supernatural appreciation of faith (*sensus fidei*) on the part of the whole people, when, from the bishops to the last of the faithful, they manifest a universal consent in matters of faith and morals.

## † **Growth in understanding the faith (CCC 94-95)**

Thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the understanding of both the realities and the words of the heritage of faith is able to grow in the life of the Church: "through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts"; it is in particular "theological research [which] deepens



knowledge of revealed truth."

- "from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which [believers] experience", the sacred Scriptures "grow with the one who reads them."

- "from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth."

"It is clear therefore that, in the supremely wise arrangement of God, sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church are so connected and associated that one of them cannot stand without the others. Working together, each in its own way, under the action of the one Holy Spirit, they all contribute effectively to the salvation of souls."



## Faith Response

- † To the ecclesiastical leaders: the sense of responsibility and concern must be observed as Jesus did to his apostles and disciples.
- † To the faithful, respect and love for the Church must be present in every action and their witnessing lives.
- † All faithful must be open handed to the needs of every member of the Church.
- † The sense of belongingness and mutual help for a better sustainability and communion
- † Prayers must be offered and the availability of the sacraments in order for all the faithful to live fully the Christian life sacramentally.



## Human Values

- † **Volunteerism** - The doctrine of the primacy of the will. This takes on a variety of forms: 1. that in God, will takes precedence over intellect, with the result that truth and goodness are what they are because God wants them that way; 2. that one's will, including one's freedom, is what makes that person distinctively human; 3. that the world is the representation of the will, a blind and aimless cosmic power; 4. that each person's free will determines for the individual what is morally good or bad; 5. that what mainly constitutes a human person is his or her lifetime exercise of free will.
- † **Witnessing** - One who can give evidence based on personal and immediate knowledge of a fact, event, or experience. The Christian concept of witness adds to the popular notion that the idea of a religious experience to which a believer testifies by his life, words, and actions, and thus gives inspiration and example to others by his testimony. Implicit in Christian witness is also the element of courage in giving testimony, either because others are not favorably disposed or because they are openly hostile to the message of faith being proposed.

† **Discipleship** - Catholic discipleship refers to a committed approach to living a Christian life within the Catholic Church. The term is generally applied to Catholics who sincerely attempt to live according to the instructions provided by Jesus in the New Testament. We can describe disciples as those who "make a conscious, firm decision to be followers of Jesus Christ no matter the cost to themselves."

Catholic discipleship also requires that the individual be willing to use his talents and blessings in building the "Kingdom of God," which is the goal of all Christian activity on earth. Since talents and blessings are seen as coming from God, the Catholic disciple is expected to be unselfish in using these for appropriate purposes. Another mark of discipleship is an unwillingness to resort to excuses to explain inaction or poor performance. The true Catholic disciple is expected to follow through on all Christian commitments.



*Photo from the Apostolic Vicariate of Calapan*



*Photo from the Diocese of Urdaneta*



## Morals

- † Make the faithful involved in parish activities and open wide the door of opportunities for them to grow in their faith.
- † Let them know their responsibilities and make them participate in the mission of the Church.
- † Give them also time to share with the community their mission and make their witnessing as a part of the growth of the parish.
- † Give them the opportunity to help and be evangelizing agents especially to the families.



# Simple Activities

## Activity: Pinoy Henyo

- † Make a list of things, places, persons that are related to the Church (Parish, Catechist, Pope Francis, Parish Priest, Baptismal certificate, altar, cross, etc.)
- † Divide the learners into two groups. Have one group guess what the other has listed (*Pinoy Henyo* style). Prepare some gifts for all of them
- † The reason and objective of this game is for the learners to know the important things, places and persons in the church and after the game you can explain these persons', things' and places' roles in the Church

## Song Analysis



Photo from the Diocese of Catarman

## SA PIGING NG PANGINOON

*Bienvenida Tabuena/ Eduardo Hontiveros SJ*

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)



## Guide for Reflection

- † As a member of the Church, am I doing my duties and responsibilities to maintain the communion/ unity of every member?
- † Do I give importance to the unity of every member of my community?
- † Do I give my whole self to be part of this community especially in thanking the Lord in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist?
- † Do my actions reflect my unity with my desire to be united wholly to the Church?



## Prayer / Worship

Thank You, God, for the body of believers who are called to serve You, who are proclaiming the Good News to all who will hear. From those who minister across the country to the men, women, and youth at home. Send us out to be a light in the dark. Send us out to speak life. Send us out to extend grace and mercy. Send us out to feed the hungry, to befriend the lonely, to find the lost. Open the doors of this church and fill it with the broken, the angry, and the hurting. Let them find forgiveness and comfort here in the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

\*\*\*

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for where You have placed me at this time. Where I live is no accident. This neighborhood is my mission field, and I declare these streets to be covered by the blood of Jesus. Satan has no power here. Neighbors will embrace neighbors. The strong will stand for the weak. The young will respect the old. The capable will assist the unable. These homes will be safe havens of friendship, kindness, and compassion. No one will go hungry. No one will go unnoticed. Lives here will be changed in the name of Jesus. Amen!



## Zeal for Mission

- † To **KNOW** the very meaning and purpose of every Basic Ecclesial Community in union with the particular church and most especially to the Universal Church
- † To make oneself responsible for the **GROWTH DEVELOPMENT** of the groups and communities within the parish or area.
- † **COOPERATE** with the church leaders on how to make these communities united and have a common goal, which is the proclamation of the Good News.
- † **SHARE** with others the faith by witnessing and by being involved with the movements and activities of the parish or community.
- † **BUILD** a Church group/s and invite friends and colleagues to be part of these small groups in order for them to develop and grow in their faith.



# CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

## MISSION: MADE HIM KNOWN

**I pray for those who will believe in me through their message. (Jn 17: 20)**

liturgical life, conserves and renews the faith in the people, and serves as a school for teaching the salvific message of Christ. The parish also puts solidarity in practice and the humble charity of good and brotherly works (Christifideles Laici 26). This is also a reminder for the ecclesiastical authorities to give more pastoral care to sustain and make productive the mission of the universal Church.

Pope Francis reminds us that the parish still remains the center of pastoral ministry because it fulfills the pastoral needs of the faithful. But the parish has to review and renew its nature when it does not create an environment of communion and participation, and when it fails to become mission oriented. Pope Francis values BECs as a source of enrichment for the Church and as a center for new evangelization. It has the capacity for dialogue through which the Church is renewed. Referring to the parish as a communion of communities, makes BECs a basic platform for the task of evangelization. It brings the Church nearer to home and makes them springs of renewal (EG 28). The Pope also mentions that BECs bring new fervor to evangelization.



*Photo from the Diocese of Cagayan De Oro*

world to offer a radiant and an attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you care for one another and how you encourage and accompany one another” (EG 99).

BEC is a new way of being Church and a new way of living the faith. BEC is a community of believers who read the Gospel and try to implement it in their daily lives. The Pope comments,



## Introduction

The parish is an old and established structure of the local church which has an indispensable mission of great contemporary importance. The parish creates the basic community of the Christian people, initiates and gathers the people in the accustomed expression of

Pope Francis insists on the union of BECs to the parish. BECs are to participate in all the pastoral activities of the parish since the real root of the BEC is the parish (EG 29).

BECs nurture communion among Christians and they are the best place to build up a genuine fraternal communion and care for one another. BEC serves the neighbors in need and witnesses the Gospel values through love of neighbor. The Pope writes, “I especially ask every Christian in communities throughout the

“the Lord’s disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Mt 5: 13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel” (EG 92).

In the BEC, every member is evangelized through Gospel sharing. In Gospel sharing, the faithful read the Gospel, reflect on it and share it with others. Speaking about the preacher, the Pope insists on the personalization of the Gospel. The preacher has to develop a great personal familiarity with the Word of God. The Pope writes to the preachers, “Yet, if he does not take time to hear God’s word with an open heart, if he does not allow it to touch his life, to challenge him, to impel him, and if he does not devote time to pray with that Word, then he will indeed be a false prophet, a fraud, or a shadow impostor” (EG 151).

In the BECs, the members express their communion more fully as they unite and actively participate in fulfilling their three-fold mission. This is the prophetic mission – proclaiming and giving witness to the Word of God, as well as denouncing the manifestations of evil in the society. This is the priestly mission – actively participating in the liturgical celebrations. This is the kingly/servant mission – working for the kingdom--for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. This is a mission of social transformation.



## Worship

### Gospel of John 17: 20-26

**20** ‘My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. **22** I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are One – **23** I in them and You in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me. **24** ‘Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world. **25** ‘Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me. **26** I have made You<sup>[e]</sup> known to them, and will continue to make You known, in order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I, Myself may be in them.’



Photo from the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



# Doctrine

## The vocation of lay people (CCC 898-900)

"By reason of their special vocation, it is proper for the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. In a special way, they illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are closely associated so these may be affected and grow according to Christ and for the glory of God."

The initiative of lay Christians is necessary, especially when the matter involves discovering or inventing the means of permeating social, political, and economic realities within the demands of Christian doctrine and life. This initiative is a normal element in the life of the Church:

Lay believers are in the frontline of Church life. The Church is the animating principle of human society for them. Therefore, they ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness of not only belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the common Head, and of the bishops in communion with him.

Since, like all the faithful, lay Christians are entrusted by God with the apostolate by virtue of their Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right and duty, individually or in grouped associations, to work so that the Divine message of salvation may be known and be accepted by all men throughout the earth. This duty is more pressing when it is only through them that men can hear the Gospel and know Christ. Their activity in ecclesial communities is so necessary that, for the most part, the apostolate of the pastors cannot be fully effective without it.

### † The participation of lay people in Christ's priestly office (CCC 901-903)

"Hence the laity, dedicated as they are to Christ and anointed by the Holy Spirit, are marvelously called and prepared so that even richer fruits of the Spirit may be produced in them. For all their works, prayers, and apostolic undertakings, family and married life, daily work, relaxation of mind and body, if they are accomplished in the Spirit - indeed even the hardships of life, if patiently born - all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. In the celebration of the Eucharist these may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God."

In a very special way, parents share in the office of sanctifying "by leading a conjugal life in the Christian spirit and by seeing to the Christian education of their children."

Lay people who possess the required qualities can be admitted permanently to the ministries of lector and acolyte. When the necessity of the Church warrants it and



when ministers are lacking, lay persons, even if they are not lectors or acolytes, can also supply their offices. Namely, they can exercise the ministry of the Word, preside over liturgical prayers, confer Baptism, and distribute Holy Communion, in accord with the prescriptions of law."

### † Participation in Christ's prophetic office (CCC 904-907)

"Christ . . . fulfills this prophetic office, not only through the hierarchy . . . but also through the laity. He establishes them as witnesses and provides them with the sense of the faith (*sensus fidei*)".

Every preacher and each believer is tasked to teach in order to lead others to faith. Lay people also fulfill their prophetic mission by evangelization, "that is, the proclamation of Christ by words and in the testimony of their lives." For lay people, "this evangelization acquires a specific property and peculiar efficacy because it is accomplished in the ordinary circumstances of the world."

Lay people who are capable and trained may also collaborate with catechetical formation, teaching the sacred sciences, and in using the communications media. "In accord with the knowledge, competence, and preeminence which the laity possess. They have the right and, even at times, the duty to express to their pastors their opinions on matters which pertain to the good of the Church, and they have a right to make their opinion known to other Christian faithful, with due regard to the integrity of faith and morals and reverence toward their pastors, and with consideration for the common good and the dignity of persons".

### † Participation in Christ's kingly office (CCC 908-913)

By His obedience unto death, Christ communicated to His disciples the gift of royal freedom, so that they might "by the self-abnegation of a holy life, overcome the reign of sin by themselves".

That man is rightly called a king who makes his own body an obedient subject and, by governing himself with suitable rigor, refuses to let his passions breed rebellion in his soul, for he exercises a kind of royal power over himself. And because he knows how to rule his own person as king, so too does he sit as its judge. He will not let himself be imprisoned by sin or thrown headlong into wickedness.

"Moreover, by uniting their forces, let the laity so remedy the institutions and conditions of the world when the latter are an inducement to sin, that these may be conformed to the norms of justice, favoring rather than hindering the practice of virtue. By so doing they will impregnate culture and human works with a moral value." "The laity can also feel called, or be in fact called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them".





In the Church, "lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power [of governance] in accord with the norm of law." And so, the Church provides for their presence at particular councils, diocesan synods, and pastoral councils, in the exercise of the pastoral care of a parish, collaboration in finance committees, and participation in ecclesiastical tribunals, etc.

The faithful should "distinguish carefully between the rights and the duties which they have as belonging to the Church and those which fall on them as members of human society. They will strive to unite the two harmoniously, remembering that in every temporal affair they are to be guided by a Christian conscience, since no human activity, even those of the temporal order, can be withdrawn from God's dominion." "Thus, every person, through these gifts given to him, is at once the witness and the living instrument of the mission of the Church itself 'according to the measure of Christ's bestowal'".



## Faith Response

- † Participate in the mission of Christ to make known the Kingdom of God to all nations.
- † Make every family a church of God, where love, peace and hope reign and motivate each member.
- † Put all the members of the Church in their respective places, that is to say, respect their rights and give them their responsibilities, respectively.
- † Every member must provide their support and their participation in order to maintain and sustain the communion of every member, while respecting their own office and ministry.
- † A total commitment to the service of God and of His Church.



*Photo from the Archdiocese of Jaro*



# Human Values

- † **Commitment** - Pledging oneself by vow, promise, or simple resolution to the performance of some action or allegiance to a cause or co-operation with a person or group of persons. The obligation is morally binding, depending on the gravity of the commitment and the formality under which it is made. (Etym. Latin *committere*, to join, connect, entrust; *com-*, together + *mittere*, to send.)
- † **Involvement/Participation** - 'Participation' is the voluntary and generous engagement of a person in social interchange. It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person (CCC 1913).
- † **Stewardship** - Stewardship is a way of life, a way that begins with acknowledging God as the Creator and Giver of all and responding with generosity through the responsible management of our resources. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are caretakers of all that God has given us. Gratitude for these gifts and blessings is expressed in prayer, worship, offering and even, in the sharing our gifts out of love for God, with one another.

Stewardship is a path to holiness. It makes us more like Christ who came not to be served, but to serve. It is the humble awareness that all we have and all we are, has been given to us freely from God. When we offer our lives back to God in love, He blesses that generosity a hundredfold.



# Morals

- † These small communities with members must be in unity and solidarity with one another and with their pastors. The members must have a strong sense of belongingness and responsibility for one another.
- † The members must share the Word of God and must be guided by regular catechesis.
- † The communities which gather around the Eucharist must have a vibrant celebration of life in the liturgy.
- † They must share not only their spiritual concerns but also their material concerns. Their poverty and their faith must lead them to a deeper involvement in the action for justice and social transformation.
- † The faithful must emerge among the poor and empower the poor.





# Simple Activities

## Activity: Praying the Holy Rosary as a family

- † Let the learners lead the praying of the Holy Rosary with their own intention in every Hail Mary, have them mention a name to offer that Ave Maria to that person.

## Song Analysis



Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

## Ipamahagi ang Pagi-ibig ng Kaligtasay Makamit

*(Basic Ecclesiastical Community Theme Song)*

*Composed and Arranged by Lester Delgado*

Mula sa isang, maliit na pamilya  
Binuo ang lipunan ng pag-ibig at pag-asa  
Masayang nagpupuri, nabubuklod sa pag-ibig  
Nagsisikap maisabuhay ng pagiging simbahan

Naglilingkod sa kapwa, organisadong pamilya  
Nananatiling tapat sa turo ng Ama  
Nagiisang damdamin sa iisang hangarin  
Ipamahagi ang pag-ibig, ng kaligtasay makamit

*(Repeat chorus)*

Sama-samang kumilos, sa pamamahagi  
Ng mabuting balita ang tunay na pag-asa  
Masayang nananalangin, sa pagdiriwang ng buhay  
Regular na katekesis, naka-sentro kay Kristo

Coda:

Ipamahagi ang pag-ibig  
Ng kaligtasay makamit

## Guide for Reflections

- † Do I participate in the mission of the Church in building Christian communities?
- † Am I happy to do this mission entrusted to me by the Church?
- † Is my family an instrument of Hope, Love and Peace?
- † Is the salvation of souls my priority in building basic ecclesial communities?



## Prayer / Worship

Loving God, you gather us as a people of the new covenant sealed with the blood of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. You formed us into a community of faith, hope and love; a priestly, prophetic, and kingly people. Humbly we ask You, make our parishes truly a communion of communities, a worshipping community, a witnessing and an evangelizing community, and a servant community. Guide our pastors, the religious and lay leaders, and all those who labor in the parish, with Your wisdom and love. Bless all the parishioners who compose the parish and BEC's, as they offer their time, talents and treasures as stewards of the graces You gifted us, for the building up of Your Church. May the Holy Spirit enlighten, inspire, and invigorate us to actively participate in the mission You entrusted to us in the parish. May we continue to be a discerning community, reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel. May we truly become the leaven in society by penetrating all its strata with the Gospel and restoring its order according to the values of the Kingdom. And may the spirit of collaboration and co-responsibility bring us into a fuller and fruitful communion with You and with one another. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



## Zeal for Mission

- † **Make the community nourished by the Word of God.** The members continue to hear the Word, share, and proclaim it to others. Christ continues to be their teacher. They learn from Him. The community of disciples is an evangelized and evangelizing community. It witnesses to the coming of God's kingdom. It is a prophetic community that proclaims the message of the kingdom – a message of salvation and liberation.
- † **Make the community a priestly community.** As a community of disciples, the BECs celebrate the presence of Christ in the sacraments. Christ continues to shape the community through the sacraments. Thus, members actively participate in the liturgical celebration. They gather in the memory of Christ and celebrate the Eucharist. They are ready to offer their life in self-sacrifice.
- † **Make the community a community of Christ.** BECs are concerned about the plight of the poor and the needy, those who are sick, who are hungry, who are in prison. They actively participate in the building of the Kingdom of God--a kingdom of justice, peace, and love. The community of disciples is truly a servant community.
- † **To make the church a church of the poor.** The community of disciples follow the way of Christ who is poor. Members live in evangelical poverty, they make a preferential option for the poor, they empower the poor in their midst to actively participate in the mission of Christ.

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