



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

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

# CATECHETICAL MODULES

Christian Faith: Call, Gift, Mission



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







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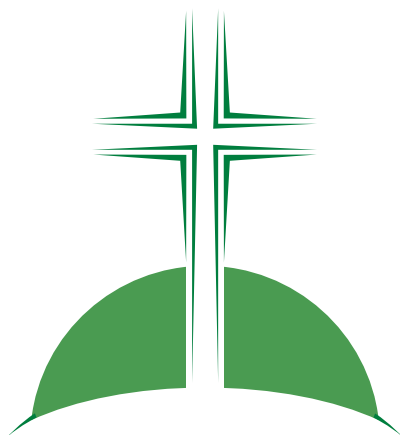
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*For the Faith-driven Servants, Front-liners,  
and who may be considered the hidden  
treasures of the Philippine Catholic Church,  
our beloved Filipino Catechists*



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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

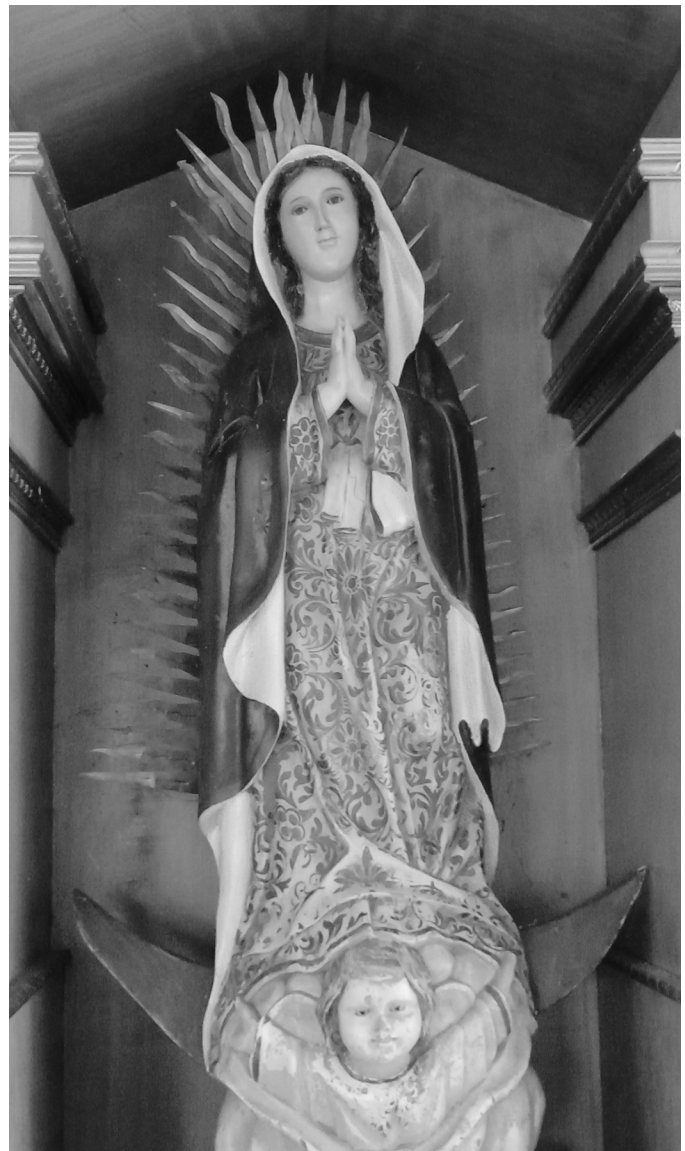


provided for by Fr. Richard P. Lagos, OP, of the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija, and three seminarians from the Diocese of Tarlac - Sem. Anthony Paul R. Tawatao, Sem. Gerald A. Cortes, and Sem. Jayson A. Besa. Other contributors who deserve our utmost gratitude are Dra. Gaines Marie Rosario for her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





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# FOREWORD

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

Bishop, Diocese of San Jose de Nueva Ecija

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



My Dear People of God! Grace and peace!

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

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

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

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

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

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

**All in JESUS' NAME,**





# INTRODUCTION

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

Executive Secretary

Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education (ECCCE)

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Kabankalan



Photo from the Diocese of Maasin

# CATECHETICAL MODULE GUIDE

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

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

## Evangelization in Vatican II

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

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

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



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

## The New Evangelization

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

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

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

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

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



# The Teachings of the Pope on New Evangelization

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

## *Pope Paul VI*

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



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

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

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

### *Pope John Paul II*

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

### *Pope Benedict XVI*

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



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

processes needed to achieve this goal.

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

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



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

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

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



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

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

# CATECHETICAL MODULE STRUCTURE

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

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

## Four Themes of New Evangelization

### Encountering Christ

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

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

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

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



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

## Conversion

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

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

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

## Communion (Sense of Belongingness to the Church)

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

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



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

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

## Zeal for Mission

When a person has already encountered Christ, converted to Christ and is in communion with the Church as children of God, then it will be the time for him/her to do mission in whatever way he/she can to proclaim the Word of God through him/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 6: THE CLERGY AND CONSECRATED PERSONS

## Overview

### The Necessity for Continuous Conversion

2018 was declared the Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. It was a propitious time to say “*mea culpa*” as the previous and present popes have done in order to repair and prevent the recurring sins of religious leaders (Muares, 2017). The Church does not only need continuous formation but also continuous conversion. Ongoing formation is very significant for Church leaders and those who are aspiring to become a priest, such as constant prayers, regular recollections, spiritual direction, updating, and mentoring. To address the lack of witnessing by some of the clergy, the Church needs to ensure a deeper dialogue of life between the clergy and the poor so that their lifestyle may conform to that of the poor Christ. For genuine servant-leadership, the seminary must provide effective clergy formation in human development, spirituality, scripture, theology, pastoral care and mission (NPCCR 58).



Photo from the Diocese of Malolos

The configuration of priests and religious to Christ the Head does not imply an exaltation which would set them above others (EG 104). They must live a simple lifestyle following Jesus Christ as a model in their way of life. The clergy and consecrated persons should remind themselves that their particular calling is to imitate Christ. Their vows must lead them to seek the values of Jesus Christ, and not their own. Church leaders must be models of values and faith in the society because “when the clergy is corrupt, the society becomes corrupt; but when the religious leaders are holy, the people become holy (PO 8). The Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons had been a year devoted to the integral renewal of moral values, mind-set, character, and lifestyles of the clergy and consecrated persons.

### The Call of Witnessing to Holiness

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church asserts that the people of God, through the virtue of baptism, have a universal calling and that is the call to holiness (Lumen Gentium 43). But then the question arises: how does one become holy? The Pastoral Letter for the Clergy and Consecrated Persons used the image of Jesus’ washing the disciples’ feet as an example of an act that leads to holiness. This action of Christ indicates humble service of religious leaders, done out of love for one another and for their flock, so that they could become holy together with their flock (Valles, 2017).

Pope Francis exemplified this when he met with different leaders of nations. Kneeling down to kiss the feet of South Sudan leaders to urge them to keep the peace and not go back to civil war, was a memorable scene of humility and holiness. Truly, Pope Francis showed how the clergy and consecrated persons must serve in humility and genuine love.

Only on the basis of this call to holiness that different forms of life can be articulated. God wants everyone to be saints and not simply settle for a bland and mediocre existence (Gaudete et Exsultate 1). The Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons is an invitation for a deeper discipleship and communion to a common journey towards holiness (Muarez, 2017). Following the example of the Good Shepherd, the clergy and the consecrated persons are invited to become servant-leaders who care for their flock, most especially for the least, the lost and the last.

The clergy and consecrated persons are united with Christ in the proclamation of the Word, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and in their spiritual leadership. That is why they are called “*alagad ng Diyos*” (servants of God). It is through their very ministry of sanctification that they, too, are sanctified (CCC 1534). But again, it is not sufficient to proclaim Jesus by words alone. The evangelizer’s proclamation must take the form of witnessing where what he/she proclaims with his/her lips are exemplified in his/her own life and deeds (EN 41).

“Let all pastors of souls bear in mind that by their daily behavior and concerns, they are representing the face of the Church to the world, and from that, people will judge the power and truth of the Christian message” (Gaudium et Spes 43). May all the clergy and consecrated persons continue to abide in Jesus and become perfect disciples of the Lord for the New Evangelization (Pastores Dabo Vobis 26). The clergy and the religious need constant prayer, for they are always in continuous battle in their life as “*alagad ng Diyos*.” Becoming a priest or a religious is not a title nor an honor, but an accountability. Persistent prayers for the Clergy and Consecrated persons would be a great support in helping them to continually embrace the holiness of their ordination and vows.

## Catechetical Intended Learning Outcomes

- † **Encountering Christ.** The clergy and the consecrated men and women should remind themselves of their particular calling to imitate Christ in their vows and promises. Unless a priest or a Consecrated Persons has a personal encounter with Christ or a religious experience, he/she will not last in this kind of life.
- † **Conversion.** The conversion of the clergy and consecrated persons through constant formation is highly regarded. This could be done through the practice of Eucharistic adoration every single day, retreats, seminars, updating, regular recollection, regular confession, spiritual direction, community interaction and recreation, appropriate self-care, and psycho-spiritual sessions.
- † **Sense of belongingness.** It is significant to reflect on one’s sense of belongingness, whether the clergy and consecrated persons are leading the people to the Church or are they driving them away. In other words, are they the cause of unity or division among their flock? The clergy and the consecrated persons indeed belong to the community. In fact, they were ordained for the community as the representatives of Christ.





- † **Zeal for mission.** Again, it is important for the clergy and consecrated persons to have a constant formation in their ministry. Meaning to say, formation towards priesthood or consecrated life doesn't just end up in the seminary or the convent, but it is an ongoing formation that goes on even after ordination/profession. Continuous formation is needed to keep their zeal for mission burning.

## Etymology

- † **PRIEST** - The word "priest", is ultimately derived from Greek word *πρεσβύτερος* or *presbúteros* via Latin *presbyter*, the term for "elder", especially referring to the elders of Jewish or Christian communities in late antiquity. The regular Latin word for "priest" being *sacerdos*, which corresponds to *ἱερεύς* *hiereús*. The presbyter is the minister who both presides and instructs a Christian congregation, while the *sacerdos*, offer sacrifices, or in a Christian context, the Eucharist and performs "mediatorial offices between God and man (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021c).
- † **CONSECRATE** - late 14c., "make or declare sacred by certain ceremonies or rites," from Latin *consecratus*, which is the past participle of *consecrare* or "to make holy, devote" (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021b).
- † **CLERGY** - c. 1200, *clergie* "office or dignity of a clergyman," from two Old French words: 1. *clergié* "clerics, learned men," from Medieval Latin *clericatus*, from Late Latin *clericus*. Meaning "persons ordained for religious work, persons consecrated to the duties of public administration in the Christian church" is from c. 1300 (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2021a).

## Catechetical Context

### OPENING OF THE 2018 YEAR OF THE CLERGY AND CONSECRATED PERSONS

CBCP PASTORAL EXHORTATION  
First Sunday of Advent, 03 December 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace and Peace to all of you!



Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos

We are on the 6th Year of our 9 – year Spiritual Journey towards 2021 – the 500th Year after the arrival of Christianity to the Philippines. It was in 1521 that the Holy Mass was first celebrated, and the Sacrament of Baptism was first administered in the Philippine archipelago. Then the Santo Niño devotion began in Cebu. That was the start of our Evangelization.

The year 2018 is dedicated to the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. They comprise just a small portion of the Church, yet they are fulfilling a vital role in her mission. In our culture, they



are greatly instrumental for the lay to become truly evangelized and an evangelizing community of disciples. Yet they are not immune to the twin errors of a dichotomy of faith and inadequate discipleship of Christ.

Renewed servant – leaders for the New Evangelization – this is the goal of our prayers and activities this year. We aim towards the integral renewal of the values, mindsets, behavior, and lifestyles of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. Following the example of the Good Shepherd, they are invited to become servant – leaders who care most especially for the least, the lost and the last. It will be a year, too, of revisiting the ways of seminary and religious formation and the collaboration with the laity in the work of mission and ministry.

As we embark towards a new evangelization, we have become aware of the bright lights along the way. Our priests faithfully celebrate the sacraments daily in the busy urban areas and in the distant and lonely barangays. Our men and women religious administer church institutions, teach catechism, and serve in the parishes. They bring joy to orphanages, hospitals, and prisons. Some have started working for rehabilitation of drug dependents. Working without habits, but no less committed, are the members of lay institutes, promoting the Kingdom in their own humble way. They truly inspire and strengthen us, like the priest of Marawi, Fr. Teresito “Chito” Sukanob, who almost lost his life caring for his parishioners caught in the crossfires of war. They make us hopeful for tomorrow.

On the other hand, the bright lights undeniably go at times with some dismal shadows, brought about by some of our Clergy and Consecrated Persons themselves. There were occasions of frailty and scandals that sadden us. Such misconducts call for sincere reflection and humble repentance and reparation. May these faults point us to new and vast possibilities of renewal and communion with those who are weak and broken. May our Priests and Consecrated Persons, in their weakness and woundedness, continue to serve and guide fellow sinners with the joy of the Gospel that leads to the fullness of life. Jesus Himself encourages us with his words: “In the world you have tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world” (Jn 16:33). Renewal of the Church requires the renewal of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons. For this, we take inspiration and example from the tender scene of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet.

## **JESUS IN COMMUNION WITH THE FATHER**

“Fully aware that He comes from the Father...” (Jn 13:3) – Jesus never lost that unity with His heavenly Father while He lived on earth. His communion and intimacy with the Father moved Him to reach out to sinners and needy. It was the source of the impact of His words and the effectiveness of His miraculous deeds (Jn 6:38, 46; Jn 8:19, 29).

As Lay, Clergy and Consecrated persons, we are invited to share in this “communion” and “intimate relationship” between Jesus and the Father. The Clergy and Consecrated Persons are united with Christ in the Proclamation of the Word, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and in their Spiritual Leadership. That is why they are called “*alagad ng Diyos*,” men and women “of God” or even more accurately, “servants of God.” It is through their very ministry of sanctification, that they too are sanctified (CCC 1534).



But at times, they seem far from God and from following his will. Some get entangled in their concern for material possessions, in their need for pleasures and in their desire for power. Instead of becoming servant-leaders of communion they may even lead us to confusion and disharmony. Let us pray that we may remain ever closely united to Jesus as He is in constant communion with the Father! We pray that all the Clergy and Consecrated Persons continue to abide in Jesus and become perfect disciples of the Lord for the New Evangelization (PDV 26).

### **JESUS STOOD TO HUMBLY SERVE...**

“Jesus stood...” (Jn 13:4) – Jesus “rose up from the meal” to wash his disciples’ feet. His love for them moved Him to serve them humbly. With this inexhaustible strength in communion with the Father, Jesus was determined to serve and love those who were given to Him, even to the point of death, death on the cross (Phil 2:8). We, as members of His Church, are invited to actualize the Kingdom of God present in our midst. We are called to reach out to those in greatest need, to love and to serve those considered different and far from us. The Clergy and Consecrated Persons, given their role of leadership in our communities, and who often enjoy privileges and entitlements, should stand up from a comfortable and privileged position to serve generously and humbly. May they stand out in a world that is increasingly indifferent and even hostile to the Good News, and yet hungering for something it knows not. In the end, the Gospel will prevail. Faith in Jesus will be vindicated, for as He said, “fear not, I have already conquered the world” (Jn 16:33).

### **“...AND HE BEGAN TO WASH THE DISCIPLES’ FEET”**

“...and He set aside His vestments...began to wash the feet of the disciples...” (Jn 13:4-5) The Lord, kneeling at the feet of his disciples, set aside His garment of protection, and put on the towel of service. Showing His example of humility, He washed their tired and soiled feet. He later admonished them to do the same to one another, “...just as I have done for you, so also should you do” (Jn 13:15).

“How lovely are the feet of him who brings the good news!” (Is. 52:7; Rom 10:15). The Scriptures acknowledges them who come with joyful tidings, who bear the Gospel message. The task of sharing the Good News entails reaching out, and traversing distances, here in our country and in neighboring Asia. We are careful not to neglect anyone needing the joy and hope that the Gospel brings. “To the peripheries!” Let us roll up our sleeves and work! The Church is like a field hospital! *“Duc in altum!”*

My dear people of God, please continue to support our clergy and consecrated persons in their journey as “servants to the servants of the Gospel.” As shepherds to the Lord’s flock, may they “take on the odor of their sheep.” As vulnerable “lovely feet” of the New Evangelization, may they encourage others to mission by serving with humility, by loving in action, and by strengthening the poor, the hopeless, the victims of injustice and oppression (Is 52:7; Rom 10:15).

Let us also pray for the young men and women in the seminaries and formation houses. As they prepare for a life of self-offering and service may their communion with Jesus be the source of their inspiration, strength, and joy.



Let us all together, Lay, Clergy and Consecrated Persons, remain united with Jesus. With Mary let us proclaim the greatness of the Lord and rejoice in God our savior. May we become servants of the new evangelization to one another so that one day, God may finally and truly be all in all (1Cor 15:28b).

From the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, December 3, 2017, First Sunday of Advent.

**+ ROMULO G. VALLES, D.D.**

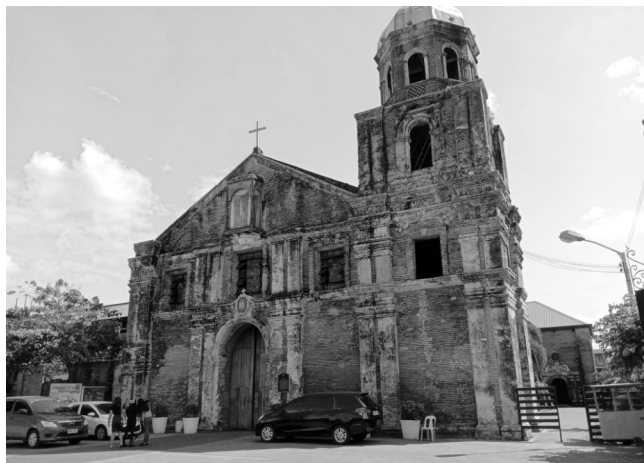
Archbishop of Davao

President,

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines



*Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog*



*Photo from the Diocese of Imus*



*Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo*



*Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija*



# Song for Reflection

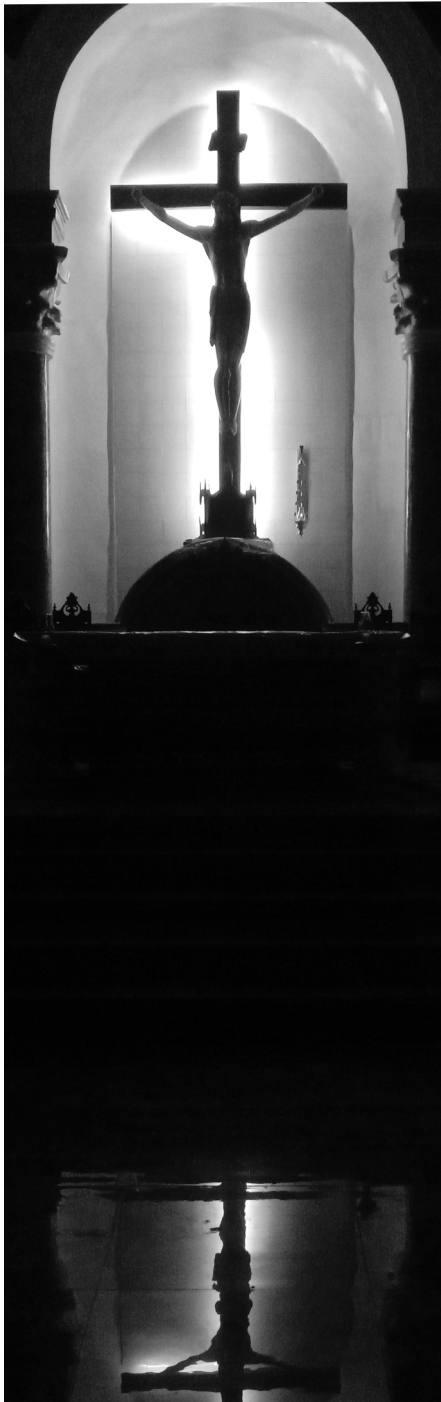


Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

## ANG MABUHAY SA PAG-IBIG

*Sta. Teresita del Niño Jesus*

*Salin ni Bienvenida Tabuena*

*Musika ni Eduardo Hontiveros, SJ*

Ang mabuhay sa pag-ibig ay pagbibigay  
na di nagtatantya ng halaga.  
At hindi naghihintay ng kapalit  
Pagbibigay walang pasubali.  
Naibigay ko nang lahat:  
magaan akong tumatakbo.  
Dukha man ako sa lahat,  
dukha man ako sa lahat  
Ang tangi kong yaman ay  
mabuhay sa pag-ibig.

Ang mabuhay sa pag-ibig ay paglalayag,  
na hantunga'y payapa't may galak.  
Sa maalab na udyok ng pag-ibig,  
Hinahanap kita sa aking kapwa.  
At s'yang tanging tumatanglaw  
bituwing sa aki'y patnubay  
diwa sa paglalakbay  
sandigang lakas at tibay.  
Laging awit ang sagisag na  
mabuhay sa pag-ibig.

Ang mabuhay sa pag-ibig ay maging bihag  
sa tawag ng pagmamahal ng Diyos.  
Papawiin N'yang lahat ang panimdim,  
Sa gunita, dahas ay limutin  
Sisidlang putik man ako, kayamanan ka ng puso ko.  
Ang gantimpala ko'y ikaw,  
pag-asang natatanaw:  
Ang pumanaw sa sarili ay  
mabuhay sa pag-ibig.

## Reflection Questions:

- † How do you experience God's love?
- † How do you profess your faith in your everyday life?





**“The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father’s only Son”**

**(John 1:14)**

## 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”**

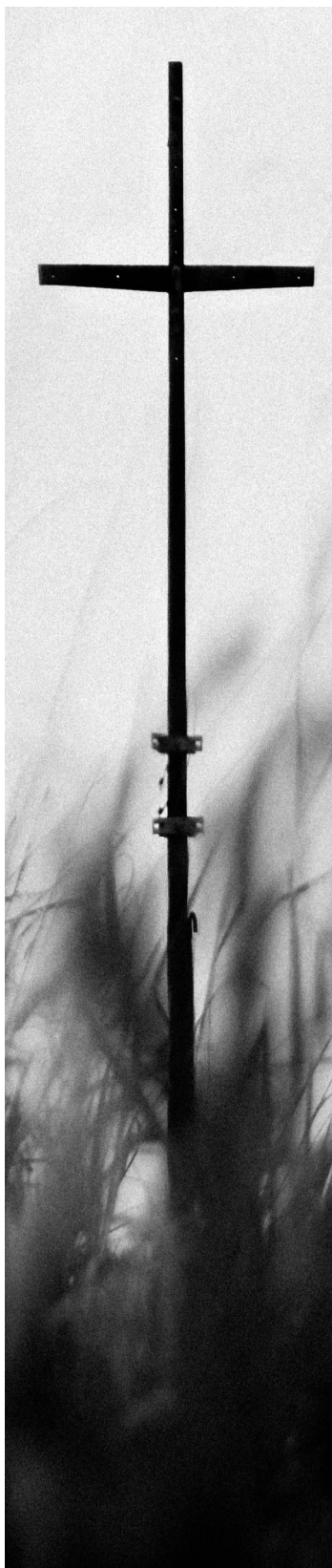
using the selected research poem below. Discuss your views and insights with fellow catechists using the provided guide question/s in relation to the module theme on *clergy and consecrated persons (klergo at mga relihiyoso)*.

### Guide question for Discussion:

- † Have you found God’s presence in the rituals of the sacraments?
- † Have you become an image of a living Christ to our brothers and sisters?



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



## LEADER-CATECHIST

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

*Translated to English by Luciana L. Urquiola*

Being a leader  
 In a catechetical ministry  
 Compares to a manual guide  
 of the sacraments:  
 From baptism  
 To the acceptance  
 Of the calling to lead,  
 The Eucharistic mission  
 Of sharing  
 Will always relieve one  
 From all obstacles.  
 It has the disposition of a confession,  
 The admission of weak actuations,  
 Because the duties of  
 The catechist  
 Are severe and austere—  
 Like in the sacrament of confirmation,  
 The help and care  
 Embrace and guidance come  
 From, the Holy Spirit.  
 The leader-catechist  
 A Prophet-priest  
 Professes at every moment  
 The sweet catechesis  
 Like lovers in love,  
 The matrimonial union  
 In the teachings of the Church  
 Is the beloved Christ.  
 In the end,  
 Whether tired or weary,  
 The leader-catechist  
 Still holds  
 The sacramental oil  
 Upon sanctification  
 And careful application,  
 To the wavering faith  
 Revives and revitalizes,  
 Because one's service as a leader-catechist  
 Has sweetness and permanence.

<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: THE CROSS AND SELF-DENIAL



### Introduction

Unless a priest or religious has a personal encounter with Christ (or a religious experience), he/she will not last in this kind of life. Even if he/she does continue, perhaps, he/she will be lacking in passion and worst, is uncertain of his/her desired path. He/she has to pray for that grace of encounter Christ and have a religious experience because that will change his/her life, the way he/she relates with others and the way he/she does his/her ministry. Hence, the clergy and consecrated persons will not be able to become true followers of Christ, unless they become witnesses and dispensers of a life other than earthly life (PO 3).



*Photo from the Diocese of Ipil*

Proclaiming Christ means showing that to believe in and to follow Him is not only something right and true, but also something beautiful, capable of filling life with new splendor and profound joy, even in the midst of difficulties (EG 167). The true minister of Christ works in humility trying to do what is pleasing to God. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he is guided by Him who desires the salvation of all men (PO 15). Thus, the clergy and religious should always remind themselves of their particular calling as a call to imitate Christ, in their vows and promises to have a Christ-like attitude. The laity, on the other hand, will encounter Christ once they see their religious leaders living a more and more Christ-like life—a life that witnesses to the life that Christ Himself lived (CFC 738).



### Worship

## Gospel of Matthew 16:24-28

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told His disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me. <sup>25</sup> For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for My sake will find it. <sup>26</sup> For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? <sup>27</sup> “For the Son of Man is to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then He will repay everyone for what has been done. <sup>28</sup> Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.”





# Doctrine

## What is Vocation?

The word vocation comes from the Latin *vocare* which means to call. God calls or invites us towards a particular vocation: single life, married life, priesthood or consecrated life. Although each of us must make a decision about our vocation, that choice is our response to God's invitation. Pope Francis' message for the 2019 World Day of Vocations was: "As with every call, the Gospel speaks of an encounter. Jesus walks by, sees those fishermen, and walks up to them. The same thing happened when we met the person we wanted to marry, or when we first felt the attraction of a life of consecration: we were surprised by the encounter and at that moment we glimpsed the promise of a joy capable of bringing fulfillment to our lives."

## Three Types of Vocation

### † Single- Blessedness

Being single is a vocation that is fully supported by the Catholic Church. An individual who is truly being called to single life will feel strongly about this choice in his or her heart.

There are many reasons why someone might feel drawn to a single life. For example, some would like to have more time for service work, church projects, or activities that require much of their time and attention. While a married person can still do service projects, his/ her priority should be the well- being of his/her spouse and children. Another factor that could lead to single life is choosing to be celibate, which means abstaining from any sexual relations/activity. The Catholic Church teaches that everyone should practice chastity because our sexuality is a beautiful gift from God. It was created and intended for a man and woman in marriage. It is ordered so that the union of the two allows for the blessing of new life. Thus, it is deemed to be sacred. So, for a consecrated single person, this means devoting one's life to God in a pure and faithful way, one that is free from sexual activity.

### † Marriage life

Marriage is the Sacrament of human love that Christ raised to a real efficacious symbol of His love for the Church. "Marriage of the Baptized is one of the seven sacraments of the New Covenant. According to CCC 1638; Neuner & Dupuis 1996; and Familiaris Consortio 13:

Marriage is seen as:

- † an ongoing saving symbolic action
- † grounded in the ministry of Christ and continued in and through the Church,





which;

- † when proclaimed, is realized, and celebrated in faith; and makes present and actually shares in God's love and faithfulness in Jesus Christ, in the pattern of His Paschal Mystery.

Marriage and the family in the Philippines today, as throughout the world, presents a sharp contrast. On the one hand, most Filipinos today have a deeper appreciation for personal freedom and the quality of interpersonal relationships within marriage. There is also a serious concern for the upholding of the dignity of women, equality of the spouses, and responsible family planning. On the other hand, Filipino Christian families are brought to greater awareness of their social, moral and political responsibilities, and their mission within the Church (FC 6). Perhaps never before in history has so much emphasis been put on the personal happiness and self-fulfilling love and pleasure that marriage is presumed to offer (CFC 1876).

### † Priesthood/Religious life

Catholic priests take vows and devote themselves to serving God and the people by administering the Sacraments, working in parishes, and doing service work. Priests can choose to either join a religious community or work for the diocese. An individual who feels called to the religious life feels a deep desire to offer one's entire self to God or devote their life to serving Jesus in a religious community.

Besides the ordained and lay ministries, there are the **Religious Brothers and Sisters**. Those faithful who bind themselves to Christ in a state of life **consecrated to God** by the profession of evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience (CFC 1426).



*Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan*



*Photo from the Diocese of Romblon*



# Human Values

- † **Discernment** - Discernment is a virtue, which sets the stage for accurate perception and correct expression which includes correct awareness, thought, actions, and lifestyle. The removal of inappropriate and unwholesome actions from behaviors is the consequence of proper discernment. One of the greatest life lessons is learning to discern the boundary between desire and craving, and between compassionate empathy and emotional co-dependency. The presence of suffering in our lives results mainly from attachment to things, people, thoughts, and emotions.
- † **Obedience** - The moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. The duty of obedience requires one to give due honor to authority and to treat those who are charged to exercise it with respect, and, insofar as it is deserved, with gratitude and good-will. Like any other virtue, obedience must be regulated by prudence. No virtue is virtuous without prudence, which is the virtue of being realistic. Obedience needs prudence in order to be virtuous, just as a student needs a teacher in order to learn. One must know whom he/she should obey.
- † **Holiness** - is endeavoring to place our minds entirely on things above not on things below. Holiness is being of one mind with God – this means we agree with God and His Words, hating what He hates, loving what He loves, measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. The adjective *qādôš*, “*holy*,” refers to God and what belongs to Him. The Virtue of Holiness offers a roadmap for navigating our everyday activities: work, family, leisure, and other pursuits. It shows how we can reach the heights of Christian life in and through our daily activities.



## Morals

### Five ways to imitate Christ as Priest and Religious

#### † Be a man/woman of prayer

To imitate Christ, one must become a person of prayer. In the Gospels, Jesus went up a mountain or withdrew to a deserted place to pray more than twelve times. It was in these moments that He prayed to His Father in heaven, to His Abba. In the Gospel of St. John, we find Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer, in which He prayed that all might be one. Jesus recognized the value of prayer, both personal and intercessory. Prayer is an essential component of being an imitator of Christ.

#### † Feed others

Jesus fed other people. Most concretely we see this in the multiplication of the loaves



and the fishes, when Jesus feeds the crowd of over 5,000 people. In John 6, Jesus tells the crowd that He is the Bread of Life that they must eat His Body and drink His Blood, and if they do, they will have life forever.

In the Eucharist that we celebrate, Jesus feeds us with His Body and Blood. After Mass, we go out into the world and have the opportunity to feed other people by doing corporal works of mercy, which are charitable actions wherein which we come to the aid of our neighbors in their bodily needs (CCC 2447). This is how Jesus says we will be judged in Matthew 25. Jesus fed others, and if we want to imitate Him, so must we.



*Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan*



*Photo from the Diocese of Kidapawan*

### † Be a welcoming disciple

Jesus constantly invited people in His ministry. He invited the Twelve to follow Him, to leave their ordinary lives as fishermen or as a tax collector. Jesus invited people to come to Him, those who were sick or burdened, and He promised them rest.

As priests and consecrated persons and even as laity, we must always invite others to know Jesus and his Words. Let us Invite people to join us in prayer before meals. Invite someone to go with us to Sunday Mass or join us in a parish program or event. Be a person who invites others to know the Lord, and when we do, we will be imitating Christ.

### † Die for your Flock

When God said, “come follow me”, He actually says come die with me, die with me in the cross. Jesus did die for us, and so we should die for other people. But this type of dying means giving up of ourselves for others. It means letting our worldly wants and desires die within us and allow Christ to live more fully in us. Jesus died for us, so He wants us to be able to give up ourselves--our lifestyles, our pride, and our attachments in order for us to serve others that they might have life!



## † Proclaim the Gospel

The people who followed Jesus hungered for His teaching. Jesus taught throughout His ministry in varied ways, especially through parables. He taught people about the Father and about who He (Jesus) truly was. He explained to them the significance of the Israelite people eating manna in the desert. Priests and religious are called to be witnesses of Christ to the flock that has been entrusted to them. He is a minister of the sacraments, proclaimer of the Word, teacher of the faith, and steward of the Church. Priests and Religious are meant to accompany and lead the flock entrusted to their care in this world so that they can reach the eternal Kingdom of Heaven.

It has been said that the best homily/preaching that a priest and consecrated person can give is when the words they utter emulate their deeds. It is important that actions accompany our words. Proclaiming the gospel by example is more virtuous and effective than proclaiming it with words. In the lives of the laity, the most concrete way we can teach other people is by signing up to be a catechist. But that takes a special calling. If that's not how God wants us to teach, then we must still teach with words and actions.



## Simple Activities

**Activity:** *Let us strive to imitate Christ in all that we do!*

Draw the face of Christ in a short/long bond paper. Color it. It is not how good we are at drawing the face of God but on how we give dedication and meaning in sketching the face of God with our own hands. Remember that we were created by Him with His own hands without any hesitation. Then at the back of the drawing, write five concrete ways that we can imitate Christ's Words and deeds during His earthly ministry. Then, ask each of the participants to share in front all their works.

**Song Analysis** (see next page)

**Guide for Reflection:**

- † As an ordinary citizen, how do I answer to God's call of sharing His love to others?
- † How can I be a blessing to others?



## PARING FILIPINO

*By Fr. Carlo Magno*

Paring Pilipino tinawag ng Diyos  
mula sa bayan ang daing ay lubos  
ikaw ang larawan ng pagbibigay puso  
buong-buo, di kulang at hustong husto

Paring Pilipino tapang taglay mo  
nakikilala mo ang yong tupa sa lobo  
ikaw ang pananggalang sa talim ng kasalanan  
salita ng Diyos at panalangin ang pag-asa mo

ikaw ang biyaya ng Diyos sa sambayanan  
ikaw ang awit sa labi ng pusong matimtiman  
ikaw ang liwanag kung madilim man ang buwan  
ika'y Pilipino. Ikaw ay Pari ni Kristo

Lubak-lubak ma't masukal ang iyong daan  
ang galak ng puso'y matatagpuan sa  
Espiritung iyong taglay  
sa ngiti ng Bayang iyong akay  
sa labi ng Ina Ng Diyos At Panalangin ng  
mga Banal  
Ika'y Pilipino...  
Ikaw ay Pari ni Kristo...  
Ika'y Pilipino isang Pari Ni Kristo...



## Prayer / Worship

### Prayer for Priest and Religious

Loving and gracious Father, You are the author of priestly and religious vocation. Be ever near to those whom You have called to follow more closely Your son, Jesus Christ, in serving You and Your people. In spite of their human weaknesses, may they witness to the transforming power of Your love. Give them the strength and consolation of Your Spirit so that in times of trials and difficulties, their fidelity to their calling may remain unshaken. May they anchor their lives only in You, the ever-faithful One, so that they may be humble and dedicated servants of Your Church. Amen.



## Prayer for Vocation

O God, Father of all Mercies,  
Provider of a bountiful Harvest,  
send Your Graces upon those  
You have called to gather the fruits of Your labor.  
Preserve and strengthen them in their lifelong service of You.

Open the hearts of Your children  
that they may discern Your Holy Will,  
inspire in them love and a desire to surrender themselves  
to serving others in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ.

Teach all Your faithful to follow their respective paths in life,  
guided by Your Divine Word and Truth.  
Through the intercession of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary,  
all the Angels, and Saints, humbly hear our prayers  
and grant Your Church's needs, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.



## Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** – To know not only in mind but also in heart the three types of Vocations namely: single blessedness, Married life, and Priesthood or Consecrated Persons. We must study these and acknowledge that your life is a vocation.
- † **LIVE** – To discern what vocation you would want to journey. You may be called to be a teacher, doctor, lawyer, community leader, or social worker. You may be called to be a parent or caregiver. Whatever vocation is, the important thing to know is that God always works in you and through you. Hence, always be open to God's call. Especially, if you feel that God is calling you to become a priest, a religious, a brother or a nun. Pray for your vocation and pray also for all the clergy and Consecrated Person. The true path for sanctification is constant prayer.
- † **SHARE** – To pour ourselves out for the needs of others are very significant especially as servant-leaders of the Church. Likewise, the clergy and consecrated persons need the support and love of his/her parishioners/laity. Your time, talent and treasure must not be hidden, it should be shared. If you have time to engage in parish activities, do it: such as leading a prayer service or bible sharing, cleaning the Church, decorating the Church, being a member of a religious organization in the parish etc. Share your talent in your own parish or in the religious institution/foundation which you belong to. If you have a good voice join the choir, if you love to serve in the altar, join the altar servers and if you want to teach, be a catechist. And if you have enough treasure, learn to detach, and give for the sustainability of the Church/Religious Institution of our brothers and sisters in the Religious life.



# CATECHETICAL LESSON 2:

## CONVERSION: WASHING THE FEET



### Introduction



Photo from the Archdiocese of Cebu

The configuration to Christ of ordained priests and consecrated persons who have their perpetual vows as religious do not imply an exaltation which would set them above others. They are to speak and act in the name of Christ with necessary wisdom and standard values.

He/she needs to renew his/her mind and heart by valuing persons as Christ did, by loving especially the poor, the needy, and the abandoned, and by serving others selflessly and generously. As a servant of God, he/she is not only a disciple of the Lord but must teach the Lord's ways to others. He/she can only do this if he/she is like Christ in his/her mind and heart (PCP II 534).

Every vocation has only one direct calling and that is holiness. The clergy and consecrated persons acquire holiness by exercising their functions sincerely and tirelessly in the spirit of Christ, in their mission (PO 13). To achieve this, ongoing formation is very significant for Church leaders and those who are aspiring to become priests, such as retreats, seminars, updating, regular recollections, confessions, spiritual directions, psycho-spiritual sessions, etc.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has established the Galilee renewal program for the clergy and the religious. In that program, there is a psycho-spiritual direction for the participants, as well as community interaction, sports/recreation, and lots of prayer. An hour is set aside for Eucharistic adoration every single day. If the clergy and consecrated persons can go to that program for two weeks once a year and integrate lessons learned in their parishes and communities.



### Worship

## Gospel of Matthew 13: 1-20

Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that His hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup> The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray Him. And during supper <sup>3</sup> Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, <sup>4</sup> got up from the table, took off His outer robe, and tied a towel around Himself. <sup>5</sup> Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the



disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around Him. <sup>6</sup> He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup> Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." <sup>8</sup> Peter said to Him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup> Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup> Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." <sup>11</sup> For He knew who was to betray Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean." <sup>12</sup> After He had washed their feet, had put on His robe, and had returned to the table, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you?" <sup>13</sup> You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. <sup>16</sup> Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. <sup>17</sup> If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. <sup>18</sup> I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, 'The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' <sup>19</sup> I tell you this now before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am He. <sup>20</sup> Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives the one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me."



Photo from the Archdiocese of Palo



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



## Doctrine

### The Three Evangelical Counsels

The evangelical counsels manifest living the fullness of charity, which is never satisfied with not giving more. They attest to its vitality and call forth our spiritual readiness. The perfection of the New Law consists essentially in the precepts of love of God and neighbor. The counsels point out the more direct ways and the readier means which they are to be practiced in keeping with the vocation of each (CCC 1974). The life consecrated to God is characterized by the public profession of the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, in a stable state of life recognized by the Church (CCC 944).





## † Poverty

Poverty may not be considered a necessary or a desirable condition by many, but it must be embraced to reach certain spiritual, moral, or intellectual states. Poverty is often understood as an essential element of renunciation in religious life. The main aim of giving up things of the materialistic world is to withdraw oneself from materialistic view and sensual pleasures as they are considered illusionary and only temporary.



*Photo from the Archdiocese of Lipa*

The vow of poverty calls the consecrated to detach themselves from the distraction of money and physical possessions in order to attach themselves more fully to God and trust in God's providence. Poverty is not just about being poor, but it is about living a shared life, like Jesus and the apostles who lived out of a common purse (Luke 8:1-3).

## † Chastity

Consecrated women and men offer their sexuality and their desire to be a mother or father as gifts to God. Their vow of chastity requires the practice of self-control and self-sacrifice. Lay persons can also exercise chastity from a different perspective. Chastity is about the gift of self to another, not necessarily about forsaking marriage and sex, unless you are a dedicated single person, a religious, or a priest. Priests give themselves to God and to the people they are sent to serve, forsaking marriage and the use of sexuality for the sake of the Reign of God (Matthew 19:12). Therefore, even spouses can imitate Jesus' chastity when they give themselves solely to each other.

## † Obedience

When consecrated women and men take a vow of obedience they completely submit to God's will and plan for their lives. Obedience is not about doing what someone in authority tells you, but involves a shift from me to thee, with a readiness to serve, no matter who, whether the other is deserving, asks nicely, is aware of the cost, or is grateful.

Hence, we begin by wanting to be with Jesus, and be taught and formed by Him, and then imitate His example. One way to do this is to imitate Jesus' poverty, chastity, and obedience. Evangelical counsels are invitations, not commandments. A lot of people think that only the religious live by these counsels, but some lay people make private vows to live by them, just as priests make promises at ordination to do so. But all the baptized are invited by Jesus to imitate His poverty, chastity, and obedience. So, there has to be an understanding of these that applies to all, even to married and single people.





# Human Values

- † **Simplicity of Life** - Simple living encompasses a number of different voluntary practices to simplify one's lifestyle. These may include, for example, reducing one's possessions, generally referred to as minimalism, or increasing self-sufficiency. A simple life gives freedom from the issues of life that should not really be of major concern. Simplicity is all about focusing on what's most important and letting go of the rest. A simple life provides freedom. Hence, Proverbs reminds us about simplicity, "If you have little, but you fear the Lord, you have everything! Wealth without God is worthless. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.
- † **Faithfulness** - Faithfulness is the concept of remaining loyal to someone or something and putting that loyalty into consistent practice regardless of extenuating circumstances. Like a married man, a priest and consecrated brothers and sisters make solemn promises to God and to the community. Both priests and married men face temptations and discouragement, but they are called to overcome them. In the case of the clergy, they exercise a celibate way of life. They are called to remain in a type of love that conquers all because its ultimate strength is rooted in the love of Christ.
- † **Perseverance in Prayer** - Pope Francis once said, "Vocations are born of prayer and from prayer." Without an active life of prayer, it is impossible to make any progress in discernment. The Catechism chapter dealing with prayer is titled "The Battle of Prayer," indicating the challenge that prayer presents to every Christian, and certainly in a particular way to the discernor. With the support and guidance of a spiritual director, a daily prayer routine provides an essential foundation to spiritual life. Elements of this prayer routine for the discernor should gradually include the Liturgy of the Hours, Eucharistic Adoration, the Rosary, meditations, and mental prayers, including praying with the Scriptures (*lectio divina*). These forms of prayer, together with the daily Eucharist, form the spirituality of priests, as well as of consecrated persons.



# Morals

What does it mean to have a priestly character? The sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders impart a character or "indelible mark" on the soul of those who receive them. This idea originated from the ancient world. Material objects, animals, and human beings (i.e. slaves) were typically branded by putting a mark or tattoo in order to mark them as being in the permanent possession of their owner. The idea of character came into Christian theology to express a relationship to an owner. Later Scholastic theology would develop the idea to explain how the three sacraments that impart a sacramental character empower the Christian believer



to perform actions that advance his or her own salvation and that of other believers. For our purposes, it is enough to recognize that having the sacramental character of Holy Orders means that priests belong to Christ in a unique way to build up His mystical body, the Church. As St. Paul says, we do not belong to ourselves; we have been “purchased at a great price” (1 Cor 6:19-20).

What are the implications of having a priestly character? Bishops, priests, and deacons, have been ordained for the service of the Lord, and this reaches into their very own being. For St. Paul, life must be Christ, so that “it is no longer we who live, but rather Christ who lives in us” (Phil 1:21). Priestly ordination and religious profession will make them belong to the faithful in a radical way, so that the faithful, along with the priests and religious, may belong fully to Christ. At the end of the day, they have nothing to give to the people but Christ alone. In each sacrament, it is Christ who either washes, feeds, or reconciles. Priests are merely His instruments. But how wonderful it is to witness the power of God flow through to their humble gestures and words.

Priesthood is never about a mere set of functions. Ordination has affected a real change in their very own being so that they now act on behalf of Christ, the Servant, and as the servant of His people in whose possession they remain until their last breath. They have been reconfigured as servants in such a radical way that no secular categories can explain the change that has been wrought by Holy Orders. As leaders of worship, as teachers of the Word of God, and as shepherds of souls.

## Six (6) suggested ways to please God

### † Humility and Love for the poor

In all that we do, especially priests and religious, we are called to be humble. One of the famous pictures of Pope Francis, which circulated around the Internet within hours of his election was during his visit to a children’s hospital in Palermo, Buenos Aires, in 2006. Wearing a deacon’s stole, he kneels during the *mandatum* before a very sick young boy who holds a handkerchief over his mouth, and whose feet the future pope had just washed. Pope Francis held the child’s right foot in the most tender fashion, as if it was a sacred vessel, then kissed it. The simplicity of the gesture expresses something profound about priesthood: In all that they do, the religious should imitate the mysteries they celebrate. The encounter with Christ in the suffering and in the poor has been a regular feature of Pope Francis’ episcopal ministry over many years. Humility and love for the poor are perfect ingredients to stay in humble service to the people of God as a servant of God.

### † Thank God always with grateful hearts

Gratitude stops pride from growing. We can thank people for the things they do and for who they are. That’s important and encouraging for them. But we’re to thank God for that person as well, for the way He has worked in them. Thankfulness is a sign of a believer. Our relationship with God is nurtured in the constant act of thanksgiving. Through thanksgiving, the gracious acts are remembered, and the life of a person is thereby changed. God-centered thankfulness helps us grow in humility.

## † **Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation often**

Contrition and confession is a reality check that reminds us who we are. Christian confession needs not be overwhelming because the cross was sufficient for all our sins and we have been completely forgiven. While it is at the cross that we understand clearly that we are sinners, it is also at the cross that we realize most clearly that we are deeply loved. When we humbly and sincerely confess our sins to God, we receive pardon through absolution and penance. We gain a deeper appreciation of God's grace and what we have been saved from. God's forgiveness gives us peace and security, and therefore the freedom to grow in humility and love.

## † **When People don't understand us easily, be ready to accept judgments and humiliations**

We can be hurt terribly, but they help us become humble. Humiliations can help us become more like Jesus, who was terribly insulted, humiliated, and persecuted. Although we might fail at something, or we might get demoted at work, maligned, and undermined, we should still be ready to accept humiliations as life-giving moments. We can learn a lot when we're at the bottom of the pecking order—which for many of us is out of our comfort zone.

## † **Have a sense of humor**

This is really key, yet not often talked about. Have the ability to enjoy every moment of life. While we have to be serious about many things in our day-to-day relationships and works, let us take time to revel on the events of our life. When we're able to laugh, we are also more able to handle different situations lightly and calmly. A healthy sense of humor is a sign of a healthy attitude in life. We can quickly adjust to situations and people. There is always joy and grace in every encounter that we make. We are more in tune with other people, and we recognize their own struggles and hopes. Being able to smile and laugh is really important so as to prevent us from possible burnout and depression. It helps us keep going in life and in our ministry.

## † **Listening to God and His message**

When we Listen to God through Scriptures, the living Traditions and from the teachings of the Church, we also listen to God in the signs of our times, and in the day-to-day life of the people of God. Hence, listening to our brothers and sisters would mean that we are willing to learn and be enriched by them. We find God in every encounter that we make and do; they may be Christians or from other faith traditions and religions. They maybe adults, or the young. Regardless of race, gender, class, or beliefs, when we listen and are listened to, we feel accepted and loved. And when we listen to others, it's a sign of loving them and acknowledging that the other person is important and valuable. It is also recognizing that God in His goodness, has made these people part and parcel of our lives. God sends us friends and strangers in various ways, and they are always gifts, for true friendship is a gift.





Hence, we, the Church, the people of God and the community of disciples, are being both the evangelized and the evangelizing community with new means, vigor, and enthusiasm together with the priests, consecrated persons, and the laity. Pope Francis (2014) said that “we, both as individuals and as Church, do not only need continuous formation but also continuous conversion. The clergy, consecrated persons and the laity as Disciples of Christ are called to serve and even forgive one another. The action of Christ in washing of the feet shows us the way. It is through the humble service of the religious leaders, done out of love towards one another and towards their flock, that they could become holy together with their flock.”

The call to sanctity and holiness is for all and could be done only through this unique relationship of service towards each other in a reciprocal love and with the awareness that one could not be without the other. It is not true that the priests and the religious are the “privileged” class in the Church while the rest are the spiritual “proletariat” (working class) in the Church. This way of thinking has to be avoided.

In other words, we are invited to reflect once more and be resolved that all of us, ordained or non-ordained, are called to holiness. All the members of the Church are called to be saints together. In other words, in this new evangelization, everyone are called to be recipients and active agents of evangelization. Each of us needs to be faithful to our calling to be saints in the One Body of Christ. The Year of the Clergy and Consecrated Persons is an invitation for a deeper discipleship and communion towards a common journey for holiness. More than ever, let us together take the path to holiness, as clergy, consecrated persons, and as lay faithful who can love and serve the Lord more faithfully and truly if we listen heartily to God’s Word in our world today.



## Simple Activities

### **Activity : Washing of the Feet**

We will read again the Gospel according to John 13: 1 -20 the washing of the feet of the disciples of Jesus. Then, after that we will do the same rituals of the washing of the feet. The chairs of the participants will be arranged in a circle. They will sit barefooted. Then each of them will experience washing one another’s feet as a sign of service to one another and a reminder that all of us need to serve one another in the humblest way of service. After the rituals or the activity of washing of the feet, asked the participants to write down in a bullet form, their humblest act of service that they had done in their life. Then, allow every participant to share their experiences during the activity as well as their list of humble service.

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





Photo from the Diocese of Borongan

## Father, Bless Them

By Fr. Carlo Magno

This world is not what it was meant to be  
All this pain, all this suffering  
There's a better place  
Waiting for me  
In Heaven

Every tear will be wiped away  
Every sorrow and sin erased  
We'll dance on seas of amazing grace  
In Heaven  
In Heaven

I'm goin' home  
Where the streets are golden  
Every chain is broken  
Oh I wanna go  
Oh I wanna go  
Home  
Where every fear is gone  
I'm in your open arms  
Where I belong  
Home

Lay down my burdens, I lay down my past  
I run to Jesus, no turning back  
Thank God Almighty, I'll be free at last  
In Heaven  
In Heaven

I'm goin' home  
Where the streets are golden  
Every chain is broken  
Oh I wanna go  
Oh I wanna go  
Home  
Where every fear is gone  
I'm in your open arms  
Where I belong

Blinded eyes  
Will finally see  
The dead will rise  
On...

## Guide for Reflection

- † How do I show my trust in the Lord?
- † How do I help others put their trust in the Lord?



# Prayer / Worship

## PRAYER FOR THE 2018 YEAR OF THE CLERGY AND CONSECRATED PERSONS

O God Most Loving Father,  
with Your priests and those who consecrated their lives to You,  
may we be fully and ever united to Christ.  
May they be our constant guides in this oneness with You  
through prayer, the Eucharist and personal conversion.

We have sinned and we have failed in so many ways.  
There are many brothers and sisters in our midst who continue to suffer.  
They hunger for truth and justice, for charity and solidarity.  
We pray that we may become bearers of the Gospel  
that transforms lives as we reach out to our suffering brethren.  
We pray that the Gospel may urge us to action,  
to be witnesses to charity and compassionate service.

Together, may we all be renewed and learn how to be  
Servant-Leaders for the Gospel of Christ.  
Like Him who rose from the table to wash the disciples' feet,  
may we too rise up to the challenge to take care  
of the poor and the weak, to be always approachable  
rather than untouchable, and "to imbibe the odor of the sheep."  
May our young people who are discerning the gentle call  
of the Lord to serve, be filled with courage and determination  
to follow You in service with humility and love.  
With Mary, Star of the New Evangelization,  
may we continue to be instruments of the Gospel  
in our country and in the world. Amen.



## P A N A L A N G I N (Tagalog version)

### PARA SA TAONG 2018, TAON NG KAPARIAN AT NG MGA NAG-KONSAGRA NG BUHAY SA DIYOS

O Diyos, lubhang masintahing Ama,  
kaisa ng tanang kaparian at mga nagkonsegra ng kanilang buhay sa Iyo,  
lagi nawa kaming lubusang naka-ugnay kay Kristo.  
Sila nawa ang maging aming laging patnubay sa pakikiisang ito sa Iyo  
sa pamamagitan ng panalangin, sa Eukaristiya, at pangsariling pagbabalik-loob.

hKami ay nagkasala at binigo Ka namin sa maraming pagkakataon.  
Di-mabilang sa aming mga kapatid ang patuloy na nagdurusa.  
Nauuhaw sila sa katotohanan at katarungan, sa pagmamahalan at pagdadamayon.  
Idinadalangin namin na kami'y maging tagapaghatid sa kanila ng Mabuting Balita  
na nakapagbabago ng mga buhay sa aming pagtulong sa kanila.  
Idinadalangin namin na ang Ebanghelyo ni Kristo ang magbunsod sa aming kumilos,  
at magpatotoo sa pamamagitan ng pagmamahalan at mahabaging paglilingkod.

Sama-sama nawa kaming mapagbago at matutunan namin kung papaanong  
maging mga tunay na Punong-Lingkod alang-alang sa Ebanghelyo ni Kristo.  
Tulad Niyang tumindig mula sa lamesa upang hugasan ang paa ng mga alagad,  
kami nawa'y makabangon din sa paghamong kalingain  
ang mga dukha at mahihina, lagi nawang malalapitan  
sa halip na hindi mahagilap, at tuluyang “akuin ang amoy ng kawan.”  
Nawa'y ang aming mga kabataan na naririnig ang mahinahong tawag  
ng Panginoon upang maglingkod bilang mga pari at relihiyoso,  
ay mapuno nawa ng tapang at katibayan ng loob na  
tumahak sa landas ng paglilingkod na may kababaang-loob at pag-ibig.  
Kaisa ni Maria, ang Tala ng Bagong Ebanghelisasyon,  
makapag-patuloy nawa kaming maging mga kasangkapan  
ng Mabuting Balita sa aming bansa at sa buong mundo. Amen.



## Zeal for Mission

- † **KNOW** –Priest and Consecrated persons are always ready to serve the people of God as they vow to accompany the faithful in their journey towards God in spirituality and pastoral care. Hence, as a lay faithful it is also good to share and get solutions to some problems or struggles of your parish priest, friend-priests and Religious. Let us show our support and love for them because they also need companions in their ministry--someone that can listen and understand them. We should pray for the priests, religious and the seminarians who are striving to be faithful to their calling for it is such is a great gift to be “*Alagad ng Diyos*,” servant of God.





- † **LIVE** – Pray for the gift of wisdom and strength for our priests and religious that they may have the courage to face the different challenging situations of God’s people with love, mercy and compassion and untiringly serve them by doing good works. Offer a Mass for them, remember them during adoration of the Blessed Sacrament or when praying the rosary.
- † **SHARE** - Invite priests and Religious into your life. There are lots of ways to connect with them on a basic relational level. It could be by sharing small talks with a priest after mass or during parish potluck or providing assistance to some ministry that is being offered by the parish. You can also invite priests and religious over for a family meal or a family celebration. They would appreciate being made part of your family. This is considered a great blessing.

# CATECHETICAL LESSON 3: COMMUNION: WITH THE LOST SHEEP



## Introduction

The Trinitarian foundation of the priestly order reveals and emphasizes not only the Divine origin of Christian priesthood, but equally its communal character. The communion of the three Divine persons, that of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, is the communion par excellence, and so priesthood in its threefold aspect: bishop, presbyter, and deacon, also portrays an image of the Holy Trinity. Deacons minister to the people of God in the *diakonia* (service) of Word, liturgy, and charity. In the Sacrament of Orders, bishops and priests exercise their ministry in the name and person of Christ, the Head. The priestly *diakonia* (service) is an event of communion. Priesthood, in its essence, is a communal reality. It is a way of communion with God, it is a peculiar communion in terms of the Divine grace conferred in Ordination.

Both the bishops and the presbyters, as celebrants of the Holy Eucharist, are the builders of Ecclesial unity. It is there, in the Eucharistic bond that all believers are united together in one Sacred relation to Christ, the living Lord. In the Eucharist, the people of God are in a constant, personal and at the same time, in communal relation to Christ, the Risen Lord. It is not accidental that all ordinations, already from the early Christian times, are liturgically and theologically inseparable from the Eucharistic communion. The fact that the Eucharistic gathering is the unique and exclusive locus of all ministerial consecrations asserts that the priesthood belongs to the Eucharistic community. It is begotten for the community and because of this, every consecration is realized within the context of the Eucharistic assembly. It is the reality of the people of God, gathered together in the Eucharistic communion that constitutes the basis for the existence of the priestly *diakonia*. Priesthood was born for the Church and within the Church.

Thus, priesthood cannot be considered in itself and for itself, but rather always as a relational reality. In other words, the only way to have an adequate understanding of the priestly charisma is to see it in its prayerful and solemn dimension and in connection with the ecclesial communion (Scouteris, 2017).

**“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”  
(Mt 10:5-6)**

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





# Worship

## Gospel of Mathew 10: 1-15

Then Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. <sup>2</sup> These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; <sup>3</sup> Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; <sup>4</sup> Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. <sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, <sup>6</sup> but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' <sup>8</sup> Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. <sup>9</sup> Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, <sup>10</sup> no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. <sup>11</sup> Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. <sup>12</sup> As you enter the house, greet it. <sup>13</sup> If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. <sup>14</sup> If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town.



# Doctrine

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS WHY IS THIS SACRAMENT CALLED "ORDERS"?

- † **CCC 1537** - The word *order* in Roman antiquity designated an established civil body, especially a governing body. *Ordinatio* means incorporation into an *ordo*. In the Church there are established bodies which Tradition, not without a basis in Sacred Scripture, has since ancient times called *taxeis* (Greek) or *ordines*. And so the liturgy speaks of the *ordo episcoporum*, the *ordo presbyterorum*, and the *ordo diaconorum*. Other groups also receive this name of *ordo*: catechumens, virgins, spouses, widows.
- † **CCC 1538** - Today the word "*ordination*" is reserved for the sacramental act which integrates a man into the order of bishops, priests, or deacons, and goes beyond a simple election, designation, delegation, or institution by the community, for it confers gifts of the Holy Spirit that permits the exercise of a "sacred power" (*sacra potestas*) which can come only from Christ himself through His Church. Ordination is also called *consecratio*, for it is a setting apart and an investiture by Christ, Himself for His Church. The *laying on of hands* by the bishop, with the consecratory prayer, constitutes the visible sign of ordination.





*Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija*



*Photo from the Diocese of Cubao*

## THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS IN THE ECONOMY OF SALVATION

- † **CCC 1544** - Everything that the priesthood of the Old Covenant prefigured finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the "One mediator between God and men." The Christian tradition considers Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," as a prefiguration of the priesthood of Christ, the unique "High Priest after the order of Melchizedek"; "holy, blameless, unstained," "by a single offering He has perfected for all time, those who are sanctified," that is, by His unique sacrifice of the cross.
- † **CCC 1545** - The redemptive sacrifice of Christ is unique, accomplished once for all; yet it is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. The same is true of the One priesthood of Christ; it is made present through the ministerial priesthood without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ's priesthood. "Only Christ is the True Priest, the others are only His ministers."

### Two participation in the one priesthood of Christ

- † **CCC 1546** - Christ, the High Priest and unique mediator, has made of the Church "a kingdom of priests for his God and Father." The whole community of believers is, as such, priestly. The faithful exercise of their baptismal priesthood is through their participation, each according to one's own vocation, in Christ's mission as priest, prophet, and king. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation the faithful are "consecrated to the holy priesthood."
- † **CCC 1547** - The ministerial or hierarchical priesthood of bishops and priests, and the common priesthood of all the faithful, participate "each in its own proper way, in the one priesthood of Christ." While being "ordered one to another," they differ essentially.

While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace --a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit. The ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace for all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a *means* by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church. For this reason, it is transmitted by its own sacrament, the sacrament of Holy Orders.



- † **CCC 1548** - In the ecclesial service of the ordained minister, it is Christ Himself who is present to His Church as Head of His Body, Shepherd of His flock, and as High Priest of the redemptive sacrifice, the Teacher of Truth. This is what the Church means when it states that the priest, by virtue of the sacrament of Holy Orders, acts *in persona Christi Capitis*.

It is the same priest, Jesus Christ, whose sacred person, His ministers truly represents. The minister, through the sacerdotal consecration which He has received, is truly made like the high priest who possesses the authority to act in the power and place of Christ himself (*virtute ac persona ipsius Christi*). Christ is the source of all priesthood. The priest of the old law was a figure of Christ, and the priest of the new law acts in the person of Christ.



Photo from the Archdiocese of Davao



Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando, La Union

- † **CCC 1549** - Through the ordained ministry, especially that of bishops and priests, the presence of Christ, as head of the Church is made visible in the midst of the community of believers.
- † **CCC 1550** - This presence of Christ in the ministers is not to be understood as if the latter are preserved from all human weaknesses, spirit of domination, error, or even sin. The power of the Holy Spirit does not guarantee all acts of ministers in the same way. This guarantee, however, extends to the sacraments, so that even the minister's sin cannot impede the fruit of its grace. In many other acts, the minister may still leave human traces that are not always signs of fidelity to the Gospel and consequently may harm the apostolic fruitfulness of the Church.
- † **CCC 1551** - This priesthood is ministerial. "That office. . . which the Lord commits to be pastors of His people, is in the strict sense of the term, a *service*." It is entirely related to Christ and to men. It depends entirely on Christ and on His unique priesthood. It has been instituted for the good of men and the communion of the Church. The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ. The exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made Himself the least and the servant of all. "The Lord said clearly that concern for His flock was proof of love for Him."
- † **CCC 1552** - The ministerial priesthood has the task of not only of representing Christ,

the Head of the Church, before the assembly of the faithful, but also of acting in the name of the whole Church when presenting to God the prayer of the Church, and above all when offering the Eucharistic sacrifice.

- † **CCC 1553** - "In the name of the *whole* Church" does not mean that priests are the delegates of the community. The prayer and offering of the Church are inseparable from the prayer and offering of Christ. Christ worships in and through His Church. The whole Church, the Body of Christ, prays and offers herself "through Him, with Him and in Him," in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to God the Father. The whole Body, *caput et membra*, prays and offers itself, and therefore, those who are in the Body, especially His ministers are called ministers not only of Christ, but also of the Church.

## THE THREE DEGREES OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS

- † **CCC 1554** - "The divinely instituted ecclesiastical ministry is exercised in different degrees by those who even from ancient times have been called bishops, priests, and deacons." The Magisterium, and the constant practice of the Church through its liturgy, recognizes that there are two degrees of ministerial participation in the priesthood of Christ: the episcopacy (Bishops) and the presbyterate (Priests). The diaconate is intended to help and serve them. For this reason, the term *sacerdos* in current usage denotes bishops and priests but not deacons. Yet, Catholic doctrine also teaches us that all three (episcopate, presbyterate, and diaconate) are conferred by a sacramental act called "ordination," that is, by the sacrament of Holy Orders.
  - † **Episcopal ordination - fullness of the sacrament of Holy Orders makes the** bishop a legitimate successor of the apostles and integrates him into the episcopal college to share with the Pope and the other bishops care for all the churches. It confers on him the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling (CCC 1560).
  - † **Ordination to the Priesthood.** The anointing of the Spirit seals the priest with an indelible spiritual character that configures him to Christ the Priest and enables him to act in the name of Christ, the Head (CCC 1563). As a co-worker of the order of bishops, he is consecrated to preach the Gospel, to celebrate divine worship especially the Eucharist from which his ministry, draws its strength, and to be a shepherd of the faithful (ibid).
  - † **Ordination to the Diaconate.** The deacon, configured to Christ, as the servant of all is ordained for the service to the Church. He carry out this service under the authority of his proper bishop by the ministry of the Word, divine worship, pastoral care, and charitable acts (CCC 1570).

## THE CONSECRATED LIFE (CCC 914-933)

"The state of life which is constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels, while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to the Church's life and holiness."



## † **Evangelical counsels, consecrated life**

Christ proposes the evangelical counsels, in their great variety, to every disciple. The perfection of charity, to which all the faithful are called, entails those who freely follow the call to consecrated life the obligation of practicing chastity and celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom, as well as poverty and obedience. It is the profession of these counsels, within a permanent state of life recognized by the Church that characterizes life consecrated to God.

Thus, the state of consecrated life is one way of experiencing a "more intimate" consecration rooted in Baptism and dedicated totally to God. In the consecrated life, Christ's faithful, moved by the Holy Spirit, propose to follow Christ more closely. They give themselves to God, who is loved above all, and pursuing the perfection of charity in the service of the Kingdom, signify and proclaim to the Church the glory of the world to come.

## † **One great tree, with many branches**

"From the God-given seed of the counsels a wonderful and wide-spreading tree grows up in the field of the Lord, branching out into various forms of religious life lived in solitude or in community. Different religious families have come into existence wherein which spiritual resources are multiplied for the progress and holiness of their members and for the good of the entire Body of Christ."

From the very beginning, there were men and women in the Church, who set out to follow Christ with greater liberty, and to imitate Him more closely, through the practice of the evangelical counsels. They led lives dedicated to God, each in one's own way. Many of them, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, became hermits or founded religious families. These the Church, by virtue of her authority, gladly accepted and approved.

### † ***The eremitic life***

Without always professing the three evangelical counsels publicly, hermits "devote their lives to the praise of God and salvation of the world through a stricter separation from the world, silent solitude and assiduous prayer and penance."

They manifest to everyone the interior aspect of the mystery of the Church, that is, personal intimacy with Christ. Hidden from the eyes of men, the life of the hermit is silently witnessing one's faith to the Lord, to whom they have surrendered their life simply because He is everything to them. This is a particular call to find in the desert, in the thick of spiritual battle, the glory of the Crucified One.



## † **Consecrated virgins and widows**

From apostolic times, Christian virgins, and widows, called by the Lord to cling only to Him with greater freedom of heart, body, and spirit, have decided with the Church's approval to live in the respective status of virginity or perpetual chastity "for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven."

"Virgins who are committed to the holy plan of following Christ more closely, are consecrated to God by the diocesan bishop according to the approved liturgical rite. They are betrothed mystically to Christ, the Son of God, and are dedicated to the service of the Church." By this solemn rite (*Consecratio virginum*), the virgin is constituted as a "sacred person," a transcendent sign of the Church's love for Christ, and an eschatological image of the heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come."

"As with other forms of consecrated life," the order of virgins (or the nun) establishes the woman living in the world in prayer, penance, service of her brethren, and apostolic activity. According to the state of life and spiritual gifts given to her, consecrated virgins can form themselves into associations in order to observe their commitment more faithfully.

## † **Religious life**

Religious life was born in the East during the first centuries of Christianity. They lived within institutes canonically erected by the Church, it is distinguished from other forms of consecrated life by its liturgical character, public profession of the evangelical counsels, fraternal life led in common, and witness to the union of Christ with the Church.

Religious life derives from the mystery of the Church. It is a gift she has received from her Lord, a gift she offers as a stable way of life called by God to profess the counsels. Thus, the Church can both show Christ and acknowledge herself to be the Savior's bride. Religious life, in its various forms, is called to signify the very charity of God in the language of our time.

All religious take their place among the collaborators of the diocesan bishop in his pastoral duty. From the outset of the work of evangelization, the missionary "planting" and expansion of the Church required the presence of the religious life in all its forms. "History witnesses to the outstanding service rendered by religious families in the propagation of the faith and in the formation of new Churches: from the ancient monastic institutions to the medieval orders, all the way to the more recent congregations."

## † **Societies of apostolic life**

Alongside the different forms of consecrated life are "societies of apostolic life



whose members, even without religious vows, pursue a particular apostolic purpose of their society. They lead a life as brothers or sisters in common according to a particular manner of life and strive for the perfection of charity through the observance of the constitutions.

### † **Consecration and mission: proclaiming the King who is coming**

Already dedicated to Him through Baptism, the person who surrenders himself/ herself to God, loves above all else. Thereby, consecrating herself/ himself more intimately to God's service and to the good of the Church. By this state of life consecrated to God, the Church manifests Christ and shows us how the Holy Spirit acts so wonderfully in her. The first mission of those who profess the evangelical counsels is to live out their consecration. Moreover, "since members of institutes of consecrated life dedicate themselves, through their consecration to the service of the Church, they are obliged in a special manner to engage in missionary work, in accord with the character of the institute."

The Church, which is herself a sacrament, is the sign and instrument of God's own life. Consecrated life is seen as a special sign of the mystery of redemption. To follow and imitate Christ more nearly and to manifest more clearly his / her self- emptying is to be more deeply present to one's contemporaries in the heart of Christ. Those who are on this "narrower" path encourage their brethren by their example, and bear striking witness that without the spirit of the beatitudes, the world cannot be transfigured and offered to God."

Whether their witness is public, as in the religious state, or less public, or even secret, Christ's coming remains for all those consecrated.



*Photo from the Diocese of San Jose De Antique*





## Faith Response

- † Respond to the universal call of God to holiness and discern with fervent prayer the vocation God has prepared for us
- † Ask and seek for God's grace for our priests and religious brothers and sisters that they may respond generously to God's call
- † Help and pray for the clergy and religious brothers and sisters
- † Participate in the mission of the Church, especially in nurturing and keeping the burning desire of the young faithful to answer God's call.
- † Open the door of every family to the seed of the vocation for priesthood or the consecrated life.



## Human Values

- † **Holiness** - In the Old Testament, the Hebrew *Kadosch* (holy) meant being separated from the secular or profane, or dedicated to God's service, as Israel was said to be holy because it was the people of God. The holiness of God identified His separation from all evil. And among creatures they are holy by their relation to Him. Holiness in creatures is either subjective or objective or both. It is subjective essentially by the possession of Divine Grace and morally by the practice of virtue. Objective holiness in creatures denotes their exclusive consecration to the service of God: priests by their ordination; religious by their vows; sacred places, vessels, and vestments by the blessing they receive and the sacred purpose for which they are reserved.

All Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of charity." All are called to holiness: "Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (CCC 2013).

In order to reach this perfection, the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that by doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus, the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.

Spiritual progress tends towards an ever more intimate union with Christ. This union is called "mystical" because it participates in the mystery of Christ through the sacraments. In the mystery of the Holy Trinity, God calls us all to an intimate union with Him, even if the special graces or extraordinary signs of this mystical life are granted only to some for the sake of manifesting the gratuitous gift given to all (CCC 2014).

The way of perfection passes by way of the Cross. There is no holiness without



renunciation and spiritual battle. Spiritual progress entails ascetism and mortification that gradually leads to living the peace and joy of the Beatitudes. He who climbs never stops going from beginning to beginning. Though beginnings have no end, he/she never stops desiring what he/she already knows (CCC 2015).



Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

- † **Generosity** - Derived from the Latin word *generōsus*, which means "of noble birth," which itself was passed down to English through the Old French word, *generoux*. It means extending ourselves to all humankind, especially the neediest. To do so, we are emulating Jesus who went after the one lost sheep. To love is to give. God loves us and He gives us everything we need. When we give, as our Lord encourages, we truly deny ourselves. Generosity must be done in silence in order to merit grace from God and not done merely for the praise of men. It is very easy to be generous to our relatives or friends but that is not enough since we are already repaid for that with friendship, thanksgiving, and praise. Generosity must extend to the poor and the needy. It is a quest for justice as we are doing the work of God by providing for those who do not have and could not pay back.

The priests, prudent cooperators of the episcopal college and its support and instrument, called to the service of the People of God, constitute, together with their bishop, a unique sacerdotal college (presbyterium) dedicated to a variety of distinct duties. In each local assembly of the faithful, they represent in a certain sense, the bishop, with whom they are associated in all trust and generosity. In part, they take upon themselves his duties and solicitude and in their daily toils discharge them. Priests can exercise their ministry only in dependence on the bishop and in communion with him. The promise of obedience they make to the bishop at the moment of ordination and the kiss of peace from him at the end of the ordination liturgy mean that the bishop considers them his co-workers, his sons, his brothers, and his friends. They, in return, owe him love and obedience (CCC 1567).

- † **Obedience** - The moral virtue that inclines the will to comply with the will of another who has the right to command. Material obedience is merely to carry out the physical action commanded; formal obedience is to perform an action precisely because it is commanded by a legitimate superior. The extent of obedience is as wide as the authority of the person who commands. Thus obedience to God is without limit,

whereas obedience to human beings is limited by higher laws that must not be transgressed, and by the competency or authority of the one who gives the orders. As a virtue, it is pleasing to God because it means the sacrifice of one's will, out of love for God.



## Morals

- † The priestly vocation is a call to love others. Therefore, to paraphrase St John Mary Vianney: “a man is not a priest for himself – he is a priest for others.”
- † Just as Jesus called and appointed men to follow Him as His apostles, God calls men today to lay down their lives so that others may have life. It is a generous response to God's call by sacrificing oneself for the Kingdom and the service of the Church.
- † Priesthood is not a career it is a way of being. It is a life of sacrifice and service because it is the life of our Lord.
- † No man deserves to be a priest. Like every grace, this vocation can only be accepted as an unmerited gift from God.
- † There is no certain type of man who is called to be a priest. In fact, God calls men with different backgrounds, personalities, temperaments, and gifts to be priests.



## Simple Activities

### **Activity: Vocation Promotion**

Coordinate with the parish priest or with the parish coordinator of vocations to invite some seminarians and religious to share their life testimony on why they enter into that kind of vocation

If it is possible, let the parish priest share his vocation story with the learners so that the bond and communion between the learners and the parish in the name of the parish priest can be shown and nurtured.

### **Song Analysis**

Refer to D. Song for Reflection – Ang Mabuhay sa Pag-ibig

### **Guide for Reflection**

- † How do I give myself to the Church?
- † In communion with the Church, do I really pray for the priests and consecrated brothers and sisters?
- † Am I open to the call of God to do missions?
- † Do I participate in the mission of the Church by helping others come closer to God?





# Prayer / Worship

## *A Prayer for Priestly Vocations*

HEAVENLY FATHER, Lord of the harvest, we earnestly ask You to bless our diocese and our world with many priests who will love You fervently, and gladly and courageously spend their lives in service to Your Son's Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We pray that their lives may always be centered on our Eucharistic Lord, that they may always be faithful to the Holy Father, and that they may be devoted Sons of Mary, our mother, in making You known and loved; and that all may attain heaven. Bless our families and our children and choose from our homes those whom You desire for this holy work. We ask this in Jesus' name. *Amen.*

## *Prayer to Know One's Vocation*

O God, Who enlightens the mind and inflames the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Spirit, grant that through the same Spirit I may know my true vocation in life, and may have the grace to follow it faithfully. I ask this through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*



# Zeal for Mission

- † **PRAY** for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life. Jesus says in Matthew 9:38 “to beg the master of the harvest to send laborers into the vineyard.” If we want more priests, sisters and brothers, we all need to ask.
- † **TEACH** young people how to pray. Pope Benedict XVI said that unless we teach our youth how to pray, they will never hear God calling them into a deeper relationship with Him and into discipleship with the Church.
- † **INVITE** active young adults and teens to consider a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life. A simple, sincere comment should not be underestimated. An easy way to do this can be remembered by four letters: ICNU. “John, I see in you (ICNU) the qualities that would make a good priest, and I want to encourage you to pray about it.” It is a non-invasive way to encourage *openness* to a religious vocation.
- † **MAKE IT ATTRACTIVE.** Show the priesthood for what it truly is – a call to be a spiritual father to the whole family of faith. Similarly, the consecrated life for a young woman is a call to be united to Christ in a unique way, by being a spiritual mother to those she encounters in her life and service. The challenge for priests and religious is to be joyful models of their vocations.
- † **PREACH IT, BROTHER!** Vocations must be talked about regularly if a “vocation culture” is to take root in parishes and homes. This means, first and foremost, the people need to hear about vocations from priests through homilies, prayers of the faithful, and discussions in the classroom. Vocations kept out of sight are out of mind.





# CATECHETICAL LESSON 4:

## MISSION: REKINDLING OUR GIFTS



### Introduction

The words of St. Paul to Timothy can appropriately be applied to the ongoing formation to which all priests are called by virtue of being a "gift of God," which they have received at their ordination. The passage helps us to grasp the full truth, the absolute uniqueness of the permanent formation of priests. We are also helped by another text of St. Paul, who once more writes to Timothy: "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given to you by prophetic utterances when the elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Take heed to yourself and to your teaching; hold to that, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tm. 4:14-16). Paul asks Timothy to "rekindle," or stir into flame, the divine gift which he has received, much as one might do with the embers of a fire. They are to welcome it and live it out without ever losing or forgetting that "permanent novelty" which is characteristic of every gift from God, who makes all things new (Rv. 21:5), thus living it out in its unfading freshness and original beauty (PDV 70).

This "rekindling" is not only the outcome of a task entrusted to the personal responsibility of Timothy. It is also not only the result of his efforts to use his mind and will. Rather, it is also the



Photo from the Diocese of Kalibo

effect of a dynamism of grace intrinsic to God's gift. In other words, God Himself, rekindles His own gift, so as to better release all the extraordinary riches of grace and responsibility that is contained in it. With the sacramental outpouring of the Holy Spirit who consecrates and sends forth, the priest is configured to the likeness of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church, and is sent forth to carry out a pastoral ministry. In this way, the priest is marked permanently and indelibly in his inner being as a minister of Jesus and of the Church. He is entrusted with a pastoral ministry which is rooted in his being and involves his entire life. The sacrament of Holy Orders confers upon the priest sacramental grace which gives him a share not only in Jesus' saving "power" and "ministry" but also in His pastoral "love." At the same time it ensures that the priest can count on all the actual graces he needs, whenever they are necessary and useful for the worthy and perfect exercise of the ministry he has received (PDV 70).

**For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.**  
**(2 Tm 1:6)**

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In this sense ongoing formation is an intrinsic requirement of the gift and sacramental ministry received, it proves necessary in every age. It is particularly urgent today, not only because of the rapid changes in the social and cultural conditions of individuals among whom priestly ministry is being exercised, but also because of that "new evangelization" which constitutes an essential and pressing task of the Church.

The ongoing formation of priests, whether diocesan or religious, is the natural and absolutely necessary continuation of the process of building a priestly personality which began and was developed in the seminary or the religious house with the training program aimed at ordination. It is particularly important to be aware of and to respect the intrinsic link between formation before ordination to the priesthood and formation after ordination. Should there be a break in continuity, or worse a complete difference between these two phases of formation, there would be serious and immediate repercussions on pastoral work and fraternal communion among priests, especially those in different age groups.

Ongoing formation is not a repetition of the formation acquired in the seminary. It is also not simply a review that comes with expanded, new, and practical suggestions. Ongoing formation involves relatively new contents and especially methods. It develops as a harmonious and vital process which - rooted in the formation received in the seminary - calls for adaptations, updating and modifications, but without sharp breaks in continuity.



## Worship

### Second Letter of Paul to Timothy (2 Tm. 1:3-14)

<sup>3</sup> I am grateful to God—whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did—when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. <sup>4</sup> Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. <sup>5</sup> I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. <sup>6</sup> For this reason, I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; <sup>7</sup> for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. <sup>8</sup> Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, <sup>9</sup> who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, <sup>10</sup> but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. <sup>11</sup> For this gospel, I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, <sup>12</sup> and for this reason, I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the One in whom I have put my trust on, and I am sure that He is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to Him. <sup>13</sup> Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup> Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.



# Doctrine

## THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

*(Presbyterorum Ordinis 1-3)*

The Lord Jesus, "whom the Father has sent into the world" (Jn 10:36) has made his whole Mystical Body, a sharer in the anointing of the Spirit with which He, Himself is anointed with. In Him, all the faithful are made a holy and royal priesthood. They offer spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ, and they proclaim the perfections of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Therefore, there is no member who does not have a part in the mission of the whole Body; but each one ought to follow Jesus in his/her heart, and in the spirit of prophecy bear witness to Him.

The same Lord has established ministers among His faithful to unite His people together into one body since "not all the members have the same function (Rom 12:4)." These ministers are able to offer sacrifice and to forgive sins and perform their priestly office publicly for men in the name of Christ, by the sacred power of Holy Order. Therefore, having sent the apostles, just as He Himself has been sent by the Father, Christ, through the apostles themselves, made their successors, the bishops, sharers in His consecration and mission. The office of their ministry has been handed down, to the priests. Established in the order of priesthood, they become co-workers of the episcopal order for the proper fulfillment of the apostolic mission entrusted to them by Christ.

Priests of the New Testament, by their vocation and ordination, are in a certain sense set apart in the bosom of the People of God. However, they are not to be separated from the People of God or from any person, but they are to be totally dedicated to the work for which the Lord has chosen them. They cannot be ministers of Christ unless they are witnesses and dispensers of a life other than earthly life. But they cannot be of service to the people if they remain strangers to the life and conditions of the people. Their ministry itself, by a special title, forbids that they be conformed to this world; yet at the same time it requires that they live in this world among the people. They are to live as good shepherds that know their sheep, and they are to seek to lead even those who are not of His sheepfold, so that they, too, may hear the voice of Christ, that there might be one-fold and one shepherd. To achieve this aim, certain virtues, which in human affairs are deservedly esteemed, contribute a great deal, such as: goodness of heart, sincerity, strength and constancy of mind, zealous pursuit of justice, affability, and others. The Apostle Paul commends them saying: "Whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever loving, whatever of good repute, if there be any virtue, if anything is worthy of praise, think upon these things" (Phil 4:8).

### The Ministry of Priests (PO 2)

Besides making all the faithful a holy and kingly priesthood, the Lord also appointed certain ministers among the faithful in order to join them together into one body where all the members may not have the same function but they are to complement each other and work together as a cohesive one. These men were to hold in the community of the faithful the sacred power of

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Order, that of offering sacrifices and forgiving sins. They would exercise their priestly office publicly on behalf of men in the name of Christ.

## Priests' Functions

The ordained, therefore, “by virtue of the sacrament of Orders, after the image of Christ, the supreme and eternal priest, are consecrated by God that they might act as His ministers in performing these sacred functions(Lumen Gentium 28):

- † **To proclaim the Gospel:** they are heralds of the Gospel and shepherds of the Church, they are to spend themselves for the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ by teaching them the life, Words, and deeds of Christ.
- † **To Dispense the Sacraments:** He calls them to lead His holy people in love, nourish them by His word, and strengthen them through the Sacraments. By Baptism, men and women are truly brought into the People of God; by the sacrament of Penance sinners are reconciled to God and his Church; by the Anointing of the Sick, the ill are given solace; and especially by the celebration of the Mass they offer sacramentally the Sacrifice of Christ and become partakers of its fruits.
- † **To Shepherd the faithful** – They lead His holy people in love, in the name of the bishop and to gather the family of God together as a brotherhood enlivened by one spirit. Through Christ they lead them in the Holy Spirit to God the Father. As for other priestly duties, spiritual power is conferred upon them for the building up of the Church. In building up the Church, priests must treat all with exceptional kindness in imitation of the Lord. They should act not as seeking to please people, but in accord with the demands of Christian doctrine and life. They should teach them and admonish them as beloved sons and daughters.
- † **To become educators of faith** - They must see to it either by themselves or through others that the faithful are led individually by the Holy Spirit to a development of their own vocation according to the Gospel, to a sincere and practical charity, and to understand with what freedom Christ has made them free. Ceremonies however beautiful, or associations however flourishing, will be of little value if they are not directed towards meaningful Christian maturity. In furthering this, priests should help men see what is required and what is the will of God in the important and unimportant events of their lives. Also, Christians should be taught that they live not only for themselves, but, according to the demands of the new law of charity; as every man has received grace, he must administer the same to others. In this way, all will discharge in a Christian manner their duties in the community of men.
- † **To build Christian communities** - priests are never to put themselves at the service of some human faction or ideology, but, as heralds of the Gospel and as shepherds of the Church, they are to spend themselves for the spiritual growth of the Body of Christ.



## Priests' Relationships with Others

All priests, in union with bishops, share in one and the same priesthood and ministry of Christ. The very unity of their consecration and mission requires their hierarchical communion with the order of bishops. At times, they manifest this communion in liturgical con-celebration, where they join with the bishop when they co-celebrate the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Therefore, by reason of the gift of the Holy Spirit which is given to priests in Holy Orders, bishops regard them as necessary helpers and counselors in the ministry and in their role of teaching, sanctifying, and nourishing the people of God.

Priests must stand by their bishops in sincere charity and obedience. This priestly obedience, imbued with a spirit of cooperation, is based on the very sharing of the episcopal ministry which is conferred on priests both through the Sacrament of Orders and the canonical mission.

This union of priests with their bishops is necessary today since apostolic undertakings must not only take many forms but frequently extend even beyond the boundaries of one's parish or diocese. No priest, therefore, can accomplish his mission satisfactorily on his own. He can do so only by joining forces with other priests under the direction of Church authorities.

Priests by virtue of their ordination to the priesthood are united among themselves in an intimate sacramental brotherhood. In individual dioceses, priests form one priesthood under their own bishop. Even though priests are assigned to different duties, they, nevertheless, carry on one priestly ministry for the people. All, indeed, are united in the building up of the Body of Christ which, especially in our times, requires manifold duties and new methods. It is very important that all priests, whether diocesan or religious, always help one another. Each one, therefore, is united in special bonds of apostolic charity, ministry, and brotherhood. Each and every priest, therefore, is united with his fellow priests in a bond of charity, prayer, and total cooperation. In this manner, they manifest that unity which Christ willed, namely, that His own be perfected in one so that the world might know that the Son was sent by the Father.



*Photo from the Diocese of Calbayog*



*Photo from the Diocese of San Jose, Nueva Ecija*





# Faith Response

The People of God therefore are enjoined to pray for all Priests that they:

- † Respond generously to the calling of God specially to serve Him and His Church.
- † Be living witnesses as faithful servants of God with heart and love for others, especially for those who are in need.
- † Learn and love the doctrines of the Church and spread them through their service and with their life witnessing.
- † Be courageous and brave to all the difficulties and challenges of the Christian life.
- † Be responsible to the duties and tasks given by the ecclesiastical leaders as part of our participation and fulfilling one's ministry.



## Human Values

- † **Fidelity/Loyalty** - Constancy in allegiance to God or the things of God; steadfastness in fidelity to a person or cause, organization, or enterprise. Implicit in loyalty is a strong affection based on firm conviction that the object of one's fidelity deserves allegiance.

Loyalty has a lot to do with a person's constancy, and fidelity to their word, to people and to their own honor. Well-placed loyalty survives difficulties. It weathers setbacks, resists temptation, and does not cave in to attacks. Loyalty engenders trust and preserves friendships. Loyalty is about being faithful to the Catholic Church, being faithful to God, being faithful to family, and not betraying a friend, even when it means to suffer because of it. It is to follow Jesus even when others do not. Jesus says that you prove your loyalty in the little things – keeping your word, arriving on time, or being there for people.

- † **Wisdom** - The first and highest gifts of the Holy Spirit. It makes the soul responsive to God in the contemplation of divine things. Where faith is a simple knowledge of the articles of Christian belief, wisdom goes on to a certain divine penetration of the truths themselves. Built into wisdom is the element of love, which inspires contemplative reflection on these divine mysteries, rejoices dwelling on them, and directs the mind to judge all things according to their principles.

Also, through the gift of wisdom, we see God at work in our lives and in the world.



For the wise person, the wonders of nature, historical events, and the ups and downs of our lives take on deeper meaning. It is a matter of judging the truth and being able to see the whole image of God. We see God as our Father and in other people through their dignity. Wisdom is being able to see God in everyone and everything everywhere.

- † **Perseverance** - Remaining in the state of grace until the end of life. The Church teaches that it is impossible, without the special help of God, to persevere in the state of grace until the end. Thus the Second Council of Orange, in A.D. 529, teaches, in opposition to the Semi-Pelagians, that the justified must also constantly pray for God's help so that they may attain a good end. The Council of Trent in 1547 calls perseverance "a great gift" and says that those in the state of grace cannot persist in God's friendship without special divine aid. Finally, perseverance cannot be simply merited, as though a person had a claim on dying in grace because he or she had been faithful all through life. Nevertheless it can, with unfailing success, be achieved with proper prayer, offered regularly and earnestly in the state of grace. The certainty of the prayer being heard is based on the promise of Jesus (John 16:23). However, since the possibility of fall always remains, one cannot know with infallible certainty whether one will, in fact, persevere unless one receives a special revelation to that effect (Hardon, 2013).
- † **Responsibility** - The ability to be trusted or depended on for an office or an action. It adds imputability to the idea of being reliable and not merely held accountable for what is done. Responsibility may either be moral, based on imputability; or legal, based on the disposition of law.



## Morals

Priests are, first of all, human beings whose very humanity ought to be a bridge for communicating Jesus Christ to the world today (PDV 43). Their humanity reflects a complex make-up, the different dimensions of what it means to be human. Each dimension needs recognition and attention. Here we list the essential dimensions:

- † **Physical:** Priests are embodied persons, whose living and functioning depend on the health and full functionality of their bodies.
- † **Psychological:** The humanity of priests is especially prominent in their psychological capacities, which are cognitive, affective, and value-directed. The cognitive capacity includes the ability to perceive or gather information, to understand, and to make judgments. The affective capacity includes the ability to feel and to connect with other human beings and the world through feeling. The value capacity includes the ability to cultivate attitudes that can direct commitments, actions, and patterns of behavior.
- † **Sexual:** The sexuality of priests links both to physical and psychological life. Sexuality



represents a passion, an energy, and a direction for connecting, belonging, and giving life—in other words, for intimacy and generativity. Physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of life converge in human sexuality.

- † Cultural: Culture provides social tools for understanding the world, in shaping and working on it, and finally, for expressing its realities. In other words, culture provides a framework for exploring the human understanding of the world and acting on it. It is the stuff of science, technology, and the arts. In all of this, culture enables people to connect and collaborate with each other. Culture, however, is not only a tool that people use to shape the world, but the collective values and attitudes that shape people. It can be identified with the spirit of the age or the nation that continuously transmits cues for behavior, ideals to be pursued, and values to be cultivated. Culture, in this sense, can exercise a positive or negative influence in shaping life.
- † Social: Priests live in a social order. They come from families, generally connect with some form of community, and are part of a larger society. Within society, they have a socially defined role. With other citizens or members of society, they are participants in political life through which people seek to live together peacefully and to prosper.



*Photo from the Diocese of Alaminos*



*Photo from the Diocese of San Fernando, La Union*



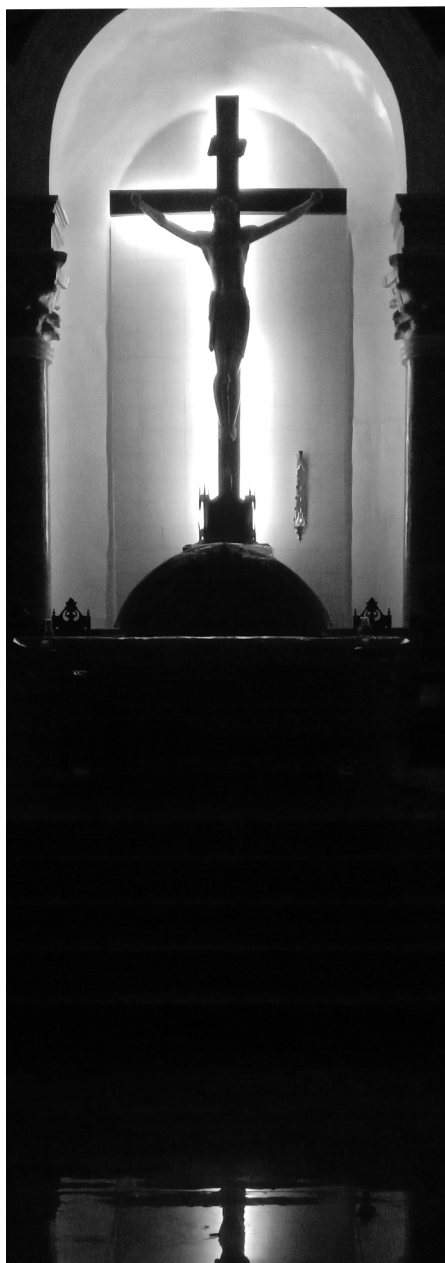
## Simple Activities

### Activity: Who is my Spiritual Father?

- † Let the learners draw an image of a priest according to their knowledge of a priest
- † Instruct them to put and draw things that the priest may have in his pocket
- † Allow them to discuss to the group why they put those things and what are the significance of these to the life of a priest.

*NB: this activity will also be a help for the priest to know what the learners think of their spiritual father or the parish priest.*

**Song Analysis** (see next page)



*Photo from the Diocese of Borongan*

## I Will Be with You

*By The Maranatha! Singers*

I will be you, in joy and in pain  
your cry for mercy, echoes my name  
now and forever, I'll be at hand  
I will be with you, I will be with  
for that's who I am

I will be with you, I'll be on your side  
your prayer for deliverance, will not be deny  
I'll fight the battle, that evil might wage  
I will be with you, I will be with you  
till the end of the age

I will be with you  
I will be with you

now and forever, I'll be at hand  
I will be with you, I will be you  
for that's who I am

I will be with, there's no need to fear  
how can they harm you, when I hold you dear,

your life is in my life, come perils or sword  
I will be with you, I will be with you  
for I am the lord  
I will be with you, I will be with you  
for I am the lord

I will be with you...

### Guide for Reflections

- † Am I aware that the priests and religious are also in need of my prayers?
- † Do I accompany my spiritual father through my prayers?
- † Do I let my spiritual brothers and sisters feel the presence and company of God?
- † Do I feel the presence of God with and through others?



## Prayer / Worship

*From Pastores Dabo Vobis*

O Mary,  
Mother of Jesus Christ and Mother of priests,  
accept this title which we bestow on you  
to celebrate your motherhood  
and to contemplate with you the priesthood  
of, your Son and of your sons,  
O holy Mother of God.

O Mother of the Church,  
in the midst of the disciples in the upper room  
you prayed to the Spirit  
for the new people and their shepherds;  
obtain for the Order of Presbyters  
a full measure of gifts,  
O Queen of the Apostles.

O Mother of Jesus Christ,  
you were with Him at the beginning  
of His life and mission,  
you sought the Master among the crowd,  
you stood beside Him when He was lifted  
up from the earth  
consumed as the one eternal sacrifice,  
and you had John, your son, near at hand;  
accept from the beginning those  
who have been called,  
protect their growth,  
in their life ministry accompany  
your sons,  
O Mother of Priests.  
Amen.





# Zeal for Mission

- † **Practice the faith.** We all need to be reminded that the whole point of our lives is to grow in a deep, intimate, and loving relationship with God. This is the first step for any young person desiring to discern their call in life.
- † **Enter into the Silence.** Silence is key to sanity and wholeness. We can only “hear” the voice of God when we are quiet. Young people should try to spend 15 minutes of quiet prayer each day – this is where we can begin to receive clear directions in our lives.
- † **Be a good disciple.** Some bishops say, “We do not have a vocation crisis; we have a discipleship crisis.” Young people can become true followers of Jesus Christ by serving those around them. By discovering our call to discipleship, we also discover our particular call within the Church.
- † **Ask God.** Ask God what He wants for our life and know He only wants what is good for each of us. If, in fact, if a person is called to the priesthood or consecrated life, it will be the path to great joy and contentment.
- † In the immortal words of a famous sneaker manufacturer: “**Just do it!**” If you feel that God is inviting you to “**try it out,**” apply to a seminary or religious order. Remember, the seminary or convent is a place of discernment. You will not be ordained or asked to profess vows for many years, providing ample opportunity to explore the possibility of a call to priesthood or religious life.

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