

Pandora's Catechetics

In ancient Greek mythology, the gods made Pandora, the first woman. She was endowed with special qualities and her name means “All-gifted”. She and her husband were ordered **not** to open a certain box. She could not resist the temptation and, on opening this **Pandora's Box**, she let loose every sort of plague on mankind.

Pandora's Box is a fitting parable for the “politically correct” catechetics plaguing the Church for nigh on 50 years.

Fads, Fashions and Falsehoods in Catechetics

and many of which, like so many falsehoods, are baited with a mix of half-truths

DOCTRINAL ABUSE of YOUNG DISCIPLES

ONE AFTER another, a series of catechetical gurus and their programmes have been unleashed on the teachers of the young disciples, in schools approved of the ecclesiastical authorities — see *Vera Doctrina, True Doctrine* (in the alphabetical listing at the end of the numbered *Handouts*). The gurus:-

- deceived the **bishops**;
- bamboozled the **parish priests**; and
- betrayed the ancient loyalties of the **faithful**.

The catechists, i.e. religion teachers in Catholic and State schools, were deceived and betrayed by faddists.

At first, each guru claimed that only the method was being changed (they said *improved*) while the matter (the doctrinal content) was unchanged. They said that the teachers were still teaching the same faith.

Unfortunately, the teaching authority of parish priests, so thoroughly endorsed by VCII, was unknown, ignored or even denied — see *Handouts* n. 10.

The Documents of VCII went unheeded except for the shibboleth (a password or slogan), “the spirit of Vatican II”. The Lord had permitted “a lying spirit in the mouth of all their prophets”, (1 Kings 22:22).

Here is a rough list, not entirely chronological, of some of the **Fads, Fashions and Falsehoods**. Wave after wave of novelty became the flavour each month, and each novelty tended to replace the previous one, or only preserve its worst features. It kept the catechists on the hop and left them breathless.

- The gurus used the **Delphic Technique** to manipulate and brainwash small discussion groups of catechists and pupils. It was “divide and conquer” by luring them into the sin of human respect (see old CNCC Newsletter n. 177 — copies posted on request);
- When parish priests or parents complained, the gurus **smooched to the bishops** and were upheld;
- “**The Medium is the message**” (from Marshall McLuhan) meant there was no real message at all *or* that the medium was the *massage* of a new message.
- The **Ego-philosophy of self-fulfilment**, i.e. self-worship, was the new aim of religious instruction;
- “**Becoming a person**” replaced becoming a saint;
- **Christ's Saints** and historic heroes were ignored; people on the TV news became the role models;
- **Brother Gabriel Moran** reduced Christian doctrine to **life-situational catechesis** on the events of life; the Deposit of Faith became an ongoing revelation, which was even worse than the Protestant claim to

private interpretation of the Bible.

- **Fr Anthony Bullen** lectured against catechisms and this eliminated much doctrine, while the **Apostles' Creed** was never memorized or even mentioned;
- The **Ten Commandments** were disparaged as “tribal”, Old Testament, primitive, negative and irrelevant;
- **Values Clarification** upheld relativism in morals;
- **Kohlberg's Six Stages of Cognitive Moral Development** also upheld relativism in morals;
- Lack of a **Catholic vocabulary** emptied the faith;
- **Rote prayers** were “out”; yoga replaced meditation;
- **Semi-seances** round lighted candles in classrooms replaced visits to the Blessed Sacrament;
- The **Sunday Mass obligation** was denied & unheeded;
- **Bible texts were not memorized**;
- **Biblical scholars reduced many texts to myths**;
- **Miracles were demythologized** by theologians;
- School Masses were **desacralized** with antics, balloons, noise, dance and camaraderie;
- **Exotic bread & wine** were “consecrated” at Mass and there was insistence on chewing;
- **General Absolution** replaced confession;
- **Holy Communion** was received indiscriminately;
- **Pierre Babin** advocated letting older youth “lie fallow” without detailed instruction;
- **Lucien Deiss** desacralised Mass with liturgical dancing;
- **Richard McBrien's** two volume *Catholicism* was finally censored by the Australian bishops for equating the Magisterium of the Church with theologians;
- **Evolution** was taught without the scientific alternatives; it denied Adam & Eve, original sin and a need for redemption; and often led into atheism;
- **Multiculturalism** gave further support to relativism;
- **Sex-education** so-called taught politically correct feminist “morals”: contraception, masturbation, sodomy and did not uphold marriage and family;
- **Sex-education**, prurience & experiment, violated the latency period from infancy to adolescence;
- **Sham ecumenism**: “one religion's good as another”;
- **Goldman's Readiness for Religion** dismissed the need for doctrine; later he supported more sex-ed;
- **Self-esteem** of “I am special, I love me” ignored Coulson's remorse that “It's the road to suicide”;
- **Ex-priest Thomas Groome** of “shared Christian praxis” inspired programmes which replaced Revelation, Tradition, Magisterium with “ongoing revelation”.

The Way Forward with the Pope and the Church

A Papal Memorization List — Use it!

BLESSED JOHN PAUL II, long ago in 1979, stated in *Catechesis in our Time* §55, “The blossoms of faith and piety do not grow in the desert places of a memory-less catechesis.”

And being a practical teacher, he provided the Church with a list of items to memorize. Despite this, in Australia, we have had a memory-less catechesis for many, many years, and it continues.

The Pope’s “memorization list” has seven items in this order (numbering added):-

1. the words of Jesus
2. important Bible passages
3. the Ten Commandments
4. the Creeds
5. liturgical texts
6. essential prayers
7. key doctrinal ideas, etc.

THEIR logical order makes the list memorizable:
nn. 1-2 are biblical;
nn. 3-4 are summaries of morality and faith;
nn. 5-6 are prayer formulas.

The list sets priorities: first, **Our Lord’s words**, then **other Bible texts**. How perfectly reasonable! It is what the Separated Brethren do/did in their Sunday schools — see Mark Twain’s *Tom Sawyer*, on Tom’s trading his way to riches in the holy cards awarded for memorization of scripture verses, and then revealing his profound ignorance even in his moment of glory when he declares that the first two disciples called by Christ were... “David and Goliath”!

Only one item on the Pope’s list is entirely specific, and it is from the Old Testament, namely the **Ten Commandments**. They are the natural moral law, and the basis of the Covenant of God with man. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, on pp. 496-497, includes the full Biblical forms, then their traditional short-form for children to memorize, (it even changes “Sabbath Day” to “The Lord’s Day”).

The **Creeds** summarize the whole Bible. The plural includes the Apostles’ Creed of the Baptismal Promises (and their catechesis), and the Nicene-Constantinople Creed in the Mass.

Next come the **liturgical texts**, especially the responses and people’s parts of the Mass. Even older Catholics are often weak on these, and flounder if left to answer on their own.

Then follow essential **prayers of piety**, as in the “Appendix of Common Prayers” in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pp. 180-192.

Lastly, there are **doctrinal formulas**, hence a need for some simple catechism answers (cf. dictionary ‘definitions’). Misled by educational gurus, most

Australian bishops have not provided a catechism in over 40 years. Indeed, the gurus have bitterly opposed any attempt to introduce Questions & Answers, or anything for memorization. See *Handouts on True Doctrine*

Lacking such Q&As, the young disciples are left limping, even crippled. And they are further crippled without **apologetics** in high school.

The papal “etc” is interesting. It could be applied to good hymns which express doctrine rather than emotions without much faith-content.

The Pope’s listing exemplifies how **memorizing and understanding** make a partnership. Far from thinking of memorizing as an opposite of understanding, they only work properly in mutual support. The most important word in Vatican II is “and” (cf. the most disastrous word in the *Novus Ordo* liturgy is “or”) — not hierarchy versus community, but hierarchy *and* community; not the common priesthood of the laity versus the ordained priesthood, but the common priesthood *and* the ministerial priesthood, thus memorization *and* understanding.

Read more on www.cardinalnewman.com.au — enter downloads, find *Handouts* (each is a mere two pages of A4). Topics range over a religious catechism (n. 13), to *Camping in the Bush* (n. 2); and *A Catechism About Catechisms*, n. 1, which cunningly uses Questions & Answers to explain Questions & Answers — a sort of “practise what you preach.” It explains why doctrinal formulas are out of fashion, but not out of date; and why memorization was excluded by the gurus; and the secrets of how to construct catechism answers. (N.B. This secret was re-discovered in 1980, using scientific experimental methods to discover those principles which would actually work in practice.)

The Ten Commandments themselves are example of logical order: see *Handouts* n. 1, §43, *A Catechism About Catechisms*, where memory is supported by understanding the priorities: God, then man; parents; no killing, adultery or theft; then words/thoughts.

For the Resurrection, **imagine** the scene in the mind’s eye, think of the chronological order of events, which make memorizing its answer easy; see §44.

IN summary, our Catholic values are under attack and much of our catechetics has served only to weaken them further. Therefore we need:-

- a catechism as a **skeleton** (avoid the jelly fish syndrome);
- a necessity, but **not sufficient** by itself, hence
- the necessity of a believing **teacher**
- and the use of **other texts**,
- and a **community** adoring God in Holy Mass.

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