

**Cardinal Newman Catechist Consultants** - 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 - **HANDOUTS n. 170**  
Catechetics and Catechisms — "Clear, brief and easily assimilated by all"

## Part 2. Catechetics in Christian Doctrine for Religious Education

**Catechetics is handing on the faith once delivered to the saints** (Jude 1:3)

The Church must abandon RE programs which fail to teach the basics of the faith. Real teaching includes "heralding", telling the potential disciples what the faith is: **catechetics with Catholic content.**

This lack in RE was recognized 33 years ago at the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops summoned by St John Paul II in 1985. This synod was to assess the implementation of VCII 20 years after its conclusion. The Synod's *Final Report* [henceforth *FR*] issued a general warning:

There had been a **defective understanding and application** of the Second Vatican Council.

That is an accurate translation of *defectuosus intellectu et applicatione*. It was mistranslated in the St Paul Edition for Australia in *FR* on p. 19: "an **incomplete understanding and lack of application**," as though all that was needed was 'more of the same', which was quite false.

**Specifically, on catechetical matters, the Synod also said:**

Everywhere in the world today the transmission to the young of the faith and moral values deriving from the Gospel is in peril. **The knowledge of the faith and the acceptance of the moral order are often reduced to a minimum.**

FR p. 31 as translated accurately in the St Paul Edition.

The 1985 Extraordinary Synod called for a new catechism akin to the Roman Catechism of Trent:

and an integral and systematic catechesis,  
and the provision of a catechism or compendium  
of all Catholic doctrine, both faith and morals.

FR pp. 31, 33.

This was delivered to us in 1992/94 as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* [henceforth *CCC*]. The *Second Edition* in 2000 adds a helpful Glossary especially to suit Catholic and State School catechists and adult catechesis. Subsequently it was supplemented by the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in 2006, with 598 Questions & Answers. It is not designed for schooling K-10, but maybe would suit years 11-12.

**Not yet implemented in Australia, but rather unknown or ignored or even bitterly opposed,** yet vitally relevant to our Australian problem, was the second sentence in *CCC* n. 22:

At the end of each thematic unit, a series of brief texts in small italics sums up the essentials of that unit's teaching in condensed formulae. These "IN BRIEF" summaries **may suggest to local catechists brief summary formulae that could be memorized.**

In Australia, officially mandated catechetics has mostly led us into a dead-end. See *Vera Doctrina* — *True Doctrine*, at the end of the listing of *Handouts* on [www.cardinalnewman.com.au](http://www.cardinalnewman.com.au).

We shall evangelize and catechize successfully when we restore the teaching of the Gospel faith "in its entirety and integrity," as Bishop William Brennan (RIP) said.

This is the very message of:-

- The Second Vatican Council, 1962-1965
- *The Code of Canon Law*, 1983
- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1992/1998/2000
- *The Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2005/2006
- Their implementation for beginners in the *Catholic Family Catechism*, editions from 1981 to 2009.

### ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

**LORD JESUS CHRIST,**  
make us your faithful followers through our loyalty  
to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*  
so that we may know and make known  
the Creed of Faith,  
your Sacrifice and Sacraments,  
the Covenant Commandments of love and duty  
and your Prayer.  
Enkindle in us the Fire of the Holy Spirit  
for a harvest of holiness,  
the reunion of all Christians  
and the conversion of our country and the world,  
for you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.  
MARY most holy, living catechism, Pray for us.  
MOTHER and model of catechists, Prayer for us.

### ***Catholic Family Catechism***

**LORD JESUS CHRIST,** Holy Child of Nazareth,  
bless Thy Church in our homes  
and our handing on the faith  
through the *Catholic Family Catechism*.  
By the prayers and example  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Joseph  
keep us faithful in our calling  
as parents, priests and other teachers,  
youthful disciples, catechists or missionaries,  
for Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.  
MARY most holy, living catechism. Pray for us  
MOTHER and Model of catechists. Pray for us.  
QUEEN of Apostles. Pray for us.  
MAY THE LORD be in our hearts and on our lips,  
that we may worthily and fitly proclaim His Gospel. Amen.

## ***Catholic Family Catechism* — for Home, Parish & School**

With it, local priest, parishioners and school can help families to get started.

The “brief summary formulas that could be memorized” (CCC n. 22 second sentence) are absent in materials from dioceses, nor are they in the texts they recommend — they seem not to believe in it.

For these formulas, we need **children’s catechisms of Q&As designed for memorization.**

A cateCHism is a book of echoes, ECHoes of the faith, for the faith to ECHo in the minds and memories of disciples. Its Q&As and Bible texts unite home, parish and school.

Enclosed is the *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples’ Edition* (CFCDE), with 50 Q&As (129 pp.). Its *Apostles’ Edition* (AE) has 500 Q&As (145 pp.). Family catechisms support faith and piety, as do parish catechists and some Catholic schools. CFCDE’s 50 Q&As fit on one sheet of A4, see pp. 29-30. Their underpinning is on pp. 31-32; and the same principles applied in a non-religious topic, pp. 33-34.

**A necessary SKELETON, not sufficient, but without one you’re ONLY JELLY FISH!**

Since 1970, catechesis has lacked a skeleton and been a spineless jellyfish chewing cotton wool.

Yet a skeleton is **not sufficient**. It must be taught by a **zealous believer** and with participation in a **worshipping community**, i.e. at Mass on Sundays, with parents persuaded to take the young disciples. Such a catechism can unite home, church & school (p. 11) in “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3).

The *Catholic Family Catechism* [hence CFC], is designed first and foremost for **Family Catechetics**. It was conceived in 1975, constructed in 1980 and defended from suppression and rejection ever since.

Such a Q&A catechism is the required **skeleton**. The *Catholic Family Catechism*, has sold over 300,000 in multiple editions and translations from 1981. Its carefully crafted Q&As use literary devices like alliteration, assonance, sense lines, and rhythm (more than rhyme) to facilitate learning by heart and to be chantable. It fulfils Pope St John Paul’s memorization and contents requirements of 1979:-

The blossoms of faith and piety [he said] do not grow in the desert places of a memory-less catechesis..

1. the words of Jesus e.g. *Our Father...*
2. important Bible passages e.g. *God so loved the world...*
3. the Creeds e.g. *I believe in God, the Father Almighty...*
4. the Ten Commandments e.g. *I am the LORD Thy God...*
5. liturgical texts e.g. *I confess to Almighty God...*
6. essential prayers e.g. *Hail, Mary...*
7. key doctrinal ideas etc e.g. the 50 Questions & Answers in CFC.

The logical progression of items is in the Pope’s original. And set out here in sense lines & couplets improves understanding, exact memorizing or just general remembering.

*Catechesis in our Time*, 16<sup>th</sup> October, 1979, \$55 with sample items added in italic.

### **CATECHISM of the CATHOLIC CHURCH justifies CATHOLIC FAMILY CATECHISM**

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*... is not intended to replace local catechisms duly approved by the ecclesiastical authorities... especially if they have been approved by the Apostolic See.

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* from the First Edition, repeated in the A.D. 2000 Second Edition, p. 6

...sources are Scripture, the Fathers, Liturgy, Magisterium to serve as a **point of reference for local catechisms**. It is offered through the bishops for redactors [authors/editors] of catechisms. (CCC nn. 11,12).

Cardinal Silvio Oddi, Prefect for the Congregation of the Clergy, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1982, wrote me:

We [i.e. the dicastery of cardinals, not just himself] **do hope that your catechism will be widely used in all the English speaking countries** and will be of great help to christian families which are, to use the term of the Vatican Council, true ‘domestic churches’.

Earlier on, in the early 1970s, came my first support for doctrinal catechesis:

This Sacred Congregation restricts its formal evaluation of catechetical texts to those so-called ‘national texts’ intended for approval by a national conference of Bishops. However, I do not want to allow this opportunity to pass without commending you for including in your Programme the complete **Ten Commandments**; the fact of **sin, original and actual**; the need for **sacramental confession**; the **basic prayers** for Catholics as well as **other essential elements** which, unfortunately, are often lacking in modern catechetical publications.

A/Bp Palazzini, Congregation for Clergy, 15-11-1972, regarding *Apostles of Christ* lesson plan Years 7-10:

Parents should be provided with **catechisms written for families**. (*Rite of Baptism for Children* 1972, pp. 10-11.)

Soon after the publication on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 1981 of the original *Catholic Family Catechism*:-

[Provide]... a suitable **catechism for families... clear, brief and easily assimilated by all...**

Pope St John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* n. 39, 22<sup>th</sup> November, 1981.

I have the honour to assure you of his [His Holiness’s] continued interest in your catechetical apostolate.

Secretary of State, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 1991

Advice concerning your CFC 2<sup>nd</sup> Revised Edition has been included in our recent bulletin.

Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, Pontifical Council for the Family, 14<sup>th</sup> March, 1992