

Riches in the *Catholic Family Catechism*

EYE OPENERS

MANY can discern for themselves the riches of concentrated ideas in a book like the *Catholic Family Catechism Disciples' Edition* (CFCDE). Others need a guide to alert them to things.

What with computers turning out *boomph* faster than ever in history, many folk have become skimmers, and habituated to missing out on depth and detail.

At this point, the reader might fetch his copy of the CFCDE, and use this monograph as a guide.

HOLY MASS — THE RITE: Q&A 26 (pp.70-71)

SACRAMENT/SACRIFICE: Q&A 27 (pp. 72-73)



First, a warning. This monograph is not an article on the Mass. Rather, it explains the CFCDE's treatment of the Mass, and offers ideas to plan out many lessons.

The CFCDE treats the Mass in two Questions & Answers, each in a double-page spread. Likewise there are two Q&As for Baptism. The other

sacraments get only one each. The strictures of ruthless brevity come from working with only 50 Q&As altogether — just 50, as in the *Australian Bush Catechism of Camping*, from which came the idea of this shorter religious catechism. The allocation of these 50 Q&As is 38% for the Creed, 24% for the Sacraments, 30% for Christian Living, and 8% for Prayer, which are roughly the proportions for the four parts of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.



ABRAHAM'S SACRIFICE OF ISAAC
The Obedience Test (Genesis 22)

The Q&As are the backbone of the Catholic Family Catechism. Q&As are only skeletons and need living organs. Enfleshment comes from the short Bible texts that more than double the memorable material, and give their own extra flavour and savour.

Then there are the pictures: at least one for every double-page spread, and each worth a thousand words.

DETAILED EXAMPLES on the Mass

1. Questions & Answers

With the Mass, Q&As 26-27 are allocated thus:

Q26 is **descriptive**. It is about the Rite, about what is seen and heard: "What happens at Mass?"

Q27 is **doctrinal**. It is about the meaning of the Rite: "What is the Real Presence?"

2. Bible Texts

Texts are carefully chosen to match the Q&As:

"**I will go to the altar of God,**" from a Psalm; and

"**This is My Body; This is My Blood;**

do this in commemoration of Me;" from Matthew and 1 Corinthians. (Remember, the italicized words in the

answers can be omitted with beginners.)

The Psalm verse was chosen:

- for its aptness for a ritual sacrifice;

- to recall the Prayers at Foot of the Altar in the Old Rite of the Mass;

- as a plea for a restoration of these prayers and this psalm, at least for Masses without singing. In the latter case it could well be said in the Sacristy.



LAST SUPPER SACRIFICE OF THE NEW COVENANT
in the Body and Blood of Christ, (Mark 14:24)

As well as a major Bible text for each Q&A, there are lesser texts in smaller print, and then further references to look up. It is a very Biblical catechism, as required by Pope John Paul II's seven items for memorization, as set out on the back cover (and with examples of each item).

3. Pictures and diagrams.

The diagram on p. 71 is packed with intriguing detail on the Rite of the Mass and the action of Our Lord in the Paschal Mystery of His Crucifixion and Resurrection.

On p. 72 is a picture of an Old Testament sacrifice mentioned in the Roman Canon, and two more are located from the references on p. 70.

Each picture could be a lesson in itself, followed up by a unifying lesson about sacrifices, animal, human and food, all of which are

aspects of Our Lord's Sacrifice on the Cross and on the altar, as also are:-

- the Sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb: N.B. it was **not**

simply a religious meal: see the Bible references with the picture on p. 29 of the CFCDE, as overleaf;

- The Holy Bread of

E t e r n a l

Life, theme

of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, p. 30 (referenced from p. 73);

- less obvious is changing Water into Wine at the



MELCHISEDECH BROUGHT FORTH BREAD AND WINE
For he was the priest of the most high God (Genesis 14:18)

of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, p. 30 (referenced from p. 73);

- less obvious is changing Water into Wine at the

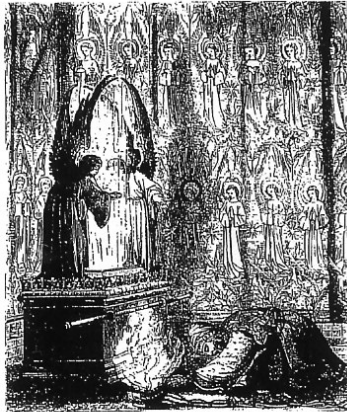
Wedding Feast at Cana (not on this sheet), p. 81 (found from p. 73).

- The CFCDE is used to best effect when all the pictures are followed up, and their significance is properly pondered. In all, there are eight pictures bearing on the Mass, and not counting such hints as the priest wearing the chasuble (the Mass vestment) because of a Baptism during Mass (p. 65).

4. Explanatory Notes

As well as Q&As and the Bible texts and pictures, there are brief notes. These are far too concentrated to be digested by skim readers. The catechist will use the notes either a lot or a little or not at all depending on the capacity of his young disciples.

5. More Advanced Disciples



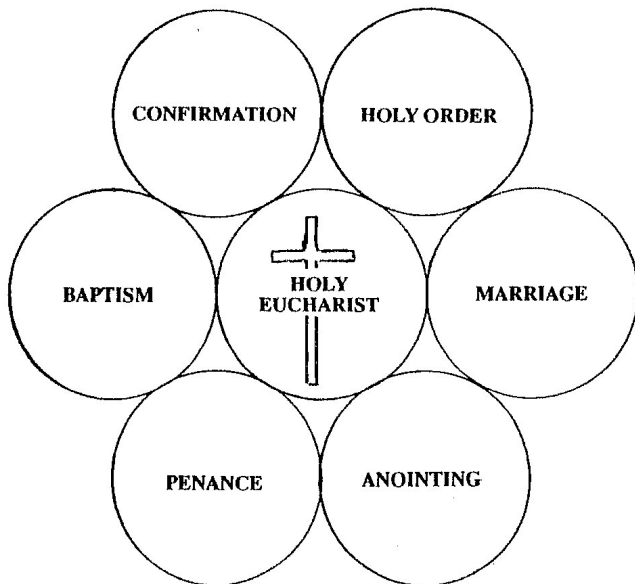
THE ARK OF THE COVENANT: foretelling the Blessed Sacrament

More advanced pupils will appreciate the preparatory role of the Ark of the Covenant (picture, p. 84) foretelling the far greater Presence in Power of the Hidden Lord in the Incarnation and the Blessed Sacrament. Tabernacles are a link: see N.T. Eucharistic tabernacles on pp. 83, 119.

Less advanced pupils "study the pictures simply in their contexts.

Their 'world-view' comes later.

Similarly, the powerful summary of the relationship of the Seven Sacraments to each other is shown with the six circles grouped around one (p. 63):



and the brief hint on p. 62 how a repeated sacrament can also be a sacrament of initiation.

6. All disciples — young or mature

My Way of Life on p. 5 has daily, weekly and monthly things that a Catholic Christian does. Baden-Powell's Boy Scout approach is attractive: a simple assertion, "A Scout is..." and a list of noble

ideals, without trying to prove he ought to...

Incidentally, the style of the Scout Promise inspired the style of the Personal Covenant on p. 121: "On my honour, I promise that I will do my best..."

7. Piety for Catechists

In the CFCDE, the simple "daily, weekly, monthly" themes on p. 5 are filled out with "always" on pp. 6-7. Here is a manifesto of the Christian Life for more fully-fledged lay apostles, as they grow in discipleship and learn to "know the Lord".

Explore also the Eucharistic depth in the explanation of the cover icon, p. 11.

8. Learning for Catechists

"To be ignorant of the Scriptures is to be ignorant of Christ," said St Jerome. See the copious lists of Bible texts, O.T. on pp. 28-30, and N.T. on pp. 34-35, 38-39. Note the cross-references to the pictures.



PASCHAL SACRIFICE OF THE LAMB (Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7) The Old Testament prefigures the New Testament

The pictures might prompt the catechist's prayer-meditations: for instance, the Agony in the Garden shows the visionary chalice, p. 120, and this is a Eucharistic theme, because of Our Lord's words at the Last Supper and in this Garden, and the relation of His obedience to His Sacrifice; and the links between the Gardens of Gethsemane and of Eden (p. 17, including the expulsion there from, p. 27), and the Resurrection (p. 39) where Our Lord was mistaken for a Gardener.

Another example of a picture-meditation is from the Sermon on the Mount, p. 115. Related to the Liturgy of the Word, the first part of Mass (p. 71).

The catechist will use the CFCDE's four listings:

- the Contents of topics on p. 3;
- Pictures and Diagrams on p. 4;
- the alphabetical Index of Ideas and Words on p. 122;
- the alphabetical Index of Pictures/Diagrams on p. 123.

Finally, lessons should be planned, at least in note form, with a motivation, presentation & conclusion, in an exercise book. See pp. 128-129.



MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES AND FISHES (Mark 6:38-44) prefigured in the manna, Deuteronomy 8:3; Psalm 78[77]:25

"Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master." Matthew 25:21