

The Relationship between Catechesis and Vocations
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For Catechetical Leaders & Catechists

PART ONE

Section One: Definitions

Catechesis

The *Catechism* begins by quoting *Catechesis Tradendae*. Catechesis is the name given to the “teaching process” the Church uses in “handing on” the deposit of faith. This also reminds us that catechesis is unique and different from teaching.

Blessed Pope John XXIII defined this difference. Catechesis is “the systematic and complete teaching of divine revelation handed on in the Church, in order to make it better known and applied ever more deeply in personal living.”

The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples clearly states that a catechist is to teach the Church’s faith, not personal opinion or purely human sciences. (cf. *A Guide for Catechist*, #8)

The Aim of Catechesis - Catechesis is to initiate the hearer into the fullness of Christian life and the sacramental life of the Church by impregnating a person’s humanity with the mystery of Christ. (cf. CT #20) Catechesis is not merely a body of abstract truths; it is to communicate a living mystery, a person. It is to proclaim the Gospel which is to lead to conversion.

Vocation

Vocation comes from the Latin word *vocatio*: “call”, corresponding to the Greek word *kaleo*: “to name, to call”. We see both in the Old Testament and New Testament that God called individuals with a specific mission or task in mind.

The word vocation thus translates to the sense of being called or invited by God to a specific mission, or task within the Body of Christ. God has a predestined plan for each individual. The phrase “God’s plan” translates several Greek words: *boule* = to wish; *eudokia* = the divine pleasure; *prothesis* = predestination; *oikonomia* = divine allotment. All of these terms seek to express the will that God has for the totality of creation, namely salvation for all in Christ.

Layers of Vocations

1. Holiness

Within this invitation of salvation each person is called and invited to be holy as He is holy (*cf.* 1Pt. 1:15-16). Throughout the scriptures we understand that we are called to repentance, love, service and be followers of Christ, i.e. disciples. This is very important for us to understand. When we talk about vocation, we are talking about God's wish, His divine pleasure, divine allotment, predestination for each person that is brought forth into existence.

2. Our Happiness

In the student book *What is My Vocation?*, the text defines vocation as the plan or way of life that God invites us to live that will lead to our happiness on earth and eternal life with Him in heaven. It says "God created each one of us for a specific purpose, and gave each one of us a mission to fulfill in our lives, just like he gave His Son. He has a plan for us to be happy, known as a vocation, and if we follow this plan, it will lead us to be saints with Him in heaven. Our vocation is an invitation from God to follow the best path for our lives, the one that will lead us to true happiness on Earth and to become saints in Heaven..." [Noonan, Joseph, *What is My Vocation*, (Mundelein Seminary, Chicago, 2005) pg. 4]

Jer. 29:11 "For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, not for woe! Plans to give you a future full of hope."

"The vocation we are called to best fits how God made us...God sets apart a special mission just for you, and only you can fulfill your vocation. No one else is capable of completing the plan God designed especially for you." (Noonan, Joseph, *What is My Vocation*, p.4)

Section 2: Relationships

Family

FC #22 "...the authenticity of conjugal and family relationship consists in fostering the dignity (being created in God's image and called to share in His life: communion) and vocation of the individual persons who achieve their fullness by a sincere self-giving."

LC #30 Speaks of the primacy that is to be given to the call of every Christian to holiness. There is to be a reawakening of vocations to Christian marriage, ministerial priesthood, and consecrated life. This reawakening is a sign of life in the Church and is a fruit of the laity cooperating with the Holy Spirit.

CCC #1656 "...It is in the bosom of the family that parents are by word and example the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children. They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation." (LG #11)

CCC #2226 "...Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God." (LG #11)

CCC #2232 "Just as the child grows to maturity and human and spiritual autonomy, so his unique vocation which comes from God asserts itself more clearly and forcefully. Parents should respect this call and encourage their children to follow it. They must be convinced that the first vocation of the Christian is to follow Jesus..."

Catechesis

GDC #86 "It is also important that every means should be used to encourage vocations to the Priesthood, and to the different forms of consecration to God in religious and apostolic life to awaken special missionary vocations."

GDC #116 "Catechesis in presenting the Christian message, not only shows who God is and what His saving plan is, but, as Jesus himself did, it reveals man to man and makes him more aware of his sublime vocation."

GDC #144 "Catechesis is an untiring echo." One of the objects of the methodology of catechesis is "to help the person to discern the vocation to which the Lord calls him....Catechesis therefore carries out a complete work of initiation, education, and teaching."

GDC #194 "In these circumstances, a catechesis of evangelization becomes indispensable: a catechesis which must be impregnated with the spirit of the Gospel and imparted in language adapted to the times and to the hearers. Such catechesis seeks to educate Christians in a sense of their identity as baptized, as believers, as members of the Church, who are open to dialogue with the world. It reminds them of the fundamental elements of the faith. It stimulates a real process of conversion. For them, it deepens the truth and the value of the Christian message in the face of theoretical and practical objections. It helps them to discern the Gospel and to live it out in everyday life. It enables them to give the reasons for the hope that is theirs. It encourages them to exercise their missionary vocation by witness, dialogue, and proclamation."

PART TWO

Methods of Creating a Vocational Environment

The False Environment

1. Speaking about priesthood or religious life during a class once.
2. Allowing our own misconceptions or opinions to get in the way and therefore not talking about vocations or not supporting them when we hear students talk about them. (e.g. Lonely life, sex scandal, carry on the family name or business, our desire for grandchildren.)
3. We should not speak in terms of “what do you want to do when you grow up.” We need to be speaking in terms of “what do you want to be when you grow up.”
4. We lack good role models so we don’t broach the subject.
5. We don’t understand vocation as the plan God has for our life that will make us happy.
6. Talking about the facts of our faith but without leading our students to a relationship with Christ.
7. Seeing our faith as something private and personal.
8. Our faith lacks excitement and joy so we aren’t excited about sharing it or wanting others to have what we have.
9. Not taking seriously God’s word in Scripture to beg for an increase of vocations.
10. Maintaining the mentality, “Vocations are great as long as they are from someone else’s family.”

A Catechist’s Mission

The catechist has a very important job or mission to do.

“Indeed the primordial mission of the Church is to proclaim God and to be his witness before the world. This involves making known the true face of God and his loving plan of salvation for man, as it has been revealed in Jesus Christ. To prepare such witnesses, it is necessary for the Church to develop a profoundly religious catechesis, nourished on the Gospel, which will deepen man’s encounter with God and forge a bond of permanent communion with Him.” (GDC #23)

The primordial mission of a catechist is to proclaim God before the world.

We can do this through:

1. Preaching
2. Teaching
3. Bearing witness, i.e. the witness of our lives. Pope Paul VI said, “Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” (*On Evangelization in the Modern World* #41)

As catechists we should ask these questions about ourselves:

- What does my life witness to?
- What do people see in me that would have them believe I was a Christian or a Catholic?
- Does my faith cause me joy?
- Is my relationship with Christ and His Church so great that I can’t hold it in? That I just have to share it with others? That it’s so good I want everyone to have what I have?

Methods of Creating a Vocational Environment:

What can a catechist do about vocations?

1. Deepen your own personal relationship with Jesus. We must have a personal intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. We are not talking about having all kinds of knowledge about Jesus. We’re talking about having an intimate relationship with Jesus that includes knowledge of Him whom you have entrusted your life to. A personal relationship where you have heard Him speak to you, that you have seen Him with your eyes, that you have touched Him. A relationship with Jesus that is life giving, which is manifested to others, which others can see. This is the relationship that you are to proclaim with the witness of your life.
2. Explore your own vocation. Know that God’s plan is that you have access to Him and that you share in His divine life. (CCC #51) Talk about God’s plan a lot.
3. Look for all the wonderful things God has done for you within your vocation. Be able to give reasons for the hope that faith holds out to us.
4. Get excited about your faith life. Celebrate your faith. What we want our students to have is a complete joy and happiness. This is what God wants for them. This kind of

joy comes about by having fellowship with the Trinity. The most effective way to help your students to have joy and fellowship is if you take them by the hand and bring them into what you have. You need to witness to the faith with your life.

5. Ongoing conversion is important. It is through conversion that we continue to turn towards God and are open to the movement of the Holy Spirit.
6. Pray that God will give you a desire and love for Him and souls, that you will set the world on fire with the witness of your own life.
7. Pray and beg God to increase holy religious vocations, holy marriages, and holy single life. We are to be about making disciples. Is our catechesis geared to discipleship training?
8. Plant the seeds of vocations with your students at every opportunity you get. God has placed everyone's vocation within them at their conception. Our task as a catechist is to provide opportunities for our students to discover that call and to respond generously.
9. Help your students to hear God's voice, to pray, and to respond in generosity. We must help our children to listen to God, to be able to hear his voice, and then to be able to respond.
 - a) Our children need help in learning to be comfortable with silence (God's language.)
 - b) Our children need to learn how to listen. (Prayer) They learn to pray by praying. They learn by being shown. Prayer is a personal intimate conversation, a dialogue with God.
 - c) Our children need daily personal prayer. Time set aside to talk with God not merely petitionary prayer.
 - d) Our children need to read the Bible daily. (God's word.)
 - e) Since the Church is the fulfillment of God's plan (CCC #737), our salvation, our children need to be active in the life of the Church.
10. Expose our students to the lives of saints.
11. Deepen your understanding of the mysteries of Christ and then help your students do the same.
12. Come to know yourself. We find our self by giving of ourselves to others. This self gift is so foreign to the world today. Help students to see the beauty and need of service. Get them out of themselves and focus on serving others.

13. Work on abandoning yourself to God. Trust Him for everything. This experience will help you be able to help others to follow this same path.
14. Be willing and open to address vocational questions directly. Help older students to study and explore vocational possibilities (not a profession) thoroughly.
15. Be willing to become personally involved and to walk with your students through their search and discovery.
16. Talk about the importance and the difference Jesus makes in your life and in the lives of others. Address the gap between faith and life. Faith is to be lived and talked about daily. The bridge that brings the two together is Christ.
17. We need to work with our adults, especially our young families. We again need to raise up the banner of our Catholic Culture. Adult and family based catechesis is a must.

VOCATIONS

Numbers with parentheses around them denote the appropriate paragraph number in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We have also added some appropriate Scripture citations.

I. CONSIDERATION OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- A. Vocation – Definition – from the Latin word “*vocare*” – to call
- B. Self –knowledge – “Our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” -St.Augustine from *The Confessions* – Our true identity is found in God. We can do nothing good apart from Him (2339).
- C. Relationships with others (1730)
 1. Every human person is made in the image of God and is made to live in relationship with others.
 2. We are called to imitate the self-giving love of the Blessed Trinity. This is especially true in marriage and family life.
 3. Jesus calls us to love unselfishly - “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (2055); Mt. 22:37-40

4. Friendship and dating
 - a. Everyone called to live chastely (2337-2347)
 - b. Avoid the near occasion of sin – these are persons, places and things which lead to sin.

II. CONSIDERATION OF PERSONAL VOCATION: (How one responds to God)

A. Universal Call to Holiness: aspects common to all Christian vocations.

1. Living out one's Baptismal faith (2340)
 - a. Humility – honesty with oneself about strengths and weaknesses, practice of self-control, obedience to commandments (2340)
2. We are called to be living witnesses of God's love. This love must be sacrificial. We must realize that He has first loved us.
3. Must keep the commandments and pursue virtue (1824); -Jn. 15:9-10.

B. The difference faith and life in the Church makes

1. "We can do no great things. We can only do small things with great love." - Blessed Theresa of Calcutta
2. Some keys to holiness
 - a. Holy Mass - we are obliged to attend Mass on Sunday (the anticipated Mass on Saturday evening fulfills the Sunday obligation) and Holy Days of Obligation (2180-2183)
 - b. Frequent Confession (Monthly confession would be a good goal toward which to aim. However, if one commits mortal sin, he/she is obliged to go to Confession as soon as possible).
 - c. Live virtuously – Keep commandments and practice virtue. An honest appraisal of one's strengths and weaknesses is important.
 - d. Devotion to the saints – especially the Blessed Mother (2340)
 - e. Kindness and goodness within the family (2204-2206); -Eph.5: 21- 6:4
 - f. Works of mercy (1473)

III. TYPES OF VOCATION

- A. Single
- B. Married
- C. Priesthood
- D. Consecrated Life

IV. SINGLE LIFE (1658)

- A. People single b/c of different particular circumstances
- B. Some choose to be single.
- C. Often people are single not of their choosing, but because of circumstances beyond their control.
 - 1. They are particularly close to Jesus' Heart.
 - 2. They deserve the special affection and care of the Church, and especially of her pastors.
- D. Some people are without a human family due to conditions of poverty, however, the Church is a home and a family for everyone, especially those who 'labor and are heavy laden' -Mt. 11:28

V. HOLY MATRIMONY (1601-1666)

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.
(1601)

- A. Marriage in God's plan (1602)
 - 1. Sacred Scripture begins and ends with marriage.
 - a. Adam and Eve at beginning -Gen. 1: 26-27
 - b. "Wedding Feast of the Lamb" at end -Rev. 19: 7,9
 - 2. Marriage and its "mystery" are woven all through the Bible.

3. Marriage “in the Lord” in the New Covenant of Christ and His Church -Eph. 5: 31-32

B. Marriage in the order of creation (1603-1604)

1. Not merely a human institution
2. Has God as its author
3. Well being of individuals and societies is closely bound up with healthy marriage and family life
4. Mutual love of man and woman is image of God’s unfailing love for us.
5. God blesses this love and intends it to be fruitful. -Gen. 1: 28, 31
6. Man and woman created for one another and they are equal, though not the same -Gen. 2: 18-25
7. The two becoming one flesh signifies an unbreakable union -Mt. 19:6.

C. Marriage under the regime of sin (1606-1608)

1. Sin and its effects cause problems within individuals and between men and women.
 - a. Discord
 - b. a spirit of domination
 - c. infidelity
 - d. jealousy
 - e. conflicts
2. Can escalate into separation and even hatred
3. Original sin had as one of its effects the rupture of the original communion of man and woman. -Gen. 3:12
 - a. Mutual attraction, which was a gift of the Creator, became marked by domination and lust. -Gen. 2:22; Gen. 3:16b

b. The beautiful vocation to be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth became burdened by the pain of childbirth and the toil of work. -Gen. 1:28, Gen. 3:21

4. Original sin did not destroy the union of man and woman, but damaged it.

5. God's grace is needed by man and woman.

D. Marriage in the Old Testament (1610-11)

1. Moral conscience regarding unity and indissolubility of marriage developed during the Old Covenant.

2. Law given to Moses aims at protecting wives from arbitrary domination by husbands -Deut. 24:1, Mt. 19:8

3. God's covenant with Israel seen in the image of exclusive and faithful marriage. This prepared people for a deepened understanding of the unity and indissolubility of marriage. -Hos. 1-3

4. Books of Ruth and Tobit show elevated sense of marriage over time in the Old Covenant, as well as fidelity and tenderness of spouses. -Song 8: 6-7

E. Marriage in the Lord Jesus (1613-1617)

1. Marriage between God and Israel comes to perfection in the marriage between Jesus and His bride, the Church.

2. Wedding at Cana

a. Jesus performs His first public miracle. -Jn. 2: 1-11

b. The Church sees in Christ's presence at the wedding a confirmation by Him of the goodness of marriage.

c. A proclamation that marriage will be an effective sign of Christ's presence

3. Jesus taught that God's original plan did not allow the possibility of divorce and re-marriage (1614)

a. Concession given by Moses because of hardness of people's hearts -Mt. 19:8

b. The sacramental marriage bond is indissoluble. -Mt. 19:6

4. Restoring original unity of man and woman

- a. This unity can be restored by:
 - i. grace of Christ
 - ii. Following Christ
 - iii. Renunciation of self
 - iv. Taking up our crosses daily and following Jesus

5. The whole Christian life bears the mark of the marriage between Jesus and His Church.

- a. Baptism – Parallel to the nuptial bath
- b. Eucharist – Parallel to the wedding feast

6. Christian marriage is a sacrament of the covenant between Jesus and His Church.

F. The Celebration of Marriage (1621-1624)

- 1. Between two Catholics the celebration of the sacrament ideally takes place during Holy Mass.
- 2. Appropriate that couple seal their consent to give themselves totally to each other at Mass where Jesus gives Himself, in the Eucharistic sacrifice, totally to His Bride the Church. -1 Cor. 10:17
- 3. Appropriate for bride and groom to prepare to receive the grace given in the Sacrament of Marriage by first receiving the Sacrament of Penance.
- 4. Man and woman marrying are the ministers of the sacrament. They confer it on each other by expressing their consent before the Church.
- 5. In order to be valid, a marriage of two Catholics or of one Catholic and one non-Catholic must be celebrated in the presence of a duly authorized priest or deacon and two other witnesses, unless, for a just cause, an exception is granted by the diocesan Bishop.
- 6. Role of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Many blessings on new couple at the Mass and especially on the bride

- b.** Spouses receive the Holy Spirit as communion of the love of Christ and His Bride the Church. -Eph. 5: 32
- c.** The Holy Spirit is the seal of their covenant.
- d.** The Holy Spirit is always available to them as the source of their love and strength.

G. Matrimonial consent (1625-1632)

- 1. Parties to sacrament of marriage**
 - a.** A baptized man and a baptized woman (There is no such thing as a true or valid homosexual marriage, regardless what the state might or might not say.)
 - b.** Must be free to contract marriage
 - c.** Neither may be impeded by any natural or ecclesiastical law
- 2. The indispensable element that “makes the marriage” is the exchange of consent between the man and the woman marrying.**
 - a.** This is the “I do” to indissolubility, faithfulness, openness to children and all that this implies.
 - b.** Must be free of coercion and of external fear
 - c.** If freedom is lacking, the marriage is invalid.
 - d.** A declaration of nullity, commonly known as an “annulment,” is an official judgment by a competent ecclesiastical authority, that because of some essential element that is found to have been lacking when the couple attempted marriage, their marriage is invalid. One example would be the case of a person who is held to the bond of a prior marriage, and attempts another marriage. That attempted marriage is invalid because he/she is already married.
- 3. Priest or deacon assisting at the celebration receives the consent of the spouses in the name of the Church and gives the blessing of the Church**
- 4. Why the Church requires that marriage take place under the ecclesiastical form:**
 - a.** Sacramental marriage is a liturgical act.

- b.** Sacramental marriage creates rights and duties between spouses and toward children.
- c.** Marriage is a state of life in the Church and thus requires witnesses that it really took place.

5. Preparation for marriage

- a.** Of prime importance
- b.** Remote Preparation - Example and teaching of parents and families is of special importance
- c.** Proximate Preparation - Role of pastors and the Christian community in preparation is also important
- d.** Practice of chastity prior to marriage is an important preparation for holy, chaste marriages.

H. The Effects of the Sacrament of Matrimony (1640)

- 1.** The marriage bond results from:
 - a.** The free human acts of the spouses
 - b.** The consummation
- 2.** This bond is irrevocable

I. Grace of the Sacrament of Matrimony (1641)

- 1.** Grace given is intended to:
 - a.** perfect the couple's love
 - b.** strengthen their indissoluble unity
- 2.** By this sacramental grace they help each other:
 - a.** attain holiness in married life
 - b.** welcome and educate children

J. The Goods and Requirements of Married Love (1643-1652)

- 1.** Involves a total gift of self:

- a. body and instinct
 - b. power of feeling
 - c. desires of spirit and will
 - d. deep personal unity
 - e. union in flesh, heart, and soul
2. The “three goods” of marriage
- a. Indissolubility -Mt. 19:6, Gen. 2:24
 - b. Faithfulness -Mk. 10: 11-12
 - c. Openness to children (*Note: Children are a gift from God; they are not owed to us by Him. As such, methods which involve the dissociation of the husband and wife, e.g. in vitro fertilization, are gravely contrary to the law of God. For more on this, please see #'s 2373-2379 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.*)

K. The unity and indissolubility of marriage (1644-1645)

- 1. Human communion between husband and wife is deepened by:
 - a. communion with Jesus
 - b. lives of common faith
 - c. the Holy Eucharist received together
- 2. Unity between them is made clear by equal and unreserved affection
- 3. Polygamy is contrary to undivided marital love.

L. Fidelity of married love (1646-1648)

- 1. Married love demands total fidelity between husband and wife.
- 2. Through the sacrament, spouses are called to represent the irrevocable love of Christ for His Church.
- 3. It can seem very difficult to bind oneself for life to another person.

- a. This is made possible by the fact that married couples share in and can draw on God's definitive love.
- b. Spouses are called to witness to this love of God.
- c. They deserve the gratitude and support of the ecclesial community.

M. Separation (1649)

1. In certain cases, the Church does permit the physical separation of spouses.
2. They do not cease being husband and wife.
3. The best solution is, if possible, reconciliation.
4. The Christian community is called to help the couple live out their situation in a Christian manner and faithful to the marriage bond.

N. Cases of Civil Divorce (1650-1651)

1. Neither God nor the Church recognizes divorce of those who are validly married.
2. In some countries today (the United States being one of them), civil divorce is not uncommon.
3. A person who is validly married according to Church law cannot enter a second marriage validly, even if the civil authority has granted a divorce.
4. If the divorced person re-marries civilly, he/she gravely contravenes God's law. -Mk. 10: 11-12
5. A person who is civilly divorced and whose marriage is recognized as being valid by the Church is required to live in complete continence.
6. Catholics who are civilly divorced are encouraged to:
 - a. listen to the Word of God
 - b. attend the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass
 - c. receive the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist as long as they have not entered an invalid marriage, are living chastely and are in a state of grace
 - d. persevere in prayer

- e. do works of charity
 - f. cultivate a spirit and a practice of penance
 - g. implore God's grace daily
- O. Openness to children (1652-1653) (*Note: catechists should read carefully, Catechism of the Catholic Church #2331-2400*)

Notes on the “marital act” within the sacrament of Holy Matrimony:

- *Every sexual act between spouses must be a free human act which is open to life and love.*
- *It should be conveyed that the marital act is not only good, it is holy. In fact, the bond of Holy Matrimony comes about through the consummation of the marriage.*
- *All intentional sexual acts within marriage must be open to both the unitive and procreative ends to be morally licit. (c.f. 2351-2359)*
- *Contraceptive devices, contraceptive chemicals, and contraceptive acts are always gravely immoral. (c.f. 2370)*
- *Natural family planning (NFP) is permissible for just reasons. When limiting or spacing children by using NFP, a husband and wife monitor the woman's fertility signs and have intercourse only during the infertile days of the wife's cycle. Vocations teachers should teach students what NFP is, but are not to teach how a woman charts her fertility cycle. Detailed information about NFP is appropriate for couples who are married or engaged but is usually not appropriate for high-school students.*
- *Several points that they should clearly convey are that NFP is not the “Rhythm Method”, when practiced properly, NFP is highly effective.*
- *NFP differs essentially from contraception. Contraception perverts the purpose and meaning of the marital act, which has two primary ends or purposes:*
 - ✓ *unity between husband and wife, and*
 - ✓ *procreation.*

- *It should be pointed out here that contraception not only goes contrary to the procreative end of the sexual act, but also affects the unitive end.*
 - *Direct sterilization is gravely immoral. This is surgery done for the purpose of rendering a person infertile. For men it usually takes the form of a vasectomy. For a woman it usually takes the form of a tubal ligation.*
 - *All intentional sexual acts outside of marriage, are, by their nature, objectively grave matter, e.g. intercourse, masturbation, “oral sex”, sexual foreplay, etc. (Culpability or degree of culpability depends on whether there are sufficient knowledge and full consent of the will regarding the immoral act). However, it should be noted that we have a responsibility to correctly form our consciences in accord with God’s revelation. We can know what God teaches through the Natural Law, Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, and the magisterial teachings of the Church.*
 - *Pornography is a pernicious evil in society. It destroys lives and marriages. It is to be absolutely avoided in all of its forms! (c.f. 2354)*
 - *The best way to prepare for a holy and chaste marriage is to live a holy and chaste life prior to marriage. (c.f. 1632)*
 - *Those who have fallen into sexual sin should not despair or in any way lack hope. They should confidently turn with trust to the Lord’s Divine Mercy, repent of their sin(s), confess it/them in the Sacrament of Confession, and start anew. Also, weekly Mass attendance and frequent reception of the Holy Eucharist in a state of sanctifying grace is strong spiritual “armor” for purity and against sin.*
 - *Individuals and couples should turn frequently to Our Blessed Mother, Mother of Holy Purity, and to the holy angels and saints for help, e.g. your Guardian Angel, St. Joseph, St. Maria Goretti, St. Dominic Savio.*
1. *By its very nature, marriage is ordered to the procreation and education of offspring (1652).*
 2. *Marriage finds its crowning glory in children (1652). (Note: Children are the supreme gift of marriage and contribute greatly to the good of the parents themselves. God himself said: “It is not good that man should be alone,” and “from the beginning He made them male and female”; wishing to associate them in a special way in his own creative work, God blessed man and woman with the words: “Be fruitful and multiply.” Hence, true married love and the whole structure of family life which results from it, without diminishment of the other ends of marriage, are directed to disposing the spouses to cooperate valiantly with the love of the Creator and Savior, who through them will*

increase and enrich His family from day to day. (Gaudium et Spes #50, paragraph 1, Gen. 2:18, Matthew. 19:4, Gen. 1:28)

3. “Sacred Scripture and the Church’s traditional practice see in large families a sign of God’s blessing and the parents’ generosity” (2373) (*Gaudium et Spes* #50, paragraph 2).
4. Fundamental task of marriage and family is to be at the service of life (1653).
5. Parents are principal and first educators of their children (1653).
6. Responsible Parenthood (**Note:** *In today’s culture, “responsible parenthood” is often connected to contraception. That is absolutely not what the Church means when she talks about responsible parenthood. True responsibility can never entail sin. Thus, contraception, which is intrinsically and gravely immoral, is not responsible parenthood. However, for serious reasons, spouses may delay, even indefinitely having children (or having more children). The following is an extended quotation from Pope Paul VI’s encyclical “On Human Life” (Humanae Vitae). It is placed here to show what the Church means by the term responsible parenthood.*)

Married love, therefore, requires of husband and wife the full awareness of their obligations in the matter of responsible parenthood, which today, rightly enough, is much insisted upon, but which at the same time should be rightly understood. Thus, we do well to consider responsible parenthood in the light of its varied legitimate and interrelated aspects.

With regard to the biological processes, responsible parenthood means an awareness of, and respect for, their proper functions. In the procreative faculty the human mind discerns biological laws that apply to the human person. With regard to man’s innate drives and emotions, responsible parenthood means that man’s reason and will must exert control over them.

With regard to physical, economic psychological and social conditions, responsible parenthood is exercised by those who prudently and generously decide to have more children, and by those who, for serious reasons and with due respect to moral precepts, decide not to have additional children for either a certain or an indefinite period of time.

Responsible parenthood, as we use the term here, has one further essential aspect of paramount importance. It concerns the objective moral order which was established by God, and of which a right conscience is the true interpreter. In a word, the exercise of responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife, keeping a right order of priorities, recognize their own duties toward God, themselves, their families and human society.

From this it follows that they are not free to act as they choose in the service of transmitting life, as if it were wholly up to them to decide what is the right course to follow. On the contrary, they are bound to ensure that what they do corresponds to the will of God the Creator. The very nature of marriage and its use makes His will clear, while the constant teaching of the Church spells it out. (HV #10)

7. Natural Family Planning – (**Note:** *The careful monitoring of the woman’s fertility signs in which the husband and wife would, for just reasons, have intercourse only during the naturally infertile days of the woman’s cycle, for the purpose of delaying pregnancy. This differs essentially from contraception. With contraception, the marital act is perverted from its natural purpose and meaning. The procreative end of the marital act is deliberately blocked or obstructed. In Natural Family Planning, the act takes place in an entirely natural way. If done for just reasons, the limiting of family size is not in itself evil. However, contraceptive acts are evil in themselves because they obstruct the procreative end of the act. This also affects the unitive end of the marital act because it shows a “holding back” of the complete gift of oneself to one’s spouse.”*)

P. Spouses to whom God does not grant children (1654)

1. Can still have married lives full of meaning
2. They can radiate:
 - a. fruitfulness of charity
 - b. hospitality
 - c. sacrifice

Q. The Domestic Church (1655-1657)

1. Jesus chose to be born into and grow up in a holy family.
2. From the beginning, families often made up the core of the Church. Acts 18: 8
3. Families are of central importance as witnesses of Jesus to a world that is greatly in need of Him.
4. Parents are the first heralds of the Faith to their children.
5. In the home, one is to learn:
 - a. Endurance

- b. joy of work
- c. fraternal love
- d. generous and repeated forgiveness
- e. above all, divine worship through:
 - i. prayer
 - ii. the offering of one's life to God

R. Mixed Marriages and Disparity of Cult (1633 – 1637)

1. Here a “mixed marriage” is defined as marriage between a Catholic and a baptized non-Catholic.
2. In many countries, including our own, mixed marriages are common.
3. They require particular attention on the part of couples and their pastors.
4. Marriage with “disparity of cult” (between a Catholic and a nonbaptized person) requires even greater circumspection.
5. Difference of confession between spouses is not insurmountable if:
 - a. They place in common what they have received from their respective communities
 - b. They learn from each other the way in which each lives in fidelity to Christ
6. However, difficulties posed by religious differences should not be underestimated.
 - a. In mixed marriages there is greater risk of Christian disunity in the heart of the home.
 - b. Disparity of cult can further aggravate these differences:
 - i. Differences about faith
 - ii. Differences about the very nature of marriage

2. Within the people of Israel one of the tribes, the tribe of Levi, was set apart for liturgical service. -Num. 1:48.
3. Priests were appointed to offer to God gifts and sacrifices on behalf of the people. -Heb. 5:1, -Ex. 29: 1-30, -Lev. 8.
4. This Old Covenant priesthood was instituted by God to:
 - a. proclaim His Word.
 - b. restore communion to Him by sacrifices and prayers -Mal. 2: 7 – 9
 - c. However, despite the repetition of the sacrifices, this priesthood was powerless to bring about salvation.
 - d. Only the sacrifice of Christ could bring about salvation.
 - e. The priesthood of Aaron, service of Levites, and institution of 70 elders prefigures the New Covenant priesthood. - Num. 11: 24-25.

D. The one priesthood of Christ (1544-1545)

1. All that the Old Covenant priesthood prefigured is fulfilled in Christ. -1 Tim. 2:5.
2. Melchizedek “priest of God Most High” prefigures the unique High Priesthood of Christ. -Heb. 5:10.
3. Christ’s redemptive sacrifice is unique, and accomplished once for all. This one sacrifice is renewed in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church.
4. The one priesthood of Christ is made present through the ministerial priesthood, without diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s priesthood. -Heb. 8:4.

E. Two participations in the one priesthood of Christ (1546 – 1547)

1. The Common Priesthood
 - a. All of the baptized share in Christ’s priestly office through:
 - i. the unfolding of the graces they received in Baptism
 - ii. living lives of faith, hope, and charity

iii. life in the Holy Spirit

2. The Ministerial or Hierarchical Priesthood
 - a. At the service of the common priesthood
 - b. Is a means by which Christ:
 - i. builds up His Church (1546)
 - ii. leads His Church (1546)
 - c. Differs in essence from the common priesthood
 - d. Is transmitted by its own sacrament, Holy Orders

F. In the person of Christ the Head (*in persona Christi Capitis*) (1548–1551)

1. The priest, by his sacerdotal consecration possesses the authority to act in the power and place of Christ Himself.
 - a. The power of the Holy Spirit extends to the sacraments so that even a priest's sins cannot impede the fruit of grace received in the sacraments (1550). (*Note: A term to be familiar with in this regard is ex opere operato, which literally means, "from the work performed." Practically speaking, this means that the grace given in the sacraments is not determined by the virtue (or lack thereof) of either the minister or recipient of the sacrament. As long as no obstacle is placed in the way, every sacrament that is properly administered confers the grace intended by the sacrament. For example, if a man (let's call him Herbert) goes to the sacrament of Penance and makes a good confession and receives absolution, Herbert's sins are forgiven, whether the priest hearing his confession is a great saint or a great sinner. The point to be made here is that God, in His unfathomable mercy, does not make His divine mercy, present in the sacraments, primarily dependent on us. "The Potter" realizes that we have "feet of clay", but He desires to mold and strengthen this "clay" in the "fire" of His divine love.*)
 - b. Priestly ordination does not guarantee the personal holiness of the priest.
2. The ministerial priesthood has been instituted by Christ for the good of mankind and the communion of the Church.
3. We should frequently pray for the holiness of priests and for an increase of vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

G. The three degrees of Holy Orders (1555-1571)

- 1. Bishop** – From the Greek, “*episcopi*”, meaning “overseer.” A bishop is one who has received the fullness of Holy Orders, which makes him a member of the Episcopal College and a successor to the apostles. He is the chief shepherd of a particular church (diocese) entrusted to him.
- 2. Priest** – From the Greek “*presbyteroi*”, meaning “elder.” Presbyters or priests are co-workers with their bishops and form a unique sacerdotal college or “presbyterium” dedicated to assist their bishops in priestly service to the People of God. Through the ministry of priests, the unique sacrifice of Christ on the cross is made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church.
- 3. Deacon** – From the Greek “*diakonos*”, meaning “a servant.” The diaconate is intended to help and serve the bishop and priests of a diocese in the celebration of the divine mysteries. A deacon is called “transitional” if he is in a program of formation leading to ordination to the priesthood. Transitional deacons are celibates. A deacon is called “permanent” if he is not an aspirant to ordination to priesthood. Most permanent deacons are men who are married, although some are celibate. All deacons exercise a ministry of service.

H. Ways in which deacons, priests, and bishops minister to the People of God.

- 1. Deacons can do the following:**
 - a.** Proclaim the Gospel
 - b.** Preach (when permitted)
 - c.** Distribute Holy Communion
 - d.** Celebrate Exposition and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament
 - e.** Baptize solemnly
 - f.** Bless articles of devotion
 - g.** Assist at and bless marriages (when permitted)
 - h.** Preside over funerals
 - i.** Dedicate themselves to the various ministries of charity

2. Priests can do all that is noted above under what deacons do, plus the following:
 - a. Acting in the person of Christ, they make present and apply the unique sacrifice of Christ offering Himself for all as a spotless victim to the Father. That is, they make present and apply the Eucharistic sacrifice.
 - b. Hear Confession and grant absolution
 - c. Celebrate the Anointing of the Sick
 - d. May in certain cases, as determined by universal and particular law, confirm, though bishops are the ordinary ministers of Confirmation

3. Bishops can do all that deacons and priests do, plus:

- a. They can confer the sacrament of Holy Orders (i.e. ordain men to be deacons and priests and, with papal authorization, ordain men to be bishops).
- b. Receive through Episcopal consecration the offices of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling the people of his diocese.

I. The Celebration of the Sacrament (1572 – 1574)

1. The ordination of bishops, priests, and deacons has great importance for the life of a particular church.
 - a. As many of the faithful as possible should take part
 - b. Preferably takes place on Sunday, in the Cathedral and with great solemnity

2. Essential Rite

- a. For all three degrees it consists of:
 - i. The bishop's laying on of hands on the head of the ordinand
 - ii. The bishop's consecratory prayer asking for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His gifts proper to the ministry to which the candidate is being ordained

J. Who can confer this sacrament? (1575-1576)

- Bishops

K. Who can receive this sacrament? (1577 – 1580)

1. Only a baptized man
2. The Lord Jesus chose men to form the college of the 12 apostles.
3. The apostles did the same when they chose collaborators to succeed them in their ministry -Mk. 3:14-19.
4. The Church recognizes herself bound by this choice made by the Lord Himself. For this reason the ordination of women is not possible (1577).
5. No one has a right to this sacrament. He is called to it by God Heb. 5:4.
6. One who feels called to the ordained priesthood must humbly submit his desire to the authority of the Church.
7. Celibacy
 - a. In the Latin Church, ordained ministers, with the exception of permanent deacons, are normally chosen from among men of faith who live a celibate life and intend to remain celibate.
 - b. They do this:
 - i. To give themselves to God and the Church with an undivided heart
 - ii. For the sake of the Kingdom of God
 - c. Accepted with joy, celibacy radiantly proclaims the Reign of God.
8. Eastern Churches
 - a. Bishops are chosen solely from among celibate priests.
 - b. Married men may be ordained as priests, as well as deacons. However, they may not marry after they receive Holy Orders.

L. The Effects of Holy Orders (1581 – 1589)

1. Configures the recipient to Christ, so that he may serve as Christ's instrument for His Church.
2. Enabled to act as a representative of Christ as Head of the Church as Priest, Teacher, and Pastor.

3. An indelible spiritual character is given. This character can never be taken away under any circumstance. (*Note: Even in exceptional cases, e.g. a priest leaves the clerical state and receives a dispensation to marry, he is still a priest, though not a functioning one. Or, in the case where a priest has his faculties revoked, he is still a priest, though he may not function as one. Even after physical death, he is still a priest. The same applies to deacons and bishops. Titles, such as pope, cardinal, and monsignor are not permanent. When the man who held such a title dies, he is no longer a pope, cardinal, monsignor, etc. The essential difference is that deacon, priest, and bishop are degrees of the sacrament of Holy Orders which carry the permanent spiritual character, whereas, pope, cardinal, and monsignor are not conferred by means of a sacrament and have no permanent spiritual character.*)

4. For the bishop, the grace of the Holy Spirit, which is given during Episcopal consecration is first of all a grace of strength. “The priest continues the work of redemption on earth...If we really understood the priest on earth, we would die not of fright but of love....The priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus.” - St. John Vianney

VII. Consecrated Life

A. Evangelical Counsels (915 – 916)

1. Chastity in celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom
2. Poverty
3. Obedience

B. Dedicated totally to God (916)

C. Various forms of religious life (917 – 919)

1. Some live in solitude
2. Some live in community

D. The eremitic life (920 – 921)

1. hermits
 - a. Do not always profess evangelical counsels
 - b. Devote life to praise of God and the salvation of the world through silence of solitude, prayer, and penance

E. Consecrated virgins and widows (920 – 921)

1. Mystical betrothal to Christ
2. They are an eschatological image of the heavenly Bride of Christ and of the life to come.

F. Religious life (925 – 927)

1. Began in the east in the early centuries of the Church's history.
2. Distinguished from other forms of consecrated life by:
 - a. liturgical character
 - b. public profession of vows
 - c. evangelical counsels
 - d. fraternal life

G. Secular institutes (928 – 929)

1. Christian faithful living in the world
2. Order temporal things to God
3. Inform the world with the Gospel
4. Committed to the evangelical counsels by sacred bonds
5. Communion and fellowship with others is appropriate to their way of life.

H. Societies of apostolic life (930)

1. No religious vows
2. Have an apostolic purpose
3. Lead a life in common according to a particular manner of life
4. Strive for the perfection of charity through observance of a constitution
5. Some embrace the evangelical counsels.

Recommended are the following resources for teachers:

- 1. On Consecrated Life, *Vita Consecrata*; 1996 Apostolic Exhortation by Pope John Paul II; Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**
- 2. On Reserving Priestly Ordination to Men Alone, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*; 1994, Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II; Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**
- 3. The Lay Members of Christ's Faithful People, *Christifideles Laici*; 1988 Apostolic Exhortation by Pope John Paul II; Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**
- 4. The Family in the Modern World, *Familiaris Consortio*, 1981 Apostolic Exhortation by Pope John Paul II; Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**
- 5. I Will Give You Shepherds, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 1992 Apostolic Exhortation by Pope John Paul II, Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**
- 6. On Human Life, *Humanae Vitae*, 1968 Encyclical by Pope Paul VI; Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**
- 7. On Christian Marriage, *Casti Connubii*, 1930 Encyclical by Pope Pius XI; Pauline Books and Media, Boston.**