

CATECHETICAL POLICY
of the DIOCESE OF UMZIMKULU – to implement draft –
November 2014

1. VISION of CATECHESIS – Preaching the Gospel in the temporary world.
CATECHESIS BRINGS ABOUT A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH
JESUS

Pope Benedict XVI stressed this theme in *Deus Caritas Est*: “Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter witha person [Jesus Christ] which gives life a new horizon and a definitive direction” (No. 1).

If the Christian faith is about an encounter with the person of Jesus, then our teaching of the faith has to move beyond commandments and rules, which has often dominated catechesis, into something that introduces us more directly into knowledge of Jesus, the person. Renewal in the Church must focus on a renewed relationship with Jesus within a believing, sacramental faith community.

The General Directory for Catechesis stresses, that “the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ” (N.80; CT5; cf. CCC 426; AG 14a.)

2. FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF CATECHESIS:

➤ helping to know, to celebrate and to contemplate the mystery of Christ.

a/ Promoting knowledge of Faith

Who has encountered Christ desires to know him as much as possible, as well as to know the plan of the Father which he revealed. Catechesis, must therefore, lead to the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan, by introducing the disciples of Jesus to a knowledge of Tradition and of Scripture through the explanation of the Creed. (GDC 85)

b/ Liturgical Education

“Christ is always present in his Church, especially in liturgical celebrations. The Catechesis, along with promoting a knowledge of the meaning of the liturgy and the sacraments, must educate the disciples of Jesus Christ for prayer, for thanksgiving, for repentance, for praying with confidence, for community spirit, for understanding correct meaning of creeds, as all of this is necessary for true liturgical life.” (GDC 85)

c/ Moral Formation

“Conversion to Jesus Christ implies walking in his footsteps. Catechesis must therefore, transmit to the disciples the attitude of the Master himself. The disciples thus undertake a journey of interior transformation, in which, by participating in the paschal mystery of the Lord, they pass from the old man to the new man who has been made perfect in Christ”. (GDC 85)

d/ Prayer Formation

“Communion with Jesus Christ leads the disciples to assume the attitude of prayer and contemplation which the Master himself had. Catechesis help to learn to pray with Jesus, reflecting the same sentiments which he had turned to the Father: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, filial confidence, supplication and awe for his glory.” (GDC 85)

e/ Education for Community Life

Catechesis prepares the Christian to live in community and participate actively in the life and the mission of the Church.

f/ Missionary Initiation

“Catechesis is also open to the missionary dimension. This seeks to equip the disciples of Jesus to be present as Christians in society through their professional, cultural and social lives. It also prepares them to lend their cooperation to the different ecclesial services, according to their proper vocation.” (GDC 85)

3. AGENTS OF CATECHETICAL MINISTRY. (GCD 217-232)

The Church needs to consider as its **primary task** the preparation and formation of catechists in the deep riches of the faith. (GCD 33)

“In the Diocese catechesis is a unique service performed jointly by priests, deacons, religious and laity, in communion with the Bishop” (GCD 219).

Catechesis is a responsibility of the entire Christian community, so that the catechumens and those who are being catechized are actively incorporated into the life of the community. (GCD 220).

❖ Bishop.

In his Diocese, the Bishop has primary responsibility for catechesis and catechists. He assumes the overall direction of catechesis in the Diocese. He also shows, in a tangible way, that he gives effective priority to catechesis by ensuring the necessary personnel, financial resources, means, and equipment, indispensable for active and fruitful catechesis in his diocese (GDC 222-223).

❖ Clergy.

Priests/Deacons, as collaborators with the Bishop, as pastors and educators of the Christian community, have as one of their greatest duties that of discerning the vocation of the catechist and of attending to their formation and training.

It is also up to the priest to integrate all catechetical activity in the parish with on-going evangelization and catechesis of the community.

In order to achieve this, the priest needs to bring about and foster the link between catechesis, sacraments, and the liturgy.

A crucial moment in catechesis is the interplay between the priest and catechists. It is the task of the priest to accompany catechists and encourage them to share their

faith. “He must put special interest in caring for the initial and permanent formation of catechists” (Congregation for the Clergy. Directory on the Ministry and Life of the Priest N.47).

Priests are called upon, to care for the planning of catechesis in their parishes by participating actively with catechists and by insisting that catechesis be well structured and in keeping with a common diocesan policy (GDC 224-225).

❖ **Consecrated Life Members**

A special appeal is made to those in consecrated life to cooperate in this renewed catechetical process, especially at parish and diocesan levels. The particular contribution that religious and members of societies of apostolic life have to offer is invaluable in the accompaniment that they can give to catechists, communities, and families.

Catechetical activity can never be marginal to or excluded from the richness of their charisms. Their public witness to the reality of the Kingdom in many spheres, including the social, religious, and pedagogical, makes them a living sign of what it means to follow more closely in the footsteps of Jesus (GDC 228).

❖ **The Family**

The family is the fundamental environment for catechesis. The Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Christian Education puts it very clearly, “Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute” (Second Vatican Council. *Declaration on Christian Education*, October 28, 1965, N. 3.).

Pope John Paul II follows the Second Vatican Council’s teaching when he challenges parents to accept their ministry of catechizing their own children with tireless zeal. He stresses that the family’s work of catechesis has an irreplaceable character (*Catechesis in Our Time*, N. 68.).

The *General Directory for Catechesis* presents the family as a source of catechesis that holds a privileged position. It states that the family is in the unique position to teach the Gospel by rooting it in profound human values. It lists the awakening of a sense of God, the first steps in prayer, the education of a Christian conscience, formation in the Christian sense of love as examples of Christian education which is ‘more witnessed than taught.’ Sensitive to the contemporary breakdown in family life in international culture, the General Directory for Catechesis emphasizes the growing importance of the faith of grandparents in family catechesis. It states, “their wisdom and sense of the religious is often decisive in creating a true Christian climate” (*General Directory for Catechesis*, N. 255.).

Indeed, family catechesis “precedes, accompanies, and enriches all other forms of catechesis” (CT 68).

❖ **The Laity**

In addition to their common Christian vocation through Baptism, some lay people feel called by God to take on the service of catechist. After having discerned this vocation, the Church confers the mission to catechize. “To feel called to be a catechist and to receive this mission from the Church acquires different levels of dedication in accordance with the particular characteristics of individuals” (GDC 231).

The General Catechetical Directory leaves it up to the local Church to analyse its own cultural and religious situations in order to discover their own needs and foster the kinds of catechists she needs. (GDC 232).

❖ **Small Christian Communities**

Small Christian Communities are the ideal places where integral catechetical activity can take place, provided that the proper nature and character of catechesis is understood and respected.

The GDC also affirms, “the small community is always a suitable place to receive those who have concluded a catechetical journey” (GDC 264).

4. The VOCATION and FORMATION of the CATECHISTS

(GCD 233-252)

The vocation to be a catechist is a special form of the Ministry of the Word. This is a personal calling requiring an initial and developing relationship with Christ.

An intimate relationship with Christ is the driving force behind all catechetical activity. “From this loving knowledge of Christ springs the desire to proclaim him, to ‘evangelize’, and to lead others to the ‘Yes’ of faith in Jesus Christ” (CCC 429).

It is imperative therefore, that the local Church provide the means necessary to awaken and discern the vocation of the catechist, confer the mission to catechize, and provide the necessary initial and on-going formation and training for catechists.

The General Directory for Catechesis stresses that *“no methodology, no matter how well tested, can dispense with the person of the catechist in every phase of the catechetical process. The charism given to [the catechist] by the Spirit, a solid spirituality and transparent witness of life, constitutes the soul of every method. Only [the catechist’s] own human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other work instruments”* (No 156).

The Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, describes catechists as “specialized workers, direct witnesses, indispensable evangelizers, who represent the basic strength of Christian communities, especially in the young Churches” (No 73).

a/ SELECTION AND FORMATION OF CATECHISTS

➤ Selection of Catechists

Catechesis is an essential ministry of the Church, and those called to be catechists are empowered by the Holy Spirit to do this work. (Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. (1993) Guide for Catechists No 2).

The clergy, who are responsible for “promoting and discerning vocations to the service of catechesis” (GDC 225) should take special care in how they recruit individuals to serve in this ministry. The GDC acknowledges, “some lay people feel called interiorly by God to assume the service of catechist” (No 231) which implies that not everyone is called to be a catechist.

The *Guide for Catechists*, (No 18) lists several characteristics that should be present in those who desire to serve in this ministry:

- Faith that manifests itself in their piety and daily life
- A love for the Church and communion with its pastors
- An apostolic spirit and missionary zeal
- Love for their brothers and sisters and a willingness to give generous service;
- Sufficient education
- Respect of the community
- Human, moral and technical qualities necessary for the work of a catechist, such as dynamism, good relations with others

➤ Initial and On-going Catechetical Formation and Training of Catechists

Keeping in mind that “the quality of any form of pastoral activity is placed at risk if it does not rely on truly competent and trained personnel” (GDC 234), all diocesan pastoral programmes must give absolute priority to the formation and training of catechists.

It is important to teach Catechists how to animate a catechetical journey and be capable of transmitting the Gospel and the teachings and traditions of the Church faithfully and competently.

The type and quality of formation and training given to catechists has to be in keeping with the concept of catechesis proposed by the Church and endorsed by the Bishops’ Conference. (Guide for Catechists No 28 -29; GDC 235 – 237; CCC 906).

➤ **Criteria and elements of the formation of Catechists:**

- As a person
- As a believer
- As a apostle
- The Knowledge of the Faith
 - ❖ Aspects of Old Testament
 - ❖ The life of Christ
 - ❖ The history of the Church
 - ❖ The Centre of Christian Message: The Creed, the Liturgy, the Moral Life, Prayer
- ✓ Fundamental elements of psychology and sociology
- ✓ Good educational methods – teaching techniques
- ✓ Good communication skills
- ✓ RCIA model
- ✓ Formation of catechist done within the Christian Community (GCD 246-247)

5. THOSE TO BE CATECHISED (GCD 163-214)

Catechesis and the Responsibility of the Parish and the Christian Community. The Parish is the primary place where the Christian community “is formed and expressed”. It is the “usual place in which faith is born and in which it grows” (GDC 257).

The baptismal catechumenate, which is the basis of the model for the catechizing ministry of the Church, is the responsibility of the entire Christian community. The goal of the interaction with the community is to introduce catechumens and candidates into the Christian life and Christian community. They learn the faith by being taught but also by actually experiencing the life of the Church (GDC 220).

Just as the goal of the catechumenate is to introduce people to the Christian community, so the goal of post–baptismal catechesis is to deepen the understanding of the baptized and to invite them to involve themselves more deeply in the life and mission of the Church community (GDC 88–91; 220–221)

In order to encourage a catechumenal approach to catechesis it is crucial to have a Christian Community that welcomes, sustains, and forms those preparing for Christian Initiation (GDC 69). “The Christian community follows the development of catechetical processes, for children, young people, and adults, as a duty that involves and binds it directly (GDC 220).

It is particularly important that young people feel welcomed and “at home” within the Christian Community. In order to do this there is the need for on-going formation in the faith of Christian communities. The faith of adults needs to be continually deepened and developed (GDC 220).

It is therefore the task of the Christian community, whether large or small, to live the faith, to proclaim it in their lives, to pass on the traditions of the Church, to keep alive the examples of many of the Saints, both canonized or uncanonized, who witnessed to their faith in ordinary and even extraordinary ways.

1/ THE CATECHESIS OF ADULTS (GCD 142-144; 172-176)

a/ AIMS:

- Adults are the ones who actively determine the direction of family life and the life of the larger community of which they are members. Adult catechesis is not optional: it is necessary. Whatever their economic situation, adults need opportunities to reflect on their experiences and their values. Adult catechesis not only informs adults, it also helps them to form themselves as members of the Church and to be transformed in Christ.
- The Catechesis offered to adults should be related to their life experience. Special attention should be given to the needs of families, single parents, non-practising Catholics, the divorced and widowed, migrants and immigrants, and marginalised and handicapped persons
- Catechesis will help individual believers and Catholic communities to understand why their Christian faith urges them to work for human advancement and for social justice. As part of this process, adult catechesis will expose social evils because such evils are opposed to the Gospel values. Awareness is a necessary step in inviting people to conversion. Once they become aware, it is possible for adults to consider by what means they should accomplish what faith urges.

b/ Methods of Catechising of Adults:

- ❖ **RCIA**
 - Catechesis for Christian Initiation according to the proper form and stages according to RCIA for those adults who are not Christians, for those who are Christians in other church communities as well for Catholic adults who did not finish the proper Christian Initiation (only baptism – but not other sacraments – Confession, Communion and Confirmation).
- ❖ **Small Christian Communities –**
 - are the place where people experience the local Church and help to involve the members in church's and community life and thus become the catechesis of life.
- ❖ **The Sunday Liturgy –**
 - is an occasion for on-going catechesis through celebrating the mysteries of faith. The homily as well the active participation of the members of the community in the liturgy become the catechesis.
- ❖ **Lay Ministry and Stewardship**
 - Preparation for the lay ministry and stewardship is a significant form of adult catechesis. A wise care for the gifts of faith and membership in the Church community calls for the donating one's time, talent and treasure in service to the Church. Suitable programmes for lay ministry and leadership should be created and implemented to reinforce the discovery of nature of

the Church and encourage to explore new possibilities of involvement to respond the current needs of the community.

❖ **Care for Creation –**

- Stewardship applies also to care we take of creation. Active concern for the environment is a duty for all Christians and is a subject for catechesis.

❖ **Parents and Guardians Catechesis**

- The Parents and guardians are the first and most important religious educators of their children. Their lives give witness to faith, hope and love. To fulfil such a great task – the parents need to be strengthened by the special catechesis and training that relate to their specific life and activities, such as: migratory labour, absence of one or two parents in the home, divorce, AIDS, sickness, single parenting, poverty, lack of proper accommodation, crime, breakage of traditional family structure, drugs, abuse, conflicts inside and outside of the family, lack of commitment, staying together only without marriage vows and so on.

✓ **The ways of support of families:**

- Training in parents methods of teaching of small children basic faith.
- Family and Community Catechesis on the occasion of receiving of sacraments by children.
- Train and supply the material for the celebration of the liturgical celebrations during the church year: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Feasts of Jesus, Mary and the saints.
- Catechesis of the parents when asking for the Baptism, First Confession and Communion, as well the Confirmation of their children.
- Christian Marriage and Family Life programmes on Christian vision of marriage and family life, methods of natural family planning, Christian Sexuality (Theology of the Body)
- Programmes on Social Justice – to teach about the rights and duties of the family in the society from the perspective of the Gospel Values
- Marriage enrichment programmes
- Marriage and Family Counselling services
- Marriage preparation programmes for those who wish to marry – to give the vision of Christian marriage and family life.

❖ **Sponsors –**

- ❖ the sponsors who are journeying together with those preparing for the sacraments of initiation should have the special meetings and catechesis to enable them to fulfil their mission of being the guides and examples of faith commitment to others.

❖ **Aged (GCD 186-188)**

- Catechesis for the aged pays attention to certain aspects of their condition of faith:
- catechesis are to bring to fulfilment a journey of faith in an attitude of thanksgiving and hopeful expectation
- or in the situation of the weakened faith – catechesis becomes a moment of new light, religious experience and inner healing.

2/ CATECHESIS OF YOUNG ADULTS

a/ AIMS

During early adulthood, young women and men define and establish themselves in careers, love relationships, and the stance they adopt towards the world. They begin to exercise responsibility for themselves and for others more fully than before through their interpersonal relationships and vocational choices – so if they are to live and act in accord with their faith, they need a pastoral care that includes catechesis.

b/ Catechetical Methodology with Young Adults

The setting and approach to catechesis for young adults vary according their experience of life as well of the faith. Overall, it should take the form of on-going formation, which can also have the RCIA format for those who have not had proper formation in past years.

❖ Content of the Catechesis for Young Adults

Catechesis should devote attention to these areas that are of importance to young adults:

- **Moral Standards** – Young adults should be offered a moral education that will help them to respond to the double moral standards found in society.
- **Skills in Leadership** – Young adults should be offered training in skills that will permit them to assume leadership in society and political life and in the Church.
- **The social teaching of the Church** – they should be offered opportunities to learn about the social teaching of the Church.
- **Vocational Guidance** – The options of Christian adult living should be proposed to the young adults, such as marriage, the single life, religious life and priesthood.
- **Marriage preparation programmes** – Programmes on the Christian view of sexuality (Theology of the Body), marriage preparation and preparation for the parenting should be offered to young adults.
- **Lay Ministries** – young adults should be invited to take part in training for admission to the lay ministries.

3/ CATECHESIS OF YOUTH AND TEENAGERS

a/ Personal and social context of youth – teens:

- ❖ A transition from childhood to adulthood,
- ❖ Strong peer influence
- ❖ A movement towards independent action in the adult world,
- ❖ And, an intense questioning of life and faith.

The catechesis of youth must take place within the context of personal development, or it will be of limited value.

b/ Directions for the catechesis of youth and teenagers:

Organise Learning Groups with the Youth: Such groups offer youth a sense of involvement, a forum for testing their ideas, learning from peers, and

place for making the necessary transition into the wider community of faith and life.

A Special Role for the Community: the community should offer the youth a credible witness to the Gospel values.

c/ Content of the Catechesis for youth and teenagers:

- ❖ The content of youth catechesis should be the product of a constant dialog with two partners: on the one hand: Scripture and Church teaching; and on the other hand, the life task or agenda of youth.
- ❖ Themes of Freedom and Hope: in our social and political situation of confusion and disappointment – youth should be guided to choose true freedom in Jesus and have hope for better tomorrow and pursue it.
- ❖ **Specific Themes:**
 - ❖ Youth catechesis should be sure to include these specific areas of content:
 - ❖ Personal relationship with Jesus – the intimacy of friends.
 - ❖ Jesus and his Message about the Kingdom of justice, reconciliation, love and peace.
 - ❖ The Church: first understood as the Community of Disciples of Jesus in today's world, and secondly, the Church understood as the one that is offering the way of being in the world, with a message, a history, and signs and symbols (sacraments) that show our Catholic identity.
 - ❖ The Gospel and Church teaching on social justice;
 - ❖ The role of youth, and eventually adults, in society and in the Church;
 - ❖ Employment and unemployment – social situation;
 - ❖ Sexual development (theology of the body for youth), marriage and family life preparation;
 - ❖ The possibilities within the Christian vocation;
 - ❖ Other issues that pertain to youth situation of the area.

d/ Method for Catechising Youth and Teenagers

❖ **A Catechumenal Youth Group**

The method employed in youth catechesis should be appropriate to the way youth learn. A catechumenal youth group approach is more effective than a "classroom" approach. This approach to catechesis calls for a methodology of personal involvement. Thus the catechetical method should include:

- Reflection on life in the light of Scripture and Church teaching.
- Opportunities for a deep religious faith experience of Christ.
- Opportunities for Christian action in the community.
- Participation in the Community liturgy, as well as special liturgies modelled on those of the RCIA stages.
- Retreat, week-end reflections, camps, and other special events whenever possible.

e/ Confirmation Catechesis – Christian Initiation

Confirmation, together with Baptism and Eucharist is a sacrament of Christian initiation. So the catechetical preparation for confirmation has distinctly

“Christian Initiation Character”. Candidates are initiated into the way of Christ and membership of the Church. The directions for the catechesis of young adults and those for the catechesis of youth and teenagers can be applied to the preparation of youth for confirmation. They can be applied to their post-confirmation catechesis.

Because the Confirmation is a sacrament of Christian Initiation, there should be used the methodology presented in RCIA for those who are not baptised and for those who are already baptised but not fully initiated, with proper adaptations.

a/ Directions for admitting Candidates for Confirmation

❖ Baptism and Age:

- Baptism is necessary for Confirmation. Its fact must be established through the request of the genuine baptism certificate – not older than 3 months. Those who are baptised in other Church Communities whose baptism we accept as valid – should bring their baptismal certificate as well. If there is a reasonable doubt about the fact or validity of the baptism already conferred – the candidate should be baptised conditionally according to the RCIA programme.
- Candidates for Confirmation should be 15 years old.

❖ The Duration of Pre-Confirmation Catechesis:

When taking into the consideration the task facing the candidate – to grow in knowledge, commitment and conversion, integration into the Church community life to become the witness of Christ and his Gospel in the Community – the preparation for **Confirmation should not be less than 18 months as it proposed in the RCIA – initiation of non-baptized in other part of the policy.**

❖ Other conditions and situations of Candidates:

1. Those adults/youth who are not married in the Catholic Church, but only in the home affairs/customary union, or baganile or bagcagcile only, or in other church – **but live as would be married** - cannot receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Before receiving of the Sacrament of Confirmation they must marry in the Catholic Church.

The Children of those parents can receive the sacrament of confirmation, but the parents are advised to have Sacrament of Marriage in order to give a good example to children and create for them good environment for practicing their faith.

2. All candidates for Sacrament of Confirmation before they start learning must have an interview with the priest. The Catechist responsible for preparation for Confirmation should accompany the candidate and be present at the interview to give more information about the situation of the candidate.

3. Candidates for Confirmation should be informed at the beginning – before they start - about the requirements and their duties so that they have enough time to solve the problems if any – for example, their marriage as it is said above.
4. Every candidate for confirmation should have his/her **sponsor**. The sponsor's function is to take care that the person to be confirmed behaves as a true witness of Christ and faithfully fulfills the duties inherent in this sacrament. The sponsors should be elected by candidates at the beginning of the preparation course, presented to the Catechists who prepare them for the sacrament and their names should be written in the register book.
5. To be admitted to undertake the office of sponsor, a person must:
 - 1/ be appointed by candidate for confirmation,
 - 2/ be not less than sixteen years of age,
 - 3/ be a Catholic who has received the blessed Eucharist and Confirmation, and who lives a life of faith which benefits the role to be undertaken,
 - 4/ not be under a canonical penalty,
 - 5/ not be either the father or the mother of the person to be confirmed.
6. There should be the **special meetings with the sponsors with the Priest and the Confirmation Catechetical Team** a few times during the period of the training to give the explanation of the roles of the sponsors and prepare them for the active participation in the formation of candidates.

❖ **Directions for the examinations before the Confirmation:**

The Candidate should have:

- **Knowledge:** All that is required is a basic knowledge of Christ, of the Gospel message, of the teaching of the Church, of the prayers, creed, commandments and what it means to be a member of the Church in practice.
- **Commitment:** Learning the skills of Christian living and experiencing how our liturgy is celebrated is as important in confirmation catechesis as learning the knowledge of the faith. So confirmation catechesis should include opportunities for practical commitment to the way of life of the Gospel – and it is required from the candidates before they can be admitted to the Sacrament.
- **Conversion:** When we confirm a person we confirm his/her growing conversion to Christ and his way of living. It is possible to notice the growing conversion in youth if those responsible for their catechesis take time to observe them, their actions and make conversation with them.

Applying these Criteria: these criteria cannot be considered in isolation from each other. In coming to a decision to admit a candidate to Confirmation, parents, catechists, sponsors, pastors and the candidate her-himself will take part of the decision making process which will go on during the time of preparation for confirmation, not only close to date of confirmation.

4/ CATECHESIS FOR CHILDREN AND PRE-ADOLESCENTS

❖ Personal and social context of children:

Children are learners who readily respond to their surroundings. They are receptive to hearing about God, love and prayer because they are open to all that life offers. This same openness can, unfortunately render children vulnerable to influences from other sources. When children receive a schooling that includes ideology, or when they are exposed to violence, fear can quickly replace openness.

**Families are the most immediate social context
for children and pre-adolescents.**

In their families, children may find love, nurture, and opportunities for education and growth. It is also possible that children experience in their families the results of society's injustice and destructive power: the material and emotional suffering of broken families, poverty, inadequate housing, poor nutrition and deficient health care.

The catechesis of Children involves much more than imparting knowledge and to rely solely on memorisation of religious knowledge is an incomplete catechesis.

**Children need to see and experience faith as a real part of the whole of life,
and not something that they only hear about from someone else. Thus home,
including parents, siblings, and the extended family is an indispensable place
of catechesis.**

The parishes, through organised instruction and through liturgical and other activities, also helps to impart faith. The process of catechesis extends to life events and special occasions, such as births, marriages, deaths and pilgrimages. Catechesis can also take place in schools, through religious education.

❖ Directions for the Catechesis of Children and Pre-adolescents.

- **Promoting the development of a truly Christian Person.**
There should be a balance of religious knowledge and experience.
- **Growth in understanding and living Gospel Values.**
The catechesis of children should lead to and foster this growth.
- **The beginning of their Religious Education.**
Catechesis for children should be the beginning of their education in the theological virtues of faith, love and hope.
- **Developing a life of personal prayer.**
The catechesis of children should help them to develop a life of personal prayer suitable to their age, and to understand and participate in liturgical celebrations and community prayer.

❖ Content of the Catechesis of Children and pre-adolescents

Catechesis should lead children to:

- **Jesus** – through a relationship with Jesus and knowledge of his story.
- **Mary and Saints** – through a familiarity with Mary and the saints.
- **The Church** – through an understanding of the Church as the Community of God's People.

- **The Creed** – through a simple and meaningful understanding of the Creed.
- **The Sacraments** – through a thorough preparation for the Sacraments - especially Baptism, reconciliation and Eucharist.
- **The Moral Life** – through an initial formation in the moral life: the New Commandment of Love, the Ten Commandments, an understanding of moral principles and a responsible use of freedom.
- **Prayer** – through an understanding of Prayer as a relationship with, and response to, God, and through a knowledge of prayers in common use: e.g. Our Father, Hail Mary, Apostle's Creed, angelus, Rosary, etc.

❖ **Methods of Catechising of Children and pre-adolescents**

Any method and any life experience that will develop a child's awareness of God's presence and influence is suitable:

- ✓ **Simple Responses to a Loving God** – a simple expression of joy, or thanksgiving, wonder, or need – to a loving God, learned at the parent's knee.
- ✓ **Parents Method of Catechising** – it is a sharing of the faith experiences with children by parents or siblings. (see Lumko material)
- ✓ **Stories** – Telling the children the stories of Jesus, Mary, his Mother, Old Testament stories, stories of the saints and stories from life are especially effective in catechising children.
- ✓ **Activities** – Drama, role-plays, art, music or song, dancing; attending, preparing for, participating in children's liturgies, Sunday liturgy of the Word for children and other celebrations – all draw the children into the mysteries of faith and are powerful means of catechesis for them.
- ✓ **Membership in Christian Associations** – according to their age, membership in Christian groups, especially where care for others and skills in sharing thoughts and feelings are promoted offer the children a chance to "learn by doing" their Christian faith. Example: Holy Childhood, Soldiers of Christ the King, Children of Mary etc.
- ✓ **Suitable Prayer Experience and Retreats** – These should be adapted to the age of the children. Brevity and simplicity are important; the simpler, the better.

RULES RELATED TO:

The BAPTISM of the CHILDREN, of the ADULTS, 1st CONFESSION, COMMUNION and CONFIRMATION -

The Sacrament of Baptism was established by Jesus Christ. He entrusted it together with Gospel to the Church when He said to the Apostles: "Go to all nations and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. I will be with you always, to the end of time. (Mt 28,19-20).

The baptism is the first and the most important sacrament, because it gives the share in God's life and by the power of the Holy Spirit cleans from every sin, also from the original sin. Besides this, the baptism includes us into the community of all believers in Jesus Christ.

Parents asking for the baptism of their children are taking the duty of bringing up their children in Catholic Faith that the children when they grow up they will know the faith they were baptized in and confess it personally.

PRACTICAL DIRECTIVES:

- 1. ALL Parents before the baptism of their children must have personal interview with the priest, where they ask for baptism of the child and explain their family situation.**

Parents of children of age from 0-6 years must attend the baptismal course prepared by the priest and appointed catechists and it would be beneficial that the sponsors could attend the course. The sponsors must not be less than 15 years of age and live a good Christian life and confirmed.

- 2. Both parents should pay Isondlo if they are Catholic. Isondlo is R00 per month, per person, but it is not the necessity that is required ultimately for the baptism of the child. The Priest and the Financial Committee should find other ways to encourage the Faithfull to support the parish. The Baptism and the other Sacraments **must not be used** as the means to improve financial situation of the Parish. There should **customary financial contribution** to the parish by the parents when their children are receiving the sacraments. The amount should be determined by the diocese taking into the account of the situations of the parishes. (*Proposition: to support the diocesan catechetical team – the parish contribute R5.00 from each child receiving the sacraments*)**

Parents of the children should be married in the Catholic Church, and live a good Christian life. But if it impossible to marry in the Church now, children should be baptized, after the promise of the parents that they will bring up their children in the Catholic Faith – the priest should make the interview to make sure that it is possible.

The parents should speak personally with the priest about their marriage problems and family situation, before baptism of their child.

The girls who have their children without marriage/single parents, who are staying at their home - and want their children to be baptized should first contact the priest and explain their situation/have an interview, then go to Sacrament of Confession and

promise the change of life.

Those who are less than 15 years of age (7-14 years), but at the stage of receiving the Holy Communion, but yet not baptized, they should attend their courses under the Catechist who teach those who are going to receive the Holy Communion or have own group of those who are not baptized yet – as they need a special teaching to introduce them to our Church's life and customs. The period of preparation should not be less than a year (12 months).

There should be **a few special meetings with parents and sponsors done by the priest and catechetical team that is preparing the children for the receiving of sacraments – years 7 and up.** The purpose the meetings is to have closer contact with parents and sponsors, involve them in formation of their children, explain their roles as the first teachers of the children and learn the family situation of the children in order to respond holistically to the needs of the child.

4. **The children who are 15 years and upwards or adults**, yet not baptized but longing to be baptized, they should contact the Catechists of Confirmation/RCIA and together come to the priest for the interview before they start the learning. After thoroughly teaching them they will be baptized, confirmed and receiving the Holy Communion on Holy Saturday Vigil – no other days. Only danger of death is the exception.

The period of preparation for their Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Communion– that is initiation into the Catholic Church according to RCIA – should not be less than 18 months and should start after Pentecost – till the Easter in two years' time when they will be baptized. *Example:* starting in July 2012 – that is starting the period of Evangelization – then in November – before/at beginning of the Advent 2012 – the candidates will be received as Catechumens and continue their training following the RCIA teaching till the 1st Sunday of Lent 2014. On the 1st Sunday of Lent 2014 – there will be the Rite of Election done by the Bishop in the Lourdes Cathedral. Before the Rite of the Election the priest and the Catechetical/RCIA Team must be sure that the Catechumens are ready to progress to Baptism and he/she has fixed the marriage issues – if relevant as it is said below. There should be also the rite/celebration of the sending of Catechumens for the election – which is done in the parishes before the 1st Sunday of Lent as the RCIA proposes. After the Lenten Purification and Enlightenment – the catechumens are ready for the Sacraments of Initiation at the Holy Saturday Vigil. Then – it is important – that those newly baptized are continuing their deepening of faith and on Pentecost Sunday they are commissioned by the Bishop at the Cathedral to proclaim the Gospel and witness to Jesus as his disciples. The priest who is baptizing the Catechumens on Holy Saturday – should also confirm them on that day.

In the preparation for baptism of adults we do not follow the school year period but the Church Year and follow the instructions that are in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

5. The adults who want to be baptized in Catholic Church, or to be received into full communion with our Church, being baptized in other churches whose

baptism we accept – and who are already living as married people – that is: baganile, bagcagcile, have civil marriage in Home Affairs or customary union only – they have to make arrangements for their Marriage in the Catholic Church before they are baptized. They have to make all preparation for marriage, that is: come together – husband and wife to the priest to complete the forms, have marriage preparation course, and appoint the date of marriage that should be shortly after their baptism. So that they can have the Sacrament of Marriage after the Easter as they will be baptized on the Easter Saturday Vigil.

This requirement should be explained to the Candidates for Baptism before they start to prepare for it – so that they are aware of it and have time to prepare for their marriage just after their baptism.

7. The children who are already baptized and at the age of receiving of Holy Communion – that is 8 years should attend the preparation teaching for the period not less than a year (12 months).

The Baptized Children before the 1st Communion must have the Sacrament of Confession – Reconciliation. The catechists should prepare them well to understand and make Confession well. There should be special lessons explaining the meaning and conditions of the good confession and how make examination of conscience. The unbaptized children should have also preparation for the Sacrament of Confession – as they will go to confession after receiving their 1st Communion.

The Children who are of age 7 should start the learning of the catechism in the group special for them – not together with the children of 1st Communion. If they are not baptized yet – they will be prepared for their baptism.

All parents are asked to send their children for preparation teaching for the Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation. It is their duty.

NOTE: Those who married only in the court/home affairs, baganile, bagcagcile or in other churches, then came to the priest for “punishment”- inhlawulo, as it was in the past time, but did not have the Sacrament of Marriage afterwards, are still not allowed to receive the Holy Communion.

6. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

a/ Parish structures

1/ Parish Catechetical Committee (Training Team)

Parish Priest, Religious Sister/Brother, Catechetical Coordinator, Rep. of Parish pastoral Council, Reps/coordinators of Catechists from outstations, Reps from Sodalties, 2 reps from Liturgical Committee

2/ Tasks of the Committee (Training Team)

Together with the Parish Priest coordinate the catechetical faith formation of the Parish Community and training of the catechists/teachers.

3/ Membership of Training Team

Membership - Parish Priest, Religious Sister if present, Catechetical Coordinator, Catechists trained by the diocesan catechetical team, Rep. of Liturgical Committee, Rep. of PPC and others according to their skills.

4/ **Catholic Schools** – the role is to maintain the Catholic Ethos in schools and give the students and staff the holistic Gospel values formation and academic excellence. The parish priest and his team should have close relationship with school in the parish area through visits, celebrations, formation of teachers and students.

b/ Diocesan Structures

1/ Diocesan Catechetical Commission

The Catechetical Commission raises Community consciousness of its importance in faith formation of the local Church. It establishes and coordinates catechetical activities in the diocese.

“The organisation of catechetical pastoral care has as its reference point the Bishop of the diocese. The Diocesan Catechetical Office is the means which the bishop as head of the Local Community and teacher of doctrine utilizes to direct and moderate all catechetical activities of the diocese” (GDC 265, page 267)

2/ Tasks of Diocesan Catechetical Commission:

- To analyse the state of the diocese with regard to education in the faith;
- To develop a plan of action, which sets out clear objectives, proposes definite suggestions and shows concrete results;
- To promote the formation of catechists;
- To elaborate, or at least indicate to the parishes and to catechists, the necessary instruments for catechesis: catechisms, directories, programmes for different ages, guides for catechists, material for those being catechized, audio-visuals, etc.;
- To foster diocesan institutions of a specifically catechetical character (catechumenate teams, parish catechetical committees and training teams and so on).

- To improve personnel and material resources at diocesan level as well as at parish and deanery levels;
- To collaborate with Liturgical Commission given the relevance of Liturgy for catechesis, especially for catechumenal and initiatory catechesis.
- To cooperate with other commissions in other Dioceses of SACBC.

3/ Membership of Diocesan Catechetical Commission

- Bishop as the chief catechist in the diocese
- The priest as the chaplain, appointed by the bishop
- Diocesan co-ordinator, appointed by the bishop
- The Diocesan Training Team
- Member of the DPC
- The deanery catechetical coordinators
- Member of Liturgical Commission
- Member of the Marriage and Family Desk
- Member of Youth Commission
- Others according to the needs.

24th November 2014

Bishop Stanislaw Dziuba, OSPPE