The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization today released the NEW General Directory for Catechesis. Please read the following Intervention by Bishop Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst. As you may recall, Bishop Tebartz-van Elst visited the Diocese not long ago and prepared us for this wonderful document. We have prepared for this day in many ways during the past few years, and certainly our last few months have set us on a determined course that will implement much of what the Holy Father Pope Francis asks of us regarding evangelization and catechesis. We are so blessed to have this as a confirmation of the work we have begun here in the Diocese of Brooklyn.

**Intervention by Bishop Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst**

It seems to me that there are seven points on which we need to reflect.

1. The new Directory is very attentive to the signs of the times and tries to interpret them in the light of the Gospel - as the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et spes*, says. Indeed, these are the main challenges of a digital culture, the context of the transmission of faith in the family in its intergenerational composition. In addition, the new Directory pays great attention to all issues related to the ecological crisis and, as far as catechesis is concerned, refers to the Papal Encyclical *Laudato si’*. In this consideration of the signs of the times, the Directory that does not take a unilateral and undifferentiated position, but rather helps to consider opportunities and limits in an appropriate way. This reflection creates the motivation to act appropriately in a corresponding field of catechetical learning.

2. In this context, the new Directory for Catechesis gives more courage to the content of faith. Based on the Apostolic Letter of Pope Francis *Evangelii gaudium*, the *kerygma* is therefore not understood in the strict sense of the word as a faith summarized in certain sentences, but as a witness that gives rise to new witnesses.

3. With reference to the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* of the year 1975, and largely inspired by the document *Evangelii gaudium*, the new Directory underlines the importance of catechesis as an indispensable part of a wider process of evangelisation. Also in this sense the current Directory represents continuity and innovation at the same time. Emphasizing the specific responsibilities for catechesis - from the bishop as first catechist of his diocese, to
grandparents - catechesis cannot be delegated but is the most intimate essence of all forms and ways of preaching the faith.

4. Like the previous Directory of the year 1997, the present document guides the process of any catechesis based on the catechumenate as an original way of Christian initiation. Especially under the current challenges of a missionary pastoral ministry, the catechumenate is becoming a paradigm in content and structure for teaching and internalizing the faith personally. This is how the possession of a Christian and ecclesial identity grows.

5. Beginning with the Apostolic Letter Amoris laetitia, the new Directory also promotes the development of a marriage-catechumenate, in this sense in analogy to the process of initiation, to emphasize the preparatory phase of marriage in its catechetical meaning.

6. More than the previous Directories of 1971 and 1997, the current document underlines a central idea of the Apostolic Letter Evangelii gaudium. In the latter Pope Francis expressly speaks of the importance of the via pulchritudinis as a central starting point for evangelization in the postmodern era. This outlines the understanding that beauty should not be misunderstood as aestheticism, but rather - in accordance with the teachings of Pope Benedict XVI - that truth is beautiful and beauty is true.

7. The great expectation of the new Directory for Catechesis - especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries and in Southern and Eastern Europe, in the United States and North and South America, in Africa and Asia - shows that catechesis needs the exchange of Churches in the world. The great commitment of many local Churches in the development of their diocesan directorates for catechesis will acquire new inspiration and motivation from the new document.

This is my experience derived from the many conferences on catechesis that I have been able to attend in recent years in the various local Churches, and from the considerations that many people have expressed to me, together with their great expectation and joy for the new document.

Thank you for all you do and for your collaboration especially during these past several “stay at home” months.

It has been a pleasure and honor to serve with you during these past fifteen years. May God continue to bless you and move the Diocese of Brooklyn forward. I hope to see you again soon.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in you.

Sincerely yours,

Ted
Theodore Musco, Secretary
Evangelization and Catechesis
Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn
310 Prospect Park West
Brooklyn, New York 11215
Office telephone: 718-281-9544
Pope Francis' Prayer to Virgin Mary for Protection

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.
Forming missionary disciples is our priority.

Goal:
A parish plan that provides for the continuity of religious education and formation and addresses all areas of evangelization and catechesis, in any situation, is essential to forming and enriching missionary disciples.
Concern for all areas of parish life....

- What will your parish life look like after these pandemic days?
- Are Confirmation candidates being challenged and supported while they wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit? No decisions have been made yet regarding the Sacraments.
- What will your parish life look like after these pandemic days?
- Have the RCIA elect and candidates encountered Christ and been accompanied during these challenging days of uncertainty?
- Have the RCIA elect and candidates encountered Christ and been accompanied during these challenging days of uncertainty?
- Have those preparing for marriage been supported and honored?
- What about young adults? Have we provided anything for them? Families with young children? Families awaiting children? Young married couple without children?
- What about the families of babies waiting to be baptized and those children waiting to receive their first Sacraments?
- And the small faith sharing groups? Are they still connected? RENEW has plenty of resources at [https://new.renewintl.org/](https://new.renewintl.org/)  
  RENEW events [https://new.renewintl.org/events](https://new.renewintl.org/events)

Family Initiatives

**Family Initiatives**
- Strong Catholic Families
  - Diocesan Family Initiative

**Sacramental Preparation**
- Diocesan Sacramental Guidelines

**Sacramental Proximate Preparation**
- Proximate Preparation Sessions
- Workshops

**Baptismal Preparation**
- Parish programs
- Baptism Matters

**Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation**
- FOCCUS Marriage Inventory

**Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and RCIA Adapted for Children**
- Diocesan Handbook
- Various resources
Parish Evangelization

Parish Evangelization
- Dynamic Catholic’s Dynamic Parish
- RENEW’S Be My Witness!
- RENEW’S ARISE/LEVANTATE
- RENEW’S Why Catholic?
- Paulist Evangelization Ministry’s
- Living the Eucharist

Growing Communities of Faith—
- Increasing Enrollment in Parish Programs of Religious Education Diocesan Plan

Parish Resources
- Handbook for Pastors: Selecting and Supporting a Catechetical Leader
- Administrative Policies
- Suggested Salary Guidelines for Catechetical Leaders
- Grant Programs

Baptismal Preparation
- Parish programs
- Baptism Matters

Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation
- FOCCUS Marriage Inventory

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults and RCIA Adapted for Children
- Diocesan Handbook
- Diocesan website

Education/Formation

Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership
- Haitian, Spanish, English and Chinese Institutes
- Holy Spirit Institute Participant Handbook
- Holy Spirit Institute Fact Sheet

Living and Leading by Faith Catechist and Catechetical Leader Formation
- Catholic Distance University
- My Catholic Faith Delivered
- The Catechetical Leader in the Third Millennium

Catholic Youth and Young Adult Outreach
- Catholic Youth Ministry Initiative
- So Be Bold!

Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

Parish Programs of Religious Education—Kindergarten to Grade 12
- Safe Environment Guidelines
- The Seed is the Word of God Curriculum Guidelines
- USCCB approved e-book series
- The Changing Face of Catechesis—Approved Models of Religious Education Programs
- Child Lures
- Family Life Program
- Magis Center Credible Catholic Initiative
- Religious Education Assessment
- Special Needs Religious Education
- Annual Diocesan Religion Bee
- DeSales Media Group
- Catechesis of the Good Shepherd
Available for your use...

- Secretariat for Evangelization and Catechesis Calendar for 2020-2021 to be adapted for parish use.
- Registration link provided by Give Central.
- Training and program information available on publisher web sites.
- Current and archived resources available at https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/religious-education-resources/
- Updated general program information is found at https://www.bqonlineformation.org/
- Fact Sheets for the Holy Spirit Institute for Service and Leadership, the Living and Leading by Faith Catechetical Leader and Catechist Formation Program, Marriage Enrichment and Pre-Cana.

SO BE BOLD. CHRIST’S LOVE ABOUNDS!
A Preliminary Plan for Religious Education in a New Time

This plan is divided into five phases according to indicated timeline:

PHASE ONE: Digital   Began May 6 (in process)
PHASE TWO: Administrative   Began June 10
PHASE THREE: Training and Development   Begins June 24
PHASE FOUR: Implementation   Begins mid-September
PHASE FIVE: Accompaniment and Assessment   Ongoing

Great strides have been made since March 17, 2020 thanks to your collaboration.
BLENDED LEARNING

for Religious Education

Blended learning is a term used to describe the combined use of both traditional face-to-face and online learning experiences. Blended learning has become a model that is succeeding and enhancing teaching and learning experiences in academic settings. Blended learning offers enhancement and personalization, as well as an “anytime, anywhere” approach to learning by putting modern educational technology to use in combination with traditional teacher-led instruction. The “blend” in blended learning happens in varying degrees and in multiple models; there is no one way or right way to do blended learning. The same benefits and flexibility of a blended approach in traditional academic settings apply to catechetical efforts as well.

- Allie Johnston

Method 1: Modeled for Blended Religious Education using an Approved Communication Method with Online Platform

1. The catechist checks in on the student and family. The catechist introduces the lesson using an approved communication method (Teams, GotoMeeting, Google Meets, etc.).

2. At home, students study the lesson and submits assignments on the online platform by a due date.

3. Catechist reviews & supports student post lesson. Catechist introduces the next lesson and repeats the process.
Method 2: Blended Religious Education Using Approved Communication Method Without Online Platform

1. Before the catechetical year begins, DRE/Catechists must provide schedule breaking down each lesson for each meeting.

2. The catechist checks in on the student and family. The catechist introduces the lesson using an approved communication method (Teams, GotoMeeting, Google Meets, etc.).

3. At home, students accesses lesson using their E-Book and submits assignments to the catechists by a due date.

4. Catechist reviews & supports student post lesson. Catechists introduces the next lesson on the schedule and repeats the process.

The Expanded Role of the Catechist

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The expanded role of the catechist includes being:

- a missionary disciple
- a joyful evangelizer
- a collaborator with parents/guardians
- an example of holiness
- a well-trained teacher
- a person of holiness
- capable of generosity and sacrifice
- open to new ways of transmitting the Faith
- a seeker of love not judgement

Adapted from Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis
**MANDATORY**

**Proximate Preparation for the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation**

**VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

For eighth years now, proximate preparation has played a vital role in preparing young people to receive the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation. The goal of proximate preparation is to invite the entire family of a student preparing to receive the Sacrament of Penance, Eucharist or Confirmation to active participation in the Mass, a small faith sharing group activity and community building activities. The outlines for 4 to 6 sessions of proximate preparation follow:

- For sample sessions that can be adapted for use if not used in gathered sessions, go to the Parish Leader Information at [https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/religious-education-resources/](https://dioceseofbrooklyn.org/get-involved/religious-education-resources/)

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**Letter for Parents regarding Sacrament preparation**

**VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Prepare a letter on parish letterhead that states the following:

1. Name of student
2. Name of family
3. Sacramental preparation period
4. Sacrament(s) prepared for by candidate
5. Specific requirements fulfilled (be specific)
6. Name of pastor/administrator
7. Name of DRE
8. DRE Contact information (include telephone number and email address)
9. Include any other pertinent information
PHASE 2:
ADMINISTRATIVE Checklist

2. Participate in training sessions provided by various partners.
3. Adapt Secretariat calendar to parish calendar.
4. Schedule class sessions based on parent availability.
   Length of weekly session—90 minutes.
   At least 45 hours per year.
5. Prepare for gathered-setting locations and policies.
6. Prepare for safe environment and health guideline enforcement.
7. Create new parent handbook.
8. Keep attendance rosters and other forms current.
9. Adhere to all Safe Environment and Diocesan guidelines.
10. Communicate with all constituents.
11. Review Fact Sheets and other important documents.
12. Begin registration process by end of this month.
13. Meet when needed with your Secretariat Advisor.
14. Consider all aspect of parish life.

PHASE 3:
TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT Checklist

1. Consult your preferred publisher for training information.
2. Attend the scheduled training sessions.
3. Announce training sessions for catechists and aides and be certain they attend.
4. Discuss training materials with the catechists and aides.
5. Meet on a regular basis with your catechists to be sure they are informed and confident.
6. Follow the advice of your publisher.
7. Contact the publisher of you have any questions.
8. Make this a learning experience for all.
9. Pray often and reflect on your progress.

VERY IMPORTANT INFORMATION
In union with Jesus, we seek what he seeks and we love what he loves. In the end, what we are seeking is the glory of the Father; we live and act “for the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:6). If we wish to commit ourselves fully and perseveringly, we need to leave behind every other motivation. This is our definitive, deepest and greatest motivation, the ultimate reason and meaning behind all we do: the glory of the Father which Jesus sought at every moment of his life. As the Son, he rejoices eternally to be “close to the Father’s heart” (Jn 1:18). If we are missionaries, it is primarily because Jesus told us that “by this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit” (Jn 15:8). Beyond all our own preferences and interests, our knowledge and motivations, we evangelize for the greater glory of the Father who loves us.

_Evangelii Gaudium_, Pope Francis

**Next Meeting:**

Look for notice coming to you soon in Outlook.