

# The Directory for Catechesis

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INSIGHTS FROM  
THE CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Pontifical Council for the  
Promotion of the New Evangelization

## DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS





# Feast of St. Agatha, Woman of Valor

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A Reading: 1 Cor 1:26-31

Let us pray, O Heavenly Father, who raised Agatha to the dignity of Sainthood, we implore Your Divine Majesty by her intercession to give us health of mind, body and soul. Free us from all those things which hold us bound to this earth, and let our spirit, like hers, rise to your heavenly courts. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You, forever. **Amen.**

With Saint Agatha we pray: "**Jesus Christ, Lord of all, you see my heart, you know my desires. Possess all that I am. I am your sheep...**"

Saint Agatha, eloquent witness of Jesus Christ as Savior, **pray for us.** Saint Agatha, **pray for us.**



Saint Agatha by David Bruce Spence

# Overview and important connections between DC and CGS



The centrality of Kerygma DC 57, 58



Mystagogy DC 63,64,98.



The Necessity of beauty DC 108, 109



The Deschooling of Catechesis DC 331



The Catechumenate Model for proper catechesis DC 61-77



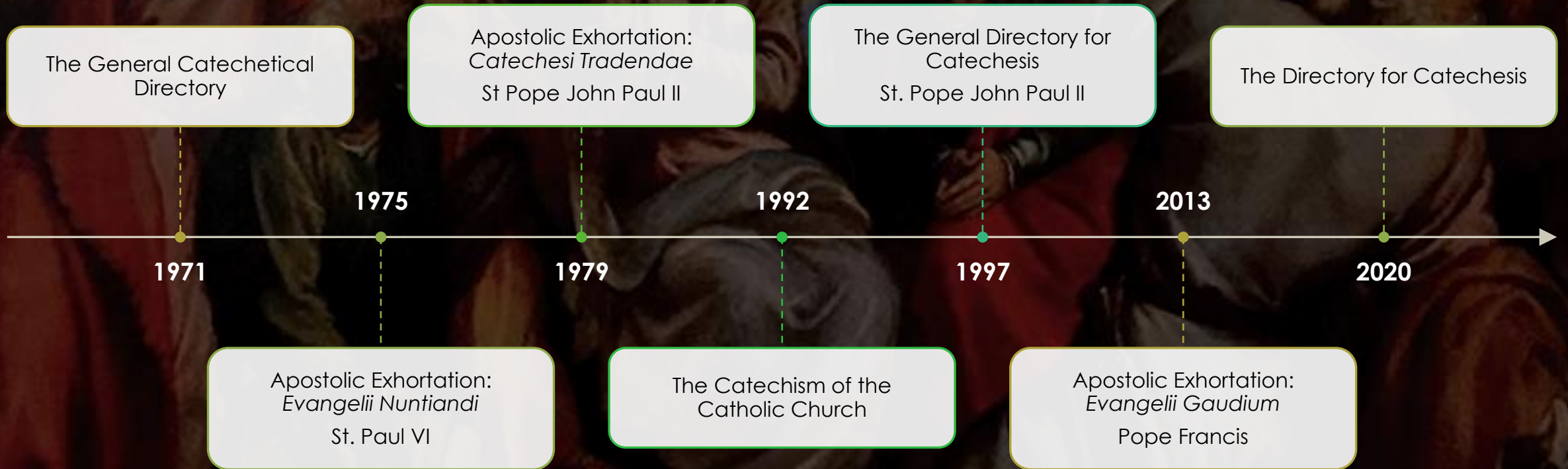
The Importance of the Environment DC 218, 221, 222



The Person and Formation of the Catechist DC 113



# The History



# The History

[W]e have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or *kerygma*, which needs to be the center of all evangelizing activity. . . . On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” This first proclamation is called “first” not because it exists at the beginning and can then be forgotten or replaced by other more important things. It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment (*Evangelii Gaudium* 164).

# The Goal of Catechesis

DC: 75: “The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch with but in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ.” (CT)

*CGS: Characteristic #1 “The child, particularly the religious life of the child, is central to the interest and commitment of the catechist of the Good Shepherd.”*

# The Identity of Catechesis

DC 57: [The Church today needs “a catechesis that in a consistent way can be called “kerygmatic,” meaning a catechesis that is an ‘entering more deeply into the kerygma.’”

DC 58: The kerygma . . . is simultaneously an act of proclamation and the content of the proclamation itself, which unveils the Gospel and makes it present. In the kerygma, the active figure is the Lord Jesus.

*CGS: “[T]he adult should proclaim God, who reveals God’s love through Christ; the adult should give the ‘kerygma.’ . . . [T]he proclamation should constantly vivify every discussion . . . to avoid the danger of falling into an arid and conceptualized transmission of religious truths.” (RPC 20)*

# The Identity of Catechesis

DC 65: Catechesis in a kerygmatic and missionary vein requires a pedagogy of initiation inspired by the catechumenal journey...

DC 64: The essential elements of the catechumenate are: the Paschal character; the initiatory character; the liturgical, ritual, and symbolic character; the community character; the character of ongoing formation and witness; and the progressive character of the formative experience.

*CGS: "When dealing with children we would in fact have to speak more of a proclamation and evangelization than of catechesis; this is the time of the child's first impact with God's Word, and its presentation should have all of the characteristics proper to the kerygma."  
(RPC 20)*



# The Sources of Catechesis

## Our Two Pillars

DC: ¶190: “The sources which catechesis draws upon are to be considered as being interrelated: one points to the other, while all can be traced back to the word of God, of which they are an expression.”

*CGS: #5. The themes presented in the atrium are those to which the children have responded with depth and joy. These themes are taken from the Bible and the liturgy (prayers and sacraments) as the fundamental sources for creating and sustaining Christian life at every developmental stage and, in particular, for illuminating and nourishing the child in his/her most vital religious needs.*

# The Sources of Catechesis

## The Word of God

DC: ¶91: “Catechesis draws its message from the Word of God, which is its main source. Sacred Scripture, which God has inspired, reaches the depths of the human spirit better than any other word.”

*#6. The Word is proclaimed in the most objective manner possible, so that the words of the adult do not impede the communication between God who speaks and God's creature who listens. The only aim of the words of the adult is to discreetly serve the listening to God's Word, in accordance with Jesus' own statement in the Gospel: “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me” (John 7:16).*

# The Sources of Catechesis

## The Liturgy

DC 95: Liturgy and catechesis are both “oriented toward bringing to life the experience of God’s love.”

DC 96: The liturgy is the “privileged place for catechizing the People of God”... Retains its celebratory character. Catechesis reaches its true fulfillment when the one being catechized takes part in the liturgical life of the community.

*CGS: Characteristic #3 The atrium is a place in which the only Teacher is Christ; both children and adults place themselves in a listening stance before his Word and seek to penetrate the mystery of the liturgical celebration.*

# The Process of Catechesis

DC: ¶163: Catechesis is called to let itself be inspired and enlivened by the Spirit of God and, with his grace, to shape the life of faith of every believer.

CGS: *Characteristic #3 "The atrium is a place of prayer, in which work and study spontaneously become meditation, contemplation and prayer."*



# The Process of Catechesis

DC 219: The group is important in personal formation processes... The catechist is called to awaken within the group the experience of community as the most coherent expression of the Church's life. . . . If it is an authentic place for relationships among people, the experience of the group is fertile soil for welcoming and sharing the message of salvation. Alongside the proclamation of the Gospel in community form, the communication of the faith also requires person-to-person contact.

*CGS: Characteristic #3 "The atrium is a community in which children and adults live together a religious experience which facilitates participation in the wider community of the family, the church and other social spheres."*

# The Environment of Catechesis

DC 222: It is appropriate to reflect on the specificity of the places of catechesis as instruments of proclamation and of education in human relationships. It is therefore necessary that such environments be welcoming and well-kept. . . The very widespread environments that are patterned after school building do not constitute the best places for the unfolding of catechetical activities. It would therefore be good to proceed with an adaptation of these spaces to the actual meaning of catechesis.

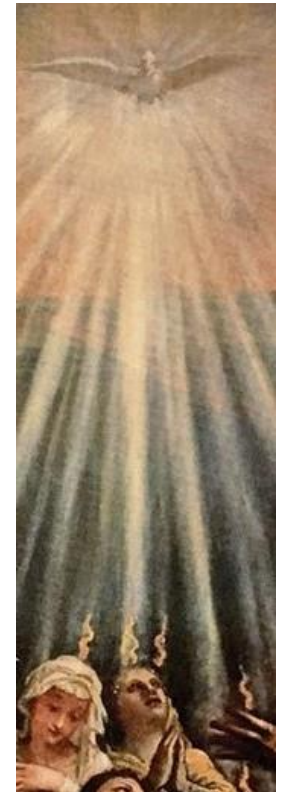
*CGS: Characteristic #3 The atrium is a place in which the only Teacher is Christ; both children and adults place themselves in a listening stance before his Word and seek to penetrate the mystery of the liturgical celebration.*

# The Catechist

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The Preface of the DC: "Catechesis is not a "job" or a task that is external to the person who is a catechist; because one "is" a catechist and all of life revolves around this mission. In fact, being a catechist is a vocation of service to the Church; what was received as a gift from the Lord should be transmitted in turn. Thus, catechists must constantly return to that first announcement of kerygma which is the gift that changed their life. It is the fundamental proclamation that must continuously resound in the life of Christians, even more so in those who are called to proclaim and teach the faith ."

*CGS: The task of the catechist is to initiate into religious reality, that is to say, (1) to point to the reality that we are surrounded by the presence of a Person, of a Love, because from this knowledge is born (2) a personal relationship with God...the catechist must remember that she is "a useless servant" and thus, in performing her service, seek to occupy as small a role as possible, taking care not to interject herself into the "internal conversation" that needs to arise between the only Teacher and the disciple. Sofia Cavalletti The Objectivity of Catechesis*



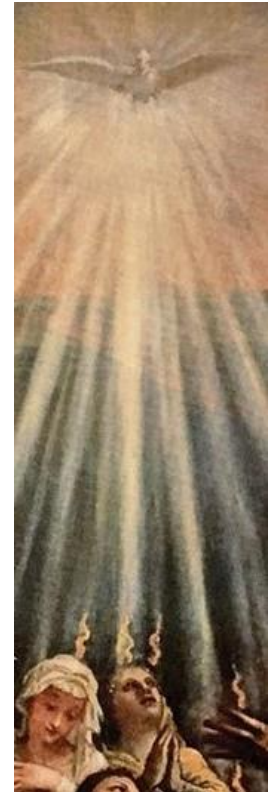
# The Catechist

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DC 112: ...The true protagonist of all authentic catechesis is however the Holy Spirit, who by means of the profound union with Jesus Christ which is nurtured by every catechist, gives efficacy to the human efforts in catechetical activity...

DC 113: By virtue of faith and baptismal anointing, in collaboration with the Magisterium of Christ and **as servant of the action of the Holy Spirit** the Catechist is:

- ❖ ***A witness of faith and keeper of the memory of God***
- ❖ ***A teacher and mystagogue***
- ❖ ***And accompanier and educator***





# Resources

The Directory for Catechesis: <https://www.usccb.org/resources/directory-catechesis-new-edition>

Summer Foglietto 2020: [https://www.cgsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Foglietto-Summer-2020\\_FN.pdf](https://www.cgsusa.org/wp-content/uploads/Foglietto-Summer-2020_FN.pdf)

Evangelizers in the Spirit: the Call and Formation of Catechists by Mary Mirrione:  
<https://www.usccb.org/news/2021/evangelizers-spirit-call-and-formation-catechists>

Forthcoming article in the July/August 2021 issue of Pastoral Liturgy by Barbara Matera

Announcement of the new Directory for Catechesis by the Pontifical Council Promoting New Evangelization:  
<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/06/25/200625c.html?fbclid=IwAR0rqA-S128aO-RSnMuybjvBI-vbNBZ0xSUNCgZ3fANfoSQ-BEm5VDnO7xc>

USCCB Video Series: <https://www.usccb.org/resources/directory-catechesis-new-edition>