

Southwest Liturgical Conference 2013

Inspired Catechesis: A Method and Model

Jerry Galipeau, D. Min.
Vice President & Chief Publishing Officer
World Library Publications
J. S. Paluch Company

Inspired Catechesis: A Method and Model

- This workshop will examine the four-fold dimension of catechesis and Christian formation articulated in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*. We will discuss ways that this model can be used for a whole-parish approach to catechesis.

Our Time Together

1. Introduction
2. Fundamental Principles of the *RCIA*
3. The Apprenticeship Model
4. A Portrait of the Initiating Parish
5. Practical Applications

1. Introduction

Catechumenate as Inspiration

- “Being initiatory, [initiatory catechesis] incorporates into the community, which lives, celebrates and bears witness to the faith . . . This inherent richness in the Catechumenate of non-baptized adults should serve to inspire other forms of catechesis.”
(General Directory for Catechesis 68)

Fundamental Characteristics of Initiatory Catechesis *(GDC 67)*

- A comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith
- An apprenticeship in the entire Christian life
- A basic formation centered on what constitutes the nucleus of Christian experience

The Aim of Catechetical Activity

The aim of catechetical activity consists precisely in this: to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith.
(General Directory for Catechesis 66)

The Church's Challenge to Us

It is necessary, however, to examine with particular attention some problems so as to identify their solutions:

- the first concerns the conception of catechesis as a school of faith, an initiation and apprenticeship in the entire Christian life of which catechists do not yet have a full understanding. *(GDC 30)*

Catechumenate (*RCIA 75*)

- Pastoral formation and guidance; training in the Christian life. This is achieved in four ways:
 - 1. Catechesis (Word & Tradition)
 - 2. Formation In and By the Community
 - 3. Liturgical Formation
 - 4. Formation in the Apostolic Life

2. Fundamental Principles of the *RCIA*

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Foundational Principles

- Initiation is not a mere expounding of doctrines and precepts but is an apprenticeship into the Christian way of life (*Ad Gentes 14*)
- Initiation is the responsibility of all the baptized and takes place within the community (*RCIA 4, 9*)
- Initiation is all about evangelization and subsequent conversion and bears a paschal character (*RCIA 8*)
- The rite is suited to the spiritual journey (*RCIA 5*)
- Sacraments of initiation enable us to carry out the mission of the people of God in the Church and in the world (*RCIA General Introduction 2*)

3. The Apprenticeship Model

Vision (*Vatican II Ad Gentes 14*)

- “The catechumenate is not a mere exposition of dogmatic truths and norms of morality, but a period of formation in the whole Christian life, an apprenticeship of sufficient duration, during which the disciples will be joined to Christ their teacher.”

Vision (*Vatican II Ad Gentes 14*)

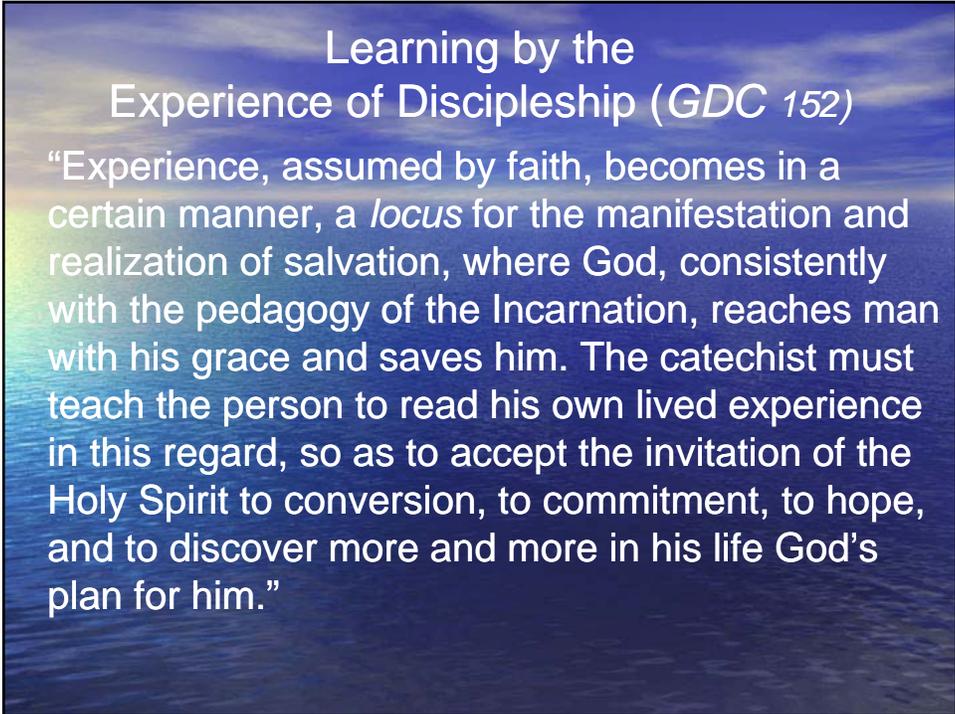
“The catechumens should be properly initiated into the mystery of salvation and the practice of the evangelical virtues, and they should be introduced into the life of faith, liturgy and charity of the People of God by successive sacred rites.”



Learning by the Experience of Discipleship

GDC 152

“Experience promotes the intelligibility of the Christian message...experience is a necessary medium for exploring and assimilating the truths which constitute the objective content of Revelation.”



Learning by the Experience of Discipleship (*GDC 152*)

“Experience, assumed by faith, becomes in a certain manner, a *locus* for the manifestation and realization of salvation, where God, consistently with the pedagogy of the Incarnation, reaches man with his grace and saves him. The catechist must teach the person to read his own lived experience in this regard, so as to accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to conversion, to commitment, to hope, and to discover more and more in his life God’s plan for him.”

Apprentice

(Merriam-Webster's Dictionary)

One who is learning by practical experience under skilled workers a trade, art, or calling

Apprenticeship is the key



In a “Hole”



4. A Portrait of the Initiating Parish

Catechumenate: Training in the Christian Life (*RCIA 75*)

THE FOUR PILLARS OF CHRISTIAN FORMATION

- Catechetical Formation: Word & Tradition
- Formation as the Christian Community
- Formation in Liturgical Prayer
- Formation in Apostolic Life

The Parish (*GDC 257-258*)

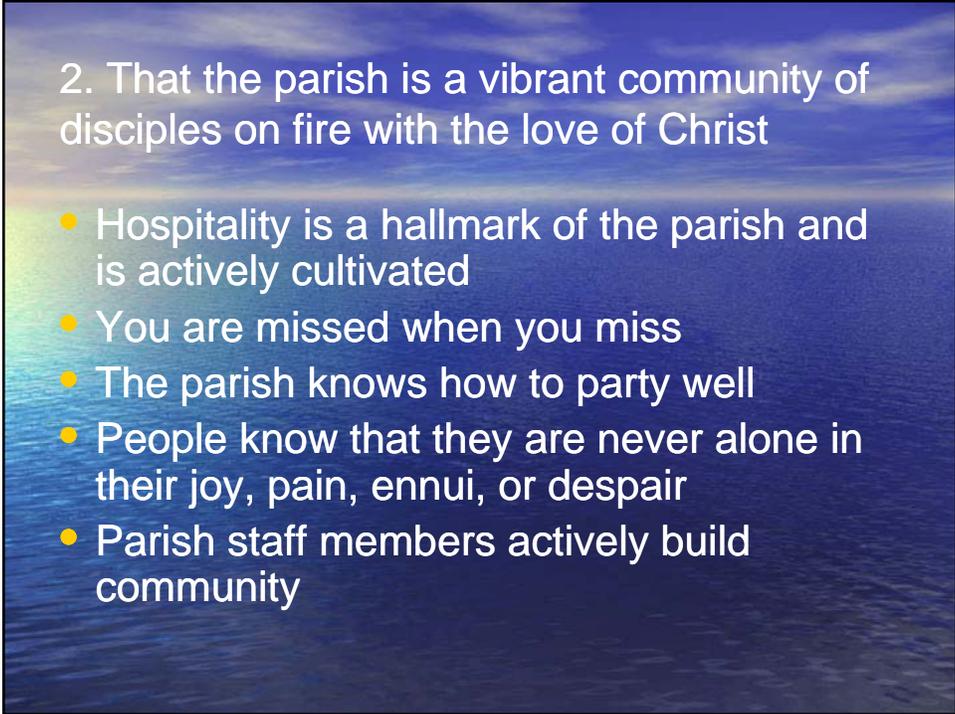
- The parish is, without doubt, the most important *locus* in which Christian community is formed and expressed.
- The parish is also the usual place in which faith is born and in which it grows.
- It constitutes, therefore, a very adequate community space for the realization of the ministry of the word at once as teaching, education and life experience.

The RCIA's Vision of Parish

1. That the parish treasures and proclaims the sacred Word and the Tradition of the Church
2. That the parish is a vibrant community of disciples on fire with the love of Christ
3. That the parish is a place where people pray in all kinds of ways
4. That the parish is a place where apostolic activity flourishes

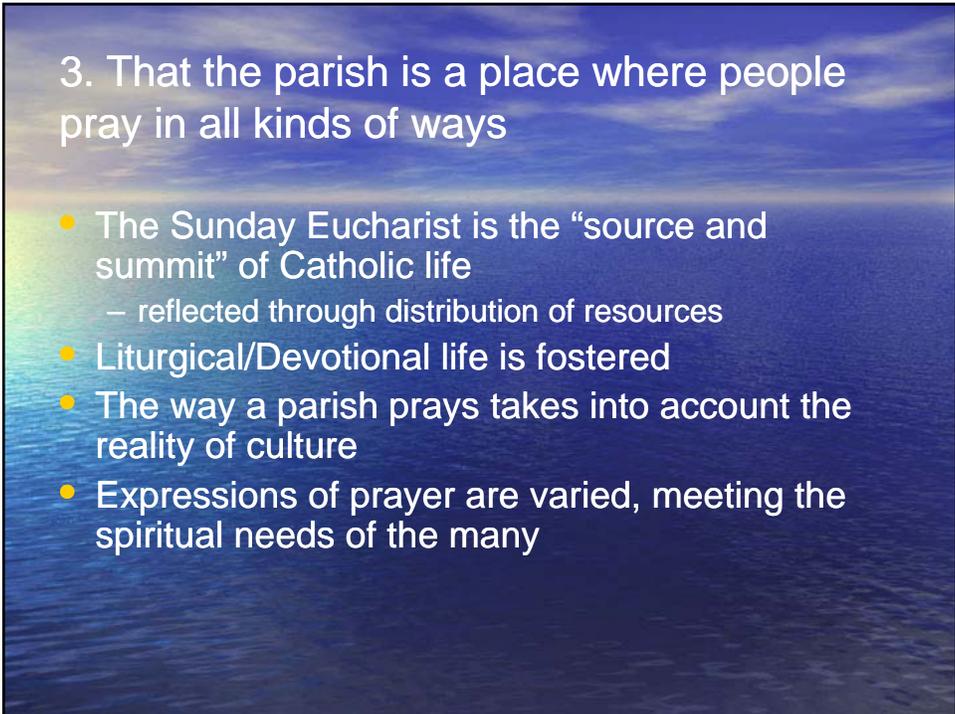
1. That the parish treasures and proclaims the sacred Word and the Tradition of the Church

- Sunday proclamation of the word and preaching are the finest they can be
- Parish groups gather around the word of God all the time
- The handing on of the Tradition embraces a myriad of methods and models (traditional, intergenerational, mystagogical, liturgical)



2. That the parish is a vibrant community of disciples on fire with the love of Christ

- Hospitality is a hallmark of the parish and is actively cultivated
- You are missed when you miss
- The parish knows how to party well
- People know that they are never alone in their joy, pain, ennui, or despair
- Parish staff members actively build community



3. That the parish is a place where people pray in all kinds of ways

- The Sunday Eucharist is the “source and summit” of Catholic life
 - reflected through distribution of resources
- Liturgical/Devotional life is fostered
- The way a parish prays takes into account the reality of culture
- Expressions of prayer are varied, meeting the spiritual needs of the many

4. That the parish is a place where apostolic activity flourishes

- Developing the understanding that the parish exists in order to evangelize
- Commitment to serve the poor and marginalized in concrete ways
- Direct connections made (preaching, teaching, bulletin and on-line communications) between Sunday Eucharist and the work of charity and justice
- Helping parishioners explicitly name that much of what is already going on (at home, school, work) *is* apostolic

5. Practical Applications

Learning by Apprenticeship

National Directory for Catechesis (USCCB 2005) #29H

“Learning by apprenticeship is also an important human element in catechetical methodology. It links an experienced Christian believer, or mentor, with one who seeks a deeper relationship with Christ and the Church. The relationship that normally grows between a catechist and a catechumen provides a workable model of learning by apprenticeship.”

Learning by Apprenticeship

National Directory for Catechesis (USCCB 2005) #29H

- “It is a guided encounter with the entire Christian life, a journey toward conversion to Christ.”
- “It is a school for discipleship that promotes an authentic following of Christ based on:
 - the acceptance of one’s baptismal responsibilities
 - the internalization of the word of God
 - the transforming of the whole person to ‘life in Christ.’”

Living the Christian Life

National Directory for Catechesis (USCCB 2005)

- The active participation of all the catechized in their Christian formation fosters learning by doing.
- ...through praying; celebrating the sacraments and the Liturgy; living the Christian life; fostering works of charity and works of justice; promoting virtues from the natural law (liberty, solidarity, justice, peace, and the protection of the created order).

Catechumenate: training in the Christian life *(RCIA 75)*

- Suitable catechesis: Word & Tradition
- Formation as the Christian Community
- Formation in Prayer
- Formation in Apostolic Life

Suitable Catechesis: Word & Tradition

- This is the one element of the four pillars of Christian formation of which we are most familiar, comfortable, and the best at accomplishing.

Formation as the Christian Community

- “Shepherds don’t make sheep; sheep make sheep!”
- Finding ways to allow persons in Christian formation to be formed into the Christian community by the Christian community itself
- What is happening in the parish community? How do we connect those in formation with these activities?

Formation as the Christian Community



Formation in Prayer

- In addition to teaching those in formation about the ways of prayer, involve them in the ways that the people in the parish actually pray

Formation in Prayer



Formation in Apostolic Life

- Connecting those in formation with apostolic activities
- Find out what the parish does to serve the needy

Formation in Apostolic Life



Two Stories to Conclude

Sister Della William and a Bus
Full of Third-graders



Sister Della William and a Bus
Full of Third-graders



Sister Della William and a Bus Full of Third-graders

“Boys and girls, what we did today at the Francis Street Nursing Home is what Catholics do.”

Conversion at the Core

