

⊕ The Ecclesial Method ⊕

There exist some “ecclesial principles for methodology that clearly emerge from a careful reading and comparison of the basic documents of the Church on Catechesis” (127).

These principles are beautifully outlined in Msgr Francis D. Kelly’s book *The Mystery we Proclaim* and are reproduced here in summary.

- An Ecclesial Approach to Catechetical Methodology -

1) Preparation: “Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths” Luke 3:4

Creating the conditions for the possibility of a deepening of God’s word in the hearts of those being served. The catechist should become open, docile, and receptive to the absolute truth of God’s word. In a practical way they should create strategies so that this Word can be communicated to & encountered by the participants. Creating a physical environment that communicates that something different than just learning is taking place. Creating an environment for an encounter not just for learning.

2) Proclamation: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News” Mark 16:15

Primacy in catechetical methodology, therefore, must be given to the faithful and effective announcement of God’s word in the scripture and in the Church’s living tradition enunciated by its Magisterium (LG25). The catechist must be aware that ultimately the truths being taught are from God and what they proclaim is “Good News”. Hebrews 4:12 tells us “the word of God is living and effective” and the task of proclamation must allow this Word to fulfill its task as described.

3) Explanation: “Always be ready to give an explanation” 1 Peter 3:15

Through the proclamation the catechist becomes a channel and instrument of something much greater than themselves. The next step involves the personal talents and creativity of the catechist to help participants come to a deeper personal understanding and assimilation of the message of faith. This explanation is made always in the light of the Church’s understanding of the Word, but the catechist is challenged to find appropriate ways to inculturate this message to be received by diverse groups.

4) Application: “And you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth” Acts 1:8

In Catechesis Tradendae, John Paul II tell us “firm and well-thought-out convictions lead to courageous and upright action” (para 22). The result of catechesis should be a life of witness and service. The truth and knowledge acquired should bear fruit and lead to an ever deepening conversion in the person being catechized and a commitment to expressing this conversion in their lifestyle. This witness is what Paul VI calls for in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* “modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers” (para 41).

5) Celebration: “In all circumstances give thanks” 1 Thessalonians 5:18

If the catechetical process begins with prayerful attentiveness and openness to God’s Word, than it follows that it should end with prayerful gratitude and praise to God. The Eucharist, the source and summit of Christian life, at its core it is “thanksgiving”. This attitude so perfectly demonstrated through the Mass can be a guide for creating effective ways to execute this 5th step in an inspiring way. Using God’s word, praying, responding, & reflecting, can all be effective ways to celebrate that which we have received. Immersing the catechetical process in prayer helps us grow in relationship with God & can also model a structure for the participants own prayer life.



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