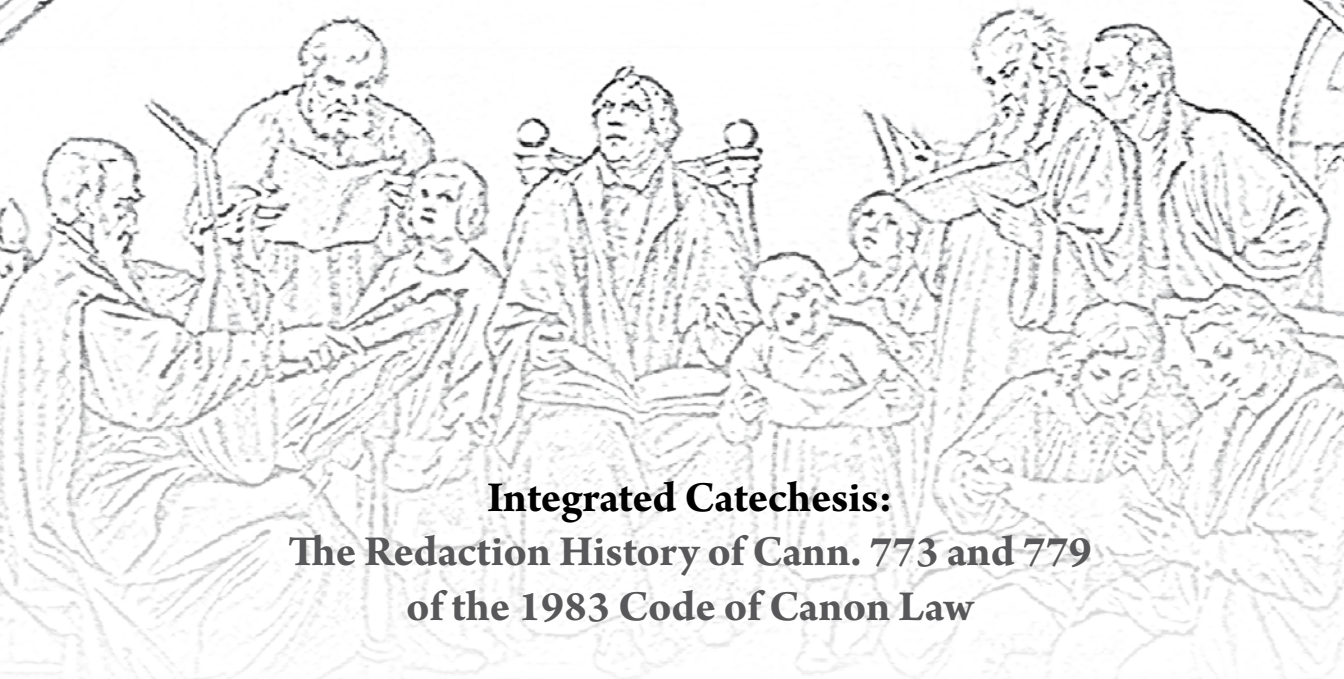




Integrated Catechesis: The Redaction History of Cann. 773 and 779 of the 1983 Code of Canon Law

Enrico C. Eusebio, Jr., S.J., JCD

Current universal law affirms the central role of catechesis in integrating one's Catholic Christian faith and daily life. Its core objective is formulated as *ut fidelium fides [...] viva fiat explicita atque operosa* (can. 773), i.e., a living, explicit and active faith, one that is more fully steeped in Catholic teaching and put into practice (can. 779). In order to achieve its goal, the law proposes a single but two-pronged means of catechetical formation: *per doctrinae institutionem et vitae christianae experientiam* (can. 773), a holistic formation in the foundations of doctrine and in the experience of Christian life.

This essay studies the catechetical canons' redaction histories from their origin, if any, in *CIC/17*, and as they evolved in the Schema of 1977, 1980 and 1982, and finally as *CIC/83* canons. Indispensable in this research are the Code revision proceedings of the *Pontificia Commissio Codici Iuris Canonici Recognoscendo* which were published in *Communicationes* from 1969-1997. In tracing the catechetical canons' redaction history, this essay hopes to show that by proposing the object and means of the Church's catechesis in cann. 773 and 779, the supreme legislator wants to steer the universal Church into a kind of catechetical formation in which the doctrinal, moral and liturgical teachings of the Church have a bearing and influence on, and not detached or split from, the daily secular life of the Christian.

Keywords: *catechesis, catechisms, Catechesi tradendae, doctrine, experience, Christian life, Christian community, social communications*

1. The work of the *Coetus studiorum De munere docendi*¹

On 25 January 1959, Pope John XXIII announced the convocation of the Second Vatican Council and declared at the same time his desire to revise the Code of Canon Law of 1917. At the initial plenary session of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law in November 1963, the group wisely decided to suspend its work until the completion of the sessions of Vatican II. It was important for the canonical revision process to await the documents expressing the Council's pastoral teaching because "canonical *aggiornamento* depended essentially on the framework of the pastoral *aggiornamento*"² of Vatican II. As Pope Paul VI said during the inauguration of the work of the Commission on 20 November 1965:

Now, with changing conditions [...], canon law must be prudently reformed. Specifically, it must be accommodated to a new way of thinking proper to the Second Vatican Council, in which pastoral care and new needs of the People of God are met.³

Various working groups were given the task of revising the texts assigned to them. The group that studied the canons on the teaching office of the Church was the *Coetus studii De magisterio ecclesiastico*, whose name was later changed to *Coetus studiorum De munere docendi*. The group reviewed and revised cann. 1322-1408 that corresponded to Book III, Part IV of CIC/17. The material specifically concerning catechetical instruction was discussed by the group in the following meetings: session I on 23-28 January 1967⁴, session II on 13-17 February 1968⁵ and session VIII on 13-17 October 1975.⁶ After finishing their work, they were able to prepare one hundred twenty-five (125) canons organized in the following manner: thirty-two (32) canons on ecclesiastical magisterium, thirty (30) on Christian education, thirty-nine (39) on the formation of clerics, twelve (12) on books and means of social communications, ten (10) on sacred missions and two

¹ The most useful sources in tracing the general history of the Code revision process are: PONTIFICIA COMMISSIO CODICIS IURIS CANONICI RECOGNOSCENDO, *Synthesis generalis laboris Pontificiae Commissionis Codici Iuris Canonici Recognoscendo*, cura et studio JOSEPH FOX – GEORGII CORBELLINI, *Communicationes* 19 (1987): 262-308; JOSEPH ALESANDRO, "The Revision of the Code of Canon Law: A Background Study," *Studia Canonica* 24 (1990): 91-146; ROSALIO CASTILLO LARA, "Le livre III du CIC de 1983. Histoire et principes," *L'Année canonique* 31 (1988): 17-54. The Pontifical Commission is hereafter cited as "PCCICR".

² ALESANDRO, "The Revision of the Code," 96.

³ "Nunc admodum mutatis rerum condicionibus – cursus enim vitae celerius ferri videtur – ius canonicum, prudentia adhibita, est recognoscendum: scilicet accommodari debet novo mentis habitui, Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi Proprio, ex quo curae pastorali plurimum tribui, et novis necessitatibus populi Dei." *Communicationes* 1 (1969): 41.

⁴ *Communicationes* 19 (1987): 221-260.

⁵ *Communicationes* 20 (1988): 122-124.

⁶ *Communicationes* 28 (1996): 273-276.

(2) on the profession of faith. Catechetical instruction formed part of Chapter II on “The Ministry of the Divine Word,” which also included “Preaching of the Word of God”.⁷

In November 1977, the group submitted its schema of the canons on the Teaching Office of the Church.⁸ As with the other schemata, this initial draft was submitted for evaluation and comments to the bishops’ conferences throughout the world, the union of superiors general, the dicasteries of the Roman Curia and pontifical universities and faculties.⁹ Then, the Secretariat of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law painstakingly classified and synthesized the wide array of observations, propositions and suggestions submitted from all over the world. These were passed on to the study groups for their perusal as input for their follow-up revision of the 1977 schema they prepared earlier. The study group *De munere docendi* discussed the canons on catechetical instruction on 4-9 February 1980¹⁰ and 24-28 March 1980.¹¹

After the schemata had been reviewed and amended, the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law Secretariat worked on the integration of these various schemata, including the utilization of consistent language syntax and terminologies. The Secretariat organized the canons in such a way as to form the various schemata prepared by different groups into a single, coherent Code. On 29 June 1980, the new 1980 Schema¹², now composed of seven books, was then sent to the cardinal members of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Canon Law for their examination and evaluation. A special report¹³ was then prepared from the comments of the Commission and was presented to the members of the Commission on their fifth and final plenary session on 20-28 October 1981.

Even as the Commission had already finished its work in the plenary, other suggestions still came in, which eventually paved the way for a few more revisions

⁷ *Communicationes* 6 (1974): 54-55.

⁸ PCCICR, *Schema canonum Libri III De Ecclesiae Munere Docendi (Reservatum)*, cap. II, cann. 25-32 (E Civitate Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1977). Hereafter cited as “Schema of 1977”.

⁹ *Communicationes* 9 (1977): 227-228.

¹⁰ *Communicationes* 29 (1977): 22-98.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 99-165.

¹² PCCICR, *Schema Codicis iuris canonici iuxta animadversiones S.R.E cardinalium, episcoporum conferentiarum, dicasteriorum Curiae romanae, universitatum facultatumque ecclesiasticarum necnon superiorum institutorum vitae consecratae recognitum* (E Civitate Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1980). Hereafter cited as “Schema of 1980”.

¹³ PCCICR, “*Relatio complectens synthesim animadversionum ab Em.mis atque Exc.mis patribus commissionis ad novissimum schema codicis iuris canonici exhibitarum, cum responsionibus a secretaria et consultoribus datis*,” *Communicationes* 14 (1982): 116-230; 15 (1983): 57-109, 170-253; 16 (1984): 27-90.

on the text. On this account, the *Schema novissimum*¹⁴ was prepared, issued on 25 March 1982 and presented to Pope John Paul II on 22 April 1982.¹⁵ The pope, in his work of personally reviewing the entire final schema as supreme legislator, also formed a small group of selected experts and a committee of cardinals to help him review and finalize the text.¹⁶

On 25 January 1983, Pope John Paul II promulgated the new Code of Canon Law on the twenty-fourth anniversary of Pope John XXIII's announcement of the code-revision project. The new Code was officially presented¹⁷ on 3 February 1983 and became juridically binding on 27 November 1983 upon the completion of its *vacatio legis*.¹⁸

The specific canons we are analyzing belong to *CIC/83* Book III, *De Ecclesiae munere docendi*, which corresponds to Part IV (*De magisterio ecclesiastico*) of Book III (*De rebus*) of *CIC/17*. As presented in *CIC/83*, the ministry of the divine word is one of the various aspects of the teaching office of the Church. The title “ministry of the divine word” is a technical expression that includes both preaching and catechesis, and is a more restricted reality than the more general “proclamation of the Gospel”.¹⁹

2. Canon 773

2.1 Redaction of the Canon

2.1.1 The Schema of 1977

The *coetus* began its work on the catechetical canons on 23 January 1967.²⁰ Part of the agenda was the discussion of the following *CIC/17* text: “Can. 1329.

¹⁴ PCCICR, *Codex iuris canonici, Schema novissimum* (E Civitate Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 25 martii 1982).

¹⁵ ALESANDRO, “Revision of the Code,” 127.

¹⁶ The group was headed by Msgr. R. Castillo Lara, then Secretary of the PCCICR and later appointed as Pro-President. The other experts were U. Betti, I. Mester, Z. Grochowski, E. Egan, E. Corecco, J. Ochoa and L. Diez. The committee of cardinals included Msgrs. A. Casaroli, J. Ratzinger, N. Jubany and V. Fagiolo. See CASTILLO LARA, “Le livre III du CIC de 1983,” 38.

¹⁷ PCCICR, “Presentazione ufficiale del nuovo Codice di Diritto Canonico. Discorso di Sua Santità Giovanni Paolo II,” *Communicationes* 15 (1983): 9-16.

¹⁸ “Preface to the 1983 Codex Iuris Canonici,” in *Code of Canon Law Annotated*, Latin-English Edition of the Code of Canon Law and English Language Translation of the 5th Spanish Language Edition of the Commentary Prepared Under the Responsibility of the Instituto Martín de Azpilcueta, ed. ERNST CAPARROS ET AL. (Montréal: Wilson and Lafleur Limitée, 1993), 79. The English translation of all *CIC/83* texts quoted in this essay are taken from the above source. Our English translations of primitive versions of the canons prior to the 1983 promulgation are also based on the same work.

¹⁹ PAOLO URSO, “Il ministero della Parola divina: predicazione e catechesi (cann. 756-780),” in *La funzione di insegnare della Chiesa: XIX Incontro di studio*, Trent, 29 June - 3 July 1992 (Milan: Edizioni Glossa, 1994), 30.

²⁰ *Communicationes* 19 (1987): 239.

A proper and most serious duty, especially of pastors of souls, is to attend to the catechetical instruction of the Christian people”.²¹

Two consultors proposed retaining the text as it was, while another two suggested that the text should be changed. Assistant Secretary W. Onclin forwarded his proposed text, which was almost identical with the original, except for the addition of the words *sacrorum ministrorum*.²² Meanwhile, a consultor suggested the addition of another paragraph to the text of *CIC/17* that would express the purpose of catechesis as presented in the Vatican II decree on the Pastoral Ministry of Bishops²³ (art. 14a), but the other consultors concurred that all the necessary points could be expressed altogether in a single paragraph. Therefore, incorporating the suggestion of the consultor into the canon already proposed by the Assistant Secretary, the group approved a new expanded version of the text:

Can. 25. It is a proper and most serious duty especially of pastors of souls to attend to the catechetical instruction of the Christian people, so that having been illumined through doctrine, the faith of the people may be living, manifest and active.²⁴

The newness of this proposed canon cannot escape notice since its *CIC/17* precedent is silent on the object or purpose of catechesis.

During the January 1967 meeting, an important point was discussed that did not directly concern *CIC/17* can. 1329, but gave a more definite legislative character to catechesis. The issue concerned *CIC/17* can. 1332:

On Sundays and other feasts of precept at those times that in their judgment are most likely to encourage attendance by the people, the pastor must also explain the catechism to adult faithful using words accommodated to their understanding.²⁵

²¹ Can. 1329. “Proprium ac gravissimum officium pastorum praesertim animarum, est catecheticae populi christiani institutionem curare”.

²² “Proprium et gravissimum officium *sacrorum ministrorum*, praesertim animarum pastorum, est catecheticae populi christiani institutionem curare”. Italics mine. *Communicationes* 19 (1987): 239.

²³ SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, “Decretum Christus Dominus, De pastoralis Episcoporum munere in Ecclesia,” 28 octobris 1965, AAS 58 (1966): 673-701. Hereafter cited as “CD”. The English translation of Vatican II documents are taken from WALTER ABBOTT, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II. All Sixteen Official Texts Promulgated by the Ecumenical Council 1963-1965* (New York: Crossroad, 1966).

²⁴ Schema of 1977, can. 25. “Proprium et gravissimum officium, pastorum praesertim animarum, est catecheticae populi christiani curare institutionem, ut fidelium fides, per doctrinam illustrata, viva sit atque explicita et operosa (CD 14)”. *Communicationes* 19 (1987): 239.

²⁵ *CIC/17* Can. 1332. “Diebus dominicis aliisque festis de praecepto, ea hora quae suo iudicio magis apta sit ad populi frequentiam, debet insuper parochus catechismum fidelibus adultis, sermone ad eorum captum accommodato, explicare”.

Presuming that the explanation of the catechism was in the context of the homily at Mass, where a large gathering of people was most likely, Assistant Secretary W. Onclin noted that this provision concerning the giving of the homily should be under the heading on preaching, and not under catechetical instruction. He said that the two should be distinguished from each other and delineated in different canons because, although both are ways of exercising the Church's ministry of the word, they are carried out in different contexts and with rather precise objectives.²⁶

The *coetus* proceeded to meet again to sort out the canons on catechetical instruction during their second session on 13-17 February 1968 and eighth session on 13 to 17 October 1975. Nevertheless, nothing remarkable was discussed concerning the focus of our essay, CIC/83 can. 773.

2.1.2 The Schemata of 1980 and 1982

On 4-9 February and 24-28 March 1980, the group resumed its meetings for the revision of the 1977 Schema on the teaching office of the Church. During these meetings, the observations on the initial schema of 1977 turned out to be decisive in formulating the text of what would be the schema of 1980 and the eventual promulgation of the canons in 1983.²⁷ Incisive comments from various bishops and episcopal conferences of the world paved the way to set the agenda of the *coetus* in accomplishing its work to an excellent completion.

An episcopal conference commented that the title *De catechetica institutione* placed too much and an almost exclusive emphasis on instruction, and not on Christian life.²⁸ Another episcopal conference likewise observed that the canon reflected an outdated concept of catechesis because it spoke only of instruction and not of other means of Christian formation.²⁹ A bishop wanted the clarification that the term *institutione* should not only mean indoctrination but also holistic Christian formation. In this regard, he suggested the promotion of various forms of ecclesial movements, especially those that promote both the basic and continued conversion of their members. The good bishop noted the model of the neo-catechumenate for those already baptized, as recommended by

²⁶ *Communicationes* 19 (1987): 241.

²⁷ Present at these crucial 1980 meetings were the following officials and members of the *coetus*: Msgrs. Rosalio Castillo Lara (Secretary) and Willy Onclin (Assistant Secretary); members Alberto Descamps, Claudio Morino, Flaminio Cerreti, Vincenzo Che, Heribert Schmitz, Raffaele Moya, Antonio Domingues de Sousa, and Romeo Panciroli. Msgr. Mariano De Nicolo served as notary. *Communicationes* 29 (1997): 22.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

the Synod of Bishops of 1977, as a great help for the maturity in the faith of these Christians.³⁰

An unnamed bishop suggested the following *modus* that might have strongly influenced the text of can. 728 of the 1980 Schema:

Catechesis, or catechetical action, also belongs to the magisterial office of the Church. Through didactic (doctrinal) instruction together with a suitable training (practice), worthy candidates are given the grace and responsibility of receiving the Sacraments of ordinary Christian life.³¹

After studying all the above *modi*, Secretary R. Castillo Lara expressed his judgment that can. 25 of the Schema of 1977 was still lacking in substance, considering the richness of what the post-Vatican II pontifical documents, *Evangelii nuntiandi*³² and *Catechesi tradendae*³³, had to offer. The minutes of their 4-9 February 1980 meeting read:

The Secretary observes that this chapter is very poor indeed in its substance and inadequate with respect to the recent documents, especially the apostolic exhortations *Evangelii nuntiandi* and *Catechesi tradendae*. The proposals of the Sacred Congregation were also not sufficient. Thus, it will be necessary to review the text of the canons with maximal consideration of the above pontifical documents.³⁴

The *coetus* thus placed before them the mind of Pope John Paul II in *Catechesi tradendae* nos. 18-20 concerning the true nature of catechesis, its relationship with evangelization, and its goal of maturity in the faith.

CT 18 stresses that catechesis is a very remarkable moment in the whole process of evangelization, outlining the fact that it is

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.* “Ad munus Ecclesiae magisteriale pertinet etiam catechesis seu action catechetica qua per *institutionem didacticam (doctrinalem) simul cum congrua ascesi (praxi)* candidati idonei reddantur ad gratiam et onera suscipienda Sacramentorum vitae christianae communis”. Italics mine.

³² PAULUS PP. VI, “Adhortatio apostolica Evangelii nuntiandi, De Evangelizatione in mundo huius temporis”, 8 decembris 1975, AAS 68 (1976): 5-76. Hereafter cited as “EN”.

³³ IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, “Adhortatio apostolica Catechesi tradendae, De catechesi nostro tempore tradenda,” 16 octobris 1979, AAS 71 (1979): 1277-1340. Hereafter cited as “CT”. The English translations of all CT texts quoted in this essay are taken from JOHN PAUL II, “Apostolic exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*,” in *The Catechetical Documents. A Parish Resource*, ed. MARTIN CONNELL (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996), 375-445.

³⁴ “L’Ecc.mo Segretario osserva che effettivamente questo capitolo è molto povero nella sostanza e inadeguato rispetto ai documenti usciti posteriormente, specialmente le Esortazioni Apostoliche *Evangelii nuntiandi* e *Catechesi tradendae*. Anche le proposte della S. Congregazione non sono molto ricche, per cui bisognerà rivedere il testo dei canoni con la massima considerazione degli anzidetti documenti pontifici [...]”. *Communicationes* 29 (1997): 40.

an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.

According to CT 19, catechesis

has the two-fold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, CT 20 specifies the integration of the knowledge of doctrine with daily life as the more precise goal of catechesis:

It is in fact a matter of giving growth, at the level of knowledge and in life, to the seed of faith sown by the Holy Spirit with the initial proclamation and effectively transmitted by Baptism.

Secretary R. Castillo Lara thus proposed the following text, much-improved, but still raw as to its final form:

It is a proper and serious duty especially of pastors of souls to ensure that catechesis is imparted to the Christian people. Through catechesis, the initial faith of the believer is brought up chiefly through instruction in Christian doctrine and the experience of Christian life so that it may reach maturity and so a true disciple of Christ is formed.³⁵

With this enriched description of the nature of catechesis serving as the basis for the revision of the 1977 Schema, the first consultor expressed his approval of the use of the more inclusive term *catechesis* instead of the narrow connotations of the term *catechetica institutio*. After some discussion, it was decided, nevertheless, that the group's 1977 proposal be modified in the light of the text proposed by the Secretary. The Secretary then suggested that instead of the term *gravissimum* in the 1977 Schema, *proprium et grave officium* would suffice. He also proposed that, instead of *per doctrinam illustrata*, the expression *per doctrinae institutionem* be used.³⁶ Hence, the final revised text eventually appeared as can. 728 in the Schema of 1980 and remained in exactly the same form as can. 773 both in the Schema of 1982 and in CIC/83. The canon³⁷ is presented here in comparison with the 1977 *prima versio* of the canon:

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 41. "Proprium et grave officium praesertim animarum pastorum est curare ut catechesis impertiatur qua fides initialis credentis educatur potissimum per doctrinae christianae institutionem et vitae christianae experientiam ut ad maturitatem perveniat et verus Christi discipulus efformetur".

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 41, 82.

³⁷ Can. 728/773. "Proprium et grave officium, pastorum praesertim animarum, est *catechesim* populi christiani curare, ut fidelium fides, *per doctrinae institutionem et vitae christianae experientiam*, viva fiat atque explicita et operosa". Italics mine.

It is manifest in this comparison that by promulgating the canon as prepared by the *coetus*, the supreme legislator wants to emphasize, along with doctrinal instruction, the Christian's formation through praxis and experience, which is in line with his teaching in *Catechesi tradendae* and in the spirit of *Evangelii nuntiandi*.

Schema of 1977, can. 25

It is a proper and most serious duty especially of pastors of souls to attend to the *catechetical instruction* of the Christian people, so that *having been illumined through doctrine*, the faith of the people may be living, manifest and active.

CIC/83, can. 773

It is a proper and serious duty especially of pastors of souls to attend to the *catechesis* of the Christian people, so that, *through doctrinal instruction and the experience of the Christian life*, the faith of the people may be living, manifest and active.

In addressing the importance of the actual experience of Christian life of the catechized, the *coetus* had to confront the following question: under what circumstances, and in which setting, would Christian formation through doctrinal and experiential catechesis be most effectively nurtured? The members of the group agreed that the privileged locus where the “nitty-gritty” of Christian life is experienced, learned, etc. is the parish. Secretary R. Castillo Lara observed that in accordance with *Catechesi tradendae*, it was necessary to speak of the parish as the prime mover and pre-eminent place for catechetical formation. Pope John Paul II explains:

The parish [...] is to be a fraternal and welcoming family home, where those who have been baptized and confirmed become aware of forming the People of God. In that home, the bread of good doctrine and the Eucharistic Bread are broken for them in abundance, in the setting of the one act of worship; from that home, they are sent out day by day to their apostolic mission in all the centers of activity of the life of the world.³⁸

Thus, the third consultor said that catechesis was the duty and right of the parish priest, first and foremost, and that it was an office or *munus* of the parish, though not in an exclusive manner.³⁹

2.2 Commentary

2.2.1 A Proper and Grave Duty of Pastors of Souls

The canon begins with the assertion that the obligation to provide for the catechesis of the Christian faithful rests especially upon the shoulders of pastors

³⁸ CT 67c.

³⁹ *Communicationes* 29 (1997): 100.

of souls. The word *praesertim* appears conspicuously in the text since such a duty is not an exclusive domain reserved to some. All the Christian faithful, precisely under the guidance of their pastors, are responsible for catechesis as its active agent (can. 774 § 1). By virtue of the Sacrament of Baptism, and strengthened by Confirmation, all Christians are called to transmit the Gospel and to be concerned about the faith of their brothers and sisters in Christ, especially children and young people.⁴⁰ In a special way, however, parents, before all others, are bound to educate their children in the faith (can. 774 § 2), a duty which arises from parenthood and marriage.⁴¹ Catechesis, therefore, is not just the concern of the hierarchy, as the title *De magisterio ecclesiastico* in *CIC/17* seems to suggest⁴². Nevertheless, within this common responsibility of teaching in the Church, there are various roles and ministries.

On the basis of this general perspective, the moral responsibility common to all the faithful now becomes a proper and grave duty especially of pastors of souls.⁴³ “Pastors of souls” are those in the priestly and episcopal orders who have been entrusted the pastoral care of a group of the faithful in view of their salvation (cann. 150; 129 §1). They refer to diocesan bishops – and their equivalents in law (cann. 134 §1; 368) – for their dioceses, pastors for their parishes or quasi-parishes, and chaplains of special groups of people. Under their direction and guidance, all the Christian faithful are to manifest true concern for catechesis according to their respective roles. A.G. Urru sums it up clearly: “Catechesis is the work of the whole Church because it is the duty of the whole Church. Just as all the faithful have the right to catechesis, so all pastors have the duty to provide it”.⁴⁴

2.2.2 The Goal of Integrated Catechesis

A faith that is living, manifest and active is another way of describing a faith that is mature. This maturity in the faith is geared not just to individuals, but

⁴⁰ SECRETARIA GENERALIS SYNODI EPISCOPORUM, *Ad populum Dei nuntius Cum iam ad exitum*, De catechesi hoc nostro tempore tradenda praesertim pueris atque iuvenibus, 28 octobris 1977, in *Enchiridion del Sinodo dei Vescovi*, vol. I, 1656-1676. Hereafter cited as, “MPG” (or Message to the People of God of the 1977 Synod of Bishops). See MPG 12. For the English translation of the MPG, see *Origins* 7 (1977-1978): 321-328.

⁴¹ IOANNES PAULUS PP. II, “Adhortatio apostolica Familiaris consortio, De Familia Christianae muneribus in mundo huius temporis,” 22 novembris 1981, AAS 74 (1982): 81-191. Hereafter cited as “FC”. See FC 52-53.

⁴² ANGELO GIUSEPPE URRU, *La funzione di insegnare della Chiesa nella legislazione attuale* (Rome: Vivere In, 2001), 562.

⁴³ DAMIAN ASTIGUETA, *Dispensa nel corso Munus docendi* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2002), 24.

⁴⁴ “È opera di tutta la Chiesa perché è dovere di tutta la Chiesa. Come tutti i fedeli hanno diritto alla catechesi, così tutti i Pastori hanno il dovere di provvedervi”. URRU, *La funzione di insegnare*, 596. See also CT 64 and MPG 8.

also to communities of faith. A strong mark of such maturity is the more profound knowledge of God and his plan of salvation, and the sharing of such mature faith with other people who have not yet attained it.⁴⁵

Maturity in the faith, however, does not only constitute the knowledge of doctrines that, nevertheless, is one of its central components. A continual process of maturing in the faith involves understanding and experiencing not just the Lord's importance for daily life, but also the practical aspect of His message. Catechesis aims to animate and sustain the life journey of Christians by the knowledge of the revealed mystery of Christ, and to lead them to a growing communion of life with the Trinity.⁴⁶ It is thus a matter of promoting growth, at the level of knowledge and in life, as Pope John Paul II wrote:

Changed by the working of grace into a new creature, the Christian thus sets himself to follow Christ and learns more and more within the Church to think like Him, to judge like Him, to act in conformity with His commandments, and to hope as He invites us to hope.⁴⁷

This process of maturation is carried out in catechesis according to the character, capability, age and circumstances of each person. It is done in a gradual, integrated and holistic manner, involving the constant searching for means to connect head knowledge with other aspects of life. It constantly asks the following questions: What does my knowledge about Christ and the Church have to do with my participation in the liturgy? Where does it lead me in terms of my moral life and of my relation with others and the environment? Through catechesis, one is helped in finding answers to these questions by listening to the word and deepening it. In the light of the same word, one interprets life and history, and acts accordingly. That is precisely how the *General Catechetical Directory* (1971) bridges the gap between the intellectual aspect of catechesis and its application in life:

For every man or woman whose mind is open to the message of the Gospel, catechesis is a particularly apt means for him/her to understand God's plan in his/her own life and to examine the highest meaning of existence and

⁴⁵ SACRA CONGREGATIO PRO CLERICIS, "Ad normam decreti, Directorium Catechisticum Generale," 11 aprilis 1971, AAS 64 (1972): 97-176. Hereafter cited as "DCG". See DCG 21. For the English translation of the DCG, see SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Catechetical Directory*, in *The Catechetical Documents*, ed. MARTIN CONNELL, 11-77.

⁴⁶ SECRETARIA GENERALIS SYNODI EPISCOPORUM, "Lineamenta Thema, quod studio, De catechesi hoc nostro tempore tradenda praesertim pueris atque iuvenibus," 30 aprilis 1976, *ESV* vol. I, 1507-1557. Hereafter cited as "*Lineamenta*". See *Lineamenta* II,6. For the English translation of the *Lineamenta*, see *Origins* 5 (1975-1976): 741-751.

⁴⁷ CT 19-20ab.

history so that the life of individual men and women and of society may be illumined by the light of the kingdom of God and be conformed to its demands, and the mystery of the Church as the community of those who believe in the Gospel may be recognized.⁴⁸

In conclusion, the goal of catechesis is not merely intellectual, but also existential.⁴⁹ If catechesis does and should actually have a strong intellectual component, it is only because the knowledge of Christ and the Church should be the source and inspiration of every Christian's committed life in the secular world. Every catechetical program, therefore, must be designed "to change the whole life of the faithful by teaching Christ and everything else as it relates to Christ".⁵⁰

2.2.3 *The Means of Integrated Catechesis*

a) *The Essential Organizational Configuration of Catechesis*

Catechesis as a whole, but especially its tasks and means, should be seen in the light of can. 213 regarding the right of the Christian faithful to receive from their sacred pastors all the help necessary to receive the word of God and the sacraments.⁵¹ In our goal of understanding the ministry of the word of God, to which catechesis belongs, we are not just dealing with a purely theological or spiritual matter. Rather, since the spiritual treasure of God's word belongs to all of Christ's faithful on the basis of their bond of communion in the profession of faith, the sacraments and ecclesiastical governance (can. 205), we are dealing with a complex of inter-connected juridical rights and duties.⁵²

The care and duty that belongs to all the Christian faithful, and which is also a serious duty of pastors of souls, pertain not just to any kind of teaching or instruction. Inasmuch as the objective of catechesis, as explained above, is two-fold, so the means to attain that objective also has a two-fold approach that includes both doctrinal instruction and an experiential formation that strive to make this learning a valid norm of conduct and life.⁵³ In fact, this approach, which is systematic and involves full Christian initiation, distinguishes catechesis from

⁴⁸ DCG 21c.

⁴⁹ MAURO RIVELLA, "Commento ai cann. 756-780," in *Codice di diritto canonico commentato*, ed. ALBERTO PERLASCA – MAURO RIVELLA (Milan: Ancora, 2001), 649.

⁵⁰ JOSE FUENTES, "Catechetical Formation," in *Exegetical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, vol. III, ed. ERNST CAPARROS ET AL. (Montréal – Chicago: Midwest Theological Forum, 2004), 111.

⁵¹ Can. 213. "Ius est christifidelibus ut ex spiritualibus Ecclesiae bonis, praesertim ex verbo Dei et sacramentis, adiumenta a sacris Pastoribus accipiant".

⁵² GIACOMO UBERTALLI, *Dispensa nel corso di prassi amministrativa* (Vatican City: Congregation for the Clergy, 2004-2006), 56.

⁵³ LUIGI CHIAPETTA, *Prontuario di diritto canonico e concordatario* (Rome: Dehoniane, 1994), 174.

preaching (cann. 761-772).⁵⁴ F. Bolognini demonstrates this fact by explaining that the priest who prepares parents and sponsors for the baptism of a child, or those engaged for the marriage, does so through catechesis, not through preaching. Catechesis does not solely move the sentiments nor is limited to an exhortation based on the Sunday readings, but also presents an integral vision of Christian life. Lay persons too can carry it out in an official or non-official manner.

Moreover, the basic character of catechesis as pertaining to the deepening of conversion and faith distinguishes it also from Catholic education (cann. 793-821), which is more concerned with the nurturing of the whole human person.⁵⁵ This distinction, however, should not lead to a rigid separation of the two. One cannot remove the Catholic school, and all other kinds of schools for that matter, from the pastoral sphere of parish catechesis.⁵⁶

We should recall that during the revision process, there arose clear preferences for the use of the term *catechesis* rather than the more restrictive *catechetica institutione*. However, the final canons 773-780 in their entirety utilize both expressions. While we prefer the use of the more inclusive term *catechesis* to denote a holistic formation in the faith, we also maintain that the term *institutione*, translated as “instruction”, still has a place in the canons when used as “doctrinal instruction”. Nevertheless, fidelity to the letter and spirit of the Code dictates that the term “instruction” should be used always in conjunction with the other component of catechesis provided in can. 773 (experience of Christian life) and can. 779 (putting Catholic teachings into practice). The concept of instruction rightfully highlights that catechesis does entail the learning and understanding of the contents of the faith.

b) A Canonical Moment: Experience of Christian Life

We present below the observations of G. Ubertalli regarding the instances and implications of the use of key words during the redaction process of the CIC/83 catechetical canons:

Various terms are used in legislative texts to refer to the activity called “catechesis”. In CIC/17, the use of the term *catechetica institutio*, along with *erudire*, *tradere*, *institutio*, *instituere* was prevalent, i.e., six times. They indicate a concept of catechesis that was prevalently doctrinal teaching. The same concept is dominant in the Schema of 1977 where the term

⁵⁴ FRANCO BOLOGNINI, *Lineamenti di Diritto Canonico* (Turin: Giappichelli, 1989), 227.

⁵⁵ EN 44; DCG 21-30; CT 18-25; 69.

⁵⁶ RICHARD BARRETT, “The Normative Status of the Catechism,” *Periodica* 85 (1996): 17.

catechetica institutio is used eight times. In the Schema of 1980 till *CIC/83*, one can observe that such use is limited to four times (*CIC/83* cann. 777, 2° and 4°; 778 and 779) while at the same time using other terms (*catechesis* in can. 773 and *efformare* in cann. 774 § 2; 776; 777, 3°) that indicate, besides the experience of Christian life, also the formative or educative task of catechesis.⁵⁷

On the basis of the foregoing observations, we see that the evolution of the concept of catechesis was also accompanied by a change in the use of appropriate vocabulary to describe its precise nature. As it came out in the final text of can. 773, doctrinal instruction and the experience of Christian life are now clearly placed as the essential institutional configuration of catechesis. Nevertheless, G. Ubertalli warns that

they are not to be poised against each other since that would result in an impoverishment of the precise identity of catechesis within the social organization of the Church. Consequently, that would result in the same impoverishment of the duty to impart catechesis and the right to receive it.⁵⁸

Based on can. 773, catechists' formation (can. 780) is to be organized juridically in the Church not merely as an intellectual pursuit but as one also that promotes a more genuine experience and practice of Christian life. This new clause in the law would entail provisions both in instruction itself (i.e., lessons that integrate doctrine with life) and through a precise setting (e.g. service-oriented activities within the catechetical program). Here, participants learn "hands-on" what it means to be a Christian in a practical way, and not anymore merely by memorizing the catechism, not even if one understands it well. Failure to provide for this kind of catechetical formation both for those catechized and catechists is not in accord with the terms of the law as provided in can. 773, and by extension, with can. 213.

In this, we see the canonical moment of can. 773 that goes beyond *CD* 14a in a significant way that, without the phrase "experience of Christian living",

⁵⁷ "Ciò che ora si è rilevato, viene anche confermato della diversa terminologia adoperata nei vari testi legislativi per indicare la catechesi. Nel *CIC/17* è prevalente (sei volte) l'uso dei seguenti termini: '*catechetica institutio*', accompagnato dai verbi erudire e tradere; '*institutio*'; '*instituere*'. Essi stanno ad indicare che la catechesi viene concepita prevalentemente come insegnamento di tipo dottrinale. La medesima concezione domina anche lo *S1977*, dove il termine '*catechetica institutio*' è addirittura usato ben otto volte. Mentre nello *S1980*, fino al *CIC/83*, si nota che tale uso viene ristretto a quattro volte (*CIC/83*: cc. 777, 2° e 4°; 778; 779), e si adopera una terminologia più diversificata che indica, oltre alla menzionata esperienza della vita cristiana, anche il compito formativo o educativo della catechesi (*CIC/83* cc. 774 §2; 776; 777, 3°)". UBERTALLI, *Dispensa nel corso*, 58.

⁵⁸ "Queste due mediazioni sono la configurazione istituzionale essenziale della catechesi. Esse non devono essere contrapposte, poiché ne deriverebbe un depauperamento della identità specifica della catechesi nell'organismo societario della Chiesa, con il conseguente impauverimento del dovere di trasmetterla e del diritto di riceverla". *Ibid.*, 59.

describes catechetical instruction as an activity “intended to make the faith, *as illumined by teaching*, a living, explicit and effective force in the lives of men and women [...]”.⁵⁹

2.2.4 *The Locus of Integrated Catechesis*

Both means of catechesis are not carried out in a vacuum. One’s Christian life is experienced and nurtured within the context of the Christian community as the locus of catechesis.

The prevailing post-Vatican II concern for the role of the whole Christian community – and not just the hierarchy – in catechesis did not escape the discerning attention of the coetus *De Ecclesiae munus docendi* while they were working on the revision of can. 29 of the Schema of 1977. This canon eventually became CIC/83 can. 774 §§ 1-2. The *Communicationes* minutes reveal that a number of the opinions of those consulted on the initial Schema of 1977, while recognizing its merits, also heavily criticized it because of its excessively hierarchical character that did not at all reflect the conciliar teaching regarding the sacramental participation of the laity in the prophetic office of Christ. Such was especially true for the canons on catechetical instruction because, while the canons mentioned the responsibility of parents, sponsors and household leaders for the catechesis of those under their care, their silence on the common responsibility of all the faithful left the laity’s role to be seen as merely accessory to the hierarchy, as proposed in can. 28 of the 1977 Schema. The natural right of Christians to proclaim the word of God and the truths of the faith does not seem to get the place that it deserves.⁶⁰

An episcopal conference based its negative judgment concerning the 1977 Schema on the fact that Pope Paul VI already taught in *Evangelii nuntiandi* that Christians belong to an evangelizing community. The command given to the Apostles applies to all Christians, though in varying ways. Evangelization is, therefore, a fundamental duty of the People of God, the deepest identity of the Church that exists in order to evangelize.⁶¹ Another episcopal conference suggested the development of the evangelizing role of the family, the domestic church.⁶²

⁵⁹ Italics mine.

⁶⁰ Some episcopal conferences and ecclesiastical universities opined that the above stance must be coming from a mentality of defensiveness reflected in the schema, a “siege mentality” that did not correspond to the spirit of Vatican II nor with the actual situation of the Church in general. The schema was, therefore, judged out-of-date and lacking in credibility by many quarters. *Communicationes* 29 (1997): 45, 48.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 82.

Given all these input for the *coetus*, the third consultor noted that it was incumbent for the group to prepare a canon concerning the above fundamental points, clarifying, however, that such *munus* of the whole Christian community, especially of parents, would be different from that which was incumbent upon the bishops.⁶³ Taken in that light, Secretary R. Castillo Lara clarified that, by its very nature, the Church's work of catechesis would still fall under the general responsibility, vigilance and management of legitimate ecclesiastical authorities.⁶⁴

Such had been the concern of many of the *modi* and of the members of the *coetus* on the need to reclaim the place of the Christian community as the only valid setting for apprenticeship in the living out of Christian life. Within this community, and without prejudice to the fact that family catechesis “precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis”⁶⁵, the parish occupies a special place as the nerve center of catechetical functions and initiatives. Here, a true experiential learning of doctrine should be organized and made effective through the actual living and interacting of those catechized with other committed Christians in the context of family, neighborhood, school and local church.⁶⁶ Here, the participants of catechesis are influenced, taught and molded by the examples of parents⁶⁷ and sponsors (can. 774 § 2), clerics and pastoral workers (can. 776) and even other catechetical participants (can. 777) by participating also in liturgical functions and works of charity of the community. There can be no experience of Christian life apart from a community of people striving to live as Christians.⁶⁸ The active agents' practice of Christian life does form part of the “curriculum” of this apprenticeship program.

3. Canon 779

3.1 Redaction of the Canon

3.1.1 The Schema of 1977

The primitive canon of *CIC/83* can. 779, which had no precedent in *CIC/17*, was proposed as can. 31 in the 1977 Schema as its *prima versio*. The

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁶⁵ *CT* 68b.

⁶⁶ JAMES CORIDEN, “The Teaching Function of the Church,” in *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, ed. John Beal et al. (New York – Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2000): 934.

⁶⁷ The extremely significant role parents (and those who take the place of parents) play in the Christian formation of their children are also stressed in cann. 226 § 2; 793; 851 2°; 872; 890; 914; 1136 and 1366.

⁶⁸ MAURA HAGARTY, “The Code, Catechesis and the Concept of ‘Experience’: A Commentary on Canon 773,” *Jurist* 61 (2001): 253.

canon was not submitted to extensive discussions in the *coetus* meetings of 1967, 1968 and 1975.

Can. 31 (new). Catechetical instruction should be based on the Sacred Scriptures, Tradition, Liturgy, Magisterium and the life of the Church. It is to be given by employing all those aids, educational resources and means of communication which seem the more effective in securing that the faithful, according to their character, capability, age and circumstances of life, may be able more fully to learn religious teaching and more effectively put it into practice.⁶⁹

3.1.2 *The Schema of 1980*

Some valuable suggestions made during the February and March 1980 meetings are worth bringing to light. It happened that there were some *modi*, coming from an episcopal conference and an ecclesiastical university, which opined that since the core of the canon's proposal, especially concerning the general method and specific tools of catechesis, was already contained in official church teaching and in common norms of pedagogy and basic pastoral ministry, it would not be necessary to repeat them in a canon of the *CIC*.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the *coetus De munere docendi* considered the principle laid down in the canon to be decisive for the attainment of the goals of catechesis. It thus decided that the canon's method and tools should be clearly legislated in the Code. Hence, the text of can. 734 of the 1980 Schema was proposed as follows:

Catechetical instruction is to be given by employing all those aids, educational resources and means of communication which seem the more effective in securing that the faithful, according to their character, capability, age and circumstances of life, may be able more fully to learn religious teaching and more effectively put it into practice.⁷¹

One point worthy of note is that the canon's 1977 version contained a clause taken from *CD* 14a: "Catechetical instruction should be based on the

⁶⁹ Can. 31 (novus). "Institutio catechetica innitatur oportet S. Scriptura, Traditione, Liturgia, Magisterio vitae Ecclesiae, et tradatur omnibus adhibitis auxiliis, subsidiis didacticis et communicationis mediis, quae efficaciora videntur ut fideles, ratione eorum indoli, facultatibus et aetati necnon vitae condicionibus aptata, plenius religionis doctrinam ediscere eamque aptius in praxim deducere valeant".

⁷⁰ *Communicationes* 29 (1997): 129.

⁷¹ Schema of 1980 can. 734. "Institutio catechetica tradatur omnibus adhibitis auxiliis, subsidiis didacticis et communicationis instrumentis, quae efficaciora videntur ut fideles, ratione eorum indoli, facultatibus et aetati necnon vitae condicionibus aptata, plenius religionis doctrinam ediscere eamque aptius in praxim deducere valeant".

Sacred Scriptures, Tradition, Liturgy, Magisterium and the life of the Church”.⁷² This pertained to the sources of the content of catechesis, which were also enumerated in article 45 of the *General Catechetical Directory*.⁷³ The clause was eventually omitted in the 1980 version and instead found its way into can. 715 of the same 1980 schema, which eventually became CIC/83 can. 760 on the integral and faithful presentation of the mystery of Christ. What remained in the text, therefore, was the reference to the catechetical activity itself, including the specific means and instruments of catechesis, i.e., various aids, educational resources and means of social communication, that would help people in learning and putting into practice the Catholic doctrine.⁷⁴

In what manner should one use these tools to accomplish the learning of doctrine and its application? Among the *modi* discussed during the 1980 *coetus* meetings was the reminder of a Sacred Congregation that Bishops should be attentive to providing catechesis for the faithful according to their age and condition.⁷⁵ Such suggestion certainly corresponded to the basic principles of pedagogy enunciated in the canon, and which CD 14a proposed with the words, “a suitable arrangement should be observed, as well as a method suited to the matter that is being treated and to the character, ability, age, and circumstances of the life of the students”.

3.1.3 The Schema of 1982

The canon, now numbered as can. 779 in the schema of 1982, contains almost exactly the same formulation as its preceding version, except for the use of the more precise term *catholicam doctrinam* rather than merely *religionis doctrinam*. Incorporating such change, the supreme legislator finally approved the CIC/83 canon, using the term *communicationis socialis instrumentis* instead of simply *communicationis mediis*, highlighting therefore the importance in catechesis of modern systems of an audio-visual character designed to reach masses of people and to influence social networks. Thus, in comparison with the *prima versio* of the canon, CIC/83 can. 779⁷⁶ was promulgated as follows:

⁷² Schema of 1977 can. 31. “Institutio catechetica innitatur oportet S. Scriptura, Traditione, Liturgia, Magisterio vitae Ecclesiae”.

⁷³ DCG 45.

⁷⁴ *Communicationes* 29 (1997): 102.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁷⁶ CIC/83 can. 779. “Institutio catechetica tradatur omnibus adhibitis auxiliis, subsidiis didacticis et communicationis socialis instrumentis, quae efficaciora videantur ut fideles, ratione eorum indoli, facultatibus et aetati necnon vitae condicionibus aptata, plenius catholicam doctrinam ediscere eamque aptius in praxim deducere valeant”.

Schema of 1977, can. 31

Catechetical instruction should be based on the Sacred Scriptures, Tradition, Liturgy, Magisterium and the life of the Church. It is to be given by employing all those aids, educational resources and means of communication which seem the more effective in securing that the faithful, according to their character, capability, age and circumstances of life, may be able more fully to learn religious teaching and more effectively put it into practice.

CIC/83, can. 779

Catechetical instruction is to be given by employing all those aids, educational resources and instruments of *social* communication which seem the more effective in securing that the faithful, according to their character, capability, age and circumstances of life, may be able more fully to learn *catholic* teaching and more effectively put it into practice.

3.2 Commentary

Can. 779 proposes the use of tools or subsidiary means for catechesis and outlines a dual criterion for their choice. First, these tools should be effective in helping the participants learn more fully Catholic doctrine and apply it in daily life. Second, the method used should be adapted to the character, capability, age and circumstances of life of the catechized, i.e., to their capacity to receive and profit from the instruction.

3.2.1 The Tools of Integrated Catechesis

Given the fact that can. 779 has no precedent in *CIC/17*, the supreme legislator clearly sees the importance of the use of catechetical instruments or tools and means of social communications in catechesis. Modern information technology, in particular, has the potential of communicating the message of Christ in a way that speaks the language of the young.

This canon is related to *CIC/83* can. 761, which provides that all available means of proclaiming Christian doctrine be used. With pride of place allotted to preaching and catechesis, the canon also highlights the use of the printed word and other means of social communication. Likewise, can. 822 § 1 strongly urges pastors, in the exercise of their office, to avail of a right that belongs to the Church, i.e., to make ample use of the means of social communication.

A clear criterion for the choice of aids for catechesis is their effectivity. They should be able to achieve two desired effects. First, the participants should be able to learn Catholic doctrine more fully; and second, they should be able to apply

more appropriately the doctrines learned to the various situations, conditions and circumstances of their life. As J. Coriden writes, “Whatever [...] is appropriate and effective should be utilized to accomplish that end, from good example to television programs, from catechisms to compact disks”.⁷⁷ However, if the aids, educational resources and means of social communications – even a particular catechism book – do not help in learning doctrine more fully and translating or applying it more appropriately in life, such aids are deemed ineffective and their use for catechesis is to be discouraged, according to the stipulation of can. 779.

In substance, therefore, can. 779 concerns the specific application of the principles of ecclesial catechetical organization, which aims towards assisting the faithful in their right to partake of the word of God. In this light, the canon thus presents the objective (full learning of Catholic doctrine and more appropriate putting into practice) and the regulating principle for the use of instruments (effective and adapted).⁷⁸ Providing a catechesis that is efficacious should be seen more and more as a truly important concern in the Church that should be juridically ensured and facilitated through concrete catechetical programs.⁷⁹

3.2.2 *The Method of Integrated Catechesis*

As mentioned above, can. 779 has no precedent in *CIC/17*. However, was the old code totally oblivious to providing effective and adapted catechesis to people, as *CIC/83* does in this present canon? Let us consider *CIC/17* can. 1332:

On Sundays and other feasts of precept at those times that in their judgment are most likely to encourage attendance by the people, the pastor must also *explain the catechism* to adult faithful *using words accommodated to their understanding*.⁸⁰

This canon demonstrates that within the context of the technological and pedagogical limitations of the day and against the backdrop of a strong intellectual emphasis on the memorization and understanding of the catechism, the old code, nevertheless, provided some canonical guidelines for effective and adapted catechesis. However, mention concerning the means to achieve this

⁷⁷ CORIDEN, “The Teaching Function of the Church,” 937.

⁷⁸ UBERTALLI, *Dispensa nel corso*, 61.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ Can 1332. “Diebus dominicis aliisque festis de praecepto, ea hora quae suo iudicio magis apta sit ad populi frequentiam, debet insuper parochus *catechismum* fidelibus adultis, *sermone ad eorum captum accommodato, explicare*”. Italics mine.

through concrete didactic and pedagogical instruments had to wait until the promulgation of *CIC/83*.

Such fact having been observed, we now read this section of the present canon in the light of can. 229 § 1 concerning the right of lay people to acquire the knowledge of Christian teaching which is appropriate to each one's capacity and condition "so that they may be able to live according to this teaching [...] and capable of playing their part in the exercise of the apostolate".⁸¹ This latter part of can. 229 § 1 and the proposed dual objective of catechesis in can. 779 mark a clear departure of the new code from the old. In the old, adaptation was done to understand doctrine well. In the new, it was done to learn doctrine well and to live accordingly. In this sense, the new code gives a more stringent criterion for the use of instruments and tools in catechesis.

The basis for the adapted use of pedagogical methods is the so-called "pedagogy of God". God revealed Himself gradually to His chosen people, in a concrete manner, using a language that is both human and comprehensible to those He chose to reveal Himself. With this pedagogy as model, "the catechist can remain faithful to man while remaining faithful to God when communicating the word of God in a way that is comprehensible to man".⁸²

The use of the most modern means of information technology should not replace the catechist's personal contact and dialogue with the catechized. This personal contact of the catechist and his or her endeavor to provide an adapted catechesis arise from a stance of respect for the person and, once again, the latter's right to acquire the knowledge of Christian teaching that is appropriate to each one's capacity and condition (can. 229 § 1).⁸³ In the words of Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii nuntiandi*,

the use of the means of social communication for evangelization presents a challenge: through them the evangelical message should reach vast numbers of people, but with the capacity of piercing the conscience of each individual, of implanting itself in his heart as though he were the only person being addressed, with all his most individual and personal qualities, and evoke an entirely personal adherence and commitment. For this reason, side by side with the collective proclamation of the Gospel, the

⁸¹ Can. 229 §1. "Laici, *ut secundum doctrinam christianam vivere valeant, eandemque et ipsi enuntiare atque, si opus sit, defendere possint, utque in apostolatu exercendo partem suam habere queant*, obligatione tenentur et iure gaudent acquirendi eiusdem doctrinae cognitionem, propriae uniuscuiusque capacitati et conditioni aptatam". Italics mine.

⁸² JOSEPH BAJADA, "Catechesis in the Code of Canon Law," *Forum* 2 (1991): 62.

⁸³ UBERTALLI, *Dispensa nel corso*, 62.

other form of transmission, the person-to-person one, remains valid and important.⁸⁴

3.2.3 *The Desired Results of Integrated Catechesis*

We have already partially delved on the matter of the goal of catechesis in our commentary on can. 773 above. Section 2.2.2 especially clarified the practical and experiential side, the canonical moment, of this singular goal of catechesis. What is left is to consider the other more common aspect of doctrinal instruction in catechesis and the common tool corollary to it, the catechism.

In conformity with the right of the faithful to be assisted by their pastors in receiving the word of God in its integrity, a right that should enjoy some degree of canonical support, it is safe to say that the method, aids and tools selected by the catechist should facilitate, and not hinder, the integral presentation of Catholic teaching. This is for the greater interest of the fuller learning of Catholic teaching required by can. 779. In using particular methods or instruments, integral catechesis demands that the approach must truly be a means to communicate the entire mystery of salvation in Christ on the basis of the hierarchy of truths, i.e., the interconnected nature of the truths of faith, revolving around the center of the mystery of the Trinity and of Christ, and varying in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith.⁸⁵ This principle runs counter to the denial of some essential elements of the faith or reducing the Word of God to some aspects, excluding others.

According to the principles of the *General Catechetical Directory* of 1971, this concern for the integral presentation of the message should respect also the principles of pedagogy, and the “pedagogy of God” in the first place. On the one hand, it takes account of the limited ability of some people, in which case Catholic doctrine is explained simply and briefly, using even suitable summary formulas. The rest of the message may be presented later in the lifetime catechetical process. On the other hand, catechists should also satisfy quick and penetrating minds that are ready to receive deeper truths and more profound explanations.⁸⁶ All in all, Pope John Paul II noted that any methodological or pedagogical choice

⁸⁴ EN 45c-46.

⁸⁵ “When comparing doctrines with one another, they [Catholic theologians] should remember that in Catholic doctrine, there exists an order or ‘hierarchy’ of truths, since they vary in their relation to the foundation of the Christian faith” (UR 11a). SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, “Decretum Unitatis reintegratio, De Oecumenismo,” 21 novembris 1964, AAS 57 (1965): 90-112.

⁸⁶ DCG 33.

will be a valid one to the extent that, far from being dictated by more or less subjective theories or prejudices stamped with a certain ideology, it is inspired by the humble concern to stay closer to a content that must remain intact.⁸⁷

In the light of this doctrinal component of catechesis, it can be asserted that the most basic catechetical tool is the catechism, especially the local ones that are already contextualized and inculturated.⁸⁸ It is still a most primordial tool in our list, prior to all others. In local catechisms, the integral truths of the faith are to be weaved into daily Christian and secular life. Moreover, in the interest of effectively putting learned Christian teachings into practice, all other tools and means should be used in addition to catechisms provided they are effective both in learning and in living out what was learned, facilitated by the irreplaceable role of both official and non-official catechists.

4. Conclusion

The term “split-level Christianity” was utilized by the Filipino Jesuit psychologist Jaime Bulatao, S.J. as the title of a short paper⁸⁹ he wrote in 1966. Writing in the context of Philippine Christianity, he showed the problem of a deep divide between what many Catholic Christians profess to believe and what they actually do in their day-to-day lives. The term and concept resonate with Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World⁹⁰, which states: “This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age”.⁹¹

In investigating the redaction histories of cann. 773 and 779, we have seen the manner by which Vatican II and its post-conciliar documents determined the outcome of the revision of the canons. What came to light were the canons’ clear pastoral orientation that sought to stamp an integrated character on all of the Church’s catechesis, in which the doctrinal, moral and liturgical teachings of the Church have a bearing and influence on – and not detached or split from – the daily secular, “non-religious” aspects of the Christian’s life. In order that

⁸⁷ CT 31a.

⁸⁸ Canons 775 and 827 §1 regulate the publication of diocesan, national or regional catechisms.

⁸⁹ JAIME BULATAO, “Split-Level Christianity,” in *Split-Level Christianity and the Christian Renewal of Filipino Values*, ed. JAIME BULATAO – VITALIANO GOROSPE (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1966), 1-26.

⁹⁰ SACROSANCTUM CONCILIUM OECUMENICUM VATICANUM II, “Constitutio Pastoralis Gaudium et Spes, De Ecclesia in mundo huius temporis,” 7 decembris 1965, AAS 58 (1966): 1025-1115.

⁹¹ GS 43a.

this new way of catechizing legislated in *CIC/83* may effectively respond to the concern of Vatican II regarding “split-level Christianity”, the work of integrated catechesis should be a top pastoral priority of bishops, parish priests, religious communities and lay leaders. It is precisely this committed involvement of the whole Church, led by her pastors, that would steer the work of catechesis to its hoped-for results. ■



Fr. Enrico Eusebio, Jr., S.J. was born and raised in Metro Manila. After ordination as a Jesuit priest in 1996, he worked as Assistant Parish Priest in Pangantukan, Bukidnon, and then was sent in 1997 to Nigeria to assist in the Jesuit parishes there. From 1999-2002, he was Vocation Director of the Philippine Jesuits. He obtained his licentiate degree in canon law (2004) from the Pontifical Gregorian University and his doctorate degree from the Pontifical Salesian University (2009), both in Rome. For his dissertation, he did research on the history of catechetical legislation from the early church to contemporary times, with special reference to catechesis in the Philippines. He can be contacted at eusebiosj@gmail.com.