

www.sjti.ac.za/resources_homily.htm

First Reading: Deuteronomy 8:2-3,14-16
Response: ***“O praise the Lord, Jerusalem!”*** (Ps.147:12)
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 147:12-15,19-20
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:16-17
Gospel: John 6:51-58

The people acclaim in the Responsorial Psalm with the words: ***“O praise the Lord, Jerusalem”*** (Ps.147:12).

Jerusalem can be understood in four ways, says *St. John Cassian*. ***“Littera gesta docet; quid credes anagogia; Moralis quid agas; quo tendes allegoria”*** (*Conferences 14:8*), i.e. Jerusalem could mean, **literally** an earthly city, **anagogically** a heavenly city, **morally** the human soul, and **allegorically** the Church.

The Church with the Risen Lord in its midst, is prophetically seen as fed by word and sacrament. ***“He sends his word to earth”*** (Ps.147:15) and ***“feeds you with finest wheat”*** (*Ibid.*).

How would you describe your daily spiritual diet? Compare it to the junk food we eat.

God did ***“give you manna to eat in the desert”*** (Deut.8:16) but that is for our bodies; a *fortiori*, we need the bread of life for our souls. Jesus says: ***“I am the bread of life”*** (Jn.6:51). ***“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”*** (Jn.6:53).

This happens in the Eucharist. St. Paul says: ***“Is not the bread we break a participation in the body of Christ?”*** (1 Cor.10:17). ***“Is not the cup of thanksgiving a participation in the blood of Christ?”*** (1 Cor.10:16).

How well do we prepare our hearts and minds for a full participation in the Eucharist?

We give praise and thanksgiving in living the great gift we receive in the Holy Eucharist.

See your mission as bringing others to the altar of God, by word and example.

FOR THE CHILDREN

What does Jesus mean when he says: “I am the bread of life” (Jn.6:51)?

When do the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ? Describe the consecration at Holy Mass.

Discuss what we mean by ‘Blessed Sacrament.’ ***Where is it kept? What is a tabernacle?***

Discuss in Blessed Sacrament and in you. Give examples of how to live with Christ in you.

FOR TEENAGERS: Shared Christian Praxis

(based on Thomas Groome’s 5 catechetical movements)

1. **Name the Present Action:**
What is the Eucharist to you? How does it affect you and others? Here we name the experience, what it is. (*An experiential approach to the Eucharist*).
2. **Your Story and Vision:**

Why this attitude to the Eucharist? What memories? What do you want? (This is critical reflection and evaluation). Why you do it (past and present) and what you hope (**vision**).

3. **Church's Story and Vision:** Teacher's input on traditional teaching of the Church and "**What is expected of us?**" (This is considered the most catechetical moment in the process, handing down the ancient truths of our faith, in a dialogue).
4. **Dialogue between The Story (Church) and Your Story:**
What does the Story of the Church challenge us to do? What are our stories saying to the Church? (Linking 'The Story' and your stories)
5. **Dialogue between Vision of the Church and your vision:**
(Linking the Vision of the Church and your vision).
How do I now need to think and act? Name my future faith response to the Eucharist.
(N.B.: Faith response is a vital part of the Christian praxis.
The whole process is to be seen in context of building the Kingdom of God).

RCIA

The Eucharist which is the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, was instituted by Jesus of Nazareth at the Last Supper and witnessed on Calvary. Basically, it consists of the paschal mystery, the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. The body of Christ, as seen in the host is also known as the Blessed Sacrament and kept in the tabernacle. It can be used for communion outside of Mass, for sick calls, adoration and benediction.

LIFE EXPERIENCE



A man asked me, "what is transubstantiation?" In simple catechetical language I explained it as bread and wine changing into the body and blood of Christ. "Wow, what a belief!," he said and asked if I had any doubts. Frankly, I have not had any yet. It made me realize how great is the gift of faith. Many in Jesus' time and today, walk away unable to believe.

LITTLE ANGELINA

Little Angelina was sitting between her parents yawning during Benediction. It was all Greek to her, or I should say it was Latin. Was she bored? My memories go back to the days of sitting comfortably between my parents who were participating in the mysteries of faith and I not understanding a word. As I grew older, I steadily learned more and the thought of my loved ones being part of it, reinforced the love and understanding of my faith. St. John Cassian describes it as being steeped in "the tradition of the elders and the goodness of their lives."⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Yes, Angelina looked a little bored but happily present with her parents, not understanding "yet beholding the things of heaven."⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾

We are never too young to be part of the mystery of love and faith and appreciate it more as we grow older.

⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ JOHN CASSIAN. *Conferences*. 'ON DISCERNMENT.' **Conference 2.11**. Paulist Press, N.Y. 1985. p.70.

⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ JOHN CASSIAN. *Opus cit.* 'THE GOAL OR OBJECTIVE OF THE MONK.' **Conference 1:17**. p.52.

IMPORTANT WORD

Transubstantiation is a Latin translation of the Greek *Metousiosis*, (μετα-ουσι-οσις). It means a substantial change, such as the miracle of bread and wine becoming the body and blood of Christ. Although we try to explain it philosophically, it is a mystery of faith. It happens by the power and word of God, the same word and power that created the universe (Gn.1:2,3).

The Eucharistic wonder continues in our lives as we in turn transform into what we eat. **“It is no longer I who live but Christ living in me”** (Gal.2:20). How much more personal and intimate than the Eucharist can you get?

Some of our detractors remind us that ‘*transubstantiation*’ is not a biblical word. There are many theological words not in the Bible, such as ‘monotheism,’ ‘Blessed Trinity’ and ‘sacrament’ but the biblical teaching of them is clear.

Jesus says: **“who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”** (Jn.6:54). Jesus meant this literally and many walked away because they understood its meaning.

Watchword: **“Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life”** (Jn.6:54)

Hebrew: האכל אתבשרי השתה תאדמי ישלו חיי עולמים

Ha'okhel eth-besari vehashotheh eth-dami yesh-lo haye 'olamim.

Greek: Ο τρωγων μου την σαρκα και πινων μου το αιμα εχει ζωην αιωνιον.

Ho trogon mou ten sarka kai pinon mou to haima echei zoen aionion.

Latin: Qui manducat meam carnem et bibit meum sanguinem habet vitam aeternum.

Portuguese: Quem come a minha carne, e bebe o meu sangue, tem a vida eterna.

Spanish: El que come mi carne y bebe mi sangre, tiene vida eterna.

French: Celui qui mange ma chair et boit mon sang a la vie eternelle.

German: Wer mein Fleisch isst und mein Blut trinkt, der hat das ewige Leben.

Afrikaans: Wie my liggaam eet en my bloed drink, het die ewige lewe.

Zulu: Odlu inyama yami, aphuze igazi lami unokuphila kwaphakade.

Xhosa: Lowo uwutyayo umzimba wam alisele negazi lam unobomi obungona-phakade.

Sotho: Ya jang nama ya ka, a enwa madi a ka, o na le bophelo bo sa feleng.

Irish: An te aitheann m'fheoil agus a olann m'fhuil, ta an bheatha shiorai aige.

-o000o-

CATECHETICS

Lesson 27:

WAYS TO CRITIQUE A CATECHISM

When walking into a Catholic bookshop, one becomes aware of the different catechisms on the shelf. They range from the universal ‘Catechism of the Catholic Church’ from Rome, to local Church editions, such as the South African ‘People of God Series.’ The *Magisterium* has to keep a watchful eye over what the Church teaches and so the catechist should be fully acquainted with what is in the catechism. A few criteria suggested below should help in doing a practical critique. One may ask, for example, how the catechism answers to a basic definition of catechesis? Does it follow the sources and traditional teaching of the Church? How does the catechism fulfil its own prescribed goals?

These are just a few basic guidelines. Other important criteria may be considered as well.

1. USING A DEFINITION, such as ‘*God’s message communicated to humanity.*’

God’s message: What does the catechism say, e.g. about sacraments, Church, etc.
Analyse the **context**.

What is the basic **theme** of the book?
How would you sum up all its **teaching**?

Communication: ***How*** does the catechism put the message across?
What **approach** does it use?
What are its **methods**?
What **language** does it use? Is it simple, abstract or concrete?

Humanity: ***Who*** is the catechism meant for? Adult, child?
Can it relate to our **human experience**?
How adaptable is it to **life situations**?
In a nutshell, how much does it speak to **persons** concerned?

2. **USING SOURCES OF TRADITION** viz. Bible, Liturgy, Doctrine and Witness.

Bible: How **scriptural** is the catechism? Does it make much use of the Bible?
Is it **kerygmatic**, focussing on what is the 'Good News'?
In what ways does it interpret the **Bible**, fundamentalistic?
What are the choice of texts and Bible quotes used?

Liturgy: Does the catechism teach much about prayer and **worship**?
Does the course follow the **liturgical calendar** and seasons?
How does it treat the **sacraments**?
Does it enhance **participation** and use **paraliturgies**, e.g. devotions?

Doctrine: What are the main **teachings** of the catechism?
How **traditional** or **updated** are its teachings?
Does the teaching content justify the **theme** or purpose of the book?
How clear and practical are its **instructions**?

Witness: What Christian **action** would the catechism elicit, if any?
With explanations, does it encourage **applications** (Christian action)?
If it challenges one to Christian **living**, how does it do it?
Does it help develop deeper **attitudes** to life?

3. **USING A CATECHISM'S OWN GIVEN CRITERIA**, such as the presentation of its own syllabus, aims, approach or psychological insights.

How does the catechism achieve its **aim** and cover the syllabus?
What age group is it meant for, recognizing the **psychological** level?
Assess the **method** and its goals.
How does it apply and cover all its **criteria**?

As mentioned, the above are merely guidelines for a critique and not complete. Much depends on how precisely one wishes to critique a catechism. It is important that a catechist can make at least a fundamental appraisal of it. In fact every teacher should know the catechism well before using. He/she should fully comprehend its content, method and aims; and knowing its strong and weak points, adapt it accordingly to relevant situations.

Note that the catechism itself is not the last word but merely a guide or teaching aid to be used appropriately in expediting the catechesis which ultimately depends on the catechist's preparation, personal witness and openness to the Holy Spirit, the ultimate divine guide and teacher.