

National Catechetical Directory: Chapter Seven

1. Catechesis is concerned with developing an existing faith. However, the element of conversion is always present in the dynamism of faith so catechesis must also perform the role of evangelization.
2. Faith is always a free response at each stage in its growth. Catechesis, therefore, is an on-going invitation and on-going assistance to the believer in keeping with the believer's maturity. It is never manipulation or coercion.
3. A person's faith develops to the degree that a person experiences a relationship to Jesus and the Father through prayer.
4. Catechesis involves awareness of a person's present stage of human maturity.
5. Catechesis must communicate God's revelation in forms that fit the person's stage of maturity.
6. Catechesis involves encouraging the acceptance of and response to God's invitation to friendship in ways that respect the person's limitations and preserve the person's freedom.
7. Catechesis embraces the whole person, his physical and emotional capacities, his intellectual capacities, his capacities to act freely.
8. Catechesis also embraces the person's full life-span from infancy to death.
9. Catechesis is concerned with understanding whatever affects the process of human maturing and the effective communication of God's revelation.
10. During infancy to early childhood (0-5) the primary concern of catechesis is to provide an overall environment which nurtures the develop-

- ment of self-acceptance, trust of others and personal autonomy.
11. Catechesis during childhood (ages 6-10) largely depends on what the child experiences in his or her relationship with others. Children at this stage can be introduced to the concepts, ritual expressions and practices of the faith relationship in a more systematic way. Teaching should be largely experiential and should relate the concepts introduced to the experiences provided.
12. Catechesis during puberty or pre-adolescence (10-13) takes into consideration that psychologically at this stage of growth children are incorporating their sexuality as male or female into their self-concept, and overall self-acceptance. Because of a maturing intellectual capacity it is possible to present and reflect on revelation in more formal ways, using concrete experiences, audiovisual aids, projects and field trips rather than abstract presentations.
13. During adolescence the person becomes more capable of spiritual insight into God's revelation of himself. More opportunities can be provided for systematic presentation and reflection on that revelation, the invitation it contains and the responsibilities a personal friendship with God places on the individual. The presentation and reflection should take place as much as possible in the form of concrete experiences requiring the person's direct participation, but reading and disciplined study are also appropriate.
14. During adolescence religious education becomes the process of helping persons of faith make life decisions, specifically in response to the call to make a decision to live a full Christian life.
15. Catechesis for early adulthood aims to assist persons to live out their life decision as expressions of their relationship to God and to prepare persons

- for and assist them through their personal crises of limits.
16. For the aging, catechesis aims to help persons understand and respond in faith to their experiences, and to help them give a creative response to physical suffering and death.
17. Catechesis gives special attention to conscience formation by helping persons to formulate norms for Christian living which are realistic for their particular stage of maturity. Catechists must be particularly sensitive to persons when they are going through critical transitions in the maturing process.
18. Catechists share in the responsibility for education in sexuality.
19. Special attention to the Church's mission to promote justice and peace is central to all adult education.
20. Methods used in catechesis for adults respect the adult status of the persons involved, their past experiences, cultural heritage, personal skills and other resources. Adult methodology is designed to help adults reflect on the meaning of their past experiences in the light of the Gospel, and to help them translate that reflection into means for coping with concrete problems and responsibilities.
21. Catechesis in a pluralistic society demands that all ethnic, racial, cultural, geographic, religious and ecclesiastical differences be recognized and respected.
22. Catechesis for special groups such as the handicapped, retarded, emotionally disturbed, etc., must be adapted to meet their special needs.
23. The specific catechetical program model chosen or developed must be adapted to the needs of the group as determined by age, ethnic or racial background, cultural lifestyle and special interests.

Chapter Seven: Growth in Faith

By Sister Michael Lappetito

Growth in Faith is the longest chapter in the proposed NCD and concerns itself primarily with the psychology of religious education and the general principles of religious education governing content, methodology and curriculum. The content, though extensive, offers little with which to quarrel seriously, outside of structural discontinuity with other chapters.

The chapter is divided into three main subdivisions, the first of which is the developmental character of faith. This section, itself, is introduced by a brief development of evangelization. The text of the chapter suggests the underlying rationale for including the introduction on evangelization in this particular place in the directory: "First, religious education proper is concerned with developing an existing faith. Being concerned here mainly with religious education proper, what is said about development of faith always presupposes a global adherence to Christ's Gospel as presented by the Church while it respects the fact that the element of conversion is always present in the dynamism of faith, and for that reason any form of catechesis (religious education) must also perform the role of evangelization."

The statement on evangelization is a good reminder to catechists, especially, that a student's level of belief will never reach its full capacity without the

In the box above is the synopsis of the seventh chapter of the proposed National Catechetical Directory as prepared by the directory staff. Diocesan officials will give a critique of each of the nine chapters of the directory weekly in the Courier-Journal. The seventh chapter is analyzed by Sister Michael Lappetito, diocesan director of Religious Education. Extra copies of the directory are available from the Office of Religious Education, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624. Any comments, suggestions or criticism also should be sent to that office.

continued challenge to grow in maturity and depth. However, the challenge must always be offered in the context of a personal relationship to a personal God.

Besides Chapter Seven, Chapter Four also addressed the question of pre-evangelization and evangelization. However, the combined efforts of both Chapters Four and Seven is an insufficient development of a topic so critical to the Church today. The rewrite of the directory certainly calls for an expanded development of this material. The reorganization of the proposed directory will have to settle the question of placement.

One of the strengths of Chapter Seven is its treatment of faith. In an older and more traditional definition, faith has been described as the "Church's understanding and explanation of what God has revealed." Catholics have spoken about the faith as a body of truths. And this is correct. However, statements of truth cannot precede and are not primary to man's relationship in friendship to a personal God.

Chapter Seven continues to

provide a balanced perspective for a clearer understanding of an otherwise complicated concept. Two more important aspects have been included in the definition of faith: its dialogical character and the element of freedom. "Faith is always a free response to God's grace at each stage in its growth. Religious education is never manipulation or coercion." Chapter Two on revelation unfolded the story of God's initiative, but neglected to point out man's ability to accept or reject God's initiative. Man's ability to accept or respect God's initiative is precisely man's exercise of freedom. Respecting man's freedom abounds with far-reaching implications for religious education. A simple

example translated into behavioral objectives is that a religious educator cannot force a young person or an adult into friendship with God, if that person is unwilling.

Too, there are other variables that can alter the quality of one's relationship with God besides the element of freedom. The maturity of the persons involved and the frequency and form of their communication with God can modify the quality of relationship. Taking into consideration the limitation of human nature, especially those failures that are the result of emotional or intellectual immaturity and the inability to make good choices, nevertheless, Christians should continue to trust in the strength of God's promises and aspire to further growth. It is important to point out once again, that growth is not dependent upon the amount of knowledge or information one has accumulated. Growth is dependent upon one's receptivity towards a personal God who is calling us to renewed greatness in liberty and truth.

Every parent and teacher should be urged to read the section in Chapter Seven on Stages of Human Development. No summary statement can be expected to adequately summarize a religious psychology of learning, but many points included in this subdivision should be encouraged. The development of good family relationships does affect a child's ability to grow in trust and develop a loving trust relationship with God. The importance of the presence of strong faith community in all stages of development from infancy to adulthood cannot be underestimated. Parents and teachers must learn to deal with exaggerated importance of peers in the life of an adolescent.

And it behooves adults to reflect on the statements relative to adulthood. There may be a "tongue in cheek" attitude present while pursuing the material but reviewing the content on "consolidation and crisis of limits" and "maturity and aging" is bound to strike a few personal chords.

CYO Workshop on Ghana

CYO worker Bob Laird and Father Laurence Tracy of Mt. Carmel Parish have worked together with Duah Agyeman to develop a workshop on Ghanaian culture. Agyeman, from Ghana, is attending St. Bernard's Seminary. He will be returning to his homeland after completing his studies for the priesthood.

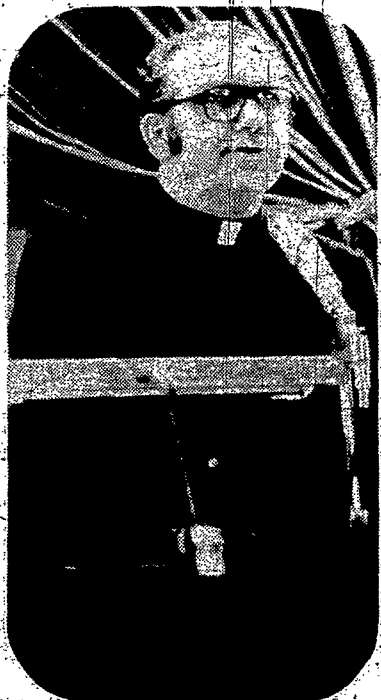
He is interested in black culture in America. During his stay so far, Duah has come to recognize some misconceptions by American blacks regarding African culture as well as African misconceptions about blacks here.

The workshops at various

gathering places of teenagers have been geared to promote understanding of African culture via small discussion groups and film presentations. Artifacts from Agyeman's personal possessions are displayed during the session. They include formal attire worn by members of the Ashanti tribe in Ghana for special occasions, a high school yearbook, and sample selections from recordings by Osibisa as examples of African music.

BAKE SALE

The Holy Apostles Rosary Society will sponsor a baked food sale after all Masses Sunday, April 20. Coffee will be served.



Knights Applaud Priests, Religious

Photos by Bruce Genet

In advance of the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, April 20, Joseph Fitzgerald, grand knight of Canandaigua Council, Knights of Columbus, gives Bishop Joseph L. Hogan \$1,200 to use in furthering vocations in this diocese. The gift was presented at a dinner the council gave April 8 in honor of the men and women following Church vocations in the Canandaigua area. About 35 priests and religious attended. Among the speakers was Father Gerald T. Connor, diocesan director of vocations (photo at left).