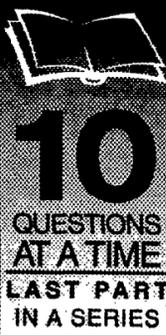


**EDITORS' NOTE:** This is the last in a series leading up to the catechism's publishing next week.

**CATECHISM**



• 41. Will the "people in the pews" receive any assistance in developing an understanding of the catechism's content?

The catechism "is intended primarily for bishops, as teachers of the faith and pastors of the Church." Therefore, the "people in the pews" can expect some assistance in the first place from their bishops. Many bishops are already incorporating the catechism into their teaching and preaching. Many are providing continuing education opportunities focused on the catechism for their priests, parish leaders, deacons, seminarians, teachers, catechists and faithful. In addition, many Catholic newspapers and periodicals are already offering their readers commentaries and guides for understanding the catechism.

• 42. How can the catechism be most effectively used by editors of catechisms and other catechetical materials?

Authors, editors and publishers of catechisms and catechetical materials should be guided by the catechism in the revision and improvement of catechetical materials. The content, plan and spirit of the catechism should shape the development of all future catechetical texts. Authors, editors and publishers of catechisms and catechetical materials should assist in the adaptation of the catechism's doctrinal presentations to the particular circumstances of those for whom catechetical texts are developed. Together with other catechetical documents within the church's magisterium, the catechism holds a privileged place in the formulation of catechetical materials. As the Holy Father has said, the catechism is a "sure and authentic source book for the teaching of Catholic doctrine and especially the composition of local catechisms."

• 43. How can the catechism be most effectively used by priests?

Since the catechism presents the content of the faith in a complete and organic summary, it is an invaluable pastoral resource for priests. It offers the church's teachings in a positive, expository manner avoiding argumentation or apologetic. As such it easily lends itself to use in teaching, counseling and preaching. For example, when the faithful seek responses to questions concerning doctrinal matters, the catechism is a user-friendly resource with its cross-referencing system and many indices. In addition, as doctrinal issues are suggested in the liturgical cycle of readings, the catechism can provide fertile background for the priest to address these issues directly in his homilies. Since seminarians can also benefit from the use of the catechism, they, too, should be encouraged to read and study it.

• 44. How can the catechism be most effectively used by catechists?

Catechists do not teach in their own names. Neither do they teach their opinions on doctrinal matters. Catechists teach in the name of Christ. In fact it is Christ who they teach. In light of this, catechists are teachers of the truths of the faith. The catechism provides them a handy reference work which could be used together with their catechist manuals for use in the preparation of lesson plans. Catechists will find the catechism to be a reliable and credible companion in their catechetical ministry.

• 45. How can the catechism be effectively used by all others responsible for catechesis?

While this part of the catechism's intended audience is indefinite, it would

seem that diocesan and parish educational and catechetical leaders would be included. The catechism provides a treasury of personal and professional resources for all those responsible for catechesis, especially those in leadership positions. Diocesan and parish educational and catechetical leaders, under the direction of the local bishop, could assist in the evaluation of catechetical materials based on the catechism.

• 46. How can the catechism be most effectively used by "all the faithful?"

Many Catholic adults are searching for a positive, coherent and contemporary statement of what the church believes and teaches. The new catechism provides such a statement in a comprehensive, yet summary format. Catholic adults should be encouraged to read and study the catechism. While private study of the catechism might fit most comfortably into the learning styles of some adults, most benefit greatly from organized discussion groups or study circles. Growth in the knowledge of the faith which one believes tends to deepen the quality of the faith by which one believes. Thus the catechism can be used by the faithful as an instrument for the wholistic maturation of their faith.

• 47. Why does the church need the catechism at this time?

The Second Vatican Council re-defined and re-affirmed the church's traditional teachings for the contemporary world. Just as in the cases of previous ecumenical councils, after the Second Vatican Council, there was a need to consolidate those teachings and represent them in a compelling and inviting way. In addition, today many people are looking for a clear and coherent presentation of the church's teaching. The catechism provides such an intelligent and complete presentation.

• 48. Will the catechism strengthen the church's bond of unity or cause division within the church?

The Holy Father has said that the catechism provides "the service of supporting and confirming the faith of all the disciples of the Lord Jesus, as well as to strengthen the bonds of unity in the same apostolic faith." The catechism sets forth what Catholics believe throughout the world without regard for their particular cultural situations. It seeks to foster the unity of the faith as it is lived distinctively throughout the universal

**Freedom faster**



AP/Wide World Photos  
Pro-democracy activist Chalard Vorachat drinks a glass of water outside the parliament building in Bangkok, Thailand, on June 10, marking the 17th day of his fast for a more democratic constitution.

church. In addition, the "In Brief" summaries especially offer a common language of faith for diverse believers to express and celebrate the one Catholic faith. The catechism has a great potential to diminish division within the church and draw believers closer to one another and to Christ.

• 49. What effect will the catechism have on church life?

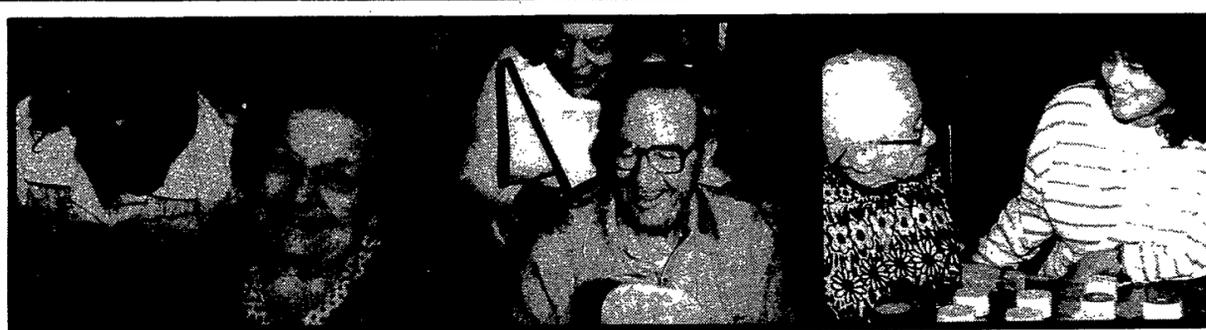
The catechism is an historic document which the Holy Father considers one of the most outstanding achievements of his pontificate. While its effects will be felt in every area of church life, they will be most profoundly felt in that dimension of the church's mission which is explicitly catechetical. The catechism will continue to encourage the renewal of catechetics which has been going on since before the Second Vatican Council. Preachers, teachers and catechists will depend on the catechism as a primary resource. Authors, editors and publishers of catechetical materials will look to the catechism as a touchstone and guide for the revision of their catechetical texts and materials. Pope John Paul II has said, "The catechism cannot be considered merely as a stage preceding the drafting of local catechisms, but it is destined for all the faithful who have

the capacity to read, understand and assimilate it in their Christian living."

• 50. Will the catechism assist the Holy Father in what he has called the "new evangelization?"

Yes. Pope John Paul II has termed the catechism, "an instrument for the new evangelization." The "new evangelization" which the Holy Father has consistently proclaimed involves both the transformation of contemporary culture and the personal, ongoing conversion of the individual believer. The new catechism presents the message of Christ in its entirety. It presents the message of Christ faithfully. It consistently offers the teachings of the church in relationship to the person of Christ who is at the heart of the church's beliefs. These three elements make up the energizing center of the "new evangelization."

The Holy Father has said, "The new evangelization, however, requires first of all a catechesis that, presenting the plan of salvation, can call people to conversion and to hope in God's promise on the basis of certitude about the true resurrection of Christ, the first proclamation and root of all evangelization, the foundation of all human development and the principle of every Christian culture."



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