

WORLD & NATION

Revisions alter death penalty, homosexuality views

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The definitive Latin edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church contains a hundred adjustments to the original text, including strengthening its position against the death penalty and changing the discussion of homosexuality to clarify that scientists still do not know its causes.

"I now entrust this definitive and normative text to the whole church," Pope John Paul II said during a Sept. 8 ceremony with cardinals and bishops officially promulgating the document.

In his official promulgation letter, the pope said the changes were among many suggested by Catholics worldwide and shows people's interest in the catechism.

Besides the expanded section on the death penalty, changes included:

- The addition of the identity and role of deacons in a section on the church's ministers.

- A clarification that it is the Catholic spouse in a mixed marriage who is obliged to continue practicing the faith and to take steps to ensure the couple's children are raised in the Catholic Church.

- An expanded section on the "precepts of the church," explaining the obligations of the Catholic faithful.

- Clearer presentations of liturgical and sacramental practices in the Eastern-rite churches.

- A more positive treatment of the morality of organ transplants.

- A change in the section on "the integrity of creation," specifying that experiments on animals should benefit human health in order to be morally acceptable.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and coordinator of the Latin revision, presented the text and its changes to journalists Sept. 9 at the Vatican.

The changes made during the drafting of the Latin edition also will have to be made in the translations into more than two dozen languages that already have been published, Cardinal Ratzinger said.

The most notable change to the text, first published in 1992, was the section on capital punishment, which was changed to reflect Pope John Paul's arguments against the death penalty in his 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*.

The 1992 catechism said, "The traditional teaching of the church has acknowledged as well-founded the right and duty of legitimate public authority to punish malefactors by means of penalties commensurate with the gravity of the crime, not excluding, in cases of extreme gravity, the death penalty."

At the same time, it said "bloodless means" that could protect human life should be used when possible.

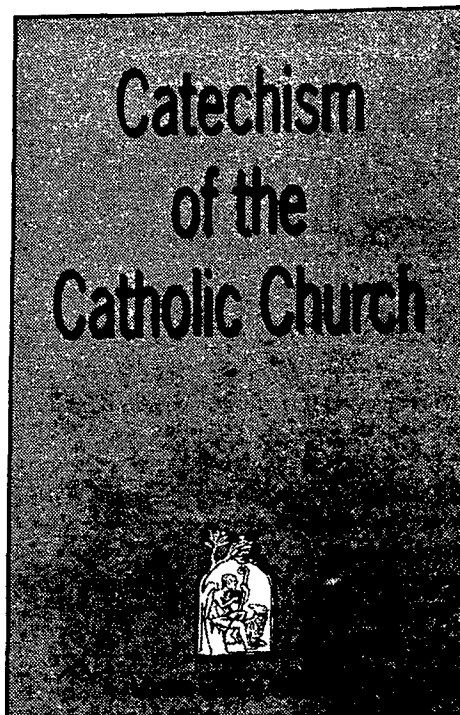
The new section specified that Catholic tradition has allowed for use of the death penalty only when the identity and responsibility of the condemned is certain and capital punishment is the only way to protect the lives of others.

But it added the judgment made by Pope John Paul in his 1995 encyclical that, with the resources and possibilities available to governments today for restraining criminals, "cases of the absolute necessity of the suppression of the offender are very rare, if not practically nonexistent."

Cardinal Ratzinger said the catechism invokes "principles which do not exclude absolutely capital punishment, but give very severe criteria" for its moral use.

"It seems to me it would be very difficult to meet the conditions today," he said.

Cardinal Ratzinger said he had not studied polls showing the majority of Catholics in the United States favor use of the death penalty, but Catholic support for capital punishment would not change the church's opposition to its use in almost every circumstance.



"While it is important to know the thoughts of the faithful, doctrine is not made according to statistics, but according to objective criteria taking into account progress made in the church's thought on the issue," he said.

The cardinal said the change in the section dealing with homosexuality was the result of "very deep study because there were two contrasting objections raised" against the original text.

The changed paragraph originally read: "The number of men and women who have deep-seated homosexual tendencies is not negligible. They do not choose their homosexual condition; for most of them it is a trial."

The new version reads: "The number of men and women who have deep-seated ho-

mosexual tendencies is not negligible. This inclination, intrinsically disordered, is a trial for most of them."

Especially in the first Italian edition, which used the word "innate" instead of "deep-seated," objections arose, the cardinal said.

"One objection was that we made people think homosexual tendency was innate, that it was already present at the moment of birth or conception of the person. Many competent experts said this has not been proven," he said.

Others, he said, thought the catechism left the origin — and therefore the basis for a moral judgment — of homosexuality too open.

However, he said, "the origin of homosexual tendency is under discussion."

The catechism recognizes that homosexual orientation is "deep-seated" in the individual's subconscious and "is not simply a matter of choice or will," he said.

At the same time, it makes clear the church's teaching that "homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered" because "they do not correspond to the fundamental tendency of sexuality which between a man and a woman is ordered toward the birth of children."

In accepting the first copy of the Latin edition, Pope John Paul said the catechism must become the reference point for all the church's activity, "especially at this time when one notes a strong and urgent need for a new missionary effort and a re-launching of catechesis."

He said that with the completion of the Latin edition, the catechism should be "better and more widely known, welcomed, spread and, above all, made a precious instrument for the daily work of pastoral activity and evangelization."

Thoughts to Consider



EDWIN SULEWSKI
Funeral Director

What are some ways to help a child who has lost a parent?

First it is important to make sure the child is honestly included in all information and planning. This means being honest about the death and answering the child's questions. It also means allowing but not forcing children to go the funeral or visitation as they wish. Secondly, a child needs love and security. Let a child know they will be cared for, take an interest in schoolwork and include them in play. Some children resent being pressured to accept burdens beyond their reach. "Taking over for Dad or Mom" may be too much responsibility. Naturally, changes will occur, but a child needs time and help in adjusting to them.

CALL AND ASK ABOUT OUR VIDEO TRIBUTE PROGRAMS
A video presentation of a life remembered.
A beautiful and tasteful visual memory and keepsake of your loved one.

We have a new organ and have remodeled.

SCHAUMAN-SULEWSKI FUNERAL HOME
2100 St. Paul St., Rochester, NY 14621
(716) 342-3400



Join
the Carmelite Friars
in Prayer as We Celebrate
the Closing of the Centennial
Year of St. Therese,
The Little Flower

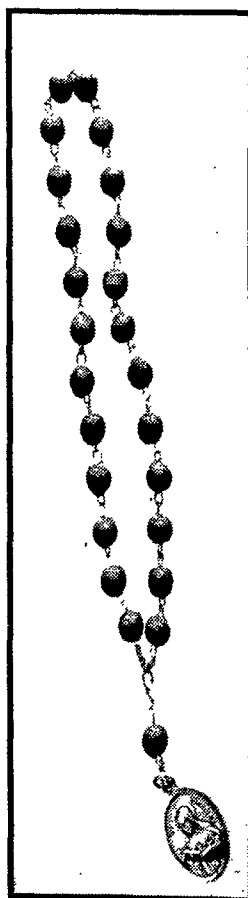
In joyful anticipation of the final Centenary Celebrations of the Little Flower's entry into heaven, we would like to include your needs in our prayers.

Please join us as we petition St. Therese during two Novenas of Masses from October 1-9th at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Basilica of St. Therese in Lisieux, France.

When you join us during this special time of prayer, you may want to honor and petition St. Therese by using the Little Flower Rose Petal Chaplet.

This unique blessed Chaplet is made of genuine rose petals which are compressed into beads. Each of the 25 beads (1 Our Father and 24 to represent each year of St. Therese's life) has the beautiful fragrance of roses... a wonderful reminder of the Little Flower. The Chaplet also has a silver-tone St. Therese medal and comes with an instructional prayer card.

The Little Flower Rose Petal Chaplet will be sent to our friends making an offering of \$12 or more to support Carmelite Ministry. Please check the appropriate box on the coupon to receive this beautiful gift.



Father Matthias, O. Carm.
National Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel™
P.O. Box 868 • Carmelite Drive
Middletown, NY 10940-0868
(914)344-0876 (Calling Hours: 8:30a.m. - 4:30p.m. EST M-F)

Dear Father Matt,
Please include my intentions in your devotions honoring St. Therese beginning October 1:

☐ I have enclosed an offering in support of Carmelite Ministry.*

[] \$12 [] \$20 [] \$50 [] \$_____

☐ My gift is \$12 or more. Please send me the blessed Rose Petal Chaplet. (The suggested offering is \$12 for each Chaplet requested.)

☐ Please send a FREE blessed Scapular.

Name _____

Address _____
(please print)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____

*Your gift is tax deductible to the extent of the law.

CC-TH-97