**Catechesis must be Nourished by the Word of God**

***By***

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If someone were to ask you; “what makes a good story?” a simple answer would be; “one that makes sense.” This response sounds reasonable enough, however another way of answering the question is that a good story is one that we want to be intimately associated with. We can relate to the characters in the story and thus figuratively place ourselves within the fabric of the story thus keeping all of our senses engaged until the very end. When we take the time to read this type of story it no longer becomes just a combination of words that make up sentences, instead it becomes in many respects a living reflection of who we are. The intention of the author is to draw us into his world as he sees it and this what we have in sacred Scripture, God’s desire to draw us into His world through His written Word.

If we take the time to meditate on the Word of God (Lectio Divina) we read over and over again God’s desire to communicate His love for us fully revealed in a most profound way through His Son Jesus Christ the Word made flesh. We are reminded that the whole of scripture is intended for God;

“. . . to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will (cf. Eph 1:9). His will was that men should have access to the Father through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit thus become sharers in the divine nature (cf. Eph 2:18; 2 Pet 1:4). By this revelation, then, the invisible God (cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tim 1:17), from the fullness of his love, addresses men as his friends (cf. Ex 33:11; Jn 15; 14-15), and moves among them (cf. Bar 3:38), in order to invite and receive them into his own company. This economy of Revelation is realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other.” [[1]](#endnote-1)

As catechists our relationship with Sacred Scripture should reflect a sense of nourishing our catechetical mission not only in what we teach but how we effectively witness the Gospel of Jesus Christ toward others. Catechesis cannot stand on its own merit without sacred Scripture as the driving force behind all of our instruction. Tradition, Scripture and the Magisterium, all three of which are closely connected, are each according to its own way the principal sources of catechesis.[[2]](#endnote-2)

“God in his greatness uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses events and words to communicate his plan and he does so progressively and in stages, so as to draw even closer to man. God, in fact, operates in such a manner that man comes to knowledge of his salvific plan by means of the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them.”[[3]](#endnote-3)

**Sustenance in the Word of God**

God revealed himself progressively to man, through the prophets and through the salvific events, until he brought to completion his self-revelation by sending his own Son . . . Jesus Christ who is not merely the greatest of the prophets but is the eternal Son of God, made man. He is, therefore, the final event towards which all the events of salvation history converge. He is indeed ‘the Father’s one, perfect and unsurpassable Word.[[4]](#endnote-4)

If God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth[[5]](#endnote-5) then His communication i.e. revelation to man becomes the cornerstone by which we teach fully revealed in Jesus Christ. The internal structure of catechesis is based on this understanding of the Word made flesh because Christ brought to fulfillment the Father’s plan to engage the world and bring humanity into full communion with Him. In other words God comes to meet us through His Son in order for us to be partakers of the Divine nature.[[6]](#endnote-6) Our source of spiritual nourishment rests on this Incarnational fact because our continuing call toward conversion reflects our intimate understanding of God communicating with us and in turn acting on His word through Christ and His Church. What this means is that our nourishment in the Word of God leads us our catechesis to emphasis the centrality of Christ which leads to a catechesis on the sacramental life where the aim is eternal life.

**The Nourishment of the Biblical Narrative**

Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted via Tradition and the Scriptures, for sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up the single sacred deposit of the word of God, which is entrusted to the Church.[[7]](#endnote-7) The content of our catechetical instruction is based on the natural use of sacred Scripture as a principle means of instructing the faithful. And this point is very important for catechists to know and understand because it is the speech of God reechoed in written form under the breath of the Holy Spirit; Sacred Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit.[[8]](#endnote-8)

If our emphasis is to hand on the teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church, then a good practical way of conveying this is thorough the use of a biblical narrative. A biblical narrative in short is a summary of salvation history through multiple excerpts from sacred Scripture. The aim of the biblical narrative is to convey a specific theme in Scripture God is communicating to us. In another way, the biblical narrative serves as a typological summary of seeing God’s love for us and connecting the events of history that brings us into a deeper understanding of His Divine Revelation e.g. the Holy Eucharist in Gen 14:18ff (Abram and Melchizedek; Ex 12 (the Passover); Mt 26:26-30 (the institution of the Holy Eucharist). In conclusion our catechetical mission is incomplete and spiritually malnourished without the Word of God as its source. Dei Verbum reminds us of this important facet as follows:

Sacred theology rests on the written word of God, together with sacred tradition, as its primary and perpetual foundation. By scrutinizing in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ, theology is most powerfully strengthened and constantly rejuvenated by that word. For the Sacred Scriptures contain the word of God and since they are inspired, really are the word of God; and so the study of the sacred page is, as it were, the soul of sacred theology. (3) By the same word of Scripture the ministry of the word also, that is, pastoral preaching, catechetics and all Christian instruction, in which the liturgical homily must hold the foremost place, is nourished in a healthy way and flourishes in a holy way.[[9]](#endnote-9)

1. DV 2 [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. GDC 96 [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. GDC 38 [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. GDC 41 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. 1 Tim 2:4 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. CCC 460 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. CT, 27 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. GDC 96 [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. DV 24 [↑](#endnote-ref-9)