

Empowered for Mission

**The Future of Evangelizing
Catechesis in Light of
New National Goals**

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1

Evangelizing Catechesis

An evangelizing catechesis seeks to deepen a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit

It proclaims the core message of the Gospel, the kerygma

It accompanies people to a response of faith and conversion to Christ

It provides a systematic exposition of God's revelation within the communion of the Catholic Church

It sends out missionary disciples as witnesses to the good news of salvation who promote a new vision of life, of humanity, of justice, and of human fraternity.



2

Encounter

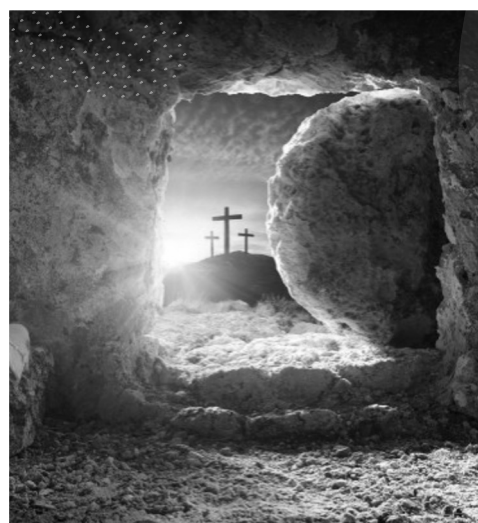
- *Encounter* is one of the most frequently used words in the *Directory for Catechesis*, appearing nearly 60 times
- Encounter with
 - Jesus
 - Scripture
 - the world community
 - Others in the catechetical process
- An initial encounter often begins with the three transcendentals



3

Kerygma

- Proclamation of the core of the Gospel message: “God loves you; Christ is your Savior; he is alive” (CV, 130).
 - “We must not think that in catechesis the *kerygma* gives way to a supposedly more “solid” formation. Nothing is more solid, profound, secure, meaningful, and wisdom-filled than that initial proclamation. All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the *kerygma*.”
- from the Preface to the *Directory for Catechesis*
- both initial and ongoing proclamation of the *kerygma*

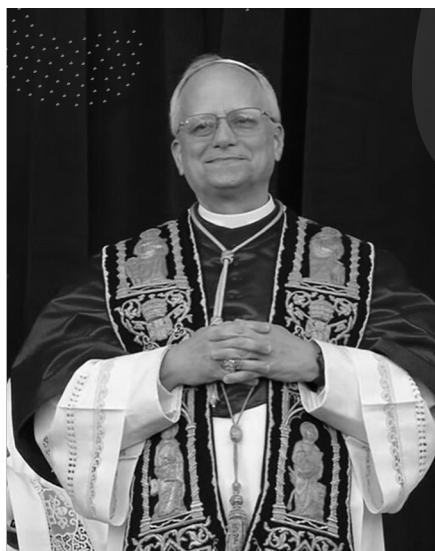


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From Pope Leo XIV

We are often preoccupied with teaching doctrine, the way of living our faith, but we risk forgetting that our first task is to teach what it means to know Jesus Christ and to bear witness to our closeness to the Lord. This comes first: to communicate the beauty of the faith, the beauty and joy of knowing Jesus. It means that we ourselves are living it and sharing this experience.

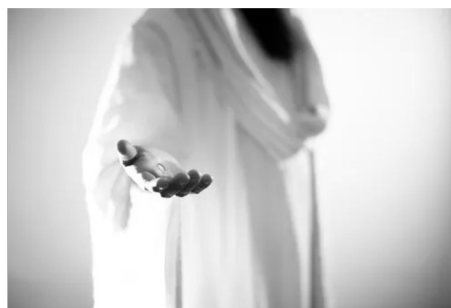
--from a 2023 interview with Vatican News



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Facilitating an Encounter with the Kerygma

- Proclaim the Gospel story often and offer an opportunity to respond to it.
- Offer your own personal witness.
- Three transcendentals
 - Truth
 - Beauty
 - Goodness



6



THE THREE TRANSCENDENTALS

- The classical philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, called truth, beauty, and goodness “the transcendental properties of being,” or the things that make us look outside ourselves towards something higher. These three transcendentals originate in God and lead us toward God. They are referenced in paragraph 172 of the *Directory for Catechesis*.
- “Think about this carefully: putting your stakes on the great ideals, the ideal of making a world of goodness, beauty and truth” –Pope Francis.
- “I affirm the path of truth and the path of beauty. But I also recommend, as a means of propagating the faith, the third of the transcendentals, namely, the good” – Bishop Robert Barron.



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Some Additional Ideas for Facilitating a Meaningful Encounter with Christ

- Talking about what it means to follow Christ, to be a disciple
- In catechetical sessions, asking ourselves, “Am I addressing the head *and* the heart?”
- Initiating participants into the practice of prayer, importance of adoration
- Thinking about our language – talking about our hunger, thirst, brokenness

8

Accompaniment

- “The catechist is an expert in the art of accompaniment, has educational expertise, is able to listen and enter into the dynamics of human growth, becomes a travelling companion with patience and a sense of gradualness, in docility to the action of the Spirit and through a process of formation helps [others] to mature in the Christian life and journey toward God.” (Directory for Catechesis, 113)
- “...this ‘art of accompaniment’ ... teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other. The pace ... must be steady and reassuring, reflecting our closeness and our compassionate gaze which also heals, liberates and encourages growth in the Christian life.” (The Joy of the Gospel, 169)



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Exposition

- Systematic
 - Hierarchy of Truths
 - Developmental Responsiveness
- God's Revelation
 - Sacred Scripture
 - Sacred Tradition
- “Within the Communion of the Catholic Church”



10

Missionary Discipleship

“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples”-
-*The Joy of the Gospel* (120).

“Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples”. If we are not convinced, let us look at those first disciples, who, immediately after encountering the gaze of Jesus, went forth to proclaim him joyfully: “We have found the Messiah! (Jn 1:41).” –*Joy of the Gospel*, 120.



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Catechists Help Learners Live as Missionary Disciples by

preparing learners to articulate their faith to others.

helping learners live the message they have received

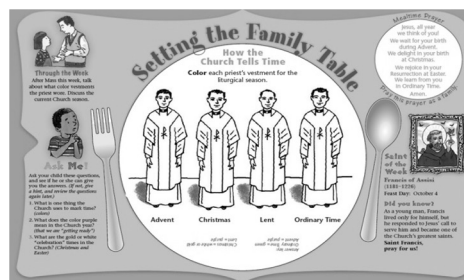
assisting parents in talking with their children about the faith.

giving families practical ways to live the faith in their daily lives.

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Sending Learners Forth

- Make the key concept the password.
- Give parents “ask me” questions.
- Provide simple, practical guides for families on practices that reflect Catholic Social Teaching.
- Offer families opportunities to participate in simple service projects.
- Name the gifts you see in your learners



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Question for Discussion

What will it take to implement the U.S. Bishops' vision of an evangelizing catechesis?



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The Mandate from the Subcommittee on the Catechism

Replace the previous
conformity protocol with
goals that go beyond
teaching doctrinal
concepts

- Cognitive
- Interior Life
- Behavioral

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A Major Change: Developmental Goals

Goals are developmental, and
are divided into three age
groups (same groupings at
Directory for Catechesis):

- Early Childhood (ages 3-6)
- Middle Childhood (ages 6-10)
- Preadolescents (ages 10-14)

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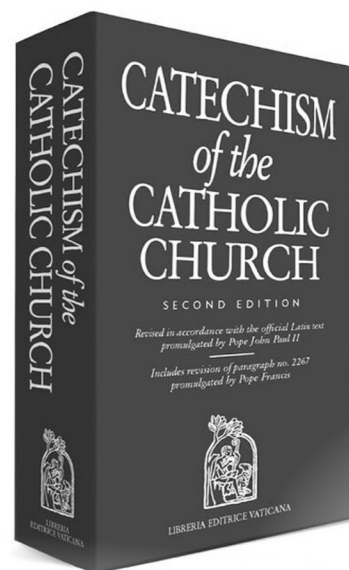
Another Major Change: Adult Goals

Goals for
parents/families

Goals for
catechists/teachers

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Organized According to the Four Pillars of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*



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Pillar I: The Profession of Faith

Faith and Reason

Divine Revelation

The Holy Trinity

Jesus Christ/Christology

The Church/Ecclesiology

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Pillar II: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (The Sacramental Life)

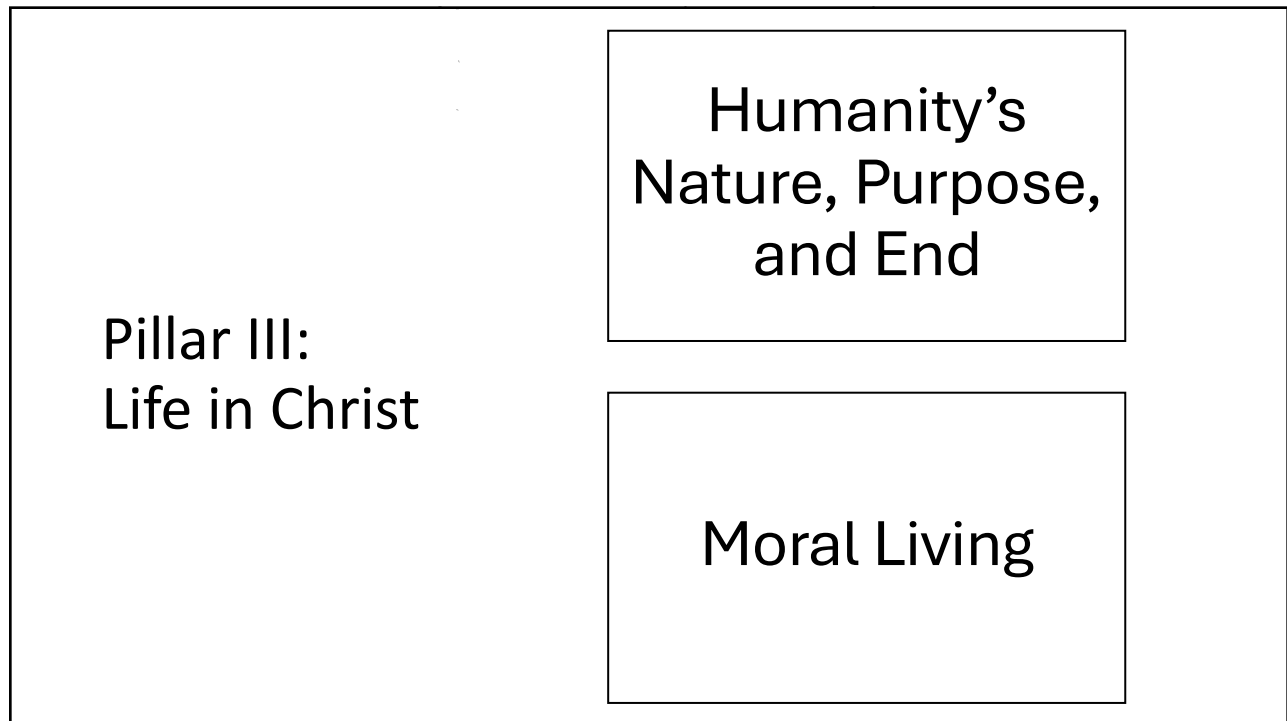
Celebration
of
Sacraments

Mass

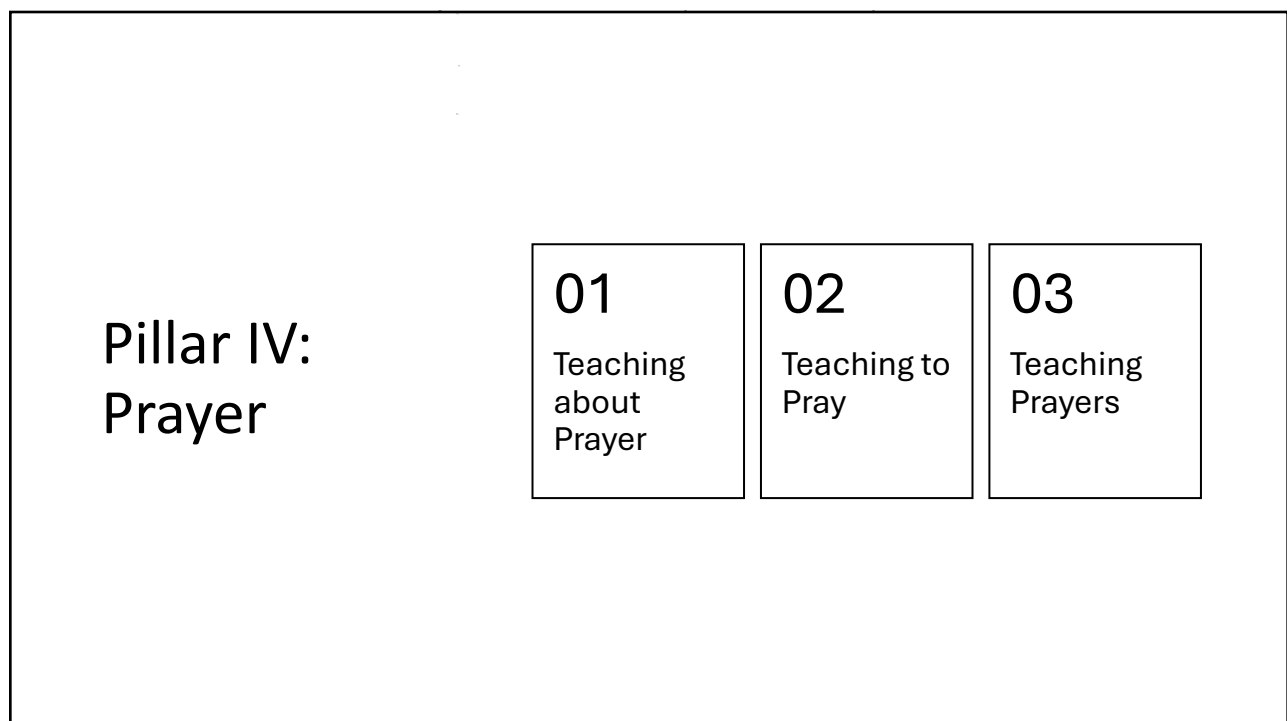
Liturgical
Year

Living the
Sacraments

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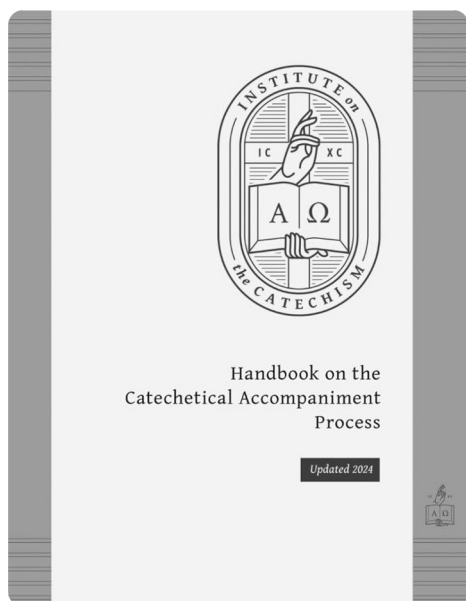
Using the Goals

With parents
and families

With
catechists
and teachers

With children

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Where to Find the Goals

- Available in printed form from Amazon.com
- Available in a pdf online: <https://www.usccb.org/committees/catechism/handbook-catechetical-accompaniment-process>

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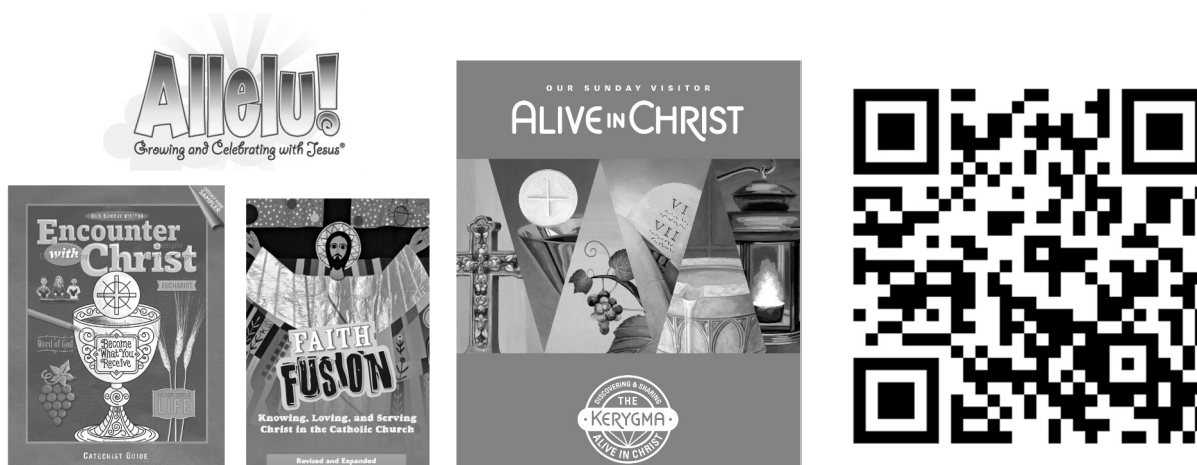
Question for Discussion

What ideas do you have for using the Handbook goals for parents and families and the goals for catechists? How might this be a resource for catechist formation and adult/family formation experiences?



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Order a Free Curriculum Sample



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