

Nativity Catechism in a Year

June Discussion Guide by Michael Sanem

(Covering sections 1122-1327, but addressing some previous sections not covered last month)

I. Last month, we finished the final part of the first major section of the Catechism, in which we outlined “the Faith Professed” as we made our way through the Apostles Creed. This month, we begin the second section that explains “the Faith Celebrated,” or, the faith as lived through the liturgical and sacramental life of the Universal Church. This section begins with an overview of the Sacramental Economy, which is the “communication of the fruits of Christ’s Paschal mystery in the celebration of the Church’s “sacramental liturgy. (1076). This liturgy is the work of the Holy Trinity, of the Father – the Source and Goal of the Liturgy, of the Son – who now acts through the sacraments he instituted to communicate his grace, and of the Holy Spirit – the teacher of faith of the People of God and the artisan of “God’s masterpieces,” the sacraments of the New Covenant.

- The catechism calls the Sacraments “God’s Masterpieces,” and confirms that they are the work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. How have you experienced this through your own experience of the sacraments?
- Reflect on the term “God’s Masterpieces.” Is there anything else in your life that could fit this description?
- How do the sacraments contribute to your spiritual life? How have Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Holy Orders, the Anointing of the Sick, or the Sacrament of Marriage transformed your life?

II. In the liturgy of the Church, it is primarily the Paschal Mystery of Christ’s life, death, and resurrection that is signified and made present: “His Paschal mystery is a real event that occurred in our history, but it is unique: all other historical events happen once, and then they pass away, swallowed up in the past. the Paschal mystery of Christ, by contrast, cannot remain only in the past, because by his death he destroyed death, and all that Christ is - all that he did and suffered for all men - participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all. the event of the Cross and Resurrection abides and draws everything toward life.” (1085)

- How have you experienced the Paschal Mystery in your own life? How has Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection affected you? How has this mystery “abided” for you?
- How has the liturgy been a place where you encounter Christ? Where do you experience God’s presence most intensely?

III. As the Catechism explains, there is an incredible richness and diversity in the church’s liturgical life, which is unified in the celebration of one Paschal Mystery: “From the first community of Jerusalem until the parousia, it is the same Paschal mystery that the Churches of God, faithful to the apostolic faith, celebrate in every place. The mystery celebrated in the liturgy is one, but the forms of its celebration are diverse. The mystery of Christ is so

unfathomably rich that it cannot be exhausted by its expression in any single liturgical tradition. The history of the blossoming and development of these rites witnesses to a remarkable complementarity. When the Churches lived their respective liturgical traditions in the communion of the faith and the sacraments of the faith, they enriched one another and grew in fidelity to Tradition and to the common mission of the whole Church. (1200-01).

- How have you experienced the richness and diversity of the Church's liturgical life? What moments of the liturgical year resonate most with you?

IV. This section then begins an overview of the three sacrament of initiation, namely, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. In the ancient church, these were all celebrated in a single liturgy, and today, we see this when we baptize an adult the Easter Vigil. Each one of these sacraments of initiation has a special meaning for us as we consider our calling to be Christians in the world, to love and follow Jesus and proclaim the Good News to all we meet. In fact, these sacraments "lay the foundation of every Christian life. 'The sharing in the divine nature given to men through the grace of Christ bears a certain likeness to the origin, development, and nourishing of natural life. The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthened in the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life. By means of these sacraments of Christian initiation, they thus receive in increasing measure the treasures of the divine life and advance toward the perfection of charity.'" (1212).

- Do you ever reflect on your own initiation into the Christian life of faith? Do you know the day of your baptism, or the day you received First Communion, or the day you were confirmed? Have you reflected on the grace and meaning of these sacraments in your own life or in the life of your loved ones?
- A good first step towards reflecting on this would be to read this section of the Catechism in its entirety, from paragraph 1210 to 1419. Perhaps that might be a good way to make your summer spiritually fruitful!

V. Next month, we will begin to discuss the sacrament of the Eucharist, which we will pay particular attention to as we begin the parish year of the Eucharistic Revival. You can find many ways to participate in this, including a Corpus Christi procession on June 11, on our revival website: <https://www.kcnativity.org/eucharistic-revival>

- I'd invite your group to consider how you can best contribute to this revival, both at Nativity and in your own life. Perhaps a group adoration hour? How can you enliven your faith and devotion to the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist?