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DISCIPLESHIP GOES BEYOND INFORMATION

Archbishop Samuel J. Aquila

What was it about St. Mother Teresa that gave her such broad appeal? Did she say something new about the Catholic faith, offer people some sort of entertainment, or appeal to them with her physical beauty? Anyone with even a superficial awareness of her life would know it was none of those things.

Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen vividly described the modern thirst for witnesses like Mother Teresa in his book, "Remade for Happiness." He wrote, "When you see people crowding into theatres, charging cocktail bars, seeking new thrills in a spirit of restlessness, you would conclude that they have not yet found pleasure, otherwise they would not be looking for it." One could easily add to this more modern distractions like texting, messaging friends on Snapchat, browsing Facebook, or watching the latest viral video.

The appeal of St. Mother Teresa to people of faith, and of no faith, was that she was a flesh and blood disciple of Jesus Christ. She helped restore meaning and a sense of purpose to both the volunteers who came to help her and to the sick and dying she served. In an age glutted with information but with few models for how to live, Mother Teresa showed people how to follow Christ. She fulfilled the truth of Blessed Paul VI's teaching in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (41), "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."

Her life, and the times we live in, present the clergy, catechists, and all lay Catholics with a particular challenge: to not just convey information but to transmit a way of life that connects people with the person of Jesus. We must realize that Jesus said, "Come follow me," and not "Come listen to me."



In some ways, we are in a similar situation to that of the early Church, when the Apostles and their successors focused on teaching people how to live, in addition to passing on the teachings of Christ. "The Didache," the first-century document believed to be written by the twelve Apostles, provides a good example of this. Throughout its sixteen chapters one finds instructions to the Christian community on how to respond to those who persecute you, what behaviors are sinful, how to discipline children, how to pray after

Communion, and how to offer hospitality to fellow Christians.

With our society awash in information, and families and relationships becoming more tenuous, Catholics must be present and ready to offer another way of living. In the words of Pope Francis, we must be willing and able to "accompany" those who are lost in a world that has rejected the existence of truth and God.

"Today more than ever," the Holy Father writes in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "we need men and women who, on the basis of their experience of accompanying others,

are familiar with processes which call for prudence, understanding, patience and docility to the Spirit, so that they can protect the sheep from wolves who would scatter the flock" (171).

The art of accompaniment begins with establishing a friendship that conveys to the person that they are loved and are made to love others. Without this foundation, the initial proclamation of the Gospel—that Jesus Christ loves them, died for them, rose from the dead, and desires a personal relationship with them—will likely fall on deaf ears. This is especially true for fallen away Catholics, who think they already know the faith and have rejected it.

However, forming missionary disciples cannot stop with authentic friendship and the kerygma. It must also answer questions like: "How do you pray? What is the meaning and purpose of sexuality? How do you live as a Christian in a secular society and workplace? How do you evangelize?" In the context of an authentic Christian friendship—much like the rabbi-disciple relationship of Christ's time—these essential aspects of being a missionary disciple can be meaningfully addressed and received.

In this way, missionary disciples are able to respond to what Lumen Fidei calls the loss of the "sense of God's tangible presence and activity in our world" (17) by testifying that they have encountered the love of God and that he has transformed their lives. To borrow from Pope Benedict XVI in *Deus Caritas Est*, their meeting with Christ "gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction" (1).

As the Church looks to transmit the joy of knowing Jesus to others, forming them into missionary disciples, let us be attentive to the profound hunger of so many for an authentic way of life that only Christ can give. theological virtues.

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Image from the Diocese of Westminster

CATECHESIS AS ENCOUNTER

By Hosffman Ospino

Catholics in the United States are currently engaged in a four-year process of reflection, evangelization, and consultation called the Fifth National Encuentro of Hispanic/Latino Ministry (from 2017 to 2020). At the core of this process is a catechetical model that builds upon the conviction that evangelization and catechesis must explicitly go hand in hand.



assess to what extent the conceptual framework of the New Evangelization applied to catechesis can lead to a renewed appreciation of this important ecclesial activity in Catholic faith communities. At the same time, the

process provides an occasion to take catechesis out of the "programmatic corner" where it dwells in many faith communities (e.g., pre-sacramental programs, "Sunday school") and reposition it into a more integrated role in the Church's wider evangelization efforts—a goal envisioned by most contemporary Church documents on catechesis but not always accomplished.

In this essay, I propose that a community's understanding of evangelization significantly influences how catechesis is conceived as well as the pedagogical and curricular commitments associated with it.

Catechesis and Evangelization

At the heart of the Church's evangelizing activity is the conviction that the encounter with God through the mystery of Jesus Christ has radical implications for the lives of every human person. Christians proclaim with joy and enthusiasm that salvation is real, that partaking in God's fullness of divine life in the here and now of our history—and beyond—is not just wishful thinking. Evangelization is ultimately the witness of the

community of Christian disciples who have experienced the transforming power of God's merciful love and, moved by the fire of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, desire others to do likewise.

The Church "exists in order to evangelize"¹ and catechesis is a privileged activity to facilitate this experience. Catechetical leaders are most likely familiar with the stages of the process of evangelization. The *General Directory for Catechesis* summarizes them in the following way:

The process of evangelization, consequently, is structured in stages or "essential moments": missionary activity directed toward non-believers and those who live in religious indifference; initial catechetical activity for those who choose the Gospel and for those who need to complete or modify their initiation; pastoral activity directed toward the Christian faithful of mature faith in the bosom of the Christian community.²

It is vital to stress that catechesis is not just an isolated moment in this process (e.g., sacramental preparation), but it is intimately intertwined in all aspects and moments of the evangelization process. Catechesis is at the heart of the original proclamation, essential to prepare for Christian initiation, and vital to sustain the ongoing formation of the Christian disciple.³ Needless to say, evangelization relies significantly on good quality catechesis.

To appreciate the evangelizing nature of catechesis, we need to have a good sense of what we mean when we say *evangelization*. Even though Catholics use the term on a regular basis, it is not surprising to encounter a wide array of interpretations. The point here is not to imply that there is only one way of speaking about evangelization but to affirm the timeless core principles when describing this important reality. The evangelizing experience is rich and abundant enough to inspire a significant number of appropriations. Yet we need to be attentive not to reduce evangelization to, say, mere indoctrination, a political agenda, or an exercise of pastoral maintenance.

Looking at Evangelization with Renewed Eyes

A community's understanding of evangelization significantly influences its conception of catechesis as well as the pedagogical and curricular commitments associated with it. Pope Francis provides us with a compelling framework to speak about evangelization in his Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*. Three

insights (of many more!) are worth highlighting for the sake of our discussion.

First, evangelization is a joyful experience. Such joy is the result of a transforming encounter with the Lord: "The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus."⁴ The joy of this encounter propels the Christian disciple to go to the encounter of others, to share what she has experienced.

Second, evangelization has an intrinsic missionary character. When the Church evangelizes, it does it as a community of missionary disciples that go forth: "Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel."⁵

Third, evangelization demands that we enter into the lives of the people with whom we share the Good News, with words and actions. Evangelization is a deeply personal and relational experience: "To be evangelizers of souls, we need to develop a spiritual taste for being close to people's lives and to discover that this is itself a source of greater joy."⁶ Evangelization from this perspective challenges us to engage our sisters and brothers, regardless of their background, in the here and now of their existences, affirming their dignity as human beings and children of God, recognizing their potential to achieve fulfillment, and acknowledging the complexity of their lives.

These characteristics of evangelization call for a catechesis that is joyful, missionary (i.e., that goes forth; unafraid of going to the peripheries), and profoundly relational. Catechesis must be an experience of encounter.

Catechesis as Encounter

We find ourselves with an invitation to creatively imagine a catechesis that is grounded in a double experience of encounter. On the one hand, we have the foundational encounter between God and humanity, within which the vocation of the Christian disciple is rooted and continuously discerned. On the other, we have the intentional encounter with our sisters and brothers in our own immediate contexts and realities, families, and faith communities—with particular attention to those who live in material and existential peripheries.

Although we can envision catechesis as a helpful “means” to facilitate this double experience of encounter, the catechetical experience is much more! In other words, as an integral aspect of the evangelization process, catechesis needs to be more than just an “instrument” to facilitate encounter. Catechesis is in itself an experience of encounter. Something unique, profound, and transforming takes place in the catechetical experience.

If catechesis as encounter is rooted in the dynamic understanding of evangelization just described, then we need a methodology that gives it life. Pope Francis names five moments that identify the evangelization process, which can be perfectly embraced as a methodological pathway for catechesis: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.”⁷

The five moments are very clear: 1) take the first step, 2) get involved, 3) accompany, 4) bear fruit, and 5) rejoice!

A catechesis intentionally incorporating these five moments has a unique potential to renew how we introduce Catholics, especially the younger generations, to the Good News and the richness and beauty of the Catholic Tradition. At the same time, it is a catechesis that summons Christians to genuinely and respectfully engage the experience of others as it unfolds in the complexity of the everyday.

A catechesis that takes the first step demands that Christian disciples go out to encounter their sisters and brothers in the faith in the contexts of where they live instead of waiting for them to come to our churches or schools or catechetical programs. Taking the first step means that catechists need courage to go to places where people live and work to engage them in conversation about their faith. Catechists need to go to the corners of society where our young people spend their time, including those that we often ignore or dismiss because we find them threatening. Catechists need to be present in the complex and fast-changing world of social media. Catechists need to go to the neighborhoods and communities where millions of Catholic immigrants live. Catechists need to reach out to Catholics who drifted away or became disenchanted about their faith—and very often about the world and its institutions. Catechists need to go to the peripheries of Church and society where many find themselves abandoned, alone, forgotten, rejected. Taking the first

step is an invitation to decentralize catechesis; that is, to go from one to multiple centers, to go where God’s people are and share the Good News with them. That first step is in itself an experience of encounter.



Getting involved through the catechetical experience is about daring to ask our sisters and brothers how they are doing, to discover their sorrows and anxieties, their dreams and aspirations, and then helping them to connect these realities to the best of our Christian tradition. No one comes into the catechetical experience as a blank slate. We bring who we are: our cultural background, biases, struggles, experiences, values, etc. To get involved is a reminder that people come into the catechetical experience as flesh-and-blood persons, with real stories, with many questions, hoping with restless hearts to encounter the God of Revelation who understands who they are. So does the catechist. To speak of catechesis as encounter is to take seriously the experience of being human. God does.

Catechesis as encounter is a unique opportunity to accompany our sisters and brothers on their life and faith journey. We need catechists who are true models of Christian accompaniment. The catechetical experience should introduce Catholics to the many ways in which God walks with us in history. Many examples in the Scriptures and Tradition illustrate this. As we catechize, people should experience the depth of God’s presence and love as we walk with them. Our U.S. society invests much on the idea of result-based educational efforts that can be measured. Such drive often permeates some of our catechetical efforts. Of course, accompaniment requires some expectations, yet we cannot fail to remember that faith is a lifelong journey. The catechist needs to be a companion without an unbending timeline. Catechesis is more than a mere program.

The catechetical encounter compels the community of believers to affirm the potential of every baptized person to bear fruit in light of their identity and dignity as children of God. Catechists are to cultivate the seeds of the Word that God has planted in people's hearts so they can bear fruits of new life, individually and communally. Catechists bear the responsibility to assist their sisters and brothers identifying their potential, discerning the charisms that the Spirit has given to them, and pointing to ways in which those gifts can bear fruit for the good of all. In essence, catechesis as encounter is a ministry of empowerment. When catechesis takes place in the material and existential peripheries that many people inhabit, empowerment becomes healing and restoration, a taste of the resurrection here and now.



As the encounter with the Gospel engenders in the heart of the baptized person the desire to share the faith with joy, the catechetical experience is to inspire and encourage the celebration of such faith in the everyday. The liturgy remains the locus par excellence where the Christian community celebrates the joyful encounter with the Gospel. Thus, catechesis as encounter is intimately linked to the Church's liturgical life. This drive to celebrate—certainly a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian person and in the community—is also expressed through popular Catholicism and other ways of ritualizing the Christian experience. Catechesis, then, is to cultivate the celebratory aspect of the faith as a way to actualize the joy of being missionary disciples.

Conclusion

Every period in the history of Christianity has called for approaches to evangelization that respond to the needs and realities of people in a particular place and time. The way communities define evangelization usually shapes how they conceive catechesis as well as the pedagogical and curricular commitments associated with it.

In this article, I have briefly outlined an understanding of catechesis rooted in a vision of evangelization that is profoundly joyful, missionary, and relational. Much more needs to be said about it. Such catechesis implies a methodological pathway that involves five moments: 1) taking the first step, 2) getting involved, 3) accompanying, 4) bearing fruit, and 5) rejoicing. Each moment introduces a unique quality that underlines the potential of catechesis to shape the identity of the baptized to live and act as missionary disciples. These methodological presuppositions reveal not merely a catechesis that facilitate an encounter with God and with others, but a catechesis that is in itself an *encounter*.

The implementation of this catechetical vision in Catholic faith communities engaged in the V Encuentro process throughout the United States will definitely test its feasibility and ideally stimulate further reflections about contemporary catechesis. In the context of a culturally diverse church and the rise of secularizing attitudes in our society, this is a much needed conversation.

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¹ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, n. 14. See also Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, art. 133.

² Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, art. 49. See also Pope St. John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, art. 18; *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, art. 17.

³ Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis*, arts. 61-76.

⁴ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, art. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, art. 20.

⁶ *Ibid.*, art. 268.

⁷ *Ibid.*, art. 24.

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FIVE WAYS PSYCHOLOGY CAN INFORM CATECHESIS

By Joseph D. White

As a Clinical Child and Family Psychologist who works primarily in the field of catechesis, one particular interest of mine is the integration of what both faith and science tell us about the human person. In secular society, and even among some individuals in the Church, there is the misconception that science and faith are somehow incompatible. However, some of the greatest minds both in science and religion have disputed this assumption. For example, Albert Einstein famously said, "A legitimate conflict between science and religion cannot exist. Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind."¹ Similarly, in a letter to Director of the Vatican Observatory Reverend George V. Coyne, S.J., St. John Paul II wrote, "Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish... We need each other to be what we must be, what we are called to be."²

Christians have viewed the field of psychology with skepticism from its very beginning. After all, Sigmund Freud, considered by many to be the founder of psychology, called religion "an illusion."³ But as the field of psychology has grown and its methods have improved, many have found it to be more and more compatible with Christian thinking. In fact, what we find by science to be true about the human mind and human emotion would necessarily have to be compatible with our faith, since God himself created us to think and to feel.

Using what we know about how people think, feel, and behave can make us more effective in faith formation. The following is a discussion of five pressing questions in the field of catechesis that may be answered, at least in part, by research in the social sciences.

1. How can we get our learners to pay better attention in faith formation sessions?

Scientists studying the brain have determined that attention processes take place primarily in the prefrontal cortex of the brain, located just behind our foreheads. The prefrontal cortex is like the CEO of the brain, responsible for what we call "executive functions." It is the last part of the brain to finish growing; although it is present early in life, it is not completely finished growing until the early twenties.



Current research on attention span tells us three important things we can use in our work as catechists. First, attention span is about equal to age in minutes, up to the early twenties (when the prefrontal cortex is fully grown). That means if we try to deliver a 10 minute talk to a group of second graders, almost every one of them will have tuned us out after 7 or 8 minutes!

A second body of research indicates that attention spans are on the decline in our country. This is most likely due to two things: the growth of technologies that adversely affect brain development (see the work of Dr. Clifford Nass at Stanford University for more about this) and a push for more academic approaches to educating preschool and kindergarten students. Research indicates that the latter actually harms their intellectual development, since an overly academic approach to early childhood education may inhibit brain structures that are dependent for their development upon social interaction and child-directed play.

Thankfully, a third line of research in attention is more hopeful for those of us who work with young learners: Science indicates that involving multiple senses in learning actually "resets" the attention clock. For example, if we are telling a story to a group of young learners and we introduce a new visual aid or have them move around, they will pay more attention to the material we are presenting. Additionally, the more

active learners are in the learning process, the better they pay attention and the more they remember.

2. Why can't we get families engaged in religious education?

I hear this question perhaps more than any other from catechists and catechetical leaders. The key to answering this question, I believe, is more attention to the developmental stages of family life. It's a truism to say everything changes when you have a child. The things couples do, the places they go, the people they spend time with—everything is rearranged and restructured when the first child is born.

Unfortunately, we often provide little for families between baptism and the sacramental years. At precisely the time that people are ready and willing to completely restructure their priorities and rearrange their lives, the parish often has little to offer. What if we saw baptism as an evangelization moment, a time to partner with parents, to take them by the hand and walk with them? Fewer people live close to extended families than in previous generations. Many parents are seeking community and support in these early parenting years. When they don't find it at the parish, they find it elsewhere—among the other families at the preschool, ballet classes, etc. By the time we see the families again in elementary school, their plates are full and there is little time to engage with the parish. What if the parish functioned as an extended family? What if families were actively involved from baptism on? Then it wouldn't be a struggle to get mothers and fathers engaged in elementary school; they would already be engaged.

3. How can we deliver catechesis that is both rich in content and developmentally-appropriate?

One key to formulating a curriculum in any subject matter is knowing “when” to teach “what.” Our knowledge of brain development, structure, and function has exploded over the past few years. We can use what we know about how the brain grows to deliver the right content at the right time. Child development research tells us that children and teens are most engaged in the material when they are just ready to master it with some support. If we present it too early, they might be frustrated and turned off. If we present it too late, they lose interest because it's not challenging enough. Paying attention to what's happening in brain development can help us present particular topics in religious education precisely at the right moments.

Here are a few examples: The attachment and relationship area of the brain is growing at its fastest in

the first five to six years of life, so preschool and kindergarten is an ideal time to focus faith formation around forming an attachment to Jesus and the parish community. In first and second grade, the rapid growth of the cerebral cortex provides an excellent opportunity to learn new vocabulary, facts about the faith, and the steps of our sacramental rites. In third grade, children have entered what social developmental theorist Harry Stack Sullivan called the “chumship” stage—when peer relationships increase in importance and children often have “best friends.” This is an ideal time to ask learners to work together in pairs or small groups and to talk about what it means to be a Christian community. In fourth grade, children are beginning to internalize standards of behavior. This is the beginning of a process in which external “rules” become internal morals and values. It's important to revisit conscience formation at this stage, as children will understand the Beatitudes, the Commandments, and other foundational moral principles in a different light. In fifth grade, children are beginning to have a better understanding of signs and symbols, so a review of the Seven Sacraments is appropriate.



Fifth grade also presents us with another important developmental window. There are two ages when science tells us children are most likely to think about their future “adult selves.” One is age 17, which is no surprise, since our culture defines adulthood as age 18. The other age might be more surprising—age eleven. At this time, children are experiencing a major physical growth spurt, and they can't look in the mirror without

realizing they won't be children forever. As they realize they are becoming young men or women, they naturally ask themselves, "What kind of man or woman will I be?" Age 11, then, is an important time to talk about vocations—not only Sacraments at the Service of Holy Communion, but also vocations with a small "v." Children should be encouraged to ask God about his plan for their lives, and to begin discovering the answer through their interests and talents, opportunities, and learning about the faith.

Beyond the elementary years, children grow in their abstract reasoning ability and reading skills, thus providing opportunities for more study of Sacred Scripture. They also continue to develop their identity as young adults and members of a community, so both discipleship and Christian community become important topics to learn and experience.

Paying attention to the development of our learners helps us form them in the most effective and efficient way. It also helps us to foster the relationship so important in any catechetical process. When we meet learners where they are, we have the opportunity to accompany them on the path to discipleship.

4. How can we prevent risky behavior in adolescents?

Recent research points to two important ways to prevent risky behavior—such as drug and alcohol use and sexual activity—among teens. One is as simple as the family meal. A body of research by the Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University shows that teens who have at least 5 to 7 meals per week with their families (vs. 2 or fewer) are much more likely to have higher grades, higher self-esteem, lower incidences of depression and suicide, lower rates of substance abuse, and many other positive outcomes. Another line of research helps us better understand how to help adolescents make responsible choices. Our default position has sometimes been to emphasize the bad things that could happen if teens make poor choices. However, teens often have a sense of invincibility. If we say, "9 out of 10 people die from this," they might be inclined to think, "I'll be the one to survive." A highly publicized study by Jemmott, Jemmott, & Fong from University of Pennsylvania and University of Waterloo in Ontario⁴ found that programs for prevention of risky behaviors are more effective when they are goal-focused, encourage critical thinking, and allow group discussion of the issues involved.

5. How can we provide teens with good examples to follow?

You might have noticed that television commercials for children's toys often feature children who appear to be too old to be playing with the toy being advertised. This is not an accident. Marketing executives know that research shows children are most likely to emulate a model who is just a little older, since they see this older child as being relatable and also more competent and mature. This points to the power of young saints as examples for children and teens. Learning the stories of saintly young people like St. Dominic Savio, St. Therese of Lisieux, Blessed Jose Sanchez del Rio, St. Clare, and Blessed Francisco and Jacinta of Fatima can help to impress on our youth that God calls them to be saints *right now*. Through these examples, they learn the power and beauty of the Christian life fully lived. Of course, the living examples of important people in the child's life are equally important, beginning with parents, older siblings, teachers, youth ministers, and catechists.

Psychology, like all the sciences, provides us with knowledge about the world and about ourselves. As believers, we must never fall into *scientism*—the idea that all truth is revealed through science alone—but we should make good use of the knowledge gained through science, especially where it points us to more effective ways of sharing the light of faith.

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¹ Albert Einstein, *Science and Religion*, printed in A. Einstein *Ideas and Opinions* (Crown, New York 1954,) pp.44-49 quote on p.46.

² Pope John Paul II, Letter to Reverend George V. Coyne, S.J., Director of the Vatican Observatory, June 1, 1988.

³ The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (2012). "The Importance of Family Dinners VIII: A CASA Columbia White Paper": New York: Columbia University.

⁴ Jemmott, J.B., Jemmott, L.S., & Fong, G.T. (2010). Efficacy of a theory-based abstinence-only intervention over 24 months: A randomized controlled trial with young adolescents. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 164, 152-159.

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HOW MANY DIFFERENT WAYS DO YOU WANT ME TO COMMUNICATE WITH PARENTS?

By Peggy Schoenfuss

We've all been there: we sent something home with students and got no response. Or maybe since it was really important we put it in the mail. But still nothing. What can we do to be more effective?

In order to reach the parents of our students we need to use multiple methods of communication. Those traditional means just aren't cutting it. So we might call them, email them, or even text them, but still, we get frustrated that we do not get any response or get very few to volunteer for anything. In order to understand how to communicate, we first need to understand, in general terms, who the parents are.

Here is a quick review of the generations that will help us understand the parents of the students we work with. This chart helps us to begin to identify some generational differences.

As you can see, there is very little that is consistent throughout each parent generation. So how do you communicate simply and clearly?

Find out who your parents are. Ask them how they want to receive information from you. If they want to be communicated with in a variety of different ways you can use a platform that can post to multiple locations at one time – IFTTT, Buffer, Flow, Tumblr, Instagram. Studies have shown that older generations will adapt to communications styles of younger generations, but not necessarily vice versa. Just think about the grandma who goes on Facebook to keep track of her grandchildren. She has adapted to a younger generations communication style.

Realize though that no matter how you send the information to your students' parents, they are going to look at it quickly and probably forget about it. It's important to send lots of reminders if you don't want them to forget something. Also, make sure you use a lot of visuals and keep the message brief. No one is going to read it if it's too much information!

It has been proven that video – in very short clips – is the most popular way to communicate with younger adults. Consider sending out a short video through a private YouTube account to get your message to the parents – it doesn't have to be fancy! If you have to send anything via old fashioned paper, make sure it is short and sweet – and put it on a really bright color so it doesn't get lost in the child's backpack or put it in the garbage before the child leaves the classroom. Almost 95% of all adults (and youth) have a cell phone. It is their lifeline to the world. It should be the lifeline to your part of their world.

In the end, for the most important things, there will never be a substitute for personal interaction. Many of our parish catechists and teachers are parents who know the parents of the kids in your religious education or school classes. Reach out to them personally! Be courageous – talk to them about the Faith outside of the parish or school. Invite them to participate in parish activities when you interact with them at sporting events and other school activities. Tell them how being active in the parish has made a difference in your life. Sell it with your own personal testimony!

If you'd like your question answered, please contact gbusse@catholicdos.org.

	Baby Boomers about 1946-1964 <i>There's a few of these parents out there.</i>	Generation X/ Baby Bust about 1965-1979	Generation Y/ Millennials/ Gen Next about 1980-1994	iGen/Gen Z about 1995-2012 <i>Very few if any of this generation are our parents yet (more likely our students)</i>
Age range in 2018	54-72	39-53	24-38	6-23
Views toward education	Value freedom of expression	Pragmatic	Everyone, including teachers, should be held accountable for what is learned	"My phone is not just a phone, it is a hand held computer and I can access all the information I need"
What technology do they use best to communicate?	Prefer face-to-face and telephone but are okay with email and snail- mail	Believe email is the most efficient way to go but will also use instant messaging	See email as archaic and prefer texting, instant messaging, Twitter, and Facebook	The older iGens prefer texting, Facebook, and Instagram. The younger iGens prefer Snap Chat and Facetime



Saint in the Spotlight

St. José Sánchez del Río

"I will never give in. Viva Cristo Rey!"

Born: March 28th, 1913 Sahuayo, Mexico

Died: February 10th, 1928 Sahuayo, Mexico

Feast Day: February 10th

"I will die happy because I die on the side of our God."

-Written while in prison four days before his death in a letter to his mother.

José Sánchez del Río died before he could celebrate his fifteenth birthday. His story is not that of a typical teenager. During his lifetime a severely anti-Catholic government took power in Mexico. Religious Orders were outlawed, priests were denied the ability to exercise their ministry, and churches were confiscated. Resistance to these laws was met with imprisonment and death.

José was part of a vibrant Catholic family who raised him and his brothers to deeply love their faith. In 1926 the Cristero War began as a response to the increasing persecution of Catholics in Mexico. Both of José's older brothers joined the newly formed army as a way to fight for religious freedom. José also wanted to join, but initially his mother refused to let him go because of his age. In the end his persistence and faith eventually convinced her. He is said to have told her "Mama, do not let me lose the opportunity to gain heaven so easily and so soon."

During his time with the Cristeros, José served as the flagbearer for his troop. During a battle on January 25, 1918 José's general's horse was killed and he was unable to get away. José gave the general his own horse, allowing him to escape while José stayed and was captured by government troops.

The local government had turned the parish church into a prison and it was there that they brought José. The leaders tried everything in order to turn José away from the Cristero cause and the Catholic faith. They offered him freedom and a prestigious future. Next they tried intimidation as they forced him to watch the execution of a fellow Catholic. José showed them how futile this was as he instead encouraged the man about to be killed, by telling him that they would soon meet again in heaven. The government then resorted to violence. They cut the bottoms of his feet and

forced him to walk barefoot all the way to the local cemetery, stabbing and cutting at him the entire way. Instead of renouncing his faith, José reaffirmed his devotion to Christ the King and Our Lady of Guadalupe. Once they arrived at the cemetery, José was shot by the soldiers.

José was canonized by Pope Francis on October 16, 2016 and named as a patron saint of adolescents. His official canonization portrait portrays both his youth and his courage in the face of persecution.

St. José is just one of many heroes of the faith that were a part of the Cristero movement in Mexico. St. John Paul II canonized 25 others on May 21st, 2000.





MARK your CALENDAR

Principal Meetings

March 2, 2018, Video Conference
April 17, 2018, Bishop Hammes Center, Haugen
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

Youth Rally

March 21, 2018, St. Francis Xavier, Merrill
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

Chrism Mass

March 20, 2018, Cathedral, Superior

High School Discipleship Training

April 6-8, 2018, Crescent Lake, Rhinelander
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

School MAP Testing Windows

April 16 - May 11, 2018
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

Professional Development Days

April 24, 2018, St. Joseph Parish Center, Hayward
"Serve, Lead, Motivate"
Contact: Chris Newkirk, cnewkirk@catholicdos.org

SUMMIT

May 17, 2018, St. Joseph, Rice Lake
Contact: Kay Berg, dreyouth@smctomahawk.com

New Teacher Retreat

May 8, 2018, Location TBD
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

NCCL Convention

May 30- June 2, 2018, Chicago, IL
Contact: Peggy Schoenfuss, pschoenfuss@catholicdos.org

Extreme Faith Camp

May 6, 2018 Extreme Team Required Training
June 10-15, 2018 Crosswoods, Mason
June 17-22, 2018 Crescent Lake, Rhinelander
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

Totus Tuus

June 10-15, 2018 Cathedral, Superior
June 17-22, 2018 St. Joseph, Hayward
June 24-29, 2018 St. Francis de Sales, Spooner
June 24-29, 2018 St. Joseph, Rice Lake
July 8-13, 2018 Our Lady of Sorrows, Ladysmith
July 8-13, 2018 Holy Rosary, Medford
July 8-13, 2018 St. John the Baptist, Glenwood City
July 15-20, 2018 St. Anthony, Park Falls
July 15-20, 2018 St. Mary, Tomahawk
July 15-20, 2018 Holy Family, Woodruff
July 22-27, 2018 St. Peter the Fisherman, Eagle River
July 22-27, 2018 St. Francis Xavier, Merrill
July 29- Aug. 3, 2018 Our Lady of the Lake, Ashland
July 29- Aug. 3, 2018 St. Patrick, Hudson
Contact: Christopher Hurtubise, churtubise@catholicdos.org

PCL Conference

August 19-21, Amerivu Hotel, Rice Lake
Contact: Grace Busse, gbusse@catholicdos.org

Orientations

New Principal

August 8, 2018 Bishop Hammes Center, Haugen
September 13, 2018 Bishop Hammes Center, Haugen

New Parish Catechetical Leader

August 13, 2018 Bishop Hammes Center, Haugen

New Teacher

August 23, 2018 St. Joseph, Rice Lake
Contact: Grace Busse, gbusse@catholicdos.org

WCRIS Teacher Conference

August 10, 2018 Wisconsin Dells

SMDP Seminar

August 15-16, 2018 St. Joseph, Rice Lake

Fall Regional Workshops

September 10, 2018 Our Lady of The Lake, Ashland
September 11, 2018 Holy Family, Woodruff
September 17, 2018 St. Patrick, Hudson
September 18, 2018 St. Peter, Cameron
September 20, 2018 St. Francis Xavier, Merrill
Contact: Grace Busse, gbusse@catholicdos.org

Fall Conference

October 26, 2018 St. Joseph, Rice Lake
Contact: Kathy Drinkwine, kdrinkwine@catholicdos.org



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Reader Survey

The Superior Catechist has been published since Fall 2003 as a way for the Diocese of Superior to connect with catechists and teachers across the diocese. In the almost 15 years since its first publication we hope you've benefited from the information and articles shared here. As we move ahead, we'd love to know what you think. Please complete the following brief survey by either mailing this form to Bishop Hammes Center/ PO Box 280/ Haugen WI 54841 or by going online to the diocesan website at catholicdos.org/superior-catechist . Questions or answers can be directed to Grace Busse at gbusse@catholicdos.org as well. Thank you!

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