

**Position Paper
of the
CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE
OF THE PHILIPPINES
on the Synod Theme**

**CATECHETICS IN OUR TIME WITH SPECIAL REFER-
ENCE TO CATECHETICS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS**

The local Church of the Philippines views Catechetics as a vital and timely concern in our times. The theme of the forthcoming Roman Synod, "Catechetics in Our Time", comes in as a logical sequence of the deliberations of the last Synod in 1974, and of the Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Nuntiandi". The Bishops of the Philippines, in line with the renewed stress on Catechetics, faithful to the guidelines contained in the General Catechetical Directory as well as in the Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World, and reaffirming their solidarity with the Universal Church and with their own people, propose the following observations for serious study and consideration.

Underlying these observations is the desire to be of assistance in the deepening and strengthening of the Church's "supreme and absolutely necessary function" of making more easily understood the "message of salvation" by men of all times "in order that they may be converted to God through Christ that they may interpret their whole life in the light of the faith, . . . and that they may lead a life of faith in keeping with the dignity which the message of salvation has brought them and that faith has revealed to them".¹

I. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Catechesis a clear and faithful presentation of the content of God's revelation as taught authoritatively by the Church and having as its aim the clarity, maturity and vigor of the faith.²

¹ *General Catechetical Directory* (GCD) 37.

² This is explained with greater detail below in section II, first Proposal and especially in section III, 1. "The Aims of Catechetics", under a somewhat different aspect. Although the emphasis is also different these aspects are complementary.

Modern theological and catechetical explorations may prove to be sources of catechetical clarity; but this will just result in the confusion of the faithful unless they are made coherent with the fundamental doctrines of the Church as proposed by the Magisterium.

2. Without neglecting the traditional catechetical work carried in school and out of school, there is urgent need to move more decisively in the direction of ADULT CATECHESIS, in such a way as to steer up the evangelizing resources inherent in family life.

3. Since the majority of our people have already been baptized, a certain number of them have also been instructed, but very few indeed have been truly converted to the Lord Jesus and the practical demands of His Gospel, priority must be given in all our catechetical efforts to the creation of various models of the CATECHUMENATE.³

4. The establishment of small Christian communities which are imbued with truly ecclesial quality, constitutes nowadays one of the most challenging developmental thrusts of our pastoral ministry. The Pope speaks of these communities, if they are genuinely ecclesial, as "sharing the Church's life, nourished by her teaching and united with her pastors".⁴ There are five essential elements which identify the local Christian community as ecclesial, i.e., the Gospel, the Eucharist, the Church, the Bishop and the Spirit. If one of these marks is missing, or is not at least inchoately present, the assembly may be made up of Christians, but it is not (or it is not yet) truly an ecclesial community. In the present position paper, whenever small Christian community is mentioned it should be understood in the above context. In this sense also we find the importance of the small Christian community: it can help in the Christian renewal of the faithful, it foments the creation of new lay ministries and fosters more lay participation in and dedication to the evangelization of the whole community.

Hence, in the light of these observations, we make the following proposals.

II. PROPOSALS

A. ORTHODOXY AND ORTHOPRAXIS IN CATECHESIS

1. We see a need of catechesis formulating its teaching in such a way as to be properly and effectively received and absorbed by the catechized in the language of the present situation but still

³ On this see *infra* under section II, C. "The Catechumenate".

⁴ *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN) 58.

remaining always faithful to the contents of God's revelation as authoritatively taught by the Church.

We note with grave concern that parents, expressing their alarm over their children's lack of doctrinal formation even after years of catechetical instruction, often hold Catholic schools responsible for this state of affairs. This does not necessarily mean lack of content in our present catechesis; some other factors may also be considered as contributing to this apparent failure such as environment, methodology, catechists' formation, the time element, etc.

In order to be effectively received and absorbed by the faithful in their Christian living the communication of the Divine Message avails itself of pertinent research in sociology, anthropology, history and culture. All these, however, should serve and never obfuscate the "clear proclamation that in Jesus Christ, the Son of God who became man, died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to every man as a gracious gift inspired by God's mercy".⁵

But in today's world one needs more than mere teaching in words about Christ and His message. One needs environs which live the message of reconciliation and sharing as brought to us by Christ. He is the ever-new inspiration of each one personally in his daily actualizations and the source of growth in their communal living. The community becomes CHRIST-CENTERED, not so much from an intellectual act of faith in Him by all the members of that community, but much more by each one's effort to attune his daily relationships with the others in his community after the example of Christ, living among people".⁶

We call this the Orthopraxis of catechesis. Its two pillars are reconciliation and sharing. By this and through this the community will be totally different from the political or economic community which we see around us. Its internal network of relationships is radically different: instead of exploitation we have acceptance; instead of greed we have sharing; instead of authoritarian imposing on others we have listening to each other.

2. It is our considered view that a serious effort must now be made to clarify in the minds of all those engaged in the catechetical apostolate what is the aim and purpose of catechesis.

⁵ EN 27.

⁶ *Growing-up Towards a New Community*. Practical Guide for Building Christian Communities. Ed. by Mensa Domini Catechetical Institute, San Jose, Antique, p. 11.

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Catechetics is supposed to build upon the conversion in Christ which is achieved in evangelization through the proclamation of the message of salvation and proceeds to develop systematically the adherence to it.⁷ Its aim is not a detached and uncommitted imparting of knowledge, but rather the sharing of a knowledge that inspires those who shall receive it to keep alive, conscious and active the faith previously received and accepted and to properly nurture it.⁸ The knowledge imparted in catechetics must be considered as a means to facilitate man's response to God's call for closer union with Him, in such a way that God's ideas, values and ways⁹ and "the eternal decisions of His will regarding the salvation of men",¹⁰ fully revealed in Christ, may become the point of reference of their lives. We feel that a more intimate understanding of the nature of catechesis is required even among ourselves. Catechists, especially, should be equipped with a more profound understanding of their apostolate.

Thus, a clear and concise explanation of the objectives of the catechetical function in the Church (quite distinct from the catechism itself) as had been already concisely presented in the General Catechetical Directory¹¹ should be stressed and developed, incorporating the Church's own understanding over time for her own "supreme and absolutely necessary function". Pastoral letters and pertinent exhortations by the local Conference of Bishops may highlight the local Church's own perception of the depth, extent and coverage of her mission, thus contributing to a localized presentation of catechesis.

3. The formation of the right attitude of faith should be stressed in our catechetical programs.

Catechesis presupposes an attitude of faith, a personal and loving acceptance by the catechized of the person of God and of everything He tells us.

We therefore believe that it is of vital concern to the Church to reintensify her efforts at evangelization, whose precise objective is the achievement of the attitude of loving acceptance, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We also deeply feel the need to provide catechists and those who shall take charge of evangelization with the necessary knowledge which could allow them to discern the existence of faith, the

⁷ Cf. GCD 17-18.

⁸ See footnote 2 supra.

⁹ Cf. Is 55:8.

¹⁰ *Dei Verbum* 6.

¹¹ GCD 21.

acceptance of Jesus Christ in those to whom they shall impart further, more specific knowledge. But more important than just a knowledge or a technique of discernment of the true faith of the people, true discernment is to be acknowledged to be a gift which flows from the Holy Spirit to whom, therefore, we must ceaselessly address ourselves while performing our catechetical apostolate.

4. The success of any catechetical program rests, among other things, on the degree of awareness and conviction of the members of the Hierarchy whose principal role is to function as the official catechists of the People of God.

More important than pastoral letters and homilies, in insuring the success of our catechetical programs, is the living witness of the Bishops and the parish priests. This can be shown by their initiative, understanding and persevering support — including financial — of the efforts of the lay catechists.

5. The right formation of our catechists should be given the required priority of consideration.

Availability and willingness to participate in the catechetical ministry are not sufficient ingredients of success. "No one gives what he does not have" is a dictum as valid in philosophy as it is in the prophetic mission of the Church. Therefore sufficient attention should be given by those concerned to the proper and adequate formation of our lay catechists.

B. ADULT CATECHESIS

1. We propose a more extensive (and intensive) catechesis for adults and of the youth in and out of school.

We feel very specially that this effort should be intensified with the purpose in mind of leaving no sector of our society ignorant of the message of salvation and that the proclamation of this message should be oriented towards the strengthening of family life and community building.

We observe that, because of this lack of orientation, not a few among the faithful have been deluded into endorsing those means of family limitation which are unnatural and artificial. We also see certain groups of adults openly advocating state divorce apart from the legalization of the annulment of marriages, which could eventually contribute to the deterioration of the stability of the married state.

We also feel that a certain amount of permissiveness in sexual matters is evident among the youth, making it doubly difficult for

them to reconcile their creative urges with the divine purpose for which they were intended.

We note the perpetuation of self-interest as a continuing guide in social and political life. This self-interest derives from a basic lack of respect for the rights of others and the rights of a community over the individuals.

We feel that a solid emphasis on the communitarian aspects of life in the Church is called for, especially in the catechesis of adults and of the youth in and out of school.

2. In the Philippine context, as in other developing countries two powerful influences which may affect, favorably or unfavorably, the effectiveness of catechesis for adults are strongly felt:

a) We take note that **Filipino culture** is in many ways a "culture of mediation". Extensive use is made of "go-betweens" to facilitate access by ordinary man to people occupying positions of power, wealth, higher learning. This phenomenon translates itself into **popular religious culture** one of whose most striking characteristics is the popularity of devotion to the Saints viewed as mediators and intercessors before the throne of God.

Devotion to Our Lady is of invaluable help to both the evangelization and catechetical effort of the Philippines.

It is necessary, therefore, to bridge the growing gap between believers who choose to profess only the essentials of faith and those who actively involve themselves in popular religious fervor. Frank and sincere interaction can become mutually enriching and could only redound to a deepening of the life of faith.

b.) **Technological progress** in developing countries is fast widening the gap between the haves and the have-nots the rich and the poor, the technocrats and the unlearned, the urban center and the rural area.

In the Philippines — as in many developing societies — the Church is called upon to preach within the context of these divergent sectors, especially within the context of both a progressive urban center and depressed rural area where progress is slow and the hold of traditional values is still strong.

Care must therefore be taken to see to it that the values and examples invoked in catechetics take full cognizance of the state of development of the catechized as well as of the values they hold and accept.

3. People today, especially in a developing country like ours, go by values which they can see and touch: money, prestige, power. Catechetics must give them values which they can equally see and touch, but which are just the opposite of what they experience in daily life, namely, the values of sharing, respect for each person, reconciliation. But how to make these values "seen and touched"? By gathering people in small viable communities who are helped to live by these values of the Gospel. Such communities are not just an exercise of the intellect, but rather an exercise in living. This means that no genuine catechetical program can exist without a genuine liturgical and social program. The Liturgy must radiate life, not just routine words and the social involvement must be based on the values of reconciliation, unity and sharing.

a) Hence it is important to see the clear link existing between **Catechetics and Liturgy** so beautifully expressed in the official Introduction to all the new Rites for the Sacraments. We might well admit that much of this is not yet implemented to its fullest extent and may also be a factor in the weakening of the catechetical profile in our country. A renewal in catechetics will only be viable if it will be based on a renewal in the celebration of the Liturgy.

So far the liturgical renewal has been often restricted to the updating of the rubrics. Our country lacks enough liturgical centers for study and deepening the spirit of the Liturgy. Efforts to make the Liturgy more relevant and catechetically appealing seem to be frowned upon or at least not encouraged. In the absence of proper liturgical centers of study and research, there is danger that we may end up with two kinds of Liturgy: one barren and dry based on no more than the rubrics, and the other full of all possible innovations based on mere emotions. In both instances, the opportunity for genuine catechetical formation will be lost.

b) Similarly, there is a link between **Catechetics and Social Awareness**. If catechetics remains a mere exercise of the mind without any relevancy to actual life socially motivated Christians will "use" catechetics as a tool for their own ideological purposes. The answer is not to condemn such Christians but to give them better catechetical tools which relate to life around us. Proper catechetics must open the minds and the hearts of the listeners by discovering together the deeper motivation of God's plan for man. Catechetics must give us the tools to compare: how God looks at man, and how man today looks at himself and his neighbor.

Christian Social Action will only be Christian to the extent that it activates us to implement God's view on man while catechetics in our time will only be relevant to the extent that it gives us the correct view of man as seen by God.

4. We believe that the catechetical effort in the Philippines must, at this point of history, seek to re-examine not only the culture and economic structure of the country, but also the political context within which the Church is called upon to unfold her message.

It is noted with grave concern that political issues are beginning to create divisions within the ranks of the clergy and the faithful. There is even a tendency to approve of the system of authoritarianism, regardless of the adverse effects to human religious liberty which it may entail. There is also a growing rift — a chasm of mutual indifference — between those who seek to assert, at least implicitly, the primacy of liberation from material wants and those who rightly insist that the Church's primary mission is the proclamation of the Good News to all men.¹²

A proper understanding of the aims and objectives of adult catechesis, of the Church's "supreme and absolutely necessary function" will help heal the wounds which politicalization has inflicted upon the ranks of the faithful and the clergy.

C. THE CATECHUMENATE

1. The essence of the catechumenate should be an intense pedagogy towards Evangelical conversion.

The process of conversion is a continuing process covering the whole range of our Christian life through the different stages and situations of life which require a knowledge of the practical demands of the Gospel. It could be a catechesis of initiation in man's first contact with the teaching of the faith; it could be an "ongoing catechesis" drawing out the implications of the Gospel in the various situations of life; it could be a perfective catechesis directed to those whom a special mission or vocation impels to a deeper penetration of faith.

Hence a series of models of catechumenate could be created to make the life of the faithful more meaningful in the light of the Gospel.

¹² See the pastoral letter of the Philippine Bishops issued in Cebu, January 1977, on "The Bond of Love in Proclaiming the Good News". See also EN 32-35.

2. Priority must be given in our catechetical efforts not only to the creation of as many models but to the enriching of such models including a long-range process and programming, for a more effective pedagogy and movement towards evangelical conversion.

3. These models must however be sufficiently flexible to adjust to the built-in limitations of time and local resources and to the needs of those catechized.

D. THE "ORGANIZED" AND THE "ORGANIZING" COMMUNITY

1. Since, as stated above, the aim of catechetics is "the sharing of a knowledge that inspires those who shall receive it to keep alive, conscious and active the faith previously received and accepted and to properly nurture it", in practice, such aim demands an environment which would promote its growth. It is in this context that the special importance of small Christian communities, which are genuinely ecclesial, should be seen and appreciated.¹³

2. We affirm that the Proclamation of Revelation is also a message of Salvation answering the aspirations of our people. This proclamation should be incarnated in the social, economic, political and cultural situation of our people, stressing the building of small communities of faith which will promote a more Christian environment through witnessing, serving and worshipping.

3. There is a need for professionally trained catechists who, together with the priests and other pastoral agents, will lead our people in building small Christian communities.

But we believe that this goal will not be attained unless our people understand and accept their responsibility as prophets to evangelize and catechize their own family and members of small Christian communities.

4. Our catechesis should make adults, youth and children aware of their mission as Church, and where and how they may and must accomplish it. This catechesis for adults, for youth and for children cannot be independent from one another but must be coordinated towards the common goal of building small Christian communities.

¹³ Besides the already mentioned letter of the Philippine Bishops, see also nn. 41-50 of the *Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church* published by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (Hongkong-Manila, 1977). The Colloquium was held 27 February-5 March 1977 in Hongkong. On "base communities" cf. also EN 58.

III. ON SPECIFIC CATECHETICAL PROBLEMS

The following are reactions to specific catechetical problems mentioned in the Synod Schema. They do not follow the sequence of the Schema, but are rather ranged according to the order of our General Observations:

1. The Aims of Catechetics

There is probably general agreement — in the conceptual order — to the following objectives of catechetics, namely:

- a) To arrive at a Christian interpretation of life;
- b) To train oneself and others to see everything in the light of faith;
- c) To take the necessary steps, based on a Christian view of life and history to intensify man's personal union with Christ through prayer, apostolic action and reception of the sacraments.

However, there is still a surprising degree of disagreement and variance with reference to the choice of means and the application of those means to achieve the above aims.

Thus, it would not be unusual for groups to appear to emphasize, say, the simple transmission of doctrine, preparation for reception of the sacraments, or rote-memorization of the tenets of the faith while being in complete agreement with the above objectives. Rather than begin to decry these emphases or directions, an attempt will have to be made to understand, first of all, why such directions have taken the forefront. In other words, rather than force a uniform emphasis, a serious evaluation of specific circumstances must be undertaken.

What is said here about the efforts of groups within a diocese can also be said about different countries represented within the Church itself.

For example, Philippine Christianity may be criticized for the heavy emphasis on devotional practices to the seeming neglect of a concerted effort in the line of "liberating people from social, political, economic, and moral conditioning". This emphasis even appears to have the sanction of the Hierarchy, and for this it is possible that the official Church itself could be held blame-worthy.

Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that devotions and their ritualization have already become part of Philippine culture and

tradition. In this sense, they may be outside the pale of ecclesiastical authority in influence. As in Latin America, where "accion popular" seems to be the by-word it may even be pastorally inadvisable to exert anything but the most prudent effort to change this situation, since its acceptance by the People of God can be interpreted as the popular will. The approach of catechetical agents can only be directed at integrating devotional/ritual practices within a broader framework which should clearly show that such practices make sense only if other matters are fulfilled or attended to.

If catechists were to follow the path of discrediting or relegating to a very secondary position such practices without offering alternatives, grave dangers would arise. The first of these dangers is that, because of human attachment to such practices, a frontal discrediting of them might lead to complete rejection of the faith and the creation of a vacuum. The second is also related to the first: rituals are probably one of the few remaining links which can be used for the intensification of a life of faith. Sever this link and the opportunity for a deepening of belief may also be lost.

Therefore even if devotions and rituals may look like substitutes and surrogates for the neglect of more critical requirements of Christian life, understood in a fuller biblical sense, we cannot close our eyes to their significance in the lives of those who practice them.

2. Content of Faith and Catechetics

We have in our country two main tendencies in the approach to the content of faith. The first is the **traditional** — the doctrinal — oftentimes culture-bound in the sense that it is transmitted through the elders of the community and the family. Hence, our old presentation of the faith has been colored or nuanced by folk-belief of the people transmitting it.

The second is the **experiential**. This approach has emphasized social situations and their emotional impact to the extent that the fundamental message of salvation expressed in the doctrine of the Church has been placed too much in the background. For the past few years, this approach has taken prominence in the Philippine catechetical movement. Hence when reversals of social situations occurred, catechesis began losing its force and vitality.

For the first trend we propose a proper reorientation by being faithful to the message of salvation as expressed by the Church in her doctrines.

For the second trend we propose that our area of human realities be widened. We should take into account not merely ephemeral social situations, but also the popular devotions and common religious practices as integral components of our Philippine situation.

The values then derived from all these should be related to the message of salvation.¹⁴ This approach will therefore call for a revision in depth of our local catechesis — its approach, the ambit of its content. All the while, in the process of this revision in depth we should strive to bring out the riches of the fundamental message of salvation, the very essence of Christian life.

3. Catechetics and Modern Cultures

What can be considered an integral part of traditional Filipino culture in strict sense, are the devotional practices to honor Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the Saints. There is always some quasi-religious or religious ritual for nearly all occasions from birth to burial, through marriage, baptisms, construction of residences, etc. These should be viewed as *apertura* or openings to a deepening of faith. Modernizing agents — principally oriented towards material prosperity, efficiency and scientific rationalism — are attempting to introduce new values in the system.

The difficulties arise from the inroads of modernization, and these are very similar to those which can be observed in the countries of Western Europe, among others. However, there is a surprising degree of syncretism which makes easy for the host culture to assimilate foreign cultures. In the process, neither culture survives in its original form although the devotional practices mentioned earlier have survived for a long time. In fact, it is the ritualization of many of these devotions which could account for their resiliency over time.

What appears to be more interesting in the Philippine case is not the comparison between the existing culture and the culture of the young or of the West but rather that between the new, prescribed culture and the traditional culture.

Various seminars, in-service training programs and catechetical schools, together with organized efforts at parish diocesan or national levels, have been directed towards renewal of catechetical language and methods. The results have been good, when judged from the viewpoint of doctrines set forth by Vatican II. But the

¹⁴ *Gaudium et Spes* 11.

question still remains: Has catechesis become anymore relevant now than it was in the past? In other words, reform should go beyond language and method. It must cover content: In this respect also the local application of the directives of Vatican II should take account of the existing traditional cultures.

4. Catechetics and Social Situations

As it can be ascertained the experiments cover areas like language — the problem of translation into the vernacular; methods — away from the school-church situation towards something more personal (though less efficient); cultural adaptation — suiting the message to the local cultural mould. It has been voiced by some people/groups, however, that because of these changes in catechesis children never really get the "fundamentals" of the faith (meaning: as contained in the post-Tridentine catechisms). The problem may even be more basic: the parents (Tridentine-trained) may no longer be able to help in catechizing the young, who are presumably trained in whatever is said to have resulted from Vatican II.

Furthermore, that has been said above regarding the risks of an exclusively or excessively predominant experiential approach to catechetics, too depending on social situations, is particularly applicable here.¹⁶

5. Catechetics and the School

As already mentioned, catechesis seems to be concentrated mostly in the schools. Out-of-school children and youth receive minimal attention. Moreover, in many places they are completely neglected, acquiring their religious ideas from the general culture of the people.

There are formal theology classes at the university level in Catholic institutions. In other instances, seminars and activities such as workshops, field work, renewal sessions, Bible classes and charismatic sessions are valid vehicles for catechesis.

6. Catechesis for Children, Young People and Adults

Catechesis for children is emphasized with little active support from the home. It is mostly done in the atmosphere of the school or the parish church — seldom in the home, though some efforts

¹⁶ See *supra* under n. 2 "Content of Faith and Catechetics".

to involve the parents are made by school and pastors. The community acts, like the parents, through surrogates: the teachers, the volunteers, the priest and religious. There is little reinforcement which can be had from the community or the home. What might perhaps create some worry is the fear that even the home and the community impart "religious ideas" which, upon closer look, are heterodox or unorthodox, to say the least.

Young people and adults seldom get a systematic development of the message since as one grows older his attention is increasingly focussed upon social involvement and family life — a remark which is valid even for religious groups and organizations. The only message which filters through at these later stages is the vague feeling that the Church is pro-justice, freedom, peace, love, etc.; the "why" however, is seldom clear. One could easily get as a result a "humane type of morality": goodness for the sake of smoother social interaction.

Some proposals are therefore in order for a more effective catechesis of these different age groups.

a) Catechesis for Children

(1) Fuller use of liturgical and paraliturgical practices would help the children imbibe the Message.

(2) Popular religious culture, properly explained, could be of great aid to the catechist.

(3) The participation of children in classroom activities should be encouraged, if only to open their eyes and to lead them to ask questions — the answers to which shall be their initiation to catechetics.

(4) Apostolic organizations at the parochial and diocesan level should take it upon themselves to organize religion classes whenever no provision for these has been made, along with organized activities of play and worship. This latter concept serves to instill early in life a sense of community.

b) Catechesis for Adolescents and Young Adults

(1) Special emphasis on preparation for family life should be made at this level or even earlier if, in the judgment of the local pastors, communications media have already implanted ideas which in time could prove harmful.

(2) The passion of Christ as an expression of His love for men deserves special mention. The image of the Church as an assembly or community of love and service should also be fostered.

(3) Apostolic organizations among adolescents and young adults — working with the poor or their elders, or within their own age group — would develop the youth's creative drive, whose manifestations are strongest at this level, a drive which needs to find fulfillment and selfless expression.

c) Catechesis for Adults

(1) This is a kind of catechumenate as the adult goes into diverse interests and occupations and various strata of society. What has been said of the catechumenate in general applies particularly to this group.

(2) Special mention must be made, however, of the development of the gift of discernment of the signs of the times since upon the shoulders of adults rests the important responsibility of executing or even making social decisions. These decisions must be such that they do not delay or create barriers against the coming of the Kingdom.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, we would like to take cognizance of the great and noble work which the vast numbers of catechists throughout the whole world have done in communicating the Divine Message through catechesis. The whole Church turns to them in gratitude and appreciation; the Schema is a great tribute to them and to the importance of their work.

Finally, we strongly suggest that catechists should accentuate the movement towards total conversion of the whole man, the dynamism towards personal union with God which the Holy Spirit sustains in all those who accept that Jesus is Christ, the eternal Son of God made man, and an outpouring of the effects of this union through Christian witness.