

FAMILY CATECHESIS – AN IMPERATIVE FOR THE NEW EVANGELISATION

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The Concept of the Family

The concept of “Family” as a generic term has multifarious meanings and connotations so much so that the word is rendered ambiguous and nebulous. However, from the etymological perspective, the word “Family” is derived from the Latin word “*familia*” meaning “household”. In its primary understanding, the word refers to the community formed essentially by parents and their children. Let me underline here that it is with this primary understanding that this Paper is concerned. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines family as “the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life”. This means, therefore, a married couple and children constitute a family.

Pope John Paul II, echoing the Synod on the Family which took place from September 26 to October 25, 1980, describes the family as a community founded and given life by love. This community of persons is made of husband and wife, parents and children and relatives. Their first task is to live with fidelity the reality of communion. There can only be a community of persons where there is love (*Familiaris Consortio*, 18). To buttress this point, he refers to the very first Encyclical letter of his pontificate, *Redemptor hominis*, in which he wrote: “Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself; his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it” (*Redemptor hominis*, 10).

The teaching of the Catholic Church on the family is re-echoed at every wedding when the spouses promise to remain bonded faithfully to each other and to be open to welcome and bring up children.

In the course of history, the Church has expressed in varied ways her teachings on the essence and function of the family in the Church and in the society at large. Those teachings are summed up in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1659-1666), the elements of which are as follows:

- Family is founded on the union of a man and woman in the permanent relationship of marriage.
- Marriage was instituted by God for the mutual fulfillment and sanctification of the spouses and for propagating the human race through pro-creation.
- Family is:
 - the building block of society and the ecclesial community

- a place of growth in the concrete and essential transmission of the virtues which give form to human existence.
- a context in which:
 - various generations come together and help one another grow wiser and
 - harmonize personal rights with other requirements of social life
- the first setting in which faith illumines the human city
- school of humanity
- essential agent in the work of evangelization
- first school of evangelization
- cradle of vocation
- the very foundation of society.

The Family as a Domestic Church

In the first sixteen centuries of our faith, the home was basically the school of faith, the first school of religious formation of the children while the parish, on the other hand, perfects it.

Some fathers of the Church, when speaking of the role of the family towards the children, wrote, “Fathers, educate the young ones in the fear of God” (St. Clement of Rome). This clearly expresses the fact that the father in the home is considered the head of the family. St. Augustine insists that Christian education is a duty of the family. This indicates that religious education is not only the task of the father but also of the mother. Different synods at different levels in the 9th and 10th centuries represented this to all families. The Second Vatican Council also describes the family as a domestic Church, thereby giving a prime place to Catholic family in the faith formation of the children within it.

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical on the family, *Familiaris Consortio* underlines the role of the family stating that: “the Christian family is called to take part actively and responsibly in the mission of the Church in a way that is original and specific, by placing itself in what it does as an intimate community of life and love at the service of the Church and the society”. The family as a domestic Church therefore carries out its role under three major aspects where it is seen as: 1) a believing community in dialogue with God, 2) an evangelizing community, and 3) a community at the service of humanity.

Pope Francis places education, both temporal and religious, at the heart of the family. Since it results from the network of relationships that is nurtured in the institution, this form of education is irreplaceable. Simply put, the family lays the foundation.

The Fathers of Vatican II also reiterated the indispensable role of Catholic parents, taking into account the fact that they give life to their children, and referred to them as the “primary and principal educators”. They insist that it is a role that can hardly be substituted. It is the responsibility of parents to provide the conducive atmosphere for inculcating social and spiritual virtues. The family is therefore referred to as the first school. The Fathers further assert:

It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early

years to have knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbour. Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God.

Lumen Gentium (“Light of the Nations”), one of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, describes the family as the ‘domestic Church’ because it is the first place where young, baptised Christians learn about their faith. It states, “From the wedlock of Christians there comes the family, in which new citizens of human society are born, who by the grace of the Holy Spirit received in baptism are made children of God, thus perpetuating the people of God through the centuries” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11).

The document goes on to explain that this domestic Church has a particular role and responsibility in leading souls to heaven: “In it parents should, by their word and example, be the first preachers of the faith to their children; they should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each of them, fostering with special care vocation to a sacred state” (*Ibid*). Through this letter, the Council Fathers intended to emphasize that Christ is the Light of the Nations, and that, as the Church, we each have a responsibility to bring the Light of Christ to others. Within the domestic Church, this means that parents are to cultivate a family life that is centered on Christ.

The *Instrumentum Laboris* of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which reflected on “The Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelisation” identifies a number of roles the family has to play and challenges that she has to face in carrying out her functions. These different roles are summed up by one: it is the role of the family to bring up children in the faith, that is, to bring them into the world and to bring them to God through baptism. The primary responsibility of parents is to bring up their children in every aspect of life in the society. In other words, parents are parents, not just because they pass genes unto their children, but because, primarily, they pass on values to them, particularly the values of faith. It is the primary responsibility of the Christian family to provide and inculcate civic and religious values to their children, to form good citizens and good Christians. The religious education of children by their parents is the foundation on which their civic education is built. This is best achieved by the witness value and personal example of the parents.

The fourth role of the Christian family, as specified in *Familiaris Consortio*, is to share in the life and mission of the Church. “The family is placed at the service of the building up of the Kingdom of God in history by participating in the life and mission of the Church” (*Familiaris Consortio*, 49). After the Second Vatican Council had described the family as the “domestic Church” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 11), *Familiaris Consortio* goes on to reiterate that “in its own way the family is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church.”

Meaning and Purpose of Family Catechesis

Family Catechesis is the education of children in the faith by parents, which begins from a tender age. This faith formation also extends even to the adults in a Christian

family, whereby members of a Christian family help each other to grow in faith through witnessing to the Christian values within the family. Thus, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes that Family Catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith (CCC #2226). In family catechesis, all family members, adults as well as children, work, learn and grow together in the Catholic faith. This does help in conscience formation. Therefore, catechesis constitutes one of the elements of such formation, and it is essential to the work of the new evangelization. When we talk of family catechesis, we can distinguish three meanings.

- (i) It is the religious education made by parents in the family. This is an occasional catechesis par excellence, and precedes every other form of catechesis.
- (ii) It is the evangelization or the religious education made to the family, in practice to parents, e.g. the preparation of parents for the sacraments of their children, and the spiritual family movements.
- (iii) It is the evangelization aimed at parents to make them grow in the faith and to make them catechists of their children. This meaning has a double aim which is first directed to the parents themselves, and then to the children.

The implication of the family catechesis as expressed by Pope Paul VI is that, the Christian family builds up the Church: for in the family the human person is not only brought into being and progressively introduced by means of education into the human community, but by means of rebirth of baptism and education in the faith, the child is also introduced into the family, the Church.

In order to establish a healthy future family, the building of family catechesis is necessary because so many families are staying apart, which endangers the upbringing of children of broken families. The life of a Christian family is essentially apostolic. By sanctifying themselves, couples are in word and example the first preachers and teachers of the faith to their children. This pastoral priority is understood from a double point of view. From the chronological point of view, it is in the family that the education of the children in the faith begins where they are taught to make sign of the cross, taught first Christian behaviour and values. From the basic point; it is the parents and guardians who have the most essential responsibility to educate their children in the most basic ways.

As stated in the ACTS of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar, 24-30 (July 1978), page 122, the aims of family catechesis are basically:

- (i) To equip parents and guardians to give religious education in their family by leading them more deeply into current thought and life of the local community of faith alongside with the positive traditional values.
- (ii) To deepen the married couples spiritual life.
- (iii) To make the family understand that it is a domestic church.
- (iv) To make the modern family realize and understand its missionary vocation to itself and other families within and without the Small Christian Communities (zones).
- (v) To present the Christian vision of family and marriage in the context of African tradition and modern society.
- (vi) To offer special attention also to single parent families.

- (vii) To encourage prayer and the reading of the Bible in the family.
- (viii) To help integrate African values into Christian marriage and Small Christian Communities (zones).

The responsibility of the family regarding initiation into Catholic culture cannot be overemphasised. First of all, it springs from the status of the Catholic family as it is defined in the goals of marriage. Referring to Canon 1035 par I, the Catechism of the Catholic Church defines marriage as:

The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament (CCC, 1601).

The welfare of spouses is no doubt emphasised. There is, however, an equal emphasis on the procreation and education of children. This is an obligation that Catholic parents cannot jettison. This is worth pondering about, especially in our generation where the education of children is given over to complete strangers (nannies and school teachers) with little involvement from the parents. This is especially the case with religious education. In the words of Pope John Paul II:

In matrimony and in the family a complex of interpersonal relationships is set up, married life, fatherhood and motherhood, filiation and fraternity - through which each human person is introduced into the "human family" and into the "family of God", which is the Church. Christian marriage and the Christian family build up the Church: for in the family the human person is not only brought into being and progressively introduced by means of education into the human community, but by means of the rebirth of baptism and education in the faith the child is also introduced into God's family, which is the Church.

The New Evangelisation

Christ came to bring hope, peace, and salvation to the world. As baptized Catholics, we are all called to share Christ in our families and daily life. The New Evangelization is realized through announcing the Good News to those who have never heard of Christ (called *missio ad gentes*, the mission to the nations), engaging in ongoing catechesis, and "re-proposing" the Gospel to those who, although baptized, have drifted away from the Church.

By deepening our relationship with Christ and experiencing his love, we renew our faith as disciples in a community of believers, grow in confidence in the truth of the Gospel, and then share our faith in Jesus Christ joyfully with others. The New Evangelization invites all Catholics to see the world as an opportunity to bring people to Christ and to grow closer to Christ themselves.

The New Evangelization is focused on three areas or dimensions of sharing and living the Gospel. One area applies to the ordinary pastoral ministries *within parish life*. Another dimension is directed towards evangelizing and proclaiming Christ's message of salvation to those *who do not know of Jesus*. The last concerns itself

with baptized Christians who have fallen away or become *distant from the Church*. (*Strategies for the New Evangelization: Connecting With Families*, Published September 20, 2014 by Steve Botsford).

Why Family Catechesis is an Imperative to the New Evangelisation

The first and most important reason why Family Catechesis is an Imperative for the New Evangelisation is because the family is the place where the Gospel is first lived and transmitted and from which it radiates out to the world as stated by Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio*. Parents, “by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children” (Lumen Gentium, no. 11). Also called the “domestic church,” the family is a small version of the Church. The family receives its life from the Church and in turn mirrors the life of the larger Church. In the family, children first learn about God, love, and the Church. Mothers and fathers are indispensable in sharing the faith with their children. When parents practice and live their Catholic faith, children receive a sure foundation to assist them in difficult life choices. As parents and families learn and live their faith, they grow in confidence in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his Church and are nourished by the sacraments and desire to share. The family has an invaluable role in passing on the faith in a joyful and bold manner. Children will learn that they are members of the Body of Christ and have a valuable role in the Church.

As they mature, reading from Scripture and the lives of the saints can touch their hearts and imaginations. Parents teach children to live the virtues (Gal 5:22-23) and love the Lord with their whole hearts (Mt 22: 27). When children see their parents committed to the Lord and his Church, they are much more likely to do so themselves. Families are uniquely qualified to invite their family members, friends, and neighbors to return to the Church or to consider becoming Catholic.

Catechesis in the family is imperative to the New Evangelisation because the family is the place where the Gospel is first lived and transmitted and from which it radiates out to the world as stated by Pope John Paul II in his great document, *Familiaris Consortio*. Family Catechesis is also imperative to the New Evangelisation because the success or effectiveness of the New Evangelisation is dependent on the extent of the fulfillment of the mission of the family which includes the following as outlined by Pope John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio*:

- to form a community of persons and live that communion with fidelity
- to reflect God’s love for humanity and Christ’s love for His bride the Church
- to serve life by procreation (‘transmitting the divine image from person to person’) and caring for ‘the little ones’
- to share goods, lives, joys and sorrows
- to educate each other, understand, forbear, pardon, reconcile
- to practice hospitality, especially to the needy
- to be dedicated to the good of society and a sign of unity and peace to our world
- to share in the life and mission of the Church, witness to the truth and evangelise the world.

We must pass on this Gospel through a New Evangelisation driven by a sense of mission, since “missionary activity still represents the greatest challenge for the

Church". "I dream", says Pope Francis, "of a missionary option, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures, can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world rather than her self-preservation".

In other words, we're called to be what the Holy Father dubs "missionary disciples" within our families and with them to the world beyond. Fully consistent with the Second Vatican Council's reminder to us of our priestly, royal and prophetic dignity as baptised Christians, the Pope argues that it is our baptismal right and obligation to follow the path of missionary discipleship: in the New Evangelisation "every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelisation". If we commit ourselves to the New Evangelisation – if we commit to pronouncing the Way, Truth and Life who is Jesus Christ by deed and word in our families – then we can hope that there will be a renaissance of faith and morality, leading people to genuine happiness.

What are some practical implications of the idea of the missionary family? If the family is to be an evangelising community, welcoming and announcing the word of God:

- it must be founded on marriage well prepared-for remotely and proximately, well celebrated sacramentally, well supported by other families, parishes, movements and Church agencies
- the members of the family must always search out and seek to live well God's plan for them
- they must be regularly re-evangelised through continuing faith education, church practice, and supportive groups such as Couples for Christ
- they must be ready to give and receive catechesis within the home, aware that they are educating their children for a human life and a divine vocation
- they must persevere in face of adolescent and cultural resistance through living witness and encouraging words
- they must collaborate with other evangelising and catechetical activities of the local Church and
- they must be a luminous sign to others of the presence of Christ, radiating the joy of the Gospel (*Evangelii gaudium*) and the confidence of saving hope (*Spe salvi*).

Present Challenges to Family Catechesis and their implications for the New Evangelisation

Many parents are willing to mentor their children in the faith but they are distracted by the need to work and take care of their families adequately. Income is never enough when compared with expenditure: school fees, house rent, car maintenance, care of members of extended family and etc. As a result both parents sometimes work to ensure the provision of these needs. It is worst when both of them work in the private sector. In this case, sometimes they are up early, when the children are barely awake and return late, when the children are already asleep. There is therefore, virtually, no interaction between them and their children. To assuage their guilt for being absent in the lives of their children, they give the children the best money can buy. This translates to expensive toys and lavish monetary gifts. But money cannot make for presence. These children are not only starved for parental

attention, exhibited sometimes in unruly behaviour but they are also denied the possibility of religious education that should take place in the family and the modelling that goes with it. These children may attend religious education programmes in the parish but it is never enough because they lack the basic foundation.

Another factor that distracts parents from their educational role is over-volunteering in church activities. It is not uncommon to find one person volunteering as a catechist, a choir member and a leader in one of the societies. Such a person will usually be active in attending morning Masses as well. Such people wake up early, while their children are still asleep to go to the Church and go back to Church immediately they close their businesses or their offices for the day and remain there well into the night engaged in one societal business or the other. By the time they get home, their children are already asleep. Such parents are consumed with the need to serve God in the parish but forget their primary responsibility to their children, who belong to their primary constituency.

We live in achievement oriented society where children are expected to excel academically. Parents strive to ensure the fulfillment of such goals. They put their children in expensive schools and ensure that they also attend extra lessons at the close of the day. It is often the case that they are so saturated with academics that there is hardly any room in their head for anything else. By the time it is evening, they are already comatose and ready only for sleep. The goal mapped out for them is purely academic without any room for spirituality. This has resulted in situations whereby we have many educated professors, who possess only elementary knowledge of their Catholic faith. Parents need to hear anew the saying of Jesus: "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul" (Matthew). Catholic culture is a totality of life that embraces the material and the spiritual to keep life in a healthy balance. Parents need to be aware of this fact in educating their children.

How to Revive and Facilitate Family Catechesis to Promote the New Evangelisation

The family's mission is to actively participate in the sanctification of the temporal order. "The Christian family is called upon to take part actively and responsibly in the mission of the Church in a way that is original and specific, by placing itself, in what it is and what it does as an intimate community of life and love at the service of the Church and society" (FC 50). Families, of course, are very busy today, often swimming against the tide of a fast-paced culture that can be distracting and oppressive. How can families begin to evangelize and build a civilization of love? They can do so by authentically living their vocation from the heart of the Church in concrete ways such as the following:

- Pray daily (individually and as a family).
- Read Scripture. Children love to hear the stories of the Bible.
- Regularly celebrate the sacraments, especially in Sunday Mass each week as a family.
- Study the faith through the Catechism of the Catholic Church and faith formation programmes. Discuss the faith over dinner.

- Personally invite friends, and neighbours to their homes to share their faith with them and to Sunday Mass in a welcoming spirit.
- Welcome new members of the parish.
- Offer to help new parents and support the divorced and widowed.

John Paul notes that in order for the family to be a sign of Christ's presence in the world and to take up its mission as evangelizing community, each member of the family, particularly the spouses, must end the reign of sin in their lives (cf. FC 63). You cannot bear fruit if you are severed from the vine, you cannot give what you do not have. In order for the family to participate in this task it has to be constantly nourished and sustained at the wellspring of grace in the Liturgy. Furthermore "the little domestic Church, like the greater Church, needs to be constantly and intensely evangelized: hence its duty regarding permanent education in faith" (FC 51).

Parents could attempt to do the following to stem the tide of illiteracy in Catholic culture. Firstly, by having quality time alone with their children. This alone time will foster the openness of children to learn the values modelled to them by their parents, in speech and deeds. The parents should review the day with their children and also share their own experiences. In so doing, they will transmit Catholic values. Unfortunately, what we have are parents throwing insults and shaming their children in an attempt to douse the fire which their absence has caused. Children learn positive values when time is devoted to them.

Family prayer is indispensable and parents have to accommodate this activity at least once a day in their tight schedule. The dictum: "The family that prays together, stays together" is true. No matter how dysfunctional a family is, prayer has a way of stitching it. Children are equally socialized into Catholic culture through daily prayers. Traditional prayers like the rosary should form the core of this exercise. It is not uncommon to find lapsed Catholics who know little or nothing about common prayers. Praying together at night, has a way of bringing the day to a close through gathering the family and placing it under God's protection and providing them with a profound initiation into Catholic culture. In the words of Pius XII:

Then the Rosary, recited in common, assembles before the image of the Virgin, in an admirable union of hearts, the parents and their children, who come back from their daily work. It unites them piously with those absent and those dead. It links all more tightly in a sweet bond of love, with the most Holy Virgin, who, like a loving mother, in the circle of her children, will be there bestowing upon them an abundance of the gifts of concord and family peace.

Those who choose to attend daily Masses could do so at noon or if they have to attend morning Masses, they should do so with their families. It is good for parents to know that striving for personal salvation to the neglect of their children neglects a key principle of marriage: education of children. At special seasons, parents could indicate interest in what their children are doing. For example, at Advent or Lent, parents could inquire about the spiritual projects their children are undertaking and encourage to do exercises that will shape their behaviour. They could decide to embark on a collective family project.

As recommended in the National Directory for Catechesis by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the following things can be done to revive and facilitate the practice of Family Catechesis in Catholic homes:

(a) Diocesan Catechetical Office

Each diocese should have (if not in place) a diocesan Catechetical office whose function is to develop a diocesan curriculum guide based on the General Directory for Catechesis, and provide guidelines for the organisations of lifelong parish catechesis. In fact, its major function is supervision of all catechetical activities and ensure that catechetical activities conform with universal Catholic plan.

(b) Parish Catechetical Committee

Priests in charge of parishes should establish a committee to assist them in their catechetical responsibilities. Each parish circumstance should determine the organisational form. If possible, the committee could be a committee of the Parish Pastoral Council. The members of this committee should represent the diversity in age, ability, and the cultural, ethnic, social and economic conditions present in the parish.

They should receive appropriate training and pastoral formation that could help them understand the universal mission of the Church.

(c) Parish Catechetical Plan

Like the Diocese, every parish should develop catechetical plan that integrates the various components of the overall programme and provide opportunities for all to hear the Gospel message, and celebrate it in prayer and liturgy. The Catechetical plan should take care of the initiatory and on-going catechesis in the parish as well as to the level of Home or Family Catechesis

(d) Effective Catechesis

The work of Catechesis in the parish should be taken seriously. Those in charge of the teaching of the faith should render their services adequately and with all sincerity for the interest of the Church and her faith. A well-informed laity will change the world.

(e) Training

All involved in catechesis should be trained. Those to be engaged in home, Sunday school or family catechesis should be well-informed, and proper supervision of their activities should be maintained.

(f) Collaborative Efforts of All Needed

There should be proper collaboration from the Bishop who in working with the universal Church is the head of the Diocese, down through the Parish Priest to the family level. There should be no sacred cow. All need to play their individual parts.

- There is also the need for Structure that can assist the Domestic church in evangelizing her members. For Instance, there could be a Diocesan policy on the pastoral care of the domestic church. Either through small Basic Christian Communities or through other means.
- Parents should make available and encourage the children to watch home videos on the lives of the saints and even EWTN and LUMEN CHRISTI

programmes on cable television. Parents should encourage their children to attend church activities regularly and also join lay apostolate groups in the church. Parents are to also live an exemplary life for their children to emulate.

The General Directory of Catechesis sets forth the principles which are the foundation for the sound teaching of the faith. Only if these principles are understood and applied will the Church meet the challenge of catechesis (including Family Catechesis) in our time and overcome the significant difficulties which have been encountered in catechesis over the past decades.

Saint Paul, the Apostle of the Nations, reminds us: "Faith, then, comes through hearing, and what is heard is the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). His simple words remind us of the fundamental responsibility of the Church to hand on by teaching the doctrine and practice of the faith. Our children and young people look to the older generation to hand on to them as a gift the faith which the older generation first received as a gift from God through parents and grandparents. Among the older generation itself, there is the strong desire to be able to give a better account of our faith, so that we may live more fully what we believe and be more effective witnesses for those who seek God's truth and love found in the Catholic faith.

The Directory also notes difficulties in catechesis in our time which must be addressed:

- the need for catechists to understand catechesis as "a school of faith", that is a deepening of Christian life in all of its aspects: knowledge, prayer and worship, and witness;
- the need to base catechesis on the Holy Scriptures and Tradition, that is the need in catechesis to make "sufficient reference to the church's long experience and reflection" over the course of nearly two thousand years;
- the need to keep before our eyes the object of catechesis, communion with Our Lord Jesus Christ, and, therefore, to present the Catholic faith in its entirety, especially the entire truth of the mystery of Christ;
- the need to address the lack of presentation of certain essential truths of the faith, for example, the truth about the relationship of God and man, the truth about sin and grace, the truth about the Final Things; the serious need to make sure that catechisms and textbooks are not selective in their presentation of the Catholic faith, eroding the integrity of the understanding of the faith;
- the need to have a strong and full "link with the liturgy", making liturgical symbols and rites, prayers and gestures, integral to the presentation of the faith;
- the need to overcome a false tension between method and content in catechesis and to found the teaching of the faith in a method which respects the fullness of the doctrine of the faith;
- the need to present the faith within a particular culture so that it is seen as truly "Good News for the lives of people and of society";

- and the need to take up formation for the apostolate and for the missions as an essential task of catechesis (No. 30).

In addition to the foregoing, attempt should be made to counter the influence of Pentecostalism in our families, our parish liturgical celebrations and our Sunday schools by ensuring that authentic Catholic teaching is provided at all levels. Also, those employed as Catechists should be persons whose orthodoxy in terms of our Catholic faith is not in doubt. Besides, the content and methodology of Family Catechesis should be built into marriage preparation programmes. For Family Catechesis or religious education to be effective, it must step from the traditional teachings of the Church. There is also the urgent need for the training of teachers in Catholic doctrine. There should be books on Catholic doctrine adapted to the different levels of human growth. In particular, special books on Catholic doctrines and the basic prayers of the Church should be written for Catholic homes to use as tools for Family Catechesis. Finally, the Church through her religious education agents including the Directors of Religious Education should study ways and means of using modern means of social communication such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc. for Family Catechesis.

In all of the above, there should be collaboration between all the agents involved with Catechesis and Communication such as the parish priests, catechists, parents, Catholic teachers, Directors of Religious Education and Directors of Communication at Diocesan and Parish levels.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have explained the concept of the family and the family as a domestic church as well as the meaning and purpose of Family Catechesis. I have also defined the concept of the New Evangelisation and given reasons why Family Catechesis is an imperative to the New Evangelisation. I also identified certain challenges to Family Catechesis and their implications for the New Evangelisation and suggested ways and means of reviving and facilitating Family Catechesis to promote the New Evangelisation.

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