



# Go and Teach: Facing the Challenges of Catechesis Today



A Pastoral Letter by Bishop Michael Saltarelli  
to the People of the Diocese of Wilmington

September 2005

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My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

A passion for catechesis is at the heart of my ministry as a Bishop. As the chief catechist of the [Diocese of Wilmington](#), I am responsible for the total catechetical mission of our local Church. My hope is that this teaching mission we share together becomes bolder and more effective now and in the years to come. [St. Ephrem](#) once said that when we eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ, we eat and drink Fire and Spirit. May this Fire and this Spirit animate our efforts to reach the hearts, minds and souls of every generation in our Church today.

### **What is Catechesis?**

*Catechesis* comes from a Greek word, meaning “to echo,” that is, to echo the Good News of Jesus Christ. Matthew’s gospel ends with the missionary mandate, “Go and teach all nations...” The first disciples, strengthened and guided by the Holy Spirit, echoed this message by their lives. This proclamation of the Gospel is a part of the process we call [evangelization](#). It is, in the words of [Pope Paul VI](#), the very reason that the Church exists, to proclaim to the whole world that Jesus is the Risen Savior.

The aim of catechesis is “to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.” ([General Directory for Catechesis](#) [GDC] 80) As we learn from our own experience, we never know a person from one meeting. It takes a lifetime to *know* a person. How could it take any less than a lifetime to *know* Jesus Christ and to come into a personal relationship with Him in the community of believers? Catechesis “matures initial conversion to make it into a living, explicit and fruitful confession of faith...” (GDC 82) This is the personal conviction that St. Paul had in mind, when he asked the Romans, “But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him?” (Romans 10:14)

The easiest way to understand and appreciate the progression of catechesis is to consider the process by which catechumens move toward membership in our faith community in the [Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults](#). Weekly, they nourish themselves on the Word of God, the Teaching of the [Magisterium](#), and the great [Tradition of the Church](#). As the relationship between the individual, Christ and the Church deepens, there are Rites that celebrate the stages of that growth. You celebrate and participate in these rites and rituals in your own parish. What you may not see is the intensive study and prayer undertaken by the candidates and catechumens. Catechesis is “more than instruction, it is an apprenticeship of the entire Christian life.” (GDC 67) After full initiation, the Church continues to gather its members in the sacraments and in continuing education in the faith.

### **An Honest Look at the Harvest**

A few years ago, [Avery Cardinal Dulles](#) wrote, “Religious literacy has sunk to a new low.” [Bishop Donald Wuerl](#), in his address to our convocation in March 2004, spoke about the “lost generation” and the “undercatechized” to depict the current state of our younger generations of adults. I share their concern. That is why I invited all of you last year to reflect with me in our *On Good Soil* parish and regional conversations. My desire was for us to look realistically at ourselves and to discern together our future.

We also studied together the Church’s rich treasure of texts on catechesis which include the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997), the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), *On Evangelization in the Modern World* (1975) and *On Catechesis in Our Time* (1979). Our conversations and our study of these documents prepared us to receive the *National Directory for Catechesis* which was published in May 2005 and the *National Adult Catechism* just accepted by our Conference of Bishops and sent to Rome for approval. These documents, along with our reflection on our experience and history here in

the Diocese of Wilmington, guide our efforts to ensure a “Faith for Tomorrow.”

**It is in our time and in this place that we need to plant the seed of faith in our children, cultivate it in our youth and nurture it in ourselves and in one another.**

### **The Soil in Which We Plant**

Our *On Good Soil* conversations recalled how important the soil is to the growth of the seed. “Jesus in the parable of the sower, proclaims the Good News that the [Kingdom of God](#) is near, not withstanding the problems in the soil, the tensions, conflicts and difficulties of the world.” (GDC 15) As we move into the future, we need to understand both the challenges and opportunities presented by American culture and a globalized society.

We live in a country with many blessings, one where we are free to practice our faith and proclaim our beliefs. At the same time, there are powerful elements in the culture that want us to keep that faith “private,” not to bring it into our schools, our places of work or our political life. It is a country where the first amendment, at times, has been interpreted as a freedom from religion instead of a freedom of religion. Exaggerated individualism can lead to a loss of a communal sense.

The media shapes values and attitudes. In my pastoral letter, *Contemplating the Face of Christ in Film*, I said, “In our day, film and television offer us an immediate and extraordinary means for imaging the face of Christ and communicating his Gospel...” But like so many powerful forces, the power of the media can be destructive. Today, the Internet, video games, television and film are capturing hearts, minds and imaginations not only of our young, but of many adults as well.

Even the culture within the Church is changing, enriched by the migrations from Latin America, the Asian Pacific Rim and so many other parts of the world. We have so much to learn from each other.

This is the soil in which we must plant Christ’s message. It can seem an overwhelming task, but a look at the history of the Church gives us great hope. Each generation is challenged, and the Holy Spirit raises up great saints, great [catechists](#) to plant the gospel in each place and time. It is in our time and in this place that we need to plant the seed of faith in our children, cultivate it in our youth and nurture it in ourselves and in one another.

### **A Community of Faith-Filled Adults Will Lead the Way**

More than a century ago, [Cardinal Newman](#), the great leader of Catholicism’s revival in England, said, “I want a [laity](#)...who know their faith, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not, who

know their creed so well that they can give an account of it and who know enough of history to defend it. I want an intelligent, well instructed laity.” My hope is that every Catholic will be able to articulate their faith in convincing and intelligent ways, and show by their living example the compelling truth of the Gospel and Church teaching.

Some ask: “Will our children live their faith?” Our children will live their faith if we adults live it. If we are faithful to the Lord and our mission, then our children will see that the journey of faith is worthwhile. The [Acts of the Apostles](#) shows us how the Church grew. “Day by day, as they spent time in the Temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the good will of all the people. And day by day, the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.” (*Acts* 2:44-47). Our adult members need to give witness to their faith and constantly grow in their knowledge and love of God. This is our response to what the Lord asks of us from Matthew’s Gospel: “Go and make disciples of all nations...” (*Matthew* 28:19).

The quote from *Acts* tell us that the early Christians “spent time in the temple...” Time seems to be one of the most valuable commodities in our lives. We spend it, lose it, waste it, save it. The pace of life has been accelerating to the point where we go from task to task, appointment to appointment, meeting to meeting, phone call to phone call, and have little or no time to devote to our own faith formation. Without taking time for prayer, the reading of Scripture and gathering with our faith community to learn and to share, how is our faith to grow? We must examine our own lives and see how we are using our time. Our calendars reflect our priorities.

My heart and my prayers go out especially to parents. By the time you fulfill your professional obligations, drive your children to and from activities, and help them with their homework, you are exhausted. The situation is particularly stressful in

single parent homes. I know that you want to fulfill the promises you made when you brought your children to the waters of [baptism](#). The priest or deacon said, “You have asked to have your child baptized. In doing so you are accepting the responsibility of training him or her in the practice of the faith. It will be your duty to bring him/her up to keep God’s commandments as Christ taught us, by loving God and our neighbor.” (*Rite of Baptism for Children*, #39)



Passing on your Catholic faith is the greatest gift you can give your children. And yet, I know, because you have told me, that many of you feel inadequate presenting or discussing basic Catholic beliefs with your children. [St. Thomas Aquinas](#), once said, “You cannot give what you do not have.” We will help you to gain a deeper appreciation and a better articulation of your Catholic faith, so that you can share it with your family, friends and co-workers. We will find creative ways to provide learning experiences to help you increase your knowledge of the Catholic faith.

Effective Adult Faith Formation is essential to our parishes. A parish cannot exist without a strong, complete, and systematic catechesis for all its members. By “complete and systematic” we mean a catechesis that nurtures a profound, lifelong conversion of the whole person and sets forth a comprehensive, contemporary synthesis of the faith, as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.” ([Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us](#) 4) By planning and working together, our parishes can offer rich and diverse opportunities for adults and children at all points in their faith journey.

### **Strengthening the Young Church of Today**

The crowds of millions of young people at the World Youth Days of [Pope John Paul II](#) and now [Pope Benedict XVI](#) show us their hunger and thirst

for Christ and the Truth. We need to reach the minds and hearts of a new generation of your people with creativity, vigor, balance and effectiveness. We need to prepare them for a future even more challenging than the present.

I have quoted the *General Directory* as saying that “catechesis is more than instruction, it is an apprenticeship in the Christian life.” The word apprenticeship comes from a Latin root meaning “to learn.” There are many ways “to learn” what it means to be Catholic, but none more important or more complete than participation in the Sunday Eucharist. “Catechesis both precedes the Liturgy and springs from it.” (NDC 33) Pope John Paul II said, “I therefore wish to insist that *sharing in the Eucharist* should really be *the heart of Sunday* for every baptized person. It

is a fundamental duty, to be fulfilled not just in order to observe a precept, but as something felt

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as essential to a truly informed and consistent Christian life.” I ask you to examine your participation in the Sunday Eucharist, “the source and summit of Christian life.” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 10) Do you participate actively, consciously and fully? (SC 14) Parents, I urge you to come with your children to the Table of the Lord every week.

Our late Holy Father proclaimed this to be a [Year of the Eucharist](#). In our Diocese we will celebrate this with a [Eucharistic Congress](#) in Ocean City October 29, 2005. I invite you and your family to join us. If you have not been participating in the Sunday Mass, this is a splendid opportunity to recommit yourself and your family.

**Knowing the Fundamentals**

While catechesis is “more than instruction,” instruction remains an integral and central part of the pro-

cess. Our formal programs for children and young people in the parishes and schools need to be centered on communicating the teaching of the Church effectively. A systematic curriculum of material helps to ensure that there is a comprehensive, structured presentation of Catholic teaching.

The [Office of Religious Education](#) is revising the elementary curriculum to reflect the outcomes we expect at each level of the parish or school program. The Bishops’ [Committee on Catechesis](#) has been working on a series of Doctrinal Guidelines for Catholic High Schools which will determine the curriculum content for the schools and later for parish adolescent programs. We will work with the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) Committee to ensure that our programs are consistent with these guidelines.

Textbooks are important aides to the catechist and to parents. Since the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the Bishops of the United States have made a concerted effort to ensure that textbooks used in our school and parish programs contain a comprehensive exposition of the Catholic faith as expressed in the *Catechism*. Over the years, the Bishops have reviewed the many texts used for catechesis in our country. The majority of textbooks and series have been found to be in conformity with the *Catechism*.

All parishes and schools in our Diocese are to review their texts to ensure conformity with the *Catechism*. In the Fall of 2006, these approved texts are to be used. A clear curriculum, backed by sound catechetical materials, will “enrich our soil.” A clear curriculum, backed by sound catechetical materials, will help guide our renewal efforts. Strengthening the instructional components in our programs will be a priority in the initial stages of our plan. Pastors are “the bishop’s closest collaborators in ensuring that the goals of the diocesan catechetical mission are achieved.” (NDC 54B) I will rely on our pastors, in collaboration with priests, deacons, religious, direc-

tors of religious education and catechists, to guide and encourage this process.

### **Adolescent Catechesis**

A few years ago, we conducted a study of our adolescent population and discovered that by the completion of the tenth grade, only 32% of our youth were enrolled in Catholic High Schools, parish catechetical programs, and/or youth groups. Although many more youth may participate in the weekly Eucharist, the lack of participation in our youth programs should give us pause for serious reflection on our future. There may be many reasons why our youth do not fully participate in the life of the Church. It should never be because we do not offer them inspiring opportunities to come together and to grow in their faith. It should never be because parents tell them “once you are Confirmed you are finished with your education in the Catholic faith.” It should never be because the adult community does not witness to them the importance of continuing education for every adult member.

If we are going to renew our adolescent catechetical programs, we need to begin by renewing our efforts in youth ministry. “The most effective catechetical programs for adolescents are integrated into a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry...” (*Renewing the Vision*, quoted in the *NDC*, 48D). I ask every pastor and parish pastoral council to carefully examine its ministry to, with and for our young people and provide the necessary resources. We need parents’ support in developing quality programs in your parishes.

### **Leaders Now and in the Future: Catechists and Catechetical Leaders**

The *General Directory* reminds us that “the instruments provided for catechesis cannot be truly effective unless well used by trained catechists.” Only the catechists’ “human and Christian qualities guarantee a good use of texts and other work instruments.” (*GDC* 156) That is why it is critically important that parishes and schools recruit, train and

support competent catechists. Their living Catholic faith should be so vibrant and natural that they “raise irresistible questions” about the power of the Catholic faith in their students and among their peers.

### **Catechists**

Forming catechists who have a deep and personal relationship with Christ and the Church is one of my primary concerns. “Their personal relationship with Jesus Christ energizes their service to the Church and provides the continuing motivation, vitality and force of their catechetical activity.” (*NDC* 54B8)

“The call to the ministry of catechist is a vocation, an interior call, the voice of the Holy Spirit.” (*NDC* 54B8). The Diocese and the parishes need to nurture this vocation. We need more catechists for adults, youth and children who are well trained and formed to meet the challenges of the catechetical ministry. Each catechist should have a mastery of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. We have a well developed diocesan catechist certification and recognition program. We must ensure that it continues to meet our needs as we move into the future. Catechists should be recognized and appreciated. A comprehensive approach to catechist formation is an essential element in providing the excellence required of catechetical programs today. Every student should expect his/her catechist to be well trained and well prepared.

### **Catechetical Leaders**

“The single most critical factor in an effective parish catechetical program is the leadership of a professionally trained parish catechetical leader.” (*NDC* 54B) These are our Directors and Coordinators of Religious Education, and our RCIA Directors, and our Coordinators of Youth Ministry who, under the leadership of the pastor, guide the catechetical programs in our parishes.

In our Catholic Schools, the principals have a key catechetical leadership role. We have instituted a

program to form a new generation of leaders steeped in the mission and ministry of the Catholic Schools. Catholic secondary schools face a special challenge. The Religion Departments need teachers who already possess a mastery of the Catholic Tradition and the Scriptures. They also should possess the skills to guide young people “to learn with truth and certainty the religion to which they belong.” (*GDC* 74) I am asking the [Office for Religious Education](#)

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along with the administrators and department heads of the secondary schools to

develop a comprehensive plan to recruit, support and nurture their religion faculties.

The Diocese has committed itself to supporting the formation of leaders for the future. Our financial support for teachers who are doing Master Degree level work in theology or religious education and who are willing to serve as Director of Religious Education or Catholic high school religion teachers remains firm.

#### **Faith for Tomorrow: Opportunities and Challenges**

With the support of our priests, deacons, religious, catechetical leaders and catechists, our school principals and teachers, our dedicated parents, and all who are committed to sound catechesis, we face the future opportunities and challenges. Let me list some of the key areas of action where we must cooperate together:

#### **Directories and Catechisms**

In May 2005, the *National Directory for Catechesis* (*NDC*) was published by the U.S. Bishops. Adapting the *General Directory for Catechesis* (*GDC*) for American culture and society, this document provides the norms and principles for catechetical ministry in the United States. Its imminent publication

was the major reason for waiting to publish this letter and the plan for implementing the recommendations and directions suggested by our *On Good Soil* process. I am pleased that many of the suggestions coming from our parish, regional and diocesan conversations are mirrored in the *NDC*. Having spent time thinking, praying about and discussing catechesis puts us in a good place to receive and appropriate the direction it sets. I urge all parish leaders to devote time this year to the study of the *National Directory*.

Another important document for the future is the *National Catechism for Adults*. In November 2004, it was approved by the Bishops’ Conference and sent to Rome for review. When the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was published, Pope John Paul II wrote, “It [the Catechism] is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to catholic doctrine.” (*Apostolic Constitution, Fidei Depositum*) When it is published, it will be an invaluable tool for adult catechesis, especially the RCIA. Our Diocese will provide an intensive program of adult faith formation to introduce the *Catechism*. Our Office for Religious Education, working with other diocesan offices, will develop a comprehensive plan for its successful implementation.

#### **Scripture**

Every survey reveals that adults list the study of Sacred Scripture as a top priority. Our people hunger for the Word of God. “Catechesis should take Sacred Scripture as its inspiration, its fundamental curriculum and its end because it strengthens faith, nourishes the soul, and nurtures the spiritual life.” (*NDC* 24B). While we have made great strides in helping our people open the treasury of Scripture, there is more work to done. My hope is to provide more effective opportunities to learn to pray the Scriptures and to [understand contemporary Catholic Biblical Scholarship](#).

## Technology

Efficiently harnessed technology can help us achieve our catechetical goals. Our Diocesan web site and the Internet have the potential to provide forms of adult faith formation that can meet the needs of busy people. Instead of always having to come to our buildings for programs, we can use the world wide web to connect our people. Our Office for Communications, working with the various offices with catechetical responsibility, will explore how to use more effectively our own diocesan web site ([www.cdow.org](http://www.cdow.org)).

## Vibrant Parishes Provide Rich Soil for Catechesis

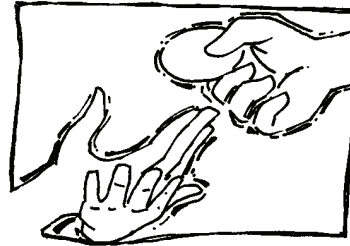
Based on my experience as a pastor and a bishop I know that effective catechesis never occurs in a vacuum. Vibrant parish life is the soil in which catechetical ministry flourishes. The *National Directory* states: “The parish serves as an effective catechetical agent precisely to the extent that it is a clear, living and authentic sacrament of Christ. On the other hand where a parish is lifeless and stagnant, it undermines both evangelization and catechesis. In such a situation, no catechetical ‘program’ can be expected to overcome the catechetical message of the parish as a whole.” (NDC 29C)

## Collaboration

Pastors and parish pastoral councils need to be more active in promoting collaboration among parish ministries. There is no easy formula for the renewal of the catechetical ministry. No single catechist or individual committee or program can carry the burden alone. It is the whole Catholic community that catechizes. We need to explore ways to make this a greater reality in the parishes. “Parish catechetical efforts should be coordinated with those of neighboring parishes, clusters of parishes, deaneries, and regions. As much as possible parishes should share resources...” (NDC 60B)

## Vibrant Liturgy

“Through the Eucharist, the People of God come to know the [Paschal Mystery](#) ever more intimately and experientially. They come not simply to the knowl-



edge of God—they come to know the living God” (NDC 33) Well planned liturgies foster and nourish our faith. Poorly planned liturgies can easily weaken our faith. All catechetical programs in parishes and schools need to include liturgical catechesis in all its forms.

In almost all of our parish, regional and diocesan conversations there was a desire for improved homilies. Outstanding homilies are essential to the ongoing biblical-catechetical formation of the laity. I invite all our clergy to continue to develop their homiletic skills. Our Priests’ Council and I will develop a plan for renewing the preaching ministry in the diocese.

## Apologetics

In our time, more and more people question our Catholic faith. It may be a question coming from someone trying to understand our Catholic faith, or it could be from someone challenging or even hostile to our faith. Regardless of the source, Catholics must be able to “give an account of the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.” (1 *Peter* 3:15-16). We call this “Apologetics”, a verbal defense of our faith. As our society grows more diverse, as the culture becomes more secular, each of us is going to be asked, “Why do you believe in the Catholic Faith?” It is our obligation to be able to answer this question. Our religious education programs need to cultivate this apologetical dimension for children, young people and adults. Learning “by

heart” should be part of this process. “The principal formulations of the faith; basic prayers, key biblical themes, personalities, and expression; and factual information regarding the worship and Christian life should be learned by heart.” (NDC 29F)

### **Evaluation and Accountability**

Evaluation and accountability are necessary to renew our catechetical efforts. Without evaluation it is impossible to improve. Without accountability it is impossible to insist on evaluation. Our Diocese has developed a program that involves a self study and accreditation of parish religious education programs. It is a tool that each parish uses to examine itself, determine its strengths and weaknesses and develop a plan for continuous improvement. Presently, half of our parishes have successfully completed the process. By the year 2007, I want every pastor and parish pastoral council to have begun the Self Study and Accreditation process.

While our Catholic School programs are evaluated as part of the School Accreditation process, they also need to be part of this process. I am requesting the Office for Religious Education, in collaboration with the Office for Catholic Schools, to examine how we

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can evaluate the effectiveness of the school catechetical programs.

There are various evaluative inventories to measure the religious knowl-

edge of our children and young people. We will select one which will be used throughout the Diocese to measure the instructional components of our catechetical efforts. I want each of our catechetical programs to be excellent. Our people deserve no less. The Gospel demands no less from us.

### **Conclusion**

Over the years, it has been my privilege to work with many great catechists. The clergy, Directors of Religious Education, Catholic School and parish catechists, Coordinators of Youth Ministry, RCIA Directors and teams have dedicated themselves to sharing my teaching ministry. We labor together in this field of catechesis. I am most grateful to them for answering this important call.

I have set forward a vision for the catechetical ministry in our diocese. A sound pastoral plan to implement this vision has been developed by the Office for Religious Education in consultation with other Diocesan offices. The plan will include the goals and objectives to realize this vision. It will be available on the diocesan web site soon after this letter is published.

As we move into the future, we must remember that the communication of Catholic faith in catechesis is, first of all “an event of grace” under the action of the Holy Spirit, “realized in the encounter of the word of God with the experience of the person. It is expressed in sensible signs and is ultimately open to mystery. It can happen in diverse ways, not always completely known to us.” (NDC 29) So we always make room for grace to work along with us.

If we work together, if we keep the Holy Spirit at the heart of our work, then we will have a “Faith for Tomorrow,” a faith that will transform our Diocese and the world. We will become the disciples the Lord needs to carry out His mission in this place, in this time.

As your Bishop and Chief Catechist, this is my hope, my dream, my prayer for our Diocese.

*+ Michael A. Saltarelli*

*September 18, 2005*

## Glossary

Click the term to visit a website with more information about the topic, person, or document.

[Avery Cardinal Dulles](#) – One of the foremost Roman Catholic theologians in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Still teaching and writing.

[Baptism](#) – The first of the Initiation Sacraments of the Church.. It is the gateway to life in the Spirit.

[Catechesi Tradendae](#) – An Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II on catechetics. It was published in 1979 following the Synod on Catechetics.

[The Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) – A reference text and a statement of the Church's faith and of catholic doctrine published in 1992 and in English in 1994.

[Catechists](#) – Those who exercise the ministry of catechesis.

[Committee on Catechesis](#) – A standing committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

[Conformity](#) – A process established by the bishops through their episcopal conference to determine a text's conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic church.

[Constitution on Divine Liturgy](#) (Sacrosanctum Concilium) – Issued by the Fathers of the Second Vatican Council and promulgated in December of 1963.

[Contemplating the Face of Christ in Film](#) – A 2004 Pastoral Letter from Bishop Michael Saltarelli, Bishop of Wilmington.

[Evangelii Nuntiandi](#) (On Evangelization in the Modern World) – First published in 1975, it is an apostolic exhortation in response to the Synod on Evangelization.

[Evangelization](#) – The process in which the Church proclaims the Good News of Salvation in Jesus Christ.

[Eucharistic Congress](#) – Event in the Diocese of Wilmington scheduled for October 29, 2005 at Ocean City, Maryland.

[General Directory for Catechesis](#) – Published by the Congregation for the Clergy in 1997, it provides principles, guidelines for catechesis for the universal church.

[Interpretation of the Bible in the Church](#) – Document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission published in 1993

[John Henry Cardinal Newman](#) – A leading figure in the Oxford Movement, lived 1801-1890.

[Kingdom of God](#) – A biblical concept found in the New Testament which refers to the sovereignty of God over all things.

[Laity](#) – The faithful, except those in Holy Order and those who belong to a religious state approved by the Church.

[Magisterium](#) – The teaching office of the Church.

[Mane Nobiscum Domine](#) – Apostolic Letter of Pope John Paul II calling for the Year of the Eucharist.

[National Directory for Catechesis](#) – Provides principles and guidelines for catechesis in the United States published in May of 2005.

[\*Our Hearts Were Burning Within Us\*](#) – The pastoral plan for adult faith formation in the United States from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops published in 1999.

[Paschal Mystery](#) – The Passion Death, Resurrection and Ascension of the Lord.

[Pope Benedict XVI](#) – Born Joseph Ratzinger at Marktl am Inn, Germany, elected Pope in 2005.

[Pope John Paul II](#) – Born Karol Wojtyla in Wadowice Poland. Elected Pope in 1978, died in 2005.

[Pope Paul VI](#) – Born Giovanni Montini, he was elected Pope in 1963 and died in 1978.

[\*Renewing the Vision\*](#) – Document published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops outlining their vision for comprehensive youth ministry in parishes.

[\*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults\*](#) – The process by which the church initiates its new members and brings others into full communion with the Catholic community.

[St. Ephrem](#) (d. 373) – Poet and theologian of the Syrian Church.

[St. Thomas Aquinas](#), (1225-1274) – Dominican priest, the Angelic Doctor, wrote the *Summa Theologica*.

[Tradition of the Church](#) – The living transmission of the faith, guided by the Holy Spirit, in the Church.

[United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#) (USCCB) – The Episcopal Conference for the bishops in the United States, headquartered in Washington, D.C.

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