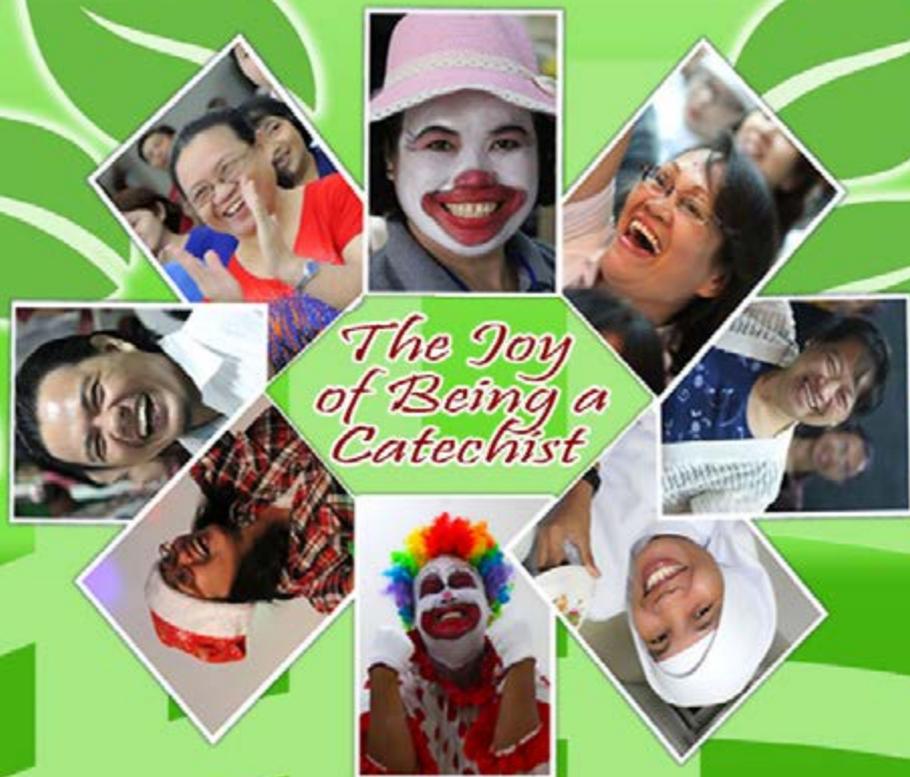




Trellis

The Catechists' Magazine



*The Joy
of Being a
Catechist*

“Do not be afraid of going beyond your boundaries-God is already there”

Pope Francis

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TRELLIS

The Catechists' Magazine is a timely event for catechists and for catechesis in the Archdiocese of Manila. The extent of catechetical initiatives calls for a legitimate source of knowledge and motivation that may inspire catechists to do more and be more. This publication, true to its name, TRELLIS, may hopefully create a forum for an in-depth discussion of ideas, activities, and plans for the catechetical enterprise. Being an archdiocesan magazine, it is meant for the personal growth and updating of its intended audience.

TRELLIS comes to life through the Catechetical Foundation of the Archdiocese of Manila (CFAM).

It is a quarterly supplementary material that enhances further the formation of catechists. Fruitful initiatives of CFAM and priceless experiences of catechists in the apostolate are forever enshrined on its pages. Catechists elsewhere could see their own lives unfold in its articles.

Without overemphasizing its value, this issue expounds the theme: **THE JOY OF BEING A CATECHIST.** To complete the magazine, we have invited several contributors who have been involved in the field of catechetics - priests, religious and lay people. TRELLIS modestly resonates the life and vision, the hopes and dreams, the triumphs and struggles of catechists. There could be no better way of honoring these "educators in the faith" than talking and writing about their journey in the apostolate. Indeed, TRELLIS is the catechists' publication.

THE CATECHISTS IN THE EYES

OF THE HOLY FATHER



(Address of Holy Father Francis to Participants in the Pilgrimage of Catechists on the Occasion of the Year of Faith and of the International Congress on Catechesis - Paul VI Audience Hall- Friday, 27 September 2013)

To “be” a catechist requires love, an ever-stronger love for Christ, a love for His holy people. And this love can’t be bought in stores, even in Rome. This love comes from Christ! It is Christ’s gift! And if it comes from Christ, it also starts with Christ, and we too need to start anew with Christ, from the love He gives us. **WHAT DOES THIS STARTING ANEW FROM CHRIST MEAN FOR A CATECHIST?**

1. START ANEW FROM CHRIST MEANS BEING CLOSE TO HIM

- Jesus insisted on this to His disciples at the Last Supper, when he prepared himself to live the greatest gift of love, his sacrifice on the Cross. Jesus used the image of the vine and its branches and said: stay in my love, stay attached to me, just as the branch is attached to the vine. If we remain united to Him, we can bear fruit, and this is familiarity with Him. The first thing, for a disciple is to stay with the Master, to listen to Him, to learn from Him.

2. STARTING ANEW WITH CHRIST MEANS

IMITATING HIM BY LEAVING OURSELVES BEHIND AND GOING OUT TO ENCOUNTER OTHERS - We ourselves don’t become the center! The more that you unite yourself to Christ and He becomes the center of your life, the more He leads you out of yourself, leads you from making yourself the center and opens you to others. This is the true dynamism of love; this is the movement of God Himself! God is the center, but He is always self-gift, relationship, love that gives itself away and this is what we will become if we remain united to Christ. He will draw us into this dynamism of love.

3. STARTING ANEW WITH CHRIST MEANS NOT BEING AFRAID TO GO WITH HIM TO THE OUTSKIRTS - Not to be afraid to go to the peripheries. Not to be afraid to come out of our fixed mindsets and follow God; because God always goes beyond; God is not afraid of peripheries; God is always faithful, He is always creative. To stay with God, one needs to be able to go out; not be afraid to go out!

GUIDE
QUESTIONS
FOR
REFLECTION:

1. When is your regular “bonding moments” with Christ? How do you make your closeness to Him stay fresh?
2. Do you have the patience and kindness of Christ in reaching out to others?
3. Have you been to the “outskirts”? Who are in the “outskirts”?

“People who work must take the time to relax, to be with their families, to enjoy themselves, read, listen to music, play a sports.”

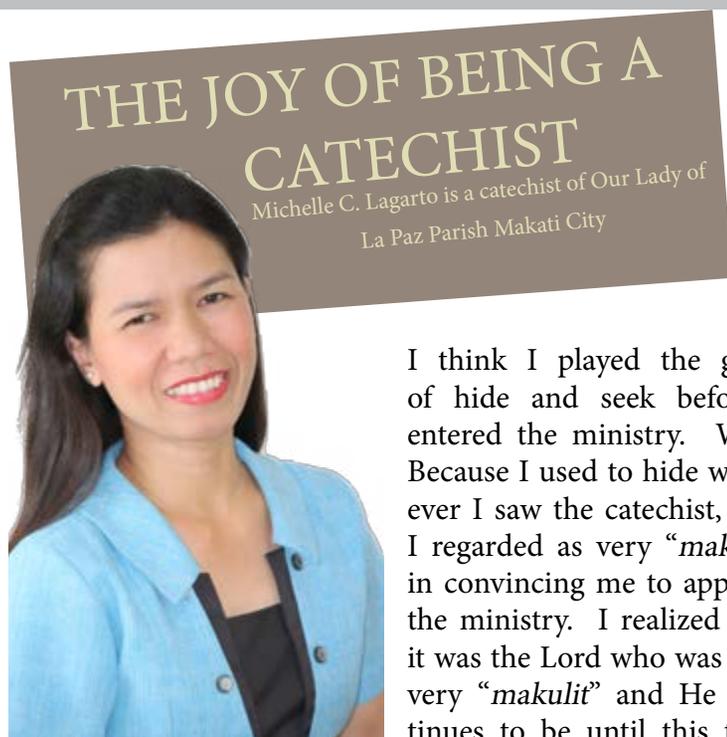
-Pope Francis-



THE VOCATION OF A CATECHIST

The call to the ministry of catechist is a vocation, an interior call, and the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit serves as a guide in the development of the catechist's vocation and spirituality, which is proper to the specific role each catechist has. The spirituality centers on an encounter with Jesus Christ. It is rooted in the living Word of God.

(National Directory for Catechesis)



I think I played the game of hide and seek before I entered the ministry. Why? Because I used to hide whenever I saw the catechist, who I regarded as very “makulit” in convincing me to apply to the ministry. I realized later it was the Lord who was then very “makulit” and He continues to be until this time.

Being part of the “Our Lady of Sorrows Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) Kids,” I grew up in the company of catechists. But it never occurred to me that I would be a catechist one day.

How did I become a catechist? Clueless...this is how I would describe my first year as a catechist. I had little experience and had no idea on how to start.

When I reported to the parish, it was the time when my head catechist was operated due to glaucoma. It was also the time when the parish I was assigned to, was undergoing reorganization and the parish priest was preparing to move to his next assignment. I was left to the care of a catechist serving at the nearby parish. She was the one who accompanied me to the school where I was assigned, introduced me to the teachers, and arranged my schedule.

Tiredness overcame me during my second year. I reached a point when I needed to drag my body to be able to go home after my last period in the afternoon. I could almost feel my body scream of fatigue!

My third year was a struggle – a struggle of might and mind. My mind said I could, but my body said I couldn't. So I started to ask myself if I was really meant for the work or was this really what I wanted?

During my fourth year, I was left alone in the parish because my head

catechist had to take a leave for a year due to family matters. The incident left me with all the catechetical duties to be fulfilled, like preparing young people for First Communion, Confirmation, Confession and other parish activities. I felt like almost giving up! The feeling of being alone was killing me. But with the help and support of other catechists in the area, I survived my fourth year. Having realized that I am not alone, that there were people who cared, I was able to cope, to move forward and to look ahead to the next year...my fifth year.

Learning to accept the life of a catechist was not easy. There were lots of sacrifices to undergo. I gathered all my strengths, my skills, my knowledge and everything that I had so I could use them to become effective and dependable in my job. This was my way of giving back to the ministry and to the parish where I was assigned. It was like living a life out of my comfort zone.

If you work for a company, I know you have to follow rules and regulations and do your work to the best that you can. But what is following and doing without self-giving? To me, self-giving is following and doing things out of love. In my seventh year, I fully learned the art of self-giving. Doing so, I then sensed that I was starting to reap the fruits of the goodness and hard work I sowed for seven long years. I felt I belonged, at least in the parish... our first home as a catechist.

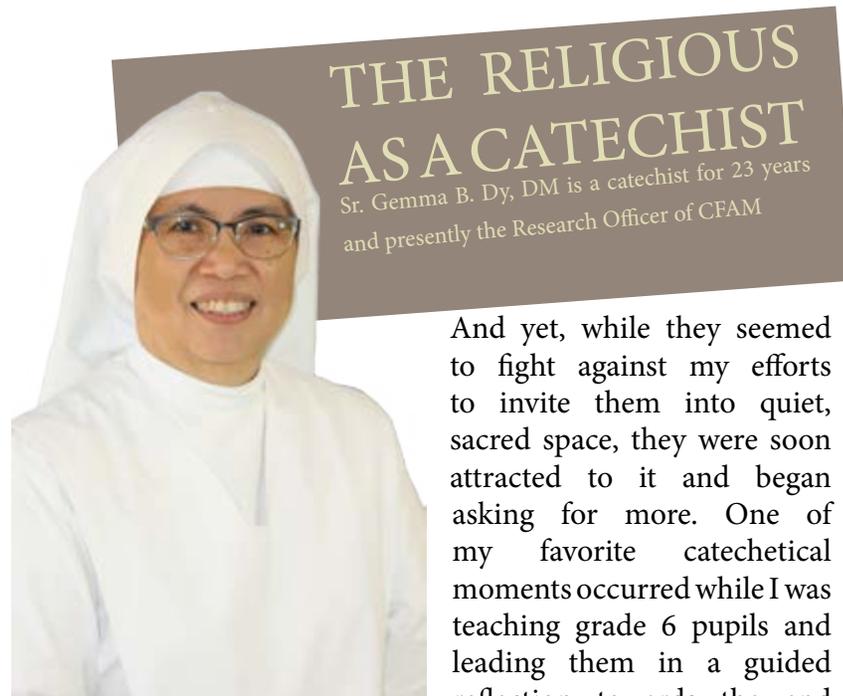
Relationship is also very important to me. The outcome of my work lies in what kind of relationship I have with the people around me. During your trying times, you will know the people who value their relationship with you. This I experienced in my ninth year when my father passed away. The parish community, my fellow catechists, teachers, students and even their parents were there to express their sympathy.

How time flies. It has been ten sorrowful, glorious, luminous and joyful years serving as a catechist. Looking back, I know I would not be able to find joy and meaning in my catechetical life if I have not experienced pain, difficulties, trials, struggles and disappointments. Now, I look at my catechetical work not as a job, because if I do so, I will get tired and will complain, but a service that I can offer to everyone.

Today, I appreciate being alone but not lonely and learned to just work silently to the best of my ability. Is this really what I want? Well, there are things that you don't understand and can't even explain but you follow. I guess, this is God's will for me. He has found me and will always find me even if I hide.

"I thank you for everything that you do, but above all, because you are part of the Church, the pilgrim People of God, and you accompany God's People on that pilgrimage"

—Pope Francis



I haven't always wanted to be in education. However, a person will never know that one can do something unless one will plunge into it. My first official teaching experience happened when I was a novice where we were obliged to teach catechesis in a public elementary school near our convent. The thought of watching and teaching a group of noisy young people was overwhelming, to say the least. Moreover, teaching young people the art of reflective prayer was not easy. They were not accustomed to silence.

And yet, while they seemed to fight against my efforts to invite them into quiet, sacred space, they were soon attracted to it and began asking for more. One of my favorite catechetical moments occurred while I was teaching grade 6 pupils and leading them in a guided reflection towards the end of the year. With each week, the students had grown more comfortable with this approach to prayer and their behavior was gradually improving. There was a time, as I finished the guided reflection, you could hear a pin drop. I slowly and quietly walked around the room as they spent some quiet time with Jesus and felt the presence of the Lord in that sacred space. It was an experience of heaven on earth and I thought to myself, "This is why I became a catechist!"

As a member of the Daughters of Mary, Mother of the Church Institute (DM), our charism is “to diligently spread the good news of Christ’s light, life and love to everyone, so that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). This is distinctively expressed through catechetical instructions among children and young people (DM Constitution). Fruitfulness in the catechetical apostolate is not an option but a goal that is inherent in our congregational identity.

The most challenging part in my life as a catechist is communicating the Gospel effectively to its recipients. Teaching students about Christian doctrine, morals or worship involves a great difficulty. Students would rather play, listen to music, or tinker with their electronic gadgets rather than concentrate on “abstract” realities or truths. When I was assigned to teach catechism to High School students, I tried several teaching strategies to get their attention - from becoming a dancing and singing nun, to being “techy,”

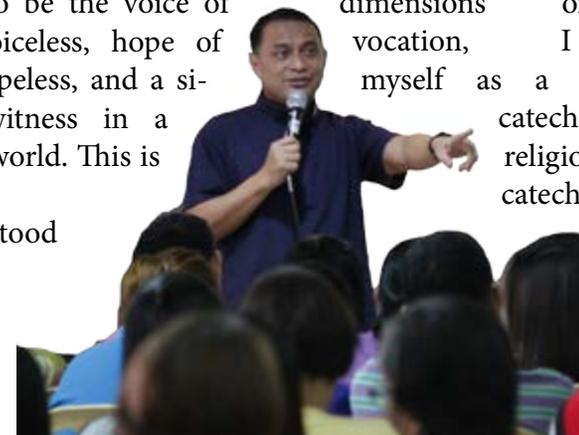
a good performer and an artist to name a few. One experience, which I will never forget, was when I taught the students about prayer. I used the different social media logos found in my Ipad to start the discussion and asked them to name them as I showed them the icons. They did it fast and enthusiastically. When I asked them what was the use of social media, they answered, for easy communication.

That was when I inserted the need to communicate with God and I guess it was an effective strategy. Many times, being with energetic, enthusiastic, and young individuals refreshes my soul with a renewed energy and a more realistic perspective in life. The millennials remind adults to live and laugh now and be overwhelmed by life’s joyful moments.

As a religious, I am called to be a witness to the Gospel in my family, my religious community, and the people I work with. Many times I find this to be a difficult challenge.

All the aspects of my life should be a showcase of what I teach. To work in an organization where everybody is a catechist is a blessing because you will find it easy to live out your calling. There were moments, of course, that we forget the basics. As a religious, you have to be the voice of the voiceless, hope of the hopeless, and a silent witness in a noisy world. This is better understood

in the context of a more encompassing, more structured and ever-growing vocation to proclaim the Gospel as its “irreplaceable evangelizers” (*Redemptoris Missio* 73.1, 2). In the end, considering the personal and communitarian dimensions of my vocation, I see myself as a religious-catechist or a religious with a catechist’s heart.



THE JOY OF BEING A CATECHIST: CREATIVITY OVER “EMPTY” ROUTINES

Rev. Fr. William M. Parde Jr. was the Director of the Caceres Catechetical Ministry for 13 years. To date, he is the rector of the Holy Rosary Major Seminary of the Archdiocese of Caceres.

The *Evangelii Gaudium* (“Joy of the Gospel”), written by Pope Francis, shows the platform of his papacy. The Pontiff writes, “I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy

from being confined and from clinging to its own security.” In the document, he aired his sentiments about the global economic structure, crucial role of politics, unequal distribution of wealth, Church renewal, decentralized leadership, and cooperation of religion

among others. Generally, the apostolic exhortation reflects the Pontiff's simple and gentle preaching technique and underscores the Church's central mission of proclaiming, "the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ."

There must be something countercultural in the life of catechists; something that goes against "conforming-to-what-is-common" mentality; something that is "out of this world." Pope Francis emphatically spoke about God's mercy, the Father's radical call for selfless lives and surrender to Him, the challenge to share the word of God as baptized individuals, and the humility and patience to wait for the results brought about by God's transformative word. Catechists, then, are guided by the Word and not by the dictates of what is fashionable, popular, comfortable and common. Most likely, what is easy, fast and convenient will not last or at the most, superficial.

Borrowing the insight of Pope Francis, lasting joy is something that is rooted on the cross – a real sharing in the

passion and death of the Lord.

The sick, the victims of violence, the confused, the depressed, and the poor must find inspiration in the cross of Christ. It is when believers carry their crosses and gradually triumph over them with God's help that Christian joy is experienced – the kind of joy that gives people deeper knowledge, patience and trust. This is more than a simple feeling as it changes one's perspective and relationship with Jesus.

Like Abraham, Moses, and Jeremiah, God constantly challenges those who believe in Him to do more. Going to Church, reciting the rosary, praying the novenas, giving donations, etc. are certainly part of the "pious routines," but Pope Francis reminds Catholics to move away from their comfort zones and to go to the "peripheries" in order to share God's loving message. Catechists should explore the countless ways they can share the word as they also attempt to find its meaning in their daily life. In this day-to-day encounter with the Lord,

the richness of His Word allows catechists to be creative in expressing it in a manner they are led to by God's Spirit. Doing religious acts in the Church is just one way to show love for God; they become more pointed when they end up seeking the good of others.

Finally, joyful catechists are not self-absorbed individuals; the measure of their joy is determined by the way they make God's word and love alive in people. Doing the same things over and over again limits the extent of one's joy, while exploring new avenues to reach out to others ensures an extensive taste of bliss. After all, daily religious activities and acquired routines of catechists are stepping-stones to a more profound joy – the fruit of efforts to do more for Jesus, to go beyond what is familiar, and to take the road less-traveled by many without hesitation.

The catechists are creative; they search for different means and forms of announcing Christ."

–Pope Francis



Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven."

–Pope Francis



WORDS FROM RETIRED CATECHISTS



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WHY AM I A CATECHIST?

“Dahil gusto kong ipahayag ang pagmamahal ni Hesus sa aking buhay.”
-Maureen -

“Ako ay tinawag ng Diyos na maging Katekista at tumugon ako sa Kanyang tawag.” - Art-

“Dahil ito ang nais ng Diyos para sa akin”
-Diosdado-

“Sign of my gratitude for all the blessings I received from God.”
-Cielou-

“Naniwala ang Diyos sa aking kakayahan na maging katuwang Niya.” -Cecille-

“Ang pagmamahal ng Diyos na nagbunga ng matinding pagbabago sa buhay ko ang nag-akay sa akin sa pagtuturo ng Katesismo” -Bimel-

“To bring the joy and love of Christ.”
-Cathy-

“Ako ay TIP: Tinawag, Isinugo, Pinili ng Diyos.” -Anette-



IKAW!
Bakit ka nga ba naging katekista?

ARE THERE REALLY CATECHISTS IN HEAVEN?

A close encounter with a saintly catechist

By: Fr. Ramil R. Marcos

LAUREANA FRANCO, or fondly called as Ka Luring, was the legendary catechist of the diocese. Many people knew her and she knew quite a lot of people as well. She attended many gatherings of the church, whether they were prayer vigils, rallies, congresses, or parish activities. Ka Luring was everywhere the action was.



a calm confidence that allowed her to mingle, discuss, and connect with almost everyone. She was sensitive to the simple people around her. There was a ready smile for everyone.

She was present in a different way. While some people used church events as an opportunity to show their dignity and finesse, Ka Luring had none of these. Instead she joined these activities in her own simple way, not at all concerned about the way she looked. In spite of her humble appearance, she possessed

Seminarians expected Ka Luring to fetch them for their weekly catechism classes in public schools. She was the seminarians' patient guide. She loved each seminarian and enjoyed moments with them. The seminarians, for their part, learned a lot from the experienced catechist.

FRIEND OF CARDINAL SIN

The Archbishop of Manila, Jaime Cardinal Sin, enjoyed a close friendship with Ka Luring. The simple catechist often visited the Cardinal in his residence.

Her visits brought joy and peace to the leader of the church. Ka Luring made the Cardinal laugh at her stories and her anecdotes about her experiences as a church worker.

At times, the Cardinal summoned Ka Luring to his office to be able to talk to her about his

concerns for the church and to ask for her prayers. Cardinal Sin, the most famous Cardinal in Asia at that time, believed and trusted in the power of the prayers of his lowly catechist.

Were these visits not like the times spent between spiritual giants like the friends St. Francis and St. Clare,

the siblings St. Benedict and St. Scholastica, and the spiritual partners St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane de Chantal? Ka Luring and the Cardinal enjoyed the same friendship of the saints.

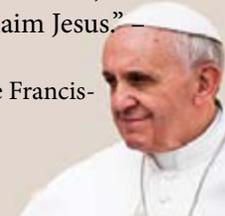
SERVANT OF THE POOR

When Ka Luring was not busy with her pupils, she was known to be serving the poor. She has a regular apostolate in a depressed area near where she lived. She took care of the elderly there in a way that even their families did not do for them.



The job of the Catechist is to go forth to others out of love to bear witness and to talk about Jesus, to proclaim Jesus."

-Pope Francis-



I began to like, and love Ka Luring because of her kindness, selflessness, and genuine friendship. She was a happy person to talk to, not at all serious and solemn, as you might expect from someone regarded as an authentic witness of Jesus Christ. Every conversation with her was light and relaxing. It left you with a feeling of being peaceful and blessed.

When we became familiar friends, Ka Luring shared with me her concerns for the poor. This woman, never tired from serving the parish, the school, the poor, tried her hand on helping indigent college students! A poor, uneducated woman with a scholarship plan! If she found a student who was diligent and struggling to succeed, and learned that the family was so deprived to sustain an education, Ka Luring took that student under her wings.

She went around town looking for priests who shared her advocacy. She visited priests in the seminary and in the parishes to tell them her stories of the lives of these poor

scholars and to entice them to lend a hand. At times, she had pictures of her students in her bag. With her way of convincing people, she got the money for the tuition and other needs of her scholars. I wonder how many of them finished high school or college, how many of them now have better lives because of Ka Luring's begging expeditions? I often joked with Ka Luring that she only remembered me when the enrollment period comes, and she loves that part because it was true.

HER SEMINARIANS AND HER PRIESTS

It was not a secret that Ka Luring had a soft spot in her heart for her special men – the seminarians and priests she met. She even had favorites among them, with whom she developed deeper friendship and showed intense loyalty. She rejoiced at every vocation to the priesthood and she attended ordinations of new priests regularly.

There were priests Ka Luring visited regularly in their assigned posts, even travelling

on foot at times, because she did not have money for transportation.

There were priests she prayed for in a special way, although she admitted praying for all the bishops and the priests of the archdiocese.

If one joked with her about her favorites, she would shyly smile or laugh without protesting. She simply defended herself by saying that some priests were also very kind and supportive of her and her advocacies than others. At times, in the parish, Ka Luring



would just make a surprise visit on a priest. She just wanted to greet the priest, hear about what

was happening in his life and assure the priest of her prayers and concern for his good. She would of course successfully leave with some generous donation for her beloved poor.

HER GOD

We were on our way to a priests' retreat when I heard that Ka Luring was in serious condition in a hospital. A group of us came to visit her there. This was the only time I saw Ka Luring lying down in bed, in contrast to the countless moments I saw her rushing to a place, busily doing something, speaking animatedly and happily, joking or telling stories, or kneeling in

The saints were not superhuman. They were people who loved God in their hearts, and who shared this joy with others.”

-Pope Francis-



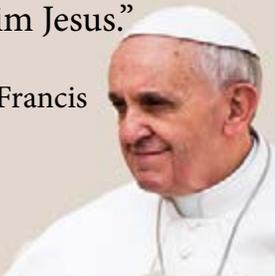
silent prayer in a chapel or church.

Each priest who came to the hospital that day had a chance to speak with Ka Luring. She clearly remembered the name of each of us and personally, in a weak voice, thanked us. I was glad she recognized me. When I assured her of my prayers for her healing, she told me that she would also be praying for me in heaven. What a beautiful promise, a final touching gesture from a person who knew what it meant to dedicate her body and soul for the holiness of the people she knew and cared for, out of love for Jesus.

Are there really catechists in heaven? Well, Ka Luring is already there now praying for us even if we cannot see or feel her. On earth she was the Lord's catechist and heavenly glory can only enhance, not erase that identity. There the servant joins her Master's eternal banquet, ever mindful of those she left behind still struggling for the soul of Manila, for the poor of Manila, for the priests and people of Manila.

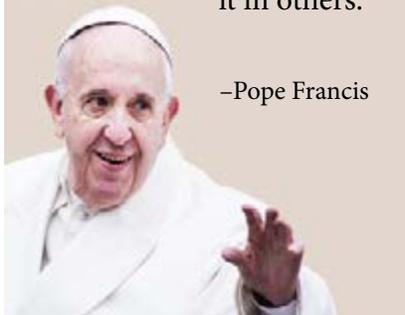
"The job of the Catechist is to go forth to others out of love to bear witness and to talk about Jesus, to proclaim Jesus."

—Pope Francis



"Catechists are people who keep the memory of God alive; they keep it alive in themselves and they are able to revive it in others."

—Pope Francis



WHAT A CATECHIST SHOULD

KNOW ABOUT EXORCISM

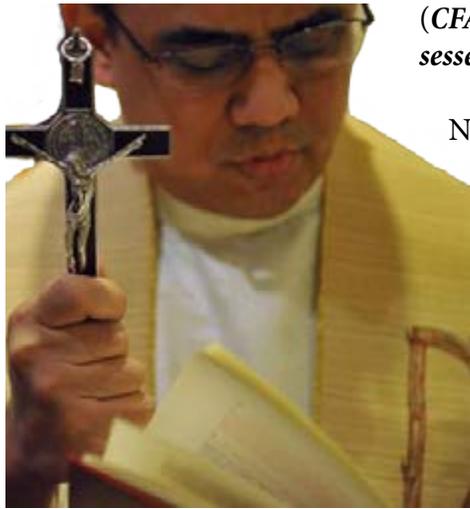
In the Archdiocese of Manila, there are an increasing number of reported cases of extraordinary demonic attacks or bondage. Occasionally, catechists encounter the concerned persons in schools and in other places. Aware of these challenging situations, the Catechetical Foundation of the Archdiocese of Manila (CFAM) conducted an interview with an expert in the field of exorcism. The following are some of the important lessons from FR. JOSE FRANCISCO C. SYQUIA, the Director of the Archdiocese of Manila Office of Exorcism (AMOE) and a leading practitioner of exorcism.

(CFAM) - There are instances when catechists encounter students who are "possessed by the devil." Can they perform certain rites for them? What actions can you recommend them to take?

The most obvious sign of possession is a reaction towards blessings, prayer, or holy

items. A simple cross is not necessarily holy; a competent authority in the matter might not have blessed it. If someone does not react to a bible, a Buddhist statue, or a Hindu symbol, it does not mean he/she is not possessed. Most of the time, it simply indicates that the items or symbols were not blessed, and did not carry a holy energy. Not every item can serve as a detection device for possession, even if it seems to come from a religious background.

A possessed person will naturally react against any kind of spiritual practice. They won't do it themselves, and they will not trust anyone with a holy energy. Individuals are possessed at varying degrees. Some people ignore that they have a possession, because they come in so many



(CFAM) - Why is a person possessed by the Devil?

Normally, we are only tempted by the Devil. But if the person opens himself up, it opens certain doorways; the devil could have more power over him. That's what we call extraordinary demonic attack. It starts with obsession. That means the Devil can attack the person's mind.

different ways and many are left unnoticed. The Rite of Major Exorcism is to be administered only by an authorized priest or bishop. If it is deemed useful, members of the lay faithful may pray the prayer of deliverance or may be present during the rite, supporting the work of the exorcist by their prayers either recited privately or as instructed in the rite. The text, however, cautions that the lay faithful are not to recite any prayers reserved to the exorcist, not only because the prayers are reserved to those ordained to act in the person of Christ the Head, but also to protect the faithful from possible spiritual harm.

In oppression, the Devil can attack the person's emotions and body through sickness. Some forms of curse could destroy even relationships and businesses. And there's the highest form of extraordinary demonic attack that we call "possession," the full take-over. A person in the possessed state, the state of crisis as we call it, does not remember anything when he wakes up.

In the Gospel, Jesus healed the woman whose back was bent for many years and it was caused by evil spirit. After the Lord expelled the spirit, the person got well already.

This is oppression. But possession is the gravest form of extraordinary demonic attack. Here in the Philippines, people can easily believe in "sanib," "engkantos," "duwendes," and many more. This concept doesn't necessarily mean demonic entities. If you look at the teachings of the Church, it never talks about elementals as a third form created by God. It would always be referred to as "fallen angels." They are not souls. They are not good angels, because no good angel would possess a person. They were thrown down from heaven to earth and are now residing in nature. "kapag ginulo mo sila, gumaganti sila."

(CFAM) - How can we determine if a person is truly possessed by an evil spirit or is just psychologically disturbed?

Even before we pray over someone, we must interview the person properly and try to look for psychological or paranormal signs. Sometimes, people who are psychologically ill are more open to spiritual world attacks. So we try to see how much is spiritual, how

much is psychological. We have psychiatrists and doctors who help us make a diagnosis. I would do a simple test on a person. I would mentally command the evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ to manifest himself. And if the person doesn't know what I'm thinking and suddenly he starts to scream or shout, then right away I would know I'm not dealing with a psychologically ill person. I'm dealing with a person who has an entity in him, one that can read thoughts that I'm sending.

In the Gospel, Jesus was able to discern right away if the person's sickness is caused by a demon. We try to not only check whether the person is psychologically ill, but other patterns and manifestations beyond the psychological. For example, when I pray over a psychologically ill person for healing, I would start to give a command silently. If suddenly, he goes on a trance state and begins, for example, to tell my personal secret, that's a sign that we are dealing with something more than psychological.



Or when we pray over the person, he/she does contortions of the body that are physically impossible to do.

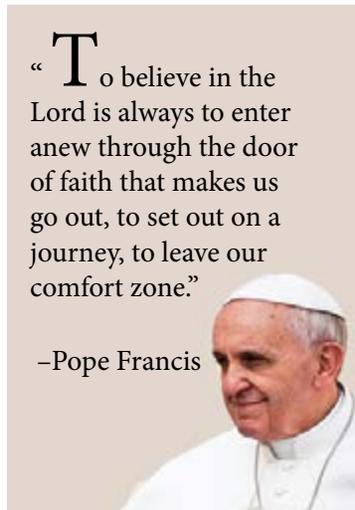
(CFAM) Do you have any message for our catechists regarding Exorcism?

I discovered that the Devil is only good at threatening people. The more scared you are, the more he will threaten you. St. Augustine said “the Devil is like a chained dog; he cannot go beyond a certain distance. You can only get hurt if you go near him.” But God will not allow you, if you are doing His work. He may touch you, but there will be no permanent damage to you. You learn about the power of God and how much He loves us and wants to intervene in our lives if we just call upon Him.

We forget that He created us to be with Him in love, and that the Devil will do anything to block that. He will divert our attention from Him. This is why I write books and give talks. The Devil is very intelligent and deceptive. He will always give you what is good in the beginning until it’s too late. I recommend that we develop devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Michael the Archangel. Pray the Rosary as much as you can and always pray the prayer to St. Michael as often as you can especially in times that you need his assistance.

“To believe in the Lord is always to enter anew through the door of faith that makes us go out, to set out on a journey, to leave our comfort zone.”

—Pope Francis



APOLOGETICS

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS?

Answer: The English word “apology” comes from a Greek word which basically means “to give a defense.” Christian apologetics, then, is the science of giving a defense of the Christian faith. There are many skeptics who doubt the existence of God and/or attack belief in the God of the Bible. There are many critics who attack the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. There are many false teachers who promote false doctrines and deny the key truths of the Christian faith. The mission of Christian apologetics is to combat these movements and instead promote the Christian God and Christian truth. Probably the key verse for Christian apologetics is 1 Peter 3:15, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..”

There is no excuse for a Christian to be completely unable to defend his or her faith. Every Christian should be able to give a reasonable presentation of his or her faith in Christ. No, not every Christian needs to be an expert in apologetics. Every Christian, though, should know what he believes, why he believes it, how to share it with others, and how to defend it against lies and attacks.

A second aspect of Christian apologetics that is often ignored is the second half of 1 Peter 3:15, “but do this with gentleness and respect..” Defending the Christian faith with apologetics should never involve being rude, angry, or disrespectful. While practicing Christian apologetics, we should strive to be strong in our defense and at the same time Christ-like in our presentation. If we win a debate but turn a person even further away from Christ by our attitude, we have lost the true purpose of Christian apologetics.

There are two primary methods of Christian apologetics. The first, commonly known as classical apologetics, involves sharing proofs and evidences that the Christian message is true.

The second, commonly known as “presuppositional” apologetics, involves confronting the presuppositions (preconceived ideas, assumptions) behind anti-Christian positions. Proponents of the two methods of Christian apologetics often debate each other as to which method is most effective. It would seem to be far more productive to be using both methods, depending on the person and situation. Christian apologetics is simply presenting a reasonable defense of the Christian faith and truth to those who disagree. Christian apologetics is a necessary aspect of the Christian life. We are all commanded to be ready and equipped to proclaim the gospel and defend our faith (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Peter 3:15). That is the essence of Christian apologetics.

Retrieved from <https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-apologetics.html> last 03/09/17

SUFFERING WITH A PURPOSE

CHALLENGE

“Why would a good God allow physical evils like suffering and death?”

DEFENSE

We don’t have full answers to the problem of evils in this life, but we can see that at least some physical evils are helpful.

God can tolerate some physical evils because good comes from them. According to Pope John Paul II: “Certain forms of physical ‘evil’... belong to the very structure of created beings, which by their nature are contingent and passing, and therefore corruptible. Besides, we know that material beings are in a close relation of interdependence as expressed by the old saying: ‘the death of one is the life of another.’

So then, in a certain sense death serves life” (General Audience, June 4, 1986). We see this in the natural world, such as when a lion kills a zebra so that it can eat. The death of the zebra serves as life of the lion.

In the same way, the living things we humans eat (whether plants or animals) sustain our lives.

The Catechism says: With infinite wisdom and goodness, God freely willed to create a world “in a state of journeying” towards its ultimate perfection. In God’s plan this process of becoming involves the appearance of certain beings and the disappearance of others, the existence of the more perfect alongside the less perfect, both constructive and destructive forces of nature.

With physical good there exists also physical evil as long as creation has not reached perfection (CCC 310). Pain can also play a valuable role in our lives. Some people suffer from congenital

insensitivity to pain, and its results can be dramatic, even fatal. Physical pain serves as a warning system, and people without a proper pain response can be severely injured or killed. Even emotional pain can be useful. The emotion of fear alerts us to danger and motivates us to take steps to avoid it.

TIP

Although some suffering plays a valuable role in the present life, this doesn’t exhaust the problem of evil. Unlike the above examples, some suffering serves no obvious purpose. The above answer, however, provides a partial explanation of why God tolerates some suffering and how he brings good out of it.

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THE CATECHISM?

1. Divine economy refers to:

- A. Living in solidarity with the poor
- B. Common work of the Trinity
- C. Parish Finances
- D. Tithing



2. The “four pillars” of the Catechism are:

- A. Eucharist, Commandments, Scripture, Church History
- B. Church history, Creed, Sacraments, Commandments
- C. Creed, Sacraments, Commandments, Prayer
- D. Sacraments, Commandments, Prayer, Scripture

3. Respecting and caring for animals is taught as part of which commandment:

- A. Ninth — You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.
- B. Seventh — You shall not steal.
- C. Fifth — You shall not kill.
- D. None. It’s not included in the Catechism.



4. The fourth “pillar” of the Catechism focuses at length on this prayer:

- A. Rosary
- B. Apostles’ Creed
- C. Our Father
- D. Jesus Prayer



5. The first official universal Catechism was published in:

- A. The first century
- B. 1566
- C. 1885
- D. 465



6. Some credit this person with producing the first Catechism text:

- A. John Calvin
- B. St. Augustine
- C. Martin Luther
- D. Pope Pius VIII



7. In which language was the current Catechism first published:

- A. English
- B. Latin
- C. Italian
- D. French

8. It took this many years to complete the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

- A. Four
- B. Twenty
- C. Eleven
- D. Six



9. The English translation of the Catechism was held up for more than a year when some U.S. bishops objected to the use of which word:

- A. Consubstantial
- B. Concupiscence
- C. Filioque
- D. Man

10. The second edition of the English version of the Catechism was changed to reflect stronger language on this topic in light of Evangelium Vitae:

- A. Stem cell research
- B. Death penalty
- C. Euthanasia
- D. Abortion



11. "Parousia" refers to:

- A. Jesus' second coming
- B. The gift of tongues
- C. An element of the occult
- D. One of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

**12. Final purification will take place in:**

- A. Heaven
- B. Purgatory
- C. Hell
- D. On earth before death

13. The "source and summit" of Christian life is:

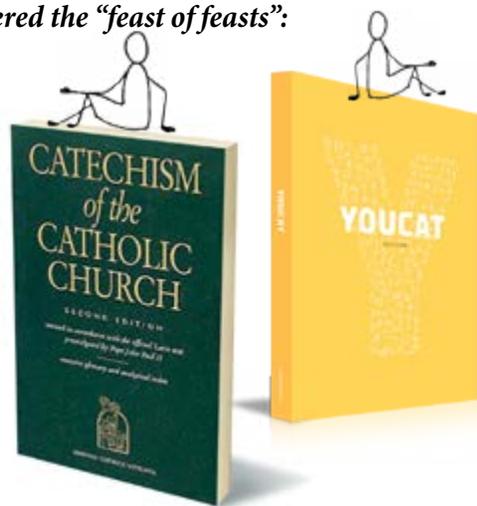
- A. Baptism
- B. Union with God
- C. Eucharist
- D. Holy Orders

**14. Church teaching on a "heavenly liturgy" comes from:**

- A. Gospel of John
- B. Book of Isaiah
- C. Revelation
- D. Acts of the Apostles

15. What is considered the "feast of feasts":

- A. Christmas
- B. Good Friday
- C. Easter
- D. Pentecost



Prepared by Fr. Jose
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Answers on page 45

PRAYING PSALM 138 (139)

O Lord you search me and you know me,
You know my resting and my rising,
You discern my purpose from afar.
You mark when I walk or lie down,

All my ways lie open to you.
Before ever a word is on my tongue
You know it, O Lord through and through.
Behind and before you besiege me,
Your hand ever laid upon me.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge
Too high, beyond my reach.

O where can I go from your spirit,
Or where can I flee from your face?
If I climb the heavens, you are there.
If I lie in the grave, you are there.

If I take the wings of the dawn
And dwell at the sea's furthest end,
Even there your hand would hold me fast.

If I say: "Let darkness hide me
And the light around me be night,"
Even darkness is not dark for you
And the night is as clear as the day.

To help us in our meditation of this beautiful psalm we read the commentary by Pope Benedict XVI:

“The substance of the message he (the Psalmist) offers us is straightforward: God knows everything and is present beside his creature who cannot elude him. However, his presence is neither threatening nor inspectorial; of course, he also looks reprovingly at evil, to which he is not indifferent. Yet the basic element is that of a saving presence, which can embrace the whole being, and the whole of history. In practice, this is the spiritual scenario to which St. Paul alluded at the Areopagus of Athens, with recourse to a quotation from a Greek poet: “In Him we live and move and have our being.” (Act 17:28)”

“And so we can understand what the ultimate, essential content of this Psalm is: it is a song of trust. God is always with us. Even in the darkest nights of our lives, he does not abandon us. Even in the most difficult moments, he remains present. And even in the last night, in the last loneliness in which no one can accompany us, the night of death, the Lord does not abandon us.”

“For our life speaks of prayer and prayer speaks of our life; Praying is something learned, just as we learn to walk, to speak, to listen.”

– Pope Francis



A CATECHISTS' LITANY OF THANKS



It would be a good time to pause and give thanks for those blessings that are specifically related to our role as a catechist. To the following, we pray, “Thank you, Lord!”

For my vocation as a catechist...

For the many people who formed me in faith...

For those I am privileged to teach...

For those I have taught in the past...

For my fellow catechists...

For my Director of Religious Education...

For the guidance of the Church...

For the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Catechism for Filipino Catholics ...

For the Catechetical Ministry, its programs and staff

For all of the Church's catechetical documents...

For the Sacred Scriptures...

For the lives of the Saints...

For the opportunity to share my journey...

For the many people who are journeying with me

For good catechetical resources from Catholic publishers...

- For good catechetical Web sites...
- For the guidance of the Holy Spirit...
- For the opportunity to partner with parents...
- For the times I have learned from my mistakes...

As a catechist, what are you thankful for?

ST. ROBERT BELLARMINE

PATRON SAINT OF CATECHISTS



St. Robert Bellarmine was a diocesan bishop for only two brief periods of a few years each, but during these times—and indeed throughout his life—he distinguished himself for his zeal and ability in preaching and teaching the faith.

The Letter of St. Paul to Timothy enumerates the virtues required of a bishop. Among these we find that he should be “temperate, self-controlled, decent, hospitable, able to teach.” These traits, most outstandingly the last, accurately characterize St. Robert Bellarmine.

Born in Montepulciano in Italy, he joined the Jesuits at a young age. He played an important role in all the great theological controversies of his day, and he used his abilities and erudition to serve the Church well in many important and high profile positions.

Among these were the chairs of controversies at the Roman College, trusted consultant to several popes, cardinal of the Holy Office, and, in the middle of his career, archbishop of Capua.

In his time as archbishop he dedicated himself to bringing his people into closer union with God by instructing them in the faith. One biographer reports that, at a time when sermons were common in Capua only during Advent and Lent, St. Robert dutifully preached every Sunday and feast day in Capua and went to great trouble to get to the remote portions of his diocese during the week in order to catechize his congregation.

Though he was recalled to Rome for service to the universal Church after only a short period of ministry in Capua, he never ceased to be mindful of the education of the faithful.

In the last years of his life he wrote several spiritual books that became immensely

popular among the laity. Reportedly the most famous of these was *The Mind’s Ascent to God by the Ladder of Created Things*. He notes in this work how easy it is for man to forget God since he “can neither see nor easily think about him nor cleave to him in affection...” Therefore, following such masters as St. Paul, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas Aquinas, he offers a series of meditations on the works of God to help bring men to greater knowledge and love of the Creator. He demonstrates that we can come to know just how close God is to us by pondering created reality, for it is a true (though by no means comprehensive) reflection of his majesty and perfection.

For his immense work in teaching the faith, St. Robert Bellarmine is now invoked as the patron saint of catechists. May his prayers bring about a great renewal of catechesis in our time (§13).

Br. Joachim Kenney, who entered the Order of Preachers in 2010, wrote this post. He is a graduate of the University of Louisville. His sister is a cloistered Carmelite nun, and he enjoys his visits home to St. Louis Bertrand Parish

Retrieved from www.dominicanajournal.org/st-robert-bellarmino-patron-saint-of-catechists/ March 1, 2017

CREATING A PRAYER ENVIRONMENT

Creating a prayer space for your students is an opportunity to bring the true, the beautiful, and the good to their lives. When we do this, we are bringing them to experience the very life of God. For centuries, the art

another location, to the very height of heaven, engrossed with the knowledge that God exist. As a catechist, we usually bring the sacredness of the church inside our classroom by creating a sacred space, which becomes a means not only of catechesis, but also an entrance into another place and time of worship. The sacred spaces we create in our classrooms can truly be an opportunity to elicit the same reactions within our students.

Here are few tips on how to create Sacred Space inside the classroom:

1. Cover a table or empty desk with fabric in the color of the current liturgical season.
2. Add basic symbols. These include a crucifix, candles, or seasonal symbols. (Advent – Advent wreath, lent- ashes, stones, cross, Easter- water, flowers) All items used within a prayer space should be of another location,



and space of our parishes have been the means through which the knowledge, the truth, and the very life of God were transmitted to the faithful. Even today, when we enter some of the majestic and beautiful churches, we usually will sit in awe, as if taken to

3. Prayer spaces need to be set aside and should consist of more than just a piece of furniture. Consider setting aside an entire corner of a room.

4. Add an open Bible. The Word of God is alive, active and open to all. The Bible should never be displayed closed.

5. Prayer spaces need to be a focus during communal times of prayer. Students may all face the area and concentrate on a piece of art, or might even gather around the space. Consider doing actions like taking off your shoes as you approach the space, to signify the area as different.

6. Prayer spaces need to be able to be utilized individually as necessary. Students ought to have an opportunity to pray quietly in or near the area before, after, or even at times during the class.

7. The prayer space must contain truth, it must be beautiful, and it must elicit the good of the students. As part of the space, we must also look toward the very prayer we utilize in the space.

Part of the environment of prayer is the very prayer itself. If we rush through a prayer, if we say it in a meaningless fashion, or if we place it as a distraction to the rest of what we do, we do not set forth an environment conducive to prayer. The prayer we choose for our classrooms needs to elicit an age-appropriate response to God's love.

8. Simple, memorized prayers work for communal recitation; yet, our prayer time with the students ought to utilize those memorized prayers as a springboard into a deeper and more relational experience of prayer. "Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice-holy God and in communion with him" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2565*).

Utilizing the depth of prayer found in liturgy, in *Lectio Divina*, in contemplating the face of Jesus, or in meditative prayers such as the Rosary or chaplets, will strengthen the depth of the prayer life of each of our students, enabling them to know

God in a relational way that will make all of our teaching more fruitful.

9. Silence is a necessary aspect of prayer at all ages, allowing God to speak to each student. Make sure to keep the length of the time of silence appropriate to the age of the students praying.

10. The whole environment of prayer (the space, the internal reflection of the student, and the prayer itself) should be replicable. Students need to be able to take the ideas, the images, and the space to their own homes. They ought to feel

encouraged to introduce this space to their parents, and be able to find a location within their own homes to utilize as a prayer space. The hearts of the students, and hopefully those of their families, will grow in union with the very heart of Jesus. To view prayer as a serious component in the life of catechesis is to take seriously the call of Christ to make disciples of all nations. By establishing an environment that is true, good, and beautiful, we can hope to establish both an internal and external openness to the very life of God within our classrooms, our students, and their families.



The Right Way to Start Your Day

This small cube with a saying on each side expresses the points of the Gospel-based “art of loving.”

Love Everyone

Be the first to love

Love Jesus in the other

Share the other’s hurt and joy

Love your enemy

Love one another

These messages can be lived concretely by people of all ages and religious backgrounds. It promotes unity and universal brotherhood everywhere --- at school, within the family and among friends!

This program, created by Focolare founder Chiara Lubich, not only helps to prevent conflict and violence but contributes to a growth in faith, to the building of a more Christian community, and to an ever greater awareness of the universal family and the needy worldwide.

Retrieved from <https://livingcitymagazine.com/cubeoflove> last March 1, 2017

The Cube is rolled to select the point for the day or week. The rest of the day or week, we focus on living concretely and intensely the message of the Cube and, afterwards, are invited to share how we lived it.

The cube of love inspires all to put the Gospel into practice, making their relationship with God and others more personal and dynamic. This fosters the greatest lesson of all: to love as Jesus taught.



download the design found in <http://gen4.focolare.org/en/download/italiano-1/in-azione-1/dado-dell-amore-1/730-dado-dell-amore-color-1/file.html>

TIPS ON HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR VOICE

As soon as we open our mouths to speak we are judged; assumptions can be made about our intelligence, our determination, confidence, power, and us. Being able to project the 'right sound' can make a vital difference to the way we are perceived and treated.

It can be said that the voice is the primary link between the mind and the body therefore if you have a positive mindset, an awareness of posture and a basic knowledge of how the voice works – you have the potential to exercise far more control, thus speaking effectively, effortlessly, and with confidence. Many people use their voice for their work. Catechists are among those who make great demands on their voice. Our voice is our treasure in spreading the good news of salvation. We have to take care of our voice not only because we want to sing but also because God is making use of our voice to

spread his Words. Below we will find some helpful tips on how to take care of our voice from **MISS MARIBEL MIGUEL ARARAO**, CFAM choir master a graduate of Master in Music, Major in Voice.



General guidelines to follow to take care of our voice:

1. Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water. Six to eight glasses a day is recommended.
2. Limit your intake of drinks that contain alcohol or caffeine, which can cause the body to lose water and make the vocal cords and larynx dry.

3. Avoid or limit use of medications that dry out the vocal cords, including some common cold and allergy medication and mouthwash or gargles that contain alcohol or irritating chemicals. If you still wish to use a mouthwash that contains alcohol, limit your use to oral rinsing. If gargling is necessary, use a salt-water solution.

4. Don't smoke and avoid second-hand smoke. Smoke irritates the vocal cords. Avoid eating spicy foods. Spicy foods can cause stomach acid to move into the throat or esophagus, causing heartburn. Include plenty of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables in your diet. These foods contain vitamins A, E, and C. They also help keep the mucus membranes that line the throat healthy.

5. Get enough rest. Physical fatigue has a negative effect on voice.

6. Exercise regularly. Exercise increases stamina and muscle tone. This helps provide good posture and

breathing, which are necessary for proper speaking.

7. Use your voice wisely: Try not to overuse your voice. Avoid speaking or singing when your voice is hoarse or tired.

8. Rest your voice when you are sick. Illness puts extra stress on your voice.

9. Avoid using the extremes of your vocal range, such as screaming or whispering. Talking too loudly and too softly can both stress your voice.

10. Consider using a microphone when appropriate. Avoid talking in noisy places. Trying to talk above noise causes strain on the voice.

Tips on proper voice care to follow in order to maintain a strong and healthy singing voice:

1. Maintain Good Posture and Proper Breathing Control- Always make sure that we maintain an upright and neutral posture and practice proper breath support when we sing.

2. Practice Vocal Warm-ups Before We Sing - We should always be sure to warm up our voices before we start to sing, so that our diaphragm and our vocal cords are ready to support and produce the sound that we require during singing.

3. Keep Our Neck, Jaw and Face Relaxed During Singing- When we sing, we control our breath using our diaphragm and the surrounding abdominal and intercostal muscles, and our voices with our vocal cords and supporting muscles. We should always take care not to involve other muscle groups into the picture, for example our neck muscles, jaw muscles and facial muscles. These muscles should be relaxed when we sing, as they will affect our voice by increasing the amount of tension in our throats and in our vocal cords, and making it more difficult for us to sing well!

4. Placing or Focusing Our Voice Appropriately - There are a great variety

of vocal registers and positions that we can sing from, and knowing which register to use as well as which position our voice should resonate from will be beneficial to general voice care and avoiding vocal damage.

In singing, ears are very important. Whatever enters the ear the brain is processing it. If the ear is weak, the brain received it and the output of the vocal cord is affected. The vocal cord has an inherent pitch but it cannot process it if it is a high or a low note because the message being sent by the brain is wrong. Generally, the built of the pitch of the Filipinos are tenor and sopranos.



WELLNESS RECIPES FOR THE CATECHISTS

(by Chef Tristan Encarnacion)

Eating fish as protein lowers cholesterol

RECIPE: BANGUS BELLY SA SABA

Ingredients:

½ tbsp Oil
 2 tbsps White Onions, chopped
 ½ tbsp Garlic, chopped
 2 tbsp Tomato, chopped
 1-2 pcs Siling pangsigang (optional)
 1-2 pcs Saging na Saba, hinog
 2 small pcs Gabi, peeled
 Brown Sugar, as needed
 Vegetable Stock as needed
 Patis and or Soy Sauce, as needed
 1-2pcs (150g each) Bangus Belly
 Salt and Pepper to taste
 5-7 leaves of kangkong
 1-2 tbsps Fresh Stevia
 ¼ cup Cucumber, diced
 Dahon ng saging (garnish)
 A cup of plain rice

“Health care is a right, not a privilege.”

-Pope Francis -



Saute onions and garlic in a pot with hot oil. Add tomatoes, sili (optional), saging na saba and gabi. Season with patis and or soy sauce. Pour stock and simmer until saba and gabi are soft and mashable. Pour everything in a blender, puree until smooth and return mixture onto the pot. Add brown sugar and pepper. Add bangus belly, simmer until cooked. Add kangkong and pipino. before serving. Season with salt if needed. Serve with plain rice.

RECIPE: ALOE VERA SHAKE

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsps Aloevera, sap (dagta)
- ½ cup Pear, peeled and cubed
- 1 cup Crushed ice
- 2 tbsps Honey or 3 tbsps Fresh Stevia
- ¼ tsp Fresh Mint
- ½ cup Dalandan Juice

Put everything in a blender. Puree until smooth. Serve on a chilled glass.

ANSWER KEY

1. B (No. 258)
2. A
3. B (No. 2416)
4. B
5. B (Catechism of the Council of Trent)
6. C (Luther's little catechism was published in 1529.)
7. D
8. D
9. B (Those bishops lost their fight; the Church opted to keep the generic male-centered language.)
10. B
11. A (No. 1001)
12. B (No. 1030)
13. C (No. 1324)
14. C (No. 1137)
15. C (No. 1168)

CATECHETICAL CENTERS/TRAINING INSTITUTES/FORMATION CENTERS IN METRO MANILA

BROTHER ANDELINO MANUEL F. CASTILLO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
FOUNDATION INC. (BAMCREF) Catechetical Center
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2401 Taft Avenue, Manila
Tel. No. 524-4611 local 762 fax: 526-7909

COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION FOR ASIA (CFA)
4427 Int. Old Sta. mesa, Manila
Tel. No. 713-2738 fax: 713-2975 cp# 0920-2338497

INSTITUTE OF CATECHETICS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA (ICAM)
San Carlos Pastoral Formation Complex
EDSA Guadalupe, Makati City, M. Manila
Tel. No. 896-7561 to 62 fax: 890-9563

LUMEN CHRISTI CATECHETICAL CENTER
Stella Maris College, ACPO box 86
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Tel. No. 912-4085 fax: 912-4210

MARY CAUSE OF OUR JOY FORMATION CENTER (MCJFC)
Amapola cor Estrella Sts.
Guadalupe, Makati City, M. Manila
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Sta. Catalina Convent, Sta. Catalina St., Quezon City, 1105 M. Manila
Tel. No. (02) 414-1157 local 131

MOTHER OF LIFE CENTER
Bo. San Agustin, Novaliches, Quezon City, 1105 M. Manila
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