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**A theological analysis of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics
as an aspect of the ministry of the divine word.**

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The norms and criteria for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as postulated in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) are identified, after which they are used to assess some existing theoretical catechetical material that has informed the practice of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics.

Next catechetics - and the above norms and criteria - are shown to discover their ground in relation to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith. By utilising the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Balthasar as presented in his Trilogy the relationship between the divine Revelation of Jesus Christ and the faith response and the norms and criteria necessary for the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis is further explicated. This allows the presentation of a post-conciliar catechetics as grounded in the derived scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's contribution.

The scheme of fundamental theology derived from Balthasar is then married with Lonergan's contribution on transcendental method and Dulles' work on systems of revelation in order to present a way to deepen the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. This takes the form of a detailed theoretical template that identifies and addresses the elements intrinsic to, and constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith response, and the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as consistent with the workings and autonomy of the human mind.

Finally, the detailed theoretical template is applied to the practice of post-conciliar catechetics, and used to critique more precisely those theoretical catechetical materials formerly investigated at the initial stages of the thesis.

Abbreviations

Documents of Vatican II

- AD *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity)
CD *Christus Dominus* (Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church)
DH *Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Liberty)
DV *Dei Verbum* (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation)
GE *Gravissimum Educationis* (Declaration on Christian Education)
GS *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)
LG *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
SC *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)

Other Church Documentation

- CCC The Code of Canon Law
CT *Catechesi Tradendae* (Catechesis in Our Time)
EN *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World)
FR *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason - Encyclical letter of John Paul II)
GCD General Catechetical Directory
GDC General Directory for Catechesis

The Works of Hans Urs von Balthasar

- GL The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics
TD Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory

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Preamble

This thesis sketches a theory of the guiding principles of modern Roman Catholic catechetics by way of a meta-approach rooted in the concept of the divine Revelation.

Thus the approach adopted in the thesis itself is that of post-conciliar Roman Catholic theology which entails and recognizes its dependence on commitment to the Catholic community, its pastors, and its methods as it works confidently inside the domain of faith.

Through adherence to the Christian symbols as understood in the tradition and in the praxis and faith of today's Church, this opus seeks to recapture the abundance of meaning and wisdom held in the many sources previously available to theologians. Scripture and Tradition are used imaginatively and organically to yield symbols and indicators so that the heart and mind of the believer can become more deeply attuned to Revelation's truth.

Indeed the relationship between Revelation and theology in this post-conciliar approach is one where, from the outset, Revelation is accepted at least by tacit faith. As theology assigns unreserved trust in the Church with its normative sources, symbols, and traditions of interpretation it takes form as a particular discipline with a definite methodology. Revelation, instead of being posited as totally known from the beginning, is continuously explicated as theology executes its mission.

However, it must also be noted that the contemporary context is marked with several objections to the notion of Revelation itself. Linguistic analysis declares that God-talk has a paradoxical and symbolic hallmark. Philosophical agnosticism questions the capacity of human reason to transcend the phenomena of worldly experience. Empirical psychology has all but destroyed any naive belief in phenomena such as visions and auditions. Modern theories of knowledge are inclined

to debilitate the apparently clear distinction between revealed and acquired knowledge. Biblical criticism has uncovered the problem of ascribing specific words and deeds to the divine agency. The history of Christian doctrine has shown that several beliefs previously understood as divinely revealed truths have been recategorized as human and even erroneous opinions. Comparative religion demands Christianity relate itself to other belief systems which in some instances hold contrary revelations and in other cases accept no such phenomena as divine revelation. Critical sociology has disclosed the ideological component symptomatic of belief systems, raising the issue of the use of power and control within those systems.

Specifically, however, the reader is alerted to the issues surrounding the autonomy of reason and its relation to the faith response as this is of particular importance in the development of catechetics understood as a discipline seeking to echo the response of faith made to the divine Revelation.

In the spectrum of tenable positions from rationalism which is dismissive of faith to fideism which is dismissive of reason four fundamental positions dealing with the relationship between the two types of mental activity, reason and faith, are common.

The first position holds that assent must ever be based on reason, which acknowledges evidence. To assent to anything on the ground of authority devoid of personal verification is tantamount to an encroachment of what is viewed as the rightful legitimacy and autonomy of reason. Revelation is denied as an infringement of the universal order and an infraction of the autonomy of the human mind.

The second major position views faith as an inferior sort of knowledge that lacks certitude and clarity. Taking John Locke as an exponent of this view, Polanyi states: 'Belief is here no longer a higher power that reveals to us knowledge lying beyond the range of observation and reason, but a more personal acceptance which falls short of

empirical and rational demonstrability.’¹ During the nineteenth century some Roman Catholic theologians, influenced by Hegel’s thought, advanced a system in which revelation, originally accepted in faith, is later translated into lucid, demonstrated knowledge. This ‘semirationalism’ was constantly condemned by Rome during the nineteenth century as was the extreme rationalism of the unbelievers.

In the third position revelation ranks above reason. Human reason is legitimate only within the limited domain of worldly consensus. Revelation discloses the limitations of reason and dictates its assertions be judged. Revelation cannot be endorsed by reason; it must be received in blind faith even though this be anomalous. This ‘fideism’ has been identified with theologians such as Tertullian, Peter Damian, Martin Luther, and Kierkegaard, though it is arguable how much each of these individuals accords to the type.

The fourth position strives to accomplish a sort of balance between faith and reason - frequently through a system that respects the identity of both faith and reason whilst preserving their relationship as obverse correlates. Reason is associated with the inherent power of the intellect to know, and in that sense is understood as the premise of Revelation. However, when Revelation happens it presents mysteries that surpass the comprehension of reason, and hence demand the submission of faith. After reason has submitted, it can fruitfully reflect on what it now knows. Albeit reason is unable to provide compelling proofs or attain lucid comprehension of the revealed mysteries, it can comprehend their inner intelligibility and their ability to illuminate things naturally known. Hence the contents of Revelation are manifest to be rationally credible, though not absolutely verifiable.

¹Avery Dulles S.J., Models of Revelation, p. 247 taken from Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), p. 266.

It is a position akin to this fourth position that is held and developed in the course of this work.

Specifically then faith is understood as the response the believer makes to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. This response is constituted by two movements inseparable from each other. The first is the response of loving the person of Jesus. The second is the response of knowing the person of Jesus. Of these two movements the response of loving takes priority over the response of knowing as love does not come to an end (1 Cor 13:7). The former is more associated with the term 'heart', whilst the latter is more associated with the term 'mind'. However this artificial distinction between heart and mind is to be understood essentially for the purpose of investigation and discussion as the human being is truly indivisible.

Introduction: Exposition of the thesis

The main concern of this work is to establish that modern catechetics needs to be grounded in a proper meta-approach consistent with the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as drawn from the Roman Catholic Church's Magisterium - as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and derived from the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965) - to better orient and structure the activity of catechetics as a vital aspect of the ministry of the word which is itself a fundamental element of the process of evangelization.¹

The mandate of the Church to catechise, as integral to the Church's mission to evangelize, is understood to flow from the missionary mandate of Jesus 'Go, therefore make disciples of all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you' (Mt. 28:19-20). Ultimately, then, catechetics finds its *raison d'être* in relation to Jesus Christ, the Resurrection (Jn 11:25), for 'if Christ has not been raised then our preaching is useless and your believing it is useless' (1 Cor 15:14).

Thus the importance of the topic under discussion stems from its relationship to the transmission of the divine Revelation of the Apostolic faith in Christ Jesus by the Roman Catholic Church to humanity, and effectively addresses the issue of how well-informed the ministry of catechesis is at the theoretical level which pertains to the nature of catechesis as derived from the relationship existing between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind.

¹GDC, Part One, Catechesis in the Church's Mission of Evangelization, Chapter One and Chapter Two, pp. 37-76.

The position of the author regarding catechetics

The position held is that catechetics as an aspect of the ministry of the divine word attends to the echo of the faith response of the mind and heart of the believer made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. Catechetics is the ecclesial discipline that seeks to promote and mature the faith of those persons who have already chosen to follow Jesus Christ.

This truth forms the base line of the thesis which essentially holds that the integrity constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind must be reflected in the nature of catechetics as a discipline that attends to the echo of faith.

Effectively, then, it is from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind that the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechetics are grounded and derived as it is this relationship that catechetics seeks to echo. Namely, the norm and source of catechetics is the word of God. Whilst the inter-connected criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message which flow from this source are: its christocentric-trinitarian structure; salvation to be ever understood as gift and liberation; the ecclesial and historic character of the message; the presentation of the Gospel message in its purity and integrity as a fundamental unity destined for all peoples; and the comprehensivity of the Gospel message with its own hierarchy of truths which causes it to be a deeply meaningful event for the human person. It is these norms and criteria that constitute the necessary meta-approach to modern catechetics.

Similarly it is also held that the integrity afforded to the content of faith, as a response of the human mind to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ, must possess a direct correspondence with the content of catechetical criteria as this content receives its 'shape' from the way in which the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ is received in faith by the heart and mind of the believer as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind.

Thus the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics (of salvation to be understood as gift; the possession of an historic nature; the promotion of inculturation; the possession of a meaningful message for the human person; and the conveying of the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths) is understood to correspond with the various dimensions of the human mind (with the form of content proper to interpretation; history; dialectic; foundations; and doctrine) in which the faith response echoes in such manner that the shape of the content of the catechetical criteria is explained. However, this content of the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics must also be situated within the norms and criteria that constitute the necessary meta-approach to modern catechetics to preserve the necessary integrity of the faith response made to the person of Jesus Christ.

The fundamental point of inquiry

Accordingly the issue addressed is much wider than, yet inclusive of, the various methodologies proper to the exposition of the doctrinal content of catechesis.

Similarly it is vital to remember that the topic addressed here is that of catechetics as distinguished from religious education. Rather, the fundamental point of inquiry is that of establishing an overarching approach which is capable of presenting the integrity of the Gospel message in such a way that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis present the Apostolic faith as a consistent

and coherent unity made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

This will be shown to be true by establishing that catechetics finds its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith and has its constant point of reference in its role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith.

Consequently this opus attends to the main aim of theology which ‘is to *provide an understanding of Revelation and the content of faith*’.² It is therefore a predogmatic work that contributes to the discipline of fundamental theology by investigating the nature of catechetics as derived from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith ‘without in any way compromising the principles and autonomy of the mind itself’.³

Effectively, then, what is advocated here is a more ‘structured’ approach to respect the necessary integrity of the nature of catechetics than perhaps has existed in recent times, where some contemporary catechetical approaches have tended to emphasise and focus on particular isolated aspects concerned with the nurturing and nourishing of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation - e.g. experiential models of catechesis; catechesis understood solely as transmission of doctrinal content; catechesis in service of inculturation of the faith - rather than ever present the work of catechesis through its necessary integrity.

However, as this work seeks to deepen the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of Jesus Christ as

²FR 93.

³FR 67.

consistent with the workings of the human mind in order to better guide and shape the ministry of catechetics it likewise holds that this comprehensive and thorough approach is capable of subsuming many of the various isolated approaches that have until now tended to be the hallmark of modern catechetics.

This is possible because whereas the various isolated approaches tended to emphasise some particular aspect or aspects of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith this thesis refers to the overarching integrity that exists between the divine Revelation of Jesus Christ and the response of faith of the believer's mind and heart as its fundamental point of reference.

For example, from the perspective of this analysis inculturation as a criterion of catechesis comes to be understood as a dimension intrinsic to the nature of catechesis as grounded in the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind; whilst simultaneously inculturation is also understood as intrinsically inter-connected with the other identified criteria of catechesis because they too are derived from the nature of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind.

In terms of the overall method of approach it is important for the reader to be aware this thesis is written from a position within the Christian faith-tradition, and indeed from a Roman Catholic perspective. As such the work is guided by the tradition of faith and its classical and binding expressions, particularly as expressed in the Magisterium of the Church and the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

Thus the thesis begins with an investigation and evaluation of the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) in order to identify the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis and to show the context in which the norms and criteria are situated and from which they emerge. In effect it will be shown that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis flow from the word of God as the source of catechesis, and that the nature, object and duties of catechesis in the process of evangelization flow from their relationship to the divine Revelation of God's Word, Jesus Christ.

Thus the norm and source of catechetics is identified as the word of God. Whilst the inter-connected criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message which flow from this source are presented as: its christocentric-trinitarian structure; salvation to be ever understood as gift and liberation; the ecclesial and historic character of the message; the presentation of the Gospel message in its purity and integrity as a fundamental unity destined for all peoples; and the comprehensivity of the Gospel message with its own hierarchy of truths which causes it to be a deeply meaningful event for the human person.

Once the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis have been identified they are then to be used to assess the theoretical state of the art of catechetics as it presently exists. This is achieved by evaluating the theoretical ground of some approaches to catechetics through the lens of the said norms and criteria as provided by the Magisterium to determine the way in which these standards and guidelines have influenced some of the theory presently informing post-conciliar catechetics. However, as the distinction between catechetics and religious education is not always made clear in the literature this section is introduced by some remarks explaining the link between catechesis and religious education as understood from the author's perspective before the various contributions are considered.

Specifically, then, the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 (1997), edited by Michael Warren is firstly assessed prior to the evaluation of the contribution of Thomas H. Groome as found in his three major works Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (1980); Sharing Faith : A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (1991); and Educating for Life : A Spiritual Vision for every Teacher and Parent (1998), after which Soil for the Seed (2001) by Jim Gallagher SDB is attended to.

On this point it is important to note that although the norms and criteria have been identified in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) they are essentially identical with those stipulated in the General Catechetical Directory (1971). Hence this investigation is justified in using the said norms and criteria to assess contributions to the catechetical field made after 1971. Similarly it must also be noted that there is not a plethora of existing theoretical material seeking to develop the ground of the ministry of post-conciliar catechetics from the perspective of fundamental theology.

After the theoretical state of the art of catechetics has been evaluated in light of the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message, attention turns to establishing more thoroughly the relationship that exists between catechetics, the divine origin of faith, and the structure of Revelation. The aim of this section is to show unequivocally that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as expressed in the GDC discover their ground in relation to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith.

This is achieved by firstly attending to the structure of Revelation according to *Dei Verbum*. Here Christian Revelation is identified as possessing several vital constitutive dimensions. These are the dialogical; the principle of historicity; the

sacramental structure; the incarnational principle; the centrality of Christ; the principle of economy; and the christocentric-trinitarian dimension.

After this the theological constitution of faith is investigated, with faith primarily understood as the response human beings make to the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Word of God. Faith is then considered as an aesthetic and redesigning initiative of God which somehow must also cater for the reasons for belief. The act of faith is then examined in terms of: its expansiveness; its relation to the role understanding plays in testifying to the theological character of faith; and how love and freedom are engaged in the faith response. Next the comprehensivity demanded by the *sequela Christi* is investigated after which the relation between the act of faith and the Sacramental Economy is considered. Penultimately, the vital unity made manifest in the homogeneity of the process and content of the act of faith is analysed before the person of Jesus Christ is presented as the principle of essential unity of the Christian faith.

Once these aspects have been identified the relationship between catechetics and the divine Revelation and the response of faith is presented in such a way that it becomes clear catechetics discovers its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith as it has as its constant point of reference the role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith.

Consequently it also becomes evident that for the work of catechesis to be effective it must be grounded in and informed by an authentic understanding of the entire structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ - as expressed through the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis given in the GDC.

This section ends therefore with the exposition of the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as expressed in the GDC as ever vital for the ministry, if that ministry is to be conducted in a genuine manner which resonates with an authentic understanding of the entire structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ as God's Word.

The next section is dedicated to the provision of a more developed theological base in which to bed the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis. To this end the method of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar is cited to point the way in which a more developed understanding of the structure of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation can contribute to the development of the catechetical ground that has been broken. Here, Balthasar's Trilogy of theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic are investigated since they reveal an original and consummate presentation of the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* of the Christian event whilst simultaneously stressing the necessary christocentric, trinitarian and ecclesial dimensions.

This allows the shape of a post-conciliar catechetics consistent with the norms and criteria of the Gospel message, and informed by the scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's theological contribution, to be expressed. Balthasar's approach is then assessed from the perspective of determining how useful or limited his contribution is in supporting the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis.

The final section addresses the issue of how the area investigated in the thesis might be further developed. In particular a way is sketched in which the work of catechetics can be informed and conducted through a far deeper understanding if, in turn, it is grounded in a more profound form of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith

made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind.

To this end the contribution of von Balthasar is married to the thought of Lonergan in such a way that the former approach is complemented by the latter's work on the structure of human consciousness. Specifically, it proposes that the said development can result from bringing together the fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's contribution - especially as it relates to his notion of the Gestalt-Christi - with those aspects of Lonergan's work which explore the structure of human consciousness as discovered in intentionality analysis. This suggests a theological construct capable of respecting both the christocentric-trinitarian presentation of the divine Revelation by the Church, with the response of faith and conversion within the human heart and mind, as resonant with the various levels pertaining to the structure of human consciousness.

To illustrate this the act of faith is analysed from the perspective of making this response to the person of Christ on the various levels that form the structure of human consciousness as proposed in transcendental method. This is accomplished with reference to the derivation of the functional specialties from the structure of human consciousness as advocated by Lonergan, and utilising the relationship between the different levels on which these specialties occur, their proper form of content, and the various contemporary systems of revelation identified by Dulles as: new awareness; history; dialectical presence; inner experience; and doctrine. This then allows the various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi to be presented after which a critical appraisal of the arguments of Balthasar and Lonergan as deployed in the thesis is conducted.

The thesis ends with a consideration of what the deepening of the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation from the above perspective can mean for the ministry of catechetics. In particular it explains how and why the criteria, and its content, used in the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics is derived from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith, and also clarifies why the criteria, as a vital unity, become essential to the ministry of catechetics if it is to be conducted in an authentic manner.

By way of example and to evidence a more refined means of assessing existing theoretical catechetical material the developed theological construct is then applied to those theoretical approaches to catechetics formerly investigated at the outset of the thesis i.e. as found in the General Directory for Catechesis, the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2, the contribution of Thomas H. Groome, and Jim Gallagher's Soil for the Seed. This reveals how the new template can provide a more informed, developed and nuanced approach in helping to establish the necessary norms and criteria needed for the authentic presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis by providing a solid theoretical foundation to orient and structure this vital ministry of the life of the Church. The thesis closes with some reflections on the relationship between the theory developed in the thesis and catechetical practice.

**Identification of the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel
message in catechesis as postulated in the General Directory for Catechesis
(1997)**

Background to the General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

The guidance and direction of post-conciliar catechetics flows from, and has its source in, the conciliar mandate to draw up a 'Directory for the catechetical instruction of the Christian people' as prescribed at the Second Vatican Council in the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus* (28 October 1965).

On 11th April 1971 the General Catechetical Directory was promulgated in accord with the above statement of intent. This directory guided the particular Churches in their renewal of catechesis and provided a point of reference for pedagogy, methodology, and content in light of the theologico-pastoral advances made at Vatican II. Indeed the aim of the directory was 'to present the fundamental theological - pastoral principles, taken from the magisterium of the Church and especially the Second Vatican Council, for the guidance and better co-ordination of the ministry of the word'.¹

Shortly after the 1971 directory was promulgated the work of catechetical renewal was further enhanced when the Congregation for Divine Worship published The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults on 6 January 1972. This evidenced a degree of scholarship and research had more than begun to influence the practice of catechetics in the most concrete of manners.

¹GCD, Introduction.

The next significant development occurred in the wake of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme of Evangelization in the Contemporary World (October 1974) when Pope Paul VI promulgated the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (8 December 1975). This document enunciated the especially vital principle that catechetics be understood as a work of evangelization in the context of the Church's mission. A few years after this, in October 1977, the final General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops as convoked by Pope Paul VI, took the topic of catechesis as their focus for reflection and analysis. This Synod understood the movement of catechetical renewal as an inestimable gift of the Holy Spirit to the life of the contemporary Church.

The catechetical enterprise further progressed when Pope John Paul II took up the theme in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae* (16 October 1979). His contribution fully located catechesis within the context of evangelization, and together with *Evangelii Nuntiandi* formed an intelligible unity which helped advance the field. To be sure, Pope John Paul II has made significant contributions of the highest catechetical value in seeking to renew ecclesial life as expressed by the Second Vatican Council. In terms of particular catechetical value, his more important Encyclicals are: *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979), *Dives in Misericordia* (30 November 1980), *Dominum et Vivificantem* (18 May 1986), and *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990). Whilst in *Fides et Ratio* (14 September 1998) he underlines the importance of catechetics to the life of the Church and urges theological work to be dedicated to its service.

However, the General Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops have also continued to influence the development of catechesis. Their work in the Synods of 1980 and 1987

which addressed the mission of the family, and the vocation of the laity, respectively, led to the promulgation by Pope John Paul II of the respective Apostolic Exhortations *Familiaris Consortio* (22 November 1981) and *Christifideles Laici* (30 December 1987). Nevertheless, perhaps one of the most important decisions for contemporary catechesis was made by the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in 1985. It was they, who after a review of the application of the Second Vatican Council in the intervening twenty years, proposed to Pope John Paul II the notion of a universal catechism for the Catholic Church. After a lengthy and involved process Pope John Paul II presented the Catechism of the Catholic Church to the bishops and the Particular Churches by the Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum* on 11th October 1992.

The publication of the Catechism coupled with the aforementioned contributions of the Magisterium meant that it was time to revise the General Catechetical Directory so as to refashion this guiding theologico-pastoral instrument in light of the novel context that had emerged.

Thus the General Directory for Catechesis was promulgated on 15th August 1997. It sought to balance the two main aims of (1) presenting catechesis within the context of evangelization as envisaged by *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and (2) appropriating the content of the faith as demonstrated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Structure and object of the General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

Nonetheless the General Directory for Catechesis did retain the basic structure, and possess the same object as that pursued by the directory of 1971: ‘It attempts to provide fundamental theologico-pastoral principles drawn from the Church’s

Magisterium, particularly those inspired by the Second Vatican Council, which are capable of better orienting and coordinating the pastoral activity of the ministry of the word and, concretely, catechesis'.²

The basic intention of the Directory remains that of proposing principles and reflections as opposed to stipulating practical directives or immediate applications. The Directory explicitly states that this approach has been chosen mainly because faults and defects in catechetical material can be avoided only if the nature and goal of catechetics, as well as the values and truths which must be transmitted, are properly comprehended from the outset.

Consequently the parts of the Directory which deal with the principles that flow from the divine Revelation and shape the nature of catechesis, and the criteria that govern the Gospel proclamation possess universal validity. Whilst the parts that refer to contemporary circumstances, to methodology governing the content of catechesis, and to the way of adapting catechesis to various age groups and cultural surroundings are to be viewed rather as indications or guidelines.

Overview of the General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

Thus the Directory is arranged as follows:

- The Introduction takes as its origin, trust and faith in the power of the Gospel seed, and reminds Christians they are to look upon the world from a faith perspective. It also offers guidelines for the interpretation and comprehension of existing human and ecclesial circumstances in a way intended to assist the mission of the Church.

²GDC 9.

- Part One grounds catechesis compellingly in *Dei Verbum*, situating it firmly in the context of evangelization as proposed in the cohesive unity which *Evangelii Nuntiandi* forms with *Catechesi Tradendae*. Here, the nature of catechesis is clarified by elucidating upon the link between Revelation and the evangelization process whilst acknowledging catechesis as integral to the process of evangelization itself.

The section begins by explaining that God's providential plan of revelation is accomplished through a pedagogy of words and deeds that attain their consummation in the person of Jesus Christ as the mediator and fullness of Revelation, and that this Revelation is transmitted by the Church through the work of the Holy Spirit. Evangelization is then identified as the process through which the Good News of Jesus Christ as mediator and fullness of God's revelation is to be carried forth to every sector of the human race by the Church.

The ministry of the word is then recognised as a fundamental element of evangelization that possesses the principal functions of: convoking people together in faith; initiating people in the life of faith; continuously educating people in faith; educating people to participate in the liturgy; and developing the understanding of the faith within the dynamic of *fides quaerens intellectum*. This leads to the identification of the significant forms of the ministry of the Word as: the first proclamation or missionary preaching; pre and post baptismal catechesis; the liturgical forms; and the theological forms.

As the Good News of Jesus is the call to “Repent and believe in the Gospel”, (Mk 1:15) evangelization becomes synonymous with the invitation to conversion and faith. Hence Christian faith is understood as conversion to Jesus Christ, a total and genuine adherence to his person, and the decision to become his disciple. Essentially faith is a gift from God that causes the disciple to live a process of continuing conversion to the way of Jesus Christ. The ministry of the word is at the service of this journey of total conversion: ‘The first proclamation of the Gospel is characterized by the call to faith; catechesis by giving a foundation to conversion and providing Christian life with a basic structure; while ongoing education in the faith....is characterized by being the necessary nourishment of which every baptized adult has need in order to live’.³

Catechesis is clearly distinguished from the primary proclamation of the Gospel, and is itself identified with the promotion and maturation of faith in those persons who have already decided to follow Jesus Christ. Catechesis is then presented as being at the service of Christian initiation and ongoing formation in the faith, and is also recognised as being distinct from, yet complementary to, religious instruction given in schools.

Part One ends with the identification of catechesis as an essentially ecclesial act whose object is to bring persons into communion with Jesus Christ through the basic tasks of helping them to know, celebrate, and contemplate the mystery of his person.

- Part Two has two chapters. The first chapter concerns itself with the criteria and norms to be adhered to in presenting the Gospel message in the ministry of catechesis. The second chapter reveals the Catechism of the Catholic Church as a point of

³GDC 57.

reference for the transmission of the faith in catechesis and for the formation of catechisms at local level.

In Chapter I the word of God is clearly identified and established as the source of catechesis and its relation to the other “sources” of catechesis is then explained. This clears the ground for the exposition of the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis which springs from the singular source of God’s word. This chapter ends with a note concerning the methodological principle used for the transmission of the Gospel message.

Chapter II considers the relationship between the GDC and the Catechism of the Catholic Church before discussing the nature, purpose, and structure of the same Catechism. The inspiration behind the Catechism of the Catholic Church is revealed as ‘trinitarian christocentricity and the nobility of the vocation of the human person’⁴ after which the Catechism’s attributes as a literary genre are noted. The relationship between the Catechism of the Catholic Church and: the Deposit of Faith; Sacred Scripture and Catechesis; and the catechetical tradition of the Fathers is then deliberated upon. Chapter II ends with a consideration of the various aspects and adaptations required of local catechisms which together can express the symphony of faith of the universal Church.

- Part Three clarifies the relationship between the divine pedagogy and the principal components of a pedagogy of the faith. This is achieved primarily from the

⁴GDC 123.

theological perspective although the contribution made by the human sciences is also acknowledged.

In Chapter I 'Pedagogy of God, source and model of the pedagogy of the faith' the relationship between the pedagogy of God the pedagogy of Christ and the pedagogy of the Church is outlined before the divine pedagogy is presented as the action of the Holy Spirit in every Christian. The correlation between catechesis and the divine pedagogy is then explained: 'Catechesis, as communication of divine Revelation, is radically inspired by the pedagogy of God, as displayed in Christ and in the Church. Hence, it receives its constitutive characteristics and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it sets out a synthesis to encourage a true experience of faith, and thus a filial encounter with God'.⁵

The second chapter, 'Elements of methodology', attends to the various contemporary methods the Church uses in transmitting the faith inclusive of discussion on: the connection between content and method; the difference, merits, and complementary nature of inductive and deductive method; the function of human experience; the role of memorization; the role of the catechist; the activity and creativity of the catechized; the bond between the Christian community, the person, and catechesis; the significance of the group in the process of faith maturation; and the elements constitutive of social communication.

- Part Four identifies the various target groups, special circumstances, and diverse contexts of those to whom catechesis is directed. The focus of Chapter I is the general

⁵GDC 143.

aspects of catechetical adaptation which acknowledges the right and need of every believer incorporated into the Church to undergo a valid catechesis.

Chapter II, 'Catechesis according to age', recognises the necessary distinction between the catechesis of adults and the catechesis of infants and young children. It then discusses elements considered significant to the catechesis of young people before turning attention to the topic of catechesis for the aged. Chapter III attends to the catechesis of the disabled and the handicapped; the catechesis of the marginalized e.g. nomads, prisoners; the catechesis that needs to be developed for emerging groups e.g. scientists; and the need for an environmental catechesis which respects the distinction between rural and urban realities.

Chapter IV attends to 'Catechesis in the socio-religious context' and addresses the complex and pluralistic situations confronted by catechesis in relation to the areas of: popular devotion; the context of ecumenism; its relation to Judaism; the context of other religions; and the existence of "new religious movements".

Part Four ends with a consideration of the link between catechesis and contemporary culture and lists the duties of catechesis for inculturation of the faith in Chapter V 'Catechesis in the socio-cultural context'.

- Part Five takes as its focus the central role of the particular Church to advance, systematise, direct and co-ordinate all catechetical activities as a primordial duty. The first chapter offers reflections on the ministry of catechetics and its agents. Catechesis

is recognised as a communal yet differentiated responsibility whose agents of bishop, priests, deacons, religious, and lay faithful all have roles to play according to their respective responsibilities and gifts. Chapter II examines the area of the formation of catechists and underlines the need for fitting candidates to be suitably trained and provided with valid catechetical materials if the catechetical ministry is to be implemented effectively. The third chapter is dedicated to the 'Loci and means of catechesis' and attends to the concrete locations where catechesis is realized i.e. the Christian community; the family; the baptismal catechumenate of adults; the parish; Catholic schools; associations, movements and groups of the faithful; and basic ecclesial communities. Part Five ends with the fourth chapter which 'studies the more organizational aspects of catechesis: the structures of responsibility, the co-ordination of catechesis and some tasks specific to catechetical service'.⁶

- The Conclusion promotes the development of contemporary catechesis and closes with an invocation to faith in the working of the Holy Spirit and in the efficacy of the word of God sown in love.

The fundamental object of catechesis according to the General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

After having explained that the work of evangelization is the transmission of God's Revelation, and clarified the place occupied by catechesis in the evangelization process, the Directory attends to the nature, object and the obligations of catechesis.

⁶GDC 216.

Catechesis is identified as a fundamentally ecclesial act whose object is ‘to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ’.⁷ The fundamental task of catechesis is therefore to help people to know, to celebrate and to contemplate the mystery of Jesus Christ.

Faith in, and conversion to, Christ Jesus

The Directory also elucidates that Christian faith is the response made to the Good News of God’s Revelation. It clearly states that God’s Revelation to Christians occurs uniquely through the person of Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is thus, in essence, conversion to Jesus Christ, total and genuine adherence to his person and the resolution to walk in his footsteps. Faith is thus a personal encounter with Christ Jesus which makes the individual a follower of him.

However, the Christian faith, through which a person says “Yes” to Jesus Christ, can be investigated in its twofold aspect. It is at once a trustful adherence to the God who reveals himself and a loving assent to the content of Revelation and the Gospel message. Hence Christian faith consists in believing in the person of Jesus Christ, the word of God, and committing oneself to him (*fides qua*) coupled with the effort to comprehend better the mystery of his person revealed in the content of Revelation and the Gospel message (*fides quae*). These two aspects, by virtue of their nature, cannot be separated. In fact, growth and maturation in faith demand their comprehensive and consistent development. Nevertheless the aspects may be regarded separately for methodological purposes. However, it is important to note that the unity of faith finds its fundamental point of reference in the person of Jesus Christ, the word of God.

⁷GDC 80.

The word of God, source of catechesis

The word of God, contained in sacred Tradition and in sacred Scripture,⁸ is the source from which catechesis draws its message: ‘Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures, for sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the word of God, which is entrusted to the Church’.⁹ Hence catechesis has the duty of leading disciples to the deliberate appropriation of the entire truth concerning the divine plan¹⁰ by instructing the followers of Jesus to a knowledge of Tradition and Scripture, understood as “the sublime science of Christ”.¹¹

This treasure of the Word is to nourish all God’s children through the animation of the Spirit. Hence the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, must constantly interpret the word of God to ensure the voice of Christ Jesus continues to echo in the Church and in the world.

The word of God and the ‘sources’ of the message of catechesis

The phrase ‘source of catechesis’ is used previously to emphasise the unity of the word of God and brings to mind the notion of Revelation in *Dei Verbum*. Similarly CT 27 also refers to ‘the source’ of catechesis. However, in line with general catechetical usage the GDC utilises the term ‘the sources’ to indicate those concrete

⁸See Rino Fisichella, ‘*Dei Verbum Audiens et Proclamans: On Scripture and Tradition as Source of the Word of God*’, (Adrian Walker trans.) *Communio* Vol. XXVIII, Spring 2001, pp. 85-98.

⁹CT 27.

¹⁰Cf. DCG (1971) 24.

¹¹DV 25a.

loci of the word of God from which the message of catechesis originates. Five loci are given.

The first is that of the sense of the faithful of all the people of God who meditate upon and comprehend more deeply the word of God. This occurs under the guidance of the authority of the Magisterium. The second place is in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy, where the word of God is continually proclaimed, listened to, interiorized and elucidated. The third is in the life of the Church, especially through Christian witness and particularly in the lives of the saints. The penultimate locus makes reference to the deepening in understanding of the mysteries of faith for believers through theological research. Whilst the final place is identified as the word of God revealed in authentic religious and moral values sown in human society and various cultures, and referred to as ‘seeds of the word’.

These are all the well-springs of catechesis, whether principal or ancillary, and must not be comprehended in a restricted sense.¹² Hence catechesis understands itself to embrace a living tradition of the many “documents of the faith” such as biblical texts, liturgical excerpts, patristic writings, offerings of the Magisterium, creeds, contributions of the saints, and theological reflection. Of importance for this thesis is that ‘The living source of the word of God and the “sources” deriving from it, and through which it is expressed, provide catechesis with those criteria for the transmission of its message to all who have made the decision to follow Jesus Christ’.¹³

¹²Cf. DCG (1971) 45b.

¹³GDC 96.

Identification of the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis

The Directory lists several closely inter-connected criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis and explains their inter-connectedness by stating that they all spring from the one source of the word of God. Thus authentic catechesis must possess the following dimensions. It must be: christocentric; ecclesial in character yet historic in nature; centred on the gift of salvation; seeking inculturation; possessing a meaningful message for the human person; and offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths.

The criterion of Christocentricity

Catechesis is utterly connected to the person of Jesus Christ because he is the Word of God who simultaneously transmits the word of God. Likewise to centre the message on him is to at once introduce the trinitarian dimension of the Gospel message for he is the only Son of the Father. Hence the Gospel message possesses trinitarian christocentricity by nature.

The christocentric dimension is to be understood in several ways. Firstly, since the person of Jesus is at the heart of catechesis the most basic task of catechesis becomes the presentation of the person of Christ to the believer - whilst everything else must also be presented in relation to Christ's person. Thus every aspect of the message is to explicitly advance the following of Jesus and communion with him.

Secondly, catechesis is to present Christ as the centre of salvation history because he is truly the event toward which the history of salvation converges. As the key, centre, and consummation of all human history, catechesis is to present Christ as the pre-eminent meaning of human history through whom each Christian locates and inserts themselves in history and discovers the true meaning of their existence.

Thirdly, christocentricity means that the theo-pragmatic nature of the Gospel message must be respected. The Word of God comes from God and not from humanity. The message that has been entrusted to the Church is the revelation of the Truth that Jesus Christ is. Hence christocentricity necessitates catechesis as a ministry of the Church must transmit the person of Jesus and his teaching in all its integrity.

In terms of the trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message catechesis must ever attend to certain points if its authenticity is to be preserved. It must be hallmarked in its internal structure by a mode of presentation that is always christocentric-trinitarian since Christian faith is always christocentric-trinitarian. Thus 'Through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit'¹⁴ becomes something of a maxim to ensure the preservation of the proper character of catechesis.

Beginning with the salvific works of God for the good of humanity catechesis must also reveal the intimate life of God 'Following the pedagogy of Jesus in revelation of the Father, of himself as the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'.¹⁵ The revelation of God through his works reveals who God is and simultaneously casts light on God's inner Being. This is good for humanity because it is analagous with the reality of human

¹⁴DCG (1971) 41; cfr. Eph 2:18.

¹⁵GDC 99.

relationships where human actions also reveal people to themselves in a profound manner.

Catechesis must similarly promote the connection between the inner life of the Trinity revealed by Jesus and its vital link with the life of humanity. Hence no human person is to submit their personal freedom to any earthly power in an absolute way as this is incompatible with belief in one God. Since humanity is made in the image and likeness of God who is a communion of persons it is also implied that humanity is called to be a fraternal society, comprised of children of the same Father, sharing equally in personal dignity. Thus the importance for catechesis to promote the Christian concept of God as Three in One and One in Three in terms of the human and social implications of this revealed truth becomes immense.

The criterion of being ecclesial in character

Since catechesis originates in the confession of faith by the Church and leads to the profession of faith of the catechumen and those to be catechized, it can clearly be understood why the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis necessarily possesses an inherent ecclesial character. This faith transmitted by the ecclesial community is one in the sense that it is the response to the Gospel - the person of Christ - who is one. ‘The confession of faith is the same. There is only one Baptism: “one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism one God and Father of us all” (*Eph 4,5*).

Catechesis, in the Church, therefore, is that service which introduces catechumens and those to be catechized to the unity of the profession of faith. By its very nature, it

nourishes the bond of unity and brings about an awareness of belonging to a great community which cannot be limited by space and time'.¹⁶

The criterion of proclaiming the gift of salvation

The message of Jesus concerning God is Good News. Jesus is God's unique intervention in history who proclaims the Kingdom of God. The gift of salvation in Christ is the outstanding element of this Gospel proclamation and it implies a message of liberation.

Jesus reveals that God, with the coming of the Kingdom, offers the gift of integral salvation. The death and resurrection of Jesus frees humanity from sin, brings humanity to communion with the Father, confers adoption as sons and daughters of the Father, and in conquering death promises eternal life. Thus the salvation brought about by Jesus is total, immanent and eschatological; it begins in this life yet reaches its consummation in eternity.

In like manner Jesus reveals that on earth, the community of his followers - the Church, is the seed and the source of the Kingdom of God. The desire of the Church is that the Kingdom of God will grow in the world encompassing all peoples and cultures in such way that the Church is concretely and effectively in service of the Kingdom.

¹⁶GDC 106.

Similarly, in announcing the gift of the Kingdom, Jesus pronounces God's justice. He proclaims both the judgement of God and the responsibility of humanity. As the Gospel of the Kingdom is the revelation of a Kingdom of love, peace, and justice - in whose light humanity will be judged - the call to promote that Kingdom necessarily involves conversion to, and faith in, the person of Jesus Christ.

Hence catechesis must promote the fact that it is in the very person of Jesus Christ that the Kingdom of God is inaugurated. As Lord he assumes the realization of the Kingdom until he entrusts it, once completed, into the hands of the Father at the end of time. Hence Jesus reveals that the history of humanity is utterly meaningful because it is a journey towards the Father's house, a foretaste of the world to come.

Similarly, for catechetics, it must be remembered that Jesus testifies to God as Father in the most simple and direct terms. Jesus reveals God as the Father who is present among his people and whose power resides in his love for humanity. This testimony is fundamental to catechesis.

However, the implied message of liberation of the proclamation of the Good News of the Kingdom of God by Jesus addresses the poor in a special way. This is reflected in the Church's catechetical ministry by arousing in those who receive catechesis a preferential option for the poor as a sign which manifests the universality of the Church's mission and nature. Nonetheless it must be recalled that catechesis must situate the message of liberation within the specifically religious objective of evangelization and recall that Christian praxis flows from the truth that Christ has liberated the world and continues to liberate it through love.

The criterion of the historical character of the Gospel message

The confession of faith of the followers of Jesus originates from a pilgrim Church that has received its commission from the living God, and thus corresponds to a Church that travels through time as it journeys to the Father. Hence the economy of salvation is stamped by an historical character as it is actualised in time. Consequently 'the Church, in transmitting today the Christian message, begins with the living awareness which she carries of it, has a constant "memory" of the saving events of the past and makes them known'.¹⁷

Thus the Church has the role and task of interpreting contemporary events of human history in light of the Spirit of God continually refreshing the face of the earth, while with faith she anticipates the coming of the Lord at the end of time.

For catechesis the historical constitution of the Gospel message necessitates that the history of salvation be presented through Biblical catechesis in order that the 'deeds and words' with which God has revealed himself to humanity are made known. It is also essential that this history is ever interpreted from within the perspective of faith as a fundamental constituent of the content of catechesis.

Similarly, catechesis is to assist the movement from sign to mystery by facilitating the passage from the 'deeds and words' of Revelation to the 'mystery contained in them'. In this way catechesis must lead to the discovery of the mystery of the Son of God

¹⁷GDC 107.

behind his humanity; the mystery of the Church as the sacrament of salvation behind its history; and the mystery of God's presence and plan behind the 'signs of the times'.

Likewise, through the means of a mystagogy, catechesis is to locate the sacraments within the history of salvation by ensuring the great events of salvation history are understood to be re-lived in the 'today' of the Church's liturgy. Thus to allude to the historico-salvific 'today' of the liturgy becomes vital for catechesis and also assists 'catechumens and those to be catechized "to open themselves to this 'spiritual' understanding of the economy of Salvation..."'.¹⁸

Correspondingly the illumination of the 'today' of salvation history is to occur through the exegesis of the Creed and the content of Christian morality through the appropriate doctrinal catechesis.

The criterion of seeking inculturation

The original inculturation of the word of God, when Christ became incarnate, is the model of all evangelization by the Church and is thus a necessary criterion for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis. This dimension of catechesis is to ensure the Gospel touches the deepest level of persons and peoples by going to the very heart of their cultures.

¹⁸CCC 1095.

Hence a fundamental requirement of the inculturation of the Gospel message is to present it in such a way that its intelligibility prepares catechumens and those being catechized to proclaim the Gospel and provide reasons for their hope in him (1 Pt 3:15).

In this regard the ecclesial community is understood as the principal factor of inculturation and is represented by the catechist who gives instruction to catechumens and those to be catechized on behalf of the Church - ideally through the Catechumenate and catechetical institutes understood as 'centres of inculturation'.

Moreover, the work of inculturation necessitates that the ecclesial community must discern what riches are to be taken up as compatible with the faith; however it must also strive to refine and transform those criteria and ways of thinking and living that are incompatible with the Kingdom of God. The two fundamental principles of compatibility with the Gospel and communion with the universal Church govern this task of discernment.

Through this process of inculturation the Gospel penetrates to the foundational strata of peoples and persons since it makes contact with the heart and root of culture on the level of meaning and values. Inculturation is thus much more than simply an external adaptation.

To help present the Gospel message in catechesis in relation to the questions, problems, and hopes manifested by the various cultures local catechisms are to be drawn up which respond to each culture and its different demands.

The criterion of promoting a meaningful message for the human person

In the presentation of the Gospel message catechesis reveals God and his saving plan through and in Christ Jesus. However, it also has the task of revealing to each person that their true vocation comes to light through relating to Jesus Christ - the Gospel - who gives ultimate meaning and illumination to the whole of life. Consequently catechesis is fundamentally christological in its presentation of the Gospel message. This has implications for the various forms of catechesis.

In biblical catechesis present-day experience is to be interpreted through the lens of the experiences of the people of Israel, of Jesus Christ and the Church, in which the Spirit of the risen Lord constantly lives, renews, and acts. Similarly, through the signs and symbols of liturgical actions liturgical catechesis must constantly refer to those great human experiences that originated in Jewish and Christian culture. In demonstrating what makes human existence worthy of the Gospel moral catechesis is also to promote the spirit and values of the Beatitudes rooting them in the human virtues residing in the heart of humanity. Whilst 'in first evangelization, proper to the pre-catechumenate or to pre-catechesis, the proclamation of the Gospel shall always be done in close connection with human nature and its aspirations, and will show how the Gospel fully satisfies the human heart'.¹⁹ Finally, in explaining the Creed, doctrinal catechesis is to display how the major themes of the faith (e.g. creation, Incarnation etc.) are ever fonts of light and life for the human being.

¹⁹GDC 117.

The criterion of offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths

The Gospel message presented by catechesis possesses a comprehensive hierarchical character constituted as a consistent and vital synthesis of the faith. From a christocentric perspective, it is organized around the mystery of the Trinity as this mystery is the origin of all the other mysteries of faith and the one that casts light on all others. The 'hierarchy of truths' provides the overall message with a harmony which connects each of the mysteries to the Trinity as the point of origin. Here 'hierarchy' is understood in terms of some truths being based on others as of a higher priority and as such are illumined by them. It does not mean that some truths concern the Faith less than others. Catechesis acknowledges that every aspect and dimension of the Gospel message partakes of this hierarchical system.

Thus the presentation of the history of salvation comes to be organized around the person of Jesus Christ as the centre of salvation history. This provides the structure of all salvation history as: the preparation for the Gospel in the Old Testament; the centre and fullness of God's Revelation in Jesus Christ - particularly as revealed through the paschal mystery; and the time of the Church.

Springing from the paschal mystery of Jesus the sacraments are also to be understood as forming a vital unity. Whilst they are considered as one, the Eucharist nonetheless occupies a unique place as it is the sacrament to which all the others are ordained. Catechesis is therefore to promote the Eucharist as the 'sacrament of sacraments'.

As regards the moral message of the Gospel the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbour - itself a hierarchy of values established by Jesus - are to be promoted by catechesis as the magna carta of the Christian life revealed by Jesus.

Similarly the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, the 'Our Father', encapsulates the essence of the Gospel and synthesizes and hierarchically shapes the treasure of prayer found in Sacred Scripture and in the life of the Church. Catechesis is to teach this prayer also to reveal to the followers of Jesus the necessary posture with which believers are to turn to the Father.

Lastly, the Apostles' Creed manifests the way in which the Church has ever desired to expound the mystery of Christianity as a dynamic integration. Catechesis is to show 'This Creed is a synthesis of and a key to reading all of the Church's doctrine, which is hierarchically ordered around it'.²⁰

²⁰GDC 115.

Summary of criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis

The following table provides a summary of the various elements which comprise the different criteria for the authentic presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis:

Criteria of Catechesis	Element	Element	Element	Element	Element
Gift consciousness of salvation	Salvation as integral	Church as the beginning of the Kingdom	Jesus proclaims God's judgement	Kingdom of God inaugurated in the person of Jesus	Jesus testifies to God as Father in simple terms
Historical significance	Living awareness of the Christian message	Presentation of salvation history	Encounter mystery of God and discern way forward	Present 'spiritual' dimension of salvation history	Explain Creed and content of Christian morality
Inculturation	Demonstrate Christian message as intelligible	Ecclesial community as principal factor of inculturation	Discern what is compatible with the faith	Gospel to touch deepest level of persons and peoples	Drawing up of local catechisms
Meaningful message	Biblical catechesis	Liturgical catechesis	Moral catechesis	First evangelization	Doctrinal catechesis
Comprehensive message with hierarchy of truth	Organized in reference to Jesus Christ	Sacraments as instruments of the Church	Love of God and love of neighbour	'Our Father' as synthesis and treasure of prayer	Apostles' Creed as synthesis and key to Church's doctrine

Brief evaluation of the General Directory for Catechesis (1997)

The General Directory for Catechesis is a well organised and highly structured reference book which clearly stipulates the fundamental theologico-pastoral principles drawn from the Church's Magisterium to better orientate and coordinate the ministry of catechesis in service of the Church.

To a large extent the GDC achieves its aim of presenting catechesis within the context of evangelization as envisaged by *Evangelii Nuntiandi* whilst holding this in balance with the appropriation of the content of the faith as proposed in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

It is a work, in a sense, aware of its own limitations because it openly distinguishes between those parts of the Directory that possess universal validity, i.e. those concerned with the essential nature of catechesis, and those elements of lesser importance, i.e. indications or guidelines referring to catechetical organization and practical implementation.

One of its major strengths resides in its attempt to establish the link between the Divine Revelation,²¹ the nature of catechesis, and the criteria which governs the transmission of the Gospel message. However, it must be noted that the limitations of the reference book genre do take their toll on the development of this line of thought simply because the inter-connectedness between the different elements does not always come across as clearly as it would, say, in a work of continuous prose. Similarly it is not always clear where the various elements of criteria find their derivation as their existence is often merely stated rather than explained e.g. the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis, GDC 97.

²¹The designation 'Divine Revelation' is used in this section as it appears in the GDC. In other parts of this work the designation 'divine Revelation' is utilised.

The same charge of a lack of inter-connectedness can be said with regard to the relationship between the Divine Revelation, the nature of catechesis, and the criteria which governs the transmission of the Gospel message with Part Three, The Pedagogy of the Faith. Hence, although the latter section does list various elements of criteria related to the topics of the: Pedagogy of God; The pedagogy of Christ; The pedagogy of the Church; Divine Pedagogy, action of the Holy Spirit in every Christian; Divine pedagogy and catechesis; and The original pedagogy of faith, it is not abundantly clear where the various elements of pedagogical criteria are derived from or how they come to be related to the relationship between the Divine Revelation, the nature of catechesis, and the criteria which governs the transmission of the Gospel message as presented in Parts One and Two of the GDC.

In similar manner, when 'Elements of methodology' is also addressed - in Part Three, Chapter II - it is rather surprising to discover that the criterion used by the Church to discern appropriate methods to transmit the Gospel message is so vague, and apparently in search of solid ground, as it rests on what has been earlier identified as 'the pedagogy of God' i.e. 'The Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method nor any single method. Rather, she discerns contemporary methods in the light of the pedagogy of God...In short, she assumes those methods which are not contrary to the Gospel and places them at its service'.²² This leaves the criterion for assessing the appropriateness of catechetical methods in a rather nebulous and almost diffident realm when compared to the surety and confidence with which the GDC established the relationship between the Divine Revelation, the nature of catechesis, and the criteria which governs the transmission of the Gospel message at its outset.

²²GDC 148.

Likewise the GDC presumes a lot when it stipulates ‘ The catechist recognizes that method is at the service of revelation and conversion’²³ as it has not specifically or clearly proved this point or shown how revelation and conversion is to be served by a relevant and corresponding method.

Furthermore the principle given to assess the integrity of the relationship between method and content in catechesis is simply stated as ‘fidelity to God and fidelity to man’²⁴ without any attempt made to explain what this might mean. The result is that the stated criterion is rendered meaningless because it has not been explained in itself or in relation to the aspect of catechesis it is thought capable of assessing.

Hence, although the GDC is aware that the content of catechesis must not be casually subjected to any method, and it clearly asserts the same content ‘requires a process of transmission which is adequate to the nature of the message, to its sources and languages, to the concrete circumstances of ecclesial communities as well as to the particular circumstances of the faithful to whom catechesis is addressed’²⁵ it does not adequately explain how such an involved process of transmission, reflective of the integrity of the faith response, is to occur.

Perhaps the main reason for this is that the GDC suffers from its notion of catechesis as derived from an understanding of the response of faith made in relation to the person of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, without fully taking into account the principles and autonomy of the human mind called to make that faith response.

Hence as the GDC progresses it is marked by the trend of its content becoming more and more weakly related to the fundamental relationships that were addressed at its

²³GDC 149.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

outset as constitutive of the enterprise - i.e. the relationship between the Divine Revelation, the nature of catechesis, and the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message.

This is due to the omission of the role the human mind plays in the faith response being integrated into the overall approach from the beginning. This results in a position where the content of catechesis, as the content of the echo of the faith response, finds no corresponding determined locus respective of the various dimensions of the human mind as this aspect has not been included as part of the structure of the faith response made to the person of Jesus Christ from the outset.

Evidence of this lack of integration of the workings of the human mind as integral to the foundations of the nature of catechesis becomes more apparent when the GDC comments on: Inductive and deductive method²⁶; Human experience in catechesis²⁷; and Memorization in catechesis²⁸. Here the GDC attempts to comment on the role of human experience as related to the Word of God in catechesis without the aid of a developed epistemology consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind being integrated into the understanding of the relationship between 'the encounter of the word of God with the experience of the person'.²⁹ The result is that various aspects of catechetical methodology related to various aspects of the mind - such as induction and deduction, experience, and memory - are presented in isolation without their ever having any established connection with one another or without finding themselves grounded through a shared point of reference.

²⁶GDC 150, 151.

²⁷Ibid., 152, 153.

²⁸Ibid., 154, 155.

²⁹Ibid., 150.

Thus the integrity of the content of the GDC, as it relates to the relationship between the Divine Revelation, the nature of catechesis, and the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message established at its outset, begins to fall apart once discussion moves to the issue of methodology as methodology invariably relates to the workings of the human mind.

From this stage onwards the GDC presents its content in a manner which does not always appear to take account of the nature of the relationship that exists between the Divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith response made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind as foundational for the catechetical enterprise, or organise its material in respect of this.

This is clearly evidenced in Part Four, Those To Be Catechized, Chapter III, ‘Catechesis for special situations, mentalities and environments’ where a rather crude classification of target groups occurs. Thus the catechesis ‘for the disabled and the handicapped’ considers ‘those who suffer handicaps, physical or mental’³⁰ as one category. This is clearly too broad a categorization as a person who is solely physically disabled cannot partake of catechesis in exactly the same manner as a person who possesses a learning difficulty as the issue at hand is the response of faith made by the human mind to the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

In the former the person possesses the right use of reason; in the latter the use of reason is impaired in some way. Hence it would appear that the criterion the GDC uses to classify target groups in this instance is that of ‘disability’ as opposed to the theological criterion concerned with the person making the act of faith. In fact this is made blatantly obvious through the outdated and politically incorrect use of a vocabulary that refers to ‘the disabled’ and ‘the handicapped’ as opposed to persons

³⁰GDC 189.

with a disability or persons possessing a handicap. Nevertheless the issue at hand is that the GDC does not always present its content in a manner that takes account of the nature of the relationship that exists between the Divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith response made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind as foundational for the catechetical enterprise, or organise its material in respect of this.

This movement of disintegration also comes to mark the remaining section of the Directory. For whilst that section begins with the words, ‘From what has been said in the preceding parts concerning the nature of catechesis, its content, pedagogy, and those to whom it is addressed, there arises the nature of catechetical pastoral work, which is done in the particular Church’³¹ there is little or no evidence to suggest that the nature of the ‘Catechesis in the particular Church’ as presented in the GDC is derived from, or consistently and coherently grounded in, the relationship between the Divine Revelation, the nature of catechesis, and the criteria which governs the transmission of the Gospel message. In fact Part Five is stamped by an overriding concern for the guidance and organization of catechesis without ever making explicit reference to this foundational truth.

Hence although the GDC suffers from its notion of catechesis as derived from an understanding of the response of faith made in relation to the person of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, without fully taking into account the principles and autonomy of the human mind called to make that faith response, it does nonetheless provide the principles and guidelines through which a well-informed shape, rooted in the Word of God, can be applied to the ministry of catechesis. Thus the overall strength of the

³¹GDC 215.

GDC resides in its addressing the issue of the nature and end of catechesis, even although this is open to the possibility of further revision.

**Assessment of some existing theoretical catechetical material in light of the
identification of the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel
message in catechesis as postulated in the
General Directory for Catechesis (1997)**

Clarification of the relationship between catechetics and religious education

The critique of the contributions is conducted from the perspective of seeking to advance the catechetical theory informing the practice of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics understood as a vital aspect of the ministry of the word. The contributions are assessed against the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis that are themselves derived from the nature of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith.

However, the reader must be alerted to the fact that in some of the literature investigated the distinction between catechetics and religious education is not always clear (e.g. Groome); nor is the ground of their distinction always convincingly explained (e.g. Gallagher). Consequently some of the theoretical literature investigated is tinged with the need for the relationship between catechesis and religious education to be more precisely explicated and more profoundly understood.

This is also true of the way in which the relationship between catechetics and religious instruction in schools is presented in the GDC where it is claimed that the relationship between religious instruction and catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity, and where it is absolutely necessary to distinguish clearly between catechesis and religious instruction yet no attempt is made to establish the truth or meaning of these assertions.³²

From the perspective of this analysis where the integrity constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind must be reflected in the nature of catechetics as a discipline that attends to the echo of faith; and the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics is understood to correspond with the various dimensions of the human mind in which the faith response echoes in such manner that the shape of the content of the catechetical criteria is explained, religious education is understood as that enterprise primarily concerned with the communication of the catechetical content proper to doctrine that corresponds with the catechetical criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message.

Hence this analysis views religious education as the means through which the doctrinal component of the necessary meta-approach to catechetics is communicated. The relationship between catechetics and religious education is therefore one where religious education discovers its ground in relation to the echo of the faith response

³²GDC 73.

made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ, and has this relationship as its constant point of reference.

The method of assessment of the contributions

The method of assessment begins by stating in summary fashion the contribution of a particular contemporary work or works that have been written to better inform the theoretical base of modern catechetics. Next each contribution is then evaluated in light of the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as postulated in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997).³³

Effectively this means that each contribution will be weighed against the norm of the word of God as the source of catechesis, and the criteria of catechesis as: christocentricity; being ecclesial in character yet historic in nature; centred on the gift of salvation; seeking inculturation; possessing a meaningful message for the human person; and offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths.

³³It is important to remember the newness of this thesis resides in the notion that catechesis is to discover its ground in relation to fundamental theology. Consequently the issue of the intellectual basis of catechesis is approached from the perspective of contributions that have attempted to incorporate a theological approach. For a work that has sought to throw light on the relationship between Christian theology and religious education - not catechesis - from a more educational perspective within an English academic context consult Christian Theology and Religious Education. Connections and Contradictions (1996), Jeff Astley and Leslie J. Francis (Eds). For a work that addresses different approaches to adult religious education from an educational perspective with a North American context in mind see, R.E.Y. Wickett, Models of Adult Religious Education Practice, (1991). For a collection of articles that seeks to address many of the issues involved in transmitting the faith from a more sociological-philosophical perspective consult Norbert Greinacher and Virgil Elizondo Concilium: The Transmission of the Faith to the Next Generation, 174, (1984).

Three contributions representative of three different types of approach will be examined. The first to be considered is the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2, (1997) edited by Michael Warren. This work has been chosen because it explicitly presents itself as a compilation of sources to be used to help inform the implementation of catechetics at diocesan and parish level.

The second contribution to be assessed is that of Thomas H. Groome. This will occur through the examination of Groome's three major works: Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (1980); Sharing Faith : A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (1991); and Educating for Life : A Spiritual Vision for every Teacher and Parent (1998). In particular the investigation will begin by focussing in detail on the definition of his term 'Christian Religious Education' and its relationship to catechesis. It will be shown that his contribution actually advances a theoretical catechetical position that grounds neither catechetics nor religious education in relation to the ministry of the word and that consequently Groome's contribution could be of use within the context of secular education in a pluralist society but not in the context of the transmission of the Catholic faith as performed in catechetics or religious education as dimensions of the ministry of the word.

The third to be assessed is Soil for the Seed (2001) by Jim Gallagher SDB. This work presents historical, pastoral and theological reflections concerning evangelisation, catechesis and religious education. These reflections flow from the author's interest in reflecting upon the nature and purpose of the Church's mission to evangelise, catechise and provide religious education in the complexities of today's world and Church. This work has been chosen because it seeks to clarify the relationship

between catechesis and religious education understood within the perspective of evangelisation.

Of note is that the three contributions examined represent rare attempts to better inform the theoretical base of modern catechetics.

At the beginning of this assessment it is essential to recall that although the General Directory for Catechesis was promulgated in 1997 the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message which it contains are essentially identical with those previously postulated in the General Catechetical Directory of 1971 and therefore may validly be used to critique contributions post-1971.

Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2

The Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 is essentially a compilation of various articles and documents which concern Catholic catechetics. Whereas volume 1 sketched the history and development of catechetics, the second volume is offered to cast light on contemporary important issues facing catechetics and to anticipate what will be significant catechetical questions in the future.

The book is divided into seven parts categorized according to the questions and issues identified by the editor. These seven divisions are: Part A. Initiation and Worship; Part B. Culture and Inculturation; Part C. The Ecclesial Zone of Catechesis; Part D. Evaluating Catechetical Structures and Developments; Part E. Catechism and Catechesis; Part F. Church (Catholic) Schools; and Part G. Ecclesial Documents.

Each division is introduced by a brief helpful commentary and summary of the articles that comprise each section with some further readings suggested on particular topics.

Furthermore the common thread that is held to bond these various aspects together is identified in the Preface. Here Warren states, 'The unifying link, then, among the disparate materials in this volume is their attention to this overriding issue of ecclesial fidelity and the insights they offer into the kind of catechetical enterprise that will address it'.³⁴

In terms of the overall structure of the work the way in which the theoretical base of catechetics is addressed is by the identification of various aspects of the enterprise (by the editor) arranged around the notion of fidelity to the Church. By paying attention to a particular dimension of catechetics and its relationship to ecclesial fidelity it is hoped that insights into each aspect will yield a more developed form of catechetics that will enhance fidelity to the Church.

However, because the notion of ecclesial fidelity is never defined it is difficult to understand how the examination of a particular aspect of catechetics actually relates to, and helps develop, a form of catechesis capable of promoting faithfulness to the Church. The failure to define what is meant by ecclesial fidelity, and to establish the connection between the notion of ecclesial fidelity and particular aspects of catechesis,

³⁴Michael Warren (Ed.), Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2, p. 8.

is a major oversight of the work as it leaves the various contributions without a solid point of reference.

Also the issue needs to be raised about the validity of catechetics being defined in relation to ecclesial fidelity in the first place. As the echo of faith catechetics is properly defined in relation to the response of faith made to the person of Jesus Christ - catechetics is not defined in relation to the response of faith made to the Church. Rather the Church as the true subject of catechesis continues the mission of Jesus.³⁵ Thus there appears to be a rather confused notion of the nature of catechesis informing this work. In fact the contents of the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 have been compiled and organized without reference to the nature of the catechetical enterprise as derived from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith. This is made more than obvious by the lack of reference to the norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as stipulated in the General Catechetical Directory (1971).

Nevertheless the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 offers a comprehensive selection of various articles and documents that do address many of the issues involved when a particular dimension of catechetics is isolated and investigated e.g. culture and inculturation, the relationship between the Catechism and catechesis, catechesis as an ecclesial ministry etc. Similarly the dimensions that have been chosen by the editor represent many important aspects of the catechetical enterprise. As a result of this, the work provides a fairly informative and general

³⁵GDC 78.

account of many of the issues that are peculiar to each particular dimension that has been identified.

However, because the work has not been shaped or taken account of the nature of catechesis as defined in relation to the response of faith made to the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ the contemporary issues addressed are cast more in a light of secondary importance than a primary one.

There are several further points on which the work may be considered somewhat inadequate. There is the issue as to how the book may truly be considered a 'sourcebook' for catechetics when it neglects to address the fact that the source of catechesis is the word of God. In similar vein no mention is made of the necessary Christocentric perspective of catechetics, whilst the notions of the gift of salvation as a focus for catechetics and the historical nature of catechetics are, at best, addressed obliquely through attention to the dimension of 'Initiation and Worship'. Equally it is most difficult to take seriously the claim that the book anticipates significant catechetical questions of the future when it fails to adequately ground and address the catechetical enterprise in the present.

On these counts the book may thus be considered more as a resource book³⁶ than a source book because its focus is fixed squarely on some aspects of the criteria of the catechetical enterprise to the detriment of the theological norms that govern it.

³⁶For an example of a work written as a resource to provide a 'solid knowledge base' and practical ideas for catechists conducting catechesis as an art form see Maureen Gallagher, The Art of Catechesis What You Need to Be, Know and Do, (1998).

Correspondingly there is the need for the various dimensions that have been identified as integral to the enterprise of catechetics to somehow be seen to be related to the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith rather than simply to possess a valid though vague link with the notion of ecclesial fidelity. Similarly there is also the need to show how these various dimensions that have been identified by the editor are in fact related to one another as part of the overall catechetical enterprise whose fundamental point of reference is always the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith.

The contribution of Thomas H. Groome:

Groome's shared Christian praxis approach

The Catholic scholar Thomas H. Groome is held by many to be one of the leading lights in the enterprise to further the intellectual base of contemporary practical theology.³⁷ At the same time he is held up by others as a beacon that points the way in the advancement of the intellectual base of religious education.³⁸

His first major work, published in 1980, was Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision.³⁹ In this work he lays the foundations of his position, particularly in the first part of the book which deals with the nature of 'Christian Religious Education' and its relationship to catechesis. For this reason this first part

³⁷ 'Review of Christian Religious Education' by D. Browning, *Journal of Religion* 62:418-424, 1982 states this book is a fine example of practical theology.

³⁸See 'Review of Christian Religious Education' by R. Conrad, *Currents in Theology and Mission* 9:121, 1982.

³⁹Of note is that few reviews, if any, have critiqued Groome's work from the perspective of fundamental theology. For an example of a review made more from an educational perspective than a theological one consult: 'Review of Christian Religious Education' by E. V. Sullivan, *Religious Education* 76: 104-106, Ja-F 1981.

will be considered and evaluated in order to explain why Groome's contribution has been included in this thesis, before a summary of his overall contribution is offered.

The Nature of 'Christian Religious Education'

Groome seeks to address the issue of the nature of 'Christian Religious Education' by defining the terms 'education', 'religious education', and 'christian religious education'. The term 'Christian Religious Education' is derived by Groome through the process of arguing that religious education as an activity is legitimately derived from the general nature of education, and that 'Christian Religious Education' as an activity is validly derived from the panoramic field of religious education. 'Christian Religious Education' therefore comes to be viewed as simply one expression of religious education in as much as it validly strives for the transcendent. At the same time he holds that education in general possesses a sort of religious essence.⁴⁰

Once the term 'Christian Religious Education' is derived it is then assessed against Groome's understanding of 'catechesis'.

'Christian Religious Education' and 'Catechesis'

The essential issue here is that it seems the reality Groome names 'Christian Religious Education' is what this thesis and the Church's Magisterium understands as 'catechesis'; and that the reality of what Groome terms 'catechesis' could be what this thesis and the Magisterium understand as religious education or instruction.⁴¹ Thus it appears a difficulty could arise if it was thought 'Christian Religious Education' was an approach advancing religious education when in fact it seeks to advance a theoretical catechetical position. It is this point that provides the justification for the inclusion of Groome's contribution as part of this work.

⁴⁰Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, pp. 20-26.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 26,27.

Summary of Groome's overall contribution as evidenced through his three major works: Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (1980); Sharing Faith : A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (1991); and Educating for Life : A Spiritual Vision for every Teacher and Parent (1998).

In Christian Religious Education Groome's concern was to put a shape on the area of catechesis, or as he wishes it called Christian religious education. His comprehensive goal was to heighten the awareness of Christian religious educators into consciously knowing what was involved in the many aspects that he identified as constitutive of the catechetical enterprise.

This concerned the action of what the practitioners in the field performed as Christian religious educators. It also encompassed their reasons for engaging in the enterprise; an analysis of the social environment which Groome understood as contextualizing their work; the willingness of their co-partners for the educational stance they adopted, and some deliberations upon the identity of those participating in this educational partnership.⁴²

Groome carried out this task firstly by attending to the nature, purpose, and context of the catechetical enterprise. He then proposed the notion of shared praxis as an overall approach to this area of ministry after which he considered the notion of shared praxis from a Piagetian perspective. Lastly he concluded by offering some reflections on the topic of co-partners in 'Christian Religious Education'.

Groome begins the book by addressing the nature of 'Christian Religious Education'. He introduces the topic via the discipline of education understood as a human

⁴²Groome, Christian Religious Education, p. xiv.

phenomenon which has been practised for the last three millennia. By also bringing the notion of time into the equation he proposes education be understood as a political activity affecting the lives of people who are subjects of history. Thus he deduces that power, and its use, must be properly managed in the educational context as its exercise can result in either the domination or the empowerment of students.

(As was seen above.) The term Christian religious education is created by Groome through the process of arguing that religious education as an enterprise is legitimately derived from the general nature of education, and that Christian religious education as an activity is truly derived from the panoramic field of religious education. Christian catechesis therefore comes to be viewed as simply one manifestation of religious education. Simultaneously Groome holds that education in general has a type of religious essence.

Groome identifies the aim of Christian religious education as to guide people towards the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ so that lives of lived Christian faith can be lived in response to that Kingdom. This tenet is fundamental to Groome's entire oeuvre. The Kingdom is the supreme purpose for Christian religious education.

In service of this he treats Christian faith as possessing the three vital and constitutive elements of believing, trusting, and doing; and proposes Fowler's structuralist approach⁴³, positing six stages of faith development, as a way to understand how it is possible to travel to faith maturity. He concludes discussion on the purpose of Christian religious education by addressing human freedom as the result of living a life of Christian faith in response to the Kingdom of God.

⁴³Groome, Christian Religious Education, Chapter 4, pp. 56-77.

The third foundational topic is the context of Christian religious education. Groome acknowledges the need for the enterprise of catechetics to occur within a Christian faith community which engages in critical educational activity. This is to ensure the activity is not reduced simply to an exercise in socialisation. The need to take seriously the issue of intentionality, thereby promoting critical and consciousness-raising education, coupled with a socialisation process becomes essential.

The presentation of the shared praxis approach to the enterprise takes up approximately one-third of the book and begins with a reflection on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35), which Groome wisely suggests 'Christian educators would do well to remember'.⁴⁴ Groome then raises the importance of addressing a 'Way of Knowing' for Christian religious education by addressing the epistemological question 'What does it mean to know?'. After discussing the biblical way of knowing, through reflecting on the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament, Groome advocates a change in the way of knowing utilised in Christian religious education towards adopting a praxis approach for the enterprise.

The philosophical foundations for a praxis epistemology are traced from Aristotle; to a treatment of the conflict between Greek intellectualism and a Christian epistemology; to G. W. F. Hegel and the praxis of Geist; to the praxis epistemology of Marx; to Habermas' demarcation of the three ways of knowing; to Paulo Freire's praxis of education.

Groome then presents an exposition of the shared praxis approach of Christian religious education as '*a group of Christians sharing in dialogue their critical*

⁴⁴Groome, Christian Religious Education, p. 135.

reflection on present action in light of the Christian Story and Vision toward the end of lived Christian faith'.⁴⁵

This shared praxis in Christian education has five vital elements of : 1) present action, 2) critical reflection, 3) dialogue, 4) the Story, and 5) the Vision that arises from the Story. These five components are claimed by Groome to eventually evolve into the five conspicuous educational operations of: naming present action; the stories and visions of participants; the story and vision of the Christian community; the dialectical hermeneutic between the story of the Christian community and the stories of the participants; and the dialectical hermeneutic between the vision of the community and the vision of the participants. The section ends with some general reflections concerning the use of shared praxis.

Penultimately Groome considers the approach of shared praxis from a Piagetian perspective. After reflecting on cognition and the levels of its development as presented by Piaget, Groome then applies this genetic theory of cognitive development to the enterprise of Christian religious education. He concludes that if a Christian faith community utilises an approach which does not allow for critical reflection to somehow be part of the approach to educate in faith then faith maturity will be rare no matter the age of the recipients. Maturity in faith will be more likely if individuals are encouraged to think critically - the shared praxis approach being an example of this.

The closing chapter deals with the remaining foundational issue of the co-partners in the enterprise of Christian religious education. Groome proposes an understanding of the educator-student exchange as a relationship where students are to be taught 'as subjects who are capable of being engaged in history to shape it in the direction of the

⁴⁵Groome, Christian Religious Education, p. 184.

Kingdom'.⁴⁶ The essence of Christian pedagogical activity is to : bring alive the Story; proffer its Vision; and to opt for life now.

1991 saw the publication of Groome's Sharing Faith : A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry. The focus of this work is the application of his shared praxis approach to the entire field of religious education and pastoral practice resulting in his coining of the term 'shared Christian praxis'.⁴⁷

In this contribution Groome develops his foundational position through re-affirming his stance on the nature and purpose of Christian religious education. He then suggests a movement in favour of interpreting the enterprise of Christian religious education as an ontological endeavour. Thus through awakening the notion of the 'remembrance of being' Groome proposes that the goal of educating in Christian faith be understood as the attainment of wisdom - or in his language 'conation'.

Groome strengthens his anthropological foundations by making an impressive journey through the thought of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Locke, Kant, Marx, Husserl, Heidegger, and Pragmatism in search of an epistemology to support his wisdom ontology. Eventually he arrives at Lonergan and the dynamic structure of being.

Citing the work of the famous Jesuit philosopher-theologian, particularly the opus Method in Theology, Groome proposes a way of knowing and being which engages: being, place, being-in-time, and Christian tradition. Groome then suggests that a pedagogy of wisdom, compatible with this way of knowing and being, can then be understood to be an educational journey which nurtures the continuous growth of intellectual, moral, religious, and social conversion.

⁴⁶Groome, Christian Religious Education, p. 274.

⁴⁷Groome, Sharing Faith, p.133.

Having laid his foundations Groome then considers the shared praxis approach in somewhat more detail than previously discussed in Christian Religious Education. However, the five movements essentially remain the same. The point he wishes to stress is the correlation of 'praxis' with 'being' particularly as applicable to an education mirroring an 'epistemic ontology' i.e. a way of knowing and being, and originating from the historical praxis of people as 'agent-subjects-in-relationship'.

Thus 'shared Christian praxis' becomes defined by Groome through the piecing together of the various elements he has identified and developed since the days of Christian Religious Education. This results in 'shared Christian praxis' defined through the prolix of '*a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their sociocultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate it in community with the creative intent of renewed praxis in Christian faith toward God's reign for all creation*'.⁴⁸

The book then focuses on an overview of shared Christian praxis as but one approach to other manifestations of Christian ministry, before specifically being applied to the areas of liturgy and preaching, justice and peace, and pastoral counseling.

The work concludes with a statement of Groome's personal theological foundations in the form of a 'Pedagogical Creed as a Christian Religious Educator' couched within the umbrella title of 'The Spirituality of Shared Christian Praxis'.

Educating for Life : A Spiritual Vision for every Teacher and Parent, published in 1998, is Groome's most recent work and is written for a two-fold purpose. Firstly, to put forward a philosophy of Catholic education; and secondly, to present a construct

⁴⁸Groome, Sharing Faith, p.135.

capable of captivating all educators no matter their religious stance. This dual purpose finds its common nourishment in a '*spiritual vision of education that is humanizing, a curriculum that educates for life for all*'.⁴⁹ The goal of Educating for Life is understood to be the nurturing of the spirituality of parents and teachers, regardless of their culture, tradition, or history.

The thrust of this work rests on the two convictions that, 1) the major aspects of Catholic Christianity can be moulded together to create a life-giving philosophy, and 2) these same characteristics can propose a humanizing means of educating.

The position charted in the book begins with education understood as an ontological enterprise to which Catholicism has relevant characteristics to contribute. It then treats the relationship and merits existing between education and a Catholic Christian anthropology; proposes a Catholic Christian cosmology constituted by fostering a sacramental consciousness; asks for commitment to a Catholic Christian sociology that values community and relationship; propounds a Catholic Christian understanding of Tradition and History; subsequently outlines a Christian epistemology ; after which the characteristics of a 'Catholic' Christian Spirituality is given. An understanding of Christian faith as grounded in justice is enunciated, and this is followed by a reflection on the meaning of catholicity, before the book closes with an exhortation to all educators to 'Reach for the stars'.

Evaluation of Groome's overall contribution

Groome's contribution to an emerging catechetical theory must be acknowledged as positive in its central thrust of intention. He attempts to clarify and develop the aim, nature, and mission of what he terms Christian religious education.

⁴⁹Groome, Educating for Life, p.13.

Groome's identification of the political nature of all education and its relationship to the exercise of power in the educational process as related to the intentionality and consciousness of both educators and students offers one of the most contemplative insights to be afforded in the field.

Similarly, the application to Christian catechesis of the existentialist interpretation of education, viewing humans as historical agents, somewhat compels Christians to admit responsibility for the world as integral to their faith and spirituality. Likewise, his highlighting of the importance of the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus as the ultimate aim of the enterprise brings a clarity of purpose and freshness of vision that the discipline would otherwise be lacking.

However, Groome does not simply identify the nature and purpose of Christian religious education. For the enterprise of Christian catechesis and pastoral ministry he proposes the way of shared praxis as a meta-approach - something more than a pedagogical *method* in the usual sense of the term. Not only that, his latest work offers the possibility of an all-embracing spirituality which is compatible with the spirituality of shared Christian praxis he had developed previously.

His overall contribution then, has been to offer a much needed shape to the developing discipline of catechetics through seeking to establish intellectual foundations, propose an informed extensive approach, and offer a harmonious and comprehensive spirituality for those who live and work in the field of educating in Christian faith.

However, the identification of his major presuppositions reveals the need for further refinement and improvement of the foundations, method, and spirituality he offers to inform the endeavour of Christian catechesis as his contribution fails to consider both catechetics or religious education in relation to the ministry of the word.

The first significant presupposition adopted by Groome is that the interpretation of words can be chosen as a datum in which to ground his position. The proposed understanding of the word 'education' becomes the basis of his philosophical stance. This makes his anthropological-philosophical position dependent upon his etymological one.

Secondly, a major presupposition of his entire oeuvre is that the nature of Christian religious education is largely derived from etymological and philosophical considerations stemming from his definition of the term 'education'. This is expressed through the methodological premise that Christian religious education is a valid form of education because it is a subset of religious education, which in turn is bona fide, because it is a subset of the general educational enterprise which is itself a genuine human phenomenon.

A third presumption is that all religions are basically alike because they perform the same function of providing paths up to the mountain top of encountering the Transcendent. This position is stated in Christian Religious Education and is re-affirmed in Educating for Life where Groome says, 'Our spiritual affinity is universal in that all humankind encounters an original outreach from the Transcendent toward them. The diversity of religious traditions emerges as the original divine-human encounter is personally experienced, appropriated, and responded to with different systems of understanding, symbols of worship, and ethics of living'.⁵⁰

Fourthly, Groome operates from what he terms the hermeneutic of a Christian religious educator although he never defines what he means by this. However, if this hermeneutic is to be somehow derived from its relationship to the nature of Christian religious education then it will be a hermeneutic resting on unsure foundations as the

⁵⁰Groome, Educating for Life, pp. 53,54.

nature of Groome's Christian religious education itself has been shown to be derived via the error of method that is eclecticism.

In treating the aim of Christian religious education he makes his fifth important presupposition that the Kingdom of God in Christ Jesus can be proposed as the ultimate aim of Christian religious education without any consideration of soteriology or Trinitarian theology. The Kingdom as presented by him is never referred to as possessing any relationship with Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. Indeed for Groome the object of Christian faith is not the person of Jesus Christ, rather it is the Kingdom of God. He also proposes a solely anthropological understanding of lived Christian faith, and is not clear in distinguishing Christian freedom from human freedom.

In similar vein the notion of faith adopted by Groome is not the response made by the human mind to the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. Rather Groome is content to adopt the notion of faith as basic trust as proposed in a psychology of religion developed by Fowler.⁵¹ Once more the lack of the christocentric dimension weakens Groome's position, and ensures the personal and interpersonal dimensions of Christian faith as encounter with Christ are simply left to one side.

In terms of the meta-approach he develops as the way of shared praxis, his fundamental methodological presupposition is that it is valid to ground a methodology of Christian catechetics in the anthropological method. This can be evidenced by his commentary on the initial stages of the process itself. 'The participants in shared praxis, then, share in dialogue their critical reflections on their present action. There is nothing uniquely Christian about such a process that would entitle it to be called Christian religious education'.⁵² Furthermore he holds that maturity in faith will result simply through people thinking critically. Yet he provides scant evidence of

⁵¹Groome, Christian Religious Education, pp. 66-73. James W. Fowler, Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning (1981).

⁵²Groome, Christian Religious Education, p. 191.

any epistemological link between the development of faith maturity and the development of the ability to think critically apart from an appeal to the six stages of faith development as outlined in Fowler's analysis of the psychology of religion - where the movement through the six stages is not necessarily thought to depend on growth in the ability to think critically!

Similarly it is the anthropological method he adopts in the development of the spirituality presented in Educating for Life, although like Christian Religious Education he places it in the context of a preamble on education in general.

Overall then, the shape Groome has developed and proposed for the enterprise of Christian religious education has the etymological consideration of education as its overture, with the main themes of his work resting on the uneven foundation of an anthropological methodology. Essentially, then, his position is well-intentioned though fundamentally misguided.

Given his presuppositions, what fundamental theological issues are in need of attention when assessed against the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as postulated in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997)?

The major issue is Groome's forgetfulness of the understanding of the nature of Christian Revelation and how this determines the nature of catechesis understood in this thesis as an aspect of the ministry of the divine word that attends to the echo of the faith response of the mind and heart of the believer made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. This results in Christianity being placed on a par with all other religions, and Christian religious education viewed solely as an exercise in some form of humanistic education carried out by the Christian community.

For Groome the unique source of catechetics is not the word of God - rather it is the educational enterprise. Equally his approach is not Christocentric either, because he posits the notion of the Kingdom of God - removed from any direct reference to the person of Christ - as the object of faith. However, the Kingdom is acknowledged as a gift from God and the proclamation of that Kingdom is held to contain a deeply meaningful message for humanity.

Similarly Groome does not necessarily view catechetics as an ecclesial ministry. In fact he tends to devalue the role of the Church in favour of a general appreciation of the educational enterprise and makes only fleeting reference to any ecclesial documentation concerning either the Word of God or the ministry of catechetics particularly in regard to guiding theologico-pastoral principles. He does however emphasise the historical aspect of catechesis mainly through the vehicle of an existentialist philosophical position. In similar fashion the importance of the inculturation of the values of the Kingdom is also advocated by him. Whereas the same cannot be said of the criterion of communicating a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths as integral to the ecclesial ministry of catechetics - although he does hold that his notion of catechesis is a particularly instructional activity.⁵³

Overall then Groome significantly diverges from the norms and a number of the criteria given in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997), particularly as these relate to the need for catechesis to be grounded in the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation in Christ Jesus and the response of faith of the Christian as incorporated into the Church.

⁵³Groome, Christian Religious Education, p. 27.

The main reason Groome's work was analysed and assessed from the perspective of this investigation was to show he considers neither catechetics nor religious education to discover their ground in relation to the ministry of the word. Consequently the theoretical catechetical position he advances as 'Christian Religious Education' could perhaps be of use within the context of secular education in a pluralist society (although it does not accurately describe the act of Christian faith), but not in the context of the transmission of the Catholic faith as performed in catechetics or religious education as dimensions of the ministry of the word.

Nevertheless, Groome's position does reveal the need to establish the intellectual foundations of catechetics by better understanding the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith made by the human mind, and the norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis, as integral to that relationship.

Soil for the Seed by Jim Gallagher SDB

Jim Gallagher is a Catholic priest who has worked for the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales in the areas of catechesis and religious education for the past thirty years. His Soil for the Seed is concerned with making some historical, pastoral and theological reflections on educating to and in the Catholic faith that flow from his own reading, study and experience of those particular fields.⁵⁴

Specifically he wishes to share reflections on some important trends and issues that address the two main areas of: (1) key historical developments over the centuries,

⁵⁴Jim Gallagher, Soil for the Seed, p. 10.

especially the 20th century, and (2) evangelisation, catechesis and religious education as addressed through directives found in the Vatican II documents and in more recent Church documents. Indeed his stated intent is 'to share some pastoral, theological reflections on the nature and purpose of our mission of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education in the complexities of today's world and Church'.⁵⁵

To this end the book is divided into two parts designated 'Part One' and 'Part Two'.

'Part One' is comprised of historical sketches which together provide a fairly informative history of pedagogy in the faith from New Testament times to the present day.⁵⁶ To Gallagher's credit he cites some of the key documents of Vatican II -particularly emphasising the anthropological perspective contained in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. He also presents the General Catechetical Directory (1971), Evangelisation in the Modern World (1975), Catechesis in Our Time (1979), the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992), and the General Directory for Catechesis (1997), and succinctly describes the contexts from which these documents emerge and how they come to be related in the flow of the Church's history.

Rather importantly he identifies a trend that has come to mark the area of pedagogy in the faith in the latter part of the 20th century. This is the need to clarify the relationship between catechesis and theology, revelation and the roles played by

⁵⁵Jim Gallagher, Soil for the Seed, p. 17. Gallagher's spelling of 'evangelisation' is used in this section.

⁵⁶Previous to Gallagher's contribution one of the few works that addressed part of this area was that of Michael Dujarier, A History of the Catechumenate The First Six Centuries (1979) (Edward J. Haasl, trans.). Here Gallagher's offering is welcome because of its attempt to provide some continuity between the beginnings of the pedagogy of the faith and the contemporary life of the Church.

human experience and doctrine particularly as related to the areas of catechesis and religious education.

'Part Two' is given over more to pastoral and theological reflections. This section opens with a reflection on what is meant by faith. Here he situates the Christian faith within the 'notion of 'faith' understood in a wider, non-specific sense'⁵⁷ announcing that 'Broadly understood, faith is a deeply human quality'⁵⁸ and that 'Faith in the broad more generic sense is essentially related to an individual's and a community's search for meaning, purpose and significance in life'.⁵⁹ However, he then goes on to correctly describe the Christian faith as 'the response to God's self-revelation in Christ'⁶⁰ before identifying as key the relationships that exist between Christian faith, doctrine and life.

In an attempt to illustrate how the understanding between revelation and faith can be broadened so that more light can be cast on the relationship between Christian faith, doctrine and life Gallagher rather paradoxically states, "This is not the place to examine in depth the issues involved in the theological understandings of revelation and faith. That is the task of those who are engaged in the study of fundamental and systematic theology. Dulles, for example, in *Models of Revelation* analyses what he terms five 'models', 'types', or 'varieties' of theological opinion on the subject in the twentieth century. Catechists must rely on the work of such scholars. A sound theology of revelation is the necessary basis for a proper and balanced understanding of Christian faith and the task of educating people to and in that faith".⁶¹

⁵⁷Jim Gallagher SDB, *Soil for the Seed*, p. 167.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

⁶¹Jim Gallagher, *Soil for the Seed*, p. 189.

After stating this Gallagher then sees fit to further utilise Dulles - though not by citing from Models of Revelation - and the positions given by Groome,⁶² Collins⁶³ and M.P. Gallagher⁶⁴ to propose some further reflections on dimensions of the faith.

Consequently the dimensions of faith offered by Dulles in The Survival of Dogma as 'conviction', 'trust', and 'commitment' to Christ are outlined. Groome's notion of Christian faith in three dimensions as: faith as believing, trusting and doing as proposed in his Christian Religious Education - which are said to correlate with the terms 'head faith', 'heart faith', and 'hands faith', respectively - are given in the barest of terms. Collins' three models of evangelisation as didactic/sacramental evangelisation, kerygmatic/charismatic evangelisation, and political/developmental evangelisation are explained as being 'head-centred', 'heart-centred', and 'hands centred', respectively. Whilst M. P. Gallagher's work is presented as offering new emphases on these different dimensions because these dimensions of faith now viewed as 'meaning', 'doing', 'listening', and 'belonging' are to be viewed as the 'pillars of the faith'.

Next the author considers the need for various approaches to pedagogy in the faith as appropriate to the diversity of various situations in the ministry before he addresses the issues surrounding the target audiences of adults and the young. Then his attention turns to Catholic schools and the issue of the relationship between catechesis and religious education therein. His response to clarifying the relationship between catechesis and religious education is simply to list some of the points made in the

⁶²See Thomas H. Groome, Christian Religious Education, (1980).

⁶³See P. Collins, 'Models of Evangelization', *Doctrine and Life*, January 1998, pp. 31-41.

⁶⁴M. P. Gallagher has contributed much to the debate surrounding faith and belief mainly from a philosophical-phenomenological perspective. Some of his more important contributions are Help My Unbelief (1983), Free to Believe (1987), Struggles of Faith (1990), Clashing Symbols (1997).

documents: *The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School* and the *General Directory for Catechesis*. These describe some of the features of catechesis and religious instruction as presented in official Church documentation.

The book ends with a consideration of the Emmaus pericope (Luke 24:13-35) as a source of good practical pastoral axioms to help shape and guide the ministry of those who work in the field of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education.

There is a sense in which Soil for the Seed is beyond criticism for Gallagher has clearly and carefully stated that the book is offered as his reflections as derived from reading, study and personal experience as related to the field of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education. Hence his contribution can be considered as a personal attempt to offer reflections to those who are engaged in the field. However, as he also states that his wish is to offer reflections on the nature and purpose of the Church's mission of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education the issue arises as to whether or not Gallagher has managed to offer his reflections in a manner informed by, and supported with, an authentic understanding of the nature and purpose of the Church's mission of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education.

Indeed a major criticism is that Gallagher fails to show in any developed sense that both catechesis and religious education, as dimensions of the ministry of the word, are to discover their ground in relation to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith. Hence although he speaks of evangelisation, there is no adequate treatment of the notion of the ministry of the word in theological terms. This may help explain why he chooses to emphasise the role of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World as opposed to the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation in 'Part One' of the book, although he does provide some fleeting references to the latter in several places.

Furthermore, this lack of appreciation of the nature of the divine Revelation is clearly evidenced at the beginning of 'Part Two' where he situates a rather shallow appreciation of Christian revelation and the response of faith made to the person of Jesus Christ within an understanding of faith viewed simply as a human quality. Thus he appears to fail to recognise the newness with which God's Word, Jesus Christ intervenes in human history and thus also fails to understand the nature of Christian faith as a gift from the Triune God.

Similarly when he attempts to address the relationship between Christian faith, doctrine and life he rather surprisingly downplays the content of Dulles' Models of Revelation in favour of a phenomenological-philosophical approach to the dimensions of faith forgetful of the centrality of faith as response to Jesus Christ - with the exception of Dulles' contribution from The Survival of Dogma.

Still this section evidences a characteristic of Gallagher's overall contribution which is the ingenious appropriation of various points of view. However even this approach sometimes falls short because the positions of Groome, Collins, and M. P. Gallagher as presented by the author all attempt to analyse the faith response without making adequate reference to the person of Jesus Christ or utilising a developed epistemology capable of respecting the workings of the human mind performing the act of faith. This results in an understanding of the dimensions of faith as concurrent with an imagined faculty psychology which is said to correspond with the symbolic centres termed 'head', 'heart', and 'hands' for Groome and Collins, and the more philosophical 'pillars of faith' as 'meaning', 'doing', 'listening', and 'belonging' for M.P. Gallagher.

All this is highly imaginative and to a certain extent rather ingenious, yet does not negate the fact that the relationship that exists between Christian faith, doctrine and

life necessitates far more solid ground to explain the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind.

Thus when it comes to the stage of addressing the issue of the relationship between catechesis and religious education Gallagher cannot utilise or appeal to the nature of either as defined in relation to the ministry of the word for in fact his exploration of faith has done very little to clarify the nature of the relationship between catechesis and theology, revelation and the roles played by human experience and doctrine as they relate to the areas of catechesis and religious education. Hence all he can do is list the different functions of each as stipulated in official documentation of the Church.

Thus it is perhaps more correct to view Gallagher's contribution as his intent to share some pastoral, theological reflections on some functions of the Church's mission of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education as he does not adequately come to grips with their nature and purpose. Ultimately if his wish is to address the issues around the nature and purpose of the mission to evangelise, catechise and to engage in religious education then he would need to address the corresponding theological issues in some depth. Not only does he fail to do so, he openly states he has no intention of attempting such a feat as is evidenced when he introduces the chapter on 'Faith, Doctrine and Life' by saying, 'My intention is to provide some pastoral reflections, not to give any deep theological exposition of the issues'.⁶⁵ Thus he wishes to engage in pastoral and theological reflections without taking the theological issues seriously enough - such a position is, to say the least, rather surprising.

⁶⁵Jim Gallagher SDB, Soil for the Seed, p. 167.

Soil for the Seed is therefore a work which gives a good summary account of the history of pedagogy in the faith. It also refers to, and thus makes known, many of the more important Church documents which relate to the areas of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education, and explains the various contexts from which these documents emerge.

However, it does fail to adequately relate the author's pastoral and theological reflections with the nature and purpose of the Church's mission of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education because it fails to situate catechesis and religious education as vital aspects of the ministry of the word as a fundamental element of the process of evangelisation in any developed theological sense. Hence the second part of the work especially is stamped by a lack of explication of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind - through a developed epistemology - as pertaining to catechesis and religious education as dimensions of the ministry of the word.

Thus when Gallagher's contribution is weighed against the norm of the word of God as the source of catechesis, and the criteria of catechesis as: christocentricity; being ecclesial in character yet historic in nature; centred on the gift of salvation; seeking inculturation; possessing a meaningful message for the human person; and offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths; it may no longer be a question why this norm and the corresponding criteria are not presented in his work as necessary and inter-related criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message when the nature of catechesis and religious education was first considered.

Recapitulation

The norms and criteria for the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as postulated in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) were identified. The fundamental norm ever to be respected is the word of God as the source of catechesis; the criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message remain: christocentricity; being ecclesial in character yet historic in nature; centred on the gift of salvation; seeking inculturation; possessing a meaningful message for the human person; and offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths.

These norms and criteria were then used to assess three contemporary approaches offered to inform the theoretical base of catechetics, namely, Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 (1997) edited by Michael Warren, the contribution of Thomas H. Groome represented in his works Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (1980); Sharing Faith : A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (1991); and Educating for Life : A Spiritual Vision for every Teacher and Parent (1998), and Soil for the Seed by Jim Gallagher SDB.

The assessment of these works in light of the identified norms and criteria reveals the need for the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith made by the human heart and mind, and the norms and criteria that govern the transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis, to be more clearly understood and more thoroughly demarcated in order to establish a solid bedrock for the discipline of modern catechetics.

**The relationship between catechetics, the divine origin of faith and the structure
of the divine Revelation**

The concern here is to generate the hypothesis that post-conciliar catechetics is to be grounded in, and take its form from a fundamental theology.

To this end catechetics is identified as ever having as its constant point of reference the bond between the divine Revelation and the response of faith.

The focus of this section is therefore the relationship between catechetics, the theology of revelation, and the divine genesis of faith - which in other words may be referred to as the relationship between catechetics and the objects of a fundamental theology.

The various approaches to catechetics that have been considered may be addressed not only in consideration of their content yet also in their formal and structural aspects.

This latter task engages the issue of method in catechetics.

Thus the consideration of the different theologies seeking to inform the enterprise of catechetics through the various catechetical approaches that have been investigated point to the implicit adoption of some methodology or methodologies - theological or otherwise - in pursuit of the catechetical enterprise. Discourse on method in catechetics must then necessarily treat of discourse on theological method.

Accordingly the doctrine of theological method has as an outcome the exposition of the foundations and presuppositions of theological knowledge. This knowledge is to

manifest the worth of affirmations concerning theological reflection in general and those dealing with individual and particular contents of faith.

When the doctrine of theological method is applied to the enterprise of catechetics it seeks to expose the foundations and presuppositions of theological knowledge in which catechetics must find its ground if it is to legitimately exist as an integral aspect of the Church's life.

Of note in the assessment of the state of the art of catechetics is that few individuals, if any, have contributed to the development of the academic rigour of the discipline from the position of firstly considering the nature of catechetics according to the mind of the Church. This evidence suggests that those persons who have contributed to the field may have forgotten or taken as a working presumption that was never explicated, or perhaps are unaware that, fundamental theology could in fact have something to offer the evolution of catechetics as an emerging discipline in this regard.

Nonetheless the issue which this study addresses remains: Has the catechetical theory used to inform the practice of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics in the English speaking Roman Catholic world sufficiently attended to the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as drawn from the Roman Catholic Church's Magisterium - as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and derived from the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965) - to better orient and structure the content of catechetics as a vital aspect of the 'Ministry of the Divine Word' and if not, how might this catechetical theory be improved upon?

Catechetics and Evangelization

Context

The mission of the Church is to evangelize the entire world (Mk 16:15, Mt 18:19-20, Acts 1:8). Evangelization is thus the term given to the process of transmitting the

divine Revelation, whose fullness resides in Jesus Christ the Word of God, to the world.

Since the dawn of the Church's existence this one process of evangelization has been designated by the terms kerygma, catechesis,¹ and parenesis. These three titles provide the forms and phases of that one single movement.

Kerygma quintessentially refers to the task of proclaiming the Good News of salvation and of guiding human beings to conversion and faith.² The task of expounding the content of the kerygma in more explicit detail is the work of catechesis and usually follows the kerygma. Catechesis has the kerygma therefore not only as a point of departure, yet also as its constant point of reference. Parenesis has as its focus moral conduct and exhortation, and differs from catechesis simply in terms of its direction of orientation.

Catechetics

Thus catechesis is that genre of the 'Ministry of the Word' which aims to serve those who have been evangelized, who have heard the gospel, and who have responded in faith.

The goal of catechetical activity is therefore to nourish and nurture the faith of those who have responded to the gospel revealed through the initial kerygma. This faith is to be made lively, conscious and effective so that it can become a true guiding force in each believer's life.

¹For a more detailed consideration of the place of catechesis in the process of evangelization consult 'Chapter II, Catechesis in the process of evangelization', GDC pp. 63-77.

²'The option for faith must be a considered and mature one. Such searching, guided by the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the *Kerygma*, prepares the way for conversion which is certainly "initial", but brings with it adherence to Christ and the will to walk in his footsteps. This "fundamental option" is the basis for the whole Christian life of the Lord's disciple'. GDC 56(b).

According to Pope John Paul II 'the name catechesis was given to the whole efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so that believing they might have life in his name (Jn 20:3), and to educate and instruct them in this life and thus build up the Body of Christ'.³

The fundamental addressee of catechesis is therefore the person who already believes.

Catechetics, the response of faith, and the divine Revelation

Since catechetics always has the task of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus and of leading human beings to conversion and faith as its constant point of reference it necessarily follows that it must find its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith. Indeed it would be impossible to lead baptized Christians in the process of on-going conversion and the deepening of their faith if this were otherwise.

For the work of catechesis to be effective it is necessary that the Church possess the true understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation. In this manner the pedagogy of God is thus understood as the font and model of the pedagogy of faith.

³CT 1.

Theology of Revelation

The relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith forms the ground of catechetics since catechetics always has the role of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and of directing human beings to faith and conversion as its invariable point of reference. Thus an authentic understanding and knowledge of the whole structure of the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith is necessary if the ground of catechetics is to be properly understood. Here the theology of Revelation is investigated as part of this relationship.

The conciliar and post-conciliar theology of Revelation

Preamble

Today's conciliar and post-conciliar theology of Revelation has been produced by a laborious process over a long period of time and has been characterised by high tensions. It was not the outcome of a spontaneous origin.

Its generation occurred in a setting of accelerated change reported in *Gaudium et Spes* (nos. 4-10) - an arena of transformation in which all fields of knowledge have been influenced by the spirit of science. Indeed these sciences have established themselves apart from any philosophy whilst some of the philosophies which characterise the present age are those which take the person; existence; language; history; and praxis as their various points of focus.

The stimulus of Catholic interest in the theology of Revelation was that of the biblical and patristic renewal. One outcome of the former was to cede priority to the word of Revelation and the revelatory action. So much so that the articles in recent

encyclopaedias and dictionaries under the title faith, Revelation, language and word are frequently so thorough and detailed as to be true monographs. In addition there has been a plethora of undertakings on basic concepts essential for Revelation to be more thoroughly comprehended (e.g. epiphany, gnosis, mystery, testimony, witness, word, truth).

The renewal of patristic studies has also profited the theology of Revelation, though this has taken place at a slower rate than that of the biblical studies. This has occurred under the form of major collections (*Sources chretiennes*, *Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte*) or in the genre of monographs dedicated to particular figures (e.g., on Irenaeus, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa etc.).

Similarly the renewal of Catholic theology has been assisted to a great extent by the volume and quality of works of Protestant theology. Some of the major contributors in this field have been: K. Barth,⁴ R. Bultmann, E. Brunner, H.W. Robinson, P. Tillich, H.R. Niebuhr, G. Kittel, and J. Baillie.

The Protestant theologians have tended to emphasise aspects such as encounter, action, event, meaning and history. Whereas the Catholic theologians have chosen to reflect more on the status of theology, the importance of preaching (kerygmatic theology, theology of preaching), the development of dogma, and on faith.

The first works in systematization appeared in the post-World War II period; these became the building blocks for a vast abundance of monographs on Revelation itself, on *Dei Verbum*, and on fundamental theology.

⁴Take for example Barth's monumental work on *Church Dogmatics* composed of the volumes (1) The Doctrine of the Word of God, (2) The Doctrine of God, (3) The Doctrine of Creation, (4) The Doctrine of Reconciliation, (5) Index, with Aids to the Preacher.

However, this novel realisation of the significance of the theme of Revelation did not result without pain or without some casualties in terms of the suffering of individual theologians. Nonetheless Revelation theology did manage to germinate in the tense climate which existed between the official teaching and that of the theological academy which sought to convey the new patterns of emerging thought.

Before *Dei Verbum* is considered in the particular, attention turns to the Second Vatican Council as the context in which this important document emerged.

The Second Vatican Council

Like the conciliar and post-conciliar theology of Revelation the Second Vatican Council did not emerge through some spontaneous generation; rather it came about due to a context that had been developing for some forty or fifty years.

The preceding historical context outside the Church was one marked by the stamp of rapid change. Three important factors of this were: the end of colonialism and the advancement of the Third World; the growth of industrialization on a worldwide scale; and the advent and rise of the communications medium of television. These phenomena helped raise the question as to what affect the church could exercise in a pluralist and secularized, now global, society.

Within the Church there was a diffuse awareness of unrest among clergy and laity alike. Eventually these forces took shape in three domains in particular: the place of the laity in the Church became increasingly significant;⁵ the return to the sources, particularly to Sacred Scripture, emerged as a feature of the renewal; and the desire to repair the fractured unity among Christians grew ever more fervent.

⁵This was more than assisted by works such as, *Lay People in the Church*, Yves Congar, O.P. which sought to address the nature, function and place of the laity in the Ecclesia.

Among other developing trends were: receptivity to the world; dialogue with the scientific community; a dedication to liturgical renewal; the revivification of anthropology; the repealing of Roman centralization and rigid homogeneity; accentuation on the particular features of Christianity when compared with the other world religions; attention to the relations between Church, gospel, and culture; and a more fitting demonstration of the Christian message in homilies, catechesis and theology.

As cited in the previous section, certain doctrinal tensions characterised the pre-Vatican II Church with the Vatican especially exhibiting some belligerent tendencies, perhaps stemming from the desire of self-preservation. Latourelle writes, 'there were the theologians, living on the periphery and listening to the demands of a new world; and, on the other, the conservatives, located rather in the Vatican, timid, scrupulous, or gripped by fear and panic and therefore turning aggressive and dangerous. One result was that a number of famous theologians became suspect and were disciplined. But in a fitting reversal, these persecuted individuals were rehabilitated and then became architects of the council, including even some cardinals (de Lubac, Danielou). The accusers sank into oblivion'.⁶

On the level of fundamental advances in attitude Vatican II made at least three profound contributions in the areas of: dialogue; service; and the search for meaning.

The 'dialogue' spoken of finds its character defined by the example of God himself who reveals at his own initiative and manifests from his hiddenness to engage in dialogue with the world. This dialogue is therefore more than a mere interchange of

⁶ René Latourelle, 'Vatican II', Dictionary of Fundamental Theology, p. 1153.

words. Rather, it is a comprehensive openness in attitude to others characterised by mutual recognition and altruism.⁷

An attitude of service, in turn, complements the attitude of dialogue. Vatican II presented a novel concept of the pope and bishops which emphasised their role as pastors. In contradistinction to the dogmatic method and manualistic theology⁸ which had prevailed up to the Council, the Magisterium itself is delineated as servant of the word of God; it is not an authority above the word but in service of it.⁹ Bishops ‘should announce the gospel of Christ to men, a task which is eminent among the chief duties of bishops’¹⁰ in exercising their office.

The attitude of searching for meaning is reflected throughout the conciliar documentation. By adopting a perspective of wide-ranging education the documents have as their purpose the instruction of the people of God, principally through the attainment of meaning and internal comprehensibility. The message of Christianity is understood to shed enough light on the condition of humanity for a spontaneous question to be asked: ‘Is it not in this direction that the truth about human beings and about God is to be sought?’¹¹

On the plane of documentation the contributions made were impressive.

⁷Latourelle attributes this attitude of dialogue as being the most important single factor which has caused the greatest transformation in the Church’s life-style. In the discipline of fundamental theology he notes its influence has been so profound as to have caused the term “apologetics”, with its antagonistic undercurrents, to fall totally into disfavour.

⁸For a relatively short, balanced critique of these phenomena see ‘Theologies VII: Manualistic Theology’, Jared Wicks, Dictionary of Fundamental Theology, pp. 1102-1105.

⁹DV 10.

¹⁰CD 12.

¹¹GS 22.

The issue of the communications media was addressed in the decree *Inter Mirifica*. *Nostra Aetate* attended to the relations between the Church and the non-Christian religions. *Gaudium et Spes* concentrated upon the theme of anthropology climaxing its position in the words 'Only in the mystery of the incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light'.¹² The decree *Perfectae Caritatis*, whose focus was the consecrated life, succeeded in bringing about the worldwide revision of the edicts and constitutions of religious communities and institutes of consecrated life. *Unitatis Redintegratio*, the decree on ecumenism, helped pave the way towards less antagonistic and more fruitful relations with the other Christian denominations.

In the domain of the liturgy of prime significance was the reform of the celebration of mass. The reforms of: the divine office; the ritual of the sacraments; and the Code of Canon Law also followed.

Lumen Gentium, the 'Dogmatic Constitution on the Church', significantly contributed to Vatican II as coming to be understood as the council of ecclesiology. Among the many offerings made in this realm of prime import are: the stressing of the trinitarian origin of the Church; the Church as both mystery of communion and institution; the model of the Church as the people of God - which subverted the former pyramidal structure through asserting the equality of all Christians by virtue of their baptism into God's trinitarian life; the cognisance of the principle of collegiality and the principle of the ecclesial character of the non-Catholic Christian churches.

Sacred Scripture reclaimed its fundamental position in the celebration of the mass showing the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of Christ's sacrifice are conjoined. The importance of scripture in the Christian life was also rediscovered and believers sought out the application and topicality of the word of God to their lives.

¹²GS 22.

However, whilst Vatican II was essentially an ecclesiological council the source document governing principles and method in the Church which emerged from the council remains *Dei Verbum*.

This dogmatic constitution stresses the centrality of the word of God where the 'word' is understood as Jesus Christ, the Word of God, Mediator and Fullness of Revelation. It also emphasises the sacramental nature of a Revelation transmitted through deed and words, 'in contrast to the earlier conception in which revelation was for practical purposes reduced to the spoken word, while the deeds, example, and behavior of Jesus were regarded as belonging to the realm of piety and popular devotion'.¹³

Vatican II and *Dei Verbum*

The dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum* marks the transition from the atemporal, extrinsicist and notional approach to Revelation (which prevailed in the Church until the 1950's) to the historical, personalist and christocentric conception. In this regard it heralded a sort of Copernican revolution in the understanding of the relationship existing between the Word of God and the life of the Church.

However, this transition was far from easy.¹⁴ *Dei Verbum* was one of the first constitutions submitted for debate by the conciliar fathers, yet was one of the last to be voted upon. Indeed there was more than enough opposition to its proposed content of reconciling the basic truths indispensable to the faith with new elements and manners of expression more in tune with the novel understanding of the historical nature of the Church before it came to be approved. Nonetheless the approval of the definitive text came on 27 October 1965 and represented the sixth official draft.

¹³ René Latourelle, 'Vatican II', *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 1158.

¹⁴For a more detailed account of the struggle for *Dei Verbum* to come to birth see R.Fisichella 'Dei Verbum I: History', *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, pp. 214-218.

The importance of *Dei Verbum* is difficult to exaggerate. In the doctrinal domain it is the source document and the interpretative key to the council's efforts and all the other conciliar texts, respectively. Similarly its worth on the ecumenical level cannot be overestimated.

Dei Verbum is all the more significant because it publicises the first time a council systematically undertook the study of the nature and particular characteristics of Revelation as the first and fundamental Christian reality. When Revelation is remembered as a constant of the entire Christian life and theological debate the fact that it was the last to be examined is somewhat amazing and evidences the degree to which its systematic study breaks new ground in the cultivated field of the Church.¹⁵

The transformation of perspective wrought by *Dei Verbum*

Vatican II altered the perspective from which Revelation had been looked upon in comparison to the position adopted at Vatican I.¹⁶ This meant that the route of firstly addressing Revelation through creation and then moving to the historical revelation was effectively reversed. The perspective donned by Vatican II manifest in *Dei Verbum* was to begin with the personal Revelation of God and salvation in Christ Jesus.

The existence of revelation

Thus the council took as its point of origin the affirmation of the divine Revelation as a fact of Christian existence. Furthermore it also stated that Revelation was fundamentally a divine initiative and a pure action of grace in resonance with the rest

¹⁵LG 6.

¹⁶At Vatican I (1870) the subject of discourse was the *fact* of revelation's existence, its possibility, and its object - not its nature or particular characteristics. Vatican I asserted the *fact* of supernatural revelation in response to pantheism and Deism. The word *revelation* was used for the first time at this council.

of the economy of salvation.¹⁷ Revelation transcends all human demands and limitations. It is characteristic of God's unpredictable love that the invisible God who is pure spirit has chosen to reveal himself to human beings in an economy of flesh and language through the incarnation of God's only Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the epiphany of God¹⁸ who casts light on the mystery of God and on human existence.¹⁹ Therefore human beings are not the measure of God. They cannot tell God what to do. Rather the word of God asks of them the 'obedience of faith'²⁰ where the love of God manifest in Christ Jesus becomes the measure of humanity and the object of the free response of the believer. Essentially then Revelation is a work of love which comes forth from the goodness and wisdom of God as a divine gift.

The object of Revelation

Dei Verbum also sought to promote a transformation in how the object of Revelation was understood. It did so by making copious use of biblical classifications - Pauline ones in particular. The purpose of this was to personalize Revelation in such a way that it would become clearer that when God makes known his salvific will God is actually making himself manifest. Accordingly God's plan, as understood through the Pauline sense of mystery, is that 'through Christ, the Word made flesh, man has access to the Father, in the Holy Spirit and comes to share in the divine nature'.²¹

Thus the three core mysteries of Christianity: Trinity, incarnation and grace which come to constitute the essentials of the divine economy may be expressed in terms of interpersonal exchange. Hence Revelation is formally a revelation of persons: the

¹⁷DV 1,2,4.

¹⁸DV 4.

¹⁹DV 2.

²⁰DV 5. The phrase 'obedience of faith' was a concession to those who made the 'Revelation as divine deposit/doctrine' stand compared to those who represented a more organic, historical understanding of Revelation and the nature of the Church.

²¹DV 2.

revelation of the mystery of the three divine persons of the Trinity; the revelation of the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word; and the revelation of Christians as adopted children of the Father who share in the mysterious trinitarian life of God.

Hence *Dei Verbum* presents the object of Revelation in its trinitarian dimension as personalist, trinitarian and christocentric.

The nature of Revelation

The council also treated of the nature of Revelation. It stated ‘Through this revelation, therefore, the invisible God (cf. Col 1:15; 1 Tm 1:17) out of the abundance of his love speaks to men as friends (cf. Ex 33:11; Jn 15:14-15) and lives among them (cf. Bar 3:38), so that he may invite and take them into fellowship with himself’²². The council thus chooses to retain the analogy of language in defining Revelation and so maintains continuity with the OT and NT, the patristic and medieval tradition, and the documents of the Magisterium.

As the higher form of exchange between intelligent beings, language is used to communicate what one person wishes to reveal to another person. The designations utilised in *Dei Verbum* (*accessum habere, consortes fieri, alloqui, conversari, invitare, suscipere*)²³ all point towards the path of a dialogue whose purpose is encounter. When the Word of God takes on human flesh and language in Christ these realities secure an unparalleled dimension for the Word of God becomes human, lives among human beings and converses with them. Thus through the Word, transcendence is made accessible to humanity.

²²DV 2.

²³René Latourelle, ‘Dei Verbum II: Commentary’, Dictionary of Fundamental Theology, p. 219.

However, these analogies of language and encounter must not be thought of as just another human attempt to decipher the incommunicable. Rather they are revealed analogies, grounded in the incarnation, employed by the inspired writings, and thus to be comprehended within the actual heart of the Revelation that enounces them.

Revelation inaugurates a protracted dramatic dialogue between the living God and human beings which is continued over the ages and extends to all of humanity. The movement of God's Revelation is from hearing to believing, from believing to seeing. The purpose of Revelation is therefore for human beings to come to 'share in the divine nature'²⁴ through responding to God's invitation to commune with the divine life. This is the reason God reveals himself.

Ultimately Revelation is the work of love of the Triune God. God proffers communication to human beings and guides them into the mysterious divine life so they can come to share intimately in, and commune with the very life of God. Almost to ensure and emphasise the understanding of Revelation as the manifestation of God's *agape* the council has increased the quantity of scriptural quotations and references made in *Dei Verbum*.

The structure of Revelation according to *Dei Verbum*

It is in accord with a comprehension of Revelation to attempt to outline how God's Revelation actually occurs. This is to address the 'attitude' God dons in entering into personal relationships with human beings. The issue of the structure or economy of Revelation must therefore be engaged.

Dei Verbum describes the categorical exposition of the economy of Revelation. It states that when God makes contact with human beings God does so through history

²⁴DV 2.

and the incarnation. Contact is made by God to created beings in possession of mind who live in time. This is the first occasion in the history of the Church that a document of the Magisterium has addressed the concrete expression of the structure of Revelation by delineating it at the active point of its origin.

Here, again, in Vatican II advances are made from the position adopted at Vatican I. Whereas Vatican I recapitulated Revelation as a vertical action which gave rise to a doctrine which barely glanced upon history, Vatican II describes the economy of Revelation as happening through the conjoined movement of 'deeds and words having an inner unity'.²⁵ This position steered a balanced course between the two one-sided notions of Revelation as (a) over emphasis of *gesta* against *verba*, and (b) Revelation comprehended as a more excellent type of gnosis.²⁶

By choosing the word-couple, *gesta-verba*, the council articulates the over-arching nature of Revelation. Events and their interpretation, works and words, constitute an organic and indivisible gestalt. It is an economy which attains its fullness in the person of Christ, the incarnate Word, who dwells among us.

Two nuances of the terms used at this important juncture in *Dei Verbum* are to be noted. Firstly, that *gesta* possesses a more profound personalist tone than *facta*; and

²⁵DV 2.

²⁶The first position is depicted by Pannenberg, *Offenbarung als Geschichte*, Gottingen, 1961, who reduced revelation to an obscure tissue of events and all but cast off the *verba* that interpreted them and announced their authentic meaning. The second position was prevalent in pre-conciliar Catholic theology and evidenced an unyielding disposition to mistake the term revelation, with revelation as a type of articulated discourse, thereby reducing revelation to a superior form of gnosis. René Latourelle, 'Dei Verbum II: Commentary', *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, p. 220.

secondly, that the connected expression *opera et verba*, works and words, always has a personal centre as its point of origin.²⁷

In the OT the works of God are the exodus, the covenant, the establishing of the royal lineage, the exile and captivity, and the restoration. The words of Moses and the prophets form the words whose interpretation announces the authentic meaning of the divine gesture in history.

In the NT the gesture of God is revealed through the actions of the life of Christ - particularly his example, preaching, miracles, and passion and death. The true meaning of these works is provided by Christ's understanding of his actions and the words of the apostles, witnesses, and authorized interpreters of his life.

According to the council these words and deeds possess a mutual dependence and nourish one another. They do so in such a way that 'The deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities²⁸ signified by the words'. Most importantly Christ's resurrection shows his sovereign reign over life and death and simultaneously establishes the truth of his testimony and the actuality of his mission as Son of the Father who has come among us to free human beings from sin and death. The words, correspondingly, 'proclaim the deeds, and clarify the mystery contained in them'.²⁹

However, it must also be noted that events and works always carry the danger of being partially or ambiguously interpreted. Nonetheless, the words are intended to dispel

²⁷DV 2,4.

²⁸This refers to God's saving plan and actions.

²⁹DV 2.

any ambiguity and to make known the true meaning intended by God in such a way that the authentic meaning of the event develops in the word.³⁰

For the OT, and for the NT in particular, the events overflow with a religious meaning that the words are meant to announce and reveal. Of paramount importance in this regard is the interpretation of the death of Christ by the word of Christ, extended by the witness of the apostles, which reveals the singular dimension of that death and manifests for our faith the event itself concurrently with its saving implications.

This profound connection between works and words occurs in the structural domain as opposed to being chronological in nature. At times, event and word occur concurrently. On other occasions, the word may precede or follow the event. Also the proportion of works to words may notably change.³¹

Nevertheless the point the council makes through emphasising that works and words are constitutive factors of the divine Revelation is that their nature is historical and sacramental. God enters our history and expresses the meaning of his intervention. God acts and reveals the meaning of his action. This comprehensive structure of Revelation is endorsed by the council in several instances³² and is sufficient to differentiate the divine Revelation from any other kind of knowledge.

This means the divine Revelation allows us to realise that by relating to the person of Christ we learn who the Triune God is. By contemplating the figure of Christ the profound truth concerning God and humanity shines forth. In Christ the anthropological character of Revelation is revealed as it is the Son and Word who calls

³⁰In the case of the exodus it is the interpretation given to the event by Moses in the name of God which announces the migration of Israel as a liberation which foresees the establishment of the covenant. It is Moses' interpretation which makes the event abundant with meaning and thus allows it to be the bedrock of the religion of Israel.

³¹The events predominate in the historical books, whereas the word prevails in the wisdom books and in the Sermon on the Mount.

³²DV 2,4,14,17.

us to become adopted sons and daughters of the Father who made us and loves us as his children.

The Centrality of Jesus Christ

In *Dei Verbum* Jesus Christ is affirmed as the focal point of God's Revelation.

However, this affirmation occurs now in a historical perspective (Heb 1:1) when in article 4 he is acknowledged as the 'Mediator and ...fullness of revelation'.

The word which existed in a fragmentary manner now attains perfection and wholeness. Christ is the pinnacle of Revelation because he is the Son sent by the Father, as the Father's eternal Word, to live among us and to communicate to humanity the innermost truths concerning God.³³

Thus the revelatory function of Christ discovers its origin in his function as Son and Word within the mystery of the Triune Godhead. 'Jesus Christ, therefore, the *Word* made flesh, sent as "a man to men", "speaks the *words* of God" (Jn 3:34), and completes the work of salvation which his Father gave him to do'.³⁴

The entrance of God's only Son into our history and into our human condition therefore means that the Word and the words uttered by him through flesh and language can now become associated in such a way that he is understood to possess total entitlement to the human condition and its modes of communication. Hence the Word, who exists as spirit, becomes a human being in the midst of humanity and comes to them at their own level, communicating to humanity through human word and example which is at the same time the Word of God. As Christ is the only Son of

³³DV 4.

³⁴Ibid.

the Father and the eternal Word it ensues that Revelation has to attain its summit, its fullness, its perfection (*perficit*), and its realization (*complendo*), in him.

The council then takes what was stated in article 2 of *Dei Verbum* and connects it with the comprehensive structure of Revelation. Thus the revelatory function of Christ is understood to be effected 'through his whole work of making himself present and manifesting himself: through his deeds, his signs and wonders, but especially through his death and glorious resurrection from the dead and final sending of the Spirit of truth'.³⁵ In short, Christ is the manifestation of the Triune God.

To make this epiphany of the Father through the Son possible, the Revelation which occurs through Christ, understood as the incarnate Word, must activate all the reserves of human expression, both *docere* and *facere*. Thus, comprehended in the concrete sense, the incarnation of the Son of the Father is revelation. Therefore the whole mortal existence of Jesus Christ (behaviour, posture, attitude, gestures, words) is a peerless manner of revealing the Father through the Son.

Dei Verbum's claim to originality resides in its presentation of Christ as being at once both the Revealer and the Sign of God's revelation. The signs of Revelation do not exist over and above Christ. Rather 'the signs of Revelation' are Christ himself in the radiance of his power, goodness, truth and wisdom. The splendour of Christ as Son is revealed through this radiance. Movement is thus directed from the reflection to the point of origin, Christ himself. The entire radiance provided by the being and action of Christ compose a divine witness. As the perfecter of Revelation, Christ authenticates as much by announcing that 'God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal'.³⁶

³⁵DV 4.

³⁶Ibid.

Christ is the eternal Word of God, the Father's only Son, sent to humanity with the mission to manifest to them the intimate life of the Triune God. He is the Epiphany of the Father³⁷ in whom the complete Revelation of the transcendent God is brought to fulfilment.³⁸

Hence the economy he bears with him must not be thought of as just fleeting in character. Rather it is conclusive and shall not pass away. By definition it cannot be substituted by another, more fitting economy. This is why 'We now await no further public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ'.³⁹

No more needs to be said because God has spoken to us through the eternal Word, his only Son. In regard to this the NT is properly *novum et definitivum*. The last word of the Revelation of the Triune God is Jesus Christ. Salvation and its Revelation are both achieved in him. Hence in a concrete sense the structure of Revelation resides in Jesus Christ as the second person of the Most Holy Trinity.

It is important to note that the existence of the public Revelation as novel and definitive does not rule out an ever more recondite grasp and an increasingly fertile and satisfactory conception of the mystery that has been revealed. Nonetheless, this second activity is not to be equated with the process of Revelation as presented above. The process of Revelation must be remembered as constitutive of all others, whilst the ramifications of appropriating the mystery may be considered as beyond measure.

³⁷DV 4.

³⁸DV 7.

³⁹DV 4. The Revelation by which God has made known his universal plan of love, in and through Christ, is officially regarded by the Church as having ended with the death of the last apostle. This Revelation is termed 'public' since it has as its addressees, through the ministry of the Church, all human beings of every time and place. The Church also recognizes the existence of 'private' revelations. These are necessarily distinguished from the 'public Revelation' and refer to those divine revelations which enlighten the faithful in matters concerning conduct in life circumstances and practical, social, religious and spiritual activities. See P. Adnès, 'Revelations, Private', *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, pp. 950-954.

Specific attributes of Christian Revelation

The particular features of Christian Revelation pertaining to its structural dimension may now be identified with some further precision.

The Dialogical Constitution of Christian Revelation

To describe the singular relationship which Revelation forms between God and humanity according to its sacramental structure Vatican II utilises the analogy of the word: God has spoken to humanity. This analogy is inclusive of all modes of communication attested to in the Scriptures yet finds its climax when applied to the living God. The use of the analogy of the word is used to inform the extraordinary encounter between God and humanity which occurred first through Moses and the prophets, and then through the incarnation of the Son. In revealing the exquisite message that God is love the Incarnate Word calls and invites human being to participate in the divine nature of the Triune God. The whole of the OT and the NT can therefore be understood to be hallmarked by this dialogical constitution.

Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that when the term analogy is used it is to be remembered that there is as much dissimilarity, if not more so, than similarity involved.

Firstly, the dialogical constitution of Revelation possesses the twin characteristics of message and challenge. The message flows from the truth of the Revelation engaging the mystery of a person whose own mystery is unveiled through and in encounter with others, in this case the Lord Jesus Christ. The challenge emanates from the fact that this encounter is not simply ineffable. Rather it is the encounter with the God who always creates anew, who has an infinite loving plan for each individual person, and who proclaims the mystery of salvation through the Incarnate Word so as to demand a response from each human being.

Secondly, and notwithstanding, it must also be remembered that there exists an intense gap between human words and the words of Revelation. The person of Jesus Christ is not simply and solely another human among humans. He is not just one of the prophets. Rather he is the transcendent One who addresses human beings in his person. He is God and man. In the Incarnate Word God comes to sinful humanity as a human being among human beings and communicates to them through word and example. He does so to ensure human beings comprehend the message communicated to them. This message is the mystery of Christ's intimacy with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Thus Christ reveals to sinful humanity the fullness of the mystery of himself.

The Revelation of the whole gospel is nothing less than God making his love known to humanity (see Jn 13:1). In fact, God takes the Revelation of his love for us to the point of supreme manifestation through the testimony of the martyrdom of the Son after all the resources of word and example have been expended by Christ in the course of his ministry. The gift of God's only Son for us, expresses to humanity the Father's love for human beings in truly concrete terms. All that is left for human beings to do is to gaze and understand. John interprets the death of Christ as a revelation of the glory of God, and bears witness that the God whom he saw die on the cross, whose side ushered forth blood and water when pierced with a soldier's lance, is Love itself. According to the design of God's Revelation the Love which Jesus Christ is, simultaneously donates itself and reveals itself.

However, there is more to the dialogical constitution of Revelation than its foundational aspect encountered in Christ Jesus. Unless human beings have been gifted with a novel fountainhead of love and knowledge they cannot consent to God's Revelation. As sinners, they must be re-created from within through an interior action which empowers them to embrace the Wholly Other (Jn 6:44; 2 Cor 4:4-6; Acts

16:14). Without this sinners are powerless to open their hearts to the depth of God's love. Hence the message of the gospel and the interior action of the Holy Spirit comprise the diastole and systole of the one Christian Revelation. These two aspects are complementary and in the economy of salvation are meant to unite and nourish one other.

If the gospel message is not communicated to human beings then it is impossible for them to know the mystery of salvation, nor can they be conscious of the action of God within them through Christ and his Spirit. Similarly, if they have no experience of being addressed individually by the interior word how can they authentically surrender themselves to the invisible God and choose to build their entire existence on him? Christian Revelation calls each individual human being to base their whole life on the word of the God whom they cannot see. If this interior action of the Spirit is not known by the (nominal) Christian then it makes no sense to expect that person to convert themselves and cease their dependence on earthly things. Therefore, Revelation must be acknowledged as an objective reality given in Christ Jesus when coupled with the gift of his Spirit through whom this Revelation is appropriated by human beings and made their own.

Christian Revelation is thus concurrently the self-communication and the self-manifestation of God in Christ Jesus, yet under the influence of the Holy Spirit who bears these realities into the innermost core of human beings so as to transform their hearts and minds in, and to, the love of God. This dialogical constitution of Christian Revelation thus makes it absolutely unique and utterly distinguished when compared with other religions, including those that make the claim to be 'revealed'.

The Principle of Historicity

A trait which is peculiar to Christian Revelation is the organic bond between revelation and history. Christian Revelation exists in history and possesses its own history. However, this is not all. It also evolves through historical occurrences whose more profound meaning is explicated by authoritative witnesses. The supreme event through which Christian Revelation attains its complete structure, and in a sense definitively and concretely establishes its relationship with history, remains the incarnation of the Son of God. This is due to the fact that God became man at a certain place, at a chronologically defined juncture, and in a specific context and location within universal history. The God of Christian Revelation is above all the God who unexpectedly intervenes and irrupts into human history. The God of Jesus Christ comes, intervenes, accomplishes, and redeems.

Sacramental structure of Christian Revelation

A further feature that is specific to Christian Revelation is its sacramental structure. In other words, Revelation is not to be equated solely with historical events in themselves apart from their authentic salvific meaning. Rather it is vital to grasp both the fact of the historical event, on the horizontal plane, and its authentic salvific meaning on the vertical level. The latter is willed by God and publicised by his chosen authorized witnesses: the prophets, Christ, and the apostles.

Hence Christian Revelation is concurrently event and interpretation of that event.

Therefore, to state that God manifests himself by words and actions is to acknowledge that God truly intervenes in history, but mediately by events, actions, works, and human beings chosen to explicate the meaning of these occurrences.

Hence to maintain that Christian Revelation possesses a sacramental structure is to hold that God actually communicates with humanity and converses with it, though

through a history that is authoritatively and meaningfully interpreted. Accordingly the plenitude of meaning of an event comes to fullness only through the word.

It is this sacramental structure of Christian Revelation which characterises it as distinct from any other type of revelation and ensures it cannot be mistaken as a form of Gnosticism or an ideology.

Indeed the unclouded declaration of this sacramental structure by *Dei Verbum* has a particular bearing on this investigation. For if it is true that Christian Revelation occurs through the *verba et gesta* of Christ, then the inference is that the transmission of this Revelation cannot be truncated to the communication of a collection of doctrine. If such a reduction was to occur, revelation would be no more than a discussion about God and salvation which would ultimately be divorced from, and have little impact upon life.

Incarnational Principle

Although Christian Revelation has the principle of historicity as an important trait, an even more specific feature of this Revelation occurs through the incarnation of the Son of God into our human existence. The incarnation of the eternal Word announces something radically new. God enters into human history by taking to himself the body and flesh of a human being. God takes on the dangers and limitations of the human condition. The Word made flesh introduces the time of fullness by choosing the opacity of the flesh as the privileged vehicle through which God wills to reveal and donate himself to humanity in a conclusive manner such that the Revelation will prove to endure.

According to Sacred Scripture the incarnation, in its concrete expression, is the Revelation of the Triune God in the person of Jesus Christ. St. Paul states that the

grace of God 'has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Tm 1:10). John holds that in the person of Jesus Christ the life that was in God 'was revealed to us' (1 Jn 1:2-3). Through the sign of Christ's humanity John interpreted his relationship with Jesus as one where he was able to see, to hear, and to touch the Word Incarnate. Christ is the epiphany of the Triune God.

The incarnational principle holds that it is the humanity of Christ which is the expression of God. Therefore, in Christ his function as Sign on behalf of God attains maximum density because as sign he is attendant to, and in communication with God himself - who remains the fullness of the signified in its most abundant expression. Hence the incarnational principle allows the statement to be uttered that Christ is the sacrament of God.

This incarnational principle is pronounced in a somewhat compact manner in Dei Verbum. 'Thus it is he [Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh] who crowns and completes revelation by his whole presence and self-manifestation, and confirms it by attesting that God himself is with us'.⁴⁰

The incarnational principle has several implications concerning the proper comprehension of Revelation. Again, this holds particular interest with regard to the thesis under investigation.

First, it is vital to underline that the role of Christ as revealer flows directly from the incarnation. The incarnation and Revelation are aspects of the single mystery which has both elevated human nature and human language. The incarnation lays emphasis on the only Son's assumption of flesh in a hypostatic union. Whilst Revelation emphasizes the epiphany of God in modes served by flesh and language. Nonetheless,

⁴⁰DV 4.

both incarnation and Revelation involve the self-manifestation and self-donation of God. In revealing himself God donates himself, and in donating himself through the incarnation God reveals himself through the gift of his Son.

Another consequence of the incarnational principle is that if God has truly become human and entirely clothed himself in humanity through the incarnation this means that every dimension of humanity has been assumed and used to reveal his total person. Hence his entire existence is the manner through which Jesus Christ reveals to us the mystery of his person, the mystery of the Trinitarian life of God, and the mystery of our participation in God's life as his adopted children. In short, the love of God is made visible for us in the love of Christ, and the works and words of Christ are the human works and words of God.

If the application of the incarnational principle is extrapolated to embrace the wider humanity then it can be claimed that through the Word incarnate, God assumes the many cultures of the human race with the intent of announcing the Gospel to each people with the purpose of bringing each culture to its authentic consummation. It is by virtue of Christ's transcendence as the Absolute that he is able to save all cultures even although it is true that he belonged to one culture in particular.

Furthermore, a more profound meaning of the incarnational economy heralded by Christ is attained by comprehending his Revelation to all human beings as the call to live a novel way of life, one that befits the status of the children of God. Indeed God had to show humanity, through the word and example - the praxis - of Christ, how this new way of life was to be lived. If God's Revelation had not taken on this sacramental structure, and the new way of life was revealed solely through verbal discourse, then the revelation would be bereft of any real influence or effect. The reason Christ came among us was therefore to reveal to us how to live authentically as the children of

God. The only Son and only true (not adopted) child of the Father came to us to reveal how human beings are to live as the adopted children of God.

In this sense the incarnational principle has profound pedagogical implications. It is by listening to the incarnate Word of God and contemplating him, by similarly gazing upon his actions, that our identity as the children of God is revealed to us by God and we discover the depth of God's love for his Son and for all human beings whom he wishes to become his adopted children.

The peerlessness and centrality of Christ

Christ enacts an absolutely singular role in the Christian faith because he is at once the revealing mystery and the mystery revealed, both the mediator and the fullness of Revelation.⁴¹ The function Christ plays hallmarks Christianity when compared with all other religions. Christianity is the solitary religion whose revelation is incarnated in a person who professes to be God, the living and absolute Truth. None of the founders of the other great world religions (Confucius,⁴² the Buddha,⁴³ Zoroaster,⁴⁴ Muhammad⁴⁵) declared themselves to be the object of their disciples' faith. However, the claim of Christianity is that if you believe in Christ you believe in God.

⁴¹DV 2,4.

⁴² 'Confucius' is the result of the latinization of K'ung-fu-tzu or literally 'Master K'ung'. He was born in Lu around 551 B.C.. He reformed, simplified, and organized the earlier traditions of China into a congruous social and religious system.

⁴³The Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, was born around 563 B.C. in Kapilavastu. He gained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. Buddhism is the most ancient of the major world religions. The path of salvation (to enlightenment) in Buddhism guides the student towards a profound mystical experience of transcendent serenity and away from knowledge of worldly vanity.

⁴⁴The time of Zarathustra's (Zoroaster) life is somewhat uncertain. He probably belonged to the sixth or fifth centuries B.C.. In Zoroastrianism Ahura Mazda is worshipped as the supreme spirit.

⁴⁵Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born about A.D. 570., a member of the tribe of the Quraysh. He received the Qur'an (Koran) - the infallible word of God - from the angel Gabriel. Islam, like Christianity, makes the claim to be a revealed religion.

Christ's role is much more than being the founder of Christianity; he is simultaneously immanent in history and the utterly transcendent Being.

As the Incarnate Word who dwells among us Christ is identified by the signs which come from him as a person. He is the radiating personal heart of Christianity. The signs through which he is revealed are not external to his person. The issue of his true identity arises because through his word and example Jesus announced to the world a quality of love and life never before experienced, seen or imagined. These revealed his person, his inmost being, as both the light of the world and the source of that light. The entire life of Jesus relates to a unique order; it proclaims that the completely transcendent One, the Wholly Other is manifest in our world.

Hence in Christian Revelation Jesus himself is the sign to be unfolded and deciphered. Disciples of Christ are to journey into the mystery of his identity, the mystery of the Triune God, through and in him. All other constrained indicators are to be understood as converging signs which denote that the peerless focal point of Christianity is the person of Jesus Christ.

The Principle of 'Economy'

Another specific attribute of Christian Revelation as presented in *Dei Verbum* is that it is not proposed as a mystery to be comprehended as solitary and distinct. Rather Revelation is to be understood as an over-arching 'economy' (in resonance with the patristic tradition). That is as an eternally wise design which God discloses and causes to come to completion through ways for which he has made provision.

This economy, which stems from the initiative of the Father, irrupts into history and finds its zenith in the person of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, who is the mediator and fullness of Revelation; it then persists under the influence of the third person of the Trinity - the Holy Spirit, in the Church through tradition and Scripture and under

the sign of expectation of the eschatological realization until the parousia. Every single aspect of God's design nourishes and casts light upon each other. Together they form a basic unity whose principle of unification and action is Christ and the Holy Spirit.

As part of this economy the OT has the triple function of preparation, prophecy, and prefiguration. These must be viewed in relation to the incarnation where the Word of God stamped his hallmark on the entire span of the economy of salvation by making flesh and time his own.

Thus all that comes before the Word Incarnate is a preparation for his entrance into human form. This means the happenings of the OT contextualize the appearance of Christ as a revelation which occurs in a distinctive situation. Taken as a whole the OT is also a prophecy of the Christ-event. The entire OT is a divine manifestation which takes shape over the centuries and awakens anticipation of the Christ-event itself, although the newness of the concrete aspects of the Christ-event remained unimaginable and utterly unique. Lastly, the OT prefigures the eschaton in the sense that it depicts it symbolically. When Christ comes among us as the Incarnate Word the ancient realities represented in the OT keep their historical standing as fact yet are also augmented, surpassed, and transcended by the presence of God with us.

This is because when the Son comes among us all newness is donated to humanity as gift. The event of the Word made flesh satisfies and totally goes beyond the limits of our human expectation.

Nonetheless, whilst it is undoubtedly true that when the OT is comprehended in light of the gospel it enjoys a new meaning, it is also true that the OT confers upon the NT a character and temporal consistency which it could not otherwise possess. To

authentically comprehend the NT it is necessary to connect it with the text of the OT, as the latter is the backdrop against which the NT is presented. However, it is the person of the risen Christ who began a new era of explanation for the OT (Lk 24:13-35), for in his person he is its exegesis because he is its conclusion and consummation.

The foundational Revelation therefore attains its zenith and procures its conclusive composition in Christ. Nevertheless this Revelation had to be transmitted and perpetuated through time to ensure that it could be made immediate and applicable to and for every age. It is in the time of the Church that this Revelation begins its era of development, its expansion through different peoples, and in a sense its journey across the ages. This novel stage of inculturation and transformation is as much an integral aspect of the 'economy' as was its constitutive phase.

In accord with God's design the transmission of the divine Revelation in the time of the Church is not left to chance. Rather, to safeguard the communication of God's revealing Word, God has gifted the Church through the Spirit a set of charisms. These are the gifts of: the Church's Tradition originating in the testimony of the apostles, the inspired word of Scripture, and the gift of infallibility commissioned by God to the teaching office of the church. Whilst it is true that this triad of charisms is placed at the service of faithfully transmitting the divine Revelation it is also true that these gifts are complementary to, and in service of one another.⁴⁶

This 'economy' is without doubt unique in its historical manifestation. Nonetheless it must accept that it cannot retreat from the vicissitudes of history whilst at the same time remember its singular uniqueness and special attributes. The distinct constitution of this economy may be summarised in the five phase movement of its: preparation

⁴⁶DV Chapter, 2.

(election), maturation (the prophetic movement), peerless communication (Christ, the Word made flesh), transmission (the Apostolic Tradition and the Sacred Scriptures), safeguarding and true interpretation (the Church and the gift of infallibility).

As the constitutive stage of Revelation was directed by the Incarnate Word so the stage of its transmission through time is guided by the Spirit of Christ. Hence the Christian Revelation cannot be assimilated to any other religion that also makes the claim to be revealed or to any human gnosis. The economy of Christian Revelation is therefore unconditionally unique.

Revelation as the work of the Trinity

In the last analysis the hermeneutic key which unlocks the treasures of Revelation is the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. This mystery of mysteries, particularly in the theology of the missions of the divine persons and of their appropriation, form the interpretative means of access through which the Revelation of the love of God in Christ Jesus is to be truly comprehended.

In short, Revelation is the work of the whole Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This mystery of mysteries reveals its spiritual abundance in accord with the twin tracks of knowledge and love. These correspond with the utterance of the word and the spiration of the Spirit respectively. The communication within the Trinity is carried forth to a terminus outside the Trinity which is Christian Revelation.

Indeed the words of Christ are the words of God because they have their origin in the communion of life between Father and Son. The Holy Spirit continues the mission of Christ by illuminating Christ's words through a communion of life which the Spirit shares with the Son. The Spirit does not speak of himself, he speaks of the Son, and the love between Father and Son is the Holy Spirit. Hence the truth of Christian

Revelation is the truth of the three persons in one, and the one in three. It is not to be equated with the truth of a single person considered in isolation from the others. The communion of life of the three persons is the foundation of Revelation, and the Christian Revelation is the translation of this communion of the divine life to humanity.

Though the Trinity as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit constitute a solitary source of revelation this does not mean that the Trinity as such has no effect upon that Revelation. Indeed each of the divine persons acts in accord with the effects that coincide with the mysterious manner in which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit respectively commune within the trinitarian mystery.

Hence it is always the Father who takes the initiative, for it is from the Father that the Son receives everything, his nature and his mission. The Father sends his only Son to show to humanity his loving plan of salvation (1 Jn 4:9-10; Jn 3:16); the Father testifies for the Son and for the Son's revelatory mission by enabling him to perform mighty works (Jn 10:25; 5:36-37; 15:24; 9:41); the Father draws human beings to the Son by virtue of an interior allure which he produces in people's hearts (Jn 6:44).

The Son, as the eternal Word of the Father within the Trinity, is the Word which totally expresses the Father himself. This means the Son possesses the ontological qualifications to fulfil the mission of being the perfect revelation of the Father to humanity whereby the Son initiates human beings into the trinitarian life as the adopted children of the Father. Thus the consummate revealer of the Father and his plan of salvation is Christ.

The salvific economy of the Father is to bestow the very life of the Trinity to the human race. The will of the Father is to beget his only Son anew in the heart and

mind of each human person, to pour forth his Spirit into their hearts, and to unite humankind to himself in the most intimate communion. In this way the Father's will can be accomplished as all can be one as the Father and the Son are one, through the same Holy Spirit of love. The Father makes us his adopted children if we embrace the testimony of the Father to the Son (Jn 1:12). Accordingly humanity may admit of a filial spirit, a spirit of love being poured out in their midst: 'God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"' (Gal 4:6).

The 'effect' of the Spirit is to 'inspire' what the Son has made known. In a sense the Spirit is the intimate vivificator of the divine thought. Whereas Christ holds before humanity the word of God, the Spirit fashions the word of God to each individual person and interiorizes it in such a way that the word of God may abide in us. The Spirit 'makes over' the mind and heart of each believer so that the God of the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, can come and make their home within each individual person (Jn 14:23). Thus it is the Holy Spirit who makes effective the gift of Revelation. In similar vein, the actualization of the divine Revelation for every generation through the ages is also a work of the Holy Spirit.

Hence, through the action of the Word the Father reveals himself to humanity; through the action of the Holy Spirit the Father draws humanity to himself. Needless to state these actions must be thought of as conjoined, as necessary and vital correlates.

Moreover, the Revelation of the Father to human beings through Christ in the Holy Spirit must ever be remembered as a movement of love. The mirroring of this love by human beings through faith and charity can thus be comprehended as integral to their immersion in the constant exchange of love that unites Father and Son in the Holy Spirit. Indeed it is through Christian baptism that each person becomes immersed in that same love. As each Christian is baptized 'In the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Spirit' the mystery of the life of the Trinity is not to be thought of as something extrinsic to Christian existence. Rather it is the mystery in which human beings are plunged at the moment they are incorporated as members of the Church.

Christian Revelation therefore is to be comprehended as an action which embraces both the mystery of the Trinity and the human race. It enables and empowers an uninterrupted dialogue between the Father and the adopted children the Son has won for him through the shedding of his blood. It explicates itself both at the level of eternity and the level of historical occurrences. Christian Revelation thus finds its origin in word and faith, and attains its consummation in the beatific vision when the mystery of the Trinity will be encountered face-to-face.

The Divine Origin or Theological Constitution of Faith⁴⁷

Faith is the response human beings make to the manifestation of the divine Revelation. This relationship forms the ground of catechetics because catechetics always has as its constant point of reference the task of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and of leading human beings to faith and conversion. Hence for human beings to truly possess faith that faith must be grounded in humanity or in some way be the product of our human abilities. Nevertheless it must concurrently find its origin in the mystery of God himself. In fact, the Judeo-Christian tradition makes this assertion, thanks in part to the contribution of the Second Vatican Council, with increased confidence and clarity.

The OT prophets understood God to donate a new heart and a new spirit - God's Spirit - upon human beings to allow them to enter into the messianic covenant and come to know the living God more intimately. In the NT, and especially in the Gospels, faith embraces the divine salvific power which is manifest through the word and example of Jesus; accession to the resurrection - who is the Lord Jesus - emanates from the very same source which caused the resurrection and constitutes the heart of the faith of Christians; and Christian faith is a response to an interior working of Christ and the Holy Spirit who freely offers each person the opportunity to share in the divine nature of the Triune God.

Specific attributes of the Theological Constitution of Faith

The Aesthetic and Redesigning Initiative of God

The reception of the word of God by the individual must presume a participation in the comprehension from which this word acquires its particular radiance and density

⁴⁷Gilles Langevin, 'Faith', Dictionary of Fundamental Theology, pp. 309-315.

otherwise such acceptance would amount to a type of degradation of God's word. What is necessary therefore is the creation of a novel being, discovered within the initial reality, else the word of God would be reduced to the level of human discourse with God as its object. The necessary elevation of the human spirit therefore entails that human beings are transformed so as to adapt to the horizon or object of the divine comprehension. As the proper object of this divine comprehension is the mystery of God himself, his interiority, this means the proper object is the living reality of God himself and not some concept about him. Accordingly, if God is to be relied upon as the means through which human beings are to possess the knowledge of faith then the life of faith must be birthed by nothing less than the vision of God.

From the perspective of believers, faith therefore signifies the aesthetic and redesigning initiative of God, for it is on God as its utter foundation that the human spirit depends. Correspondingly, when God reveals himself in modes that transcend analogy, he cannot depend on anything other than himself to sustain his testimony. Hence, if perfect truth is to require identification of itself as such from a finite spirit, then it cannot rely on any truth other than itself.

The reasons for believing: their function and extent

Since in the case of the divine Revelation the absolute testifies to itself, this necessitates from the human perspective that the function and limits of the reasons for believing be considered further. Hence, in the investigation of the theological character of faith the signs which accompany the divine Revelation merit subsequent attention.

Sacred Scripture informs us that the authenticity of the mission of all prophets must be proven through means of 'signs', i.e., miracles or wondrous actions performed in God's name (Is 7:11; see Jn 3:2; 6:29-30; 7:3-31; 9: 16-33). However, in the

economy of the divine Revelation these signs must also be accompanied with an authentic interpretation of their meaning. Faith is the response made to the signs which convey the divine Revelation.

Nonetheless, if a person is to give their assent to God, then because the human person is in possession of the gift of reason, that person must possess a reason or reasons for believing. This aspect of the response of faith is termed the *fides quae*. It denotes the exposition of the attempt to comprehend better the mystery of the divine word on the part of humanity. In other words if respect for human dignity and responsibility is to be maintained then it is fitting that each human person possesses a right motivation for their response of faith and is able to give an account of the life of faith which they live.

Nevertheless, regardless of individual conviction on the part of the believer and no matter how many reasons each individual may possess to substantiate their belief, in the last analysis the act of faith in God cannot formally rely solely on the workings of the finite human mind. To do so would confront the individual with the workings of their own mind and not with the reality of God. Hence although reasons are indispensable in some regard, in themselves they are insufficient and really belong to a lower order in the overarching structure of the economy of revelation.

The higher order of the divine origin of faith rests on the basic fact that faith is a gift from God to humanity. The sign which is presented to humanity as the fullness and the mediator of the Christian Revelation is the person of Christ Jesus himself - especially the death and resurrection of Christ interpreted by the word of Christ. Hence the fundamental reason which each Christian possesses for their response of faith must flow from their encounter with the formal object of Christian Revelation, Christ himself. This aspect of the response of faith is termed the *fides qua*. It denotes the adherence, made under the movement of grace, to God who reveals himself. This

mien of the faith response involves believing the word of God, Jesus Christ, and committing oneself to him.

Thus the assent of faith of each Christian must originate within the dialogical and interpersonal horizon of encountering the love of God revealed in the person of Christ Jesus. Hence the *fides qua* and the *fides quae* must be thought of as incapable of separation from the very moment when faith is birthed.

Consequently the primary reason for Christian faith flows from the fact that God loves each person first - 'We are to love, then, because he (God) loved us first' (1 Jn 4:19). On the part of humanity this forms the most fundamental reason for believing. The most basic response of faith is thus to choose to love Christ Jesus, as the second person of the Trinity, because he has revealed the trinitarian mystery of love through the mystery of his person.

On the most profound level then, the response of Christian faith consists in the *fides qua* - of believing in Christ Jesus and committing oneself wholeheartedly to him; coupled with the *fides quae* - of striving from that moment to understand better, and come to know more deeply, the mystery of the person who is Jesus Christ. The *fides qua* and the *fides quae* are thus nothing less than the diastole and systole of the response of Christian faith.

Christian faith is accordingly constituted by, and made in response to, the love of God revealed in Christ Jesus. The decision of Christian faith is therefore the decision to open oneself up to what true love really is. It is not a leap into an abyss of darkness. It is rather the assent to be embraced in loving encounter with the God of Jesus Christ and through that interpersonal and dialogical relationship with Jesus Christ to grow in love through, with, and in him.

The higher order of the divine origin of Christian faith is therefore that of dialogical interpersonal encounter where the reasons for faith are those of the reasons of the heart which has been seduced in a loving encounter with the mysterious God of Jesus Christ. Hence to love the person of Jesus Christ is to have Christian faith.

This means the response, and life of faith of the believer on the most profound level is not to be made conditional upon or contingent with any individual's discursive logical abilities. Rather the response of faith and the life of faith become dependent upon the authentic presentation of the divine Revelation through the Church's 'Ministry of the Word' to those members of humanity who would believe in Jesus Christ. In the strictest sense then, this constitutes the critical path for the faith response and for faith development to be possible in the first place. In the economy of the divine Revelation the love of God for humanity, and the response of humanity's love for God, is thus not subservient to human reason.

What then is the purpose of the overtly discursive reasons for believing as related to the life of Christian faith?

It is important to recall that these discursive reasons do not fall outwith the overarching economy of the divine Revelation, rather they are part of that economy though properly speaking they exist on a lower plane when considered in relation to the constitutive components of the divine origin of faith. However, what rational knowledge of the signs, and the signs themselves give to humanity, is human knowledge of the obligation to believe in the Christian faith and the knowledge that to believe in the Christian faith involves each person's own free decision to respond to the divine Revelation made accessible to humanity through the person of Jesus Christ.

Thus the potentiality of intelligent information concerning the signs of Revelation is simply a condition to the degree of honesty of the free resolution by which the human person chooses to believe in God.

Faith must therefore be understood to be much more than a purely intellectual activity. Correspondingly as catechetics finds its ground in relation to the manifestation of the divine Revelation and the response of faith its content must also be understood to incorporate yet go beyond the purely intellectual. Indeed it must find its constant point of reference in the person to person relationship that exists between the risen Lord Jesus Christ and each individual believer - it is the total person who makes the faith response to Christ and not simply the intellectual dimension. Nonetheless the importance of the intellectual dimension must ever be recalled.

The Expansiveness of the Act of Faith

However, in the post-Vatican II climate it is vital to assert faith's global character and expansiveness which the Council affirmed. "The 'obedience of faith' (Rom 16:26; cf. 1:5; 2 Cor 10:5-6) must be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man entrusts his whole self freely to God, offering 'the full submission of intellect and will to God who reveals,' thus freely assenting to the truth revealed by him".⁴⁸

The Council therefore structures its contribution in such a way that the higher order of the *fides qua* which refers to the surrender of the whole person to the God who reveals, is placed before the reference which speaks of the individual giving assent to the message, the *fides quae*. The Council therefore acknowledges that in the first place faith pertains to the interpersonal design of the covenant.

⁴⁸DV 5.

The Understanding: Testimony to the Theological Character of Faith

Thus the obedience of faith is understood to affect the whole being of the individual person; the heart, comprehension, the ability to judge and decide, behaviour and posture are all affected in the self-surrender to the living God.

Nonetheless the question remains as to what role the understanding plays in making a response of faith as complementary, yet of a lower order, to the response of trust and surrender to God in Christ Jesus made at the level of the heart. In what way can assent to a doctrine or message be salvific?

In the first instance assent to divine Revelation reveals the total otherness of the wisdom and love that saves humanity. The words and deeds of Revelation emerge from the mystery of God himself - the God who is the Absolute Other. Thus the words and actions that save us cannot be conceived within the order of human self-surrender and trust which stem from our creaturely resources, rather they come to us as gift from absolute otherness.

However, humanity's doorway to otherness resides with the capacity to understand. The understanding is humanity's ability to perceive that which is not the 'I' as the 'not I' or 'other'. The understanding can therefore provide witness to the divine origin of faith by acknowledging that divine Revelation comes to humanity as a gift from God who is the Absolute Other. The understanding therefore testifies to the divine origin of faith and the radical nature of the encounter between God and humanity where both parties donate themselves as mutual gift.

Love and Freedom

Moreover, love and freedom are also engaged in the faith response made to God's Revelation in Christ Jesus. Indeed the reality that triggers the activity of faith results

from the seductive allure of the overwhelming good encountered as gift presented to humanity by God's Revelation in the person of the Incarnate Word. This ultimate concrete good which is placed before each person who would be Christian is not integral to their finite condition, rather it transcends that which is given by nature i.e. a love and knowledge of God that are dependent upon analogy.

It is thus with total freedom that each person can allow themselves to be seduced into the novel vocation that God presents before them. They can choose to participate in the life of God by virtue of their adopted status as God's children made possible by the incarnation of the very Son of God. Thus the choices made in favour of the path of Christian faith by believers constitute the affirmation of a destiny previously assigned to them in the mind of God, and are also integral to the attainment of the ultimate goal of communion with the Triune God itself.

Categorically, Christian faith is free because the individual human being agrees to be lovingly seduced by a good which transcends anything they can possibly imagine or will. This good is nothing less than that of being gifted with access to the world of the trinitarian relationships. Therefore faith is not to be thought of as free simply because it necessitates dispositions of trust and obedience in regard to the revealing God, nor just because the message of faith cannot be manipulated by the rational mind which always seeks evidence. Rather it is free because in the free decision to believe grace comes to meet the human person and moves the individual to accept a novel meaning for their being in its entirety.

The Act of Faith - Behaviour and Fruitfulness: The Sequela Christi

The assent to God revealed in Christ Jesus, of the heart and mind of the human person, finds its consummation in the conduct that befits the adopted children of God, in the

sequela Christi. The comprehensiveness of the act of Christian faith is such that it demands total commitment.

The word which believers accept into the totality of their being is the word of God. Since this word is the word of God it is Truth; it is therefore act. As God's word it brings into being that which it utters. Hence as God's utterance it will change any human person who says 'yes' to the person of his Son, the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

The act of faith therefore demands that the believer shows forth by their actions the fruits of their relationship with God in Christ Jesus. This will be determined by God's will for them and their individual capacities which enable them to respond to God's word authentically.

The expansiveness of the act of Christian faith thus encompasses all the dimensions of our human being in such manner that if Christian faith is not embodied in the person who claims to have said 'yes' to God in Christ Jesus, then that faith is empty or dead, as James would say (2:14-26; see 1:22-25). Similarly Paul is of the mind that authentic Christian faith is indispensably attended by works which the Spirit creates in us (Rom 8:4; Eph 2:8-10). In other words, loving action on the part of a Christian to another human being is also evidence of their living faith in Christ Jesus.

The Christian life then is not to be thought of as a sort of end result determined through some mechanistic means. Rather the Christian life is more organic in the sense that it involves the authentic working out in humanity of the living response of faith to the living mystery of God revealed in Christ Jesus. The comprehensiveness of the act of Christian faith - which encompasses the heart, comprehension, the ability to judge and decide, behaviour and posture of each human person - coupled with the

degree to which assent is given to God comes therefore to determine in the last analysis how real the mystery of Christ is evidenced by Christians.

Hence, for catechetics to lead human beings to faith and conversion the understanding and knowledge of this authentic working out in humanity of the living response of faith to the living mystery of God revealed in Christ Jesus becomes essential.

Catechetics must therefore be informed by, and seek to promote, an understanding and knowledge of the comprehensiveness of the act of faith that encompasses the heart, understanding, the ability to judge and decide, behaviour and the posture of each human person, as well as the way in which assent is given to God in such manner that the mystery of Christ can be evidenced more fully in the life of Christians.

Faith and the Sacramental Economy

In the sacramental economy God has gifted humanity with gestures and rites which express and celebrate the fact that God condescends to meet us in our corporeal and communal reality. However, as the response of Christian faith is made to God's Revelation in Jesus Christ, and God's Revelation in Christ Jesus is presented to us in the form of word and sacrament, this means the response of faith is made in encounter with Christ's presence as revealed through word and sacrament. In other words the life of Christian faith cannot exist apart from the sacramental economy of the Church which perpetuates the celebration of the Christian mystery through word and sacrament. The fathers of the Second Vatican Council teach that 'he (God the Father) also willed that the work of salvation which they (the apostles) preached should be set in train through the sacrifice and sacraments, around which the entire liturgical life revolves'.⁴⁹

⁴⁹SC 6.

Thus in celebrating the Christian mystery through word and sacrament the Church holds before humanity God's Revelation in Christ Jesus. Hence the life of faith necessarily involves the making of a response on the part of humanity to this Revelation presented under the form of word and sacrament. The life of Christian faith therefore comes to be constituted through its relationship to the liturgical life of the Church. Initiation into the life of Christian faith, and the on-going development of this life, must inevitably involve respect for this sacramental design of God's saving economy. This is the reason Vatican II states 'For it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, "the work of our redemption is accomplished," and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church'.⁵⁰

Faith and Baptism

In Baptism, which has been esteemed as the sacrament of faith since the time of the early Church, the human person is plunged into the mystery of the trinitarian relationships through dying with Christ so as to rise to the new life of an adopted child of God. 'In Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ' (Gal 3:26-27).

There is then a sense in which the physical plunging of baptism, in a weak analogical sense, reflects the invisible reality of being gifted with access to the world of the trinitarian relations. The life of faith as encounter with this invisible world begins with the 'immersion' into word and sacrament whereby the plunging into the water is symbolic of being buried into Christ's death, from which the person rises up by resurrection with Christ as a new creature (see Col 2:12).

⁵⁰SC 2.

As the sacrament of faith Baptism is the basis of the entire Christian life, the portal to life in the Spirit, and the gateway which provides access to the other sacraments. The Church acknowledges that for all baptised persons, whether children or adults, faith must develop after Baptism.

Faith and the Eucharist

The on-going development of the life of faith necessarily involves the Eucharist as its celebration forms the cornerstone of the liturgical seasons and the liturgical year.

In the course of the liturgical year the Church seeks to reveal the entire mystery of the person of Christ, the Incarnate Word, by recalling the mysteries of the redemption. In this way the Church unfolds to the faithful the treasures of Jesus Christ's powers and merits to enable these to be, in some way, manifest in every age.

By keeping the memory of the Lord's resurrection once each week on the Sunday or the Lord's Day, the Church celebrates the saving work of our redemption in the sacrifice of the mass throughout the course of the liturgical year. The sacrifice of the mass is comprised of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The liturgical year follows the pattern of presenting the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity in the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season; to his passion, death, descent into hell, and resurrection in the Lent-Easter season; to his glorious ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the expectation of the joyous hope of the coming of the Lord at the end of time. In the Sundays of Ordinary Time the Church places before the faithful the life and ministry of Jesus as recorded in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke which are respectively assigned to a three year cycle designated as A, B and C. The liturgical year therefore unfolds to all the faithful the figure of Christ as revealed through word and sacrament.

Hence, in concrete terms, the on-going development of the life of Christian faith is dependent upon the degree of authenticity with which the divine Revelation is presented to the faithful in the form of word and sacrament as revelatory of an aspect of the entire mystery of the figure of Christ as presented in the celebration of Sunday mass as the Church follows the path of the liturgical year. This is why the Sunday Eucharistic celebration is the primary and essential source from which the faithful are to receive the true Christian spirit.⁵¹ If the response of faith made by the faithful to the reading of the figure of Christ is to grow and develop then the faithful's full and active participation in the sacred Sunday liturgy becomes paramount in importance.

Hence, in a truly concrete sense the life of Christian faith cannot be conceived as divorced from the organic reality of the life of the Church, especially in its relation to the celebration of the Christian mystery in accord with the sacramental economy as the primary locus of manifestation of the divine Revelation.

The Unity of Faith

The simplicity of God and his activity is mirrored in the very form of faith which itself retains a unity. This unity is manifest on three planes or horizons. In the formal sense faith is indivisibly an acceptance of the reality of God in Christ Jesus and an assent to God's Revelation through the person of the Incarnate Word. Nonetheless, the composition of God's Revelation is analogous both with the activity of God and with the action of the created spirit. It is therefore a manifestation of the very action whereby God donates himself and human beings say 'yes' to him. Conclusively, these two perspectives of form and content are conjoined in the heart and mind of the believing person whereby their faith response becomes associated with the religious experience of Jesus Christ.

⁵¹SC 14.

Homogeneity of the Process and Content of Faith

The homogeneity of the process and content of Christian faith becomes abundantly clear when the unity between the propositional content and the activity of faith is properly identified. This is because the object of faith is co-extensive with the dual process in which God in Christ Jesus and the human person donate themselves each to the other. Thus there is an interior bond between a collection of statements and the activity that maintains them.

Christian faith must therefore be understood as the complete acceptance from God of the communication of his Word which is concerned with the history of humanity and totally reveals the mystery of the trinitarian godhead. This is the message which humanity is to appropriate and totally realise in freedom.

Christian faith thus involves the three stages of acceptance, listening, and appropriation which locates believers in the company of a God who is Father or Source, incarnate Son or Word, and Holy Spirit or Love. This Triune God donates himself to the finite created spirit of human beings to assure humanity gifts itself to God in return. The action of humanity in this regard corresponds to the internal fecundity of the Trinitarian God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of the Word taking flesh and becoming a human being, and of the sharing of the divine life that God wills to exist between himself and humanity through the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Due to this homogeneity of process and content the Christian faith exhibits a mystagogical dimension whereby Christian faith provides access to the mystery which is the origin and object of God's Revelation. 'In his goodness and wisdom, God chose to reveal himself and to make known the hidden purpose of his will (cf. Eph 1:9) by

which through Christ, the Word made flesh, man has access to the Father in the Holy Spirit and comes to share in the divine nature'.⁵²

Jesus Christ the Mediator and Fullness of Divine Revelation

Ultimately Christian faith obtains its essential unity in the person of Jesus Christ. As God's unmerited gift to humanity Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is the foundation, the object, and the end of Christian faith. As the unique mediator of God's Revelation in its fullness Christ Jesus is faith's foundation. 'All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him' (Mt 11:27).

As the plenary object of faith the person of Jesus Christ is the convergent focal point of God's revelation. Paul testifies to this when he states, 'When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified' (1 Cor 2:1-2). In Christ Jesus, the Son of God, the entire mystery of God in its fullness is revealed to humanity.

As the end of Christian faith, the person of Christ Jesus is the incomparable good that faith seeks. Salvation is found in him and no one else (see Acts 4:12). By uniting us to Christ Jesus, the beloved Son of God, the Father reconciles humanity to himself and draws us to the happiness of sharing in the condition of the risen Lord through our life in the Holy Spirit.

⁵²DV 2.

Catechetics, the structure of Christian Revelation, and the Theological Constitution of Faith

Catechetics discovers its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith. It does so because it has as a constant point of reference the role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith. Therefore for the work of catechesis to be effective it is necessary that the Church possess an authentic understanding of the entire structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation.

This structure becomes nothing less than a vital map of the theological methodology to be adhered to if the ministry of catechetics is to genuinely be enacted as an integral aspect of the ‘Ministry of the Divine Word’ in the process of evangelization. Accordingly this map, and its important features, comes to be defined through attending to the constitutive realities of the structure of Christian Revelation and the divine origin of faith.

Catechetics and the specific attributes of Christian Revelation

Catechetics and the dialogical constitution of Christian Revelation

The dialogical constitution of Christian Revelation ensures that the pedagogy of catechetics respects the dual components of message and challenge as integral to the ‘dialogue of salvation’. These flow from the truth that this catechetical pedagogy both serves and is included in the relationship between the God of Jesus Christ and the human person.

In regard to the message, the catechetical pedagogy must respect its origin through the divine initiative and its motivation of absolute love. Similarly it must also be

presented as a gift which totally respects the human being's liberty to freely choose when making a response to God's word, Jesus Christ. From the human perspective the dignity of the gift which is offered must nonetheless be esteemed for what that gift truly is. Likewise catechetics must remember to hold before the believer the challenge of continually growing within this gift, as it were.

The dialogical constitution of Christian Revelation, however, also necessitates that the catechetical pedagogy be enacted through remembering that the one Christian Revelation is comprised both of the message of the gospel and the interior action of the Holy Spirit. Therefore any authentic catechetical pedagogy must invariably recall that in the economy of salvation these two aspects are complementary to, and must unite and nourish one another.

Therefore, for catechetical pedagogy to truly honour the dialogical composition of the divine Revelation that pedagogy must necessarily, in concrete terms, address the communication of the gospel message to human beings and at the same time awaken the believer to the interior action of the Holy Spirit within the believer's heart and mind.

In this way the work of catechesis as the task of transmitting the divine Revelation will be performed in accord with understanding Christian Revelation as concurrently the self-communication and the self-manifestation of God in Jesus Christ though under the influence of the Holy Spirit who carries these realities into the deepest part of the human person so as to convert their hearts and minds in, and to, the love of God.

Catechetics and the Principle of Historicity

The principle of historicity, which pertains to the organic bond existing between Christian Revelation and history, guarantees that a genuine catechetical pedagogy does

not forget that the God of Jesus Christ comes, intervenes, accomplishes, and redeems. As a ministry of the Church travelling through time this catechesis secures the shape or form of a movement or 'journey of following the Christ of the Gospel in the Spirit towards the Father'.⁵³ In the time of the Church, the community experience of faith rooted in inter-personal relationships and the process of dialogue, and the passing on of that faith, can therefore be 'seen' to be genuine only if the fruits of the Holy Spirit are evidenced and discerned among those persons who claim to grow in the love of God as believers.

Catechetics and the sacramental structure of Christian Revelation

The sacramental structure of Christian Revelation assures that catechesis is conducted according to a pedagogy whereby signs, words and example, teaching and posture are all interconnected.

Indeed this sacramental structure in a sense guarantees a wholistic approach to catechetical pedagogical methodology which in turn finds its ground in the *verba et gesta* of Christ Jesus.

For catechetical methodology it is therefore true to say that as the Christian Revelation occurs through the *verba et gesta* of Christ so the degree to which the Christian Revelation is appropriated by Christ's followers will be shown through their word and example. The sacramental structure also ensures that for catechesis to be genuine there can be no opposition between form and content as far as theological methodology is concerned. Truly, then, it is the sacramental structure of Christian Revelation that ensures the work of catechesis does not disintegrate into educating people in the ways of a false gnosis or indoctrinating people in accord with some Christian ideology.

⁵³GDC 143.

Catechetics and the Incarnational Principle

The incarnation of the Son of God as one of the most important features of the Christian Revelation is so vital to the enterprise of catechetics that catechesis becomes determined as ‘a pedagogy of the incarnation’.⁵⁴

In the pedagogical economy it is Christ’s function as Sign on behalf of God which reveals to humanity the self-manifestation and self-donation of the Triune God. By teaching people to gaze upon the *verba et gesta* of the incarnate Word humanity is to learn the meaning of love by attending to the sign of Christ’s humanity. The work of catechesis therefore comes to be determined as ‘a pedagogy of the incarnation’ because it is precisely from the incarnation that the role of Christ as revealer flows.

Hence it is through the Word of God made man that we are to discover God’s will for humanity. The incarnational principle also has the consequence of explaining that it is by attending to the entire existence of the person of Jesus Christ that the mystery of the Trinitarian life of God and the mystery of our participation in God’s life as his adopted children is revealed.

Catechetics as ‘a pedagogy of the incarnation’ thus requires to teach persons how to listen to the incarnate Word of God and contemplate him, how to gaze upon his actions, in fact how to understand his entire existence - words, deeds, posture, values - in such a way as to discover what it means to live as an adopted child of God in relation to the person of Jesus Christ.

Thus, when the incarnational principle is extrapolated to embrace the wider humanity it justifies the position whereby catechesis ‘accepts the principle of the

⁵⁴GDC 143.

progressiveness of Revelation, the transcendence and the mysterious nature of the word of God and also its adaptation to different persons and cultures'.⁵⁵

Catechetics and the Peerlessness and Centrality of Jesus Christ

It is the peerlessness and centrality of the person of Jesus Christ which undoubtedly hallmarks the catechetical enterprise and its requisite pedagogy as unique within the world of faith and the domain of faith transmission. This is because the explicit goal of catechesis in the (Catholic) Christian faith 'is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus'.⁵⁶ The overarching function of catechesis is therefore to lead believers towards an ever deeper relationship with the person of Jesus Christ who is risen from the dead and lives amongst us.

As the radiating personal heart of Christianity, the singularity and uniqueness of the person of Christ and his role in transmitting God's Revelation, is unrivalled and utterly unsurpassed in regard to the pedagogy of God and the pedagogy of faith. This is the reason there is but one teacher of the Christian faith who is the person of Jesus Christ.⁵⁷ In concrete terms, this is why Jesus Christ must be found at the heart of every Christian catechesis if that work is to be authentic.

When the peerlessness and centrality of Jesus Christ is coupled with the incarnational principle several major ramifications for catechetics become abundantly clear as 'the whole of Christ's life was a continual teaching: his silences, his miracles, his gestures, his prayer, his love for people, his special affection for the little and the poor, his acceptance of the total sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world, and his Resurrection are the actualization of his word and the fulfilment of revelation'.⁵⁸

⁵⁵GDC 143.

⁵⁶GDC 80; CT 5; AG 14a.

⁵⁷CT Part I.

⁵⁸CT 9.

The heart of the catechetical enterprise therefore revolves around the unfolding and deciphering of the Sign of Christian Revelation - Jesus Christ himself. Indeed the process of catechesis can be nothing other than continually learning how to journey into the mystery of Christ's person, the mystery of the Trinity, through and in him. In relation to the catechetical enterprise, then, all other constrained indicators must be comprehended as signs of convergence which come together and ultimately find their meaning unequivocally in relation to the peerless focal point of the person of Jesus Christ.

Catechetics and the Principle of 'Economy'

In reference to the principle of 'economy' the ministry of catechetics is understood to relate to the stage of Christian Revelation concerned with the transmission of Christian revelation through time as guided by the Holy Spirit. This is manifest in the Church through tradition and Scripture as safeguarded by the gift of infallibility given to the teaching office of the Church as a godly commission. The name given to this foremost fundamental task of establishing the connection between the definitive saving event of Jesus Christ as the peerless revelation of the Triune God and the present day faith of the Church through the mediation of the Apostolic Tradition, the Sacred Scriptures, and the gift of infallibility is the *auditus fidei*.

Still, this economy is to be remembered and presented as over-arching in character due to the understanding of Christian Revelation as a mystery which is neither solitary nor distinct. However, if the work of catechetics is to be faithful to its ground then it follows that it must also remember to reflect the over-arching character of the economy of Christian Revelation in the implementation of this vital ministry if the pedagogy of faith is to be faithful to the pedagogy of God.

In concrete methodological terms, then, catechetics must ever remember to present the *auditus fidei* as the horizon and first basic moment within which the catechetical enterprise is to discover its 'divine economic foundation'. Hence, it is within this all-embracing presentation of the *auditus fidei* that the person of Jesus of Nazareth is to be encountered as the heart of catechesis.

Similarly the principle of economy justifies the pedagogy of the Church. This is because from her very origin she has existed in Christ in the nature of a Sacrament,⁵⁹ and has experienced her mission as an unmistakable and real continuation of the pedagogy of the Father and of the Son under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For these reasons the Church understands herself to be not only Mother, and educator of our faith,⁶⁰ yet moreover a living catechesis whereby she is the essential and primary locus of catechetical activity in possession of a treasure of pedagogy in faith which is without comparison.

It is because of this intimate connection between the pedagogy of the Church, the pedagogy of faith, and the pedagogy of God that the Church realises the need on her part to be a credible witness to the divine Revelation. This is the reason she realises the need to 'undertake an examination of the modes of acting and of the possessions and life style found within the Church herself'.⁶¹

Catechetics and Revelation as the work of the Trinity

In the last analysis the hermeneutic key which unlocks the vital character of (Catholic) Christian catechetics lies with the truth of the Christian Revelation being the revelation of the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. In particular, the theology of the missions of the divine persons and their appropriation by each human person who

⁵⁹LG 1.

⁶⁰GE 3c.

⁶¹Justice in the World III.

would be Christian, highlights the constitutive vital essence which the enterprise of authentic catechetics must ever strive to address.

As Revelation concerns the work of the whole Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; so the work of catechetics must exhibit a similar trinitarian theocentrism. This is due to the structure of God's Revelation. For just as Jesus Christ is the focal point of salvation history, so the mystery of God is the heart from which the Word Incarnate originated and towards which it is ordained as to its conclusive fulfilment. To this end the crucified and risen Christ, the Pasch, leads human beings to the Father by sending the Spirit to God's family. This, then, is the reason the structure of the whole content of catechesis must necessarily follow a theocentric-trinitarian pattern which can be summarised as: through Christ, to the Father, in the Spirit.

Catechetics must be 'through Christ' because it is he, as the Word Incarnate, who gives the entire economy of salvation its meaning. Indeed, the economy of salvation prepared for Jesus Christ's coming as the peerless communication of God among us, and now in the time after his death and resurrection, his kingdom on earth is manifest and extended in time through the Sacrament that is his Church. Hence the mystery of the person of Christ necessarily illuminates the entire content of catechesis. In fact the various dimensions which help comprise the discipline of catechesis - the biblical, the ecclesial, the evangelical, the human, and the cosmic - must ever be taken up and explained in relation to the Word Incarnate if the relationship between the principle of economy and the person who gives that economy its meaning is to be preserved.

Catechetics must be 'to the Father' for the simple reason that the pre-eminent goal of the Incarnation of the Word and of the whole plan of salvation is to lead all human beings to the Father. The aim of such catechetics must ever be to help transmit this loving plan of salvation of the heavenly Father to the wider humanity through the growth of the church. Hence, catechetics must seek to ensure this loving plan of

salvation is increasingly understood, and moreover, that the ultimate meaning of human life is to be found in coming 'to know God and to glorify him by doing his will, as Christ taught us by his words and by the example of his life, and thus to attain eternal life'.⁶²

Catechetics is to be performed 'in the Spirit' because coming to know the mystery of the person of Jesus Christ and journeying to the Father are achieved in relation to the third person of the Trinity. Hence, in the work of catechetics the presence of the Holy Spirit must always be emphasised when the content of the Christian mystery is being disclosed. In this way the Holy Spirit will constantly lead those persons being catechized into communion with the Triune God and other people, and will guide people in making their response to the Word of God.

The relationship between catechetics and Revelation as the work of the Trinity is therefore revealed as nothing less than catechetics' function to teach persons how to participate in the salvific economy of the Father and accordingly and concurrently to lead those same people to come to participate in the very life of the Trinity itself.

Catechetical activity must therefore be constituted by teaching people how to listen and respond to the Word of God as the second person of the Trinity. Consequently each individual who responds to the will of the Father discovers the love of God has been poured into their heart by the Holy Spirit and the Father's only Son has been begotten anew in their mind and heart. In this way humankind will be united to the Father in the most intimate communion. In no uncertain terms then, the concrete overall aim of catechesis is to teach believers how the Father's will can be accomplished in love so that all may be one as the Father and the Son are one, through the Holy Spirit of love.

⁶²GCD 41.

The theology of the missions of the divine persons and of their appropriation thus comprise a non-negotiable ground for the ministry of catechetics. Hence catechetics must not only teach believers that it is through the action of the Word made flesh that the Father reveals himself to humanity; catechetics must also teach believers how to perceive this action which is revelatory of the Father. In similar fashion, catechetics must not only teach believers that it is through the action of the Holy Spirit that the Father draws humanity to himself; it must also teach believers how to recognise and respond to the action of the Holy Spirit through which the Father draws them to himself.

The theology of the missions of the divine persons and of their appropriation thus form the interpretative means of access not only through which the Revelation of the love of God in Christ Jesus is to be genuinely comprehended, yet also the means through which the fundamental activity of catechesis as a work of transmitting the divine Revelation is to derive its structure as trinitarian and theocentric.

Catechetics and the Theological Constitution of Faith

Catechetics and the Aesthetic and Redesigning Initiative of God

The response of faith made by human beings to the word of God holds vital importance in relation to the original pedagogy of faith. This is because in the act of faith the human spirit is utterly dependent on God taking the initiative and aesthetically redesigning the human person such that their human spirit is elevated to the level of being able to adapt to the object of the divine understanding. The original pedagogy of faith comes therefore to rely upon God himself sustaining his own testimony as He reveals himself in ways that transcend analogy.

Thus catechesis as an active pedagogy in the faith must accomplish its goals by remembering the reception of the word of God by the individual begins through the

salvific action of God which is pure grace. Thus the means through which human beings are to attain the knowledge of faith is God himself and this life of faith is born through a vision of God which is totally gift.

Catechetics and the original pedagogy of faith

Hence the ministry of catechesis must proceed in the sure knowledge that from the time of an individual's baptism into the world of the trinitarian relationships that person has received the gift of faith. The work of catechetics in relation to the original pedagogy of faith can therefore be understood as awakening, nurturing and informing this gift of faith which each believer has already received from the Triune God.

Nonetheless although the salvific action of God is not to be confused with the pedagogical activity of humanity, neither can they be opposed or separated. In fact the inspiration and norm for the catechetical enterprise is nothing less than the awesome dialogue that God enters upon with every human person.

In terms of pedagogical methodology, then, the enterprise of catechesis requires a means through which this dialogue between God and humanity, the Person of Jesus Christ and each believer, is ever to be promoted through a progressive and coherent synthesis. In other words one which is capable of constantly and consistently advancing the integration of the total adherence of humanity to God (*fides qua*) and the content of the Christian message (*fides quae*).

In terms of the theological methodology which necessarily, then, comes to inform the discipline of catechetics the requisite pedagogy must discover its foundation in a methodology capable of promoting a dynamic harmony between the advancement of the positive phase of theology and its reflective phase, between the promotion of the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* as an integrated unity.

In concrete terms the enterprise of catechetics must find a means through which the *auditus fidei* - expressed through Tradition, Scripture and the mediation of the Magisterium - comes to be presented before the faithful in such a way that together with its corresponding *intellectus fidei* an active pedagogy in the faith is seen to be promoted as a vital aspect of the living Church.

Catechetics and the reasons for believing

The explanation of why a human person can have reasons for believing lies in the fact that the human person is in possession of the gift of reason and thus if they are to give their assent to God must furnish an explanation for so doing. This constitutes that aspect of the response of faith termed the *fides quae*.

In relation to the *fides quae* catechetics has the function of teaching believers how to better comprehend the mystery of the divine word from the human perspective of understanding more thoroughly the content of the Christian message. This aspect of catechetical ministry finds its roots and rationale in respecting human dignity and human responsibility in such a way that the response of faith is understood to be intelligible and thus capable of articulation in some way. In similar fashion the more profound an understanding the believer possesses of their life of faith the more they are capable of providing an account of the life of faith which they live. Hence catechetics has the function of educating believers to better understand their response of faith and the dynamic of their life of faith in order that they can legitimately justify these in terms of providing some form of articulated witness.

For the catechetical enterprise these discursive reasons provide the learning believer with the human knowledge which pertains to the obligation to believe in the Christian faith. Education in the *fides quae* also communicates to the believer that their

response of faith is a personal and free decision made in relation to the divine Revelation manifest in the person of Jesus Christ.

However, the indispensable original pedagogy of faith requires the *fides quae* to always be presented in relation to the *fides qua*, which in turn recalls the overarching economy of the divine Revelation within which catechetics as a ministry to the Word of God takes its place.

Catechetics and the Comprehensiveness of the Act of Faith

The global character of the act of faith and its comprehensiveness likewise inspires the methodological choices faced by the original pedagogy of faith. This is because the God who reveals must be given the ‘obedience of faith’ and this faith is manifest through an obedience by which the human person donates their whole being freely to God. As this donation involves both the total surrender of the entire person to God in Christ, and also the full assent of intellect and will, the choice of methodology adopted to ensure an active pedagogy in faith must seek ‘to develop all the dimensions of faith through which it conveys faith which is known, celebrated, lived and prayed’.⁶³

Thus catechetics must operate through a methodology which not only promotes the dynamic harmony of the *fides qua* and the *fides quae*, yet also one which understands the comprehensiveness of the act of faith to affect the entire being of the human person on the levels of the heart, comprehension, the ability to judge and decide, behaviour and posture.

⁶³GDC 144.

Catechetics, Understanding, Love and Freedom

Some other methodological choices which also affect the original pedagogy of faith flow from the role played by the understanding, love and freedom in determining faith's theological character.

The relationship between the function of understanding as testimony to the theological character of faith and catechetics is such that catechetics must operate in a manner which respects that the understanding does witness to the divine origin of faith by confessing that the divine Revelation comes to humanity as a gift from God. All catechetical activity must therefore respect the fundamental character of the meeting between God in Christ Jesus and the human person where both participants give themselves to one another as mutual gift.

Similarly, the role love and freedom enact in the faith response holds implications for the choice of methodology adopted as consistent with the original pedagogy of faith. Catechetics must therefore conduct its operations in accord with the profound truth that the freedom of Christian faith resides in the fact that the individual human person consents to be lovingly seduced by a good that utterly transcends anything they can possibly will or imagine.

Thus the adoption of a methodology that is right and fitting to the enterprise of catechetics will be one capable of helping the believer 'to abandon himself "completely and freely to God": intelligence, will, heart and memory'.⁶⁴

Catechetics and the Sequela Christi

As the act of faith finds its consummation in the behaviour that is becoming to God's adopted children, so the discipline of catechetics must choose an appropriate

⁶⁴GDC 144.

methodology whereby the total commitment demanded by the comprehensiveness of the act of Christian faith is ever recalled in the faith education which strives to promote the *sequela Christi*.

This means that from the outset of the catechetical enterprise believers must be taught through a methodology which ever holds before them the truth that they have accepted into the totality of their being the very word of God. This adopted methodology must concurrently awaken and nourish each human person to the truth that as a believer who has accepted the word of God, they will be transformed by that word because God's word brings into being that which it utters.

In the catechetical enterprise therefore each believer is to be taught through a method which promotes their saying 'yes' to the person of the Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, in such a way that they will further comprehend the fact that their relationship with God's Word ever transforms them in love.

An essential aspect of monitoring the authentic use of such a methodology will therefore be the cognisance of the fruits born of the Spirit (see Gal 5:22) among all who participate in the catechetical enterprise. In this way believers will provide evidence of the fruitfulness of their relationship with God in Jesus Christ by their love for one another. Thus catechetics must seek to teach believers how to discern God's will for them and also how they are best to respond to God's word according to their individual capacities.

In other words, a catechetical methodology appropriate to the original pedagogy of faith must be capable of leading believers in the journey of their further embodiment of living faith in the *sequela Christi*. For every believer, then, the means through

which catechesis is to be imparted must 'help the person to discern the vocation to which the Lord calls him'.⁶⁵

Catechetics and the Christian life

As the nature of the life of Christian faith is more an organic reality than a mechanistic one, so the enterprise of catechetics must similarly be understood.

Catechetics is thus a ministry whose aim is to educate believers ever more into the genuine deciphering of the living response of faith to the living mystery of God revealed in Christ Jesus. In service to the act of faith in response to God's Word, catechetics must seek to adopt a methodology capable of supporting the original pedagogy of faith without any loss to the integral living components which together constitute the comprehensiveness of the act of Christian faith.

A catechetical methodology which resonates with the original pedagogy of faith must therefore be chosen in light of the precise objects of promoting: a progressive and coherent synthesis between the *fides qua* and the *fides quae*; the development of all the dimensions that comprise the life of Christian faith - particularly remembering first evangelisation and biblical, doctrinal, moral and liturgical catechesis understood as eminently christological; of enabling the human person to totally donate themselves to the living God of Jesus Christ; and to actively assist them in discerning and responding to their personal vocation to which the Lord calls them.

The importance of adhering to a proper methodology which esteems the original pedagogy of faith in the work of catechetics is thus understood to be vital for the life of the Church. This can clearly be seen when it is remembered that ultimately the degree to which catechesis is authentic - in enabling people to make their total

⁶⁵GDC 144.

response of faith to the word of God as best they can - will determine how real the mystery of Christ comes to be demonstrated in the lives of Christians.

Catechetics, Faith and the Sacramental Economy

The response of faith is made through encounter with the presence of Jesus Christ as revealed by word and sacrament in the sacramental economy of the Church.

Catechetics ever discovers its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith. Thus it follows, in a truly concrete sense, that the ground of authentic catechetics must be intrinsically related to the living reality of the Church's sacramental economy as this provides the primary locus where God's Revelation in Jesus Christ is actually manifest to all the faithful.

Catechetics therefore derives its organic character from the organic nature of the Christian life lived in response to the living revelation of God in Jesus Christ as celebrated in the sacramental economy. Similarly the concrete dimension of catechetics comes to be derived from the concrete reality of the liturgical life of the Church. Thus, if catechetics is to be thought of as a practical discipline, in the purest sense this has to mean it must ever respect the relationship it possesses with the living reality of the liturgical life of the Church. In short, if catechetics is to be authentic it must always remember its relationship of service to, and derivation from, the sacramental design of God's saving economy. In practical terms the enterprise of catechetics must therefore seek to resonate with the living reality of the liturgical year, the liturgical seasons, and especially the Lord's Day.

Catechetics, Faith and Baptism

In relation to pedagogical methodology, the enterprise of catechetics as a ministry of the Church cannot afford to forget the importance played by Baptism in originating the life of Christian faith. This is because after Baptism the chosen methodology of

catechetical activity must ever reflect the fact that the person or persons being catechized have already entered into the mystery of the trinitarian relationships through receiving faith as a gift. As the work of catechetics is the work of seeking to nourish this life of faith lived in relation to the Revelation of the Most Holy Trinity the catechetical enterprise must take the manifestation of the trinitarian reality as the over-arching foundation within which all its efforts must be grounded.

This is not all. The trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message finds its echo in a catechesis which is similarly trinitarian and christocentric because ‘Christians, at Baptism, are configured to Christ, “One of the Trinity”, and constituted “sons in the Son”, in communion with the Father and the Holy Spirit’.⁶⁶

Hence in post-baptismal catechesis an approach must be chosen which invariably recalls the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit to the heart and mind of every Christian as lying at the core of the enterprise. Consequently the internal structure of catechesis must be governed by a necessary methodological approach which conducts itself in such a way that the nourishment of the life of faith is drawn from this trinitarian source through a mode of presentation which is always christocentric-trinitarian.

Moreover such catechesis must propose itself more of an awakening of the mystery of the gift of faith already in possession of those who have been baptised than somehow only as a transference of knowledge from catechist to learner.

Catechetics, Faith and the Eucharist

The significance of the relationship between catechetics the on-going development of the life of faith and the Eucharist is clearly manifest when it is recalled that according

⁶⁶GDC 99.

to the mind of the Church the primary means of education in the faith lies above all in the participation of the faithful in the Eucharist. Post-baptismal catechesis thus seeks to bring the faithful to a full, conscious and active participation in the Eucharist as the principal way of ensuring their on-going spiritual growth and development. In fact the very character of the liturgy and the dignity of the baptismal priesthood demand this.⁶⁷ In concrete terms then, the work of catechetics must resonate with the living organic reality of the liturgical life of the Church, especially as centered around the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Lord's Day. This means that catechetics will necessarily discover its vital point of reference in the living celebration of the Christian mystery of the sacramental economy, particularly in relation to the cornerstone of Sunday mass as celebrated throughout the liturgical year.

Thus an authentic pattern of catechesis must echo that same pattern of the liturgical year whose concern is to reveal the entire mystery of the person of Christ, the Incarnate Word, through recalling the mysteries of the redemption. The christocentric-trinitarian character of such catechesis will ensure that this ministry of the Church will truly assist the unfolding of the treasures of Christ's powers and merits to the faithful.

As the sacrifice of the mass is comprised of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist so the catechesis which seeks to serve the transmission of the Gospel as presented in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration must also be mindful of this pattern of word and sacrament as integral to its mode of presentation.

A catechesis in accord with the liturgical year will therefore assist the unfolding of the figure of Christ to the faithful through attentiveness to word and sacrament as it pertains to each specific Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

⁶⁷GDC 85.

In the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany season the corresponding catechesis will focus on the Lord's nativity and incarnation. In Lent-Easter time Christ's passion, death, descent into hell, and resurrection will provide the point of convergence of catechetical activity. Such catechesis for the season of Easter-Pentecost will centre upon Christ's glorious ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit, and the expectation of the parousia. Whilst the corresponding catechesis for Ordinary Time will follow the three year cycle of the Sunday mass of Year A, Year B, and Year C.

Therefore, like the life of Christian faith itself, the work of catechetics cannot be conceived as divorced from the organic living reality of the Church. This is especially true when the bond between catechetics and the celebration of the Christian mystery in the Eucharistic sacrifice is authentically remembered.

Catechetics and the Unity of Faith

The unity of faith demands that the ministry of catechetics ever respects the simplicity of God and his actions in relation to humanity. Catechetics must therefore present itself constantly as an echo which recalls this unity occurs on three constitutive levels.

On a most profound level, love as form and love as content must be taught in correlation with the believer's faith response to the person of Jesus Christ. Moreover catechetics must conduct itself in such a way that it never forgets the significance and hallowed nature of the mysterious action of God's self-donation and the human person's affirmation to God's Revelation. Likewise, on the formal level, catechetics must ever be presented as a discipline which seeks to nourish and nurture the life of faith as the acceptance of the reality of God in Christ Jesus and an assent to God's Revelation through the person of the Word Incarnate.

Catechetics and the Homogeneity of the Process and Content of Faith

The homogeneity of the process and content of faith helps establish the catechetical enterprise as the work of teaching believers how to completely accept from God the communication of his Word and how to appropriate and totally realise in freedom what the Revelation of the mystery of the trinitarian godhead means for humanity.

This aspect of the catechetical ministry rests on the fact that the propositional content and the activity of faith exhibit a basic unity, an interior bond.

As the Christian faith necessarily embraces the three movements of acceptance, listening and appropriation so the ministry of catechetics must educate believers in how to accept, listen and appropriate the trinitarian mystery as constitutive of their life of faith. Attentiveness to the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of each believer thus come to be recognised once more as constitutive of the core of the catechetical enterprise.

The homogeneity of process and content stamp the Christian faith with a mystagogical dimension thus ensuring the ministry of catechetics must also bear this sacramental configuration if it is to authentically assist access to the mystery of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus.

Catechetics and the Person of Jesus Christ - Mediator and Fullness of Revelation

In the final analysis catechetics, like the Christian faith which it serves, also discovers its vital unity in the person of Jesus Christ. As Christ Jesus is the foundation, the object, and the end of Christian faith so he also performs these functions for the discipline of catechetics.

As the foundation of faith the person of Jesus Christ is the datum from which the catechetical enterprise is to conduct its mission. Catechetics must therefore begin

from the position of always acknowledging the person of Christ Jesus as the cornerstone of the life of faith. Authentic catechetics must thus ever make explicit reference to the person of Jesus Christ as the origin from which it strives to achieve catechetical goals.

Likewise, in respecting Jesus Christ as the plenary object of faith, all genuine catechesis must be undertaken as the exploration of the mystery of his person through means deemed proper and suitable. Only by choosing to constantly focus catechetics on Jesus Christ as the convergent focal point of God's Revelation will the work of catechesis be in accord with the economy of salvation.

As the end of Christian faith, the person of Jesus Christ demands that the movement of all genuine catechetical activity ever leads back to him. Catechetics must always operate in recollection of the fact that salvation is found only in him.

Hence Jesus Christ's function as mediator and fullness of God's Revelation requires that genuine catechesis ever carries the christocentric hallmark of originating in his person, of exploring an aspect or aspects of his person, and of leading to encounter with his person.

Validity of the norms and criteria for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis

The generation of the hypothesis that post-conciliar catechetics is to be rooted in, and take its form from a fundamental theology has been addressed.

This has been achieved by attending to the issue of catechetical methodology and there after identifying that catechetics must seek its ground and terms in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith...Through the subsequent investigation of the structure and characteristics of Christian Revelation and the theological constitution of faith a way was cleared to make possible the revelation of the relationship between these core aspects of fundamental theology and the method and attributes of post-conciliar catechetics.

Consequently it can be stated that catechetics is understood to discover its ground in relation to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and therefore finds its constant point of reference in its role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to faith and conversion. Hence it has been shown that the source of catechesis is the word of God, and the criteria of catechesis are: christocentricity; being ecclesial in character yet historic in nature; centred on the gift of salvation; seeking inculturation; possessing a meaningful message for the human person; and offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths.

Thus it has also been evidenced that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis - as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) - are vital for that ministry if it is to be conducted in a genuine manner that resonates with an authentic understanding of the entire structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ as God's Word.

Balthasar's theological contribution and method in catechetics

The logic of this section rests on the argument that if the discipline of catechetics is to be grounded and informed by a fundamental theological methodology capable of advancing a gradual and orderly integration of the *fides qua* and the *fides quae* then Balthasar's contribution can provide sure foundation due to the connection between the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei*, the *fides qua* and the *fides quae*, respectively since in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Trilogie a unique and complete undertaking of presenting the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* of the Christian event is displayed.

The relationship between the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* thus comes to determine the way the *fides qua* and the *fides quae* are advanced as a progressive and coherent synthesis in the catechetical enterprise.

The concrete shape of a catechetical method or approach based on Balthasar's contribution is then proposed.

However, the reader is reminded of the fact that the approach being developed rests on one way of understanding the relationship between revelation and faith (cf. Preamble), and that the fundamental theological position of Balthasar chosen to inform this stage of the thesis' development is but one among many theological positions and was chosen because of his emphasis on the christological and trinitarian dimensions.

Balthasar's theological contribution

In the Trilogy of Balthasar's theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic an original and consummate undertaking of presenting the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* of the Christian event is made.

The scheme of fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's theology of the Word can therefore ground post-conciliar catechetics as an integral aspect of the 'Ministry of the Divine Word'.

Introduction to Balthasar's Trilogy

Ultimately, for Balthasar, the point of reference for his theological style is the glory of God. This is the totally gratuitous and enrapturing irradiation of God's Lordship on the totality of being - a glory capable of enchanting whoever perceives it because of its illumining beauty. This beauty is the sense of the glory of the divinity of God himself as revealed in the Paschal mystery and reflected in the lives of Christians who gaze upon their Lord.

Notion of style

For Balthasar style is discovered where the Thomistic categories of *species* (form) and *splendor* (splendour) meet. They are the factors constitutive of the *pulchrum* (beautiful). Style, then, is simply the *expressio* (expression) of the *impressio* (impression) made by a form through its splendour on the perceiver, who, subsequently is always in some manner captivated by it. Outwith this constituent centre, no beauty exists, and thus no style.

In theological terms, the form of the beautiful is the glory of God, whose majesty captivates and entrances. And the glory of God finds its summit in the person of the

risen Jesus Christ, in that eternal form, which unites God and humanity (the world) in the new and everlasting covenant. Therefore, more than any other this form needs the faculty for vision which pertains to the simple eyes of faith.

Form and theology

A theology, thus, does not discover its form until it is overshadowed, exactly in its formal object, by the glory of God, of which it becomes a demonstration. This holds independently of the aesthetic manner of expression utilised by it (style). Hence a theology must itself arise as the expression of the impression made on the theologian by God's glory itself.

As theology is 'an active-passive radiance of the divine glory from the form of revelation'¹ the apex of the form is located interiorly. True enough, this primary form is reachable only via external form and style i.e. through a systematics (theological logic), through images, words and concepts forged by the theologian; nonetheless, the theologian must always remember that through the secondary form the primary or interior form must really be grasped and communicated.

Style and form

For Balthasar, then, any consideration of style must necessarily be a discussion of form (Gestalt). Form and content are not to be treated separately or opposed in discussion on method. Rather, form is to be understood as the content that never discovers off-the-peg styles, but seeks emerging styles which are steadily created by this content in the developing process of a theology.

Hence in any theology which realises a form the gratuitous meaningful relationship between humanity and the God of Jesus Christ is ever operating. The worldly

¹GL II, p. 28.

appearance of the divine glory in its interior form moulds the external form and style which exist totally as nourished by that content (form in the determined sense). Thus, complete harmony exists between form and content.

Therefore, 'theology is on the one hand an obedient repetition of the expression of revelation imprinted on the believer, and on the other, a creative, childlike, free sharing in the bringing-to-expression in the Holy Spirit'.²

Thus an individual theology is determined not by fickleness or fate, but concretely speaking, by the content that is the form of Revelation. This in turn discovers a compelling hermeneutic standard in the Church's Magisterium. It is only in this *space*³ created by the Holy Spirit that theological missions and charisms acquire life.

Theological pluralism thus finds an acceptable foundation in the truth of the inexhaustibility of the full form of glory as it shines in the God of Jesus Christ. It is the result of the fact that the Gloria Dei, in giving itself, invariably abides as mystery.

For a theology to be historically influential, then, in the time of the Church it must itself be a reflection of the Gloria Dei. This is because 'only theology which, grasped by the glory of God, is able itself to transmit its rays, (and) has the chance of making any impact in human history by conviction and transformation'.⁴

²GL II, p. 28.

³ 'The Risen One offers to his disciples in every age both the grace of *following after* him toward the *eschaton*, the *not yet*, and at the same time the certainty of living every moment in peace within the salvation which has *already* been acquired....It is a substantial experience which begins with the paschal event, where we are conscious that Jesus is acting by means of his Spirit, in order to arrive, through the Eucharist and the remission of sins, at union with him'. Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 72.

⁴GL II, pp. 13,14.

Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure

Balthasar's theoretical innovation is to conduct his analysis within the perspective of what he terms a meta-anthropology. Thus he moves beyond using a metaphysical perspective where the human is viewed as a being among beings and part of the cosmos to a meta-anthropological horizon.

Here the human is understood to both synthesize and transcend the cosmos thereby ensuring that ontological discussion takes as its point of origin the existential analysis of humanity in order to go beyond it. In other words, his starting point is the enigmatic structure of humanity⁵ which acknowledges the human as limited though disposed towards the totality of being.

The topic of ontological difference⁶ is therefore understood within the wider horizon of humanity's existential structure without loss of any of its academic exactitude.

It then follows that if the question of the ontological difference is posed in terms of the human it must at the outset be acknowledged that each human exists only in dialogue with their fellow human beings. The vista of infinite Being in its entirety

⁵ The enigmatic structure of humanity is a theme addressed in the introduction to *Gaudium et Spes*, 10. 'The dichotomy affecting the modern world is, in fact, a symptom of the deeper dichotomy that is in man himself. He is the meeting point of many conflicting forces. In his condition as a created being he is subject to a thousand shortcomings, but feels untrammelled in his inclinations and destined for a higher form of life....And so he feels himself divided, and the result is a host of discords in social life'.

⁶ 'The central drama of Balthasar's theology comes from the fact that he has accepted the disappearance of the traditional natural man and natural law philosophy in theology, but yet shows at every step that he has been formed in the old way and brings along with him, without looking at it directly, the principle of the traditional way, the principle of the continuity of the natural and the supernatural, the principle that Karl Barth called somewhat ambiguously the analogy of being, and which in this present book becomes the principle of the analogy of beauty'. Noel O'Donoghue, 'A Theology of Beauty', in *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, (ed. John Riches), p. 6.

opens to humanity in dialogue. Correspondingly, through dialogue the human attains self-awareness. This breakthrough advances in concert with an entire progression of axial ontological stages.

The paradigmatic example which Balthasar offers as illustrative of his position is the account of the baby's discovery of being which originates with the loving smile of its mother.

In that encounter, the horizon of all unlimited being opens itself for him, revealing four things to him: (1) that he is one in love with the mother, even in being other than his mother, therefore all Being is one; (2) that that love is good, therefore all Being is good; (3) that that love is true, therefore all Being is true; and (4) that that love evokes joy, therefore all Being is beautiful.⁷

In this encounter the transcendentals are discovered for in reality every engagement is an encounter with Being, and the transcendentals are attributes of Being as such; they transcend the boundaries of every essence and are coextensive with Being itself.

Hence, in meeting with the other, the other does not simply communicate himself, but Being itself. This foundation sets the entire viewpoint of classical metaphysics within the novel perspective of meta-anthropology.

For Balthasar the epiphany of being is significant only if, in the appearance, the thing in itself is grasped i.e. the essence as it manifests itself: the baby does not baldly behold an appearance, but the mother in herself. The essence is therefore grasped through its communication and not in itself as such.

⁷Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p.26. taken from Balthasar, My Work, p. 114.

This foundation is vitally meaningful for if the encounter is a meeting with the essence as such, then it is an encounter with a revelation of being. Subsequently, the deeper I move into dialogue with essences in which being subsists in a specific form, the more I understand being, whereas the more I retreat from these essences, the less I comprehend it.

In Balthasar's thought the transcendentals can be predicated analogically, just as being is predicable analogically. In fact, he holds that analogy reaches its total epiphanic density specifically in the analogy of the transcendentals. It is for this reason the Trilogy is composed around the foundation of the transcendentals.⁸

Two inferences emanate from this.

Firstly, humanity exists only through interhuman dialogue - the word. Therefore it makes no sense for Being itself to be denied the Word. Revelation thus arises as a credible hypothesis, one confirmed by the Prologue of John's Gospel : 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John 1:1).

⁸ 'The basic form of 'ever-greater dissimilarity however great the similarity'...is irrevocable; but it can vary from being a philosophical 'negative theology' - in which God's Being remains infinitely hidden and unfathomable over and beyond all analogous utterances about him- all the way to being a 'negative theology' within the theology of revelation, in which God 'appears' unreservedly and, therefore, even in his ever-greater incomprehensibility really comes into the foreground and into the form that appears. God's incomprehensibility is now no longer a mere deficiency in knowledge, but the positive manner in which God determines the knowledge of faith: this is the overpowering and overwhelming inconceivability of the fact that God has loved us so much that he surrendered his only Son for us, the fact that the God of plenitude has poured himself out, not only into creation, but emptied himself into the modalities of an existence determined by sin, corrupted by death and alienated from God. This is the concealment that appears in his self-revelation; this is the ungraspability of God, which becomes graspable because it *is* grasped'. GL I, p. 461.

Hence God is able to reveal himself and does so thanks to the dialogic constitution of being. Humanity is itself dialogical. Therefore, if humanity exists axiomatically through interhuman dialogue, and discovers only in dialogue who humanity is, it makes sense to attribute to God the capability to enter into dialogue with humanity.

Secondly, if God really is God, then as the Fullness of Being God will need no created other and cannot be the other of anything; God is then the very totality of the One, of the Good, of the True, and of the Beautiful. As a consequence the human as a finite being shares in the transcendentals only in an imperfect, fragmentary manner.

This participation in the transcendentals in the finite realm is manifest in the irreducible duality of the universal and of the particular. Although both movements can be known with certainty their simultaneous realisation remains impossible. Balthasar thus identifies the law of polarity as constituent of finite reality's contingency.⁹

Founded on these assertions Balthasar professes to have tried to create a philosophy and theology beginning with an analogy of Being as it is met concretely in its transcendental properties, as opposed to starting from an analogy of abstract Being and its categorical attributes.

The transcendentals are implied in one another precisely because they are coextensive with Being, utterly traversing it. Therefore, that which is beautiful must likewise be good, true, and one. This is so no matter the transcendental.

On both the aesthetic and the ethical levels the result of this is critical. This method becomes a firm safeguard against all forms of relativism and subjectivism: a thing

⁹See Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, pp. 28-30.

which is not beautiful can be neither true nor good. For any of the transcendentals the identical logical association is operative.

The original methodology of Balthasar's entire work rests on his option for the transcendentals. Indeed, by opting for analogy in function of the transcendentals over the analogy of being in itself, he constructs a philosophy and theology capable of concretely grasping reality as opposed to settling for what he considers an abstract position.

Clearly his position depends on the premises he has worked out previously in upholding the priority of a meta-anthropology over a metaphysics. Nonetheless, his choice of utilising analogy as the unique instrument genuinely tailored not only to creating an understanding of an *auditus fidei* and an *intellectus fidei*, yet also a sound metaphysics is also congruent with the classical conception.

Balthasar states the objective starting point for his method in its fundamental structure: "A being 'appears', it has an epiphany: in that it is beautiful and makes us marvel. In appearing it 'gives' itself, it delivers itself to us: it is good. And in giving itself up, it 'speaks' itself, it unveils itself: it is true (in itself, but in the other to which it reveals itself)".¹⁰

Therefore, from the perspective of the analogy of the transcendentals being reveals itself most concretely in accord with this flow whose first pulse is on epiphany.

It is vital to realise that it is only by blending the existential aspect of interpersonal exchange with that of the self-revelation of being in the order of transcendentals

¹⁰Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 31. taken from Balthasar, My Work, p. 116.

starting with the *pulchrum*, that the primordial structure of reality proposed by Balthasar's meta-anthropology can be grasped - and that the need to distinguish any further between subject and object recedes. In the paradigmatic example previously cited, the baby becomes conscious of its own being the instant it perceives the being of its mother in the totality of the concrete density of its transcendental attributes.

In Balthasar's scheme, the epiphany of being, its beauty, is the proper aperture through which being impresses upon humanity and simultaneously awakens humanity to self-awareness and to reality.

Since the transcendentals are mutually inclusive, the good inexorably follows the beautiful: if the being which appears to me astounds me and captivates me, if it delights me, this means that it gives itself, and if it gives itself this means that it is good. Through this self-giving, being manifests itself as being at the exact instant when it awakens the I to self-awareness and to knowledge - this is the truth.

Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure, synonomous with the logic of his theological thought, is now apparent.

To begin at the beginning which is undeniably original we must begin with the epiphany of God, with God's magisterial beauty (Aesthetics). However, God comes precisely to give himself. God establishes a covenant with humanity through the Son. God begins an authentic theo-drama where his infinite freedom and humanity's finite freedom become entwined and engage in a mortal struggle for the testimony of the good (Dramatics). God makes himself understandable to humanity, making himself, the infinite Word, approachable through finite logic and in finite words. God's incomparable beauty which gives itself as the good reveals itself as truth (Theologic).

Balthasar thus opens the way for a unique and consummate endeavour at an *auditus fidei* and an *intellectus fidei* of the Christian event (the Trilogy), yet also clearly enunciates the deep ontological ramifications of this event as expounded through his meta-anthropology.

Trilogy: Aesthetics, Dramatics, Logic

In terms of theological method the issue arises as to what methodological principles allow the movement from the threefold analogy of the beautiful, the good, and the true to the Trilogy of Aesthetics, Dramatics, and Logic.

Phenomenological plane

The development of the dialogical dimension as illustrative of humanity's existential state yields a characteristic phenomenological pattern consistent with, first of all, a being appearing, a form shining. Thus the transcendentals emerge in revelatory progression by virtue of the axiom of their reciprocal exposition. The principle of circumincession gives validity to beginning with the beautiful.

Theological plane

On the theological plane the resolution to commence with Aesthetics i.e. under the cipher of glory, plainly represents a fundamental theology. For Balthasar, whoever encounters the awesome wonder of the majesty of Christ, and in him of the Most Holy Trinity, is initiated into the necessary answer.

Balthasar contends Christian 'theoria' must precede Christian 'praxis'. Proof of this is offered by the very logic of God's Revelation. God's primary purpose in coming was to present and radiate himself, the majesty of God's eternal triune love through that 'disinterestedness' that true love shares with true beauty.

God does not visit us primarily as a ‘redeemer’ for our use (‘good’), nor as a teacher (‘true’). The world was created through the glory of God and for the glory of God the world is also redeemed. Indeed it is only through aesthetics that the ascent to God can be grasped without fudging it beforehand by adopting a position which advocates an instrumental relationship to humanity or the cosmos.¹¹

Theological Aesthetics

The movement which determines the entirety of Balthasar’s theological ‘Aesthetics’ is the concept of the majesty of glory which impresses and captivates.¹² By reason of the impression the glory can therefore be perceived. This activity governs the perspective of the first part of the Trilogy.

The category of form

The crucial category in which the movement is condensed is that of form. Indeed, form serves as the supporting structure of the seven volumes of the aesthetics.

Form (Gestalt) is the compacted real design of being (an ‘inside’ and an ‘outside’ indissolubly bonded); a concrete active character which penetrates every distinct being by merging all its parts into a unity, and which discloses it to that Being which genuinely ‘informs’ it, accords it form (whose expression it therefore is), and enables it to radiate, in turn, its own brilliance.

¹¹See Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 37.

¹²Balthasar states, ‘theological aesthetics must properly be developed in two phases, which are: 1. *The theory of vision* (or fundamental theology): ‘aesthetics’ in the Kantian sense as a theory about the perception of the form of God’s self-revelation. 2. *The theory of rapture* (or dogmatic theology): ‘aesthetics’ as a theory about the incarnation of God’s glory and the consequent elevation of man to participate in that glory’. GL I, p. 125.

In the pre-eminent sense 'form' is hence the Most Holy Trinity. The triune God whose unfathomable splendour, whose glory, whilst abiding unequivocally itself, bridges the complete inexhaustible theatre of beings impressing them with its hallmark (*impressio*), so that they may subsequently express (*expressio*) the beauty they have encountered.

According to Balthasar there is in the structure of the human being a pre-comprehension which allows the individual to lay hold of, or catch, this form. The form is Christ himself - the Gestalt Christi - who is revealed as the Paschal mystery.¹³ To see the form is to encounter the glory of the Lord on the objective level of God's Revelation being unveiled and on the subjective plane of the experience of faith.

Of the theological aesthetics Leahy writes,

Theology is a self-surrender to the glorious form and within its light or radiance unfolding the mysteries of faith. What emerges from the theological aesthetics is that the *Fides quaerens Intellectum* is a contemplative, receptive, opening to and entering into the mystery of the Godhead through the Word-light as form perceived, entered into and incarnated. The *Intellectus quaerens Fidem* is the formative, creative aspect emerging from the Holy Spirit as *Spiritus Creator*, overshadowing the beholder with the new light which draws forth new forms in theology.¹⁴

¹³ 'What is involved is primarily not 'beauty' in the modern or even in the philosophical (transcendental) sense, but the surpassing of beauty in 'glory' in the sense of the splendour of the divinity of God himself as manifested in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and reflected, according to Paul, in Christians who look upon their Lord'. Balthasar, 'Another Ten Years', The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (ed. John Riches), p. 224.

¹⁴Breandán Leahy, 'Theological Aesthetics', The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (eds. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas

The theological 'Aesthetics' is constituted by the journey from an aesthetic understood in a Kantian sense as a theory of perception to a theological aesthetic. The latter in its most profound sense is akin to the self-presentation of the glory of God which brings with itself its own testimony and reveals it to the eyes of the faithful.

The twin movements of perception and of asceticism, as response to the epiphany of the form, become blended together as a single movement for each one can exist only within the other. Ultimately, we cannot be disengaged voyeurs of God's glory. Rather we are enraptured by it in order to become co-workers for God.

This guarantees theological safe conduct to the second part of the Trilogy, the Dramatics.

Theological Dramatics

To be sure, Balthasar contends that 'Anyone who took seriously the encounter described in the aesthetics was obliged to see that the phenomenon presented to him was one in which he had always been involved'.¹⁵

Thus the irresistible and fascinating attraction of the unfolding of God's Revelation in Christ under the sign of glory draws the individual convincingly towards itself dramatically engaging their freedom. As the covenant of God is the struggle of God's love 'with' sinful humanity it can necessarily only be the action of God as the continuation of the drama between God and humanity as initiated in the old covenant.

Norris) p. 51.

¹⁵ TD I, p. 15. as cited by Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 40.

The focus of the Dramatics is therefore the pivotal event of the encounter in creation and history between the infinite divine freedom revealed in the kenotic love of God and that of finite human freedom.

Even at the natural level the dramatic movement is understood to characterise existence,¹⁶ for just the feeblest attempt at self-comprehension on humanity's part always occurs within humanity's actual existence. Humanity's existence is dramatic because it is an existence open to question.¹⁷

However, to the attentive inquirer the question unmask the deeper reality of the questioner having always been embraced in the dynamic plan of God. Ergo, the drama is authentically this: God's action.

Nonetheless, what is most astonishing concerning this theandric drama, is that the beholders are invited to become protagonists. 'Now we must allow the encountering reality to speak in its own tongue or, rather, let ourselves be drawn into its dramatic arena. For God's revelation is not an object to be looked at: it is his action in and upon the world, and the world can only respond, and hence 'understand', through action on 'its' part'.¹⁸

The engagement of the two fundamentally different freedoms of the infinite and the finite does not guarantee the outcome of humanity choosing the road to true salvation.

¹⁶ 'As human beings, we already have a preliminary grasp of what drama is; we are acquainted with it from the complications, tensions, catastrophes and reconciliations which characterize our lives as individuals and in interaction with others, and we also know it in a different way from the phenomenon of the stage (which is both related to life and yet at a remove from it)'. TD I. p. 17. as cited by Aidan Nichols, No Bloodless Myth, p. 11.

¹⁷ This further echoes GS 10: 'Man's deeper questionings'.

¹⁸ TD I, p. 15. as cited by Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 41.

In fact, to save humanity from the path of self-salvation God in Christ has freely plunged himself into the drama and become its advocate.

God wrestles the mortal warfare *in persona Christi* in a theodrama which opens up to humanity's freedom once more the *space* in which to become a disciple. A *space* to follow the living God made possible only by virtue of the undeserved act of incorporation to Christ in the Church.

This *space* is where Christians receive the Spirit in order both to understand God and to fit themselves into the life of Jesus, thus opening up the possibility of living the fullness of life through an uninterrupted discipleship. This is how Christians in the time of the Church live in Christ. In short, this *space* is that offered by God to each individual member of the Church through their participation in the Paschal mystery.¹⁹

The Paschal mystery, celebrated in the sacred liturgy of the Church, as the abiding actuality of the response of Christ to the drama, is where the unfathomable mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is revealed to humanity in every age. It is thus through celebrating the sacred liturgy that the Christian will also be drawn to dramatically engage their finite freedom with the infinite divine freedom, and choose to re-affirm or reject the invitation to be God's protagonist in the world.

¹⁹ 'Within the drama of Christ, every human fate is deprivatized so that its personal range may extend to the whole universe, depending on how far it is prepared to cooperate in being inserted into the normative drama of Christ's life, death and Resurrection. Not only does this gather the unimaginable plurality of human destinies into a concrete, universal point of unity: it actually maintains their plurality within the unity, but as a function of this unity'. TD II, p. 50. as cited by Aidan Nichols, No Bloodless Myth, pp. 51-52.

Accordingly, the Dramatics is that part of Balthasar's Trilogy where, in a most original way, he seeks to articulate an *intellectus fidei* of the fulness of Christian revelation.

Ultimately for Balthasar this means theo-drama must take priority over theology. For unless this happens a necessary focal point of convergence for the different contemporary theologies simply cannot exist. However, this centre is not to be determined conceptually. It is not the product of integrating ideas from various competing systematic theologies.

Since the theo-drama, according to Balthasar, cannot be defined under any conceptual umbrella term it is not to be expressed as an idea at all. Rather it must be articulated as the overarching context. Therefore, what can be achieved is to state its presuppositions. These are the play of freedoms, divine and human and, the pivotal meaning God has revealed in this 'play of freedoms' in Jesus Christ.²⁰

Regarding methodology, Balthasar's theodramatic theory is therefore perfectly suited to the role of unifying the various partial approaches to theological method which have so far provided Christian reflection with a theological or philosophical principle of order. This means the nine motifs of theological methodology which he identifies as: (1) event; (2) history; (3) orthopraxy; (4) dialogue; (5) political theology; (6) futurism; (7) structuralism; (8) role; (9) freedom; can find their centre in the theological dramatics.²¹

²⁰ 'As the perfect man (Jesus) with his peerless drama, he is the living framework within which every human destiny is acted out; every human destiny is judged by his perfection and saved by his redeeming meaning'. TD II, p. 87. as cited by Aidan Nichols, *No Bloodless Myth*, p. 55.

²¹ Aidan Nichols, O.P., *No Bloodless Myth*, pp. 12-16.

Thus Balthasar's theological dramatics could become the comprehensive structure of theological method. It would then unify an otherwise fragmented theological culture and also provide the overarching context within which the various motifs of theological methodology could discover a matrix of meaning in which to express their relationship with each other and as an integral part of this all-embracing context. The theological dramatics, in turn, must be founded on the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ understood as the saving drama into which we must incorporate our own 'plays' as ever new productions. For,

Jesus Christ, in his dramatic role, which encompasses all dimensions of the world and of history, becomes the norm of every real and possible drama in the personal and public domains.²²

The necessary focal point of convergence of the theological dramatics is therefore the person of Jesus Christ, dead and risen, who lives amongst us.

However, it must not be forgotten that the author insists the Trilogy be taken as a whole. What then is the purpose of a 'Theologic'?

Theologic

The reason for a 'Theologic' is two-fold. To explain how God can make himself comprehensible to humanity in human terms without any loss of identity through some emanationistic schema; and to articulate how the limited human spirit is able to grasp the boundless meaning of the Word made flesh.

The 'Theologic' is the way of truth. It is theo-logy inasmuch as it is Balthasar's consideration of the possibility of formulating the mysterium in humanly comprehensible and responsible language.

²²TD II, p. 67. as cited by Aidan Nichols, No Bloodless Myth, p. 54.

Ultimately the meaning of truth is love. Love as opposed to knowledge, is the last word, in this life or the next. Consequently the understanding of the truth cannot occur through the mastery of reason yet only in the surrender of the self in freedom to the Father as revealed in Christ Jesus and forever offered to us in his Spirit.

It is this Spirit who introduces the finite human spirit to the understanding of the logic of the Logos. It is the Spirit who interprets for the Church the central truths of the order of Christian salvation: the Church itself, the life of the sacraments, the resurrection of the flesh, and life eternal.

Balthasar thus utilises the concepts of form, drama, and logos to inform and develop the analogy of the transcendentals in their transposition to the Trilogy of the Aesthetics, Dramatics, and Logic.

Nonetheless, the elements - of Aesthetics as theophany, Dramatics as theopraxis, and Logos as theology - must be remembered as not admissible of separation. Their correct balance occurs when the beautiful (*pulchrum*) is given its rightful place in the complete ordered structure and appears as the way in which God's goodness (*bonum*) gives itself and is revealed by God and comprehended by humanity as the truth (*verum*).

Christocentrism

From the dawn to the dusk of his life Balthasar propounded Christocentrism as the explicit program which gave shape and meaning to his contribution. "To display the Christian message in its unsurpassable greatness '*id quo maius cogitari nequit*' because it is...God's deepest love in the splendor of his dying so that all might live beyond themselves for him".²³

²³ Angelo Scola, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style*, p. 45 taken from Balthasar, *My Work*, p. 50. For a contemporary appreciation of this point refer to

For him Christocentrism is the horizon from which the contemplation of Revelation is to be engaged. Throughout the entirety of his theological vision Christ is indeed the Alpha and the Omega.

To grasp the theological significance of his perspective for this study necessitates the contours of this Christocentrism be further explored.

It is vital to note that talk of a Christocentric horizon signifies the focus of interest here is essentially on method and not on content. Content is more properly addressed under the heading Christology. However, due to the form of Balthasar's theology it must also be remembered that content and method may not be improperly separated.

Relationship between nature and grace

A text now recognised as a classic statement of Balthasar's theology illuminates his Christocentric vision as related to the much debated issue of the relationship between grace and nature:

Human nature and its mental faculties are given their true center when in Christ; in him they attain their final truth, for such was the will of God the Creator from eternity. Man, therefore, in investigating the relationship 'between' nature and supernature has no need to abandon the standpoint of faith, to set himself up as the mediator between God and the world, between revelation and reason, or to cast himself in the role of judge 'over' that relationship. All that is necessary is for him to understand "the one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ" (1 Tim 2:5), and to believe him in whom "were all things created in heaven and on earth... all by him and in him" (Col 1:16). Christ did not leave the Father when he

Cardinal Walter Kasper, 'Jesus Christ: God's Final Word', (David Christopher Schindler trans.), *Communio* Vol. XXVII, Number 1, Spring 2001, pp. 61-71.

became man to bring all creation to fulfilment; and neither does the Christian need to leave his center in Christ in order to mediate him to the world, to understand his relation to the world, to build a bridge between revelation and nature, philosophy and theology.²⁴

From this text it is clear that Balthasar views nature in Christocentric terms. Nature is internal to grace yet distinct. Nature is not a presupposition extrinsic to grace. This understanding of the relationship between grace and nature overcomes any extraneousness between the two categories, yet retains the respect for the legitimate autonomy of nature and, correspondingly, of reason. In the single, true, historical order if grace is not a 'superadditum' of nature then inescapably nature must be understood as a dimension of that Christic fulness which is grace.

Grace, then, does not signify something which could be added to a previously finished person. Rather it is the form in which a person is conclusively themselves. The person is therefore the synchronic result of a two-fold free act of God fundamental to the gift of creation. At the exact moment in which the person encounters the call to participate in divine life the person receives being from God:

God undertook that first communication of his being, whereby finite, self-aware, free beings were created, with a view to a "second" act of freedom whereby he would initiate them into the mysteries of his own life and freely fulfill the promise latent in the infinite act that realizes Being. This "second" act does not need to be temporarily distinct from the first: the final cause, since it is the first and all-embracing cause, includes all the articulations of the efficient cause - that is, the world's coming-to-be and God's becoming man.

²⁴ Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 46 taken from Balthasar 'Theology and Sanctity', pp. 194-95.

Thus the supernatural is to be understood as to enfold the natural. Nature and the supernatural are no longer to be thought of as if extraneous to each other. The supernatural is a gestalt which connotes the natural as a component provided with its own sovereign composition.

After stating the nature/grace relationship in inclusive terms Balthasar's thought regarding Christocentrism inevitably moves to the consideration of the place of Christ in the entire economy of salvation.

The place of Christ

For Balthasar, the issue of the problem of Christ and his place in the economy of salvation is considered as the question of predestination.

The Swiss theologian maintains the principle of the universality of salvation in Christ Jesus. He does so by advocating a Christocentricity that is decidedly consistent and organised around the crucial foundation of the concrete form of Christ.

Christ is the heart of the universe and of history in a total and objective sense, as opposed to a fragmentary or derived one. For him, the influence of the risen Lord extends over the whole of being and of history. Thus the theme of creation in Christ is asserted by Balthasar as central.

Only in Christ does the silhouette of humanity, as the image of God, find its luminosity. In accord with God's novel proclamation, God reveals himself only in Christ. Christ is the true ex-egesis of God.

It is in the Theo-Drama that the treatise of creation in Christ is most adequately grounded for this is where Balthasar addresses the tract of creation by the Trinity.

Here he returns to a theme of Bonaventure which avows that a nontrinitarian God could not have created.²⁵

This allows progression towards understanding the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in Balthasar's Christocentrism. The utter singularity of Jesus Christ resides in the truth that his humanity is the place in which the form himself, the Son - true icon of the Father - translates himself into the image without discontinuing to be the form: Jesus Christ is the Word-made-Flesh, the God-man.

This transferral happens in the flesh of sin specifically for the *pro nobis*, our salvation, to be totally accomplished. The humanity of Christ unveils itself as the unique humanity of the Son of God.

Christ's humanity is thus the totally concretised archetype of the human. Every human person discovers in the humanity of Christ the complete form with which to confront and weigh themselves; no created thing can avoid the embrace of the concrete event of the risen Lord.

Balthasar's thesis of creation in Christ articulates expressly that Jesus Christ is the original Word, the total, complete, fundamental self-communication of the Father, the comprehension of which is made accessible to humanity by the action of the Spirit. Balthasar thus maintains that humanity finds itself dramatically confronted with the need of authenticating, through the exercise of freedom, that reality has been created in Christ from the beginning. This results from humanity's acceptance of Christ as the solution to the human enigma.

²⁵ See TD IV: Das Endspiel, pp. 53-92. cited by Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 50.

As the beginning, Jesus Christ is the Predestined, and humanity is predestined in him. Christ's predestination, in Balthasar's scheme, is archetypal. This is because Christ came as saviour of the world and as the effector of every good (adoption as sons and daughters of God).

When the predestination of Christ is examined from the perspective of Christ's mission Christ's preexistence is understood as a constituent inherent to the totality of Christ's mission for the world. A mission which must succeed. Christ is ever with God, and yet the flesh he has taken on is integral to the initial scheme.

From this, logic dictates that the role of mediator in creation concerns not only the Logos but also Jesus Christ. In reality, if all things are to discover consummation in him then all things must be created in him - and only in him. Therefore, the archetypal pattern of humanity is discovered in Jesus Christ dead and risen, the Pasch.

The place of Christ in the concrete historical order culminates with the proposition of objective Christocentrism. This supports not only the essential, though formal topic of grace and nature, yet moreover the concerns which disclose the theological significance of the issue in the rigorous sense: the predestination of Jesus Christ, his singularity and preexistence.

Theocentric trinitarian perspective

Karl Rahner once stated, 'If the doctrine of the Trinity were to be suppressed as false, the greater part of religious writing, (and what is even more sad, the very life of Christians) would remain almost unaltered'.²⁶

²⁶ Bede McGregor, O.P., 'The Wider Ecumenism', in The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (eds. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas Norris), p. 201 taken from K. Rahner, Mysterium Salutis, vol. 3, Brescia 1969, p. 404.

The same cannot be said if the above statement is applied to Balthasar's contribution. Indeed, if the doctrine of the Trinity was removed from his work, nothing of substance would remain, and his writings would simply be incomprehensible.

For Balthasar, the Trinity and Christ are the two dogmas which constitute Christian Revelation. The relationship existing between them is such that both need to be thought out and deciphered together if the organic unity of the Christian faith is to be authentically presented.

To put the matter tersely, in his thought the dogma of the Trinity and the dogma of Christ form the diastole and systole of true Christianity. Balthasar's theology seeks to transmit the trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message in such a way that one is led to confess faith in God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message lies at the heart of Christian Revelation and is the core from which the other mysteries of Christianity are to be comprehended. The central fact of Jesus Christ as the second person in the Trinity is the cornerstone of the life of faith.

Jesus Christ is that One of the Trinity who came among us to suffer, die, descend to hell, and rise from the dead so that the trinitarian beauty of God's love could radiate as His glorious form.

Utilising the simile of nuptial relationship Balthasar holds that the 'heavenwards' earth may be caught up into the 'earthwards' heaven since between Jesus Christ the Bridegroom and Mary-Church the Bride a novel kingdom of being has been unlocked,

and it is a trinitarian one.²⁷ It is within this context that the theological aesthetics is relocated from christocentrism into a definitive trinitarian theocentrism.²⁸

This novel trinitarian life gifted in Jesus Christ takes up creation-humanity-history-Mary-Church as the place of encounter of theological aesthetics. The genesis for theological aesthetics is thus the encounter with the Trinitarian love which appears before us in Christ Jesus.

The experience of faith flows from catching sight of this divine mystery which enraptures us ecstatically into the communion of the Trinity itself and moves us out of ourselves in service of God's Word to the world.

Transmitting the message

Authentic Christian identity is therefore understood by Balthasar to be constituted through being commissioned and moved to serve. Indeed he considered the commission to transmit the Gospel message once received as a truly noble task - one constitutive of his own self-understanding.

Thus, when an individual is seduced by the love of God in Christ Jesus and their soul is overwhelmed by that love and thrust out of themselves in mission they become a 'great individual' - one awakened to living in relation to the Triune life.²⁹

²⁷ 'It is helpful ... to note that the doctrine of seeing and rapture central to Balthasar's theological aesthetics revolves around a core perspective: the God-world relationship as revealed (and concealed) in the nuptial encounter between Christ and Mary/creation/Church'. Breandán Leahy, 'Theological Aesthetics', The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (eds. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas Norris), p. 28.

²⁸ See GL VII, pp. 261-63.

²⁹ John and Ignatius are given as examples.

Objective interiority

According to Balthasar, the authentic hallmark of true Christian identity is that of an 'objective interiority'.³⁰ In the individual this is constituted through the complementarity of receiving and giving, of accepting the commission and passing on the message in loving service.

'Objective interiority' thus forms the single datum in the Christian (human person) which cannot be lost to subjectivity. It is both the source of the font of God's call to love and of personal action. It supports and nourishes the wellspring of personal response and mission.

Theological biography

Balthasar holds before us the truth that the person who would seek to transmit the Christian message authentically must first personalise what they have received through the original act of *tradere*. They must understand and live their Christian existence as a living theological biography with no schism between doxography and biography.

Rather, by keeping before themselves the constitutive realities of Christian identity of vocation and mission, of receiving and transmitting, they will become impregnated with the hallmark of Christian discipleship. For Balthasar this mark which stamps his theological anthropology is therefore decidedly Marian in character.

³⁰Johann Roten, S.M., 'Marian Light On Our Human Mystery', *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, (eds. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas Norris), pp. 114-115.

Mediation of the form³¹

The fourfold testimony to Christ Jesus from the Father, the Spirit, salvation-history and the cosmos is included in the glorious figure (form) of Christ. This witness pertains to the actual structure of form itself. However, the mediation of the form in time and space relate to the Word and the Church.

The medium which impresses the Christ-form in peoples' being is Sacred Scripture. It is akin to a sacrament of the Holy Spirit which accomplishes what it (Sacred Scripture) proclaims. The mediation of the Church is manifest in different ways. The Church is at once the 'event' of participating in Christ's carrying the guilt of the world and at the same time the vehicle proclaiming the already effected redemption. The Church is the action of the risen Lord through the form of Sacred Scripture and the form of sacrament.

What Balthasar has termed as the communion of archetypal experiences of divine splendour is what is mediated by both Sacred Scripture and the Church. Through our participation in Sacred Scripture and the Church we share in the glorious divine trinitarian life of God. Thus, the fundamental archetypal encounter is Jesus Christ's experience of God, which is the Paschal mystery.³² This is seen clearly in the ecclesial cult which is in essence a *memoriale passionis Domini*.

However, this does not exclude the entire O.T. encounter with God, the Marian experience and the eye witness accounts of the Apostles which courses into the

³¹GL I, pp. 527-593.

³² 'What is involved is primarily not 'beauty' in the modern or even the philosophical (transcendental) sense, but the surpassing of beauty in 'glory' in the sense of the splendour of the divinity of God himself as manifested in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and reflected, according to Paul, in Christians who look upon their Lord', Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'Another Ten Years', The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (ed. John Riches), p. 224.

Church as constitutive of her mediational treasury. Enclosed inside the Marian archetypal encounter, the four-fold tiered Church (the Petrine, Pauline, Jacobine, Johannine) is the place in time and space through which we access the awaited encounter of the eschatological splendour between the Bride (Mary-Church) and the Bridegroom (Jesus Christ).

Ministry to the Word

The apostolic preaching remains the archetype of all ensuing preaching in the life of the Church. This apostolic preaching is 'ministry to the Word' (Acts 6:4).

Consequently the preaching of the Church does not take on a form of its own which exists in parallel and in opposition to the form of the Word. Significantly, the ministry of the Word amounts to permitting God's Word, in the present, to make its own form reign in those to whom it is announced and who listen to it.

As the concrete matter of the Word is the hearts of persons who must be moved and converted there is then no sense in which the matter here involved would give rise to the construction of any 'intermediary form' or attract attention to itself. Thus, the art of preaching and rhetoric in the Church's life must submit to similar critical reflection endured by all other Christian art.

The issue, then, which must constantly face the ministry to the Word is whether all energies are put at the service of making the Word of God present, or whether preachers and teachers create a form of their own design which slips in as an intermediary existent to be encountered in its own right and perhaps even worthy of some admiration. The result of the latter creation would be to muffle the power of the Word of God, thereby deadening the impression (*impressio*) and the expression (*expressio*).

Therefore, in the ministry to the Word, preachers and teachers must avoid constructing their preaching and teaching, knowingly or unknowingly, on a scheme or model of Christianity conceived by themselves. They are to employ a theology capable of ensuring their ministry is transparent of God's Revelation itself and not an obstacle which hinders the listener from an authentic and direct hearing of the Word.

Thus, the apostolic preaching has at its heart the principle of Christocentric design or architecture. Inferentially, the presuppositions on which the apostolic preaching is based are ever explicitly supernatural, specifically, supernatural comprehension and the Holy Spirit.

What therefore makes the word of proclamation (of preachers and of teachers) credible as the Word of God is the space given to the Holy Spirit to effect his work. Necessarily this means preachers and teachers must suppress their own agendas and constructs in humble, obedient service to the proclamation of God's Word, the *Gestalt Christi*.

The Sacraments

In similar fashion, the sacraments derive their theological gestalt-quality and the majesty of grace they offer from Christ as One of the Trinity. The beauty of their celebration will be the more evident when their theological comprehension and their liturgical enactment convey most clearly and soberly it is the gesture of Christ that is made present to humanity through them.

Thus, for example, the authentic celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy does not need the presiding cleric to develop his own private artistry, or strive to be the originator of an aesthetic performance. Rather he must cultivate the humility to put himself at the

service of the Christian 'style' where the Lord who ever empties himself, and his people who hunger for him, are united in love.

Therefore, in the celebration of the sacraments the minister is not to get in the way of God's Revelation in Christ by inadvertently or deliberately making himself or his preaching into an 'intermediary form' which ultimately distorts the grace offered by the sacraments.

Christian style

In the mediation of the form the style of the ministry to the Word and the celebration of the sacraments is agreed synchronically. As but two facets of the same reality they make the event of the Lord present as event through the power of the risen Lord who lives among us. This is achieved through our remembrancing of the Lord who comes to us as word and food.

It necessarily follows that because catechetics is an integral aspect of the 'Ministry of the Divine Word' it too must be presented according to the Christian style with the ecclesial cult as its context. Additionally, it must be remembered that the existence of 'intermediary forms' within catechetical ministry will lead to the stifling and distortion of the proclamation of the Word in its pristine authenticity.

**Post-conciliar catechetics as grounded in the derived scheme of fundamental
theology from Balthasar's contribution**

As theological work in the Church has the proclamation of the faith and of catechesis as its primary service¹, Balthasar's contribution to the understanding of the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* proves to be invaluable as it too reaches its summit in the Paschal mystery.

Essentially the Swiss theologian's thought provides the ground for the *fides qua* and the *fides quae* to be promoted comprehensively and coherently, in a manner consistent with the communication of divine Revelation, in such a way that faith is allowed to grow and mature. By understanding catechesis as that variety of the 'Ministry of the Word' aimed at those who have been evangelised, have heard the gospel and responded in faith, Balthasar's notion of living '*en Christoi*' is particularly apt in developing a position whereby faith nourishment and growth can be cultivated to enable faith to be a true guiding force in the Christian's life.

Such catechesis must be grounded in the celebration of the Christian mystery in the sacramental economy as this is the place *par excellence* where the believer encounters the glory of the Lord. The appropriateness of liturgical catechesis thus derives from the reality of the ecclesial cult as a *memoriale passionis Domini* whose greatest expression is the sacred liturgy, in particular, that of the Eucharistic cult.

Indeed the catechetical task of the (fundamental) theologian can be identified as the creation of a systematics (theological logic) comprised of images, words, and concepts of the secondary external form and style through which the primary or

¹FR 99.

interior form can actually be caught and communicated. The task for those being catechised is to allow themselves to be led to grasp and encounter the Gestalt-Christi.

There is then a real sense in which each individual Christian must be led to discover their faith journey as the ongoing discovery of their unique individual style created by the obedient repetition of the expression of Revelation imprinted on themselves, coupled with a creative, childlike and free sharing of the struggle to express what this means in the Holy Spirit.

Each Christian, in accord with their capacity, has the responsibility of exercising theological reasoning as that function of reason within faith through which they are called to account 'for the hope that is in you' (1Pt. 3:15). It is in this sense that an individual theology consonant with the individual Christian's theological mission and charism is to be discovered and progressed by each individual within the space offered by the form of revelation regulated by the Magisterium of the Church. Each baptised person may therefore understand their life expressed as a living theological biography for the greater glory of the Triune God.

The sacred liturgy as the locus of encounter of the full form of the glory of God as it shines in Jesus Christ is therefore also the source and summit of the plurality of theological reasoning and thus of individual theologies.

In similar fashion, for the faith to be a true guiding force in the life of each individual Christian it is only through each individual Christian awakening the gift of faith and exercising theological reasoning therein that in the time of the Church they can exercise historical influence through the conviction and the transformation which flows from being enraptured by the Gloria Dei.

What then can be said of the primordial structure of Christian reality forming the horizon in which post-conciliar catechesis occurs?

When Balthasar's anthropological reflection explicitly dons the perspective of Christian Revelation, Jesus Christ becomes the centre of the cosmos and of history. More accurately, to speak of creation in Christ means that Christ's freedom becomes the pivotal axis for the comprehension of human freedom and that the person of Christ, in its unique humanity, is the 'form' through which humanity can be comprehended. Jesus Christ is the normative archetype of freedom and the form of all those who are predestined to be sons and daughters of God the Father in the Son.

Thus for the baptised Christian the freedom of Christ resolves the enigmatic structure of humanity through participation in the event of the Paschal mystery. This, however, does not settle the dramatic freedom of the Christian in advance. In the Christian life the gift of Jesus Christ is proposed to freedom, and in some sense radicalizes the natural tensions through the flooding of a novel consciousness into the individual Christian creating a supertension. Now the Christian comprehends more fully their nature of existing between God and nothing, of owing everything to the gift of God's initiative.

This living in Christ must nonetheless be ratified by the Christian's freedom. Such ratification must occur from within all the concrete circumstances and situations that constitute the ordinary structure of the Christian's everyday existence. It cannot be reduced to a one-off, for all time, endorsement.

Christian freedom, however, is no longer at the mercy of the human enigma. It is now in the loving embrace of the risen Christ.

In Christ, then, the Christian is understood to both synthesize and transcend the cosmos and history through participating in the *space* of the Paschal mystery. This confirms that ontological discourse takes as its point of origin the existential analysis of lived Christianity in order to grow in Christ. Christ, as the solution of humanity's existential enigma, is the starting point through, with, and in which the Christian is capable of traversing the tensions of being and moving towards its totality.

If Revelation is acknowledged as a credible hypothesis, with God capable of revealing himself due to the dialogic constitution of being, and humanity is itself dialogical, the faith response to the utterance of God speaking his Word to humanity must necessarily be dialogical also.

For baptised Christians, then, the faith response made to the ongoing revelation of God's Word must inevitably be dialogical too. Christian faith therefore exists axiomatically through inter-Christian dialogue, and discovers only in dialogue 'who Christians are' and what the reality of living in Christ means.

For each individual Christian to discover the meaning of their faith journey to the Father therefore means discovering their unique individual style in dialogue with their fellow Christians as response to God's Revelation in the Paschal mystery. Dialogue between Christians as response to the obedient repetition of the expression of God's Revelation imprinted on themselves accompanied with dialogue to discover the meaning of the creative, childlike and free sharing of the struggle to live in the Holy Spirit comprise the essentials of Christian faith.

Christian faith is capable of being nurtured and nourished only by Christians dialoguing with one another in light of the dialogue of God revealed through the

Paschal mystery. Through this dialogue in Christ the life of the Holy Trinity in its entirety opens up to each and every Christian.

It is vital to note that it is only by blending the existential perspective of the Christian's inter-Christian relationship with that of the divine Revelation beginning with the glory of the Lord as revealed through the Paschal mystery and celebrated in the sacred liturgy of the Church that the primordial structure of Christian reality derived from Balthasar's meta-anthropology may be grasped.

As the need to no longer distinguish between subject and object is true of Balthasar's thought, so too does his method in its fundamental structure extinguish the need to distinguish any more between orthopraxy and orthodoxy. Indeed Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure clearly supports his notion of the entire Christian life as a living theological biography.²

Thus the epiphany of Christ in the sacred liturgy is the proper door through which the glory of the Lord impresses upon Christians and simultaneously awakens them to self-identity and to the truth of living in Christ. Through this epiphany each Christian is called to fully live the liturgy of life as a living theological biography for the greater glory of God.

Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure, by overcoming the bridge between orthopraxy and orthodoxy, ensures the life of the liturgy is not set apart from the concerns of living the Christian life on a daily basis. Rather his contribution supports the notion of the need for a post-conciliar catechetics as a vital aspect of the ecclesial

²In terms of Balthasar's meta-anthropological approach Christian identity becomes self-evident the moment the Christian recognizes the glory of the Lord in the totality of the concrete density of its transcendental attributes.

cult as a *memoriale passionis Domini* and thus a necessary complement to the sacred liturgy.

The logic of Balthasar's theological thought, synonymous with his method in its fundamental structure, as the ground of a post-conciliar catechetics is now apparent.

The place to begin is the locus of epiphany of the glory of the Lord, God's magisterial beauty of the Paschal mystery revealed in the sacred liturgy of the Church. The Christian is a liturgical being who needs to learn how to offer praise to the living God of Jesus Christ. Catechetics must be theophanic (Aesthetics).

However, God comes in order to give himself by establishing the new covenant in the blood of his Son. God orchestrates a genuine theo-drama where his infinite freedom and the freedom of each Christian intertwine and engage in a mortal struggle for the witness of the good. Catechetics exists therefore to teach Christians how to engage in theopraxis, giving witness to Christ and is thus necessarily dramatic (Dramatics).

Similarly, Christians must be taught how to theologise by learning and expressing to themselves and the world what it means to live their lives in accord with the Holy Spirit (Theologic).

From Aesthetics, Dramatics, Logic to Meta-catechetics

Balthasar's method yields a theologically advanced and a dramatically catholic construct of Christian faith, life, and worship. It enables a scheme of fundamental theology to be derived to inform a post-conciliar catechetics having as its express aim the achievement of the ideal proposed in the Second Vatican Council. This is to effect an active grasp of the total mystery of Christ articulated in Tradition and

Scripture, which rests at the heart of the Church and is primarily exercised through the apostolic ministry of bishops and priests.

Characteristics of authentic post-baptismal catechetics

Once the legitimacy of a derived scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's contribution is accepted as valid several inferences follow for the necessary character of the post-conciliar catechetics being developed.

The first is that in relation to the existing methods of catechesis it is a *meta-approach* to catechetics. This is a catechetics understood to seek to communicate consistently the total ordered structure of the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* as the authentic horizon within which the Christian faith is transmitted. It is therefore a catechetics which grounds itself in the understanding of the Christian event as articulated in Balthasar's theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic.

The 'meta' dimension stems from the all-embracing context set both by the encounter with the sacred liturgy of the Church and the call to theodramatic living which this entails. As the theological aesthetics comes to justify the essential theophanic nature of catechetics as founded on the celebration of the Christian mystery in the sacramental economy, so the theological dramatics comes to explain the vital dramatic nature of catechetics as learning how to give witness to Christ in the Church to and for the world.

Since the theo-drama takes priority over theology, so the catechetics derived from it will take priority over the existing partial approaches to catechetics presently derived from the various motifs of theological methodology.

Thus, in terms of theological methodology, the 'meta-catechetics' being advocated will provide a comprehensive structure of catechetics as rooted in the comprehensive structure of theological method as flows from the theological dramatics. This 'meta-catechetics' will provide the overarching context within which the partial approaches to catechetics can then articulate their relationship with each other and discover their place within the all-embracing context of the meta-catechetical approach. At the same time it must be remembered that this meta-approach is ever stamped by a liturgical hallmark.

This 'meta-catechetics' can then unify the various models of catechesis derived from the theological (or philosophical) principles of order which stem from the various motifs of systematic theology, and are presently used in the transmission of the faith. It can also provide the backdrop against which each of the partial approaches can be utilised authentically.

Hence, it is also the quality of offering this horizon within which the various methods of existing catechesis can validly be employed which allows the prefix 'meta' to be placed before 'catechetics'. It is in itself then more an all-embracing context than a method understood in the usual sense, derived from Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure, whose purpose is to mediate the glorious form of Jesus Christ.

It is also in some ways the logical development of the Ignatian insight that Catholic Christians are called to a common spirituality and this-worldly mission. However, for the post-conciliar catechetics being advocated this occurs through the unfolding of prayer comprehended as participation in the space of the Paschal mystery, the continuation of the mystery of Christ and the presence of the Trinity in us. As such this meta-catechetics must ever present itself to be in living thematic resonance with the concrete celebration of the sacred liturgy as manifest in the life of the Church.

Needless to say, within this meta-catechetical horizon, other expressions and methods of catechetics can, indeed, need to be advanced by those with the ministry to catechise. However, the use of the world-historical approach and the utilisation of anthropological methodology must be understood as secondary aspects which are but complementary to the way of divine pedagogy, the way of Revelation.

What the meta-catechetical horizon achieves is the provision of a context grounded in fundamental theology for the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* to be presented in their integrity as consistent with the authentic communication of divine Revelation. In other words the provision of the meta-catechetical horizon ensures the constant possibility of authentic remembrance of the relationship which exists between the *fides qua* and the *fides quae* as vital for growth and maturation in Christian faith.

A second inference is that the meta-catechetics proposed here has as an overarching characteristic an inductive tenor. This is due to the truth that theological methodology can never be authentically deductive for to do so would subject the freedom of the form to the ordinances of human thinking.³ Similarly when theological methodology informs post-conciliar catechetics as the work of mediating the glorious form of Jesus Christ, the same law holds. Accordingly meta-catechetics must necessarily possess an overarching inductive tenor in respect of the freedom of the form.

It is to be noted that if, in practice, catechetical activity was to occur solely through the use of deductive method the danger of making the freedom of the form subservient to the laws of human thought exists as a possible outcome. The resulting catechetics would then amount to no more than the instrument of an ideology of control. However, it must be remembered that within this meta-catechetics which

³GL VI, p. 18.

possesses an overarching inductive character both inductive and deductive method can and may be used.

Moreover, the proposed meta-catechetics is to be understood as inductive in the sense intended by Newman where the convergence of the lines and rays of discernment come to a unitary focal point.⁴ For meta-catechetics this point of focus is to be none other than the person of Jesus Christ - the Gestalt-Christi. Meta-catechetics is therefore Christocentric and must always possess as its outcome the discovery of an aspect of the person of Jesus Christ.

Thus meta-catechetics must achieve successful actualization and inculturation of the Christian life by progressing faithfully only in relation to the mystery of Christ and of the Church. This is accomplished by the movement of the interpretation of Scripture and Tradition by Scripture and Tradition along the path of a theme possessing a Christic resonance to arrive at the moment where the Gestalt-Christi is allowed to speak for himself.

This is the core of the inductive approach and ensures the authenticity of the meta-catechetics as it places the person of Jesus at the heart of catechesis and leads those being catechised to an intimate communion with Jesus within the Church where they are invited to make a response as faith.

Only this guarantees Christians are lead to the love of the Father in the Spirit and share in the life of the Most Holy Trinity. The approach to such meta-catechetics is thus ultimately understood as theocentric and trinitarian.

⁴GL VI, p. 18.

From this follows a third inference for meta-catechetics on this level. It is that the post-conciliar meta-catechetics, whose focus is the Gestalt-Christi, must necessarily be based on reading the figure of Christ as presented through the celebration of the sacred liturgy in the course of the Church's liturgical year.

This follows from the fact that the work of theology is 'to read the Figure of Christ'. Thus post-conciliar catechetics must inevitably follow the same path. In what sense, then, is such a post-conciliar meta-catechetics to be constructed if it is also true that 'theology can only perform its task by circular repetitions of that which is ever greater'. It therefore also follows that a post-conciliar catechetics informed by theology must seek to travel the similar path of ever expanding circular repetitions.

The answer lies in adopting the liturgical year of the Church as the concrete horizon within which the post-conciliar meta-catechetics derives its theological logic and finds its *raison d'être*.

Holy Mother Church believes that it is for her to celebrate the saving work of her divine Spouse in a sacred commemoration on certain days throughout the course of the year. Once each week, on the day which she has called the Lord's Day, she keeps the memory of the Lord's resurrection. She also celebrates it once every year, together with his blessed passion, at Easter, that most solemn of all feasts.

In the course of the year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity to the ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.⁵

In this way post-conciliar meta-catechetics can explore the figure of Christ as presented within the cycle of the liturgical year and simultaneously respect the vital

⁵SC 102.

internal harmony of the derived scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's contribution.

In other words, the ecclesial cult of the Church - especially as manifest in the celebration of Sunday Eucharist in the liturgical year, the fundamental theology which informs it, and the meta-catechetics derived from both come to be understood as existing through, with, and in one another forming a dynamic and consistent unity.

The goal of post-conciliar meta-catechetics is therefore to lead those who engage in the journey of catechesis to be struck by the beauty of the supreme Form as revealed in the sacred liturgy, and to teach how to act within and with that supreme Form through gazing with simple eyes upon the visible signs of the logic of the faith.

Christocentricity of meta-catechetics

The Christocentric nature of post-conciliar meta-catechetics means that the individual person as member of the Church has the opportunity to be the person whom God has conclusively called them to be. This happens through the individual relating to the Gestalt-Christi as that Christic fulness of grace, the form in which each person is conclusively themselves.

This relationship with Jesus Christ, which catechesis fosters and nurtures, is both the 'place' where the person encounters the call to participate in the divine life of the triune God and where the person acquires being from God.

If, however, catechetics failed to effectively promote or forgot to include this vital Christocentric dimension, then at least two subsequent outcomes of the implementation of such catechetics could be: the lack of awareness on the part of those being catechised of the call to participate in the divine life of God (as Trinity);

and a lack of receiving being from God. Thus a non-christocentric catechetics could actually induce in people a sense of spiritual emptiness and meaninglessness through forgetfulness of the need to relate to the person of Jesus Christ.

However, by advocating a Christocentric catechetics which rests on the principle of the universality of salvation in Jesus Christ, the resulting catechetics comes to be dependable and organised due to its construction on the foundation stone of the concrete form of Christ.

As the heart of the cosmos and of history, in the complete and objective sense, Christ as the risen One influences the entirety of being and of history. Therefore, when the individual person is taught how to relate to Christ as our Pasch they come to encounter Christ's influence over their being and their history. This finds expression as living theological biography. Thus a catechetics built on Balthasar's position fundamentally rests on the theme of creation in Christ.

The importance of Christocentricity in catechetics is further underlined when it is remembered that the silhouette of humanity discovers its luminosity only in Christ.

When the humanity of Christ reveals itself as the peerless humanity of the Son of God, Christ's humanity is unveiled as the totally concretised archetype of the human. Thus the work of catechetics has at its heart the need to teach Christians how to discover their authentic humanity through encounter with the humanity of Christ as the complete form which confronts and challenges them to luminosity. This occurs by the action of the Spirit which makes the comprehension of Jesus Christ as the basic self-communication of the Father accessible to the Christian.

Christocentric catechetics therefore posits the Christian's (humanity's) acceptance of Christ as the answer to the human enigma and dramatically confronts the Christian with the need to authenticate that reality in Christ (as created from the beginning) is true. This is to happen through the exercise of their freedom.

Christocentric catechetics thus leads Christians to the point of realising they need to make particular decisions if they are to follow Christ in authenticity. Moreover, Christocentric catechetics does not make any decisions for any particular Christian concerning their exercise of freedom nor does it possess the legitimacy or means to do so. However, what it can provide is a setting in which the exercise of freedom is remembered and accomplished within the context of life in the Holy Spirit.

Since Jesus Christ is the beginning, the Predestined, and all things must find their consummation in him by virtue of their creation in him, it is in Jesus Christ as the Pasch that the archetypal pattern of humanity is discovered. This means that the Gestalt-Christi of Christocentric catechetics in which Christians are to discover their luminosity faithfully corresponds to the risen Lord manifest in the form of sacred Scripture and the form of sacrament.

There is then the sense in which the focal point of Christ in the concrete historical order of catechetical ministry realises its completion in a catechetics which proposes an objective Christocentrism.

Trinitarian christocentric catechetics

In order for the Christian faith to be transmitted as befits its organic unity it is necessary for catechetics to be characterised by the trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message. Indeed, the dogma of the Trinity and the dogma of Christ must be as much the diastole and systole of catechetics as it is of Christianity itself.

Since the Trinity and Christ are the two constitutive dogmas of Christian Revelation, and catechetics is the work of communicating this divine message, it necessarily follows that the person being catechised must be taught how to listen and respond to the call to enter ever more into the divine life of the Trinity through relating to the Gestalt-Christi as the second person of the Trinity.

Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure grounds the proposed post-conciliar catechetics promoted as a form of liturgical catechesis understood as a vital, organic whole whose focus is the person of Christ. In turn this Christocentric catechetics, within the context of the ecclesial cult, comes to be comprehended as theocentric and trinitarian by ensuring the structure of the entire content of catechesis is through Christ Jesus, to the Father, in the Spirit. Authentic catechetics is therefore trinitarian and christocentric.

If the trinitarian christocentricity of catechetics is ignored, forgotten, or misrepresented then the Christian message of the Gospel can actually cease to be itself. This would occur if catechesis lacked true reference to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or ignored the relationship which exists between the three divine persons.

However, the proposed post-conciliar catechetics follows the path of being attentive to the mystery of God revealed in Christ Jesus as the centre of salvation history. It is trinitarian and christocentric precisely because it seeks to take seriously the mystery of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the close relationships existing between them, and the call to humanity to enter their divine life.

Post-conciliar catechetics must therefore be understood as the nurturing and nourishing of the experience of faith which flows from catching sight of the divine mystery radiated by the glorious form of Jesus Christ our Pasch. This enraptures us

ecstatically into the communion of the Trinity and moves us out of ourselves in service of God's Word to the world.

Post-conciliar catechetics and the transmission of the faith

The post-conciliar catechetics grounded on Balthasar's theological contribution finds itself faced with the concern of how to faithfully pass on an authentic Christian identity to those being catechised.

As this identity is constituted by the notion of being commissioned and moved to serve, the corresponding catechetics must be structured around the notions of teaching individuals how to listen to God's Word in order to discover their commission as well as teaching them how to discern the manner of their service.

The goal of such catechetics for each person being catechised then becomes one of awakening each individual to living in relation to the Triune life of God through their being enraptured in love by relating to the Gestalt-Christi. Each person is thus to be led to discover how they are to be a 'great individual' in the sense of carrying out the unique mission which God's will for them.

The basic form of a post-conciliar catechetics derived from the scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's theological contribution

The basic form of a post-conciliar catechetics must begin by presenting to those being catechised an aspect of the person of Jesus our Pasch, as that which is to be encountered by them.

The encounter with, and exploration of a chosen and identifiable theme revelatory of an aspect of the person of Christ becomes the overt aim of each particular catechesis. Christocentricity is therefore acknowledged as essential to the overall catechetical design from the outset.

The chosen theme is developed by presenting to those being catechised the form of Scripture and the form of Church Tradition which resonate with, and hold, that particular theme. This assures the necessary trinitarian christocentric dimension of the catechesis. It also assures the liturgical aspect of post-baptismal catechetics.

The presentation of the form of Scripture and the form of Church is accompanied with a fundamental theological commentary on the theme to safeguard the proper comprehension of the theme as directed by the hermeneutic standard of the Magisterium of the Church. This fundamental theological commentary is to be presented in such a way that it holds before the faithful the truth of the unity of the Word of God as revealed in Sacred Scripture and Tradition.

One way of helping to achieve this is to structure the individual component and the communal component of the post-conciliar catechetics so that the gestalt of the Word as Sacred Scripture and Tradition becomes reflected in their construction. The manner in which the catechetics is presented thus comes to support and provide a framework for the fundamental theological commentary. The fundamental

theological commentary similarly supports the gestalt through which the catechetics is presented.

The level and length of this fundamental theological commentary will vary in accord with the overall concern of that particular catechetics and the depth of catechesis deemed necessary for the particular target group the catechetics seeks to serve. The fundamental theological commentary must also seek to stimulate dialogue between the heart of each Christian and the living God of Jesus Christ, and to encourage dialogue between believers who together explore the mystery of the living God at work in their lives.

Here modern catechetics presents the Christian with the opportunity to be further imprinted with the obedient repetition of the expression of Revelation and to begin to express once more what living in accord with the Holy Spirit means in response to the Revelation of that particular aspect of Christ Jesus.

This movement is to culminate in the presentation of the form of Scripture along the same theme, thereby interpreting Scripture by Scripture thus ensuring a successful actualization in the lives of those being catechised.¹ This is to occur on both the individual and communal levels.

Thus on the individual level the Christian has their faith nurtured by reason through a liturgical catechetics designed to facilitate their personal appropriation. Emphasis on

¹ 'The most sure and promising method for arriving at a successful actualization, is the interpretation of Scripture by Scripture, especially in the case of the texts of the Old Testament which have been re-read in the Old Testament itself (e.g., the manna of *Exodus* 16 in *Wis* 16:20-29) and/or in the New Testament (*John* 6). The actualization of a biblical text in Christian life will proceed correctly only in relation to the mystery of Christ and of the Church'. Pontifical Biblical Commission, 'The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church', p. 115.

this level falls on the dialogue between their heart and the person of Jesus, and leads back to the action of the risen Lord revealed in the form of Scripture.² This is further enhanced by a liturgical catechetics on the communal level which is obviously and inevitably linked with the former.

The latter, through engaging in meaningful dialogue, chooses to explore the chosen aspect of the mystery of the person of Christ revealed to those who gather. This dialogue must likewise occur in respect of a context set by the hermeneutic standard of the Church's Magisterium.

The summit of the movement of communal liturgical catechetics is proposed as the celebration of a para-liturgy (on the same theme as that which has been explored) which elicits an encounter with the Gestalt-Christi in the form of scripture as the Word of the Gospel.

In this post-baptismal catechetics the Gestalt-Christi is allowed to speak to each individual in the first person singular through the medium of another Christian. This ensures the movement of the catechesis and its corresponding rays of discernment arrive at the unitary focal point of the person of Jesus Christ as revealed as, and at, the heart of the Church.

The Gestalt-Christi thus reveals the Word of the Gospel and manifests himself as the cornerstone and key to the entirety of biblical revelation, communicating the divine call, and summoning each Christian to respond in the Holy Spirit to the ongoing revelation of his person. There is then a truly concrete sense in which the Gestalt-Christi is communicated to each Christian as the 'Living Word'. This form of

²Sometimes this is referred to as personal/private prayer.

communication simultaneously respects, and is animated by, the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit.

Other practical expressions

The identification of the basic form of a post-conciliar catechetics derived from the scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's theological contribution comes to allow the composition of catechetical material for the varied and various aspects which constitute the ministry of catechetics. Thus in respect of the basic form catechetical material can be composed to cater for different age levels, distinct ranges of intellectual ability, and the various expressions of ecclesial life and ministry.

Thus, for example, the basic form may be applied to the RCIA. It could also be utilised in developing on-going catechesis for the ministries of: justice and peace; pro-life; child catechesis; family catechesis; etc. In fact, because the form is basic it possesses the potential to be applied to every area of Church life served by catechetical ministry.

Recapitulation

The concern of this section was to prove that post-conciliar catechetics could be rooted in, and take its shape from the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the theological contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar.

This was achieved by investigating the Swiss theologian's method in its fundamental structure coupled with attending to the methodological principles that inform his Trilogie of Aesthetics, Dramatics, and Logic.

Consequently this allowed for a post-conciliar catechetics to be proposed which followed Balthasar's method in its fundamental structure and also sought to be

faithful to the methodological principles informing his Trilogy. Thus his understanding of the relationship between the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* of the Christian event comes to provide the basis for promoting a progressive and coherent synthesis between the *fides qua* and the *fides quae* so vital for the genuine enactment of catechetical ministry.

The section ended with the presentation of an example of a form of post-conciliar catechetics derived from the scheme of fundamental theology flowing from Balthasar's theological contribution.

Hence the explication of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and the related norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis proved possible by utilising the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar as presented in his Trilogy of the theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic due to its emphasis on the dimensions of the christocentric, the trinitarian, and the ecclesial.

Consequently the explication of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and the related norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis proved possible by utilising the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar as presented in his Trilogy of the theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic - due to its emphasis on the dimensions of the christocentric, the trinitarian, and the ecclesial - allowed the shape of a post-conciliar catechetics consistent with the norms and criteria of the Gospel message to be expressed.

Evaluation of Balthasar's approach to determine the usefulness of his contribution in support of the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis

On the whole Balthasar's approach significantly contributes to the maintenance and nourishing of the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis as offered in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) by the Magisterium.

The identification of the major themes in the scheme of fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's theological contribution of: the Gestalt-Christi as the Word of God, christocentrism, theocentric trinitarianism, and the response of faith characterised by the marian hallmark all resonate strongly in support of the word of God as the source of catechesis and the criteria that flow from it.

To be sure, Balthasar's approach strongly respects the word of God contained in Sacred Tradition and in Sacred Scripture. It also acknowledges the role the Magisterium plays in regulating the interpretation of that word. Similarly his contribution gives legitimate weight to the presence of the word of God in the Sacred Liturgy, in the life of the Church as witnessed by her members - especially in the lives of the saints, and it assists believers to further understand the mystery of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the word of God.

In terms of the criteria that spring from the word of God to govern the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis his contribution is likewise supportive. His exploration of the themes of christocentrism and theocentric trinitarianism help give a more developed understanding of the trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message in such manner that it further explains why the internal structure of catechesis must ever be christocentric-trinitarian. Thus the stamp of authentic

catechesis as 'Through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit' is given a new depth of meaning when informed by Balthasar's work.

Similarly Balthasar is clear that salvation must be understood essentially as gift - God's Revelation is God's action, not that of humanity. God liberates humanity from sin and death to participate in the divine life of the Triune God through, with, and in Christ. Likewise he esteems the ecclesial and historic character of the Gospel message by acknowledging that the *space* to follow the living God of Jesus Christ is made possible only by virtue of the unjustifiable act of incorporation to Christ in the Church which exists in time.

With regard to the integrity and purity with which the Gospel message is to be presented this also finds its fundamental reference point in the person of Jesus Christ who proclaimed the Gospel integrally as the Word of God. This Word is advanced as being destined for all peoples and thus is promoted as a Word that seeks inculturation.

The comprehensive and hierarchical dimensions of the Gospel message are also catered for in Balthasar's thought because he promotes the Most Holy Trinity, from the christocentric perspective, as the mystery which is the font of all the other mysteries of faith and the source that enlightens them. Furthermore this vision of the Gospel message makes it profoundly meaningful for each human person because in Balthasar's thought the person of Jesus himself, the Gestalt-Christi, reveals to each person who they are called to be and the sublime vocation they are called to live through their relationship with Christ.

There are however some areas in which Balthasar's approach does not provide as much theological support. For example, although he presents a developed understanding of the 'yes' of faith he is rather weak on the fundamental reality of

conversion as similarly demanded by the Good News. Equally his contribution does not adequately address how God's Revelation in Christ may be accepted without in any way compromising the autonomy and principles of the human mind itself.

Thus his position does not fully explain how the integrity constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind can be reflected in the nature of catechetics and the content of catechetical criteria. In this regard it is suggested that the thought of Lonergan on the structure of human consciousness as discovered in intentionality analysis, and his work on conversion, could complement the work of Balthasar to yield a more profound understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation than exists at present - which in turn could cast more light on the nature of catechetics and the content of catechetical criteria.

Another area which reveals a deficiency in Balthasar's thought is that the preferential option for the poor appears not to feature significantly in the Swiss theologian's scheme, and to some extent this indicates a major lacunae in his theologising. However, this point requires further attention as there is a need to incorporate the preferential option for the poor as integral to the message of liberation which flows from the gift of salvation as a criterion of authentic catechesis as consistent with the Magisterial position.

Nonetheless it must also be noted that although Balthasar's contribution in the main nourishes and supports the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis the novelty in this instance also resides in his derived scheme of fundamental theology being applied concretely to catechetics as a practical discipline.

The marrying of Balthasar's approach with some aspects of Lonergan's work on the structure of human consciousness as discovered in intentionality analysis through the application of Lonergan's transcendental method to the act of faith.

This part suggests that the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation can be deepened. It proposes that the said development can result from bringing together the fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's contribution - particularly as it relates to the notion of the Gestalt-Christi - with those aspects of Lonergan's work which explore the structure of human consciousness as discovered in intentionality analysis. In this way a developed presentation of the relationship between God's revelation in Christ and the response of faith can be made by marrying together the strengths of both approaches. In particular the christocentric approach of Balthasar is thought to be capable of complementing and being complemented by Lonergan's investigation of the structure of human consciousness in attending to the relationship which exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith.

Whilst the approach is limited in as much as it seeks to marry one way of understanding the relationship between revelation and faith informed by one theologian's way of understanding fundamental theology (Balthasar) with one particular way of perceiving the workings of the human mind (Lonergan) the study begins by investigating Lonergan's thought on human consciousness with the specific intent of identifying the basic pattern of operations of the human mind which Lonergan has termed transcendental method and which is constituted by the four transcendental precepts: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible.

Next it considers the basic patterns of operation of the human mind as operative in encounter with the word of God, the Gestalt-Christi, as the object of faith. This then gives rise to a construct which denotes the transcendental precepts as operative within a human mind which has been flooded by the love of God revealed in the person of Christ.

After this a way is presented in which the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation is deepened. This presents the Gestalt-Christi as the fundamental unity and point of reference for the faith response, where the faith response is shown to possess various dimensions which correspond to distinct levels of human consciousness.

To evidence this the act of faith is analysed from the perspective of making this response to the person of Christ on the various levels that form the structure of human consciousness as proposed in transcendental method. This is achieved with reference to the derivation of the functional specialties from the structure of human consciousness as advocated by Lonergan, and utilising the relationship between the different levels on which these specialties occur, their proper form of content, and the various contemporary systems of revelation identified by Dulles as: new awareness; history; dialectical presence; inner experience; and doctrine. This then allows the various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi to be presented.

The section ends with a consideration of what the deepening of the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation from the above perspective can mean for the ministry of catechetics. In particular it explains how and why the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel

message in catechetics is derived from the relationship which exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith.

*Lonergan and the structure of human consciousness*¹

Lonergan is convinced that the dynamic structure of human consciousness can be discovered by individuals if they attend to the data of their own consciousness. The discovery of this inner dynamic which exists by virtue of 'the eros of the human spirit' is for him, reflective of the capacity for self-transcendence. This self-transcendence is ever a going beyond the immediate and what is given by the data of sense as what seems to be, to the extension of intentional consciousness into the spiritual realms of the intelligible, the true, and the good.

The discovery that consciousness is intentional stems from a person undergoing the process of objectifying the contents of their own consciousness in such a way that they realise themselves as a conscious subject who inquires, comprehends, reflects, and judges. In other words, when a person investigates the procedure of how their own mind works they discover a pattern of operations used in every cognitional task. Lonergan calls this operational process of the mind transcendental method.

Thus transcendental method relates to the four different levels of consciousness and intentionality which can be differentiated as the subject executes the various operations of sensing, understanding, reflecting, and evaluating.

Hence Lonergan identifies: the empirical level on which the person senses and perceives; the intellectual level on which the subject comes to understand; the rational level as the level on which reflection occurs; and the responsible level which corresponds to the level where decisions are made.

¹Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Chapter I, 'Method', pp. 3-25.

It is the dynamic thrust of striving to know that causes the person to reach for the transcendental ideas of the given and the intelligible, or the values of the true and the good. This is achieved through following the four transcendental precepts of being attentive, being intelligent; being reasonable; and being responsible. According to Lonergan, as the human person achieves authenticity through self-transcendence the importance of following the transcendental precepts become ever apparent.

The following table provides a summary of the dynamic structure of human consciousness understood from the perspective of Lonergan's transcendental method.

<i>Level of consciousness</i>	<i>Transcendental action</i>	<i>Transcendental notion/value</i>	<i>Transcendental precept</i>
The empirical	Attending	The given	Be attentive
The intellectual	Understanding	The intelligible	Be intelligent
The rational	Judging	The true	Be reasonable
The responsible	Deciding	The good	Be responsible

The structure thus evolves from the four levels of consciousness that are discovered through self-appropriation; they concur with the three terms *what*, *is*, and *ought*, that occur in sequence after the given has been presented on the empirical level of consciousness. Thus after data has been attended to on the empirical level of consciousness, the question on the intellectual level is: *what* does it mean?, the question on the rational level is: *is* my idea correct?, whilst the question on the responsible level is: what *ought* I to do? The empirical level coincides with the realm of experience; the intellectual level corresponds to that of understanding; the rational level is in accord with the act of forming a judgement; the responsible level is where a person decides what they stand for in the realm of values.

Of note is that Lonergan maintains there are two directions in which a person may progress along the structure. There is the way of ascent from the presentations of experience, through concepts and judgements, to values and responsible activity. This direction can be thought of as the way of self-taught learning or achievement. There is also the way of descent through values that have been transmitted in family, church, and society, judgements received in a community rather than created through personal appropriation, understanding that eventually comes to support this set of judgements, and experience made more mature and sensitive because of this. This latter direction can be termed the way of tradition, a mode which transmits the achievement of previous generations.

Transcendental method and the Gestalt-Christi as the object of faith

Faith is the response human beings make to the manifestation of the divine Revelation of the Triune God. The divine Revelation for Christians is manifest in the form of the person of Jesus Christ. From Balthasar's thought the presence of Jesus in the Church can be understood as that of the Gestalt-Christi made manifest as the Word of God through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Hence Christian faith can be viewed as a personal encounter between the human person and the manifestation of the person of Jesus as the Gestalt-Christi through the presentation of the Word of God revealed in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Therefore Christian faith becomes the response human beings (Christians) make to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christ as presented through the Sacred Scripture and the Sacred Tradition of the Church. However, from the perspective of Lonergan's transcendental method the possibility arises to promote a construct which denotes the transcendental precepts as operative within a human mind that has been flooded by the love of God revealed in the person of Jesus understood as the Gestalt-Christi. If Lonergan is correct about the basic patterns of operations of the human mind then these basic patterns must also come into play when the human person is called to make the act of faith in response to the

Gestalt-Christi. Similarly they must also be operative in the process of faith development and maturation.

This gives rise to the act of faith understood from the perspective of transcendental method. Hence after human consciousness has been flooded by the love of God revealed in the person of Jesus for the person to make an authentic response of faith they must: be attentive to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; be intelligent in relating to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; be reasonable in relating to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; be responsible in relating to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi.

This is not all. Since there are two ways of moving along the structure of human consciousness as proposed by Lonergan it becomes apparent that there are two related dimensions in which the response of faith may occur. There is the way of ascent where the individual works at the appropriation of the faith beginning with personal experience; yet there is also the way of descent, of appropriating the faith through the already existing Tradition which begins on the level of values held dear by the faith community. This second direction gives rise to the possibility of the act of faith understood from a communal perspective where the corresponding transcendental precepts become: communally value the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; communally acknowledge the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; communally understand the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; and communally attend to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi.

Derivation of the functional specialties²

In effect the two principles of division identified and utilised by Lonergan (i.e. of theological operations occurring in two fundamental phases and the fact that the

²Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Chapter 5, 'Functional Specialties', pp. 125-145.

conscious and intentional operations of the human mind exist on four particular levels which possess their own proper achievement and object) give rise to the eight functional specialties which the Jesuit theologian distinguishes as: research, interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.

In the first phase of theology *in oratione obliqua* research finds and makes available the data; interpretation then seeks to understand the data's meaning; history strives to determine and narrate what happened; and dialectic tries to untangle the conflicts connected with values, facts, meanings, and experiences. In the second phase of theology *in oratione recta* foundations exists on the level of decision and seeks to attend the reality of conversion; doctrines come to express both judgements of value and judgements of fact; systematics seeks to present appropriate systems of conceptualization; and communications provides data in the present and for the future.

In Lonergan's words,

Functional specializations arise, then, inasmuch as one operates on all four levels to achieve the end proper to some particular level. But there are four levels and so four proper ends. It follows that the very structure of human inquiry results in four functional specializations and, since in theology there are two distinct phases, we are led to expect eight functional specializations in theology. In the first phase of theology *in oratione obliqua* there are research, interpretation, history, and dialectic. In the second phase of theology *in oratione recta* there are foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications.³

³Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 134.

Of note is that there is a form of content proper to each level of consciousness that correlates with the class of object investigated in each functional specialty. This type of content is named 'operational'. It therefore relates to the genus of the content, the kind of knowledge generated, and the type of specialization being attended to. This is distinct from the notion of material content which is the content that fills the structure identified as operational content.

Hence, if Lonergan is correct about the basic patterns of operations of the human mind and if these basic patterns come into play through the two distinct phases of theology, it follows that when the human person is called to make the act of faith in response to the Gestalt-Christi there must result eight distinct objects which correspond to the act of faith objectified on each level of consciousness where each level possesses its own form of content. In other words, there exists a form of content proper to each of the eight levels when the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi is analysed through the application of Lonergan's transcendental method and notion of functional specialties.

Of the eight distinct ends two can be accounted for simply enough. Research can be understood to arrange the data concerning the understanding of the act of faith from the past. Communications seeks to provide data concerning the understanding of the act of faith in the present and for the impending future. However, a third end can also be identified. This is the level on which this investigation occurs and which is to be understood as the level associated with the working out of an appropriate system of conceptualization for the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation. This is the level of systematics.

Therefore, by a process of elimination, the possibility exists for the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation to be objectified on the five remaining levels of:

interpretation; history; dialectic; foundations; and doctrine - where each level possesses its own proper form of content. The work of Dulles, Models of Revelation, is cited to assist the development of the argument.

Dulles - Models of Revelation

In the book Models of Revelation Dulles identifies five models or types of revelation and shows how they are compatible with an understanding of the symbol of Jesus Christ as the summit of revelation.

The five types he lists are proposed from a consideration adapted to the theology of revelation as presented in the twentieth century, inclusive of both Catholic and Protestant theologians. To his mind five major classes of system may be identified in the literature according to their pivotal intuition of how and where revelation takes place. The types, although they cannot assume to embrace all possible or extant theological positions, in Dulles' opinion, attest the major issues debated in contemporary revelation theology. He argues that by studying the dispositions embodied in the types one may attain an adequate mastery of contemporary theological opinion to weigh any given presentation against a representative number of alternative perspectives.

Consequently the typology he proposes does not presume to be capable of pigeonholing every living theologian inside one and only one of the five models. Equally he recognizes that some of the great theologians fuse elements from two or more different types, whilst others have cultivated remarkably personal positions that are hard to categorize. However he argues it is best to study the pure positions first as this at least then allows for some informed insight into the hybrid positions.

Nevertheless, according to Dulles the basic unity of each class flows from their sharing in a root metaphor. Dulles is aware that what constitutes the models is not the metaphors as such, rather it is the structural relationships they represent - hence the term 'root'. Thus he acknowledges the differences between the models can partly be attributed to the fact that they take their departure from various dimensions of human cognition and utilise different analogies in explaining the relationship which occurs between God as revealer, the recipient, and the means of revelation.

Thus the different orientations between theologians of revelation who represent the different classes of revelation theology is viewed by him to stem from the various theologians' unquestioned acceptance of a particular metaphor which has not been subjected to serious scrutiny and thus is more intuited than formally chosen. Dulles calls these root metaphors or approaches to understanding revelation, models. He identifies five in all: new awareness; history; dialectical presence; inner experience; and doctrine. Dulles states,

Each of these five typical positions situates the crucial moment of revelation at a different point. For the doctrinal type, the pivotal moment is the formulation of teaching in clear conceptual form. For the historical type, the decisive point is the occurrence of a historical event through which God signifies his intentions. For the experiential type (i.e., the type emphasizing *inner* experience), the crux is an immediate, interior perception of the divine presence. For the dialectical type, the key element is God's utterance of a word charged with divine power. For the awareness type, the decisive moment is the stimulation of the human imagination to restructure experience in a new framework.⁴

⁴Dulles, Models of Revelation, p. 28.

New awareness model of revelation

Proponents of this model hold that revelation occurs as a development in consciousness or shift of perspective when individuals unite with the movements of secular history. God is understood to be mysteriously manifest as the transcendent dimension of human engagement in creative tasks. The defining moment of this model occurs when the human imagination is stimulated to reconstruct experience in a novel shape. This model was proposed partly because some prevailing models of revelation were thought to be too authoritarian e.g. revelation as doctrine, and also as a corrective to the “inner experience” model which was considered too individualistic and unworldly.

In the new awareness model God reveals by enticing the human imagination to interpret the world in a new way, daring the recipients to conceive new ways of living, calling them to respond to the vocation to build a more fully human world. Dulles identifies the theologians Gregory Baum, Leslie Dewart, Gabriel Moran, Ray L. Hart, and William M. Thompson as having developed a theology of revelation along the general lines of this model. He also suggests that elements of this type can be discovered in the work of Paul Tillich and Karl Rahner, though he cautions that these latter two theologians do in fact combine elements proper to various different models.

Model of revelation as history

This type maintains that the revelation of God occurs essentially in his great deeds, particularly those which represent the major themes of biblical history. The Bible and the official teaching of the Church are thought to manifest revelation simply to the extent that they are trustworthy accounts about what God has done. Some adherents of this model view the biblical and ecclesiastical teaching as revelation in a derived sense, whilst most proponents prefer to state that the Bible and ecclesial teaching are in fact witnesses to revelation.

God is pictured as the transcendent agent who is the author of revelatory events and through them communicates to his people. The task of the recipients in this model is to discern and interpret the signs which God reveals in the history of salvation.

Wolfhart Pannenberg is recognized by Dulles as a leading exponent of this type.

The model of revelation as dialectical presence

This model insists that God can never be considered as an object to be known either by deduction from nature or history, or through propositional teaching, or by immediate perception of a mystical kind. Rather God is utterly transcendent and chooses to encounter the human subject at God's own pleasure by means of a word through which faith recognizes the divine presence. The word of God concurrently reveals and conceals this divine presence - hence it is dialectical. This model arose in repudiation of the objectivism of the models of revelation understood as doctrine, and as history; and also as a response to the subjectivism of the model which understood revelation as inner experience.

In this type, God's revelation happens through a mighty, transforming word, such as the proclamation of the Cross and Resurrection. The image of God associated with this model is that of the merciful judge who has the power to pardon or condemn. The recipients of revelation are obliged to submit themselves in obedience to the power of the word, which simultaneously justifies and convicts. The leading representatives of this model according to Dulles are Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Rudolph Bultmann.

Inner experience model of revelation

According to this view revelation is a gracious inner experience of communion with God. It is not to be equated with a series of external, historical events nor is it to be thought of as a relationship with a detached collection of objective truths. The

perception of God is considered to be immediate to each person although some devotees of this position hold that the experience of grace is dependent on the mediation of Christ, who experienced the presence of the Father in a most singular and perfect manner.

In the inner experience model God reveals by giving the individual an immediate interior experience of his presence understood as the divine visitor who is the guest of the human (Christian) soul. The communication of God occurs through the presence of God itself. The recipient must be as open to the revelation of this divine presence as is humanly possible. Leading exponents of this model according to Dulles are George Tyrell, Evelyn Underhill, and John Hick.

The model of revelation as doctrine

This model of revelation holds that God manifests himself as an authoritative teacher who principally reveals through clear propositional statements. For Catholics these statements of revelation are to be discovered in a most accessible way through the official teaching of the Church understood as an infallible oracle of God. For Protestants who advocate this model, revelation is comprehensively identified with the Bible, understood as a compilation of inspired and truthful teachings. Although the truth of such teaching is believed to be perceptible through external signs (e.g. miracles), some proponents - both Catholic and Protestant - advocate that interior grace is a necessary precondition both for the response of faith and for the perception of the evidence.

In this type, God is viewed as an infallible educator who communicates knowledge to his people through speech and writing. The recipients take the role of attentive and docile pupils who are subservient to their divine master. Dulles identifies the Evangelical theologians Gordon H. Clark, James I. Packer, John Warwick

Montgomery, and Carl F.H. Henry as leading representatives of this type. He also names the Catholic Neo-Scholastics Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, Christian Pesch, and Hermann Dieckmann in similar regard.

The five models and their relation to Christ as the summit of revelation

Dulles states that for many of the theologians who represent each of the five models there is agreement that the fullness of revelation is perfectly, or even exclusively, given in Christ. Still, they contrast on how this proposition is comprehended.

In the new awareness model Christ is understood as the paradigm that reshapes the human imagination as it exposes itself to the creative transcendence of God. In the historical type the Christ-event is comprehended as the consummate act of God in history which definitively discloses the attributes and intentions of God. In the dialectical model Christ is depicted as God's word addressed in forgiveness and judgement to a sinful people. For the model of inner experience Jesus is viewed as possessing the grace of unrivalled and perfect intimacy with the Father. And for the model of revelation as doctrine Jesus is understood as the divinely authoritative teacher - a foundation endorsed either of the Christ of Scripture or of the Christ of dogma.

Advancement of the thesis

Dulles' identification of the five models is grounded in the position that each of the models has arisen through a pivotal intuition on the part of a class of theologians as to how and where revelation takes place. The shared basic unity of each class flows from the root metaphor which comes to describe each of the models and their exposition of the how and where of revelation. More importantly Dulles is aware that what is constitutive of the models is not the metaphors as such. Rather it is the structural relationships they represent, and which occur between God as revealer, the recipient,

and the means of revelation. Of note is that Dulles is also aware of each model possessing some sort of link between an aspect of human cognition and the various root metaphors he has identified. However he sees this link more in terms of a pivotal intuition which has somehow been grasped by a class of theologians.

When the five models are discussed in relation to Christ as the summit of revelation it is clearly seen that each of the models tends to emphasise some particular characteristic of the person of Christ treated as the object of revelation.

Nevertheless, the contention here is that the pivotal intuition and root metaphor of each class does in fact correspond with the proper form of content associated with an identifiable level of consciousness and particular phase of theology on which the act of faith has been objectified. In other words the various root metaphors can be shown to be related in terms of a vital unity because they correspond to the proper form of content that results from the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the various levels of consciousness of the human subject in a particular phase of theology.

This means: the new awareness model can be understood as the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology; the history model can be comprehended as the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology; the dialectical presence model can be understood as the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of decision in the first phase of theology; the inner experience model may be comprehended as the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of decision in the second phase of

theology; and the model of revelation as doctrine can be understood as the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of judgement in the second phase of theology.

To illustrate this, the relationship between each model of revelation and the corresponding level of consciousness as it relates to each particular phase of theology is now examined. The issue attended to here concerns the identification of the operational content that hallmarks each model as encapsulating the proper form of content associated with a particular functional specialty.

New awareness model as objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology

The level of the understanding in the first phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of interpretation. Interpretation seeks to understand what was meant by conceiving the data of consciousness as an intelligible unity. The structuring of concepts to form an intelligible whole is characteristic of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The decisive attribute of the new awareness model is the stimulation of the human imagination to conceive experience in a new framework in response to the encounter with the paradigm of the Gestalt-Christi. Thus the compatibility between the new awareness model and the proper form of content can be seen to reside in the structural elements which pertain to the restructuring of human experience within a novel interpretation which flows from an encounter with Christ.

Hence the new awareness model can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology.

History model as objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology

The level of the judgement in the first phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of history. History strives to determine and narrate what has happened. The determination of what has occurred and what was meant by its occurrence is characteristic of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The decisive attribute of the history model in relation to the Gestalt-Christi is that the Christ-event is comprehended as the consummate act of God in history which definitively discloses the attributes and intentions of God. Thus the compatibility between the history model and the proper form of content can be seen to reside in the structural elements which pertain to the determination of the occurrence and meaning of events which flow from an encounter with the Gestalt-Christi understood as the Christ-event. Hence the history model can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology.

Dialectical presence model as objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of decision in the first phase of theology

The level of decision in the first phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of dialectic. Dialectic seeks to untangle the conflicts connected with values, facts, meanings, and experiences. The reconciliation of many viewpoints is characteristic of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The decisive attribute of the dialectical presence model is the encounter with Christ depicted as God's utterance of a word of divine power which can both justify and condemn. Thus the compatibility between the dialectical presence model and the proper form of content can be seen to reside in the structural elements which pertain to the ability to form a position of

reconciliation in the face of disparate realities revealed by the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the dialectical presence model can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of decision in the first phase of theology.

Inner experience model as objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of decision in the second phase of theology

The level of decision in the second phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of foundations. Foundations seeks to attend the reality of conversion understood as intimate, existential, and deeply personal. More correctly, foundations results from the explicit objectification of conversion itself. The transformation of the subject and his or her world through an encounter of intimate communion with the person of Christ - viewed as possessing unrivalled and perfect intimacy with the Father - is characteristic of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The decisive attribute of the inner experience model is the personal encounter with the living God revealed through Christ Jesus which calls for a response on the personal level. Thus the compatibility between the inner experience model and the proper form of content can be seen to reside in the structural elements which pertain to the level of intimacy with which God relates to the human heart and calls them to convert through an encounter with the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the inner experience model can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of decision in the second phase of theology.

Doctrine model as objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of judgement in the second phase of theology

The level of judgement in the second phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of doctrines. Doctrines come to express both judgements of value and judgements of fact. The conception of such judgements is characteristic of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The decisive attribute of the doctrine model is the formulation of teaching in distinct conceptual form which comes to depict Christ as the divinely authoritative teacher. Thus the compatibility between the doctrine model and the proper form of content can be seen to reside in the structural elements which pertain to the formulation of clear truths used to reveal the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the doctrine model can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of judgement in the second phase of theology.

Recapitulation

By utilising Lonergan's notion of the functional specialties and the proper form of content associated with the corresponding level of consciousness of each specialty, it has been shown that the various models of revelation identified by Dulles can be understood to correspond with the proper form of content that results from the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the various levels of consciousness of the human subject in a particular phase of theology.

Thus it follows that the various responses of faith made in relation to the Gestalt-Christi discover their vital unity as dimensions of the singular human consciousness which responds to the revelation of the person of Christ.

This allows the understanding of the person of Christ as advanced by each of the models to be comprehended from a necessarily complementary perspective as opposed to a mutually exclusive one. Hence the response of faith on the part of the

human subject to the Gestalt-Christi in each of the models is now understood to correspond with the objectification of the act of faith on particular levels of consciousness in distinct phases of theology that necessarily possess their own proper form of content. Thus the various ways in which Christ as the fullness of revelation was perceived by each of the models can now be understood to be essentially complementary since they find their vital unity as various dimensions of the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi proper to the structure of human consciousness and the two phases of theology.

Hence Christ is at once to be understood as: the paradigm that reshapes the human imagination as it exposes itself to the creative transcendence of God (new awareness model); the consummate act of God in history which definitively discloses the attributes and intentions of God (historical model); God's word addressed in forgiveness and judgement to a sinful people (dialectical model); the person who possesses the grace of unrivalled and perfect intimacy with the Father (inner experience model); and the divinely authoritative teacher - a foundation endorsed either of the Christ of Scripture or of the Christ of dogma (doctrinal model).

Attention now turns to the identification of the various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi as consistent with this analysis.

Various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi

By analysing the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi through utilising Lonergan's notion of the functional specialties and

the proper form of content associated with the corresponding level of consciousness of each specialty, it becomes possible to identify the various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith itself. Whereas, it must be remembered that the principle that establishes the vital unity of the act of faith ever resides in the Gestalt-Christi as the fundamental focal point of that act; it must also be remembered that the various dimensions result from the hearing of this Revelation on the various levels of human consciousness in each distinct phase of theology.

Thus with the Gestalt-Christi as the basic reference point of this analysis the following dimensions of the act of faith can be identified. There is the dimension of: the act of faith made on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of decision in the first phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of decision in the second phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of judgement in the second phase of theology.

Consequently it is possible to identify five dimensions of the act of faith. However, these dimensions are to be thought of as necessarily complementary because they correspond to the various levels on which the faith-response is capable of being made in each human person as they relate to the Gestalt-Christi. In other words, if the fullness of the response of faith is to be respected then all five dimensions of this response must be attended to if the fullness of Revelation in Christ is to be honoured. Thus the vital unity of the five dimensions of the faith-response made in relation to the Gestalt-Christi flow from the given that is the structure of human consciousness. Although the integrity of the act of faith demands the consideration of all five dimensions as an integrated unity it is possible to present the act of faith from the perspective of one or more of these dimensions. This, of course, can result in the presentation of the act of faith in a somewhat diminished manner. In fact it could be

argued that this has been evidenced through Dulles' identification of the five models of revelation as typical, yet not essentially complementary, positions of the contemporary theology of revelation. Nonetheless, a return to these models from the perspective of the identification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi through utilising Lonergan's notion of the functional specialties and the proper form of content associated with the corresponding level of consciousness of each specialty yields some notable and novel advances.

Some significant and original advances offered by the new perspective

The new perspective set by the understanding of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi through utilising Lonergan's notion of the functional specialties and the proper form of content associated with the corresponding level of consciousness of each specialty provides an entire fresh context in which to situate the five models of revelation identified by Dulles.

As an overarching framework the new perspective allows for a greater understanding of how and where the different models of revelation originate. Not only that, it also yields a coherent framework which shows how the various models are in fact related because they derive from the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi in accord with the distinct levels of consciousness of the human subject in the two phases of theology. Hence the unity which comprises the faith-response is made from integrating the objectification of the act of faith on the various levels of consciousness in the distinct phases of theology in relation to the Gestalt-Christi.

This indicates the concrete possibility that the various contemporary models of revelation as presented by Dulles can be reconciled with one another if understood

from the new perspective, i.e. they are to be looked upon as fundamentally complementary to one another. The significance of this breakthrough is of the utmost import for if it is true that ‘The great theological disputes turn out, upon reflection, to rest on different understandings of revelation, often simply taken for granted’⁵ the possibility now exists for those same theological disputes to reach an harmonious resolution through acknowledgement of the possibility of reconciliation in theological disputes by recognizing the various understandings of revelation which inform those disputes as essentially complementary to each other.

Thus the various contributions to the theology of revelation inclusive of Baum, Dewart, Moran, Hart, Thompson, Tillich, Rahner, Pannenberg, Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Tyrell, Underhill, Hick, Clark, Packer, Montgomery, Henry, Garrigou-Lagrange, Pesch, and Dieckmann can be comprehended as necessarily complementary to one another because each of their contributions is derived from attending to a particular dimension of the act of faith as identified through this investigation. In like manner, hybrid positions which have combined particular elements of the various models can be understood as trying to incorporate more than one dimension of the act of faith in their analysis. Such developments would undoubtedly witness to the magnitude and splendour of God’s revelation in Christ in such a way that the cumulative response of faith yielded through the unification of the various theological contributions would testify to Christ’s priestly prayer ‘may they be so completely one, that the world will realise that it was you who sent me’ John 17:23.

Equally the great theological disputes (concerning for example the divinity of Christ, ecumenism etc.) could be re-visited in light of the new perspective. The positions taken in the disputes could firstly be analysed to discover what understanding of

⁵Dulles, Models of Revelation, p. ix.

revelation had been intuitively adopted by the respective parties as informing their opinion. The new perspective could then be used to reveal to the various protagonists the particular level or levels of consciousness and corresponding phase or phases of theology on which the objectification of the act of faith in response to the divine Revelation had been intuitively adopted by them in the course of their enquiries, and which therefore implicitly supported their position. This would then hopefully allow the proposal of the notion that the insights of the various protagonists in the debates be understood as essentially complementary to each other because they had tackled the issue under debate from the perspective of a different, yet related, level of human consciousness on which the act of faith had been objectified in response to the divine Revelation.

Similarly the new perspective would allow theologians to become more knowingly aware of which dimension of the act of faith in response to the divine Revelation they were operating out of as they conducted their own theological investigations. This would then allow them to situate their contribution within a more precise context than exists at present.

The new perspective which deepens the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation through bringing together the fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's contribution - particularly as it relates to the notion of the Gestalt-Christi - with those aspects of Lonergan's work which explore the structure of human consciousness as discovered in intentionality analysis, and particularly the notion of functional specialties, consequently helps develop the meaning of the words of St. Augustine, 'To believe is nothing other than to think with assent...Believers are also thinkers: in believing, they think and in thinking, they believe...If faith does not think, it is nothing'.⁶ In short the

⁶Saint Augustine, *De Praedestinatione Sanctorum*, 2, 5: PL 44, 963. taken from John

new perspective offers a construct which provides a profound understanding of Revelation and the content of faith.⁷

Reflections on the new perspective

The central thrust of the new perspective is the focus on the relationship between the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi and the response of that revelation in human consciousness understood as the act of faith.

Balthasar's notion of the Gestalt-Christi was adopted to respect the necessary christocentricity as demanded by the teaching of the Church in understanding the relationship between revelation and faith. However, it was adjudged that his contribution in the area of the faith-response made according to the structure of human consciousness could be further complemented. In this regard the contribution of Lonergan offered a remarkable and coherent approach to the structure of the human mind through intentionality analysis. However, it must be noted that Lonergan's work is not marked by the same christocentricity as that of Balthasar. Thus it seemed perfectly sensible to attempt to marry the thought of both parties in such a way that the strength of one complemented the strength of the other.

This gave rise to an understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation where the divine Revelation is understood to take place through the Gestalt-Christi, and where the response of faith is understood to occur in such a way that the structure of human consciousness is respected.

Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, 1998, p. 116.

⁷See FR 93.

This led to a construction which denoted the transcendental precepts of Lonergan's transcendental method as operative within a human mind that has been flooded by the love of God revealed in the person of Jesus understood as the Gestalt-Christi. Then a construct was unveiled which sought to ever remember the relationship that existed between the Gestalt-Christi and the level of consciousness and distinct phase of theology on which the act of faith was objectified. This meant that the proper form of content, associated with a particular level of consciousness and distinct phase of theology, was shown to resonate both with the aspect of Christ that was revealed and with the corresponding content of the response of faith.

The strength of the new perspective resides in its ability to conceive the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation from a novel and broader horizon. It allows for the reconciliation of the various contemporary models of revelation identified by Dulles through conceiving them as complementary as opposed to being distinct; it provides theologians with a more developed framework within which to approach the issues of fundamental theology; and perhaps most importantly it explains in a fruitful way how the faith can be conceived as 'one' in such manner that the divisions between Christians of various denominations and their corresponding theologies can be reconciled in Christ Jesus. As a construct it is faithful to Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition; it is internally coherent and possesses plausibility; it appears adequate to the experience of faith; it is theoretically sound and is potentially fruitful on a practical level; and it also enhances the possibility of dialogue among Christian theologians and adherents of other religions.

**Critical appraisal of the arguments of Balthasar and Lonergan as deployed in
the thesis**

The aim of this chapter is to critically appraise the arguments of Balthasar and Lonergan as deployed in the thesis. The argument is that by marrying Balthasar's method of a fundamental theology with Lonergan's work on the structure of human consciousness a deeper understanding of the structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ is achieved through which the assertion that modern catechetics needs to be grounded in a proper meta-approach consistent with the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis and derived from the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* is supported by a more developed theoretical position that accounts for the empirical evidence of the content of faith.

It begins with a summary of Balthasar's contribution after which the work of Balthasar is critically appraised from the wider context. Then Balthasar's contribution as it is deployed in the thesis is critically appraised with particular reference to its assessment against the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis.

Next Lonergan's contribution is summarised after which it too is critically appraised from the wider context. Then Lonergan's contribution as it is deployed in the thesis is critically appraised with particular reference to its assessment against the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis.

After this the development of Balthasar's thought and Lonergan's thought beyond themselves i.e. their marriage, is explicated as the author's position which proposes a

theory of an architectonic structure of Roman Catholicism. Lastly, the author's position is critically appraised.

Summary of Balthasar's contribution

Balthasar posits a theology of beauty as the harmony of God's own perfections and the combination of impulses in the drama of salvation that cause the beauty in the glory of Christ revealed as the only-begotten Son of the Father (Jn 1:14). He conceives this theology as a theo-aesthetic, a theo-dramatic, and a theo-logic in which God's concrete action in history, in its own glory interprets itself to humanity in manners impossible to surmise from humanity's existence.

Critical appraisal of Balthasar from the wider context

From the wider perspective, Balthasar's contribution is understood to be a splendid work of the imagination - which has been described as orchestral¹ - yet a work of imagination nonetheless.

Within this context of the construction of a theological-revelation perspective his contribution has been limited by the omission of the contribution of philosophers² - even those Catholics who consider the truths of reason illumined by revelation e.g. Maritain - and the women mystics³ of the Tradition in possession of a practical theological aesthetic, which has resulted in this magnificent work of imagination devoid of certain styles of imagining that could possibly have enhanced it further.

¹See Noel Dermot O'Donoghue, O.D.C., 'Do we get beyond Plato? A Critical Appreciation of the Theological Aesthetics', The Beauty of Christ An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (eds. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas Norris), p. 263.

²As part of his 'theological styles' Balthasar includes the contributions of theologians, 'men of letters', poets and mystics. The philosopher as philosopher is not cited, even to the exclusion of Thomas Aquinas.

³The omission of Teresa of Avila seems incredible for her central theme is that of the beauty of the divine humanity in Christ Jesus.

Indeed additional cause for concern stems from Balthasar's superficial attitude to the contribution of traditional philosophy as philosophy which results in the deeper background drama of his work being the way in which the relationship between philosophy and theology is understood from this imaginative revelation perspective. Revelation is presented as Balthasar understands it without any reference to, or attempt at critical discussion with other theoretical positions that attempt to explain the relationship between nature and grace, philosophy and theology-revelation.⁴

The omission of the thought of women mystics perhaps helps explain the lack of dramatic engagement with reality (the world) in Balthasar's position for although the work is that of a theological aesthetic it is not marked with the practicality associated with the feminine approach as manifest through, say, Teresa of Avila or Margaret Mary Alacoque. Thus it tends to be a contribution lacking a sense of commitment to change the world for the better. Truly, then, the drama in Balthasar appears to be confined to the heart of the individual in the life of God - which could provide sufficient evidence for those critics who brand his contribution as somewhat ahistorical.

In a sense this is not surprising for it is consistent with the choice to begin from the imagination which inevitably results in a position cast adrift from the moorings of experience.

In similar vein there is a peculiar absence of confrontation with the notable modern structural evils e.g. patriarchy, capitalism, for a person so vocal about the reality of evil. In fact it can be said that Balthasar's neutral stance to such realities smacks

⁴Some of these issues are discussed in Avery Dulles, S.J., Models of Revelation, particularly in Chapter I, 'The Problem of Revelation'.

more of an other worldly naivety rather than being explained through political innocence.

He also exhibits comparable naivety by his comments on the Church and structural change when although he properly acknowledges the Church in civil society must possess a non-party political function he simultaneously allocates this role to the Christian laity without recognizing that they are - in a real normative sense - Church. Balthasar fails to address the complexities of this issue.⁵ In fact, he does tend to treat the Church as an organization beyond reproach and seems over-confident in its ability to promote the values of the kingdom of God in its life and structures when compared to civil society.

However, the more predominant positive note is that this magnificent work of Balthasar's imagination does make a worthwhile contribution to theology. It helps explain how the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ is encountered in the life of worship of the Church and how this encounter with the person of Christ simultaneously engages the believer in a life of service. However, the relationship between this call to worship and service and the salvation of the world through historical engagement necessitates the development of Balthasar's thought beyond himself.

Critical appraisal of Balthasar as deployed in the thesis

A significant weakness of Balthasar's thought is that it is essentially a work of imagination. It does not address the empirical content of faith or its echo in catechetics in any detailed formal terms. Hence Balthasar's contribution is

⁵Gerard O'Hanlon, S.J., 'Theological Dramatics', The Beauty of Christ An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar, (eds. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas Norris), pp. 108-109.

fundamentally a theology based on reflection concerning a notion rather than reflection upon the empirical content of faith evidenced in the Tradition.

To a large extent this helps to explain more thoroughly the root causes of the charges of ahistoricism and lack of dramatic engagement with reality for his thought is truly adrift from any real sense of the personal appropriation of the faith by the faithful as revealed in the living witness of those who are already Church - with the exception of those individuals he uses as examples of different styles.⁶

In this sense Balthasar's contribution is not thoroughly as ecclesiastical as it may firstly be perceived as it appears to put to one side the evidence of the life of faith of the ordinary members of the faithful as the living witnesses of the Tradition as the place from which to construct a theoretical theological position. Neither does he attempt to understand how the integrity constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Christ and the response of faith as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind can account for the empirical content of faith.

However, he does present the human person as constituted dialogically in relationship with other human persons which lays a solid basis from which to deliberate upon the relationship of the believer as a member of the Church. Still this position is dependent upon the genesis, circumincession, and epistemic objectivity of the transcendentals as understood as consistent with the Scholastic tradition. On this point Balthasar fails to call attention to the lack of unanimity on the topic of the transcendentals among members of this tradition e.g. Albert the Great and Thomas

⁶In GL III Balthasar presents Dante, St. John of the Cross, Pascal, Hamann, Soloviev, Hopkins, and Péguy as examples of lay styles. In GL IV he presents Irenaeus, Augustine, Denys, Anselm, and Bonaventure as examples of clerical styles.

Aquinas; that within this tradition there was no unanimity whatsoever as to whether beauty possessed an equal and real place among the transcendentals; and that for the medievals the epistemic objectivity of the transcendentals was presumed. Similarly he seems to accept uncritically the notion of circumincession, although he does 'prove' the objectivity of the transcendentals with reference to the mother-baby relationship⁷, and acknowledge his position is based on an analogy of those transcendentals.

Nevertheless, on the whole Balthasar's approach significantly contributes to the maintenance and nourishing of the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis as offered in the General Directory for Catechesis.

The identification of the major themes in the scheme of fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's theological contribution of: the Gestalt-Christi as the Word of God, christocentrism, theocentric trinitarianism, and the response of faith characterised by the marian hallmark all resonate strongly in support of the word of God as the source of catechesis and the criteria that flow from it.

To be sure, Balthasar's approach strongly respects the word of God contained in Sacred Tradition and in Sacred Scripture. It also acknowledges the role the Magisterium plays in regulating the interpretation of that word. Similarly his contribution gives legitimate weight to the presence of the word of God in the Sacred Liturgy, in the life of the Church as witnessed by her members - especially in the lives of some of the canonised saints, and it assists believers to further understand the mystery of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the word of God.

⁷Angelo Scola, Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style, p. 26. taken from Balthasar, My Work, p. 114.

In terms of the criteria that spring from the word of God to govern the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis his contribution is likewise supportive. His exploration of the themes of christocentrism and theocentric trinitarianism help give a more developed understanding of the trinitarian christocentricity of the Gospel message in such manner that it further explains why the internal structure of catechesis must ever be christocentric-trinitarian. Thus the stamp of authentic catechesis as 'Through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit' is given a new depth of meaning when informed by Balthasar's work.

Similarly Balthasar is clear that salvation must be understood essentially as gift - God's Revelation is God's action, not that of humanity. God liberates humanity from sin and death to participate in the divine life of the Triune God through, with, and in Christ.

Likewise he esteems the ecclesial and historic character of the Gospel message by acknowledging that the *space* to follow the living God of Jesus Christ is made possible only by virtue of the unjustifiable act of incorporation to Christ in the Church which exists in time.

With regard to the integrity and purity with which the Gospel message is to be presented this also finds its fundamental reference point in the person of Jesus Christ who proclaimed the Gospel integrally as the Word of God. This Word is advanced as being destined for all peoples and thus is promoted as a Word that seeks inculturation.

The comprehensive and hierarchical dimensions of the Gospel message are also catered for in Balthasar's thought because he promotes the Most Holy Trinity, from the christocentric perspective, as the mystery which is the font of all the other mysteries of faith and the source that enlightens them. Furthermore this vision of the

Gospel message makes it profoundly meaningful for each human person because in Balthasar's thought the person of Jesus himself, the Gestalt-Christi, reveals to each person who they are called to be and the sublime vocation they are called to live through their relationship with Christ.

There are however some areas in which Balthasar's approach does not provide as much theological support. For example, although he presents a developed understanding of the 'yes' of faith he is rather weak on the fundamental reality of conversion as similarly demanded by the Good News.

Another area which reveals a deficiency in Balthasar's thought is that the preferential option for the poor appears not to feature significantly in the Swiss theologian's scheme, and to some extent this indicates a major lacunae in his theologising. However, this point requires further attention as there is a need to incorporate the preferential option for the poor as integral to the message of liberation which flows from the gift of salvation as a criterion of authentic catechesis as consistent with the Magisterial position.

Nonetheless it must also be noted that although Balthasar's contribution in the main nourishes and supports the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis the novelty in this instance also resides in his derived scheme of fundamental theology being applied concretely to catechetics as a practical discipline.

Summary of Lonergan's contribution

Lonergan conceives theology as reflection upon religious experience which attends to the acts of theologians attempting to understand and respond to God's revealing action. Implicit to this position is a theory of meaning as achieved by way of

intentionality where genuine objectivity resides in the subjectivity of the believer constructing a world of meaning for the self through transcendental method.

This dynamic of self-transcendence (transcendental method) acts in a fourfold manner from experience to understanding to judging to decision. Experience is of data, understanding pursues meaning, judgment affirms truth, and decision binds the subject to values. Concurrent with this, theology is composed of eight functional specialties arranged in two divisions of four: the first is an ascending progression from research (experience) to interpretation (understanding) to history (judgment) to dialectic (decision); the second is a descending flow from foundations (decision) to dogmatics (judgment) to systematics (understanding) to communication (experience).

Critical appraisal of Lonergan from the wider context

From the wider perspective Lonergan's contribution is understood to be a work of transcendental philosophy and transcendental theology which takes as its focus the human subject who structures a world of meaning for the self as the basis on which to explain theology as being itself a method.

This approach of a transcendental method is but one way of comprehending methodology in theology as theological method is approached today from various perspectives e.g. existentialism, hermeneutics, eschatology, linguistic analysis, process thought, liberation praxis.

However, to begin with the transcendentals is not without controversy for whereas pre-modern thinkers took the epistemic objectivity of the transcendentals as given, a device of modern thought is to investigate explicitly both the epistemic objectivity of the transcendentals and their genesis in human consciousness. In fact Lonergan's position is one of three contrasting and decidedly significant modern understandings

of the transcendental concepts. Examples of the other two being the positions of Joseph Owens and Immanuel Kant.⁸

Whereas Lonergan and Kant hold that the genesis of the transcendentals in human consciousness occurs *a priori*, Owens holds it is *a posteriori*. However, this alignment changes when the question ‘Are the transcendental concepts epistemically objective?’ is asked. Here Lonergan and Owens answer in the affirmative, whilst Kant’s answer is negative.

Similarly it is important to recall that coupled with this disagreement about the transcendentals’ genesis and epistemic status there is also keen debate about the number of transcendentals. Although it is widely agreed that ‘being’, ‘unity’, ‘truth’, and ‘goodness’ are held to be transcendentals the placing of ‘beauty’ among them has been the subject of much contention. For example, this is evidenced in Balthasar’s theology of beauty where some critics argue against the inclusion of beauty as a transcendental. Of note is that Lonergan omits beauty as part of his transcendental method.

Similarly Lonergan’s focussing on the human subject creates reservations because it fails to adequately address the human subject as constituted dialogically within the human community. This gives rise to a position that could be described as overly subjective in its approach since it claims that genuine objectivity resides in the subjectivity of the individual structuring a world of meaning for the self and leaves mostly unaddressed and undeveloped how the individual subject might structure his/her world of meaning in dialogue with other human subjects and how these individual subjects then together might structure a world of meaning for the human

⁸Joseph Owens, An Elementary Christian Metaphysics. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason.

community. However, to be fair to Lonergan he does speak of the need for common experience, common understanding, common judgment, and common decisions as part of his schema.⁹

Likewise the orientation towards decision associated with the subjectivity of Lonergan's approach begs the question as to the degree of emphasis placed on experience, understanding, and judgment. Hence his approach can be charged with the theoretical misdemeanour of 'decisionism' as the transcendental method advocated by him ultimately crystallises on the fourth level of self-transcendence associated with the act of deciding. This, coupled with the previous indictment, leads to perhaps the most common charge against his theory as that of subjective decisionism.

A critical appraisal of Lonergan from the wider context becomes more complete by acknowledging his failure to incorporate adequately the sociology of knowledge to inform his position and to note that the data attended to in his plan of things appears to be exclusively that of the original sources and the texts of the tradition. In other words the data of the faithful's empirical experience of faith is entirely undeveloped in Lonergan's schema.

This in turn leads to a position where his identification of the functional specialties are more a leap of theology over the evidence of faith than a derivation of those functional specialties from the evidence of faith. Hence the existence and identification of the functional specialties seem more intuited than deduced in Lonergan's position.

⁹Bernard Lonergan S.J., *Method in Theology*, p. 79.

Overall, the method of theology sketched by Lonergan is more at the service of the theologian as part of the theological elite than it is of service to the life of the faithful of the Church because his method does not adequately take into account the empirical evidence of the content of faith manifest in the living witness of all those who are already Church.

Critical appraisal of Lonergan as deployed in the thesis

Lonergan is used in the thesis as one way of addressing the issue of how the mind responds to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. He was chosen because his theory - rooted in the existential experience of the subject objectifying the contents of his/her own consciousness¹⁰ - provides an empirical, as opposed to a notional basis, on which to build a position.

However, this foundational rock is not without its cracks for the anthropological component of his theological method does not sufficiently take into account the dialogical constitution of the human subject as part of the human community making its application to help explain the relationship of the believer as part of the Church somewhat lacking.

Similarly the hallmarks of subjectivity and decisionism that stamp his work are not particularly helpful as in the Church the believer must ever understand him/herself as part of the Body of Christ and thus ever in relationship with other persons and must also seek to value all aspects of sharing together their life in Christ and not simply the impetus to make decisions. In fact the issue of the ecclesial identity of the subject is at best addressed only tangentially in Lonergan's schema for his 'subject' appears as a

¹⁰Bernard Lonergan S.J., Method in Theology, pp. 14-20.

subject obsessed by the workings of his/her own mind in what could be termed a mental isolationism.

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the religious component of his method does not take adequate account of the inter-personal nature of the relationship of the faith response made to the person of Jesus Christ, nor address the empirical reality of the content of faith as evidenced in the living Tradition of the Church.

Assessment against the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message leads to further insight into some of these areas.

To be sure Lonergan's approach does not strongly feature the word of God contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Nor does it engage in any developed attempt to cater for the understanding of the Gospel message as necessarily possessing a trinitarian christocentricity in the derivation of his theological method. In fact his tendency is to speak simply of 'God' without truly attempting to advance the themes of christocentrism or theocentric trinitarianism.

In similar fashion he speaks simply of 'faith' and is content to define it as the knowledge born of religious love¹¹ which he acknowledges as gift. Yet he does not explicate the empirical content of this notion of faith much further. Likewise he does not seriously address the response of faith made to Jesus Christ within the Church, nor does he attempt to account for the empirical content of the life of faith as evidenced through the living Tradition. Correspondingly although his anthropological component has an empirical starting point his theological position is

¹¹Bernard Lonergan S.J., Method in Theology, p. 115.

based more on a hazy notion of Christian faith rather than its concrete empirical content.

Consequently the dimensions of the historical, the seeking of inculturation, the possession of a meaningful message and its doctrinal content appear nowhere in Lonergan's consideration of what the content of faith is. Rather some aspects of these criteria seem to emerge as part of the content of his functional specialties - which appear to have been discovered intuitively through time.

The resultant outcome is that when Lonergan's method is assessed against the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message it reveals itself as a method that is not firmly rooted in, nor entirely resonant with the Gospel as the supreme norm of the Church's life. However, his anthropological component appears consistent and sound albeit within the limitations previously identified.

Explanation of the 'marriage' between Balthasar and Lonergan with reference to the drama played out in the background of the proposed marriage - The Author's position: An Architectonic Structure of Catholicism rooted in the Gospel norm

The marriage of Balthasar's method of a fundamental theology with Lonergan's approach of transcendental method was proposed in order to build the author's position from the critical assimilation of the thought of two respected predecessors. However, this new position requires further explication of its foundations.

Firstly, it must be remembered that the aim of this thesis is to carry out a theological analysis of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics as an aspect of the ministry of the divine word, and that the approach adopted is that of post-critical Roman Catholic theology. This means the investigation is conducted within the domain of faith,

where the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ is taken as a given, with faith understood as gift. Within this context the Gospel of Jesus Christ is viewed as the supreme norm of the Church's life and it is against this norm that the assessment of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics as an aspect of the ministry of the divine word occurs.

With catechetics understood as the echo of the faith response made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ, it was shown that catechetics needs to be grounded in a proper meta-approach consistent with the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis because these norms and criteria encapsulate the nature of the faith response made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ that catechetics seeks to echo. Hence the meta-approach to catechetics advocated here is synonymous with an approach that consists of, and respects the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message which flow from the understanding of the relationship between the faith response of the believer and the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

Strictly speaking this is not simply a theoretical position for the Roman Catholic Church. Rather it forms the edifice on which the Church is built as the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed through Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition is the supreme norm of the Church's life itself.

However, whilst it was proper to assess catechetics against this Gospel norm the investigation also sought to explain the empirical content of catechetical criteria within a more developed theoretical theological context.

To put flesh on the bones of the argument the method of a fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Balthasar was cited as an example of a theological

methodology that could further inform this meta-approach to catechetics as it was itself rooted in an approach that respected the norms and criteria of the Gospel message. Similarly Balthasar was also chosen because his theology of beauty was adjudged to take seriously the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ (Gestalt-Christi) through the Sacred Liturgy. This meant that a meta-approach to catechetics informed by his position could possess the concrete reality of the Sacred Liturgy as a main point of reference. This resulted in the positing of a post-conciliar catechetics as grounded in the derived scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's contribution oriented in resonance with the Sacred Liturgy.

To further develop this theory of a meta-approach to catechetics the argument moved on to a consideration of the response of faith made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind in an attempt to account for the empirical content of faith addressed as the content of catechetical criteria.

It did so by initially explicating the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith response, and then by explicating the relationship between the various aspects of the faith response and particular catechetical criteria according to the pairings: Faith as gift - gift consciousness of salvation; Expansiveness of the act of faith - historical significance; Role of love and freedom - inculturation; Aesthetic redesigning initiative - meaningful message; Reasons for belief - doctrine. This occurred in light of the theoretical proposal that the scheme of fundamental theology derived from Balthasar could be married with Lonergan's contribution on transcendental method and Dulles' work on systems of revelation in order to present a way to deepen the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

With Lonergan's contribution accounting for the basic anthropological component of the position, and Balthasar and Dulles contributing on the side of the divine Revelation, the outcome was a detailed theoretical template that identified and addressed the elements intrinsic to, and constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith response, and the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as consistent with the workings and autonomy of the human mind in an attempt to account for the empirical content of faith addressed as the content of catechetical criteria.

In effect, with the person of Jesus Christ as ever the point of reference, the detailed theoretical template provides a map of the dimensions of catechesis that can help to better orient and structure the exploration of the endeavour to know more profoundly the meaning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

However, the foundations of this new position are laid by developing the thought of both Balthasar and Lonergan beyond themselves in an attempt to construct a model of Roman Catholicism that begins with the reality of the empirical content of the life of faith. It is this facet of seeking to explain the empirical content of faith (and its echo) that marks this work as an advance and paves the way for a theory which proposes that Roman Catholicism possesses an architectonic structure derived from the norm of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hence it is proposed that the architectonic structure of Catholicism is constituted by two movements. The first is that of the faith response made by the individual believer as part of the Church to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ (the Gospel) as presented in the Sacred Liturgy through Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church. The second is that of reflecting upon the meaning of the first

movement. The first movement is the domain of faith and catechetics (understood in an expansive sense); the second movement is the domain of theology.

This architectonic structure of Catholicism is dependent upon: an anthropological component that attends to the intentional consciousness of the human person as constituted dialogically within human community and recognizes a transcendental epistemology of consciousness that gives rise to various forms of content associated with corresponding dimensions of the mind; and a religious component that attends to the faith response of the believer as part of the Church made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ as presented in the Sacred Liturgy through Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church and evidenced in the empirical manifestation of content associated with the life of faith and its echo in catechetics.

Hence the anthropological component consists of an extrapolation of Lonergan's transcendental precepts beyond the merely subjective domain into the dialogical realm - this also applies to the objectification of consciousness into the dialogical sphere. Here eight transcendental notions are identified which in turn give shape to a distinct form of content that correlates with a particular dimension of the mind. The first four are borrowed from Lonergan and concern the subjective element. These are: be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible. The second four concern the person as dialogically constituted within human community. These are: be a person of integrity, be a person of truthfulness, be a person of consistency, be a person of transparency. This gives rise to the mind of each individual as part of humanity to be theoretically shaped according to the dimensions of: attentiveness, intelligence, reason, responsibility, integrity, truth, consistency, and transparency.

The first four reflect the ascent from experience to understanding to judgment to decision in the direction of personal appropriation; the second four reflect the descent

from decision to judgment to understanding to experience in the direction of communal appropriation.

Of note is that this theory suggests there must ever be a relationship between the individual and communal dimensions of the mind because of the unity of human consciousness. Moreover the activity of an individual dimension must always somehow influence the other seven dimensions. Thus the so-called circumincession of transcendentals comes to be explained as the relationship that exists between the dimensions of the mind and the unity of consciousness.

The religious component remains that through which the individual believer as part of the Church encounters the person of Christ in Scripture and Tradition. However, when the anthropological component is raised through the encounter of faith this raising consists of the individual as part of humanity being transformed into a 'new creature' as a believer as part of the Church through encounter with the person of Jesus Christ as the paschal mystery.

This raising of the heart and mind to God in Christ is built on the fact that Christians are made, not born, and that what is raised to God is each person's humanity. Since the anthropological component possessed the capability of accounting for the working of the mind prior to its raising, it is logically consistent to hold that the same ability exists to account for the working of the mind within the domain of faith as this domain is defined through the way in which the heart and mind of the believer responds to the person of Christ. The way the mind and heart operate does not change in themselves rather it is the object they attend to i.e. Christ, who causes the shift in horizon.

Thus the first phase consists of the faith response of the believer as part of the Church made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ where the form of content of the dimensions of the mind identified as intelligence, reason, responsibility, integrity, and truth become equated with the precepts: to interpret, to know, to discern, to live, and to teach. The omission of the dimensions of attentiveness and transparency are explained since attentiveness arranges the data concerning the understanding of the act of faith from the past and transparency seeks to provide data concerning the understanding of the act of faith in the present and for the future. The omission of consistency from the list is explained because this is the level on which this investigation occurs and which is to be understood as working out an appropriate system. This level is objectified with the explication of phase two of the architectonic structure.

For the aspect of the person of Christ in relation to the form of content of the mind (in the order previously given) this yields the content: proclaimer of salvation; centre of salvation history; caller to decision; soul-friend; and teacher.

For the models of revelation identified by Dulles in relation to the form of content of the mind (in the order previously given) this yields the content: new awareness; history; dialectic; inner experience; and doctrine.

For the aspect of the faith response in relation to the form of content of the mind (in the order previously given) this yields the content: faith as gift; expansiveness of the act of faith; role of love and freedom; aesthetic, redesigning initiative; and reasons for belief.

For the criteria of catechesis in relation to the form of content of the mind (in the order previously given) this yields the content: gift consciousness of salvation; historical significance; inculturation; meaningful message; and doctrine.

With the explication of the second phase of the proposed architectonic structure of Catholicism the form of content of the first phase associated with consistency and identified with the precept to organise is identified through 'looking back'. This yields the content: the way of God for the aspect of the person of Christ; economy of God for the model of revelation; Jesus as principle of vital unity for aspect of the faith response; plan of salvation for criteria of catechesis.

The second phase of the architectonic structure of Catholicism occurs as reflection upon the empirical faith content of the first phase.

Thus reflection upon the gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament and the Old Testament yields biblical theology.

Reflection upon the historical significance of being in relationship with the Gospel of Jesus Christ yields liturgico-narrative theology.

Reflection upon the moral significance of being in relationship with the Gospel of Jesus Christ yields moral theology.

Reflection upon the fundamental meaning of being in relationship with the Gospel of Jesus Christ yields fundamental theology.

Reflection upon the comprehensivity of the message of being in relationship with the Gospel of Jesus Christ yields doctrinal theology.

Reflection upon God's plan of salvation revealed through being in relationship with the Gospel of Jesus Christ yields systematic theology.

Also of note in this second phase of the architectonic structure of Catholicism is that the functional specialties identified by Lonergan can rightly take their place as specialties that are shaped by the form of their content. However, within this structure their derivation comes to be understood to flow from their relationship to the empirical content of faith of the first phase as opposed to being simply intuited.

The following table provides a summary of the proposed architectonic structure of Catholicism derived from the faith response of the believer as part of the Church made to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ understood as the Gospel:

Form of Content	To Interpret	To Know	To Discern	To Live	To Teach	To Organise
Aspect of the person of Christ	Proclaimer of Salvation	Centre of Salvation History	Caller to Decision	Soul-Friend	Teacher	The Way of God
Model of Revelation	New Awareness	History	Dialectic	Inner Experience	Doctrine	Economy of God
Aspect of faith response	Faith as gift	Expansiveness of the act of faith	Role of love and freedom	Aesthetic, redesigning initiative	Reasons for belief	Jesus as principle of vital unity
Criteria of Catechesis	Gift consciousness of salvation	Historical Significance	Inculturation	Meaningful Message	Doctrine	Plan of Salvation
Types of Theology	Biblical Theology	Liturgico-Narrative Theology	Moral Theology	Fundamental Theology	Doctrinal Theology	Systematic Theology
Functional Specialties	Interpretation	History	Dialectic	Foundations	Doctrine	Systematics

This theory, which proposes that Roman Catholicism possesses an architectonic structure derived from the norm of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, begs the question as to how assessment of the execution of each phase is to be measured against this norm.

It is proposed that the content of such Christian praxis consists of assessing the disposition of the Christian against the degree to which s/he has grown in the love of God in Jesus Christ. Hence openness to the gifts of the Holy Spirit is assessed against the manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the degree to which the believer has practiced the dispositions of fear of the Lord, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, counsel, piety, and fortitude is assessed against the evidence of love, gentleness, kindness, self-control, goodness, peace, trustfulness, patience, and joy in their lives. To this end it is suggested that the gifts of the Holy Spirit identified in the tradition as fear of the Lord, understanding, knowledge, wisdom, counsel, piety, and fortitude and understood as permanent dispositions possessed by the Christian can be equated with the dispositions identified in the author's theoretical position.

Thus fear of the Lord refers to the need to keep Jesus Christ as ever the point of reference. Within this context: understanding refers to the disposition of the mind to interpret; knowledge refers to the disposition of the mind to know; wisdom refers to the disposition of the mind to discern; counsel refers to the disposition of the mind to choose life; piety refers to the disposition of the mind to be taught religious principles; fortitude refers to the disposition of the mind to organise in order to persevere.

For the fruits of the Holy Spirit it is likewise suggested that: the fruit proper to fear of the Lord is love; the fruit proper to understanding is kindness; the fruit proper to knowledge is self-control; the fruit proper to wisdom is goodness; the fruit proper to counsel is peace; the fruit proper to piety is trustfulness; the fruit proper to fortitude is

patience. Gentleness is the fruit proper to being open to encounter (being attentive). Joy is the fruit proper to encountering (being transparent).

Hence the proposed architectonic structure of Roman Catholicism is constituted not only by the two phases previously identified it also possesses a form of Christian praxis integral to its structure. Consequently this Christian praxis is applicable at every stage of its enactment, i.e. the domain of faith, catechetics, and theology must at all times be governed by the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus it is evidenced that this proposed architectonic structure ultimately takes its shape in accord with the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit as sent by the Father.

Critical appraisal of the Author's position

The Author has chosen to build his position upon the notion of the transcendentals believing them to exist *a priori* and to be epistemically objectifiable. He differs from others in suggesting the existence of eight transcendental precepts that correspond with the various forms of content of the human mind derived from the human person as constituted dialogically in relationship with others.

However, the genesis, epistemic status, and number of transcendentals as identified above is not held uniformly. For example Owens considers them to exist *a posteriori*, Kant holds they are not epistemically objectifiable, and their number has been widely disputed at least since the time of the Scholastics.¹² Nor has the author attempted to explain how the presence of Jesus Christ is communicated through Sacred Scripture and Tradition, e.g. through symbolic mediation.¹³ Rather the fact that for believers Jesus is made present takes precedence over how his presence is experienced.

¹²Michael Vertin, 'Transcendentals', The New Dictionary of Theology, pp. 1043-44.

¹³Dulles has attempted this in his Models of Revelation, especially in 'Chapter IX,

Nevertheless the main way in which the Author's position surpasses and critically appraises the arguments of Balthasar and Lonergan is by basing itself upon empirical foundations. Both in the realm of the human person as dialogically constituted within human community, and as a believer as part of the Church in possession of the empirical content of the life of faith.

As the theory presented seeks to explain the empirical content of the life of faith addressed in catechetics as the basis from which to develop an architectonic structure of Roman Catholicism guided by the Gospel norm it is to be acknowledged that this approach is significantly different from other, if not all, previous theoretical theological positions which the author holds have not seriously attended to the content of the life of faith (Lonergan) or have failed to do so because they have built their position upon an imagining (Balthasar) rather than take as a starting point the empirical reality of the content of the life of faith encountered in the living Tradition.

Of note is that this empirical approach to an architectonic structure of Roman Catholicism rooted in the Gospel norm constitutes a huge offensive to those who propose ideal forms of theology - frequently lacking any christocentric point of reference, i.e. those theologies that begin from notions such as existentialism, hermeneutics, eschatology, linguistic analysis, process thought, liberation praxis; as there is a profound difference between objectifying a theology around a notion and constructing an architectonic structure that takes seriously: the human being's affirmation as a loving and knowing subject within the human community, the individual affirmation of the believing subject as part of the Church, the empirical content of the life of faith, and the empirical content of the life of the Sacred Liturgy of the Church.

As a theory, therefore, the proposed architectonic structure of Roman Catholicism rooted in the Gospel norm does appear to account for the empirical evidence manifest in the Tradition with a high degree of plausibility. However, since Popper has pointed out that the truth of theories are not incorrigible¹⁴ the theory presented will of course need to be replaced by a better theory in those instances where it is proved to be inadequate.

¹⁴See Karl Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery and The Open Society and Its Enemies. The former deals with the theory of the natural sciences, the latter addresses the realm of political and social theory.

**Catechetics and the implications of deepening the understanding of the
whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine
Revelation according to the new perspective**

The new perspective casts fresh light on the discipline of catechetics because catechetics discovers its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith, and has as a constant point of reference the role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith. The new perspective thus presents a more developed comprehension of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation through which the work of catechetics can be informed.

This is achieved by bringing together the fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's contribution - particularly as it relates to the notion of the Gestalt-Christi as presented through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition - with those aspects of Lonergan's work which explore the structure of human consciousness and identify the transcendental precepts, the derivation of the functional specialties, the relationship between the different levels on which these specialties occur and their proper form of content. There is a sense then in which the new perspective provides the structure of a more sophisticated echo-chamber for the work of catechetics to nurture and enhance the echo of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi.

However, it must be remembered that this new theoretical perspective possesses the limitations inherent with its construction of being built upon, yet a development of: the relationship between one way of understanding the bond between revelation and faith, the fundamental theological position of one theologian (Balthasar), and the epistemological stance on another theologian (Lonergan).

Catechetics and the transcendental precepts as applied to the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi

When the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi was understood from the perspective of transcendental method two related sets of precepts were identified as necessary for an authentic response of faith. Firstly, the way of ascent - from the level of experience to understanding to judgement to value - yielded the need on behalf of the individual to: be attentive to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; be intelligent in relating to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; be reasonable in relating to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; be responsible in relating to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi. Secondly, the way of descent - from the level of value to judgement to understanding to experience - yielded the need for a person as an integral part of a community to: communally value the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; communally acknowledge the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; communally understand the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; and communally attend to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi.

Therefore, as the ecclesial ministry of catechetics concerns itself with those individuals who have converted to Jesus Christ and strive to follow him as part of his Church, the identification of the corresponding precepts in the directions of personal and communal appropriation of the act of faith in response to his risen person become ever important if that ministry is to be implemented effectively and authentically. This is because the precepts reveal the different aspects of the faith-response that must be attended to if the response of Christian faith by the individual as part of the Church is to acknowledge and recognize the echo of faith in Jesus Christ as the Word of God within every level of the believer's human mind.

Thus catechetics must teach believers how to be attentive to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; how to be intelligent in relating to the Gestalt-Christi; how to be

reasonable in relating to the Gestalt-Christi; how to be responsible in relating to the Gestalt-Christi. Similarly it must also teach believers how to communally value the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; how to communally acknowledge the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; how to communally understand the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi; and how to communally attend to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi. Consequently catechetics can be understood as a ministry which seeks how to nurture and develop the response of faith to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the various levels of consciousness of the human subject in the directions of both personal and communal appropriation.

Thus in the direction of personal appropriation the empirical level of Christian faith corresponds to that of awakening the gift of faith; the intellectual level of Christian faith corresponds to that of understanding the gift of faith more thoroughly; the rational level of Christian faith corresponds to that of coming to a greater knowledge of the gift of faith; the responsible level of Christian faith corresponds to the exercise of the gift of faith through decision made on the plane of value. Consequently the fullness of faith-response in this direction has the inter-related dimensions of: awakening faith, intelligent faith, reasonable faith, and responsible faith.

However, there is also the direction of communal appropriation through the living Tradition of the Church which is also integral to the work of catechetics. Thus the responsible level of Christian faith in this direction corresponds to the exercise of the gift of faith through communal decision on the level of value; the rational level of Christian faith corresponds to shared knowledge of the gift of faith; the intellectual level of the Christian faith corresponds to shared understanding of the gift of faith; the empirical level of Christian faith corresponds to the shared awakening of the gift of faith. Consequently the fullness of faith-response in this direction has the

inter-related dimensions of: shared responsible faith, shared reasonable faith, shared intelligent faith, and the shared awakening of faith.

Hence catechetics must seek to nurture and nourish all aspects of the faith-response made in relation to the Gestalt-Christi inclusive of the two directions which results in attending to: awakening personal faith, intelligent personal faith, reasonable personal faith, responsible personal faith, shared responsible faith, shared reasonable faith, shared intelligent faith, and the shared awakening of faith.

The new perspective and the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics

The General Directory for Catechesis⁸ identifies the criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechetics as necessarily: christocentric; ecclesial in character yet historic in nature; centred on the gift of salvation; seeking inculturation; possessing a meaningful message for the human person; and offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths. These criteria are inter-connected because they spring from the one source of the Word of God. Nonetheless the contention here is that the new perspective can throw more light on the nature of the inter-connections that comprise the criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechetics.

Christocentricity and the new perspective

The christocentricity of the Gospel message is established through the fact that Jesus Christ not only communicates the word of God, rather he is the Word of God. As such he is the fullness of God's Revelation. Thus catechetics as an ecclesial ministry

⁸GDC 97.

has the basic task of presenting to the believer the person of Christ and everything in relation to him.

From Balthasar's thought the presence of Jesus in the Church can be understood as that of the Gestalt-Christi made manifest as the Word of God through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Hence Christian faith can be viewed as a personal encounter between the human person and the manifestation of the person of Jesus as the Gestalt-Christi through the presentation of the Word of God revealed in Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Therefore through the new perspective catechetics can be presented as a ministry which nurtures and nourishes the response human beings (Christians) make to the revelation of the Gestalt-Christi as presented through the Sacred Scripture and the Sacred Tradition of the Church.

In other words the scheme of fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's theological contribution, because it is necessarily christocentric in character, can be used to cast light on the christocentric nature of catechetics.

Ecclesial character of catechetics and the new perspective

The transmission of the Gospel message possesses an inherent ecclesial character because catechesis is by nature, ecclesial. It is the Christian community who sponsors the process of transmitting the Gospel message by means of the ministry of catechesis. From this viewpoint the new perspective does not add much to catechetics' ecclesial character. However, there is also the sense in which the faith transmitted by the Church is one. This is usually understood to refer to all the disciples of Jesus scattered throughout the world who together form one community in Christ.⁹ However, the new perspective, with a particular debt to the contribution of Lonergan, allows this oneness of faith to be understood in an altogether new way.

⁹GDC 106.

The oneness of faith transmitted by the ecclesial community can now also be understood as the unity which comprises the faith-response made from integrating the objectification of the act of faith on the various levels of consciousness in the distinct phases of theology in relation to the Gestalt-Christi. This means that the 'one Faith' spoken of in Ephesians 4:5 can now be looked upon as the fullness of response made to Jesus as the Word of God which occurs on every level of each believer's consciousness. Similarly, catechetics may now be understood as a ministry that seeks to nurture and nourish the fullness of the response of faith made to Jesus as the Word of God that echoes on every level of each believer's consciousness.

In terms of the criteria identified as necessary for the authentic presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis it is relatively clear that the christocentric dimension and the ecclesial character of catechesis proceed from the nature of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi and the response of faith made by the individual within the ecclesial community. To explain the existence and inter-relatedness of the other five criteria of : salvation to be understood as gift; the possession of an historic nature; the promotion of inculturation; the possession of a meaningful message for the human person; and the conveying of the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths attention turns once again to the proper form of content of the functional specialties pertaining to the various levels of consciousness in each particular phase of theology.

The hypothesis here is that if the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the various levels of consciousness of the human subject in a particular phase of theology corresponds with a proper form of content then that same proper form of content should somehow be a stamp of the criteria recognized as necessary for the authentic promotion of the Gospel message in catechesis. In other words, the echo of faith in each dimension of consciousness must somehow be marked by the same proper form of content that was identified as

hallmarking the various dimensions on which the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi was objectified. This means that the different criteria identified as necessary for the authentic presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis is to possess a one-to-one correspondence with the proper form of content associated with the functional specialties of interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, and doctrine if the criteria are to reflect the fullness of the response of faith.

Salvation understood as gift as the catechetical function which corresponds to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of interpretation

The level of the understanding in the first phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of interpretation, where interpretation strives to comprehend what was meant by conceiving the data of consciousness as an intelligible unity. Thus the structuring of concepts or notions from the stimulation of the imagination to conceive experience in a new framework is characteristic of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. To understand salvation as gift is to stimulate the human imagination to conceive experience in the new light of what it means to enter into the gratuitous relationship of the Triune God through the person of Christ Jesus. The criterion of remembering that salvation is gift is therefore compatible with the proper form of content which pertains to the restructuring of human experience within the novel interpretation which flows from the encounter of faith with the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the catechetical function of salvation as gift can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of interpretation.

Historic character of catechesis as the catechetical function which corresponds to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of history

The level of the judgement in the first phase of theology correlates with the functional specialty of history. History seeks to ascertain and narrate what has happened. The determination of what has occurred and what was meant by its occurrence is distinctive of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The historic nature of catechesis flows from the fact that catechesis is realized within “the time of the Church”. Thus the economy of Salvation possesses an historical character since in transmitting the Gospel message today the Church starts from ‘the living awareness which she carries of it, has a constant “memory” of the saving events of the past and makes them known. In light of these, she interprets the present events of human history, where the Spirit of God is continually renewing the face of the earth, and she awaits with faith the Lord’s coming’.¹⁰ The criterion of the historic nature of catechesis is therefore compatible with the proper form of content which pertains to the determination of the occurrence of meaning and events which flows from the encounter of faith with the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the catechetical function of the historic character of catechesis can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of history.

¹⁰GDC 107.

The seeking of inculturation as the catechetical function which corresponds to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the decision in the first phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of dialectic

The level of decision in the first phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of dialectic. Dialectic strives to resolve the conflicts connected with values, facts, meanings, and experiences. The reconciliation of many viewpoints through discernment is representative of the proper form of content of this functional specialty.

The inculturation of the Gospel message requires the discernment of the most profound level of persons and peoples in such manner that the person of Jesus Christ - who is the Good News - touches them profoundly, and makes contact with the very heart of their cultures. The criterion of inculturation as integral to the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis is therefore compatible with the proper form of content which pertains to the ability to discern a position of reconciliation when faced with disparate realities revealed by the Gestalt-Christi as part of the encounter of faith. Hence the catechetical function of the seeking of inculturation can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the decision in the first phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of dialectic.

The promotion of meaning as the catechetical function which corresponds to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the decision in the second phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of foundations

The level of decision in the second phase of theology correlates with the functional specialty of foundations. Foundations strives to attend the reality of conversion comprehended as intimate, existential, and profoundly personal. In fact it stems from the explicit objectification of conversion itself. The transformation of the human subject and their world through an encounter of intimate communion with the person of Christ is particular to the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The promotion of the meaning of God's Revelation in Christ through catechesis ' "...is not...isolated from life or artificially juxtaposed to it. It is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life and it illumines the whole of life with the light of the Gospel, to inspire it or to question it"'.¹¹ And again, 'Catechesis operates through this identity of human experience between Jesus the Master and his disciple and teaches to think like him, to act like him, to love like him. To live communion with Christ is to experience the new life of grace'.¹² Thus the criterion of the promotion of the Gospel message as profoundly meaningful for the human person as integral to catechesis is therefore compatible with the proper form of content which pertains to the level of intimacy with which God relates to the human heart and calls to each person to conversion through the encounter of faith with the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the catechetical function of the promotion of meaning can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the decision in the second phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of foundations.

The teaching of the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths as the catechetical function which corresponds to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the

¹¹GDC 116.

¹²Ibid.

*Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the second phase of theology
pertaining to the functional specialty of doctrines*

The level of judgement in the second phase of theology relates to the functional specialty of doctrines. Doctrines seek to communicate both judgements of fact and judgements of value. The formulation of such judgements is representative of the proper form of content of this functional specialty. The Gospel message that catechetics transmits possesses a comprehensive hierarchical character and is a vital and consistent synthesis of the faith. From a christocentric perspective, it is ordered around the mystery of the Triune God, and with this as the point of origin the harmony of the entire Gospel message is understood to necessitate a “hierarchy of truths”.¹³ Thus the criterion of teaching the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths as integral to catechesis is therefore compatible with the proper form of content which pertains to the formulation of clear truths used to reveal the Gestalt-Christi. Hence the catechetical function of the teaching of the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths can be understood to correspond to the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the level of the judgement in the second phase of theology pertaining to the functional specialty of doctrines.

Recapitulation

Hence the hypothesis that the objectification of the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi on the various levels of consciousness of the human subject in a particular phase of theology corresponds with a proper form of content which comes to stamp, and correlates with, the criteria recognized as

¹³GDC 114.

necessary for the authentic promotion of the Gospel message in catechesis has been shown to possess validity.

In other words, it has been demonstrated that the echo of faith in each dimension of consciousness is marked by the same proper form of content that was identified as hallmarking the various dimensions on which the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi was objectified.

This means that the different criteria identified as necessary for the authentic presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis as: salvation to be understood as gift; the possession of an historic nature; the promotion of inculturation; the possession of a meaningful message for the human person; and the conveying of the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths; has been shown to possess a one-to-one correspondence with the proper form of content associated with the functional specialties of interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, and doctrines respectively. Not only that, it has also been evidenced that the different criteria must always be presented in relation to the Gestalt-Christi because they constitute different dimensions of the echo of faith which is only truly intelligible if made in reference to his person.

The content of the criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics

The identification of the criteria (of salvation to be understood as gift; the possession of an historic nature; the promotion of inculturation; the possession of a meaningful message for the human person; and the conveying of the Gospel message as a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths) for the presentation of the

Gospel message in catechetics has come about through illustrating the one-to-one correspondence of each of the criteria with the proper form of content associated with each of the functional specialties. However, this begs the question as to where the content of each of the identified criteria as previously identified in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) originates.

To help explain this, the hypothesis here is that the content of each of the identified criteria must possess a further one-to-one correspondence with the proper form of content associated with each of the functional specialties of interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, and doctrine if the workings of the human mind identified by Lonergan in the theological undertaking are to prove consistent. In other words, it would be consistent with this analysis if each identified criterion for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechetics was shown to possess five dimensions that correspond to the proper form of content associated with the functional specialties of interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, and doctrine as harmonious with the pattern of the workings of the human mind as related to the fullness of the response of faith.

The criterion of proclaiming the gift of salvation and the form of its content

For this criterion the dimension that corresponds to the proper form of content of the functional specialty of interpretation resides in the notion that salvation be understood as integral. In other words the entire existence of the Christian is to be interpreted from within the new horizon of life in Christ. As St. Paul states, 'For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation' (2 Cor 5:17). The gift of salvation means the Christian must interpret his or her life through, with, and in Christ.

The proper form of content associated with the functional specialty of history and which concurs with the gift of salvation is manifest in the reality of the existence of

the Church as the seed and the source of the Kingdom of God on earth. The gift of salvation comes to the world through the historical reality of the Church.

In Jesus' announcing of the gift of the Kingdom through the proclamation of God's judgement and the responsibility of humanity the third dimension of the gift consciousness of salvation is shown. Here the proper form of content that accords with the functional specialty of dialectic is clearly revealed through the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom in whose light humanity will be judged.

The fourth dimension of the criterion of salvation as gift resides in the fact that it is in the very person of Jesus Christ that the Kingdom of God is inaugurated. This corresponds with the proper form of content consistent with the functional specialty of foundations.

Lastly, the proper form of content that corresponds with the functional specialty of doctrine in relation to the criterion of salvation as gift is displayed through the truth that Jesus testifies to God as Father in the most simple and direct terms.

The criterion of the historical character of the Gospel message and the form of its content

The proper form of content of the functional specialty of interpretation is manifest as a dimension of the historical character of catechetics by virtue of the promotion by the Church of the living awareness of the Christian message. This form of content is clearly evidenced through the Church's role and task of interpreting contemporary events of human history in light of the workings of the Holy Spirit.

It is the presentation of the 'deeds and words' of God's revelation to humanity in salvation history that evidences the proper form of content that corresponds with the

functional specialty of history in relation to the criterion of historical significance. These 'deeds and words' are presented through Biblical catechesis.

The movement from sign to mystery by facilitating the passage from the 'deeds and words' of Revelation to the 'mystery contained in them' corresponds to the proper form of content of the functional specialty of dialectic where encounter with Christ's humanity must lead to the discovery of the mystery of the Son of God; where encounter with the historical Church must lead to the discovery of the mystery of the Church as the sacrament of salvation; and where encounter with the 'signs of the times' must lead to the discovery of the mystery of God's presence and plan.

The fourth dimension of the historical criterion resides in a mystagogy through which catechetics is to promote the spiritual dimension of the great events of the history of salvation especially by means of the sacraments, in order to re-live the history of salvation in the 'today' of the Church's liturgy. This dimension seeks to promote the spiritual understanding of the economy of salvation and thus resonates with the proper form of content harmonious with the functional specialty of foundations.

The proper form of content of the functional specialty of doctrine is seen to be manifest as part of the historical criterion where the 'today' of salvation history is illuminated through the exegesis of the Creed and the content of Christian morality through the appropriate doctrinal catechesis.

The criterion of seeking inculturation and the form of its content

The fundamental prerequisite of the inculturation of the Gospel message is to present it in a manner that is intelligible and coherent. This 'shape' to be put on the Gospel message corresponds to the proper form of content harmonious with the functional specialty of interpretation.

The second dimension that can be identified is that of the ecclesial community functioning as the principal factor of inculturation. This corresponds to the proper form of content consistent with the functional specialty of history.

Furthermore, the role played by the ecclesial community in discerning what to take up or discard as compatible with the faith clearly resonates with the proper form of content harmonious with the functional specialty of dialectic.

Penultimately on this point, the proper form of content of the functional specialty foundations is manifest in regard to this criterion through the aim of making the Gospel touch the deepest level of both peoples and persons in the transmission of the Christian message. This is to be achieved by presenting the response of faith as ever to be made to the person of Jesus Christ, who is the Gospel.

Fifthly, in respect of the functional specialty of doctrine its proper form of content becomes manifest through the drawing up of local catechisms in response to the demands of different cultures.

The criterion of promoting a meaningful message for the human person and its proper form of content

For this element of catechetical criteria the proper form of content of the various functional specialties corresponds to a particular type of catechesis.

Thus Biblical catechesis corresponds with the proper form of content consistent with the functional specialty of interpretation where present day experience is to be interpreted through the lens of the Old Testament, of Jesus Christ and the Church, in which the Spirit of the risen Lord constantly lives, renews, and acts.

Liturgical catechesis is to make constant reference to the great human experiences that originated in Jewish and Christian culture through the signs and symbols of liturgical actions. This corresponds with the proper form of content consistent with the functional specialty of history as resonant with the historico-salvific today of the liturgy.

Moral catechesis is to attend to the discernment of values in demonstrating what makes human existence worthy of the Gospel and thus evidences the proper form of content consonant with the functional specialty of dialectic.

As the goal of 'first evangelization' is to show how the Gospel totally satisfies the human heart this can be understood to be harmonious with the proper form of content corresponding to the functional specialty of foundations.

Doctrinal catechesis is thus the proper form of content that corresponds with the functional specialty of doctrine and is evidenced through the explanation of the Creed which displays the major themes of the faith as ever sources of light and life for the human person.

The criterion of offering a comprehensive message with its own hierarchy of truths and its proper form of content

The proper form of content that corresponds to the functional specialty of interpretation for this criterion resides in the fact that the history of salvation is organized around the person of Jesus Christ as the centre of salvation history. The locus for Christian doctrine must ever be Christ himself.

Secondly, the proper form of content of the functional specialty history is manifest in the existence of the sacraments of the Church. As instruments of the pilgrim Church

the sacraments allow believers to participate in the dying and rising of Christ as they journey to the Father.

Thirdly, the proper form of content of the functional specialty of dialectic is revealed in the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbour. These commandments form the magna carta of the moral message of the Gospel.

Fourthly, the functional specialty of foundations and its proper form of content are manifest in the teaching of prayer through the 'Our Father'. This reveals how the believer is to pray at the level of the heart.

Fifthly, catechetics is to promote the Apostles' Creed as an integration and means of reading all of the Church's doctrine, which is hierarchically structured around it. This evidences the proper form of content resonant with the functional specialty of doctrine.

Thus it is consistent with this analysis to show that each criterion possesses five dimensions that correspond to the proper form of content associated with the functional specialties of interpretation, history, dialectic, foundations, and doctrine as harmonious with the pattern of the workings of the human mind as related to the fullness of the response of faith. The following table provides a summary of the proper form of content of each functional specialty as it corresponds to each catechetical criterion:

	Form of content proper to Interpretation	Form of content proper to History	Form of content proper to Dialectic	Form of content proper to Foundations	Form of content proper to Doctrine
Gift consciousness of salvation	Salvation as integral	Church as the beginning of the Kingdom	Jesus proclaims God's judgement	Kingdom of God inaugurated in person of Jesus	Jesus testifies to God as Father in simple terms
Historical significance	Living awareness of the Christian message	Presentation of salvation history	Encounter mystery of God and discern way forward	Present 'spiritual' dimension of salvation history	Explain Creed and content of Christian morality
Inculturation	Demonstrate Christian message as intelligible	Ecclesial community as principal factor of inculturation	Discern what is compatible with the faith	Gospel to touch deepest level of persons and peoples	Drawing up of local catechisms
Meaningful message	Biblical catechesis	Liturgical catechesis	Moral catechesis	First evangelization	Doctrinal catechesis
Comprehensive message with hierarchy of truth	Organized in reference to Jesus Christ	Sacraments as instruments of the Church	Love of God and love of neighbour	'Our Father' as synthesis and treasure of prayer	Apostles' Creed as synthesis and key to Church doctrine

Some further implications

Thus with the Gestalt-Christi as the fundamental point of reference, the new perspective helps explain why the ecclesial ministry of catechetics must begin with him and return to him if the design of God's revelation to humanity is to be respected.

Likewise the new perspective reveals the content of faith to encompass the five inter-related dimensions of: the act of faith made on the level of the understanding in the first phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of the judgement in the first phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of decision in the first phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of decision in the second phase of theology; the act of faith made on the level of judgement in the second phase of theology.

Consequently catechetics must seek not only how to nurture and nourish the making of the act of faith by the believer in respect of these five dimensions, it must also seek to communicate to the believer the content of faith proper to each of the dimensions. Therefore the new perspective clearly reveals that the content of catechesis must be understood to be much wider than, yet inclusive of, the content proper to the act of faith made on the level of judgement in the second phase of theology - which is perhaps best exemplified by a work such as The Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Nevertheless, the most significant contribution made to the discipline of catechetics by the creation of the new perspective probably lies in the fact that the new perspective does present a more developed comprehension of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation through which the work of catechetics can be informed. It not only attends to why catechetics is shaped the way it is - it also explains how catechetics comes to be shaped that way. In other words the new perspective shows a way in which the human mind is understood to relate to the Word of God in such manner that the response of faith and its echo respect both the revelation of the *Gesalt-Christi* through the Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Church, and the workings of the human mind, called by that Word. Hence it is a detailed theoretical template that can be applied to all 'Those To Be Catechized'¹⁴- e.g. adults, children, persons with a developmental disability, etc. because it does provide a developed understanding of the entire structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation through which knowledge of the faith can be communicated to each individual according to their capacity.

¹⁴GDC 163-214.

**Re-visitation of the assessment of some existing theoretical catechetical material
in light of the identification of the norms and criteria for the transmission of the
Gospel message in catechesis as postulated in the General Directory for
Catechesis (1997) from the stance of the new perspective**

The new perspective offers a more developed theoretical template that maps out the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith and the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in such a way that theoretical contributions that seek to inform the ministry of catechesis can be critiqued more precisely.

This is possible because the new perspective offers a comprehensive construct that takes account of a way in which the human mind is understood to relate to the Word of God in such manner that the response of faith and its echo respect both the revelation of the *Gesalt-Christi* through the Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition of the Church, and the workings of the human mind, called by God's Word Jesus Christ.

In other words the new perspective does not simply identify the norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message, it also explains their derivation from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith on the part of the believer. Thus any deficiencies found in relation to theoretical catechetical contributions when compared with the new perspective will necessarily result from adopted positions that have not done full justice to the structure and expansiveness of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation in Christ Jesus and the response of faith of the Christian as incorporated into the Church.

For the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) the new perspective offers the possibility not only of explaining the derivation of the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis more thoroughly, it also clarifies the relationship between these norms and criteria and their content because it presents a notion of catechesis derived from the understanding of the faith response made in relation to the person of Jesus Christ that takes into account the principles and autonomy of the human mind called to make the faith response. In clarifying the derivation of the catechetical content from the relationship that exists between the catechetical criteria and the various dimensions of the human mind in which the faith response echoes, the new perspective also offers a way to comprehend the relationship between catechetics and religious education (understood as that enterprise primarily concerned with the communication of the catechetical content proper to doctrine) which respects the integrity of the faith response. Thus religious education can be understood to correspond with the form of content proper to doctrine, which in turn must be presented within the wider perspective and its relationship to the other forms of content proper to interpretation, history, dialectic, and foundations. Thus from the stance of the new perspective religious education must be presented as that part of an integral meta-approach to catechetics whose concern is the presentation of the content proper to doctrine.

Similarly the contribution made by the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2, (1997) edited by Michael Warren which identified various dimensions relevant to catechesis (i.e. Initiation and Worship; Culture and Inculturation; The Ecclesial Zone of Catechesis; Evaluating Catechetical Structures and Developments; Catechism and Catechesis; Church (Catholic) School; Ecclesial Documents) and gathered them around the notion of ecclesial fidelity can be critiqued more precisely.

From the stance of the new perspective it becomes even clearer why the point of origin of catechesis must be recognised as the word of God and not simply the notion of ecclesial fidelity - faith is the response made to the word of God. Similarly the new perspective clearly holds up the person of Christ Jesus as God's Word to be the revelation to whom the believer is to make a faith response. It is more than a little strange then that a book dedicated to the provision of sources for catechesis chooses to ignore the supreme source of God's life for us - the person of Jesus Christ as the Word of God.

The new perspective also reveals why it is somewhat inaccurate and simplistic to suggest the various dimensions that have been identified can all be legitimately and simply gathered around the notion of ecclesial fidelity. The reality is simply more nuanced than that. Rather the various dimensions associated with catechesis must be understood in terms of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made in accord with the autonomy and principles of the human mind as catechetics always has as its point of reference the task of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and of leading human beings to faith and conversion.

Furthermore the new perspective reveals that some of the identified dimensions referred to in the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 find their proper place within a more developed notion of the response of faith made to the divine Revelation as derived criteria shaped by a particular mode of consciousness e.g. Initiation and Worship; Culture and Inculturation and thus are intrinsically related to one another as essential elements of the act of faith. Whilst other dimensions clearly

treat of matters more organizational and practical e.g. Evaluating Catechetical Structures and Developments.

Thus the new perspective helps to explain not only the relationship that exists between the various norms and different criteria that are intrinsic to the act of faith and thus are directly related to the nature of catechesis, it also allows the identification of which elements are proper to the act of faith and which considerations lie beyond this pale.

Hence the new perspective can be used both to appraise whether or not a particular theoretical catechetical contribution has treated of the constitutive elements intrinsic to the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith, and whether or not the same constitutive elements have been accorded their proper place in the plan of things.

Likewise when the new perspective is applied to the assessment of Thomas H. Groome's contribution a more precise critique is evidenced.

Firstly, the new perspective grounds the nature of catechetics in the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith. However, for Groome the ground of catechetics is the educational enterprise. This means that for Groome the word of God is not the source of catechetics. Thus he finds his source, which dictates the nature of his form of catechetics, from a location outwith the bond that exists between the divine Revelation and the response of faith.

Secondly, this has the knock-on effect of totally dismissing the necessary christocentric dimension of catechesis demanded for the authentic transmission of the

Gospel message. Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is not the source of the catechetical enterprise in Groome's scheme of things.

Moreover, the object of faith for Groome is the Kingdom of God - divorced from the person of Jesus. Thus the response of faith in Groome's schema is made to a set of disembodied values held to represent the Kingdom as opposed to a personal response made to the revelation of the person of the risen Lord. How precisely this former invitation and response is to occur is difficult to conceive whereas the new perspective conceives the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith in a coherent and consistent manner that respects the workings of the human mind.

Thirdly, because Groome does not fully appear to appreciate the nature of the Church he brings in the historical-existential perspective through an appeal to philosophy rather than understand the ecclesial and historic dimensions of catechesis as necessarily flowing from, and being constitutive elements of, the relationship that exists between the Word of God and the faith response of the Christian incorporated into the Church.

In similar vein he attends to the issue of inculturation from an extrinsic perspective rather than understanding it as a derived criterion intrinsic to the totality of the faith response. The same can be said of his treatment, or lack of it, in regard to the elements of meaning and doctrine.

In fact Groome's position is revealed as an ingenious amalgam of eclectic elements simplistically gathered around the collective term 'Christian Religious Education' when held before and compared with the consistent, coherent, and inter-related unity

of the norms and criteria of the new perspective derived from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi and the response of faith.

Furthermore when the new perspective is used to critique the contribution of Jim Gallagher SDB as presented in Soil for the Seed, particularly as applied to his pastoral and theological reflections. Here the new perspective clearly reveals the difference between Gallagher's approach and an approach that is grounded in the relationship that exists between the various norms and different criteria that are intrinsic to the act of faith by explicating and analysing the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the principles and autonomy of the human mind.

Whereas the former presents a series of reflections gathered around the idea of the author's service to the Church and his subsequent associated learnings, the latter offers a template derived from the nature of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the corresponding faith response.

Effectively then the new perspective explains in a consistent and coherent manner the relationship between Christian faith, doctrine and life that Gallagher struggled to explain. The new perspective presents the integrity constitutive of the relationship between the divine Revelation and the response of faith as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind - and which comes to be reflected in the nature of catechetics - in such manner that Christian faith, doctrine and life are understood and shown to be intrinsically and properly related. In similar fashion the new perspective also explains that the integrity afforded to the content of faith must come to possess a direct correspondence with the content of catechetical criteria.

Indeed this latter truth helps greatly in clarifying the difference between catechetics and religious education which Gallagher also sought to address yet could not do so convincingly as he had failed to construct or borrow a sufficiently developed theoretical template to address the relationship between the divine Revelation of Jesus Christ and the response of faith made according to the autonomy and principles of the human mind.

Recapitulation

Hence as a developed theoretical template the new perspective offers a detailed and thorough map of the contours of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi and the response of faith and the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis.

The new perspective also reveals the inter-relatedness of the various elements of the norms and criteria of catechesis that are intrinsic to the act of faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi as consistent with the workings of the human mind.

Correspondingly, as a developed theoretical template the new perspective also allows those theoretical contributions that seek to inform the ministry of catechesis to be assessed with a high degree of insight and precision when weighed against it.

**Some reflections on the relationship between the theory developed in the thesis
and catechetical practice**

This chapter offers some reflections on the relationship between the theory developed in the thesis and catechetical practice.

Christian praxis is to exist on the level between the catechists and those who are responsible for training and guiding them in the ministry of catechesis. It is to exist on the level of the catechists themselves as they reflect on the performance of their ministry in relation to those they seek to catechize. It is to exist on the level of both the catechists and those being catechized in relation to their collective behaviour as a measure of how much they are all growing in God's love revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

Some examples of the practical implementation of the theory in catechetical practice

This section offers three examples of the practical implementation of the theory in catechetical practice from the author's experience. The three models are: (1) Parish catechesis for children - St. Roch's, Garngad, Glasgow; (2) Catechesis of infants in St. Blane's Roman Catholic Primary School, Summerston, Glasgow; (3) Ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year - general application.

Also each of these accounts describes in concrete terms the dialectical relationship between theory and practice that was adopted by the author in the development of the catechetical approach advocated in this thesis. In each instance the guiding principles were used to assist the design of catechesis for different target audiences.

Each account is followed by some comments that assess each case in relation to the thesis as measured against the criteria of faithfulness to the Roman Catholic Tradition; an approach that possesses internal coherence; an approach adequate to people's experience; and one that bears practical fruitfulness.

Parish catechesis for children - St. Roch's, Garngad, Glasgow

The author met with the then parish priest of St. Roch's, Rev. Angus MacDonald - now Spiritual Director of the National Seminary, Scotus College - to discuss the method of approach to catechetics that was being promoted with a view of helping to guide the implementation of this approach in the parish.

The Rev. MacDonald wished to begin catechesis for children led by adult parishioners who would be their catechists. It was envisaged that two or more adults would be responsible for each particular group of children. The final ratio of adults to children would be dependent upon the number of adults and the number of children coming forward to participate in the venture. However, an aspect of the model sought by Rev. MacDonald was for the adult catechists to work as a team in preparing the material which they would then deliver in teams to the children.

The author outlined his approach as one that focussed on the person of Jesus, that understood catechesis as nurturing and nourishing the gift of loving and knowing Jesus, and emphasised the primacy of love in the catechetical process. The importance of a liturgical approach to catechetics and the need to awaken the influence of Jesus in each person's life history was also stressed along with the need to monitor the various levels involved in catechetical work i.e. the level between himself as the parish priest and the catechists he would appoint; the level between the catechists themselves; and the level of the relationship between the catechists and the children they sought to catechize.

The author then spoke of the need for the catechists to make any programme that would be developed their own. To this end it was also suggested that adopting a praxis mode on the various levels of catechetical work previously identified would probably help achieve this for the parish priest, adult catechists, and children alike.

The author suggested it would be possible to train the catechists in the overarching approach that was advocated and provide the catechists with lesson plans - inclusive of para-liturgical content - based on Christ-centred themes that would guarantee a working structure of this approach within which the catechists would need to create and discover appropriate content with which to work with the children in resonance with the chosen theme being explored.

It would be up to the catechists in dialogue with their parish priest to choose which theme or themes to be explored on any particular occasion along with the appropriate content. It was also noted that the same theme could be explored on more than one occasion. Nevertheless the syllabus of themes for such parish catechesis was to be decided by the parish priest and the catechists through dialogue in light of the spiritual needs of the children and the overall goal of their particular parish catechesis.

This approach was deemed acceptable by the Rev. MacDonald. However, for his own reasons to do with the parish situation he did caution the use of terms like 'catechist' and 'catechesis' as these would not necessarily be part of the peoples' vocabulary. He also wished the notion of 'training' to be played down in favour of the idea that the adult parishioners involved would be passing on the gift of faith that was already in their possession and thus they would come to understand their work as more that of awakening and sharing the gift of loving and knowing Jesus than thinking they had to be trained in something they (presumably) thought they did not know.

After several meetings with the Rev. MacDonald in preparation for the training of the parish catechists the author finally met with those adult parishioners who had come forward to participate in the venture.

The input by the author was given over several occasions and was mainly dedicated to the communication of the guiding principles constitutive of the form of catechetics that was advocated. The adults were also told that lesson plans would be provided from which they, in dialogue with their parish priest, could design appropriate lessons with which to engage the children.

Thus the catechists were urged to understand their faith in Jesus as a gift that was already in their possession and it was suggested they come to understand their work as that of awakening and sharing their gift of loving and knowing Jesus with the children. The work of catechetics was presented as the work of bringing the children into communion with the person of Jesus. The catechists readily adopted this position.

From this foundation of focussing on the person of Jesus the author then stressed the primacy of love over knowledge in the faith response and suggested to the assembled adults that adopting a posture of love to the children was the most important perspective to bring to the venture - although the dimension of communicating knowledge was also vital. Again the catechists readily adopted this position.

It was then suggested that to help develop the implementation of catechetics in the name of Jesus it was important to continuously review each level on which the catechetics took place i.e. the level between the parish priest and the catechists; the level between the catechists themselves; and the level of the relationship between the catechists and the children they sought to catechize.

To this end the author urged the adults to engage in their work of catechetics from the perspective of monitoring the different levels of catechesis through the manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Spirit - with primacy given to love, along with the assessment of the practical and theoretical content of the lessons they engaged in with the children.

The author then suggested that to lead the children in this form of catechetics firstly required the catechists to have travelled a similar path before them. The author then engaged the catechists in some spiritual exercises to awaken in them the following dimensions.

Thus for each child to have the possibility of being awakened to their relationship with Jesus and the influence of the Holy Spirit in their life history as part of the Church through participation in the Sacred Liturgy required that each catechist comes to understand their own relationship with Jesus and the influence of his Holy Spirit in their own life history as part of the Church through participation in the Sacred Liturgy.

For each child to have the possibility of being awakened to their relationship with Jesus in making the Gospel values their own through respect for their human dignity and the right to choose according to their conscience necessitates each catechist comes to understand that to inculcate the values of Jesus they must possess respect for their own human dignity and the dignity of others and respect for the right of all people to follow the dictates of their conscience.

For each child to have the possibility of being awakened to their relationship with Jesus as the one true Teacher who preserves the integrity of the Gospel message requires that each catechist truly believes that the person of Jesus Christ is the one true teacher of the Catholic faith.

For each child to have the possibility of being awakened to the relationship with Jesus and the hierarchy of the truths of the faith centred around his person necessitates that each catechist understands this relationship between the hierarchy of truths and the person of Jesus.

For each child to have the possibility of being awakened to the relationship with Jesus and the meaningful dimension of the Gospel message requires that each catechist discovers the supreme meaning of their life through, with, and in relation to the person of Jesus to whom they give living witness.

After the initial training period of the catechists the author left the above mentioned lesson plans with the parish priest and made the arrangement to be called upon as required to assist the implementation of the parish catechetics that was being implemented on an on-going developmental basis.

The author was called upon several times to help the catechists gain a deeper understanding of some specific aspects of the approach as required.

In particular through dialogue with the catechists and the Rev. MacDonald the importance of each lesson to have a clear aim centred on some aspect of the person of Jesus for the catechists to communicate as the aim of each session, and for the children to appropriate became increasingly important. Similarly it also proved helpful to remind the catechists that a theme could be explored more than once, or indeed that the same theme might be explored over several sessions.

The catechists also underlined the importance of the liturgical dimension of the catechetical lessons and said that this helped make attendance at Sunday Eucharist more meaningful for both themselves and the children.

The name given to this parish catechesis by the catechists and the children was 'The God Squad'. In the opinion of the Rev. Angus MacDonald the creation and running of 'The God Squad' was a major success story of St. Roch's parish.

Assessment of the example of 'Parish catechesis for children - St. Roch's, Garngad, Glasgow' in relation to the thesis

'Parish catechesis for children - St. Roch's, Garngad, Glasgow' is an example which shows that the approach advocated in the thesis can bear fruit in some areas of a parish's life.

Its ready adoption by the priest, catechists, and those being catechized bears witness that the approach was accepted as being faithful to the Roman Catholic Tradition by taking as its focus the person of Jesus revealed in the Sacred Liturgy of the Church.

The approach also allowed catechesis to occur in a planned and comprehensible manner showing the importance of such a method possessing an internal consistency that enabled continuity within catechetical lessons and between catechetical lessons.

Similarly the method of approach proved adequate to the experience of the catechists and those to be catechized in such manner that those who participated in the enterprise found it to be meaningful and worthwhile in terms of enlightening their life history in relation to the person of Jesus.

In terms of practical fruitfulness the method of approach advocated by the thesis enabled a group of parishioners along with their parish priest to help design and implement a catechesis for children based on the person of Jesus in resonance with the Sacred Liturgy as celebrated in their local parish. This catechesis was deemed to

be fruitful for the catechists, the participating children, and - in turn -the parish community.

Altogether the approach enabled a ministry of catechesis for children to be birthed and developed in a parish where such a ministry did not previously exist.

Catechesis of infants in St. Blane's Roman Catholic Primary School, Summerston, Glasgow

The author was approached by Ms. Mary Rocchiccioli, an infant teacher in St. Blane's Roman Catholic Primary School, and asked if it were possible to help develop an approach to nurture the faith of the children in her charge.

She was deeply concerned that the content of the syllabus she was obliged to teach as part of her job was, in her opinion, not really nourishing any faith the children already possessed.

As a teacher of over twenty years experience in this field she felt that the official syllabus material failed to present the faith in relation to Jesus in favour of presenting content that focussed on the natural world (e.g. stories of hedgehogs) or the world of everyday experience (e.g. putting on a warm coat) after which some tenuous connection would be made between the story or experience in relation to God - simply designated as 'God'.

It was not that the syllabus material was bad in itself, rather Jesus was not given pride of place in the presentation of the Catholic faith by material that sought to present the Catholic faith, and the role played by the Church was that of a silent partner.

On further inquiry the author discovered that the other teachers of the infant department of St. Blane's also shared this concern and after gaining the approval of

the then head teacher Ms. Theresa O'Connor decided to work with Ms. Rocchiccioli in designing an approach that was more Jesus centred if the approach offered by the author was deemed acceptable.

Initially, then, the author presented his approach as built on the the norm of Jesus Christ and the influence of his Holy Spirit in the life history of believers as part of the Church through their participation in the Sacred Liturgy. As such a liturgical catechesis would be an important aspect of the approach advocated.

Likewise the primacy given to love and the need for the teacher to love the children and for the children to love the teacher and one another in Jesus' name as manifest in concrete behaviour were stated as integral components of the approach. The manifestation of the fruits of the Holy Spirit - with primacy given to love - between the teacher and the children, and between the children themselves would therefore be the yardstick used to measure the success of the approach.

Similarly the importance in this type of catechesis of the relationship between the person of Jesus and the various dimensions of each individual's life (i.e. life history, appropriation of Gospel values according to conscience, integrity of living the Gospel message, understanding the truths of the faith in relation to Jesus in accord with their capacity, and discovering the meaning of their Christian life in relation to Jesus) was stressed as essential to the advocated approach.

Once the guiding principles of the author's approach were accepted and after further consultation the task identified was to design a type of catechesis guided by the principles of the theory that brought a Christ centered approach to the world of infant catechesis whilst at the same time acknowledging that the official syllabus had also to be taught.

Eventually it was decided that the catechesis advocated by the author could provide an overarching context within which the official syllabus could be taught thus presenting the content of the official syllabus in a more Christ centred manner.

The means through which this was achieved was by the author producing a significant number of lesson plans all of which possessed themes that centred on the believers' relationship with Jesus. For example, 'To be a friend of Jesus' or 'To love one another as Jesus loves us'. The lesson plans also included a short simple prayer based on the chosen theme and a para-liturgical service also based on the chosen theme that incorporated a time for each child to share a story from their life history in resonance with the theme.

It was the responsibility of the teacher to choose a lesson plan whose theme was in line with the official syllabus that would be taught that particular week.

On the Monday morning the teacher would introduce the theme for the week to the children and then say the short prayer with them. Throughout the day the teacher would remind the children of the goal and urge them to do their best to live it throughout the day in the classroom, at playtime, at dinner time, and when they went home e.g. 'To love one another as Jesus loves us'. The same short prayer would then be said at the end of the school day. The teacher would teach the official syllabus within this thematic context.

This was to happen on each school day up to Friday afternoon at which point a para-liturgical celebration based on the theme of the week was celebrated with the children (and, on occasion, some of their parents).

Of note is that the themes of the lesson plans, although dedicated to some aspect/s of the person of Christ, also had to possess the potential of being concretely meaningful

in relation to the life experience of the children. Thus the lesson plans themselves were acknowledged as always in need of on-going revision through dialogue with the teacher/s and the feedback from the children.

For example, in a lesson plan dedicated to ‘Sharing in the many gifts Jesus has given us’ - to celebrate the gift of Creation - it was decided to incorporate stories from the children about shopping at their local Asda supermarket as part of the para-liturgical service because this experience held significant meaning in their eyes.

The situation at present is that the author is still in on-going contact with Ms. Rocchiccioli with the view of continuing the refinement of the approach in acknowledgement of the dialectical relationship between the present state of the theory and the present implementation of catechetical practice in St. Blane’s.

Presently the catechetical approach advocated by the author has developed from being used solely by Ms. Rocchiccioli as a pilot project and is now incorporated within the official policy plan of the school for the entire infant department.

Feedback from the teachers of infants who have used the approach is positive. They unanimously agree that the approach provides a means of teaching the children about Jesus in such a way that their behaviour and that of the children is influenced. Some teachers have also commented that the approach has helped to bring a much needed spiritual dimension to their chosen profession.

Also the teachers have found the approach allows them to address the problem of bullying and unruly behaviour among the children from the creative context of urging the children to adopt a posture of love as advocated by the person of Jesus.

However, perhaps the most significant impact to date was that the improvement of one child's disturbed behaviour was adjudged by a visiting psychologist, and noted in the psychologist's official report, to be profoundly influenced for the better by the catechetical approach advocated in this thesis.

Assessment of the example of 'Catechesis of infants in St. Blane's Roman Catholic Primary School, Summerston, Glasgow' in relation to the thesis

'Catechesis of infants in St. Blane's Roman Catholic Primary School, Summerston, Glasgow' is one example that shows the advocated approach of the thesis can prove fruitful in some areas of the catechesis of infants in a Roman Catholic Primary School.

Its ready adoption by the infant teachers - to the extent that the approach has now been incorporated into the official policy plan for the infant department - evidences a degree of acceptance with which the approach has been viewed and understood as consistent with the Roman Catholic Tradition.

The internal consistency of the approach has meant not only that each teacher could effectively design and implement relevant catechetical lessons utilising this means, it also enabled the approach to be adopted in such manner that it enhanced and complemented much of the material of the official syllabus already in existence.

Likewise the method of approach proved adequate to the experience of the teachers and the experience of the children alike. This was revealed through the fact that the behaviour of both parties has been influenced for the better largely because they have found the approach of nurturing people into a deeper communion with the person of Jesus to be worthwhile and meaningful.

The practical fruitfulness of the approach has been evidenced through a catechesis of the children by their teachers as conducted in a more Christ centred manner that concretely influences behaviour in relation to a posture of love.

Ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year - general application

The realisation of the need for an ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year was a long time in germinating. It began in 1995 when the author commenced work with a group of five practicing Catholics all of whom wished to deepen their spirituality in some way yet were not quite sure what this meant or how to go about it.

What was clear was that each person had a thirst to develop their life of Catholic faith and was willing to engage in a search to try to quench that thirst. However, all five people thought that the provision of courses offered by different Catholic religious orders, religious congregations or agencies were far too expensive given their income and the prevailing economic climate. Although all five members attended Sunday mass in their own local parish all five felt there was something more they needed to do to live their faith to the full. The group consisted of three men and three women inclusive of the author - all of whom met voluntarily.

The author engaged in dialogue as part of the group and after an initial soul searching/brainstorming meeting suggested that a possible start might be made by putting together a flexible programme based on some of the movements found in the scriptural passage 'The Road to Emmaus' (Luke 24:13-35) that could possibly help the group members develop their appreciation of the Catholic faith and grow spiritually.

This would be achieved by the group members engaging in spiritual exercises led by the author which the author was familiar with from his work in parish missions, retreats, and from his development of a spirituality for catechists within the context of the SPRED programme. This was deemed acceptable. The group would meet for a two hour session every two weeks.

However, from the outset the group adopted the practice of beginning the next group session by devoting the first thirty minutes to any positive critical feedback and any negative critical feedback that flowed from reflection on the previous session and the concrete impact the session had on each person's life. The author then had the role of taking on board the feedback and re-tuning the process and content as best he could to further progress the enterprise.

From the initial stages each session possessed a spiritual goal which was stated at the outset of each meeting. However this goal was not always stated in relation to an aspect of the person of Christ. A pericope of Sacred Scripture that resonated with the theme being explored was also read at the beginning of each session. After the particular theme had been explored - through one or more spiritual exercises and a time of group dialogue - the session ended with a para-liturgical service that incorporated the said pericope and which highlighted a relevant aspect of the person of Jesus.

After some of the movements found in 'The Road to Emmaus' had been explored over a period of several months the group members began to realise more deeply that their life of Catholic faith was in fact rooted in the person of Jesus revealed to them in word and sacrament.

However, it also became clear that the members of the group were unaware that this revelation of the person of Jesus through word and sacrament was supposed to happen

for them as they followed the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year through their attendance at Sunday mass.

It was then suggested by the author that the group might benefit from a catechesis of the Liturgical Year with emphasis on the Sunday cycle in the hope that such an exploration would further enhance and nourish the faith lives of the members of the group. The group agreed to this and the said catechesis proceeded in continuity with the method previously adopted by the group.

Part of this catechesis informed the group that as the faithful they were supposed to attend the celebration of Sunday mass properly disposed in heart and mind if the liturgy was to produce its full effect in their lives; and that it was the duty of their bishop and priests to guarantee that they participate fully in the sacred liturgy completely aware of what they are doing and thus become actively engaged in, and therefore graced by the rite.

When the time came for the catechesis on the Liturgical Year to be assessed *en bloc*, the group felt that they did have the responsibility to attend mass with the proper disposition - although they did say that there was not much help forthcoming from their pastors in this regard. In fact most of the group held the position that the understanding of the faith they possessed primarily came from what they were taught at school. They also noted that in the wake of the Second Vatican Council very little had been done to provide themselves as adult Catholics with an adult appreciation of the Catholic faith.

They also considered the theory behind the Liturgical Year was all very well but in practice the results depended too much on the manner in which the priest conducted himself as he celebrated mass and the quality of preaching delivered by the priest at

whatever mass they attended. In many if not in most cases the quality of preaching was thought to be inadequate.

The group decided that this situation was one that needed to be addressed and felt that it would be most beneficial if a means of engaging in an ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year could be created for concrete use.

At this stage the author shared with the group the idea of always taking the person of Jesus as the thematic focal point of any material since the most fundamental point of engaging in the sacred liturgy was to encounter and enter into communion with the person of Jesus. The author also shared that in his research of the Tradition he had unearthed the notion that Jesus Christ be understood as the norm in relation to certain criteria (historical character, inculturation, integrity, hierarchy of truths, meaningful message). The group members discussed these points and agreed that in as much as it was possible it would be a good idea to keep in mind the said norm and criteria in the attempt to address the issue they had identified.

The author was then given the task by the group of constructing a type of ongoing catechesis of the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year whose purpose was to help properly dispose the faithful to the celebration of the liturgy.

This was to be achieved by building upon the method of meeting that the group had previously adopted and by focussing on the coming Sunday celebration of the Eucharist through the lens of a chosen Christic theme. The group members would use this material and give feedback on its positive and negative aspects.

Over a time period lasting approximately two years the following method of approach took shape. A Christ centred theme that resonates with the coming Sunday

celebration of the Eucharist is chosen. Each day, from Monday to Friday, an aspect of the Sunday liturgy is offered to the individual for reflection and prayer. These daily exercises are composed around the chosen theme and take the shape of a scripture reading which will feature in the Sunday liturgy, a short commentary on the given text, a personal exercise to help embody one's faith response, a short prayer based on the chosen theme as celebrated in the Sunday liturgy, and a single line of scripture that resonates with the chosen theme and spirit of the exercise.

Once the daily material has been read and pondered (if possible at the start of the day) the idea is then to recall and pray the brief quotation of scripture as often as possible in the course of the day in the understanding that by so doing the person is awakening once more the presence of the Lord in their heart and mind.

On the communal level a structured group meeting is provided to explore the same theme as that which has been attended to on the individual level. The individuals who attend this meeting are therefore presumed to be participating in the daily prayer exercise centred on the same theme. This meeting also takes place prior to the celebration of the Sunday mass.

The structure of the communal meeting follows the overarching movement of word and sacrament as presented in the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. As such the meeting begins with the proclamation of the readings for the coming Sunday celebration.

After this a fundamental theological commentary leads into some questions for reflection. These questions are designed to help the individuals ponder what God's Word could mean for them. The questions therefore seek to awaken each individual to the reality of their lives as living theological biography. For an apt time the

individuals ponder the Word in silence to allow a dialogue of the heart to occur between themselves and the living God of Christ Jesus.

After the period of silence each individual may enter into dialogue with the other Catholic Christians who have gathered in order to create inter-Christian dialogue on the designated theme of the catechesis. Here Christian faith is nurtured and nourished by Christians dialoguing with one another in light of the dialogue of God revealed through the form of Scripture and the form of the Church. Thus together they search for the meaning of the imprint of the expression of Revelation upon themselves, and how to bring this to expression in the Holy Spirit. In effect as Church they seek how to compose the next piece of their living theological biography as a reflection of the Gloria Dei.

Once the dialogue on the theme has been exhausted, or needs to be drawn to a close given the constraints of time, the group engages in a more obvious para-liturgical celebration to bring their gathering to closure.

The group meeting concludes with a time for intercessory prayer, and a closing prayer and blessing chosen to resonate with the designated theme.

In the liturgical season of Advent-Christmas-Epiphany the fundamental theological commentary will seek to enlighten the faithful concerning the mystery of the Incarnation. In the season of Lent-Easter-Pentecost the overarching focus will be to enlighten the faithful as regards the mystery of Christ's passion, death, resurrection and ascension.

For the Sundays in Ordinary Time the fundamental theological commentary will follow: the Gospel of Matthew for Year A, the Gospel of Mark for Year B, the Gospel

of Luke for Year C. This will enlighten the faithful on the mystery of Christ's life among us within a paschal context.

Near the end of the two year period that shaped the material through the interplay of theory, practice, and critical feedback the group decided it was content with the structure of the daily exercises and the format of the group meeting in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year. Yet the issue surfaced regarding the practical concrete presentation of the material as it sat in the hands of those who used it.

Up to this time the material had been distributed in single A4 sheets bound by a plastic spine. Now the point was made that if the material could be put into a more user friendly format then several of the group members would feel more comfortable with it even to the extent of attempting to lead other groups of adults in their own local parish.

After much discussion, and several attempts at presentation, the group decided that one of the best formats to adopt was to present the material in an A5 booklet format.

For ease of use and to make the material more manageable it was decided to devote only a single page to each daily exercise. Similarly the group meeting was to be limited to and presented through a two-page spread immediately followed by the Sunday readings. The idea behind this for the group meeting was to help keep the focus of group participants to a maximum and distractions e.g. fumbling with papers, losing the place etc. to a minimum.

After the A5 booklet format was adopted five of the group members decided to begin small groups in their own parish. The remaining member decided to use the booklet solely for personal use.

Due to the limitation of resources at present the author has produced material for an ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year in the A5 booklet format for the seasons of Advent-Christmas-Epiphany and the season of Lent.

The mailing list for such booklets stands at approximately eighty people some of whom decide to meet in small groups to experience the approach suggested and obtain the necessary number of booklets for their group members as required.

Feedback concerning the method of approach is asked for on a continuous basis in the hope of constantly improving the delivery and content of the catechetical material provided.

Assessment of the example of 'Ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year - general application' in relation to the thesis

'Ongoing catechesis of adults in relation to the Sunday cycle of the Liturgical Year - general application' is one example of a way in which the approach advocated in the thesis can prove fruitful for some Roman Catholic adults.

The ready adoption by a not insignificant number of Roman Catholic adults (inclusive of some priests and some religious) of this means of approach evidences the method as not inconsistent with the Roman Catholic Tradition, and to some extent manifests a willingness and need in people to prepare for their encounter with the person of Jesus as revealed through word and sacrament at the Sunday celebration of Eucharist.

The internal consistency of the method and its relationship to the Sacred Liturgy allows people to address and attend to their life of faith in a comprehensible and

ordered manner on a daily, weekly, seasonal, and yearly basis whilst ever respecting Sunday as the day dedicated to more formal worship.

Similarly the advocated approach has proved adequate to the experience of those who continue to use the method as they discover the meaning of their life to flow from their communion with the person of Christ. They have also discovered the approach to be practical and worthwhile and not unduly time consuming.

In terms of practical fruitfulness the method of approach allows Roman Catholic adults to prepare individually and collectively for the coming celebration of the Sunday Eucharist. This preparation, in turn, ensures that participation at the celebration of Sunday Eucharist proves more meaningful, spiritually uplifting, and worthwhile on both the individual and collective levels.

Recapitulation

The three examples show in real terms how one can engage in the ministry of catechesis by adopting a stance that acknowledges the dialectical relationship between practice and theory in the development of the approach advocated.

Summary

The investigation set out to answer the question, Has the catechetical theory used to inform the practice of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics in the English speaking Roman Catholic world sufficiently attended to the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as drawn from the Roman Catholic Church's Magisterium - as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and derived from the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965) - to better orient and structure the activity of catechetics as a vital aspect of the 'Ministry of the Divine Word', and if not, how might this situation be improved upon?

It began by stating that the fundamental point of inquiry was to establish an overarching approach that is capable of presenting the integrity of the Gospel message in such a way that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis present faith as a consistent and coherent unity made in response to the person of Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Thus, at the outset, catechetics was understood to discover its ground in relation to the divine Revelation and the response of faith and therefore found its constant point of reference in its role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith.

With the above understanding of the ground of catechetics in place the investigation identified the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as stipulated in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997). The supreme norm of catechetics was identified as the word of God. The inter-connected criteria that flowed from the same source were: its christocentric-trinitarian structure; salvation to be ever understood as gift and liberation; the ecclesial and historic character of the message; the presentation of the Gospel message in its purity and integrity as a

fundamental unity destined for all peoples; and the comprehensivity of the Gospel message with its own hierarchy of truths that causes it to be a deeply meaningful event for the human person.

After the relationship between catechetics and religious education was clarified from the perspective adopted in this thesis, the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis were then used to assess the theoretical ground of some approaches to catechetics as found in the Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics Volume 2 (1997), in the contribution of Thomas H. Groome as expressed in his three major works of Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision (1980); Sharing Faith : A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry (1991); and Educating for Life : A Spiritual Vision for every Teacher and Parent (1998), and in Soil for the Seed (2001) by Jim Gallagher SDB. It was noted that although the norms and criteria identified were from the GDC (1997) they were essentially identical to those stipulated in the GCD (1971) and thus could validly be used to assess contributions made to the catechetical field after 1971. It was similarly noted that there was a paucity of material that sought to develop the theory informing the practice of modern catechetics.

Nevertheless, the assessment of the theoretical material revealed a situation where the existing material was adjudged not to be sufficiently informed by the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as expressed in the GDC (1997). In fact it could be said that the material assessed evidenced either a lack of appreciation of the fact that catechetics was to discover its ground in the relationship that existed between the divine Revelation and the response of faith, or that this relationship was perhaps a working assumption that was never fully articulated, thus showing a major lacunae in the theory informing the practice of the ministry of catechetics.

This then led to the examination of the relationship that exists between catechetics, the divine origin of faith, and the structure of Revelation to show unequivocally that the ground of catechetics resides in the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith, and that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis - as postulated in the GDC - likewise flow from this relationship.

To this end the structure of Revelation as set out in *Dei Verbum* was identified as possessing the vital dimensions of : the dialogical; the principle of historicity; the sacramental structure; the incarnational principle; the centrality of Christ; the principle of economy; and the christocentric-trinitarian dimension.

Next the divine constitution of faith was examined with faith primarily comprehended as the response human beings make to the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ as the Word of God. Faith was then presented as an aesthetic and redesigning initiative of God which must also cater for the reasons for belief. Then the act of faith was understood in terms of: its expansiveness; its relation to the role the understanding plays in testifying to the theological character of faith; how love and freedom are engaged in the faith response; the comprehensivity demanded by the *sequela Christi*; the relation between the act of faith and the Sacramental Economy; the vital unity exhibited in the homogeneity of the process and content of the act of faith; and the presentation of the person of Jesus Christ as the principle of essential unity of the Christian faith.

Once these aspects had been identified it became clear that because the basic concern of catechetics is essentially to enhance the echo of faith, catechetics must discover its ground in relation to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith

response. Thus the constant point of reference for catechetics is its role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith. Consequently it was evidenced that for the work of catechetics to be effective it had to be grounded in, and informed by, an authentic understanding of the entire structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. In this regard it also became evident that the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis were vital for the genuine implementation of that ministry because they were derived from the relationship that existed between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the faith response of the human person.

The next section sought to develop a theological base in which to bed the norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis by utilising the method of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar to present a more mature understanding of the structure of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ. This was achieved by examining Balthasar's Trilogy of theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic which revealed an original and consummate presentation of the *auditus fidei* and the *intellectus fidei* of the Christian event whilst simultaneously stressing the necessary christocentric, trinitarian and ecclesial dimensions. This then allowed the shape of a post-conciliar catechetics consistent with the norms and criteria of the Gospel message, and informed by the scheme of fundamental theology from Balthasar's theological contribution, to be expressed.

However, whilst Balthasar's contribution was adjudged to support the norms and criteria necessary for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis it was also felt that the Swiss theologian's work could be further complemented by the work of Bernard Lonergan - particularly on the structure of human consciousness - to provide a

more profound form of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the revelation of the person of Jesus Christ.

To this end the contribution of Balthasar was married to the thought of Lonergan by bringing together the fundamental theology derived from Balthasar's contribution - especially as it relates to his notion of the Gestalt-Christi - with those aspects of Lonergan's work which explore the structure of human consciousness as discovered in intentionality analysis. This suggested a theological construct capable of respecting both the christocentric-trinitarian presentation of the divine Revelation by the Church, with the response of faith and conversion within the human heart and mind, as resonant with the various levels pertaining to the structure of human consciousness.

This was illustrated by analysing the act of faith from the perspective of making this response to the person of Christ - understood as the Gestalt-Christi - on the various levels that form the structure of human consciousness as proposed in transcendental method. This was accomplished by referring to the derivation of the functional specialties from the structure of human consciousness as advocated by Lonergan, and utilising the relationship between the different levels on which these specialties occur, their proper form of content, and the various contemporary systems of revelation identified by Dulles as: new awareness; history; dialectical presence; inner experience; and doctrine. This then allowed the various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi to be presented within a novel perspective. It was then noted how this new perspective could contribute to the field of the theology of revelation - especially in regard to the reconciliation of various theological positions that sought to understand the act of faith - and that of fundamental theology after which a critical appraisal of the arguments of Balthasar and Lonergan as deployed in the thesis was conducted.

The thesis ended with a consideration of what the deepening of the understanding of the whole structure of knowledge of the faith made in response to the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi can mean for the ministry of catechetics as approached from the new perspective. In particular it explained how and why the criteria, and its content, used in the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis is derived from the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the Gestalt-Christi and the response of faith made by the human mind and heart. Simultaneously it clarified why the criteria, as a vital unity, are essential if the ministry of catechetics is to be conducted in an authentic manner.

By way of example the developed construct was then applied to those theoretical approaches to catechetics formerly investigated at the outset of the thesis to reveal how this new template can provide a more informed, developed, and nuanced approach to establishing the necessary norms and criteria needed for the authentic implementation of the ministry of catechesis. The thesis closed with some reflections on the relationship between the theory developed in the thesis and catechetical practice.

Conclusions

In answer to the question, 'Has the catechetical theory used to inform the practice of post-conciliar Roman Catholic catechetics in the English speaking Roman Catholic world sufficiently attended to the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as drawn from the Roman Catholic Church's Magisterium - as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and derived from the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965) - to better orient and structure the activity of catechetics as a vital aspect of the 'Ministry of the Divine Word', and if not, how might this situation be improved upon?' the following conclusions that flow from the investigation are offered:

1. The General Directory for Catechesis (1997) does provide clear norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis as rooted in the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith. However, the same Directory does not explain thoroughly how and why those norms and criteria originate.
2. Catechetics is understood to discover its ground in relation to the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and therefore finds its constant point of reference in its role to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ and to lead human beings to conversion and faith.
3. The existing theoretical catechetical material that was investigated pays scant regard to the existence of the said norms and criteria for the presentation of the Gospel message in catechesis as advocated by the Magisterium of the Church as

stipulated in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and as first proposed in the General Catechetical Directory (1971).

4. The existing theoretical catechetical material that was investigated pays similar scant regard to the fact that the ground of catechetics is the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith.

5. The relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and the related norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis was in need of a more developed explication prior to this work.

6. The investigation of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ, the response of faith, and the nature of catechetics revealed the validity of the norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis - as postulated in the GDC.

7. The explication of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and the related norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis proved possible by utilising the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar as presented in his Trilogy of the theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic due to its emphasis on the dimensions of the christocentric, the trinitarian, and the ecclesial.

8. The explication of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and the related norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis by utilising the scheme

of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar as presented in his Trilogy of the theological aesthetics, theological dramatics, and theological logic - due to its emphasis on the dimensions of the christocentric, the trinitarian, and the ecclesial - allowed the shape of a post-conciliar catechetics consistent with the norms and criteria of the Gospel message to be expressed.

9. Further explication of the relationship between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith and the related norms and criteria necessary for the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis proved possible by marrying the scheme of fundamental theology derived from the contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar - particularly in its emphasis of the Gestalt-Christi - with Bernard Lonergan's contribution on intentionality analysis and Dulles' work on systems of revelation.

Specifically it proposed the development occurred by analysing the act of faith from the perspective of making this response to the person of Jesus Christ on the various levels that form the structure of human consciousness as presented in transcendental method. This was accomplished with reference to the derivation of the functional specialties from the structure of human consciousness as advocated by Lonergan, whilst utilising the relationship between the different levels on which these specialties occur, their proper form of content, and the various contemporary systems of revelation identified by Dulles as: new awareness; history; dialectical presence; inner experience; and doctrine. This then allowed the various dimensions which form the vital unity of the act of faith made in response to the Gestalt-Christi as consistent with the principles and autonomy of the human mind to be presented.

10. The marriage of Balthasar's contribution and Lonergan's thought allowed the creation of a detailed theoretical template that identified and addressed the elements

intrinsic to, and constitutive of the relationship that exists between the divine Revelation of the person of Jesus Christ and the response of faith, and the norms and criteria that govern the authentic transmission of the Gospel message in catechesis as consistent with the workings of the human mind.

11. The identified theoretical template can profitably be applied to the areas of: the reconciliation of various models of revelation; fundamental theology; the assessment of theoretical contributions that seek to inform the practice of the ministry of catechetics; and the relationship between catechetics and religious education since it essentially presents a more developed theoretical framework with which to comprehend the making of the act of faith.

12. Modern catechetics needs to be grounded in a proper meta-approach consistent with the norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message in catechesis as drawn from the Roman Catholic Church's Magisterium - as expressed in the General Directory for Catechesis (1997) and derived from the conciliar Constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965) - to better orient and structure the activity of catechetics as a vital aspect of the ministry of the word.

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