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Catechesis in Italy between the Two Vatican Councils – 1870–1962

Abstract

The article endeavours to give a bird's eye view of catechesis in Italy as from 1870 to the threshold of Vatican Council II – 1962. The point of departure is a study of the use of the *Catechism* as the handbook for catechesis. The study will then move on to study the efforts of individuals – from priests to Pope Pius X – who sought to positively influence catechesis through their ministry and how different Congresses and Conventions helped in trying to formulate a more coherent catechesis throughout Italy. Finally, the paper will end by a study of the Active Method which was to be the unifying factor for catechesis in Italy prior to Vatican Council II.

Keywords

Catechesis, Catechism, Vatican Councils, Italy.

The aim of this article is to study the development of catechesis in Italy between 1870 and 1962, that is, the period between Vatican Council I and Vatican Council II. The endeavour to study the development of catechesis in Italy is not a simple venture. This is because when studying the way catechesis developed in such a large peninsula, we necessarily have to look into the way in which new trends and new movements emerged within the pedagogical sphere as a result of the socio-political context.¹

¹ Cfr. R. Lombardi, *Il movimento catechistico in Italia*, in: A. Läßle, *Breve storia della catechesi*, Brescia 1985, Queriniana, p. 239.

1. The Use of the *Catechism*²

In Italy, during the last decades of the 19th century, we still get the *Catechism* as the most important handbook by means of which the faith was passed on from generation to generation. At this point in time, we can speak of catechesis as teaching of the catechism, in that the process consisted solely in the learning-off of the text of the *Catechism* in question and answer by heart. It was in this way that the faith was taught to children and to adults; something which was reminiscent from the Counter-Reformation and the way in which the Church actively tried to overcome the religious ignorance of the people.³ It was only at a much later stage that the term *Catechism* came to mean the book in which we can find the contents of the faith as we know them today.

In the period which was immediate to the Counter-Reformation, in Italy, we could find a certain uniformity in the texts used to teach the catechism. There were four main texts which were used to teach the faith. Amongst these we find the *Catechisms* of the Confraternities of Christian Doctrine; the *Catechisms* of Peter Canisius and of Roberto Bellarmino; and the *Catechismus ad Parochos*. However, as from the 17th century, we get an epoch, which is characterised by a proliferation of different texts which were used to teach the catechism. This emerged due to the tendency that every bishop started to feel the need to publish and use his particular *Catechism* in his diocese. After some time in which many different texts of the *Catechism* we published, the need for a unified text, that is, a text which would be common to all of Italy was felt. This venture of creating a universal *Catechism* was to be one of the projects of Vatican Council I.⁴

² When speaking about the *Catechism* in this context, we are not referring to the act of teaching the faith but to the *Catechism* as a printed resource book in question and answer as was typical at that contemporary time.

³ In this respect, Italy was not much different from what was happening in other European countries where the Traditional Method based on the *Catechism* in question and answer was being used. Cfr. C.M Sultana, *Catechesis in Europe during the 20th Century*, in: G. Bonney, R. Vicent (eds.), *Sophia – Paideia. Sapienza e educazione (Sir 1,27). Miscellanea di studi offerti in onore del prof. Don Mario Cimosà*, Roma 2012, LAS, pp. 423–450.

⁴ Cfr. Lombardi, pp. 240–241; L. Nordera, *Il Catechismo di Pio X. Per una storia della catechesi in Italia (1896–1916)*, Roma 1988, LAS pp. 240–241.

2. A Unique Text of the *Catechism*

The project to prepare and publish a universal *Catechism* was one of the conclusions reached during Vatican Council I. This was not an easy feat. The idea was to prepare a unique text of the *Catechism* in Rome, which would then be used in all Italian dioceses. However, some Bishops had a different opinion, claiming that the promulgation of a universal *Catechism* for Italy would deny the Bishops of their ministry to teach. Other Bishops however argued that the Pope had an absolute authority to promulgate such a unique *Catechism*. Notwithstanding this lack of agreement, a unique text was drawn on 25th April 1870, but which allowed bishops to introduce minor modifications according to their specific needs.⁵ The issue of a unique *Catechism* did not end here. It was taken up in the First National Catechetical Congress held at Piacenza in 1889.⁶

3. Towards a Catechetical Renewal

In Italy, the catechetical renewal was spearheaded by a particular event which brought about the gradual abolition of the teaching of religion in Italian schools. This process constituted a chain-reaction which was prompted by the fall of Rome in 1870.⁷ The reaction to this gradual expulsion of Religion as a subject to be taught in Italian schools brought about the birth of the Italian catechetical movement. The eradication of religion from schools also led to a major reform in the catechesis which was being offered in the parishes and which now became the primary means of religious education for Italian children. The first person to undertake this catechetical renewal was Giovanni Battista Scalabrini.⁸

⁵ Cfr. Lombardi, pp. 241–242; Nordera, pp. 44–46.

⁶ Cfr. *infra*.

⁷ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 46–51. The expulsion was lifted in 1923 when religious education was re-introduced once again into Italian public schools.

⁸ Cfr. U. Gianetto, G. Gianolio, *Il movimento catechistico in Italia dal 1870*, in: Centro Catechistico Salesiano (ed.), *Linee per un Direttorio di Pastorale catechistica*, Leumann (Torino) 1967, Elledici, pp. 11–14; Lombardi, 243.

4. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini⁹

Giovanni Battista Scalabrini was one of the first Italian bishops who felt the need of a catechetical renewal. He felt the need for this reform as from the very early days of his priesthood. He thought that if catechesis were to be revived once again, the Church had to make a very courageous decision. He articulated his ideas by developing a catechetical programme entitled *Piccolo catechismo proposto agli asili d'infanzia dal sacerdote G. B. Scalabrini parroco priore di s. Bartolomeo in Como*.¹⁰ This resource book for teaching the catechism used novel pedagogical and catechetical insights.¹¹ The lessons in this catechism commenced by a half-page illustration which was conspicuous and clear. This image had a didactic aim and children could easily identify it. The theme of the image was in line with the theme which was to be discussed during the lesson. After this, there was a pedagogical and didactic note for the teacher. This note helped the teacher to present the theme in a pedagogically and didactically correct way. This was finally followed by the catechism proper. These were the

⁹ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini (8th July 1839 – 1st June 1905): Italian priest and bishop of Piacenza as from 1876. He set the Italian catechetical movement in motion. He is mostly known for his pastoral zeal in the catechetical sphere, for being the founder of the 1st catechetical review in Italy – *Il catechista cattolico* – and in the organisation of the 1st Catechetical Congress. Scalabrini is also known to have founded the missionaries for immigrants so that immigrants could keep up the faith that they practiced when they were in Italy. Cfr. M. Francesconi, *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini vescovo di Piacenza e degli emigrati*, Roma 1985, Città Nuova; Gianetto – Gianolio, *Il movimento*, pp. 14–15; Lombardi, pp. 243–244; P. Vanzan, *Il Beato Giovanni Battista Scalabrini: vescovo, fondatore e padre dei migranti*, “La Civiltà Cattolica” 149 (1998) II, pp. 225–227; M. E. Brown, *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini*, “Migration World Magazine” 29 (2001) 4, pp. 40–41. More information about Giovanni Battista Scalabrini’s pastoral endeavours can be found at S. Riva, *Mons. G. B. Scalabrini pioniere della catechesi moderna [I]*, “Rivista del Catechismo” 4 (1955), pp. 223–229; S. Riva, *Mons. G. B. Scalabrini pioniere della catechesi moderna [II]*, “Rivista del Catechismo” 4 (1955), pp. 305–309; S. Riva, *Mons. G. B. Scalabrini pioniere della catechesi moderna [III]*, “Rivista del Catechismo” 4 (1955), pp. 466–470; S. Riva, *Mons. G. B. Scalabrini pioniere della catechesi moderna [IV]*, “Rivista del Catechismo” 4 (1955), 5 (1956), pp. 66–71; S. Riva, *Mons. G. B. Scalabrini pioniere della catechesi moderna [V]*, “Rivista del Catechismo” 4 (1955), pp. 143–148; L. Di Maria, *Il servo di Dio Mons. G. B. Scalabrini, apostolo del Catechismo*, “Sussidi” Oct (1955), pp. 342–348; L. Rebecchi, *Considerazioni catechistiche del servo di Dio Mons. G. B. Scalabrini (1839–1905)*, Piacenza 1956, U.C.D.

¹⁰ G. B. Scalabrini, [*Prezioso dono ai bambini, o, Piccolo catechismo proposto agli asili d'infanzia*], Milano 1875, Tip. di S. Giuseppe.

¹¹ Cfr. Nordera, p. 47.

questions and the answers which the children had to memorise after they had been duly explained by the teacher.¹²

When Scalabrini was chosen as the Bishop of Piacenza, his passion for the teaching of the catechism was evident in his pastoral activities. The first pastoral letter, which he wrote on the 23rd April 1876 is outstanding. The letter – *Sull'insegnamento del Catechismo* – was addressed to the clergy and to the faithful.¹³ The pastoral letter commenced by demonstrating how throughout history the teaching of the catechism had always been one of the primary roles of the Church.¹⁴ Moreover, the clergy are in duty bound to be responsible for religious instruction. Scalabrini exhorts them to put all their efforts in teaching the catechism in the best way possible. However, he still maintained that although priests are responsible for religious instruction, parents were not exempt from educating their children in the faith.¹⁵

Throughout the rest of the pastoral letter Scalabrini insists especially on two particular points: the organisation of parochial catechesis in the form of a school, and the formation of catechists. Scalabrini insisted that in each and every parish, a school of the catechism should be set up.¹⁶ Giovanni Battista Scalabrini's love for the catechism also led him to start publishing a periodical

¹² Cfr. Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [II]*, p. 308; Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [I]*, pp. 223–224, 227–228; Vanzan, p. 227; G. Frumento, *Un grande vescovo catechista: il Servo di Dio Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini*, “Catechesi” 25 (1956) 10, p. 383; G. Galeazzi, *Motivi pedagogici nell'opera di G. B. Scalabrini*, “Pedagogia e Vita” 46 (1984–1985), p. 74.

¹³ Cfr. G. B. Scalabrini, *Lettera pastorale al clero e popolo della città e diocesi di Piacenza sull'insegnamento del Catechismo [23 Aprile 1976]*, in: O. Sartori (ed.), *Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. Lettere pastorali 1876–1905*, Torino 1994, Società Editrice Internazionale, pp. 11–24; Frumento, p. 384; Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [III]*, p. 467; Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [IV]*, p. 66. There are four other pastoral letters which Scalabrini wrote during his episcopate and which touch directly upon the teaching of the catechism. Cfr. Frumento, *Un grande vescovo catechista*, p. 385.

¹⁴ Cfr. Scalabrini, *Lettera Pastorale sull'insegnamento del Catechismo*, pp. 11–17; Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [IV]*, p. 66.

¹⁵ Cfr. Scalabrini, *Lettera pastorale sull'insegnamento del Catechismo*, pp. 18–19; Frumento, p. 384.

¹⁶ Cfr. Scalabrini, *Lettera pastorale sull'insegnamento del Catechismo*, pp. 19–24; G. Biancardi, U. Gianetto, *La storia della catechesi. Vol. 4. Il movimento catechistico*, Roma 2016, LAS, pp. 366–367; Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [V]*, pp. 143–146; Frumento, pp. 383–385; Vanzan, p. 230; Galeazzi, p. 74.

entitled *Il catechista cattolico* in 1876. This periodical was aimed at helping catechists in their ministry of teaching the catechism.¹⁷

One of the things which Scalabrini had been thinking about for a very long time and which he as a Bishop could now organise, was a catechetical congress in his diocese. He did this in Piacenza in 1889. In this Congress, which is known as the 1st National Catechetical Congress in Italy he intended to invite the best pedagogues and teachers to discuss and to study the best methods and ways in which religious instruction could be carried out. However, he organised a congress on a much larger scale, so much so that it was considered as a national activity.¹⁸ The arguments that were discussed during this Congress included the catechism for different categories of people and the publication of an official and unique *Catechism* for the whole of the Italian peninsula.¹⁹ The proceedings and the different speeches delivered during this Congress can be found in the Acts and documents which were published later on.²⁰

The first national catechetical congress was a positive endeavour because it did not only unveil the problems which were being encountered in the teaching of the catechism during those times, but it also tried to take positive action towards the resolution of these practical difficulties. The affirmative outcome of this Congress gave rise to a substantial number of other congresses organised at a local level and which were aimed at the improvement of the teaching of the catechism.²¹

¹⁷ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 365–366, 385; A. Läßle, *Breve storia della catechesi*, Brescia 1985, Queriniana, p. 244; Nordera, p. 48.

¹⁸ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 367–385; Riva, *Mons. Giovanni Battista Scalabrini [V]*, p. 146; Gianetto, Gianolio, pp. 14–15; Frumento, p. 386; Vanzan, p. 230; Nordera, pp. 48, 52–55; Läßle, p. 244; C. Wackenheimer, *Breve storia della catechesi*, Bologna 1985, Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, pp. 130–132.

¹⁹ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 377–379; Vanzan, p. 230; A. Balocco, *Congressi catechistici nazionali*, in: J. Gevaert (ed.), *Dizionario di catechetica*, Leumann (Torino) 1986, Editrice Elledici, p. 174; *Argomenti proposti a trattarsi nel congresso catechistico*, in: *Atti e documenti del Primo Congresso Catechistico tenutosi in Piacenza nei giorni 24, 25, 26 Settembre 1889*, Piacenza 1890, Tipografia Vescovile Giuseppe Tedeschi, pp. 11–12; U. Gianetto, *Il 1° congresso catechistico nazionale in Italia. Piacenza 24–26 settembre 1889 [I]*, “Catechesi” 38 (1969) 440, pp. 8–9; Läßle, pp. 244–245.

²⁰ Cfr. *Argomenti proposti a trattarsi nel congresso catechistico*, pp. 11–12.

²¹ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 380–385.

5. The Ferment of Congresses and Conventions

Between 1905 and 1910 in Italy there was an effervescence of the catechetical movement. This can be demonstrated through the number of congresses and conventions which were organised in different parts of Italy at that time.²²

Amongst these congresses and conventions, we find:

- the Diocesan Catechetical Congress of Benevento – 1905;
- the Catechetical Meeting of Casale Monferrato – 1905;
- the Congress of Foligno – 1905;
- the Convention of Milan – 1907;
- the Catechetical Convention of Lazio as a province – 1908;
- the Catechetical Congress of Tuscany – 1909;
- the Diocesan Catechetical Congress of Bologna – 1909.

Besides the congresses and conventions organised on a diocesan and regional levels, there were also a number of other congresses were celebrated as *Acerbo Nimis* had suggested.²³ Amongst these we find:

- the Second Congress – Torino, 1902;
- the Third Congress – Faenza, 1907;
- the Fourth Congress – Milan, 1909.²⁴

6. Geremia Bonomelli²⁵

Mgr Geremia Bonomelli worked hard to try to bring about a positive revolution in religious instruction in his diocese. He was a very close friend of Giovanni

²² Cfr. M. Carminati, *Un trentennio, Un trentennio, Un trentennio di storia della catechesi italiana (1900–1930)*. Lorenzo Pavanelli e Luigi Vigna e il «Catechismo in forma di vera scuola», Leumann (Torino) 1995, Editrice Elledici, pp. 66–80.

²³ Cfr. Pius PP. X., *Litterae encyclicae SS. D. N. Pii div. Prov. Papae X ad sacras universi catholici orbis Antistites, de Christiana doctrina tradenda [Acerbo Nimis]*, 15 April 1905, in: “Acta Sanctae Sedis: 37 (1904–1905), pp. 613–625; Läßple, pp. 248–251; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 118–121, 140–142.

²⁴ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 399–403.

²⁵ Geremia Bonomelli (22nd September 1831 – 3rd August 1914): Italian priest from Brescia, and bishop of Cremona as from 1871. He worked untiringly to augment religious instruction in his diocese. He published guides for students of rich families and he worked hard for the inclusion of Italian immigrants in the new contexts and cultures in which they lived far away from home. Cfr. P. Guerrini, *Saggio di una bio-bibliografia bonomelliana*, in: *Geremia Bonomelli*,

Battista Scalabrini, and this may be the result of their common interest in religious instruction.²⁶ When he was chosen as the Bishop of Cremona one of his very first acts was to publish the text *Il giovane studente istruito e difeso nella dottrina cristiana. Trattenimenti*.²⁷ This was a work in three volumes that was aimed at the religious instruction of the children of families in the higher strata of society.²⁸ Bonomelli also gave his precious contribution to the modernisation of the way in which religious instruction was conducted. He was aware of the inadequacy of using an abstract *Catechism* which took a very scholastic approach for religious instruction, and in his pre-publication reactions to the 1912 *Catechism* by Pius X he called for a return to the simple way in which the Gospels were presented. This called for the redaction of a totally new catechism.²⁹ He gave a lot of importance to the teaching of morality and of history. Moreover, he was very adamant on the pedagogy and the methodology used for religious instruction.

Mons. Geremia Bonomelli, being one of the people who wanted to promote a change in the way in which religious instruction was to be imparted, was one of the guest speakers in the Congress of Piacenza in 1889.³⁰

7. The Second National Catechetical Congress

The second national catechetical congress was held at Milan between the 5th and the 8th September 1910.³¹ The aims of this Congress were two-fold:

vescovo di Cremona nel XXV anniversario della morte, Brescia 1939; G. Gallina, *Il problema religioso del Risorgimento e il pensiero di G. Bonomelli*, Roma 1974, PUG; C. Bellò, *Geremia Bonomelli vescovo di povera santa chiesa*, Brescia 1975, Queriniana; L. Vigna, *Mons. Bonomelli catechista*, in: "La Scuola Cattolica" 67 (1939) pp. 684–700; L. Vigna, *Mons. Bonomelli catechista*, Varese 1940, Edizioni La Scuola Cattolica.

²⁶ Cfr. Wackenheim, pp. 130–132.

²⁷ Cfr. G. Bonomelli, *Il giovane studente istruito e difeso nella dottrina cristiana. Trattenimenti*, vol. 1, Brescia 1871, Tipografia del Pio Istituto; G. Bonomelli, *Il giovane studente istruito e difeso nella dottrina cristiana. Trattenimenti*, vol. 2, Brescia 1873, Tipografia del Istituto Pavoni; G. Bonomelli, *Il giovane studente istruito e difeso nella dottrina cristiana. Trattenimenti*, vol. 3, Modena 1874, Tipografia Pontificia e Arcivescovile dell'Immacolata Concezione.

²⁸ Cfr. Läßle, p. 243.

²⁹ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 131–133; Nordera, p. 49.

³⁰ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, p. 363.

³¹ Cfr. Carminati, *Un trentennio*, pp. 80–82; Balocco, p. 174; Gianetto, Gianolio, p. 22. For a very comprehensive coverage of how this Congress was planned, how it unfolded and the results achieved, cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 389–411.

- it was to be a celebration of the 3rd century of the canonisation of St. Charles Borromeo, thus re-presenting him to the participants as a great saint and catechist;
- to bring together in the form of a synthesis all the endeavours and initiatives which had been carried out in the sphere of the teaching of the catechism.³²

As a result of this, four major themes were studied:

1. the *Catechism*;
2. the catechist;
3. the children or interlocutors;
4. the method.³³

The proceedings and the speeches delivered during this Congress were also published for future reference in the form of Acts for this Congress.³⁴

The second Italian national catechetical congress proved to be a positive meeting because it took up and discussed a number of themes which one can never exhaust. These themes were to be the subject matter of later debates. But this Congress had broken new ground because it was decided that the discussion on the method which was to be used in the teaching of the catechism was to be finally undertaken. This opened the door to discussions on the method to be used, and on the particular choices to be made further on by Lorenzo Pavanelli and Luigi Vigna.³⁵

8. Pope Pius X

The pontificate of Pius X (9th August 1903 – 20th August 1914) is characterised by his solicitude for religious instruction. It is enough to mention that he published the first encyclical letter which was totally dedicated to religious instruction. Moreover he ordered the compilation and publication of two compendia of Christian doctrine, he reduced the age when children were to receive their First Holy Communion, and he organised parish-based religious instruction in

³² Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 406–407.

³³ Cfr. Carminati, *Un trentennio*, pp. 81, 90–91; Balocco, p. 174.

³⁴ Cfr. *Atti del II congresso catechistico italiano tenutosi in Milano il 5, 6, 7 Settembre 1910*, Milano 1910, Premiata Libreria e Tipografia Pontificia ed Arcivescovile S. Giuseppe; Carminati, *Un trentennio*, p. 104; Gianetto – Gianolio, p. 22–23.

³⁵ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 409–411.

Roman parishes.³⁶ For this reason he has been rightly called ‘The Pope of the Catechism’.³⁷ Pope Pius X’s endeavours have left a very deep impact on religious instruction in many countries. This is especially so for Italy due to its proximity to the Vatican City State.

The first encyclical letter dedicated to religious instruction – *Acerbo Nimis* – was published on the 15th April 1905.³⁸ It is a complete manual for religious instruction.³⁹ The starting point of the encyclical was the saddening awareness of the widespread religious ignorance which was dominant throughout the world at that time.⁴⁰ Still, while religious ignorance was a reality, the encyclical letter proposes a solution to it: organised and more frequent religious instruction sessions.⁴¹ Consequently some action had to be seriously taken into consideration and put into practice in each and every parish. *Acerbo Nimis* proposes the following attempts at a solution:⁴²

1. 1. that all parishes should organise catechesis for children on Sundays and feast days;
2. special instruction was to be given in preparation for the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Confirmation and in preparation for the reception of the First Holy Communion;
3. the establishment of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in each and every parish;
4. the setting up of a school of religion for young people attending educational institutions;
5. weekly adult catechesis for everyone on Sundays and feast days.

³⁶ Cfr. U. Gianetto, *Magistero (XX secolo)*, in A. Balocco, *Congressi catechistici nazionali*, in: J. Gevaert (ed.), *Dizionario di catechetica*, Leumann (Torino) 1986, Editrice Elledici, p. 397; L. Csonka, *Storia della catechesi*, in: P. Braido (ed.), *Educare. Sommario di scienze pedagogiche. Vol III. Fondamenti psicopedagogici della catechesi, problemi generali della catechesi, catechesi evoluttiva, differenziale*, Zurich 1974, PAS – Verlag, p. 163.

³⁷ Cfr. B. Lewandowski, *La catechesi nelle sollecitudini del Magistero della Chiesa*, in: “Seminarium” 15 (1975) 1, p. 37; G. Frumento, *La catechesi nei documenti della Santa Sede*, Roma 1965, Edizioni Paoline, p. 23; Lämpfle, pp. 245–251; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 116–118.

³⁸ Cfr. *Acerbo Nimis*, pp. 613–625.

³⁹ Cfr. Frumento, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Cfr. *Acerbo Nimis*, pp. 613–615; Frumento, p. 23.

⁴¹ Cfr. *Acerbo Nimis*, pp. 617–623. Cfr. also Frumento, pp. 23–24; Csonka, p. 164.

⁴² Cfr. *Acerbo Nimis*, pp. 623–624. Cfr. also Frumento, p. 24; Csonka, p. 164; Lewandowski, p. 37; Gianetto, *Magistero (XX secolo)*, p. 397.

The encyclical letter *Acerbo Nimis*, being the very first of its nature for the catechetical sphere left a very good impact. It was welcomed everywhere with a particularly special interest.⁴³

Pope Pius X had always been in favour of a unique *Catechism* for Italy. Since he was a bishop of Mantova he had struggled to propose the idea and convince others of the necessity of a unique *Catechism*. Since the project of a unique *Catechism* had not yet materialised, even though it had been proposed during Vatican Council I, Pius X embarked on the mission to realise such a project.⁴⁴

When speaking about the *Catechism* of Pius X, we normally think of the *Catechism* which he published in 1912. However on the 14th June 1905, he had already published another *Catechism* known as the *Compendium of Christian Doctrine*.⁴⁵ This was divided into three parts:⁴⁶

- the First Notions of the *Catechism*;
- the Small *Catechism*;
- the Long *Catechism*.

It also had three appendices at the end:

- an Instruction on the Days of the Lord, feasts of the Virgin Mary and of the Saints;
- a short history of religion;
- daily prayers and other important prayers.

The *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* was very traditional in its contents and very voluminous. Luciano Nordera rightly describes it as a small handbook of apologetics, of moral and of dogmatic theology.⁴⁷

The 1905 *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* was destined to the dioceses of Rome and to the dioceses of the Roman ecclesiastical province. Notwithstanding this, it was given freely to all other Italian bishops as an encouragement and to possibly adopt it and use it in their dioceses, although they were free to do so. In this way the *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* was spread throughout the

⁴³ Cfr. Frumento, p. 24; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 118–121.

⁴⁴ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 482–485; Läßle, 245–248; Wackenheim, pp. 132–133; G. Gariselli, *Il rinnovamento catechistico in Italia*, in A. Etchegaray Cruz (ed.), *Storia della catechesi*, Roma 1983, Edizioni Paoline, pp. 338–339.

⁴⁵ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 169; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 121–128.

⁴⁶ Cfr. Gianetto, *Catechismo di Pio X*, p. 121; Nordera, pp. 164, 165 footnote 92; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 123–124.

⁴⁷ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 165.

Italian peninsula.⁴⁸ By July 1906, the *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* had already been translated into eleven other languages.⁴⁹

When Pope Pius X wanted to publish a new version of the *Catechism*, he did not simply reprint the 1905 *Compendium of Christian Doctrine*, but he set up a commission which was to be specifically responsible for the revision of the 1905 *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* in preparation for a new *Catechism*. The task entrusted to this commission was only to revise the 1905 *Compendium of Christian Doctrine* and not to draw up a totally new *Catechism*.⁵⁰ However, after drawing several drafts, the commission ended up by embarking on a project of compiling a new *Catechism*.⁵¹ The draft of this new *Catechism* was then submitted *sub-secreto pontificio* to some experts for their comments.⁵²

The next draft and the succeeding drafts which was drawn up later were based on the comments which had been submitted by the experts who had studied the first draft.⁵³ Finally, a last draft was handed over to Pope Pius X so that he could give it a last glance.⁵⁴ The structure of the *Catechism* was the following:

1. first there was a preliminary lesson;
- then it had three different parts:
2. the Creed;
 3. the Commandments;
 4. Grace. This part was further subdivided into two parts:
 - i. the Sacraments;
 - ii. prayer.

These were followed by three appendices:

- the history of the Christian religion;
- Christian feasts;
- a warning to parents and to catechists.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 169–171; Frumento, pp. 25; Csonka, p. 164; A. Bollin, *Pio X, il papa del catechismo*, in: “Catechesi” 70 (2001) 4, p. 30; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 124–128.

⁴⁹ Cfr. Nordera, p. 173.

⁵⁰ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 296–297.

⁵¹ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 302–306, 310, 312; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 129–133.

⁵² Cfr. Nordera, pp. 319–382.

⁵³ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 383–403.

⁵⁴ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 407–408.

⁵⁵ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 408, 411; Gianetto, *Catechismo di Pio X*, p. 122; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 133–135.

The *Catechism of Pius X*, as it became known, was promulgated for the dioceses of Rome and for the dioceses of the Roman ecclesiastical province.⁵⁶ All the dioceses to whom it was designated accepted it willingly.⁵⁷ Pius X also sent free copies to all the Italian bishops thus publicising the *Catechism* itself.⁵⁸

The 1912 *Catechism of Pius X* was not destined to remain only within the Italian peninsula. It soon spread abroad through different translations which were approved by the Holy See. Translations into Spanish, English, German and French were soon made after the official publication of the Italian text.⁵⁹

The *Catechisms* which were published by Pope Pius X had the positive side of introducing an official unique *Catechism*. However, they also had a latent side-effect: they helped in conserving the *status quo* in a moment of radical changes which should have been approached in a more eloquent way. Consequently, the *Catechisms* were not the beginning of a new epoch of resources and texts of that type for religious instruction, but the last effort of an aeon which had come to an end.⁶⁰

9. The Diocesan Congress of Brescia

The Congress of Brescia held on the 3rd, 4th and 5th September 1912 was a three-day study session in which the whole diocese was invited to think about and study the teaching of the catechism. This Congress was organised by Lorenzo Pavanelli⁶¹ and Luigi Vigna,⁶² who were protagonists of the Italian reform of

⁵⁶ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 409, 511–513; Gianetto, *Catechismo di Pio X*, p. 122; Bollin, p. 30.

⁵⁷ Cfr. Nordera, p. 418; Gianetto, *Catechismo di Pio X*, p. 122.

⁵⁸ Cfr. Nordera, p. 418; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 135–137.

⁵⁹ Cfr. Nordera, pp. 429–430.

⁶⁰ Cfr. Gianetto, *Catechismo di Pio X*, p. 122.

⁶¹ Lorenzo Pavanelli (31st January 1876 – 4th March 1945) was a priest from Brescia who together with Luigi Vigna occupied a privileged position in the organisational and methodological renewal of catechesis in Italy. His greatest works in the catechetical ministry include the creation of a Federation which under the direction of a lay person brought together the Oratories, the Catechisms and Catholic Action in general. Many catechists were formed and initiated in their ministry through this Federation. Pavanelli also introduced the idea of a central Catechetical Office in the diocese. This ultimately gave rise to the Central Catechetical Office of the Holy See. Cfr. U. Gianetto, *Pavanelli mons. Lorenzo*, in: J. Gevaert (ed.), *Dizionario di catechetica*, Leumann (Torino) 1986, Editrice Elledici, pp. 485–486; Nordera, *Il catechismo di Pio X*, pp. 443–445; S. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia. Uomini – Idee – Opere*, Roma – Brescia 1972, Antonianum – La Scuola, pp. 178–186; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 417–418.

⁶² Mgr Luigi Vigna (21st September 1876 – 28th February 1940): studied at the Catholic University of Freiberg. It was during his studies at this University that he met Eugène Dévaud

catechesis during this epoch.⁶³ The different speeches made during the congress clearly show that the major focus was the problem of the method which was to be used in the teaching of the catechism. The speeches delivered during this Congress have been collected and published in the form of Acts for this Congress.⁶⁴

The Congress of Brescia was primarily aimed at bringing about a radical change in religious instruction. It was not simply intended as a meeting ground or to share the fruits of one's research. Notwithstanding this fervent request to bring about a change in the teaching of the catechism, the actual results show that the request to change the teaching the catechism from using the traditional method to that of teaching the catechism organised in the form of a real school asked for too much. This shows that this is never easy to change a method which had been used for years and possibly for centuries. Lorenzo Pavanelli's idea actually asked priests and catechists to make a revolutionary change in the way in which they taught the catechism. It was not simply requesting them to change the text used for religious instruction or to be more fervent in the way they were teaching. He was asking them much more. Pavanelli was asking them to consider and to reorganise the way in which they were conducting their religious instruction. This meant restructuring the methodology, the programs used, determining new competences for those involved in religious instruction, and the rearranging of the environment where religious instruction is conducted in terms of edifices and location.⁶⁵

However, the ideas of Lorenzo Pavanelli and of Luigi Vigna did not end with the last session of the Congress of Brescia. They pursued the idea of organising the teaching of the catechism in the form of a real school until they were able

who wanted to create active Christian schools to replace the traditional schools in Switzerland. This is probably what influenced Vigna to embark on the mission of renewing the teaching of the catechism into a form of a real school together with Lorenzo Pavanelli. Cfr. U. Gianetto, *Vigna mons. Luigi*, in J. Gevaert (ed.), *Dizionario di catechetica*, Leumann (Torino) 1986, Editrice Elledici, pp. 662–663; Carminati, *Un trentennio, Un trentennio*, pp. 108–113; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 418–419.

⁶³ Cfr. Carminati, *Un trentennio, Un trentennio*, p. 104; Gianetto, Gianolio, pp. 22–23; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 416–417, 419–424. For more details about Pavanelli and Vigna, cfr. *infra*.

⁶⁴ Cfr. *Congresso Catechistico Diocesano. Seminario S. Angelo – 3–4–5 Settembre. Presidenza. Parrocchie e rappresentanza. Orari – Programmi*, Brescia 1912, Tipografia e libreria Queriniana. Cfr. also Carminati, *Un trentennio, Un trentennio*, pp. 147–156.

⁶⁵ Cfr. Carminati, *Un trentennio, Un trentennio*, p. 167.

to diffuse it not only throughout their diocese but throughout the whole of Italy as well.⁶⁶

10. Lorenzo Pavanelli and Luigi Vigna

Lorenzo Pavanelli was able to lead catechesis from the limited area of the parish and the school, to the more open sphere of the Italian Church as a whole. His ministry as a catechist led him to draw out the problems of religious instruction from the confinement of the parish to Italy as a whole peninsula in such a way that this would influence the whole Italian Church. Pavanelli maintained that for a fruitful religious instruction, a drastic methodological renewal based on what was happening in public schools was necessary. Such a methodological renewal would lead to a more child-centred attitude and methodology.⁶⁷

Mgr Luigi Vigna was the greatest collaborator of Lorenzo Pavanelli. Pavanelli, together with Vigna developed in a practical way the theory and the practice of the intuitive and the cyclic methods. Thus they devised a methodology which opened wide the door to the introduction and the use of the Active Method in Italy.⁶⁸

Lorenzo Pavanelli not only experimented in practice with the ideas of the catechism in the form of a real school as had been discussed during the Congress of Brescia, but together with Luigi Vigna elaborated texts for religious instruction which conformed to the didactic method discussed during this Congress.⁶⁹ Lorenzo Pavanelli together with Luigi Vigna, inspired by the conclusions reached in the Congress, and which can be synthesised in the phrase – catechesis in the form of a school through a cyclic and intuitive method, were the first to publish resources using these notions as guidelines.⁷⁰ The didactic texts which they elaborated upon were published in October 1913 and were entitled: *Fede mia*,

⁶⁶ Cfr. M. Carminati, *La formazione dei cristiani nella catechesi in "forma di vera scuola"*, in: L. Meddi (ed.), *Diventare Cristiani. La catechesi come percorso formativo*, Napoli 2002, Luciano Editore, p. 168; Wackenheimer, p. 135–137.

⁶⁷ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 180.

⁶⁸ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 186.

⁶⁹ Cfr. Carminati, *Un trentennio*, p. 104; Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 182.

⁷⁰ Cfr. Nordera, p. 443; Gianetto, *Pavanelli Lorenzo*, p. 486; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 424–428, 431–434.

vita mia! Together with these volumes they also published teacher's guides which were entitled *Guida didattica*.⁷¹

The Bible formed an intrinsic part of these volumes. Notwithstanding this, the liturgy, the history of the Church and the life of the saints were also had a prominent part.⁷² The method used in these volumes besides being intuitive is also cyclical in that the child is given the fundamental ideas and notions at the very beginning. These are then developed and deepened further by time and

⁷¹ Cfr. Gianetto, *Pavanelli Lorenzo*, p. 486. Since it was impossible to trace the first editions of the works published by Lorenzo Pavanelli and Luigi Vigna, I am quoting the 2nd edition: L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Classe prima di religione. Nuova edizione migliorata coll'aggiunta delle domande alle formole del testo ufficiale*, Torino – Brescia [1916], L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C. – Ufficio Catechistico Diocesano [Brescia]; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Classe seconda di religione. Nuova edizione migliorata coll'aggiunta delle domande alle formole del testo ufficiale*, Torino – Brescia [n.d.], L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C. – Ufficio Catechistico Diocesano [Brescia]; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Classe terza di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta coll'aggiunta delle domande alle formole del testo ufficiale*, Torino – Brescia [1916], L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C. – Ufficio Catechistico Diocesano [Brescia]; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Classe quarta di religione. Terza edizione riveduta coll'aggiunta delle domande alle formole del testo ufficiale*, Torino – Brescia [1916], L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C. – Ufficio Catechistico Diocesano [Brescia]; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Classe quinta di religione. Terza edizione riveduta coll'aggiunta delle domande alle formole del testo ufficiale*, Torino – Brescia 1936, L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C. – Ufficio Catechistico Diocesano [Brescia]; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Classe sesta di religione. Terza edizione riveduta coll'aggiunta delle domande alle formole del testo ufficiale*, Torino – Brescia [1920], L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C. – Ufficio Catechistico Diocesano [Brescia]; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Lezioni didattiche ad uso degli insegnanti delle scuole parrocchiali di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta aggiuntovi il programma d'insegnamento e gli schemi di ricapitolazione. Classe prima*, Torino 1937, L.I.C.E. R. Berruti & C.; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Lezioni didattiche ad uso degli insegnanti delle scuole di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta aggiuntovi il programma d'insegnamento, interrogazioni e schemi di ricapitolazione. Classe seconda*, Torino 1935, L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C.; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Lezioni didattiche ad uso degli insegnanti delle scuole parrocchiali di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta con programma d'insegnamento, schemi di ricapitolazione e canti catechistici. Classe terza*, Torino 1938, L.I.C.E. R. Berruti & C.; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Lezioni didattiche ad uso degli insegnanti delle scuole parrocchiali di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta aggiuntovi il programma d'insegnamento. Classe quarta*, Torino 1938, L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C.; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Lezioni didattiche ad uso degli insegnanti delle scuole parrocchiali di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta aggiuntovi il programma d'insegnamento e gli schemi di ricapitolazione. Classe quinta*, Torino [n.d.], L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C.; L. Pavanelli, L. Vigna, *Fede mia, vita mia! Lezioni didattiche ad uso degli insegnanti delle scuole parrocchiali di religione. Nuova edizione riveduta aggiuntovi programma d'insegnamento. Classe sesta*, Torino 1935, L.I.C.E. Roberto Berruti & C.

⁷² Cfr. Carminati, *La formazione dei cristiani*, p. 445.

when the child's intelligence has developed in such a way that s/he can grasp the notions. The cyclic method presented the advantage of repeating in a concentric way whilst deepening the fundamental ideas already learnt at the beginning. It is thus a progressive and gradual method.⁷³

11. The Active Method

The Active Method in Italy is associated with Mario Casotti,⁷⁴ Gesualdo Nosengo⁷⁵ and Silvio Riva.⁷⁶ When speaking about the Active Method in Italy, we need to consider the works of these three pedagogues together and not in an individual way. It was they who introduced the Active Method in Italian Schools.⁷⁷

Mario Casotti is known as the father of Italian Catholic pedagogy. When the Active Method was originally introduced in Italian public schools, Casotti was

⁷³ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 183; Gianetto, *Pavanelli Lorenzo*, p. 486; Läßle, pp. 253–256.

⁷⁴ Mario Casotti (10th June 1896 – 12th July 1975) was an Italian pedagogue born at Rome. He was educated by Giovanni Gentile to be a philosopher by profession. However, at heart he was a pedagogue. Cfr. L. Pazzaglia, *Casotti Mario*, in: J. M. Prellezo, C. Nanni, G. Malizia (eds.), *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, Leumann (Torino) – Roma 1997, Editrice Elledici – LAS – SEI, pp. 161–162; Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, pp. 134–139.

⁷⁵ Gesualdo Nosengo (20th July 1906 – 13th May 1968) was both a pedagogue and a professor in religious instruction. He was a pioneer of the active teaching in Italy with regards to religious education. Through his work he introduced the Active Method which had been elaborated upon by Mario Casotti into religious pedagogy. Thus, he influenced the renewal of schools in Italy. Cfr. U. Gianetto, *Nosengo Gesualdo*, in: J. Gevaert (ed.), *Dizionario di catechetica*, Leumann (Torino) 1986, Editrice Elledici, pp. 457–458; U. Gianetto, *Nosengo Gesualdo*, in: J. M. Prellezo, C. Nanni, G. Malizia (eds.), *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, Leumann (Torino) – Roma 1997, Editrice Elledici – LAS – SEI, pp. 748–749; Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, pp. 145–147; G. Ruta, *Il contributo di Gesualdo Nosengo (1906–1968) alla pedagogia religiosa in Italia*, in: "Orientamenti Pedagogici" 40 (1993) p. 823–853.

⁷⁶ Silvio Riva (1913–1994): an Italian priest and religious educator. His most notable contribution is the foundation of the periodical *Rivista del Catechismo* in 1951, which he also directed until 1957. Cfr. G. Catti, *Riva Silvio*, in: J. Gevaert (ed.), *Dizionario di catechetica*, Leumann (Torino) 1986, Editrice Elledici, pp. 547–548; U. Gianetto, *Riva Silvio*, in: J. M. Prellezo, C. Nanni, G. Malizia (eds.), *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, Leumann (Torino) – Roma 1997, Editrice Elledici – LAS – SEI, p. 945.

⁷⁷ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 163; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 446–454; Wackenheim, pp. 137–139; Läßle, pp. 256–259.

very hesitant about its use in religious instruction. As a result he criticised the introduction of the Active Method in religious instruction in a very constructive manner without condemning it outrightly. He praised the positive aspects of the Active Method, such as the fact that it re-awakened the need to pay attention to the human being who is the primary agent in the process of education. However, he did not hesitate to point out its weakness from both the philosophical and the pedagogical point of views. This weakness was fundamentally based on the fact that the Active Method presented an enormous emptiness to teachers of religion.⁷⁸

Casotti's role in the renewal of religious pedagogy in Italy cannot be underestimated. Primarily, he had the courage to speak up in favour of religious education at a time when the people were rejecting religion and religious values. Moreover, he was wise enough to critically study the Active Method that was used beyond the religious context in order to integrate its positive aspects in religious instruction. By doing so, he was able to reconcile the Active Method with the goals of religious instruction.⁷⁹

Gesualdo Nosengo was Mario Casotti's student, and later he was also his assistant. Nosengo was the pedagogue who established the active school in Italy. His concept of the Active Method did not consider religious instruction as a subject in itself and separated from all the other subjects taught at school. On the other hand, Nosengo saw religious instruction as a subject which was integral to the curriculum as part of the holistic education of the child.⁸⁰

Gesualdo Nosengo's Active Method can be distinguished for its Christocentric characteristic. Christ is at the centre of his method. In having Christ at the centre, the doctrinal aspect was allotted a secondary position. This gives the child the opportunity to meet and enter into a relationship with Christ as with a friend. Due to this, the Bible was of utmost importance to Nosengo's Active Method. The Bible was considered as a source for the faith, and Nosengo considered the Word of God in the Bible both as a motivation for the faith and as a possibility for educating for the faith. He was sure that from the Gospels one could extract perfect guidelines for a complete pedagogy and methodology for religious

⁷⁸ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 136; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 446–447.

⁷⁹ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, pp. 143–144.

⁸⁰ Cfr. Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 448–451.

instruction. In this way, he demonstrated that the Active Method was not in contrast with the Catholic faith but in harmony with it.⁸¹

Nosengo insisted on the centrality of Christ, on Jesus as the Teacher, on the particular vocation of the lay religious educator, on the adoption of the Active Method and on the need of focussing on the child. This shows that Gesualdo Nosengo's work with regards to the Active Method was a very important element within the Italian catechetical renewal movement.⁸²

Silvio Riva collaborated very closely with Mario Casotti and Gesualdo Nosengo in trying to put the Active Method and pedagogy into practice within the sphere of religious instruction. Silvio Riva was more inclined to work in parishes and in Catholic associations for adolescents and youth. His pedagogy was founded on biblical catechesis; on teaching children, youth and adolescents how to pray; and on active liturgical participation.⁸³

In an autobiographical note, Riva says that since a lot had already been said about the Active Method, he thought that it was best for him to visit schools, parishes and other teaching centres and try and put what had been said into practice.⁸⁴ Moreover, he claims that he was always convinced that all religious truths communicated through the Active Method should be put into practice. If this does not happen, religious instruction will remain a sterile subject based on mere notions. Furthermore, trying to live a good life without any religious instruction can be likened to a movement of the body, but which is incapable of producing a really spiritual life.⁸⁵

The contribution that Silvio Riva gave to the Italian catechetical renewal movement was that he sought to see the Active Method actually put into practice in all educational institutions. He laboured indefatigably to attain this and consequently besides being a dynamic agent within the spread of the Active

⁸¹ Cfr. Ruta, *Il contributo di Gesualdo Nosengo*, pp. 840–847; G. Ruta, *L'annuncio di Cristo. Approccio storico al movimento catechistico italiano nel XX secolo*, [n.p.] 1992, Edi Ofes, pp. 141, 151–157; Gianetto, *Nosengo Gesualdo*, in: *Dizionario di catechetica*, p. 457; Gianetto, *Nosengo Gesualdo*, in: *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, p. 748; Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 149.

⁸² Cfr. Gianetto, *Nosengo Gesualdo*, in: *Dizionario di catechetica*, p. 458; Gianetto, *Nosengo Gesualdo*, in: *Dizionario di scienze dell'educazione*, p. 749.

⁸³ Cfr. Gianetto, *Riva Silvio*, p. 945; Biancardi, Gianetto, pp. 451–454.

⁸⁴ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, p. 166.

⁸⁵ Cfr. Riva, *La pedagogia religiosa del Novecento in Italia*, pp. 171–172.

Method in Italy, he can be considered as one of the eye-witnesses of the spread of the method within the realm of religious education.

12. Conclusion

Catechesis in Italy in between Vatican Council I and Vatican Council II is not marked by a particular method or movement that clearly defines what was happening in the Italian peninsula. Still, one can trace particular changes, especially those brought about as a result of the ferment of National Congresses, Conventions and Regional Meetings. One can also note that a number of individuals collaborated together in working out particular developments in catechesis. It is through the endeavours of such individuals that Italy paved the way to renewing catechesis in line with the pedagogy being practiced in schools at that point in time, and with the way in which the human being as more receptive to knowledge of the faith.

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