

# 6.10 Catechesis and Communication

## Aim

- To appreciate the link between communication and catechesis.
- To study the various communication processes in catechesis

## Procedure

• Share the input. Divide the class into groups which will treat the various aspects introduced below.

## Input

• 1. Appraisal of communication in Church catechetical and communication documents.

• *Evangelii Nuntiandi* defines Catechesis as learning through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history.

• Now a group can take *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Catechesi Tradendae*, the General Directory for Catechesis, *Inter Mirifica*, *Communio et Progressio*, *Ecclesia in Africa* and other relevant documents and analyze their views on communications. What communication models and means are these documents calling for?

• 2. We now see the four common models of catechetical communication process

### a) *Shared Praxis*

• This is where a group share in a dialogue form on a present action in the light of the gospel and its vision of lived faith. The steps are

- the activity
- reflection on why they do what they do and the consequences of their action.
- the leader gives a relevant Christian story and its corresponding faith response.
- appropriating the story to their own story in dialectic form.
- a personal response for the future.

### b) *Structured Catechesis*

• This has four basic aspects:

- Human Experience:** the context and concern of catechesis is the life of the individual, focusing on their life's journey of faith and using these life experiences as starting points for listening and responding to the word of God.
- Message:** how does the message of God's revelation relate with their individual life story?
- Reflection/Discovery/Integration:** here the message is interiorized, accompanied by the relevant conversion.
- Response:** to God's word by service (*diakonia*) and worship (*liturgia*).

### c) *Learning through personal change*

• This is a model based on learning as a means of changing a person's way of living. It involves these steps:

- Starting Point:** the present state, made up of a value system, conscious behaviour patterns and principles for decision which are the focus. It also includes the psychological readiness and cultural milieu.
- Significant experience:** events that move the person from the starting point. They could be life affecting events and options for the future. This awareness leads to the need to evaluate present trends of life.
- Reflection:** here the individual evaluates the meaning of experience and their possibilities and demands in view of changing former thinking and behaviour. A decision of reaffirmation or change usually results.
- Assimilation:** an effort to integrate new reflections into present life style. Here is actual learning.

## Materials Required

- Church Document on Catechesis



#### d) *Catechesis of Small Communities*

The Small Christian Communities (SCCs) have been a common phenomenon as the main channel for achieving a local church that is self-administering, self-propagating and self-supporting in both rural and urban areas of Africa. This is best carried out in small groups, where intimacy, love and sharing can develop. It has taken root in East African contexts where Church life is based on people's everyday life, work and social groupings for real inter-personal relationships and a sense of communal belonging. In spite of the clerical obstacle to SCCs, it is popular and is the grassroots church for the poor and weak of society. Communication here involves all aspects of life, and is mostly oral as seen in the following steps:

- i. Daily Experience: the events of their daily life, their values, aspirations and preoccupations are the starting point of their response to the Christian message.
- ii. Enlightenment by Faith: these experiences are then reflected upon in light of the Christian message, especially the mystery of salvation and also in church documents.
- iii. Commitment and Celebration: the illumination gotten from the faith reflection enables the people to make new commitments to a Spirit-filled life based on the Word, their faith and culture. This commitment is celebrated in songs, prayer and testimony.
- iv. New Lifestyle: the new commitment is now carried out in daily life, forming a new daily experience which will be reflected upon again for new commitments. The cycle goes on and on.

### Review

1. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* defines Catechesis as learning through systematic religious instruction the fundamental teachings, the living content of the truth which God has wished to convey to us and which the Church has sought to express in an ever richer fashion during the course of her long history.
2. There are four common models of catechetical communication process:
  - a) *Shared Praxis*
  - b) *Structured Catechesis*
  - c) *Learning through personal change*
  - d) *Catechesis of Small Communities*

### Reflection

'..learning as a means of changing a person's way of living.' Write a one page reflection on this phrase expressing what it means to you personally

### Relevant Skills

The Small Christian Communities (SCCs) have been a common phenomenon as the main channel for achieving a local church that is self-administering, self-propagating and self-supporting in both rural and urban areas of Africa. In what ways can you strengthen the Small Christian Communities in your local Church? Undertake to do this.

### Reference

- Thomas H. Groome. *Sharing Faith, A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis*. New York: Harper and Collins Publishers, 1991.
- Bob Hater. *The Relationship between Evangelization and Catechesis*. Washington, D. C.: National Conference of Diocesan Directors of Religious Education, 1981.
- Elochukwu Uzukwu *A Listening Church, Autonomy and Communion in African Churches* New York, Orbis Books, 1996.
- James O'Halloran *Small Christian Communities: Vision and Practicalities* Dublin: The Columba Press, 2002.