

Note With Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith

Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Summary Notes

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Introduction

- Pope Benedict's Apostolic Letter, *Porta Fidei* declared a Year of Faith: October 11, 2012 (50th anniversary of opening of Second Vatican Council) to Nov 24, 2013 (Solemnity of Christ the King).
- Year will be occasion for faithful to understand more profoundly that the foundation of Christian faith is "the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction." (BXVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, No. 1).
- Founded on encounter with Risen Christ, faith can be rediscovered in its wholeness and splendor.
- Year of Faith coincides with 2 great events marking life of Church in our days:
 - 50th anniversary of opening of Second Vatican Council (1962)
 - 20th anniversary of promulgation of Catechism of Catholic Church (1992)

Vatican II

- wanted "to transmit doctrine, pure and whole, without attenuations or misrepresentations," "... in a way which corresponds to the needs of our time."
- opening words of Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, of primary importance:

Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature to bring the light of Christ to all [people], a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church." (LG 1)
- Council undertook its desire "to transmit doctrine..." through its four Constitutions, four "pillars" around which the Council's Declarations and Decrees address some of the major challenges of the day:
 - *Sacrosanctum Concilium (Constitution on the Liturgy)*
 - + emphasizing the light of Christ, which purifies, illuminates and sanctifies in the celebration of the sacred liturgy.
 - *Dei Verbum (Constitution on Divine Revelation)*
 - + where light of Christ purifies, illuminates, sanctifies with His divine word.
 - *Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)*
 - + where the Council wanted to elaborate on the intimate nature of the Church.
 - *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)*
 - + addressing Church's relationship with the contemporary world.
- Church set about ensuring reception and application of the Council via:
 - synods of bishops, begun by Pope Paul VI in 1965
 - Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortations

October 2012 General Assembly of Synod of Bishops

- theme: *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith.*

Pope Benedict XVI and Council

- has worked for correct understanding of the Council
- rejected "hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture"

- promoting “hermeneutic of reform”, renewal and continuity of the Church, develops, yet remains the same, “the one subject of the journeying People of God.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- authentic fruit of the Council and “tool for aiding in its reception”
- publication preceded by 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, convoked on 20th anniversary of Council: Synod suggested a catechism to offer the People of God “a compendium of all Catholic doctrine” and a point of reference for local catechisms.
- accepted by Pope John Paul II as a proposal of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod
- compiled in collaboration of entire episcopate, it “truly expresses what could be called the symphony of the faith.”
- includes “the new and the old” (cf. Mt 13: 52), “the faith is always the same and source of ever new light”
 - i.e., repeating old, traditional order of catechism of Pope Pius V in 4 parts:
 - Creed
 - Sacred Liturgy (with pride of place to Sacraments)
 - Christian Way of Life (including the 10 Commandments)
 - Christian Prayer
- contents of CCC are “often expressed in a new way in order to respond to the questions of our age.” ‘
- “a valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion and a sure norm for teaching the faith.”
- provides “systematic and organic synthesis” of content of the faith
- wealth of 2000 years of church teaching that has been received, safeguarded and proposed:
 - from Scripture to the Fathers of the Church
 - from theological masters to saints across the centuries
 - a permanent record of Church meditation on the faith and progress in doctrine, offering certitude to believers in their lives of faith.

Year of Faith is intended:

- “to contribute to a renewed conversion to the Lord Jesus and to the rediscovery of faith”
 - making the Church’s members “credible and joy-filled witnesses to the Risen Lord in the world of today”
 - making the Church’s members capable of leading others to the “door of faith”
- *door of faith* opens wide our gaze to Christ, with us “until the end of the age” (Mt 28:20)
- Christ...
 - “shows us how the art of living” is learned “in an intense relationship with him.”
 - “through his love, Jesus Christ attracts to himself the people of every generation” convoking the Church “in every age”, “entrusting her with the proclamation of the Gospel by a mandate that is ever new.”
- today, there is needed “stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelization in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith.”

This Note:

- is drawn up at the invitation of Pope Benedict XVI, in consultation with Holy See’s competent Dicasteries, with contribution of the *Committee for the Preparation of the Year of Faith*.
- contains “recommendations for living this time of grace” with openness too initiatives the Holy Spirit will inspire among Pastors and faithful throughout the world.

Recommendations

- I know him in whom I have believed" (2Tim 1:12): St. Paul's words revealing that faith is:
 - humanity's personal adherence to God
 - a "free assent to the whole truth that God has revealed" (CCC 150)
- faith as "personal trust in the Lord" inseparable from "faith we profess in the Creed"
 - each focuses on and requires the other.
- *faith lived* and *faith's contents* share a "profound bond":
 - "The faith of the Witnesses and Confessors is also the faith of the Apostles and Doctors of the Church."
- the following recommendations for the Year of Faith desire
 - to aid "the **encounter with Christ** through authentic witnesses to faith"
 - to aid the "**ever-greater understanding** of [the faith's] contents."
- Year of Faith proposals are intended
 - as "examples" to encourage a ready response" to Holy Father's invitation to live Year as "special time of grace." (*Porta Fidei* No. 15)
 - to help consolidate unity and communion "among different bodies that make up the wider family of the Church" through "[t]he joyous rediscovery of the faith."

I. On the Level of the Universal Church

1. (XIII General Assembly of the Ordinary Synod of Bishops)

- Convoked by Holy Father in October 2012, dedicated to *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*.
- Synod will begin with "solemn celebration of the beginning of *The Year of Faith*, in remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council."

2. (Encouragement of Pilgrimages)

- pilgrimages of faithful are to be encouraged "to profess faith in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in union with [Peter], who today is called to confirm his brothers and sisters in the faith." (cf. Lk 22:32)
- important "to promote pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the place which first saw the presence of Jesus, the Saviour, and Mary, his Mother."

3. (Turning to Mary)

- it will be helpful to invite the faithful to turn with particular devotion to Mary, model of the Church, who 'shines forth to the whole community of the elect as the model of virtues.'" (LG 65)
- encouragement of initiatives which help the faithful:
 - recognize Mary's special role in the mystery of salvation,
 - love Mary
 - follow Mary as a model of faith and virtue
- "To this end, it will be proper to organize
 - pilgrimages,
 - celebrations, and
 - gatherings at the major Marian shrines."

4. (World Youth Day, Rio De Janeiro – July 2013)

- will offer youth "a special occasion" "to experience the joy which comes from faith in the Lord Jesus and communion with the Holy Father, in the greater family of the Church."

5. (Symposia, Conferences and Large Gathering)

- Note hopes for holding of many local and international symposia, conferences, large gatherings
 - “to encourage encounters with authentic witnesses to the faith”
 - “to promote understanding of the contents of Catholic doctrine”
- it will be important as Word of God continues to grow and spread, to give witness that
 - all the human heart’s longing and anguish finds its fulfillment in Christ Jesus (PF 13)
 - “faith *becomes a new criterion of understanding and action that changes the whole of* [the human person’s] *life*” (PF 6)
- “Some conferences... particularly dedicated to the rediscovery of” Second Vatican Council’s teachings.

6. (Deepened Knowledge of Catechism and Documents of Vatican II)

- Year of faith “special opportunity” for all faithful to deepen:
 - knowledge of Vatican II’s primary documents,
 - study of Catechism of Catholic Church
- especially true for priesthood candidates, particularly during propitietic year or in first years of theological study, religious novices, as well as for persons discerning joining Ecclesial Association or Movement.

7. (Attentiveness to Peter’s Teaching)

- Year “an auspicious time for more attentive reception” of Holy Father’s homilies, catechesis, addresses, speeches, documents.
- Pastors, consecrated persons, lay faithful invited to renew “efforts in effective and heart-felt adherence to the teaching of the Successor of Peter.”

8. (Efforts Toward Restoration of Christian Unity)

- various ecumenical initiatives aimed at restoration of Christian unity (one of Vatican II’s principal concerns) planned for Year in cooperation with Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.
- there will be a “solemn ecumenical celebration in which all of the baptized will reaffirm their faith in Christ.”

9. (New Secretariat Coordinating Year’s Initiatives)

- Secretariat will coordinate initiatives...
 - proposed by Holy See’s various Dicasteries
 - relevant to Universal Church
- Secretariat will be established within Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization.
- Secretariat should be informed timely of main events, can suggest appropriate initiatives.
- Secretariat will open dedicated website to make available useful information for effective living out Year of Faith.

10. (Close of Year with Eucharist and Profession of Faith)

- Year of Faith will end on Solemnity of Christ the King with Eucharist presided by Holy Father including renewal of the profession of faith.

II. On the Level of Episcopal Conferences

1. (Designating Day of Study)

- day of study on the topic of "faith, its personal witness and its transmission to new generations" can be designated by Episcopal Conferences, in light of Bishops' mission "as teachers and 'heralds of the faith.'" (LG 25)

2. (Publication of Vatican II Documents, CCC and CCC Compendium)

- republication and electronic distribution of economically priced, paperback versions of Vatican II documents is to be promoted.

3. (Translation of Vatican II Documents, CCC and CCC Compendium)

- renewed efforts to translate these documents into local languages where previously unavailable is desirable, with encouragement of charitable assistance for mission areas that cannot afford translations, under guidance of Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

4. (Promoting Faith's Principles, Content in Electronic & Print Media)

- "Pastors should work to promote television and radio transmissions, films and publications focusing on the faith, its principles and content, as well as on the ecclesial significance of the Second Vatican Council."
- above "should be done using the new styles of communication, especially on the popular level, making these things available to a wider public."

5. (Disseminating Knowledge of Local Saints)

- It is opportune that Episcopal Conferences work toward disseminating knowledge of local Saints ("Saints and the Blessed are the authentic witnesses of the faith"), by traditional and modern means of social communication.

6. (Maximizing Catechetical Potential of Local Art)

- Episcopal Conferences are encouraged to maximize the catechetical potential of local art heritage ("patrimony"), "possibly with ecumenical cooperation," given the contemporary world's sensitivity to the relationship between faith and art.

7. (Demonstrating the Catechism's Relevance in all Academic Disciplines)

- Educators are to be encouraged to demonstrate the relevance of the CCC's contents and the latter's implications, within their various academic disciplines in:
 - centers of theological studies
 - seminaries
 - Catholic universities

8. (Preparation of Apologetic Materials - for Response to Questions in Difficult Contexts)

- useful to prepare apologetic pamphlets/leaflets with help of theologians and authors
- such materials would help the faithful to respond to questions arising in difficult contexts:
 - e.g.:
 - sects
 - problems related to secularism, relativism
 - limiting of rational certainty to scientific/technological discovery
 - other specific issues

9. (Bringing Local Catechetical Materials into Conformity with CCC)

- it is hoped that local catechisms/catechetical supplements used in particular churches “would be examined to ensure their complete conformity with” the CCC.
- new catechisms/supplements should be developed following example of Conferences which have done so, when found to be not in accordance or out of date with CCC.

10. (Ensuring CCC Contents Present in *Ratio* of Priestly Formation)

- Year will be appropriate time to examine, in collaboration with Congregation for Catholic Education, the *Ratio* for future priestly formation, to ensure CCC contents are present in their theological studies.

At the Diocesan Level