

# FAMILY CATECHESIS –

## WHY PARENTS MATTER!



*I am the way, the truth  
and the life. John 14:6*



Agency for Evangelisation  
and Catechesis  
ARCHDIOCESE of SOUTHWARK

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# OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, Creator of all things,  
you call me to be in relationship  
with you and those I encounter.

Thank you for calling me to be a catechist,  
for the opportunity  
to share what you have given to me.

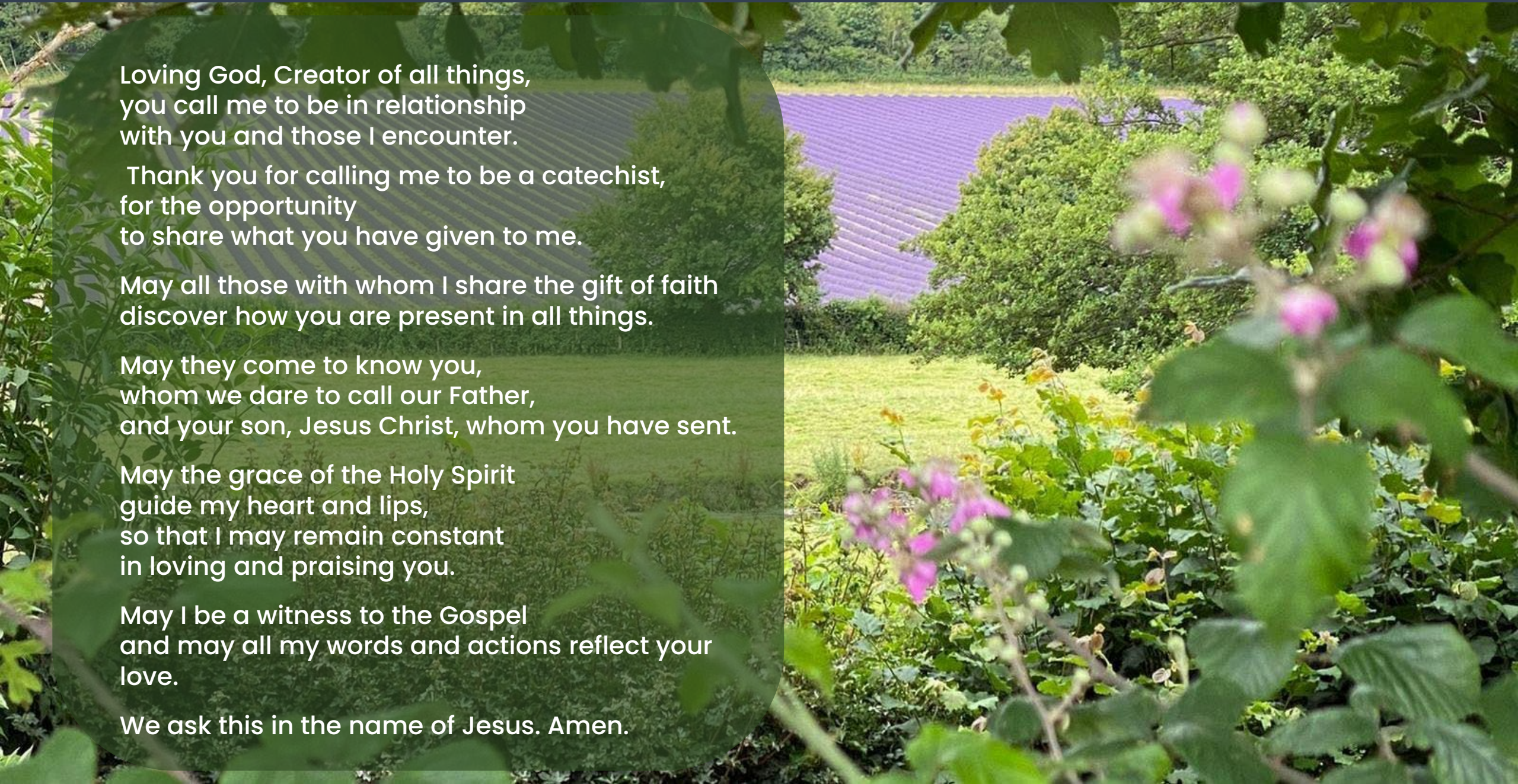
May all those with whom I share the gift of faith  
discover how you are present in all things.

May they come to know you,  
whom we dare to call our Father,  
and your son, Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit  
guide my heart and lips,  
so that I may remain constant  
in loving and praising you.

May I be a witness to the Gospel  
and may all my words and actions reflect your  
love.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.



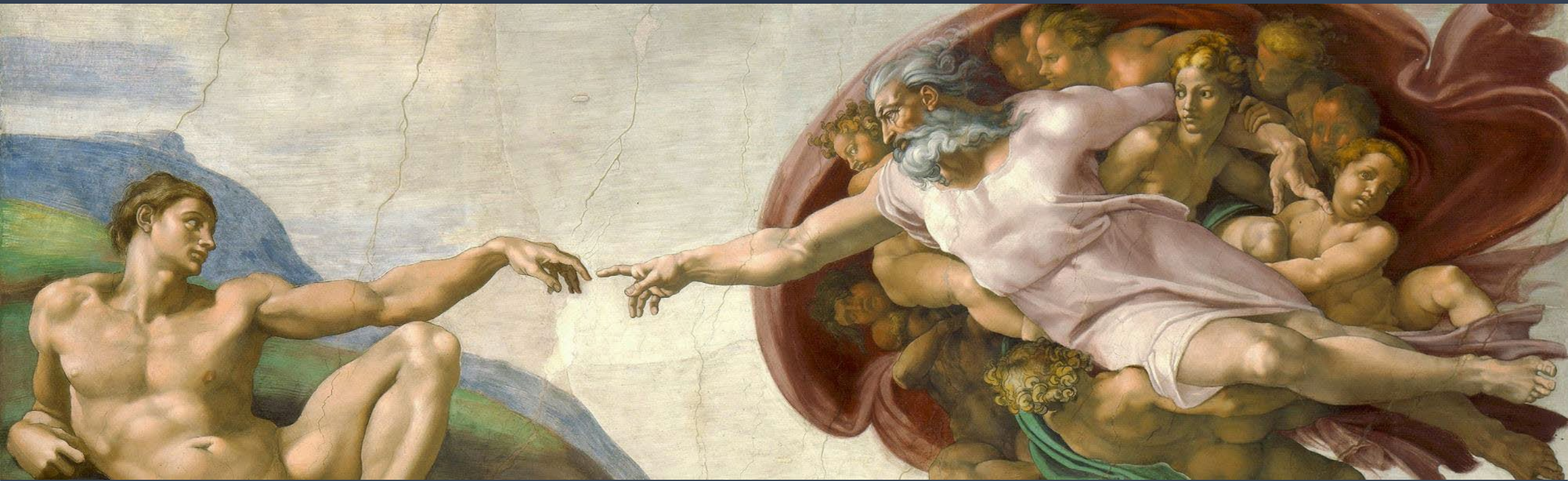
## TWO QUESTIONS...

**In your parish, in the Sacramental programmes you are involved in:**

- 1. What is the role of the Catechists?**
- 2. What is the role of the Parents?**

**Just jot down now what these are, and keep for later.**

# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TELL US ABOUT THE FAMILY?



*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them..., 'Be fruitful and multiply'. Genesis 1:27,28*

# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TELL US ABOUT THE FAMILY?



You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your might.

*Deuteronomy 6:5*

# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTS?

Keep these words... in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.



# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTS?

Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

*Deuteronomy 6:6-9*



# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTS?

To our fathers he gave a command to make it known to their children, that the next generation might know it, the children yet to be born. They should arise and declare it to their children, that they should set their hope in God and never forget God's deeds.

*Psalm 78:1, 3-7*





# WHAT DOES SCRIPTURE TELL US ABOUT THE FAMILY?

I am reminded of your sincere faith, *a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.* For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God..., for God gave us a spirit... of power and love and self-control.

*2 Timothy 1:5-7*

*Timothy and his grandmother, Rembrandt, 1648,  
Hermitage Museum*



# WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTS?



**...parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.**

*Familiaris Consortio 36 and Gravissimum  
Educationis 3*

# WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TELL US ABOUT THE ROLE OF PARENTS?



On account of the uniqueness of the loving relationship between parents and children [which] is irreplaceable and inalienable, ...the educational role of parents is therefore incapable of being entirely delegated to others or usurped by others.

*Familiaris Consortio 36*

# WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TELL US ABOUT THE FAMILY?



Education is thus a unique process for which the mutual communion of persons has immense importance. The educator is a person who "begets" [brings about] in a spiritual sense. From this point of view, raising children can be considered a genuine apostolate. It is a living means of communication, which not only creates a profound relationship between the educator and the one being educated, but also makes them both sharers in truth and love, that final goal to which everyone is called by God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*St Pope John Paul II's Letter to Families (1994), 16*

# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



....the most basic element,  
so basic that it qualifies the  
educational role of  
parents, is parental love,  
which finds fulfilment in the  
task of education...

# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



...as well as being a source, the parents' love is also the animating principle and therefore the norm inspiring and guiding all concrete educational activity...

*Familiaris Consortio 36*

# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



- ❖ The family is the domestic church.
- ❖ *The home is the Church in miniature.*

# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



**...the family is the domestic church...a community of life and love. It educates and leads its members to their full human maturity and it serves the good of all along the road of life. The family is the 'first and vital cell of society'.**



# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



In its own way it is a living image and historical representation of the mystery of the Church. The future of the world and of the Church, therefore, passes through the family.

St John Paul II, Homily, Australia

# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the  
whole world in which we live. *St John Paul II*

# WHAT DOES THE FAMILY TELL US ABOUT THE CHURCH?



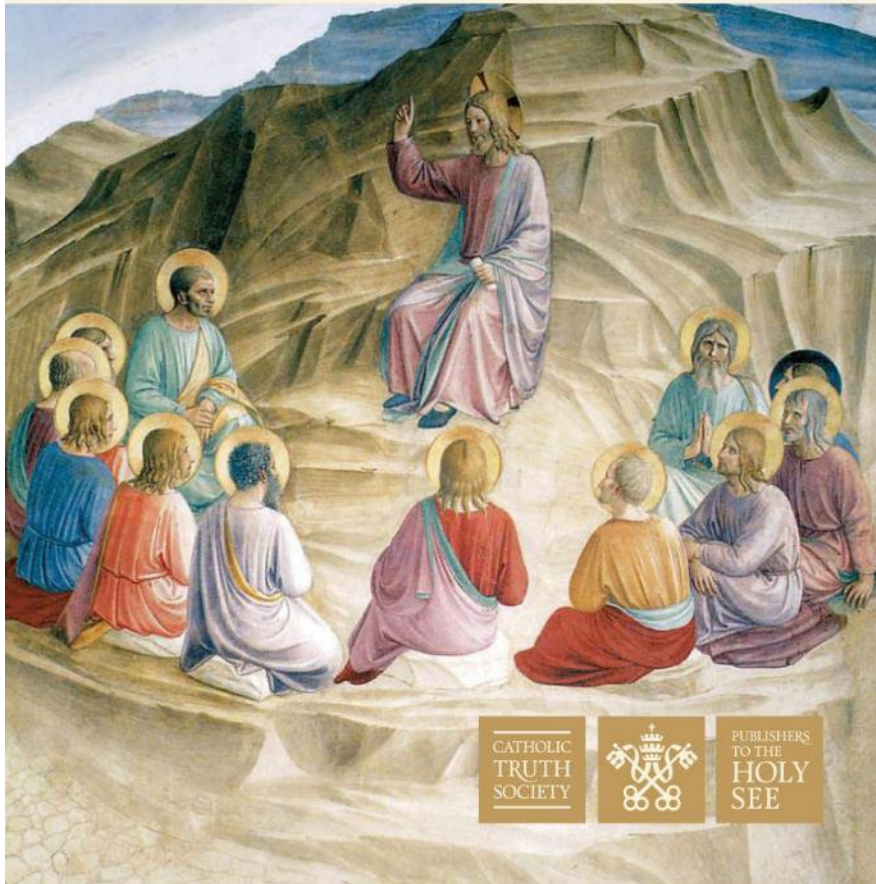
Since it is in the home where children first experience love, the very essence of God himself, it follows that 'family catechesis therefore precedes, accompanies and enriches all other forms of catechesis'

Catechesi Tradendae 68

# WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TELL US ABOUT THE FAMILY?

## DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS

 PONTIFICAL COUNCIL  
FOR PROMOTING  
NEW EVANGELIZATION

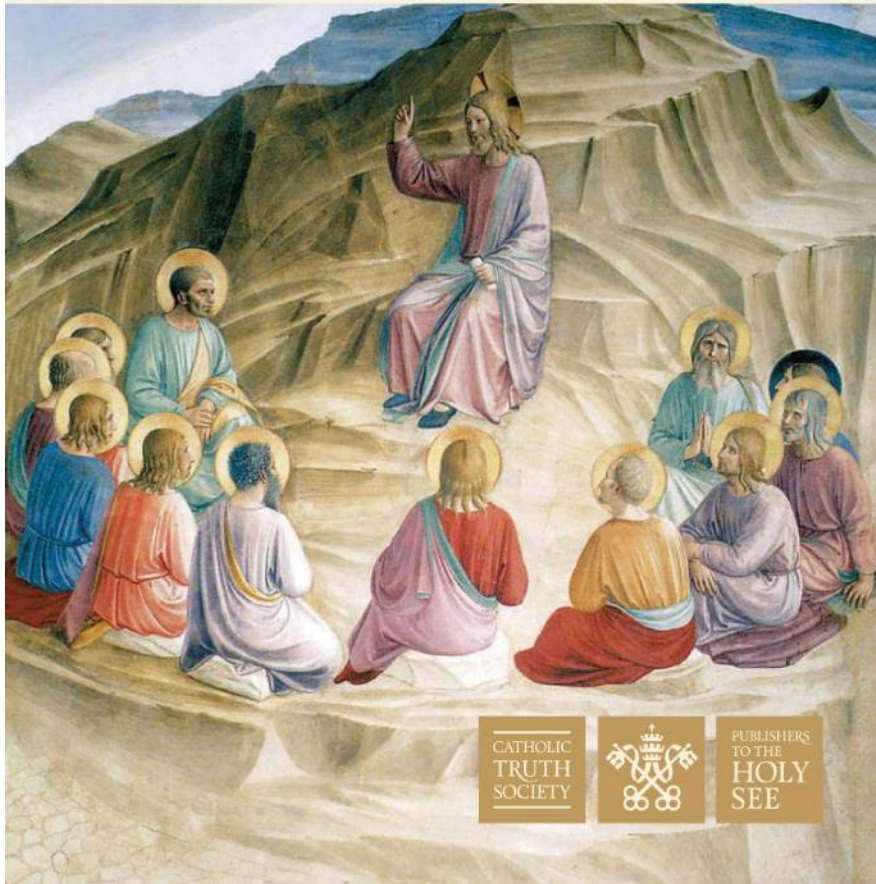


**Enabling families to take up their role as active agents of the family apostolate calls for ‘an effort at evangelisation and catechesis inside the family’.**



# WHAT DOES THE CHURCH TELL US ABOUT THE FAMILY?

## DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS



The Church is called to cooperate with parents through suitable pastoral initiatives, assisting them in the fulfilment of their educational mission to become above all the first catechists of their own children.

*Directory for Catechesis 124*

# CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF HIS PARENTS



And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

And the favour of God was upon him.

Luke 2:39,40

# WHO ARE THE PARENTS IN YOUR PARISH?

NON-  
BELIEVING

NON-  
TRUSTING

BAPTISM

INITIAL TRUST

SPIRITUAL CURIOSITY

SPIRITUAL OPENNESS

SPIRITUAL SEEKING

INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP



BAPTISM

# PARENTS AS EVANGELISERS AND CATECHISTS?



Through the grace of the sacrament of marriage, parents receive the responsibility and privilege of evangelizing their children. They are the 'first heralds' and 'should associate them from their tenderest years with the life of the Church'. *CCC 2225*

How do we meet them with 'approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental'.

*Evangelii Gaudium 165*

'Do you know that Jesus Christ loves you; he gave His life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.' *EG 164*



## CHALLENGES TO PARENT-LED CATECHESIS

Why do parents very often wish to delegate the task of passing on the faith to their children?

Have other  
priorities: work  
and family  
commitments

Think it is  
all about  
dogma  
and  
doctrine

Uncomfortable  
talking about their  
faith because of their  
own practice and/or  
personal situation

# CHALLENGES TO PARENT-LED CATECHESIS

Quite happy to leave  
it to the 'experts'

Afraid of giving the  
'wrong answer'

Feel ill-equipped to  
knowledgeably speak  
about their faith, & have  
lost the 'language of faith'

**Why do parents very often wish to delegate the task of passing on the faith to their children?**

**Do not know that they are much loved children of God and do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.**

# REVISITING TWO QUESTIONS

In your parish, in the Sacramental programmes you are involved in:

1. What is the role of the Catechists?
2. What is the role of the Parents?

Just jot down now what these are, and keep these for later.

Is there anything you need to change?

# SUMMONED AND SENT

Go forth to do the work for which God has elected you. He will be your right hand so that no difficulty shall move you, he will hold you by his hand so that you may walk in his path.

So be of great courage, and may your courage endure. And the way to get it is to keep on asking him who alone can give it to you; he will give it to you if you follow the leading of his grace with a simple heart. May the love, peace, and consolation of the Holy Spirit be in your soul for ever...

Go forth calmly and sweetly in peace to serve God and Our Lady where you have been summoned by their will, and may the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you for ever.

*Saint Francis De Sales*