



Dearest catechists,
peace and joy in the name of Lord Jesus, our sole Master!

On the occasion of the happy occasion of the 90 years of the Office for Evangelization and catechesis, established by Bishop Ferdinando Ridolfi, I would join you personally, by extending my greeting to tell you how grateful I am for all you do in our Church.

In the course of my pastoral visits I have the chance to meet you, get to know you better, be with the guys in the catechesis and see how germinates the seed of the Gospel (cf. Mt from 13.3 to 23 . 31-32) that you seed among adults and families, among young people and children, through the works and the announcement. From a recent diocesan investigation, I have known that you are still numerous: Thanks God. I encourage you to continue with enthusiasm, loyalty and hope in this vital and valuable ministry to the life of our communities, a ministry that cannot miss in any parish or Pastoral Unit.

Let me share with you some thoughts, which you can then develop in your regular meetings of training, following the exhortation of Pope Francis "Evangelii gaudium" (2013) and the document, approved in May by the Italian Bishops Assembly "We meet Jesus. Guidelines for the proclamation and the catechesis in Italy" (2014).

1. LOVE THE CHURCH, of which you are living members, chosen and sent to the catechetical ministry (Luke 10,1-16). The Church in mission is the house of mercy, joy and fraternity, as Pope Francis keeps saying. For many kids and adults you represent the front door in the church community, where one comes to meet Jesus Christ and to experience Him. Be salt (Mt 5:13) of evangelic wisdom and leaven (cf. Mt 13: 33) to build up the Church with your testimony strong and consistent in following the Lord Jesus.

2. COLLABORATE WITH FAMILIES AND PARENTS. They are the first educators and leaders of the faith of their children (cf. 2 Tim 1,5)! They show confidence in trusting you their guys to complete the journey of faith with the Christian initiation in the parish. As far as you can, meet with them regularly, keep them informed and visit them in their homes, propose - in the most appropriate form and manner and with the aid of your priests - a journey of faith with and among them. Be light (cf. Mt 5:14), solace, support for them in the task of education.

3. APPLY MY CATECHETICAL PASTORAL NOTE "Create to the life of faith". I know that you accepted it seriously and I thank you. Start to take the first steps to implement it: working together, in a network between neighboring parishes, in the Vicariate, without haste or too many fears. Pope Francis encourages us to "dare" (EG No. 24) and "not to dwell again on a pastoral conservation - in fact generic, dispersed, fragmented and not very influential - to assume, instead, a pastoral which focuses on the essential" (Speech at the Assembly of the CEI, May 19, 2014).

The Note, in line with the new CEI guidelines for catechesis, offers you a horizon and precise goals to renew the face of our communities, from adults to the routes of initiation into the Christian life with the new generations. The Note shows the common framework towards which all walk in the Christian fellowship that characterizes the children of God; this does not exclude possible and desirable different paths that take into account the available forces, the needed time to mature convictions, and the peculiarities and the paths already taken by each parish.

4. TIGHT EDUCATION ALLIANCES IN THE TERRITORY. In order not to isolate catechesis from social life and ministry and to grow harmoniously trainees, start and establish opportunities of meeting and collaboration among all those in the area, who are engaged in education: teachers, teachers of religion, sport, leisure, CA, ecclesial movements entertainers, scouts... Try to make the first step, according to your priests, so that every parish or PU does not miss a community, a solid and nourished group of education.

5. GROW YOUR MINISTRY EDUCATION

To live intensely your ministry, in today's context, good will and availability are not enough; an initial and continuing training is necessary. There is no sudden catechist; one grows up into a catechist! It takes - to make catechesis - mind, heart, hands... one must gain experience and competence. From the group of catechists in the parish, to the training opportunities and the zone, vicarial or diocesan courses... proposals and incentives are out there, with focus on being, knowing, knowing how to do, knowing how to get done, being able to stay with. You have to give yourself time and find opportunities to take care of your ministerial preparation, in the contents and the methods, in the spirituality and in the tutoring.

I express my gratitude and appreciation to the Managers of the Office for evangelization and catechesis that, annually, prepare a proposal with a variety of courses and training programs for you, to better qualify your service.

So, with your generous and distinguished service, you will renew the practice of Christian initiation and the paths to train adult believers in our beloved land into a new season of evangelization and catechesis in Italy.

I assure you of my closeness and my prayers that the Spirit of the Lord will guide you in the catechetical ministry with the gifts of counsel, fortitude and wisdom (Is 11,2).

I entrust you to the intercession of the Blessed Mother Rosa, the patron saint - since 2009 - of catechists from Vicenza.

+ Beniamino Pizzoli
Bishop

Vicenza, 8 September 2014
Nativity of Virgin Mary



*THE BISHOP BENIAMINO
TO THE CATECHISTS
FOR A NEW SEASON
OF EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS*

