1. **The Transmission of Revelation in the Faith of the Church (Directory 24-7)**

The Apostles, faithful to the divine mandate, by witness and works, preaching, institutions and writings inspired by the Holy Spirit, have handed on what they received, and, ‘in order to keep the Gospel forever whole and active in the Church, left bishops as their successors, ‘handing over’ to them ‘the authority to teach in their own place.’ (Vatican II). This apostolic tradition ‘develops in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a growth on the understanding of the realities and words which have been handed down. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts through a penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience, and through the preaching.’ (Vatican II)

*Vatican II speaks of ‘study made by believers’ but before ‘study’ it mentions ‘contemplation.’ How do we and those we serve grow through contemplation? What might ‘contemplative catechesis’ look like?*

The transmission of the Gospel according to the Lord’s command has been carried out in two ways: ‘through the living transmission of the Word of God (also called Tradition) and through Sacred Scripture which is the same proclamation of salvation in written form.’ Tradition and Scripture are firmly united and interconnected, stemming from the same source, the Revelation of Jesus. These join together in a single stream, the ecclesial life of faith, and work together… to render the whole mystery of Christ alive and dynamic in the Church.  *How does our catechesis use Scripture and Tradition as a single life-giving stream?*

Tradition is not primarily a collection of doctrines but is a life of faith that is renewed every day….The Church’s Magisterium (the Bishops in communion with the Pope), supported by the Spirit and endowed with the charism of truth, exercises its ministry of authentically interpreting the word of God, which it serves.

The word of God is the primary source of evangelisation, the source around which all other sources are ordered.

*How do we equip our catechists to use Scripture and Tradition as a life-giving source?*

*How do we bring to others the rich treasures of God’s living Word?*

1. **Revelation and Evangelisation (Directory 28-31)**

‘Evangelising is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelise… She begins by being evangelised herself. She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love, and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hope, to the new commandments of love…she has a constant need of being evangelised if she wants to retain her freshness, vigour and strength to proclaim the Gospel. ‘(Pope St. Paul VI).

*I am evangelised afresh when I …………*

*Our parish is evangelised afresh when…………………*

*Our Diocese is evangelised afresh when…………………..*

Evangelising is not, in the first place, the delivery of a doctrine but rather making present and announcing Jesus Christ. …Evangelisation makes this enduring presence of Christ concrete, in such a way that those who draw near to the Church may encounter in his person the way to ‘save their lives’ (cf Matt 16:25) and open themselves to a new horizon. *How comfortable am I talking about Jesus?*

*How often do I talk with new parents, families, parishioners about Jesus and his place in my life?*

Evangelisation has as its ultimate aim the fulfilment of human life. … God became human, so that humanity could become truly human as he intended and created him to be; humanity whose icon is the Son; the human being, who is saved from evil and death in order to participate in the divine nature. Believers can already experience this salvation here and now, but it will find its fullness in the resurrection.

Inspired and supported by the Holy Spirit in the process of evangelisation the Church:

-driven by charity, permeates and transforms the whole temporal order, incorporating cultures and offering the contribution of the Gospel so that they may be renewed from within;

-draws near to all humanity with attitudes of solidarity, fellowship and dialogue, thus bearing witness to the Christians’ new way of life, so that those who meet them may be prompted to wonder about the meaning of live and the reasons for their brotherhood and hope;

-explicitly declares the Gospel through the first proclamation, issuing the call to conversion;

-initiates into Christian faith and life, through the catechumenal process (catechesis, sacraments, witness of charity, fraternal experience) those who convert to Jesus Christ or return to following him, incorporating the former and restoring the latter into the Christian community;

-through ongoing education in the faith, the celebration of the sacraments and the exercise of charity nourishes the life of communion among the faithful and supports the mission, sending all the disciples of Christ to proclaim the Gospel in the world with works and words.

*As I read the elements of evangelisation I am inspired by……………………………………………….*

*As I read the elements of evangelisation I am consoled by……………………………………………..*

*As I read the elements of evangelisation I am challenged by…………………………………………*

*As I read the elements of evangelisation I wish to………………………………………………………….*

1. **The stages of Evangelisation (32-)**

Evangelisation includes various stages and moments; these are not only phases that follow each other but also aspects of the process.

Missionary activity is the first stage of evangelisation;

*The three paragraphs that follow are densely packed and can seem to turn the process of catechesis into a series of complicated stages for which we feel we lack the necessary time, resources, energy.*

*They are stages but maybe see them more as movements in the hearts of the ‘sympathisers’, ‘seekers’, parents seeking baptisms, First Communions, adults seeking membership of the Church. I wonder if we move direct from the initial inquiry to the full-on teaching without giving time for them (and us) to recognise God’s presence already with them.*

*Read the paragraphs below in the light of people to whom you minister. I have highlighted phrases that speak to me. Which phrases speak to you?*

1. Witness involves **openness of heart**, capacity for **dialogue** and **reciprocity**, **willingnes**s to recognise the **signs of goodness** and of **God’s presence in the people one meets**. **God comes towards us** from within the **very hearts of those to whom the Gospel is communicated. He is always the first to arrive**. Recognition of the **primacy of grace** is fundamental in evangelisation, right from the first moment. The disciples of Jesus, sharing life with all, bear witness **even without words to the joy of the Gospel that elicits questions.** Witness, which is always expressed as respectful dialogue, at the appropriate time, becomes proclamation.
2. To stimulate an initial turn towards faith and conversion ….[is the aim of the first proclamation.] The interest raised, while not a stable decision, creates the dispositions for the reception of faith. The Church calls those who show such concern ‘sympathisers’.

*How do we reach out to sympathisers, searchers? What will help them?*

1. **At the service of the profession of faith**
2. (continued from last week) The time of inquiry and maturation is necessary to turn initial interest in the Gospel into a deliberate choice. The Christian community, cooperating with the work of the Holy Spirit, welcomes the interest of those who are seeking the Lord and carries out a first form of evangelisation and discernment through accompaniment and the presentation of the kerygma. This ‘precatechumenate’ is important for the reception of the proclamation and for an initial response and conversion. It already brings with it the desire to get away from sin to follow in the footsteps of Christ.

*The ‘Precatechumenate’ or the Inquiry Stage, in the RCIA, is not the first few teaching sessions of the programme,, the ‘Basics’ before we move on to the ‘heavy stuff’. If we look at it as about a movement in the heart of the enquirer, it’s about the movement from ‘wondering whether to become a Catholic’ to ‘wanting to become a Catholic.’ If an attendee tells their friends they are coming to RCIA because they are ‘wondering whether’ that, to me is a sign of inquiry. If they ‘want to’ and the signs as mentioned in the RCIA are present, then they can and should be admitted as catechumens.*

*These signs are; ‘an initial conversion and intention to change their lives and enter into a relationship with God in Christ. …evidence of the first stirrings of repentance, a start to the practice of calling upon God in prayer, a sense of the Church, and experience of the company and practice of Christians through contact with a priest of some members of the communion’ RCIA 42.*

*What does this say to us about preparation for the other sacraments?*

Those who have already met Jesus Christ feel the growing desire to get to know him more intimately. In the Christian community catechesis, together with the liturgical ceremonies, works of charity and experiences of fraternity, initiates them in knowledge of the faith and apprenticeship in the Christian life. The disciple of Jesus is ready for the profession of faith when, through the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, he is grafted onto Christ. This stage corresponds to the catechumenate and the prior of purification and illumination in the RCIA.

Pastoral action nourishes the faith of the baptised and helps them in the Christian life’s ongoing process of conversion. The beginning of this stage corresponds to mystagogy in the RCIA.

*As I read these words I am inspired by………………………………….*

*As I read these words I am struck by……………………………………*

*As I read these words I am challenged by…………………………..*

*As I read these words and look at my own discipleship I…………………………….*