



Institut
Catholique
de Paris

International Conférence
for the
Catechumenate



Paris,
July 2010, Tuesday 6 to Friday 9



Catechumenate and catechesis, new prospects

In the context of its research project, the « International observatory of catechumenal practices », ISPC (Institut Supérieur de Pastorale Catéchétique) wishes to gather pastoral actors, institutional and university partners from the five continents and various Christian Churches. The aim is:

- ✓ To update the situation of catechumenate in the world from its concrete practices
- ✓ To show its theological and ecclesial stakes

The purpose is to question the catechumenate, not about itself, but about its relationship with catechesis in particular and the mission of the Church in general. We shall evaluate how the Catechumenate is effectively a strength to renew and inspire the catechetical responsibility of the Church.

Presentation Folder

This presentation folder comprises:

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I. Issue

Christian initiation practice has moved differently according to the social, cultural, political and religious situations of the countries in which it has been set up since the first centuries.

Thus, the catechumenate disappeared in some parts of the world while, in others it appeared as the very life and dynamics of the local rising Church. These different realities were the point of an international meeting in July 1993 about the pastoral prospects and theological stakes of the catechumenate. *Pascal Thomas*¹, a group of pastoral theology initiated this meeting under the twin patronage of the Lyon Catholic University and The French Pontifical Mission societies. Eighty eight participants took part in this conference – pastoral actors, theologians, Church leaders from thirty countries of the five continents- to exchange their experiences and researches. Among the questions there were: the catechumenate and its ecclesial function, Christian initiation and cultures, Catechumenate and liturgy, Communities and ministries².

Since 1993, catechumenal practices have continued to move. Therefore, there is a need to go through them afresh today in their link with catechetical practices, especially since the “*General instruction for catechesis*”³ was published. Hence this proposition for a new conference whose dynamics could be linked around two questions: how does Christian initiation remain the more appropriate way of proposing faith to our contemporaries whatever their culture? How baptismal catechumenate can inspire catechetical practices for a continuously growing Christian life?

Vatican II: renewal of liturgical catechumenate

We must emphasize the importance of the fact that the Vatican II council restored the catechumenate in its step by step liturgical way:

The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and to be taken into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this, means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time.⁴

On January 6th, 1972 *Ordo initiationis christianae adultorum* is published. It contributed to have a catechumenal practice which was more adjusted to the first centuries practice and better understood as an initiation process. As Cardinal Ratzinger wrote in 1982: “On the one hand [...] the catechumenate is part of the sacrament: not a preliminary teaching but a real part of it. On the other hand, the sacrament is not a simple liturgical rite, but a

¹ A group which was created and led by Henri Bourgeois.

² See the Acts of this conference in the review *Spiritus* n° 134 (1994).

³ CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, *General Directory for catechesis (GDC)*, Washington DC, United States Catholic Conference, 1998, 282 p.

⁴ *Sacrosanctum concilium*, n°64. We must also note the importance of AG 13-14 which gives the fundamental elements for the practice and pedagogy of catechumenate.



process, a long way which mobilizes all the strength of the catechumen: his intelligence, will and feeling”⁵.

The implementation of this Ritual has been different according to countries, in very different contexts and the reception work is not finished yet. The renewed practice of Christian initiation has also benefited from the works of many theologians, liturgists, historians and pastoral actors. Nowadays, the catechumenate has its own experience at the same time referenced to the first centuries, taken from Vatican II council and rooted in modernity.

Catechumenate and catechesis

Vatican II did not only inspire the present understanding of the catechumenate but its relationship with catechesis as well. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, speaks about the post baptismal catechumenate for the children in countries where the baptism of babies is common (§ 1231). We also have to mention the place of the catechumenate in the catechetical reflexion over these last fifty years. From the sixties on, the catechumenate has progressively been considered as the inspiring model of every catechetical action. The §90 of the *General directory for catechesis* says : “Given that the *missio ad gentes* is the paradigm of all the Church's missionary activity, the baptismal catechumenate, which is joined to it, is the model of its catechizing activity.” And §91 ends with these words:

Post-baptismal catechesis, without slavishly imitating the structure of the baptismal catechumenate, and recognizing in those to be catechized the reality of their Baptism, does well, however, to draw inspiration from "this preparatory school for the Christian life", and to allow itself to be enriched by those principal elements which characterize the catechumenate.

The GDC speaks about catechesis as a “fundamental element of Christian initiation” (§66), and adds that the fundamental element of the catechesis of initiation aims at:

“A comprehensive Christian initiation” (CT) which enables an authentic following of Christ [...] It implies education in knowledge of the faith and in the life of faith, in such a manner that the entire person, at his deepest levels, feels enriched by the word of God; it helps the disciple of Christ to transform the old man in order to assume his baptismal responsibilities and to profess the faith from the "heart" (§67)

The present research

A certain number of bishops' conferences recently published texts for the orientation of catechesis inspired by the catechumenate in a prospect of initiation⁶. Many theologians for

⁵ Joseph RATZINGER, *Les principes de la théologie catholique*, esquisse et matériaux, Paris, Tequi, p.36.

⁶ E.g. : The United States bishops' conference, *Our Hearts Wee Burning Within Us : A pastoral Plan for Adult Faith Formation in the United States*, 1998 ; The Ordinaries French speaking Conference and The French speaking Commission for catechesis, *Note de travail en vue d'une pastorale catéchétique en Suisse romande*, 2003 ; Assembly of the Quebec Bishops, *Jésus, chemin d'humanisation, Orientations pour la formation à la vie*



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catechesis worked on the catechumenal model too. These researches and the recent developments beckon the questioning of this model today.

It has been for a few years now, a main preoccupation in France and it led to the *National text for the orientation of catechesis in France*⁷, which was published by the bishops' conference. It is from this text that we make the hypothesis of the conference. It is the very place where we elaborate what we wish to discuss. It emphasizes, from the catechumenate, the catechetical activity as a sacramental approach:

The catechumenate process has many components: a biblical catechesis which awakens to the knowledge of God, the call to a personal conversion provoked by the Gospel of the Lord, the meeting with a living community, by exchanging, sharing in groups, the real relationship with witnesses who have different Christian ways of living; an introduction to prayer and sacramental life which opens to God's mystery and Christ's friendship. The catechumenal process leads the believer to be able to tell what he received, what has been transmitted, what it provoked in him and what he keeps in memory, he must be able to express and give testimony⁸.

An initiatory catechesis therefore leans on the Church sacramentality (LG1). It enables to experiment faith as an answer to the revelation of a mystery which meets man. The *National text* ...recommends a necessary *pedagogy of initiation*: "As a well established rule by the *Rite of Christian initiation of Adults* (RCIA), pedagogy of initiation will foresee journeys that lean upon, and already live on the sacraments they are preparing"⁹. The catechumenal model bears essentially on establishing a link between the seven sacraments and the sacramentality of the Church at the very heart of its catechetical activity. This leads the French bishops to propose paths of catechumenal type for each sacramental step¹⁰. This encourages catechesis to take distance from the school model.

At the heart of faith¹¹

The paschal mystery is at the heart of the catechumenal journey. In fact, the catechumens give testimony of the nearness of this mystery and of the presence of Christ which is well ahead of every initiation. The catechumenal process, through liturgical rites, the word of God and the community as body of Christ, meets and bear fruit to what the catechumens have already inside themselves. It is very important therefore to consider that it cannot be any different for every catechesis journey. The catechetical activity which is aimed

chrétienne, 2004 ; Declaration of the Belgium bishops, *Devenir adulte dans la foi, La catéchèse dans la vie de l'Eglise*, 2006.

⁷ France Bishops Conference, *Texte national pour l'orientation de la catéchèse en France et principes d'organisation*, Paris, Bayard, Cerf, Fleurus-Mame, 2006

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54

¹⁰ See the fourth principle of the *Texte national* ..., p.91-95.

¹¹ See: COMMISSION EPISCOPALE DE LA CATECHESE ET DU CATECHUMENAT, *Aller au cœur de la foi*, Bayard, Cerf, Fleurus-Mame, Paris, 2003.

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at anybody at any age of life needs to be listened to with tact and tenderness so that he or she might enter more deeply in the intimacy God has already opened. In our contemporary world we have well identified challenges: the challenge of inner life, of a first announcement, the educational and the community ones...Thus, “in [the] pluralistic context of the crisis in transmission, catechesis claims a come back into the heart of faith to put somebody in touch with Jesus Christ, as are the words of *Catechesi Tradendae* n°5”¹².

Therefore, the issue of the conference is at this level of challenge. Through its catechetical responsibility, the Church will gain in considering the catechumenate as an inspiring model. It seems more than ever relevant to understand this model and to analyse it precisely in updating the catechumenal practices in different countries throughout the world. We shall show the theological and ecclesial stakes of this model and by this, we shall be able to bring into light the challenges that question the mission of the Church nowadays.

As it is a huge piece of work, this research cannot be limited to one conference in 2010 but it enters a bigger research that will see the setting up of an *international Observatory for catechumenal practices*. ISPC wishes to gather, from now on, university, pastoral actors and institutional partners from the five continents, from different Christian confessions to continue this file.



¹² Jean-Louis SOULETIE, « La catéchèse ou la grâce d’initier dans un monde pluraliste », *Lumen Vitae* LXII (2007/2), p. 143.



II. General programme of the Conference

The Conference is structured by three main axes :

- conferences in plenary,
- research workshops,
- forums (research and practises)

The program, facilitates the interactions between these three axes:

Tuesday 6th July 2010

14.00 – 18.00

- ◆ Issue of the Conference
- ◆ Inaugural conferences

18.00

- ◆ Vespers
- ◆ Buffet

Wednesday 7th July 2010

9.00 – 12.00

- ◆ Research forum

14.00 – 18.00

- ◆ Research workshops, according to eight themes:
 - outlays for the Ritual of Christian Initiation for adults,
 - the mystagogy as catechetical practise,
 - accompaniment of the catechumens,
 - sacramentality of the pathway in catechesis and in catechumenate,
 - conversion and Christian life,
 - ecclesiology of the catechesis and of the catechumenat,
 - taking account of the cultures in catechesis and in catechumenate,
 - catechesis and catechumenate in inter-faith contexts.

Thursday 8th July 2010

9.00 – 12.00

- ◆ Forum of the practises

14.00 – 18.00

- ◆ Continuation of the research workshops

18.00

- ◆ Liturgy celebration
- ◆ Celebration dinner

Friday 9th July 2010

9.00 – 12.00

- ◆ Summary of the work done in workshops in plenary
- ◆ Conclusion of the Conference



III. Appeal for contributions - Research Forum

During the conference, half a day is dedicated to a **research forum, on Wednesday July 7th, from 9h00 to 12h00**. In this space, we invite 15 to 20 researchers (professors and PhD students) to present the fruit of their work in catechumenate or catechesis linked with the issue of the conference.

Frame of interventions

Each intervention enrolls in a thematic session during which two researchers have twenty minutes to present their research before beginning a debate between the two of them and the other participants.

Before their presentation, each researcher will have to give a one page document that sums up the principal arguments and some bibliographical elements. Beforehand, they will have given the scientific committee organizing the conference, the whole text of his intervention in view of a later publication.

Candidates

In order to contribute to the research forum, one has to send the scientific committee organizing the conference a file including:

- ♦ An argument (2000 to 2500 signs/400 words) presenting the contribution that the intervention means to bring to the issue of the conference.
- ♦ An academic bibliography (diplomas, teaching seats, research projects, bibliography).

This file should be presented in one of the three languages of the Conference: French, English or Spanish.

Calendar

- ♦ 29th may 2009 deadline for sending contribution projects (argument and bibliography)
- ♦ 30th June 2009 the scientific committee sends its reply to the candidates
- ♦ 31st march 2010 deadline for the candidates who have been accepted to send their texts (NB taking part in the forum is subject to the effective sending of texts at that date).
- ♦ 7th July 2010 Research forum

Contact

The application files must be sent to the Scientific Committee preparing the conference: ispc@icp.fr



IV. Appeal for contributions – Practises forum

During the conference, half a day is dedicated to a **Forum of the practises, on Thursday 8th July 2010, from 9am to 12 noon**. In this framework, we invite between 10 and 20 people (called here “practitioners”) to present their practise, linked to the issue of the conference. This morning will enable the attendees of the Conference to meet people of all countries who have set up:

- a catechumenal proposition,
- or a catechetical proposition of a catechumenal type,
- or a proposition that uses characters of a catechumenal journey.

Framework of the interventions

These practitioners will be invited to share their experience by presenting over 45 minutes, the reflection and issue which presided at the start of a proposition ; the way it was instigated ; the way it was spread and the way it trained new tutors ; the actions for promotion... In brief, it is about describing an experience whilst stressing the stakes of setting it up. The realisation to be presented must have an effective life and must have been in operation for at least a year. It must not be simply an idea or a project.

Each forum will have its own room. It will last 45 minutes and will be presented 3 times in the presence of a compere. It would be useful if each realisation to be the object of a Forum be also presented to the fair of practises (see p.10).

Candidates

To take part into the forum of the Practises, the practitioners who wish to present their realisations are requested to fill in an application form (see next page). All these propositions will be studied by a selection committee.

The candidates must send, before 19th December 2009:

- ◆ an argued presentation of their realisation, according to the data on the questionnaire enclosed;
- ◆ and if possible, if they exist,
 - the URL address of the internet site which presents this realisation
 - a promotional document aimed at the potential attendees or comperes.

Calendar

- ◆ 19th December 2009 deadline for sending applications (form and complete file)
- ◆ 2nd February 2010 the selection committee replies to the candidates
- ◆ 8th July 2010 forum of the Practises

Contact

The application forms must be sent to the selection committee of the conference: ispc@icp.fr



Forum of the Practises – Application Form

In order to be a candidate for the forum of the practises, please send this application form, together with a presentation of about 1500 characters of your project and all documents (especially educational and/or promotional) likely to help the decision of the selection committee, **before 19th December 2009** to:

- ◆ ISPC 26, rue d’Assas – 75270 PARIS cedex 06 - FRANCE
- ◆ ispc@icp.fr (object: forum of the Practises)

NAME of the realisation: _____

Date of the start of its realisation: _____

Details of the person responsible for this realisation:

Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address : _____

Postcode: _____ Town: _____

Country: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail : _____

To which institutional or ecclesiastical entity is this realisation linked:

Name: _____

Address : _____

Postcode: _____ Town: _____

Country: _____

Do you have an internet site that represents this realisation? YES NO

If YES, what is its address: http://

How many groups are there as of today?

With how many participants?

Does this realisation exist in other countries than yours? YES NO

If YES, in which countries?

What is the length of “the Programme” for the participants?

How many meetings constitute a “Programme”?

Do the attendees have a teaching support? YES NO

If YES, which type? (book, notebook, exercise book, multimedia document, other..). You can join it to your mail application

In which language will you do your presentation if you are selected to lead a Forum?



V. Appeal for Contributions – Practises Fair

Linking with the Forum of the Practises, and during the whole of the Conference (except for plenary sessions), a Fair of Practises will be open to all attendees, a space for interaction and grouping through the presentation of catechumenate realisations or catechetical realisations but with a strong catechumenal tendency. The Fair of practises will be the opportunity for the attendees to the conference to meet with practitioners who have taken an initiative in the domain of starting up

action projects of a catechumenal type, from all countries.

The aim of this fair is to activate a relational, creative and experienced network.

Framework of the exhibitions

The selected candidates will have a display area of 0.70 metres wide by 1.20 meters high and a table of 0.40 meters depth by 0.70 metres width. Each stall will have a socket (220 volts, model available in France) to use a multimedia support (laptop computer – independent video block...).

The Fair of practises will be open everyday during the Conference from 8.30 to 18.30 except during Plenary sessions.

Each stall holder at the Fair of practises will ensure that he is present or near his stall as often as possible.

Each realisation will be identified by a NAME, by the ENTITY (juridical, pastoral or other) which carries it (association, group, movement, organisation, service...) and by the NAME and ADDRESS of a person likely to be contacted by the attendees to the Conference who would like to know more about the realisation.

Candidates

The candidates must let their realisation be known by answering the questionnaire enclosed (see p. 11). As much as possible, the candidates will supply a copy of their promotional documentation or any other support (press article, audio interview,..) likely to present their realisation. A committee will retain, among the realisations, those who subscribe best to the issue of the conference.

Calendar

- ◆ 19th December 2009 deadline to send applications (form and complete file)
- ◆ 2nd February 2010 the organisation committee will reply to the candidates
- ◆ 7-8th July 2010 Fair of practises

Contact

The application forms must be sent to the organisation committee of the Conference: ispc@icp.fr



Fair of Practises – Application form

In order to apply for the Fair of practises, please send this application form together with a presentation of your project in 1,500 characters together with any documents (particularly educational and/or promotional) likely to help the decision of the selection committee, **before 19th December 2009** to:

- ◆ ISPC – 26, rue d’Assas – 75270 PARIS cedex 06
- ◆ ispc@icp.fr (object: fair of Practises)

NAME of the realisation: _____

Date of the start of its realisation: _____

Details of the person responsible for this realisation:

Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address : _____

Postcode: _____ Town: _____

Country: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail : _____

To which institutional or ecclesiastical entity is this realisation linked:

Name: _____

Address : _____

Postcode: _____ Town: _____

Country: _____

Do you have an internet site that represents this realisation? YES NO

If YES, what is its address: http://

How many groups are there as of today?
With how many participants?

Does this realisation exist in other countries than yours? YES NO

If YES, in which countries?

What is the length of “the Programme” for the participants?
How many meetings constitute a “Programme”?

Do the attendees have a teaching support? YES NO

If YES, which type? (book, notebook, exercise book, multimedia document, other..). You can join it to your mail application

In which language will you do your presentation if you are selected to lead a Forum?



VI. Various Practical Information

By organising the international catechumenal conference, the ISPC aims to favour the existence of a network of independent research. This is why the Conference, like the research project that they inaugurate, call for a group of international efficient partnerships.

Scientific Committee of the Conference

The pre-preparatory scientific committee is composed of research-teachers from the Paris Catholic Institute engaged in research at ISPC:

- Pr. Dr. Jean-Louis Souletie (D.Th, Hab.), responsible for the research project « world observatory of the catechumenal practises ».
- Pr. Dr. Henri-Jérôme Gagey (D.Th).
- Dr. François Moog (Ph.D, D.Th), director of ISPC.
- With the participation of Roland Lacroix, doctoring at the Paris Catholic Institute.

Partnerships are already looked into with the Laval University (Québec, Canada), the Catholic University of Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium) and the Gregorian University (Rome, Italy).

Organisation committee of the Conference

The organisation committee of the conference is composed of the members of the scientific committee and of:

- P. Luc Mellet, director of the national service of catechesis and catechumenate (Paris, France)
- Sr Beatrice Blazy, co-director of the national service of catechesis and catechumenate (Paris, France)
- P. Michel Dujarier, SMA.
- Mme Dorothée Lagabrielle, Eurocat.
- M. Denis Jacob, head of teaching at ISPC.

Name and Address

All correspondence relating to the Conference must be sent to

<p>✉ ISPC – 26, rue d’Assas – 75270 PARIS cedex 06 ✉ ispc@icp.fr ☎ (+33) 1 44 39 52 54 ☎ (+33) 1 44 39 52 73</p>
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