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Rooted in a rich history of Catholic publishing, Sadlier Religion is dedicated to innovative, quality catechesis and sacramental preparation that faithfully presents the teachings of the Catholic Church. Our K-8 programs, in English and Spanish, cater to diverse communities to address the needs of all Catholic schools and parishes.





Founded by the Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist, we offer educational and inspirational media that seeks to open hearts and minds to the light of Christ. Our goal is to nurture academic, emotional, and spiritual growth by equipping individuals with tools for human flourishing, virtue, and a deeper relationship with Christ and others.





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As the largest Catholic publisher in the English language, OSV is a non-profit Catholic company that strives to champion the Catholic Church through innovative and faithful catechetical programs, trade books, periodicals, and other resources. Our 1st through 8th grade parish and school religion series, *Alive in Christ: Discovering and Sharing the Kerygma*, offers a comprehensive overview of the fundamentals of Catholic teaching and includes free online home session plans, family gathered sessions, adaptations for diverse learners and active learning approaches for every lesson. Scan the QR code to order a free sample of *Alive in Christ* today!

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What is the Convocation of the Institute on the Catechism?

The Institute on the Catechism Convocation took place June 30 – July 2, 2025 on the campus of the Conference Center of the University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Mundelein, Illinois. Participants included bishops from around the country from both the Latin Church and Eastern Churches, diocesan directors of catechesis and school superintendents, publishers of catechetical texts, and those associated with allied organizations, especially those through which catechists are formed.

The choice of gathering on holy ground was intentional. A prayerful atmosphere set the tone for participants as they learned and dialogued about an evangelizing catechesis through the sessions, over meals and while enjoying the beauty of USML.

Upcoming Institute Activities

Next Year's Convocation: June 29 – July 2, 2026

**Forming Children and Families for Eucharistic
Amazement: Catechetical Opportunities and Challenges**

October 29, 2025, 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

In-person and Livestreamed, Catholic University of America

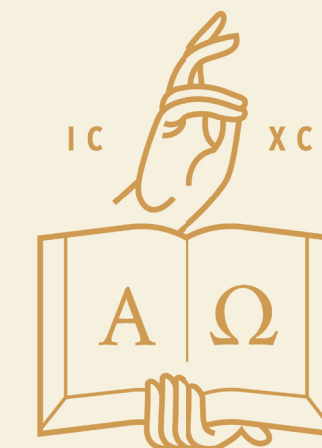
**A Father Who Teaches: Cultivating Evangelizing
Catechesis in the Parish**

A Formative Experience for Priests

February 2-6, 2026

Our Lady of Florida Retreat Center, North Palm Beach, FL

Registration for both events: www.EvangelizingCatechesis.com



INSTITUTE on the CATECHISM

REPORT ON
**Institute on the Catechism
Convocation 2025**
June 30 – July 2, 2025

UNIVERSITY OF
ST MARY OF THE LAKE
CONFERENCE CENTER
MUNDELEIN, IL



What is Evangelizing Catechesis?

At the heart of the Church's mission to all people, an evangelizing catechesis seeks to deepen a personal encounter with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit:¹ It proclaims the core message of the Gospel, the kerygma;² It accompanies people to a response of faith and conversion to Christ;³ It provides a systematic exposition of God's revelation within the communion of the Catholic Church;⁴ and It sends out missionary disciples as witnesses to the good news of salvation⁵ who promote a new vision of life, of humanity, of justice, and of human fraternity.⁶

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, April 27, 2021¹ The Directory for Catechesis (DC) offers a more expanded description in paragraphs 55 and 56.
² Cf. DC, 2: The kerygma "manifests the action of the Holy Spirit, who communicates God's saving love in Jesus Christ and continues to give himself so that every human being may have the fullness of life."
³ Cf. DC, 3: The process of accompaniment leads to an internalizing of the Gospel which "involves the whole person in his unique experience of life."
⁴ Cf. DC, 4: "The act of faith is born from the love that desires an ever-increasing knowledge of the Lord Jesus, living in the Church."
⁵ Cf. DC, 4: "All believers are active participants in the catechetical initiative...and because of this are called to become authentic missionary disciples."
⁶ Cf. DC, 60: "Since 'the kerygma has a clear social content'...the efficacy of catechesis is visible not only through the direct proclamation of the Lord's Paschal mystery, but also through its revelation of a new vision of life, of humanity, of justice, of social existence."

ATTENDEES

Bishops

8

Diocesan Leaders

80

Superintendents

6

Publishers and their staff

36

Members of allied organizations

20

Institute team and consultants

34

Total Participants

184



SUMMARY OF CONVOCATION

Theme:

Forming a Catechetical Culture

Plenary Presenters:

Bishop Erik Pohlmeier
Bishop Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst
Monsignor James Shea

Breakout Presenters:

Bishop Earl Fernandes
Sr. John Paul Maher, O.P.
Chris Burgwald
Brian Greenfield
Jimmy Mitchell
Ken Ogorek
Julianne Stanz
Joseph White
Patrick Donovan
Brian Pedraza
Scott Sollom
Hans Plate

Emcees:

Fr. Daniel J. Mahan
Kately Javier

Core team members:

Julianne Stanz
Kately Javier
Scott Sollom
Brian Greenfield

Institute Staff:

David Spesia
Fr. Daniel J. Mahan
Alissa Thorell
Christopher Ragusa
Andrew Montanaro
Zachary Keith
Jon Crumpacker
Marilyn Santos
Thomas Nee



BISHOP ERIK POHLMEIER

The Importance of Personal Witness in Catechesis: Catechetical Culture and Missionary Discipleship

Bishop Erik Pohlmeier of the Diocese of St. Augustine proposed a vision for the personal witness necessary in catechesis, with the ecclesial context for creating a true catechetical culture. He warned that it is not just those who have official duties in parish faith formation who are involved in catechesis. He referred to the many groups in attendance at the convocation as exemplary of the fact that one cannot limit catechesis to one group or another. Only when all pieces come together for the single goal of catechesis can a transformative catechetical culture be possible. Further, one must acknowledge those that they can influence and support so that they

can reach those yet further off.

Bishop Pohlmeier related all of this to personal witness in catechesis. He noted that people often do not want to hear about Jesus or anything wrapped in religious language. Here, Bp. Pohlmeier cited Pope Francis, who in *Evangelii Gaudium* teaches that those who accept the Gospel are set free from “sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness.” Those who might recoil at “sin” may be ready to listen to the freedom one has found in Christ from sorrow, emptiness, or loneliness. Bp. Pohlmeier encouraged us to ask, “how am I free from these things?”—and one’s answer to this question, he proposes, is equivalent

to one’s personal witness to the kerygma.

Thus, Bp. Pohlmeier marked where the kerygma meets witness—the acknowledgment from the freedom experienced by meeting Christ and accepting his saving message that God is love. This is the most foundational question: do you believe God is love, and wants to free you by inviting you into a relationship? If the answer is not a clear yes, all else needs to be set aside and this foundation shored up. The more this awareness permeates each of us, those in our spheres of influence, and indeed every level of catechesis, the more a true culture of catechesis will emerge.

MONSIGNOR JAMES SHEA

How Evangelizing Catechesis Helps Us Transform Evangelization: Practical Implications

Monsignor James Shea, president of the The University of Mary began by echoing the *Directory for Catechesis* that though one may conceptually distinguish the parts of catechesis, “in the present context it is no longer possible to stress such differences” (56). Instead, Catechesis must be consistently “kerygmatic” such that “the proclamation [of the Gospel] can...no longer be considered simply the first stage of faith... but rather the essential

dimension of every moment of catechesis” (57). Msgr. Shea noted that this vision of the *Directory* was at the heart of the US bishops’ emphasis on “evangelizing catechesis.” In his ministry, connecting the narrative of God’s salvation to his students’ personal narratives helped them hold onto the faith long after they had left his class, because the Gospel was now “in their bones.”

Simultaneously, new technologies have radically changed our understanding of who we are and what it means to be human—far greater a shift than the horse-and-buggy to car. Lastly, he noted that people, in their “familiarity” with Christianity’s creeds, can find them “dull.” He counseled a living out of the advice of the *Directory* and of evangelizing catechesis. Our task is to re-entice and renew people’s imaginations, broaden their views of

the cosmos, and teach people who they are by proclaiming the Gospel throughout catechesis. The goal is at every moment to help people connect their lives to God’s salvific action throughout the ages. The Gospel sweeps people, and we want to be swept away by the greatest of truths. As an example, he offered his own eucharistic preaching at the recent Eucharistic Revival in Indianapolis. He noted that he intentionally preached the Church’s understanding of the eucharist by relating it both to his own upbringing and to the whole of the Gospel and Jesus’s salvific mission.



BISHOP TEBARTZ-VAN ELST

The Catechumenate as Inspiration for all Catechesis

Bishop Tebartz-van Elst, who is the Delegate for Catechesis for the Dicastery for Evangelization, addressed the participants of the Institute on the Catechism’s Convocation during a plenary address titled “The Catechumenate as Inspiration for all Catechesis.” His excellency extended a warm greeting for Evangelization, who participated in the Convocation in 2024.

Bp. Tebartz-van Elst emphasized the importance of certain elements of the catechumenal model as a framework and foundation for catechetical efforts in the United States and in the Church around the world. He emphasized the importance of the individual’s journey of conversion, one that is ongoing throughout his or her life. The liturgical and sacramental foundation of the catechumenate were also noted as key elements in a catechesis that invites conversion and renewed vigor in faith. The basis in Sacred Scripture that is part of the catechumenal process is also to be emphasized as vital to catechetical efforts. Helping the faithful to come to understand their individual stories in light of the unfolding of salvation history is necessary for their integration into the life of the Church. These elements (biblical, liturgical and pastoral) can aid the faithful in ongoing conversion of life and lived witness to their faith.

Finally, catechesis must always have at its center the kerygma. Jesus Christ is both the act and the content of the proclamation—Jesus himself acts (cf. *Directory for Catechesis*, 58). His excellency emphasized that catechesis must support ongoing maturation of faith for believers.