

# The Role of the Local Ordinary in Regulating Catechesis and Catholic Education

## CATECHESIS

### **The Bishop has primary responsibility for catechesis in the particular Church**

The Bishops are "beyond all others the ones primarily responsible for catechesis and catechists par excellence" (General Directory for Catechesis 222 citing Lumen Gentium, 25).

### **Catechetical norms are established by the Bishop**

While observing the prescriptions of the Apostolic See, it is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop to issue norms concerning catechetics (Canon 775).

### **The formation of catechists and catechetical leaders is determined by the Bishop**

Local ordinaries are to see to it that catechists are duly prepared to fulfil their task correctly, namely, that continuing formation is made available to them, that they acquire a proper knowledge of the Church's teaching and that they learn in theory and in practice the norms proper to the pedagogical disciplines. (Canon 780)

The principal competencies of the diocesan office are the following: ...to improve personnel and material resources at diocesan level as well as at the level of the parish and the vicariates (GDC, 266)

### **The diocesan office over catechesis is the extension of the bishop's authority**

The diocesan catechetical office (*Officium Catechisticum*) is the means which the Bishop as head of the community and teacher of doctrine utilizes to direct and moderate all the catechetical activities of the diocese (GDC, 265).

### **The parish priest sees to the needs of catechesis in his parish according to the norms of the diocese**

"In accord with the norms established by the diocesan bishop" the pastor is to see to the various catechetical needs of his parish (Canon Law, 777).

The catechetical tasks proper to the presbyterate and particularly to parish priests are: ... to secure the bonds between the catechesis of his community and the diocesan pastoral program by helping catechists become active co-operators in a common diocesan program (GDC, 225)

### **The diocese establishes a global catechetical program - parish programs must not operate separately from the diocesan plan**

The diocesan catechetical program is the global catechetical project of a particular Church, which integrates, in a structured and coherent way, the diverse catechetical programs addressed by the Diocese to different age groups. These different programs of catechesis, each with its own socio-cultural variations, should not be organized separately as though they were "separate compartments without any communication between them". It is necessary that the catechesis offered by a particular Church be well coordinated (GDC 274-275).

# CATHOLIC EDUCATION

## **Catholic schools are under the control of ecclesial authority**

A catholic school is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority or of a public ecclesiastical juridical person, or one which in a written document is acknowledged as catholic by the ecclesiastical authority (Can. 803 §1).

## **Religious education and the teachers of religion in the Catholic school are under the authority of the diocesan Bishop**

The formation and education in the catholic religion provided in any school, and through various means of social communication is subject to the authority of the Church. It is for the Episcopal Conference to issue general norms concerning this field of activity and for the diocesan Bishop to regulate and watch over it (Canon 804 §1).

The local Ordinary is to be careful that those who are appointed as teachers of religion in schools, even non-catholic ones, are outstanding in true doctrine, in the witness of their christian life, and in their teaching ability (Canon 804 §2).

In his own diocese, the local Ordinary has the right to appoint or to approve teachers of religion and, if religious or moral considerations require it, the right to remove them or to demand that they be removed (Canon 805).

## **The diocesan Bishop has the right of supervision and general regulation of Catholic schools, diocesan and private**

The diocesan Bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He has also the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of catholic schools these directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their schools (Can. 806 §1).

Those who are in charge of catholic schools are to ensure, under the supervision of the local Ordinary, that the formation given in them is, in its academic standards, at least as outstanding as that in other schools in the area (Canon 806 §2).