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THE CATECHIST IN THE CHURCH COMMUNITY. A WITNESS OF FAITH AND A MISTAGOGUE

Abstract. While establishing the lay catechist ministry, Pope Francis expressed his hope that, as was the case in Christian antiquity, a catechist—because of the tasks entrusted to him—would be simultaneously a witness of the faith, a master and a mystagogue, a companion and an educator who teaches on behalf of the Church. This article aims to highlight the mystagogical dimension of the education of catechists preparing to enter the ministry in parish communities and to present the related directions of pastoral activities carried out in the Church of Katowice as part of the Archdiocesan Centre for Pastoral Formation. The main research problem concerns the nature of the formation of catechists serving in parish communities and their specific competences. The study uses methods of analysis and synthesis. The analysis of catechetical documents, carried out in the light of chronologically (sequentially) complementary guidelines concerning catechists' formation, enabling us to distinguish the mystagogical elements of the theological-pastoral formation of catechists. The article emphasises the postulate expressed in the Catechetical Directory for the formation of catechists as “witnesses of faith and mystagogues” and the lay ministry of the catechist established by Pope Francis. These make possible and necessary the formation of two types of catechists that complement each other through their competences: the school catechist—a teacher of religious education, and the catechist who undertakes ministry in the parish community. Pastoral initiatives supporting the formation of parish catechists conducted in the Archdiocese of Katowice are presented as an example of catechetical-pastoral implementation of the postulated activities. They serve as an inspiration for activities in other formation centres.

Keywords: catechist; community of the Church; formation of catechists; mystagogue; witness of faith.

The Risen Lord has entrusted the Church with a single mission, which in practice takes different forms, depending on the people and areas to which it is addressed. The mission *ad gentes* is the model for the Church's pastoral activity. It is addressed to

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peoples, groups, and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and his Gospel are not known, or which lack Christian communities sufficiently mature to be able to incarnate the faith in their own environment and proclaim it to other groups.¹

Announced in 2020, the *Directory for Catechesis* notes that, in the spirit of a renewed awareness of her vocation, the Church “is also re-envisioning catechesis as one of her works *in a missionary going forth*.”² Its goal is to get closer to the people of our time, to walk by their side wherever they are. Catechesis understood in this way

[...] forms believers for mission, accompanying them in the maturation of attitudes of faith and making them aware that they are missionary disciples, called to participate actively in the proclamation of the Gospel and to make the Kingdom of God present in the world: ‘The Church’s closeness to Jesus is part of a common journey’; ‘communion and mission are profoundly interconnected.’³

Establishing the lay ministry of a catechist on May 10, 2021, Pope Francis indicated the priority directions of the Church's activities, such as recognizing the presence of the laity who, under the sacrament of baptism, feel called to cooperate in the catechetical service, awakening the enthusiasm of every baptized person and reviving the awareness of being called to fulfil their mission in the community. In the context of the rich experiences of Christian antiquity, a special place and importance for the Church community held by the ministry of a catechist who, due to the tasks entrusted to them, “[...] must be a witness to the faith, a teacher and mystagogue, a companion and pedagogue, who teaches for the Church. Only through prayer, study, and direct participation in the life of the community can they grow in this identity and the integrity and responsibility that it entails.”⁴

¹ Jan Paweł II, *Encyklika “Redemptoris missio”* (Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), 33. Cf. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html, accessed 23 January, 2023.

² Papieska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji, *Dyrektorium o katechizacji* (Kielce: Wydawnictwo Jedność, 2020), 50. Cf. <https://katekezi.mt/resources/directory-for-catechesis/> accessed January 23, 2023.

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Franciszek, “List apostolski w formie Motu proprio papieża Franciszka «Antiquum Ministerium» w którym ustanawia posługę katechety,” *eKAI*, <https://www.ekai.pl/dokumenty/list-apostolski-w-formie-motu-proprio-papieza-franciszka-antiquum-ministerium-w-ktorym-ustanawia-posluge-katechety/>, accessed 5 February, 2022. Cf. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/>

This article aims to highlight the mystagogical dimension of the formation of catechists preparing to take up ministry in parish communities and to present the directions of pastoral activities carried out in Katowice Diocese as part of the *Archdiocesan Centre for Pastoral Formation*.

1. THE MYSTAGOGIC DIMENSION OF THE FORMATION OF CATECHISTS

The issue of the formation of catechists has always been one of the priority activities in the Church community. At the dawn of Christianity, formation referred to experiencing a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, confirmed by one's words and life testimony. The witness of the preachers of the Gospel became the hallmark of the entire formation process, which gradually introduced people to the mystery of the Church's faith. In these times, facing a fast pace of social change and cultural pluralism, the formation of catechists requires special attention.⁵ Only an example of living under the preached word can awaken another person's spiritual life. A catechist must practice what they preach. They must live what they teach. If this coherence is missing, a catechist will not preach, but only teach. In mystagogical terms, this is a fundamental difference, because science basically addresses only one's intellect, and not another human being's deepest "I." Through their religious existence, a catechist must support the faith of the catechised, becoming a witness of the faith in the Church community.⁶

Significant directions for the formation of catechists can be found in catechetical documents. The *General Catechetical Directory* postulated that a well-formed catechist, following the example of classical mystagogues, should become a companion and guide to the catechized on their path of faith. The document outlines a kind of itinerary for the mystagogical formation of catechists. The nature of the task entrusted to catechists requires them to keep

a fervent sacramental and spiritual life, a practice of prayer, and a deep feeling for the excellence of the Christian message and for the power it has to transform

en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210510_antiquum-ministerium.html no. 6, accessed 23 January, 2023.

⁵ Papińska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji, *Dyrektorium o katechizacji*, 130.

⁶ Jan Szpet, "Katecheta – świadkiem i przyjacielem (charakterystyka osobowości)," *Katecheta* 30 (1986), 1: 16–17.

one's life; it also demands of him the pursuit of the charity, humility, and prudence which allow the Holy Spirit to complete his fruitful work in those being taught.⁷

Further indications regarding the mystagogical dimension of the formation of catechists can be derived from the exhortation *Catechesi tradendae*. Perceiving catechesis as an activity aimed at continuous growth of communion with Jesus Christ, leading to full intimacy with Him,⁸ obliges one to adopt a Christocentric feature in the entire formation and spirituality of catechists.

The *General Directory for Catechesis* states that formation understood in this way leads the catechist to skilfully and effectively enliven the catechetical process in which s/he preaches Jesus Christ, leading to knowledge about His life, and showing it within salvation history. A catechist introduces others to the mystery of the Son of God, who became man for us, and finally – what is especially important – helps the catechumen or the catechised to identify with Jesus Christ through the sacraments of Christian initiation. The task of the catechist – the mystagogue – is to deepen these fundamental aspects within the framework of constant catechesis.⁹ In analysing the mystagogical dimension of the formation of catechists, an especially important element should be pointed out. The formation of catechists leads to identifying with the Church's lively and up-to-date awareness of the Gospel, so that they become capable of transmitting it on her behalf. The *General Directory* emphasizes, “this truly *ecclesial* quality of the transmission of the Gospel permeates the entire formation of catechists and gives to that formation its true nature.”¹⁰

Considering the above indications, the *Catechetical Directory of the Catholic Church in Poland* briefly states that “the catechist should be a man of the Church,” and the already mentioned Christocentric and ecclesial aspects

⁷ Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, “Ogólna instrukcja katechetyczna,” in *Katecheza po Soborze Watykańskim II w świetle dokumentów Kościoła. Część 1*, ed. Władysław Kubik (Warszawa: Akademia Teologii Katolickiej, 1985), 114. Cf. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccclergy_doc_11041971_gcat_en.html no. 114, accessed 23 January, 2023.

⁸ Jan Paweł II, *Adhortacja apostolska “Catechesi tradendae”* (Kielce: Referat katechetyczny, 1996), 5.

⁹ Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Dyrektorium ogólne o katechizacji* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 1998), 236. Cf. *General Directory for Catechesis* ([vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)), accessed 23 January, 2023.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

of catechetical formation “express and shape a catechist’s true and authentic identity.”¹¹ However, a doubt may arise whether this “identity of a catechist” leads them to discover mystagogical assignments in their mission. The criteria that should inspire and permeate the formation of catechists include the need to adapt this ministry to the evangelical needs of our times. This demands that the catechist be a person of deep faith with a clear Christian and ecclesial identity. It is equally important that s/he share the understanding of catechesis that the Church has today and be able to put this model into practice in catechetical work. More precisely, it is about integrally implementing catechesis in its function of teaching, upbringing and initiation. Poland’s *Catechetical Directory* postulates that a catechist, aware of the mission entrusted to them by the Church community, should present the catechists as a teacher of the faith, an educator in faith, and above all as an authentic witness of the faith.¹²

The 2020 *Directory for Catechesis*, defining the identity and vocation of a catechist, presents them in a triad, in light of which the catechist is at the same time a witness of faith and a guardian of the memory of God, a teacher and mystagogue, and a companion and teacher. Regarding the function of teacher and mystagogue, s/he receives a twofold task – to hand on the content of faith and to lead to the very mystery of faith.

A catechist is called to open people up to the truth and their ultimate vocation by acquainting a person with Christ. At the same time, they introduce people to various dimensions of the Christian life, revealing the mysteries of salvation contained in the deposit of faith and realized in the Church’s liturgy.¹³

A catechist will become an authentic companion and educator on the path of faith only when they witness to faith, hope and love. A catechist’s faith influences the faith of the catechized. Although faith is always a grace given to a person individually, a catechist’s task is to awaken one’s readiness to open up to the faith, cultivate it, and enable people to profess and testify about their faith, awakening motives and formulating arguments. Such action requires a catechist to have personal adherence to Christ and thorough knowledge.¹⁴ Here we touch upon two mutually reinforcing and complementary

¹¹ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Dyrektorium katechetyczne Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo WAM, 2002), 150.

¹² Ibidem. Also see Roman Buchta, *Mistagogia w polskiej refleksji i praktyce katechetyczno-duszpasterskiej po II Soborze Watykańskim* (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2017), 433–435.

¹³ Papińska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji, *Dyrektorium o katechizacji*, 113.

¹⁴ A catechist cannot limit himself to bearing witness to his own faith; he must competently convey its content. Therefore, a systematic study of the doctrine of the faith by catechists is

aspects: a catechist's faith and knowledge. A catechist, fulfilling in equal measure the functions of teaching, upbringing and initiation¹⁵ proper to catechesis, personally undertakes four basic functions, giving their ministry the characteristics of a mystagogue-catechist. Namely, s/he stands before the catechized as:

- a representative of the ecclesial community;
- a prophet transmitting the Good News about Jesus, showing how to interpret the signs of the times through which God reveals himself to man;
- an educator – helping others to live the Christian call, must first develop their experience of life in the Church, including prayer and works of charity;
- a witness who, in addition to communicating the message, bears witness to it above all in their life.¹⁶

At this point, a question should be asked: what does it mean that a catechist is “a witness of the faith”? Undertaking the mission entrusted to them by the Church, a catechist enters into specific relationships, which are a place for testimony. These are, successively, in reference to God, the content of the catechetical message, the catechized, and oneself as the catechist. The fundamental determinant of the testimony is the catechist's reference to the person of Jesus Christ as the One who gave them a vocation, lives and acts in the life of the catechist and leads to full union with God. Witnessing in terms of content means fidelity to God's message and the teaching of the Church. Testimony in relation to the catechized manifests itself in a personal relationship involving both parties. For the catechized, being a witness and companion on a common journey means competently explaining, searching together, and above all, sharing one's experience of meeting God.¹⁷ Concern-

necessary. Using the cooperation of people full of good will in the catechetical service, but without proper preparation, usually does not bring good results – see Jan Paweł II, *Wierzę w Boga Ojca Stworzyciela* (Watykan: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), 31.

¹⁵ Cf. Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Dyrektorium katechetyczne Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, 37–53.

¹⁶ Jan Szpet, “Formacja katechetów w Polsce,” *Katecheta* 54 (2010), 10: 4.

¹⁷ “Katecheta postawiony między Chrystusem a dziećmi i młodzieżą ma obowiązek stałej konfrontacji siebie z Mistrzem, w imieniu którego przemawia i oddziałuje całą swoją osobowością. Jest przecież nie tylko nauczycielem, ale i świadkiem. Zwiastuje «drogę Pańską», na której sam się znajduje i którą powinien wiernie kroczyć, co jest nieodzownym warunkiem, by inni weszli na tę drogę” [“A catechist, placed between Christ, children and young people, has the duty to constantly confront himself with the Master, in whose name he speaks and interacts with his entire personality. After all, he is not only a teacher, but also a witness. He proclaims ‘the way of the Lord’ which he himself is on and should faithfully follow, an indispensable condition for others to enter this path”] – Mieczysław Rusiecki, “W trosce o dojrzałą osobowość katechety,” in *Ocena w katechezie*, ed. Stanisław Kulpaczyński (Lublin: Inspektorat Towarzystwa Salezjańskiego, 2001), 146.

ing oneself, witnessing demands continuous spiritual maturation and commitment to a process of integral formation.¹⁸

The catechetical directories draw attention to the dimensions necessary for the integral formation of catechists. The deepest relates to simply “being” a catechist, their human and Christian dimensions. Formation should help them grow in maturity – as a person, as a believer and as an apostle. Today, this dimension also takes on the meaning of “being with,” underlining that one’s personal identity is always relational. For the catechist to carry out their task properly, the formation must care to include the proper dimension of “knowledge,” which means double fidelity: to the message and person in their social context. The dimension of the “ability to act” is also important, because catechesis is an act of communication and an educational act.¹⁹

A catechist who is to introduce students and help them understand the mystery of salvation also needs a solid liturgical formation, resulting from the concept of the liturgy. A catechist must know and understand the liturgy. In order to help others, for active, conscious and fruitful participation in the Church's liturgy, they must have already had a deep and vivid liturgical experience – they must “feel” the spirit of the liturgy. Therefore, one cannot be limited to teaching about the liturgy or even competently explaining the meaning of the rites. Instead, they should educate through prayer, thanksgiving and penance, to recite prayers with confidence, in a spirit of community and properly understand liturgical symbolism.²⁰ Fulfilling these indicated tasks leads a catechist to acquire the competence of a mystagogue, whose attitude, knowledge and skills can be characterized as follows:

- has theoretical and practical knowledge of things that are not generally available;
 - is able to convey and share information, i.e., is able to guide others and introduce them to knowledge exceeding that which is commonly available;
 - can draw attention to what they present – meaning that they can explain mysteries and make it easier to accept or experience them;
 - can connect the mystery with the life of the person they are leading.
- The mystagogue initiates a meeting with the mystery of Jesus Christ in one’s life so that it is not just a theory or news from the past without reference to one’s current life.²¹

¹⁸ Buchta, *Mistagogia*, 435.

¹⁹ See Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Dyrektorium ogólne o katechizacji*, 238; Papińska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji, *Dyrektorium o katechizacji*, 136.

²⁰ Kongregacja ds. Duchowieństwa, *Dyrektorium ogólne o katechizacji*, 85.

²¹ Zbigniew Kiernikowski, “Mistagogia nieodzownym etapem chrześcijańskiego wtajemniczenia. Wprowadzenie do sympozjum,” in *Chrzest w życiu i misji Kościoła. Mistagogia – pogłę-*

A catechist, being a mystagogue by nature, should have the ability to introduce listeners to the area of religious and Christian experiences. However, they will not do so by simply referring to secular didactics. A mystagogue – a witness of the faith – is a guide who, based on their experience of a Christian life, is able to lead and open their listeners to the great mysteries of God, man and the world, pointing to how important these are in life. A mystagogue finds appropriate “teaching aids” in the Bible, in the liturgy and the daily life of the Church. After years of discussions among Poland’s catechists, a satisfactory distinction was made between religious education in schools and parish catechesis. The tasks of teaching religion were defined in Poland’s *Catechetical Directory* as Christian education and transmission of the teachings of the faith. Therefore, emphasis was placed more on the function of education and teaching than on initiation.²² By its very nature, initiation requires being in communion with the Church and can be fully realized only in it. Regarding parish catechesis, the general objective is “primarily the formation of a mature faith, inclusion in the Church, assistance in choosing the path of the Christian vocation and taking up tasks in the Church.”²³

In this context, it is worth noting the possibility of forming two kinds of catechists, namely a school catechist, who is a religion teacher, and a parish catechist. The suggested division does not preclude a catechist working in a school from simultaneously undertaking parish catechesis. The intention of such a distinction is rather to indicate competences related to the nature and goals of teaching religion in school and parish catechesis. The qualifications of a school catechist, *ex definitione*, will be dominated by the teaching profile of one’s activity. Therefore, didactic and pedagogical competences are of particular importance. Regarding a parish catechist, it is necessary to indicate the competences that would be adequate to the nature of parish catechesis, related mainly with preparing people to receive the sacraments, and experience their faith and community life while clearly emphasizing the liturgical dimension. The terms characterizing the competences of a parish catechist most appropriately seem to be “pastoral and mystagogical.”

bione wtajemniczenie, ed. Irena Chłopkowska (Warszawa–Siedlce: Wydawnictwo Sióstr Loretańek, 2011), 16.

²² However, this does not mean that religion classes are completely deprived of the dimension of initiation, although its implementation in the school environment encounters serious practical difficulties.

²³ Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Dyrektorium katechetyczne Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, 105.

The mystagogical dimension of parish catechesis and its close relationship with general ministry, especially the so-called sacramental pastoral care, distinguish it from religion lessons and give it a specific character that allows implementing the assumed goals, such as introducing people to the Church community, sharing one's faith, and experiencing God through participation in the liturgy and sacramental life.²⁴ Therefore, a parish catechist should develop a special ability to accept and perceive the catechized person not as a student in a given class, but as a brother in faith.

A person participating in parish catechesis is not a student who comes to school "for a lesson," but rather a member of the community with whom I can share the experience of faith, the experience of being the Church, participating together in the liturgy, praying and bearing witness to the faith. Pastoral practice shows, however, that some school catechists find it difficult to overcome the teaching character of their ministry. Often, due to the excessive number of school commitments, they are also unable to undertake an additional ministry in the parish to a greater extent. Hence, there is a need to search for and form active creators of catechesis among other members of the parish community who are not school catechists.²⁵

2. CATECHETICAL AND PASTORAL INITIATIVES IN KATOWICE DIOCESE SUPPORTING THE FORMATION OF CATECHISTS FOR PARISH COMMUNITIES

The Second Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice (2012-2016) aimed to diagnose the pastoral situation and indicate the most important directions for further action. Part of the synodal work was to recognize that the current catechetical situation related to the return of religion lessons to schools and kindergartens. Apart from its undoubted advantages (such as teaching a larger group of children and youth, improving the regularity of catechetical work or overcoming the discrepancies in the educational activities of the family, school and parish), other issues were addressed. At the same time, the Synod revealed weaknesses in the existing pastoral ministry that were causing new difficulties. Among the disturbing phenomena indicated is the regression of parish catechesis at all levels, the disappearance of a sense of bonding between children and young people with their parishes, and weaker catecheti-

²⁴ Ibidem, 105–107.

²⁵ Buchta, *Mistagogia*, 439.

cal and educational cooperation between pastors and religion teachers with parents.

Added to this is the disappearance of the so-called “Church’s Tradition” and the basic environments of religious socialization.²⁶ Taking into account the warning of the venerable servant of God, Fr. Franciszek Blachnicki, it was noted that “conciliar renewal will be a fiction as long as it does not descend to the level of the parish.”²⁷ According to these words, all the faithful – clergy, laity and consecrated persons – must strive to make every parish more and more a community of communities (*koinonia*), communities built on the word of God (*martyria*), sacramental ministry (*liturgia*) and service (*diakonia*).²⁸

With a view to implement the indicated directions of pastoral activity, the Archdiocesan Centre for Pastoral Formation (ACPF) was founded. Its task is to develop formation programs to implement the parish model as a community of communities and form pastors, lay people and consecrated persons to implement this vision.²⁹ Following the recommendations of the synod, the ACPF operating within the Department of Pastoral Care prepares aids for pastoral work in parishes, with particular emphasis on the indications of the universal Church and the nationwide pastoral program of Poland’s Episcopal Conference.³⁰ Since its establishment in 2017, the ACPF has been systematically implementing new pastoral projects at the diocesan, deanery and parish levels.³¹

The Second Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice distinguished the basic functions of catechesis as initiation, upbringing and teaching. It more clearly defined the tasks of the parish, family and school, emphasizing the diversity and complementarity of their roles in the work of catechesis and education. Catechesis for children and youth after 1990 took the form of teaching religion at school, which does not mean that less attention should be paid to adult catechesis and catechetical ministry to children and youth in the parish.³² The Archdiocesan School of Parish Catechists (ASPC) was esta-

²⁶ Wiktor Skworec, “Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie w Kościele katowickim,” in *Wsluchani w Ducha. Uchwały II Synodu Archidiecezji Katowickiej*, ed. Grzegorz Strzelczyk, Magdalena Jóźwik (Katowice: Księgarnia św. Jacka, 2016), 264.

²⁷ Franciszek Blachnicki, *Oaza rekolekcyjna Diakonii Ruchu Światło-Życie* (b.m.w.: 1995), 146.

²⁸ Wiktor Skworec, “Duszpasterstwo w Kościele katowickim,” in *Wsluchani w Ducha*, 2.

²⁹ Ibidem, 11.

³⁰ Ibidem, 20.

³¹ See “Archidiecezjalne Centrum Formacji Pastoralnej,” <http://centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 10 March, 2022.

³² Skworec, “Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie,” 266.

blished to implement the synodal guidelines.³³ The main goal of the ASPC is to prepare lay people to conduct catechesis in the parish. The assignments of catechists include:

- a) to support priests and deacons in the formation of the faithful;
- b) to assist in preparing parents and godparents for their child's baptism;
- c) to assist in the catechesis of parents and children before and after receiving first holy communion;
- d) to participate in the preparation of candidates for confirmation and the catechesis of parents and witnesses;
- e) to help priests to better prepare secondary school youth for marriage;
- f) to participate in animating and leading parish and apostolic groups, organize bible circles, evangelisation courses, and assistance in closed retreats.³⁴

Organized under the substantive supervision of the Catechetical Department and the patronage of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Silesia, the study programme is addressed to everyone interested in deepening and better understanding their faith, particularly for people already serving in parishes (leaders, animators, those responsible for groups, communities, etc.). The program lasts four semesters (120 hours each), where academic lecturers give classes on philosophy, biblical studies, church history, dogmatics, psychology, pedagogy, catechetics, liturgy, pastoral theology and spirituality.³⁵ During its five editions, organized since 2017, the ASPC promoted over 300 graduates, many of whom received a mission to perform catechetical ministry in parishes. The Archdiocese School of Parish Catechists, through its ideological assumptions and implemented formation program, appears as a pre-emptive response of the Katowice Church to the call for the formation of catechists and the secular ministry of a catechist established in 2021 by Pope Francis.

Among the proposed pastoral initiatives, carried out cyclically by the ACPF in selected deaneries, is "Dogmatics for Everyone." It is a formative cycle for all concerned, especially for catechists, leaders and animators of parish communities. Ten, two-hour long meetings consisting of a synthetic introduction to the basic truths of the faith, from God in the Holy Trinity to

³³ The School for Catechists operates as part of the Archdiocesan Centre for Pastoral Formation.

³⁴ Skworc, "Katecheza i wychowanie katolickie," 267.

³⁵ See "Archidiecezjalna Szkoła Katechetów Parafialnych," <http://skp.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

the four last things.³⁶ At the deanery level, the “Ecumenism for Everyone” formation cycle is also organized. Ten, two-hour long meetings help to systematize basic information about the divisions in Christianity, the Church’s diversity and the need for interfaith dialogue.³⁷

The Second Synod of the Archdiocese of Katowice also pointed to the need to deepen the formation of the faithful in the field of Catholic social teaching. An attempt to pastorally implement the synodal indication is the Study of Catholic Social Teaching prepared and conducted by the ACPF at the deanery level. It is a series of meetings on topics related to contemporary social problems and challenges in light of the Church's social teaching. Among the proposed themes are: Christian involvement as a moral duty; criteria of the Christian evaluation of social reality; our times and their moral dilemmas; freedom and truth versus changes in Poland; family – education – culture; a Christian towards politics – social and moral order and democracy; work – free market – consumerism – business ethics; exclusion as a socio-moral problem; ecology as a call for the Church; and social Catholicism in Upper Silesia – history and prospects.³⁸

The “Liturgy for everyone” is a formation cycle organized in deaneries concerning basic issues related to the liturgy, especially the Eucharist and other sacraments. During ten, two-hour long meetings, the following issues are discussed: what is the liturgy? The language of the liturgy and liturgical space; liturgy and time; the Eucharist (parts 1-3); the sacraments; sacramentals and popular piety; liturgical texts; and the Liturgy of the Hours.³⁹ “Spirituality for everyone” is a formation cycle consisting of a synthetic introduction to issues related to spiritual life and its development. The following issues are discussed during ten, two-hour long meetings: man in relation to God; spiritual life development; the word of God and the spiritual life; prayer; examination of conscience and spiritual discernment; Christian asceticism; the liturgy – prayer for all of us; community prayer; lay Christian spirituality; and holiness as the goal of the spiritual life.⁴⁰ According to the as-

³⁶ See “Dogmatyka dla wszystkich,” <http://dlaliderow.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

³⁷ See “Ekumenizm dla wszystkich,” <http://ekumenizm.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

³⁸ See “Studium Katolickiej Nauki Społecznej,” <http://studiumkns.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

³⁹ See “Liturgika dla każdego,” <http://liturgika.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

⁴⁰ See “Duchowość dla każdego,” <http://duchowosc.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

sumptions of the ACPF, the study programme on liturgy and spirituality is an attempt at catechetical and pastoral formation of the faithful in the context of the current pastoral program of the Church in Poland.

The latest ACPF proposals include a *Study on the Thoughts of John Paul II* and *Silesia and the history of the Church in Silesia*, whose cyclical implementation in deaneries has been planned for February 2022. The first of the proposals – the *Study of the Thoughts of John Paul II* – is a continuation of the *Study of Catholic Social Teaching* programme. The formation cycle, consisting of ten, two-hour long meetings, covers the following topics: Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II; theology; Church – clergy, laity, consecrated; marriage and family; social thought; present-day moral challenges; missions and ecumenism; spiritual testament and dialogue with the world; pilgrimages to Poland (1979-1987); and pilgrimages to Poland (1991-2022).⁴¹

Silesia and the history of the Church in Silesia is a formation cycle on topics related to Silesia, its history and the beginning of the formation of the Katowice diocese. The study program will address the following issues: the place of Silesia as a region in Poland's emerging statehood (the Middle Ages); the Church in Silesia in the Middle Ages; Silesia's Czech period; the Reformation and its significance for the region; Silesia's Prussian period; the Silesian uprisings and the incorporation of part of Upper Silesia into Poland, with new structures in the Catholic Church; World War II; the birth of Katowice and Opole Dioceses; bishops and clergy of Katowice Diocese; Silesia – the specificity of the borderland.⁴² The purpose of the proposed study – in addition to learning about the issues provided for in the program – is to prepare the faithful for the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Diocese of Katowice in 2025.

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The catechetical ministry occupies a significant place among the many forms and ways of ministering that the Church uses to carry out the mission of evangelization. A catechist's ministry leads to faith and, together with the liturgical ministry, gives birth to the children of God in the bosom of the Church. A catechist's vocation is rooted in the common vocation of God's people. By nature, the catechist belongs to the Christian community, being

⁴¹ See "Studium myśli Jana Pawła II," <http://www.jp2.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

⁴² See "Śląsk i historia Kościoła na Śląsku," <http://www.kosciolnaslasku.centrum.katowice.pl/>, accessed 16 March, 2022.

an expression of its vitality and a witness to its evangelical fervour. Their ministry is lived within the community, which is the first subject for accompanying someone in their faith. The awakening of catechetical vocations and the formation of people ready to undertake this work in communities, according to the letter of Pope Francis *Antiquum ministerium* – namely, the ministry of a lay catechist, should be included among the priority tasks of the universal Church and particular Churches.

Catechetical and pastoral projects carried out in the Archdiocese of Katowice cover a wide range of religious and socio-cultural issues. The common denominator that unifies undertaking action is the mystagogical dimension clearly present in the formation meetings of the participants. These activities will achieve the assumed goal when they more fully discover their “ecclesial identity” (*sentire cum Ecclesia*), the greatness of one’s vocation (including catechetical) and the obliging nature of the mission in which all the baptized participate as witnesses of the Resurrected.

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