

## Introduction

**Behold now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**

- 2 Cor 6:2

Catechesis is an education in the faith for children, young people, and adults which includes especially, the teaching of Christian Doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, with a view to imitating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life.

- CCC 5, CT 18

### ***A Word to the Catechist on Catechesis***

Those to be catechized, and those who will catechize are what make up the initial body of catechesis among all who will learn the faith. Jesus Christ is the Word that became flesh through the Divine Will of the Father sent forth through the power of the Holy Spirit so that we might have life and live it abundantly. It was through His Incarnate Word that Christ, through His Father established for us those redemptive qualities that we receive in our Profession of Faith, the Mass and Sacraments, the Commandments, and in prayer that allow us to fully share into the history of Salvation with our Lord. We, as the people of God, are a faith sharing community in the created image of God to profess and proclaim the Gospel message. This mission of catechesis has been practiced from the moment Christ was born. As part of the Church community we hold a responsibility not only to learn our Catholic faith, but teach it to all who will listen. The ministry of catechesis serves the Church in a decisive mission. This teaching first and foremost is passed on through the apostles and their successors, the Bishops of the Catholic Church.

***The moment of catechesis is that which corresponds to the period in which conversion to Jesus Christ is formalized, and provides a basis for first adhering to him. (GDC 63)***

Quite early on, the name catechesis was given to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples, to help men believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in His name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ. (CCC 4, CT 1;2)

It is in this totality that we must present a complete authentic instruction of the faith, faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church so that the fruits of the Church may not go unnoticed or unpracticed. Catechetical instruction provides us with a framework to accomplish just such a mission. This task of catechesis, then, must be carried out under the guidance of the Church, whose duty it is to safeguard the truth of the divine message, and to watch that this ministry of the Word uses appropriate forms of speaking, while prudently considering the help which theological research and human science can give (GCD 38 and NCD 47). The Bishop holds the primary position of authority over programs of catechesis (NCD 47).

## **The Church's Mission to Evangelize**

From the beginning, the mission of Jesus was to establish a church on earth that would proclaim what He had taught to the Apostles so that in turn the Apostles themselves would go forth and proclaim the good news to all the nations. This mission is so eloquently revealed in Matthew's Gospel where Christ instructs His Apostles to:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . .

**-Mt 28: 19-20**

Establishing the integrity of the Gospel message is the purity of what the mission of Catechesis is all about. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel integrally . . . because I have made known to you all that I have heard from my Father (Jn 15:15, GDC 111). This making known statement reveals to us a knowledge that is firmly rooted in the Gospel, professed through the Trinity and is passed on through the Deposit of Faith where we as catechists come into play as part of that Deposit of Faith entrusted to proclaim, profess and evangelize through a complete, systematic, organic, thorough presentation and teaching of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic church. The Church was instituted by Christ through His Apostles, His disciples. We look at Peter as being the rock, (Kephias) where the foundation is laid by his possession of the keys to the gates of heaven and of earth thus receiving the power to bind and loose on earth. We see this very clearly in chapter 16 of Matthew's Gospel where Christ proclaims to Peter:

On this rock, I will build my church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven (vs. 18).

Catechesis works as the instructional wing of the Church to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all corners of the globe. It does not end in the classroom as soon as the child leaves. It continues to be fostered, maintained, cared for so that the maturity of the faith becomes the end result. We wouldn't necessarily plant a bed of roses and then calmly say, All right they're fine, they'll grow on their own. This probably won't happen. We know full well that the rose needs constant irrigation, pruning and maintenance to keep the vitality of the rose from withering away. This same principle applies towards catechesis. Catechesis does not only impart itself in the classroom, but outside as well. In spreading the Gospel message;

The church has always considered catechesis one of her primary tasks,  
(Catechist, Pope John Paul II pg. 37);

and it is because of catechesis that the Pope has so urgently and faithfully established for us a New Catechism of the Catholic Church now in its second edition as the first of its kind in over 400 years. Along with the catechism came the revision of the Code of Canon Law (1983), General Directory for Catechesis (1997), Catechesis In Our Time (1979) etc. Pope John Paul II has seen the need to systematically promote the Catholic faith to all the faithful.

## *Primary Aim of Catechesis*

Christ is the Divine Teacher. He is the ultimate catechist who constitutes all that we proclaim to be true. In keeping with Christ as our ultimate Divine Teacher, we find evidence in the Gospel where Jesus is seen "day after day sitting in the temple teaching" (Mt 6:25; 24:1-14; Lk. 14:15; 20:1-8). Christ's teaching was part of His missionary work on earth. The proclamation of the Gospel by Christ involved catechetical instruction to the un-catechized. Christ had to teach the people who He is as Messiah, the Son of the living God. He instructed the faithful in the key role he held for all mankind in bringing about the Redemption of humanity. He firmly presented and taught the mystery of the Blessed Trinity for all to see how He, Jesus, is the principle figure towards the Redemption and Salvation with our Father in Heaven.

### **Christ is passing on the Deposit of Faith:**

*My teaching is not from myself; it comes from the one who sent me. (Jn 7:16).*

The Apostles thus become the witness for Christ throughout the ends of the earth. So, then, how does all this apply to our ministry as catechists? Catechesis in Greek means to resound to avail a certain element or particle for all to see and witness. Thus, catechesis is passing on the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the use of written and spoken words plus visual and audio aids. Catechesis is based primarily on Scripture and Tradition as well as the Liturgy and wisdom of the saints. It promotes a lifelong conversion to the faith of all Christians. With, catechesis, the primary object is the mystery of Christ. A revelation occurs in the Person of Christ through God's eternal design for all mankind. Through this revelation, catechesis is established not as a mean's of promoting one's own teaching or someone's personal mastery of a subject, it is the establishment of the teachings of Jesus Christ because He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life- Jn 14:6.

Catechesis is an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian Doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organic and systematic way, initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life . . . catechesis is built on a certain number of elements of the Church's pastoral mission that have a catechetical aspect the prepare for catechesis, or that spring from it. These elements are:

- the initial proclamation of the Gospel or missionary preaching through the kerygma (proclamation) to arouse faith.
- apologetics or examination of the reasons for beliefs.
- experience of Christian living.
- celebration of the sacraments.
- integration onto the ecclesial community.
- apostolic and missionary witness" (CT 18).

## *Role of the Catechist In Instructing the Faith*

My brethren show not partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory . . . for whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it . . . what does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has no works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or a sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, Go in peace, be warmed and filled, without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead . . . you see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

- (Jas 2:1, 10, 14-17, 24)

The catechists role is not only to be a teacher of the faith. That faith must also be put into practice resulting in the catechist being an active model of Christian charity for all to see, especially the student being catechized. In the act of faith and works, a catechist exemplifies the model of catechesis as a systematic, organic presentation of the faith rooted firmly in the teachings of the Catholic Church and visibly expressed through participation in the sacraments, the commandments, beatitudes, and prayer.

The missionary mandate of Jesus, the supreme evangelist, was to proclaim the kingdom of God. In proclaiming the Kingdom of His Father, Jesus preached of the joy of the kingdom and the fruits that would be shared in the kingdom. (GDC 34)

It was in the profession of the Kingdom of God where Christ fully revealed himself as true God and true man. Jesus Christ completed and perfected Revelation; he did this by way of his presence and self manifestation-by words and works, signs and miracles, but above all by his death and glorious resurrection from the dead, and finally by sending the Spirit of Truth (DV 4).

As Catechists, the constant revelation of faith must be apparent to all whom we catechize. It must not cease at the end of class time. Revelation must be on-going. It must not be stagnant or disruptive. This revelation of faith must take on the image of God who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Tim 2:4)

This revelation of faith as a catechist must be communicated through the Word of God. It is in the Word where the message is transformed and communicated. "The ministry of the word, within the context of evangelization, transmits Revelation through the Church, by using human words. These, however, always refer to works: to those which God has done and continues to do, especially in the liturgy. (GDC 50)

The missionary activity of the catechists is essential ecclesial. The Church becomes the starting point in the catechetical activity of those who are catechized. Transmission of the faith occurs in the Church. It is in the celebration of the Christian mystery where catechesis is aimed. As, catechists, our definitive aim must always be "to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ." (GDC 80, CT 5)

## The Catechetical Mission

- 30 a.d.**      **Matthew 28:19-20**  
"Go therefore and proclaim the Gospel to all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all the commands I have given you."
- 1965**      Decree on the Pastoral Office of the Bishops  
Christus Dominus, 14  
"The function (of catechesis) is to develop a living, conscious, and active faith, enlightened by doctrine."
- 1979**      On Catechesis In Our Time  
Catechesi Tradendae, 20  
  
"Catechesis aims at developing an understanding of the mystery of Christ in the light of God's Word . . . so that changed by the working of grace into a new creature, the Christian follows Christ and learns more and more within the Church to think, judge and act like him.

The **four elements** necessary for **planned and intended** catechesis: CT, 21

- It is systematic, not improvised but programmed to reach a precise goal.
- It is organic, that is, it deals with the essentials, without any claim to tackle all disputed questions or scriptural exegesis.
- It must be sufficiently complete, not stopping short of the initial proclamation of the Christian Mystery, but in fact delving into it.
- It must be integral to Christian Initiation, open and leading to all other factors of Christian Life.

- 1997**      **General Directory for Catechesis – GDC, 80**  
  
"Starting with the initial conversion of a person to the Lord. . . catechesis seeks to solidify and mature this first adherence. It proposes to help persons . . . to know this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself, . . . the Kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and commandments contained in his Gospel message and the paths he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him.

# FOUR TENETS OF CATECHESIS

THE MISSION OF THE CATECHIST IS TO LIVE AND PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

- I. Establishing a **Profession of Faith** through a belief in Trinity, and an adherence to the **Deposit of Faith** i.e. **Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Church's teaching authority (Magisterium).**
  
- II. **Celebration of the Christian Mystery** by:
  - An active understanding of the Liturgy (Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist)
  - Participation in the Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist
  - Renewal of Baptismal Promises, maturation of the grace of Confirmation.
  
- III. **Life in Christ** through living a just, moral life in accordance with Christ's teachings. (e.g. the beatitudes, Ten Commandments, the Natural Moral Law)
  - Following the theological and cardinal virtues and putting them into practice.
  - Understanding the evil of sin.
  - Receiving grace through a life of holiness
  
- IV. **Developing a mature Christian Prayer life.**
  - emphasis on the recitation and contemplation of the "Our Father"
  - application of the Lectio Divina (praying with the scriptures)
  - proper veneration (angels, saints, our Blessed Mother) and adoration (Christ in the Holy Eucharist)

## The Basics

By MOST REVEREND WILLIAM E. LORI, BISHOP OF BRIDGEPORT

**Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,**

Who was Joan of Arc? According to a poll taken several years ago, 12% of respondents thought she was Noah's wife. I have to admit, the image of Saint Joan of Arc using her sword to herd all kinds of animals aboard Noah's ark is intriguing. But it is also disturbing. It is yet another indicator of gaping holes in religious knowledge.

Before we conclude that such ignorance exists only in the general populace and not within our own community of faith, let's examine our consciences. A frequently cited *New York Times* poll, taken several years ago, showed that only about a third of American Catholics believe in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. So we need to ask ourselves: Do we really know our faith? Have we acquired the concepts to express what we believe? Even more importantly, are we giving our children - the future of the Church - a solid knowledge of the Church's teaching and an ability to articulate their faith?

The answer is "yes" and "no." Some know their faith very well and can express it clearly, accurately, and lovingly. Others have only a very vague idea about basic religious truths and lack the words and concepts they need to describe the faith that is their baptismal inheritance. And all of us - myself included - can and should be growing constantly in our knowledge and love of the Church's faith.

We rightfully show special concern for children and young people. We want to give them every benefit: good, safe schools; a sound curriculum; up-to-date technology; marketable skills; good social skills; sports and entertainment opportunities. But so often we neglect to give them even the rudiments of religious knowledge. Some aren't quite sure who or what the Trinity is. Others have hazy and erroneous ideas about Jesus' identity and mission. Still others falter when asked to recite basic prayers like the Our Father or the Hail Mary.

When one lacks a religious vocabulary, the Mass, the sacraments, and other religious rituals often don't make sense. The Mass may be in English but, for many, the words of the Mass don't register in their minds, let alone in their hearts. Even the simplest and best constructed homily seems dry and technical to someone who has almost no grasp of religious language. For example, a homilist may presume that when he uses the word "sacrament" everyone knows what he means. Unfortunately, that presumption isn't necessarily true. Thankfully, more and more Catholics are recognizing the need for better faith formation for young people as well as for adults. In a recent online survey conducted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops - a survey that included nearly 60,000 respondents - nearly 70% said it was important that

parishes improve how they support parents in passing on the faith to their children.

Our schools and religious education programs are working hard to address those deficiencies. Under the combined leadership of Dr. Joan Kelly, director of the Diocesan Office of Catechesis, and Mr. Armand Fabbri, superintendent of Catholic schools, we are developing a standard and comprehensive religion curriculum for our elementary and secondary schools and parish religious education programs. But that's just the first stage. Next we shall review the religion textbooks and resources currently on the market. Only those in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and with our standardized curriculum will be approved for religious instruction. The train has left the station, but we need someone else to climb aboard - the parents - including those that did not respond to the aforementioned survey!

Even the best Catholic school and religious education program will not be successful without the full and loving cooperation of you, the parents of our children. If they are really to learn the faith, they need your help and your commitment. For example, some parents will send their children to religious education classes and Catholic schools but not bring them to Mass on Sunday! Parents need to reinforce what their children learn in religious education by attending Mass with them each and every Sunday and by checking to see if they know the basics of the faith. I'm not talking about complicated theological theories. I'm talking basics.

For starters, here's a checklist of things your child should know by the time he or she is in the fifth grade:

- Can your child name the three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity? Is he or she clear that there is One God in Three Persons?
- Does your child know who Jesus is and what He did for us?
- Can your child tell you what the word "sacrament" means? Does he or she know the names of the seven sacraments and something about each one of them?
- Can your child tell you whom he or she receives in Holy Communion? Does he or she know the connection between the Mass and what Jesus did to save us?
- Does your child know how to receive the Sacrament of Penance or Reconciliation? When is the last time you brought your children to church to participate in that sacrament?
- Does your child know what sanctifying grace is?
- Does he or she know who founded the Church and what her mission is?
- Can your child recite the Ten Commandments?
- Can your child explain the difference between mortal and venial sin?

- Does your child know about heaven, purgatory, and hell?
- Can he or she recite from memory the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the Glory Be, and the Apostles Creed?
- Does your child know who Mary is and who the saints are? Can they tell you what the saints do for us?

If the answer to all these questions is “yes,” please keep doing what you’re doing. But if the answer is “no” – it’s time for some soul searching. After all, parents are the first teachers of the children in the ways of faith. May you be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by word and example.

## **QUALITIES OF THE MASTER TEACHER**

Although the only personal qualities the Teacher specifically told the disciples they should learn from him were gentleness and humility (Mt 11:29) he gave ample evidence of possessing many more traits that are worthy of imitation by any teacher.

**HE WAS GENTLE, RESPECTFUL, and FORGIVING** with those who had surrendered to a misguided heart: the woman caught in adultery; the one who'd had five husbands; Mary, the prostitute

- forgiving the action, but not condoning it
- "Go, but do not sin again." (Jn 8:11)

**HE WAS CONCERNED** about HIS PUPILS' FAMILIES

- even mothers-in-law (Lk 4:38-39)

**HE MADE HIS STUDENTS FEEL IMPORTANT**

- He called them salt and light (Mt 5:13-16)
- He accepted an invitation to a dinner with outcasts to honor a new student. (Mt. 9:9-13)

**HE PROTECTED** the REPUTATION OF HIS STUDENTS

- even in his contacts with Judas: "Hurry and do what you must!" And none of the others knew what the Teacher meant. (Jn 13:27-30)
- His good shepherd parable was told to uphold the tax collectors and outcasts who listened to him (Lk 15:1-7)

**HE WAS PRAYERFUL**

- He began his teaching mission with a forty-day retreat. (Lk 4:1-13)
- He spent many nights in prayer in lonely places.

**HE WAS AN INSPIRATION TO HIS STUDENTS**

- "Make our faith greater." (Lk 16:5)
- "Lord, teach us to pray." (Lk 11:1)

**HE WAS FEARLESS** in warning his students of evil influence.

- "Watch out for the teachers of the Law..." (Mk 12:38-40)

**HE WAS TENDER, and LOVING** with the apostles and Mary Magdalene immediately after his resurrection, as he led them from the shock of grief to accept the astounding miracle of his rising and to the realization that he was leaving them with a God-sized mission to accomplish.

**HE KNEW MEN'S HEARTS**

- "There was no need for anyone to tell him about men, because he knew what was in their hearts." (Jn 2:25)

#### HE WAS PERCEPTIVE

- aware of his student's needs before the student expressed it (Lk 10:10-13)
- He answered questions his students were too embarrassed to ask. (Jn 16:17-19)
- He didn't force an answer when he knew they were ashamed to tell the truth. (Mk 9:32-33)

#### HE WAS PATIENT with slower students and their naïve questions.

- Throughout his last explanation at the supper he shared with them as he referred to his "going" they kept asking "where?" (Jn 16)

#### HE WAS CAUTIOUS not to teach TOO MUCH TOO SOON

- "I have much more to tell you, *but now* it would be too much for you to bear." (Jn 16:12)

#### HE PREPARED THEM ADEQUATELY for THE FINAL EXAM

- telling them precisely what questions to expect and how to answer them! (Mt 25:31-46)

#### HE WAS PERFECT AT PACING A LESSON

- not too hurriedly, no matter how many detours he had to make to meet his students' needs.

#### HE EXPLAINED CLEARLY, with SIMPLE EXAMPLES

- "I tell you the truth... A man is born physically of human parents, but he is born spiritually of the Spirit... This is how the judgment works..." (Jn 3:1-21)

#### HE STARTED HIS TEACHING AT HIS STUDENTS READINESS POINT, no matter how elementary

- "What are you looking for?"
- "Where do you live, Teacher?"
- "Come and see." (Jn 1-35-39)

and he moved the forward!

#### HE SEARCHED for THE BEST WAY TO EXPLAIN

- "What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like? What parable shall we use to explain it?" (Mk 4:30)

#### HE WAS THOROUGH

- When the almost-cured blind man described people as "trees walking around," Jesus finished the job and "he saw all things clearly." (Mk 8:22-26)

## HE WAS PRACTICAL

He noticed details overlooked by others.

- When the stunned crowd stood gaping at Lazarus still bound up in his burial sheets at the entrance of his tomb Jesus told them: "Untie him and let him go." (Jn 11:44)
- When Jairus young daughter was called back from the dead he "ordered them to give her something to eat." (Lk 8:55)

## HE WAS KNOWLEDGEABLE about HIS SUBJECT MATTER

- "When the crowds heard this they were amazed at his teaching." (Mt 22:33)
- "...he taught with authority" (Mt 7:29)
- Even his enemies wondered: "How does this man know so much when he has never been to school?" (Jn 7:15)
- "...all the people kept listening to him, not wanting to miss a single word." (Lk 19:48)

## HE WASN'T INTIMIDATED

- when he had to teach a hard lesson (Mt 23:1-36)
- or when he faced students who rejected his message (Jn 10:1-40)

## HE WAS JUST, and EXPECTED JUSTICE FROM OTHERS

- "If I have said something wrong, tell everyone here what it is. But if I am right in which I have said why do you hit me?" (Jn 18:23)
- He answered Pilate clearly and pointedly as the procurator tried to get the facts early in the inquiry. But Jesus was reluctant to answer after Pilate's wishy-washy response to the facts. (Jn 18:28-38; 19:8-11)

## HE WAS AVAILABLE

- to the crowds (Jn 3:1-2)
- to those who needed his healing power (Mk 1:32-34)
- when he was tired (Mk 6)
- He prayed all night and in the early morning hour to leave the day for his ministry. (Jn 3:1-21)

## HE WAS PRUDENTLY CAUTIOUS

- disappearing in the midst of the crowd who wanted to throw him over the cliff, because he had much more work to do! (Lk 4:28-30)
- choosing not to "go openly" when he knew the timing wasn't right (Jn 11:54)

## HE WAS SHARP, ALERT, KEEN with those who set out to entrap him

- shrewdly wording questions to confound them (Lk 20:26; Mt 21:23-27)
- seeing through their motives (Mt 22:18)
- parrying question for question (Mt 12:10-11)

## HE WAS STERN and ANGRY

- when he dealt with hardened evil, with those who had no respect for his Father's House (Jn 2:13-22)
- when his disciples scolded those who brought their children to him (Mk 10:13-15)

An outstanding quality of the Master Teacher was his adamant stand on specific issues of morality.

He expected his students to live according to a clear-cut code of action based on strong beliefs. So he explained those principles in definite, precise language; he answered questions on them to clarify misunderstandings; and he applied them to daily life.

Most importantly, it was evident that he lived what he taught:

- about anger (Mt 5:21-26)
- about judging others (Mt 7:1-5)
- about love of enemies (Mt 5:43-48)
- about performing religious acts in public (Mt 6:1-4)
- about prayer (Mt 6:5-15; 7:7-12; Lk 11:5-13)
- about revenge (Mt 5:38-42)

His position was just as unyielding on the current issues of his time:

- on the Law (Mt 5:17-20)
- on adultery (Mt 5:27-28)
- on divorce (Mt 5:31-32; 19:1-10; Mk 10:2-12)
- on fasting (Mt 6:16-18)
- on material wealth (Mt 6:19-21; Lk 12:22-34)

The teacher was revolutionary in his teachings.

He demanded far more than the minimum requirements of the Law, and he made no apologies for it.

"You have heard that it was said....*but now I tell you...*" (Mt 5-7)

*...and for NOW ...when we examine our own "teacher qualities"*

- Our students deserve to see what is in store for them if they follow our teaching. We are that best example.
- The principles we give our students must flow from solid beliefs. Consequently those principles must be broad enough to become the foundation for the structure of daily living, and clear enough to give a

dependable sense of direction in matters which develop as our society changes.

- We need to teach them

- HOW TO think
  - HOW TO raise questions
  - HOW TO offer opinions
  - HOW TO read and listen
  - HOW TO speak and write
  - HOW TO evaluate
  - HOW TO come to valid conclusions
  - HOW and WHEN TO lead
  - HOW and WHEN TO follow

- And we need to provide many opportunities to practice all these lessons on all levels
  - + pre-school through university.

The *facts* they practice on may appear to be simple or unimportant; they may even become obsolete,

but the *HOW TO skills* will grow stronger

- + ready to serve them in each new NOW.

*from How Jesus Taught: The Methods and Techniques of the Master by Sr. Regina M. Alfonso, SND. Alba House: New York, 1986*

## **“God has created me to do Him some definite service”**

God has created me to do him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another.

I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not just created me for naught. I shall do good, I shall do His work.

I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it-if I do but keep His Commandments.

Therefore, I will trust Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

“He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me-still He knows what He is about.”

- Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman