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**Environmental Engagement in Catechesis:
Critical Analysis of the Apprehension of the
Relation between Catechesis and the Care for the
Environment by the “New Directory for Catechesis”**
*Okoljsko udejstvovanje v katehezi: kritična analiza
razumevanja odnosa med katehezo in skrbjo
za okolje v “Novem Pravilniku za katehezo”*

Abstract: “New Directory for Catechesis” released in 2020 deals directly with problems arising from the environmental crisis. In this article, it will be explored how this document deals with problems that come from man’s relationship to the environment. The first part shows how the previous two Directories – “General Catechetical Directory” from 1971 and “General Directory for Catechesis” from 1997 – dealt with those issues, then the second part shows how the new one approaches them throughout the whole document and, especially, in numbers 381–384. In the last part, several critical remarks will be made on the document. The main hypothesis is as follows: the new Directory strongly emphasizes that engagement related to environmental problems is at the heart of Christian identity. But, in some places of the text, this argument could be more emphasized and also adequately incorporated into other topics it deals with.

Keywords: ecological engagement, creation, catechesis, “New Directory for Catechesis”, Encyclical Letter “Laudato Si”

Povzetek: Novi Pravilnik za katehezo iz leta 2020 se neposredno sooča s problemom, ki izhaja iz okoljske krize. V prispevku raziskujemo, kako ta dokument obravnava probleme, ki izvirajo iz človekovega odnosa do okolja. Prvi del predstavlja, kako sta omenjena vprašanja obravnavala prejšnja pravilnika – Splošni katehetski pravilnik iz leta 1971 in Splošni pravilnik za katehezo iz leta 1997. Drugi del prikazuje, kako te teme skozi ves dokument, zlasti od št. 381 do 384, obravnava novi pravilnik. Zadnji del prispevka prinaša več kritičnih pripomb na dokument. Glavna hipoteza je, da novi pravilnik močno poudarja, da je prizadevnost v zvezi z okoljskimi problemi srčika krščanske identitete. Ta argument bi lahko na nekaterih mestih še bolj izpostavili in ga ustrezno vključili tudi v druge teme, ki jih pravilnik obravnava.

Ključne besede: ekološka angažiranost, ustvarjanje, kateheza, novi Pravilnik za katehezo, enciklika Laudato Si’

1. Introduction

For the first time, an official document of the Catholic Church, the “New Directory for Catechesis” (DC) released in 2020, which determines the definition and principles of catechesis and “offers fundamental theological-pastoral principles and some general guidelines that are relevant for the practice of catechesis in our time” (DC, 10), deals directly with problems arising from the environmental crisis. The “General Catechetical Directory” (GCD) from 1971 and “General Directory for Catechesis” (GDC) from 1997, two main documents for creating plans, activities and strategies for catechesis in the Catholic Church, did not mention those issues. On the one side, it seems right because in the second part of the 20th century ecological crisis became more and more important and visible. It seems that the time is ready for a catechetical approach to the ecological crisis, especially since the popes after Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) have also taken into account this crisis in their documents.

In this article, it will be explored how the Directory deals with problems arising from man’s relationship to the environment. The first part of the paper will show how the previous two Directories dealt with the issue of relations to the environment in catechesis, then the second part will show how the Directory deals with the question of man’s relationship to the environment throughout the document. In the last part, several critical remarks will be made on certain shortcomings of the document.

The main hypothesis is as follows: The Directory strongly emphasizes that awareness of environmental problems and actions that might be done to stop or mitigate them is at the heart of Christian identity. On the other hand, in some places of the text, this argument could be applied and emphasized to a greater degree, and also adequately incorporated into other topics it deals with.

2. Attitude Towards the Environment in the “General Catechetical Directory” (1971) And the “General Directory for Catechesis” (1997)

The two previous catechetical directories do not address directly the issue of environmental protection within the catechetical process. GCD published by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in 1971 does not mention the word “ecology” or the “environment”, but the word “Creator” is mentioned four times and the word “creation” nine times. Another important document on catechesis is the GDC issued in 1997 by the Congregation for the Clergy. It mentions the word “ecology” once in the footnote, the word “Creator” twice, the word “creation” nine times and the words “protection of creation” twice. Only the new DC from 2020 for the first time dedicates several articles to the attitude towards environmental protection within the catechetical process.

Although the GCD (1971) does not mention the environment, ecology, climate change, or caring for a common home, it does mention the word “creation” in the

context of a theology of creation eminently associated with soteriology. In numbers 50 and 51, it points to the connection between the relationship to all creation and the unique role of Jesus Christ in the economy of salvation. (GCD, 50–51) This lays the theological foundations for thinking about the relationship to the environment: creation needs to be understood in relation to salvation. Namely, in number 51 the document points out that “the creation of visible and invisible things, the world and angels, is the beginning of the mystery of salvation (DV 3); the creation of man (Pius XII, *Humani generis* 1950) should be understood as the first gift and vocation leading to the celebration of Christ (cf. Rom 8:29-30).” The event of creation, therefore, anticipates in itself the salvation of all creation. In this context, salvation is to be understood as an event that will ultimately be completed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The process of completing salvation takes place in a historical time in which specific people live and act. This leads to an unequivocal conclusion about the role of all creatures in the process of salvation. Everything created strives for redemption and salvation in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. All creatures are therefore companions of man on the path of salvation. Only on this track can theological conclusions be drawn about the attitude of Christians towards the environment as a dimension that also aspires, as well as the creation of man, to ultimate redemption and salvation.

The GDC also emphasizes the importance of “nature protection” in two places. First, in number 157 it points out: “Believers, indeed, in the ordinary state of the Christian life, individually or in age groups, are called to respond to the gift of God through prayer, participation in the sacraments, liturgy, ecclesial and social commitment, works of charity and promotion of human values, such as liberty, justice and peace and the protection of creation.” (GDC, 157) Namely, the document emphasizes that persons who are catechized, but also all believers, are called to protect creation in response to the gift of God. Although the protection of nature is indicated here as one of a series of activities in response to the gift of God, its mention is by no means accidental.

The second time it mentions “nature protection” is in the fifth chapter of the fourth part, entitled “Those to be catechized”. Namely, in the fifth chapter, the document presents the main features of the socio-cultural context in which catechesis takes place, emphasizing that catechesis must take place in “modern areopagi” such as: “communications; civil campaigns for peace, development and liberation of peoples; the protection of creation; the defense of human rights, especially of minorities, women and children; scientific research and international relations.” (GDC, 211) Nature protection belongs to one of the many areopagi within which catechesis should also take place if it wants to successfully accomplish its task by having before its eyes a particular man with his specific problems in a particular time and space.

Some of the issues in the document that mention the word “creation” also reveal theological postulates that are crucial for understanding a specifically Christian attitude toward the environment. The key is number 36 which strongly emphasizes God’s presence in created things: “Man, who by his nature and his

vocation is capable of knowing God, when he listens to this message of creation is able to arrive at the certainty of the existence of God, as the cause and end of all things and as this one who is able to reveal himself to man.” (GDC, 36) So, this number starts from the theology of creation within which it is emphasized that the path to God leads through everything created. The whole created world is an opportunity for man to personally know God who reveals himself.

These two documents do not deal in more detail with the specific context in question, in which the catechetical process takes place. Although they do not explicitly explain or directly encourage the development of catechetical approaches aimed at protecting nature and restoring the environment, both of these documents provide major theological-catechetical starting points for understanding caring for the environment as a specifically Christian way of life. Based on the previous analysis, the main theological-catechetical starting points for catechesis can be indicated aimed at preserving everything created: 1. everything created by man is directed towards salvation, 2. environmental protection is an expression of the Christian response to the gift of God, 3. process of catechesis should take into account the protection of nature as the modern areopagus within which Christians operate, 4. all creation can lead to God.

3. Relation to the Environment in the Entire Directory for Catechesis and in Numbers 381–384

Relation to all of God’s creation and to the environment in general GD places it within biblical theology in the context of its relationship to understanding creation. If one tries to find the word “ecology” in the Index of the GD, it can be found but only as a guideline for another term – “creation.” Caring for a common home is therefore only understandable in Christianity in the context of the theology of creation. The Index points to 15 places in the document that mention “creation”. They set out a framework in which creation and environmental problems can be understood. It does not bring ready-made solutions, but strategy and theological concepts that can be used to understand the relationships that man has: with God, with his neighbour and with the Earth (LS, 66.). The main ideas are as follows:

1. Catechesis is based upon the Word of God (DC, 91). God speaks in creation. So, creation is the word of God. To be involved in ecological engagement is to be involved in the Word of God, or embraced by It.
2. The annunciation of the Kingdom of God includes the message of salvation which is inextricably linked with the care and responsibility for the creation, the earth (DC, 173). So, ecological engagement is a manifestation of the human responsibility for the gift that God gave him.
3. The earth is a place where God can be experienced (DC, 329). If creation is the Word of God, then through creation someone can hear His Word and experience His vicinity.

4. Catechesis helps to recognize that time, care for animals, plants, cultivation of the earth, rhythm of days and months confirm that all of that is only for God (DC, 330).
5. Liturgical year and natural elements in liturgy show this admirable connection between God, man and nature.

But in addition to theological assumptions in general that can help a better understanding of Christian care for all creation, DC devotes four passages directly to this topic. Four numbers of 428 that DC contains, deals directly with ecological problems. The document delineates ecological problems in numbers from 381 to 384. Two main conclusions it can be made by reading those passages: 1. ecological problems are problems that catechesis must pay attention and 2. ecological engagement is part of the Christian faith.

Those passages are in the third part of the DC called “Catechesis in the Particular Churches”, in chapter 10 which is entitled “Catechesis in the Face of Contemporary Cultural Scenarios” and in the third part of this chapter called “Catechesis in the socio-cultural contexts”. At the beginning of chapter 10 DC in number 319 clearly states that there exists some topics that must be in focus in order to deal with inculturation of the faith. Those topics that are called “constitutive attentions” are: pluralism, ecumenism and religious pluralism and socio-cultural context. Those contexts have the following features: scientific mentality, digital culture, bioethics, the integrity of the person, ecological engagement, option for the poor, social commitment and work environment.

At first sight, it seems that ecological questions are in the margin of this document, they are one of those questions that we must deal as usually as we deal with so many other questions. In the end, it only has a four number in it. But if we look at those four numbers this statement soon loses his own strength. First of all, all of those “attentions” are important because they are based in the contemporary historical context, enabling evangelizes to have a better knowledge of the specific problems of modern man and the challenges they face in the whole process of evangelization. In this way, evangelization is deprived of all the negative potential constitutive elements that would enable it to become a process burdened with excessive bureaucracy focused on approaches, methods, and strategies. Pope Francis clearly and unequivocally criticizes the primacy of the administrative aspect: “In many places an administrative approach prevails over a pastoral approach, as does a concentration on administering the sacraments apart from other forms of evangelization.” (EG, 63) Evangelization is primarily focused on people and their problems, not on forms and meeting certain norms. Therefore, it is extremely important for the process of evangelization and catechesis to get better acquainted with the time and space in which it takes place. The inculturation of faith is only possible if the main features of the culture within which the faith is proclaimed are well known. This is the reason for the publication of this document, as Archbishop Rino Fisichella himself points out, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation: “The need for a new Direc-

tory was born of the process of inculturation which characterises catechesis in a particular way and which, especially today, demands a special focus.” (Fisichella 2020, 2) Precisely because of the constant and rapid change in the socio-cultural environment of catechesis, such a change is needed which will not be just a change of form. Archbishop Arenas, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, believes that “catechesis is called to renewal that cannot consist merely of a change of strategy, or simply the development of more attractive discourses.” (Arenas 2020, 4)

In addition, the inclusion of these numbers in a document that has a high priority in the adoption of catechetical plans in the Church and contains the most important strategic determinants for the actions of all those actors in the Church in charge of proclaiming the faith, confirms the exceptional importance of “ecological engagement” and all other constitutive attentions. As this document is intended primarily for bishops, and then for episcopal conferences, priests, deacons, consecrated persons, and catechists and catechists themselves (Fisichella 2020, 1), it is to be expected that persons compiling catechetical manuals containing plans and methods of the proclamation of faith, documents of individual episcopal conferences, plans within archdioceses, dioceses and individual parish communities, precisely because of the universal nature of this document and its importance for the proclamation of faith today, should take into account, if they haven’t done so already, the relationship to the environment which for now *explicite* is not thematized in catechetical documents of this type. Of course, the way of dealing with environmental problems will depend on the specific culture and tradition within which the Church fulfils its mission, but the basic motive, which is the need to incorporate environmental relations within catechetical plans, will apparently become one of the key landmarks in the future for catechesis.

This is confirmed by the document “Journeying Towards Care for Our Common Home: Five Years After *Laudato Si*” (JTC) published by the Interdicasterial Working Group of the Holy See on Integral Ecology in 2020. The first chapter, entitled “Education and Ecological Conversion,” mentions the importance of education, lifelong learning programs, ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, but also catechesis itself. (JTC 85–91) This document provides an excellent synthesis of theological starting points from which activities in catechesis related to environmental protection can be encouraged. (88–91)

Those efforts do not transform evangelization itself or call it into question in any way, but quite the opposite. The key points of catechesis, or “constitutive attention” as the DC calls them, do not in any way reflect the Church’s effort to adapt or please the general public, taking into account a passing and sympathetic theme that preoccupies the faithful. The point is that all these “constitutive attentions” provide the opportunity for the proclamation of the faith. The attitude towards the environment is, therefore, more than just a topic that believers occasionally deal with. Ecumenical and interreligious relations, personal relations with God and neighbour are built and improved around the attitude towards the environment as the attention we have before our eyes in the process of evangelization.

Numbers 381 and 382 of DC have theoretical characters, and numbers 383 and 384 have practical ones. Number 381 is focused on ecological conversion. After a quotation from the encyclical letter of Pope Francis "Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home" (LS) 105 which detects a disproportion between technological development, and "development in human responsibility, values and conscience" emphasizes ecological conversion. Number 382 brings out the most important framework in which the relation between faith and ecology must be understood, that ecological engagement is part of the Christian faith quoting Pope St. John Paul II (1989).

So, just to pay attention for the moment, everything that Christians do regarding the environment is part of their faith. It cannot be seen differently.

Numbers 383 and 384 bring out in the light of the Social Teaching of the Church suggestions for improving ecological engagement: it refers to ecological mentality, ecological spirituality, integral ecology and encourages ecological activities mentioning what was already suggested by Pope Francis in LS in chapters five and six. So, from the point of view of these numbers, it follows that DC strongly repeats what was obvious from the documents of Social Teaching of the Church for a decade that ecological engagement, which is also connected with the economy, poor and inequalities, is an important part of the Christian faith.

It seems that the concept of "ecological engagement" is the main point of this document regarding the attitude of believers towards the environment. Due to the importance of this term for understanding environmental care in the processes of evangelization and catechesis, it is necessary to refer to the source to which the DC refers when it mentions "ecological engagement." The document refers to the message of Pope John Paul II on World Day of Peace entitled: "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation." (1990) The main idea of the Pope's message could be formulated as follows: the ecological problem is not only an ecological problem, but also a moral one. After a brief review of the biblical theology of the creation, Pope John Paul II connects the ecological crisis with a morality which is also related to "the lack of respect for life" (1990). He outlines some possible solutions to the ecological crisis and calls for new solidarity among nations, especially developed countries, warns of poverty, war, lifestyle review and education with special emphasis on environmental responsibility. In concluding number 16 of this message, the Pope addresses the faithful, reminding them that "care for all of creation is their serious obligation". The source of this concern lies solely in their belief in God the Creator. This Message for World Peace Day is, in the full sense of the word, the forerunner of the encyclical LS and the first message that has the full character of caring for the environment, which is inextricably linked to caring for the poor. What the DC refers to is primarily the fact that caring for the environment is an integral part of a believer's identity, that is, that caring for the environment stems from Revelation and faith in God the Creator itself. The message of Pope John Paul II is important for Catholics because more than thirty years ago he warned that caring for the environment is something that is eminently a matter of the Christian faith, that it is a moral problem, therefore,

something much more than only the ecological problem and how this problem cannot be blocked because it concerns every man and requires from every man a new solidarity both on a personal level and on an international level among nations.

So, if someone pays attention to everything that Christians do when it comes to the environment, it is noticeable that all of this is an integral part of their faith. This issue cannot be approached differently.

On the other hand, numbers 383 and 384, following the Social Teaching of the Church, present proposals for improving environmental engagement such as: environmental mentality, environmental spirituality, integral ecology and encourages environmental activities by mentioning what has already been said in LS in the fifth and sixth chapters. Based on these numbers, it follows that the DC strongly repeats what has been evident from documents of Social Teaching of the Church for decades that environmental engagement, which is also linked to the economy, the poor and inequalities, is an important part of the Christian faith. The main emphases of the numbers dedicated to caring for a common home in the DC could be summarized as follows: 1. Destruction of our common home is a phenomenon to which the catechetical process must be attentive, 2. Christian care for a common home arises from a Christian understanding of faith and Revelation and 3. caring in a catechetical process must be understood within the concept of ecological engagement. In other words, the catechetical process should be directed in such a way as to encourage the engagement of Christians in the preservation of the common home.

4. Critical Interpretation of Selected Parts of the Directory for Catechesis (2020)

All of these features of ecological engagement are important also because they can help to make a balance between scientific, technological and economic approach and approach that is attentive to the beauty of the world.

Now, regarding described features of ecological engagement it must be posed several important questions: Are ecological problems treated enough in this DC? If we want to take seriously Pope Francis' analogy between the nuclear crisis and environmental crisis in LS number 3, can we say that this crisis is incorporated enough in the whole document? Moreover, if DC departs from Pope John Paul II's statement that ecological engagement is part of the Christian faith then we can expect that we can find lots of argument and catechetical instructions that takes this statement strongly. On the one side, we can find four numbers in it that emphasize ecological engagement, and what is really delightful, we can also find several outstanding theological statements which put a relationship with nature in the right Christian concept like the relationship between the creation and the Word of God and liturgy as a place of encounter between God, man and creation

which we mentioned earlier. But on the other side, we cannot find in other parts of DC *explicite* statements on care for creation.

An excellent example of incorporating care for creation within all aspects of catechesis, i.e. religious education, is the book by Professor Alojzije Hobljaj, retired professor of catechesis and former head of the Department of Religious Education and Catechetics at the Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Zagreb, published in 2006, "Theological-Catechetical Origins of Religious Education in Early Childhood". The eighth chapter of this book is entitled: "Earth - a common task." In this chapter, Professor Hobljaj writes as if he has already read the encyclical LS. He writes about the Earth as God's creation, brings the biblical foundations of caring for the creature, principles of new behaviour (e.g. observing nonhuman creatures in a new way, solidarity with the Earth, emphasizing the importance of joining together and calling for responsibility towards nonhuman creatures), important suggestions for behaviour change (live simpler, political struggle, spirituality, Eucharist, peace - justice - creation) and finally he offers suggestions to religious educators and parents how to work with children between three and six years of age. The whole structure of this chapter in a way encompasses the structure of LS. It is surprising that at the beginning of this chapter, he writes: "The trademark of this thematic reflection should be the verses of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of friends of ecology, from the Canticle of the Creatures: Praised be..." (Hobljaj 2006, 93)

This eminent example of encouraging catechesis aimed at restoring environmental relations shows how these topics could be implemented in the catechetical process from an early age. Considering the importance of caring for the created-in evangelization and catechesis, one can especially notice the lack of a new DC, which does not mention the care for creation in important places. These are places where mentioning care for creation would be expected given the strength of the arguments put forward by the document.

When the DC describes a relationship between catechesis and new evangelization in the first part named "Catechesis in the Evangelizing Church" numbers 48–53, it mentions the importance of the Church which "goes forth" (EG 20–24), charity, dialogue but it doesn't mention explicitly catechesis oriented towards renewal of the relationship with nature.

It would be great if DC described the catechist as one of the leaders caring for creation. In number 113 DC describes a catechist as a witness of faith, a teacher who introduces to faith, a leader and an educator. It is obvious that here we have a general description of the catechist and that care for creation is included in those features, but regarding the number 382 where it is emphasized that ecological engagement as an integral part of Christian faith and environmental crisis more detailed and specified role of the catechist as a witness of faith, teacher, leader and educator who encourages care for creation would be more than welcome. Especially in the life of the parish community, the role of the catechist as a leader in caring for creation could be the driving force behind parish groups dedicated to

caring for creation. The parish or diocesan level is one among the seven levels that the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development encourages in the seven-year LS journey. It is clear from the nature of the DC that catechesis must pay more attention to problems arising from the environmental crisis, but there is a lack of argumentation and explanation of the role of the catechist in this process that can encourage the creation and initiation of parish ecological communities.

An excellent strategic plan for parish communities as a place to care for creation was presented in 2012 in a paper in the journal *Catechesis* by Professor Josip Šimunović, current dean of the Catholic Faculty of Theology at the University of Zagreb, and Dragana Tomić entitled: "Ecology and the parish community: The possibility of achieving an ecological community in the parish community". The authors drew attention to the importance of environmental awareness of every person and pointed out the possibilities of the parish community in the awakening and development of the same and its members (Šimunović-Tomić 2012, 206). In this context, the document of Croatian bishops "Parish catechesis in the renewal of the parish community" issued in 2000 should be considered. (Croatian Bishops' Conference 2000) Bishops adopt a one-year plan and program a catechetical process with a desire to primarily serve the renewal of parish catechesis in new circumstances. The authors propose a plan and program of catechetical meetings, as well as several practical proposals that can encourage certain initiatives, but also revive the ecological catechetical community in their own parish communities in order to build and preserve a better world in and around themselves. Therefore, this document listed nineteen special communities of interest, i.e., living religious circles, offered to adult believers to choose from. Among the living circles of believers, there is a special community called the ecological community. Croatian bishops emphasize that "in our time this community can play a significant role in creating a deeper religious relationship with the created world, which can be achieved either through their own initiatives or through the efforts of all parishioners, from children, youth and adults to associate with other movements outside the parish and on a broader scale" (Croatian Bishops' Conference 2000, 121). Following this example, in relation to the new DC, the role of the catechist as a leader and promoter of ecological circles in parish communities could be expanded.

A similar shortcoming is noted in number 264 in DC describing catechesis for adults. Lots of features are mentioned, but again, not *de explicita* the importance of care for the creation. We can read about catechesis as an initiation to faith, new initiation to faith, revised discovery of the faith, about catechesis as an announcement of faith to life settings, catechesis with couples, catechesis of deepening the faith based upon the Bible, Teaching documents, or lives of the saints, liturgical catechesis, catechesis with different kind of topics oriented toward participation in the life of the society and catechesis in the specific circumstances. Once again, care for creation may be incorporated in different kinds of catechesis, but explicitly referring to catechesis as a care for creation, or similar, it would give great impetus for deepening the role of the Christians in environmental crisis.

There is also an important example in Croatia of recognizing the relevance of catechesis as a concern for all creation. Namely, Fr. Bože Vuleta, head of the Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace, a tireless promoter of care for nature, water, and air protection, together with his associates, has published several publications related to the protection of nature. In the book entitled *This glorious Divine world: the faithful and ecology* (1997), which can rightly be called “ecological catechism”, the author sets out the basic principles of Christian doctrine, or ways of environmental education whose general goal is »awe« of nature, from which other goals arise.

In the book *Thirst at a spring: My Responsibility for Water* (2005) written by Ivan Milanović Litre, Bože Vuleta and Rebeka Anić, the authors point out that this is a study on water issues in the firm hope that the information provided, some examples of prophetic endeavours, religious texts and interpretations, as well as samples of individual exercises and prayers will be inspiring enough to achieve common goals. (Milanović Litre – Vuleta – Anić 2005, 6)

The publication *Our everyday air: Climate change and global warming* (2007) edited by Ivan Milanović Litre, Bože Vuleta and others, deals with global warming and climate change. It offers practical guidelines for shaping civic, especially religious, responsibility towards nature and an incentive for concrete engagement with individuals and different communities in nature protection. All of these publications, in addition to scientific data on water and climate change and the theological aspects of caring for creation, provide ready-made materials that are appropriate and quite applicable in catechesis.

Apparently, it can be concluded that there was still room in the DC for directing the catechetical process towards the preservation of everything created.

5. Conclusion

It is a great achievement of the new DC that it directly addresses ecological questions in four numbers: 381–384, and indirectly in other parts of the document. In summary, several important theses for understanding the Christian attitude towards the environment in the process of catechesis emerge from the whole document: 1. environmental problems are one of the main features to which catechesis must pay more and more attention in order to deal with them properly, 2. ecological engagement is an integral part of the Christian faith and is associated with salvation, 3. creation is a place where God’s Word can be heard and His nearness experienced and 4. catechesis helps to understand the wonderful connection between God, man and nature that is embraced by the Christian liturgy.

The importance of those issues is more than evident: DC called them »constitutive attentions«, considers that ecological engagement is an integral part of the Christian faith, and refers to the role of the catechist as a person who directs towards liturgy as a place where the relation between God, man and nature are embraced.

On second thought, there is no reference to caring for creation when DC writes about the relation between catechesis and evangelization, when it brings features of the catechist and when it describes the catechesis of the adults.

But this document still waits for national and local implementation. In number 10 DC emphasized that it brings theological and pastoral principles, and that local Churches will elaborate it in their contexts. It is to be expected that following this document, and especially within the initiative of Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development of a seven-year journey towards sustainability, preserving environmental care as an eminent feature of Christian identity in catechesis will find its intensive implementation.

Abbreviations

- DC** – Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization 2020 [Directory for Catechesis].
- DV** – Second Vatican Ecumenical Council 1964 [Dei Verbum].
- EG** – Francis 2013 [Evangelii Gaudium].
- GCD** – Sacred Congregation for the Clergy 1971 [General Catechetical Directory].
- GDC** – Congregation for the Clergy 1997 [General Directory for Catechesis].
- LS** – Francis 2015 [Laudato Si’].

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