Pope Francis noted the singular importance of the catechumenate “whereby growing numbers of adults, even in societies with ancient Christian roots, now approach the sacrament of baptism—for the new evangelization. It is the road of preparation for baptism, for the transformation of our whole life in Christ” (Lumen Fidei, no. 42).

In 2000 Jerry Baumbach described the catechumenate as a navigational aide for catechesis. While the societal landscape has changed in the last fifteen years, the essential guideposts in accompanying seekers on their journey with Jesus Christ and the Church remain the same. Like a GPS—global positioning system—that so many now rely on for communication and travel, the catechumenate depends on sufficient connectivity and real-time feedback on local conditions to navigate the various opportunities and roadblocks in the journey of faith.

**Sufficient Connectivity = Multiple Relationships**

Regularly at local diocesan celebrations of the Rite of Election, the presiding bishop asked the newly elect what first brought them to consider becoming Catholic: a book, a course, a lecture, someone they knew. Almost all raised their hands to indicate that a relationship with someone who was already Catholic was the main reason they walked the path toward full initiation. Connections with God and others brought the elect this far and will sustain them in a life of discipleship.

The catechumenate describes the essential interactions involved in forming a living, explicit and fruitful relationship with Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. The General Directory for Catechesis (105) points out that the Christian community is to receive, understand, celebrate, live, and communicate the Gospel. All of these activities involve encounters with God, self, and others. Weaving a strong web of relationships that are experientially and culturally diverse provides both the person being initiated and the members of the faith community connections capable of working with
the Holy Spirit and the universal Church to guide one another in following the Way, the Truth, and the Life which is Jesus Christ. As Baumbach said “We never stop sponsoring one another” as we build up the body of Christ.

Real-time Feedback = Encounter, Listen, Walk

One of the things I find most beautiful about the catechumenate is that it is most fruitful when responding to the particular lives of those involved as part of God's incarnational pedagogy (White, 2014). Much like the GPS, it relies on being aware of the real-time conditions of the person asking for directions as well as the community or communities in which the journey will occur in order to provide accurate directions. “It [the baptismal catechumenate] reminds the Church that her catechesis accompanies a continual conversion to Christ and an ongoing initiation into the celebration of the sacraments and the life of the Church” (NDC, no.35.D, p 116).

The catechumenate challenges parish leaders to be open to encountering people in the process of listening to God and finding a community with and through whom to walk the journey of faith; they are not enrolling for a course that graduates at Easter. For instance, the National Study of Catholic Parishes with Hispanic Ministry found that the RCIA is the most common space for faith formation for Hispanic adults (as reported by parishes with Hispanic ministry). If we recognize the initiation sacraments as markers in a life long walk with Christ, not isolated destinations captured in pictures, how would we engage all adults in apprenticing each other in the Catholic way of life.

Navigating with Joy

Our catechetical GPS map is framed by the parameters of the catechumenate. Through sufficient connectivity and real-time feedback we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to guide one another toward the ultimate happiness: the fullness of life in Christ. Pope Francis, during the Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate that concluded the Year of Faith, expressed it well when he said, “Dear catechumens, today you begin the journey of the catechumenate. My wish for you is to follow it with joy, sure of the entire Church’s support, who is watching over you with great trust. . . . I invite you to guard the enthusiasm of that first moment in which he opened your eyes to the light of faith; to remember, like the beloved disciple, the day, the hour in which for the first time you stayed with Jesus, felt his gaze upon you.”

Further Reading


Pope Francis. “November 23, 2013 Address during Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate and Meeting with Catechumens at the Closing of the Year of Faith” (www.annusfidei.va/content/novaevangelizatio/en/eventi/EventiPassati/23-11-2013.html)


**Lori Dahlhoff** is currently the Digital Content Manager at Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) and was formerly the Religious Education Department Executive Director for NCEA. Lori has over twenty years of experience as a catechetical leader in parish, Catholic school, and diocesan settings, particularly in the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. Lori holds an Ed.D in Education and an MA in Pastoral Ministry with an emphasis on catechesis, liturgy and leadership.
This article was published in Communication Research Trends, Volume 38 (2019), Number 4, a Quarterly Review of Communication Research from CSCC Santa Clara University California, ISSN 0144-4646. This issue was about Social Media and Faith Formation and have papers by Paul A. Soukup SJ, Aline Amaro da Silva and Stephen Garner. In addition to the catechumenal inspiration, to mark the path of initiation with rites that put the catechist in personal contact with the paschal mystery of Christ, catechesis in digital times needs not only to forfitulate a new pedagogy, but also requires a new attitude on the part of its protagonists. Reflection models and frameworks. This section begins with a warning: a single model is often applied differently by different academic disciplines or is often adapted so that the steps or stages incorporate different reflective activities. Whilst there are only three presented here, there may be others used on your course. This is really based on Kurt Lewin’s work on experiential learning but was progressed to be a set of reflective prompts and even a way to structure a piece of reflective writing. You might have already noticed that these models have some overlaps which is not surprising given the main function of reflection: to learn from both experience and theory, bringing both together to deepen understanding. Learner Development Unit. The Reflections library works as a classpath scanner. It indexes the scanned metadata and allows us to query it at runtime. It can also save this information, so we can collect and use it at any point during our project, without having to re-scan the classpath again. After calling one of the Reflections constructors, the configured scanners scan all the provided URLs. Then, for each scanner, the library puts the results in Multimap stores. As a result, in order to use Reflections, we need to query these stores by calling the provided query methods. Let's see some examples of these query methods.

4.1. Subtypes. Let's start by retrieving all the scanners provided by Reflections:

```java
1.2
```

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