



EVANGELIZING

New Vision - New Directions

CATECHESIS

2016 Reflections

Article 8. Adult Faith Formation

by Fr. Christopher Bazyouros

One day at the office I was speaking with a coworker about the various ideas and projects in his area of ministry which is with young adults. It was an energetic and fascinating conversation as we discussed some of the many possibilities in this field. At the end of our conversation he said, “It’s an amazing thing to be an adult Catholic today.” This comment stayed with me in the weeks following and I often wonder how people see a mature, adult life of faith as something amazing. While there is still much energy that is devoted to forming children in youth in our parishes, there is a steady increase in attention and focus towards adults. In the *General Directory for Catechesis* (173), it says, “The faith of adults. . . must be continually enlightened, developed and protected.” What follows here are three aspects that have seen development in the past 15 years.

We are called to become disciples of Jesus. It may seem like this should be a given, but many times our concept of being a Catholic revolved around parish membership or “getting something” like a sacrament or service. The importance of discipleship in Christian life has been receiving increased attention for many years and took center stage with Pope Francis’ encyclical *Evangelii Gaudium*. In that document, discipleship is the key element to a life with Christ.

The complexity of adulthood allows for a rich expression of faith. No one will deny that life is difficult. The complexity of adult relationships and decisions can be daunting, but it can also present the best opportunity of entering into a profoundly deep relationship with God. People seek an authenticity and relevancy in their faith. If that complexity is not addressed or if it is addressed in a general or superficial way, that opportunity is lost. In recent years, there has been growth in teaching theological reflection and small faith group sharing. There has been a shift from a classroom mentality to gatherings in fellowship. What has followed is an awareness that adults are in various places in their faith journey and the community is now encouraged to engage them where they are and accompany them to encounter Jesus.

One size fits one. When we engage people where they are, we soon realize that one program or series or book will not be sufficient. Of course, there are things about our faith that all of us aspire to learn and put into practice in our daily lives. However, each person’s journey is unique, and we must try to offer everything we can to assist them in their search. In these days, the tremendous increases in technology and digital sharing have allowed a great amount of the Church’s rich theological tradition

to be accessible to millions. We are also able to offer the content of that tradition in ways that engage various learning styles and interests.

In the year 2000, Dr. Luby wrote about how the Church must help adults to grow in their faith so that the Church may move forward in its mission. In the past 15 years, we have seen that putting our attention on the formation of adults has helped many revitalize their lives as disciples, develop a greater sense of authenticity in living their faith, and come to the realization that they are uniquely loved and known by God.

And there is still more. Indeed, it is an amazing time to be an adult Catholic.

Fr. Christopher Bazyouros, a native of the Los Angeles area, is a diocesan priest who serves as Director of the Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.