

**THE ANCIENT *NARRATIO* AS AN ECCLESIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE  
PEDAGOGY: A STUDY OF ITS SOURCES AND PROPOSAL FOR ITS CURRENT  
APPLICATION**

by

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degree of

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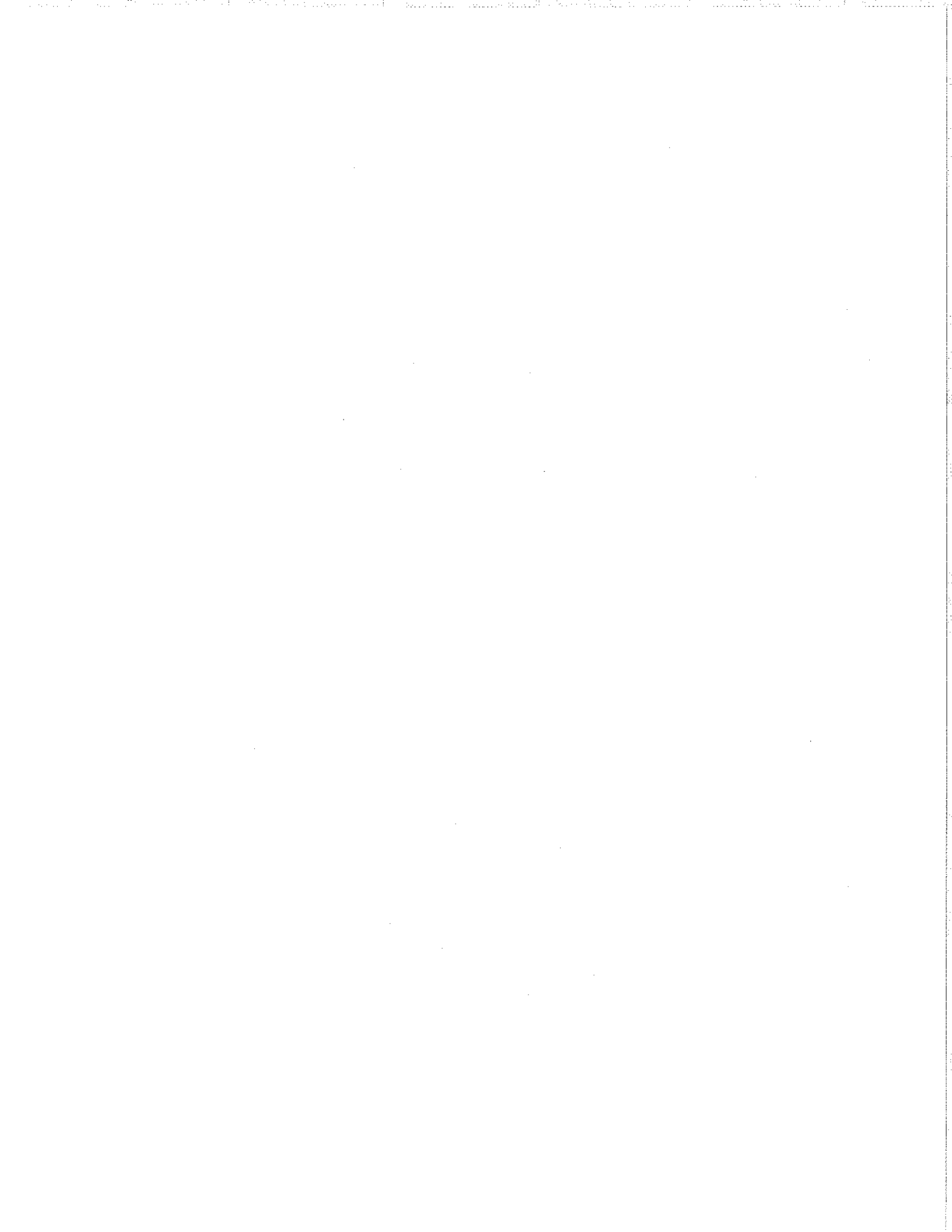
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PEDAGOGY: A STUDY OF ITS SOURCES & PROPOSAL FOR ITS CURRENT APPLICATION

By S. Innerst for the degree of Doctor of Theology (D.Th.) in  
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**Abstract:**

This study represents a work of practical narrative theology which originates in the notable prominence of an ancient form of catechesis in a modern document, the *General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)*, issued in 1997 by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in the Vatican. The *GDC* first mentions *narratio* explicitly in number 39 in the form of an imperative:

"Catechesis, for its part, transmits the words and deeds of Revelation; it is obliged to proclaim and *narrate* them and, at the same time, to make clear the profound mysteries that they contain." It is under the weight of that obligation that this study came to be.

*Narratio*, or the narration of salvation history, which was a standard part of the catechesis of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries gave way to the exigencies of a changing Church in which the catechetical focus turned from adults, who needed a Judeo-Christian worldview to replace a Greco-Roman one, to children who had grown up in communities shaped by a Christian vision.

This doctoral thesis proceeds by, first, surveying Roman Catholic magisterial teaching immediately preceding the issuance of the *GDC* to trace the roots of this apparent innovation within an institution which is otherwise noted for its conservatism. After establishing the context and character of the *GDC*'s call for revival of *narratio*, this thesis examines the historical setting, rhetorical structure, and function of *narratio* in Augustine of Hippo's *De catechizandis rudibus*, and then its scriptural precursors in the two Testaments in order to discover how this narration functioned in the Jewish and Christian communities which practiced haggadic and anamnestic recitals of God's saving works as a means to the formation and maintenance of communal identity.

This study seeks to establish that a positive response to the *GDC*'s call is as much warranted by the evidence provided in the biblical and post-biblical Jewish and Christian practice of ritual/covenantal remembrance as by the Catholic magisterial imperative in the *GDC*. In this, it may aid to inform and direct such a positive response to the *GDC* for the revival of the catechetical *narratio*.

**Key Words:**

*Narratio*, Catholic catechesis, Augustine of Hippo, *De catechizandis rudibus*, narrative theology, *haggadah*, *anamnesis*, divine pedagogy, catechetical methodology, catechetical content.

## Acknowledgements

I declare that THE ANCIENT NARRATIO AS AN ECCLESIAL PARTICIPATION IN THE DIVINE PEDAGOGY: A STUDY OF ITS SOURCES AND PROPOSAL FOR ITS CURRENT APPLICATION is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I acknowledge that some portions of Chapters VI and VII were previously published by me under the titles "The Family That Learns Together, Yearns Together: The Liturgy as Family Pedagogy," in *Catholic for a Reason: Scripture and the Mystery of the Family of God*, S. Hahn and L. J. Suprenant, eds. (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 1998) and "Time for Liturgy: 'Appointed Times' in Judaism and Christianity," in *Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass*, S. Hahn and R. Flaherty, eds. (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2004)

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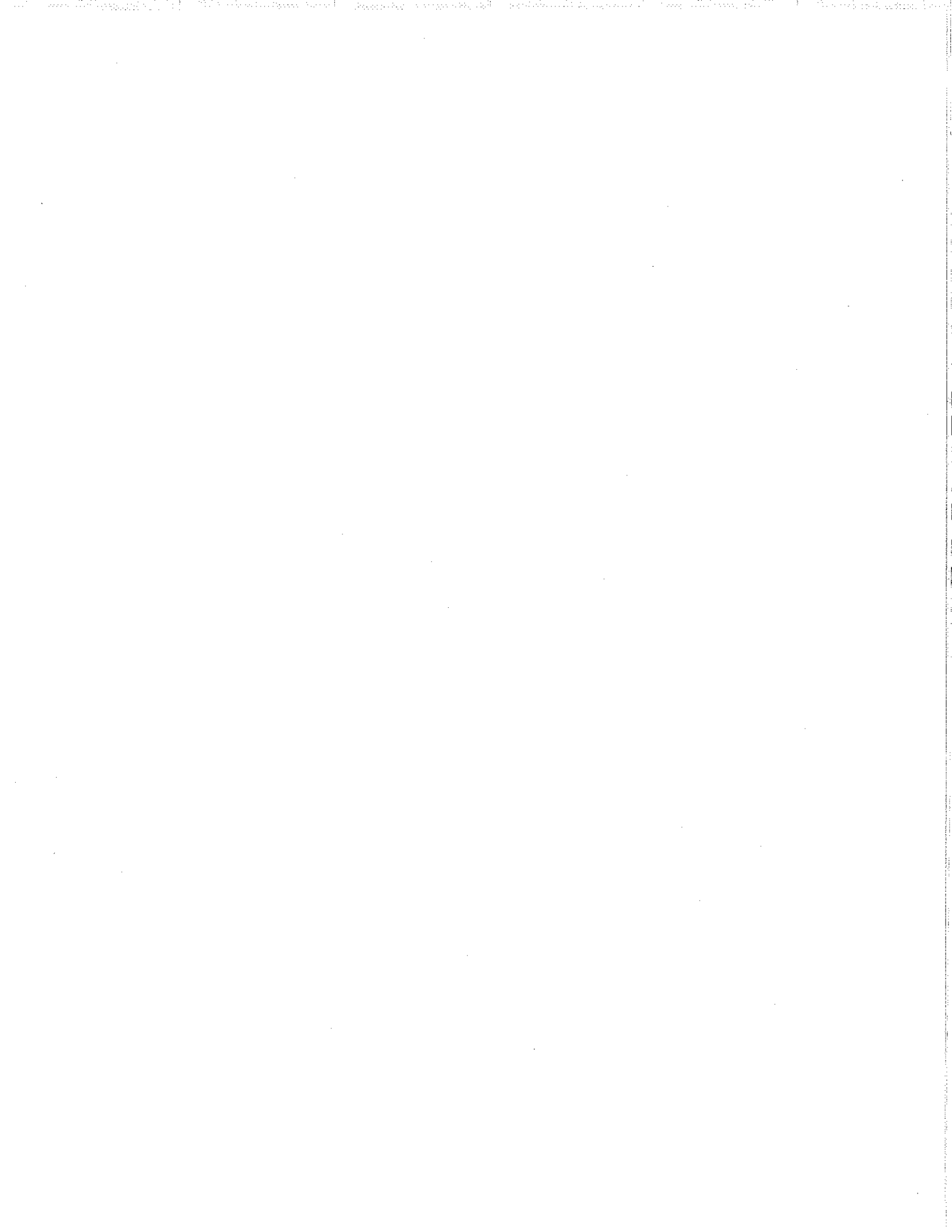
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**Abbreviations:**

<i>AG</i>	<i>Ad Gentes</i>
<i>CCC</i>	<i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>
<i>CD</i>	<i>Christus Dominus</i>
<i>CL</i>	<i>Christifideles Laici</i>
<i>COINCAT</i>	<i>The International Council for Catechesis</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Catechesi Tradendae</i>
<i>DCR</i>	<i>De catechizandis rudibus</i>
<i>FD</i>	<i>Fidei Depositum</i>
<i>GDC</i>	<i>General Directory for Catechesis 1997</i>
<i>GCD</i>	<i>General Catechetical Directory 1971</i>
<i>NJBC</i>	<i>New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i>
<i>PBC</i>	<i>Pontifical Biblical Commission</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
<i>EN</i>	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i>
<i>RCIA</i>	<i>Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults</i>
<i>RH</i>	<i>Redemptor Hominis</i>
<i>RM</i>	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i>



## INTRODUCTION

### TOPIC AND METHODOLOGY

The present study finds its origin in the notable prominence of an ancient form of catechesis in a modern document, the *General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)*, issued in the Latin typical edition in 1997 by the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy in the Vatican<sup>1</sup> and published in English in the following year by the, then, United States Catholic Conference (which is now the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops). *Narratio*, or the narration of salvation history, which was a standard part of the catechesis of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries, but which had all but ceased to be a standard part of catechetical pedagogy since, is mentioned first, explicitly, in number 39 of the *GDC* and there in the form

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<sup>1</sup> *General Directory for Catechesis, Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1997). All references will be taken from this English edition, unless otherwise noted, and the citations for this and all ecclesial documents will be made with the internal numbering system, rather than by page numbers.

of an imperative: "Catechesis, for its part, transmits the words and deeds of Revelation; it is *obliged* to proclaim and *narrate* them and, at the same time, to make clear the profound mysteries that they contain" (emphases added). While the *GDC* will go on to make the character of that narration clearer in succeeding paragraphs, already in its introduction it has made of it a catechetical obligation for Catholic teachers of the faith. It is under the weight of that obligation that this study has come to be.

Although a full history of the loss of the *narratio* is beyond the scope of this study, which will focus on the patristic practice, its roots in Scripture, and its proposed revival, it is worth briefly noting here the difference, on the matter of the *narratio*, between the *GDC* and its immediate predecessor, the *General Catechetical Directory (GCD)*, issued in 1971 during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI. While the *GCD* of 1971 at several points highlights the fact that Revelation is an action of God in history and that the temporal quality of that disclosure must "be kept in mind constantly and practically in the exposition of the content of catechesis," there is no mention of the *narratio*, nor even of a sustained account of

the content of salvation history in catechesis.<sup>2</sup> Rather, although catechesis may be "biblical" in one of its "various forms," as the previous quote suggests, salvation history is more something to be "kept in mind" rather than to be narrated in the ancient manner.<sup>3</sup>

So although the 1971 *GCD* represents perhaps a stage in a movement toward a more biblical and less purely propositional catechesis, the call of the *GDC* of 1997 stands as a marked departure from the content and concerns of even its immediate 1971 predecessor in the magisterium of the Catholic Church. One question to be answered, then, is why such a dramatic departure within an institution which is noted for its continuity and conservatism? To begin to undertake an answer to this question and to formulate even more primary questions about the *narratio* will require a little more background.

The term *narratio* is applied with reference to the recitation of the history of salvation made to those who

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<sup>2</sup> *General Catechetical Directory* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference Publications Office, 1971) 44.

<sup>3</sup> *GCD* 46. The *GCD* is here making reference to one of the four "languages" (biblical, liturgical, doctrinal and experiential) of Kerygmatic catechesis which will be discussed later. As will be seen then, although the Kerygmatic method called for recourse to the biblical sources as one of the moments of catechesis, and so represented an attempt to develop a less propositional catechesis more in accord with the ancient methods, this didn't mean a sustained recounting of salvation history, but simply the marshalling of shorter source texts and brief stories from the Bible.

approach the Church to enter the catechumenate by Augustine of Hippo in his *De catechizandis rudibus* (DCR) which could be translated "On the catechizing of the uninstructed" or, as Raymond Canning renders it in his 2006 annotated translation, *Instructing Beginners in the Faith*.<sup>4</sup> While it is here that the term seems to have first been applied in this catechetical sense (at least so far as the documentary evidence shows), it was a standard part of the classical oration, as we see in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, the handbook for Roman rhetoric and other educational practices from the first century A.D.<sup>5</sup>

Augustine may have been simply drawing from his background as a *rhetor* in the classical pagan tradition or

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<sup>4</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Instructing Beginners in Faith*, Translation, Introduction and Notes by Raymond Canning, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2006). The translation of *De catechizandis rudibus* (DCR) used throughout this work is Canning's, unless otherwise noted, but the reference numbers cited will be those which are internal to DCR itself, rather than Canning's page numbers. Where Canning's commentary on the work is cited, the page numbers will be used.

<sup>5</sup> Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, H. E. Butler, trans., vols. 1-4, (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1953), IV, 1-2; see also Cicero, *De inventione* I, 19, 27 [*De inventione. De optimo genere oratorum. Topica*, H. M. Hubbell, trans. (Cambridge, MA and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1949)] as described in William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995) 123-126. As will be discussed later, Raymond Canning in his annotated translation of DCR cites the thesis of P. Siniscalco that the classical *narratio* is described as having three forms, two of which were employed in civil disputes and a third which was not. This third form of *narratio* could, in turn, take three forms, *fabula*, *historia*, or *argumentum*, the second of which - "a credible account of actual occurrences" - Canning concludes, is what Augustine had in mind in using the term. Augustine of Hippo, *Instructing Beginners in Faith*, Translation, Introduction and Notes by Raymond Canning, (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2006) 17.

he may have been using a term which had already found a place in the Christian catechetical vocabulary.<sup>6</sup> This latter possibility may well be indicated by the fact that *De catechizandis rudibus* was penned at the request of a deacon of Carthage named Deogratias who appears, from Augustine's response, to have specifically asked about the place to start and finish the narration and whether it should be followed by an exhortation or a mere list of precepts.<sup>7</sup> Given that *exhortatio* was also a standard element in classical orations,<sup>8</sup> Deogratias' question about the inclusion of *exhortatio* may indicate that he assumed that something called *narratio*, even if catechetical rather than rhetorical, ought to be followed by *exhortatio*, as was common in formal discourses, thus suggesting that the term

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<sup>6</sup> See Christopher's 1926 commentary where he seems quite inexplicably to argue both that "Augustine was the first to see the adaptability of this rhetorical term" used by the deacon Deogratias "and seized upon it and gave to it the comprehensive meaning which it has in this treatise" and (just prior) that the "rhetorical term *narratio* must have been applied long before Augustine's time to the historical exposition at the beginning of the catechetical instruction, otherwise Deogratias would hardly have used the term when writing or speaking to Augustine, and Augustine in turn would hardly have used it here without explanation." *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi de Catechizandis Rudibus Liber Unus*, Joseph Patrick Christopher, trans. The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies vol. VIII. (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1926) 128.

<sup>7</sup> DCR 1,1.

<sup>8</sup> Harmless notes that while an *exhortation* was not a formal part of the Ciceronian model, as he outlines it on page 124 of *Catechumenate*, "exhortatory digressions were both common and expected," citing Cicero's *De inventione* 1, 97.

*narratio* had already become standard in catechesis, at least in the Churches of Latin North Africa.

Augustine's work includes two versions of the *narratio*, a longer and shorter, which make it the fullest expression of a catechetical method which is found in various forms in Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, and Cyril of Jerusalem, as well as in the Cappadocian Fathers.<sup>9</sup> But the initiatory practice of the fourth century gave way to the exigencies of a changing Church in which the catechetical focus became not so much adults who needed to be given a Judeo-Christian world view to replace a Greco-Roman one, but children who had grown up in communities that were more and more shaped by a Christian vision.<sup>10</sup>

Salvation historical narratives or biblical stories have been employed in catechesis at various points in Church history since the time of Augustine. Some examples include the methodology of Bishop Fenelon from the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Munich Method that became popular at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the Kerygmatic movement, founded and encouraged by many of the proponents

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<sup>9</sup> See Rudolph Bandas, *Contents and Methods of Catechization* (St. Paul, Minnesota: The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1957) 212.

<sup>10</sup> On the change in the pastoral circumstances see Josef Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy: To the Time of Gregory the Great*, Francis A Brunner, trans. (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1960) 250-251.



of *ressourcement* - what its detractors pejoratively referred to as *la nouvelle théologie*, which gained popularity before the Second Vatican Council. But the use of biblical narrative in catechesis has by no means been so common at any time since the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, including the years since the Council, as to make the *General Directory's narratio* imperative at number 39 anything other than quite exceptional, especially when compared to the absence of any mention in the 1971 *GCD*, as just noted.

It is the purpose of this study to explore the history and character of *narratio* and the ways in which it might be applied today so as to make possible a positive response to the call of the *General Directory for Catechesis*. More generally, it aims at disclosing the enduring value of the narration of salvation history in evangelization and catechesis for the formation and maintenance of a proper Christian ethos.

### **The *Status Questionis* and Methodology**

As has already been suggested, while familiar to some patristic scholars and a few historians of catechesis, the *narratio*, as it was practiced in the early Church, has not

been a prominent part of catechetical practice in the Church's recent history. This nearly complete lack of familiarity with the *narratio* may account for the fact that the *GDC*'s call for its reinstatement has not even been recognized as such by most commentators.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This is so much the case that even American catechetical scholars of the caliber of Thomas Groome and Robert Duggan in their reflections on the call of the *GDC* for a catechumenalization of catechesis end up treating this call primarily in terms of the structure of the RCIA, Duggan favoring this call and Groome suggesting caution, and miss the clear call for a content to catechesis which follows that of the patristic catechumenate, including the *narratio*. See Robert D. Duggan, "The New Constellation of Catechesis" and Thomas Groome, "Conversion, Nurture, or Both: Towards a Lifelong Catechetical Education—A Cautious Reading of the *GDC*", both in *The Living Light* 37, no. 4 (Summer 2001). Michael Horan, in a work on the *GDC* called *Catechesis As an Evangelizing Moment: Singular Challenge to a Maturing Church* (Washington, DC: NCEA Publications Office, 1999) written for and published by the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), which functions in a cooperative relationship with the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, makes no mention of the *narratio*.

The British catechetical journal, *The Sower*, while celebrating the content of the 1997 *GDC* and especially drawing attention to its stress upon the uniqueness of the "original pedagogy of faith" (See Petroc Willey's "Editor's Notes" and John Redford's article "The General Directory for Catechesis," in *The Sower* 19, no. 2 (January 1998): 4 and 5-7 and Cyril de Souza's "The New Emphases in the General Directory for Catechesis," *The Sower* 20, no. 3 (April 1999): 5-8, see also *GDC* 138 and CT 58.), didn't run an article taking note of the place of the *narratio* in the *GDC* until its April 2002 issue. See vol. 23 no. 2: 4-8, Petroc Willey's "Editor's Notes" and Andrew Minto's "Theological Foundations for Biblical Catechesis." Minto in that article and two others that followed in later numbers of *The Sower* (25, no. 2 (April 2004): 6-8 and 25, no. 4 (October 2004): 6-8) tends to conflate the catechetical *narratio* and what he calls the "biblical *narratio*" and in so doing, addresses not the ancient patristic *narratio* referenced in the *GDC* but the general principles and aims of a proper biblical catechesis, in the broader sense. See also André Fossion, "Un nouveau Directoire Général pour la Catéchèse" and Henri Derroitte, "Les tâches de la catéchèse Regards sur le Directoire Général pour la Catéchèse, both in *Lumen Vitae* 53, no. 1 (March 1998): 91-102 and 103-112, respectively. Cesare Bissoli, now an emeritus professor from the Pontifical Salesian University in Rome who likely had a hand in framing the *GDC*, represents an exception to the lack of attention to the *narratio*, see his "Il nuovo Directorio Generale per la Catechesi. Provocazioni alla catechesi italiana" in *Quaderni della Ségretaria Generale CEI* 27, no. 1 (1998) 35 ff.

The call of the *GDC* for the reintroduction of *narratio* cannot be answered by those engaged in the apostolate of Christian catechetical formation unless they understand the *narratio*, its past function and possible application in the current catechetical setting. To this point in time, no such extended study has been done. After establishing the context for and character of the *GDC*'s call for its reintroduction, this thesis will provide an introduction to the original historical setting, structure, and function of *narratio* from Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus* as well as well as some of its scriptural precursors for the purpose of disclosing the way it functioned in the past, as a way to inform and direct a positive response to the call of the *GDC* for the revival of *narratio*.

This study will be undertaken in seven chapters. After this brief introduction outlining the matter and method of the study, Section 1 of Chapter I will present a survey of the pertinent magisterial documents of the last

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In a recent joint work entitled *Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2008, especially 79-89.) Petroc Willey, Barbara Morgan and Pierre de Cointet take serious note of the *GDC*'s insistence upon the place of the *narratio* and make it the seventh of their twelve essential components or "keys" of the "craft of catechesis." These three frequent contributors to *The Sower* give the *narratio* ten pages out of the one hundred and fifty in their proposal for a catechesis renewed from the sources in what appears to be the fullest treatment in the current catechetical literature of the role of the catechetical *narratio* since the issuance of the *GDC*.

several decades with an emphasis upon certain central elements, such as the increased importance given to evangelization and the baptismal catechumenate. The purpose of this will be to suggest the genetic links between the *GDC* and these earlier expressions of the papal magisterium.

Section 2 of the first chapter will focus on the call for the revival of *narratio* in the *GDC* of 1997, beginning with a comparison between it and the *General Catechetical Directory* of 1971, its immediate predecessor. This will be followed by an analysis of the discussion of the three pedagogies in the 1997 *GDC*, the patristic, the divine, and current ecclesial, and the ways in which the relation between the three supports the revival of *narratio*. The two pedagogies, the patristic and divine, which are to inform our current practice, will then serve as the conceptual framework for the rest of the study.

Chapters II, III, and IV will explore the Patristic pedagogy. Chapter II will deal with the place of *narratio* in the pre-catechumenate of the late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries, as represented in Augustine of Hippo's *De catechizandis rudibus*, and then Chapter III will examine the rhetorical structure of the catechetical address as

Augustine describes it in the Prologue and Part I of *DCR* (1,1-14,22).

Chapter IV will apply the principles outlined in Chapter III to the two examples of *narratio*, one long and one short, that Augustine provides in Part II of *DCR* (15,23-27,55). In this longest chapter of the thesis I will also make a few comparisons with Irenaeus of Lyon's *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, a precursor and likely catechetical model for Augustine's work, to further explicate the genre of *narratio* when employed in other catechetical settings than the pre-catechumenate. Chapters II through IV will give us a clear vision of one example of the *narratio* in its original setting in the patristic pedagogy of the ancient Church, as well as its form and function, and serve as a guide for the proposed work of *ressourcement* in its current application.

Chapter V will focus in Section 1 on the critique leveled against another form of salvation-historical catechesis, the kerygmatic movement, which was so prominent before the Second Vatican Council. While not equivalent to the *narratio* proposed by the *GDC*, the similarities presented by the kerygmatic movement provide an opportunity to test the *narratio* against a scholarly critique which it has not yet faced. In Section 2 I will return to the *GDC*

to show that the characteristics that it ascribes to the "divine pedagogy" can also be applied to the *narratio*, suggesting that the latter shares with the former the status of a catechetical principle and not simply that of a standard part of catechetical content or one methodology among others.

Chapters VI and VII will demonstrate that the precursors to the patristic *narratio* and the salvation historical catechesis it represents, are indeed to be found in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and that these represent, as asserted by the *GDC*, the divine pedagogical warrant for what I call a narrational catechesis. Particular attention will be given to how the recital of past events in these communities' histories functioned in the formation of Jewish and then Christian identity. In Section 1 of Chapter VI the stress will be upon the way in which the historical prologue functioned in the ancient covenant formularies to order covenant membership and obligations. Section 2 will show that this same memorial principle passed into the ritual life of biblical and post-biblical Judaism.

Chapter VII will test scholarly support for a modern reading of the Bible which employs the ancient interpretive style of Augustine against the claim that a critical

exegesis obviates that older form. I will propose that a sympathy for the critical methods need not displace a typological reading and that the New Testament's reading of the Old Testament itself provides the warrant for that ancient interpretive form which actually depends upon the literal/historical meaning with which the critical methods are concerned for its full integrity.

The Conclusion will gather up the strands of the, scriptural, patristic, magisterial and theological sources and suggest that *narratio* represents an apt echo of what the *GDC* calls "the original and efficacious 'pedagogy of God.'"<sup>12</sup> In addition, I will attempt to answer the question of how the *narratio* has and ought to function as catechetical content and/or method in the formation of individuals and the Church today. In the Conclusion I hope to show that a positive response to the *GDC*'s call for a revival of the *narratio* is as much warranted by the evidence provided in the biblical and post-biblical Jewish and Christian practice and the theological reflection of both those communities as by the Christian catechetical tradition and the Catholic magisterial imperative represented by the *GDC*.

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<sup>12</sup> *GDC* 139.

I have also added an Epilogue which explores in some detail the clearest biblical expression of a narrative catechesis, the Emmaus road episode from the 24<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke's Gospel, to make good on my promise to include a proposal for the application of the practice we see in Augustine's *DCR* and the ancient Jewish and Christian communities. I will suggest that the Emmaus road pericope presents a model for a narrational catechesis in the New Evangelization.

#### **Particular Questions and a Primary Question**

Underlying the elaboration of the chapter divisions described above are two important questions that this doctoral thesis will seek to answer: Does the use of *narratio* in ancient contexts suggest reasons for its revival, as proposed by the *GDC*? How can *narrationes* be employed today in response to the call of the *GDC* and in fidelity to the ancient practice? In addition to these questions there is a further foundational question that will be explored in each of the phases of the study and which serves as a seminal question for this thesis. This question needs to be briefly elaborated.



The Church's magisterium has usually demurred from pointing to any particular catechetical method as most favorable to faith formation and has instead satisfied itself by enjoining a particular content in its role as guardian of the faith (*fides quae creditur*).<sup>13</sup> Just such an instance can be seen in the 1997 *GDC* in number 130, found in Chapter 2 on "The Gospel Message," which identifies *narratio* as part of the content of catechesis. There it refers to the three phases of *narratio*, Old Testament, New Testament and history of the Church, as three of the "seven foundation stones" of catechesis.<sup>14</sup> But at the same time, the *GDC* also seems to propose what it calls the "pedagogy of God" as the standard by which all methods are measured, rejecting any "presumed neutrality between method and content."<sup>15</sup> At several points the *GDC*

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<sup>13</sup> See *GDC* 148: "the Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method nor any single method."

<sup>14</sup> The question as to whether the third phase of *narratio*, referred to as "the history of the Church" at numbers 108, 130 and 240, and the "time of the Church at number 115" (that latter is closer to the Augustinian usage), is supposed to be a recitation of Church history will be treated in Chapter Three. See also number 107 which says, that "In the light of these ['saving events of the past'], she [the Church] interprets the present events of human history."

<sup>15</sup> *GDC* 148, 149. In marked contrast to this, the previous *GDC* of 1971 sights the difference between the "pedagogy used by God" and that used by the Church which is "a new one" (33). There and in number 38 the *GDC* draws a clear distinction between the two pedagogies. A point that will be evaluated more closely in Section 1 of Chapter I, should be mentioned here. Although the distinction between the divine and ecclesial pedagogies in the *GDC* is clear, the difference between the two suggests not so much a repudiation of the *method* (a historical

seems to suggest that the divine pedagogy, as a personal, progressive, historical work of formation through dramatic acts of God and the disclosure of the content of revelation, is properly paralleled by a human pedagogy which includes a recitation of that saving work by *narratio*.<sup>16</sup>

The question then arises, is *narratio* a pedagogical method or is it content? Is it perhaps, to borrow from Marshall McLuhan, an instance of the medium being the message, a moment where pedagogy and content function in a kind of symbiosis?<sup>17</sup> That is, if God has been revealed in a narrative mode in salvation history, then perhaps a

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disclosure) of the divine pedagogy in the catechesis of the Church, but rather that the *content* of the former, which consists of a veiled disclosure of the coming of Christ in figure and prophecy in the Old Testament, is expanded in the latter by the New Testament realization of these in Christ and the clarity gained over time by theological reflection and the development of doctrine. As we will see, this is meant to be a caveat against a purely biblical catechesis. But this issue of the distinction (and sometimes confusion) between a narrational method and content is precisely a central issue for this study.

<sup>16</sup> See *GDC* 107, 108, 129, 132, 141, 143, 144, 148, many of which will be explicated below.

<sup>17</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964, accessed on 4 February 2005). The famous dictum is often misunderstood to suggest a kind of identity between medium and content. McLuhan is saying something much subtler and those subtleties speak to the character of *narratio*, i.e., a medium can impart messages that extend beyond the obvious content which can make important changes in human societies that may not be immediately evident. The *narratio*, I hope to show, is not just an informational content, nor is it a mere medium by which a historical content is conveyed, but a transformational practice that works to incorporate persons into the shared faith of the Church. See Mark Federman, "What is the meaning of The Medium is the Message?"; available at [http://individual.utoronto.ca/markfederman/article\\_mediumisthemessage.htm](http://individual.utoronto.ca/markfederman/article_mediumisthemessage.htm).

narrative account of that revelation in catechesis will most closely comport with that divine mode, not merely with reference to the ordering of the *content* of revelation but with the very *method* of its disclosure. Further, if the salvation historical disclosure of revelation, the divine pedagogy, represents an instance of the divine accommodation (*synkatabasis*) to a fundamental human need to find a specifically temporal and communal place in the family of faith, then perhaps *narratio* represents also a catechetical imperative for formators in the faith to make a similar accommodation.

Might the *narratio* be not merely an important part of catechetical content but, at the same moment, the method best suited to the disclosure of that content, precisely because it functions to enable the person to whom it is addressed to be inserted into the divine/human story of salvation history, thereby becoming a participant in its unfolding in the ecclesial community? To ask the question in still another way, could it be that the *narratio* is not merely a content that *informs* but the method which works best to *transform* both the worldview and the self-understanding of the aspiring or neophyte Christian? It is this question of the full character and function of the *narratio* in Christian formation which this thesis will seek

to answer and upon which the proposal for its application in the modern catechetical setting will be based. It will be apparent by now that the aim of this study is to make the "obligation" laid down by the *GDC* to include the *narratio* in our catechesis not merely a juridical, but a theological, and even a rational imperative, by bringing to light its effectiveness as a content *and* as a method for the formation of persons and the Church.

## CHAPTER I

## THE CALL FOR A RENEWED CATECHETICAL NARRATIO

The first task of our study of *narratio* is to establish that the *GDC* does, in fact, assert the necessity of its employment in catechesis. That it does so will be shown, but in order to appreciate that seemingly innovative proposal by the *GDC* it is necessary to begin with a study of the immediate ecclesial context of the *Directory*.

**Section 1: The Magisterium Leading up to the GDC**

The 1971 *General Catechetical Directory (GCD)* was one of the "general directories governing the care of souls" mandated by *Christus Dominus (CD, Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, 28, October, 1965)* of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>18</sup> The revision of the 1971 *GCD* was

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<sup>18</sup> *CD 44, Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, ed., (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1975). "The sacred Synod further decrees that general directories concerning the care of souls be compiled for the use both of bishops and parish

necessitated by the subsequent publication of a number of documents of the Church's magisterium, not least of which was the publication in October 1992 of the first edition of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Although the *GCD* of 1971 was mandated by the Council, it struggled in the elaboration of some conciliar themes that wouldn't come to clearer definition in the magisterium of the Catholic Church until the publication of the 1997 *GDC*. If the 1971 *GCD*, with certain reservations that will be discussed later, can be called the directory of the Council, the 1997 *GDC* is clearly the directory of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Catechism* itself, however, was preceded by a number of important magisterial documents that set in motion an evolution in the Church's reflection upon the catechetical task, an evolution which can be seen to work out the implications of clear themes from the Second Vatican Council documents that didn't find a fully developed echo in the *GCD* of 1971.

The introduction to the 1997 *GDC* mentions a number of documents of the magisterium issued in the years between

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priests ...and also a directory for the catechetical instruction of the Christian people in which the fundamental principles of this instruction and its organization will be dealt with and the preparation of books relating to it. In the preparation of these directories due consideration should be given to the views expressed both by the commissions and by the Conciliar fathers." (All subsequent citations of the conciliar documents will be from the 1975 Flannery edition, unless otherwise indicated.)

the *General Catechetical Directory* and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1971-1997). The first, and perhaps most influential, as regards the 1997 *GDC* and its call for a renewal of the *narratio*, is the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (*RCIA*) issued by the Congregation for Divine Worship in January of 1972. The *GDC* refers to it as "especially useful for catechetical renewal."<sup>19</sup> As we will see, the *RCIA* has been the primary engine for the rethinking of catechetical praxis, shifting time, attention, and talent toward both adult education and a catechumenal model of parish catechesis for adults and children.<sup>20</sup> As we will also see, it is this revival of the rituals of initiation of the patristic age that will prompt a growing interest in, not just the rituals, but also the catechesis that accompanied them in the early Church.

*Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*), a post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Paul VI in 1975, stated in a brief, almost offhand remark, an important broadening of the concept of

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<sup>19</sup> *GDC* 3.

<sup>20</sup> The revival of the patristic model of initiation represented by the *RCIA* came at the direction of the Second Vatican Council in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (*SC*) 64, issued in December of 1963: "The catechumenate for adults, comprising several distinct steps, is to be restored and brought into use at the discretion of the local ordinary. By this means the time of the catechumenate, which is intended as a period of suitable instruction, may be sanctified by sacred rites to be celebrated at successive intervals of time." See also *Ad Gentes* (*AG*) 14.

the "catechumenalization" of catechesis to include not just those adults who are being initiated into full Christian life but those being catechized at any age.<sup>21</sup> The *GDC* also notes that *EN* provides "a particularly important principle, namely, that of catechesis as a work of evangelization in the context of the mission of the Church."<sup>22</sup> This was a vital shift in emphasis, especially as the Church was beginning to recognize herself as missionary by nature.<sup>23</sup> If the Church constitutes herself by her evangelical mission, and catechesis is enclosed in that work of mission, then catechesis will be seen as a constitutive,

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<sup>21</sup> *EN* 44, "Moreover, without neglecting in any way the training of children, one sees that present conditions render ever more urgent catechetical instructions, under the form of the catechumenate, for innumerable young people and adults who, touched by grace, discover little by little the face of Christ and feel the need of giving themselves to Him." Paul VI, *On Evangelization in the Modern World*, (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1975).

<sup>22</sup> *GDC* 4.

<sup>23</sup> *AG* 2. See Avery Dulles, "John Paul II and the New Evangelization - What Does it Mean?" in *John Paul II and the New Evangelization*, Ralph Martin and Peter Williamson, eds. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995) 26-27 on the special emphasis given to evangelization by the Second Vatican Council and the appropriation of that seminal theme in the pontificate of Paul VI, even to the point of taking the name "Paul" as an expression of the conciliar impulse. See also Thomas Groome where he notes the importance of this thematic shift in the Church's reflection at the time of the Second Vatican Council. Whereas, evangelization does not appear at all in the texts of Vatican I (1869-70), the word "evangelize" appears 18 times and the word "evangelization" 31 times in the texts of Vatican II. "Total Catechesis/Religious Education: A Vision for Now and Always," in *Horizons and Hopes: the Future of Religious Education*, Thomas Groome and Harold Horell, eds. (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2003) 3.



and not merely ancillary, part of the life of the Church.<sup>24</sup> Since the catechumenate served as an important instrument of the evangelization in the ancient world, its qualities and characteristics, including the catechetical *narratio*, would eventually figure in the *GDC*'s echo of Paul VI's earlier call for a "catechumenalization" of catechesis.<sup>25</sup>

The 1997 *GDC* says of *Catechesi Tradendae (CT)*, the first catechetical work of John Paul II issued in October of 1979, that it "forms a cohesive unity with *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and fully locates catechesis within the context of evangelization."<sup>26</sup> That *CT* is of a piece with *EN* in that particular regard is clear. John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation is a response, really a summation of the concerns of the General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops called by Paul VI in 1977 to consider the theme of catechesis as an extension of the Third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on evangelization in 1974. John Paul

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<sup>24</sup> Citing number 4 from the "Declaration of the Synod Fathers," Paul VI asserts in *EN* 14 that "'the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church.'" He goes on to assert that "Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize, that is to say, in order to preach and teach." See also *CT* 13 and *CCC* 7 where the connection between catechesis and the Church's "geographical extension and numerical growth" and "her inner growth" is made.

<sup>25</sup> *GDC* 59 and 68.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

II makes clear in his introduction that he is working not only with notes left by Paul VI but also with those prepared by his immediate and short-lived predecessor John Paul I.<sup>27</sup>

It is, of course, well known that John Paul II took up the evangelizing theme of Paul VI with great vigor, focusing primarily, though not exclusively, on the "New Evangelization" of those traditionally Christian peoples whose commitment to the faith has waned.<sup>28</sup> But John Paul II brought a different outlook to his pontificate than did Paul VI. This can be seen by an examination of the first and flagship encyclical of the fourteen that he penned during his long pontificate. Since the *GDC* is very much a product of the magisterium of John Paul II, it is worth giving a little space to an elaboration of this change in outlook as it is disclosed in *Redemptor Hominis* (*RH*) before advancing to an evaluation of the *GDC*. This will show that

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<sup>27</sup> John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, (Vatican: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1979) no. 4.

<sup>28</sup> In our concern for the New Evangelization, or the re-evangelization of Christian peoples, it is sometimes overlooked that John Paul II specifically appealed for a renewal of the mission *ad gentes*, to those who have not yet heard the Gospel, from which "the new evangelization of Christian peoples will find inspiration and support." *Redemptoris Missio* (*RM*) (Boston: St Paul Books and Media, 1990) 2. In support of this contention John Paul quotes, in the first footnote of *RM* his predecessor, Paul VI, from his "Message for World Mission Day" of 1972: "How many internal tensions, which weaken and divide certain local churches and institutions, would disappear before the firm conviction that the salvation of the local communities is procured through cooperation in work for the spread of the Gospel to the farthest bounds of the earth!" *RM* 2, n.1.

the concern for the Church's evangelizing, and so also catechetical, mission introduced near the end of the pontificate of Paul VI finds an even more elaborated emphasis in the pontificate of John Paul II.

John Paul II's New Outlook: The Relation between the Church

*Ad Extra and Ad Intra*

By way of background, papal documents are given titles based upon the *incipit*, the first words that appear in the Latin typical texts. Part of the art of these things is beginning with the very words that will serve a titular function for the whole document. (That is, of course, easier to do in Latin, which allows more flexibility in word order, than English.)

In the case of *Redemptor Hominis*, though, John Paul II chose words that he intended not merely to serve as the title of this particular document. As the first document (written in 1979) of a very prolific pontificate, the pope chose words that in some measure titled his whole papacy. The first words he addresses to the world are these: "The Redeemer of man, Jesus Christ, is the center of the

universe and of human history."<sup>29</sup> With the phrase *Redemptor hominis*, John Paul II announces that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, will be the very center of his pontificate.

But, we might ask, why is this even worth saying? Shouldn't it be assumed that any pope would make Jesus Christ the center of his attention and the impetus for his pastoral activity? The first hint of an answer to this question, why focus on the Redeemer, comes first in section four of the encyclical which has the rather perfunctory title "Reference to Paul VI's First Encyclical."

In that first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (His Church), as John Paul II notes, Paul VI laid out the program of his pontificate which, I think it can be fairly said, involved a continuation of the Second Vatican Council's emphasis on the Church's self-reflection in *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. John Paul II, with surprising candor, expresses his gratitude to Paul VI who "knew how to display *ad extra*, externally, the true countenance of the

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<sup>29</sup> John Paul II, *The Redeemer of Man* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1979) no. 1. For our purpose of examining the *narratio*, which is an ordered, catechetical account of salvation history, it is not just the first two words of that *incipit* which are important. The second part is significant too: "Jesus Christ, is the center of the universe and of human history." As we will see, that affirmation is the origin for the catechist's own faith understanding and the disclosure that he or she makes to the one being instructed and the end point of faith to which the *narratio* intends to bring him or her. See CCC 450.

Church, in spite of the various internal weaknesses that affected her in the post-conciliar period."<sup>30</sup>

In essence, Paul VI is to be admired, says the then new pontiff, for not allowing the internal strife of the Church to hamper the missionary apostolate of the Church more than it did. In reference to the rampant and sometimes rancorous internal criticism from which the Church suffered at the time, John Paul says, again, candidly,

While it is right that, in accordance with the example of her Master, who is "humble in heart", the Church also should have humility as her foundation, that she should have a critical sense with regard to all that goes to make up her human character and activity, and that she should always be very demanding on herself, nevertheless criticism too should have its limits. Otherwise it ceases to be constructive and does not reveal truth, love and thankfulness for the grace in which we become sharers principally and fully in and through the Church.<sup>31</sup>

The fuller part of an answer to the question of why the pope stresses *Redemptor* comes in number seven. Facing

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<sup>30</sup> RH 4.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

the pastoral task ahead, as well as raising the main theme of the encyclical, "the Mystery of the Redemption," John Paul II returns to the question of this new beginning, what he will now dub a "new advent" for the Church.

While the ways on which the Council of the century has set the Church going, ways indicated by the late Pope Paul VI in his first encyclical, will continue to be for a long time the ways that all of us must follow, we can at the same time rightly ask at this new stage: How, in what manner should we continue? What should we do in order that this new advent of the Church connected with the approaching end of the second millennium may bring us closer to him whom Sacred Scripture calls "Everlasting Father", *Pater futuri saeculi*?<sup>32</sup>

He answers his own question as follows:

To this question, dear Brothers, sons and daughters, a fundamental and essential response must be given. Our response must be: Our spirit is set in one direction, the only direction for our intellect, will and heart is - towards Christ our Redeemer, towards Christ, the Redeemer of man.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

With all tact, John Paul II is signaling a clear shift in focus. Just as Paul VI's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, His Church, signaled his concern for the Church, *Redemptor Hominis* signaled that John Paul II intended to shift focus off the inner constitution of the Church (and the internal criticism that that seems to have engendered) and toward Christ and the missionary mandate he issued to the Church.<sup>34</sup>

So, as John Paul II began his pontificate he was convinced that the Church must concern herself less with ecclesiology and more with missiology,<sup>35</sup> focus not on

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. "Through the Church's consciousness, which the Council considerably developed, through all the fields of activity in which the Church expresses, finds and confirms herself, we must constantly aim at Him "who is the head." It should be noted that this self-reflective and sometimes self-critical tendency in the Church during the reign of Paul VI about which John Paul II seems to be himself subtly critical should not be understood to be a wholesale indictment of the policies of the former pontiff. In this first encyclical John Paul speaks of Pope Paul with the greatest affection as "truly my father" and returns to the theme of gratitude toward him for the fact that, despite all the turmoil he faced, "he preserved at the time the providential balance of the bark's helmsman" (4). In a footnote attached to that last phrase he lists all of Paul VI's documents, the last being the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* which pointed the Church in just the direction of the need to regain her outward, missionary focus that John Paul II now endorses.

<sup>35</sup> Tracy Rowland makes a kindred point about John Paul's celebrated use of *GS 22* which asserts that "only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word does the mystery of man take on light," and which he calls in *RH 8* "the stupendous text." Rowland shows in chapter 2, "Gaudium et spes and the Importance of Christ," that John Paul II's choice to highlight the Christological anthropology of *GS 22* was intended to correct the secularizing, "extrinsicist" interpretation that some have proposed of the conciliar document, particularly highlighting *GS 36*, which asserts the "autonomy of earthly affairs." In brief, the point is that *GS* can suggest a picture of autonomous man that can leave one with the sense that religion is an even unnecessary add-on that the modern age can do without. John Paul II specifically

herself but on her Redeemer and the world to which she has been sent by that Redeemer:

The Church's consciousness must go with universal openness, in order that all may be able to find in her "the unsearchable riches of Christ" spoken of by the Apostle to the Gentiles. Such openness, organically joined with the awareness of her own nature and the certainty of her own truth, of which Christ said, "The word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me," is what gives the Church her apostolic, or in other words her missionary, dynamism"<sup>36</sup>

And as has already been noted, since that missionary dynamism, as had been asserted in Paul VI's *EN*, includes or encloses the catechetical apostolate, the Church is also, we could say, constituted by a catechetical dynamism, such that, John Paul can later say in *Catechesi Tradendae*, "Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life. Not only her geographical extension and numerical increase, but even more her inner growth and

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picks up on *GS 22* in his first encyclical (*RH*) to counter what Cardinal Ratzinger (now Benedict XVI) termed an almost pelagian, naturalist anthropology with a specifically Christocentric one. So, we could add, the Church must go out of herself to evangelize, not just because she is only properly herself when she does so, but because it is only by being brought into an explicit relation with Christ that men can fully become who they are, as well. Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 32-35.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.



correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on catechesis."<sup>37</sup>

This concern for a reassertion of the essentially missionary nature of the Church in the papal magisterium of John Paul II becomes the primary theme of the Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, issued in 1990 on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Second Vatican Council Decree *Ad Gentes*.<sup>38</sup> There, taking up the theme from 1 Corinthians 9:16: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!", John Paul calls for a reinvigoration of the missionary impulse. This same theme will comprise an important part of other Apostolic Exhortations aimed at particular vocations within the Church, such as *Familiaris Consortio (FC)* in 1981,<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *CT*, 13. In his essay, "The Ecclesiology of John Paul II," Avery Dulles notes that "The ecclesiology of John Paul II is deeply influenced by his anthropology, which depicts the human person as constituting itself through action." (He is here referring to the pope's philosophical work *The Acting Person*.) So the Church, like any person, must go out of herself (go to the world) to constitute herself. This, of course, has real implications for both the pastoral activity of John Paul II - his many journeys - and for his stress on the mission of the Church as constitutive of her. The quote can be found in Peter C. Phan, ed., *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook on Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O. S. B.* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000) 105.

<sup>38</sup> "The missionary thrust therefore belongs to the nature of the Christian life." John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1990) no. 1.

<sup>39</sup> "The Christian family's faith and evangelizing mission also possesses this catholic missionary inspiration. . . . and makes Christian married couples and parents witnesses of Christ 'to the end of the earth,' missionaries, in the true and proper sense, of love and life." John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (Boston: St. Paul Media and Books, 1981) no. 54.

*Christifideles Laici* (CL) in 1988<sup>40</sup> and *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (PDV) in 1992.<sup>41</sup>

So this whole concern in the pontificate of John Paul II with Christ, first considered as *Redemptor* at the center of human history (as in *Redemptor Hominis* of 1979) and then as the source of the Church's *missio* (as in *Redemptoris Missio* of 1990) is an elaborated expression of the principle, already outlined, that in order for the Church to be herself, to be constituted as the Church, she must go out of herself in the work of evangelization and catechesis. It is this principle, inherited from Paul VI,<sup>42</sup> and yet not fully elaborated or exercised in his pontificate, which becomes both the centerpiece of the pontificate of John Paul II and the crux of the admiring, yet subtly critical assessment of the previous pontificate that we noted above from number seven of *Redemptor Hominis*. And, of course, this christocentric missiological

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<sup>40</sup> Here, with regard to the part the laity is to play in the Church's work of mission, John Paul II speaks of a "particular urgency" and asserts in the strongest terms, "It is not permissible for anyone to remain idle." John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1988) no. 3.

<sup>41</sup> After citing a statement on the ecclesiology of communion from CL 8, PDV goes on to note, "It is within the Church's mystery, as a mystery of Trinitarian communion in missionary tension, that every Christian identity is revealed, and likewise the specific identity of the priest and his ministry." John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (Boston: St. Paul Books and Media, 1992) no. 12.

<sup>42</sup> See note 24, above.

ecclesiology<sup>43</sup> becomes a guiding principle in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, issued in October of 1979, and the now famous dictum of *Redemptoris Missio* in 1990: "I sense that the moment has come to commit all the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*."<sup>44</sup>

What we see in the papal magisteria of Paul VI and John Paul II is a steadily growing realization of the essentially missionary or evangelistic character of the Church. Added to this is the insertion of catechesis within the broader category of evangelization, and, finally, the still tentative but growing insistence on what may be called the catechumenalization of catechesis.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Apologies for the clumsiness of the term, which has to say too much. See further, John Seward, *Christ is the Answer: The Christ-Centered Teaching of Pope John Paul II* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark and Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1995) especially chapters 8 and 12 on John Paul's ecclesiology and his missiology, respectively.

<sup>44</sup> RM 3.

<sup>45</sup> Although *CT* had a mandate to consider "Catechesis in our time, with special reference to the catechesis of young people" (35) and so less so to adults, leading, perhaps, to a neglect of a fuller elaboration of a fuller application of the catechumenate than might have otherwise have been the case, in number 45 John Paul II asserts that there should not be "watertight compartments" between the catechesis of the various ages and, in fact, "there should be no break between them," going on to say that they have a "perfect complementarity." *EN* 44 had already referred to the catechumenate as universal. *CL* 61 notes that "The Synod Fathers have said that a post-baptismal catechumenate can also be helpful, and at number 34 that "the hour has come for a re-evangelization."

This latter development, which is the logical outgrowth of the growing stress on evangelization, aims at harnessing the methodology of the first wave of the Church's evangelization effort in the Greco-Roman world of its foundation. These magisterial developments, which give catechesis a central place in a New Evangelization, "one that is new not in content but in its ardor, new in its methods, and new in its means of expression,"<sup>46</sup> prepare for the treatment of catechesis in both the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the *General Directory for Catechesis*.

As was noted above, the immediate impulse for the revision of the 1971 *GCD* was the publication in 1992 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Final Report of the Second Extraordinary Synod of 1985 had included a suggestion that "a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed, that it might be, as it were, a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in the various regions."<sup>47</sup> Much of the reflection on evangelization and

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<sup>46</sup> John Paul II to Bishops of Latin America (CELAM March 9, 1983), III, AAS 75 (1983) 778.

<sup>47</sup> Synod of Bishops, Final Report, *Ecclesia sub verbo Dei mysteria Christi celebrans pro salute mundi* (Vatican City, 1985, accessed 6 May 2007); available at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/CURIA/SYNFINAL.HTM>.

catechesis in the Magisterium, as just reviewed, found a place in both the content and form of the *CCC*. A brief consideration of the *CCC* as both an expression of the development in the conception of catechesis as fundamentally evangelistic - and so rightly catechumenal and narrational - and also as the root of the call for the revival of the *narratio* in the *GDC* will have to wait for the fourth chapter of this study when I will suggest that the *Catechism* expresses much of its content in a narrational form.

## Section 2: The Call of the GDC

Having briefly reviewed the sixteen-year papal magisterium highlighting the place of catechesis within the larger conceptual frame of the missionary nature of the Church in the immediate run up to the issuance of the *GDC* in 1997, we are nearly ready to turn our attention to the content of that document and its statements about the catechetical *narratio*. But to appreciate the originality of its call for the reinstatement of the catechetical *narratio* we will also have to compare it to its immediate predecessor, the *GCD* of 1971. The following side-by-side table serves as a visual reference for what follows.

<p><b>GDC (1997):</b></p> <p>Intro: Preaching the Gospel in the contemp world (15-29)</p> <p>Part One: Catech in the Church's Mission of Evangl (33-4)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Revelation (35-52)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Catechesis in the process of Evang (55-68)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 3 Nature, Object &amp; Duties of Catech (69-82)</p> <p>Part Two: The Gospel Message (87)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Norms &amp; Criteria for pre the Gospel (89-112)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 This is our faith(CCC and the GDC) (114-132)</p> <p>Part Three: The Pedagogy of the Faith (135-6)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Pedagogy of God, Source &amp; Model (137-43)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Elements of Methodology (145-53)</p> <p>Part Four: Those to be Catechized (157-8)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Adaptation to those, Gen'l Aspects (161-2)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Cat according to age (165-78)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 3 Catech for special situations (179-80)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 4 Catech in socio- religious context (183-8)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 5 Catech in socio-cultural context (191-8)</p> <p>Part Five: Catech in the Particular Church (203)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 The Ministry in the Part Churches (205-17)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Formation (219-33)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 3 Loci and Means (235-43)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 4 The Org of Catech in Part Churches (245-58)</p> <p>Conclusion: (261ff)</p>	<p><b>GCD (1971):</b></p> <p>Part One: The Reality of the Problem</p> <p>Part Two: The Ministry of the Word</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Min of Word of Revelation (13-17)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Catech in the Past Mission (19-27)</p> <p>Part Three: The Christian Message</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Norms or Criteria (31-36)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Outstanding Elements (38-54)</p> <p>Part Four: Elements of Methodology (56-60)</p> <p>Part Five: Catech according to Age (62-74)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">[21 headings]</p> <p>Part Six: Pastoral Action in the Ministry of the Word</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 1 Analysis of the Situation (78-9)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 2 Pgm of Action (80-1)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 3 Catechetical Formation (83-6)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 4 Catechetical Aids (88-91)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 5 Org for Catechesis (92-3)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 6 Coord of Pastoral Cat w/ all Past Work (94)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 7 Necessity of Promoting Scientific Study (95)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Chap 8 Int'l Coop &amp; Relations with the Holy See (96-7)</p> <p>Addendum: (On First Sacraments) (98-100)</p>
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## Issues of Tone

The 1997 *GDC*, is a much expanded revision of the 1971 *GCD*, based upon the intervening years of magisterial teaching outlined above. While the earlier *GCD* was just shy of one hundred pages in length, the later *GDC* is well over two hundred and fifty pages, surpassing the length of the older directory by almost 25,000 words. Both are broken down into six major parts treating similar topics.<sup>48</sup>

The first thing one notices about the two documents is the difference in tone. The 1971 *GCD* was decidedly negative in its assessment of the state of the world. Its first part is titled "The Reality of the Problem" and that is largely the way this document sees the modern world, as a problem. Referring to "serious aberrations" joined with modern progress, the *GCD* makes reference to the challenges of pluralism; the distractions from faith presented by a civilization that has lost its traditional moorings and become "scientific, technical, industrial and urban;"<sup>49</sup> the threats of secularization; religious indifferentism;

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<sup>48</sup> For a comparison of the two directories, see Cyril de Souza, "The New Emphases in the General Directory for Catechesis," *The Sower* 20, no. 3 (April 1999): 5-8.

<sup>49</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, Congregation for the Clergy (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1971) 4, 5.

atheism and "a new form of paganism."<sup>50</sup> "The question now," says the *GCD*, "is not one of merely preserving traditional religious customs, but rather one of also fostering an appropriate re-evangelization of men, obtaining their re-conversion, and giving them a deeper and more mature education in the faith."<sup>51</sup> It then goes on to lament certain vague "impediments" which have frustrated this work of re-evangelization.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, the introduction to the *GDC* is titled "Preaching the Gospel in the contemporary world" and takes its theme from the parable of the sower from Mark's Gospel, chapter 4. While honestly assessing the variety of soils into which the seed of the word of God will be scattered, the evaluation of the "field that is the world" is based upon the positive contribution the Gospel can make in spurring Christians "'to the cause of justice' and to a 'preferential option or love of the poor,'"<sup>53</sup> rather than to the "aberrations" of modern life. While recognizing that science and technology are "incapable of explaining everything," the *GDC* recalls that *Gaudium et Spes*

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 6, 7.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>53</sup> *GDC* 17.



underlines their importance "for the birth and development of modern culture." Rather than denigrating modern culture, it notes that "Scientists themselves acknowledge that the rigor of experimental method must be complemented by some other method of knowing" and points out that "together with this 'more universal form of culture,' there is a growing desire to esteem anew autochthonous cultures."<sup>54</sup>

### **Issues of Catechetical Content**

Generally speaking, that more generous evaluation of the field of the world which encourages a "theological reading of modern problems"<sup>55</sup> rather than condemnations is accompanied by a more fulsome evaluation of the fundamental theological underpinnings of catechesis and evangelization in the *GDC*. This is perhaps clearest in a comparison of Part Two, "The Gospel Message," in the *GDC* with its counterpart in the *GCD*, Part Three, "The Christian Message." Both of these sections of the two directories are aimed at a brief elaboration of the *fides quae*, the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 20, 21.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 16, quoting John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 35.

content of the faith, and the norms which govern its disclosure in catechesis. Both of the two directories, following the lead of *Dei Verbum*, the Second Vatican Council Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, emphasize that God reveals himself in a saving economy of "deeds and words," in a saving history which culminates in Christ.<sup>56</sup> But in the older *GCD* after an elaboration of those criteria of revelation in Chapter 1 of this part, the presentation in Chapter 2 consists largely of a doctrinal summary highlighting the "more outstanding elements of the Christian message."<sup>57</sup> In the newer *GDC*, however, the parallel chapter to the *GCD*, entitled "This is our faith, this is the faith of the Church," points not so much to content as to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

One might first think that the newer *GDC* need not use a similar content sort of approach, since it can simply point to the *CCC* as the reference for such content.<sup>58</sup> If

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<sup>56</sup> See *DV* 2: "This economy of Revelation is realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other. As a result, the works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain. The most intimate truth which this revelation gives us about God and the salvation of man shines forth in Christ, who is himself both the mediator and the sum total of Revelation."

<sup>57</sup> *GCD* 47-69.

<sup>58</sup> Leonard Blair, Bishop of Toledo, writing at the time of the release of the *National Directory for Catechesis* of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2005, exemplifies this position:

this were the case, the comparison between the *GCD* and *GDC* would be inapt. But upon further inspection, the two sections are both eighteen pages in length; the *GCD* chapter has more words (6,847) in comparison with the *GDC* chapter (4,949), but certainly not so few as to suggest that it is merely pointing to the *CCC* as a repository of doctrine that it need not repeat. As we have already stated, the *GDC* is inarguably the directory of the *Catechism*, but in pointing here to the *CCC* it doesn't do so as if to say, "There's the doctrinal content, if you want to look." While this chapter does, in its first paragraphs, reiterate the assertions of *Fidei Depositum* (*FD*), the Apostolic Constitution that presented the *CCC*, in noting that it is "a sure norm for teaching the faith," "a sure and authentic reference text" and "comprehensive synthesis of the faith,"<sup>59</sup> it thereafter specifically relates the structure, themes, literary genre and sources of the *CCC* (Scripture, Tradition and catechetical traditions), which is to say,

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"Back in 1971 the *General Catechetical Directory* had combined in one text the principles of catechetical methodology and the guidelines for catechetical content. Twenty years later the revised *General Directory for Catechesis* of 1997 focuses only on methodology because the already published *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is meant to be the touchstone of catechetical content. The two volumes are to be used hand-in-hand." Available at <http://www.usccb.org/education/ndc/blaireng.shtml>; accessed 7 September 2009.

<sup>59</sup> *GDC* 121, quoting in part, *FD* 3, published with the *CCC*.

its *mode or method* of presenting the content of the faith, to that content.<sup>60</sup>

### **The relation of content to method and the aim of catechesis**

This is a vital point to this study. The *GDC*, like the *CCC* it follows, presents the content of the faith as intimately bound up with the structure and method of its disclosure. In so doing, it is opposing what it calls in its introduction "a content-method dualism" that undervalues "that pedagogy which is proper to the faith" and which may tend toward a "reductionism to one or the other" (content or method).<sup>61</sup> While stopping short of saying that the older *GCD* is an instance of just such a dualism, I would say that it doesn't see so clearly the interrelation of content and method as does the *GDC* and, as

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-130. The paragraphs that follow (nos. 131-136) address the application of the *CCC* to the development of local catechisms, but even here the concern is for retaining "a 'symphony' of faith, a symphony inherent above all in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*" (136). In this regard the *GDC* says specifically, "the catechism...always reflects a certain catechetical inspiration and must always make apparent, in its own way, the divine pedagogy" (132) and, "a catechism must be faithful to the deposit of faith in its *method* of expressing the doctrinal substance of the Christian message" (135, emphasis added). The last chapter of this study will show that the *CCC's* method of disclosure of the content of the faith says something very specific about that content and even essential to it: the faith is not merely a set of propositions, but is "believed, celebrated, lived and prayed" (*GDC* 122).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

a consequence, places the larger part of its emphasis on catechetical content.<sup>62</sup>

The reason for this difference in outlook can be found in the aims of catechesis as expressed in the two directories. In Chapter 1 of Part Three on the "The Christian Message" of the older *GCD* the goal of catechesis "is to present the entire content" of the faith.<sup>63</sup> One couldn't ask for a clearer assertion of the centrality of a content-based catechesis. But the reason for that aim is made clearer if we look at number 21 which defines catechesis as "that form of ecclesial action which leads both communities and individual members to maturity of faith." What constitutes "maturity of faith" is then made clear in 24 where we find that "a person mature in faith knows the mystery of salvation revealed in Christ" and that "catechesis should contribute to the gradual grasping of the whole truth about the divine plan." Maturity of faith is the primary theme of Chapter 2 of Part Two of the *GCD* outlining the "nature, purpose [and] efficacy" of catechesis. If that maturity is, at least in large part, dependent upon a sufficient grasp of the content of revelation (an assertion which on its own terms is entirely

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<sup>62</sup> Chapter 2 of Part Three is the longest portion of the *GCD* encompassing 17 pages in the USCC 1971 edition.

<sup>63</sup> *GCD* 38, see title and following.

true), then the mode of revelation and the method of catechesis may not be so important.<sup>64</sup> That kind of assessment of the aims of catechesis would naturally lead to a greater stress on the content of revelation, such as we see in the *GCD*.

The newer *GDC*, however, says that "The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ."<sup>65</sup> This personal relationship is precisely tied to the manner of God's self disclosure in history, which is personal,<sup>66</sup> and calls for a total personal response, not merely a noetic one: "The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to his person and the decision to walk in his footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making of oneself a disciple of him."<sup>67</sup> In the *GDC*, then, faith is an appropriate personal response to a personal revelation on the part of

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<sup>64</sup> The theme of "maturity of faith" is not taken to be entirely a cognitive trait ordered to the *fides quae*. For example, in *GCD* 26 we read: "A person mature in the faith is able to recognize in various circumstances and encounters with his fellowman the invitation of God whereby he is called to work toward the fulfillment of the divine plan of salvation."

<sup>65</sup> *GDC* 80, quoting *CT* 5, see also *GDC* 30, 41, 53, 98 and 116.

<sup>66</sup> *GCD* 37 asserts the same: "Revelation....takes place through a personal communication from God to man." *GDC* 36, citing *Dei Verbum* (*DV*), "describes Revelation as that act by which God manifests himself personally to man."

<sup>67</sup> *GDC* 53

God, and so the personal *quality* of the *fides qua*<sup>68</sup> is ordered to, or consistent with the personal *quality* of the *fides quae*,<sup>69</sup> which is not conceived of merely as a content, but as the whole history of God's personal self-disclosure.

A catechesis appropriate to the personal *quality* of the act of faith which it invites must likewise be conformed to the personal *quality* of the revelation upon which that act of faith will be exercised.<sup>70</sup> And so for the *GDC*, unlike the earlier *GCD*, catechesis must follow closely the "divine pedagogy" expressed in revelation, because a properly personal act of faith is only possible in response to a personal revelation on the part of God.<sup>71</sup> And so the catechesis which rehearses that revelation cannot be just a content which, once appropriated, brings one to the maturity of faith. (Again, it is not a mere content to

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<sup>68</sup> Speaking about this "personal character of faith," Joseph Ratzinger notes that "Faith is an orientation of our existence as a whole." *Gospel, Catechesis and Catechism: Sidelights on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997) 25.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 "[T]he *Catechism* displays the act of faith and the content of faith in their indivisible unity."

<sup>70</sup> See *GDC* 24 which asserts that faith "as an adherence...to God who reveals himself" (*fides qua creditur*) and "as the content of Revelation" (*fides quae creditur*) "by their very nature cannot be separated."

<sup>71</sup> See *Dei Verbum* 5: "'The obedience of faith' (Rom. 16:26; cf. Rom 1:5; Cor. 10:5-6) must be given to God as he reveals himself. By faith man freely commits his entire self to God, making 'the full submission of his intellect and will to God who reveals,' and willingly assenting to the Revelation given by him." It should be noted that the term "personal" isn't employed to suggest that revelation is other than "public." God's revelation is personal *and* public and our personal response in faith is made with reference to public revelation.

which we assent in faith, according to the *GDC*, but a person.)<sup>72</sup> Our catechesis, our method, our pedagogy, must comport with God's in order to evoke the proper faith response.

### **Issue of Method in the *GCD***

On questions of method, the *GCD* is not silent, but does take up such issues in Part Four under the title "Principles of Methodology." It should be noted that "the earlier directory was developed at a time when catechists thoroughly examined the methodological problems regarding the methods of catechesis, as they were posed by the psychological, educational and pedagogical sciences."<sup>73</sup> And so the *GCD* values and encourages the appropriation of the insights of educational research, while leaving the specific application of these methodological insights to the "various directories" of individual countries.<sup>74</sup> This

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<sup>72</sup> There is, of course, a content to which we assent, but the life of faith is, as we will see in the *CCC*, precisely a *life* of believing, worshiping and acting in charity. See *GDC* 51 "Those who are moved by grace to decide to follow Jesus are 'introduced into the life of faith, of the liturgy and of the charity of the People of God.'" (quoting *AG* 14).

<sup>73</sup> de Souza, "New Emphases," *Sower* 20, no 3: 7.

<sup>74</sup> *GCD* 70.



treatment of methodology in the *GCD* is decidedly non-theological and in marked contrast to the methodology employed in the *GDC*, to which we now turn in detail.

"Pedagogy of God, Source and Model of the Pedagogy of the Faith."<sup>75</sup>

### **Discontinuity in the *GCD* to *Concursus* in the *GDC***

So what, according to the *GDC*, is the method suited to evoking this personal response of faith that the *GDC* describes? As we will see, the primary pedagogical point of reference for the *GDC* is the divine pedagogy.

God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses human events and words to communicate his plan; he does so progressively and in stages, so as to draw even closer

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<sup>75</sup> *GDC*, title of Chapter I of Part III. The citations made in the footnote to this chapter title (n.1) represent the genealogy of the theme of the divine pedagogy. They include *DV* 15, which affirms the deliberate ordering of the Old Testament economy for the preparation of Christ's coming; *GCD* 33 which uses the phrase "God used pedagogy" with reference to the same theme of prophetic preparation of the advent of Christ as suggested by *DV* 15, but then goes on to suggest, as has already been noted, a clear difference between the divine and the catechetical pedagogies, a point just the opposite of the one being made here by the *GDC*; *CT* 58, which is probably the root text for the *GDC*'s collocation of the divine pedagogy and the catechetical "pedagogy of faith," where John Paul II asserts that "God himself used a pedagogy that must continue to be a model for the pedagogy of faith;" *CL* 61 which highlights that "God is the first and great teacher of his People;" and then a series of paragraph citations from the *CCC* which will be the subject of consideration in Chapter V.

to man. God, in fact, operates in such a manner that man comes to knowledge of his salvific plan by means of the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them.<sup>76</sup>

The reference to "events and words" is drawn from *Dei Verbum* 2 which speaks of revelation as "realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other." In describing the interplay between the deeds and words of the economy *DV* goes on to say, "as a result, the works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain." It is important to note that *DV* is asserting that revelation is not a merely verbal phenomenon, but salvation historical, as well.<sup>77</sup> The events and words are mutually interpretive.

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<sup>76</sup> *GDC* 38.

<sup>77</sup> The significance of this assertion is, of course, not confined to catechetics. It is a bedrock principle for a specifically Catholic fundamental theology and responds to the sundering of word and event that we see both in Francisco Suarez in the 16th and in Rudolph Bultmann in the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Whereas Suarez tended to stress the propositional/verbal quality of revelation and faith so as to objectify the *fides quae* (and so also the *fides qua*) to the detriment of the historical event, Bultmann stressed the proclamational word and the ultimately noumenal quality of the historical event so as to subjectivize the *fides qua*. See Bultmann's *Kerygma and Myth* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1961). See also Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987) 185 ff. where he argues that the *actio* of God is antecedent to the *verbum* which yields the "sacramental principle" in which God's word is received in "words and signs," as a

The history is even said to "bear out the doctrine." So that even that which most often is conceived of as primarily verbal or propositional, that is the doctrine, is shown to properly percolate up out of the history of salvation. And even the words of revelation - again, most often considered to be the bearers of doctrinal content - are described as proclaiming and bringing to light the mystery behind the events.

The *GDC* likewise asserts the necessarily "historical character of the mystery of salvation."<sup>78</sup> "The salvation of the person, which is the ultimate purpose of Revelation, is shown as a fruit of an original and efficacious 'pedagogy of God' throughout history."<sup>79</sup> And here we see, again, that the reason for that temporal, historical quality of the divine pedagogy is that it is personal.

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middle way between the two false antitheses of the late scholastics (metaphysics vs. salvation history) and Bultmann's existential formalism and the politicaltheologies it spawned (salvation history vs. eschatology). See also Tracey Rowland's incisive recounting of the origins of *DV 2* as a response to the word/event dualism of Suarez and as an attempt to recover the participatory faith of the classical Thomist position which it distorted, in *Ratzinger's Faith* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) 48-52. Cf. CCC #53 which quotes *DV 2*, calling the interplay of "deeds and words" in the "plan of Revelation" "a specific divine pedagogy."

<sup>78</sup> *GDC* 107, title. "The 'economy of Salvation' has thus an historical character as it is realized in time:...'in time past it began, made progress, and in Christ reached its highest point; in the present time it displays its force and awaits its consummation in the future" (citing, *GCD* 44, emphasis in original).

<sup>79</sup> *GDC* 139.

In number 139 the *GDC* returns over and over to the term "person" to show that the divine pedagogy is an accommodation to the needs of human persons in order to invite them to a personal relationship with God, such that God "assumes the character of the person," "liberates the person," "causes the person to grow." "To this end," the *GDC* states, "as a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations."<sup>80</sup> The *GDC* concludes, "Truly, to help a person to encounter God, which is the task of the catechist, means to emphasize above all the relationship that the person has with God so that he can make it his own and allow himself to be guided by God."<sup>81</sup>

It is important to note, before advancing, that the stress laid in the *GDC* upon both the historical character of revelation and the personal relationship that a proper faith response evokes, does not preclude the evaluation of revelation in a propositional mode. The careful pairing of "word" and "event," both in the source texts from *DV* and in their deployment in the *GDC* guard against the overly subjective conception of revelation that follows upon the

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

loss of propositional content.<sup>82</sup> As was quoted above, the *GDC* faithfully echoes *DV 2* in stressing that deeds or events and the words that relate and explicate them "are intrinsically bound up with each other."

So, we could conclude, the divine pedagogy (in word and deed) is gradual and historical as an accommodation to persons who live and act in history. In the *GDC* the central paradigm for discerning the divine pedagogy is Christ himself "who determines catechesis as 'a pedagogy of the incarnation.'"<sup>83</sup> Christ is "the center of salvation history....the final event toward which all salvation history converges."<sup>84</sup> It is in Christ's incarnation that the pedagogy of God as a carefully ordered series of words and deeds in the economy of salvation comes to be known in its fullness. His advent gives intelligibility to the events of the Old Testament economy and so "The catechetical message helps the Christian to locate himself

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<sup>82</sup> On the importance of a propositional revelation to the Church's apostolicity and indefectibility and so also the necessary primacy of the catechetical over the theological order in the ministry of the Word, see Eugene Kevane, "Apostolicity, Indefectibility and Catechesis," *Divinitas, Pontificae Academiae Theologicae Romanae Commentarii*, Rome (September 1985): 207-233. And see also the three articles on related issues by Karl Lehmann, "The catechism: a means of transmitting the faith" 4-9; Joseph Ratzinger, "Sources and transmission of the faith, 17-34; and Hans Urs von Balthasar "Should faith or theology be the basis of catechesis?" 10-16, all in *Communio* (Spring 1983).

<sup>83</sup> *GDC* 143

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 98

in history and to insert himself into it, by showing that Christ is the ultimate meaning of this history."<sup>85</sup> The centrality of Christ as the fulfillment and continuation of the pedagogy of God is shown in the first chapter of Part Three, "The pedagogy of the faith." There, after asserting Jesus as the "one Master," in accord with Matthew 23:10, the *GDC* notes that by uniting his action with "Jesus the Teacher," the catechist is joined to the "mysterious action of the grace of God," and so also to the "original pedagogy of the faith."<sup>86</sup>

In so saying, the *GDC* makes clear that the divine or original pedagogy and the work of the catechist can be expressed in a concursus, that they can function together, and need not be radically distinguished to the point of separation, as the 1971 *GCD* had suggested at number 33.

It is here that we find the most marked differences between the two directories. While the *GDC* wants to highlight the joining of the divine and human pedagogies, the older *GCD* tends to highlight the distinction between them. The 1971 *GCD* wants to highlight that the historical revelation, in prophecy and figure and which finds its fulfillment in Christ, should yield to an ecclesial

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 138, citing *CT* 58.

pedagogy which begins with simple, "summary formulas."<sup>87</sup> In fairness to the GCD, its concern is not so much to ensure an exclusively propositional catechesis, as to avoid a purely biblical catechesis which does not give ample treatment to Church Tradition. That is made clear at *GCD* 38 where the presentation of the "entire treasure of the Christian message" is described as properly given "according to the example of the divine pedagogy (cf. n.33)," but also by giving the People of God "the full store of revelation."

Although the divine pedagogy is clearly honored in that phrase, the suggestion is that traditional, simple formulae must be added for a full catechesis. What that would further suggest, although, we could assume, unintentionally, is that something is lacking to the divine pedagogy that must be rectified by the Church! Once again, while apparently intending only to forestall a non-propositional and purely biblical catechesis, the *GCD* ends up by making perhaps too great a distinction between the divine and ecclesial pedagogies and subtly favoring a formulaic catechesis.

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<sup>87</sup> *GCD* 33. See also 38: "Catechesis begins, therefore, with a rather simple presentation of the entire structure of the Christian message (using also summary or global formulas), and it presents this in a way appropriate to the various cultural and spiritual conditions of those to be taught."

The *GDC*, on the other hand, sees so great a concurrence of the two pedagogies that it can say that "the Church actualizes the 'divine pedagogy'" in local catechisms<sup>88</sup> or that a "divine education" is "received by way of catechesis," so long as the action of the Holy Spirit is received by "teachers of the faith...who are convinced and faithful disciples of Christ and his Church."<sup>89</sup> At number 143 catechesis is said to be "radically inspired by the pedagogy of God." And at 144 that "the wonderful dialogue that God undertakes with every person becomes its inspiration and norm, and goes on to assert that, of this dialogue with God, "Catechesis becomes an untiring echo."<sup>90</sup> At number 141 the *GDC* goes so far as to say that the Church's mission itself is "a visible and actual continuation of the pedagogy of the Father and the Son."

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<sup>88</sup> *GDC* 131.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>90</sup> The *GDC* is here quoting from number 11 of the *Message to the People of God (MPD)*, the document from the 1977 Synod of Bishops, and also cites *CT* 58 by John Paul II, which it inspired.



### **The Link between the Divine and Ecclesial Pedagogies**

As early as numbers 38 and 39 the *GDC* makes clear this kind of connection between the divine pedagogy and catechesis. "God...uses a pedagogy" of "human events and words," employing "the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them" to disclose himself and his plan.<sup>91</sup> Evangelization and the catechetical moment within it are, likewise, to transmit the words and deeds of Revelation. "Catechesis, for its part...is obliged to proclaim and narrate them and, at the same time, to make clear the profound mysteries they contain."<sup>92</sup>

The question remains, where is the connection between the divine pedagogy and ecclesial catechetical pedagogy? How does the *GDC* arrive at the obligation, the catechetical imperative to "proclaim and narrate" the words and deeds of salvation history and their mysteries? What warrant is there for this close association of the divine and human pedagogies which stands in marked contrast to its 1971 precursor? Where does it draw its inspiration in insisting

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 39.

that we ought not to "oppose them and separate them,"<sup>93</sup> and that, rather, catechesis must be "radically inspired by the pedagogy of God?"<sup>94</sup>

While the *GDC* affirms that the whole "history of catechesis" or "tradition of catechisms" is to be affirmed and rightly enters into "the memory of the community and the praxis of the catechist,"<sup>95</sup> it lays special emphasis upon the "wealth of patristic tradition" and the catechumenal model that arose from it. We've already seen that the mandate for a renewed use of the catechumenate came from *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 64. We've also noted that the promulgation and use of the RCIA, as the response to that conciliar mandate, served as the impetus for a renewed emphasis upon evangelization and the catechumenalization of all catechesis, which finds its mature expression in numbers 59 and 68 of the *GDC*.<sup>96</sup>

It is in number 129, in a similar move of uniting the ecclesial and divine pedagogies to the ones we have already seen, that we find a clear sign of the link between the two

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 130 and 143.

<sup>96</sup> See *GDC* 90, "Given that the *missio ad gentes* is the paradigm of all the Church's missionary activity, the baptismal catechumenate, which is joined to it, is the model of its catechizing activity."

pedagogies as well as the signal importance of *narratio*. There we read that "the fathers model the catechumenate on the divine pedagogy." That paragraph goes on to say that in that age the catechumenal process of those approaching Baptism was likened to the "journey" of the people of Israel. For that reason, then, "the content of catechesis" was organized "in accordance with the stages of the process" such that, "in patristic catechesis a primary role is devoted to the *narration* of the history of salvation" (emphasis in original).

In the next paragraph, 130, that patterned imitation of the divine pedagogy represented by the "patristic tradition" along with that which the GDC calls the "tradition of catechisms," yields the "seven basic elements" or "foundation stones" of the "actual catechesis of the Church." These are "the three phases in the narration of the history of salvation" and "the four pillars" (Creed, Sacraments, Decalogue, and the Our Father).<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 130.

### **Patristic pedagogy, the methodological middle term**

In describing patristic catechesis, the GDC makes clear the resemblance it carries to the divine pedagogy, such that it is an instance of the proper pedagogy of faith that the *GDC* enjoins for modern ecclesial catechesis. What I am suggesting is that the patristic pedagogy, which is treated in Part Two of the *GDC* on "The Gospel Message," (particularly at numbers 129 and 130) stands in the place of a methodological middle term or bridge between its treatment of the divine pedagogy, described at number 139, and that of the proper pedagogy of the Church - what the *GDC* says at number 144 should be an expression of the "original pedagogy of faith."<sup>98</sup> This will need a little explanation.

It's important to note that these latter citations (from 139 and 144) come from Part Three of the *GDC* on "The Pedagogy of Faith." That is, the *GDC* separates its

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<sup>98</sup> It's unclear from the context how the *GDC* intends that phrase to be understood, since it could either refer to an association between ecclesial catechesis and the divine pedagogy or between ecclesial catechesis and that of the early Church. Either could be considered the "original," or initial pedagogy in a particular sense. The origin and proper understanding of this vital term is provided in *CT* 58 where John Paul II makes a distinction between "the science of education" and the "original pedagogy of faith." He holds that the "absolute" and "irreducible" *originality* of Christian faith calls for a pedagogy of an equally original character, patterned on the pedagogy of God himself. So, "original" has more the meaning of peculiar to the faith than temporally prior, although God's pedagogy, it should be noted, is also that.

treatment of the patristic pedagogy (which includes *narratio*) and the divine and ecclesial pedagogies. The patristic is treated under the heading ("The Gospel Message") which might more generally be considered content, and the divine and ecclesial pedagogies under the rubric "The Pedagogy of Faith," which could be considered as nearly synonymous with method.

That separation gives rise to a possible confusion about whether the patristic *narratio* is content or method or something of both. Although it is called "pedagogy," suggesting it is an educational methodology, it is placed in the chapter on content. That fact points toward the central concern of this thesis.

An examination of the way that the *GDC* treats the patristic pedagogy as a bridge, or what I have called a methodological middle term, between the divine and ecclesial pedagogies in Part Three on pedagogical method suggests that the *GDC* is saying *implicitly* that the patristic catechumenal pedagogy, which is also fundamentally narrational in character, is to be valued and imitated both for its content and methodological advantages.

That is particularly evident at number 129, already cited above, where, under the general heading of content

("The Gospel Message") and just before the mention of the "primary role" of the catechetical narration, the staged character of the catechumenal process, which was modeled on the historical "journey" of Israel (the original historical manifestation of the methodological pedagogy of God), required an "organization of the content of catechesis in accordance with the stages of that process." To put it more simply, the *GDC* seems to be saying that in the patristic pedagogy, content, including the historical narration, is dictated by the historical *methodology* of God. Still more succinctly, the patristic content must be historical because the divine methodology is historical.

As we will see in just a moment and still further in Chapter II, this close association between the divine method and catechetical content makes *narratio* not only an important part of the content of patristic catechesis but also renders patristic catechesis (and an ecclesial catechesis that takes up its catechumenal character) fundamentally, methodologically narrational, even at those times when the ancient, patristic catechechist is not engaged specifically in presenting formal *narrationes*.

### **A Comparison of the Three Pedagogies**

But first, to sharpen our appreciation of the way in which the patristic pedagogy serves as the methodological middle term between the divine and ecclesial pedagogies, we should spend just a moment in outlining the constituent elements of each of the three pedagogies, divine, patristic, and ecclesial, as described in the relevant numbers of the *GDC*. This will give us the opportunity to identify the essential elements of the "original pedagogy of faith."

The constituent elements of the divine pedagogy

What, then, are the common elements of the three pedagogies (divine, patristic, and ecclesial) in the *GDC* and how do they comport with one to another, that is, how do they point to an "original pedagogy of the faith" which is narrational? We have already seen that the divine pedagogy is a personal,<sup>99</sup> gradual, progressive<sup>100</sup> and historical<sup>101</sup> revelation, which is made up of events and

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<sup>99</sup> *GDC* 36.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 38, 112.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 107, 108.

words<sup>102</sup> that are mutually explicative,<sup>103</sup> and which has as its "ultimate purpose" "the salvation of the person."<sup>104</sup> All this is done as an accommodation to the human condition,<sup>105</sup> the zenith of which is reached in Christ<sup>106</sup> himself who comes to make a personal appeal and disclosure at the center of human history in a public ministry also made up of dramatic events and verbal discourses. This pedagogy is "completed when the disciple shall 'become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself.'"<sup>107</sup> As we have already seen at number 128, the *GDC* notes that Israel's curriculum under the divine pedagogy takes the character of a journey which has as its goal the arrival at the promised land.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid 37, 140 "He brought to the world the supreme gift of salvation by accomplishing his redemptive mission in a manner which continued 'the pedagogy of God.'" See also *GDC* 98 "He is indeed the final event toward which all salvation history converges."

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 142, quoting Eph. 4:13.



## The constituent elements of the patristic pedagogy

The patristic pedagogy, which, we are suggesting, serves as a bridge or middle term between the divine and ecclesial pedagogies (the latter being ideally what we have identified as an instance of the original pedagogy of the faith), is said by the *GDC* to have been intentionally modeled on the divine pedagogy.<sup>108</sup> As a consequence, it is also personal,<sup>109</sup> gradual,<sup>110</sup> and progressive,<sup>111</sup> and involved a "biblical catechesis" - an historical account of salvation history which was "eminently Christocentric"<sup>112</sup> - and combined verbal proclamation and ritual events in a catechumenal process which intended to replicate in the present the "journey" of the people of Israel.<sup>113</sup> All this aimed at a mature "configuration to Christ,"<sup>114</sup> such that,

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 89, see also 38, 39, and n. 62 at 107.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

the patristic pedagogy constituted a "true and proper school of Christian pedagogy."<sup>115</sup>

In the *GDC* the divine and patristic pedagogies so closely parallel each other that the one apparent difference between the two is very much worth noting. Whereas the divine pedagogy is historical in the sense that it precisely occurs in history, the patristic pedagogy is historical in that it calls for a recounting of that history. In this sense, it is what I would call "memorial" or "anamnetical," by which I mean that the past pedagogy of God is in some sense replicated in the present by a recounting of that past pedagogy. As the *GDC* puts it, "in the catechumenal process the catechumen, like the people of Israel, goes through a journey to arrive at the promised land: Baptismal identification with Christ."<sup>116</sup>

As we will see when we look specifically at the narrational character of the sacramental life and the catechesis that prepares for it, it is that memorial identification of the catechumen with Israel that makes *narratio* essential. Put plainly, one cannot enter a story

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., 129. The *GDC* attaches a note to this description that exactly demonstrates the anamnetical quality of the recounting of salvation history in *narratio* by quoting from Origen's *Homiliae in Jesu Nave*, in which he addresses the catechumens as though they themselves were the subjects of the exodus from Egypt and entrance into the promised land.

one doesn't know. And that is why in the sentence just following the one cited above, still at section 129, the *GDC* notes that the very organization of that staged process demanded that "in patristic catechesis a primary role [be] devoted to the *narration* of the history of salvation" (emphasis in original).

This connection between the historical pedagogy of God and the salvation historical pedagogy of the patristic era is not expressed just in the narration, however. The *GDC* is saying more: that the personal, gradual, progressive, and staged qualities of the original historical pedagogy of God is what calls forth the personal, gradual, progressive and staged characteristics of the catechumenate itself, such that each can be described as a "journey." This suggests that the whole process in both pedagogies is narrational, in a broader sense, and not simply that the catechumenal process includes *narratio*. Already we can see here that *narratio*, while clearly being a vital part of the *content* of the catechumenal catechesis, is so precisely because the methodology itself, its "organization...in accordance with the stages of that process," is patterned after the narrative of salvation history.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

## The constituent elements of an ecclesial pedagogy

This stress upon the "primary role" of the narration of salvation history in the patristic catechesis and the narrational quality of a catechumenal catechesis finds an exact echo in the *GDC*'s account of a proper ecclesial catechesis. First, as we saw in the patristic pedagogy, it is to be "radically inspired by the pedagogy of God."<sup>118</sup> It is to address the person to be catechized as an "untiring echo" of "the wonderful dialogue that God undertakes with every person" which it is to make its "inspiration and norm."<sup>119</sup> "Based on the example of catechesis in the patristic era" it is "to form the personality of the believer"<sup>120</sup> and is to be "rooted in interpersonal relations" in "the process of dialogue."<sup>121</sup>

It is to "accept the principle of progressiveness in Revelation," and so also "takes the form of a process or journey."<sup>122</sup> In this regard, the gradual, staged and

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., see also 147 in which catechesis is described as an "educative journey."

progressive quality of the catechecuminate,<sup>123</sup> is, as we have already noted, to be regarded as the norm for all catechesis, pre and post-baptismal.<sup>124</sup> It envisions a "process of conversion" which is "eminently christocentric,"<sup>125</sup> precisely because it is "completely permeated by the *mystery of Christ's Passover*."<sup>126</sup> It "conducts a pedagogy of signs, where words and deeds, teaching and experience are interlinked,"<sup>127</sup> which is intended to constitute a "process of maturation" in faith.<sup>128</sup>

And in one of the most elaborated sections in the second major part of the *GDC* ("On the Gospel Message"), in its first chapter titled, "Norms and criteria for presenting the Gospel message," one finds that ecclesial catechesis must comport with the fundamentally "historical character of the mystery of salvation."<sup>129</sup> In this context, at paragraph 107 the *GDC* commends the patristic catechesis

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 59, 68, 88, 90, 91.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 89, see also 97 and 98.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 91, emphasis in original. Number 99 makes clear that this is a trinitarian christocentricity.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, title at 107.

for its use of "the narration (*narratio*) of the wonderful deeds of God," which "always accompanied the exposition of the mysteries of faith." In a footnote attached to that sentence, the *GDC* elaborates on that point still further saying that the content of the patristic catechesis was based on this narration for the purpose of stressing that Christianity was rooted in time and history and not merely a religious philosophy.<sup>130</sup>

In 108 this "historical character of the Christian message" is said to "require" the presentation of the important stages of saving history in its two phases, Old Testament and New, along with the history of the Church, exactly outlining the three parts of the classical Augustinian *narratio*.<sup>131</sup> The Creed and sacraments are to be explained in relation to this history which, the *GDC* asserts, should disclose the mysteries of Christ's divinity, the Church's mission as sacrament of salvation, and the plan and presence of God in the "signs of the times."<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 62.

<sup>131</sup> The *GDC* says at 107 that it is on the basis of her "constant 'memory'" of this saving history that the Church is able to read "the present events of human history" and then mentions the *expectatio* of Christ's return as another essential element of catechesis, thereby suggesting a comprehensive embrace of time, past, present, and future.

<sup>132</sup> *GDC* 108.

Then, at number 130, the content of the "actual catechesis of the Church," which is to unite both the "patristic tradition" (which I have called a methodological middle term between the divine and ecclesial pedagogies) and the "tradition of catechisms," is outlined under the rubric of the "seven foundation stones" that I have already mentioned. Again, these are the three phases of *narratio* and the four "pillars" of the catechism: "the Creed, the Sacraments, the *Decalogue*, and the *Our Father*" (emphasis original).

**Conclusion - The Divine, Patristic and Ecclesial pedagogies  
are in Method and Content Narrational**

What I conclude, then, from this survey of the three pedagogies, as they are described in the *GDC*, is that they share the attributes of being personal, gradual, progressive, historical, proclamational (in words), experiential (in deeds), and fundamentally christocentric. I would also note that, while the divine pedagogy made use of the gradual and progressive historical journey of Israel, expressed in words and deeds and ordered to the fullness of Revelation in Christ, the patristic and ecclesial pedagogies, while seeking to replicate the

gradual and progressive qualities of that originating historical experience in a staged catechumenate, also require what I have called an anamnestic or memorial rehearsal of that history in the narration of salvation history. So, both in their catechumenal structure and in their component *narrationes*, these pedagogies are what I would call, in a more expansive sense of the word, narrational. That is, the fundamentally "historical character of the mystery of salvation" demands that catechesis be both structurally and in content in accord with the salvation historical quality of *narratio*.

This narrational element, in the more expansive sense, is evident from Part I of the *GDC* on evangelization, and both Parts II on content, and III on pedagogy or method. It is true that the only direct references to *narratio* come in Part I on the Church's evangelizing mission and Part II on catechetical content, with no specific mention of the patristic *narratio* in Part III on pedagogy, where only the divine and ecclesial pedagogies are referenced. But, I have suggested that the fact that the catechumenal process of the patristic age, which the *GDC* explicitly speaks of as including *narratio*, and which it enjoins as normative for all catechesis in Part I, and where it is also described as



a "proper school of Christian pedagogy,"<sup>133</sup> stands in the *GDC* as a methodological middle term between the "original and efficacious pedagogy of God"<sup>134</sup> and that "exercise of the original pedagogy of faith" that the Church engages in "when joined to Christ."<sup>135</sup>

Although the patristic pedagogy is only treated in the sections on evangelization and content and not in the one on method, it is precisely its pedagogical or methodological imperatives (catechumenal ordering and historical, narrational character) that are commended for current ecclesial practice, and precisely because the "fathers model the catechumenate on the divine pedagogy."<sup>136</sup> Put simply, the *GDC* asserts that the patristic pedagogy replicated the divine pedagogy and enjoins that the ecclesial pedagogy do so too, with the catechumenal and narrational character of the patristic pedagogy as the pattern. It should be patent, then, that when the *GDC* insists that the Church in her catechesis is "obliged to proclaim and narrate"<sup>137</sup> the words and deeds of Revelation, that imperative is as much a pedagogical or methodological

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 129.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 39.

one as it is one of content. Since it is precisely pedagogy or methodology which is referred to throughout, even when these references are made in the sections on evangelization and content and not specifically in the one on method, I would conclude that the *GDC* still means to make a methodological point.

In this regard, it is important to note that the divine pedagogy, which has been clearly established as the model for all catechetical activity in the Church, is an historical *methodology* which employs words and deeds, truths and events, we might say, in a personal, gradual, progressive appeal to human persons who are themselves located in history. Revealed history, we could say, is simultaneously content and method. *What* God reveals, the content of Revelation (its words and events as experienced in the journey of Israel), is inextricably woven into the *how* of Revelation, the historical fabric which is entirely constituted by the revealed words and deeds which are its threads. That should suggest that the catechetical rehearsal of that history in *narratio*, as well as the gradual and progressive catechumenal process which is intended to be a memorial reliving of the historical journey of Israel, could also be understood to be both content and method, message and medium, thread and fabric.

In short, what the *GDC* enjoins is not just a *narratio* of salvation history as a necessary component of the content of catechesis. The *GDC* certainly makes clear that *narratio* is content. But the whole complex of pedagogical themes in the *GDC*, the stress upon a personal, gradual, progressive, historical disclosure of Revelation, the evangelization and catechumenalization of catechesis, along with the elaboration of the three pedagogies - these don't just make of the *narratio* an essential part of the content of catechesis, but point to a specifically narrational method of catechesis, as well.

Having now taken account of the imperative for *narratio* from the *GDC* and the rationale proffered for it in the divine and patristic pedagogies, we will turn to a closer examination of *narratio* in those two pedagogies, turning first, in Chapters II through IV, to its form and function in the patristic pedagogy which is likely to have motivated the *GDC's* attention to *narratio*, after which we look for the aboriginal forms of *narratio* in the biblical literature and the communities that formed around it.

## CHAPTER II

AN EXAMPLE OF *NARRATIO* IN THE PATRISTIC PEDAGOGY: *DE*  
*CATECHIZANDIS RUDIBUS*, CULTURAL CONTEXT AND GENERAL  
CATECHETICAL PRINCIPLES**Introduction**

Having ascertained the important place of *narratio* to the *GDC*'s program for a modern ecclesial catechesis modeled on the divine and patristic pedagogies, we now turn to a closer examination of both, beginning first with the patristic. One might rightly ask, "Why not begin from the beginning and start with the divine pedagogy (as expressed in the Scripture) to which the *GDC* looks as the ultimate paradigm for catechetical endeavors?"

The answer is that for the *GDC* the *narratio* of the patristic pedagogy is what we have identified as a methodological middle term or bridge between the divine pedagogy and current catechetical practice. *GDC* 129 says, "in patristic catechesis a primary role is devoted to the

*narratio* of the history of salvation," and also that "The fathers model the catechumenate on the divine pedagogy." For this reason it makes sense, as we walk backward in time from the *GDC*'s imperative toward that original divine pedagogy, to cross that historical bridge. It is, after all, the patristic pedagogy which is the first ecclesial manifestation of catechesis and the first attempt to replicate, to the extent possible, the divine pedagogy. Beginning with an important example of the patristic pedagogy will also enable me to frame the questions that I will raise in Chapters VI and VII about the narrational character of the divine pedagogy that the patristic pedagogy had attempted to imitate.

In the next three chapters I will look at one particular example of narrational catechesis from Augustine of Hippo's *De catechizandis rudibus*. In the present chapter I will give a little of the remote context: the reason for choosing this text, the cultural and historical setting for it, and the catechetical intent behind it. In Chapter III I will take up a study of Part I of *DCR* (1,1-14,22) in which Augustine introduces the catechetical principles to be followed and outlines the shape of the full catechetical address, the central portion of which is the *narratio*. In that chapter I will outline the three

principle rhetorical elements of the full address and posit a relation between these and the theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

Then in Chapter IV I will apply the principles outlined in Part I of *DCR* to the two examples of *narratio*, one long and one short, that Augustine provides in Part II of *DCR* (15,23-27,55).

The figure to whom we turn for our examination of *narratio* and its use in the patristic period is Augustine of Hippo and his *De catechizandis rudibus*. In Section 1 I will examine the general background for the study of *DCR*: why Augustine and not some other of the Fathers, and the pastoral setting of Hippo Regius at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. In Section 2 I will examine the fittingness of the *DCR* as a model for catechetical *narrationes* in the New Evangelization and look at the immediate context of the First Catechetical Instruction that Augustine describes.

## Section 1: The Augustinian Narratio: De Catechizandis

### Rudibus, Remote Background

#### Why Consult Augustine?

At the outset we have to ask the question, "Why start with Augustine?" The answer is that the framers of the GDC clearly had him in mind when proposing the use of the catechetical *narratio*. We can say that with some confidence because of an element of which we have already taken note. Of the seven or so explicit mentions of *narratio* in the GDC (39, 107, 108, 115, 128, 129, 130), three of them (130, 115, and 108) make specific reference to a third part of *narratio*, which is identified in two of the cases (130 and 108) as "the history of the Church" and in one (115) as "the time of the Church."

As Raymond Canning notes in his recent annotated translation of Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus*,

In catechetical treatises before Augustine, the *narratio* (historical exposition) was limited to the biblical account. Augustine's *narratio*, however, here

embraces the whole history of the Church down to his own time.<sup>138</sup>

Here Canning, like most commentators, is crediting Augustine with saying that the *narratio* "continues down to the present period of the church's history" as Augustine seems to say in *DCR* 3,5, (and also in *DCR* 6,10), without taking note of the fact that this proposed third phase - what he calls the "church's history" - isn't really employed in the samples that Augustine gives later in the work.<sup>139</sup> It appears that the framers of the *GDC*, following that common interpretive pattern, do the same, taking Augustine at what they take to be his word, while not taking note of the fact that he doesn't actually include anything like a history of the church.

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<sup>138</sup> Canning, *Instructing Beginners*, 54, n. 3. Canning also cites Christopher's 1946 translation and commentary (page 5) to suggest the same. The reference is to Augustine's advice that the "historical exposition is complete when the instruction delivered to the newcomer begins from the scriptural verse *In the beginning God made heaven and earth* (Gn 1:1), and continues down to the present period of the church's history" (*DCR* 3, 5).

<sup>139</sup> For example, see Christopher (Ibid.) page 3 "in the present treatise Augustine includes Church history down to his own time;" in Boniface Ramsey, "Catechezandis rudibus, De" in Allan D. Fitzgerald, ed. *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999) "[*DCR*] contains two sample catecheses constructed along historical lines that, for the first time, go beyond biblical history to include the history of the church as well." For more measured descriptions that stay closer to exact language of Augustine see Bandas, *Contents and Methods*, 208, and Eugene Kevane, *Augustine the Educator: A Study in the Fundamentals of Christian Formation* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964), 212.



That would suggest very strongly that it is Augustine (and perhaps the commentators on him) that the framers of the *GDC* are following in their commendation of *narratio*, as well as the form it ought to take.<sup>140</sup> It is important to note that the Latin phrase used by Augustine at both 3,5 and 6,10 is: *usque ad praesentia tempora ecclesiae*,<sup>141</sup> which is better rendered "up to the present time of the Church." (I will comment on what I think Augustine means by that phrase a little latter.) The phrase used at numbers 130 and 108 in the *GDC*, "the history of the Church," seems to repeat the common *interpretation* of Augustine's statement at *DCR* 3,5, while the phrase at *GDC* 115, "the time of the Church" seems to more closely translate the Latin of *DCR* 3,5, and 6,10.

This argument for an Augustinian source for the *GDC*'s references to *narratio* is further strengthened by the fact that, contrary to the suggestion of Canning's limiting phrase: "treatises *before* Augustine," which would indicate

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<sup>140</sup> One ought not to underplay, too, the very compelling evidence of the very use of the term "*narratio*" in the *GDC*, which, as I already noted in the introduction, is of Augustinian provenance.

<sup>141</sup> All references to the original Latin are from the 1926 Christopher edition: *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi de Catechizandis Rudibus Liber Unus*, Joseph Patrick Christopher, trans., The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies vol. VIII (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1926). I will later take note of the fact that "history" is not really in the Latin of this text.

that *narrationes* after Augustine may have commonly included a third historical part, a "history of the Church," was never really part of the patristic *narratio*.

In my analysis of Augustine's *narratio* I will suggest that he wasn't suggesting anything like a post-biblical history of the Church with the phrase *usque ad praesentia tempora ecclesiae*, something that even at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century would have been entirely beyond the possible scope of a first catechetical instruction of the kind that Augustine has in mind. We will propose that with that phrase Augustine is not counseling something that he then fails to do himself in his sample *narrationes*. He is not calling for a history of the Church in the ordinary sense, but for some kind of an application of the content of the biblical history of salvation "to the present time of the Church."<sup>142</sup> That is, he is really asking for what we would call today "relevance," an application of the biblical history related in *narratio* to the present Church. We will see how he does that when we look specifically at the structure and aims of *narratio*.

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<sup>142</sup> Frederick van der Meer's *Augustine the Bishop*, Brian Battershaw and G. R. Lamb, trans. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1961), page 459, describes this as "an account of the present *position* of the Church." (Emphasis added.)

### Relevance of Augustine to Our Own Context

A word or two on Augustine's own relevance to the present Church of our own day is also called for here, so as to better contextualize the particular work, *De catechizandis rudibus*, and the particular part of that work, his *narratio*, that we are considering.

Although a figure at a remove of 1650 years from our own day, Augustine of Hippo is a fitting figure to consult on matters of evangelization and catechesis because the pastoral challenges he faced at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century are not all that remote from the challenges that catechists face today. Although he could say of his Hippo Regius that "In this city are many houses in which there is not even a single pagan, nor a single household in which there is not a Christian,"<sup>143</sup> Augustine shepherded people who, while living at the twilight of the ancient paganism, were still entirely surrounded by its influences.<sup>144</sup> In *DCR* he notes

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<sup>143</sup> Sited in Michael Pasquarello, *Sacred Rhetoric: Preaching as a Theological and Pastoral Practice of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005) 15.

<sup>144</sup> An extended treatment of the biography of Augustine or the broader cultural setting of *DCR* is entirely beyond the scope of this study. I rely upon Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography (New Edition, with an Epilogue)* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), which by the edition of the new epilogue and the revised conclusions that Brown is able to draw based upon the more recent finds in Augustine scholarship bears directly on the motives of Augustine in writing works like *DCR*, and van der Meer's *Augustine the*

that those coming for the first instruction must be warned by the catechist such that

When our hearer is being equipped to counter those whose depraved mobs physically occupy the churches, we should at the same time also call to mind, briefly and becomingly, the precepts of a Christian and honorable way of life, so that he may not all too easily be led astray by drunkards, misers, cheats, gamblers, adulterers, fornicators, lovers of entertainments, healers using sacrilegious amulets, chanters of spells, astrologers, or soothsayers versed in any and every useless and harmful trick or any other of this ilk. And let him not think that, because he sees many people who are nominally Christians finding pleasure in these practices and taking part in them and speaking in defense of them and advocating and promoting their use, he can do the same himself and go unpunished.<sup>145</sup>

This brief portrait of the Church of Hippo shows that Augustine accepted the mantle of ecclesiastical office at a moment in history between two ages and between two

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*Bishop*, which has the added advantage of focusing on the pastoral setting and challenges faced by Augustine. See Part 1 "The Church of Hippo Regius" and especially chapters 3-6 on the religious and cultural diversity characteristic of a provincial town of North Africa. James O'Donnell's more recent *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005) provides a fresh reconstruction of Augustine by comparing Augustine's self descriptions with other facts that surface out of his other writings and contemporary documents from other sources.

<sup>145</sup> DCR 7, 11.

cultures. The classical age, of which he was a superlative product, was coming to a close, while the west's Christian future was as yet by no means assured. In fact, Augustine died in the midst of a siege of his beloved city by armies of the Vandal king Genseric in August of 430.

Even his parentage suggests the same tension between a dying world and a world yet to be born. Patricius, his father, was a Roman *curiale*, or government official in Tagaste, North Africa and a pagan, while his mother, Monica, was a Christian of profound virtue. His upbringing and education was likewise divided, early on given a Christian cast by his mother who had him enrolled among the catechumens, and later ordered to worldly success by the designs of his father.<sup>146</sup>

As his *Confessions* make abundantly clear, during the early part of his 76 years Augustine faced monumental moral and intellectual struggles before arriving at Christian convictions. While still a young student far from home he fathered a son, Adeodatus, out of wedlock. His heart was for years lost to the faith so dear to his mother under the

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<sup>146</sup> His mother, too, seemed to hope both for both worldly and spiritual success. This is evidenced by her exertions to arrange a suitable marriage which would both advance his career as a rhetor and enable him to enter the Church. See *Confessions* 6, 13. All citations from this work are taken from *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, John K. Ryan, trans., New York: Doubleday, 1960, unless otherwise noted. See also Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 89.

influence of Manichaeism, a mix of Christian Gnosticism and Persian mysticism, while his intellect was given over to pagan philosophy. During this period he belittled the Scriptures, seeing them as primitive and base,<sup>147</sup> giving his pious mother abundant reasons for the tears she shed for his soul - a very modern sounding story indeed.

After having come to Christ and the Church, Augustine the bishop and teacher faced theological assaults of such variety - questioning the sovereignty of God; the nature of the Church, her hierarchy and sacraments; our need for grace and even the divinity of Christ - that he was able to forge the basic framework for the future of western theological reflection between the anvil of heterodoxy and the hammer of the Church's faith.

"Augustine's ministry, therefore, was not conducted within an environment of comfortably established catholic orthodoxy,"<sup>148</sup> but in a welter of diverse cultural influences not all that unlike our own in many respects,

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<sup>147</sup> In *Confessions* 5, 14 Augustine noted, "I had believed that the law and the prophets could in no way be upheld against those who hated them and scoffed at them." See also his account of the corrosive "carnal" reading of Scripture in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* vol. IV, Philip Schaff, ed. Augustine of Hippo, "Against the Epistle of Manichaeus Called Fundamental," Richard Stothert, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979) 139-40 and *On Christian Doctrine*, D.W. Robertson Jr., trans. (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958) 83-84. This is a topic to which we will return in order to evaluate Augustine's use of the scriptural material in his *narrationes*.

<sup>148</sup> Pasquarello, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 15-16.

making Augustine an apt figure for us to look to today in the New Evangelization called for by John Paul II and his successor, Benedict XVI. As the quote cited above makes clear, he faced not just the mediocrity and laxity in his flock, a perennial issue for the Church, but real moral turpitude and even religious syncretism.

This very brief description of the pastoral setting within which Augustine worked, what William Harmless calls the "where" of his catechetical task,<sup>149</sup> gives us a better sense of what the first catechetical instruction and its *narratio* would have had as its purpose. Pasquarello describes Augustine's pastoral task generally as "to wean his people from idolatry, to purify their desires, and to establish an alternative culture that was responsive to God by building up the church in love."<sup>150</sup> *DCR* is certainly a first instance of that task, aimed as it was toward those who were for the first time approaching the Church to ask for membership.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 34. He orders his study of the catechumenate of Augustine around the "what," the curriculum; the "how," the models of teaching; the "why," the conversional aim; and the "where," the faith and culture which Augustine encountered. See pages 32-36.

<sup>150</sup> Pasquarello, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 16.

<sup>151</sup> St. Augustine, *The First Catechetical Instruction* [*De Catechizandis Rudibus*], Joseph P. Christopher, trans. and annotations, *Ancient Christian Writers: The Works of the Fathers in Translation*, The Catholic University of America, no. 2 (Westminster, MD: The Newman

### The Importance of the First Catechetical Instruction

These *accedentes*, as these first inquirers were called by Tertullian,<sup>152</sup> are the *rudes* (rustics, the rough or ignorant) in the faith referred to in the title attached to Augustine's work.<sup>153</sup> That would make the *DCR's narratio* part of what we call in the modern RCIA "evangelization" or "precatechumenate."<sup>154</sup>

Needless to say, this potentially makes of *DCR* a tremendously important model for the New Evangelization, which, as we have seen, combines both a continued attention to the *missio ad gentes* and a new emphasis upon re-evangelizing those traditionally Christian cultures which have begun to flag in their commitment to the faith. The

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Press and London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1952), 4. This is Christopher's republished version of his 1926 translation with updated annotations of 1946, here cited from its second imprint of 1952. Subsequent citations will distinguish between the 1926 and 1946 texts as Christopher, *De Catechizandis* [1926] and Christopher, *First Catechetical Instruction* [1946].

<sup>152</sup> *De idolatria* 24,3, cited in Canning, *Instructing*, 12. The Latin *accedo -ere* can mean either "to draw near" or "to approve."

<sup>153</sup> Harmless notes that "*rudes* in everyday Latin meant 'unpolished,' 'ignorant,' or 'illiterate.' However, in Christian parlance, it referred to anyone who happened to be ignorant of things Christian. It thus became the technical term for those whom we now call 'inquirers.'" *Catechumenate*, 108, n. 3. Christopher adds, "The term, in other words, has no reference whatever to the intellectual qualifications of the candidate. The *rudes* may be a rustic or he may be an educated man." *First Catechetical Instruction*, 4.

<sup>154</sup> RCIA 7.



world of the North African Church, which we have seen described above as being beset by those "whose depraved mobs physically occupy the churches," suggests the necessity of the broad pastoral applicability of this first catechetical instruction. The varied picture of humanity that Augustine describes in 5,9; 6,10; 8,12 and 9,13 of *DCR*, pagans, Jews, the children of the baptized; the range of social positions, educational levels and motives (from the most sincere to the patently base), even heretics,<sup>155</sup> likewise suggests that his cultural situation was in some ways similar to the variety of persons and backgrounds that one would find in an urban parish in the United States, for example.

The *DCR* represents the sole surviving instance that we have of such a first address to these new arrivals.<sup>156</sup> It is largely because of the utter uniqueness of a work like *DCR* that Edward Yarnold can say that "We have little

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<sup>155</sup> Christopher, *First Catechetical Instruction*, 4.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Here Christopher tallies the number of catechetical addresses by Cyril of Jerusalem (18 delivered to *competentes*, 5 to *neophyti*), Ambrose of Milan (the first book of *De Abraham* for *catechumeni*, the *De mysteriis* for *neophyti*), and Theodore of Mopsuestia (10 addressed to *competentes* and 6 to *neophyti*). For the best brief survey of the ancient catechetical texts, see Gerard S. Sloyan, "Religious Education: From Early Christianity to Medieval Times," in his *Shaping the Christian Message: Essays in Religious Education* (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1958) 11-45, which has been republished in *Sourcebook for Modern Catechetics*, Michael Warren, ed. (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1983) 110-39.

indication of how this period [evangelization or pre-catechumenate] was conducted in the early church."<sup>157</sup> The salvation historical manner of catechizing represented in *DCR*'s two sample *narrationes*, may, as Bandas notes, have "its roots deep in Christian antiquity and in the Sacred Scriptures themselves" and be characteristic of much of the catechesis of the Eastern and Western Fathers, such as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Basil, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzen, and Gregory of Nyssa,<sup>158</sup> but the two sample *narrationes* that we have in *DCR* are no less unique for being an expression of a common and larger genre of biblical catechesis at other stages in the catechumenate of the early Church.

The *narrationes* of *DCR* are not the sustained salvation historical catechesis of the Patristic age that would have been given to *competentes*,<sup>159</sup> which we now refer to in the

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<sup>157</sup> *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origins of the RCIA* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994) 2.

<sup>158</sup> Bandas, *Contents and Methods*, 207, n.1.

<sup>159</sup> See, for example, *Egeria: Diary of a Pilgrim* 46, George Gingras, trans. *Ancient Christian Writers* series, J. Quasten, W. Burghardt, T. C. Lawler, eds. (New York, NY, Paramus, NJ: Newman Press, 1970) 123. "those who are to be baptized, both men and women, sit closely around the bishop... beginning with Genesis he goes through the whole of Scripture during these forty days, expounding first its literal meaning and then explaining the spiritual meaning. In the course of these days everything is taught not only about the Resurrection but concerning the body of faith. This is called catechetics." It is very much worth noting that this is one of the earliest recorded uses of the term "catechetics" (the full sentence reads *hoc autem cathecesis apelatur*) and the pilgrim Egeria, who is

RCIA process as the elect (*electi* or *illuminandi* in the terminology of the Latin Fathers and *photizomenoi* among the Greeks<sup>160</sup>). These elect were those who had entered fully into the rigorous Lenten preparation for Baptism. Nor is the *narratio* of DCR like the mystagogy given to the neophyte Christians in the period after Baptism. It is a single address, of a half-hour to two hours in length, which was intended to supply a compelling synopsis of the whole of the substance of Christian faith<sup>161</sup> for the purpose of bringing the hearer to make a first decision for faith and to encourage him to enter the catechumenate proper.

Van der Meer suggests that by the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century the practice would have been such that for many, perhaps the majority of catechumens, this first catechesis would have been the only formal catechesis received, such that "their first catechism remained their last."<sup>162</sup> In his typically voluble way, Van der Meer describes the typical catechumen of the age as equivalent to our "nominal

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reporting on catechetical practices in Jerusalem, roughly contemporary with the authorship of the DCR says the whole "body of faith" is teased out of an extended *narratio* of salvation history. See Gingras' note 467 on page 252.

<sup>160</sup> Canning, *Instructing*, 13 and Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 62-63.

<sup>161</sup> Van der Meer, *Bishop*, 353. Of course, this had to be done without direct reference to the *arcana*, the secrets of the faith, such as the exact words of the Creed and sacramental practices.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

Christian" of today and goes on to say that as regards the ordinary sermons, from which they would thence forward have to take their instruction, that "No doubt they listened, but they did not understand; they were *audientes* but not *intelligentes*."<sup>163</sup>

In the early portion of his extended study, *Augustine and the Catechuminate*, William Harmless concedes the point about the catechumen as "nominal Christian" without comment.<sup>164</sup> But later in the text he takes Van der Meer to task on his implication as to the inadequacy of ordinary preaching to serve as a regular course of catechesis for the catechumens who had not yet entered their names as *competentes* and so also for the final Lenten preparations (and catechesis) for Baptism. Harmless goes on to describe in a whole chapter just how catechetically effective Augustine's sermons would have been. He notes that Augustine himself had been in just the same position, an older and not yet committed catechumen, when the ordinary sermons of Ambrose entirely changed his mind and brought him to a full Christian conversion and commitment.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 357.

<sup>164</sup> Harmless, *Catechuminate*, 57.

<sup>165</sup> Harmless does concede that the *disciplina arcana* (the strict secrets that were made of the Christian mysteries) would have meant

Leaving Harmless' very valid point aside for the moment, the fact is that by the year 400 a great deal would have been riding on such a first catechetical instruction. That is likely the exact impetus behind the request made by the Carthaginian Deacon Deogratias toward Augustine to which he responds by penning *DCR*.

By this time the earlier years-long process of catechumenal preparation<sup>166</sup> had now become a somewhat swollen catechumenate peopled, first, by *catechumeni* whose commitment was not always assured and whose reticence at making the next step toward full inclusion in the Christian community was a commonplace, and, second, by a smaller, leaner cadre of *competentes* who were willing to embrace the

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that the average catechumen could not have understood some important references to the sacraments (157, n. 6) but uses Van der Meer's point to launch his deeper study of Augustine's catechetical preaching. In fairness to Van der Meer, his point is really only that the experience of the sacramental mysteries and the grace they bring make a real difference in the catechumen's capacity to receive the fullness of faith. Likewise, that the unwillingness of some catechumens to enter their names for Baptism was a thorny pastoral problem that Augustine and other late 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> century pastors had to confront, a point which Harmless also treats amply (see pages 56-61). In addition, the whole work of mystagogy, which in the usual practice was postponed until after integral initiation, exactly presupposes just the sort of dynamic that Van der Meer describes.

<sup>166</sup> Michel Dujarier, in his *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries*, E. Haasl, trans. (New York: Wm. H. Sadlier, 1979) 91-106, both chronicles and laments the loss of the rigorous practices of the third and earlier fourth centuries, both in regard to entry into and conduct of the catechumenate. In his work the miniscule practice of induction into the catechumenate indicated by Augustine's first catechetical instruction is a clear sign of decay.

Lenten rigors of baptismal preparation.<sup>167</sup> With this state of affairs, the *narratio* had to function, not just as an introduction to the faith, but as an evangelical tool of exhortation to move the inquirer enough so that he might not stall out at that first stage and go on to seek and receive Baptism. (That exigency may have been the very reason for Deacon Deogratias' query about an accompanying exhortation to the historical narration.) If, as Van der Meer describes them, the mass of catechumens were no longer the small and recognizable group of the earlier centuries who could be managed effectively by pastors - "their presence or absence at liturgies... dutifully noted; their progress and lifestyle, carefully scrutinized"<sup>168</sup> - then it would have been pastorally imperative to avoid loosing these first inquirers into this mass of "nominal Christians."

If the first catechetical instruction was the first and often last formal catechesis before the inquirer disappeared into that mass of *audientes, sed non intelligentes* then the *narratio* had to serve as an acutely effective expression of condensed catechesis. It is just

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<sup>167</sup> See also Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy*, 249: "The entire preparation for Baptism was therefore condensed into two sessions: the opening catechesis and the catechesis in Lent."

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

this difficult circumstance that makes of Augustine's careful response to Deogratias an instance of the "pastoral sagacity," that Boniface Ramsey recognizes in the work.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> "Catechezandis rudibus, De," *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999).

**Section 2: Is *DCR* an Appropriate Model for All  
Catechetical Narration?**

But this raises a critical question that has to be dealt with before we advance to a closer study of the instruction itself. As an instance, indeed the only surviving instance of a first catechesis from the period of the precatechumenate, can the first catechetical instruction of *DCR* bear the weight that the *GDC* appears to place upon it? That is, if the *narrationes* of *DCR* are so specialized a part of catechesis, is it appropriate to universalize their importance for catechesis as a whole, as we saw the *GDC* doing so clearly in Chapter I?

Harmless lodges a similar caveat, suggesting that the evidence doesn't even allow us to say with any certainty that this sort of first catechetical address was either an innovation of the late 4<sup>th</sup> century Church or widely practiced throughout the Church either before or after. In opposition to Jungmann's assertion that Augustine's work expresses the attempt on the part of the Church of his age to address the common practice, just mentioned, of prolonging the catechumenate and putting off Baptism, Harmless says, "it seems more prudent to say that we do not



know."<sup>170</sup> That is, according to Harmless, we can't even be sure of the universality of the practice of this kind of first *narratio* among Augustine's contemporaries, which, one could argue, would certainly call into question its universal applicability in our own time.

In regard to the universal applicability of *DCR*, Harmless makes reference to the works of figures like Eugene Kevane and George Howie. He notes that "there has been a tendency to highlight [Augustine's] more generalizable insights at the expense of his original and quite specific focus: the evangelization of inquirers."<sup>171</sup> Harmless is no doubt correct that, from a scholarly perspective, one ought not without reason assume the universal applicability of a practice that was employed at the turn of the 5<sup>th</sup> century for the particular purpose of introducing first inquirers to the faith. But should we take Harmless' otherwise well-founded warning to mean that

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<sup>170</sup>*Catechumenate*, 110. See Jungmann, *Early Liturgy*, 249.

<sup>171</sup>*Catechumenate*, 108. See Kevane, *Educator*, especially page 123 where he refers to *DCR* as a "model catechetical instruction, which gives Augustine's educational principles" and as a "handbook of the Christian teacher and charter of religious and catechetical instruction throughout the centuries." See also George Howie's *Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine* (New York: Teacher's College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1969) where on page 32 he calls *DCR* "a handbook of method for the Christian teacher in his task of instructing candidates for baptism and all who seek knowledge of the Christian faith."

*DCR* ought not to be seen as having broader implications for catechesis in the way suggested by the *GDC*?

In direct response to the instances of an unwarranted generalization of *DCR* raised by Harmless, it should be said that Howie's interest is less in narrational content (and/or methodology) than in what Augustine has to say about general educational methodology, especially where he cites *DCR*.<sup>172</sup> Although he does discuss issues of salvation historical content, it is with reference to the place of Sacred Scripture at the heart of a Christian program of education in the liberal arts. With reference to the particular concerns of this study, Howie doesn't specifically deal with the *narratio* at all, in fact. Rather, his concern is with the "teacher-pupil relationship" as described in Augustine's description of how to assess and prepare the pupil to receive the historical narration and exhortation.<sup>173</sup>

Kevane, on the other hand, does suggest that the centrality of biblical catechesis, as expressed in the narrational elements in *DCR*, has a normative quality, and

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<sup>172</sup> Howie, *Educational Theory*, 32. He calls *DCR* "a handbook of method for the Christian teacher." That label is worth recalling with reference to the question of whether *narratio* is content or method, even given that Howie's concern is primarily with "educational theory and practice."

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 150 ff. This relational element does undoubtedly have a certain amount of universal applicability in education of any kind.

that is not surprising, given the influence of the kerygmatic movement of the time.<sup>174</sup> He very clearly sees that the syllabus of Christian teaching must have the Scriptures or salvation history at its heart, based on the teaching of *De catechizandis rudibus*, as well as *De doctrina christiana*.<sup>175</sup> One of his primary points in *Augustine the Educator*, kindred to that made by Howie,<sup>176</sup> is that for Augustine, Christian doctrine is central to the renewed Christian trivium and that Christian "philosophy" has assumed the crowning place in the renewed Christian quadrivium of the classical liberal arts.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Although Kevane only mentions the movement once, and only then in a footnote to chapter ten, he affirms the "solid fruits of the biblical, catechetical and liturgical movements which characterize the life of the contemporary Church." *Educator*, 318; see also 350, n. 24. For a less positive evaluation of the kerygmatic movement see Thomas Groome, *Christian Religious Education: Sharing our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980). On 148 he summarizes it this way: "The kerygmatic movement spearheaded by Jungmann and championed by Hofinger is best known in this country as the salvation history approach. Its central emphasis is on beginning with and teaching the story of salvation. It gives little place to the role of the student's lived experience." See also Mary Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1980) for a description and critique of the kerygmatic movement, as well as Francis Kelly's brief, schematic description of the kerygmatic stage of catechesis in *The Mystery We Proclaim: Catechesis for the Third Millennium* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, 1999) 154.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 317-318.

<sup>176</sup> See his diagram representing the centrality of Christian doctrine to the curriculum on page 229 of *Educational Theory and Practice in St. Augustine*.

<sup>177</sup> See *Educator* 189 ff. "Not only had the quadrivium been omitted by the schools of rhetoric, but the trivium had become swollen with pride and immorality, and empty of purpose and content. Its grammar was nothing but Vergil and the poets; its rhetoric nothing but Cicero and the skepticism of the New Academy; and logic had declined

The Kevane Thesis: *Augustine the Educator*

For Kevane, whose interest goes beyond catechesis to the whole of the church and school curriculum, the *narratio* of *DCR* ought to be central to catechesis in just the same way that Scripture study is central to the broader project of Christian education in *De doctrina christiana*.<sup>178</sup> It is this latter work (and not *DCR*) that Kevane describes as "in a sense the most fundamental of all the works of Augustine" and as critical to an understanding, not just of Augustine's pedagogical principles, but the very structure

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into mere sophism." See also H. I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la Fin de la Culture Antique* (Paris: Éditions E. de Boccard, 1958) 390, where he explains that this project entailed only a rejection of the pagan spirit, but not that which was of value in classical culture. This is what Howie calls a "harmonious synthesis of the old and the new." *Educational Theory*, 224.

<sup>178</sup> See especially 241-242. What Kevane calls the "renewal of sacred history" in Augustine, as explained in chapter seven of his work, results from the meeting of the classical heritage and Christian revelation. It represents the coming together of Athens and Jerusalem, the classical *paideia* and *doctrina Christiana*, in a way that is represented historically - in history itself - in *De civitate Dei*, especially in Book XVIII. Kevane writes, "'As a foundation of the edifice, we must place first the divine testimonies,' he writes in *The City of God*, in a fundamental statement of position which governs all his thought and work." So Kevane is not so much universalizing the principles of *DCR* as seeing in its catechetical method and content an expression of a dominant Augustinian theme, namely the centrality of Scripture and a sacred history to the renewal of the heart and mind of the Christian, which is then proposed as the proper core of Catholic education as a whole, which then becomes an instance of a real "*paideia Theou*" (177). The importance of Augustine's vision of history will be discussed later.

of much of his *opera omnia*.<sup>179</sup> Kevane's thesis, and so the reason for the title of his work, is that Augustine is fundamentally an educator. From the time of his retirement to Cassiciacum with family and friends in preparation for Baptism and to spend his time in prayer, study and teaching, he seemed to have discovered his life's project, which would remain central even after ordination to the priesthood and elevation to the episcopate.

Although at age 32 he had written only one text, *De pulchro et apto* (The Beautiful and the Fitting, which is nonextant), at "Cassiciacum, Augustine began to write with vigour and freedom," producing four works (*Contra Academicos*, *De beata vita*, *De ordine* and *Soliloquia*), apparently "having discovered a guiding principle that could be expounded in many directions: education, the arts, philosophy and religion."<sup>180</sup> These four themes, identified here by Knowles and Penkett, really resolve, in Kevane's estimation, to a full program of Christian education committed to the service of the Supreme Wisdom.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 221.

<sup>180</sup> Andrew Knowles and Pachomius Penkett, *Augustine and His World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004) 82-84.

<sup>181</sup> In this scheme we could say that, the *Contra Academicos* is a work that exposes the corruption of the ancient *paideia* in the new Academy and shows that pursuit of wisdom is possible. *De beata vita* shows that the proper aim of a renovated *paideia* is the Trinity. *De ordine* sets out the proper order of education in accord with the divine

From this point forward,<sup>182</sup> Kevane would suggest, Augustine's principle aim was to "renovate the heritage of *paideia*"<sup>183</sup> for the purpose of enabling Christians to come to possess the fullness of wisdom in faith, hope and love.<sup>184</sup> He asserts that the mature elaboration of the centrality of Scripture to his educational project didn't

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plan for the world. And *Soliloquia*, especially Book 1, shows the personal program of spiritual and intellectual (even physical) reassessment needed for the journey ahead. See Joanne McWilliam, "Cassiciacum Dialogues," in Fitzgerald, *Augustine through the Ages*. See also Howie's wonderful account of the way in which the Cassiciacum works describe an educational program, with particular reference to a Socratic methodology in his *Educational Theory*, 163 ff. For a very different assessment of the Cassiciacum period as *otium liberale* or "cultured retirement," and as an expression of an immature stage in the development of the Augustinian curriculum, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, New Edition (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) 108-117.

<sup>182</sup> In the context of arguing against the common thesis that Augustine's conversion was initially one to Neoplatonism, a philosophical rather than a Christian one, Kevane argues persuasively in chapter 4 of *Educator* that the flaw in that thesis is that from Cassiciacum until his ordination Augustine is engaged in the work of a "Catholic Lay Teacher" (section heading from 102). He argues "from the evidence of Augustine's own statements, that the works of this period between the launching of his 'difficult undertaking' at Cassiciacum with the publication of *The Happy Life* through the other works extending to his ordination, are all bound together by a common unifying theme. They represent Christian philosophy, indeed, but Christian philosophy as a body of thought developing in and for a renewed and reformed education of youth" 105.

<sup>183</sup> *Educator*, 189. See also *De beata vita*, 4,35.

<sup>184</sup> See H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, G. Lamb, trans. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), especially 95-101. "For Hellenistic man the sole aim of human existence was the achievement of the fullest and most perfect development of the personality.... *Παιδεία* (or *παιδευσις*) comes to signify 'culture' - not in the sense of something active and preparational like education, but in the sense that the word has for us today - of something perfected: a mind fully developed, the mind of a man who has become truly man; it is a striking fact that when, later, Varro and Cicero had to translate *παιδεία* into Latin, they used the word *Humanitas*" 98-99.

come until Augustine returned to his work *De doctrina christiana*, in the very midst of the retracing of his life's work in his *Retractiones*.<sup>185</sup> I would add, too, that his embrace of the Scriptural text, which came so hard to him as a young man, became iconic of the whole moral, spiritual and even intellectual transformation that Augustine undergoes in the *tolle lege* incident reported in the *Confessions*,<sup>186</sup> At the time of his *Retractiones*, Kevane suggests, Augustine had the chance to solidify the outlines of the general educational project which had sprung to life in his conversion experience and in his time at Cassiciacum.

So, Harmless' warning that *DCR* ought not to be made to stand as the general program or canon for all catechesis is worth hearing and heeding. But Kevane's thesis reminds us that, at least on this one point, the centrality of the biblical story, *DCR's narratio* is expressive of a central Augustinian theme found throughout his work. If Kevane is

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 221. Kevane notes that, although *De doctrina* was substantially completed when Augustine was still a priest, he left it unfinished for almost thirty years and only returned to it when he discovered it again while working on his *Retractiones* and thought it necessary to interrupt that latter work to return to finish *De doctrina* before going on with his evaluation of his life's work in *Retractiones*. See also 189.

<sup>186</sup> *Confessions* 8,12. See page 211 in Kevane's *Educator* where he explains that the meeting of the teaching authority of the Church and the Scriptures that it propounds served as "the striking new intellectual fact" which facilitates Augustine's conversion.

right, sacred history stands as the central principle for Augustine's whole program of Christian instruction.<sup>187</sup>

#### An Evangelical Catechesis for the New Evangelization

The very fact that *DCR* is, as highlighted by Harmless, a catechetical guide to an act of evangelization, a part of what we would today call the pre-catechumenate, is itself a reason to look at it anew. The *GDC*, as we have seen, represents the mature fruit of a decades-long movement to embed catechesis within the larger work of evangelization, which is the macro theme set forth in its Preface, "Preaching the Gospel in the contemporary world," and the title and concern of the whole of Part One, "Catechesis in the Church's Mission of Evangelization." Given the *GDC*'s insistence that the recovery of the evangelizing dynamic of

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<sup>187</sup> As Kevane moves in his argument from the central position of the Bible in *DCR* to the same centrality in Augustine's proposal for academic teaching, he notes that "St. Augustine continued the basic structure and features of the catechumenate in his plan for the order of academic studies in his school for Christian youth," *Educator* 217. This seems to corroborate in ancient practice the *GDC*'s insistence upon the normative quality of the catechumenate for all catechesis at 59. In the next chapter we will also see in Irenaeus of Lyon's *On the Apostolic Preaching* an example of a non-apologetical catechetical treatise in the form of a *narratio* intended, not for catechumens at all, but for a fellow believer, which is the oldest full summary of Christian teaching. We have already seen, as noted by several scholars, that these narrational catechetical forms, briefer or more extended, were used for many catechetical purposes and not just as first catechetical instructions. See note 158, above, and pages 5 and 86.



the patristic period is a providential impulse for the renewal of catechesis in our time, *DCR*, as the sole surviving example<sup>188</sup> of a patristic evangelistic catechesis, may be perhaps the single most valuable source text we have!<sup>189</sup>

With more specific reference to the importance and character of a biblical, catechetical *narratio*, Kevane's thesis suggests that Augustine's educational project for the alteration of the culture of his time by a renovation of *paideia* with the Scriptures at its center is evangelistic to the core. It wouldn't be too much to suggest that Augustine's project for such a renovation comports perfectly with what is called for in the New Evangelization of today. In both cases one valued cultural form, which is in decline, is renewed by recourse to the founding principles of that same cultural form. There are certainly differences, too, between the challenges faced by

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<sup>188</sup>There are certainly other patristic works, apologies, that could be considered evangelistic in a broad sense. Harmless lists Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation to the Greeks*, Minucius Felix's *Octavius*, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Preparation for the Gospel*, as well as Gregory of Nyssa's *Catechetical Oration*, which is intended to philosophically equip catechists. (*Catechumenate*, 109.) We could add to that list the apologetical works of Justin Martyr, as well.

<sup>189</sup> The reference here is to *GDC 2*, which is worth quoting in full. "The thirty-year period between the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council and the threshold of the third millennium is without doubt most providential for the orientation and promotion of catechesis. It has been a time in which the evangelizing vigor of the original ecclesial community has in some ways reemerged. It has also seen a renewal in interest in the teaching of the Fathers and has made possible a return to the catechumenate."

Augustine and those of our own day. Of course the movement from *paideia* to a *paideia Theou* in Augustine is entirely different from the current need for a New Evangelization, in the sense that the former was a movement from classical paganism to Christianity, from nature to grace in a radical sense, whereas the latter aims at reviving the life of grace in a culture previously committed to Christian forms of life.

But a "New Evangelization, one that is new not in content but in its ardor, new in its methods, and new in its means of expression,"<sup>190</sup> is still an evangelization in the ancient sense that Augustine had experienced, even though the newness of Augustine's evangelization derived not just from new ardor, methods and expression, but from the "sacred history" which had assumed the central place in the Christian curriculum. In each case, grace has to be brought to bear on a culture that had lost its way. But we ought not to underplay the vast cultural change that the world was undergoing then, which Augustine experienced in microcosm within himself. That change from the classical to the patristic has, after all, been proposed by the *GDC*

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<sup>190</sup> John Paul II to Bishops of Latin America (CELAM March 9, 1983), III, AAS 75 (1983) 778.

as the primary catechetical paradigm for the New Evangelization, and with good reason.

In every soul, in every work of evangelization, new or old, that macro change is expressed in micro. We all walk the same journey from pagan to Christian, from nature to grace, regardless of the state of the culture in which we find ourselves. With reference to Augustine's personal struggle and the educational project he formed out of that struggle, Kevane reminds us that

Human beings are indeed enslaved in the darkness of Plato's cave, but it will take more than the culture of human arts and disciplines, more even than a renovated and restored human paideia, to liberate the soul of man. St. Augustine realizes more fully and realistically the nature of this imprisonment, and the impotence of man to free himself. Men are in a far more sorry condition than Plato knew.<sup>191</sup>

I hope to show by the following examination of Augustine's *narratio* that in the catechetical recital of the content of the biblical story he aims at imparting to the hearer something of the "vision of universal history which occupied his mind's eye" from the time of his

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<sup>191</sup> *Educator*, 190.

conversion forward.<sup>192</sup> We have seen the centrality of Scripture, of "sacred history" to both Augustine's conversion and his project for the Christian renewal of Greco-Roman culture.<sup>193</sup> In light of all this, the *narratio* of *DCR* can, in the measured sense required by a sober embrace of Harmless' caution, represent just the sort of universal catechetical model that Kevane's work suggests and which the *GDC* enjoins.

#### Augustine's *DCR*: Proximate Background of the Instruction and Its Catechetical Genre

*De catechizandis rudibus* was provoked by a request from a deacon named Deogratias from Carthage, who would have had to face the same cultural challenges as Augustine only more so, since Carthage was the cosmopolitan center of North Africa and what van der Meer calls the "cradle of Christian Latinity," as well as "the intellectual battlefield of Latin Christianity."<sup>194</sup> "Brother

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 202. "It is the Scriptures, therefore, which make this reality of sacred history visible to the human mind; the Bible is the divine instrument for bringing the concept of sacred history to birth among men."

<sup>194</sup> Van der Meer, *Bishop*, 10. For a more recent analysis of the cultural setting with specific reference to tensions at play between

Deogratias," asks specifically for advice on how to present the "central parts of the faith," where to start and finish the "historical exposition," whether an *exhortatio* should be added at the end of the *narratio* or just a recital of behavioral precepts, and for advice on how to maintain a pleasing enthusiasm in his catechetical presentations.<sup>195</sup>

As I have tried to show, given the state of the catechumenate by the year 403, - the year which Raymond Canning concludes to be the correct one for *DCR* after rehearsing the outlines of the argument for that date by Pierre Marie Hombert<sup>196</sup> - the necessity of making the most of the evangelistic opportunity provided by this first catechetical instruction would have been felt acutely by someone like Deogratias. He is recognized by Augustine as being a successful catechetist,<sup>197</sup> someone who inquirers would have sought out or in whom his bishop had invested a great deal of responsibility in such matters.

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the Roman or Ambrosian and Caecilianist and Donatist forms of North African Christianity, see O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 49-61.

<sup>195</sup> *DCR* 1,1.

<sup>196</sup> Canning, *Instructing*, 9-11.

<sup>197</sup> *DCR* 1,1. "You are thought to be extremely skilled in offering this instruction, by reason of both your learning in the faith and the appealing way in which you deliver your address."

His query incites Augustine to pen what Van der Meer calls a "most delightful," and "wonderful little work,"<sup>198</sup> and which Kevane describes as "a priceless document of the patristic age," because it "summarizes the theory and illustrates the practice in this program of Christian teaching."<sup>199</sup> Harmless refers to *DCR* as "a unique document," noting that we have "nothing quite like it" from the patristic period.<sup>200</sup>

While most scholars have summarized the content of *DCR* in similar ways with only slight variations,<sup>201</sup> the most helpful, for its concision and practicality, is Harmless' division. For the first part of *DCR*, Harmless divides it according to candidate (in *DCR* chapters 5-6, 8-9)

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<sup>198</sup> *Bishop*, 453, 353.

<sup>199</sup> *Educator*, 212.

<sup>200</sup> *Catechumenate*, 109.

<sup>201</sup> E.g., Christopher, in *First Catechetical Instruction* (1946) who commends the work for "moving along clearly and vigorously" and the arrangement of its contents for being "logical and methodical" (8), opts to divide the work under the two main rubrics, "Part I The Theory of Catechesis (Chapters 1-15)" and "Part II The Practice of Catechesis (Chapters 16-27)". Van der Meer in *Bishop* (453-467) follows a similar pattern, seeing the two major divisions as falling 2-15 and 16-27, further subdividing them as follows: 1-2 (introduction), 3-4 (narratio), 5-7 (questioning and admonition), 8-9 and 15 (various types of catechumens), and 10-14 (the *hilaritas* of the catechist) and in the second part 16-25 (two examples, long [16-26, 50] and short [26, 51-27], of the complete catechism). Like Harmless, to simplify his summary he approaches it conceptually with "The Types of Catechumen," "The Catechist," and "Example of a Two-Hour Catechism," which is prefaced by reflections on the importance of "The Story of Redemption" and "The Exhortation." Canning provides the most elaborated outline with annotations on pages 43-51 of *Instructing*.

catechesis (chapters 3-4, 7), and catechist (2, 10-16), and, for the second part, according to the two sample addresses (16-25, the long, and 26-27, the short one) which he unfolds in pages 107-155 in *Augustine and the Catechumenate*.<sup>202</sup>

In reference to Harmless' division of the first part (by candidate, catechesis, and catechist) I have already touched upon some aspects of the character of both candidate and catechist while discussing the pastoral setting of *DCR*. My primary concern in this study is with only part of the catechesis, specifically, the *narrationes* themselves, their purpose, form, and function as catechetical content and method. So I will be focusing, for the most part, on those sections of *DCR* which will inform us on that score.

I will, however, suggest in Chapter III, following, an alternate division of the text in accord with the three rhetorical modes of proof from the Aristotelian system (*ethos, logos, and pathos*) which I think better accounts for the way in which Augustine orders his presentation of themes, as well as drawing into sharper focus the precise function of the *narratio* as the central part of the full

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<sup>202</sup> Harmless outlines the scheme which governs the treatment he gives to the content of *DCR* on page 110.

catechetical address. In order to demonstrate the aptness of this division, I will have to take up certain elements of the Prologue and Part I, including especially Augustine's advice on avoiding discouragement and maintaining cheerfulness (1,14 - 14,22) which address these three modes of proof and which also explain the rhetorical and catechetical dynamics at work in the three parts of the full catechetical address: the *exordium*, the *narratio*, and the *exhortatio*.

But before considering the specifics of content and method of the catechesis, we will need to determine a little more clearly what the particular act of catechesis at which Deacon Deogratias and his mentor Augustine are aiming. This will reinforce the point made above about the general catechetical applicability of the *narratio*, but now with reference, not to the general needs represented by the pastoral setting, nor the larger pastoral project of Augustine himself, but with reference to the particular needs of a first catechetical instruction.

### **The *Actus Catechizandis***

My brief treatment of the historical, pastoral setting of *DCR* lent an opportunity to discuss who the *rudes* of *De*



*catechizandis rudibus* were. Harmless helped us see that the common meaning of the Latin had given way to a technical one in the Church, which only meant "uninstructed," prescinding from any further presumptions about class, cultural standing, or educational accomplishment.<sup>203</sup> I have also discussed the issue of the unique character of *DCR* as the singular example of a first instruction of a pre-catechumen, which is really just what is meant by "uninstructed." But in order to complete the work of defining our terms, I have to return to that issue in order to clarify just what the *actus catechizandis* is in *DCR*.

As we did for the noun *rudes*, we first turn to Harmless for an analysis of the significance of the verb *catechizare*. He notes that our modern concern with distinguishing between *kerygma* and *didache*, between evangelization and catechesis would have been foreign to the Latin Fathers who used *catechizare* for both.<sup>204</sup> Mary Boys defines the two terms that we moderns reflexively distinguish: evangelization as "the efforts that prepare

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<sup>203</sup> See above, page 84, note 153.

<sup>204</sup> *Catechuminate*, 108, n. 3. For a deeper evaluation of the terms, see C. Mayer, "Catechizandis rudibus, De," C. Mayer and K. H. Chelius, eds., *Augustinus-Lexikon* I, 5/6 (Basel: Schwabe & Co, 1992) 793-805.

and bring into life a person's first responsible adherence to the gospel" and catechesis as "the efforts intended to activate faith by means of instruction and, by so doing, to bring initial faith to maturity."<sup>205</sup>

In Raymond Canning's explanation for his choice of the title *Instructing Beginners in the Faith* for *DCR*, he notes the work is, strictly speaking, neither evangelization nor catechesis, in the way that Boys defines them. Those who receive this first address come of their own volition (even if unenthusiastically or without the best motives) seeking Church entry. They have already responded to the gospel and so can't be the subjects of the efforts of primary evangelization, but have not yet received the grace of faith in Baptism and so can't be the subjects of catechesis - in the modern sense - either. He calls *DCR* a "pre-catechesis," indicating that it stands uniquely between the moments of evangelization and catechesis, again, in the modern sense of those terms.<sup>206</sup>

This should remind us of the point made in the previous part of this chapter, that *DCR's* uniqueness (as a catechesis for the pre-catechuminate) doesn't make it less

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<sup>205</sup> Mary Boys, *Education in Faith: Maps and Visions* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989) 98-99, cited in Canning, *Instructing*, 15, n. 12.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

germane to the modern catechetical setting, but precisely more so. The recent association of catechesis with evangelization, as introduced in Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and summed up in the *GDC* fits perfectly with the latter's approval and even insistence upon the proper place of *narratio* if one takes Canning's insight to mean that *DCR* is somewhat evangelistic and somewhat catechetical. If, as Canning's insight suggests, it has a foot in both worlds, belongs in some way to both moments, then that supports a wider application for its *narrationes* than in either just evangelization or catechesis alone.

The movement to embed catechesis within the evangelical mission of the Church is born of the realization that, as Paul VI put it,

The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love; and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the "mighty works of God"

[citing Acts 2:11 & 1 Pt 2:9] which converted her to the Lord.<sup>207</sup>

That is, the renewed emphasis upon evangelization is not simply a renewed interest in the geographical extension of the Church which then couples to itself the work of catechetical instruction, but a revival of the Patristic practice in which *didache* always had something of the quality of the kerygmatic about it, just as the *kerygma* always had something didactic about it. And this is so because, as she has always known, the Church is always in need of evangelization herself, although this came into sharper focus in the last half of the twentieth century when the popes issued a call for a New Evangelization.

As regards catechesis, this means that it

must often concern itself not only with nourishing and teaching the faith but also with arousing it unceasingly with the help of grace, with opening the heart, with converting, and with preparing total adherence to Jesus Christ on the part of those who are still on the threshold of faith.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> EN 15.

<sup>208</sup> John Paul II, CT 19.

That summary statement by John Paul II in *Catechesi Tradendae* about the need for an evangelizing catechesis follows upon the admission that in actual "catechetical practice...initial evangelization has often not taken place," and he concludes with the statement that "[t]his concern will in part decide the tone, the language and the method of catechesis."<sup>209</sup>

This last statement speaks directly to the issue at hand about the kind of *actus catechizandis* that *DCR* proposes. With Canning's insight that Augustine would likely have had just that sort of problem at hand - one in which he must combine the evangelistic with the catechetical, the kerygmatic with the didactic, in a work of instruction which is therefore a "pre-catechesis" - we can now advance to a study of the catechetical content and methodology that Augustine uses to accomplish this dual purpose in his narrations. And we can now advance to that task with a clearer sense that it is just that dual purpose which makes of what he proposes to Deogratias just the sort of all-purpose tool that the *GDC* insists that the *narratio* is.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> See also *GDC* 62 on the need to start with a "kerygmatic catechesis" or "pre-catechesis" in the context of the New

## CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: PROLOGUE AND PART I, *DE MODO*  
*NARRATIONIS* AND *DE HILARITATE* (1,1 - 14,22)**Introduction**

In this chapter I will be looking at Augustine's introductory Prologue and the two sections of Part I which Canning titles, "Actual Directions for Formulating the Address" (3,5 - 9,13) and "How to Avoid Discouragement When Giving Instruction and How to Develop a Cheerful Attitude" (10,14 - 14,22). For ease of reference, I will refer to that first section of Part I as *de modo* and to the second as *de hilaritate*.

Because of the imperative that the *GDC* makes of *narratio* as we saw that outlined in Chapter I, I would normally be interested less in the advice that Augustine gives to the catechist about diagnosing and solving his

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Evangelization to ensure that a "solid option of faith" has first been taken.

lack of enthusiasm for the catechetical task in *de hilaritate* than in the character of the narrative catechesis itself in *de modo*. So my intention is to spend the most time on those elements in *DCR* that address the historical address or *narratio*. These are the portions of chapters 3 - 4, which speak to basic issues of the form and purpose of the narration<sup>211</sup> and the actual addresses or narrations themselves (16,24 - 24,45 and 26,51 - 27,53).

But, as I hope to show, to understand fully the *narratio* portion of the complete catechesis one must also understand how Augustine intended each of the three parts of the address, the introductory *exordium*, the *narratio*, and the closing *exhortatio*, to function rhetorically. The Prologue and Part I of *DCR* (1,1 - 14,22) present indispensable material for understanding the intention and rhetorical structure of the full catechetical address, of

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<sup>211</sup> Canning titles this portion after the Prologue (1,1-2,4) as "Actual Directions for Formulating the Address" and extends the division to *DCR* 9,13. But 5,9 through 9,13 have to do with determining the disposition of the inquirer, both for the purpose of adapting the address to his needs and to encourage a receptive attitude in him. This does present one important issue that will be taken up, that of the specifically personal character of the Augustinian pedagogy, but has less to do with the content and methodological questions as regards the actual narration or address that are my primary concern.

Canning's numbering system, which I will be following, employs the system used in Christopher's earlier translations, giving first the chapter number and then, behind a comma, the section numbers which continue sequentially through the text from beginning to end. So, for example, 2,4 and 3,5 are immediately adjacent to each other in the text, the fourth section being at the end of chapter 2 and immediately preceding the fifth section at the beginning of chapter 3.

which the *narratio* is its central part. In this chapter I hope to show that the full address in its three parts can be better understood as informed by both the Aristotelian modes of proof, *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*, and a theological rubric for the catechesis that Augustine gives at 4,8 where he tells Deogratias that the *narratio* should aim at faith, hope and charity.

In the next chapter (Chapter IV) I will take the findings from this chapter and use them to examine the three parts of the sample catechetical addresses, *exordium*, *narratio*, and *exhortatio*, drawing from the long and the short samples that Augustine provides (16,24 - 25,49 and 26,51 - 27,55), again, giving most of my attention to the *narratio*. I will also touch briefly upon Augustine's transition to the long address at 15,23 and the rite of reception into the catechumenate at 26,50 in Chapter IV.

#### **The Historical Exposition: Its Aims and Extension**

As I have already noted, *DCR* was penned by Augustine of Hippo at the request of Deacon Deogratias of Carthage, who asked specifically how to communicate to inquirers "in a suitable way the central points of the faith that gives



us our identity as Christians."<sup>212</sup> In the context of that more general description, Augustine tells us that Deogratias had also asked about where to begin and end the historical exposition,<sup>213</sup> in the Latin *narratio*; whether to append to it a moral exhortation or list of precepts; and, also, that Deogratias had lamented his felt sense of inadequacy owing to a dearth of enthusiasm for the task of this first instruction.

I have also noted that Augustine's concern<sup>214</sup> with helping Deogratias to find a way of sparking his enthusiasm for the catechetical task concerns me only as it relates to "the manner in which the historical exposition is to be presented."<sup>215</sup> The *narratio* itself is my central concern because the *GDC* has called for its use in catechesis and to do that catechists need to know what it is and how it functions.

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<sup>212</sup> DCR 1, 1. See Walter Burghardt, "Catechetics in the Early Church: Program and Psychology," *Living Light* Vol. 1, No. 3 (fall 1964):101-118. He uses Augustine's *DCR* as his first example of the particularly doctrinal quality of patristic catechesis in whatever form on 101-102.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* Canning uses the English phrase "historical exposition" for *narratio* throughout.

<sup>214</sup> Augustine, in fact, calls this his "greatest concern," owing to the fact that the joy of the speaker makes him "more appealing" to his hearers. *DCR* 2, 4.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 4.

In his Prologue (1,1 - 2,4) Augustine tells us that, as just noted, the *narratio* is intended to display "the central points of the faith" and that it "gives us our identity as Christians."<sup>216</sup> With reference to the first point, he also says in 2,4 that it represents an "initial grounding in the faith" and then that in the historical exposition "the content of the faith is communicated." That a half-hour to an hour-and-a-half discourse could do all that might seem a rather exalted claim, but Augustine is clear that in either the short or the longer form, when constructed properly, the *narratio* will be "at all times perfectly complete."<sup>217</sup>

It is clear that Augustine expects much of the *narratio* he describes; it must ground the faith, give at least its central tenets - perhaps the whole of its content, and even enable the hearer to begin to take on a Christian identity. That is a very tall order and we now have to see how he fills it with specific reference to what he means by its being "complete."

In 3,5 Augustine tells us that the *narratio* "is complete when the instruction delivered to the newcomer

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 1,1. Christopher (1946) has "that truth, the belief in which makes us Christians." *First Instruction*, 13.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 2,4.

begins from the scriptural verse, *In the beginning God made heaven and earth* (Gn 1:1), and continues down to the present period of the church's history." That describes what I would call its completeness in extension. He gives first its beginning and its end, and any story needs both. But he goes on to set limits, not to the extension - it must include the beginning and the end - but to its internal contents, first by limiting the books of the Bible from which one might draw one's material to the historical books,<sup>218</sup> and, then, by making clear that the whole of the content of these texts, whether verbatim or in one's own words, would be far beyond the scope of the time allowed. What is called for is "a general summary sketch of all the content," or, in Christopher's better translation "a general and comprehensive summary."<sup>219</sup>

What this summary would consist of is then described as a selection of "a certain number of quite remarkable events (*quaedam mirabiliora*)...ones that our listeners find particularly appealing (*quae suavius audiuntur*) and that constitute the critical turning points (*in ipsis articulis*

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<sup>218</sup> He lists specifically "the Pentateuch and all the books of Judges and Kingdoms and Ezra," as well as "the whole of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles."

<sup>219</sup> In the Latin, *cuncta summam generatimque complecti*. Canning's "summary sketch" seems here to get less of the meaning than Christopher's "comprehensive summary."

*constituta sunt*)."<sup>220</sup> These criteria of selection, that one should choose the more marvelous, appealing, and critically important events of the biblical history, constitute the skeleton of the *narratio*. One must tell the story to insight wonder, to encourage fascination, and to enlighten as to the unfolding of the plot of the economy. As Augustine puts it, at these critical, wonderful points of the story one should "linger a little, unfasten the wrappings [of the scroll] as it were, unroll the parchment, and offer its contents to the minds of our hearers to consider and admire (*inspicienda atque miranda*)."<sup>221</sup>

What this suggests is an intensive completeness, rather than just an extensive completeness. It is not just the whole story that Augustine is after, the story from beginning to end, but that wholeness or completeness which is indicated by the most meaningful of biblical events.

Highlighting these central events orders the story and focuses and keeps the intellect fresh so that the memory

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<sup>220</sup> The full phrase is *ita ut eligantur quaedam mirabilia quae suavius audiuntur atque in ipsis articulis constituta*. Canning cites the importance of *articulus* as a critical or turning point and, after citing Christopher's references to the classical precursors of the term in Cicero and Pliny, points to Augustine's use of important eras as ordering principles in the economy in *The City of God* (XVI, 24, 2), which he won't begin writing for another ten years, and in *DCR*; see *Instructing*, 64, n. 19. These turning points will become a critical part of our analysis going forward in *DCR*.

<sup>221</sup> *DCR* 3,5.

will retain the outline of the narration. As we will see, these events are the ones that mark the story as divine and so are also capable of convicting, inciting wonder, and engraving themselves in the memory, captivating the intellect, and capturing the will. The rest of the events, says Augustine, "should then be rapidly reviewed and woven into the fabric," and so "relegated to the background," so that the more central ones "will stand out more prominently."<sup>222</sup> When again discussing the content of the narration later at 6,10, Augustine says that the central events related should be joined to an explanation of their "causes and reasons" (*causae rationesque*). Canning translates this "the deeper meaning," which, although not literal, points us toward a central feature of the narration which Augustine addresses next at 3,6.

At 3,6 and again at 6,10 Augustine tells us that the goal of the whole of the economy which the catechist is to relate is "constituted by love"<sup>223</sup> and that catechists should "make all that we say accord with this standard."<sup>224</sup> That is so because "God's love formed the bedrock beneath

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 6,10.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., 3,6. This accords with Augustine's assertion of love as the primary exegetical principle in the interpretation of Scripture in *De doctrina Christiana*, Book Three, XII, 20-24.

the shifting sands of salvation history."<sup>225</sup> The pedagogy of the catechist must follow God's in making love the standard and so, "toward it we should also purposefully turn the glance of the person for whose instruction we are speaking."<sup>226</sup>

William Harmless calls this the "guiding thread for this recital of salvation history."<sup>227</sup> He is right in the sense that love or charity is the *purpose* of both salvation history and the narration that rehearses it. But with reference to the *narratio*, love ought not to be thought of in the abstract.<sup>228</sup> The "deeper meaning" (as Canning translates *causae rationesque*) of the events of salvation history in the Old Testament is the revelation of Christ and the Church. In these, divine love is not merely related but operative: "Indeed, everything that we read in the holy scriptures that was written before the coming of the Lord was written for the sole purpose of drawing

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<sup>225</sup> Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 129.

<sup>226</sup> *DCR* 3,6.

<sup>227</sup> Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 129. On page 143 he refers to the "two threads" that shape the *narratio*: "(1) foreshadowings of the New Testament, and (2) the love of God."

<sup>228</sup> At 4,7 we read, "Now, what stronger reason could there be for the Lord's coming than that God intended to reveal his love among us and prove it with great force." Augustine in this section and the one following urges that Christ is the demonstration of God's love and an incitement to our return of love. As the *narratio* unfolds, this will be shown in the saving works of God, which is to say that God's love is shown in his actions, the culmination of which comes in Christ.

attention to his coming and of prefiguring the future Church."<sup>229</sup> Love is *Incarinate* in Christ and expressed in his Church. That is, love is an exegetical key because God acts out of love; and so the events of salvation history are ordered and illuminated by it.

As he puts it in 4,8, "all of the divine scripture that was written before the Lord's coming was written to announce that coming; and everything that has since been committed to writing and invested with divine authority tells of Christ and calls to love" (*Christum narrat et dilectionem monet*). Put simply, the purpose of the Scripture is to reveal Christ and the Church and the purpose of Christ and His Church is to reveal and make available the love of God.

But the "golden thread" that links these events, according to Augustine himself at 6,10 is "the very truth of the explanation we provide" (in Christopher [1946] "the simple truth of the narration we employ"<sup>230</sup>). So, together the *mirabilia*, the *articuli*, and the *causae rationesque* - the more wonderful events, the critical turning points, and

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<sup>229</sup> DCR 3,6.

<sup>230</sup> *First Catechetical Instruction*, 27. See Sophia Cavaletti, *History's Golden Thread: The History of Salvation* (Chicago: Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Publications, 1999). The title is taken from DCR and the elaboration of salvation history as a unified plan follows Augustine's lead.

the causes and reasons the catechist provides to connect them - form a narration that convicts that Love is at work in the world, by virtue of the truth of the "complete" picture of salvation history. Between addressing the "deeper meaning...that is brought out when we relate them [*causae rationesque*] to the goal constituted by love" and "the very truth of the explanation that we provide" [by way of those *causae rationesque*] which he calls the "golden thread" of the narration, Augustine makes a clear distinction between the "fictitious tales of the makers of verse" and the "true stories that we tell." He wants to make sure that the deeper meaning, which as we will see, is constituted by the spiritual meaning of the events of Bible history, is not to be thought of as *fabula* but as *historia*, a true and so convincing story as to the divine goal of love. So, the completeness of the narrational picture is guaranteed by the underlying Christological/ecclesiological theme, its true and deeper meaning, which also discloses the divine charity.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Raymond Canning in the *Australian EJournal of Theology* sums the issue up well in the following way: "in sum, the prime purpose of the historical exposition (*narratio*), or the presentation of subject matter, is to explain the deeper meaning of the events that are recounted, a 'meaning [that] is brought out when we relate [these events] to the goal constituted by love (see Tm 1:5).'" "Teaching and Learning: an Augustinian Perspective," August 2004, Issue 3; accessed 22 August 2007; available at: <http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt3/Canning.htm>.



**"For Our Sakes, on Whom the End of the Ages Has Fallen"**

This is shown in the example that Augustine supplies at the end of 3,6 to explicate further "the manner in which the historical exposition is to be presented."<sup>232</sup> He turns to the birth of Jacob, one of the signal turning points (*articuli*) in the patriarchal history, to expose the pattern of the whole plan of God in regard to its eventual disclosure in Christ by explaining the marvelous way in which this event prefigures Christ's coming and its effects. Jacob's hand reaches out of his mother's womb and latches onto the heel of his elder brother Esau, whom he will eventually displace in the patriarchal line. This is a figure, for Augustine, of the overthrowing of the firstborn, Israel, in favor of the Gentiles. The Jews end by "catching their heel in the bonds of the law as it were with his five fingers."

But it suggests more than that. Jacob is a type of Christ who sends ahead of himself (like Jacob's five fingers protruding from the birth canal) the five books of

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<sup>232</sup> DCR 2,4.

the Pentateuch (symbolic of the whole of the Law). The five fingers also represent the five ages that will foretell and prepare (in the whole of the rest of the Scriptural canon) for Christ's coming. As such, this brief, yet elaborate typology of Jacob's birth represents the fundamental pattern of the whole historical exposition that is to follow. Augustine will elaborate it along the lines of the five ages that lead up to Christ, who becomes the agent in the divine plan introducing the sixth age.

In the Jacob/Christ typology presented here, the five fingers, five books, and five ages all point allegorically to Israel, the people of the book (Pentateuch). With the addition of Christ, born in the sixth age of the world (as the first Adam was born on the sixth day of creation) and as the final historical figure who fulfills all those preceding him, Augustine will make a direct association between the hebdomad, the six days of creation, and the whole history of the world with Christ as the central interpretive figure. So with this figure, Augustine discloses that he intends to tell a story that is ordered, progressive, typological, and Christological and, so, all encompassing.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> At *DCR* 9, 13 Augustine says that allegorical or "hidden meaning" of the "literal sense" should be given to those who have been educated in the rhetoric schools of his day "to arouse the desire for

In this brief preview of what is to follow we also see Augustine's primary exegetical principle, a Christological and ecclesiological typology that reveals that the "sole purpose" of the biblical story is to point to Christ and the Church.<sup>234</sup> As he puts it at 4,8 in that now familiar dictum, "the Old Testament is concealed in the New, and in the New Testament is revealed the Old."<sup>235</sup> Gerard Sloyan says of this famous principle that

No understanding of Augustine is possible without a grasp of this simple exegetical and pedagogical principle. He attacks all portions of both Testaments in search of Christ, and because they contain him, Augustine is not disappointed.<sup>236</sup>

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truth and dispel the listlessness that is brought on by distaste" for the pedestrian character of the language of the Scriptures. Here he hints that the allegorical interpretation is going to be used for all.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., 3,6. For Augustine's use of the senses of Scripture, see Brian Stock, *Augustine the Reader: Meditation, Self-Knowledge, and the Ethics of Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 165-169.

<sup>235</sup> See CCC 129, which cites this same dictum in *Questions on the Heptateuch* 2,73. Canning also notes (*Instructing*, 70 n. 44) that the veiled quality of the Old Testament and its disclosure in the New was a principle that Augustine learned from his mentor Ambrose and which enabled him to overcome the Manichean critique of the Old Testament which he describes here in *DCR* as he does elsewhere as a "carnal" reading, which is to be contrasted to a proper "spiritual" reading, such as that which he gives in sample form in 3,6 in the allegory of the birth of Jacob.

<sup>236</sup> Gerard S. Sloyan, "Religious Education: From Early Christianity," in his *Shaping the Christian Message*, 27.

Again, I need to note that in the allegory of the birth of Jacob, Augustine demonstrates his principal that the whole Scripture (the part - the Pentateuch - standing in for the whole<sup>237</sup>) points to Christ and that the love that he comes to disclose is already being revealed at Israel's inception. The five fingers of Jacob, he says, are connected to the Head, but below the Head, and precede his coming. God's demonstration of love in Christ is prefigured in the whole of Israel (the part, Jacob, again, standing in for the whole). Since, as he argues in 4,7 and 4,8, an advance sign of love by a superior toward an inferior is a powerful inducement to love from the inferior, this allegory suggests that God has gone very far out indeed in advance of us to induce a loving response from us.

That this sample typology representing the prophetic history "of the faithful servants who preceded him" was meant by God precisely for the Church of his day is indicated by Augustine in a brief collection of three Pauline texts:

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<sup>237</sup> At 3,6 we read, "he too sent on ahead as it were a part of his body in the form of the holy patriarchs and prophets," and then refers to the "five epochs of history," that is, the whole of the history of Israel leading up to the coming of Christ.

Hence all the things that were written in the past were written to teach us (Rom 15:4), and they were symbolic figures of ourselves (1 Cor 10:6); these things happened to those people with symbolic import, and indeed they were written for our sakes, on whom the end of the ages has fallen (1 Cor 10:11).<sup>238</sup>

What these texts also indicate is that, for Augustine, the typological exegetical methodology to which I have already made reference is founded in the New Testament's reading of the events of the Old and not in any novelty introduced by himself or others of the Fathers.<sup>239</sup>

This first disclosure of the pattern of the *narratio* indicates that the whole of the revealed history is both unified in, and properly interpreted by the revelation of Christ and the Church, and that the Church is both the beneficiary of the earlier chapters and herself the final chapter of the story. The former part of the story is "for

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid., emphasis in Canning's original.

<sup>239</sup> For a brief but cogent explanation of the role of the allegorical reading of the Scriptures by the Fathers, see Robert Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2003) 69-77. I will have to take up later the issue of whether or not an exegetical principle of this kind is appropriate for modern catechesis, for now, however, it is best to get all the cards on the table, as it were, to allow Augustine to give his *narratio*, so that we know the full scope of the exegetical principle, and so that arguments pro and con will have their proper context. Sloyan credits Irenaeus' *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* with "setting the stage for all subsequent attempts to see in Christ the summing-up of humanity, typified by the Jews who awaited God's revelation." "Religious Education: From Early Christianity," in *Shaping the Christian Message*, 18.

our instruction"<sup>240</sup> and for "prefiguring the future Church,"<sup>241</sup> and its "complete" telling must include "the present period of the Church's history."<sup>242</sup> And so Augustine encourages Deogratias to convince his hearers that they should "take the way already prepared in the holy scriptures." That is, the journey that sacred history charts is continued in the life of the Christian and the Church.

In the last two sections of this introduction to the historical exposition where Augustine treats of the types of newcomers to the Church that a catechist might expect to meet (8,12-9,13) and of ways to maintain cheerfulness in delivering the instruction (10, 14-14,22), he gives further valuable indications of the character of his narrational methodology.

He notes that in this initial grounding in the faith the catechist should "keep to the most well trodden path," indicating that the content he will later present is, at least, the common fund for catechesis of this type.<sup>243</sup> For

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<sup>240</sup> Rm 15:4, RSV.

<sup>241</sup> DCR 3,6.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 6,10 and 3,5.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 11,16. He says this in reference to the danger of veering into error in the exposition, but it stands as a general admonition nonetheless. See CT 61 for a modern statement on the need to avoid theological speculation in catechesis.

the duller newcomer with "no ear for...the charm of such endeavors," he counsels that the instructor keep to the "most essential" elements, "namely, the unity of the Catholic Church, temptations, the Christian way of life."<sup>244</sup> But the exposition will still have for the hearer a quality of "newness" which may leave him "affronted and confounded," due to longstanding habits of intellectual or moral error.<sup>245</sup> This same quality of newness may arouse "great awe" or "astonishment" or "grief and lamentation," and, hopefully, also a "desire for the truth."<sup>246</sup>

In most cases it is precisely the allegorical interpretation of the "literal sense," the "hidden meaning" which is able to arouse in this way, for the purpose of convicting of the truth, turning from error, heightening the sense of the value of the Scriptures for the intellectually jaded, or for dispelling listlessness of mind or physical weariness.<sup>247</sup> It is these "mysteries," the "obscure and concealed" elements in the "words and deeds"

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<sup>244</sup> Ibid., 13,18. He suggests thereby that the absolute fundamentals are trust in the reliability of the Church as the teacher of divine truth and the moral rectitude that will enable him to escape "the judgment to come."

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid., 13,19; 9,13.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

of the exposition which enable the classically educated to look beyond the poverty of the biblical language and to realize that one should prefer truth to mere eloquence, just as one should prefer wise to handsome friends.<sup>248</sup> It is the allegorical interpretations, "especially the ones that are part of our historical exposition itself, which we can then clarify and explain," which make "our address pleasant to listen to," whatever sort of person the catechist might find himself addressing.<sup>249</sup>

It's important to note, too, that for all his concern with providing the deeper allegorical meaning of the biblical text, the story that Augustine tells should not thereby be considered to be fabulous, in the way of the "fictitious tales of the makers of verse (*fictas poetarum fabulas*), contrived as they were to suit the tastes of minds that feed on frivolities."<sup>250</sup> The economy of salvation is made up of "true stories" comprised of the literal historical sense, as well as the allegorical, which constitutes the "very truth of the explanation we

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<sup>248</sup> Ibid. Here Augustine is addressing the case of persons who had been educated in the schools of rhetoric, in which he was once a practitioner. Canning notes that he had been won to faith by Ambrose's employment of just such a method of allegorical interpretation and cites *Confessions* VI, 4, 6-5, 8 (*Instructing*, 86 n. 93).

<sup>249</sup> DCR 13, 18.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 6, 10.



provide."<sup>251</sup> As I noted above, the allegorical dimension of meaning is the "golden thread," and the wonderful events for which this allegorical meaning provides the explanation are conceived of as the "precious stones in an ornament" which the golden thread of the allegorical sense holds together. As he tells us, the allegorical must not overwhelm the historical, "making itself too obvious."<sup>252</sup>

### **The Rhetorical Structure of the Full Address**

Augustine's concern with retaining the literal-historical framework of the historical exposition - despite the importance of the allegorical dimension, - is in keeping with Canning's insistence upon his classification of the *narratio* as *historia*, one of the three less specifically forensic forms of classical rhetorical presentation. While Harmless rightly says that "neither Augustine nor Deogratias would have thought of declaiming the *narratio* as simply 'telling the story,'" he contends that Augustine's model is instead largely that of the

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

juridical oration.<sup>253</sup> Canning, on the other hand, cites Siniscalco in two articles from *Augustinianum*, as well as the source texts from Cicero and Quintilian, to support the thesis that Augustine's reference in 6,10 (just cited above) to *fictas fabulas* is made precisely to distinguish his *narratio* (as *historia*) from *fabula*, one of the three other non-juridical rhetorical forms. (The third form of these non-juridial *narrationes* was the *argumentum*.)<sup>254</sup> Again, while Harmless is right to insist upon Augustine's intention to give "the facts of the case," Canning is also right to insist that those facts are presented with a less strictly forensic purpose than with an historical one.

The essential point for this study is that Augustine's *narratio* is more than just one element of the elaborated *dispositio* (in the Greek, *taxis*) of the standard rhetorical presentation that Harmless tries to make of it.<sup>255</sup> In the

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<sup>253</sup> See Harmless, *Catechuminate*, 123 ff. and the chart on page 155. In fairness to Harmless, for him the historical dimension of the *narratio* is in continuity with the traditional form of Jewish argumentation from covenantal history (p. 127). Harmless sees the classical Greco-Roman juridical and Jewish covenantal historical forms as combining in Augustine. As I will show later, in accord with Harmless, there is a great deal of truth to this, even if the Siniscalco/Canning thesis adds an important measure of precision to it, precisely because it shows that the Greco-Roman and Jewish rhetorical forms that Augustine employs are closer in intent from the start.

<sup>254</sup> Canning, *Instructing*, 53 n. 2 and see the full bibliographical citation on Siniscalco's two articles on his page 42.

<sup>255</sup> For what follows, see Edward Corbett and Robert Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 11-24 and George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*

Aristotelian rhetorical system it belongs to the one of the three "entechnoi, the artistic or internal modes of proof"<sup>256</sup> (*pistis*). The three forms are usually designated by the three terms *ethos* (ethical appeal), *logos* (rational appeal), and *pathos* (emotional appeal). The *narratio* belongs to the second category, *logos*, the appeal to reason by way of a disclosure of the facts of the case; in that capacity it represents the substance of an argument. The full Augustinian catechetical address is really a very lean piece of rhetoric, with only vestigial elements of *ethos*, in the introductory *exordium*, and *pathos*, in the closing *exhortatio*, and even less of the other explicit elements of the more elaborated classical Ciceronian *dispositio*.<sup>257</sup>

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and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) 63-74. Corbett and Connors note that in one of "the two most famous sets of *progymnasmata*," the programs of training in rhetoric, Aphthonius of Antioch, interestingly, almost exactly contemporaneous with DCR, places learning to recite a *narratio*, either fictional or nonfictional, as the second step in the rhetoric curriculum, just after the retelling of a *fabula*, 484-485.

<sup>256</sup> Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Christian and Secular*, 68.

<sup>257</sup> Even in Harmless' attempt to show the elaborated parts of the classical *dispositio* in DCR in his chart on page 155, it is striking that the only ones clearly identifiable are the *exordium*, the attempt to render the audience well disposed [corresponding to *ethos*], the *narratio*, the facts of the case [*logos*], and the *exhortatio*, the arousal to action [*pathos*]. These three correspond to the fundamental Aristotelian schema. The full Ciceronian *dispositio* outlined by Harmless includes six parts: *exordium*, *narratio*, *partitio*, *confirmatio*, *reprehensio*, and the *concluding peroratio*, which is elaborated into three further divisions, *enumeratio*, *indignatio*, and *conquestio*. (Harmless notes on page 130 that the *exhortatio*, an important part of Augustine's catechetical address, isn't a part of the Ciceronian schema.) I'm not faulting Harmless' attempt to tease out these various

Augustine's *narratio* is historical, inductive, neither fabulous, nor abstractly argumentative, as would be characteristic of the more juridical form. With reference, again, to the Aristotelian rhetorical pattern - this time with reference to the type of audience addressed - it belongs to that category of orations called deliberative, that sort of appeal made to a hearer who is being invited to judge a proposed future course of action.<sup>258</sup>

With reference to a renewed application of *narratio* in the modern setting, it is important to stress that the *narratio* makes for compelling catechesis not on the basis of rhetorical panache, nor even just because it makes an appeal to *logos*, but because it discloses the work of the

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rhetorical elements in Augustine's discourse. Augustine was, after all, a Ciceronian *rhetor* whose training and practice would certainly have found expression in such a presentation, as Harmless rightly notes. I only mean to say that Siniscalco and Canning seem to have rightly identified the elemental form of Augustine's *narratio* as the non-juridical *historia*. That designation seems to comport with the fact of the centrality of *historia sacra* to Augustine's educational program, as stressed by Kevane. See Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 155 and Kevane, *Educator*, 235-243. See also R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 11 ff.

<sup>258</sup> Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Christian and Secular*, 68, "logos [is] that mode of proof found in the argument and most characteristic of rhetoric." And on page 70, "proof by example is more suitable to deliberative than to judicial oratory, since we must predict the future on the basis of our knowledge of the past." And on page 74, "Much of Christian oratory is deliberative." Quoting from Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, Kennedy sees the classical Aristotelian scheme still operative in this most deliberatively rhetorical of his works in noting that "the Christian teacher should 'conciliate those who are opposed [ethos], arouse those who are remiss [pathos], and teach those ignorant of his subject [logos]." 156.

*Logos*, demonstrating that Christ is what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls "the key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of man's history."<sup>259</sup> Augustine is very much concerned with winning the soul in front of him, as we are about to see, and that by the use of his considerable rhetorical skills if they will serve that purpose. But he is utterly convinced of the truth of his case and so seems to think that it requires not much rhetorical adornment, if the bare-bones product we have in *DCR* is the real measure of the question.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> CCC 450.

<sup>260</sup> In *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974) 48 ff., James Murphy explains the way in which Augustine, whose distaste for the crass rhetoric of what is called the Second Sophistic would have been a commonplace among the Christian commentators of the fourth century, nevertheless in *De doctrina Christiana* he encourages the Christian orator not to "stand unarmed in the fight against falsehood" (4,1,2) and so to take up the art of eloquence in the service of wisdom. In this, Augustine charts the course of a western appropriation of the classical patrimony but, like his contemporaries, he always asserts the superiority of wisdom over mere eloquence ("Eloquent speakers give pleasure, wise ones salvation." *DDC* 4,6,9). This supports, I think, my suggestion that Augustine's rhetorical approach in *DCR* is closer to the Aristotelian in its sober concern with the truth and lack of ornamentation, than the more ornate Ciceronian rhetoric associated with judicial purposes. See further Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 42 and *DCR* 9,13 where Augustine speaks disparagingly of those who, like himself, "have been to the run of the mill schools of grammar and rhetoric" and who must be especially enjoined to "clothe themselves with Christian humility."

**The Personal Nature of the Address and Preparing the Person  
to Receive It - *Ethos***

What I have shown is that there are certain constants to the content of the Augustinian address, what we could call its essentials: a Christological and ecclesial trajectory, the importance of encouraging moral rectitude in accord with Church teaching, the alluring mystery and cogency added by the allegorical interpretation of the summary of the letter of the Scriptural story, the importance of enabling the hearer to join his journey to that which he sees in the scriptural story, and the ultimate purpose of disclosing the love of God in Christ. But despite this stability of content, Augustine is equally insistent upon an absolute methodological docility on the part of the catechist toward the hearer of the address. He repeatedly indicates that Deogratias must strive to meet the needs of the individual in front of him and not merely rely upon a stock fund of tools.

In fact, this fundamental methodological principle makes up a large part of the methodological advice he gives in this last portion of Augustine's "directions for

formulating the address."<sup>261</sup> Even his extended advice on overcoming discouragement and encouraging cheerfulness in the catechist is entirely ordered to the end that the words of the discourse may "be drunk in with pleasure" by the inquirer.<sup>262</sup> In fact, one of the very causes of discouragement, according to Augustine, can be just the imperative to "improvise and adapt our words to another person's way of thinking."

Augustine's advice about how to overcome discouragement in the catechist, as well as his tips on measuring the class, education, and motives of the candidate, aim entirely at preparing the soil of the soul of the student for the *narratio*.<sup>263</sup> As we will see when we look at the longer sample address, his concern for the receptivity of the audience is what informs the first part of his oration, the *exordium*, the appeal for a hearing that aims to make the hearer "well disposed, attentive and

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid., 10,14.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid., 14,22. See also 2,4: "we are given a much more appreciative hearing when we ourselves enjoy performing our task" and "our greatest concern is much more about how to make it possible for those who offer instruction in faith to do so with joy. For the more they succeed in this, the more appealing they will be."

<sup>263</sup> See Damian Halligan, "Augustine: A Teacher's Teacher," *Lumen Vitae* 22:2 (June 1967): 281-292.

receptive."<sup>264</sup> According to the Aristotelian rhetorical paradigm that I have set out above, this is *ethos*.

At 3,5 Augustine says that the *narratio* is "telling the story in our own words." But that doesn't mean that the catechist is free to tell the story in only one way, as from a prepared script. Although such a summary of the sacred history, especially one that keeps to the "most well trodden path," will inevitably include "oft-repeated phrases,"<sup>265</sup> it must still be a case of fitting "our own words to the actual circumstances" which the state of the listener presents to the catechist. Again, Augustine acknowledges that

even when we know how to make our address attractive, we still prefer to hear or read something which has been better expressed and which can be delivered without effort or uneasiness on our part rather than to have to improvise and adapt our words to another person's way of thinking.<sup>266</sup>

For the catechist to surrender his preferences and make this adaptation is a work of accommodation in which he

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<sup>264</sup> Cicero, *De inventione* 1,20, cited in Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 141-142, who notes that Augustine cites this phrase in *De doctrina Christiana* 4,4,6.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 11,16 and 12,17.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 14.



imitates the divine condescension. Augustine insists on this precisely because "what we dispense is God's, and the more we love those to whom we speak, the more we want them to find acceptable what is offered them for their salvation."<sup>267</sup> Augustine strings together a series of Pauline texts to illustrate the Christological kenotic principle that must be at play in such a catechesis<sup>268</sup> and concludes that

the more love goes down in a spirit of service into the ranks of the lowliest people, the more surely it rediscovers the quiet that is within when its good conscience testifies that it seeks nothing of those whom it goes down but their eternal salvation.<sup>269</sup>

This accommodation to the person can even take rather extreme forms, for example, the case of an inquirer who comes professing the best motives while actually seeking some worldly advantage in becoming a Christian, to curry favor with the powerful or to gain some financial advantage. Augustine counsels that Deogratias "make the

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> 1Pt 2:21, Phil 2:6-8, 1 Cor 9:22, 2 Cor 9:22, 2 Cor 5:13-14 and 1 Thes 2:7.

<sup>269</sup> DCR 10,15. This suggests again the way in which *ethos*, while "arising from the speaker's personal qualities" (Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 4), can help to determine the receptivity of the audience.

matter of the lie itself the starting point of your address....to the point that he actually enjoys being the kind of person that he wishes to appear."<sup>270</sup> Such adaptation may mean departing from the narration to supply "authoritative statements and rational arguments" when we find that the hearer holds to some error<sup>271</sup> or to ask probing questions of the hearer when the catechist finds him unresponsive due to boredom or a possible lack of comprehension.<sup>272</sup>

When the catechist commits himself to this imitation of the divine condescension for the sake of the salvation of the inquirer, whatever his state or need, "fluent and cheerful words will then stream out from an abundance of love." When the good steward (*dispensatore*) of the kingdom opens up the "oracles of the scriptures"<sup>273</sup> to his charges,

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<sup>270</sup> Ibid., 5,9. One is reminded here of Chesterton's definition of hypocrisy as the compliment that vice pays to virtue.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 11,16.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid., 13,18.

<sup>273</sup> At *DCR* 1,2 Augustine obliquely refers to Deogratias as among "the stewards (*dispensatores*), my companions in service." In this regard, Canning refers to 1 Cor 4:1-2, and 1 Pt 4:10-11 at *Instructing* 55 n.7. These texts refer to the figure of the *oikonomos* who in the latter reference from 1 Peter "utters oracles of God." In Alistair Stewart-Sykes' commentary on Hippolytus' *On the Apostolic Tradition* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001) number 8 "On Deacons," he notes that the *oikonomos* is the ordained deacon who acts as steward of the house church. (See page 89.) I would also suggest that the *oikonomos* as the catechetical oracle is the one who can "bring out of his treasure what is new and what is old" in disclosing the shape of the divine *oikonomia*. (See Mt 13:55.) See also Harmless,

offering "the address that [he is] actually called to deliver,"<sup>274</sup> rather than the one [he] might prefer, then the catechist becomes himself an oracle, such that "he who is listening to us - or more precisely, listening to God through our agency - begins to make progress on his way of life and in his understanding and to advance eagerly along the way of Christ."<sup>275</sup> This accommodation to the needs of the student unites the teacher and his student in such a way that

when our listeners are touched by us as we speak and we are touched by them as they learn, each of us comes to dwell in the other, and so they as it were speak in us what they hear, while we in some way learn in them what we teach.<sup>276</sup>

Augustine avers that if catechists will "cheerfully allow him to speak through us" God will work through their words.<sup>277</sup>

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*Catechumenate* 180-181, on these "monetary metaphors," that is, on the catechist dispenser as the bursar of the word of God.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 11,16.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 7,11.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 12,7. See Canning's note on the proverbial quality and import of this expression, which Augustine may have borrowed from Ambrose in *Instructing* 97, n.123.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 11,16.

Just as the catechist's aim should be "to lift up their [the students'] minds to the design and purpose of the maker" as regards human creations, the aim in the narration is to enable the students "to rise higher still to the veneration of God, the creator of all, in whom love has its richest goal."<sup>278</sup>

In short, Augustine's program for a personal grounding in the faith by the *narratio* calls for the catechist to put himself at the complete disposal of God, to make God's goal of love his or her own and so to draw the student to align his or her own goal with that same divine love. This all suggests that the establishment of the authority of the speaker (the catechist), which is the aim of the classical *exordium*, and that Aristotelian mode of proof called *ethos*.

That part of a rhetorical presentation that establishes trust on the part of the audience - is, in Augustine's view, nothing less than a participation in the divine love showed by God, shared in by the catechist, and which is now offered to the hearer. For the Christian *rhetor* the authority proposed is not, in fact, that of the speaker, as would have been the case in the classical

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<sup>278</sup> Ibid., 12,17.

oration, but of the loving God in which both the catechist and the inquirer are to trust.<sup>279</sup>

Augustine sums up the "manner in which the historical exposition is to be presented" in the following two ways:

The historical exposition should then begin from what is written about God's having created all things very good and continue, as we have said, down to the present period of the Church's history. Our account should focus on explaining the deeper meaning of each of the matters and events that we describe: a meaning that is brought out when we relate them to the goal constituted by love; and whatever we are doing or saying, our eyes should never be turned away from this goal.<sup>280</sup>

Earlier, at 4,8 he gives another summary in which the theological virtues serve as a form and the measure for the proper delivery of the address, with love again as the ultimate goal:

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<sup>279</sup> See Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Christian and Secular*, pp.120-121. There he notes that "In its purest form Judeo-Christian rhetoric shows similarity to philosophical rhetoric: it is the simple enunciation of God's truth, uncontaminated by adornment, flattery, or sophistic argumentation; it differs from philosophical rhetoric in that this truth is known from revelation or established by signs sent from God, not discovered by dialectic through man's efforts" 121. See DRC 10,14: "what we dispense is God's." For a fuller argument on the differences between Augustinian and Ciceronian rhetoric based upon his intention to teach *doctrina*, rather than merely to persuade, see Ernest Fortin, "Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric," *Augustinian Studies*, 5 (1974): 85-100.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 6,10.

Keeping this love before you then as a goal to which you direct all that you say, recount every event in your historical exposition in such a way that your listener by hearing it may believe, by believing may hope, and by hoping may love.<sup>281</sup>

This, then, describes in sum the manner and the desired outcome of the whole historical exposition. I would contend that this seminal dictum at 4,8 also expresses a theological description of the three modes of proof, *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, as ordered to faith, hope, and love. In opposition to my contention, one might counter that if the *exordium*, which establishes *ethos*, normally comes first in the classical rhetorical presentation, *narratio* and *logos* second, and *exhortatio* and *pathos* last, then Augustine, or at least my interpretation of him, is out of order by saying that faith (*narratio/logos*) should yield hope (*exhortatio/pathos*), and hope love (*exordium/ethos*).

But it is interesting to note in this respect that if one makes the connection that I am suggesting, the ordering of the theological virtues in 4,8 seems to follow the order

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<sup>281</sup> *Hac ergo dilectione tibi tamquam fine proposita, quo referas omnia quae dicis, quidquid narras ita narra, ut ille cui loqueris audiendo credit, credendo speret, sperando amet.*

in which Augustine makes his presentation in the first part of *DCR* (3,5 - 14,22).

This can be seen at the end of his prologue where Augustine lays out the three-part division of the work that he is going to present: (1) "the manner in which the historical exposition is to be presented," (2) "the question of the precepts and the exhortation," and (3) "the means of developing that cheerful attitude." I propose that Augustine's description of the order of his treatment of topics at the end of the prologue (2,4) seems to be recapitulated in a theological mode in the summary at 4,8, or, to put it alternately, that the order of the work given at 2,4 can be summed up under the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, as Augustine suggests at 4,8. This makes sense if one recognizes that what Augustine is proposing to present at 2,4 are the three Aristotelian modes of proof in the order of *narratio/logos* (the historical exposition), *exhortatio/pathos* (precepts and exhortation), and *exordium/ethos* (maintenance of cheerfulness).

While my proposal that the theological rubric for the catechetical presentation that Augustine gives at 4,8 should be seen as reflective of his ordering of *DCR* as described at 2,4 is novel, the pairing of *narratio/logos* (the historical exposition), *exhortatio/pathos* (precepts

and exhortation), and *exordium/ethos* (maintenance of cheerfulness) is really only controversial with reference to the last paring, the one suggesting that his section on the maintenance of cheerfulness (*de hilaritate*) ought to be seen as ordered to the formation of *ethos*.

The last portion of Augustine's introduction (10,14 - 14,22) which Canning titles "How to Avoid Discouragement When Giving Instruction and How to Develop a Cheerful Disposition" (*de hilaritate*) is not commonly recognized as descriptive of and preparatory to *ethos* as expressed in the *exordium*, as I am suggesting here. Harmless rightly notes that the term *exordium* is used in 5,9 where Augustine says, "we have to question the newcomer himself, so that we can build the introduction to our address (*sermonis exordium*) around the replies that he has given."<sup>282</sup> Augustine then says a few brief things about the historical exposition (*narratio*) in the second half of 6,10 and the precepts and exhortation (*exhortatio*) in 7,11 before going on to consider two types of newcomers at 8,12 - 9,13. It is true that in this summary section Augustine is following the order of delivery of the full address (*exordium, narratio, and exhortatio*). The implication is, then, that having

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<sup>282</sup> See Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 114 and Canning *Instructing*, 74.



dealt with the three parts of the full address in 5,9; 6,10; and 7,11, Augustine is touching only on ancillary and largely "methodological" issues in 8,12 - 9,13 (types of newcomers) and 10,14 - 14,22 (*de hilaritate*).

But it is also clear that what he says in 8,12 and 9,13 - that is, after briefly considering the parts in the order *exordium*, *narratio*, and *exhortatio* - is largely aimed again at measuring or sizing up the hearer so as to gauge his receptivity and to determine the character of the full address that one should deliver, which is what he is also concerned with at 5,9. Again, this is really the work of *ethos*.

#### ***De Hilaritate - The Formation of Ethos***

As an attentive reader will have already noted, when discussing above the issues of *ethos* or the receptivity of the hearer, I have already cited texts from 3,5 through 14,22, and that by way of the priority of the goal of love. That has been possible because Augustine is so concerned with the "goal constituted by love"<sup>283</sup> and the need for the

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<sup>283</sup> DCR 6,10.

catechist to make that goal his own in a personal appeal to the individual hearer. For Augustine, love as the goal of the total address means that each of its three parts, *exordium*, *narratio*, and *exhortatio* will be concerned with it in some measure. And I would suggest that same impulse is entirely behind Augustine's advice about how the catechist might "develop a cheerful disposition" (*de illa hilaritate comparanda*) in 10,14 - 14,22. This portion of the text is not a mere methodological afterthought, but an integral element of the content of the full address, with a special orientation toward the formation of *ethos*.

The development of *ethos* in the audience, as I have already said, turns upon what they sense to be the authority of the speaker. Augustine's whole treatment of *hilaritas*<sup>284</sup> in 10,14 - 14,22 is ordered toward the gaining of a congruence between the motive of the divine love and that of the catechist, as many citations that we have already seen suggest. As he says, "what we dispense is God's, and the more we love those to whom we speak, the

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<sup>284</sup> See also Peter Brown's description of the place of *hilaritas*, not in the speaker but in the audiences of North Africa: "*hilaritas* - a mixture of intellectual excitement and sheer aesthetic pleasure at a notable display of wit - was an emotion they greatly appreciated." *Augustine*, 250.

more we want them to find acceptable what is offered to them for their salvation."<sup>285</sup>

Just as the catechist must measure the level of culture, class, and motives of the audience to ensure that one's address will be acceptable, so also the catechist must be prepared to display that love of God and its fruit (*hilaritas*) which will establish *ethos* in his audience. While *ethos*, properly understood, is a state of the audience and not the speaker, it is constituted by the assessment of audience of the authority of the speaker himself.<sup>286</sup>

So the effectiveness of the *exordium* in establishing *ethos* requires both that the speaker measure his audience, as Augustine says at 5,9, but also that he be an effective representative of the authority he wields, in this case that of God, as Augustine stresses in that portion of his introductory section on the maintenance of *hilaritas*. All this suggests that 10,14 - 14,22 is a long treatment of the importance of the disposition of the catechist to the formation of *ethos* and not simply a separate practical

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 10,14.

<sup>286</sup> See Nedrad Reynolds, "Ethos as Location: New Sites for Discursive Authority," *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Spring 1993): 325-338 and S. Michael Halloram "Aristotle's Concept of Ethos, or if not His, Someone Else's," *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Sept 1982): 58-63.

section on a topic only tangentially related to the catechesis at hand, as most seem to assume.

And so I would propose that the important phrase from 4,8<sup>287</sup> is a theological summary of the whole of the first part of *DCR* in accord with what Augustine had promised Deogratias at the end of the Prologue (2,4). By keeping to this pattern of belief (*narratio/logos*) yielding hope (*exhortatio/pathos*) yielding love (*exordium/ethos*), Augustine can stress that the divine love, which is also the Augustinian norm for all exegesis of Scripture, is both the ultimate aim of the historical exposition or *narratio* and the intention which must inform the whole of the catechetical address (*exordium, narratio, and exhortatio*) as a personal appeal from the catechist toward the hearer.

Seen in this way the *narratio* has its proper context, as well as its full dimension as more than just a juridical statement of the case or just one part of an elaborated rhetorical presentation but, rather, as the central work of the catechist which is ordered finally toward faith, hope, and love.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> This phrase from *DCR* 4,8 is cited as a kind of summary of the purpose of Revelation itself, as well as the work of the Church in proposing it in the last sentence of the Prologue to the Second Vatican Council's *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum* 1.

<sup>288</sup> Augustine, in fact, uses just such a theological rubric for his catechesis in *The Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Love*, J. F. Shaw,

**The *Exhortatio* is Aimed at *Pathos*, Inspired by Hope**

And this also points us toward the aims of the exhortation, as well. As I noted above, I am less concerned with the content of the exhortation that Deogratias asks about than with the narration, but the important statement on the purpose of the narration as ordered to faith, hope and charity from 4,8 gives us the opportunity to note what specific part the *exhortatio* plays in Augustine's catechetical scheme. We have already seen that the narration represents an "initial grounding in faith"<sup>289</sup> ordered toward love and prepared for by the appeal to love presented in the *exordium*.

We can now see that the grounding in faith at which the *narratio* aims is intended, by way of the *exhortatio* which follows it, to instill hope in the possibility of salvation, and, finally, and by way of the *exordium* which precedes it, to lead the inquirer to love. The truth of the narration, which incites belief, "tells of Christ and

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trans. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1961). Daniel C. Stevens presents a comprehensive proposal for religious education in its cognitive, affective, and overt fields using the Pauline categories of faith, hope, and love in "Christian Educational Foundations and the Pauline Triad: A Call to Faith, Hope, and Love" in *Christian Education Journal* Vol. V, No. 1 (fall 1984): 5-15.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., 2,4.

calls to love."<sup>290</sup> That is to say, it tells that we have been loved first by God in the events that disclose Christ. It is the love of God that gives the otherwise hopeless sinner reason to hope.<sup>291</sup>

The final exhortation, then, is also aimed at enabling the hearer to begin to finish this Trinitarian loop of virtues, from faith, to hope, to love at which the historical exposition or *narratio* had itself aimed, but in its particular case by way of hope. "Once the historical exposition is concluded, we should deeply impress upon our hearer the hope in the resurrection,"<sup>292</sup> Augustine says. And to avoid scandal from the "depraved mobs" in the Churches, the inquirer must be warned "not to place his hope in a human being," so that

when he who is listening to us - or more precisely listening to God through our agency - begins to make progress in his way of life and in his understanding and to advance eagerly along the way of Christ, let him not dare to give the credit for this either to us or to himself. Rather, he is to love himself and us, and all the others whom he holds dear as friends, in

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid., 4, 8.

<sup>291</sup> "What is higher than God who judges, and what more hopeless than human beings who sin?" Ibid., 4, 7.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 7, 11.

the one and because of the one who has loved him as an enemy so as to justify him and make him a friend.<sup>293</sup>

That is, the purpose of the closing moral exhortation is to move the hearer from belief in the truth of the historical exposition to its application in a life of love of self, neighbor, and God by way of the hope for eternity that the prior love of God makes possible. In short, it is just that sort of conformity with the goals of the God (who has revealed his truth, made evident his love, and hoped for a return of that love<sup>294</sup>) that the catechist has been asked to take on, which the hearer is now encouraged to accept, too. Just as the catechist has been asked to make the loving condescension of God his own and to hope that God will give his words oracular power as he tells the true story of God's love and God's hope of its being requited by us, so also the inquirer is to move from what he now believes from the *narratio* to hope and then to love.

*Pathos* is often understood to be an appeal to emotion, intended to spur the audience to action. (Recall that as *historia* the *narratio* is a form of deliberative address,

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Although it isn't theologically accurate to say that God "hopes," Augustine at 4,7 reflects at length on the way that the superior who loves first hopes that his love will be requited and that his love is an inducement to love for the lesser who otherwise could not have hoped to be loved by the superior. It is in the manner of the human analogy that he employs that I am using the term here.

one intended to aid the audience to decide to take some course of action.) The theological virtue of hope, however, is not just a passion, an emotion. Natural hope, the proper human emotional response to a barrier to a desired good which is also perceived to be surmountable, is one of the eleven human passions identified by the scholastic anthropology,<sup>295</sup> but supernatural hope is a gift that empowers us to see the naturally insurmountable as supernaturally surmountable.<sup>296</sup> That grace is what Augustine himself hopes for in his charges, but he can't supply it. No discourse, no matter how effective, could do that.

This highlights that the theological rubric from 4,8 may not be intended to suggest that the full blown virtues ought to be the result. In pedagogical language, they can't represent in any exact sense either the student performance objectives for the class that Augustine presents or the teacher objectives, precisely because neither the student nor the teacher can supply them. The catechist may hope that God will supply these gifts and that the student will be open to receiving them, but, in

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<sup>295</sup> *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 23, a. 4, resp.; q. 40, aa. 1-8.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, q. 65, a. 4, resp. "the act of hope consists in looking to God for future bliss."



any case, their certain bestowal will only come with the Baptism that would follow an extended catechumenate.

Given what has been said above about the place of the *narratio* of DCR among the classical Aristotelian modes of proof, I don't think that it is unwarranted to suggest that with the all parts of the historical exposition now elaborated, the *exordium* [*ethos*], *narratio* [*logos*], and *exhortatio* [*pathos*], Augustine's rubric of the theological virtues at 4,8 could be seen as a theological summary of what he intends to do rhetorically, such that, faith is the desired outcome of *logos*, hope the aim of *pathos*, and charity the aim of *ethos*, even though the actual order of the address itself will be the traditional one of *exordium*, *narratio*, and *exhortatio*.<sup>297</sup> Love, of course, remains the overarching "goal to which you direct all that you say."<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>297</sup> As we will see, this simple elaboration of the whole catechetical address into its three constituent parts has implications for pedagogical psychology. Van der Meer gives short shrift to the *exordium* and so can say that "the two constituent parts that are essential in the introductory catechesis" are "the *narratio* of the story of salvation, which must be directed to the understanding, and an exhortation, which must be directed to the will" (*Augustine the Bishop*, 453). Harmless, who gives much more attention to the *exordium*, notes that "Such a speech, like any rhetorical endeavor, had a dual aim: both to convince the mind and to arouse the emotions," and then goes on to identify the *exordium* and the *peroratio* as "directed toward winning the audience's heart," and the *narratio* and *confirmatio* as "establishing the credibility of one's case" in *Catechumenate*, 125. The identification of the three parts of the address with the three modes of proof and then with the three virtues cited in 4,8 might suggest an educational psychology that would be more specifically Augustinian, although Augustine does not elaborate any such in DCR. Such a psychology might suggest that the full catechesis is addressed to the

For the sake of clarity, the chart below indicates the point made here.

<b>Rhetorical and theological breakdown from Part I of DCR</b>		
<u>Rhetorical element:</u>	<u>Rhetorical element:</u>	<u>Rhetorical element:</u>
<i>Narratio</i>	<i>Exhortatio</i>	<i>Exordium</i>
<u>Aristotelian mode of proof:</u>	<u>Aristotelian mode of proof:</u>	<u>Aristotelian mode of proof:</u>
<i>Logos</i>	<i>Pathos</i>	<i>Ethos</i>
<u>Portion of text:</u>	<u>Portion of text:</u>	<u>Portion of text:</u>
3,5-6,10	7,11-8,12	8,12-9,13* (Viz. the hearer)
<u>Theological aim:</u>	<u>Theological aim:</u>	10,14-14,22 (Viz. the speaker)
To instigate faith	To instigate hope	<u>Theological aim:</u> To instigate love
* Canning treats this as a disconnected excursus; see <i>Instructing</i> , 59, n.15.		

### Conclusion

What we have seen, then, in the Prologue and Part I of *DCR*, is that this first catechetical address is aimed at providing the newcomer with an "initial grounding in the

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will, the intellect, and the memory of the inquirer. For a fuller presentation of Augustine's psychological analogy between these three powers and the three divine Persons see *De Trinitate* 8, 6.

<sup>298</sup> *DCR* 4,8.

faith" by relating its "central points."<sup>299</sup> It consists of three parts.

The first is the *exordium* which aims at making the audience well disposed (*ethos*) by introducing the divine condescension and inviting the hearer to love of God in response to the love he has shown us first in the saving events of the history which is to follow. I have suggested that the section *de hilaritate* (10,14 - 14,22) which has usually been identified as a separate methodological excursus is, in fact, advice on how the catechist himself may be prepared for the formation of *ethos* (just as the portion on the types of newcomers [8,12 - 9,13] aims at *ethos* in the audience) and should, therefore, be identified with instruction on the *exordium*. That is indicated at the end of the section, *de hilaritate*, by Augustine's assurance to Deogratias that those words which "stream out from an abundance of love," will "be drunk in with pleasure."<sup>300</sup>

The second part of the address is the *narratio* proper which is to provide the facts of the case (*logos*), so to speak, the substance of the catechetical appeal to faith. Augustine describes an ordered, progressive, presentation which has certain stable features. It is to begin with

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<sup>299</sup> DCR 2,4; 1,1.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., 14,22.

creation and to proceed to the time of the Church. The *narratio* must combine the *mirabilia*, the *articuli*, and the *causae rationesque*, that is, the more wonderful events, the critical turning points from salvation history, and the causes and reasons the catechist provides to connect them. These latter *causae rationesque* consist of the allegorical interpretations which supply the deeper meaning of the historical events and invite admiration and rouse the hearer whose attention might be flagging or whose appreciation of the Scriptures might be wanting.

The allegorical dimension of meaning is what Augustine calls the "golden thread," and the wonderful events are like the "precious stones in an ornament" which the thread of the allegorical sense holds together.<sup>301</sup> Deogratias is told that the events marshaled from the progressive march of the biblical economy and the deeper allegorical interpretation are to point to Christ and the Church and are to encourage the hearer to undertake the Christian journey toward Christ and the Church already described in the Scriptures. The completeness of the picture painted by the *narratio* is to be guaranteed by that Christological/

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 6,10. The allegorical interpretation, according to Augustine, is "the very truth of the explanation" of the historical events recounted in the *narratio*.

ecclesiological theme which also discloses the divine charity and "calls to love."<sup>302</sup>

The third part of the full address is the *exhortatio* which, based upon the truths disclosed in the *narratio*, encourages the hearer (*pathos*) to embrace the hope of the resurrection and to flee "the punishments [for] those who oppose God."<sup>303</sup> In addition, it should arm the newcomer against the potential scandal that the "many people who are nominally Christians" might present.<sup>304</sup>

The whole address in its three parts is to have love as its inspiration and telos. The seminal phrase at 4,8 which, I have suggested, supplies a theological rubric for the rhetorical purposes of the address, such that it should move the hearer from faith, to hope, and then to love, also begins with the advice to Deogratias that he should keep "this love before you then as a goal to which you direct all that you say." If so composed and directed, the complete address is to provide the "central points of the faith that gives us our identity as Christians," as Augustine says.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid., 4,8.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., 7,11.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., 1,1.

Although the address is to exhibit these standard elements, what Augustine calls the "well trodden path,"<sup>306</sup> he insists upon a personal methodology which responds to the needs of the particular audience, a methodology which is eager to meet the hearer at the level necessary, whether of culture, education, or advance in faith, in a pedagogy of condescension. This personal overture is to be made in imitation of the love of God who condescends to take a human nature at the central point of the economy and to speak in human words and events throughout. And this insight enables us to draw a preliminary conclusion about the way in which content and methodology meet in the first instruction as described in Part I.

The whole content of the historical exposition is described by Augustine as a work of love. God loves us in the economy, as just described. The inquirer is encouraged to love God in return in the *exordium*, and shown the demonstrations of the divine love and the reasons for embracing both love and faith in the *narratio*. The *exhortatio* asks the hearer to now respond in hope to what was previously proposed in the *exordium* and demonstrated in the *narratio*, to strive for the eternal embrace of divine

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 11,16.

love on the basis that he or she has been loved first by the condescending God. In short, this suggests both a content and methodology of love in condescension. The content of the *narratio* discloses a divine pedagogy of condescending love which the catechist is encouraged to imitate in the very method in which the catechetical address is delivered. Phyllis Zagano notes that in *DCR* "course content and love . . . are complementary, for the narration of the story of faith is one which is hoped to lead the individual in love to respond in love to the love of God."<sup>307</sup> To echo the phrase from Marshall MacLuhan, the medium very much appears, in this instance, to be the message. Or, as Augustine describes this mysterious oracular concursus between God and the catechist at the very end of this section, "For it is not so much I who say these words to you as it is love itself that says them to us all."<sup>308</sup>

Next, I will take up an analysis of Part II of *DCR* and the various parts of the sample addresses that Augustine provides, adding flesh to the content and methodological skeleton that Augustine has given us in Part I.

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<sup>307</sup> Phyllis Zagano, "Communicating Belief: A Historical Look at Christian Catechesis - and Catechisms," *Christian Education Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (winter 1992): 49.

<sup>308</sup> *DCR* 14;22.

## CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT: PART II, THE TWO MODEL *NARRATIONES*

15,23-27,55

**Introduction**

Having already seen in detail Augustine's description of the content and method for the first catechetical instruction in his prologue and directions on the manner of its delivery (*de modo* and *de hilaritate*) in Part I, it should not be necessary to rehearse these principles of the *narratio* when looking at the two model addresses he supplies to Deogratias. Rather, it will suffice to describe the actual content he recommends so that we can see the principles already elaborated now at play. This will be done in the present chapter under the divisions already employed above: *Exordium* (*ethos-love*) 16,24 - 17,28; *Narratio* (*logos-faith*) 18,29 - 24,24; and *Exhortatio* (*pathos-hope*) 24,45 - 25,49.



Prior to analyzing these sections I will have a brief word to say about Augustine's transition from Part I to Part II in 15,23. I will also have just a word to say about the Rite of Reception into the Catechumenate at 26,50 after treating the three parts of the catechesis, this is to suggest the sacramental trajectory of the catechesis.

That last section on the rite of entry into the catechumenate and what I have just called the "sacramental trajectory" that it suggests will also help answer a question that I have already raised about the third phase of *narratio*, the one called by the *GDC* at number 130 "the history of the Church." Comments about the shorter form of the catechesis that Augustine gives in 26,51 - 27,55 will, where appropriate, be interspersed with those about the three parts of the longer address.

### **The Transition to the Model Addresses and the Personal Appeal**

In his transition to the two model addresses, Augustine highlights the importance of the personal nature of the address, a theme that figured prominently in our examination of Part I. In the context of a kind of apology

to Deogratias for the ways in which the written work which he is presenting will depart from the form of a spoken address,<sup>309</sup> Augustine notes that the catechesis will vary based on the type of setting, formal or informal, the person or persons to whom it will be delivered, few or many, educated or uneducated, city or country people, or a mixed crowd. Augustine admits that

I can testify from my own experience that I am swayed, now in one way, now in another, according [to] the person I see before me.... And it is in keeping with these various influences that my actual address opens and moves forward and comes to a close.

Although we owe the same love to all, we should not treat all with the same remedy. And so for its part, this very love is in pain giving birth to some, makes itself weak with others; devotes itself to edifying some, greatly fears giving offense to others; bends down to some, raises itself up to others. To some it is gentle, to others stern, to no one hostile, to everyone a mother.<sup>310</sup>

This final testimony - just before he begins his sample address - to the importance of Augustine's methodological personalism, what I called a pedagogy of

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<sup>302</sup> "The basic orientation of someone dictating an address with a future reader in mind is quite different from that of someone speaking when the listener is actually present before his eyes." *DCR* 15,23.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

condescending love, is a remarkable summary of just how important an issue this is for him. As we have already seen, for Augustine this kind of nimble pedagogical response to the person in need of instruction is intended to imitate the divine condescension. At this point it is worth recalling that this is one of the key features that we saw in the *GDC*'s description of the divine pedagogy.

We saw that at number 36 the *GDC* echoes *Dei Verbum* in describing Revelation as "that act by which God manifests himself personally to man" and that at number 139 the *GDC* returns over and over to the term "person" to show that the divine pedagogy is an accommodation to the needs of human persons in order to invite them to a personal relationship with God, such that God "assumes the character of the person," "liberates the person," "causes the person to grow." "To this end," the *GDC* states, "as a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations." This adaption to "diverse ages and life situations" seems to be just what Augustine is getting at in his own methodological advice to Deogratias.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> For Augustine as mentor in ministry to Deogratias, see Edward Smither's *Augustine as Mentor: A Model for Preparing Spiritual Leaders* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2008).

**Section 1: Exordium (ethos-love) 16,24 - 17,28**  
**and the Cor Requietum**

As Augustine begins his sample address he demonstrates just that kind of personal adaptation in a playful, creative, and even endearing way. He imports Deogratias' name into the first line of the *exordium* of the long model address: "Thanks be to God, brother." (*Deo gratias, frater.*) In so doing, he puts a dramatic exclamation point behind his insistence on the personal quality of this catechesis as we have seen him describe it in Part I of *DCR* and again in the transition to the first sample catechesis. And it is very much worth noting that the fact that he gives so clear an expression of this personalist principle in the first words of the *exordium* may help to corroborate the claim I made earlier that the last section of Part I (*de hilaritate*, 10,14 - 14,22) which makes so much of just this principle of personal adaptation in imitation of God, does serve as an instruction on the *exordium* which Augustine now begins in perfect accord with the advice he had given there.<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> In using this phrase Augustine seems also to be giving a mirror image echo of the first words of *DCR*: "*Petisti me, frater Deogratias,...*" One is moved to wonder whether Augustine may have used

He then enters into a relatively long *exordium*. As Harmless puts it, he "displays little hurry in getting on to the narrative."<sup>313</sup> As I have already noted at length, the *exordium* is intended to prepare the inquirer to give the address a proper hearing. Augustine does that by, in a sense, posing the same question that Jesus poses in the Gospel of John: "What do you seek?"<sup>314</sup> And he assumes the answer of his presumed inquirer: rest (*requies*), security (*securitas*), and happiness or blessedness (*felicitas*). He congratulates his fictional inquirer that he has chosen to seek things that will last, rather than those things that "one tiny fever can sweep... away"<sup>315</sup> and which present only "illusory prospects of happiness."<sup>316</sup> Rather than pursuing riches or honors or the pleasures of the tavern, brothel, or theater

You, however, are seeking the true rest which promised to Christians after this life, and therefore it will

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this same sort of play on the name of other students in this first catechesis. See also Canning's recounting of Christopher's suggestion that this phrase is an ellipsis for a common liturgical formula and a common early Christian greeting in *Instructing*, 115, n. 157.

<sup>313</sup> *Catechumenate*, 140.

<sup>314</sup> John 1:38.

<sup>315</sup> See Augustine's treatment of *libido*, "the love of those things which a man can loose against his will" in his *De libero arbitrio* I, 3-4.

<sup>316</sup> *DCR* 16,24.

be for you to taste its sweetness and delight even here amid the most bitter troubles of this life, if you love the commandments of him who promised it.<sup>317</sup>

This "true rest" (which represents a conflation of the three: *requies*, *securitas*, and *felicitas*) is the primary theme of Augustine's address. It supplies the motive for the journey of faith that Augustine is inviting his hearer to embark upon. It will also serve as a segue into the *narratio* by way of the seventh day rest of the creation narrative. At 17,28 Augustine says, "It is this rest that is meant by scripture when it expressly mentions that, from the beginning of the world when God made heaven and earth and everything that is in them, he worked for six days and on the seventh day he rested."

With reference to the presence of the same theme in *The City of God*, Jean Danielou notes that "we have here the two central axes of the thought of St. Augustine, - the progress of history toward the future world of glory and the progress of the soul toward the interior world of peace - the result is that the theme of the Sabbath is at the center of Augustinian thought."<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Jean Danielou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956) 276. See Christopher (1946) *The*

This suggests the Augustinian psychology undergirding the Augustinian pedagogy. The famous *cor inquietum* of the human person which serves as the impetus or purpose for his personal journey as described in the very first words of the *Confessions*, is here called upon to introduce the inquirer to the *narratio*, which speaks to and answers the restlessness of his own heart. And so Augustine is suggesting (although the pedagogical design at play here wouldn't yet be evident to his student) that the personal history of the inquirer - that search for the rest of ultimate happiness in the possession of the thing that ultimately satisfies every human longing - is paralleled by a sacred history which points the human heart toward the rest it seeks. In short, he is telling the inquirer that

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*First Catechetical Instruction*, 120, n. 152 where he notes that the same figure of oxymoron in the Latin of "For they wish to be at rest amid things that are neither stable nor lasting" (*volunt...requiescere in rebus inquietis*) in 16, 24 can also be found in that famous phrase from the *Confessions* I, I, 1: *quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.*

This again suggests the second part of Danielou's "center of Augustinian thought," the progress of the individual soul toward the internal rest, and serves to corroborate his insight with reference to the *Confessions*, as well as the *City of God*. What this also suggests is that *DCR*, although a catechetical work, is very much a vital expression of the spirit that animates the whole Augustinian corpus. On this point, see also *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* by Johannes van Oort (Leiden: Brill, 1991) in which he boldly asserts that the *City of God* can best be understood with reference to the catechetical rubric supplied by *DCR*. In the same vein, Van der Meer says of the *narrationes* in *DCR* that they "represent the best thought of a great spirit in its simplest form." *Bishop*, 467.

sacred history is the answer to the quest that is her or his personal history.

In this way, the two great Augustinian axes that Danielou refers to, the rest that each person desires and the rest that will be granted to the world at the end of time as an echo of the seventh day rest at the end of the creational week, converge. The desire of the inquirer is drawn into accord with the whole course of the world and its sacred history.

Further, by suggesting a litany of the possible contenders for human happiness: riches, honors, worldly pleasures, and even the Christian mediocrity which seeks worldly advancement by way of human or even the divine favor,<sup>319</sup> Augustine reminds his inquirer of human transcendence, that man is made for more than all these things which the realm of profane history provides. This is not a mere moralism which aims at "scaring the hell" out of the seeker, but a basic anthropology which asserts the nobility of the human spirit (even in its fallen state), which has important moral implications. It works to inform the inquirer about the deep things of his own heart, while framing his desire in a way that will make him attentive to

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<sup>319</sup> He cautions against being one of those Christians who "look to find blessedness in this life, aiming to be more blessed in earthly affairs than those who do not honor God." *DCR* 17,26.



the fact that his story is a microcosm of the macro-story, that God has arranged history to be the answer to his personal search for happiness. That happiness in its highest, graced form is blessedness or beatitude or what Genesis just calls "rest."

The one who doesn't just fear hell but loves God and becomes a Christian "because of the everlasting bliss and perpetual rest," "in this one alone is the rest that eye *has not seen not ear heard nor has it come up into the human heart*, the rest, *which God has prepared for those who love him.*"<sup>320</sup> And in this last phrase from 17,27 Augustine is saying that the eschatological telos will inform or color our temporal journey. If we seek eternal rest, we will have that rest in our hearts not just hereafter but here, even in this life.

This pedagogical movement to arouse a desire for God and the eternal rest he can provide resembles what is called in Augustinianism the *victrix delectatio*, the ardor of love, which is that grace that enables us to overcome

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<sup>320</sup> DCR 17,27. The italics here, which are original to Canning's translation, indicate that Augustine has inserted "rest" into St. Paul's famous discourse on the "hidden wisdom of God" and the secret thoughts locked within the "spirit of the man," which meet in the Beatific Vision, in 1 Cor 2:7-13.

concupiscence and to win the victory of eternal life.<sup>321</sup> It ought not to surprise us that this primary Augustinian theme should figure pedagogically in his *exordium* to the *narratio*. His *Confessions* is full of this kind of ardor and his own conversion turned on just this sort of grace as it is expressed in that phrase from Romans 13 which he took up in response to the *tolle lege*:

not in reveling and in drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.<sup>322</sup>

The whole episode of titanic struggle in Book VIII of the *Confessions* is hinged upon the fact that, as he says, "I was at odds with myself."<sup>323</sup> His desire for the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, the whole pursuit of the philosophical life which had gripped him from that time in his late teens when he had first discovered Cicero's *Hortensius* and which had finally matured into a realization of the truth of the Christian faith under the tutelage of

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<sup>321</sup> See Winfried Bocxe, "Introduction to the Teaching of the Italian Augustinians of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century on the Nature of Actual Grace," especially Chapter IV, "*Gratia Efficax* is a '*Victrix Delectatio*' or an Ardour of Love by Which the Opposite Concupiscence is Conquered," *Augustiniana*, Vol. VIII (1958): 356-396.

<sup>322</sup> Romans 13: 13-14; see *Confessions* VIII, 12.

<sup>323</sup> *Confessions*, VIII, 10.

Ambrose, had been obstructed by his passions. His natural desire for the highest human goods, those sought by the philosophers, was insufficient to overcome his passions.<sup>324</sup> He needed the grace of a new ardor, one sufficient to enable him to "make no provision for the flesh," and instead to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

That is the same graced desire that Augustine now aims at inciting in his inquirer, an ardor, a love for God and the perfect "rest" that will enable him to successfully leave the world and all its false promises of happiness behind. As Harmless aptly says of the theme of God's love, which is the source of the graced transformation that Augustine seeks in his hearer, "This message shaped the pedagogy."<sup>325</sup>

That Augustine's *exordium* is the first part of a love-shaped pedagogy is made the more evident by a glance at the short form he supplies at 26,52, which consists of only two sentences, here quoted in full:

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<sup>324</sup> For a very different accounting of the events described in Book VIII, "true in the details, if quite false in impact" (61), see O'Donnell's *Augustine: A New Biography*, 59 ff. See also Gary Wills, *St. Augustine's Memory* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2002).

<sup>325</sup> Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 154. "Augustine stressed the affective dynamic within evangelization because he believed that no voice reached the ears save the emotion of the heart." Of course, love is a thing of the will and not just the emotions, but the affective powers when rightly ordered will serve the will.

Truly, brother, the great and true blessedness is that which is promised to the saints in the world to come. All visible things, however, pass from existence, and the ostentatious display of this world and its allurements and its excessive eagerness for knowledge will all come to nothing, and they will drag their lovers down with them in ruins.

This shows us again that Augustine's *exordium* is an appeal to rightly ordered love. The "rest" highlighted in the long version is that happiness or "blessedness" (*beatitudo*, the single term used in the short version) which is represented by the complete possession of that which love moves us to desire. The lovers of passing things can only end by seeing the things they love, as well as themselves, perish. The very contingency of these things means that they cannot yield rest in the fullest sense. The mere natural happiness we feel in the possession of passing things cannot be compared to the beatitude (or graced happiness) that we feel in the possession of eternal things; only this latter can truly be called rest. In the end, only the love of God can make the *cor inquietum a cor requietum*.

**Section 2: Narratio (logos-faith) 18,29 - 24,24:**

**The Six Ages of Man**

Whereas the *exordium* of *DCR* stresses the personal axis of the great Augustinian theme of the Sabbath rest, described by Danielou as "the progress of the soul toward the interior world of peace," the *narratio* portion of the full catechetical address stresses the other historical axis, the "progress of history toward the future world of glory."<sup>326</sup> We have seen already that Augustine begins the drawing together of those two axes in the *exordium* itself at 17, 28 when he associates the rest we each seek with the eternal rest of heaven which is "meant by scripture when it expressly mentions that, from the beginning of the world when God made heaven and earth and everything that is in them, he worked for six days and on the seventh day he rested." He goes on to say that the creation account gives "symbolic expression to the fact that, after the six ages of this world, in the seventh age as on the seventh day, God will rest in his saints."

In so doing, Augustine draws a parallel between three trajectories: human life spent seeking rest, the six day

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<sup>326</sup> Danielou, *Bible and Liturgy*, 276.

creational week which ends in the divine Sabbath rest, and the six ages of the world which will end in a seventh age of rest enjoyed by the saints of God, or, as Augustine puts it, when "God will rest in his saints." It is this movement (which will be fundamentally typological) from micro (man's search for rest) to macro (creation and rest), to still "more macro" (sacred history itself and rest) that invites a receptive hearing from the inquirer. Augustine will provide an explanation for the restless heart of man by way of the brief interpretation he gives of the fall. The original creation, which culminates in the rest of God, promised rest for man. The fall explains why man has not entered into that rest, why his heart is gripped by lesser loves. Sacred history will be the recapitulation of the original creation, in fact, a work of recreation in Christ, which will yield the possibility of a final rest in God.

In keeping with the Christocentric character of the catechesis which Augustine had insisted upon in the first section of Part I on *de modo*,<sup>327</sup> it is Christ who makes possible the intersection or typological overlap of these three trajectories. It is the Word through whom the world was made who would have guaranteed the rest of Eden. This

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<sup>327</sup> "And all of the divine scripture [and so also the *narratio* which relates it] tells of Christ and calls to love." DCR 4,8.

Word "is the Christ in whom the angels and all the purest heavenly spirits rest in a holy silence." But because of the fall, men have "lost the rest that they had in the Word's divinity." "In his humanity," the possibility of rest is regained for us.<sup>328</sup> In this way, Augustine puts Christ in the central place in the *narratio* even before it begins. And to remind us of the purpose of its telling, he ends his *exordium* and introduces his *narratio* with the words,

Thus it is that we should love the God who so loved us that he sent his only Son to be clothed in the lowly condition of our mortal existence and to die at the hands of sinners and on behalf of sinners. Long since [sic], indeed from the beginning of the ages, this profound mystery has been unceasingly prefigured and foretold.<sup>329</sup>

The whole of the rest of the *narratio* will explain that last sentence, the way in which the profound mystery of Christ has been "prefigured and foretold." But Augustine approaches that task slowly at first. After a much abbreviated account of the actual work of creation, one in which he gets through the whole of the chain of

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 17,28.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

being in one long first sentence, Augustine says, somewhat perfunctorily, in his second, "Thus also God made man in his own image."<sup>330</sup> Having already introduced the symbolic value of the six days of creation in the *exordium*, he apparently sees no need to rehearse in detail the account supplied by Genesis. He stresses only that creation is a good work of the good God and that man stands at the head of the earth just as God is the head of the whole creation. And the reason for this terse presentation of the creation soon becomes clear because Augustine spends most of 18,29 - 19,31 explaining the problem of the entry of sin into the world and the justice of God in response to it.

#### The Plot of the Story:

##### Salvation from the Sin which Impedes our Rest

He doesn't grapple with these important themes of sin and justice in detail either, as would a typical storyteller,<sup>331</sup> but only with reference to the more abstract problems of the free will of men and angels, the justice of God and his immutability, and the comingling of sinners and

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 18,29.

<sup>331</sup> In the long form of the historical exposition he doesn't even mention the name of Adam, as he does do in the shorter form at 26,52.



saints in the world. That is because his primary concern is to show that sin cannot alter God's "wonderful plan,"<sup>332</sup> and, without telling the story of that plan in precise detail, to set up the tension that will drive the plot of that story forward. Sin is the problem; Christ is the answer. So the first order of business is to sketch in broad strokes the dynamic which will require that history be a *saving* history.

An important feature of that history is the theme of the

two cities - one of the wicked, the other of the saints - existing from the beginning of the human race right through to the end of time....mixed together in body but separated in will; though, on the day of judgment, they are to be separated in body as well.<sup>333</sup>

This problem of the *corpus per mixtum* is one that Augustine must face at the beginning of the story. During the telling of the first part of the story, the one that

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<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 18,30.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 19,31. As Canning notes at *Instructing* 128, n. 218, this is the first mention in Augustine of the doctrine of the two cities in which the two classes of men are referred to as *civitates*. Note also from 11,16: "In our heart then we must cling to the very firmly established and unshakable conviction that, when the times have run their course, the Jerusalem that has been taken captive by the Babylon of this world will be set free and none of her citizens will perish."

prefigures and foretells Christ, Augustine would not want his inquirer to think that everything that transpires is approved of by God. And in the history that follows, in the life of the Church, he would not want him to imagine that the weeds have the same claim on the promises of God as the wheat.

He will only make that point fully when he gets to the closing *exhortatio*, but the doctrinal principle is first marshaled here.<sup>334</sup> He is anxious to forestall any misunderstanding that the presence of sin and sinners in the world suggests any kind of flaw in God or his plan; rather, this is a temporary state which the final judgment will rectify and which currently testifies to the forbearance and mercy of God which gives to the wayward "scope for repentance and reform."<sup>335</sup>

This points to a vital element in Augustine's catechetical instruction. The story isn't just told, it must be interpreted. As later narrative theologians would suggest, the story needs a doctrinal grammar to ensure that it is told, or received, properly, to ensure that it is the

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<sup>334</sup> "It is inside the Catholic Church itself, however that the greatest care is needed, so that no one will be tempted and misled by people whom the Church carries along like chaff right up to the moment of the winnowing of the grain." And, "Mix with good people, with those whom you see loving your king together with you." *Ibid.*, 25,48 & 49.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 19,31.

real Christian story and not some other. George Lindbeck's "rule theory of doctrine" suggests that doctrines are "attempts after the event to model in a formal system the vagaries of the Church's language, the 'deep grammar' of which may 'escape detection.'"<sup>336</sup> This doctrinal grammar is what Augustine is establishing, *inter alia*, in these first portions of the *narratio*.

This represents not a mere doctrinal overlay or accretion but something entirely consistent with the narrative itself. The fact of the mixing of saints and sinners in the Church is explained by way of the presence of the two cities even in the antediluvian world, "from the beginning of the human race right through to the end of time."<sup>337</sup> The doctrine rises out of the brief elements he narrates and indicates the very plotline the narration will

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<sup>336</sup> Gerard Loughlin, *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 47, interpreting George Lindbeck's *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (London: SPCK, 1984). Apropos of our topic, Loughlin goes on to quote Lindbeck, page 82, "the guidance offered by the grammar or the doctrine of the textbooks may be indispensable, especially to those who are learning a language, to those who have not mastered it well, or to those who, for whatever reason, are in danger of corrupting it into meaninglessness." See also Brian K. Smith, "Christianity as a Second Language: Rethinking Mission in the West" in *Theology Today*, vol. 53, no. 4, (Jan 1997) 439-448. Smith uses Lindbeck's cultural linguistic theory of religion and Stanley Hauerwas' apprenticeship model to advocate for a return to the catechumenal model of the ancient Church, one that is less individualistic and more church-centered, one in which centripetal and centrifugal models of mission are combined.

<sup>337</sup> DCR 19, 31.

follow. As I have already said, since man and woman sin in the garden and continue to do so, God's plan will be expressed in a saving history that represents the divine forbearance. The citizens of the two cities will finally be separated, as "when God destroyed all humankind in the flood, making an exception of the one just man and his family."<sup>338</sup>

So the doctrine of the *corpus per mixtum* percolates, so to speak, out of the very story itself, expressing what Augustine had earlier called "the very truth of the explanation that we provide,"<sup>339</sup> and also later as an "explanation along allegorical lines,"<sup>340</sup> which is the "golden thread"<sup>341</sup> of the historical exposition. That is, doctrine and allegory work seamlessly together in the telling of the story.

#### The Six Ages of the World

At 19,32 Augustine indicates for the first time in the body of his *narratio* the structure of the six ages which he

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<sup>338</sup> Ibid.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid., 6,10.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., 9,13.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid., 6,10.

had introduced in the *exordium* when he says that God's patience in the time of the flood of Noah is indicative of the mercy that he shows toward sinners. Noah is the figure who marks the term of the first age, that one from Adam to Noah, which Augustine has related in only the most impressionistic way.<sup>342</sup> He quickly draws out the meaning of the "salvific symbol" (*sacramentum*) of the flood, connecting the wood of the ark with the wood of the cross, such that by this "the future Church was foretold. By the mystery of his cross, the Church's king and God, the Christ, has held her up and saved her from sinking beneath the waves of this world."

Here Augustine shows us the importance of not only the Christological but also the ecclesiological dimension of the *narratio*. At 3,6 he had told Deogratias that "everything that we read in the holy scriptures...before the coming of the Lord was written for the sole purpose of drawing attention to his coming and of prefiguring the future Church." And that is now demonstrated by way of the

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<sup>342</sup> Much of the *narratio*, which Augustine has told us is being given as it would be to an average Carthaginian of only modest education who has exhibited a good motive in coming forward for instruction (16,24), seems to assume a prior familiarity with the scriptural narrative, such that a kind of allusive presentation is sufficient with the deeper meanings of that narrative drawn out. As I noted above, this catechesis isn't intended to be the first proclamation of the Gospel but a first instruction to someone who has heard enough of that Gospel to want to present himself for instruction and entry into the catechumenate.

"mystery of the wood," which represents, in the case of the ark, a confluence of Christological and ecclesiological types.

In 19,33 Augustine draws the prefigured Church into even greater focus by way of the people spawned by Abraham, "to whom the mystery of the Son of God would manifest itself."<sup>343</sup> Abraham, too, is the terminal figure of the second age of the world, that one beginning after Noah, who is introduced by no more of the biblical story than is represented in the phrase "certainly even at that time there were a number of virtuous people who devotedly sought God and overcame the pride of the devil....From their midst came Abraham."<sup>344</sup> Augustine goes on to say that from him sprang a people in whom "the future Church was symbolically foreshadowed with much greater clarity."<sup>345</sup>

Again, as one would expect in an explicit foreshadowing of the *corpus per mixtum* which is the Church, this people includes the "carnally minded who worshipped God in order to gain visible benefits," but also "the few

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<sup>343</sup> See Jn 8:56.

<sup>344</sup> The missing portion from 19,33 indicated by the ellipsis does contain an evocative phrase: "Citizens of the holy city, they received healing from the future humility of their king, the Christ, which was revealed to them through the Spirit." But my purpose in citing what I have is to show that very little of the intervening narrative between these major figures is supplied, it is, rather, only suggested.

<sup>345</sup> DCR 19,33.

who kept before their minds the rest that was to come."<sup>346</sup> Just as the ancient antediluvian world had had its "city" of those who are "slaves to idols and demons," as well as that "city" populated by "virtuous people who devotedly sought God," so now amongst those who will later be called Jews, there are those who follow God but without spiritual insight, as well as those whose hearts are more attuned to his hidden truths. These latter, Augustine says, are living prophecies "of this present time"<sup>347</sup> [*huius temporis*] and the Church won by the cross of Christ.

Augustine says something similar at the beginning of 20,36 after discussing the symbols of what is to come in the Mosaic phase of the story (the middle of the third age, from Abraham to David). With reference to these prefiguring events and many others, "which it would take too long to enumerate," he says, "we see them fulfilled in the Church at the present time." [*nunc in ecclesia videmus impleri*] This presents me with an opportunity to suggest that these ecclesial typologies are just the sort of thing that Augustine was referring to in 3,5 and 6,10 in saying that the *narratio* should continue "*ad praesentia tempora ecclesiae.*"

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid.

### The Present Time of the Church in Type and Figure

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, Augustine includes no real "history of the Church"<sup>348</sup> in his *narratio* despite the fact that the *GDC* calls for such and many commentators simply repeat the phrases from 3,5 and 6,10 (even inserting the term "history" into Augustine's phrases when it is absent in the Latin) without noting that nothing like a real history of the Church appears in the *narratio*.<sup>349</sup> As we will see, there are a few sentences at the end of the long sample narration (the last sentence of 23,43 and the six sentences of 24,44) that might be described as encapsulating the Church of the post-testamental period, but they represent nothing like a history.

If we take what Augustine actually supplies in *DCR* as the hermeneutical key to what he means by *ad praesentia tempora ecclesiae*, then I would suggest that it is this element of the *narratio* that we have just seen, the way in

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<sup>348</sup> *GDC* 108, 130.

<sup>349</sup> E.g., Harmless claims that "Augustine's one innovative twist was in his final phrase: that this recital should also include Church history." *Catechumenate*, 128; Christopher says, "in all catechetical treatises prior to Augustine...the *narratio* was restricted to Bible history; in this present treatise Augustine includes Church history down to his own time." *First Catechetical Instruction*, 5.



which past figurative types of the Church (the Ark, the descendents of Abraham, the Passover and the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, the rituals of the Mosaic Judaism, and also, as we will see, the founding of Jerusalem and the Davidic Kingdom and the captivity in Babylon) are shown to be "fulfilled in the Church at the present time," as Augustine puts it at 20,36. That is, the Church of Augustine's present is shown, not by way of a Church history, but typologically. He is teaching the inquirer that the present visage of the Church can be seen in the types and prophecies of the Old Testament and their fulfillments in the New.

So much is this the case that these past figures and events are not seen as *mere* symbols of future things but real expressions of the Body of Christ, even though they predate his birth.

And still, all these happenings were symbols of spiritual mysteries related to Christ and the Church, this being the Church of which those holy people were also members, even though they lived in the time before Christ the Lord was born according to the flesh.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> DCR 19,33.

As Augustine had done in 3,6 in describing the meaning of the five fingers of the hand of Jacob which preceded his head, he again here says that these typological figures which occur in advance of Christ's birth "are firmly attached to the entire body under the direction of the head."<sup>351</sup> He concludes that this is so that "He [Christ] might be to the whole Church what the head is to the body" [*ut totius ecclesia tamquam totius corporis caput esset*].<sup>352</sup> It is just this doctrine of the *tota ecclesia* - that the just of the old covenant are joined to those of the new in Christ - which, to a certain measure, obviates the need for a full history of the Church in the *plena narratio*.<sup>353</sup> For Augustine, it is the very likeness of the past types to the present realities, along with the pattern of prophecy and fulfillment that these describe, which are sufficient to corroborate Christian truth claims about the Church.<sup>354</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid. (The translation here is Christopher's from 1926.)

<sup>353</sup> Although *DCR* is commonly dated several years before the monumental event of the sack of Rome by the Goths in 410, R. A. Markus' thesis about the shift in Augustine's thinking away from the commonly held belief in *tempora christiana* - owing to the success of the faith in the Roman Empire of the 4<sup>th</sup> century - and toward a conceptual distinction between sacred and secular history, might also apply here. As we have already seen, Augustine is quite sober about the effects of Christianity's acceptance in the Roman Empire as regards "the depraved mobs" that he faced in his congregations. That state of affairs might also have "made it increasingly difficult to speak of any episode of post-Incarnational history in terms of any *heilsgeschichtlich* significance." *Saeculum*, 44.

### The Antiquity of the Church

This indicates, too, the ancient Christian interest in establishing the antiquity of the faith, over against pagan and Jewish claims of its relative novelty.<sup>355</sup> Unlike our own age which most values the most recent innovation, the ancients valued that which was time-honored. In commenting upon Augustine's famous dictum from 4,8, "in the Old Testament is concealed the New, and in the New Testament is revealed the Old," Harmless says,

This statement...encapsulates in the briefest terms the principles that Augustine had learned from Ambrose: that the Old Testament was "prophecy," "type," "shadow." This method enabled Augustine, as it had enabled Ambrose, to prove the "antiquity" of

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<sup>354</sup> Enrico Mazza says of this typological relation between past and later fulfillment, with specific reference to the mystagogical catechesis of Ambrose and others of the Fathers, that "the events comprising the history of salvation are objectively bound together to form a coherent whole; there is a movement from the lesser to the greater, from sketch to full reality, terminating finally in the revelation proper to the eschaton." *Mystagogy: A Theology of Liturgy in the Patristic Age*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Pueblo, 1989) 25. See also Markus, *Saeculum*, 16: "He [Augustine] often thought of the whole vast fabric of human history as a majestically ordered whole, an extended song or symphony, in which each moment has its unique, if impenetrably mysterious significance."

<sup>355</sup> For the way that Eusebius of Caesarea handles this in his *Ecclesiastical History*, see Jaroslav Pelikan's *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 30-31.

Christianity: that it had existed, albeit in hidden form, prior to and within Judaism. Thus, as Arnaldo Momigliano notes, Augustine, like other Christian teachers, could "silence the objection that Christianity was new, and therefore not respectable."<sup>356</sup>

Just one such example of this principle can be found in Ambrose's *De Sacramentis*, which probably captures the mystagogical catechesis that Augustine himself would have received:

In the flood, too, [in addition to the episode at the Red Sea] baptism was prefigured, and this was certainly before the sacraments of the Jews existed. If, then, the rite of baptism came first, you can see how the Christian sacraments are more ancient than those of the Jews.<sup>357</sup>

This practice of presenting the portrait of the Church of the present by way of the Old Testament types which

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<sup>356</sup> Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 128, quoting Arnaldo Momigliano, ed., "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.," in *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1963), 79-99.

<sup>357</sup> Quoted from Yarnold, *Awe Inspiring Rites of Initiation*, 108. Marcus makes the same point as regards those Christian historians of the 4<sup>th</sup> century who were concerned to place the events of biblical history in the context of Greco-Roman history: "their concern had been, in the first place, to vindicate the claims of the biblical revelation to greater antiquity and thus to priority over the wisdom of the Greeks." *Saeculum*, 3.

prefigure it was a standard practice in patristic catechesis. One can see this in Irenaeus' *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, which presents a *narratio* which, it is believed, served as one possible template for Augustine's in *DCR*.<sup>358</sup>

While by the end of the fourth century Augustine had a formal canon of New Testament passages from which to draw and which he cites or alludes to fulsomely, Irenaeus, in the last decades of the second century, makes virtually no use of the "memoirs" of the apostles (as Justin Martyr had called them) in his catechetical treatise. As John Behr notes, "the apostolic preaching is nothing other than the various predictions made by the prophets, proclaimed as having been realized in Jesus Christ."<sup>359</sup> Even though

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<sup>358</sup> "The two treatises, however, which most resemble the present work of St. Augustine, are the *Constitutiones Apostolorum* and the *Demonstratio praedicationis apostolicae* of St. Irenaeus.... The study of very considerable resemblances of certain sections of Augustine's treatise to passages in the two older works leads to the conclusion that all three compositions ultimately derive from an original, well-defined catechetical model." Christopher, *First Catechetical Instruction* (1946) 7. In what follows I will have an opportunity to suggest a few further comparisons between Irenaeus' work and Augustine's.

<sup>359</sup> St. Irenaeus of Lyon, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, John Behr trans., (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1997) 13. Behr describes the influences that informed Irenaeus' catechesis by saying that "For Ignatius and the other apostolic fathers, the Christian Gospel, the revelation of Jesus Christ, was essentially a christocentric reading of [Old Testament] Scripture, as it had been interpreted by the apostles, although their writings were never cited to substantiate this teaching nor were they ever cited as Scripture." 11. Behr notes that Irenaeus, on the other hand, cites Paul three times and John twice (16). Further cites of Irenaeus' work will be from Behr's translation and employ just the text numbers of the

Augustine can freely cite New Testament Scripture, he seems to retain the older practice of relying primarily on the Old Testament history and types in sculpting the substance of his *narratio*.

And now we can also see why he had stressed from the very outset of his instructions on the method of delivering the *narratio* (3,6) that "the holy scriptures that [were] written before the coming of the Lord [were] written for the sole purpose of drawing attention to his [Christ's] coming and the prefiguring of the future Church." That statement represents not just a hermeneutic principle for the Old Testament, but a methodological principle for the *narratio*. He is in effect telling us that, since the Old Testament suffices to so disclose Christ and the Church, the *narratio* will be made full, not by including a Church history, but when that disclosure has been completed. I conclude, then, that the phrase "to the present time of the Church" indicates not really a history of the Church but a *narratio* which completes a portrait of the Church of the present time (*huius temporis*) drawn from the types and prophecies of the Old Testament.

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*Demonstration.* (Behr also includes some Greek terms which A. Rousseau, in his critical edition of 1995, had judged to be the substrate of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Armenian version. Those will be included here, too, where helpful.)

At 22,39, where he recaps the structure of the five ages to introduce the coming of Christ in the sixth, Augustine says that the "critical turning points [*articuli*] of the first two ages are highlighted in the books of the Old Testament." These are the two ages, from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham that we have seen so far in 18,20 - 19,33. He goes on to say that

As for the high points of the remaining three ages, these are indicated in the Gospel as well, when the physical genealogy of the Lord Jesus Christ is recalled. For the third age covers the period from Abraham down to King David; the fourth runs from David down to that period of captivity when the people of God was deported to Babylon; and the fifth extends from the time of the deportation to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here Augustine is making reference to the genealogy of Matthew's Gospel as his template for the third, fourth, and fifth ages leading up to the coming of Christ. In 1:1-17 Matthew elaborates three periods of fourteen generations each, making Jesus "the son of David, the son of Abraham."<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>360</sup> Mt. 1:1.

Irenaeus in his *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, which is considered, as I have noted, a 2<sup>nd</sup> century precursor and model for Augustine's work, uses a more complex numerical system to order his presentation of the *narratio*. Noah and Adam are separated by ten generations as are Abraham and Noah.<sup>361</sup> Two generations beyond Abraham, that is in the twelfth generation from Noah, Jacob arrives as the father of the twelve tribes. Moses, who plays a more prominent role in Irenaeus' work than in Augustine's,<sup>362</sup> arrives 400 years ("in the fourth generation") after Abraham received his vision promising, "to your descendants I give this land" (15:18) in Genesis 15. That makes Moses the fourteenth generation from Abraham, out of accord with Matthew's pattern, but Moses also expresses the earlier symbolism of the ten-fold pattern of the first two ages by presiding over the ten plagues and receiving the Ten Commandments at Mt. Sinai.<sup>363</sup> Irenaeus does retain the Matthean theme, albeit without the

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<sup>361</sup> *Demonstration* 18 and 21.

<sup>362</sup> Irenaeus stresses the role of Moses partly because of his successor, whose name he changes from Osee to Jesus. "Then God revealed to him [Moses] the Name which alone (is) able to save those who believe in it: and Moses, renaming Osee, the son of Nave, one of the envoys, called him Jesus; and thus sent (him) with the power of the Name, believing that he would receive them back safe because of he guidance of the Name - as indeed came to pass." (27).

<sup>363</sup> *Demonstration* 25 and 26.



fourteen generations, by stressing that Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises, first made to Abraham of a seed of blessing (Gn 22:18) and then to David of a "fruit" or the "seed of David" who would be an "Eternal King" (2 Sm 7:16).<sup>364</sup>

Augustine's sparser treatment is likely due to the fact that he is addressing a newcomer while Irenaeus is addressing Marcianus, a mature Christian whom he counsels to "keep the rule of faith."<sup>365</sup> But in citing the same sort of material as Irenaeus for the first two ages and Matthew's genealogy as the source of his pattern for establishing the "highpoints of the remaining three ages,"<sup>366</sup> he indicates to his hearer that the *narratio* is patterned in a way that testifies, although without all the detail that Irenaeus is able to provide, to the providential hand of God at work in guiding the economy of salvation toward the fullness of revelation in Christ and the Church he establishes. This is aimed, as Augustine had

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid., 35, 36. See the notes to verses 1:2-17 and 1:17 of Matthew in *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible* (RSV), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Intro., Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000). This commentary notes that the pattern of fourteen generations, which includes the listing of the name of David in the fourteenth position, is intended to establish the Davidic identity of Jesus. The numerical value of David's name in Hebrew is 14 (Dalet=4 + Vav=6 + Dalet=4)

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>366</sup> DCR 22,39.

said at 12,17, at enabling those who have come for catechesis to "lift up their minds to the design and purpose of the maker, and to rise higher still to the veneration and praise of God, the creator of all, in whom love has its richest goal." There Augustine is speaking of the way in which creation testifies to God's existence and his creative and sustaining power,<sup>367</sup> he goes on to say of the matter of this catechesis, however, that it represents an attempt "to acquire knowledge of God himself,"<sup>368</sup> suggesting that the "design and purpose" of salvation history conduces to a more articulate knowledge of God than creation can possibly provide.

This way in which the content of the economy as recounted in the *narratio* gives us "knowledge of God himself" can be seen again in Augustine's treatment of the third age of the economy, from Abraham to David. He returns to the liberation of the just by the "mystery of the wood," (*ligni mysterio*) which he had employed with reference to the flood in the first age of the world at 19, 32. As the wood of the ark of Noah had pointed to the cross of Christ, the wood of the staff of Moses by which he

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<sup>367</sup> Christopher's commentary (1946) on this passage suggests a reference to a "teleological argument for the existence of God." *First Catechetical Instruction*, 116, n. 122.

<sup>368</sup> DCR 12,17.

parts the Red Sea assures "that the salvific symbol of the wood (*ligni sacramentum*) was not lacking"<sup>369</sup> here either.

And the cross, which is signified by both the ark and Moses' staff, makes both of these water events in the economy "symbols of holy baptism by means of which the faithful pass over into a new life while their sins are brought to nothing and destroyed like enemies."<sup>370</sup> And this sacramental trajectory of the economy, something which will later be stressed heavily in the mystagogy to which these newcomers will advance if they offer themselves for Baptism, is made even clearer, Augustine says, in the events surrounding the first Passover in Egypt.

Even more clearly, however, was Christ's passion symbolically foreshadowed in that people when they were ordered to kill and eat a sheep, and to mark their doorposts with its blood, and to celebrate this event every year, and to call it the Passover of the Lord. Indeed, the prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus Christ very plainly states that *he was led like a sheep to be offered in sacrifice* (Is 53:7). With the sign of his passion and cross you are today to be marked on the forehead - your doorpost, so to speak - and all Christians are marked in the same way.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., 20,34.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

We can see Augustine tiptoeing very close to the *arcana* here. The association of Christ with the rites of entry into the catechumenate, which will follow this first catechetical instruction and which I will consider in due course, also strongly hints at the mystery of the Eucharist, by way of the paschal lamb slain and eaten. Without saying too much, Augustine is helping his inquirers to get a first pass through the sacramental significance of the economy. In this way, his *narratio* can be seen to be preparatory to *mystagogy*.

This will become clearer when we move on to comment upon the rites of entry into the catechumenate, just mentioned, but at this point we can already see that the "design and purpose" of salvation history very clearly includes not just the analogies between events in the Old and New Testament economies, but extends to enclose within it the sacramental mysteries. In this way, those three overlapping trajectories that we saw earlier: the human search for rest; the creational week and the rest of God; and the week of the ages of the world and the rest of God in his saints, are made to intersect, not just through a typology which points to Christ and the Church, but also by

way of a typology which binds those three trajectories together, so to speak, through the sacramental mysteries.

By these, mankind finds the rest it longs for, which had been lost to us by the original sin following the creational week, and which is made possible again by Christ and the way in which his passion and cross sum up and make operative in the present the saving events of the first five ages of the world. All this suggests that the "knowledge of God himself" which the catechesis promises comes by way of the presence of Christ in his sacraments.<sup>372</sup>

In 20,35 Augustine extends this sacramental typology of the third age by considering the giving of the Commandments and sacrifices of the Old Law. After a brief reflection upon the phrase the "finger of God" and the way in which it indicates the Holy Spirit's communication of the law on the stone tablets while at the same time indicating the hardness of heart of the people, Augustine speaks of the weight of "external ritual practices regarding "food, animal sacrifices, and countless other matters." He goes on to say that

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<sup>372</sup> Irenaeus in *Demonstration* (Part II, 1, 45-46) suggests that the types themselves act like epiphanies and attest to the constant presence of the "Word of God who was always with mankind and foretold things of the future, which were to come to pass, and taught men things of God" (45). He goes on, "for in [these] things (Burning Bush, Red Sea, etc.) our [affairs] were pre-formed (προμελετιώ), the Word of God at that time demonstrating in advance by types, things to come" (46).

these ritual practices were symbols of spiritual realities related to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. At that time only a few holy ones understood them with profit for salvation and observed them in a manner appropriate to that period of history. By the vast number of carnally-minded people, however, they were observed without being understood.<sup>373</sup>

Just as he counsels against interpreting the phrase "finger of God" in a carnal fashion, as "the visible form of a human body,"<sup>374</sup> he also imputes to all but a few in Israel a carnal understanding of the ritual practices of the Old Law.<sup>375</sup> He implicitly suggests that to read the Old Law as still prescriptive in the matter of such sacrifices is to return to "hardness of heart." The whole body of that Mosaic teaching as regards those "many visible sacraments" (*multis sacramentis visibilibus*) is to be understood as symbolic of "spiritual realities" (*rerum*

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid., 20, 35.

<sup>374</sup> This issue of the carnal reading of the Old Testament has already been touched upon and will figure again heavily in the *apologia* for a typological catechesis that will follow in Section 2 of this chapter.

<sup>375</sup> For a wonderfully balanced treatment of Augustine's view of Israel as "a witness to, and not merely a shadow of, God's redeeming work," see Kari Kloos' "History as Witness: Augustine's Interpretation of the History of Israel in *Contra Faustum* and *De trinitate*" in *Augustine and History*, Christopher Daly, J. Doody and K. Paffenroth, eds. (Lanham, MD and Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008) 31-51.

*spiritalium*).<sup>376</sup> The same holds for the king and his kingdom at the tail end of the third age; David and his "earthly kingdom had in it an image of the spiritual kingdom," Jerusalem "prefigured the free city which is called the heavenly Jerusalem"<sup>377</sup>

And here Augustine gives his hearer a brief vision of heaven, its citizens, the saints of "past, present, and future," the angels at its heights, those who devotedly worship the eternal King whom David had symbolized and remotely sired. These contrasted with the fallen angels who in their "godless pride" had forsaken heaven and heaven's King. This is the "vision of peace,"<sup>378</sup> the promised rest that Jerusalem had prefigured and toward

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<sup>376</sup> "Many visible sacraments" is Christopher's (1926) translation. These are not useless signs, they retained the character of prophetic signs to those who had the eyes to see, but they fall short of the realities disclosed in Christ. Van der Meer encapsulates Augustine's attitude toward the mysteries of Israel in saying, "The saints of earlier days foresaw our own time and believed in its coming, for since the beginning of the world this mystery of God becoming Man had been ceaselessly indicated and proclaimed in symbols." *Bishop*, 462. Kloos' article, cited in the footnote just above, points to an exegetical study (an unpublished dissertation, "Augustine's Construction of Figurative Exegesis Against the Donatists in the 'Ennarrationes in Psalmos,'" Univ. of Chicago, 1996.) by Michael Cameron which she describes as arguing that "Augustine's sign theory shifts from a disjunctive to a conjunctive relationship between the *signum* and the *res*, which is itself affected by Augustine's deepening understanding of the incarnation in the 390s." Of course we would expect *DCR*, dated to about 400, to express that same conjunctive, rather than disjunctive relationship between the rites of the old and the new, which is to say, to see the regime of Judaism positively.

<sup>377</sup> *DCR* 20,36.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*

which the newcomer is encouraged to set his sights.<sup>379</sup> After that taste of the prize of discipleship, Augustine finishes the third age with the suggestion that there will be much more to be learned in the days ahead, of the "Many...deeds done in that promised land which symbolically foreshadowed the Christ who was to come and the Church" with which "little by little you will be able to familiarize yourself...in the holy books."<sup>380</sup>

#### The Fourth Age and the Return of Babylon

In 21,37 Augustine returns to the theme of the two cities that he had introduced in the first and second ages (11,16 and 19,31). In so doing, he summarizes the whole of the span from David to the Babylonian captivity with reference to the downward trajectory that Israel takes from the "vision of peace" represented by Jerusalem toward the "confusion" which constitutes Babylon. After the brief vision of heaven that Augustine had just provided, he now shows the possible alternative by way of the "city in which the evil come together" but which in this age the citizens of each are mixed in with those of the other city. He

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<sup>379</sup> See 2 Samuel 7 where David is promised rest from his enemies in Jerusalem and a blessed house, an everlasting kingdom.

<sup>380</sup> DCR 20,36.



concludes, "at the last judgment they are to be separated from each other." This is already a preview of the final exhortation in which Augustine will counsel his charge to flee the punishments of hell and to seek the blessed rest above, but that is not the primary purpose he has in mind in returning to the symbol of Babylon.<sup>381</sup>

Instead, Augustine highlights the captivity in Babylon as a figure of the way in which Christians must be subject to the rulers of this world and the necessity of rendering unto Caesar. The seventy years in captivity suggest to him a double fulfillment. The first is that "peace was given to Church" as a result of the prayers offered for the Emperors in obedience to the command of St. Paul in 1 Timothy 2:1-2. And so the work of "building and planting"<sup>382</sup> "goes on throughout the entire world with the

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<sup>381</sup> Kloos in "History as Witness" (34-36) discusses Augustine's theological purposes in his evaluation of the fourth and fifth ages in an earlier work (388-389), *De Genesi adversus Manichaeos*, where he highlights the ascendancy of David and the fidelity of Israel in the fourth and the decline into exile in the fifth. This different treatment is likely due to Augustine's correlation of the six ages with human life stages, such that youth, as represented by the David period, gives way to physical decline, represented by the captivity in Babylon, but finally yielding wisdom, represented by the coming of Christ and the Gospel in the sixth age. The lesson is a similar one in *DCR*, only the period in which that lesson is given is altered, owing to the different purposes to which he puts his narration. Kloos remarks, "His exegesis of Israel here seemingly diverges from the [schema of successive spiritual progress of] the six days of creation, instead relying upon the Pauline theology of the death of the old self and birth of the new.... In turn, this Pauline theme of rebirth is linked back to the sixth day of creation, the making of humanity" (36).

blessing of Christian rulers."<sup>383</sup> But "such peace is time-bound" and the ultimate fulfillment will come when, "after the predetermined time symbolized by the seventy years, the Church is freed from the disorder of this world just as Jerusalem was freed from captivity in Babylon."<sup>384</sup> With reference to the first of these two fulfillments, the temporal and eschatological, this work of "building and planting" are on-going, says Augustine to his hearer, even "by means of this address."<sup>385</sup>

#### The Fifth and Sixth Ages:

##### the Psalms and Prophets and Christ's Coming

Augustine compresses the fifth age, one third of the period described in Matthew's three-part genealogy, down to just three paragraphs. This ought not to surprise us, since much of this period in the history of the chosen

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<sup>382</sup> Augustine is citing Jeremiah 29:5-7 where, when asked when the exile will come to an end the people of Judah are told by God through the prophet to "Build house and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare."

<sup>383</sup> DCR 20,37.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

people is commonly referred to as the "prophetic silence." According to the traditional dating of the texts that Augustine would have accepted, apart from the history we have in the two Maccabees from the early to late 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., the chronicle of the return from Babylon that we have in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the last prophetic utterance of that period (mid-5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) recorded in Malachi is all we have from this period. He notes that the return to build the Temple was, in a sense, a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy and yet also the building up the rest of the prophetic figure which signifies the Church at rest at the end of the ages.

Augustine also highlights the way in which the Psalms of David and the prophecies surrounding the Babylonian exile served to point beyond the immediate descendants of David and the events of the return as plausible candidates for the fulfillment of the prophecies of liberation by the Christ. He notes that their continued domination by foreign powers made clear to the Jewish people that the "liberator had not yet come."<sup>386</sup>

After recapping the structure of the first five ages at 22,39, Augustine announces the arrival of the Christ and that "the sixth age is underway." The significance of the

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<sup>386</sup> Ibid., 21,38.

sixth age is in its correlation with the sixth day of creation: "In this sixth age the human spirit will be renewed in accordance with the image of God, just as on the sixth day human beings were created in accordance with the image of God." And Augustine stresses that in this age the carnal understanding of the old covenant as aimed merely toward the physical wellbeing of the Jews will give way to the things of the spirit, such that his followers "would worship God without self interest, not longing to receive from him any visible reward for their service, or happiness in this present life, but desiring only that eternal life in which we enjoy God himself."<sup>387</sup>

And here Augustine returns to the themes he raised in his *exordium*. The happiness we all seek can't be gained by "greed for temporal things"<sup>388</sup> but only by the love of the God who first loved us. Canning notes that this theme "closely reflects the opening sentences of 4,7, which are at the core of Augustine's outline and description of the *narratio*."<sup>389</sup> And so in a very clear way, Augustine, in the

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<sup>387</sup> Ibid., 22,39

<sup>388</sup> Ibid.

<sup>389</sup> Canning, *Instructing*, 144, n. 295. See Joseph Ratzinger, *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism: Sidelights on the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997) 15: "As he pursued the tangled paths of his life, Augustine constantly asked himself one question: How do I attain happiness."

first sentences narrating the sixth age, has again brought together those three trajectories: that of man and his happiness, the last day of the creational week, and the last age of the world, and this time in clear association with the coming of Christ himself. Christ is shown to be the answer to man's search for happiness; and Christ's coming enables man to reorient himself, by way of the renewed *imago*, toward an eternal beatitude rather than mere earthly happiness. Christ does this by taking on himself "the weight of all earthly adversity, warning that we would have to take this upon ourselves. So were we to learn that happiness is not to be sought in earthly goods nor is unhappiness to be feared in adversity."<sup>390</sup>

Augustine then turns briefly to the essential historical elements of the arrival of the new covenant in Christ, the virgin birth from Mary, the humble circumstances of his birth in Bethlehem, showing "that he did not wish anyone to boast about the grandeur of any earthly city."<sup>391</sup> Augustine then summarizes the whole of the public ministry of Christ by a series of what Harmless calls "kerygmatic paradoxes."<sup>392</sup> In a series of eight of

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<sup>390</sup> *DCR* 22, 40.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>392</sup> *Catechumenate*, 147, n. 153.

these paradoxes, Augustine simultaneously sums up both the doctrine of the Incarnation, the public ministry and the passion by which Christ won our salvation, as well as providing hints as to the fruits of the sacraments to which the seeker would be admitted by Baptism.

Harmless gives a number of the Latin lines, arranging them to highlight the literary qualities of the original.<sup>393</sup> Even in translation the text is worth quoting in full (the numbering has been added, the translation is Christopher's):

1. He hungered who feeds all,
2. He thirsted by whom all drink is created, He who is spiritually both the bread of them that hunger, and the wellspring of them that thirst;
3. He was wearied by earthly journeying who has made Himself the way to heaven for us;
4. He became as it were dumb and deaf in the presence of His revilers, through whom the dumb spoke and the deaf heard,
5. He was bound who has freed men from the bonds of their infirmities.
6. He was scourged who drove out from men's bodies the scourges of all pains;
7. He was crucified who put an end to our torments;

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 146-147.

8. He died who raised the dead to life.

But He also rose again, nevermore to die, that none might learn from Him so to despise death as though destined never to live hereafter.<sup>394</sup>

This is a remarkable work of concision combining "rhetorical figures and verbal sonorities" that "verges on poetry."<sup>395</sup> But in addition to the summary of the Incarnation, ministry, and Passion, one can see resonances of the way in which Christ fulfills the precursor events of the whole economy.

From the creation (#2) and the first bite of the forbidden fruit (#1) to the welling up of the waters of the Flood (#2), to the wanderings of Abraham (#3), to the freedom from slavery (#5) worked in Moses (#4, though he was "slow of speech and of tongue"<sup>396</sup>) to the faithful witness of the prophets in the midst of persecutions by the heirs of the steadily corrupting influences of the house of David (#6), to the scourge of the Babylonian exile (#6), the whole of the economy appears to be recapitulated here, too. And this remarkable summary reaches its culmination

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<sup>394</sup> Christopher, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* (1926), 97, 99.

<sup>395</sup> Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 147.

<sup>396</sup> Exodus 4:10-11, "'But Moses said to the Lord, 'Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent ...I am slow of speech and of tongue.' Then the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind?'"

in the death and resurrection in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of these paradoxes and then spills forth into the fruit that they win for us in the brief phrase at the close which suggests that we ought not to "pay too little heed to death, as if there were never a life to come."<sup>397</sup> That is to say, in this Christological summary can be found a summary of the whole address. Here is the picture of Love incarnate drawing human suffering and sorrow to himself to transform it in his Passion into the engine of hope and ultimate happiness. In this passage we see demonstrated again the absolutely Christocentric character of this catechesis. Everything converges on Christ and spills over *ad praesentia tempora ecclesiae*.

Then at 23,41 Augustine races forward to the Ascension and Pentecost, forty days from the Resurrection to the first, and fifty days to the second. Pentecost is the outpouring of the divine love which enables these first Christians "to fulfill the law not only without finding it a burden but even with joy." This gives Augustine the opportunity to reflect upon the great commandment to love God and neighbor, which sums up the Decalogue. And that connection enables him in turn to draw an analogous

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<sup>397</sup> This is now Canning's translation of the last line of 22,40, which is a little clearer than Christopher's, cited above.



relationship between the events of Mt. Sinai and those of Pentecost. He calls this typological relation "a similar chronology," the fifty days from the first Passover to the giving of the Law on Sinai prefiguring the fifty days from the "the passion and resurrection of the Lord - that is the true Passover." He recalls for his hearer that at 20,35 he had interpreted the "finger of God" which inscribed the Law on the stone tablets of Moses as referring to the Holy Spirit. Now, on this first Christian Pentecost, the Jewish feast which had celebrated the giving of that Law, "the Holy Spirit himself was sent to the disciples."<sup>398</sup>

He explains and conflates the events of Acts 2, 3, and 4 at the end of 23,41 and the beginning of 23,42, the tongues of fire and the miracle of the tongues and then the healing of the cripple by Peter and "many miraculous signs" which yield the conversion of thousands of Jews. Of these Augustine says that they "were no longer people who yearned for God to give them temporal benefits" but people who

loved Christ in his immortal nature - Christ who in his mortal body suffered so much hardship for them and because of them, and who forgave their sins, even the sin of shedding his own blood, and through the example of his resurrection showed them that it is immortality

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<sup>398</sup> DCR 23,41.

that they should hope for and desire to receive from him.<sup>399</sup>

These represent the remnant of Israel for Augustine. They have accomplished the movement from the carnal to the spiritual, from seeking their happiness in earthly things to hope in eternal things, just the pattern of transformation that he had encouraged in his listener in the *exordium*. These new Christians, now conformed to Christ, suffer like him at the hands of those of their race who remain "carnally minded." Paul is among the number of the persecutors, but becomes a believer and is sent to the Gentiles, enabling Augustine to take up that next phase of the Christian story which is aided by the dispersion that the Jewish persecution brings.

The Gentiles turn from "the cult of idols" and were initiated in the worship of the one God by their Jewish-Christian mentors. And they are encouraged to support the Churches of Judea. Augustine says that Paul placed between them as a cornerstone "Christ in whom both of them, like walls coming from different directions (that is, from the

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<sup>399</sup> Ibid., 23,42.

Jews and the gentiles), were to be united in fraternal love."<sup>400</sup>

It is here, at the last line of 23,43 that Augustine seems to begin his description of the age of the Church. The gentiles impose "harsher and more frequent persecutions against the Church of Christ,"<sup>401</sup> as Jesus had foretold. And so the vine of God is made "more luxuriant the more abundantly it was watered with the blood of martyrs" and still more so as the "unfruitful branches" of heresy and schism were pruned away.<sup>402</sup> He mentions again before closing that the powers which had persecuted the Church "were converted and came to know and worship Christ." And that is all he provides of a history of the Church.<sup>403</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 23,43.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid., 24,44.

<sup>403</sup> It is worth noting again, that all the commentators that we have been following, after promising just such from Augustine, pass over the lack of any elaborated history without a word. On 465 of *Bishop*, Van der Meer summarizes this last portion of the long address in one sentence and then immediately takes up themes from the *exhortatio* without a paragraph break. Harmless on 147 of *Catechumenate* finishes his review of the *narratio* with the kerygmatic summary of the ministry of Christ that we saw above and then passes over this brief section altogether by saying, "Narrative then shifts unobtrusively to exhortation." Christopher (*First Catechetical Instruction*, 1946, 75-77) titles 24,44-45 "the Church of prophecy and history. How it has been watered with the blood of martyrs and pruned of heresies." But by joining 24, 45 with 44 he places the beginning of the *exhortatio* with the end of the *narratio*, suggesting that Harmless is right in calling the transition "unobtrusive." It appears to be so much so that Christopher missed it. (In fairness, Christopher is following the traditional chapter headings in his division of the text, whereas Canning, rightly I think, picks up on the clue from 7, 11:

This, then, finishes the *narratio* which Cicero defines in his *De inventione* as follows: *narratio est rerum gestarum, aut ut gestarum expositio.*<sup>404</sup> In this case, as we have seen, it is a *narratio* of that kind which he calls *historia*, so of things that God has done. To borrow a term, again from Irenaeus, the *narratio* of Augustine represents a "demonstration" or proof of the case that he is presenting for Christianity. (I will discuss how it functions in that regard under the heading of the *exhortatio*, just below, because Augustine himself begins his concluding *exhortatio* by summarizing the findings of the *narratio*.)

**Section 3: Exhortatio (pathos-hope) 24,45 - 25,49**

**and the Rite of Reception 26,50**

As noted above, I am most interested in the content, shape and methodology of the central portion of the full address, the *narratio*. But we have also seen that the full address (as well as Augustine's order of presentation in

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"Once the historical exposition is concluded, we should deeply impress upon our hearer the hope in the resurrection." That transition actually occurs at 24,45 and not at 25,46.) See Canning *Instructing*, 154, n.346. But Canning, like the others, (see 152-153) passes over the absence of any real "history of the Church."

<sup>404</sup> *De inventione* I,19,27. "The narration is an exposition of things that have been done or of things as if they had been done."

DCR, as seen at 2,4) is governed by a rubric supplied by the theological virtues at 4,8 which seems also to correlate with the three modes of proof from Aristotle's rhetorical system. So we need to take a few pages to see if this schema is born out in Augustine's *exhortatio*.

He first immediately corroborates in 24,45 that the *narratio* is intended as the central proof of the argument, to supply *logos*, the reasons for faith. In regard to the historical exposition just given he says, "Well now, we know that all these events have taken place exactly as we read of them in prophecies going back so far in time," and then continues, "so we are built up to be strong in faith because all this had been fulfilled, just as we read in the books which were written long before this fulfillment occurred." All the events which had foretold Christ's coming and the foundation of the Church have been seen to have been fulfilled, he notes. Whereas the first Christians had to rely for faith more on miracles "because they did not yet see these actual events as having coming to pass," those of Augustine's day could see the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ and the Church, as well as the conversion of tyrants into patrons of that Church.

It is this pattern of prophecy/type and fulfillment, as witnessed in the present age of the Church, that constitutes the object of the nascent faith of these first inquirers. (The Creed would only have been presented in a *traditio* later, in the last period of the catechumenate, enlightenment.) This is the same patterned discourse that Irenaeus had presented over two centuries earlier in the *Demonstration* to a mature Christian and which he describes even as an explication of the "rule (κανών) of faith."<sup>405</sup> Augustine has unrolled "the parchment," the image he had employed in 3,5, to disclose the "oracles of the scriptures,"<sup>406</sup> explaining "the deeper meaning of each of the matters and events" and has related "them to the goal constituted by love."<sup>407</sup>

In this way, the memory of his inquirer has now been filled with these great works, enabling the mind to be lifted up to the "design and purpose" of God "in whom love has its richest goal."<sup>408</sup> The next rhetorical step that

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<sup>405</sup> *Demonstration* 3. Behr notes that in Irenaeus this expression represents the "model of faith which is received at Baptism...which epitomizes the 'order and connection of the Scriptures.'" *On the Apostolic Preaching*, 102, n. 11.

<sup>406</sup> DCR 6,10.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., 12,17. Note that Irenaeus calls his work, the *Demonstration*, a "summary memorandum" (κεφαλαιωδής ὑπόμνημα), a summary memorial.

Augustine takes is to make the connection between the prophecies already seen to be fulfilled and those "remaining prophecies [that] will come to pass as well."<sup>409</sup> These can be believed "without hesitation" because in the former prophecies and fulfillments have been shown God's loving plan, and his trustworthiness.

Having made that connection between past and future fulfillment, Augustine can move to that step promised in 7,11: "Once the historical exposition is concluded, we should deeply impress upon our hearer the hope in the resurrection." The judgment of the two cities will come, the citizens of each "having regained possession of their bodies," and Christ will "divide the upright from the wicked," Augustine tells his charge. "With firm and unwavering faith, therefore, you are to believe that all the things that seem to vanish from our human sight, as though their life had come to an end, remain intact and undiminished in the all-powerful God."<sup>410</sup>

And it is then in 25,47 that the rhetorical mode of *pathos* is fully displayed when Augustine seems to warm to his theme: "Flee, therefore, by means of unshakeable faith

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 24,45. These consist of the tribulations of the last days and the final judgment.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid., 25,46.

and a good way of life. Flee those torments, brother." And then alternately, "Blaze with love and desire for the eternal life of the saints, where activity will be effortless and rest will not be idle." Faith and love aid in the attainment of the goal of rest that we saw figuring so heavily in Augustine's *exordium*: faith by repelling the dangers of temptation and love by its attraction to the eternal reward. And that rest is elaborated, as it was in that first part of the address, by the happiness we all long for: "God will be the complete delight and fullness of the holy city, the city that will live in him and from him, in wisdom and happiness."<sup>411</sup> In the short address Augustine expresses the same as "such joy and blessedness that no human being can either express or imagine."<sup>412</sup> It is the very enjoyment of the angels, Augustine says, "for which we now hope and wait because it has been promised by God."

So faith and love make possible the hoped-for rest that means our eternal happiness. And then, in a kind of doctrinal finale to the *exhortatio* in which our desire for rest and Trinitarian faith meet (which will be followed in 25,48 by precepts and warnings), Augustine says,

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<sup>411</sup> Ibid., 25,47.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., 27,54.



Side by side with the angels we shall then enjoy by sight that Trinity in whose ways we now walk by faith. For we believe what we do not see so that by the very merits of that faith we might find ourselves favored also to see what we believe and to be utterly absorbed in it. Concerning the equality of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the unity of the Trinity itself (how these three are one God): we are then no longer to shout out this profession of faith using noisy words but to drink in the reality in an act of the most pure and fervent contemplation in that place of silence.<sup>413</sup>

That which had been hoped for, the rest of heart toward which Augustine had encouraged his hearer to strain in his *exordium*, is given a Trinitarian articulation here at the end of the *exhortatio*. This encouragement to hope is echoed in the final phrases of both the long and short forms of the address, in the context of the precepts of life supplied there. In both, Augustine seeks to orient the hope of the inquirer toward God by warning against a

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid., 25,47. It is significant that at the end of what I judge to be the full address, *exordium*, *narratio*, and *exhortatio* (followed then by precepts), Augustine deploys this primary article of baptismal faith which will be expressed in the sacramental of the rites of reception into the catechumenate that follow the address and which point forward to the fuller initiatory rites. Here, the hoped-for goal of Baptism is joined to the ultimate goal of Christian life. In the short form of the address a similar pattern holds of *exhortatio* (in 27,54) which culminates in the promise of "living forever in him," followed by precepts (in 27,55), beginning with the words, "If you believe this then, you should be on your guard against temptations."

misplaced hope. He says, "We must not place our hope in human beings, no matter how good they are. Indeed, he by whom we are justified is one thing, those with whom we are justified are another."<sup>414</sup>

One final but very important thing needs to be noted about the placement of the exhortation and precepts at the end of the historical exposition. In addition to the proper rhetorical order that this represents, there is a vital theological/pedagogical principle evident here, too. As David Ford maintains, there is an important "relationship between 'story' and 'performance.'"<sup>415</sup> As he says with specific reference to the dependence of Paul's epistolary teaching upon the grounding narrative of the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, when so grounded in that narrative of salvation, moral teaching can

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<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 27,55.

<sup>415</sup> "System, Story, Performance: A Proposal about the Role of Narrative in Christian Systematic Theology," in Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, eds. *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1997) 198. "[The Gospels] are, as I construe them, realistic narratives written in the middle distance perspective in the light of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, and this verdict embodied in the crucified and risen Lord not only is the clue to the distinctive reality rendered by the Gospels but also lies at the heart of Christian 'performance' in worship, community, prophecy, and mission" 199.

take on the "practical realism of someone facing pressing issues calling for verdicts and decisions."<sup>416</sup>

This is what we see in *DCR*, too. The *narratio* calls for "verdicts and decisions." As Christian ethicist Stanley Hauerwas puts it, "the story of God we claim as revealed in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection forces a repositioning of the self vis-à-vis [that] reality."<sup>417</sup> In Augustine's work, that "repositioning" is expressed in the order of presentation from *narratio* to exhortation to action, to precepts guiding that action, and, finally, to the Rite of Acceptance, which I will take up next. In this way, the story demands performance, in a life of discipleship which includes both moral rectitude (precepts) and worship (Rite of Reception).

#### Rite of Reception into the Catechumenate

After a series of precepts which are aimed at helping the hearer to avoid the temptations of bad company and to seek the company of the righteous, Augustine directs

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 198. On this point Ford cites Richard B. Hays' *The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Investigation of the Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1-4:11* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1983).

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 304. Stanley Hauerwas, "Why the Truth Demands Truthfulness: An Imperious Engagement with Hartt" in *Why Narrative?*, 303-310.

Deogratias to ask the newcomer "whether he believes what has been said and whether he desires to abide by it in practice."<sup>418</sup> If he answers affirmatively, he is to be given the rite of acceptance into the catechumenate. We needn't spend much time on the conduct of the rite or rites. Van der Meer, Harmless, Canning, as well as Yarnold, supply the scholarly consensus on the rites.<sup>419</sup> The rites or *sacramenta* are generally thought to have consisted of a signing with the cross - as Augustine had hinted at 20,34 in his interpretation of the blood on the doorposts of the Exodus - a prayer with the laying on of hands, and the placing of a pinch of salt on the tongue, and perhaps also a minor exorcism.

As I noted above in my commentary on the meaning of *ad presentia tempora ecclesiae*, along with the pattern of typological fulfillment that finds expression in the Church of Augustine's present, the sacramental telos of catechesis generally and this first catechesis as well, works to

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<sup>418</sup> Ibid., 26,50.

<sup>419</sup> Van der Meer, *Bishop*, 354, explains the "little solemnity consisting of four rites." Harmless discounts the fourth, an exorcistic *exsufflatio*, as expressive of a Donatist practice, *Catechumenate*, 150-151, see n. 165. Canning admits the possibility of the exorcism, while recognizing that the only mention of such in Augustine is in reference to the Donatist practice in *Instructing*, 163, n. 375. Yarnold (*Awe Inspiring Rites*, 2-6) also describes the ancient western rites as four: signing with the cross, giving salt, imposition of hands, and an exorcism by words and a gesture of blowing. He cites Cyril of Jerusalem and John the Deacon in support.

connect the narrated events of the economy with the present of the believer. That is just what Augustine's commentary on the marking of doorposts at the Exodus suggests: "With the sign of his passion and cross you are to be marked on the forehead - your doorpost, so to speak - and all Christians are marked in the same way."<sup>420</sup>

It is Christ, "his passion and cross," which effects the meeting of the past mystery of Moses at the Exodus and the present mystery of the rites. He is not just the thematic center of the narration, as we have seen so often, but a sacramental nexus point, which acts rather like a prism that focuses and then refracts the beam of light that the past economy casts and which the sacramental economy of the Church reflects in sign and symbol. In this way, the past type is expressed in the present time of the Church, which is precisely a sacramental present.

Just as the integral sacraments of Christian initiation, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist, follow the extended catechetical and moral formation of the catechumenate (which is itself also ritualized in both its ancient and revived modern forms), so in this short introductory catechesis that sacramental trajectory was

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid., 20,34.

(and is) expressed. It is even suggested that the rites are meant to mimic the three sacraments of Baptism (the sign of the cross), Confirmation (imposition of hands), and Eucharist (the salt, sometimes even given on blessed bread).<sup>421</sup>

This shows that the catechetical address is inherently ritual in its intention. Even where the arcana must be respected, as is the case with this first catechesis, the ritual trajectory is clearly expressed. This is one of the characteristic elements of the patristic catechumenal pedagogy that the *GDC* had identified. "The fathers model the catechumenate on the divine pedagogy; in the catechumenal process the catechumen, like the people of Israel, goes through a journey to arrive at the promised land: Baptismal identification with Christ."<sup>422</sup> And this only goes to highlight the point made above about the performative quality of Christian life in response to the story it enacts, in this case with specific reference to ritual worship. The rites suggest that the full order of the catechetical address could, therefore, be described as *exordium, narratio, exhortatio, participatio*. The story

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<sup>421</sup> See Van der Meer, *Bishop* 354, for the way in which these rites serve as "shadows of the actual sacraments of initiation."

<sup>422</sup> *GDC* 129.

invites the hearer to enter it and this is done by way of the *sacramenta*.<sup>423</sup>

### Conclusions on The Sample Addresses

My examination of the sample addresses in Part II has, I would argue, corroborated the conclusions drawn from Part I at the end of the previous chapter. The very beginning of the address illustrates the importance of the personal dimension of the catechesis of condescension by the insertion of *Deogratias'* name in the greeting. Thereafter, Augustine presents the sample address in three parts. His *exordium* is an appeal to love (*ethos*) following the pedagogy of condescending love that I had identified in the last chapter. It closes with the appeal, "we should love the God who so loved us that he sent his only Son to be clothed in the lowly condition of our mortal existence and to die at the hands of sinners and on behalf of sinners."<sup>424</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> "The sacraments are simply the continuation in the era of the Church of God's acts in the Old Testament and the New. This is the proper significance of the relationship between the Bible and the Liturgy. The Bible is a sacred history, the liturgy is a sacred history." Jean Danielou, "The Sacraments and the History of Salvation" in *The Liturgy and the Word of God* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1959) 28.

<sup>424</sup> DCR 17, 28.

In addition, we saw in the *exordium* an appeal to happiness or blessedness (*requies, securitas, and felicitas*) under the general heading of "rest" which is to provide the impetus for undertaking the journey of Christian life. Augustine returns to the themes of eternal happiness and rest in the closing *exhortatio* which is intended to move the hearer (*pathos*) to take that journey: "Blaze with love and desire for the eternal life of the saints, where activity will be effortless and rest will not be idle." He goes on to describe heaven as the place where "God will be the complete delight and fullness of the holy city, the city that will live in him and from him, in wisdom and happiness."<sup>425</sup> It is the hope supplied by the condescension of God in loving us first, as demonstrated in the *narratio*, that enables us to hope for such a reward.<sup>426</sup>

The *narratio*, which is to present the central argument (*logos*) for a Christian commitment, is a concise, ordered,

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid., 25,47.

<sup>426</sup> Harmless takes note of the fact that the theme of love seems to be presented in only "muted tones" in the *narratio* portion of the address, only reappearing in the "thumbnail sketch of Church history." (Catechumenate, 144.) I would account for this by the fact that the narration is presented as precisely a *demonstration* of the love that the *exordium* prompts us to see in it and to which the *exhortatio* will attempt to make us respond. It is just this that justifies Harmless' identification of the theme of love as the "golden thread" of the address. As I noted above, Augustine identifies the allegorical connections, "the very truth of the explanation that we provide" as such a connecting thread (DCR 6,10). But if one recognizes that these connections are entirely ordered to the demonstration of a divine plan of love, Harmless' assertion is entirely vindicated.



progressive rehearsal of the plan of God in the economy which discloses Christ and the Church. That economy is outlined in accord with the six days of creation and the seventh day rest or Sabbath, which becomes, as just noted, the motive force behind the Christian journey. Augustine presents the five ages leading up to that full disclosure by way of the central characters of salvation history and the events that constitute the *mirabilia* or *articuli* (the wonderful events and critical turning points). This is done with great concision, with the important figures standing in for the whole age in many cases.<sup>427</sup> This concise telling of the story apparently assumes a certain familiarity with the basic persons and events of Revelation, but also allows that "little by little" the newcomer "will be able to familiarize [him or herself] with them in the holy books."<sup>428</sup> In this way, the gradual progression of the history of salvation, and the

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<sup>427</sup> This use of persons to represent the history is also an important indicator of the personal quality of the catechesis. See Francois Coudreau, "The Bible and Liturgy in Catechesis," in *The Liturgy and the Word*, esp. 106-107. "While the Bible causes us to enter into a world of actions and signs, it also causes us to enter into a world of *persons and personal relationships*" (106, emphasis in original).

<sup>428</sup> DCR 20,36. Such a basic familiarity with the outline of the biblical story wouldn't undermine the delight and surprise that this fuller telling was intended to evoke. See Harmless, *Catechuminate* 149, for the shock that the "discovery of a new history" would engender in even educated pagans.

progressive disclosure of it in the *narratio*, also points forward to a gradual and progressive appropriation of the fuller version by the new catechumen in his or her future journey of faith.

#### The Plan of God is Disclosed by Types and Fulfillment

The characters and events in the *narratio* are evaluated typologically with reference to their fulfillment in the Christ and the Church, resulting in a fundamentally Christological and ecclesiological presentation. This relation of type and fulfillment sets the figures and events of the past in analogous relation to Christ and the present realities of Church life. The allegories that Augustine uses are the stock ones, "the well trodden path" he says, and are intended to draw out the analogies between past signs and present realities in such way that they constitute the *causae rationesque*, the causes and reasons behind the plan of God. That is, the typological relation itself, from Old Testament to fulfillment in Christ and then expressed in the *sacramenta*, is the very ground establishing the Church and life in her. In regard to this patristic catechetical practice, Jean Danielou has said, "Knowledge of these correspondences is *the* Christian wisdom

as the Fathers understood it, the spiritual understanding of Scripture."<sup>429</sup>

It is the analogies or correspondences between past signs and present realities in typological relation that makes the narration narrational, if you will. It works as a proof or demonstration, in the rhetorical sense, precisely because of these correspondences. Otherwise, the *narratio* would be simply a catalog of biblical/historical events and not a demonstration of the action of God in the world.<sup>430</sup> This is prophecy in the fuller sense, not just fulfillments of verbal oracles but an expression of the way in which the whole sacred history discloses Christ and the Church.<sup>431</sup>

Van der Meer explains this methodology with reference to the impact it tended to have on its hearers:

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<sup>429</sup> "Sacraments and History," in *The Liturgy and the Word*, 32.

<sup>430</sup> As Harmless rightly says, "neither Augustine or Deogratias would have thought of declaiming the *narratio* simply as 'telling the story'" (*Catechumenate* 127). See Lucinda Nolan on the common reading of *DCR* as a prescription for the use of stories of various kinds in catechetical practice, in the this case in the adaptive method, in "Scaling the Heights of Heaven: Sister Rosalia Walsh and the Use of Story in the Adaptive Way," *Religious Education*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (Summer 2007) 314-327.

<sup>431</sup> Augustine in his shorter address, perhaps specifically to abbreviate it, uses appeals to verbal prophecy in rapid fire fashion, using the word "foretold" ten times in 27, 53. He may be imitating Irenaeus here who in the second part of his *Demonstration* presents the prophetic oracles and their fulfillments after giving the continuous history in a *narratio* in the first part.

Augustine defends his method partly by an appeal to Holy Scripture, and partly by pointing to its psychological effectiveness and to the power of conviction inherent in the "proofs of prophecy". Thus he writes elsewhere that pagans seem to be thunderstruck by the fact of the confirmation of the prophecies, when they become acquainted with it, by the "trustworthy prophetic word", of which Peter speaks. They are much more impressed by this than by miracles. This is the principle ground put forward by him for accepting the Faith, the *motivum credibilitatis*, and he formulates his view as follows: See how everything up to the present day has been fulfilled in Christ and his Church! You can be assured from this that the terrible Last Judgement and the life everlasting will also be found to be realities.<sup>432</sup>

Not only is this pattern of fulfillment the motive of credibility, as Van der Meer states, but it is the very object of the act of faith that the hearer will be asked to make. As Jean Danielou puts it, "the object of faith is the existence of a divine plan. It is the objective reality of the divine interventions which modifies ontologically the human situation, and of the reality to

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<sup>432</sup> *Bishop*, 460. He is citing *Contra Faustum* 13,7 and *Sermones* 43,4,5. See also 2 Pt 1:19.

which faith causes us to adhere."<sup>433</sup> In this way the allegorical element, providing as it does the *causae rationesque*, functions as the "golden thread which holds together the precious stones in an ornament."<sup>434</sup> The causes and reasons supplied by the allegorical meaning answer the "why?" of the biblical story. As Peter Brown puts it in a wonderful reflection on the quality of Augustine's exegetical preaching, "Augustine will run through the text of the Bible in such a way that every sermon is punctuated by 'Quare...quare...quare' 'Why?...why?...why?'" It is allegory, which "summed up a whole attitude toward knowledge," that answers that question.<sup>435</sup>

This first instruction is a preparation, a way of tuning the hearer's ear to the rhythm and rhyme of the biblical text that will be the constant food of this new pilgrim in his Christian walk.<sup>436</sup> Like the preacher who addresses him, he must "train himself to listen for the

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<sup>433</sup> "Sacraments and History," *The Liturgy and the Word*, 29.

<sup>434</sup> *DCR* 6,10.

<sup>435</sup> Brown, *Augustine*, 249-250.

<sup>436</sup> American humorist Mark Twain is sometimes credited with the quip that history doesn't repeat itself, but it does rhyme. It could be said, then, that the typological *narratio* provides both the rhyme and the reason of sacred history.

single hidden 'will' that had expressed itself in the deliberate selection of every word of the text."<sup>437</sup>

Conceived of as "a giant puzzle - like a vast inscription in unknown letters," with "all the elemental appeal of a riddle," the Word "had to be communicated by means of an intricate game of 'signs,'"<sup>438</sup> by which this communication discloses its meaning. Once the "why" - the causes and reasons - for the "what" - the event or individual of a particular *articulus* - had been supplied, Augustine moves on to the next, which accounts for the brevity of the *narratio*, even in its longer form. The essential thing in the *narratio* seems to be to enable those present to "lift up their minds to the design and purpose of the maker, and to rise higher still to the veneration and praise of God, the creator of all, in whom love has its richest goal."<sup>439</sup>

#### A Doctrinal Grammar

This work of interpretation of God's "wonderful plan"<sup>440</sup> extends to certain essentials of doctrine. We saw

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<sup>437</sup> Brown, *Augustine*, 250.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, 250, 249.

<sup>439</sup> *DCR* 12,17.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 18,30.

that the *exhortatio*, and so also the whole address, culminates in 25,47 with a Trinitarian profession that leads to the first words in the section on precepts (25,48), "Hold all this firmly in your heart." The doctrines of the goodness of the world, human freedom, and original sin percolate up out of the brief exposition of the creation and fall (18,29-18,30). The mercy and forbearance of God surfaces out of the tale of the two cities and the flood (19,31-19,32). The doctrine of the Church emerges in the treatment of the descendants of Abraham (19,33).

The sacramental regime is introduced in the crossing of the Red Sea (while also harkening back to the flood), which is connected to Baptism, its efficacy being tied to the wood of the Christ's cross (20,34). The importance of observance of the moral law is stressed in the engraving of the tablets on Sinai by the "finger of God," the Holy Spirit (20,35). The Church as the new Jerusalem with Christ at her head as the new David is disclosed in the fourth age, but she as a city in which the citizens of that holy place are mixed among those of Babylon (21,37). The fifth age reminds us that we have here no lasting city nor lasting peace, that we are exiles here (21,38). The sixth age introduces the doctrine of the Incarnation by a summary

of the first five ages preceding the Christ, who is himself the summary of them all, the new Adam (22,39).

The doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary is presented in 22,40 in the context of the establishment of the new covenant. The story of the Ascension and Pentecost presents the opportunity to assert the importance of the new law of love, the summary of the ten in the two (23,41).<sup>441</sup> And in that brief accounting of the New Testament and post-testamental Church in 23,42 - 23,43, Augustine teaches the principle that the vine of the Church grows when she is persecuted and even threatened by heresy and schism. As I have said, this doctrinal commentary, which percolates naturally out of the story, provides a kind of grammar, assuring that this is the Church's story - not some other - providing that "initial grounding in faith" to which Augustine refers at 1,1 and again twice at 2,4.

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<sup>441</sup> The summary of the Ten Commandments in the two-fold Gospel commandment of love could be seen as rather like the way in which Christ in his two natures is the summary of the Old Law, which directed Israel in love of God and man.



## The Various Trajectories of the Catechetical Address

So, all taken together, the typological disclosure of the gradual and progressive plan of God as disclosed in the economy; the wonderful events, their causes and reasons; the doctrinal notes that percolate out of the story, especially those which disclose Christ and the Church; represent the "initial grounding" in the "central points"<sup>442</sup> of the faith that Augustine had promised to show Deogratias. In addition, the sacramental trajectory that I have noted doesn't simply arise at the end as a kind of appendage, but surfaces out of the events of the economy in such a way that the *sacramenta* represent a performative entry into that economy in that they "stand as symbols (*signacula*) of divine realities."<sup>443</sup>

As we have seen, it is the ecclesial and sacramental trajectories of the *narratio*, expressed in such a way that past types prefigure the Church of the present, that make the *narratio* complete. And the three overlapping trajectories that we saw earlier in the address, in the *exordium* and early portion of the *narratio*: the human

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<sup>442</sup> DCR 2,4 and 1,1.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid., 26,50. This isn't "symbol" in the weak sense. Augustine goes on to say that, having "been made holy by the blessing," the humble signs are "not to be looked upon in the same way as...in everyday life."

search for rest; the creational week and the rest of God; and the week of the ages of the world and the rest of God in his saints, are made to intersect by way of a typology which binds those three trajectories together, so to speak, through the sacramental mysteries.

This is accomplished in the address by a Christological link. The wood of the cross is associated with the wood of the Ark and the wood of Moses' staff and the Passover Lamb with the Passover of the Lord, whose blood, in a figurative sense, will mark the doorpost, the forehead of the inquirer in the Rite of Reception into the catechumenate which immediately follows the address. As we have seen, it is this Christocentric telling of the story that links the past events of the economy with the present time of the Church, disclosing the full meaning of both of those parts of God's saving economy, the Old Covenant and the New, the Old Testament and the New. In this way, the inquirer is encouraged to "take the way already prepared in the holy scriptures," the "dependable oracles."<sup>444</sup>

Lastly, this "way already prepared" represents a coming together of the human desire for rest, the work of

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<sup>444</sup> Ibid., 6,10.

the creational week, and the whole course of human history. And this suggests a meeting, too, of method and content.

All the *methodological* advice of Part I, the importance of the personal appeal, of reading the condition of heart and mind of the hearer, of maintaining cheerfulness in oneself to facilitate the proper *ethos* in the audience, converges in the address with the *content* of the *exordium*, *narratio*, and *exhortatio*. The personal appeal, for example, is not a mere rhetorical methodology, it is aimed at helping the hearer to recognize, in good Augustinian fashion, that his restless heart has been made to respond to the content of this story, which tells of God's methodology for making the *cor inquietum* into a *cor requietum*.<sup>445</sup> That methodology is precisely an historical one, the content of which the *narratio* discloses. And that content conduces to a sacramental methodology of initiation into, as well as on-going participation in, the story that has just been told. Again, the six day/age *content* of the *narratio* is simultaneously a *method* for reading or for construing the world and one's own place in it.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> For a fuller treatment of Augustine as a "psychotherapeutic teacher" in *DCR*, see Ellen T. Chary, "Augustine of Hippo: Father of Christian Psychology," *Anglican Theological Review*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (2006): 575-589.

<sup>446</sup> See Kloos, "*History as Witness*" (34-35) where she outlines Augustine's interpretation of the six days in a three-fold symbolism of

As Momigliano puts it, "conversion meant literally the discovery of a new history from Adam and Eve to contemporary events," a "universal history"<sup>447</sup> which is not merely a new way of conceiving of the world, but becomes by its formation of the memory of the hearer the world into which one is swept by the rites that enable the hearer to become a catechumen.<sup>448</sup>

As I have also tried to show from a few corroborating examples from Irenaeus' *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, this world-shaping narrational methodology was not confined to the first catechesis that we see in *DCR*, it was not just for *rudes* or *accidententes*. It is an absolute commonplace in the patristic liturgical preaching which would form the main staple for both the catechumen and the mature Christian in the ancient Church.<sup>449</sup> In the simplest

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temporal, anthropological and spiritual significance in his *De Genesi adversus Manichaeos*.

<sup>447</sup> "Pagan and Christian Historiography," 82, in Arnaldo Momigliano, ed. *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

<sup>448</sup> For the a fuller anthropological evaluation of the appropriation of worldview, see Paul Hiebert's study *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), especially his chapter "Toward a Biblical Worldview," 265 ff.

<sup>449</sup> See Harmless' Chapter 5 following his treatment on *DCR* in *Catechumenate*, 156-193, as well as Scott Hahn on the "liturgical trajectory and liturgical teleology in the canonical narrative," in Chapter Four of his *Spirit and Life* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2009), and also his fuller treatment demonstrating what he calls in

possible terms, the catechetical narration is a work that appeals to the universal human desire for happiness, for beatitude, or what Augustine simply calls rest. It aims at disclosing the loving plan of God in an ordered presentation of the events of the economy of salvation and the allegorical interpretation of them which discloses their deepest meaning in pointing to Christ and the Church. The disclosure of this plan of love in the economy, which is expressed in the typological connections made between three phases: the Old Testament period of promise by way of signs, their fulfillment in Christ, and their performative, ritual expression in the present time of the Church, is intended to move the hearer to undertake the journey of Christian life in faith, hope and love.

As we saw in the first chapter, the *GDC* has suggested that this narrational dimension of the catechetical curriculum be revived in our own day. While a whole host of theologians and religious educators have recognized the formative character of the telling of the story of the biblical narrative,<sup>450</sup> as I noted in Chapter I, the specific

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that latter work "the formal and material unity of Scripture and liturgy" (61) in *Letter and Spirit* (New York: Doubleday, 2005).

<sup>450</sup> The school of narrative theology is represented by a very large body of literature. Already in 1991 George Stroup could say flatly, "the literature has become too vast to list," in an article to celebrate the July 1975 issue of *Theology Today* which presented "A

call by the *GDC* for the reintroduction of the catechetical *narratio* has largely been met with silence.

By way of exception, in one important chapter in a recent work called, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*, its authors highlight the way in which a recitation of salvation history in the *narratio* "brings to the fore the dynamic sense of divine intelligence and purpose underlying our own lives, the lives of our hearers, and the whole creation."<sup>451</sup>

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Symposium on Story and Narrative Theology." One helpful survey, which also prompted Stroup's remark, would be Stanley Hauerwas and Gregory Jones, eds. *Why Narrative?: Readings in Narrative Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997). See George Stroup, "Theology of Narrative or Narrative Theology?: A Response to *Why Narrative*," *Theology Today*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Jan 1991): 424-432, n.2. For a scholarly evaluation of the sometimes unacknowledged debt that narrative theology owes to Augustine, see Christopher Thompson, *Augustine and Narrative Ethics* (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1994; UMI Dissertation Information Service, 9505913).

As a sampling from two authors on narrative in catechesis, the first a mainline Christian writing in an Evangelical journal and the other a Catholic, the following can be quoted: "Biblical narratives transform lives. They offer narrative resources for the re-storying of lives. Narratives provide an underlying structure for the plotting of our lives into the life-giving core metanarrative of the life and ministry, suffering and crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of Christ Jesus." [Harry Corcoran, "Biblical Narratives and Life Transformation: An Apology for the Narrative Teaching of Bible Stories," *Christian Education Journal* 3, Vol. 4, No. 1 (spring 2007): 34-48, 46. Citing the importance of narrative analysis of Scripture, as asserted by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, Kathleen Weber says, "The power of narrative rests on the human readiness to identify and enter into the experience of others....In entering into the narrative of the text, the reader (or listener) becomes an actor in the story. He or she bridges the gap between past and the present. The historical context comes alive in the circumstances of one's own life." "Making the Biblical Account Relevant: A Narrative Analysis," *The Living Light*, vol. 31 (fall 1994): 16-19, 17. Weber's article predates the *GDC* by three years.

<sup>451</sup> Pierre de Cointet, Barbara Morgan, and Petroc Wiley, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008) 84. The authors suggest that the use

Otherwise, there has been almost no mention of the call of the *GDC* for a revival of the *narratio* in the recent catechetical literature.<sup>452</sup> Possible reasons for that silence will be explored briefly in the next chapter.

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of *narratio* makes for a "purposeful" catechesis. In their treatment the use of *narratio* is one of twelve keys of catechesis.

<sup>452</sup> See also Pamela Jackson's "The Baptismal Catechumenate as a Model for Catechesis," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2005): 825-846, esp. 828 for a brief mention of the *narratio* in the *GDC*.

## CHAPTER V

THE MODERN CRITIQUE OF SALVATION HISTORICAL CATECHESIS AND  
A RESPONSE FROM THE *GDC***Introduction**

In this chapter I will take account of the critique of Augustine's typological method of narrational catechesis which claims that it represents a methodology that has been eclipsed. In Section 1 I will review the characteristics of what was called the kerygmatic movement and an analysis by one scholar of the criticisms leveled in 1960s and 70s against the salvation historical catechesis that it proposed in imitation of the patristic/Augustinian paradigm. In Section 2 I will look at the description of the divine pedagogy given in the *GDC* to show that the *narratio* is not just another methodology that can be dispensed with but an expression of the divine pedagogy which the *GDC* declares to be normative. This second section



will also provide a foundation for the following chapters on the divine pedagogy as we find it expressed in the Old and New Testaments.

### **Section 1: The Kerygmatic Movement and the Demise of Salvation Historical Catechesis**

One does not often find a direct critique of Augustine's use of Scripture in *DCR* in the catechetical literature. As the sources I have cited to this point verify, Augustine is a seminal figure in catechetical history and reflection. Most theorists recognize that fact and cite him approvingly for one contribution or another that he has made to this important Church ministry.<sup>453</sup> As I have already noted, critiques of the revival of the

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<sup>453</sup> Even a primary critic of salvation historical catechesis like Gabriel Moran writes most approvingly of Augustine - even where he parts with him on fundamentals - in "Augustine Despite Aquinas" in his work *Speaking of Teaching: Lessons from History* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2008) 23ff. I should note, however, that Thomas Groome in *Christian Religious Education* gives a very critical assessment of *DCR* for giving "no apparent attention to the lived experience of the students," a general claim as regards the catechesis of the time that played heavily in the critique that Moran leveled in advance of Groome's. Groome is also critical of the kerygmatic movement which "fifteen hundred years after Augustine...was still paying little attention to lived experience or to an active/reflective way of learning" 159-160. Brian Stock, however, says "There is a parallel relationship between the spiritual ascent of the catechumen through ...scripture, as reflected in its spiritual sense. The meaning in the text is to be matched by the subjective response of the reader or hearer. Augustine is also concerned with fitting the lived experience of the candidate into the intentional structure of the biblical narrative....In order to bring this about, he has to live a 'representational' narrative." *Augustine the Reader*, 185.

*narratio* called for in the *GDC* are even rarer still. In fact, I haven't found any in the catechetical literature.

#### An Earlier Proponent of the Augustinian Model

The kerygmatic school of catechesis, however, which gained a fairly wide popularity in the three decades before the Second Vatican Council and had taken Augustine's pedagogy as a model did come in for some serious criticism just after the reforms of the Council. The kerygmatic movement of the mid-twentieth century had in particular looked to the patristic model as a possible curative to the overly propositional catechesis that had survived the methodological improvements of what came to be called the Munich method.<sup>454</sup> That latter method had "focused on the use of explanation and elaboration...in order to imprint on learners' memories a clearer picture, and thus promote clearer understanding and more effective memorization"<sup>455</sup> of

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<sup>454</sup> See Bendas, *Contents and Methods*, Chapter VIII, "The Psychological or Stieglitz Method," 267-279. This method had included at the first or presentation stage biblical narratives "As a means of visualizing abstract religious truths" 270. The steps of the Munich method included a preparatory connection with previous material covered, and statement of the aim or objective of the present lesson, then the three stages of presentation, explanation, and application. This was a considerable methodological advance over previous practice.

<sup>455</sup> Michael P. Horan, "Twentieth Century Christian Educators: Josef A. Jungmann," (Online Article) accessed at [http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/view.cfm?n=josef\\_jungmann](http://www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/view.cfm?n=josef_jungmann), citing

the questions and answers of the standard catechism. Josef Jungmann's publication in 1936 of *Die Frohbotschaft und Unsere Glaubensverkündigung* (*The Good News and Our Proclamation of Faith*) signaled the first step in a revolution in catechetics which Jungmann saw as primarily a revision of content, but which also stressed the methodological dimension of a kerygmatic presentation of lived faith.<sup>456</sup> It should be noted that the kerygmatic movement did not specifically propose the use of the classical *narratio* as Augustine deploys it, but it did embrace the general principle of the use of salvation history as a basis for catechesis, which, as I will show, was inspired partly by *DCR*.<sup>457</sup>

Following the pattern that he had found in his researches into the liturgy and catechesis of the first

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Jungmann's *Handing on the Faith: A Manual of Catechesis*, A.N. Fuerst, trans. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1959), (Original work published as *Katechetik* in 1955).

<sup>456</sup> Jungmann had urged that what was needed was "a more biblical and mystagogical language, with the hope of generating a more unified, harmonious (and less fragmented) approach to catechesis. The kerygma, the proclamation of the good news, was before all else a joyful experience, an experience that must be lived as well as explained." Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> It is worth recalling William Harmless' caution in *Augustine and the Catechumenate* about making *DCR* a general catechetical manual. Although I argued in Chapter II that Kevane's insights in *Augustine the Educator* suggest reasons for extending some of the principles in *DCR* beyond just its immediate application in the precatechumenate (where Augustine uses it) as the *GDC* enjoins, it would be wrong to blame the faults of the kerygmatic movement on Augustine. For Harmless' critique of an overgeneralization of this kind, see *Catechumenate* 108-109 and of Jungmann's analysis of *DCR* see, 109-110, especially n. 8.

Christian centuries, Jungmann called for a more vital, unified content for catechesis. "He called this unitary content by different names: history of salvation, mystery of Christ, the plan of God, and seemed to use the terms interchangeably to refer to the content."<sup>458</sup> This included a focus upon Bible history as the specifically unifying element in the curriculum,<sup>459</sup> but which included what were called the four languages or signs of a kerygmatic catechesis: liturgy, Bible, doctrine, and Christian living or witness.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Bible history was not a feature added by the kerygmatic movement, witness the very popular *Bible History* by Richard Gilmour published by Benzinger Brothers for over fifty years from the late nineteenth century until the 1930s. It seems to have been influenced by Augustine's work and included allegorical interpretations of biblical figures like this one from the story of the Flood of Noah: "The impenitent sinner is like the raven that returned not to the Ark, while the dove is like the faithful soul that finds rest only in Jesus Christ and His Church." Right Rev. Richard Gilmour, D.D., Bishop of Cleveland, *Bible History: Containing the Most Remarkable Events of the Old and New Testaments. To Which is Added a Compendium of Church History* (New York: Benzinger Brothers Inc., 1936), 16. Benzinger Brothers' *Bible History: A Textbook of the Old and New Testaments for Catholic Schools* (New York, 1931) by George Johnson, Jerome Hannan, and (Sr.) M. Dominica was published simultaneously with Gilmour's work for a few years in the early 1930s and replaced it in the school market when Gilmour went out of print. It represented a more fulsome historical account but featured less typology.

<sup>460</sup> See Johannes Hoffinger, *The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), 21, n. 1: "According to the 'Program of the Catechetical Apostolate,' worked out at the International Study Week at Eichstaett, July 1960, 'Catechesis embraces a four-fold presentation of the Faith: through liturgy, Bible, systematic teaching and the testimony of Christian living' (Program, Basic Principles, no. 12)." See also 269 ff.

It would be a mistake to entirely identify what the *GDC* is advocating as regarding the *narratio*, or the Augustinian practice to which it seems to point, with the kerygmatic movement spawned by Jungmann. The *GDC* speaks of "kerygmatic catechesis" in the general sense at number 62 as that proclamation appropriate to the "pre-catechuminate" which is to incite conversion. Again, at 151 the term is used to describe a "descending" method "which begins with the proclamation of the message, expressed in the principle documents of the faith (Bible, liturgy, doctrine...) and applies it to life." These elements do suggest the four languages or signs of Jungmann's kerygmatic approach. The *GDC* seems also to include a kerygmatic methodology when speaking about the advantages of an inductive approach in number 150, where it makes reference to a catechesis that begins from the "facts" of "biblical events, liturgical acts," and "events from daily life."

But parts three, four, and five of the *GDC* on pedagogy, the student, and catechetical practice in the local, particular Church suggest that the "Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method nor any single method."<sup>461</sup> That is, despite its insistence

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<sup>461</sup> *GDC* 148.

on the normative quality of the divine pedagogy and the seven foundation stones of catechetical content (the four parts of the *Catechism* and the three phases of the *narratio*), the application of those is to be in accord, it says, with the "socio cultural variations"<sup>462</sup> presented by particular circumstances.

The *GDC* also stresses, within limits, the importance of "human experience in catechesis," for helping to avoid "artificial juxtapositions or closed understandings of the truth."<sup>463</sup> That last dimension, experience, has become the methodological starting point for many catechetical theorists.<sup>464</sup> As I just suggested, the *GDC* has not rejected

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 152, 153. Jungmann *has* had an impact on Catholic magisterial teaching on catechesis. For that impact in the documents prior to those I am discussing here, see Michael P. Horan, "Kerygmatic Catechesis: An Analysis of the Writings of Jungmann and Hofinger as Reflected in Post-Conciliar Catechetical Documents" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1989; UMI Dissertation Information Service, 8912976).

<sup>464</sup> Proponents of revelation as a personal event, like Alfonso Nebreda in his *Kerygma in Crisis?* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1965) and Gabriel Moran in his *Theology of Revelation and Catechesis of Revelation (both from Herder and Herder, New York, 1966)*, moved the catechetical starting point toward human experience just after the Second Vatican Council. The emphasis upon personal experience in catechesis in Nebreda and Moran came to be augmented by the work of those who supplied an increased emphasis on the experience of the whole community of faith, rather than just the individual [see John Westerhoff, *Will Our Children Have Faith?* (New York: Seabury, 1976)] and a creative reorientation of that community toward a kingdom-centered concern with peace and justice. The primary proponent of this latter emphasis is Thomas Groome and his *Christian Religious Education: Sharing Our Story and Vision* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980) as well as his later and very influential work, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry: The Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1991).

that advance in the inclusion of experience in catechesis, it even speaks of the experience of the subject as "a *locus* for the manifestation and realization of salvation, where God, consistently with [sic] the pedagogy of the Incarnation, reaches man with his grace and saves him."<sup>465</sup> The *GDC*'s only real caveat as regards this is the need for "[i]nterpreting and illuminating experience with the data of faith," and it calls this important dimension "a constant task of catechetical pedagogy."<sup>466</sup>

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While in the former work, *Christian Religious Education*, Groome is quite critical of the kerygmatic movement, he also employs some insights from the narrative movement in theology, which accounts for his subtitle identifying the faith as "Story and Vision." By so doing, Groome represents in his own work a kind of anticipation of the narrative imperative found later in the *GDC* and a rationale for recognizing the importance of retaining a narrative catechesis, even while rejecting some elements of the kerygmatic school. Sylvia De Villers provides a very helpful summary of this recent catechetical history in *Lectionary-Based Catechesis for Children: A Catechist's Guide* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1994). Westerhoff's work has been revised, expanded and republished under the same title (Harrisburgh, PA: Morehouse Publishing & Toronto: Anglican Book Centre, 2000).

<sup>465</sup> *GDC* 152.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, 153. The need for such a caveat can be seen in the later work of Moran who finally comes "to challenge the very concept of 'revealed truth.'" *Vision and Tactics: Toward and Adult Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 62. Iris Cully, in describing "experience-centered" catechesis, notes that "the Bible is a 'resource' in the sense that it is the 'lore' of the People of God, our story, and we need to know it in order to realize our roots." She goes on to say, "the Bible is a living word as we hear God speak through its words, but a careful selection has to be made of the words appropriate for our time....Proponents of [this] theory [say] only in this way can one motivate people to read the Bible and that biblical history arouses only antiquarian interest." From "Problems of Bible Instruction in American Catechetical Literature" in *Catechetics for the Future*, Alois Müller, ed. Volume 53: Pastoral Theology, from the *Concilium: Theology in the Age of Renewal* series (New York: Herder & Herder, 1970) 133-134. See also the articles in the same volume by Karl Ernst Nipkow, Christiane Brusselmans, and Willem Bless for the thinking of the time, especially in continental Europe. Under the subheading, "The Catechism

## The Demise of the Kerygmatic School

Mary Boys, in her thorough and influential study, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education: A Study of the Kerygmatic Era*, published in 1980,<sup>467</sup> sought to chronicle the decline of the salvation history or *Heilsgeschichte* approach of the Fathers as it had taken catechetical form in the kerygmatic renewal movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. But her work was not simply a post-mortem on a catechetical movement that had gone into eclipse. Her larger aim was to advocate to retain the important role for Scripture in catechesis that had obtained in that movement, but to replace it with a biblical exegesis that presents a picture of a Bible full of "development, diversity, and modification of

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must start from Human Experience," Bless says, "When...I say that the catechism must start from human experience, I do not mean that as soon as we have analysed this we should 'pass over' to revelation. On the contrary. Although revelation is a divine response to our situation, it comes to us as a human experience in the most profound sense of the word. Our human history is the history of salvation and of disaster. Revelation is either a genuine incarnation or it is nothing at all. We shall have made great progress if our modern proclamation of the faith takes our human experience with all the seriousness it demands." In his essay, "What are the Main Requirements for a New Catechism?" 94. On this topic see also my "Catechetical Experience and the Experience of Catechesis," *The Catholic Faith*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (Nov/Dec 1997):16-18.

<sup>467</sup> Mary C. Boys, *Biblical Interpretation in Religious Education: A Study of the Kerygmatic Era* (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1980).



traditions,"<sup>468</sup> which might, she says, stand as a better grounding for catechesis and "provide insight into the ways the contemporary church might similarly adapt the teachings of Jesus to new situations."<sup>469</sup> There is no denying, however, that her work also implicates Augustine as an important source for Jungmann's theories. In discussing the work of Johannes Hofinger, the great interpreter and popularizer of Jungmann's work, she says the following:

Hofinger places the greatest stress on christocentrism, because the mystery of Christ means God's redemptive plan with Christ as its center. Catechists, therefore, should initiate their subjects into this mystery primarily through the telling of the story of salvation. This was what the apostles had done, and was the principle given by Augustine in his *De catechizandis rudibus*.<sup>470</sup>

In a work published under the title *Katechetik*<sup>471</sup> and later in an English edition under the title *Handing on the*

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid., 91. Boys is summarizing from Hofinger's *The Art of Teaching Christian Doctrine: The Good News and Its Proclamation* (Notre Dame: University Press, 1957) 23-32. This text contained the substance of a summer course that Hofinger had taught at the University of Notre Dame in the summers of 1954 and 1955.

<sup>471</sup> Josef Jungmann, *Katechetik: Aufgabe und Methode der religiösen Unterweisung* (Freiburg: Studia Friburgensis, 1949). A second edition was published under the same title by Herder, Freiburg 1953.

*Faith*, Jungmann discusses Augustine's contribution in his first chapter on "The History of Catechesis" and in chapter four on "the Task of the Catechist."<sup>472</sup> In discussing the order of the catechumenate, he says,

To the first examination was added an introductory catechesis.... designed to give a survey of the content of the Christian doctrine of salvation. Instructions for this are given by St. Augustine in his work: *De catechezandis rudibus*. After this, the catechist was supposed to present in the form of a narration (*narratio*) the entire doctrine of salvation, from the fall of our first parents down to the Last Judgement. By this process it was hoped that the candidate would be led from faith to hope and from hope to love. For this reason Augustine attached great value to the fact that during the catechesis an atmosphere of happiness (*hilaritas*) should prevail.<sup>473</sup>

To this elaboration of the now familiar themes of *DCR*, Jungmann later adds the broader implications of the biblical narrative in catechesis under the rubric "Bible History." His remarks are worth quoting here at length

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<sup>472</sup> Idem. *Handing on the Faith* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1959) 1-64, 92-151.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

because they indicate the lines of the argument I intend to make in the rest of this thesis:

Whereas in the catechism we are presented with truths in a systematic logical form, in Bible History we are offered these same truths in historical dress.

The possibility of an historical presentation is postulated by the very nature of Christian revelation. Christianity saw the light of day not as a philosophical system, but as an historical fact; the divine plan was disclosed gradually over periods of time. The historical sequence of events is a genetic development; for in it we can detect the gradual growth of the kingdom of God. We see how God himself gradually makes real the Christian economy of salvation - in the Old Testament preparing and laying the foundation; in the New Testament building up and perfecting it. As a consequence this method of viewing events has been held in high esteem from the very beginning. The Old Testament supplies us with historical psalms; the New Testament constantly refers to incidents in the Old Testament, frequently narrates them with a wealth of detail (for example, the speech of St. Stephen, Acts 7, 2-50): the missionary sermons of the Apostles are for the most part historical reports of facts, of things they themselves had seen and heard. And this factual narrative has been laid down in the Gospels. In fact, it was the biblical narrative which, in the first decades of Christianity, dominated the presentation of the Christian faith. The Fathers of the Church, by preference, preached

Christian doctrine in a biblical guise. Frequently they expounded whole books of Sacred Scripture in the form of homilies, and by explaining the New Testament they also dealt with some of the books of the Old Testament (Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine). For catechesis Augustine favored the *narratio* as an essential form of presentation.<sup>474</sup>

Jungmann here asserts a "genetic development" in the Church's catechesis, that the biblical narrative itself shows "how God himself gradually makes real the Christian economy of salvation." And, likewise, that this biblical narrative, "in the first decades of Christianity, dominated the presentation of the Christian faith" which was taken up in the preaching of the Fathers. In so doing, he follows just the pattern that we have seen in the *GDC*, wherein the divine pedagogy represents the paradigm for the Fathers and so also for any expression of "a true and proper school of Christian pedagogy"<sup>475</sup> in the Church today.

Although Jungmann clearly establishes his program on a *ressourcement*, a return to the patristic sources of the kind practiced by what became to be called *la nouvelle théologie*, Boys' work traces the similarities (without, she

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 103-104. See also Boys, *Biblical Interpretation*, 113-114.

<sup>475</sup> *GDC* 33.

admits, establishing any real genetic connection) between the kerygmatic movement pioneered by Jungmann and the Protestant *Heilsgeschichte* theology of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. She then associates the "demise" of the former movement with the latter just after the Second Vatican Council. As I mentioned, Boys' primary concern was to re-form the alliance that had obtained between Bible study and catechesis in the kerygmatic movement but based upon the findings of historical critical methodologies rather than the hermeneutic of *Heilsgeschichte*.

While one might be quite sympathetic to Boys' aim of trying to make sure that scriptural study remained coupled to catechesis, by associating the kerygmatic movement with *Heilsgeschichte*, she fails to address the scriptural and patristic roots of Jungmann's work and the way in which these, as Jungmann argues and the *GDC* suggests, reflect the original divine pedagogy. In the 250 plus pages that she spends in carefully describing the development and dénouement of *Heilsgeschichte*, Boys, in effect, distances Jungmann's program from the normative ancient Christian practice upon which it had been based, and about which the *GDC* makes so much, and instead makes it just another

"school" of thought, and one that is largely German and Protestant, at that.<sup>476</sup>

The *GDC*, as I have already noted, doesn't reject the enduring insights of Boys or those she cites as having moved catechetical methodology forward, but does clearly seek to reconnect present practice with the ancient one, at least as regards the catechumenate and *narratio*. What we have seen in Augustine's *DCR* doesn't undercut Boys' interest in retaining the connection between catechesis and Scripture study, nor the increased concern with the place of human experience in catechesis, nor the important insights of the social sciences in educational methodology. While expressive of a content and methodology appropriate to his age, Augustine's concern with the centrality of

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<sup>476</sup> Boys was writing about a Catholic catechetical movement and for a primarily Catholic audience who would have felt no particular attachment to *Heilsgeschichte*. I would suggest that the reason for making the connection between Protestant *Heilsgeschichte* theology and the kerygmatic movement, which in Boys' work is found primarily in the similarities (while admitting differences, too) between the work of Oscar Cullmann and Jean Danielou, is to be found in the need to connect Jungmann, an Austrian Jesuit at Innsbruck, with a decrepit German theological project rather than to the Patristic *ressourcement* which was its real source and inspiration. (In Boys' index there is no entry for "*ressourcement*.") It is striking that Boys describes a long historical process of development in German theology in order to explain a movement that is largely rooted in *la nouvelle théologie*. Although drawing in adherents from Germany, where many of the first forays had been made in the liturgical movement, as well as from Belgium, Austria, and Switzerland, that revival in Catholic theology was rooted heavily in France rather than Germany. See Marcellino D'Ambrosio, "*Ressourcement* theology, *aggiornamento*, and the hermeneutics of Tradition," *Communio* 18 (Winter 1991): 530-555. For Boys' summary of her fuller analysis for the theological, cultural, general and religious educational reasons for the decline of the kerygmatic movement, see *Biblical Interpretation*, 248-252.

Scripture,<sup>477</sup> with the proper dispositions of the catechist and inquirer, as well as with the arrangement and order of the catechetical presentation, indicates a basic openness to the imperatives of catechetical development and innovation.<sup>478</sup>

I would suggest that the *GDC*'s insistence upon the inclusion of the *narratio* should be taken in the same way and not interpreted as merely antiquarian, or as simply a return to the kerygmatic methodology of Jungmann and his followers. There are similarities between the two, to be sure, but the *GDC*, by calling the *narratio* foundational to catechetical content, suggests that it deserves a place in the catechetical curriculum of any age, whatever the current methodologies. It is to a review of what the *GDC* says about the divine pedagogy that I now turn. Doing so will, I hope, make the case that it would be a tragedy to reject the *narratio* as somehow reflective of an antiquarianism which rejects the kind of modern concerns

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<sup>477</sup> For a very helpful analysis of Augustine's approach to Scripture, see "Appendix A, History, Prophecy and Inspiration" in Markus' *Saeculum*, 187-196.

<sup>478</sup> Referring to *DCR* and its influence in catechetical history, Harmless notes, "This brief treatise has helped shape the pedagogy and programs of influential Christian educators.... Again and again, educators have been struck by Augustine's pedagogical acumen and psychological sensitivity." *Catechumenate*, 108.

that Mary Boys raises,<sup>479</sup> because it is expressive of both a vital content and what could be called a macro-methodology which can still comport with other educational methodologies, as well as respond to the exigencies that a variety of catechetical settings and needs might suggest. For, as Kathleen Weber puts it, "narrative is the oldest and most powerful form of human learning."<sup>480</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> I should reiterate that no such claim has been made of which I am aware. I am only trying to anticipate a possible criticism that could be leveled against the *narratio* by a critic who might contend that the *GDC*'s call is merely the rehashing of an old catechetical model with which it bears only some similarities, the kerygmatic approach.

<sup>480</sup> Kathleen Weber, "Making the Biblical Account Relevant," 18.



## Section 2: The Divine Pedagogy in the GDC

As I noted earlier in this work, in addition to the call for the revival of the *narratio*, one of the most stunning developments in the 1997 *GDC* is its strong emphasis upon the "divine pedagogy" in contrast to the near neglect of it in the 1971 *GDC*. The *GDC* tells us it is the best method for evoking a personal response of faith and so is to be the "source and model of the pedagogy of the faith."<sup>481</sup> At *GDC* 38 we read:

God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses human events and words to communicate his plan; he does so progressively and in stages, so as to draw even closer to man. God, in fact, operates in such a manner that man comes to knowledge of his salvific plan by means of the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them.<sup>482</sup>

Here we see a summary of those points that have surfaced throughout this study. The divine pedagogy is

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<sup>481</sup> *GDC*, title of Chapter I of Part III.

<sup>482</sup> *GDC* 38.

personal, human, progressive, staged, historical, and expressed in events and words. The terms "events and words" are from *Dei Verbum* 2, which speaks of Revelation as "realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other," and are intended to highlight the interplay between the deeds and words of the economy. *DV* 2 goes on to say, "as a result, the works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain." It is important to note that *DV* is asserting that revelation is not a merely verbal phenomenon, but historical, as well.<sup>483</sup>

As I explained in Chapter I, the events and words are mutually interpretive. The history is even said to "bear out the doctrine," so that even that which most often is conceived of as primarily verbal or propositional, that is the doctrine, is shown to percolate up out of the history of salvation. This is what we saw in Augustine's *DCR* at several points such that he could describe the *narratio* as an "initial grounding in Christian faith" and as providing

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<sup>483</sup> Cf. CCC #53 which quotes *DV* 2, calling the interplay of "deeds and words" in the "plan of Revelation" "a specific divine pedagogy."

the "central points of the faith."<sup>484</sup> But for *DV* even the words of revelation, - what we might most often associate with doctrinal content - are understood to bring to light the mystery behind the events.

The *GDC*, likewise, asserts the necessarily "historical character of the mystery of salvation." "The 'economy of Salvation' has thus an historical character as it is realized in time:...' in time past it began, made progress, and in Christ reached its highest point; in the present time it displays its force and awaits its consummation in the future."<sup>485</sup> This history is the very matrix of the divine pedagogy: "The salvation of the person, which is the ultimate purpose of Revelation, is shown as a fruit of an original and efficacious 'pedagogy of God' throughout history."<sup>486</sup>

And recall, too, that the reason for that temporal, historical quality of the divine pedagogy is that it is personal. As I discussed in Chapter I, in number 139 the *GDC* uses the term "person" again and again to show that the divine pedagogy is an accommodation to the needs of human

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<sup>484</sup> *DCR* 1,1.

<sup>485</sup> *GDC* 107, title and following, citing *GCD* 44, (emphasis in original).

<sup>486</sup> *GDC* 139.

persons to invite them to a personal relationship, so that God "assumes the character of the person," "liberates the person," "causes the person to grow." "To this end," the *GDC* tells us, "as a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations."<sup>487</sup> The *GDC* concludes, "Truly, to help a person to encounter God, which is the task of the catechist, means to emphasize above all the relationship that the person has with God so that he can make it his own and allow himself to be guided by God."<sup>488</sup>

We can see here a reflection of the pedagogy of divine condescension that Augustine described in the Prologue and Part One of *DCR* and which he directed Deogratius to imitate. We can also see that scholars like Gabriel Moran were not wrong in asserting the personal and relational character of revelation. The *GDC* is here stressing that God isn't just interested in the mass of humanity; he is a personal, relational God who seeks to enter into personal relation with us. But the *GDC* stresses both the historical character of Revelation, as elaborated in past, present,

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<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

and future, and, then, the personal relationship that a proper faith response evokes.

This is in keeping with Augustine's theological arrangement of the *narratio* according to faith, hope, and love. In a lived faith believers are asked to profess faith in what God has done in the past, adhere to him in love in the present, and to hope for salvation into the eschatological future. We are not just people of present experience, but, as Augustine argued in Book XI of the *Confessions*, of the past by way of present recollection and of the future by way of present anticipation. And the theological virtues, which are the rubric for Augustine's catechesis, are ordered to just the kind of historically situated beings that we are.

The careful pairing of "word" and "event," in the *GDC* guards against the overly subjective conception of Revelation that can follow upon the total loss of propositional content to the faith. As was quoted above, *GDC* 38 faithfully echoes *DV* 2 in stressing that deeds or events and the words that relate and explicate them "are intrinsically bound up with each other." This saves the cognitive content, the intellectual object of faith, and the historical or event-quality of human experience, not in

isolation from one another but in a proper relation of mutual interpretation.

So, the divine pedagogy (in word and deed) is historical as an accommodation to persons who live and act in history. And that history is staged or progressive and gradual. That is what we saw in Augustine's use of the six days of creation, correlated to the six ages of the world. These converge on Christ because "With Christ's coming the sixth age is underway," in which "the human spirit will be renewed in the image of God, just as on the sixth day human beings were created in accordance with the image of God."<sup>489</sup> In the *GDC* the central paradigm for discerning the divine pedagogy is Christ himself "who determines catechesis as 'a pedagogy of the incarnation.'"<sup>490</sup> Christ is "the center of salvation history....the final event toward which all salvation history converges."<sup>491</sup> This is an echo of Augustine's assertion that "all of the divine scripture...tells of Christ and calls to love."<sup>492</sup> It is in Christ's incarnation that the pedagogy of God as a staged

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<sup>489</sup> *DCR* 22, 39.

<sup>490</sup> *GDC* 143.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>492</sup> *DCR* 4, 8.

and progressive series of words and deeds in the economy of salvation comes to be known in its fullness.

Christ's coming gives intelligibility to the events of the Old Testament economy such that "The catechetical message helps the Christian to locate himself in history and to insert himself into it, by showing that Christ is the ultimate meaning of this history."<sup>493</sup> This reminds us again that a Christocentric reading of the economy is not something that a critical reading of the Bible can efface. As I will show in a following section, the New Testament itself reads the prevenient history in the same way. Indeed, in the Emmaus account in Luke 24, Christ himself is shown so reading it. And as the *GDC* makes clear in that line just quoted from number 98, it is the Christocentric quality of the economy that enables the believer to "locate himself in history and to insert himself into it," suggesting that in an isolated, ahistorical present the human person has no identity.

As Stephen Crites reminded us in a seminal essay for the development of narrative theology, "personal identity depends upon the continuity of experience through time, a continuity bridging even the cleft between remembered past

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<sup>493</sup> *GDC* 98.

and projected future."<sup>494</sup> (He based his analysis upon Augustine's analysis of time in Book XI of the *Confessions*, just mentioned.) And this is not just so for personal experience, but for the collective experience of the Church, as well. Without Christ, who for Augustine supplies the shape and continuity of the whole of human historical experience, we can't find our ecclesial place in time either. As I have noted, it is Christ's place in the *narratio* as the fulfillment of the Old Testament and the source of power in the sacraments that makes it possible for Augustine's hearers to be inserted into that saving history. He is the one who makes the past saving events operative in "the present time of the Church" through his Pascal Mystery.

The centrality of Christ as the fulfillment and continuation of the pedagogy of God is shown in the first chapter of Part Three of the *GDC*, "The pedagogy of the faith." After professing Jesus as the "one Master,"

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<sup>494</sup> Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, XXXIX, 3 (September 1971); republished in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, Stanley Hauerwas and Gregory Jones, eds. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 78. See also Thompson's *Augustine and Narrative Ethics* for an accounting of the sourcing of narrative theology in Augustine. One primary example can be found in Stanley Hauerwas and David Burrell's, "From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics," in the volume just cited, *Why Narrative?*, especially section D. titled, "Augustine's Confessions: A Narrative Assessment of Life Stories," 181 ff.



echoing Matthew 23:10, the *GDC* notes that by uniting his action with "Jesus the Teacher," the catechist is joined to the "mysterious action of the grace of God," and so also to the "original pedagogy of the faith."<sup>495</sup> This reminds us that Augustine asked Deogratius to accept his instruction in the *DCR* not as a bit of personal advice but as if "it is love itself that says them to us all."<sup>496</sup> He also said that "what we dispense is God's," and that when the hearer receives the *narratio*, he or she is "listening to God through our agency."<sup>497</sup>

In so saying, Augustine and the *GDC* make clear that the divine or original pedagogy and the work of the catechist can be expressed in what I referred to as a *concursum*, (the Latin for "going together"). The *GDC* even says that "the Church actualizes the 'divine pedagogy'" in local catechisms<sup>498</sup> and that a "divine education" is "received by way of catechesis," so long as the action of the Holy Spirit is received by "teachers of the faith...who

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<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, 138, citing *CT* 58.

<sup>496</sup> *DCR* 14,22.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, 10,14; 7,11.

<sup>498</sup> *GDC* 131.

are convinced and faithful disciples of Christ and his Church."<sup>499</sup>

At number 143, proper catechesis is said to be "radically inspired by the pedagogy of God" and at 144 that "the wonderful dialogue that God undertakes with every person becomes its inspiration and norm," and then, the *GDC* asserts that, of this dialogue with God, "Catechesis becomes an untiring echo."<sup>500</sup> At number 141 the *GDC* goes so far as to say that the Church's mission itself is "a visible and actual continuation of the pedagogy of the Father and the Son."

In summary, the divine pedagogy is God's way of making a personal appeal to us for faith in the events of salvation history and the truths it discloses. As the model for our own catechetical pedagogy, it calls us to combine the propositional content of the faith, such as that which we have received in the *Catechism*, with the narration of that revelatory and saving history by which God has conveyed it to us. At 143 the *GDC* says that a catechesis "inspired by the pedagogy of God" will exhibit seven factors that yield a "process or a journey of

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<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>500</sup> Quoting number 11 of the *Message to the People of God*, 1977 Synod of Bishops, and *CT* 58.

following the Christ of the Gospel in the Spirit towards the Father" and toward a "true experience of faith" and "maturity of the faith." The elements of such a catechesis are:

1. It will serve and belong to the "dialogue of salvation," which on God's part is his initiative, loving and gratuitous, and respects human freedom; and on our part recognizes the magnitude of God's gift and demands growth in it.

2. It will embrace the progressive quality of revelation, its mystery and transcendence, but also its adaptability to individual persons and cultures.

3. It will be Christocentric and a "pedagogy of the incarnation," which is to say that the Gospel of Christ is to enter the real lives of persons.

4. It will value the "community experience of faith"<sup>501</sup> of the Church.

5. It will be "rooted in interpersonal relations" and dialogue.

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<sup>501</sup> It is worth noting that in 143 the *GDC* twice uses the phrase "experience of faith." Although the *GDC* is keen to stress that catechesis must engage human experience, as does Gabriel Moran, the emphasis is upon "illuminating experience with the data of the faith" (153) or of allowing the light of revelation to interpret "the signs of the times and the present life of man" (39). This makes of our experience "a locus for the manifestation and realization of salvation" (152). A similar note is sounded in point 6, just following, which insists on the linking of teaching and experience.

6. It will consist of a "pedagogy of signs," which links word and deed, teaching and experience.

7. It will derive its power of proclamation of the truth from the love of the Holy Spirit.

#### Divine Pedagogy, Content and Other Methods

In these facets of the divine pedagogy we get a clearer picture of the "educative journey"<sup>502</sup> as the GDC sees it.<sup>503</sup> But we still have to grapple with an important question. What is the connection between the divine pedagogy which is to serve as the methodological norm of the Church's pedagogy and the varieties of methods that the GDC assumes and encourages in the development of local catechisms?

In what I take to be the most thorough treatment of the pedagogy of God to date,<sup>504</sup> Petroc Willey, Dean of

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>503</sup> Linking the peripatetic character of the Platonic and Aristotelian pedagogies to the very term "pedagogy," Mark Byrne notes that the "etymology of 'pedagogy' has that sense of physical movement in learning. It is taken from the Greek *παῖς*, 'child', and *αγω*, 'to guide' or 'to take towards'." The Latin *ex-* or *e-* *ducere* also suggests the journey character of education. "The Formative Quality of the Teacher-Student Relationship: A Recovery of Spirituality in Education for a New Evangelization" (S.T.D. diss., *Pontificia Studiorum Universitas A S. Thoma Aq. in Urbe*, 2006), 40-41.

<sup>504</sup> See also Cesare Bissoli, "Pedagogia di Dio," *Dizionario de Catechetica*, Joseph Gevaert, ed. *Instituto di Catechetica (Facoltà di Scienze dell'Educazione) dell'Università Pontificia Salesiana di Roma*,

Research at Maryvale Institute in the UK, in a fifty page monograph prepared as the introductory briefing paper for the Third International Catechetical Conference in Rome in July 2009, explains the important distinction between "pedagogy" and "methodology" in the *GDC*.<sup>505</sup> Drawing upon what the introduction of the *GDC* has to say about the relative weight of its various parts, he notes that those portions of the *GDC* are to be considered "universally valid" which treat of "Divine revelation, the nature of catechesis, [and] the criteria governing the proclamation of the Gospel message," while those dealing with "present circumstances," "methodology," and "the manner of adapting catechesis" are "to be understood rather as indications or guidelines."<sup>506</sup>

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(Torino-Leumann: Editrice Elle Di Ci, 1986), 493-494; Andrew Minto, "How the Divine Pedagogy Teaches," *The Sower*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct 2004): 6-8; and John Gresham "The Divine Pedagogy as a Model for Online Education," *Teaching Theology and Religion*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (2006): 24-28. Bissoli is a figure of some interest. He likely had a role in the framing of the *GDC*, if the likeness between its introductory themes and that of the International Council for Catechesis (COINCAT) 1990 document, "Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines," is a reliable indicator. Bissoli was the principle author of that document as General Secretary of COINCAT. His short piece in *Dizionario de Catechetica* from 1986 already suggests the outline of the *GDC's* concern with the divine pedagogy. The COINCAT document, which doesn't express the same concern, can be accessed at: [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc\\_co\\_n\\_ccclergy\\_doc\\_14041990\\_acat\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_co_n_ccclergy_doc_14041990_acat_en.html).

<sup>505</sup> Petroc Willey, *Catechetical Conference on the Pedagogy of God: Introductory Paper*, July 2009, available from: [http://www.archindy.org/oce/download\\_documents/items\\_of\\_interest/briefing\\_paper\\_for\\_rome\\_conference.pdf](http://www.archindy.org/oce/download_documents/items_of_interest/briefing_paper_for_rome_conference.pdf).

<sup>506</sup> *GDC* 10, cited in Willey, *Pedagogy*, 5.

Willey then evaluates the five major parts of the *GDC*, concluding that Parts 1 on "Catechesis in the Church's Mission of Evangelization;" 2 on "the Gospel Message;" and 3 on "The Pedagogy of God..." belong to the category of the "universally valid. Parts 4, on "Those to be Catechized;" and 5, on "Catechesis in the Particular Church," to belong to the category of "indications or guidelines."<sup>507</sup> He goes on to say that,

Located at the centre of the *General Directory for Catechesis*, the pedagogy of God acts almost as a bridge, uniting the first parts on the nature and content of catechesis to the latter parts on the particular methods to be used for specific churches, groups and situations.<sup>508</sup>

He thereby distinguishes content, pedagogy, and methodology and says of the divine pedagogy that "It appears to stand between content and method, more by way of overarching principles of transmission of the faith."<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., 7.

Furthermore, he goes on to show that "these pedagogical principles are held to flow from the Faith itself."<sup>510</sup>

That the divine pedagogy represents a set of overarching principles that bridge content and method explains why the *GDC* says that no one method is endorsed by the Church but that "contemporary methods" must be discerned "in the light of the pedagogy of God."<sup>511</sup>

Willey's analysis of the divine pedagogy as a bridge also suggests the root of the *GDC's* contention that there can be no "artificial separation or presumed neutrality between method and content."<sup>512</sup> The *GDC* goes on to say, in fact, that "the content of catechesis cannot be indifferently subjected to any method," because

It requires a process of transmission which is adequate to the nature of the message, to its sources and language, to the concrete circumstances of ecclesial communities as well as to the particular circumstances of the faithful; to whom catechesis is addressed.<sup>513</sup>

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<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> *GDC* 148.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

That is, method, as a "process of transmission" must respond to both the universally constant elements and of "the message" and the more contingent matters of the "concrete" and "particular circumstances" of the local context. Again, the divine pedagogy, which expresses in some measure both the content of the message and its transmission by way of a work of divine accommodation, represents the proper principle of discernment for all other such particular methods. The divine pedagogy, then, could be thought of as a kind of macro-method which links content and the variety of methodologies that might be employed in the catechetical setting. And here again we see an echo of the Augustinian pedagogy of divine condescending love, which calls the catechist to be true to the pedagogical model of the divine Teacher, whose approach is always personal, concrete, and particular with reference to each student.

It is when Willey comes to analyze that particular characteristic of the pedagogy of God that the *GDC* identifies as progressive or gradual that the *narratio* comes in for particular attention. Willey first asks whether this element of gradualness might be a reference to the stage theories of cognitive, moral, or spiritual



development and answers his own question in the negative.<sup>514</sup> His reasons are, first, that as attuned as the Church is to the importance of age-appropriate catechetical methodologies, the descriptions of the divine pedagogy make clear reference to stages of *history* and not the natural stages of human growth and development.<sup>515</sup> Second, there is a progression of catechesis within every phase of human development, whether it is offered to children, adolescents, or adults, which follows the "intrinsic 'logic' and development of God's Revelation."<sup>516</sup>

Instead, Willey concludes that this aspect of the divine pedagogy warrants "a narrative approach"<sup>517</sup> to the elaboration of topics in our catechesis, as well as a presentation which follows the example set out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: a threefold presentation of themes which replicates the three phases of the ancient *narratio*.<sup>518</sup> Again, number 108 of the *GDC* outlines these as

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<sup>514</sup> Willey is obviously referring to the constructivist stage theories of cognitive, moral, and faith development of figures like (respectively) Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and James Fowler.

<sup>515</sup> There is an Augustinian precedent for making an association between the 6 stages of history and the stages of human growth in his *De Genesi adversus Manichaeos*, as Kari Kloos describes in "History as Witness," 34-35.

<sup>516</sup> Willey, *Pedagogy*, 40.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>518</sup> For more on the narrative structure of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, see Sean Innerst, "Marian Pondering: Learning to Pray

"the great stages of the Old Testament" (which are called a "journey"), the "life of Jesus," and "the history of the Church." Willey calls this "threefold point of reference" "fundamental to the *narratio*."<sup>519</sup> Willey also quotes that now familiar phrase from DCR 4,8 which makes love the goal of the catechetical address, such that "your listener by hearing it may believe, by believing may hope, and by hoping may love."<sup>520</sup>

### Conclusion

If, then, the staged, gradual, and progressive character of the divine pedagogy is the foundation for a narrational catechesis, and if that pedagogy of God represents to us overarching principles that are really a bridge between content and methodology which governs both, as Willey asserts, then, I would conclude, that a narrational catechesis, too, is as much a matter of principle, as of content or method.

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from Our Mother," *The Sower*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct 2009): 14-16 and also *From Blessing to Blessing: The Catechism as a Journey of Faith*, forthcoming from Ascension Press.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid., 42. See also de Cointet, Morgan, and Willey, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Craft of Catechesis*, 86-88.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid., 41. I've used Canning's translation rather than the one that Willey provides.

As I noted above, the *GDC* clearly classes the *narratio* as an essential part of *content* by placing it among the "seven foundation stones" of catechesis. And in that the *narratio* is both a description of and a participation in the journey of the people of God throughout history, as well as a description of and a participation in the fundamentally catechumenal process of formation in faith, it has strong methodological dimensions as well. But by associating a narrative approach with the principles of what Willey calls the "widely neglected 'third element' in catechesis,"<sup>521</sup> the pedagogy of God, he helps to buttress my contention that, although Augustine's *narratio* represents one phase in the catechumenal process, the narrational dimension of catechesis - as reflective of the divine pedagogy - is properly present in some form everywhere in the "educative journey" of growth to maturity in faith. In short, it is really a specific dimension of what I have called the macro-method that is the divine pedagogy.

Those who might claim, therefore, that the insistence of the *GDC* on the revival of *narratio* represents a return to an outdated methodology of the kind championed by the

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<sup>521</sup> *Omnes Gentes* feature, *The Sower*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct. 2009): 32.

kerygmatic school of catechesis,<sup>522</sup> would have to account for the association of *narratio* and the divine pedagogy on the level of catechetical principle, as "overarching principles of transmission of the faith ....principles [that] are held to flow from the Faith itself."<sup>523</sup> That is, if a potential critique of the *GDC* were to be based upon its proposing an outmoded method, then such a critique would be *prima facie* invalid if what the *GDC* actually proposes is not a methodology at all but a matter of principle, which Willey describes as a kind of *tertia quid*,

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<sup>522</sup> Once again, although the critics of the kerygmatic school like Gabriel Moran, Thomas Groome, and Mary Boys present a jaundiced view of a salvation historical catechesis, they have not expressed opposition to the *GDC*'s call. I would argue that what we have seen in my close study of *DCR* is a mode of instruction which is not opposed to what Groome calls an "active/reflective" or "experiential/reflective" process of initiation, nor one that is divorced from the biblical ("Hebrew/New Testament") model. Groome claims, too, that Augustine departs from the "experiential/relational theological model that he employs in *The City of God* and *Confessions* in *DCR*, replacing it with a "didactic narrational" one, expressive of the "theory to practice" way of knowing that he wants to replace with his "shared praxis" model. What I am suggesting is that the divine pedagogical model is operative in both the biblical and Augustinian model (in *DCR*) of a personal, gradual, accomodational, anamnetical and participational or performative catechesis and that Augustine's *narratio* is not a merely didactic, theory to practice model, but one which performatively encloses the present experience of the hearer (and the catechist, too) in the narrative recital of the past works of God. In fact, Groome's own use of "Story and Vision" in his model is a testimony to the power of narrative as a hermeneutic of praxis and praxis as a performative hermeneutic of narrative. See Groome, *Christian Religious Education*, 157-160 and 184-206. See also Willey's discussion of Groome's critique on 42-43 of *Pedagogy*, as well as George Stroup, "Theology of Narrative or Narrative Theology?" 424, n. 2. See also Jackie Smallbones' "Thomas Groome's Shared Christian Praxis," *Christian Education Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn 1986): 57-67 and Barbara Bjelland's "A Response to Jackie Smallbones' Assessment of Thomas Groome's Christian Religious Education," *Christian Education Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Winter 1990): 107 ff.

<sup>523</sup> Willey, *Pedagogy*, 7.

touching upon both the enduring content of the faith, and the transmission of that content into the particular and concrete circumstances and experiences of human life, but which stands astride both, as the measure of both.

That isn't so vaunted a claim for God's pedagogy, which is, as we have seen, both content and method, word and deed. But the conclusion above depends, of course, upon just that *association* of the *narratio* and the divine pedagogy that I am asserting. I think I can conclude at this point that such an association is warranted based upon what we have seen in both *DCR* and our study of the *GDC*, now further supported by the insight supplied by Petroc Willey. The question to take up next, is whether an examination of the Biblical text suggests the same association, whether the divine pedagogy presented in the Scriptures is narrational.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE DIVINE PEDAGOGY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

**Introduction**

In *Catechesis of Revelation* Gabriel Moran says the following in regard to the pedagogy of God:

If one asks the reason why history is so important in catechetical work, the immediate and obvious answer is that history was God's method of teaching and that man does better by imitating the means that God used rather than creating his own methods....This is undoubtedly the right direction for us to take, that is we must meditate upon divine teaching in order better to understand our catechetical work. It must be understood, however, that we have here a starting point and not a conclusion.<sup>524</sup>

In order to advance to a conclusion, Moran adds to the two premises that we might phrase as, "We should follow God's

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<sup>524</sup> *Catechesis of Revelation*, 43-44.

method," and "God's method is history," a third one: "Man is the being who makes history and history is man's self-understanding."<sup>525</sup> As I have already noted, for Moran and those who followed him in the wave of reform that followed the Second Vatican Council, the primary starting point for catechesis became human experience.

What I hope to show in this chapter and the next is that the Old and New Testament record, which is, after all, the first source for our understanding of the divine pedagogy, does not set up an opposition between special revelation and human experience, but that, in fact, the ritual recollection of the past great works of God in what Christians often call the Old Testament<sup>526</sup> functioned as the prologue to individual covenant entry and maintenance, and this by God's direction, as part of his explicit pedagogy. And, as I will go on to reference briefly, this pattern of

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>526</sup> I'm following Scripture scholar Joseph Jensen in my use of the terms "Old" and "New," rather than substituting the terms "Hebrew" and "Christian" or some others. He notes that the term "old" need not mean out of date or disfavored (a decidedly western and modern understanding of the term anyway) and that the difference in the Jewish and Catholic Christian canons of the Old Testament, as well as the time-honored conjunction of the two testaments by Christians makes most of the other proposed terms, such as "First" or "Prime Testament" or "Jewish Scriptures" problematic in one way or another. Jensen, "Beyond the Literal Sense: the Interpretation of Scripture in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*," *The Living Light*, vol. 29 (summer 1993): 57-58. We will see as I move into an examination of the interpretation of the Old in the New Testament, that the Old is actually honored by the interpretive method called typology.

narrational recollection does not end with the end of the Old Testament, nor with the New, nor even is it confined between the covers of the Bible, but is an ongoing facet of Jewish and Christian life to our own day.

Here in Chapter VI and in Chapter VII, following, I propose to examine two facets of the divine teaching as expressed in the Old and New Testaments. The first, taken up in the present chapter, presents the way in which the historical prologue of the ancient covenant formularies functioned in the Old Testament as a ritual act of memorialization to form the covenant people of Israel and discloses how that was then reflected in the liturgical life of ancient Israel.

The second, taken up in Chapter VII, presents the interpretive practice of the New Testament towards the Old, called typology, and the way in which that practice functioned to appropriate that ancient form of memorialization on the part of Israel in the New Israel of God, the Church.

What follows in these two chapters is admittedly a catechetical reflection on Scripture by a catechist, aided by a few scholars who are much more than catechists. My intention is to suggest in broad strokes a certain tenor of the thought-world or, perhaps better, world-view that



informed the ancient Jewish and Christian communities and those who sought to enter them. Obviously, I can't claim by this to settle any exegetical questions beyond my competence and the scope of this thesis, but only to apply what the scholars teach me to the realm of catechetical content and practice, with particular reference to how what they teach applies to our understanding of the pedagogy of God and the *narratio*.

### **Section 1: History as Prologue in the Old Testament**

In his now classic 1962 study on *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, Brevard Childs, commenting upon Deuteronomy 8, which commands at verse 2, "And you shall remember all the ways which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness," says, "In this passage historical memory establishes the continuity of the new generation with the decisive events of the past. God's plan for Israel unfolds in her history."<sup>527</sup> He goes on to note,

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<sup>527</sup> Childs, Brevard. *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (Naperville, Illinois: Alec C. Allenson, Inc., 1962), 51. This now classic study of the terms surrounding the concept of memory in the Old Testament is an indispensable starting point for a theology of memory and history. This work replaced the earlier attempt by J. Pedersen (*Israel*, 1926) to establish the existence of a unique theoretical system of memory in the Old Testament based upon a primitive, mythopoeic Hebrew thought pattern in which memory and action based upon that act of memorialization are inseparable. Building upon the critique of James Barr who finds similar patterns in North-west Semitic and Homeric Greek, Childs

"Memory plays a central role in making Israel constantly aware of the nature of God's benevolent acts as well as of her own covenantal pledge."<sup>528</sup> Childs, who stands at the beginning of what came to be called canonical criticism, uses form critical skills to establish the centrality of *zeker* (remember) and *zikaron* (remembrance) to the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel.<sup>529</sup>

In *Sinai and Zion*, Jon Levenson focuses our attention on the "Sinaitic event" as that moment when Israel passes from a "prehistorical" or "protohistorical" stage to one which records an "awesome" and "transcendent" event which "occurred on the plain of human history."<sup>530</sup> That event was

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concludes that Pedersen's analysis shows that "zkr" and related terms possess a wider semantic range than is common in the English term "memory," but that the breadth of the term is not suggestive of a so-called "primitive" Hebrew psychology. Childs adds to this semantic evaluation a close "form-critical analysis of the passages which employ the important words describing the role of memory" (30).

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>529</sup> See H. Eising, "zākhār; zēkher; zikkārôn; 'azkārāh," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. IV, Botterweck, G. J. and Ringren, H., eds. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), David Green, trans., 64-82. This scholarly treatment of *zkr*, its etymology and various forms, explains the mode and purpose of Israel's remembering and then also of God's remembering with a close evaluation of the context in each case, along with the recounting of special instances of the acts of remembering and forgetting. See also Lawrence Hoffman's "Does God Remember? A Liturgical Theology of Memory" in Michael A. Signer, ed. *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) 41-72. He argues that *zekher/zikaron* are both best rendered as "memorial."

<sup>530</sup> Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1985), 24.

the formation of a covenant between Israel and YHWH which we find in compressed form in Exodus 19:3-8.

3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." 7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

Levenson calls these verses an "introduction to the entire revelation on Sinai."<sup>531</sup> Following the earlier work of G. E. Mendenhall and K. Beltzer, and later scholars of covenant like D. J. McCarthy, Levenson sees in this prophetic announcement from Exodus an abbreviated form of the typical covenant formulary of the Late Bronze Age

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

Hittite suzerainty treaty.<sup>532</sup> Although "covenant" or "berit" indicates different kinds of agreements or relationships, political, social, tribal, familial, etc.,<sup>533</sup> Levenson focuses on the suzerainty form. The elaborated formulary would typically have included six parts: 1. a preamble or titulary in which the suzerain identifies himself; 2. the historical prologue or antecedent history, which states the past relationship between the two parties to the covenant and is aimed at instilling a sense of gratitude and obligation on the part of the vassal to the treaty; 3.

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<sup>532</sup> Ibid., 26-32. Although Levenson stresses the suzerainty covenant form, what follows ought to be understood, too, with reference to the larger kinship model that other scholars explore. Especially in regard to the role that the *narratio* plays in the formation of the Church family, kinship is certainly as important a paradigm as kingship. "The social organization of West Semitic tribal groups was grounded in kinship. Kinship relations defined the rights and obligations, the duties, status, and privileges of tribal members, and kinship terminology provided the only language for expressing legal, political, and religious institutions. Kinship was conceived in terms of one blood flowing through the veins of the kinship group." Frank Moore Cross, "Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel," in F. M. Cross, ed., *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3. See also Scott Hahn's extensive treatment of this in *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Hahn distinguishes between kinship-type, treaty-type, and grant-type covenants. Kinship-type covenants involve two persons of equal status who both come under the covenant obligations (parity). Treaty and grant-type covenants are formed between a superior and inferior parties and the obligations are unequally distributed (vassalage), 29.

<sup>533</sup> Paul Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant: A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East*, *Analectica Biblica* 88, (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982), 15. Recent scholarship has found that "a 'covenant' is, in its essence, a legal means to establish kinship between two previously unrelated parties." *Catholic Bible Dictionary*, Scott Hahn ed., (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 168.

stipulations or terms of the treaty to ensure the *personal* fidelity of the vassal to his one lord<sup>534</sup>; 4. the deposition of the text of the treaty, often in the temple of the god who would serve as the witness of the treaty, with some treaties requiring a periodic, "liturgical"<sup>535</sup> rereading by the vassal; 5. the list of witnesses, these being the gods who witness and guarantee covenant fidelity, sometimes also "mountains, rivers, heaven and earth, stand in witness,"<sup>536</sup> too; 6. lastly, the blessings and curses which provide a "moral mechanism," "reward for the faithful, punishment for the faithless."<sup>537</sup>

While in Exodus 19:3-8 Levenson only finds "reflexes of the formulary,"<sup>538</sup> particularly the historical prologue in verse 4, the stipulation in verse 5, and the oath in verse 8, he goes on to analyze Joshua 24:1-28 (with some supporting instances from Deuteronomy and Leviticus) in which all the six elements of the formulary can be found in some measure. He also notes that the Joshua text is a

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<sup>534</sup> Levenson notes that the "ubiquitous metaphor" in these treaties describing the suzerain/vassal relationship was that of shepherd and flock. *Sinai and Zion*, 28.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>537</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>538</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

covenant renewal rather than a covenant formation ceremony. Based on his analysis of these relatively early fragments he concludes that the "covenantalization of Israelite religion was so thoroughgoing that we are almost reduced to hypothesis in our effort to reconstruct the prior stages."<sup>539</sup> Levenson cites Baltzer's work on the covenant formulary in the OT to support his assertion that, apart from the two samples that evaluates, "There are dozens and dozens of other texts whose structure and setting become lucid in the light of the discoveries about covenant."<sup>540</sup>

For our purposes, Levenson's concern with "the theology of the historical prologue" is primary. He says of the function of the historical prologue as the ground of the covenant obligations of Israel that "the unstated assumption is that meaning can be disclosed in history."<sup>541</sup> "The present is the consummation of the past, the assurance that it can continue."<sup>542</sup> The recital of the history has as its major function "to narrow the gap between generations," says Levenson.<sup>543</sup> In this way it serves as the engine for

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<sup>539</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>540</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., 38.

the formation and maintenance of the collective identity of Israel.

History is telescoped into collective biography. What your ancestors saw is what you saw. God's rescue of them implicates you, obliges you, for you, by hearing this story and responding affirmatively, become Israel, and it was Israel whom he rescued. Telling the story brings it alive. The historical prologue brings the past to bear pointedly on the present. In the words of the rabbinic Passover liturgy (Haggadah), "Each man is obliged to see himself as if he came out of Egypt."<sup>544</sup>

This is not an expression of a deductive or existential philosophical system. The Jew does "not determine who they are by looking within, by plumbing the depths of the individual soul," one does not find a "philosophical system" or "theorem" in the Hebrew Bible; rather, Israel infers and affirms her identity "by telling a story."<sup>545</sup> The public, the historical determines the private and the personal, "[o]ne's people's history becomes

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<sup>544</sup> Ibid. It is interesting to note here the confluence of collective identity and individual obligation. The association of the covenant historical prologue and the Passover Haggadah, albeit allusively, in Levenson is important for understanding this as precursor for Augustine's *narratio*. Covenant formation and renewal, even in the new covenant, calls for a return to the historical recital of the grounding covenantal events.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., 38-39.

one's personal history."<sup>546</sup> This is nearly the polar opposite of the Moran view that "history is man's self-understanding." This is not the autonomous person as the arbiter of the meaning of history but history as the determinative prologue of human destiny. "Israel affirms the given."<sup>547</sup> And, as Alasdair MacIntyre has shown in his description of classical heroic cultures and their heirs in the tragedians and philosophers of ancient Greece, this is the formative quality of tribe and tradition among premodern peoples.<sup>548</sup> History is determinative of one's personal relations and moral obligations; history yields covenant and not the reverse. And it is history that establishes the trustworthiness of God, who he is, not a philosophical or religious system.<sup>549</sup>

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<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid. In an echo of this, Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones note in their introduction to *Why Narrative* that "In recent years appeals to 'narrative' and to 'story'...have caused delight in that narrative and story appear to provide a cure, if not a panacea, to a variety of Enlightenment illnesses: rationalism, monism, decisionism, objectivism, and other 'isms.'" And I'd add individualism to that catalogue.

<sup>548</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

<sup>549</sup> If there is a philosophical dimension to be found here, it is best expressed by Brevard Childs, "It [memory] serves in making Israel noetically aware of a history which is ontologically a unity. There is only one redemptive history." *Memory and Tradition*, 52. Lawrence Hoffman suggests this dimension from the perspective of Jewish moral reflection: "halakhah is a synchronic medium, a mode of discourse in which eternal truths are spelled out much as in the philosophy of essences. Verbs in halakhic debate are present participles, implying what one does or does not do, not just now but forever. What eternal



Levenson shows that although a covenantal theology of history takes shape around the Exodus event, the entire Torah can be read as a covenant text. Even though the historical prologue that we see in the covenant formulary arises later, the creation account and the migrations of Abraham are folded into their horizon.<sup>550</sup> "Most of the recapitulations of the sacred history begin, like Joshua 24, some time in the Patriarchal period."<sup>551</sup>

Levenson is eager to allay the sense that the telling of salvation history is anything like an end in itself. He rejects the classical Lutheran reading of opposition between law and grace. In the view of ancient Judaism, the historical prologue is to incite the sense of obligation, to encourage observation of the covenant stipulations, the commandments, in *mitzvot*. He disputes with the Lutheran reading of Romans 10:4 of Christ as "the end of the law," asserting as the Old Testament position that *mitzvot* are the proper goal of covenant formation and a loving response

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truths are for the philosophers, halakhic propositions are for the Rabbis." From "Does God Remember?" in *Memory and History*, 56.

<sup>550</sup> Scott Hahn in a popular work, *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1998), elaborates the covenantal elements latent in the symbols of the creation account in his second chapter "Creation Covenant and Cosmic Temple." He supplies a smattering of scholarly support for these (from R. Murray, R. de Vaux, and J. Ratzinger) in endnotes 7 and 8 on pages 270-271.

<sup>551</sup> Levenson, *Sinai*, 40.

to the gratuitous acts of God toward Israel. What he misses is that the Greek of Romans 10:4 has Christ not ending the law, but serving as its *telos*.<sup>552</sup> In the older Christian understanding, which is beginning under scholarly scrutiny to be the more widely accepted view of the arguments that Paul is making in Galatians 3 and Romans 4, the "obedience of faith" with which Paul begins and ends his presentation in Romans,<sup>553</sup> represents a very similar vision to the Old Testament one advanced by Levenson.<sup>554</sup>

What Levenson's theology of the historical prologue suggests, is that the proper order in Old Testament covenant formation is *Haggadah* (telling the story), *Torah* (teaching on the obligations covenant requires), and *Halakhah* (walking in covenant fidelity).<sup>555</sup> In this

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<sup>552</sup> On this and what follows, see Michael Wyschogrod's arresting analysis of St. Paul's treatment of the Law in Galatians and Romans in light of the decision of the so-called Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 which binds the gentile Christians to the requirements of the Noachide law (vv. 19-20) but says nothing about the abrogation of the requirements of the Law for Jewish Christians. *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, R. Kendall Soulen, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2004) 188 ff.

<sup>553</sup> Romans 1:5 and 16:26; see also 15:18 and Paul's charge to "win obedience from the Gentiles."

<sup>554</sup> See N.T. Wright's *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005) for a revised understanding OF Paul's theology of personal salvation and, again, Scott Hahn's *Kinship By Covenant* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009) on what Paul means by "works of the law." Grace does not obviate obedience to the moral law nor incorporation into a visible people of God, but elevates new covenant fidelity in accord with the measure of the Beatitudes.

<sup>555</sup> Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 50-56. Jacob Neusner provides simple definitions of these three on pages 216 and 218 of *The Emergence of*

connection, Donald Gowen in his work *Theology in Exodus* makes clear that despite their universalization in later Jewish reflection, the commandments of Exodus are only for Israel.<sup>556</sup> That might seem a surprising claim until one realizes that the experience of the exodus, whether had directly or by way of liturgical covenant renewal, as in the Passover *Haggadah*, is the necessary pedagogical precursor to acceptance and living of the stipulations of covenant life.

The commandments are *covenant* stipulations. God first saves Israel (as he reminds them in the titular and historical prologue) and then invites to obedient covenant

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*Judaism* (Louisville and London: John Knox Press, 2004). For this seven meanings of Torah see chapter four, notably called, "Torah: The Worldview of Judaism," 57 ff. The arrangement that I'm proposing here: Haggadah, Torah, Halakah, depends upon Levenson's identification of the importance of the historical prologue in covenant formation and renewal. I'm not suggesting that the Haggadah, understood as the "narrative read at the Passover banquet (Seder) [Neusner, 16]," occurs first in the scriptural history. I'm proposing that the historical experience of Israel is itself preparatory to the reception of the Torah and covenant stipulations at Sinai and that the later Seder Haggadah stands in for that experience in the ongoing life of Judaism and its catechetical formation of the young.

<sup>556</sup> Donald E. Gowan *Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994). "The author of the *Jubilees* projects all the most important commandments back into Genesis, and the rabbis were certain that the law had been created in heaven before the world was made (*Gen. Rab.* 1.4). But early Israel resisted that tendency, and Sinai remained a moment in history" (180). "The use of the apodictic form in many of the commandments makes it clear that this is a personal relationship, and not just an abstract code of laws....the Decalogue, Ex. 20:22-26, and much of 22:18-23:33 are in the second person, God speaking to the people. And most of the second person verbs are in the singular, so in the law individuals are addressed" (182).

relation, not the other way around.<sup>557</sup> And that is not only a necessity of plot, but of anthropology and psychology. Any law which is imposed apart from the narrative circumstances of human experience will be treated as an imposition. This is also just the order that we saw in Augustine's *narratio: exordium, narratio, then exhortatio*. First, the catechist invites a hearing in the *exordium*, then tells the story of God's saving work in the *narratio*, and only then advances to an appeal for a loving response in the *exhortatio*. Parenesis follows *narratio*.

As Levenson helps us to see, the intimate covenantal *knowing* (*yada*) of God that comes by way of walking (*halakhah*) in the commandments is not merely a cognitive thing but historical from start to finish, past history bestowing intelligibility upon present and future obligations.<sup>558</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> R. Kendall Soulen, in his commentary on the theology of Michael Wyschogrod says of it, "Even the Torah, for many interpreters Judaism's center of gravity, arises from the prior reality of God's election of the Jewish people. Israel is not the accidental bearer of the Torah. Rather, the Torah grows out of Israel's election and God's saving acts performed for his people." *Abraham's Promise*, 9.

<sup>558</sup> The obverse of this can be seen in an essay called "Jewish Thought as Reflected in the Halakah" by Louis Ginzberg. Commenting on the phrase from the Talmud, "He who studies the Halakah daily may rest assured that he shall be a son the world to come," says, "he who studies the Halakah may be assured that he is a son of the world - the Jewish world - that has been. Not that Halakah is a matter of the past; but the understanding of the Jewish past, of Jewish life and thought, is impossible without a knowledge of the Halakah." From *The Jewish Expression*, Judah Goldin, ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976) 164.

That is nowhere more apparent than in Deuteronomy 6 where we read,

When your son asks you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD our God has commanded you?" **21** then you shall say to your son, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; **22** and the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes; **23** and he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land which he swore to give to our fathers. **24** And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. **25** And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us."<sup>559</sup>

In this explicit Old Testament directive on catechesis of the young, the answer to the question "Why should I live like a Jew?" is not "Because I said so." or "Because it is the virtuous thing to do." or "Because you are the author of your own history." or "Because you will bring about the workers' paradise." or even "Because Yahweh said so."<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> Dt. 6: 20-25.

<sup>560</sup> I don't mean by this that obedience to God, as such, is unimportant to the Jew. See, for example, Abraham Joshua Heschel's

but, rather, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out." Marc Brettler, in agreement with Levenson about the preparatory character of the recollected salvation history, notes that the phrase

"you shall remember that you were slaves in Egypt" and its variants...appear five times in Deuteronomy. The phrase never appears in isolation; this too suggests that the act of memory itself is not central. Rather, it appears as a motivation of five different laws....Here, too, "remembering leads to doing."<sup>561</sup>

But in the life of Israel the thing remembered didn't disappear after it was effected. "Thus, life in the

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essay, "The Meaning of Observance" in *Understanding Jewish Theology: Classical Issues and Modern Perspectives*, Jacob Neusner, ed., (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1973). He notes that "To say that the *mitzvot* have meaning is less accurate than saying that they lead us to wells of emergent meaning" (99). He means that "Divine meaning...is experienced *in acts*, rather than in speculation" (98, emphasis in original). Note, that, just as Torah surfaces out of the lived experience of Israel as expressed in the Haggadah, the meaning of both surface out of the lived experience of Halakah. History yields covenant, covenant means obedience, but that obedience is only fully meaningful when lived. Again, history and the tradition it bears is not opposed to the vital experience of God in the present, but is the very source of the meaning of the present when lived anew. N. T. Wright (citing Frei and Alter) speaks of the Old Testament narratives as entirely unlike "the unstoried world of the detached aphorism or the mystical insight." *Jesus and the Victory of God* ((Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996), 176. The same could be said, I think for present Christian experience: the *narratio* and the doctrine which percolates up out of it can only be understood fully by an experience of lived faith. And that experience testifies to the meaning, the veracity of the *narratio* and its doctrinal grammar.

<sup>561</sup> Marc Brettler, "Memory in Ancient Israel," in Michael A. Signer, ed., *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) 5-6.

covenant is not something merely granted, but something won anew, rekindled and reconsecrated in the heart of each Israelite in every generation."<sup>562</sup> Levenson cites the form of Psalm 81, which Jews today chant on Thursday mornings, as a holdover of a regular liturgical re-presentation of the Sinaitic covenant event.<sup>563</sup> He notes the urgency with which the current generation of wanderers is addressed in Deuteronomy 5:1-4 as indicative of the importance of retaining the immediacy of the covenant with the passage of time: "It was not with our fathers that YHWH made this covenant, but with us - us! - those who are here today, all of us living. Face to face YHWH spoke with you on the mountain, from the midst of the fire" (vs. 3-4). Levenson suggests that this is to allay any sense that they are only "obliged in a distant way by the covenant of Sinai/Horeb, but not as direct partners in it."<sup>564</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> Levenson, *Sinai*, 81.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.*, 80. For the historical-paradigmatic quality of Psalm 89, which "comprehends at once the history and destiny of the Jewish faith," see Jacob Neusner's early essay, "The Eighty-ninth Psalm: Paradigm of Israel's Faith," in his *History and Faith: Essays on Jewish Learning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965) and his later, mature reflections on the emergence of the "paradigmatic thinking" which makes for the "presence of the past" and the "pastness of the present," see chapter seven "The Story Judaism Tells," in *Judaism When Christianity Began: A Survey of Belief and Practice* (Louisville, KY and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, 81. Levenson goes on to argue that the *mitzvah* to twice daily recite the *Shma* prayer "is the rabbinic way of actualizing the moment at Sinai when Israel answered the divine offer of covenant....In

## Section 2: The Sevens of Time: Ritual Remembrance

Because that act of memorialization which is essential to covenant formation and preservation can't be left to chance, the divine pedagogue included among the stipulations of the covenant itself not just the Passover celebration but the seven feasts of the liturgical year of ancient Judaism.<sup>565</sup>

These are delineated in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus. There the Lord tells Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, The appointed feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, my appointed feasts, are these."<sup>566</sup> The first bedrock observance is, of course, the Sabbath of solemn rest that sanctifies each week. The Sabbath observance had been enjoined in the Ten Commandments<sup>567</sup>; it is also assumed in the event of the

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short, the recitation of the *Shma* is the rabbinic covenant renewal ceremony" 85-86.

<sup>565</sup> The cursory treatment here of the ancient feasts as *zikaron* or memorial of the Exodus has as its background Lawrence Hoffman's concise treatment of *zekher/zikaron* in liturgical use in "Does God Remember? A Liturgical Theology of Memory" in Michael A. Signer, ed. *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 41-72.

<sup>566</sup> Lv. 23:2.

<sup>567</sup> Ex. 20:11. "The same *Kiddush* prayer that gives us the Sabbath as a 'memorial of the work of creation' says also that it is a *zekher*



provision of manna in Exodus 16. That miraculous bread, which normally went foul if kept until the next day, was both unavailable for gathering on the Sabbath and was preserved for the Sabbath from the previous day. And, of course, the Pentateuch sees the roots of the Sabbath observance in the account of creation itself, as seen in Genesis 2:3: "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."<sup>568</sup>

This "sevening" or sabbath blessing is played out again and again in the process of sanctifying time in the Old Testament. In Leviticus 25, God commands that every seventh year, in effect a sabbath of years, be observed with a solemn rest from plowing and pruning, for man and beast. God even calls for a jubilee year after "seven weeks of years" ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ ), that is, in the fiftieth year, beginning on the first day of the feast of Atonement, during which the Jews are to rest from labor for a whole year and to offer return of land and freedom to those who

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*li'tsiyat mitsrayim*, 'a memorial of the Exodus.'" Hoffman, "Does God Remember?" 55.

<sup>568</sup> Ex. 31:12-17. For a brief but comprehensive account of the scriptural roots and rabbinical reading of the Sabbath see Baruch Levine and Jacob Neusner (respectively) in chapters seven and eight of Jacob Neusner, Bruce Chilton, and Baruch Levine, *Torah Revealed, Torah Fulfilled: Scriptural Laws in Formative Judaism and Earliest Christianity* (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2008).

had lost either because of debt or sale since the last major jubilee.<sup>569</sup> In Deuteronomy 31 Moses commanded, in keeping with the fourth part of the typical covenant formulary that we saw above (deposition of the text), that on the Feast of Booths in the jubilee year "you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing."<sup>570</sup>

This "sevening" of time can be seen, too, in the yearly feasts of Israel, of which there were seven commanded in Leviticus 23.<sup>571</sup> Three of these, Passover (*Pesach*)<sup>572</sup>, Unleavened Bread (*Matzot*), and First Fruits (*Bikkurim*), were celebrated in the first month of the Jewish calendar, Nisan, which falls in the spring. They combined the commemoration of the first Passover with a memorial of the first harvest in the Promised Land. One other feast, that of Weeks (*Shavuot*)<sup>573</sup>, fell one day beyond

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<sup>569</sup> For the Sabbath and Jubilee as a return to the perfection of Eden and as a desist from creation, see Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 67-78.

<sup>570</sup> Dt. 31:10-11. See Levenson, *Sinai*, 29 and 34.

<sup>571</sup> Hoffman, citing the *Kiddush al hakos*, relates that "'It [the Sabbath] is the day [that marks] the first of the sacred convocations [*mikra'ei kodesh*], a memorial of the Exodus....' Technically, then, all sacred convocations, not only the Sabbath, are memorials of the Exodus." "Does God Remember?" 55. The OT citations identifying the following feasts as sacred convocations and so also as a memorial (*zikaron*), as indicated in the paradigmatic text for Passover which Hoffman cites from Exodus 12:14-16, will be cited below.

<sup>572</sup> Lv. 23:7-8, Nm. 28:18, 25.

<sup>573</sup> Lv. 23:21, Nm. 28:26.

seven weeks after First Fruits (again, 7 x 7 days + 1, or 50 days) and so was, and still is, called Pentecost, from the Greek for fifty days. It celebrates both the full harvest and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

The three other feasts, Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*)<sup>574</sup>, Atonement (*Yom Kippur*)<sup>575</sup>, and Tabernacles or Booths (*Sukkot*)<sup>576</sup>, were celebrated during Tishri, the seventh month of the year. These last three constitute the High Holy Days of Judaism. Trumpets signals not only the start of the civil year, as opposed to the liturgical year, but also the "ten days of awe," that period of repentance leading up to the Feast of Atonement. Jewish tradition has it that those who are not in the book of the righteous have ten days to reform before the books and their fate are sealed on the feast of Atonement. On that day in ancient Israel, the High Priest offered sacrifices of atonement for sin, for himself and his family, and then for the whole people, entering the holy of holies for the only time during the year to offer incense and to sprinkle the blood of the animal sacrifices on the Mercy Seat. Afterwards, he

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<sup>574</sup> Lv. 23:24, Nm. 29:1. The monthly New Moon celebration, of which Rosh Hashanah is the first of the (civil) year, is cited at Is. 1:13.

<sup>575</sup> Lv. 23:27, Nm. 29:7.

<sup>576</sup> Lv. 23:35, 37; Nm. 29:12.

would bless the people, pronouncing the divine name YHWH over them, a name which was reserved for this feast alone, and which was otherwise never spoken.

Tabernacles, which begins five days after Atonement, is also a seven-day memorial feast commemorating the Exodus, with a solemn rest observed on the eighth day. Great menorahs were lit in the Court of the Women, illuminating the Temple Mount, and on the eighth day, the High Priest would pour water from Siloam on the altar as a prayer for the fall rains. This feast also marked the ingathering from the threshing floor and the wine press<sup>577</sup> and so came to take on eschatological significance as a figure for the gathering of all of God's people in the messianic age, and also for the judgment at the end of time.<sup>578</sup>

These seven feasts divide the year into two great blocks of feasts in the first and seventh months, in the spring and fall, with Pentecost standing on its own in late May or June.<sup>579</sup> Three of the seven feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, were called pilgrim feasts

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<sup>577</sup> Cf. Deut. 16:13.

<sup>578</sup> Cf. Rev. 14:14-20.

<sup>579</sup> Phillip Sigal gives a very helpful description of the feasts in *Judaism: The Evolution of a Faith*, revised and edited by Lillian Sigal (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 19-25.

because able-bodied men were expected to come to Jerusalem for their observance.<sup>580</sup> In this way, the year was punctuated by religious celebrations that served as a kind of life breath of Judaism as she inhaled her pilgrims into the Jerusalem Temple and exhaled them out again into the towns and villages of Israel, and even into the diaspora beyond.<sup>581</sup>

These feasts were commanded by God. By them, he was claiming a place in the lives of his people and was hallowing time. These feasts served to keep the founding events of Mosaic Judaism, the events of the exodus, deeply etched in the memory of the Jewish people. But they were not merely memorial, they pointed forward to some sort of fulfillment in a future messianic age.

As I've already mentioned, the Jewish feasts recalled the mysteries of God's saving action among His chosen people. God's command to celebrate memorial feasts of this kind acknowledge an important psychological principle. Stated simply, (and forgive the apparent tautology) when we don't remember God and what he has done for us, we tend to

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<sup>580</sup> Ex. 23:14-17.

<sup>581</sup> "Pesach, Shabuot (or Shabbuoth), and Sukkot (or Sukkoth) are known as the "pilgrimage festivals" because of the biblical requirement that pilgrimages to the sanctuary be made at those those crucial times in the agricultural calendar. They were times of harvest, and gifts of first fruits were to be presented to the priests." Sigal, *Judaism*, 21. See also Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 135-146.

forget him. As Childs notes, to remember or keep the festival (which is to recall the event it recalls) means "to act in obedience toward" God. Likewise, to forget is commensurate with covenant failure, to "go after other gods and serve them and worship them."<sup>582</sup> Whenever Israel became lax in observing God's ritual commands, it tended to forget altogether the covenant with him. For example, at the time of the sweeping religious reforms of King Josiah in the seventh century B.C., as the author of 2 Kings notes, "[N]o such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah."<sup>583</sup> So, in direct opposition to God's command in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23 that the Passover be kept as the principal yearly memorial feast of God's saving work, there had been no such official celebration of it for four centuries!

During that same period, the kings of Israel and Judah consented to or directly engaged in horrendous acts of idolatry, including ritualized sexual misconduct, and even child sacrifice.<sup>584</sup> It was this continual and wanton

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<sup>582</sup> Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 54. See Dt. 18:18-19.

<sup>583</sup> 2 Kgs. 23:22.

<sup>584</sup> The prophet's chilling indictment of Judah over the "Topheth" in Jer. 19 includes the charge that "they have filled this place with

disregard of the covenant, caused by the disregard of the covenant liturgy, that had occasioned the reforms of King Josiah, who "put away the mediums and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord."<sup>585</sup> And despite Josiah's best efforts to draw the southern kingdom of Judah back to covenantal fidelity, it would eventually lead to the return of Israel to exile, this time in Babylon rather than Egypt, beginning in 586 BC.

In accord with the educational dictum that repetition is the mother of learning, it seems that God was saying to Israel, "If you won't ritually recall the last time I saved you from exile, I'll just have to exile and save you again to refresh your memory." In this respect the regime of Christianity is no different than that of Judaism; to fail to memorialize God's works, will tend to lead to negligence. (So it is no surprise that when Jesus fulfills and perfects the Passover, he will command, "Do this in

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the blood of innocents, and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal" (vv. 4-5).

<sup>585</sup> 2 Kgs. 23:24. This suggests that the part of the covenant formulary called the deposition of the text, which required both the placement of the covenant text in the temple and then its periodic reading, had only been observed in regard to the first requirement.

memory of me," to ensure that by liturgical recollection of his salvation, Christians, too, would be moved to covenantal fidelity.)

In this regard, the Bible seems to suggest a psychological imperative of human nature that the God of the Bible feeds by commanding Israel to memorialize his saving work in acts of worship. This psychological principle is even suggested in the creation account. When God sets the lights in the firmament on the fourth day of creation, we are told that this is that they might serve "for signs and for seasons" (Gen. 1:14 RSV). Other translations render this as to "mark the fixed times" (NAB) or to "indicate festivals" (NJB).

The Hebrew root term *mo'ed* refers to appointed times of worship and immediately suggests to Jewish ears a time of a specifically religious assembly for liturgical purposes.<sup>586</sup> It is this very same word that is used in Leviticus 23:2 when God commands that the seven feasts be kept at the "time appointed." (The New American Bible suggests the liturgical connotation of *mo'ed* by translating

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<sup>586</sup> See K. Kock, "*mō'ēd*" *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. VIII, Botterweck, G. J. and Ringren, H., eds. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), David Green, trans., 167-173.



the same passage with "you shall celebrate with a sacred assembly.")<sup>587</sup>

The biblical view of time is that its seasons and cycles are, from their creation, precisely for the ritual remembering that helped Israel remain covenantally faithful. Creation itself, and the movements of the stars and planets, are ordered to these "appointed times."<sup>588</sup>

### Conclusion

As we have seen, Levenson associates the covenant historical prologue with the Passover Seder Haggadah. Both are expressive of the conviction that "Telling the story brings it alive, actualizes it, turns it from past into present and bridges the gap between individual and collective experience."<sup>589</sup> In God's command to Israel to keep the Passover as a perpetual ordinance, he says, "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you

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<sup>587</sup> See also 2 Chronicles 8:13 where the appointed festivals referred to in Leviticus 23, are observed by Solomon after the building of the Temple.

<sup>588</sup> See Ps. 104:19, "Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons (*moadim*); the sun knows its time for setting."

<sup>589</sup> Levenson, *Sinai*, 42.

shall observe it as an ordinance for ever."<sup>590</sup> In regard to this paradigmatic memorial of the Jewish ritual cycle the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says,

In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men.<sup>184</sup> In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them.<sup>591</sup>

Christians, of course, hold that it was in conformity with this command for a perpetual memorial that Christ Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, said, "Do this in remembrance of me."<sup>592</sup> And in so doing Jesus was acting exactly in accord with the thought-world of ancient Judaism. Sacred memorials of the saving events of God's acts in history are an essential part of covenant formation and maintenance and so the "new covenant in my blood" that Jesus references would presumably require the same. Lawrence Hoffman confirms this by saying that

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<sup>590</sup> Ex. 12:14.

<sup>591</sup> CCC 1363, emphasis in original.

<sup>592</sup> Lk. 22:19.

encouragements to a proper ritual memorial of the Passover that we find in rabbis like Hillel is the same thing we find in Rabbi Jesus' "Do this in memory of me." "They are of a piece, each being a set of words that accompany a ritual act.... In both cases, we have liturgy as the Rabbis understood it, liturgy as *zikaron*, liturgy as memory, or better, as pointer, drawing God's attention to what matters."<sup>593</sup> What this suggests to us is that the divine pedagogy is thoroughly covenantal, memorial, and so also historical,<sup>594</sup> as well as thoroughly ritual.

What we've seen so far comports roughly with the list of the features of the divine pedagogy that I presented from *GDC* 143. The ritual, memorial covenantal system that constitutes the Judaism of the Bible is dialogical, but by God's initiative. The treaty form of the covenant is bilateral, although between unequals: God playing the role of the liege sovereign and Israel the role of lesser vassal

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<sup>593</sup> Hoffman, "Does God Remember?" 66. Hoffman, after surveying the post-biblical rabbinical literature, concludes that the terms *zekher* and *zikaron* really mean "pointer" and these things can be both signifiers and the thing signified, these things can be events, places, objects, which point to the mercy of God, who is both remembered and the one who remembers Israel.

<sup>594</sup> It is important to note that for scholars like Marc Brettler, the Old Testament is not history in the modern sense but a "premodern history," which as memory presents not necessarily "the past," but rather, "a past." "Memory in Ancient Israel," 10, 11. In what follows, biblical scholar Dale Martin suggests a way of understanding the difference between modern historiography and these ancient memorial documents.

king. God's Old Testament pedagogy is progressive and adaptable, he alters his approach based upon the fidelity or infidelity of his people. It is a pedagogy of signs, or what Hoffman calls "pointers," which is the more literal translation of the *zekher/zikaron*. The liturgical life of Israel is woven out of these memorial signs. It is both communal and interpersonal, the collective history supplying the collective identity into which each Jew is incorporated with each celebration of the yearly Passover.<sup>595</sup>

Levenson's work suggests that the covenantal nature of the relationship, which requires an historical prologue to establish relationship and obligation, may in some measure be the very reason for the whole of the Old Testament corpus. The narrative portions and certain Psalms supply the historical prologue or the Haggadah; the legislative portions or Torah represent the covenant stipulations; the prophets regulate covenant fidelity and measure halakhic conformity. And the very preservation of the texts through the ages suggests the importance of deposition and ritual recital of the covenant documents. And, as Levenson makes clear, all of this depends upon the recitation of the

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<sup>595</sup> The Christocentric character of the pedagogy, as cited at point 3 in the list from *GDC* 143 will obviously have to wait for the "fullness of time."

tribal or national history of Israel as the engine of covenant formation and maintenance. What this all suggests, as Jacob Neusner has put it, that "Israel's history is taken over into the structure of Israel's life of sanctification, and all that happens to Israel forms part of the structure of holiness built around cult, Torah, synagogue, sages, Zion, and the like."<sup>596</sup> To put it in the succinct formulation that I have borrowed from narrative theology, the story is performative in character. And, according to the telling of that story in the Old Testament, as well as its haggadic retelling in Judaism, this is all at God's direction. In this sense we could conclude that the divine pedagogy of the Old Testament is very much what I have called narrational.

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<sup>596</sup> *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 88.

## CHAPTER VII

## THE PEDAGOGY OF TYPE AND FIGURE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Introduction**

The *GDC* states that the pedagogy of Christ in the New Testament is a precise continuation of the divine pedagogy of the Old Testament and that the Church's pedagogy should be a continuation of both. I asserted in Chapter V that the association of the *narratio* with the divine pedagogy in the *GDC* lends to it the quality of a catechetical principle and not merely that of a standard content or one among a variety of methods. What we have just seen in the survey of the Old Testament pedagogy is that it is indeed narrational. And so the next step for this chapter is to determine whether an echo of the narrational pedagogy of the Old Testament, which, as we have seen, is still operative in Judaism, can be found in the New Testament and the ecclesial body which tells and performs its story.

Jewish scholar Jacob Neusner calls "paradigmatic thinking" the way that the Rabbinic canon "recast Israel's recorded experience ('history') into a set of models that pertained everywhere and all the time."<sup>597</sup> It is by means of this kind of "paradigmatic thinking" that "Israel's history is taken over into the structure of Israel's life of sanctification."<sup>598</sup> Hebrew Scholar, Catholic catechist, and ecumenist Sophia Cavalletti has observed of what I have referred to as the performative element of both Judaism and Christianity, that "[t]his approach to liturgy, common to both branches of the people of God, is called 'memorial.'<sup>599</sup> She links memorial with typology asserting that "each annul the distance between historical events, causing them to converge into the 'eternal present' of a manifestation of salvation and of God's love which encompasses the whole of history," enabling the believer to "discover the 'golden thread' of the plan of God which unites events into a single history."<sup>600</sup> She goes on to conclude:

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<sup>597</sup> *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 87.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>599</sup> "Memorial and Typology," *Letter and Spirit I* (2005): 85.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.* She is here echoing Augustine exactly in the use of the term "golden thread."

The fact that throughout the whole development of their traditions, Jews and Christians have shared the same approach, at such a depth of religious life, even if from different points of view, is something that must be pondered with the greatest attention.<sup>601</sup>

In what follows in this chapter I hope to ponder just the way in which the memorial and typological character of the New Testament pedagogy is a reflection of the Old Testament and Jewish practice and expressive of the narrational pattern we have seen there. Whereas the principle feature in the last chapter was the covenantal and ritual/memorial character of the divine pedagogy, in this chapter I will attend more to the typological element in the New Testament pedagogy, but precisely because it expresses an appropriation of the Old Testament pattern and themes.

This should not be assumed to suggest a rejection of other critical forms of New Testament interpretation. Rather, my argument is the modest one that in addition to the critical task of evaluating *Sitz im Leben*, literary or other forms, history of authorship, redaction, or traditions, the New Testament itself calls for an application of the ancient interpretive practice of

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid., 86.



spiritual exegesis as well. The reason, I hope to show, is that its own pedagogy is expressed in a typological mode, echoing the paradigmatic character of the Jewish tradition that we have been surveying and anticipating the *narratio* that Augustine tells.

**Section 1: Witness to the Divine Pedagogy in a  
"Christianly" Reading of the New Testament**

Return to an Ancient Practice While Rejecting  
Ancient Prejudices

In his recent work, *Pedagogy of the Bible*, Dale Martin, himself an historical-critical biblical scholar at Yale, after surveying the pedagogical practices of ten major American Protestant divinity schools from across the spectrum of denominational and theological perspectives,<sup>602</sup> found that, although other innovative methods of reading and interpreting the Bible are beginning to make inroads on the near-monopoly of historical criticism, "that method is

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<sup>602</sup> These were the Chandler School of Theology (Emory), Columbia Theological Seminary, Chicago Theological Seminary, Fuller Theological Seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Interdenominational Theological Center, Lancaster Theological Seminary, Moravian Theological Seminary, North Park Theological Seminary, and the University of Chicago Divinity School. Dale B. Martin, *Pedagogy of the Bible: An Analysis and Proposal* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) x-xi.

still the dominant one taught to students training to be ministers."<sup>603</sup> Martin concludes from his interviews that

In seminaries and divinity schools, students who will spend their careers being called upon to interpret the Bible for theological and ethical ends are not being sufficiently trained in how to think and speak articulately about theological interpretation.<sup>604</sup>

He goes on to not only complain that scientific historical exegesis has displaced the essential step of theological interpretation of the text, but, perhaps surprisingly, also to suggest that what is called scientific historiography is not really sufficient to assess the faith claims of Christianity:

The faith that founds Christianity is not based on the mere historical fact of the existence of Jesus of Nazareth or his life and death. It is rather based on the claim that Jesus was divine. These theological claims can be neither confirmed nor denied by modern historiographical methods. Modern historians, when practicing the common procedures affirmed by that modern discipline, can say nothing about whether God was in Jesus or not. The incarnation, therefore, is not a historical fact in the more technical sense of

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<sup>603</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid., 24.

the term "historical" - that is, an event in the past that can be confirmed and studied by modern historiographical methods.<sup>605</sup>

Martin is obviously not suggesting that modern history is useless to the conduct of biblical study, nor is he suggesting that historical criticism ought to be jettisoned. Rather, he is directing our attention to the fact of the difference between what most Christians mean when they say that Christianity is an historical religion and what modern scientific history studies. To say that Christianity is historical is not to say that it is entirely subject to the findings of historical science.<sup>606</sup> But he is not arguing either for a fideistic approach to Scripture along the lines of Martin Kähler's famous distinction between the Christ of faith and the Jesus of history. This other Martin is only reminding us, by way of a simple act of historical reflection, that historical criticism can't be a *sine qua non* for a properly Christian

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<sup>605</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>606</sup> In this regard, N. T. Wright's work is very much a testament to the possibility of reconnecting historical study and theological interpretation. See his description of and attack upon "the notion that history and theology are two worlds which must be kept entirely separate" in *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 3-27. (I will be presenting below some historical-critical arguments in support of the narrative character of the divine pedagogy from N. T. Wright.)

reading of the Bible. With rhetorical flourish Martin concludes:

For modern Christians to say that modern historical criticism is necessary for the Christian interpretation of the Bible is to say that all premodern Christians or those Christians throughout the world today who do not use historical criticism did not or are not reading the Scripture Christianly, and that offends the theological notion and the confession of faith in the communion of saints.<sup>607</sup>

To encourage the move beyond a sole reliance on historical-critical methods and toward what he identifies as a more fulsome practice of theological interpretation, Martin gives a brief sampling of premodern forms of interpretation. "'Christian' interpretation of Scripture begins in the New Testament itself;" he notes, "New Testament authors provide instructive examples of premodern exegesis, and I urge that we Christians learn from their examples."<sup>608</sup> That is what I will be trying to do in the next few pages of this chapter when I examine the precedent in the New Testament for the typological character of the *narratio*.

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<sup>607</sup> Martin, *Pedagogy* 43.

<sup>608</sup> Martin, *Pedagogy* 49.

But of still further importance for this study, Martin advances to samples of premodern interpretation of Scripture from Origen and Augustine to show that "allegorical reading is an expansion of meaning into other realms of Christian truth, not the exclusion of a literal meaning or the foundation of new knowledge."<sup>609</sup> That is, the literal or historical meaning, which is so much the concern of historical criticism, is not effaced by the spiritual senses of Scripture, as we sometimes hear.

Mary Boys in her work on the decline of the kerygmatic movement states that "allegory had offered emancipation from a literal rendering of the text,"<sup>610</sup> suggesting that figures like Augustine and others of the fathers chose to simply bypass the difficulties of "the story read as narrative."<sup>611</sup> She even fears a kind of sinister quality to this form of interpretation in saying that "Typology and allegory, when linked with cultural domination, functioned to legitimate persecution and thus to betray the

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<sup>609</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>610</sup> Boys, *Biblical Interpretation*, 276.

<sup>611</sup> Martin, *Pedagogy* 52. Martin translates Origen's *historia*, by which he refers to the literal, historical meaning, or what he often calls simply "the letter" of the text, as "narrative" to avoid the problem of the equivocations in the modern meaning of the term "history" that I mentioned above. That term "narrative" is felicitous, too, because it points us toward the explosion in concern with narrative in theology that I will touch on briefly below.

interpretive task of Scripture."<sup>612</sup> Martin, on the other hand, counters,

To many modern people, premodern interpretations have sounded capricious, arbitrary, and even self-serving. I believe, along with an increasing number of scholars, that premodern scriptural interpretation was anything but arbitrary, that it was the product of the employment of skills learned in important socialization, and that it is something from which we "postmodern" Christians may learn quite a lot.<sup>613</sup>

Even if this interpretive practice had been put to the sort of ill use that Boys cites, it would serve here to recall the old Latin dictum, *abusus non tollit usum*. In our own day when persons of all Christian denominations and religions increasingly recognize the need for esteeming

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<sup>612</sup> Boys, *Biblical Interpretation* 312.

<sup>613</sup> Martin, *Pedagogy* 47. Martin cites James L. Kugel and Rowan A. Greer's work, *Early Biblical Interpretation*, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) and Beryl Smalley's *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, revised 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), as well as more recent studies, one edited by Justin S. Holcomb, *Christian Theologies of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2006) and Rowan A. Greer's *Anglican Approaches to Scripture: From the Reformation to the Present* (New York: Crossroad, 2006). I would add the admirably succinct description of the place of typology in ancient biblical interpretation on pages 19-25 in Scott Hahn's *Letter and Spirit* (New York: Doubleday, 2005) and the historical works by Robert L. Wilken, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), especially Chapter 3, and Glenn W. Olsen, *Beginning at Jerusalem: Five Reflections on the History of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), especially Chapter 1. Both these texts fill in what Martin means by saying that the ancient forms of interpretation are expressions of "skills learned in important socialization."

those of other faiths, there is far less danger that an interpretive practice like typology would be deployed in support of anti-Semitism or other forms of intolerance. In fact, as the citation from Cavalletti above indicates, a typological interpretative practice can even be deployed to draw the two traditions of Christianity and Judaism toward closer mutual understanding.<sup>614</sup>

Warrant for the Ancient Practice in  
the New Testament and the Patristic Interpretation

In addition to suggesting that the ancient form of reading the Scriptures was more expansive, open and full than many modern critical readings that focus almost entirely on the literal or historical dimension of the text, Martin reminds us that the warrant for this sort of reading actually comes from the Bible itself. For our purposes, I could also say that such warrant can be found in the divine pedagogy, for that is what the Bible gives us. As he says, "'Christian' interpretation of Scripture

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<sup>614</sup> See R. Kendall Soulen's "An Introduction to Michael Wyschogrod" on what the latter dubs "post-supersessionist Christianity." He quotes Wyschogrod: "The existence of this new Christianity has helped me shape a Jewish identity that can live in deep appreciation of this new Christianity." *Abraham's Promise*, 22.

begins in the New Testament itself."<sup>615</sup> (The quotes around "Christian" in that phrase indicate that he means that this form of interpretation is practiced even by Jesus, although he can't be properly called a Christian.)

Scholars of this form of interpretation note that typological exegesis, the reading of the new in light of the old, has what Henri De Lubac called a "prehistory" in the Old Testament.<sup>616</sup> Scott Hahn tells us that "Many scholars have noted that the Book of Exodus, at many points, seems to depict the events of Israel's exodus as a reprise of the creation stories of Genesis."<sup>617</sup> Hahn goes on to note the typological relation between the reed basket in which the baby Moses is set afloat on the Nile and the earlier ark of Noah and then the way in which the tabernacle construction follows the form of the creation narrative in Exodus.

Hahn also cites a number of examples in the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel of the "interpretation of redemptive events, present and future in terms that evoke a new creation..., new exodus..., and new kingdom." He calls

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<sup>615</sup> Martin, *Pedagogy* 49.

<sup>616</sup> *Medieval Exegesis*, vol. 1, M. Sebanc, trans., (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 230.

<sup>617</sup> *Letter and Spirit*, 21.



these the "three 'mountain peaks' of typology throughout the major and minor prophets and, later, throughout the New Testament."<sup>618</sup> (This is consistent with what we have seen about the character of the historical prologue. Since the past events retain, by way of ritual recollection, their power to save and incorporate Jewish believers in each generation, their enduring significance as "pointers" would naturally establish them as a kind of interpretive matrix for succeeding events in the lives of the people of Israel.<sup>619</sup> So, when Jesus interprets himself and current events in the light of the Old Testament,<sup>620</sup> as Martin indicates, he is simply following the Old Testament prophetic practice, which often framed current events

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<sup>618</sup> *Letter and Spirit*, 22.

<sup>619</sup> The translation of *zeker/zikkaron* as "pointers" is Lawrence Hoffman's. Again, for the foundations of "paradigmatic thinking" in Rabbinical interpretation, see "The Story Judaism Tells" in Neusner's *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 79 ff. He cites Brevard Childs at length to ground his discussion of this process by which "When later Israel responded to the continuing imperative of her tradition through her memory, that moment in historical time likewise became an Exodus experience" (*Memory and Tradition*, 85). For this Jewish practice from a literary perspective, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), especially his chapter on "Biblical Type-Scenes and the Uses of Convention" 47-62.

<sup>620</sup> Brian Stock writes, "In [Augustine's] view, Christ and the apostles are interpreters of the Old Testament even as they act; we interpret their readings and actions as we read and act, and so forth. It is through this model as well as the meaning of the stories that a community of readership overcomes the temporal distance that separates the two narratives in time." *Augustine the Reader*, 165.

within the matrix of these seminal events of Israel's past.<sup>621</sup>

Typology, as scholars like Hahn suggest, is an important unifying principle in both the Old and New Testaments. What Martin and Hahn describe in the biblical mode of interpretation inherited by the Fathers is not just another school of interpretation.<sup>622</sup> What they describe is a kind of web of meaning that ties the discreet events of the biblical narrative together. As will become more apparent as I begin to present more examples, for the new Testament interpreters of the Old Testament, the analogies between the Old Testament events and their fulfillment in Christ serve as the very ground of their narratives. This way in which the analogies between new and old make up the very fabric of the New Testament narratives is undergirded, too, by the insights of a narrative theology which refuses to consider the narrative form of much of the scriptural material to be a mere matter of genre. Nor is the narrative structure to be thought of as a kind of

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<sup>621</sup> For Jesus acting in accord with the "Profile of a Prophet," see Part Two of N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*, especially chapter eight: "Stories of the Kingdom (3): Judgment and Vindication."

<sup>622</sup> For De Lubac's argument for the normativity of this practice or what Marcellino D'Ambrosio describes as a "non-negotiable part of the Christian patrimony," (148) see his "Spiritual Sense in De Lubac's Hermeneutics," 147 ff.

arbitrary delivery system for propositional truth. As Stanley Hauerwas put it in an early work,

Narrative is not secondary for our knowledge of God; there is no "point" that can be separated from the story. The narratives through which we learn of God are the point. Stories are not substitute explanations we can someday hope to supplant with more straight forward accounts. Precisely to the contrary, narratives are necessary to our understanding of those aspects of our existence which admit of no further explanation - i.e., God, the world and the self.<sup>623</sup>

As we have seen, in Augustine, the narrative he tells is actually woven together out of the typological substructure of the pattern of fulfillments that the New Testament instigates and which Augustine then imitates. Jaroslav Pelikan in his chapter "The Turning Point of History" in *Jesus Through the Centuries*, notes that

Calling itself the new Israel and the true Israel, the church appropriated the schema of historical meaning that had arisen in the interpretation of the redemption of Israel accomplished by the exodus from Egypt, and adapted this schema to the redemption of

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<sup>623</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), 26.

humanity accomplished by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.<sup>624</sup>

He goes on to point out that "Christians ransacked the Hebrew Bible for references to Christ.... the prophets of Israel had found their aim, and their end, in Jesus."<sup>625</sup> When Matthew takes the phrase from Hosea 11:1, "out of Egypt I have called my son," and applies it to Jesus (2:15) he is suggesting by that typological association with the founding event of Mosaic Judaism that it is not just the events of Jesus' own life that describe and disclose who he is, but that he is constituted by a much deeper history, the covenantal history of Israel, which we have seen, but which now serves as a vast and singular historical prologue for a new covenant in Jesus.

Pelikan argues that it is this Christian accounting for the Christ event out of the fund of the events of the history of Israel that makes for history as we know it in the west and which accounts for the "divergence between Christianity and Classicism" and "between the church and the synagogue."<sup>626</sup> Citing Augustine, he says that God's

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<sup>624</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus Through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 22.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

purposes are advanced not as the result of "luck or fortune or the power of the stars, but of an 'order of things and times, which is hidden from us, but thoroughly known to [God, who]...rules as lord and appoints as governor.'" <sup>627</sup>

This "order of things and times" in Augustine is the root of the *sacra historia* that Kevane had recognized as having taken the central place in Augustine's new Christian *paideia*, replacing Homer and Virgil. And this suggests that the history which had served as prologue for Israel's covenant and then as prologue for the Christ has now become the prologue for the Christian Church. And it is the analogies between events in those three phases which make up the span of the full narration (Old Testament, Fullness of time in Christ, and the "present time of the Church") that are described by typologies, both biblical and liturgical. <sup>628</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Ibid., 29, quoting *City of God* 4.33; 5.1; 5.11.

<sup>628</sup> Hahn, in *Letter and Spirit*, beginning with the Emmaus account from Luke 24, draws out three methodological elements in that encounter: economy, typology, and mystagogy (15). He goes on to quote Robert Taft that "*Mystagogy is to liturgy what exegesis is to scripture*," (26, emphasis in original) as an expression of the fact that, in the ancient church, typology is the common interpretive principle for both Scripture and the liturgy. As we saw in the tentative, first mystagogical explanations that Augustine gave his hearers of the *sacramenta*, the types of the *narratio* become the signs of the sacraments. The citation from Taft is taken from "The Liturgy of the Great Church," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, n. 34 and n. 35 (1980-81): 59.

## Section 2: Typology in the New Testament

The place to begin our investigation into New Testament typology would be those places where the word *τυπος* or its variant forms are used in the epistolary literature, the Adam/Christ type in Romans 5, the exodus types from 1 Corinthians 10, the elaborate temple typology of Hebrews 9 and 10 and the baptismal type from 1 Peter 3. That word, used as a hermeneutical term, does only appear in the epistolary literature.<sup>629</sup> But the exegetical use of the Old Testament that these epistolary texts employ is itself, no pun intended, typical of the interpretation employed by the gospel writers, as well. The typological

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<sup>629</sup> The term is also used six times in Paul, the Pastorals and 1 Peter as a personal model for obedience in faith (e.g., in Tit 2:7 he is told to be a "model [*τυπος*] of good deeds") and in Romans 6:17 with reference to the norm which Christianity provides. It is also used in John 20:25 to indicate the scars in the hands, feet and side of the risen Christ. We will be dealing here only with those instances which indicate a hermeneutical sense of the term. The references in Acts just mentioned are, respectively, and contrapuntally, to the "figures" (*τυποι*) of the pagan gods that the people of Israel worshiped in defiance of Yahweh and the "pattern" (*τυπος*) of the tabernacle that Moses had been shown by God at Sinai. The other hermeneutical uses are: 1 Cor 10:6 (*τυπος*) and 10:11 (*τυπικως*) in reference to the baptism in the Red Sea and the cloud and the spiritual food and drink provided by God to the Israel of the exodus as comparable to those spiritual goods (the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist?) provided to the Church; Rom 5:14 which refers to "Adam, who was a type (*τυπος*) of the one [Christ] who was to come;" 1 Pt 3:21 where Baptism is said to correspond (*αντιτυπον*) to flood of Noah; and in Hebrews 8:5 (*τυπον*) and 9:24 (*αντιτυπα*) where the structure and rites of Jerusalem temple are called, respectively a "pattern" and "copy" of the heavenly sanctuary. See Leonhard Goppelt, "*τυπος, αντιτυπος, τυπικως, υποτυπωσις*," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VIII, Gerhard Friedrich, ed., G.W. Bromiley, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972) 246-259.

interpretation of the Old Testament in the New is not limited to those places where the terms "type" or "antitype" are used. (Under the heading "allegory" we could also make reference to Galatians 4:24 ff. on the two mountains, Sinai and Jerusalem, and 2 Corinthians 3:12 ff. on the veil of Moses and the unveiled face of the believer.)

In Chapter 5 of his *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, entitled "The Use of the Old Testament," James D. G. Dunn points to several examples of the use of typological exegesis in the New Testament. Quoting C. H. Dodd's *According to the Scriptures*, that the Old Testament "is the substructure of all Christian theology and already contains its chief regulatory ideas," Dunn posits that, if Dodd is correct, we have in the early Christian reliance on the Old Testament for its theological substructure "a unifying element of primary significance, perhaps as unifying a factor as faith in Jesus itself."<sup>630</sup>

But Dunn spends most of the rest of his chapter stressing other forms of Jewish and early Christian interpretation, namely allegory, targum, midrash and peshet, which employ a more freewheeling interpretive use

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<sup>630</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (Harrisburgh, PA: Trinity Press International, 1990), 82.

of Old Testament texts than does the typological. In short, Dunn is interested in demonstrating a radical Christian reinterpretation and even abrogation of the Old Testament revelation rather than that the Old Testament traditions represented a normative standard for early Christianity, as Dodd had suggested.<sup>631</sup> This, of course, is consistent with a hermeneutic that presupposes "development, diversity, and modification of traditions," in line with Boys' proposal, but it doesn't comport with the kind of interpretive practice which, as N. T. Wright suggests, calls for a close association between historical continuity with the Jewish thought world as the matrix for an intelligible prophetic praxis of reevaluation of that thought world in the New Testament.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> "But where the old revelation did not fit with the new there was little question of the mainstream of first-century Christianity but that the old had to be adapted or else abandoned." Ibid., 102.

<sup>632</sup> Again, see N. T. Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God* for his compelling arguments that a rejoining of scientific history and theological interpretation requires that Jesus be understood in his historical context and that the "controlling story" or metanarrative of first century Judaism is a necessary presupposition to the intelligibility of the Jesus of the Gospels and, then, that the practice of Jesus can be more articulately understood in light of the radical reinterpretation of that story that he intends to propose in accord with the praxis of a prophet. In this way, Wright saves the radicality of the Gospel but also the continuity of the Jewish worldview of which it is an heir. I would suggest that this is just what typology does, as well. It communicates the radical newness of God's work at each stage, but in continuity with what he has done heretofore, giving the story of salvation history the character of a plan ordained by a faithful God and, as we have seen in Augustine's *DCR*, the capacity to inspire faith, hope and love.



While Dunn's larger point with regard to the practice of targumic, midrashic, allegorical interpretation and peshet can't be dealt with here, I hope to suggest that even a brief consideration of typological interpretation, as distinguished from those other more freewheeling forms, shows a more sober appreciation of the normative character of the Old Testament text in accord with the covenantal pattern that we saw employed in the Old Testament.<sup>633</sup>

Before we look at the diverse ways in which typology is employed in a set of texts, we need to get a handle on the term itself. "Typology," is a term that has been coined to describe a particular kind of interpretation of Old Testament texts by the New Testament writers which showed a concern for types or figures, those events from the Old Testament which seemed to have found a fulfillment

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<sup>633</sup> For an examination of Paul's rhetorically allusive use of the Old Testament contra the claim that he uses a midrashic interpretation, see Richard Hayes, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989). In answer to Dunn's assertion that the apparent license that the early Christians show in interpretation of the Old Testament ought to be paradigmatic for our modern interpretation of the New (see *Unity*, 102), the following quote from Hayes is apropos: "(...midrash has caught the fancy of deconstructionists and other modern literary theorists who have found in rabbinic midrash a historical precedent and analogue for their own interpretive practices.) The difficulty with this usage lies in its simultaneous imprecision and authoritative mysteriousness: the label *midrash* tends to bring the interpretive process to a halt, as though it had explained something, when in fact we should keep pressing for clarity" 13-14.

in the advent of Jesus as Messiah.<sup>634</sup> As we have seen, this is the same dynamic at work in Augustine's *narratio*.

As will be obvious, the hermeneutical term "typology" is derived from τυπος. That word, from τυπω, "to strike," originally meant a blow and, derivatively, the impression left by a blow. The connotation being that the object with which one strikes at the receiving surface is the reverse of the impression it leaves. We could think of a seal and the impression it leaves in wax.<sup>635</sup> The use of the term seems natural to the interpretive function it provides in showing associations between events in the two Testaments, which are often referred to as type and antitype.

I have been using the two terms "typological" and "allegorical" as synonyms up to this point, and that has been warranted by the fact that the term "allegorical" was used to describe the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures in the patristic and medieval periods, as we saw in Augustine's *DCR*. But that term has since come to mean

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<sup>634</sup> Henri De Lubac notes that the term is of Lutheran origin and of fairly recent vintage, only about a century at the time of his writing. *Sources of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 15 n. 13. See Marcellino D'Ambrosio's explanation of De Lubac's dissatisfaction with the use of "typology" as the principle term to describe the patristic and medieval interpretive practice in "the Spiritual Sense in De Lubac's Hermeneutics of Tradition," in *Letter and Spirit I* (2005): 147-157.

<sup>635</sup> Leonard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, D. Madvig, trans. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1982), 4-5 n. 4.

something quite other than it did in earlier centuries. Allegory has come to mean a use of the text which considers it not so much in terms of its past literal or historical meaning, but rather as "a code or cipher" indicating a present reality.<sup>636</sup> Oscar Cullmann noted that "for allegorical exegesis, history is only a symbol behind which something else is to be sought."<sup>637</sup>

Glenn Olsen distinguishes the two terms this way:

"Typology is the interpreting of an event belonging to the present or the recent past as the fulfillment of a similar recorded or prophesied in Scripture. Allegory is the interpretation of an object or person or a number of objects or persons as in reality meaning some object or person of a later time, with no attempt made to trace a relationship of 'similar situation' between them."<sup>638</sup>

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<sup>636</sup> Dunn, *Unity*, 86. D'Ambrosiano refers to "the connotations of artificiality and subjectivism that the term allegory had borne for the last century of two." *The Spiritual Sense in De Lubac's Hermeneutics*, 150. St. Paul uses the term allegory (ἀλληγορούμενα) in Galatians 4:24 in explicating the relation between Christians and Jews by employing Sarah and Hagar as allegorical foils. One could make a case, however, that St. Paul is engaging in something more akin to what would be called typology in that instance, since the historical episode referred to is of importance to him. It is precisely our point here that Paul, like the other New Testament writers sees the historical sense of the Old Testament as bearing a Christological content which is only disclosed with Christ's coming.

<sup>637</sup> Quoted in De Lubac, *Sources of Revelation* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968), 13, n. 4.

<sup>638</sup> Glenn Olsen, "Allegory, typology, and symbol: the *sensus spiritualis*, Part I: Definitions and earliest history," *Communio* (summer 1977): 163.

Olsen goes on to note that allegory "is not tied to an historical examination of a type." Typology, on the other hand, "when properly used can never escape history, that is, the literal sense of Scripture. It must pay attention to the circumstances of the original event, or anti-type, which is claimed to be its (historical) fulfillment."<sup>639</sup> According to Olsen, then, allegory is much less a method of interpretation than meditation or illustration which relies for its legitimacy on an author's claim to some kind of inspiration, "a higher gnosis or *theoria*," which obviates the need to stay so close to the literal meaning of the text.<sup>640</sup>

This is the kind of practice that Raymond Brown refers to when he speaks of the "more than literal senses" as at least suffering from a "problem of controls" and at worst, belonging "to an alien thought world where imagination ran riot and where the literal meaning of the Scriptures, even when it was recognized, was constantly submerged beneath a

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<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., 164-165. Although Augustine does speak of the catechist as a kind of "oracle" in *DCR* (7,11 and 11,16), recall that he also describes the biblical narrative that the catechist is to present as the "well-trodden path" (11,16).

strong tide of symbolism."<sup>641</sup> It is just that problem in the more heavily allegorical reading of figures like Philo, and in some measure Origen, which a more sober typology helps us avoid.

Typology, then, properly understood, is a form of New Testament interpretation of the Old which takes the Old Testament text seriously as the very ground of the assertion that it makes about the person or event recounted in the New. That is, the whole interpretive matrix of the person or event recounted in the New Testament depends upon the relation of the type to the antitype. When Paul sets up the typical relation between Adam and Christ in Romans 5, for example, the interpretation of Adam is essential to the interpretation of Christ. They are, in fact, mutually interpretive. The literal/historical meaning of the text from Genesis discloses the spiritual meaning of Christ's saving acts in the present age. While the fall of Adam comes into clearer focus in reference to the redemption worked by Christ.<sup>642</sup>

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<sup>641</sup> *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990) "Hermeneutics," 71:30 and 34. Brown tends to conflate the terms "typology," "allegorical," and "spiritual sense" (Ibid., 71:36).

<sup>642</sup> Glenn Olsen notes that the Adam/Christ typology found in Romans 5 and elaborated upon by Irenaeus and others represents an important ancient capacity to think in "universal particulars," in this case "one man [both Adam and Christ] standing for all men." He suggests that an appreciation of the ancient typological mode of reading the Bible could point the way toward an overcoming of our modern, western individualist

This is the same sort of rich intertextual interpretation that we see when John shows Jesus applying the temple as a type of himself;<sup>643</sup> or when Paul calls the body of each believer a temple of the Holy Spirit<sup>644</sup> or when the same interpretive principle is extended by Paul in his identification of the Church as the Body of Christ,<sup>645</sup> or when Paul makes a further eschatological association between the tent or tabernacle of the body of each believer and the "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;"<sup>646</sup> or when in Revelation we see

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obsessions, as well as enable us to preserve Christianity itself. Olsen, *Beginning at Jerusalem*, 35.

<sup>643</sup> Jn. 2:19-21, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." and then the author of John notes in his own voice, "he spoke of the temple of his body." Here John shows us Jesus as exegete of the Old Testament, applying the hermeneutical principle that he will enunciate in 5:39, "You search the Scriptures...and it is they that bear witness to me."

<sup>644</sup> 1 Cor. 3:16-17, 6:19 and in 2 Cor. 6:16. In 1 Peter 2 we see the Church being built up out of living stones "into a spiritual house," which in Ephesians 2:19-22 is called a "holy temple in the Lord" where even the Gentiles are "built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit."

<sup>645</sup> Rm. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 3:6, 4:12; Col. 1:24, 3:15. See also Joseph Ratzinger's *Called to Communion* in which he argues that Paul's typological image of the Body of Christ is not inherited from the Stoic allegory of the state as a body but from the entirely "inner-biblical" conception of Jewish "corporate personality," as well as the biblical theology of eucharist and matrimony (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 33-40.

<sup>646</sup> 2 Cor. 5:1.

each persevering believer becoming a pillar in the heavenly temple.<sup>647</sup>

What we have seen in these few passages is an interpretive typological matrix that discloses a temple typology of Christ's body as the new temple, the body of the believer as tabernacle or temple of the Holy Spirit and the Church as the body of Christ and a spiritual temple here and in the eschaton. These are expressive of the classical three spiritual senses of Scripture: the allegorical, or the types "significance in Christ;" the moral or how the type "ought to lead us to act justly;" and the anagogical, or the "eternal significance" of the type.<sup>648</sup>

Although these passages use the temple to interpret Christ, believer, Church and heaven, they likewise cast an interpretive light back on the Jerusalem temple. The temple as an actual historical edifice and locus of worship is not repudiated or abrogated in these interpretations. It is necessary to the various interpretive fulfillments as type, but it is also retains its literal significance, without which the fulfillments precisely lack their character as fulfillments. Since the type and antitype are

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<sup>647</sup> Rev. 3:12. God himself is identified with the temple at the culmination of the seer's vision in 21:22.

<sup>648</sup> CCC 117.

in a sense mutually interpretive, the historical temple is now seen to be not less important but, in fact, more so. It is not merely a cipher or code that must be read as a pure symbol of Christ and his Church, but takes on a kind of historical concreteness based on the greater weight of meaning it assumes in the Christian dispensation as these various levels of spiritual meaning begin to aggregate around it.

Because of the later destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. and even the statements made by Stephen in Acts 7, it would be easy to suggest that this temple typology represents a spiritualization of the historical manifestation - in this case of the temple - which points to an abrogation of Judaism in early Christianity. That is Dunn's position.<sup>649</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Dunn argues (*passim*) that representations of liturgy and ministry in the earliest sources suggest a "pneumatization" of the old order which sought to abrogate the Jewish regime and which was replaced only later by rigid forms of worship and hierarchy. In reference to Stephen's speaking against the temple (p. 128), Dunn doesn't note that the charges made against him in Acts 6:13-14 for speaking "against this holy place and law" are uttered by "false witnesses" and that they exactly follow the same false charges made against Jesus in Mark 14:58. The early Christian claim seems rather to have been not a call for a repudiation of Judaism, even by the Hellenists, but a messianic return to an earlier covenant promise, based on texts like Ezekiel 20:11 and 20:25 which reference two kinds of law, one by which "man shall live," as opposed to those "statutes that were not good." See especially Galatians 3:17-19. New Testament typology seems to have provided a kind of linguistic, symbolic bridge from the older forms of Judaism to the new forms of Christianity that only take on a more elaborate shape with the passage of time and that based precisely on reflection upon those typologies. Again, see Scott Hahn's *Kinship By Covenant* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).



I would suggest, however, that this amounts to an allegorization, if you will, of typology. (Keeping in mind Olsen's distinction.) In the typological interpretative relationship, the older reality, the type, and the later fulfillment, the antitype, rely heavily upon each other for their significance. If the older type is "pneumatized," as Dunn suggests, then the antitype loses its place in that historical/memorial matrix that we found to be so fundamental a part of the Jewish covenantal regime.<sup>650</sup> That would be the case if the historical temple is abrogated to make way for a spiritual temple. But typological interpretation is, rather, an appropriation of the past and not an abrogation. It honors the past reality in its fulfillment.<sup>651</sup>

The proper application of typology suggests an enduring importance to the Jewish foundations to the Christian fulfillment in accord with the principle that

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<sup>650</sup> In reference to the Jewish practice, Neusner says, "Here we deal not with the spiritualization of Scripture but with the acutely contemporary and immediate realization of Scripture: once again, as then; Scripture in the present day, the present day in Scripture. That is why it was possible for the sages to formulate out of Scripture a paradigm that imposed structure and order on the world that they themselves encountered." *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 83.

<sup>651</sup> See K. Rahner and H. Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965) 474. The article on "Type" concludes, "they can help us in our task of constantly *actualizing* the OT anew" (emphasis added).

Jesus enunciates in Matthew 5:17, "I have come not to abolish...but to fulfill." And the diverse kinds of application of the type that we have seen in New Testament temple typology only increase the weight of significance of the historical temple. Hahn summarizes well the proper weight accorded to the literal-historical in both the ancient practice and the modern scholarship on it:

Since typology depends upon scripture's literal-historical sense, the New Testament's exegesis of the Old depends upon the enduring integrity of the Hebrew scriptures. In the words of Hugh of St. Victor: "History is the foundation." Danielou rightly observed: "The typological interpretation of events does not in any way tend to ignore or mask their individual existence and value, but affords a frame of reference for intelligible coordination."<sup>652</sup>

It is worth raising again the point that Kari Kloos makes that, under pressure from his Manichean controversies, "Augustine [himself] deepened his early readings of Israel's history, connecting this reading to a more urgent and present meaning of the history of Israel for Christian faith." "For if Augustine's theology depends upon God entering into that history for the purpose of

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<sup>652</sup> Hahn, *Letter and Spirit*, 24.

working salvation, Israel is the first locus of that plan."<sup>653</sup> Typology in the New Testament represents an implicit assertion of the importance of history and its remembrance which is consistent with the Jewish thought world of which it is an heir. And this can serve to remind us of what a proper Christian appreciation of the enduring significance of Judaism should look like. Ironically, it is spiritual interpretation such as that practiced by Augustine and the Fathers which guards against a gnostic spiritualizing of Christianity, or a Marcionist or even anti-Semitic rejection of the Israelite past.

#### The New Testament's Typological Reading of the Old

As I have already noted, the typological interpretation of the Old Testament in the New isn't limited to just those places in the epistolary literature where the word (*τυπος*) is used. A look at one short Gospel narrative can show how prevalent and diverse is the application of a kind of implicit typology.

In Luke's gospel, chapters 3 and 4 describe Jesus' baptism by John, followed by a genealogy, followed by his temptation in the desert. Various commentators find a

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<sup>653</sup> Kari Kloos, "History as Witness" in *Augustine and History*, 32.

variety of typological references latent in these texts. We may assume that these indicate diverse authorial intent on the part of the gospel writer and not merely diverse interpretations by commentators.

N. T. Wright sees a clear retelling of the Davidic story, starting from the clear parallels between the Elizabeth/Zechariah story in chapter 1 and the Hannah/Elkanah story from 1 Samuel 1 and 2.<sup>654</sup> In his reading, Luke "has said as clearly as he can that John the Baptist is playing Samuel to Jesus' David."<sup>655</sup> Just as the anointing of David is the height of Samuel's prophetic career, so also Jesus is shown to be anointed at the Jordan, in this case not so much by the prophet as through the instrumentality of the prophet.

He notes that just as David is anointed and then proceeds to do battle with Goliath, so also Jesus is anointed and then goes to do battle with the Devil.<sup>656</sup> For Wright, this indicates Luke's interest in proposing the

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<sup>654</sup> N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 379.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, 380

<sup>656</sup> It is interesting to note that in 1 Sm 16:13 David's name, which means "beloved," is not used until the phrase "Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David." Jesus is likewise called "beloved" as the Spirit comes upon him.

story of Jesus as the unlikely fulfillment of the Davidic dynasty and as of unique significance to the world story.<sup>657</sup>

Others see in the ordering of the genealogy itself, which ends with "Adam, the son of God," and the subsequent temptation a reflection of the Adam type as employed by Paul (1 Cor 15:22, 45-49; Rm 5:14).<sup>658</sup> In this interpretation the "world story" is precisely key. We could suggest that Wright's notion that the solving of the problem of the Davidic monarchy in Christ is now shown to also be the answer to the problem of sin in the world,<sup>659</sup> a different typological referent to advance a similar literary intent.

Tim Gray sees John playing the Elijah to Jesus' Elisha, who received a double portion of the former prophet's power at the Jordan River in 2 Kings 2.<sup>660</sup> This would be consistent with the messianic expectations of the Jewish people that Elijah would precede the anointed one as

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<sup>657</sup> Apropos of our discussion here, Wright notes, "It is important to stress that this is not simply 'typology'. Typology takes an event from the past and sets it in close relation to a parallel event in the present time. Luke's David theme is indeed typological - Jesus really is seen as the 'true David' - but this is neither random nor arbitrary: it is held firmly *within a historical scheme*." Ibid., 381.

<sup>658</sup> J. Jeremias, cited in Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 1 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 498.

<sup>659</sup> See Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke, Sacra Pagina Series vol. 3* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 72.

<sup>660</sup> Tim Gray, *Mission of the Messiah: On the Gospel of Luke* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 1998), 23.

prophesied in Malachi 4:5 and explain why Luke puts "he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah" on the lips of the angel who appeared to Zechariah in Luke 1:17. Here Luke is using still another type, another double type, to accentuate the fulfillment of the Jewish story. The Samuel/David type expresses a kingship fulfillment and the Elijah/Elisha type expresses a prophetic fulfillment.

I have only looked at one small set of narrative elements in Luke. Were we to look at the same units in the other two synoptics I could suggest still other diverse types implicit in the episodes we've been considering.<sup>661</sup> Even this very small sampling of texts suggests the density of typological associations from the Old Testament that are latent in the New. Even a cursory look at the commentators I've cited for these insights, as my footnotes here indicate, shows that this is not a minority position of those opposed to the standards of critical scholarship. Fitzmyer, Johnson, Best, and Davies and Allison, would be

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<sup>661</sup> See, Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1983) 81-82 who notes that "beloved son" is an echo of the offering of Isaac or *akedah* in Genesis 22 and W. D. Davies and Dale Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Matthew*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991), 328-335, who cite traditions that see Jesus at his baptism as the new Israel, and as Noah, Gideon, or Samson.

classed as standard, major synoptic commentaries by highly reputable historical critical scholars.

What we find in these Old Testament echoes in New Testament pericopes is not merely a mode of interpretation of texts but a way of reading history as a determinative story.<sup>662</sup> The writing of Old Testament themes into the events of the New Testament, layer upon layer, suggests they are products of a *gestalt* or worldview formed by the Old Testament.<sup>663</sup> The foundational concept behind this reading of past events in present events could only be a conviction as to the absolute sovereignty of God over history, which is just the view the Old Testament presents.

Mary Boys, while admitting that the New Testament, as well as the early Church, "sees a plan of God come to fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth" which is characteristic

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<sup>662</sup> "It is not the Old Testament texts that are called *ἱστορίαι* but the historical events." Goppelt, *Theological Dictionary*, Vol. VIII, 251. For a clearer description of what I mean by "determinative story," see Gerard Loughlin's chapter "Consuming Text" in *Telling God's Story*. He supplies an account of the significance to modern and postmodern modes of interpretation, of Hans Frei's theology which "seeks to fit the world into the story of God rather than God into the story of the world" (34).

<sup>663</sup> Paul Hiebert provides an important call for humility in this regard: "Worldviews are encoded in the languages, products, rituals, practices, and beliefs of the people. It is the underlying patterns, the *gestalt*, that links all of these together in a way that seeks to make sense of the world in which people live. It is important, therefore, not to equate any attempt to describe a biblical worldview as complete and fully accurate. It is our attempt to understand the deeper underlying order in the Scripture and in cosmic history. We can speak of truth but recognize that our understanding of it is partial and finite." *Transforming Worldviews: An Anthropological Understanding of How People Change* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008) 275.

of the "followers of the Way,"<sup>664</sup> also doubts the kerygmatic claim "that God is revealed in history,"<sup>665</sup> as well as "the assumption that the OT is "fulfilled" in the NT."<sup>666</sup> But the scholarship that I have just surveyed seems to corroborate the contention that to read the Scriptures typologically as do Augustine and the other Fathers is not entirely unacceptable for a modern exegesis.<sup>667</sup> My brief survey suggests that these kinds of typological associations between Old Testament figures and Christ are anchored in the original intention of the author/redactor. So these are not the product of freewheeling, pneumatized or allegorical readings of the New Testament texts by later interpreters but are part of the fabric of the original sources themselves.

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<sup>664</sup> *Biblical Interpretation*, 275.

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>667</sup> Joseph Ratzinger notes, "with reference to the inner unity of the books of the New Testament, and of the two testaments," that, "From a purely scientific point of view, the legitimacy of and interpretation depends on its power to explain things. In other words, the less it needs to interfere with the sources, the more it respects the corpus as given and is able to show it to be intelligible from within, by its own logic, the more apposite such an interpretation is." *Behold the Pierced One: An Approach to Spiritual Christology*, Graham Harrison, trans., (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986) 44-45.



The Ancient Interpretive Practice in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*: A Test Case for the GDC

As I have previously noted, one doesn't find critical comment about the GDC's call for a return to the *narratio* and to the ancient interpretive practice of typology, but there have been critiques of the use of Scripture in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which represents a similar form of interpretation to that of Augustine's *narratio*.<sup>668</sup> Some say that the "use of the Old Testament in the Catechism and the relation that is postulated between the Old and New Testaments may offend those who reject a prediction-fulfillment between the two and who object to what they call the 'typological' use of the Old Testament in the liturgy."<sup>669</sup> Joseph Jensen, then executive secretary of the Catholic Biblical Association and a Scripture professor in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of America, wrote a special feature article in the *The Living Light* in the summer of

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<sup>668</sup> The patristic interpretive practice generally is not without its critics. Even a figure as sympathetic to the patristic practices as Edward Yarnold can say that "the allegorical method of interpreting the scriptures" does "not appeal to our present age with its more exacting critical standard." *Awe Inspiring Rites*, 98.

<sup>669</sup> Joseph Jensen, "Beyond the Literal Sense: the Interpretation of Scripture in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*," *The Living Light*, vol. 29 (summer 1993):50.

1993 to respond to the charge that the *Catechism* represented an uncritical interpretation of the Scripture.

He affirms that, based upon hermeneutical theories that have their origin in the works of figures like Gadamer, Ricoeur, Barth and others and which assert the primacy of the literal sense in Scripture, "Catholic scholars continue to stress the importance of establishing the literal sense with all the critical means at their disposal."<sup>670</sup> But, citing Raymond Brown and Sandra Schneiders' entry in the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* on "Hermeneutics," he also says that "Catholic scholars recognize that hermeneutical theory justifies, and indeed dictates, going beyond the literal sense of a text."<sup>671</sup> After surveying the recent findings of a variety of exegetical schools, he notes that the prevailing theories about the "triple distantiation" of the text from its original author, audience, and situation, means that what scholars call the text's "semantic autonomy" (the term is from Ricoeur) is in accord with the "Christian tradition" that "some sort of meaning beyond the purely literal has always been recognized."<sup>672</sup>

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<sup>670</sup> Ibid., 53-54.

<sup>671</sup> Ibid., 54, citing *NJBC* 1146-65.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., 54.

He goes on to note, too, that the typological or "thematic" pairings of readings from the Old Testament found in the Catholic liturgy represent a process that "is virtually identical with what is done in the New Testament," and then, on the basis of this liturgical interpretation of what modern scholars call the "world in front of the text," affirms the *Catechism's* assertion of the "unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments."<sup>673</sup> Jensen's general point is that some of the critics of the *Catechism* (and, by implication, of the *GDC* which echoes it) are simply applying the standards of an out-dated scholarship, unaware that "Modern developments in hermeneutics can be invoked to suggest that the *Catechism* is more on target than might at first appear."<sup>674</sup>

In the fall 1994 issue of the same journal, one which celebrated the Pontifical Biblical Commission (PBC) document, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Raymond Collins gives a survey of the methods reviewed in that document and notes that both the Jewish interpretative tradition and the, "so called canonical approach" have

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<sup>673</sup> CCC 128; Jensen, "Beyond the Literal," 57 and 52. See also Jensen's "Yahweh's Plan in Isaiah and the Rest of the Old Testament," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 48 (1986): 443-55.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

gained new importance, noting that Brevard Childs and James A. Sanders (both advocates of a canonical criticism which takes the received text as an interpretive starting point) are the only two American scholars mentioned by name in the PBC document.<sup>675</sup>

Under the heading "Catholic Interpretation," Collins notes that the PBC document makes mention of the formation of the canon and patristic tradition and says that a "Catholic exegesis deliberately places itself within the living tradition of the Church."<sup>676</sup> He also notes that the PBC also affirms the ancient practice which "highlights the literal and spiritual meanings of the text, emphasizing the connection between the two."<sup>677</sup> He goes on to say that this method is not to be conceived of as "a subjective one stemming from imagination or intellectual speculation that has no basis in the text itself."<sup>678</sup> Collins also mentions the document's recognition of the way in which certain

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<sup>675</sup> Raymond Collins, "Hearing the Word: Methods of Biblical Interpretation," *The Living Light*, vol. 31 (fall 1994): 3-9. Collins notes, too, that canonical criticism "represents the newest venture in biblical interpretation."

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

biblical texts "are used again or 'reread' within the biblical tradition itself."<sup>679</sup>

In the same fall issue of *The Living Light*, Kathleen Weber, in an article titled "Making the Biblical Account Relevant: A Narrative Analysis," remarks that the "Pontifical Biblical Commission singles out narrative analysis as one of the more productive ways of interpreting the Scriptures because it 'offers a method of understanding and communicating the biblical message that corresponds to the form of story and personal testimony.'"<sup>680</sup> She appeals to catechists to make use of the biblical narratives because it is "only after hearing the repeated stories of God's providential care for Israel," for example, "that we can state with assurance the common themes that God is one, God is almighty, and God is love."<sup>681</sup> These three scholars suggest that the proposal of the *GDC* for the revival of the *narratio* may yet receive a generous response from catechists.

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<sup>679</sup> Ibid.

<sup>680</sup> Kathleen Weber, "Making the Biblical Account Relevant," 17.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 18. She goes on to say, "we must encourage skillful catechists and authors to find and share creative ways to complement narrative with propositional knowledge and catechism with story in ways that will take advantage of the magnificent strengths of both" 19.

### Conclusion

It appears that to combine the modern exegetical investigation of the historical/literal sense and the ancient form of teasing out of the literal sense the three spiritual senses is, to borrow Dale Martin's phrase, precisely to "read Christianly." Again echoing Martin, to erase, based on "Recent developments in biblical studies,"<sup>682</sup> the common reading of all premodern Christians or those Christians throughout the world who do not have access to those "recent developments" is to offend against the principle of the communion of the saints.<sup>683</sup>

Mary Boys rightly appeals for a vital marriage between Scripture scholarship and catechesis, and if we add to that Dale Martin's suggestion that we give proper weight to both modern and ancient modes of interpretation of the text, such a marriage would be all the more vital. This is, in fact, what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* enjoins in saying that the reader must first seek "to discover the *sacred author's intention*" and then advance to the

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<sup>682</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>683</sup> To highlight this point, Robert Wilken quotes the first paragraph of Augustine's *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, "No Christian would dare say that the [words of Scripture] are not to be taken figuratively." *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 70.

"spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church."<sup>684</sup> At paragraph 115 we read, "The profound concordance of the four senses guarantees all its richness to the living reading of Scripture in the Church."

I would suggest that this conviction as to the unified quality of the scriptural story as expressed in a typological interpretation of the Old Testament is perhaps just the "unifying factor of primary significance" that Dunn is intent upon finding and that it is "just as important a unifying factor as faith in Jesus itself." In fact, it is the conviction that Jesus is the unifying interpretive principle of the whole of history that is the root of what Irenaeus in *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* called the conviction of faith. To again quote Dunn, "Jesus [does indeed give] unity and coherence to the diversity of formulations,"<sup>685</sup> in the New Testament. Among the diverse kerygmatic, confessional, or liturgical forms that have been drawn in to the authoring and redacting of the New Testament corpus, Jesus is, as Dunn suggests, the coherent element amidst the variety.

Typological interpretation, not merely of texts but of history, which is what seems to lie behind the production

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<sup>684</sup> CCC 110 (emphasis in original); 113, quoting Origen.

<sup>685</sup> Dunn, *Unity*, 82.

of the New Testament texts and at the center of Augustine's *narratio*, suggests that the diversity we find in the Scripture is precisely aimed at expressing, however humanly and haltingly, the magnitude of Jesus' significance as, not merely one coherent element among a riot of others but the cause of all coherence. It was exactly this element of the convicting fact of the coherence of all the diverse biblical strands in the person and work of Christ that Augustine expresses in *DCR* when he says, "everything that we read in the holy scriptures that was written before the coming of the Lord was written for the sole purpose of drawing attention to his coming."<sup>686</sup>

And here again we find that the New Testament practice is expressive of the characteristics of the divine pedagogy that the *GDC* elaborates. Of course, in the New Testament pedagogy we see the Christocentric dimension (or what *GDC* 143 calls a "pedagogy of the incarnation") that a Christian faith would add to the Jewish reading of the Old Testament. But that itself highlights the progressive and gradual nature of the pedagogy as a whole. The enduring importance given to the types of the Old Testament suggests, too, that

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<sup>686</sup> *DCR* 3,6.



this is not a pedagogy that rushes to the punchline, so to speak, without allowing the story to unfold.

The story matters all along the way, just as the stages of the journey toward faith must each be given their season. Again, doctrine and morals, Torah and Halakah, don't come before the story, the Haggadah; they don't supersede it, but percolate up out of it in the lived "community experience of faith."<sup>687</sup> Even in the canonical arrangement of the New Testament this can be seen, the epistolary doctrine and its parenesis following the narrative Gospels and Acts, with the apocalyptic and mystagogical Revelation drawing up the rear.<sup>688</sup> The specifically typological quality makes of it a "pedagogy of signs,"<sup>689</sup> which links word and deed, teaching and experience. I have yet to comment on the way in which the New Testament pedagogy represents what the *GDC* calls a "dialogue of salvation" "rooted in interpersonal relations,"<sup>690</sup> but that will have to wait for the concluding chapter that follows on the story of the road to Emmaus.

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<sup>687</sup> *GDC* 143.

<sup>688</sup> See Scott Hahn's *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) for the Book of Revelation as a kind of mystagogy of the Eucharist.

<sup>689</sup> *GDC* 143.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*

## CONCLUSION

## A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

We've seen in the previous chapters that the Scripture provides a considerable warrant for the kind of typological, narrative catechesis that Augustine presents in *DCR* and which the *GDC* enjoins. The Scripture, Old and New Testaments, presents a tightly woven tapestry of types which the New Testament authors read as converging on Christ who represents the fulfillment of God's work in history. I think, given what we have seen, that it is not saying too much to suggest that the fundamentally narrative form of the Scriptures and the pattern of promise and fulfillment that characterizes them represent a kind of intra-scriptural interpretive principle, which is really what the *GDC* is claiming for the divine pedagogy.

In so far as we recognize the Bible as inspired and revelatory, we could say that we have already confirmed the reasons for the *GDC*'s imperative as regards the revival of catechetical *narrationes* of the kind found in Augustine of

Hippo's *De catechizandis rudibus* from what it calls the "divine pedagogy." But in order to complete the historical path I promised at the beginning of Chapter II, to walk backward from the imperative issued by the *GDC* for the revival of *narratio* across the bridge supplied by the patristic catechetical practice (what I called the catechetical middle term in the *GDC*'s evaluation of the "original pedagogy of faith"<sup>691</sup>) toward the divine pedagogy, I have just one further point to make.

Andrew Minto defines the divine pedagogy as the way in which "God reveals and communicates himself and his plan of salvation to us through his words and deeds, teaching us his ways and leading us to communion with him."<sup>692</sup> Minto, a Scripture scholar, conflates the three terms, divine pedagogy, Bible, and *narratio*, into the one term "biblical *narratio*;" and so he can say, "The overarching story or *narratio* of this divine teaching is recounted in Scripture."<sup>693</sup> While he is departing here from the technical meaning of *narratio* (a selective retelling of the highlights of the biblical story for catechetical purposes)

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<sup>691</sup> *GDC* 138, 144; see also 244 and 249.

<sup>692</sup> Andrew L. Minto, "How the Divine Pedagogy Teaches: Part 1: The Interpretation of the Biblical Narratio," *The Sower* Vol. 25, No. 4 (Oct 2004): 6.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*

by identifying it with the Bible, there is, as I hope now to have shown, a certain truth in that misidentification.

As the *GDC* reminds us, although catechesis "does not confuse the salvific action of God, which is pure grace, with the pedagogical action of man....Neither, however, does it oppose them and separate them."<sup>694</sup> What I tried to show in the brief account I gave of Mary Boys' chronicle of the demise of the kerygmatic approach to catechesis is that her critique of that movement from the mid-twentieth century does not undermine the program of revival set out by the *GDC*.

Her fundamental argument is that a critical study of the Bible undercuts a salvation historical catechesis of the kind that we see in Augustine. Applying the logic set out in the *GDC* that biblical revelation discloses a divine pedagogy<sup>695</sup> that should serve, as Petroc Willey indicates, as the principle norm for catechetical content and method, Boys is really saying that the divine pedagogy is not salvation historical and so neither should be the Church's catechesis. Since, as she proposes, the Bible does not

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<sup>694</sup> *GDC* 144.

<sup>695</sup> "The transmission of the Gospel through the Church remains before all else and forever the work of the Holy Spirit and has in Revelation a fundamental witness and norm" (*GDC* 138). "Catechesis, as a communication of divine Revelation, is radically inspired by the pedagogy of God, as displayed in Christ and the Church" (*GDC* 143).

really suggest a unitary structure in which we find the fulfillment of the Old in the New Testament centering on the disclosure of Christ and the Church, but rather a picture of "development, diversity, and modification of traditions," we should employ a plurality of methods in catechesis.

Obviously it is the contention of this thesis, contra Boys, that the divine pedagogy is indeed salvation historical, or what I have called narrational, so that when one narrates the great works of God in the way that Augustine describes: relating the *mirabilia* and *articuli*, along with their *causae rationesque* (the wonderful events, critical turning points, and causes and reasons), catechesis becomes precisely the "untiring echo"<sup>696</sup> of the "original and efficacious 'pedagogy of God'"<sup>697</sup> that the *GDC* enjoins.

But, although the *GDC* does clearly propose the divine pedagogy as the norm, it also says, "The Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method or any single method."<sup>698</sup> While the *GDC* does immediately add that the Church "discerns contemporary methods in the

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<sup>696</sup> *GDC* 144.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>698</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

light of the pedagogy of God,"<sup>699</sup> one could read this as a corroboration of Boys' position. Might not the *GDC*'s insistence on a single divine method and yet a plurality of contemporary methodologies be a reflection of the critical assessment of the Bible that proposes one divine revelation that makes use of a variety of genres, forms, traditions, and redactional voices?

There is clearly a certain truth to that formulation. Especially when we take note of the fact that the *GDC* goes on to suggest that any methods are allowable with only the caveat that they may not be "contrary to the Gospel."<sup>700</sup> At this point the question would then become, to what extent does the inspiration of the Holy Spirit guide the work of the many in such a way as to effect the divine and unitary will in the scriptural message? Well, I certainly don't intend at the close of this thesis to take up a complicated question about the exact quality of biblical inspiration! But the same purpose has been served, I think, by looking at the general qualities of the divine pedagogy as elaborated in the *GDC* and in the Scriptures. What the *GDC* calls the divine pedagogy seems to be represented in the Scripture by a sustained, gradual and progressive

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<sup>699</sup> Ibid.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid.

disclosure of a "plot," if you will, based upon a covenantal, ritual, and typological pattern that, for the New Testament authors anyway, seems to converge upon the person and work of Jesus.

But Boys' position, along with suggesting the need to answer the single divine methodology/plural methodologies question, also reminds us of a vital issue, which has surfaced at a number of points along the way. Recall that the *narratio* in its three phases is treated in Part Two of the *GDC* in regard to content and not pedagogy or methodology, which is taken up in Part Three. So the question resurfaces, is the *narratio* content or method or perhaps a bit of both? It seems to me that the critical element in that issue can now be seen more clearly. The *GDC* clearly intends to settle the question as to whether salvation history is appropriate catechetical content by including its three parts (Old Testament, life of Christ, and history of the Church) among its "seven foundation stones of both initiatory and of continuing Christian development" at number 130. There is nothing particularly negotiable about "foundations."

The critical issue, then, is whether the connection that the *GDC* draws between the "catechumenal process" of the Fathers and the divine pedagogy at number 128 suggests

a methodological dimension to the *narratio*, as well. That the catechumenate is "gradual and progressive" and that Augustine's *narratio* is likewise a gradual (in the sense of graded or staged, not gradual in time) and progressive disclosure is significant. That the catechumenate is described as a "journey" in the *GDC* and that Augustine takes his charges along the "well trodden path" in his *narratio* also matters. And that the *narratio* is treated in the *GDC* as an important part of the "organization of content" in this "process" or "journey" seems to suggest that the content, the *narratio*, has certain features with a methodological quality.<sup>701</sup>

If the *narratio* in its three phases describes the journey of the people of Israel toward the disclosure of Christ and the Church, and if the process of the

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<sup>701</sup> In light of this connection that I am teasing out of the *GDC* between the catechumenate and the *narratio*, it is worthwhile to note that while Thomas Groome is quite critical of the narrative catechesis of *DCR* as neglecting a relational/experiential way of knowing, he speaks approvingly of the catechumenate of Augustine's day, which, although it had begun to place "increased emphasis on doctrinal instruction," had also retained "a relational/experiential process of initiation into the Christian community by which the catechumens were prepared for living the Christian life." *Christian Religious Education* 158 ff. I would suggest that what Augustine was about is what we would call today "worldview training." Christian praxis requires Christian convictions and these, as Stanley Hauerwas puts it, are of a narrative character. In order to undertake the Way, one must know the way that God has charted for us in history, so experiential catechesis and narrative catechesis are not at all opposed to one another. To speak, as Groome does, of the *narratio* as a purely "didactic" process is to miss the way in which the story that it proposes is precisely proposed for performance.



catechumenate is intended to mimic that journey (as the *GDC* states in 129), then wouldn't it be appropriate to say that the *narratio* is not just an abbreviated presentation of the scriptural content, but a description of the very *process* of Christian initiation as well? And, if the catechumenal process is to be the primary model for all catechesis, as the *GDC* tells us at number 59, then wouldn't all catechesis also be governed by the description of Christian growth to maturity that the *narratio* presents?

From this it appears that the content represented in the *narratio*, in addition to being foundational *as content*, also describes the divine and ecclesial methodologies that the *GDC* points to as primary. When we add to this the sacramental trajectory that we saw in Augustine's *narratio* - the *sacramenta* that signal the reception into the catechumenate<sup>702</sup> - which I described as an "enactment" or "performance" of the story that the *narratio* tells, then we can see that even the narrative content is not merely cognitive but also embraces a participatory methodology as well. In accord with the insights of narrative theology, the story the Church tells is not merely told but performed, not only liturgically, but creedally, morally, and orationally. And these four ways of enacting or

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<sup>702</sup> DCR 26,50.

performing the story that the *narratio* tells: creed, liturgy, moral life, and prayer, represent the other four of the seven foundation stones of catechesis in the *GDC* and the content of the *Catechism*.

All this suggests that the *narratio* is not just content but a narrative expression of the very process of Christian initiation and growth to maturity, of the life of faith itself which is the object of the divine pedagogy. I would further suggest that it is the central place of memory and ritual remembrance to the construction of both Jewish and Christian identity that establishes the importance of a narrated rehearsal of the past works of God.

In the midst of reflecting on a question very close to the one I have been considering, in the first chapter of his *Principles of Catholic Theology*, titled, "On the Relationship of Structure and Content in Christian Faith," Joseph Ratzinger poses as the central problem in that relationship the ancient philosophical puzzle concerning the ontological gap between Being and time, between the One and the many. He claims that gap is crossed by the "'I' of the credo, called forth and made possible by the Trinitarian God" and uttered by "the transtemporal subject,

the *communio Ecclesiae*," which is "the mediator between being and time."<sup>703</sup> He goes on to say,

In his philosophy of memory, St. Augustine had begun to reflect philosophically on this insight with the help of both his Platonic and his biblical heritage. He recognized memory as the mediator between being and time; in view of this, one can readily see what it means when he interprets the Father as *memoria*, as "memory." God is memory per se, that is, all-embracing being, in whom, however, being is embraced as time. Christian faith, by its very nature, includes the act of remembering; in this way, it brings about the unity of history and the unity of man before God, or rather: it can bring about the unity of history because God has given it memory.

What I've said at several points about the need for a narrational catechesis which is not, therefore, merely propositional, comes again to the fore by way of what Ratzinger has to say here about the memory of the Church, which "exists through all the ages, waxing and waning but never ceasing to be the common situs of faith."<sup>704</sup> He urges that in our own day we "work out anew the biblical basis of

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<sup>703</sup> Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology*, 23.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*

a Christian doctrine of *memoria*"<sup>705</sup> which is what this study of the *narratio* seems to have amounted to, albeit in a very preliminary way.

I would suggest that the revival of the *narratio* as called for in the *GDC* could be a practical expression in the life of the Church today of just such an expression of the doctrine of *memoria*. Between the diversity of human voices through which God has effected his revelation in the Bible (and about which Boys rightly reminds us) and the diversity of formulations, propositions, dogmas, doctrine, theological reflection which have been derived from it, there stands the believing subject, the *memoria Ecclesiae*, "which unifies the whole."

[W]ithout this (believing) subject...the content of faith is neither more nor less than a long catalogue of things to be believed; within and by the Church, they are made one. The Church is the locus that gives unity to the content of the faith.<sup>706</sup>

And that believing subject, the Church, who finds the unity in that symphony of voices is also unified, made to

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid., 23-24.

be who she is by the telling and retelling of the story that the Holy Spirit causes her to recall.

In light of this remarkably simple solution to that ancient and vexing philosophical problem of the One and the many which the hidden God overcomes at a stroke in the Incarnation of Christ and the Church he institutes, Ratzinger concludes, "the decisive question for today is whether that memory can continue to exist through which the Church becomes Church and without which she sinks into nothingness."<sup>707</sup> Ratzinger then suggests the means to the maintenance of the Church's living memory - one which will eventually find an echo in *GDC* 59 and 39: "Our principle need today is not primarily new formulas; on the contrary, we must confess to a superfluity of unheeded words. Our principle need is for a reconstruction of the existential context of the catechumenal training in the faith."<sup>708</sup> He then says, "Let us pause here for a summary." "What, then, is constitutive of Christian faith 'today'? What else but that which actually constitutes it: confession of the triune God in the *communion* of the Church, in whose solemn

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<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>708</sup> "Christian doctrine rose initially in the context of the catechumenate, only from there can it be renewed." Ibid., 27.

remembrance the means of salvation history - the death and Resurrection of the Lord - is truly present."<sup>709</sup>

That statement has obvious eucharistic implications, but it also speaks to the way in which faith is formed when believers "treasure in their hearts the events and words of the economy of salvation."<sup>710</sup> That is the whole point behind the *traditio* or handing over of the Creed in the third phase of the catechumenate which the officiating minister refers to as the "words of that faith by which you will be justified."<sup>711</sup> That Creed is, after all, a kind of *narratio* in miniature. As paragraph 190 of the *Catechism* makes clear, the "three chapters" of the Creed are expressive of the works traditionally appropriated to the three Persons of the Trinity in the economy: creation, redemption, and sanctification. These roughly correlate with the three phases of the *narratio* that the *GDC* identifies and with the "complete" instruction that Augustine tells Deogratias "begins from the scriptural verse, *In the beginning God made heaven and earth*, and continues down to the present period of the church's history." The Creed tells in miniature the story the

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<sup>709</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>710</sup> CCC 2651.

<sup>711</sup> RCIA 160.

*narratio* tells more fully and so the *narratio* is the proper place to start the process of formation in faith which profession of the Creed will finish and effect at the time of Baptism.<sup>712</sup> But the "educative journey," the journey of faith formation does not end there, as those of us who have undertaken it know all too well.

The *narratio* ought to be revived, not just as an instance of evangelization in the precatechumenate as in *DCR*, but so that the Church of the future in her ongoing walk of faith can avoid the "perfunctory, mindless repetition of formulas that have lost significance for the

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<sup>712</sup> See Henri De Lubac: "The 'economy,' the unfolding of the divine action in favor of man, comes about, one might say, in three phases. Hence three successive series of operations which are different in nature, and each of which is attributed by our Creed to one of the three Persons - even though it has always been understood that never does any one of them act separately from the other two. So, the works of creation belong to the Father, the works of redemption to the Son, the works of sanctification to the Holy Spirit. This is what Origen explains in the first book of his *Periarchon*. All through tradition we see this same schema used as the framework for elementary catechetical teaching as well as for more extensive works....Each of the three series thus distinguished can be more or less fully detailed, but from the beginning they cover together the entire range of history, from creation to the final consummation. From the beginning, the framework is laid down. Before being adopted by the Apostles Creed, it was used in the primitive preaching, such as we find in Acts; the entire divine plan of salvation, as explained by the first witnesses of Christ, unfolds in 'three historical stages which readily correspond to the three Persons.' [quoting Pierre Benoit] This is the same framework Luther used, and there is no innovation whatever to be seen in the fact that 'the Trinitarian division adopted by' the leader of the reformation in his *Little Catechism* makes the Church 'only a consequence of the Holy Spirit.' [quoting Emile Leonard] For this is in the Creed, a framework laid down once and for all, which can be neither be transformed nor transcended. It measures and encloses the faith. The creed of the Christian faith, which explains the mystery of the 'economy', is necessarily and strictly trinitarian." *The Christian Faith: An Essay on the Structure of the Apostles' Creed*, Richard Arnandez, trans., (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 114-115.

individual,"<sup>713</sup> what Ratzinger calls the "superfluity of unheeded words." What a revival of the *narratio* promises is what Michael Warren has called an "anamnetic catechesis." Taking up again the ancient and ongoing Jewish practice of *haggadah*, which was subsequently taken up and continued in the Christian practice of *anamnesis*, the Church of the future may be able to avoid remembering as mere recollection, ordered to mere repetition, undertaking instead vital ways of embracing "religious tradition that demand reflection on actual practices and a struggle with the meanings in the here and now."<sup>714</sup> Only then will our catechesis be a real participation in the divine pedagogy.

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<sup>713</sup> Michael Warren, "Toward an Anamnetic Catechesis," *Living Light* Vol. 40, No. 4 (summer 2004): 21. This was the last issue published of the *Living Light*.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.



## EPILOGUE

## NARRATIO ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Introduction**

Anyone following the course of this thesis will likely be surprised that I have not yet mentioned a number of vitally important catechetical and narrative elements in the New Testament. Ratzinger says that the four Gospels "are not simply books but the written record of a proclamation," and "while the four Gospels are evangelization, they also inaugurate the development of evangelization into catechesis."<sup>715</sup> Bruno Barnhart cites the work of Daube, Bowman, and Standaert who point to the conclusion that the Gospel of Mark was intended as a "Christian Passover *Haggadah*," and then advances his own case that the Gospel of John is, too, if not specifically

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<sup>715</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism: Sidelights of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 51, 56.

and "paschal *haggadah*," at least "structured as the basis of a sacramental catechesis."<sup>716</sup>

What about Peter's Pentecost Speech in Acts 2; or Stephen's inflammatory rendering of the Jewish story that earns him martyrdom while Saul looks on from Acts 7; or the hint of a *narratio* that we find Philip delivering to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8; or Paul's much more elaborated version of the new covenant *haggadah* to the members of the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia in Acts 13; or the very different *narratio* that Paul attempts before the "Men of Athens" in the Areopagus in Acts 17? This list alone suggests that the first portion of Luke's Acts - that part before Paul enters into the phase of controversy and seems to have to spend as much time explaining himself as explaining the Gospel - this first part of Acts is a narrative of *narrationes*!<sup>717</sup> Even the largely parenthetic Epistle to the Hebrews inserts what could be called a *narratio* of the Old Testament heroes of faith in chapter 11.

That the Apostles and Evangelists should almost immediately begin telling a story as the medium for the

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<sup>716</sup> Bruno Barnhart, *the Good Wine* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1993), 334 ff.

<sup>717</sup> "An analysis of the Acts of the Apostles, which in its totality could be described as a narrative ecclesiology, would be particularly fruitful." Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, 41.

Gospel message should be no surprise after having seen the formative practice in the old covenant of Israel or the way that the New Testament authors disclose Jesus by way of an elaborate matrix of types that evoke many elements in the earlier story, giving it a new and surprising turn in Jesus Christ.

The fact that Jesus would, while in the midst of the *habhurah* or family of his followers<sup>718</sup> at his last Passover meal, insert the primary ritual of what he called the new covenant into the very heart of the paradigmatic Jewish act of remembrance, the seder and its haggadah of the Exodus, presents ample reason for this explosion of kerygmatic *narrationes*. The Eucharist to this day has as its central acts, first a haggadah, the Liturgy of the Word, followed by an "institution narrative." But, there is another signal event that follows the Last Supper and precedes the *narrationes* of Acts that is probably the primary model for the all the *narrationes* that follow, the resurrection appearance of Jesus on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24.

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<sup>718</sup> "Israel's Passover was and is a family celebration. It was celebrated in the home and not in the temple." Joseph Ratzinger, *Behold the Pierced One* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 103.

**A Model for the Use of *Narratio* in the New Evangelization:****The Road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-35**

The Story of the Emmaus Road is a work of Lucan narrative art. While the incident is mentioned briefly in Mark 16:12-13, its elaboration is particular to Luke. This dramatic, poignant episode shows two disciples leaving the fold of the Jerusalem community in despair at the apparently failed mission of Jesus.

In proposing this episode as a model for the use of the *narratio* in the New Evangelization I am suggesting that it presents a picture of much of the Church in the West today. Having succumbed to a variety of cultural forces, modernism become post-modernism, secularism, materialism, consumerism, scientism, and a pervasive philosophical skepticism, many have left the fold, walked away from the Jerusalem community, giving up on what they perceive to be the failed project of Christianity.

As a consequence, there has been much talk about the need for a New Evangelization. Pope John Paul II made the call for a new mission to what some have dubbed the post-Christian West one of the primary themes of his long

pontificate and Benedict XVI has advanced the same project. In response to this call, many plans have been proposed and implemented, the Church has published the first universal catechism in over three centuries and a *General Directory for Catechesis* to accompany it. This brief study is an attempt to take a fresh look at the Emmaus story to see if it might yield an outline for mission in the New Evangelization and what part the *narratio* might take in it.

To that end, attention will be paid to the geography of the episode, so import to Luke; consideration of the identity and disposition of the two disciples and, perhaps most importantly, the method of the risen Jesus in drawing the wandering disciples back into the Jerusalem community. In this event we see in the clearest form possible the essentials of the pedagogy of God as effected in the ministry of the now Risen Christ.

J. Fitzmyer sees in this narrative unit, identified by C. H. Dodd as a "circumstantial narrative"<sup>719</sup> for its expression of the storyteller's art, four distinct parts or phases: *The Meeting* (vv. 13-16), *The Conversation en Route* (vv. 17-27), *The Emmaus Meal* (vv. 28-32) and *The Return to*

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<sup>719</sup> Joseph Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, vol. 2 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 1556.

*Jerusalem* (vv. 33-35).<sup>720</sup> These divisions will serve, not just as textual compartments to be analyzed in turn, but also as phases or moments in a model for a new narrational mission.

#### The Meeting (vv. 13-16)

Near the end of his gospel, Luke gives us the story of two disciples on a journey away from Jerusalem and the company of the scattered Apostles because their hopes that Jesus was the appointed Messiah have been tragically disappointed. In just four verses Luke evokes a whole complex of associations that are significant for both the import of the narrative and for an understanding of mission. He begins his story with a "once upon a time," as would any story teller, but he has reasons for being more specific. "That very day" is "the first day of the week" (v. 1) and "the third day" (v.7) since the crucifixion of Jesus. It is that day which in the early Church will be called the Lord's Day, our Sunday, and here we see two disciples who have absented themselves from the company of the eleven and the rest of the disciples.

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<sup>720</sup> Ibid., 1559

De Cointet, Morgan, and Willey note that the New American Bible twice uses the phrase "on the way," at verses 32 and 35 (the RSV has "on the road"), suggesting the "an allusion to the name given to Christians in the early decades, "Followers of the Way" (Acts 19:23; 22:4; 24:22).<sup>721</sup> These disciples of the Way are headed toward Emmaus, which is precisely to be understood as "from Jerusalem." That is to say, while the place name "Emmaus" is significant, it is still more so for Luke that these two are moving away from that place which has been the goal of the life and ministry of Jesus, not merely in a geographical sense, but, we could say, psychically as well.

Jerusalem, the holy city, draws the plotline of Luke's gospel toward it like a magnet. Jerusalem is that place toward which Jesus "set his face" in Luke 9:51 and Luke follows that determination on the part of Jesus with considerations of his invitation to "follow me" (vv. 57-62). It is no accident that Luke uses the name "the Way" for the fledgling Church in the second half of his story in Acts (9:2, 19:23, 24:14).<sup>722</sup> For Luke, each Christian must undertake the same journey and follow Jesus on the way to

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<sup>721</sup> *The Catechism and the Craft*, 82.

<sup>722</sup> B. P. Robinson, "The Place of the Emmaus Story in Luke-Acts," *New Testament Studies* 30, no. 4 (Oct 1984): 481.

Jerusalem, that place where prophets meet their death. Jerusalem will later be the place from which the mission to the world will be launched but, even in the interim, "staying in Jerusalem is the necessary condition for participating in the great events (resurrection, descent of the spirit) which usher in the Age of the Church."<sup>723</sup>

So that these two are headed toward "Emmaus" (about which an old concordance of biblical names says, "Perhaps from Heb. Amma'os. - a people rejected,"<sup>724</sup>) and not toward Jerusalem is a tragedy beyond expressing. And while they are walking away from the center of Luke's narrative world, they discuss the events of recent days, perhaps, like any two modern refugees from Christianity, explaining to each other why they are perfectly justified in leaving the Church. But as they walk and talk, the incredible happens: "Jesus himself drew near and went with them." These who have apparently left the Way have not left Jesus' way. Their way, though not his Way, is nevertheless his way. He has always been found "near" the tax collectors and sinners and even death hasn't changed that. "[T]heir eyes," however, were kept from recognizing him" (v. 16). Mark

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<sup>723</sup> Schuyler Brown, *Apostasy and Perseverance in the Theology of St. Luke*, *Analectica Biblica* 36 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969,) 76.

<sup>724</sup> Thomas Williams, "EMMAUS," *A Concordance of the Proper Names in the Holy Scriptures* (St. Louis & London: B. Herder Book Co., 1923).



notes in his brief telling that Jesus "appeared in another form" (16:12) but Luke seems to place the fault in the eye and not what came to it. These two cannot see Jesus because the dead *cannot* be seen walking down the road. "Humanly speaking, they failed to recognize Jesus because, like any modern sceptic, they were convinced that miracles of that sort just don't happen. Jesus was dead and no amount of hearsay ...could convince them otherwise"<sup>725</sup> Their blindness won't be overcome until verse 31. This story "stresses that Christ is often unrecognized on this journey, that spiritual awakening is required in order to see him. There is a need to be born "from above" (Jn 3:3), for the 'eyes' of the heart (see Eph 1:18) to be opened."<sup>726</sup>

#### The Conversation en Route (vv. 17-27)

Jesus, not a missionary who demands that he be listened to, first asks the disciples to empty their hearts out to him. This is that dimension of the divine pedagogy that the *GDC* refers to as the "dialogue of salvation," which on God's part is his initiative; it is loving and

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<sup>725</sup> G.B. Caird, *The Gospel of St. Luke* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), 258.

<sup>726</sup> de Cointet et al., *The Catechism and the Craft*, 82.

gratuitous, and respects human freedom and is "rooted in interpersonal relations".<sup>727</sup> But the question at first seems to be an absolute conversation stopper. Luke writes, "And they stood still, looking sad" (v. 17). It seems that with one question, one concerned question, Jesus has broken the cycle of self-pity, rationalization and recrimination and invited silent reflection. It is always harder, of course, to complain out loud than within oneself or to a close friend. But disappointments and fears must be drawn out into the light and someone who is full of them must be allowed to empty himself before he will be ready to listen.

One of the two, whom we find out is named Cleopas,<sup>728</sup> reports the whole sad story. He has all the facts of it right, they tell of the great works and words of Jesus, their messianic hopes for him, his conflict with the Jewish authorities, his passion and death. They even relate that some women have reported a vision of angels and that his

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<sup>727</sup> GDC 143. de Cointet et al, counsel that the Emmaus story should not simply be read as an inducement to have the catechized "share their story," but rather as a "specific invitation to focus on how we understand Jesus' death and Resurrection." *The Catechism and the Craft*, 82, n. 6 (emphasis in original).

<sup>728</sup> Eusebius and Jerome reported that one of the cities in the running to be the Emmaus referred to in this story, and which was later razed by the Romans and rebuilt and renamed Nicopolis, was the home of Cleopas. It is today called Amwas and is located approximately twenty miles west northwest of Jerusalem. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1561.

tomb has been found empty. But they apparently can't put all the pieces together in a meaningful way.

The irony is that but for a few words the story he tells could be a proclamation of faith. Only the words "We had hoped that" in verse 21 - The full verse being "We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." - only those four words keep this from sounding very much like the kerygma that Peter announces on Pentecost day (Acts 2:22-24). It is often the case with those who have left or rejected the Church community that their rejection or misunderstanding turns on just one point or two in the Church's teaching. Even if that point is a fundamental one, once the foundation is put right the whole edifice of faith can rise up straight and strong again. But the missionary must, like Jesus, ask to find out where faith has gone wrong or not been allowed to enter.

As I noted, Cleopas finishes his lament with the report of the women about the empty tomb and with the most ironic of words. "But him they did not see" (v.24), he says, to him they cannot see! Perhaps that is why Jesus bursts out with, "O foolish men"<sup>729</sup> (v. 25). "[S]low of

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<sup>729</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson translates this "O you foolish people." See *The Gospel of Luke, Sacra Pagina Series* vol. 3, 395. G.B. Caird, noting the same translational issue, posits that, since Cleopas and the other disciple live in the same house in Emmaus, the unnamed disciple may be the Mary, wife of Clopas of John 19:25. See *St. Luke*, 259.

heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" he says, "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter his glory?" Jesus listens well, but he certainly doesn't coddle those he evangelizes. The *GDC* says, that the divine pedagogy is such that it requires that we recognize the magnitude of God's gift and that it demands growth in it.<sup>730</sup> Salvation is always personal salvation and the obstacles to faith are often personal failings. They have to be brought under the shadow of the cross, and so Jesus doesn't promise salvation except by way of the cross, "glory" except by way of "the Christ should suffer." "If it is true for me, it will be true for thee," he seems to say.

Now empty and somewhat chastened, the former disciples are ready to hear the gospel afresh. The mysterious figure fascinates them with a retelling of that story, not just in the brief form that they had been able to assemble in their lack of faith, but the whole story, "beginning with Moses

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This, of course, identifies Cleopas with Clopas, which Fitzmyer denies, claiming that the names are differently derived. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 1563. It does make an interesting scenario to suggest that one of these disciples is a woman. That would be in keeping with Luke's interest in highlighting women and pairing them with men. But he would, for that very reason, likely have given her name. If he did know of a tradition that included a woman, he might have felt the need to suppress the name on the basis that then one would not have the two (male) witnesses needed for legal attestation. In that case, Mark's version, which has the Jerusalem community remaining incredulous to the report of these two disciples would make more sense.

<sup>730</sup> *GDC* 143.

and all the prophets...interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (v. 27), demonstrating that "the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory" (v. 26). We are not talking about "a handful of proof texts drawn at random from the Old Testament, but all the Scriptures."<sup>731</sup> These disciples knew that Jesus *had* suffered, what they didn't know or understand was that it was "necessary that the Christ should suffer" (v. 26, emphasis added). They knew the facts, but they didn't understand how they fit together. They knew a story, but they didn't know the plot. In a word, they didn't know the *oikonomia*, the "plan of the mystery," as Paul titles it in Ephesians 3:9.

This is the primary and often missing element in our evangelization and that vital phase of evangelization called catechesis. People need to know not just the story, but how the story goes. They need to know the plan, the meaning behind the story, or better, that the story is meaningful. Only a meaningful story will supply for a *praeambulum fidei*. With Jesus, there is not the *solvitur ambulando*; the plan is known and communicated. He does not engage in a groping exegesis, he is *the* hermeneutical principle of the whole Scripture. As he says in John 5:39-

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<sup>731</sup> Caird, *St. Luke*, 258.

40, "You search the Scriptures, because you think in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness to me; yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." "Jesus tells them the Story of Salvation, with himself as the center and interpretive key."<sup>732</sup> Here is that dimension of the divine pedagogy that *GDC* 143 calls "Christocentric," and so also a "pedagogy of the incarnation." As the *Catechism* puts it, "The Church...believes that the key center and purpose of the whole of man's history is to be found in its Lord and Master."<sup>733</sup>

This is what will make hearts burn again, when our mission regains the confidence to tell the whole of the story, "all the scriptures," and how they attest to Christ from front to back, from the earthly paradise of Eden to the heavenly paradise of Revelation.<sup>734</sup> In his 1979 Apostolic Exhortation, *Catechesi tradendae*, John Paul II said the following, which sounds almost like a precise

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<sup>732</sup> de Cointet, et al., *The Catechism and the Craft*, 82.

<sup>733</sup> CCC 450, quoting *GS* 10.

<sup>734</sup> See Sean Freyne, *The Twelve: Disciples and Apostles: A Study in the Theology of the First Three Gospels* (London & Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1968), 233-36. He notes that in reference to the Emmaus episode and the later appearance of the Lord in Jerusalem, "an understanding of the scriptures is seen as key to understanding the events so puzzling in themselves....Thus it is through the scriptures that the word which they did not understand and which was hidden from them...is now explained to them; they can be declared 'witnesses of these things', because now they appreciate their implications."

commentary on this passage: "'At the heart of catechesis we find, in essence, a Person, the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son from the Father...who suffered and died for us and who now, after rising, is living with us forever.' To catechize is 'to reveal in the Person of Christ the whole of God's eternal design reaching fulfillment in that Person.' Catechesis aims at putting 'people...in communion...with Jesus Christ.'"<sup>735</sup>

We are told their hearts burned within them as they heard the whole economy or biblical story retold by this figure that they will finally recognize as the risen Christ when he breaks bread for them. In this way, Jesus taught them the Church's doctrine of salvation by telling the saving story of prophecy and fulfillment in the economy.

That is the *narratio* of Augustine's *De catechizandis rudibus*, the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* of Irenaeus of Lyon. That is the same story the Church has been telling from that day to this. It is the gospel proclamation, the true story of the working out of God's saving plan to draw us back to the Father's blessing. That is the same story, the gospel story, that the *Catechism*

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<sup>735</sup> This is the presentation of CT 5 in CCC 426.

tells,<sup>736</sup> and out of it percolate all the doctrines that serve as guides to us on our own part of the journey from blessing to blessing that the *Catechism* describes in its first paragraph.<sup>737</sup> It is the same story about which the *GDC* 39 says, "Catechesis, for its part, transmits the words and deeds of Revelation; it is obliged to proclaim and narrate them and, at the same time, to make clear the profound mysteries that they contain." Knowing the plot of that great story we can learn to read our own story in light of it and begin to walk in the same way that the disciples did. Our meaning-starved world will respond with faith to nothing less.

#### The Emmaus Meal (vv. 28-32)

"So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further" (v.28). How true that is, much further, indeed. This is, in certain way, an expression of the condescending love of the divine

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<sup>736</sup> "Long passages of the *Catechism* are narrative in character. The *Catechism* recounts the story of Jesus, the story of God with us, as the Bible relates. This...was the catechetical method of the apostles.... For the *Catechism*, the message of the Bible is a reality, which as such, can, in fact, must, be told in this fashion even today." Ratzinger, *Gospel, Catechesis, Catechism*, 61.

<sup>737</sup> "God, infinitely perfect and blessed in himself, in a plan of sheer goodness freely created man to make him share in his own blessed life." CCC 1.



pedagogy. He will go as far as he must to save us. We find out in Acts that the Way of the Lord will lead to the ends of the earth. We could say that once crucified at Jerusalem he set out to be crucified everywhere in his body the Church. Joseph Grassi, in discussing the importance of the hospitality theme in Luke, makes reference to Jeremiah 14:8.<sup>738</sup> Perhaps Luke had it in mind when recording this part of the Emmaus story:

O, thou hope of Israel,  
 its saviour in time of trouble,  
 Why shouldst thou be like a stranger  
 In the land,  
 like a wayfarer who turns aside to  
 tarry for a night?  
 Why should though be like a man  
 confused,  
 like a man who cannot  
 save?  
 Yet thou, O Lord, art in the midst  
 of us,  
 and we are called by thy name;  
 leave us not.

So this wayfarer God "went in to stay with them," as we read in verse 30. He waits for us to offer him lodging but once asked, he unfailingly comes in. But as the many mystics attest, he must be "constrained" at times to stay (v. 29). A timid invitation will often not invite the

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<sup>738</sup> Joseph Grassi, *Loaves and Fishes: The Gospel Feeding Narratives* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991) 71-72.

right response because we only get as much as we ask for. What's needed is an impassioned plea, like that of Jeremiah 14.

And the evangelist, the missionary must imitate this God and be willing to stay, but not too eager. To evangelize well we have to be willing to stay with those we evangelize. We have to be faithful. But in the end, the real staying is God's business and not ours. Every one missionized will have to become missionary at some point. And, as we will see, instead of staying with us, God often runs ahead to invite us further along the path. In the spiritual life there is no standing still.

"Staying with," however briefly, assumes "eating with" in the Lucan world and so, "when he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them" (v. 30). Here, Jesus the wayfarer has suddenly taken the role of the host (no eucharistic pun intended) and offers blessed bread to his hosts-now-become-guests. This puts us in mind of Revelation 3:20 which involves the same kind of host-guest ambiguity: "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him and he with me."

In both places the eucharistic evocations are clear for those who read these texts in a eucharistic Church. But we should note that the language is a little different from that in the institution narrative in Luke. In 22:19 Jesus "gives thanks" (*eucharisteo*) and in this verse he "blesses" (*eulogeo*), as he had done at the feeding of the five thousand in 9:16.<sup>739</sup> Some argue that this is not a eucharist as the Church of Luke would have understood it.<sup>740</sup> I am inclined to agree that this is not a eucharist in that sense. Given the circumstances - the geographical distance from Jerusalem, suggesting a spiritual distance from that community - a symbolic meal that points back to the Last Supper in time, and back to Jerusalem in space, makes sense. And that it resembles more the feeding of the five thousand which looks forward to the Last Supper and to Jerusalem is equally fitting. And so, our evangelization should point those we evangelize to the Eucharist. From a Catholic perspective it would be rash to admit them before they enter or return to the community of the Church.

This story recounts that when Jesus gave them the bread "their eyes were opened and they recognized him" and

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<sup>739</sup> Johnson, *Luke*, 396.

<sup>740</sup> For a different take on these issues see Robinson, "Place of the Emmaus Story," 487-494. Robinson, in fact, denies that even the Last Supper is a eucharist.

immediately "he vanished out of their sight" (v. 31). Luke has similar episodes in Acts 8:26-40 and 12:6-17. In both cases these involve a realization and sudden exit.<sup>741</sup> In the first, Philip has just brought the Ethiopian eunuch to faith after giving a brief *narratio* and then disappears. In the second, Peter gives the news of his miraculous deliverance from prison to the incredulous disciples and then quickly departs. In the Emmaus story, having brought the two wayward disciples to a renewed faith, it is fitting that Jesus vanishes. But the implication is still clear that, even though this is not yet a eucharist, it is in the bread that he will be seen.

Gerard Loughlin, in the last chapter of his *Telling God's Story: Bible, Church and Narrative Theology*, poses the image from Revelation 10:8-10 where John is given a scroll to eat, sweet in the mouth yet bitter in the stomach, as the image of the confluence of Scripture and Eucharist in the life of the Church. On the frontispiece of that text Loughlin explains in the following way:

In the epilogue this book focuses on the Eucharist as the sacramental site in which the story and body of Christ consumes and is consumed. Through this bodily telling and consumption the Church is enabled to

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<sup>741</sup> Ibid., 483.

receive again God's gift of return and to be the telling of God's story, once more.<sup>742</sup>

I would like to suggest that something similar is happening in the Emmaus story. The co-incidence of the *narratio* and the breaking of bread, both of which disclose the Christ, is no coincidence. As we saw in Augustine's *DCR* the historical exposition has a sacramental trajectory. Those who enter into the catechumenate through the *sacramenta* will undergo a long apprenticeship in the word before they will be allowed to receive the Word in the Eucharist. The *narratio*, its types, will become, as Robert Taft reminds us, the interpretive vocabulary of the mystagogy that they will receive from the Church once they are received into the Church.<sup>743</sup> If they make the journey back to the heart of the Jerusalem community as do these disciples at Emmaus, they will finally be admitted to the narrative that makes the One narrated present, the *haggadah* to which all others have been merely prologue.

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<sup>742</sup> Loughlin, *Telling God's Story*, frontispiece.

<sup>743</sup> "Mystagogy is to liturgy what exegesis is to scripture." Cited in Hahn, *Letter and Spirit*, 26.

## The Return to Jerusalem (vv. 33-35)

Jesus has pursued these two to Emmaus and, having achieved his end, he disappears. They reflect momentarily on the new insight they've gained from the opening of the Scriptures that led to the opening of their eyes. And having both understood and experienced the risen Lord, they are now ready to return to the Jerusalem Church and to be witnesses themselves.<sup>744</sup> The evangelized are now missionary. They are precisely missionary in their eagerness to return to communion with that Church. "The climax of the episode is the disciples' 'conversion' to Jerusalem (v. 33), where they learn of the Lord's appearance to Simon (v. 34) and are present with the rest of the community, for Jesus' final appearance."<sup>745</sup>

In this is seen the fittingness of the disappearance; they could not stay in Emmaus, "a people rejected." To remain with Jesus they must return to the community, to the Church where he is seen and experienced and attested to by Peter and the other disciples.

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<sup>744</sup> Freyne, *The Twelve*, 233-238.

<sup>745</sup> Brown, *Apostasy and Perseverance*, 77

### Conclusion

What we have seen in the Emmaus story is a four-fold division in Jesus' method for a new evangelization of the two disciples who find themselves despairing of the victory of Christ and at a distance from the mother church of Jerusalem. He meets them on their way and invites their confession of doubt in a kind of pre-evangelization. In the midst of this conversation he witnesses to the meaning of the Scriptures by a *narratio* which discloses a plan in history of which he is the origin and aim. After this evangelization and catechesis on the meaning of life and history, after this *praeambulum fidei*, he stays with them, eats with them and discloses both himself in fellowship and the need to return to fellowship, to communion with the larger Church. Back in the bosom of the Church their act of faith becomes also an act of witness.

Those disciples on the road to Emmaus, having heard the story told rightly and having now been able to recognize the risen Christ as the fruit of it, go immediately back to the heart of the Church, the gathering of the apostles in Jerusalem, to confirm what they have seen. They are able to reenter that fellowship because they can now read their own experience within the larger

story that Christ has shown them. Their journey away from Christ and his Church has been halted and reversed by the divine story that the Risen One tells them.

With the divine warrant that Jesus provides for a biblical/narrational and eucharistic evangelization and with eyes now open to the possibilities that such a method offers, perhaps we will again find hearts that burn both for the telling of that story and for the mission on which it sends us in this still new millennium.

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