CATECHETICAL FORMATION FOR PDL VOLUNTEERS
BASED ON POPE FRANCIS' TEACHING ON ACCOMPANIMENT, INCLUSIVITY, AND DIALOGUE

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Introduction

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:19-20). This is the missionary mandate of the risen Jesus sending his followers to preach the Gospel to every corner of the earth. "...It is incumbent upon every believer to be a bringer of the Good News to others: 'It is unthinkable that a person should believe the Word and submit himself to the Kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn'" (*EN*, 24).[1]

Jesus' "'mandate words': go, teach, proclaim, make disciples, baptize, announce"[2] still echo until today, the twenty-first century. In our present era, the Second Vatican Council declared that "the entire Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is the fundamental task of the People of God" (*AG* 35). In its essence, the mission of evangelization is not just a

1. Teodoro C. Bacani, Jr., *Faith and the New Evangelization* (Manila, Philippines: Gift of God Publications, 2013), 56.

2. Ibid., 7.

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private obligation of a few individual Christians but a common task and mission of the entire Church.[3]

Pope Francis and new evangelization are closely associated since he started his papacy in 2013, just after the Synod on New Evangelization was concluded. This was the major theme in his first exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, in 2013, immediately after his election to the papacy. He writes at the start of this important evangelization document:

> I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since "no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord" (*EG* 3).

Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* serves as a blueprint for new evangelization. In that document, he outlines his vision for the Church's mission in the modern world and the principles of the new evangelization. Some of the important key principles are encounter with Christ, inclusivity, empowerment of the laity, missionary discipleship, accompaniment, and synodality.

The Call to Missionary Discipleship

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes, "Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: We no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries,' but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples'" (*EG* 120). In his desire to encourage

3. Matthew Vellanickal, *Church: Communion of Individual Churches Biblico-Theological Perspectives on the Communion Ecclesiology of Vatican II* (India: St. Pauls, 2010), 283.

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everyone to be a missionary, Pope Francis particularly coined the term *missionary discipleship* in *Evangelii Gaudium.*

Succinctly, this calls for all the baptized to become "missionary disciples" (*EG* 119, 21). In those moments that we fail to recognize that the laity are members of the Body of Christ, Pope Francis reminds the Church is all the baptized, and that includes the laity, which is also called to become missionary disciples.

Missionary discipleship signifies disciples who are proactive and intentional when it comes to looking for opportunities to encounter Christ and to help others do the same. It is an interpersonal approach to evangelization that requires a commitment to engaging others on a personal level and deepening that relationship to allow faith-sharing to take place. Becoming a missionary disciple is never an initiative of a believer or group, or a consequence of ordination but bore out from our baptism. Pope Francis explains this in his first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*:

> In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt. 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients (*EG* 120).

In the hope of Pope Francis of a Church that is "missionary disciples" (*EG* 24, 119-21), there is no more dichotomy between the two—there is no disciple nor missionary but missionary disciples as the Church as a whole is both "anointed" and "going out to others." In Pope Francis' effort to call all the baptized to engage in active evangelization, he has proposed several

themes, concepts, and ideas in order to advance the missionary renewal of the Church through missionary discipleship.

Pathways Towards Missionary Discipleship According to Pope Francis

The Call to Accompaniment

The word accompaniment has been related to the Spanish word *compañero* meaning a friend and in the most casual sense, accompaniment simply mean a person being in the presence of or journeying with another. It denotes an expression of solidarity with other human beings, of journeying on a common path.

From this, we can interpret accompaniment as an expression of love, mercy, and solidarity with the poor and marginalized—to all those who are excluded. In simple terms, accompaniment is the ability of the Church of being with and walking with the poor, neglected, and marginalized. Accompaniment requires the formation of listening and attentiveness to what happens to the lives of others... "becoming like Jesus as he reveals himself in the Gospels: close to people, able to listen, to heal, to console; patient, and not seeking to demand but to manifest the tenderness of his Father's heart."[4] Cultivating the values of encounter using active listening—without agenda, but simply being present to the other person is an important component of accompaniment.

In the case of the PDLs, it is evident that there is a deeper need for them to be accompanied as they serve their sentence in the penitentiary. Based on the interviews, it is apparent that

4. *Final Document of the Amazon Synod*, http://secretariat.synod.va/content/sinodoamazonico/en/documents/final-document-of-the-amazon-synod.html (accessed August 8, 2023).

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there is a profound longing for someone to accompany them on their faith journey. Accompaniment involves journeying with the PDLs not only physically but, more importantly, spiritually and emotionally. They must be accompanied in terms of providing spiritual guidance, prayerful support, and opportunities for religious exploration and growth, such as a regular recollection in addition to attending the catechetical program. In this way, PDLs are initiated into deeper faith formation, motivating them to "walk with" and accompany their fellow PDLs.

The Call to Inclusivity

Pope Francis calls for an inclusive Church. Pope Francis reiterated the Second Vatican Council image of the Church as the "People of God" where everyone is invited without distinction, because God's mercy wills that everyone will be saved as God excludes no one. According to Pope Francis, inclusivity is an aspect of mercy that reaches out to everyone without regard for social conditions, language, race, culture, or religion. It is manifested in the love of each person as God loves them.

In the interview with the PDLs, the age range of those who attend the catechetical program ranges from 19 to 80, with the majority being adults, and there are also several senior citizens. The many predicaments of the PDLs show the need for inclusivity in the catechetical program, inclusive in the sense that everyone's needs are looked after and those with greater needs are given immediate attention.

Inclusivity ensures that all PDLs, regardless of their background, ethnicity, religion, or other characteristics, are treated with dignity and respect. It acknowledges and values the diversity within the prison population. Inclusive environments foster a sense of belonging and mutual respect, which can help reduce tensions and conflicts among inmates. When

PDLs feel included and supported, they will feel more motivated to participate in the catechetical programs, recollections, and other opportunities for self-improvement.

The Call to Dialogue

Pope Francis has held up dialogue as the path toward renewed evangelization. This is the path of evangelization that Pope Francis is calling the missionary disciples to live, becoming zealous for a "culture of encounter" and seeking to discover Christ in all people and in all situations. He said, "You can't evangelize without dialogue. It's impossible" for it is obvious that dialogue is a necessary moment of evangelization but "during dialogue, you begin from where these people come from."[5] Dialogue opens the heart to Christ and allows the missionary disciples to move in the living vitality of the Holy Spirit, thus allowing the missionary disciples to be used as instruments of healing and transformation for the world.

The catechetical formation program, such as that offered by the PJPS, creates opportunities for PDLs to build supportive relationships and networks within the prison community. Through various activities, sharing, and reflection provided by the catechetical formations, PDLs can connect with their fellow inmates. Here, they can find emotional support, encouragement, and solidarity, which are crucial for coping with the challenges of incarceration. Hence, the need for good dialogue between and among PDLs is reinforced by having more updated and tailor-fit catechetical modules. Meaningful dialogue can contribute to rehabilitation by promoting personal growth,

5. "Pope Francis Homily: Pope: Grace, Docility and Dialogue Are Keys to Evangelization," *National Catholic Register,* May 8, 2014, https://www.ncregister.com/news/pope-grace-docility-and-dialogue-are-keys-to-evangelization (accessed August 8, 2023).

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self-reflection, and positive behavioral change among the PDLs.

The above reflections on accompaniment, inclusivity, and dialogue as pathways to missionary discipleship were extracted from Pope Francis' documents, speeches, messages, and general audiences and are not exhaustive of all his contributions towards missionary discipleship. For him, an initial step, such as responding to the call of accompaniment, inclusivity, and dialogue, contributes towards missionary consciousness and engagement.

Directory for Catechesis 2020: Call to a Renewed Catechesis

As the Universal Church seeks a path to missionary renewal that struggles through a pandemic-ridden world, the long-awaited *Directory for Catechesis* from the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization arrives when the Church needs it most. The new Directory confirms the intricate link between evangelization and catechesis that unites the Church to witness the Gospel, ongoing formation, maturation of faith, and forming a community of disciples.

Catechesis is within the realm of evangelization. Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, said in a press conference on June 25, 2022, "In this relationship, the primacy belongs to evangelization, not to catechesis."[6] This was thoroughly explained in the *Directory for Catechesis* 2020. The Directory carefully explains that catechesis accompanies a dynamic process of internalizing the Gospel involving the whole person,

6. Arch. Salvatore Fisichella, "Press Conference to present the Directory for Catechesis," *Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization*, June 25, 2020, https://press.vatican.va/ (accessed August 17, 2023).

including his/her life experience, which is a form of spiritual action—typically an inculturation of Christian faith. It is a document of the Universal Church that encourages the drafting or revising of national and local directories to adapt to the local catechetical opportunities and challenges in particular churches. The Directory gives more emphasis on (1) the primacy of the kerygma in all catechetical activities; (2) the dynamic process of evangelization and catechesis within it as a spiritual action above all; (3) the pedagogy of God that inspires the pedagogy of the Church in catechetical tasks of initiation, education, and ongoing formation in Christian discipleship; (4) catechesis in digital culture; (5) the globalization of culture; (6) bioethical issues that impact catechesis; (7) the "way of beauty" in catechesis; and (8) catechesis that accompanies with mercy the poor and people with disabilities, migrants, and *prisoners.*

The new Directory emphasizes not only the teaching of the faith but also the accompaniment of those being instructed/catechized as it states, "In his proclamation of the Kingdom, Jesus seeks, encounters, and welcomes people in the concrete life situations" (*DC* 198). Concrete life situations include people in the various stages of life such as children and teenagers (*DC* 236-243), young people (*DC* 244-256), pre-adolescents (*DC* 246-247), adults (*DC* 257-265), elderly (*DC* 266-268), and those persons with disabilities (*DC* 269-272), migrants (*DC* 273-276), and prisoners (*DC* 281-282).

The desire of Pope Francis to have an inclusive catechesis is so clear in the Directory as it includes catechesis for persons that are usually not the priority of the majority such as the migrants, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and prisoners. This is precisely the inspiration of the writer to create context-based/adult catechetical modules adapted for the prisoners.

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Philippine Jesuit Prison Service' (PJPS) Catechetical Formation Program for the PDL Volunteers of NBP

For more than a decade now, the writer has had the opportunity to visit the four camps of the New Bilibid Prison, the largest prison facility in the Philippines, and has done outreach activities inside this national penitentiary that houses more than 20,000 persons deprived of liberty (PDLs).[7]

PDL refers to a detainee, inmate/prisoner, or another person under confinement or custody in any other manner. However, to prevent labeling, branding, or shaming by the use of these or other derogatory words, the term "prisoner" has been replaced by this new and neutral phrase "person deprived of liberty" under Article 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

PDLs in the national penitentiary are classified according to their sentence—they can either be put in Maximum, Medium, or Minimum Security Camps for the whole duration of serving their sentence. Most, if not all, PDLs inside the Maximum compound stay for ten years and more inside the Maximum Security Camp. PDLs inside the maximum camp can also be assigned to other camps (Medium and Minimum) to complete their sentence.

7. The New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in Muntinlupa, Metro Manila is the main insular penitentiary designed to house the prison population of the Philippines. Currently, there are about 33,000 PDLs that are incarcerated in NBP. Being the largest prison facility in the country, NBP also caters to several traditional faith groups--Catholic, Muslim, and Jews aside from the various religious denominations that are active in prison ministries such as *Iglesia Ni Cristo*, Evangelicals, Aglipayan and other Christian groups including Protestant, Baptist, Pentecostal, Anglican, Orthodox, Methodist, and Seventh Day Adventist.

The writer collaborated with the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service (PJPS),[8] a socio-pastoral apostolate of the Society of Jesus (Philippine Province). PJPS caters to the needs of the PDLs and the immediate family of the PDLs. They provide services and holistic rehabilitation to the corrections community, particularly with the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor)[9] in Muntinlupa City. With PJPS' advocacy with the poor, the writer sees an opportunity to live out her call to respond to Jesus' invitation to care for the needs of the poor. The writer has been serving the prison facility since 2012, preparing programs and activities where her students interacted with the PDLs. From these brief encounters and experiences with the PDLs, the writer observed that there are many opportunities to help in the spiritual formation of the PDLs inside the camps and to cope with life inside the prison facilities.

In her interview with the former PJPS Directors about the conduct of religious activities in the prison camps, she learned that regular liturgical celebrations such as Eucharist and Confession are held in the chapels of each camp. Through interaction with the PDLs, the writer has seen the sincerity and religiosity of the many PDLs manifested particularly during liturgical celebration. She deeply senses the prayerfulness whenever the Eucharist is celebrated.

Aside from this liturgical celebration in the prison camps, there is also a catechetical formation for the PDLs. The PJPS organizes the program and they have been using the diocesan catechetical modules for their catechism classes. The modules are adjusted "on the spot" based on the needs of the PDLs.

8. Philippine Jesuit Prison Service Foundation Inc., (PJPS) is a non-stock, non-profit organization that provides services, holistic rehabilitation, to the corrections community particularly with the Bureau of Corrections.

9. Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) in Muntinlupa City.

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The chaplains give the catechesis and train the PDL chapel volunteers to become catechists. Most of the attendees of the catechism are the chapel workers/volunteers and other PDLs who are Catholics. This does not usually exceed 20-30 PDLs per session.

In this context, the writer sees an opportunity to improve the quality of catechetical formation given to the PDLs because the catechetical modules given to them are diocesan modules, which are basically generic and do not fit the context of the PDLs. Given the contexts of the PDLs inside the prison facility, they must use a tailor-fit module that would fit their needs and context/situation for their integral faith formation.

Catechesis with Adults as Chief Form of Catechesis

The Church has not only recognized but also prioritized catechetical renewal, especially after the Second Vatican Council. This validation of the importance of catechesis can be found in the Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, which stated, "It (catechetical instruction) should be carefully imparted, not only to children and adolescents but also to young people and even to adults" (*CD* 14).

The *General Directory for Catechesis* has forcefully invited the Church and Christian communities to effect a paradigm shift for the whole catechetical ministry as it proclaims that the catechesis of adults is the central element and point of reference for all other forms of catechesis.[10] To quote *NDC*, "Because of its importance and all other forms of catechesis

10. Jerome Vallabaraj, *Delving into the World of the Catechetical Education of Adults: A Multi-Perspective Elaboration* (Bangalore, India: Kristu Jyoti Publications, 2008), 7.

are oriented in some way to it, the catechesis of adults must have high priority at all levels of the Church."[11]

The ultimate goal of catechesis with adults is to lead individuals to "attain the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). This involves growing in likeness to Christ, embodying his virtues, and living by his teachings. Thus, catechesis should not just be given to children but to adults, as they also need a catechesis that will support and promote the growth of an adult faith in an adult Church.

Furthermore, "many Catholic adults practice their faith and desire to deepen it...others who have been baptized but who have not received a comprehensive catechesis or who no longer practice their faith need to be renewed through an enthusiastic preaching of the word and a vibrant re-evangelization."[12] In this vein, the author was motivated to craft an adult catechesis for adult PDLs.

Catechesis with Prisoners: Special Form of Catechesis with Adults

Catechesis with prisoners is considered a special form of catechesis with adults, emphasizing the unique challenges and opportunities for spiritual growth in the context of penitentiary. It requires a pastoral and contextual approach that recognizes their particular circumstances and their needs as individuals within correctional facilities. Effective adult catechesis for prisoners prioritizes personal encounter and accompaniment, offering the PDLs an opportunity to encounter Christ's love and mercy in a tangible way. Some of these may involve providing spiritual direction, pastoral counseling, and

11. Unites States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *National Directory for Catechesis* (Washington DC, USA: USCCB, 2005), 187

12. *NDC*, p. 188

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opportunities for sacramental reconciliation and Eucharistic celebration, etc.

Adult catechesis with prisoners aims to integrate faith formation with the lived realities of incarcerated individuals, helping them to find meaning, hope, and redemption in their circumstances. Catechesis with prisoners also plays a pivotal role in their reintegration and rehabilitation into society after completing their sentence. Good adult catechesis will help them prepare for "free" society upon release. As such, the catechetical formation to be given to PDLs may include providing practical support and assistance with social and spiritual resources to facilitate a positive transition into the community. An example may be regular spiritual recollections or retreats to deepen their catechesis.

Catechesis with PDLs/prisoners as a particular form of catechesis with adults seeks to proclaim the Gospel message of hope, redemption, and reconciliation within the unique context of correctional facilities, offering them the opportunity for spiritual growth, healing, and renewal amidst the challenges of being incarcerated.

The *Directory for Catechesis* 2020 mentions the various places where catechesis can be given, including "the home, the office, educational, cultural, and recreational environments, prisons, etc." Often less formal than Christian community settings, these places are suitable for "casual catechesis" because they foster more familiar relationships (*DC*, 223). Indeed, as a Church that responds to the call of the new evangelization, we cannot overlook the space of prison as an informal place to conduct casual catechesis with adults.

The Need for an Updated Adult Catechesis with PDLs in the National Bilibid Prisons

Given that all individuals incarcerated in the National Bilibid Prisons are adults, it is fitting to offer them catechism tailored to their age group. Consequently, the author suggests that catechesis serves as an ongoing education in faith that adapts to the various life stages, as indicated by the statement, "catechesis is thus a permanent school of the faith and follows the major stages of life" (*CT* 39).

In giving catechesis, aside from considering their readiness and age, it is also essential to consider that the prisoners, as a community, belong to a group of believers in particular situations. The *Directory for Catechesis* 2020 mentions the basic content of the catechesis directed to prisoners:

> The fundamental content of catechesis among prisoners, which often has a casual and experimental character, is the kerygma of salvation in Christ, understood as forgiveness and liberation. The direct encounter with Sacred Scripture is the setting for the proclamation of the faith, which if accepted can console and heal even the life most devastated by sin, in addition to opening spaces for reeducation and rehabilitation (*DC* 282).

Since prisoners are persons who live in a specific environment and with special social conditions, they must be given an adapted and context-based catechesis in order "to help them respond to God's uniquely personal love for them within the context of their situation."[13] Prisoners/incarcerated individuals are also members of the Church. Hence, the Church has special concern for them.

From the informal and formal interviews and observations conducted by the writer, it is evident that the PDL volunteers of PJPS for their catechetical formation program urgently need

13. *National Catechetical Directory,* 210.

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a catechetical program that is context-based and tailor-fit for them, which we refer to as "adult catechesis" since all catechetical ministries with adults are contextual.[14] Adult catechesis holds significant importance for PDLs for several reasons: adult catechesis provides prisoners with opportunities for deeper spiritual growth and development as it offers a deeper understanding of their faith, allowing them to grow their relationship with God as mature adults. Furthermore, adult catechesis can play a crucial role in the process of healing and redemption for PDLs as it provides a space for reflection, forgiveness, and reconciliation, allowing individuals to confront their past mistakes and seek spiritual renewal.

Participation in adult catechesis programs for PDLs also allows them to connect with others who share their faith and values. It provides them with a sense of community and support, which can be instrumental in their personal growth and rehabilitation. With adult catechesis, PDLs are further empowered to take ownership of their spiritual journey and encouraged to reflect critically on their faith, leading them to rehabilitation and transformation in their lives.

Methodology

The writer applied the descriptive and exploratory-qualitative approaches to research. However, in the context of theology and pastoral ministry, the method is *Pastoral-Theological Approach* using Fr. Albert Alejo's *D.A.R.E. Framework* using the following steps.

First, personal and informal/semi-structured interviews and observations with the PJPS chaplains, BuCor personnel in charge of education, and selected volunteer PDLs will be

14. Vallabaraj, *Delving Into the World of the Catechetical Education of Adults*, Introduction, 11.

conducted to better grasp of the situations and the process of the faith formation program given to the PDLs. This is the contextualization aspect of evangelization and catechesis as reflected in the Church in the Philippines, noting that catechesis in prison is just part of the overall catechetical ministry of the Church in the Philippines.

As this is a qualitative study, the PDLs who will participate in the small group discussion will be chosen by snowball sampling. A small group of 15-20 PDL chapel volunteers inside Maximum Security Camp was interviewed and consulted. In the D.A.R.E. framework, this is the *descriptive* part.

Second, the writer will synthesize and analyze all the data gathered during informal interviews and observations will be synthesized and analyzed by the writer. Thematic analysis of the transcripts will be undertaken, which involves labeling the themes, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting them to focus on the themes and subthemes of the interviews. This is the a*nalysis* part of the D.A.R.E. framework.

Third, after analyzing the data taken from the interviews and observations, this step will involve a *reflection* stage. The writer will use the interview results, the writer will use the results to correlate with theology and Church teachings specifically regarding the Church's mission of new evangelization. The writer will take a closer look at specifically the ministry of laity people referred to Pope Francis as missionary disciples highlighting the ways of forming missionary disciples through the themes of accompaniment, inclusivity, and dialogue.

Fourth is the *engagement* taking place as this will be the stage where the catechetical modules will be crafted. Using the information/data that may be gathered from the PDL volunteers' informal conversations, group discussions, testimonies, sharing, reflections, and interviews it will generate a variety of

learning activities such as liturgies, scripture readings, prayer experiences, ecumenical dialogue, and other related activities that can be used to contextualize the catechetical modules.

The final step is the production of catechetical modules for the group of PDL volunteers and catechists. The modules are adapted to the needs and situations of the PDLs in the NBP camps inspiring them into becoming missionary disciples using the topic accompaniment, inclusivity, and dialogue.

Key Findings from the Interviews and Thematic Analysis

With the interviews and the analysis of the writer, it is indeed glaring that there is a need for some balance between the constraints of time, resources, and the goals of catechetical instructions for the PDLs. While the emphasis on chaplain-led talks and minimal activities may limit the depth of engagement and interaction, there are opportunities for enhancing the effectiveness of catechetical instructions through innovative teaching methods and a responsive approach to meet the PDL needs. These can be done by checking the structure and content of the catechetical program and whether it is adapted to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the inmate population. Flexibility to the schedule and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the inmate community are key to ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of the catechetical program within the prison setting.

In this case, it becomes obvious that there is a lack of context-based catechetical modules for the PDLs of New Bilibid Prisons; generally, the modules being used in the PJPS catechetical classes are either the general modules provided by the Diocese of Muntinlupa which are not context-based or a

draft module created by the chaplain to respond to the needs of the PDLs.

The acknowledgment of the lack of context-based catechetical modules for PDLs at NBP underscores the importance of addressing this gap better to serve the spiritual needs of the incarcerated population. By developing materials that are specifically tailored to the realities of prison life and the experiences of PDLs, chaplains and pastoral ministers can enhance the effectiveness and relevance of catechetical efforts within the prison setting. An appropriate content, presentation, and methodology would greatly contribute to the transformation of those being catechized; it has the potential to facilitate transformation in the lives of those being catechized in this case, the PDLs.

By integrating contextualized content, the modules aim to inspire conversion, deepen spiritual growth, and empower the PDLs to live out their faith in authentic and meaningful ways such as becoming missionary disciples within the prison setting.

The "AID" Catechetical Modules[15]

The adult catechetical modules with the prisoners of National Bilibid Prisons take on these three pivotal themes of A-I-D (Accompaniment, Inclusivity, Dialogue) with the hope to initially form the PDLs into becoming missionary disciples inside prison camps and even outside the confines of prison halls once they are released from the prison facilities. The writer carefully analyzed and reflected upon the three themes, which are the felt needs of the PDLs based on the interviews and observations.

15. The structure of the modules (3R's) was formulated by Fr. Renato De Guzman, SDB, the author's second reader. It was his personal template.

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These themes can be easily remembered by the PDLs as they are relate to the support (*ayuda*) they have been asking for and receiving since the time they entered the prison facilities. Aid, or "*ayuda*" in Filipino, is a very important word for prisoners. It means help in whatever form it may be—food, money, or other material things that would help alleviate their suffering in the prison facility.

In this case, *ayuda* is not in the form of food, money, or anything material, but rather a religious formation that will motivate and inspire them to "re-hear" the call of Jesus to become his missionary disciples and hopefully make Jesus and his Kingdom a visible reality in the context of their daily lives inside the prison facilities. In this article, the acronym AID, which stands for accompaniment, inclusivity, and dialogue, is explored as pathways to live out the call of Pope Francis to missionary discipleship

The general lesson structure is the 3Rs: Remember, Reflect, and Respond. There are three major themes: Accompaniment, Inclusivity, and Dialogue—each comprising four lessons or sessions. There are twelve sessions for the AID catechetical program for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). The three major themes of AID were subdivided into four sessions, bringing about twelve sessions. For each theme, the same Word of God has been used to emphasize the continuity of each topic. The doctrines, worship, and moral aspects were also given emphasis as they were not presented all at once in one session.

The catechesis proper starts with an Opening Prayer and a short Introduction to the lesson. This is followed by '*Remember*,' where the Text in Context is placed, exposing the participants to the story of the Word of God.

The topic is then developed in the Exposition/Deepening. This is the *'Reflect'* part, in which the participants are

immersed in the essential content of the faith taken from the primary source (Sacred Scriptures), secondary sources (Church Teachings), and the Filipino human experience. This is where the *kerygma* of faith happens. In this part, the PDL participants are provided with the dynamic mutual relatedness of the three dimensions of faith, i.e. doctrine, worship, and moral (D-W-M).

The importance of human experience was also reaffirmed by the *Directory of Catechesis* 2020 when it mentioned that "human experience is integral to catechesis, in its identity and process and also in contents and method, because it is not only the place in which the word of God is proclaimed but also the space in which God speaks..." (*DC*, 197).

The integration of human experience in adult catechesis with prisoners can serve as a bridge to discovering God in the ordinariness of life inside prison camps.

The last part is the '*Respond*' part where the integration of life values and individual and common action are situated. The *synodal* aspect of catechesis is integrated in the individual and common action part as it encourages the participants to not only personally reflect on the theme but also encourage their fellow participants to reflect as a community of missionary disciples journeying together. The integration of the Synthesis of Kerygma and Mystagogy before the conclusion is a response to the call of the Church to the call of new evangelization.

To cap the module, a *celebration* of faith is included. This celebration aspect is the *mystagogical* aspect of the catechetical module. It is usually in the form of a Marian prayer service, a celebration of the sacrament, or Filipino popular piety.

Scope of the Modules

The adult catechetical modules are prepared for the Catholic male adult PDLs of National Bilibid Prisons (NBP)

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camps who participate in the PJPS Catechetical Program. Male adult PDLs are between 21-75 years old. The module is designed to be given by a volunteer, formator, and/or facilitator inside the prison camps. They may be a volunteer, religion teacher, catechist, pastoral worker, and/or chaplain. The modules are contextualized or tailor-fit for male adult PDLs and, hence, can only be given to NBP PDLs. The module can also be used by other prison chaplaincy in the country, such as those in the city or provincial jails with male prisoners.

Any jail chaplaincy office could find such a module helpful, especially in the efforts to raise consciousness within their communities concerning evangelization of inmates inside prison facilities. A copy of the module can also be shared with the diocesan or parochial catechetical ministry offices as the modules can be considered as a local catechism. *DC* 2020 emphasized the importance of the local catechisms in catechesis:

> Local catechisms are invaluable instrument for catechesis, which is called to bring the newness of the Gospel into the different cultures of the peoples. In them, the Church communicates the Gospel in a way that is accessible to the person, so that he may encounter it where he lives, in his culture and in his world (*DC*, 403).

Generally, the modules can be utilized for evangelization and Christian formation of male PDLs. The author proposes AID catechetical module composed of twelve sessions inspired by Pope Francis' teachings. Although the catechetical modules are not exhaustive of Pope Francis' teachings, they nevertheless contribute to the much-needed adult catechetical materials for the prisoners of the National Bilibid Prisons (NBP).

The modules are designed to impart knowledge about the Catholic faith and facilitate a deeper encounter with the person of Jesus Christ. The PDLs are invited to experience the

conversion of heart, healing, and spiritual growth through encounters with Christ in Scripture, prayer, sacraments, and community. This transformative journey empowers them to live as authentic disciples of Christ, bearing witness to His love and mercy daily.

Using the "AID" (Accompaniment, Inclusivity, and Discipleship) of Pope Francis' teachings and the kerygmatic-mystagogical-synodality framework, this article has attempted to present a sample catechetical module (see Appendix A and B) using a contextualized template—Remember, Reflect, and Respond. Aside from the key themes of AID, the proposed adult catechetical modules with the PDLs showcase the three important themes of the New Evangelization which are Conversion (Dialogue), Encountering Christ (Inclusivity), and Communion (Accompaniment). Capping the modules is the theme of missionary discipleship which is the living out of the call of Pope Francis.

In the effort of the Church for missionary renewal, catechesis, as one of the tasks of evangelization, is re-emphasized here. A renewed catechesis is a tool for forming missionary disciples out of the believers. Including those in prisons as "as authentic mission territory for evangelization and a frontier laboratory for pastoral action..." (*DC*, 281). Indeed, even inside the prison facility, the call of Pope Francis to missionary discipleship remains all the more pertinent. The prisoners, despite their desperate condition, can be formed to become missionary disciples once they respond to a renewed encounter with God's love.

In the context of the PDLs, it is relevant that they are given an appropriate formation program—one that is context-based and fits their situation. In this way, the PDLs will be further assisted in the deepening and maturing their Christian faith.

Ultimately, a renewed and adaptive catechesis in a prison setting aims to facilitate personal transformation and spiritual growth among incarcerated individuals. By inviting them into a deeper encounter with Jesus and inviting them to respond to His call, catechesis becomes a catalyst for positive change and inner renewal.

Although the challenge of giving authentic formation to these marginalized persons (PDLs) in their difficult situations is vast and demanding, it is consoling to know that even inside prison facilities, PDLs long for a deeper relationship with God. Ironically, many PDLs would share that their experience of incarceration led them to a deeper relationship with God. From the many sharings of the PDLs, they admittedly shared that despite their sins, they still feel loved. In the book of Fr. Eli Lumbo, SJ, he mentioned that PDLs many times have "expressed their gratitude for being imprisoned and called their imprisonment a blessing because this made them know and experience God's love concretely. This was like a breath of fresh air. Amid sin, God's love was experienced."[16]

Lastly, the writer anticipates that the adult catechetical formation will empower the PDL participants to engage meaningfully with their communities, within the prison setting and beyond. Hopefully, the modules will equip the PDLs to contribute positively to their communities' well-being and flourishing and actively participate in building a more just, compassionate, and inclusive society.

16. Eli Rowdy Lumbo, SJ, *Redemption Behind Bars* (Quezon City, Philippines: Jesuit Communications, 2023), 55.