

Reclaiming the Heart of Adult Catechesis:  
*A Case Study in Search of Praxis that  
Empowers Mature Christian Disciples*

Carol Kuzmochka

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## Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES.....	1
ABBREVIATIONS.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	3
A Statement of the Problem.....	3
The Context of the Researcher.....	7
Lacunae in Empirical Research .....	9
The Research Focus of this Thesis and a Definition of a <i>Mature Christian Disciple</i> ....	11
The Contents of this Thesis.....	13
CHAPTER ONE	
HISTORICAL THEOLOGY: ADULT CATECHESIS THAT EMPOWERS MATURE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES.....	16
The Purpose of Adult Catechesis: Empowering Mature Christian Disciples.....	17
An Attempt to Reclaim the Heart of Adult Catechesis.....	19
Drawing on the Ancient and the New.....	20
Emmaus as Model.....	21
Catechesis at the Service of Mature Christian Discipleship.....	25
Continuity of this Model in the Early Church .....	27
The Heart Goes Out of Things.....	29
The Problem of “the Triumph of the Mind Alone” and Reclaiming the Heart .....	32
Vatican II and Adult Catechesis: Educating for Mature Christian Discipleship .....	32
Documents Following the Council.....	39
<i>The General Catechetical Directory, 1971</i> .....	39
Surrounding Pastoral Documents .....	43
<i>Catechesi Tradendae, Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community and the General Directory for Catechesis</i> .....	44
Reclaiming the Heart of Adult Catechesis: The Continuing Problem.....	50
Concluding Remarks .....	52
CHAPTER TWO	
LITERATURE REVIEW RELATED TO THE SEARCH FOR ADULT CATECHESIS THAT EMPOWERS MATURE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES.....	53
A Review Across a Number of Disciplines .....	53
Adult Catechesis in a Particular Sociological Context.....	55
Challenges of Secularity .....	62
The Challenge of “The Triumph of the Mind Alone” .....	64
Reclaiming the Language of “Catechesis” .....	68
Commentary on the General Directory for Catechesis.....	74
The Disconnect Between Vision and Practice.....	77
A Partnership with Adult Education, and Transformative Learning Theory.....	80
Transformative Learning and Power Relationships.....	85

Shared Christian Praxis as an Method for Adult Catechesis .....	88
Partnership with Practical Theology.....	91
Insight from Jewish Adult Religious Education.....	93
The Partnership between Adult Catechesis and Adult Development Theory .....	96
Fowler’s Adult Faith Development Theory as a Theological Construct for Mature Discipleship.....	103
Concluding Remarks .....	107
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A CASE STUDY OF</b>	
<i>PUTTING OUT INTO THE DEEP</i> .....	109
The Case Study Design: a Mixed Approach.....	110
Table 1: Case Study, Putting Out Into the Deep.....	111
A Mixed Methods Approach and Multiple Sources .....	111
A Definition of Mature Christian Discipleship as a Point of Reference .....	116
The Survey.....	116
<i>Participant Recruitment</i> .....	116
<i>Contents of the Survey</i> .....	117
<i>Response Rate</i> .....	118
<i>Sampling for the Survey</i> .....	119
<i>Analysis of the Survey Data</i> .....	119
Semi-Structured Small-Group Interviews .....	120
Table 2: Participants: Three Semi-Structured Interviews.....	121
<i>Sampling for the Interviews</i> .....	124
<i>Participant Selection and Recruitment</i> .....	124
<i>An Interview with Pastoral Accompaniers of Small Reflection Groups</i> .....	125
<i>An Interview with Pastoral Leaders of Participants’ Parish Communities</i> .....	125
<i>Analysis of the Data from Semi-Structured Interviews</i> .....	126
The Relationship between the Interviewer and the Interviewees.....	128
Participant-Researcher.....	128
The Challenges and Limits of this Case Study.....	130
<i>Reflexivity in Qualitative Research and World Views</i> .....	132
Ethics Review and Approval .....	134
Concluding Remarks .....	135
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	
<b>FINDINGS: A CASE STUDY OF <i>PUTTING OUT INTO THE DEEP</i></b> .....	
A Description of Putting Out into the Deep .....	136
<i>The Central Role of the Advisory Committee and the Guiding Principles</i> .....	137
A Beginning Consultation Process .....	139
<i>A Proposal</i> .....	143
Designing Putting Out into the Deep.....	145
<i>Streams of Participation</i> .....	147
<i>Resource People and Leadership of the Sessions</i> .....	150
<i>Physical set-up</i> .....	151

<i>Structure of the Sessions</i> .....	151
<i>Participants over the Two Three-year Cycles</i> .....	152
<i>The Challenge of Publicity</i> .....	153
<i>Maintaining a Collaborative Approach</i> .....	155
<i>A Ceremony</i> .....	157
<i>A Symposium at the End of the First Three-year Cycle</i> .....	159
<i>A New 3-year Cycle of Putting Out into the Deep</i> .....	160
<i>Findings from the Survey</i> .....	161
<i>Table 3: Survey Data – Putting Out into the Deep</i> .....	164
<i>The Significance of the Small Group Experience</i> .....	165
<i>Table 4: Respondents’ evaluation of the importance of Small Groups</i> .....	165
<i>Findings Regarding the Two Central Questions</i> .....	168
<i>Table 5: Survey Data – Putting Out into the Deep</i> .....	168
<i>Table 6: Summary of Responses to Survey Section Five</i> .....	171
<i>Table 7: Summary of Survey Section 6</i> .....	175
<i>Words that Best Describe the Experience of Putting Out into the Deep</i> .....	178
<i>Table 8: Words to Describe the Experience</i> .....	179
<i>Additional Remarks from Respondents to the Survey</i> .....	179
<i>Research Findings from the Small-group Semi-structured Interviews</i> .....	182
<i>Summary of Findings from the Interview with Participants</i> .....	183
<i>Table 9: Semi-structured Interview 1</i> .....	184
<i>Summary of the Interview with Pastoral Accompaniers of Small Groups</i> .....	197
<i>Table 10: Semi-structured Interview 2</i> .....	198
<i>Summary of Interview with Pastors and a Pastoral Associate</i> .....	202
<i>Table 11: Semi-structured Interview 3</i> .....	203
<i>Concluding Remarks</i> .....	208

## CHAPTER FIVE

<b>FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: IN SEARCH OF PROCESSES THAT EMPOWER MATURE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES</b> .....	209
<b>Constructing Thematic Conceptual Categories</b> .....	210
1. <i>Consistency and Stability: Vision, Committed and Capable Leadership, a Collaborative Approach</i> .....	211
2. <i>Engaging the Whole Person: Content and Process</i> .....	214
3. <i>Integration of Prayer and Learning</i> .....	216
4. <i>Physical Arrangement of Learning Environment, Hospitality, and Shared Leadership</i> .....	217
5. <i>Bringing Experience and the Faith Tradition into dialogue, and the Role of the Community</i> .....	218
6. <i>The Significance of Small Groups</i> .....	220
7. <i>Collaboration, Evaluation and Feedback</i> .....	221
8. <i>Thinking for Oneself - Critical Thinking</i> .....	222
9. <i>An Opportunity to Move from Child-like to Adult Perspectives of Faith</i> .....	223
10. <i>A Need for Adult Catechesis at the Parish Level</i> .....	224

<i>11. Disengagement of Pastoral Leaders (Priests and Pastoral Associates)</i> .....	225
Twelve Statements Summarizing the Case Study Data.....	227
Nine Adult Catechetical Processes that Empower Mature Christian Disciples.....	227
<i>Three Obstacles to Adult Catechesis that Empowers Mature Christian Disciples</i> ....	229
Interpretive and Explanatory Analysis .....	230
Catechetical Processes that Empower Mature Christian Disciples and the Challenges of Secularity .....	231
Integrating Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis.....	235
Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis and Collaborative Curriculum-Building.....	238
Adult Catechesis that Engages the Whole Person .....	239
A Need for Ongoing Study of the Challenges .....	241
Supporting Mature Christian Disciples.....	243
Reflections about the Choice of Methodology .....	246
Concluding Remarks .....	249
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
<b>RECLAIMING THE HEART OF ADULT CATECHESIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR RENEWED PRAXIS</b> .....	
A Brief Summary of the Church’s Vision of Adult Catechesis from Chapter One ...	251
The <i>GDC</i> as the Way Forward for Adult Catechesis .....	252
Identifying Obstacles and Challenges to Effective Adult Catechesis .....	253
The Need for Critical Reflection to Renew Praxis .....	258
The Need for Ongoing Empirical Research.....	260
Final Remarks.....	261
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	264
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	275

Doctor of Ministry Thesis  
Carol Kuzmochka, 2014

***Reclaiming the Heart of Adult Catechesis: A Case Study in Search of Praxis that Empowers Mature Christian Disciples***

**ABSTRACT**

This Doctor of Ministry thesis explores the need to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis as a ministry that exists for the purpose of empowering mature Christian disciples. The encounter on the road to Emmaus provides an inspiring example of a transformative experience that shaped the vision and practice of the early Church.<sup>1</sup> The fifty years since the Second Vatican Council have seen an attempt to reclaim effective adult catechesis modelled in the early Church. However, a disconnect exists between the vision of adult catechesis expressed in the Church's documents and its practice. Lacunae in empirical research in adult catechesis confound this problem.

A central goal of this study is to contribute to a needed body of empirical research that studies adult catechesis. Using a mixed method approach of quantitative and qualitative instruments, I conducted a case study of *Putting Out into the Deep*, an adult catechetical series that I designed and led, in collaboration with an Advisory Committee, in the Archdiocese of Ottawa. Using case study methodology allowed me to study the series as a bounded system. I gathered a mix of quantitative (a 50 item random sample survey sent to 50 participants in the catechetical series) and qualitative evidence (small group semi-structured interviews with 10 participants and 7 pastoral leaders associated with the series) using multiple data collection techniques. This allowed me to search for

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<sup>1</sup> I use "Church" to denote the "Roman Catholic Church." I use "church" and "churches" to refer to all of the Christian denominations. The Roman Catholic Church is one of the Christian denominations and is included among the "churches."

processes that empower mature Christian disciples and to identify some obstacles to effective adult catechesis.

The Church's normative documents regarding adult catechesis provide a foundation for theological reflection in this research, and literature from adult catechesis, adult development (and faith development), transformative learning, sociology of religion and practical theology provide the conceptual framework.

The case study presents one model of collaborative curriculum building that demonstrates that it is possible to construct adult catechesis that honours both comprehensive adult catechesis, and the significant faith and life questions of participants. The findings from this study both corroborate and expand some current theories related to effective adult catechesis. The findings regarding effective adult catechesis include: it is characterized by processes, such as those used for theological reflection, that engages critical thinking; it is marked by authoritative support, competent leadership and a commitment to the empowerment of mature Christian disciples; it invites the whole community to take responsibility, and involves participants in the ongoing planning and evaluation of the process; it is impeded by pastoral leaders - lay and ordained – who may support it verbally but not in practice; it is impeded by indoctrination. The need to embrace the expertise of transformative learning and adult development theory is particularly evident from the findings.

As a work in practical theology seeking renewed praxis, reflection on the Church's normative texts in dialogue with the research findings emphasizes the duty of those who are responsible for this ministry to engage in critical reflection that identifies obstacles, renews vision, and strengthens commitment to providing effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples.

- 1 Approval of the Research Project from the Ethics Research Board, Saint Paul University
- 2 Permission from the Archdiocese of Ottawa to conduct the Research
- 3 Covering Letter Inviting Participants to Complete the Survey
- 4 Informed Consent form for the Small Group Interview Participants
- 5 Survey
- 6 Outline for the Semi-structured Interview with Participants
- 7 Outline for the Semi-structured Interview with Small Group Pastoral Accompaniers
- 8 Outline for the Semi-structured Interview with Pastors and a Pastoral Associate
- 9 *Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting Out into the Deep! A Proposal for the Steps Ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector, August, 2003*
- 10 Moving Toward a Lay Formation Program, Archdiocese of Ottawa, English Sector: A Summary of Focus Group Session on the Future of Lay Formation, June, 2003
- 11 A Proposed Process for the Small Group Gathering following the session of May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 (1.5 hrs) and Questions for Reflection Papers for Certificate Participants
- 12 A Brief Report on the Activities of 2005-06
- 13 Evaluation Summary, June, 2004
- 14 Topics Chosen for Adult Catechetical Sessions: *Putting Out into the Deep*
- 15 “Mike’s” Speaking Notes
- 16 A Report on a Symposium on Adult faith Development and Leadership Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Diagram, Case Study, <i>Putting Out into the Deep</i> : Parts of the Study and Data Sources	111
Table 2: Diagram, Participants: Three-Semi-Structured Interviews	121
Table 3: Survey Data – Participation of Respondents	164
Table 4: Respondents’ evaluation of the importance of their involvement in Small Groups	165
Table 5: Survey Data – <i>Putting Out into the Deep</i> Summary of Survey Section Four	168
Table 6: Survey Data – <i>Putting Out into the Deep</i> Summary of Responses to Survey Section Five	171
Table 7: Summary of Survey Section 6	175
Table 8: Words to Describe the Experience of <i>Putting Out into the Deep</i>	179
Table 9: Semi-structured Interview #1	184
Table 10: Semi-structured Interview #2	198
Table 11: Semi-structured Interview #3	203

## ABBREVIATIONS

CCCB	Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
COINCAT	International Council for Catechesis
<i>GDC</i>	<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i> . Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1997.
J.P.II	Pope John Paul II
NRSV	<i>The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition</i> (NRSV). New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
USCCB	United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of adult catechesis is to engage in a process of formation that leads people to mature Christian discipleship. We see such a process of adult catechesis modelled in the encounter between Jesus and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus engages their hearts,<sup>2</sup> in the full biblical sense of this word, by engaging all of the dimensions of the human person. Religious education specialist and practical theologian Thomas Groome describes this as educating for *conation*, an ancient term he wishes to reclaim because it holds together the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in a holistic sense of what it means to educate in Christian faith.<sup>3</sup> This process of engagement with the disciples on the road to Emmaus brings about *metanoia*, or transformation, that enriches and empowers them as mature disciples of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church<sup>5</sup> has been trying to reclaim a practice of adult catechesis that, like the practice of the early Church, reaches the hearts of people and has this same transformative result. The Church's catechetical documents,

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<sup>2</sup> "Heart" is used frequently in both the Hebrew and New Testaments. A study of the Hebrew word for heart, *Lebab*, and the Greek word, *kardia* reveal that "(t)he heart, in its moral significance in the Old Testament includes the emotions, the reason and the will....As to its usage in the New Testament it denotes...the seat of moral nature and spiritual life...joy...the intentions...the reasoning powers...the will." W.E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997), 537.

<sup>3</sup> For an extensive exploration of Groome's understanding of conation see Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins, 1991), 11-32.

<sup>4</sup> I will explore the notions of *metanoia*, *conversion*, and *transformation*, and their relationship to mature Christian discipleship, in Chapters One and Two.

<sup>5</sup> I use "Church" to denote the "Roman Catholic Church." I use "church" and "churches" to refer to all of the Christian denominations. The Roman Catholic Church is one of the Christian denominations and is included among the "churches."

since the Second Vatican Council, clearly reflect this objective by calling for a fully alive and engaged laity, inspired to take responsibility for their baptismal vocation by living a mature discipleship characterized by ongoing conversion and marked by agency in the world as instruments of justice, peace and joy.<sup>6</sup> As *Lumen Gentium* suggests, “Each disciple of Christ has the obligation of spreading the faith according to their abilities.”<sup>7</sup> *Empower* is defined as “to give power to (someone), to enable, (and) to promote the self actualization or influence of.”<sup>8</sup> Catechesis that *empowers* mature Christian disciples, then, enables the person to take responsibility for his/her baptismal vocation and to engage as agents of this justice, peace and joy.<sup>9</sup>

Church communities have responded to this vision. Leona English writes, “The lay ministry education movement in the past two decades in the Church has been the greatest adult education thrust of recent times.”<sup>10</sup> Yet, in spite of the vision, commitment and expertise that abound for the ministry of adult catechesis a *disconnect* exists between the vision of catechesis, expressed in the Church’s documents, and the current practice of catechesis. Like the rest of the western world, Canada is currently marked by

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<sup>6</sup> The reference alludes to Roman 14:17: “For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”(NRSV).

<sup>7</sup> “Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*”, no. 17, in Austin Flannery, O.P., *The Vatican Collection: Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1998), 369.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/>. Accessed, September 27, 2013.

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 11-12 of this thesis for a definition of “mature Christian discipleship” I constructed for use in the empirical case study research that is a central focus of this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> Leona English, “Adult Education of the Laity: A Church Concern,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol.41, No.1, 132.

a growing number of people who are distant from the Christian community, not by an increasingly alive and inspired laity engaged in the life of mature discipleship.<sup>11</sup> The challenges and the blessings of post-modernism give shape to a very complex reality about which it can be said: “This situation poses a profound challenge for religious education in every faith community; it is probably true that educating in “faith and life” was never more demanding than in our time and place.”<sup>12</sup> Research findings of Canadian sociologist of religion Reginald Bibby show that many people are not finding, in churches, experiences of faith that are relevant to their lives.<sup>13</sup> The churches are not capturing their hearts. Current initiatives, originating from the Vatican to engage in a time of “New Evangelization,” reflect an attempt to try to understand and respond to this phenomenon that expresses itself across the western world.<sup>14</sup>

In this postmodern period, one of the obstacles to effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples is the ongoing influence of what Thomas Groome

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<sup>11</sup> Sociologist of Religion, Reginald Bibby reports that in Canada “(t)here has been a significant increase in the number of people who are rejecting religion, as well as a rise in the proportion who constitute something of “an ambivalent middle.” Reginald Bibby, *A New Day: The Resilience & Restructuring of Religion in Canada* (Lethbridge, Alberta: Project Canada Books, 2012), Preface.

<sup>12</sup> M. Myrtle Power, “Religious Education and Vatican II: The Aftermath, Editor’s Introduction,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol.41, No 1, Special Issue, Religious Education and Vatican II, 6.

<sup>13</sup> This has been a consistent theme in Bibby’s research that I will explore in detail in Chapter Two.

<sup>14</sup> Pope Benedict XVI presents an excellent articulation of this can be found in his letter “Porta Fidei:”

Today too, there is a need for stronger ecclesial commitment to new evangelization in order to rediscover the joy of believing and the enthusiasm for communicating the faith... Faith grows when it is lived as an experience of love received and when it is communicated as an experience of grace and joy. It makes us fruitful, because it expands our hearts in hope and enables us to bear life-giving witness: indeed, it opens the hearts and minds of those who listen to respond to the Lord’s invitation to adhere to his word and become his disciples.

Pope Benedict VI, Apostolic Letter, *Porta Fidei* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 2012), #7

calls “the triumph of the mind alone,”<sup>15</sup> or what theologians Miriam Martin and Ramon Matinez de Pison refer to as “...the exaggerated primacy given to knowledge attained through reason.”<sup>16</sup> This is associated with a view that memorizing propositions of doctrine or dogma, and giving one’s intellectual assent to them, is the primary purpose of catechesis. Groome describes catechesis as a “way of the heart, mean[ing] that our pedagogy is to nurture people effectively in right and loving relationships with God, self, others and the world.”<sup>17</sup> He claims that the problem arises when the Church regards the purpose of catechesis as “...just ‘head knowledge,’ the kind presumed by our Western Enlightenment heritage.”<sup>18</sup>

Effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples is characterized by this engagement of the heart, or the whole person, in the full biblical sense of the word. This effective adult catechesis requires the wisdom of both *the ancient* and *the new* which I will further explain later in this introduction. It is my contention that a practice of effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples is needed to heal the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis expressed in the Church’s documents and the practice of adult catechesis. The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry Thesis is to search for praxis in adult catechesis that

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins, 1991), 27.

<sup>16</sup> Miriam K. Martin and Ramon Martinez de Pison, “From Knowledge to Wisdom: A New Challenge to the Educational Milieu with Implications for Religious Education,” *Religious Education* (Spring 2005), Vol. 100 No. 2, 157.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York, New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 115

<sup>18</sup> Groome, *Will There Be Faith?* 115.

empowers mature Christian disciples. It is also the intention of this thesis to look for obstacles to effective adult catechesis, and to gain understanding of the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis in the Church's documents and the practice of adult catechesis.

### **The Context of the Researcher**

The Church's documents specify that responsibility for the catechizing ministry of the Church belongs to the whole Christian community.<sup>19</sup> Primary responsibility for this ministry rests with bishops who collaborate with those who have the various abilities needed to sustain and support catechetical activity; priests, religious and those called to the vocation of catechist.<sup>20</sup> I consider myself among those who are responsible for the Church's catechizing ministry in several ways: as a baptized member of the faith community; as an experienced religious educator who has held responsibility for the design and direction of adult catechesis in several parishes and two dioceses; as a teacher of others about adult catechesis; as a past member of the National Advisory Committee on Adult Religious Education for the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and as a member of a writing-team of the National Advisory Committee on Adult Religious Education that created resources for adult catechesis in Canada; as a

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<sup>19</sup> For a reference to this communal responsibility, see Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1997), #219, #220.

<sup>20</sup> The *GDC* provides detailed information about these responsibilities and roles. See numbers 219-232. Throughout this thesis I refer to adult catechesis as "our" responsibility. It is my intention to include the whole Christian community in this notion of "our" and especially bishops and those with whom bishops collaborate who have the leadership roles and the expertise needed to support this ministry.

student of practical theology who wishes to make a positive contribution to the ministry of adult catechesis through this Doctor of Ministry thesis research.

Research specialist John Creswell encourages the researcher to be aware of the “world views”<sup>21</sup> they may bring to their research. He defines several world views as points of reference. I realize that I hold a strong “advocacy and participatory” world view. This view sees a need for reform, and holds a conviction that research should contain an action function toward that reform. According to this worldview, it is a significant goal of research to help identify marginalization, hegemony, and oppression so as to recommend reform.<sup>22</sup> The Church’s documents describe catechesis as “a fundamental ecclesial service, indispensable for the growth of the Church.”<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, the documents express a clear commitment to adult catechesis:

All the baptized, because they are called by God to maturity of faith, need and have therefore a right to adequate catechesis. It is thus a primary responsibility of those responsible for the catechizing ministry of the Church to respond to this in a fitting and satisfactory manner.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, it is a serious matter that a disconnect exists between this vision and the practice of adult catechesis.

I come to this research with the conviction that an “adequate catechesis” engages the hearts of adults and empowers them as mature Christian disciples. It is the right of every baptized adult to receive this catechesis. I have chosen to focus my Doctor of

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<sup>21</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches, Second Edition* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publication, 2007), .224.

<sup>22</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 21- 22.

<sup>23</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *GDC*, #219.

<sup>24</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *GDC*, #167.

Ministry research on the search for praxis in adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples because I believe that much is at stake. Without effective adult catechesis to empower them, adults are impeded in their right to become mature Christian disciples. Furthermore, without mature Christian disciples to engage in the mission of the Church to announce God's reign, the mission of the Church is impeded as well. Those of us who are responsible for the Church's catechizing ministry have an obligation to identify and study this problem and to search for positive solutions.

### **Lacunae in Empirical Research**

Confounding the problem of the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis in the Church's documents and our practice of adult catechesis is the fact that we are faced with an absence of empirical research about initiatives in adult catechesis in Canada. This deficiency resembles the related "lacunae of empirical research about continuing education for lay ministry in the Church in Canada"<sup>25</sup> pointed out by adult education scholar Leona English. As English suggests, this deficiency of empirical research makes it very difficult to know where help may be needed and what could be offered.<sup>26</sup> This observation highlights the need for rigorous empirical studies that focus on good thick descriptions of what is occurring in adult catechesis in Canada. The lacunae also indicate the need for qualitative research into adult catechesis. While

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<sup>25</sup> Leona English, "Continuing Education for Lay Ministry: Providers, Beliefs, Issues, and Programs," *Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education*, v.28 (Spring 2002), 13.

<sup>26</sup> English, "Continuing Education for Lay Ministry: Providers, Beliefs, Issues, and Programs," 27.

theories about the methods of adult catechesis abound, there is very little qualitative research that assesses the effectiveness of the catechesis shaped by these theories.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, through its National Office of Religious Education, published a resource for adult catechesis in Canada in 2011 called *On Good Soil: Pastoral Planning for Evangelization and Catechesis with Adults*.<sup>27</sup> This resource contains insights and suggestions from people engaged in adult catechesis. It also has references to our current Church documents on catechesis and evangelization, an articulate expression of the call to the Church to effectively engage the current cultural and social reality in ways that are respectful and transformative. It offers insightful anecdotes that point to successful models and valuable processes.

Notwithstanding the helpfulness of this resource, it is important to note that the document is based neither on any systematic research into what is actually happening in adult catechesis in Canada, nor on any qualitative study of what is working or not working to empower adults in faith. If there are serious obstacles to effective adult catechesis in Canada, it is important to ask if building a solid base of empirical research might help to address the problem. This study can help to fill the lacuna in research by making a contribution toward the creation of a solid, comprehensive body of qualitative research in this field.

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<sup>27</sup> I was a member of the resource development team for this publication by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, *On Good Soil: Pastoral Planning for Evangelization and Catechesis with Adults* (Ottawa: CCCB, 2011).

### **The Research Focus of this Thesis and a Definition of a *Mature Christian Disciple***

This Doctor of Ministry thesis centers around a case study of a particular process of adult catechesis called *Putting Out into the Deep* that I designed and led, with the help of an Advisory Committee, in the Archdiocese of Ottawa over a six-year period. The central purpose of this case study, which collected quantitative and qualitative data, is to search for processes of adult catechesis that empower mature Christian disciples in the context of empirical research. It is also the intention of this research study to look for related insights about obstacles to effective adult catechesis, and to seek a deeper understanding of the disconnect that exists between the vision and the practice of adult catechesis.

For the purposes of this study, I have constructed a definition of a *mature Christian disciple* by combining central insights about maturity and discipleship derived from several sources: the Church's documents regarding discipleship;<sup>28</sup> the insights of theologians, Anthony Gittins<sup>29</sup> and Raymond Brown;<sup>30</sup> and a notion of *maturity* derived from James Fowler's adult faith development theory: that as adults develop in faith they become able to hold the tensions of paradox, and move progressively outwards towards

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<sup>28</sup> The view of the disciple as one who is in relationship with Jesus, who engages in ongoing learning from Jesus and who is sent in mission to serve the community, permeates the Church's documents. I will identify these documents later in this Introduction, and explore each of them in Chapter One.

<sup>29</sup> Anthony Gittins, *Called to be Sent* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Press, 2008), 4, 9. Gittins holds the idea that discipleship results in a centrifugal force outwards toward the other. He also holds the premise that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is essential and expresses these two notions in many places in his writings.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Church the Apostles Left Behind* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1984). Brown presents the beloved disciple in John's gospel as an illustration that one's Christian identity is not determined by function but by a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

the needs of others.<sup>31</sup> I will explore the various elements of this theoretical construction in more detail in Chapters One and Two. I define a mature Christian disciple as,

someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the community, and who is committed to service of others.<sup>32</sup> He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.

Utilizing a mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative research techniques this case study resulted in findings that contribute to an understanding of the processes that constitute effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. My research data also contribute to an understanding of some of the obstacles to effective adult catechesis, and point to considerations that may deepen our understanding of the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis expressed in the Church's documents and our practice of adult catechesis. The comprehensive description of all dimensions of the process, along with the thick rich description of experience named by participants in the survey responses and during semi-structured interviews, provides significant insight about the dimensions of this experience of adult catechesis that helped them to mature as disciples of Jesus Christ. These findings can be instrumental in supporting and shaping theory for renewed praxis in adult catechesis. Such understanding can help those of us

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<sup>31</sup> James Fowler, *Becoming Adult Becoming Christian* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Boss, 2000), 52.

<sup>32</sup> This definition may be expanded and has been expanded by those who include responsibility for the integrity of all creation as an integral dimension of mature Christian discipleship. For examples of definitions of discipleship that include this understanding see Anthony Gittins, *Called to Be Sent*, 173, where he claims that "...we cannot fail to note the critical importance of physical geography for spirituality and theology..." or Sallie McFague, *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 136.

who are responsible for catechesis to reclaim its heart, and to help heal the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice of adult catechesis.

### **The Contents of this Thesis**

Establishing a theological foundation for this case study requires an exploration of both *the ancient* and *the new* in the practice of adult catechesis. The ancient practice of adult catechesis in the Church engaged the heart of the person in the full biblical sense of the word. Chapter One focuses on Historical Theology to describe what the Church's historical practice and documents have to say about the practice of adult catechesis.<sup>33</sup> It also clearly establishes the vision of the Church's documents regarding adult catechesis and the obligation of those who are responsible to ensure that adults receive effective catechesis that enables them to respond as mature Christian disciples.

Establishing the theoretical framework for my case study involves a review of current literature across several disciplines. The spirit of *ressourcement*<sup>34</sup> that characterized the Second Vatican Council allowed the ancient wisdom of the Church's practice of catechesis to be integrated into the documents that establish the vision and direction for its current practice. Further to this ancient wisdom there is also new insight

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<sup>33</sup> Practical theologian Don Browning describes how Historical Theology asks, "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are confronted as honestly as possible?" See Don Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), 49.

<sup>34</sup> *Ressourcement* is the call to critical retrieval of the richness of the Church's tradition in light of our current context. For a detailed examination of the role this played at Vatican Council II see Gerald O'Collins, S.J., "Ressourcement and Vatican II" in *Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth-Century Catholic Theology* Gabriel Flynn and Paul D. Murray, eds (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2012), 372-392, or John O'Malley, S.J., *Vatican II: The Council of Rapprochement* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University, 2012), 8.

to consider in the search for processes of adult catechesis that empower mature Christian disciples. In Chapter Two I explore literature from several fields: sociology of religion, adult religious education, adult education - particularly that of transformative learning-adult development theory, and adult faith development theory. Expertise from all of these disciplines is needed to construct a framework for effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples.<sup>35</sup>

My case study is comprised of a description, and an empirical research study of the catechetical series, *Putting Out into the Deep*. The description is constructed from a number of archived documents, participant testimony and my memories of observations as researcher-participant. The empirical research study utilizes a mixed methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative data. It utilizes descriptive data, a survey and a series of semi-structured small group interviews. Chapter Three explains my research methodology and methods. It begins with an explanation of case study methodology, followed by a presentation of my design and several significant considerations regarding the methodology and analysis of the research data. Chapter Four presents the data from my case study. Chapter Five focuses on further analysis and interpretation of the case study findings. It begins with the construction of conceptual categories based upon the data findings and proceeds to an interpretative analysis by bringing the study findings into dialogue with key insights from conceptual framework established in the literature review in Chapter Two. This analysis presents significant

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<sup>35</sup> Jane Regan holds the position that it is at the intersection of evangelization, transformative learning and adult faith formation that a framework for an adult Church is found. I will explore this further in Chapter Two. See Jane Regan, *Toward an Adult Church* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2002), 80.

findings from my research study and suggests several significant areas for ongoing study and research.

As a work in the field of practical theology, it is the intention of this thesis to propose insights for renewed praxis in adult catechesis that reclaim the heart and empower mature Christian disciples. My Conclusion focuses on bringing all of the study data and analysis into dialogue with the Church's normative texts explored in Chapter One. The goal is to identify the areas for renewed praxis in adult catechesis that emerge from this dialogue. The conclusions make some final suggestions for further research in adult catechesis.

## CHAPTER ONE

### HISTORICAL THEOLOGY: ADULT CATECHESIS THAT EMPOWERS MATURE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

The purpose of this chapter is to establish a normative theological foundation by using Historical Theology to explore adult catechesis. I begin by establishing the purpose of adult catechesis: the empowerment of mature Christian disciples. I use the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus to establish that the empowerment of mature Christian disciples is a matter of the heart as *heart* is understood in the Biblical context.<sup>36</sup>

Then, I trace the historical development of adult catechesis to describe the wisdom of the early practice of adult catechesis, and to demonstrate how “the heart went out of things”<sup>37</sup> with the epistemology associated with Western Enlightenment education. Following this, I explore how the spirit of *ressourcement* that permeated the Second Vatican Council enkindled the desire to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis that has since been the focus of the Church’s documents regarding this ministry. I explore the related conciliar and post-conciliar documents that establish the Church’s current vision and direction for adult catechesis.

Finally, I present some research from sociology of religion that demonstrates the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis presented in the Church’s vision and

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<sup>36</sup> I will establish this biblical definition of “heart” later in this chapter.

<sup>37</sup> This is an expression I borrow from education expert, Parker Palmer. I will explain my use of it later in this chapter. Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco, California: Harper Collins, 1993), x.

our current practice of adult catechesis. I conclude this chapter by articulating the central research questions which I will bring to my review of the literature in Chapter Two.

### **The Purpose of Adult Catechesis: Empowering Mature Christian Disciples**

The purpose of adult catechesis is to empower mature Christian disciples. According to the definition I constructed for this research,<sup>38</sup> this means that adult catechesis must employ processes that enable people to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ, engage more deeply in the life of the Christian community, and grow in their commitment of service to others. This growth is characterized by a deepening desire to learn more, an increasing tolerance towards diverse views and opinions, and an ability to hold the tensions of paradox. It is catechetical processes that reach the hearts of those being catechized that have the greatest potential to enable people to grow in this mature discipleship.

Thomas Groome points out that “(t)he word creed, from the Latin *credere*, means ‘to invest one’s heart’.”<sup>39</sup> This is in contrast to an understanding of belief as an “intellectual assent to a proposition”<sup>40</sup> as it is often now understood. “Heart” is used frequently in both the Hebrew and New Testaments. Its meaning, denoted by the

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<sup>38</sup> See pp. 11-12 of this thesis for the definition of mature Christian disciple constructed for this research study.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Groome, *What Makes Us Catholic? Eight Gifts for Life* (New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2002), 173.

<sup>40</sup> *The Catholic Encyclopedia* defines “belief” as “That state of the mind by which it assents to propositions, not by reason of their intrinsic evidence, but because of authority.” Accessed November 10, 2012. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02408b.htm>

Hebrew word *Lebab*, includes the emotions, the reason and the will.<sup>41</sup> The New Testament Greek word for heart, *kardia*, denotes “...the seat of moral nature and spiritual life... joy... the intentions...the reasoning powers...the will.”<sup>42</sup> The heart, therefore, was understood as the centre of the person. As scholar Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore explains, “...(T)he heart was understood to be the seat of the mind and will as well as the emotion...it was taken to be a representation of the thinking and willing and feeling of the human being.”<sup>43</sup> Benedictine monk, spiritual writer and scholar, David Steindl-Rast, binds all of these notions together in an effective description:

The heart stands for that center of our being at which we are truly ‘together’. Together with ourselves, not split up into intellect, will, emotions, into mind and body.... Together with God, the source of life, the life of my life, welling up in my heart. In order to listen with my heart I must return again and again...just as the eye perceives light and the ear sound, the heart is the organ for meaning.<sup>44</sup>

Catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples is that which reaches the hearts of people. And, in so doing, it empowers Christian disciples who give their hearts to the following of Christ.

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<sup>41</sup> W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testaments* (Nashville Tennessee.: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997), 537.

<sup>42</sup> Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testaments*, 537.

<sup>43</sup> Mary Elizabeth Mullino Moore, *Teaching From the Heart: Theology and Educational Method* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1998), 203-4.

<sup>44</sup> David Steindl-Rast, *A Listening Heart: the Spirituality of Sacred Sensuousness* (New York, New York: Cross Roads Publishing, 1999), 2.

## **An Attempt to Reclaim the Heart of Adult Catechesis**

The fifty years since the Second Vatican Council have been marked by an attempt to reclaim the heart of an adult catechesis that is in the service of mature Christian discipleship. Clear, compelling articulation and life-giving orientations and direction regarding the call of all the baptised to discipleship, as well as the related missionary identity of the Church, characterize the documents that form the bedrock of the Second Vatican Council. In the Church's documents,<sup>45</sup> adult catechesis is defined as an important responsibility, shared by the entire Christian community, to nurture its members in faith that leads to the configuration of one's life to the life of Christ.

The documents reinforce the call of every baptised adult to live his or her baptismal vocation fully by engaging in a relationship of mature discipleship with Jesus Christ. Amidst all of the joys and sorrows of humanity that we share and acknowledge as intimately our own and of our primary concern,<sup>46</sup> the Church's catechetical documents, since the Second Vatican Council, reflect a convergence of the ancient and the new to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis. This includes the renewal of the

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<sup>45</sup> Since Vatican II the most significant universal documents related to adult Catechesis are: *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, *Catechesi Traedendi*, 1979, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines*, 1990, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1993, *The General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997. *The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* was adapted for use in 1972, as a result of the request at Vatican II to renew the Catechumenate. However, it was not officially available in English until 1985, and was published by the Bishops of Canada in 1987. By the time it was printed in Canada, after the rite had been used in practice for more than a decade, there was an established sense that the Catechumenate was a model for all good catechesis and had the power to renew the Christian community. This is clearly expressed in the *Forward* to the Canadian edition of the Rite, published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in 1987.

<sup>46</sup> *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et Spes*, Promulgated by Pope Paul VI, in *Vatican Council II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations*, Austin Flannery, ed. (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Co., 1996).

Baptismal Catechumenate, set in motion by the Second Vatican Council, and a growing awareness that this particular catechetical process provides a model for effective adult catechesis.<sup>47</sup>

### **Drawing on the Ancient and the New**

The disconnect between the vision of catechesis expressed in the Church's documents and the current practice of adult catechesis exists in spite of the strength and clarity of the vision expressed for adult catechesis in the Church's documents. Why does this disconnect persist? The wisdom we need to heal this disconnect can be found by drawing on both *the ancient* and *the new*.

From the perspective of *the ancient*, our forebearers in faith in the first centuries of the Church anchored their leadership in the call to conversion that their baptism signified, and the commitment to an ongoing life of transformation in the discipline of

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<sup>47</sup> The call for the renewal of the Catechumenate surfaced during the Second Vatican Council. *The General Catechetical Directory* (1971) says that "The catechumenate for adults, which at one and the same time includes catechesis, liturgical participation and community living, is an excellent example of an institute that springs from the cooperation of diverse pastoral functions" (#130). Though it is *The General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) that is cited most often, in current literature, as the source for the insight that the catechumenate is the model for all catechesis, the notion entered the Church's documents much earlier:

The Synod of 1977 affirmed that "the model of all catechesis" is the catechumenate which culminates in baptism (*Synod Message* 8; cf. *EN 44. Chr. L.* 61). According to ancient tradition, every form of catechesis should be inspired by the catechumenal model. Precisely because the catechesis of adults aims at living the Christian life in all its fullness and integrity, the process outlined in the *catechumenate* seems the most appropriate model and should be encouraged everywhere, though it cannot be considered the exclusive model (*Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* (Vatican City: Congregation for the Clergy, 1990), #66).

conforming oneself to Christ as his disciple.<sup>48</sup> There is rich pastoral wisdom in these catechetical orientations that can ground, critique, as well as inspire our current challenges in adult catechesis. With respect to *the new*, we are invited to open ourselves to the emerging expertise in transformative learning theory, adult development theory, and the growing body of literature in practical theology that propose fresh insight regarding the heart of conversion, human maturity, faithful Christian praxis and the processes needed to promote them.

### **Emmaus as Model**

Luke's Gospel scene of the disciples on the road to Emmaus<sup>49</sup> provides a model of adult catechesis that reaches the heart and empowers mature Christian discipleship. Cleopas and another disciple have had an intense experience of disappointment that has left them disillusioned and despairing. In fact, they are so distraught that they have turned their backs on Jerusalem and abandoned the mission. As they journey toward Emmaus, and commiserate along the road, they are met by a stranger, another wayfarer, who asks them what they are talking about. Amazed that anyone could be ignorant of the recent events in Jerusalem, they tell him all that has happened and share the deep despair that has led them to leave the mission of Jesus. Their intense despair speaks of a

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<sup>48</sup> See, as an example, John Chrysostom's reflection on the connection between baptism and Christian living as outlined by Enrico Mazza, in *Mystagogy* (New York, New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1989), 121-123.

<sup>49</sup> See NRSV (New York, New York: Oxford University Press), 1999, Luke 24: 13-35.

commitment that was passionate, “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.”<sup>50</sup>

The stranger allows the disciples to view their experience in a whole new way by bringing their experience into dialogue with their story of faith. Beginning with Moses and the prophets, he provides an entirely new interpretation of their faith history that allows them to see that the suffering and death of the messiah is not the end of the mission. Rather, their experience of the suffering and death of the messiah can be understood in such a way that it makes credible the women’s report, from earlier in the day, that Jesus was seen alive.

Night approaches as the conversation concludes and, as the stranger moves to continue on, the disciples invite him to stay with them. Accepting their invitation he takes bread and breaks it to share with them whereupon they recognize immediately that it is Jesus. He disappears from their sight and they turn to each other saying, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”<sup>51</sup> The disciples are empowered to make a complete *about-face* and return to Jerusalem to share their amazing news with the apostles and to reengage with the mission they had abandoned.

The experience of the disciples is truly a transformative experience of catechesis that leads to authentic conversion marked by transformed actions, and characterized by “hearts that were burning.” So thorough was the experience of transformation for the

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<sup>50</sup> NRSV, Luke 24:21.

<sup>51</sup> NRSV, Luke 24:32.

disciples, that they were literally turned one hundred and eighty degrees around to return to the very place they were running from to reengage in the mission they had abandoned.

While a translation of the word for conversion in Greek, *metanoia* is “a reversal or change of mind,”<sup>52</sup> it is important to understand that there was no mind/heart dichotomy in this story. The use of *metanoia* in the New Testament has to do with a change that is transformative in nature where the person affected sees things in a fundamentally different way than he or she saw them before. It is neither primarily nor exclusively about the rational or intellectual, but about reaching the heart, or the whole person. This is closely related to the connection between the New Testament understanding of *credere* not as a primarily intellectual function, but as the giving oneself, and the giving of one’s heart. Since the heart was understood as the centre of the person, the place of the whole self, the notions of *conversion* and *believing* have to do with the whole person, the centre of the person, the transformation of the person and the giving of the self.

The Emmaus story illustrates adult catechesis that engages the heart where “...the disciple’s sadness, foolishness, and slowness of heart are transformed into joy, insight, and joyful recommitment to Jesus’ way.”<sup>53</sup> Biblical scholar Robert J. Karris, O.F.M.

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Wilkin presents a study of “metanoia” that supports this interpretation of the word. Wilkin argues that standard translations of the word as “repentance,” in English misses the fullness of the meaning of *metanoia* and its pre-Christian roots. See, Robert N. Wilkin, “New Testament Repentance: Lexical Considerations,” *Repentance and Salvation Series*, Bible.org. Accessed November, 2012. <http://bible.org/seriespage/new-testament-repentance-lexical-considerations>.

<sup>53</sup> Robert J. Karris, O.F.M., “The Gospel According to Luke,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy, eds (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1990), 721.

describes how journey symbolizes discipleship in Luke's Gospel.<sup>54</sup> The locus for the engagement of the heart is *on the road*, in the context of the reality of life. It happens in relationship with others who are travelling, with those who can listen to the essential experiences of life, and can bring them into dialogue with the stories of faith, so that minds, hearts and actions are changed, experiences are understood in new life-giving ways, and actions are transformed. Luke's reference to the early Christians as "the people of the way"<sup>55</sup> speaks of this dynamic, active identity of discipleship. It has to do with all that lies at the centre of the person in relationship with Jesus Christ and with the others one meets along the way.<sup>56</sup> As Robert Karris explains, the disciple's eyes are opened to see in a new way. This is accomplished by "...Jesus' interpretation of his life

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<sup>54</sup> Robert J. Karris, O.F.M., "The Gospel According to Luke," in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 720.

<sup>55</sup> Biblical scholar Floyd V. Filson explains that "(t)he term "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22), is used in Acts five times as a designation for the Christian faith and group... another indication that Luke and the apostolic church found journey language congenial." See Floyd V. Filson, "The Journey Motif in Luke-Acts," in *Apostolic History and the Gospel, Biblical and Historical Essays* W. Ward Gasque & Ralph P. Martin, eds (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1970), 68-77.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Groome uses the Emmaus story as a central point of reflection on catechesis in his book *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2011). I began to develop a reflection on the Emmaus story as the central biblical image for my doctoral research question and thesis project proposal during the 2006-2007 academic year. I incorporated the Lucan notion of "journey as discipleship," and the ideas of "on the road" and "meeting people where they are" into my first thesis project draft proposal submitted for my Professional Practicum course in 2007, and into a paper I wrote for a Research Methods course the same year. I wrote two further papers built upon this central reflection on the Emmaus story, one for a Reading Course in Summer of 2007, and the other for a second Reading Course in 2009. The approved copy of my Thesis Project Proposal, registered with the Faculty of Graduate Studies in 2011, contains this reflection on the Emmaus story. When Thomas Groome published *Will There Be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* in 2011, in which he developed many of the same themes regarding the Emmaus story, I felt both encouraged and affirmed in the direction I had chosen for my research, knowing that I had developed a line of thought so similar to that of this renowned scholar and leader in religious education.

s the fulfillment of all God’s promises... (And) the disciples’ eyes are only fully opened after they have shown hospitality to a stranger.”<sup>57</sup>

### **Catechesis at the Service of Mature Christian Discipleship**

The burning hearts of these travellers rekindled the flame of their discipleship and allowed them to be transformed. As theologian Anthony Gittins describes, “Luke is sometimes called the evangelist of mission. He, above all, shows how people’s worlds are turned inside out: from being self-focused or introverted, people discover that life is to be lived for others, that they are called to self-transcendence, and that the meaning of discipleship is mission.”<sup>58</sup>

Christian discipleship is rooted in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Biblical scholar Raymond Brown defines this personal relationship according to “...Johannine idealism: All Christians are disciples and among them greatness is determined by a loving relationship to Jesus, not by function or office.”<sup>59</sup> Gittins affirms this fundamental dimension of discipleship by pointing out that, “...to know you must encounter... We can’t know, much less love, in the abstract.”<sup>60</sup> Gittins highlights the “centripetal and centrifugal forces that characterize mature Christian discipleship. An

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<sup>57</sup> Robert J. Karris, “The Gospel According to Luke,” in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 720-721.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony Gittins, *Encountering Jesus: How People Come to Faith and Discover Discipleship* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori, 2002), 120.

<sup>59</sup> Raymond E. Brown, *The Churches the Apostles Left Behind* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1984), 93. This notion of the “beloved disciple” is one of the concepts I used to construct the definition of the mature Christian disciple I constructed for my research study, (see pp. 11-12 of this thesis).

<sup>60</sup> Anthony Gittins, *A Presence That Disturbs: A Call to Radical Discipleship* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori, 2002), xviii.

encounter with the person of Jesus Christ involves being pulled deeply into a profound relationship of love. The person cannot truly encounter Jesus without experiencing a process of conversion that disturbs the status quo and sends the person forth to live the mission of love that is embodied by Jesus.<sup>61</sup>

The story of the road to Emmaus is marked by precisely such a dynamic, where the encounter with Jesus inspires a response of hospitality to a stranger, and propels the disciples back outwards to joyfully reengage with the very dangers and challenges of their lives from which they were fearfully fleeing. Discipleship is marked by the readiness for *metanoia* or conversion. And this conversion is clearly a *matter of the heart* in the fullest biblical sense of engaging the whole person; mind, emotion, will, and action.

Gittins points out that discipleship often evolves through stages during which the person comes to more deeply identify with Jesus Christ and to have faith in him.<sup>62</sup> In other words, the life of mature Christian discipleship is an ongoing process that unfolds over a life-time. The purpose of adult catechesis is to accompany adult believers as they grow in maturity and deepen their response as disciples of Jesus.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Gittins frequently refers to the idea of the centripetal and centrifugal forces of discipleship in his work. See, Gittins, *Called to be Sent*, 4, and Gittins, *A Presence that Disturbs* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori, 2002), xix.

<sup>62</sup> Gittins, *A Presence that Disturbs*, x.

<sup>63</sup> Gittins' insights about discipleship are among the concepts I used to construct my working definition of discipleship for my case study (see pp. 11-12 of this thesis for the definition).

### Continuity of this Model in the Early Church

The unity of orthodoxy and orthopraxis was the hallmark of discipleship in the early Church, and at the heart of the practice of adult catechesis that was rooted in preparation for initiation of baptism and Eucharist. Authentic conversion and discipleship were the constant and central pastoral concerns. Catechesis was defined by a practice wherein “(a)bsolute sincerity of conversion was considered to be *sine qua non*.”<sup>64</sup>

Initiation into the Christian faith was regarded as a most serious personal commitment, and “...even at the beginning (living in an eschatological time), the Church did not confer baptism lightly.”<sup>65</sup> Rather, “(t)he early Church...did not admit anyone without preparation, without tests, without guarantees.”<sup>66</sup> The engagement of the early Church in a process of catechesis that aimed to reach the hearts of people, and engaged the whole person, is revealed in many sources. Saint Augustine gives testimony to this when he is asked, by his colleague, the deacon Deogratius, for his advice about how to catechize. Augustine comments, “(T)here is no voice to reach the ears of God save the emotion of the heart.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Michael Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: the First Six Centuries* (New York, New York: William Sadlier, Inc., 1979), 23.

<sup>65</sup> Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate*, 13.

<sup>66</sup> Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate*, 25-26.

<sup>67</sup> Augustine, *First Catechetical Instruction (De catechizandis rudibus)* Trans: Rev. Joseph P. Christopher (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1946), 25.

Augustine was a realist who recognized that Christians are not born but are made<sup>68</sup> through an ongoing process of conversion and transformation. He stood humbly before his students noting that “we cannot see into the human heart nor put it on display...You cannot inspect the heart of a new Christian...”<sup>69</sup> He said this by way of encouraging an open pastoral approach to inquirers. He encouraged Deogratias to get to know the people he was catechizing, their motives, concerns and understandings of Christianity, so that he would be able to craft the catechesis to meet their particular needs.

Augustine believed that good catechesis could help open the heart to the transforming presence of God’s grace that would bring about conversion and a change in action. He certainly did not believe that this was simply a matter of transmitting information. Rather, Augustine stressed that the modelling of a Christian life for “the beginners”<sup>70</sup> is as important as the catechist’s knowledge of the Christian faith.<sup>71</sup> Augustine’s own words make it evident that he worked hard to craft homilies that would reach the hearts of those who listened:<sup>72</sup> “When I unpack the holy Scriptures for you, it

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<sup>68</sup> Christianne Brusselmans, “Forward” in Michael Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: The First Six Centuries*, 6.

<sup>69</sup> William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1995), 119.

<sup>70</sup> “Beginners” is the title Augustine gives to those seeking preparation for Christian-life. A literal translation of the title of his text “De catechizandis rudibus” is “catechizing Beginners.”

<sup>71</sup> Augustine, *De catechizandis rudibus*, #14.

<sup>72</sup> In chapters eight and nine of *De catechizandis rudibus* Augustine discusses the various diverse people who come to be catechized and the need to adapt to the needs of each. He advises Deogratius to do the same. For example, in *De catechizandis rudibus*, #12 he instructs Deogratius about the importance of coming to know the inquirer as follows:

is as though I were breaking open bread for you. You who hunger receive it...we have in heaven a common storehouse for from it comes the Word of God.”<sup>73</sup> The parallel with the stranger who opened up the scriptures for the disciples on the road to Emmaus is striking.

Augustine’s understanding of “knowing one’s faith” represented the epistemology of the early church in which the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of the person were integrated: “Knowing the tradition in the Augustinian sense means not only knowing in mind but loving in heart and loving in deed.”<sup>74</sup> This understanding shaped adult catechesis in the early Church. It was firmly anchored in the call to conversion, the seal of that conversion in baptism, and the commitment to an ongoing life of transformation in the discipline of conforming oneself to Christ as his disciple.<sup>75</sup>

### **The Heart Goes Out of Things**

As early as the fourth and fifth centuries, the early Church found itself struggling with the increasingly prevailing attitude that baptism is an entitlement for all who ask for it. This was precipitated not only by Constantine’s edict of Milan in 313 CE and his

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We should certainly also elicit from him [the person to be catechized] some account of himself, so that he may give us to understand what writer he chiefly perused, and with what books he was more familiarly conversant, as these were the means of moving him to wish to be associated with the church.

<sup>73</sup> Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 160.

<sup>74</sup> Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate*, 372.

<sup>75</sup> One examples of this is John Chrysostom’s catechesis on the connection between baptism and Christian living in Enricho Mazza, *Mystagogy* (New York, New York: Pueblo Publishing, 1989), 121-123.

advocacy for Christianity, but also by a growing emphasis on original sin and the necessity of baptism for salvation. As a result, people began to view baptism as a magical guarantee of entrance into heaven, rather than as a sign of discipleship and the call to configure one's life to Christ. Dietrich Bonhoeffer refers to this *magical* notion of baptism as “cheap grace”. “Cheap grace is grace without discipleship...grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”<sup>76</sup> While Bonhoeffer does not deny that God's grace is given freely and without cost, he objects to the failure to be engaged in “(c)ostly grace [which] confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus...”<sup>77</sup>

The early Church embodied a life of “costly grace” in which members were known by “...deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. ‘See’ they say, ‘how they love one another...’”<sup>78</sup> The emphasis was on the importance of the response to God's grace. Becoming a disciple, called by baptism, was a process of systematic apprenticeship under the supervision of an approved mentor who became “...a beloved father or mother.”<sup>79</sup> However, in spite of this orientation toward discipleship, and the efforts of many leaders to avoid a disconnect between the faith and the incarnated everyday lives and actions of people, the Church continued on a path that increasingly emphasized faith as an intellectual assent to propositions. Furthermore, the centrality of discipleship and the sense of the mission of the Church greatly eroded by

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<sup>76</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (New York, New York: Touchstone Books, 1995 (copyright, 1959)), 44.

<sup>77</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship*, 45.

<sup>78</sup> Aaron Milavec, the *The Didache* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2003), 221: quoting the writing of Justin Martyr.

<sup>79</sup> Milavec, *The Didache*, ix.

the Middle Ages due to religious formalism and the polarization of clergy and laity.

Professor of Liturgy Gilbert Ostdiek describes the erosion this way:

By the nineteenth century, the relationship between catechesis and liturgy had been severed for the most part; they occupied separate pastoral niches. Catechesis had been narrowed down to a question-and-answer instruction in the truths of the faith which were set down in a catechism and presented primarily to children, for intellectual assent and understanding. Liturgy had been narrowed both in pastoral practice and in theory. Pastorally, liturgy was understood as the ‘ceremony’ performed publically by the priest before a passive congregation for the honour and glory of God; theologically, liturgy was reduced to the essential minimum [matter and form] required to “confect” a sacrament.”<sup>80</sup>

While the Council of Trent called for a continuation of the universalizing mission, the Reformation left the Christian world fragmented and the Church of Rome hostile and defensive.<sup>81</sup> As educator Parker Palmer points out, “(when) institutional conditions create more combat than community the heart goes out of things....”<sup>82</sup>

Discipleship cannot be lived without the heart. Anthony Gittins clearly articulates the crisis that had evolved for adult catechesis focused on discipleship:

The first generation of disciples actually *knew Jesus*. After the Resurrection and Ascension, new disciples came to *know about Jesus* from those who had known him personally. Gradually, however, membership in the Church became dependent, not on having known Jesus himself, but on *believing in the Creed*... And since *belief* can have as its objectives a set of propositions, whereas the proper object of faith (actually, its subject) is a relationship (actually, a person), it is now possible to be a Christian (believer) without being a person of faith...<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Gilbert Ostdiek, O.F.M., “Liturgical Catechesis” in *The New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, Peter E. Fink, S.J., ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1990), 163-64.

<sup>81</sup> Gittins, *A Presence That Disturbs*, 16-18

<sup>82</sup> Parker Palmer, *To Know As We Are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco, California: Harper Collins, 1993), x.

<sup>83</sup> Gittins, *A Presence that Disturbs*, 17.

The loss of this deep sense of relationship at the heart of catechesis along with the evolving notion of belief as an intellectual assent to propositions resulted in a growing chasm between orthodoxy and orthopraxis that characterized the Church emerging from the Middle Ages.

### **The Problem of “the Triumph of the Mind Alone” and Reclaiming the Heart**

This division of orthodoxy from orthopraxis found its ultimate affirmation in the Church with the Age of Reason and the emergence of what Groome refers to as “the triumph of ‘the mind alone’.”<sup>84</sup> The separation of belief from action and life-style, or of the cognitive from the affective and behavioral dimensions of the person, ultimately plunged the Church into an intense struggle to free itself from the crippling notion that indoctrination is the objective of catechesis.

Thomas Groome has constructed an elaborate explanation of the evolution of epistemology in western culture to demonstrate that the disconnect between *being* and *knowing*, and the related cognitive-rational bias, that emerged from the Age of Reason leaves education impoverished, and greatly in need of renewal.<sup>85</sup> I will explore this further in Chapter Two.

### **Vatican II and Adult Catechesis: Educating for Mature Christian Discipleship**

The conviction that the dichotomy between orthodoxy and orthopraxis had to be healed was also central to the Second Vatican Council: *The Pastoral Constitution on the*

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<sup>84</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 26

<sup>85</sup> For Thomas Groome’s construction of the history of epistemology in the Western World and the need to reclaim *conation* as a wholistic approach to education, see Part One of Groome’s, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco, California: Harper, 1991), 7-129.

*Church in the Modern World* expresses this clearly: “One of the gravest errors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and the practice of their daily lives.”<sup>86</sup> Observing a complex and troubled *modern* world, Pope John XXIII recognized the need for the Church to find a new direction and approach to engage and affect it. The words of his opening speech for the Council on October 11, 1962, which called for the “medicine of mercy” to replace the “language of severity,”<sup>87</sup> set the tone and opened the way for new direction. Historian John O’Malley S.J. describes the operative principles that underlie the Council: *Aggiornamento*, expressing renewal and reform; *ressourcement*, expressing the return to the original roots of the early Church to rediscover vision and identity; and *rapprochement*, expressing reconciliation.<sup>88</sup>

O’Malley points out that these principles reflect a spirit that runs throughout the Council, a spirit of engagement, relationship, and healing broken relationships. The choice for the title of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *The Church in the Modern World* further demonstrates this spirit:

The title is significant: not the church for the modern world; not the church against the modern world; not the church either above or below the modern

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<sup>86</sup> *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, #43, in Austin Flannery, O.P., *The Vatican Collection: Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1998), 943.

<sup>87</sup> Pope John XXIII, *Opening Speech at the Second Vatican Council*, October 11, 1962.

<sup>88</sup> John W. O’Malley, S.J., *Vatican II: Its Aims and Trajectories*, a lecture presented at *University of Saint Thomas, Saint Paul, Minnesota*, Sept., 2012. Accessed Jan, 12, 2013, <http://www.stthomas.edu/theology/vatican2/>.

world, but simply in the modern world. The title is a simple recognition of fact. Every member of the church lives, perforce, “in the world.”<sup>89</sup>

O’Malley explains that the style of the language of the Council reflects what he calls the issues-under-the-issues, and is particularly important for grounding the spirit of the council, and for understanding the documents:

A simple pairing of the model implied by this vocabulary with the model it wanted to replace or balance conveys the vocabulary’s import: from commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to dialogue, from ruling to serving, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to friendship, from suspicion to trust, from rivalry to partnership, from fault-finding to appreciation, and from behavior-modification to inner appropriation. If it is important to reflect on how the council changed us in certain particulars, it is even more important to grasp the new orientation the council envisaged for the church and, in so doing, for every Catholic.<sup>90</sup>

The early Church’s understanding of discipleship is easily recognizable in this *new* orientation that involved every Catholic. The renewed focus on relationship, dialogue, partnership, service, community and conversion express a call to mature relationship with Jesus Christ in mission to the world.

Theologians Catherine Clifford and Richard Gaillardetz present an analysis of discipleship in the Council documents that reveals how central Christian discipleship is to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The Council served to re-establish Christian discipleship as the most fundamental expression of the Christian identity of all the baptized. Clifford and Gaillardetz describe the Council’s recovery of the term

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<sup>89</sup> John W. O’Malley, S.J., *Vatican II: The Council of Rapprochement* (Washington, District of Columbia: Georgetown University, 2012), 8 (This was published originally in French in the September, 2012 edition of *Études*. The emphases are O’Malley’s in the original text).

<sup>90</sup> John W. O’Malley, S.J., *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 2008), 47-49.

*priesthood of all the baptized* as a cornerstone of the Council documents that needs to be properly understood.<sup>91</sup> In response to a common misinterpretation of this term to mean *priesthood of the laity* they explain: “The priesthood of all the faithful was a synonym for Christian discipleship; all Christians, lay *and* clergy, participate in this common priesthood by virtue of their baptism.”<sup>92</sup> Clifford and Gaillardetz clarify that it was not the intention of the Council to posit two different groups of priests within the Church, one lay and one clerical.<sup>93</sup> Rather, the distinct identity of the ministerial priesthood is sorted out in relation to the common identity that unites *all* of the baptized. As the authors point out, Christian discipleship is so fundamental that it is only after grappling with basic questions such as “What does it mean to live out the common priesthood of all the faithful?” [and] “What are the demands of authentic Christian discipleship?” that further distinctions can be defined in ministerial identities and roles.<sup>94</sup>

In addition to *priesthood of all the faithful*, Christian discipleship is expressed in the documents in a number of similar terms that also refer inclusively to all of the baptized such as *Christian vocation* and *vocation of all the baptized*. Other terms such as the *apostolate of the laity* and the *apostolate of the hierarchy* are used to reflect on particular roles of lay and ordained. *The Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*

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<sup>91</sup> Richard R. Gaillardetz and Catherine E. Clifford, *Keys to the Council: Unlocking the Teaching of Vatican II* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 80.

<sup>92</sup> Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council*, 80.

<sup>93</sup> Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council*, 80.

<sup>94</sup> Gaillardetz and Clifford, *Keys to the Council*, 80.

provides a complex description of the essential the role of all the baptised that is echoed throughout the documents:

The need for this urgent and many-sided apostolate is shown by the manifest action of the Holy Spirit moving laymen<sup>95</sup> today to a deeper and deeper sense of their responsibility and urging them on everywhere to the service of Christ and the Church...From the fact of their union with Christ the head flows the laymen's right and duty to be apostles. Inserted as they are in the mystical Body of Christ by baptism and strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit in confirmation, it is by the Lord himself that they are assigned to the apostolate...in order that they may in all their actions offer spiritual sacrifices and bear witness to Christ all the world over....<sup>96</sup>

This *many-sided apostolate* reflects the fundamental, complex and demanding role for all who share the vocation of the baptised as mature Christian disciples. In response to this, the documents also attempt to address the Christian education that is needed to empower people for this role.

Since the primary focus of the *Decree on Christian Education*<sup>97</sup> is the entire enterprise of education, especially the concerns of schools and the rights of all people to have an education, it addresses education from this broad perspective. Within this broad perspective some significant orientations regarding education for Christian life are expressed:

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<sup>95</sup> This reference, as it is written in its original form, uses exclusive language. While I support the use of inclusive language, I present this quote and other references in this thesis that use exclusive language as they are written in their original form.

<sup>96</sup> "Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People", #'s 1 and 3, in Austin Flannery, O.P., *The Vatican Collection: Vatican Council II*, 767-768.

<sup>97</sup> "Decree on Christian Education," in Austin Flannery, O.P., *The Vatican Collection: Vatican Council II*, 727.

All Christians...have a right to a Christian education...especially directed towards ensuring that those who have been baptised...daily become more appreciative of the gift of faith they have received...Moreover, conscious of their vocation, they should learn to give witness to the hope that is in them....

Chief among these [functions in education] is catechetical instruction which illumines and strengthens the faith, develops a life in harmony with the spirit of Christ, stimulates a constant and fervent participation in the liturgical mystery, and encourages mankind<sup>98</sup> to take an active part in the apostolate.<sup>99</sup>

These two key paragraphs reveal a fundamental perspective of the Council's documents regarding the Church's catechizing ministry: Not only is discipleship the purpose of catechesis, but Christians have a right to a Christian education that forms them for discipleship.

The need for adult catechesis is addressed more extensively in the document on the Role of Bishops, since primary responsibility for catechesis rests with the bishop:

Bishops should be especially concerned about catechetical instruction...It should be very carefully imparted...the teachers must observe and order and method suited not only to the matter in hand but also to the character, the ability, the age, and the life-style of their audience....

They should furthermore ensure that catechists are adequately prepared for their task, being well instructed in the doctrine of the Church and possessing both a practical and theoretical knowledge of the laws of psychology and of educational method...They should take steps to re-establish or to modernize the adult catechumenate.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Please see footnote, p. 36 of this thesis regarding exclusive language.

<sup>99</sup> "Decree on Christian Education," #'s 2 and 4, in Austin Flannery, O.P., *The Vatican Collection: Vatican Council II*, 727-730.

<sup>100</sup> "Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church," #14, in Austin Flannery, O.P., 571.

It is important to note, in this document, the obvious significance accorded to catechesis that effectively reaches and engages the person, as well as the importance accorded to well-prepared catechists. Furthermore, this instruction to bishops reveals a growing awareness that collaboration with experts in the evolving field of social sciences, especially in human development and education methodology, is necessary for the development of effective catechesis.

The call to re-establish the adult catechumenate became a particularly important development which opened the way for adult catechesis to be recognized as the principal form of catechesis, and for the catechumenate process to become a primary model. The decree ends with a directive to establish “...a directory for catechetical instruction of the Christian people in which the fundamental principles of this instruction and its organization will be dealt with...”<sup>101</sup> This directive expresses the priority of catechesis following the council. It also suggests that the bishops were keenly aware of their need for collaboration with experts to help craft effective processes for catechesis that could empower mature Christian disciples capable of responding to the complex needs of the time.

Over all, the Council documents express a strong commitment to develop educational opportunities that empower mature Christian disciples who can engage in a “fully conscious and active participation”<sup>102</sup> in a whole and integral Christian life as

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<sup>101</sup> “Decree on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church,” # 44, in Austin Flannery, O.P., 590.

<sup>102</sup> Although this expression is used in *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, #14, to refer to engagement in the liturgy, it captures the spirit of the invitation to all the baptized, that permeates all of the Conciliar documents, to fully engage in a whole and integrated Christian life.

baptised members of the Church. This commitment opened the way to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis oriented toward the empowerment of mature Christian disciples.<sup>103</sup>

### **Documents Following the Council**

The catechetical documents that follow Vatican II reflect the realization that if the baptised were to be able to respond to their vocation to be mature Christian disciples in mission to the world, then educational opportunities that would form them and empower them for this vital work would need to be constructed. The idea that “(o)ne is not born Christian, one is made Christian”<sup>104</sup> re-emerged as a central focus linking this vision of catechesis to the one held by the early Church. It opened the way to reclaim the kind of model that was at work on the road to Emmaus, where coming to faith and growing in faith are understood as a process, and people must be met according to their needs. Once again, it was understood that the purpose of the Church’s catechizing ministry is to create learning environments that open the way for conversion, transformation and integration that reach the heart and can lead to a full living faith.

### ***The General Catechetical Directory, 1971***

*The General Catechetical Directory* was the first document to address this renewed vision of catechesis when it was published in 1971. It was a direct response to the expressed need of the bishops that they required direction and help for catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. The catechetical practice of the Church that followed the Council of Trent, which concluded in 1552, indicates that children were the

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<sup>104</sup> Dujarier, *A History of the Catechumenate: the First Six Centuries*, 6.

primary focus of the Church's catechizing activity. *The General Catechetical Directory* represented a seismic shift in orientation.

... (C)atechesis for adults, since it deals with persons who are capable of an adherence that is fully responsible, must be considered the chief form of catechesis. All the other forms, which are indeed always necessary, are in some way oriented to it. In obedience to the norms of the Second Vatican Council, shepherds of souls should also strive "to re-establish or better adapt the instruction of adult catechumens."<sup>105</sup>

Two essential points, expressed in this 1971 statement, have become the foundation for all catechesis since: that the mission of the Church is "adult work" that requires mature Christian disciples who are empowered to engage in it; and that the catechumenate is a process-oriented, apprenticeship-based model that can inspire all sound catechesis. This is the case because the catechumenate reflects the integral nature of mature Christian discipleship and the responsibility of the entire Christian community in the educating enterprise:

The catechumenate for adults, which at one and the same time includes catechesis, liturgical participation, and community living, is an excellent example of an institute that springs from the co-operation of diverse pastoral functions. Its purpose is to direct the spiritual journey of persons who are preparing themselves for the reception of baptism, and to give direction to their habits of thought and changes in moral living. It is a preparatory school in Christian living, an introduction to the religious, liturgical, charitable, and apostolic life of the People of God. Not only the priests and catechists, but the entire Christian community, through sponsors who act in its name, is engaged in this work.<sup>106</sup>

Further to these foundational points, there are four orientations in this document that continue to be essential. Firstly, it recognized the critical need for collaboration

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<sup>105</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *General Catechetical Directory* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1971), #20.

<sup>106</sup> *General Catechetical Directory, 1971*, #130.

between Church leaders responsible for catechesis and human scientists with the expertise in education and human development for effective catechesis. Standing in the shadow of the rapidly growing fields of social science, the Directory also recognized that research expertise for contextual analysis, needs assessments, the development of educational strategies to address the needs, and for the assessment of the achievement of goals and objectives was imperative.<sup>107</sup> The directory realized that, “Because of the rapid development in present-day culture, the catechetical movement will in no way be able to advance without scientific study.”<sup>108</sup> It emphasized that the insights gained from research should lead to concrete plans and goals for catechesis that could be implemented and evaluated.<sup>109</sup> The document even suggests that the catechist herself or himself, exemplifying mature Christian life, must be a person who can analyze and respond to the needs of current society.<sup>110</sup> Secondly, the document stressed the importance of utilizing the best methods and technology available for the educating enterprise.<sup>111</sup> Thirdly, the Directory called for international, national, local and parochial structures dedicated to catechesis.<sup>112</sup> The Directory described a vision of catechetical institutes being the primary locus for the preparation of catechists and the

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<sup>107</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, #'s 9, 27, 46, 74, 99, 100, 101, 102 112, 131.

<sup>108</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, #131.

<sup>109</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, #103.

<sup>110</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, #97.

<sup>111</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, #'s 120-123.

<sup>112</sup> *General Catechetical Directory* 1971, # 98.

continued development of catechetical expertise,<sup>113</sup> and expressed the need for bishops' conferences to establish pastoral plans for catechesis.<sup>114</sup>

Finally, the Directory revealed an understanding of catechesis as a process of integral formation that engages the whole person. The importance of a mature faith permeates the document. This mature faith is achieved by "Christocentric, Trinitarian Theocentric Catechesis."<sup>115</sup> In other words, mature discipleship, which flows from Jesus Christ, flows also from the relationship of the Trinity from whom Jesus Christ is indivisible. Further, this maturity is marked by agency in the world and the ability "... to evaluate correctly, in the light of faith, the sociological and cultural changes in contemporary society."<sup>116</sup> Evident here is the dynamic of mature Christian discipleship defined by Gittins: the *centripetal force* of relationship with Jesus Christ results in the *centrifugal movement* outwards to others.<sup>117</sup>

*The General Catechetical Directory of 1971* is a marker in the development of adult catechesis, of the profound shift from question-and-answer models focused on children, toward integral models that reclaim the heart of adult catechesis as processes that empower mature Christian disciples. It remains an essential foundation and point of reference for the continued development of effective adult catechesis.

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<sup>113</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, # 105.

<sup>114</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, # 104.

<sup>115</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, #'s 40, 41.

<sup>116</sup> *General Catechetical Directory*, 1971, # 97 a).

<sup>117</sup> Gittins, *Called to be Sent*, 4.

### *Surrounding Pastoral Documents*

The period in between 1971, when the *General Catechetical Directory* was published, and 1997, when the *General Directory for Catechesis* (hereafter *GDC*) was published, saw the emergence of several pastoral documents. Although these documents are not principally focused on catechesis, they must be noted because of their influence on the catechizing ministry of the Church. The first, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI in 1975, “...enunciates...a particularly important principle, namely, that of catechesis as a work of evangelization in the context of the mission of the Church.”<sup>118</sup> This document’s explicit attention to the connection between catechesis and evangelization squarely positioned catechesis as a central concern for the missionary activity of the contemporary Church.

This essential link is reiterated by John Paul II in *Catechesi Tradendae*<sup>119</sup> in 1979, and is expressed time and again in the various ensuing documents of John Paul II written over the course of his pontificate. In particular, *Familiaris Consortio*<sup>120</sup> and *Christifideles Laici*<sup>121</sup>, the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortations published following the synods of 1980 and 1987 addressing, respectively, with topics of the mission of the family and the vocation of the laity, must be mentioned for the elaboration they gave to

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<sup>118</sup> *GDC*, #4.

<sup>119</sup> John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae* (Vatican City: Vatican), 1979.

<sup>120</sup> John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio* (Vatican City: Vatican), 1980.

<sup>121</sup> John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici* (Vatican City: Vatican), 1987.

the roles of family and the laity in general in the mission of the Church. The impact of these and other pastoral documents, along with the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in 1992, “(n)ecessitated a revision of the *General Catechetical Directory* so as to adapt this valuable theological-pastoral instrument to new situations and needs.”<sup>122</sup>

***Catechesi Tradendae, Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community and the General Directory for Catechesis***

The many complex challenges that characterized the modern world in the years following Vatican II, such as secularization, religious pluralism, growing atheism, the ongoing explosion of technology, and globalization, created an equally complex and challenging context for adult catechesis. This led to a decision for the Fourth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, September-October, 1977, to be devoted to the topic of *Catechesis in our Time*. The post-synodal apostolic exhortation that followed this synod built upon the foundation established in the *General Catechetical Directory* of 1971. It named mature Christian discipleship clearly and directly as the purpose for catechesis, “...the name of catechesis was given to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples...”<sup>123</sup>

While the word “mature” is not used in this particular excerpt because it also refers to the catechesis of children, the document describes the catechesis of adults as “the principal form of catechesis, because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully

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<sup>122</sup> GDC,#6.

<sup>123</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1979), #1.

developed form.”<sup>124</sup> It names a personal relationship with the person of Jesus as the heart of this discipleship, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ.”<sup>125</sup> And *Catechesi Tradendae* establishes, unequivocally, the central and essential place of catechesis in the life of the Church:

The more the Church, whether on the local or the universal level, gives catechesis priority over other works and undertakings the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community of believers and of her external activity as a missionary Church. As the 20th century draws to a close, the Church is bidden by God and by events - each of them a call from Him - to renew her trust in catechetical activity as a prime aspect of her mission. She is bidden to offer catechesis her best resources in people and energy, without sparing effort, toil or material means, in order to organize it better and to train qualified personnel.<sup>126</sup>

Furthermore, John Paul II reaffirmed the integral nature of orthodoxy and orthopraxis, “It is useless to play off orthopraxis against orthodoxy: Christianity is inseparably both.”<sup>127</sup> He validated the essential connection between experience and doctrine by directing that “(n)or is any opposition to be set up between a catechesis taking life as its point of departure...”<sup>128</sup> And he reaffirmed the catechumenate as a model for all good catechesis, and the priority of adult catechesis.<sup>129</sup>

*Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines*, published in 1990 by the International Council for Catechesis (hereafter COINCAT as it

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<sup>124</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #43.

<sup>125</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #5.

<sup>126</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #15.

<sup>127</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #22.

<sup>128</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #22.

<sup>129</sup> J.P.II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #43.

is referred to in the document), is the only Vatican document devoted exclusively to adult catechesis. While it addressed itself to “the whole People of God,”<sup>130</sup> its primary focus was to offer support for “those lay catechists who are already engaged in catechesis of adults or who are preparing themselves for this service.”<sup>131</sup> The document“(highlighted) only the most significant aspects of the catechesis of adults.”<sup>132</sup> The aim was to address some common global issues, problems and potential solutions, while recognizing the need to develop approaches to these problems at the local level.<sup>133</sup>

The writers of the document sought to affirm with the same “spirit of renewal of the Second Vatican Council....the centrality and importance of the catechesis of adults.”<sup>134</sup> The committee utilized the documents of the Second Vatican Council, John Paul II’s *Catechesis Tradendae* and *Christifideles Laici, the General Catechetical Directory* and Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as foundational sources for the principles and guidelines they presented in this document. Quoting from Pope John Paul II’s words in *Catechesi Tradendae* that identified adult catechesis as an urgent need, the document reaffirmed that “it (adult catechesis) is the principal form of catechesis because it is addressed to persons who have the greatest responsibility and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form.”<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> International Council for Catechesis (COINCAT), *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1990), #8.

<sup>131</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, # 8.

<sup>132</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, #7.

<sup>133</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, #7.

<sup>134</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, #4.

<sup>135</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, #4.

*Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community* emphasized the importance of creating catechetical opportunities for adults keenly attuned to addressing the central issues and questions of their lives. It utilized the *Parable of the Sower* to capture the “diversity of the soil” and the need to know and respond to the “different kinds of terrain...of adults in today’s Church.”<sup>136</sup> Some of the central aspects of this document are: an emphasis on the necessity of addressing this diversity; the need for developing accessible language for learners, and giving attention to the need to create a variety of locations and models for catechesis; a clear affirmation that “(a)dult catechesis is an invitation to faithfully practice the discipleship of Jesus and to judge all personal, social and spiritual experiences in the light of faith.”<sup>137</sup>

The *GDC* was published in 1997 as a revision to the *General Catechetical Directory* of 1971. This revision “...undertaken by the Congregation for the Clergy, was conducted by a group of Bishops and experts in theology and catechesis.”<sup>138</sup> The original inspiration and content of the *General Catechetical Directory* were respected. Cardinal Hoyos, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy at that time, explained that the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*,<sup>139</sup> along with major

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<sup>136</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, #9.

<sup>137</sup> COINCAT, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, #36.

<sup>138</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *GDC*, #7

<sup>139</sup> John Paul II promulgated the publishing of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* with his Apostolic Constitution, *Fidei Depositum* on October 11, 1992. The first English-language version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was published by the Vatican Press in 1993. Quotes from *Catechesi Tradendae* are used to define catechesis in #'s 4-10 of the Prologue of the catechism. Note that #4 of the Prologue quotes # 1 of *Catechesi Tradendae* which I have presented in footnote #122, p.44 of this thesis.

interventions of the Magisterium reflected in the Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortations *Familiaris Consortio* and *Christifideles Laici*, “necessitated a revision of the *General Catechetical Directory* so as to adapt this valuable theologico-pastoral instrument to new situations and needs.”<sup>140</sup>

The *GDC* recalls the biblical images of the Sower and the Seed<sup>141</sup> from *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, emphasizing the importance of knowing the soil of the believer for effective catechesis. Using references to earlier documents such as *Gaudium et Spes* and Pope John Paul II’s *Catechesi Tradendae*, the Introduction to the *GDC* identifies the mature Christian disciple: “The disciple of Jesus Christ deeply shares the “joys and hopes, the sadness and the anxiety of the men today.”<sup>142</sup> The Introduction continues with an elaboration of all this disciple is called to be in the world. Part I adds an explicit statement about the nature of this call by grounding catechesis in the missionary mandate of Jesus Christ: “(A)fter his Resurrection together with the Father sent the Holy Spirit in order that he might accomplish from within the work of salvation and that he might animate his disciples to continue the mission to the whole world.”<sup>143</sup> This vision of mature discipleship forms the bedrock for the *GDC*.

The *GDC* reiterates the priority of adult catechesis, affirms the catechumenate as model for all good catechesis, and emphasizes the importance of a Christocentric,

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<sup>140</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *GDC* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1997), #'s 6,7.

<sup>141</sup> See NRSV, Mark 4:3-8 for the complete text of this parable.

<sup>142</sup> *GDC*, #16.

<sup>143</sup> *GDC*, #34.

Trinitarian Theocentric Catechesis. It continues to reflect on the need for catechesis that meets the real questions and issues of people's lives. It gives a considerable amount of attention to educational methods, human development, and socio-cultural issues given the considerable development in each of these fields since 1971. It is the current normative document regarding the Church's catechizing ministry.

Running through all the documents are two overarching themes that require mention because of their centrality to the exploration of adult catechesis that reclaims the heart, or engages the whole person. First, the documents clearly acknowledge what John Paul II expresses so succinctly in *Catechesi Tradendae*:

To begin with, it is clear that the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right. On the one hand, it is certainly a duty springing from a command given by the Lord and resting above all on those who in the new covenant receive the call to the ministry of being pastors. On the other hand, one can likewise speak of a right: from the theological point of view every baptized person, precisely the reason of being baptized, has the right to receive from the Church instruction and education enabling him or her to enter on a truly Christian life...<sup>144</sup>

This right to catechesis that empowers adults as mature Christian believers is an important point of reference for considering further directions and efforts in adult catechesis. I will return to this point of reference in later chapters. Secondly, the documents express the recognition that reclaiming the heart of catechesis from the early Church is a source of renewal for the emerging vision and commitment to catechesis: "It is a time in which the evangelizing vigour of the original ecclesial community has in

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<sup>144</sup> John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae*, #14.

some ways re-emerged.”<sup>145</sup> This perspective helps to open the way for continued exploration in the chapters that will follow.

### **Reclaiming the Heart of Adult Catechesis: The Continuing Problem**

Over the last several decades in Canada, concerted efforts have been made to engage adults in catechetical processes intended to be faithful to the vision of Vatican II: To form all the baptized for the vocation of mature Christian discipleship to which they are called. The *Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops* (CCCB) established a *National Office for Religious Education* that has published a number of resources over the years that embody the vision for effective adult catechesis expressed in the Church’s documents.<sup>146</sup> Most recently, the document *On Good Soil* was modelled on the *GDC*<sup>147</sup> to provide a pastoral planning tool for adult catechesis in the Canadian setting.

Two institutes were initiated at Saint Paul University, in collaboration the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, for the purposes of educating people in Liturgy and Religious Education: *Summer Institute in Pastoral Liturgy*; and *Summer Institute in Religious Education*. Two national publications were launched, *Caravan*<sup>148</sup> as a resource designed to publicize current Canadian initiatives in religious education,

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<sup>145</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *GDC*, Preface, #2.

<sup>146</sup> Three major resources published by the CCCB to assist adult catechesis are *Adult Faith*, *Adult Church*, 1981, *Pathways to Faithfulness*, 1993, and *On Good Soil*, 2011.

<sup>147</sup> See *On Good Soil*, Preface, #3 for this reference.

<sup>148</sup> *Caravan* was produced by the *National Office of Religious Education* of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, and published by CCCB Publications from 1987 to 2004.

and *Celebrate*<sup>149</sup> as a resource for liturgy. Furthermore, many dioceses initiated formation programmes, over the past decades, specifically designed to form adults in a mature and responsive faith. Leona English describes the lay ministry education movement in the past few decades as the “greatest adult education thrust of recent times.”<sup>150</sup>

It is evident that many efforts have been made, and that energy and expertise have abounded for adult catechesis. However, these efforts, on the whole, do not seem to be successful in empowering adults as mature Christian disciples. The Church’s documents present a vision of mature Christian disciples, engaged in a life-giving personal relationship with Jesus Christ, empowered to achieve the mission of the Church. The transforming encounter on the road to Emmaus mirrors this vision. Yet, the Church in Canada does not seem to be marked by an increasing number of people empowered for mature Christian discipleship. Instead, like the rest of the western world, Canada is characterized by a growing number of people who are distancing themselves from the Christian community.<sup>151</sup> The content of our catechetical documents reveals that we have reclaimed the heart of adult catechesis in theory. But we do not seem to have reclaimed it in practice.

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<sup>149</sup> *Celebrate* was published by Novalis Press from 1988 to 2012 when publication ceased.

<sup>150</sup> English, *Adult Education of the Laity: A Church Concern, Theoforum*, 132.

<sup>151</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 11.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Those of us who are formally responsible for the Church's catechizing ministry must continue to grapple with the challenge to make real, in fact, what is expressed in principle in our catechetical documents. Given the clear vision of the Church's documents about the essential place of adult catechesis, and its indispensable role for forming mature Christian disciples who are capable of fulfilling the mission of the Church, it is somewhat puzzling that a disconnect between the vision and practice of adult catechesis persists.

A practice of effective adult catechesis that reaches the hearts of people and empowers them as mature Christian disciples is needed to heal the disconnect. This means searching for the processes in adult catechesis that empower mature Christian disciples, identifying obstacles that impede effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples, and looking for greater insight into the reasons for the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice.

This leads to several questions surrounding the present context. These include: What needs to be understood about the sociological context for adult catechesis? What are the obstacles to effective adult catechesis and how might they be addressed? What is fueling the disconnect between the vision and practice of adult catechesis and how might this be addressed? What catechetical processes engage the whole person and empower them as mature Christian disciples? What is meant by Christian "maturity" and what processes promote it? These are the central questions that focus my exploration of the current literature in Chapter Two.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW RELATED TO THE SEARCH FOR ADULT CATECHESIS THAT EMPOWERS MATURE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

A comprehensive literature review which addresses the central questions of my thesis related to effective adult catechesis involves a survey across a number of disciplines. As religious education expert Jane Regan points out,

My contention is that there is a significant intersection where evangelization, transformative learning, and adult faith formation cross paths. And it is in that intersection that the framework for forming an Adult Church is found.”<sup>152</sup>

The intersection that I will explore in order to construct a framework that can assist the search for praxis in adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples is similar to the one Regan describes. The intersection where adult catechesis, adult faith development (and adult development) theory and transformative learning cross paths shapes the framework I use to explore effective adult catechesis. It also allows me to examine obstacles to effective adult catechesis and provides insight into the disconnect between the Church’s vision and practice in this field. The framework for this study is strengthened by contributions from sociology of religion and practical theology.

#### **A Review Across a Number of Disciplines**

I will begin my review of the current literature with some insight from sociologist of religion Reginald Bibby who has gathered information about adults, their spiritual lives, and their engagement with faith communities that provides much needed insight about the real context adult catechesis must address in Canada. Bibby also

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<sup>152</sup> Jane Regan, *Toward an Adult Church* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2002), 80.

provides a provocative challenge to current readings of secularization in Canada that may help stimulate reflection and creative and effective responses in adult catechesis.

The exploration of research from sociology of religion is followed by a examination of a variety of current work in the field of religious education that helps to address my central research questions. These writings identify the obstacles to effective adult catechesis and promote education that supports effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. Some of this literature also offers insight into the reasons for the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice of adult catechesis. I also examine the effort in the field of catechesis to reclaim the language of "catechesis." This effort reveals important orientations and priorities for identifying obstacles and reclaiming the heart of adult catechesis.

This survey of current literature about adult catechesis is followed by an examination of literature that promotes the partnership between adult catechesis and adult education, especially transformative learning. After this, I explore the essential contribution transformative learning makes to effective adult catechesis. Next, I present *Shared Christian Praxis*<sup>153</sup> as a method for effective adult catechesis. This method of theological reflection represents the partnership between adult catechesis and practical theology.

Then, I present the need to consider power relationships in adult catechesis – a perspective the partnership with transformative learning brings to the fore. Following

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<sup>153</sup> This is a method of theological reflection used for religious education and the practice of Ministry in Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, The Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco, California: Harper Collins, 1991).

this, I look outside of the Christian perspective to explore some insights that are emerging in Jewish education about education that empowers mature believers. Finally, I will survey some current work in adult development theory and adult faith development theory that define maturity, and present important considerations for effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples.

### **Adult Catechesis in a Particular Sociological Context**

Reginald Bibby's research indicates that many people in Canada are not finding experiences of faith in their churches that are relevant and meaningful to their lives. His studies reveal a complex picture of religion in Canada.<sup>154</sup> This picture provides an essential horizon against which to search for adult catechetical processes that empower mature Christian disciples. It can enable a better understanding of the obstacles to effective adult catechesis and offer insight about the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice of adult catechesis.

Bibby presents a number of key insights that are relevant to this research. First, he explains that, "(t)he interests and needs that in days gone by called out for religion continue to call out today. A significant and fairly stable numerical core continues to value faith. That core is currently being enhanced considerably by immigration."<sup>155</sup> Furthermore, Bibby predicts that "with accelerated immigration, the global vitality of religion is having and will continue to have a dramatic impact on the state of religion in

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<sup>154</sup> See Reginald Bibby, *Beyond the God's and Back: Religion's Rise and Demise and Why it Matters* (Lethbridge, Alberta: Project Canada Books, 2011) and his most recent publication, *A New Day: the Resilience & Restructuring of Religion in Canada* (Lethbridge, Alberta: Project Canada Books, 2012).

<sup>155</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 3.

Canada.”<sup>156</sup> This is a unique and significant fact about Canada. The percentage of people who participate regularly has remained essentially stable over the past twenty years at between 20-25%.<sup>157</sup> This is contrary to common predictions during the 1980’s that the numbers would continue to plunge to levels under 10% as they did in Europe. Therefore, while the effects of secularity are certainly present and challenging, they need to be understood within this particular Canadian context. Furthermore, from the perspective of adult catechesis, this “immigrant population” constitutes a significant portion of adult believers that needs to be clearly identified and understood.

Bibby’s research indicates that many common assumptions about religion in Canada are not correct: “What most of us thought was happening isn’t happening. Religion is not going away.”<sup>158</sup> However, it is not Bibby’s intention to dismiss either the challenging effects of secularity on religion in Canada, or to deny the decline of religious practice in Canada and the need to effectively address this problem. As Bibby states, “it isn’t that the secularization thesis doesn’t have a measure of applicability to some global settings....”<sup>159</sup> He describes some of the effects of secularization in Canada quite clearly: “... a growing number of people have decided to take a pass on religion. A noteworthy segment of the population is something like ‘the politically undecided’ – neither embracing nor rejecting faith.”<sup>160</sup> However, he presents an interpretation of

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<sup>156</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 11.

<sup>157</sup> Reginald Bibby, “A Mirror of Faith on the Canadian Wall,” *The Globe and Mail*, Monday, Apr. 25, 2011.

<sup>158</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, Preface, 1.

<sup>159</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 8.

<sup>160</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 3.

secularization that is in keeping with his research findings: “(T)o the extent secularization is viewed as linear and relentless, leading to the inevitable demise of religion, it simply does not provide an accurate analysis of developments in Canada.”<sup>161</sup>

Bibby explains that the predictions of the demise of religion in Canada that were common during the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s have not been realized: “We now know that the picture painted by academics, religious leaders, the media and others was inaccurate. They were wrong.”<sup>162</sup> The research of Paul Bramadat, another Canadian sociologist of religion, complements and supports the findings of Bibby. Bramadat claims that evidence indicates that there has never been a full *secularization* of Canadian society, and religion continues to play a central role in Canadian life that may even grow in importance. Bramadat suggests that we are in a time of postsecularity which has yet to fully take shape:

I would like to suggest that in the West we are living in what I think of as an *ideological interregnum* period – between the triumphant liberal secularist modernism that has guided Western societies for roughly a hundred years on the one hand and what the German scholar Jurgen Habermas and others have more recently called an emergent postsecular society on the other hand. I think it behooves those of us who study religion and society to be honest and to say that we do not yet know what this post-secular stage of our societies will look like.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 6.

<sup>162</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 8.

<sup>163</sup> Paul Bramadat, “Our Current Interregnum and the Decline of Secular Modernity” A lecture delivered at a plenary session of the *Ethnicity and Democratic Governance Conference* Montreal, Quebec 27 October 2007, 3. Accessed January 2013. [http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/Bramadat\\_e.pdf](http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/Bramadat_e.pdf)

Bibby's and Bramadat's research encourages those responsible for adult catechesis to avoid what Bibby refers to as the "psychological shackles"<sup>164</sup> of the common attitudes that have prevailed about secularization which, as he points out, "hardly made for a climate that stimulated inspiration, adventure, and creativity."<sup>165</sup> Since inspiration, adventure and creativity are needed for the creation of adult catechesis that reaches the hearts of people, these insights are important for the catechizing ministry of the Church. Furthermore, a misreading of secularization in Canada may lead to misinterpretations about secularity and its effects on adult believers, as well as to false assumptions about the spirituality of Canadian adults.

Indeed, faced with the reality that "a growing number of people have decided to take a pass on religion,"<sup>166</sup> one may draw the conclusion that this indicates that a growing number of people are simply not interested in their spiritual lives anymore. Bibby exposes the error of this perspective, and also reveals that such conclusions are too simplistic. His research from 2009 indicates that 41% of the total Canadian population continues to identify itself as "Roman Catholic,"<sup>167</sup> even though many are not regularly engaged in the activity of the Church community by attending Sunday worship. A large percentage of people surveyed, who attend weekly church services less than once a month and continue to self-identify as "Roman Catholic," indicate that they

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<sup>164</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 7.

<sup>165</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 7.

<sup>166</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 15.

<sup>167</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 30.

are open to reconnecting with the Christian community if it could be worthwhile for them.<sup>168</sup> The studies indicate that what people consider *worthwhile* is engagement with the existential questions of life that relate to relationships and family, life after death, the meaning of life, and dealing with the challenges of life. “Recent General Social Survey data (2010) generated by Statistics Canada show that a majority of Canadians both engage in personal religious and spiritual practices as well as view related religious and spiritual beliefs as important to the way they live.”<sup>169</sup> When asked the question, “How often in the past year have you engaged in personal religious practice or spiritual activities?” only 35% of the total population answered “Never” while 41% indicated “Weekly.”<sup>170</sup> Similarly, when asked about the level of importance of spiritual and religious beliefs to how they live their lives, 34% and 31% indicated “very” and “some,” respectively, while only 18% responded “not at all.”<sup>171</sup>

As Bibby points out, “(t)his hardly points to a nation that has down-graded the importance of religion and/or spirituality.”<sup>172</sup> However, it is essential to understand that many are not engaging with the Christian community to meet their religious/spiritual needs.

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<sup>168</sup> This is a consistent finding in Bibby’s research over the years. See, for example, his statement in *Restless Gods* (Toronto, Ontario: Stoddart, 2002), 48: “...beyond the 20% or so Canadians who attend services every week or more, there are another 60%-plus who continue to identify with the country’s dominant traditions.”; and see Bibby’s table, 50, that demonstrates that 56% of Catholics who attend Sunday mass less than once a month indicate that they would consider becoming more involved in their faith community if they found it more worthwhile.

<sup>169</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 17.

<sup>170</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 17.

<sup>171</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 17.

<sup>172</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 17.

Leona English and Elizabeth Tisdell make a similar observation based upon their study of the place of spirituality within the field of adult education:

As many adult educators have noted, while religious groups may have been the standard bearers of rituals and traditions that have supported and nurtured us spiritually, organized religion has also had a history of colonizing the minds, bodies, and spirits and has not always attended to meaning making or to justice (English et al., 2003). This is why some people leave their religious traditions behind; they are attempting to separate spirituality as an experience of the sacred (which can happen anywhere) from the power relations and politics of religious institutions.<sup>173</sup>

These observations, coupled with Bibby's research findings indicate that it is important not to equate a lack of engagement in the Christian community with a lack of care or concern with one's spiritual life.

These insights invite careful study of the reasons for the lack of engagement as well as consideration of effective responses. Bibby claims that it is important to move beyond an old paradigm which is too simplistic and is no longer helpful. According to this paradigm people are either "in" or "out"; "churched" or "unchurched." Bibby recommends a move toward a more helpful paradigm that acknowledges the various levels of involvement people have. For example, in the catholic community, many people will attend liturgical celebrations for Christmas, Easter, baptisms, marriages and funerals even though they may not attend Sunday mass on a regular basis. Bibby points out two important insights in this regard: firstly, that people who engage in the life of the community only on these occasions often have a strong self-identification as "Catholic";

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<sup>173</sup> Leona M. English and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, "Spirituality and Adult Education," in *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*, Carol E. Kasworm, Amy D. Rose, Jovita M. Ross-Gordon, eds (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2010), 286.

secondly, that if people experience these events as worthwhile, meaningful for their lives, they may consider further engagement with the community.

These insights are in keeping with what Bibby refers to as two “critical shifts”<sup>174</sup> that have marked the past fifty years: from obligation to gratification; from deference to discernment.<sup>175</sup> Where people may once have engaged with the Christian community out of a sense of obligation, they will now look for the engagement to be gratifying; where people once would engage with the Christian community in obedience to an authoritative voice, they look for the engagement to bring meaning, direction and hope to their lives.

Bibby’s analysis of the Canadian context suggests that much work needs to be done by the churches to foster meaningful, relevant connections with people. As he states: “What transpires in Canada as far as the religion-no religion balance will depend largely on the collective performance of its religious groups. These consequently are times that call for a new outlook, new alliances, and new efforts.”<sup>176</sup>

Bibby’s research presents a complex Canadian context in which “(a) solid and highly durable core of people continues to value faith, precisely at the same time that a growing number do not, with many others in the middle, neither opting decisively for or against faith.”<sup>177</sup> Bibby refers to this as a “New Day” and explains that “(w)hat makes it

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<sup>174</sup> Reginald Bibby, *Beyond the God’s and Back: Religion’s Demise and Rise and why it Matters* (Lethbridge, Alberta: Project Canada Books, 2011), 18

<sup>175</sup> Bibby, *Beyond the God’s and Back*, 19-26.

<sup>176</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 59.

<sup>177</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 58.

such is the fact that, while faith is neither gone nor going, we are polarized religiously to an extent we have never known before. Faith persists and will continue to persist because many people want it and need it.... [But] What transpires in Canada as far as the religion-no religion balance will depend largely on how religious groups respond to the current reality.”<sup>178</sup>

This sociological reading of the religious context in Canada encourages those responsible for adult catechesis to abandon notions that adults are simply not interested in faith, and to explore and evaluate, instead, how adult catechesis may become more effective. Bibby suggests that initiatives need to address what really matters to people.<sup>179</sup> I contend that what is required is a willingness to find processes of effective catechesis with a strong potential to reach the heart of people’s lives, inviting them on the journey toward mature Christian discipleship.

### **Challenges of Secularity**

The challenges of secularity that mark this post-modern time in which we live are a central concern for those in search of effective adult catechesis. Thomas Groome and M. Myrtle Power<sup>180</sup> both identify this current period in history as an unprecedented time of challenge for effective catechesis. Power observes that “it is probably true that

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<sup>178</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 58-59.

<sup>179</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 52-59.

<sup>180</sup> Like Thomas Groome, M. Myrtle Power uses Charles Taylor’s, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007), to argue that “Many of the conditions of our postmodern world are counter if not inimical to faith.” See M. Myrtle Power, “Religious Education and Vatican II,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol. 41, No 1, 5.

educating in “faith and life” was never more demanding than in our time.”<sup>181</sup> As she points out, “Overall, the stakes have never been higher for religious education.”<sup>182</sup> Groome affirms this, claiming that “(i)t is commonly agreed that the values of post-modern society pose a deeper and more pressing challenge to effective catechesis than any era heretofore.”<sup>183</sup> Referring to key insights about secularity from philosopher Charles Taylor, Groome claims that “(t)he Western world has moved from socio-cultural conditions that promoted religious belief, even required it, to conditions that actively discourage it.”<sup>184</sup> Groome highlights the need for religious educators to seek approaches “to catechetical education that will be appropriate and adequate to our postmodern age.”<sup>185</sup> Assuming the central claim of the secularity philosophy that “God has disappeared from western self-consciousness,”<sup>186</sup> M. Myrtle Power and John van den Hengel also build on the work of Charles Taylor to explore how religious education is responding to this cultural shift.

Power and van den Hengel identify a central problem for effective catechesis: in an age of secularity “(t)he language of faith finds no resonance within people’s own language and experience.”<sup>187</sup> They propose that the hermeneutical process reveals the

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<sup>181</sup> M. Myrtle Power, “Religious Education and Vatican II,” *Theoform*, 5.

<sup>182</sup> Power, “Religious Education and Vatican II, the Aftermath,” 7.

<sup>183</sup> Groome, “The Mind of the Church,” *Theoform*, 14.

<sup>184</sup> Groome, “The Mind of the Church,” *Theoform*, 14.

<sup>185</sup> Groome, “The Mind of the Church,” *Theoform*, 14.

<sup>186</sup> M. Myrtle Power and John van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol. 41, No 1, 54.

<sup>187</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*,” 58.

need for catechesis to remain rooted simultaneously in both the “constitution of our faith”<sup>188</sup> that has come to us by revelation, and in “the fragility and fallibility of our human community and of our relationship to the earth.”<sup>189</sup> According to them, this marks the path to discovering catechetical education that has the potential to reach the hearts of people. The authors advocate that effective catechesis can only be generated by a relational approach whose language and articulation are deeply grounded in the concrete reality of life experience: “The challenges facing catechetics today are linked, it seems to us, with the ability of our language of faith to get in touch with our fragility and vulnerability as human beings.”<sup>190</sup>

### **The Challenge of “The Triumph of the Mind Alone”<sup>191</sup>**

Another significant challenge for catechesis in our current time is the division between orthopraxy and orthodoxy, that found its ultimate expression during the Age of Reason, and persists as a major challenge to effective adult catechesis in our current post-modern context. Groome builds upon the insights of Paulo Friere<sup>192</sup> and expresses the problem in this manner:

I have been convinced for some time that the learning outcome for Christian religious education should be more than what the Western world typically means

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<sup>188</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 75.

<sup>189</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 75-76.

<sup>190</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 75.

<sup>191</sup> I borrow this expression from Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 27.

<sup>192</sup> Groome draws the insights that “banking education” does not work from Paulo Freire’s original work on emancipatory learning, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York, New York: Continuum, 1970).

by “knowledge”; that it is to engage the whole “being” of people, their heads, hearts and life-styles, and is to form, inform and transform their identity and agency in the world.<sup>193</sup>

In his 1991 seminal text, *Sharing Faith*,<sup>194</sup> Groome unpacks three different ways of knowing distinguished by Aristotle: theoretical way of knowing; praxis way of knowing (from the wisdom of life); and poiesis way of knowing (from imagination). Groome claims that we need an integration of the three for *whole knowing*. Taking this further, Groome claims that the kind of knowing we want in adult catechesis is a knowing in the biblical sense of *yada* or love-making. While it includes the cognitive, it is deeper and so much broader than the cognitive. It includes the heart, relationship, engagement with life...It is much more than a theological comprehension, but contains also wisdom for life, and taps into imagination which is the key for integration. Groome proposes a renewal and reconstruction of the word *conation* to try to hold all that it means to say that we *know* something in a more comprehensive way.

While studying the history of *wisdom*, he discovered *conation* as a word close in meaning to *wisdom*. When trying to explain why it had disappeared from usage in the vocabulary of western culture he writes, “I am convinced that the demise of *conation* in the western culture is concomitant with the triumph of ‘the mind alone’...”<sup>195</sup> Groome’s aim is to reclaim what he refers to as an epistemic-ontology where being and knowing are reintegrated. He contends that it is in this reintegration that meaningful adult

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<sup>193</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry*, 2.

<sup>194</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry, the Way of Shared Praxis* (San Francisco, California: HarperCollins, 1991).

<sup>195</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 27.

catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples can take place. Groome identifies effective catechesis as that which informs, forms and transforms the person.<sup>196</sup> While he sees these three dimensions functioning together, Groome emphasizes the *transforming*<sup>197</sup> dimensions of catechesis, that empower a truly living, appropriated mature adult faith which, he insists, cannot be accomplished by information alone.

In the more than twenty years since Groome published his reflection on *conation*, the term has not, in fact, been reintegrated into the terminology of literature regarding catechetical education. However, the ideas and objectives it represents, for a whole, integrated approach to adult catechesis, are certainly fundamental to the current writing in this field. Martin and Martinez de Pison demonstrate this with their contention that a whole and integrated approach to education in general, and to religious education in particular, is necessary. They point to the positive challenge the post-modern paradigm presents to religious education to move from a limited epistemology of *knowledge*, defined by an accumulation of information, towards the quest for “*wisdom* [which] requires the integration and transformation of knowledge into human experience.”<sup>198</sup> As the authors describe it, “(t)he call to wisdom requires the transformation of our educational milieu. It means we must integrate contemplation, that

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<sup>196</sup> Groome, *Will There Be Faith?* 14.

<sup>197</sup> I will discuss the relationship between adult catechesis and transformative learning later in this chapter.

<sup>198</sup> Miriam K. Martin and Ramon Martinez de Pison, “From Knowledge to Wisdom,” *Religious Education*, 163.

is, the capacity of going beyond pure rationality to reach something deeper, in order to open ourselves to others, to creation, and to the Holy One.”<sup>199</sup>

Martin and Martinez de Pison present an analysis similar to Groome’s of the current obstacle to effective adult catechesis. They point out that excellence in education has often become synonymous with “intellectual performance.”<sup>200</sup> They explain that “(t)he interpretation of excellence as being synonymous with intellectual performance coincides with an emphasis on knowledge as a *quantity* of data to be possessed, and with the role of educator who functions as a means to attaining this data.”<sup>201</sup> Describing the implications of this interpretation of excellence for religious education they explain that “(r)eligious education, along with theology, consisted in the communication of doctrines, concepts, ideas, and norms often separated from life.”<sup>202</sup> Like Groome, they highlight the grave limitation of this epistemology since “(e)xcellence, in this narrow sense, is no longer related to the whole person, and is not acquired in a relational way.”<sup>203</sup> Martin and Martinez de Pison explore the positive challenge posed by the post-modern paradigm that invites a movement from a limited notion of knowledge towards wisdom.

These insights of Groome, Martin and Matinez de Pison enrich an understanding of the current challenges and obstacles facing effective adult catechesis and propose

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<sup>199</sup> Martin and Martinez de Pison, “From Knowledge to Wisdom,” *Religious Education* , 164.

<sup>200</sup> Martin and Martinez de Pison, “From Knowledge to Wisdom,” *Religious Education* , 157.

<sup>201</sup> Martin and Martinez de Pison, “From Knowledge to Wisdom,” *Religious Education* , 158.

<sup>202</sup> Martin and Martinez de Pison,, “From Knowledge to Wisdom,” *Religious Education*, 159.

<sup>203</sup> Martin and Martinez de Pison, “From Knowledge to Wisdom,” *Religious Education*, 160.

essential considerations for the search for processes that empower mature Christian disciples. Effective adult catechesis is dependent upon this transformation and integration of knowledge into human experience, and a commitment to processes that promote the engagement of the whole person. These are essential points of consideration for reclaiming the heart of adult catechesis.

### **Reclaiming the Language of “Catechesis”**

The spirit of *ressourcement*<sup>204</sup> that infused the Second Vatican Council allowed the ancient practices of adult catechesis to be reclaimed and integrated into our current vision for catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. The desire to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis in the full biblical sense that characterized the encounter on the road to Emmaus, and the practice of the early Church, can be seen in the endeavour to reclaim the language of “catechesis.”

Choices about the terminology to employ for adult catechesis provide a window on some of the central concerns associated with trying to fully reintegrate orthopraxy and orthodoxy – faith and life. The terms *religious education*, *catechesis*, and *faith formation* have come to be used quite interchangeably in both oral and written communication.<sup>205</sup> The term religious education came into common usage during the early twentieth century in concert with several catechetical movements that were

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<sup>204</sup> John O’Malley, S.J.’s explanation of the spirit of *ressourcement* at the Second Vatican Council can be found in Chapter One, 32.

<sup>205</sup> See, as one example among many, M. Myrtle Power and John van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform* (2010) Vol. 41, No 1. They use the terms “catechesis” and religious education” interchangeably, as exemplified on 54 and 55.

underway in an “attempt to draw upon the still-young science of pedagogy to enhance the Church’s catechetical ministry.”<sup>206</sup> The term *faith formation* enjoys common usage and interchangeability with both of the terms *adult catechesis* and *religious education*.<sup>207</sup>

The word *catechesis* is often utilized in place of *religious education* and *faith formation* – terms that have become commonplace in the Catholic community. The position held by some scholars is that religious education and catechesis, while related, have a distinct purpose and character that need to be upheld.<sup>208</sup> The growing common usage of the term *catechesis* reflects the attempt to clarify and redefine the nature and central purpose of this ministry; one that is intended to engage the heart, or the whole person, in a process that leads to mature Christian discipleship. From the ancient Greek, translated as *Katecheo*, a literal translation of the word catechesis is “*to sound down into the ears*.”<sup>209</sup> Words such as echo and resonance find their etymology in these roots.<sup>210</sup> In

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<sup>206</sup> Thomas Groome, “‘The Mind of the Church’ in the General Directory for Catechesis,” *Theoform*, Vol. 41, No 1, 2010, 13.

<sup>207</sup> See, for example, how the terms adult faith formation and catechesis are used interchangeably on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops website, accessed November, 2012 at <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/adult-faith-formation>.

<sup>208</sup> Some argue that religious education allows for an academic study of religion without any necessary personal engagement in faith, while catechesis involves a personal faith dimension, a formation in a faith life. They claim that this distinction is necessary and ought to be maintained. For further discussion of this, see Graham Rossiter “The Need for a Creative Divorce between Catechesis and Religious Education in Catholic Schools,” *Religious Education* (1982) 77 (1): 21–43, and Richard Rymarz, “Catechesis and Religious Education in Canadian Catholic Schools,” *Religious Education* (October 2011), 106 (5), 537–549. Both make strong proposals for maintaining a clear distinction between religious education and catechesis.

<sup>209</sup> See *Katecheo*, in James Strong, “Greek Dictionary of the New Testament” in *Strong’s New Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (New York, New York: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1984), # 2727.

<sup>210</sup> See Jacques Audinet, “Catechesis” in *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, Karl Rahner, ed. (London, England: Burns and Oats, 1975), 173–178. See also W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1997), 588.

relation to all of the other terms for instruction and teaching, catechesis uniquely refers to both “the act of teaching” and “the knowledge imparted by teaching”.<sup>211</sup> The knowledge imparted by teaching, in catechesis, is not concerned with simple information but with a complex way of life and relationship.

Religious education specialists Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran have recognized the significance of the term catechesis and expanded on it in their explanation of the two aims of religious education. Referring to “the Way of Jesus” as the purpose of religious education, they describe its two aims as: to teach the way; and to teach about the way.<sup>212</sup> A clear understanding of the aim of catechesis as a way of life reveals and highlights its central purpose: the empowerment of mature Christian disciples.

There are several Greek words for teaching, such as *didasko*, *didaskalos* and *didache*, which are used almost 200 times in the New Testament.<sup>213</sup> *Katecheo* is used only seven times - four times in Luke/Acts, and three times in Paul’s Letters; once each in Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians.<sup>214</sup> Catechesis does not occur in a noun form in the scriptures, but only in verbal form.<sup>215</sup> Practical theologian Jacques Audinet, writing

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<sup>211</sup>“Catechesis,” *New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia*. Accessed November, 2013. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05075b.htm>, copyright, 2012, Kevin Knight.

<sup>212</sup> For an in depth exploration of these two aims of religious education, see Maria Harris and Gabriel Moran, *Reshaping Religious Education: Conversations on Contemporary Practice* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 30-55.

<sup>213</sup> ‘New Testament Greek Lexicon’, *Bible Study Tools.co*. Accessed June, 2009, December, 2012, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek>.

<sup>214</sup> See *Katecheo* “New Testament Greek Lexicon”, in *Bible Study Tools.com*. Accessed June, 2009, December, 2012, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek>.

<sup>215</sup> Audinet, “Catechesis” in, *Encyclopedia of Theology*, Rahner, ed., 173.

about the evolution of catechesis after the Second Vatican Council, points out that the word used in the New Testament reveals that this form of teaching is oral, and has to do with handing on what has been received.<sup>216</sup> Catechesis and the corresponding terms catechumen and catechumenate were adopted by the early Church to reflect the complex process utilized to accompany a person into Christian initiation. This process was intended to reach the heart of the person. Its objective was discipleship and ongoing conversion as a member of the Christian community. The choice to restore this terminology is indicative of a desire to reclaim this nature and purpose of catechesis. As Audinet explains, “That is why the term *catechesis* has been rehabilitated these latter years.

The change of vocabulary indicates that the teaching of the faith cannot be reduced to the provision of a “catechism class” for children...Both in its content and in its form, the catechesis should present the word of God as a living thing.”<sup>217</sup> In reference to the role of catechesis to make the good news of salvation history accessible to others, Audinet describes the nature of catechesis: “it is the present echo of what was accomplished.”<sup>218</sup> He names the primary role or purpose of catechesis as the facilitation of the relational encounter between God and the human person.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> Audinet, “Catechesis” in *Encyclopedia of Theology*, Rahner, ed., 172.

<sup>217</sup> Audinet, “Catechesis,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology* Rahner, ed., 175.

<sup>218</sup> Audinet, “Catechesis,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology* Rahner, ed., 175.

<sup>219</sup> Audinet, “Catechesis,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology* Rahner, ed., 176.

It is the desire to reclaim this integral and relational understanding of the Church's educational ministry that is fueling this evolution in terminology. This process began, as M. Myrtle Power and John van den Hengel point out, in the catechetical shifts that began in the nineteenth century. The authors convey that "(t)he earliest efforts to create a new catechetical language and experience aimed mainly to break the stranglehold of the doctrinal approach of the Roman Catechism."<sup>220</sup> Reclaiming the term *catechesis* reflects the desire, since Vatican II, to renew the ancient meaning of this term as it was used in the early Church. However, debates continue about the best use of terminology. While one may fully support the efforts to break the stranglehold of a doctrinal approach to catechesis, it is problematic to lose the terminology of *education* from the language related to adult catechesis. The evolving expertise in the field of adult education, especially in transformative learning, offers one of the primary sources for strength and renewal in adult catechesis. In her article entitled "Adult Education of the Laity: a Church Concern," Leona English emphasizes this point:

Though catechesis is the Church's preferred term to describe the education and formation of adults, this article uses adult education to make the point that the secular field of adult education can and ought to inform catechesis. This wording is consistent with the author's stance throughout that the Church needs to engage more with the educational sciences, especially with the insights of curriculum and theory to improve its practice of education.<sup>221</sup>

It is important to utilize language that can hold the integrity of this much needed connection between education and catechesis. Thomas Groome proposes the use of the

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<sup>220</sup> Power and van den Hengel, "Catechesis in an Age of Secularity," *Theoform*, 55

<sup>221</sup> English, "Adult Education of the Laity: A Church Concern," *Theoform*, 131.

term *catechetical education*. Though, as Groome explains, his motivation is different from that of English:

I use this phrase to capture the values of both religious education and catechesis. In the literature, these two are often separated out, the former understood to place primary emphasis on the academic study of religion, and catechesis understood more as the socialization of people into Christian identity. However, I prefer to keep the terms and their activities together with a healthy partnership and tension between them.<sup>222</sup>

While the term *catechetical education* may serve to hold this healthy partnership and tension as Groome describes, I propose that it may also function to situate adult catechesis squarely within the educational enterprise, in general, and address English's concern that adult catechesis can and ought to benefit from the expertise of adult education.

The spirit of *ressourcement* is active in this endeavour, as we grapple to bring together the ancient and the new in the use of terminology that best reflects the central purpose of catechesis. We know that language is not neutral. It functions to shape us. As Elizabeth Johnson writes, "structural change and linguistic change go hand in hand."<sup>223</sup> Therefore, the choices we make about the language we use for catechesis are important. The ongoing evolution of terminology is driven by the desire to move catechesis away from doctrinal approaches as well as to utilize terminology that effectively represents the authentic meaning of this essential ministry of the Church. It indicates that the search for

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<sup>222</sup> Groome, "The Mind of the Church," *Theoform*, 11.

<sup>223</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Discourse* (New York, New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1992), 40.

language that represents effective adult catechesis that reaches the hearts of people; that empowers mature Christian disciples.

### **Commentary on the General Directory for Catechesis**

Groome, and Power and van den Hengel, highlight the *GDC* as a central source for vision and guidance about how to engage in effective catechesis. Jane Regan affirms this perspective. She notes that it is very helpful that the *GDC* is clear about the purpose of adult catechesis to form mature Christians who are capable of responding to the Church's mission:

It is the reaffirmation of the Church's mission to be and to continue to become an evangelizing church that gives foundation to the call for ongoing catechesis of adults. It seems to me that this is one of the important contributions of the *GDC* to our understanding of adult catechesis.<sup>224</sup>

Power and van den Hengel describe the *GDC* as a sign of hope, calling it, “(o)ne of the most hailed attempts to revitalize religious education in a Catholic context.”<sup>225</sup> Power and van den Hengel point to the well-described aim of catechesis in the *GDC* as a further sign of hope: “To put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.”<sup>226</sup> Regan explains that regarding “...inform, form, and transform, these three dimensions are complementary and interrelated.”<sup>227</sup> Quoting the

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<sup>224</sup> Jane Regan, *Toward an Adult Church* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2002), 24.

<sup>225</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 57.

<sup>226</sup> Power and van den Hengel, citing # 80 from the *GDC* in “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 57. It should be noted that the original source for this reference in the *GDC* is John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendi* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1979), #5.

<sup>227</sup> Regan, *Toward an Adult Church*, 16.

same reference in the *GDC* as Power and van den Hengel, Regan proposes that it is only when the whole person is engaged and they are informed, formed and transformed that this communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ can be realized.”<sup>228</sup> Power and van den Hengel focus on a similar theme, highlighting the *GDC*’s attention to the integral relationship between revelation and human existence. They name the corresponding need for effective catechesis to be rooted in concrete human experience.<sup>229</sup> As they suggest, “(t)his presumption of a dialectical relationship of revelation and common social and cultural experience...urges the agents of this new evangelization to attend to the “original expressions” and “fundamental experiences” of people’s lives so that they can bring the message to the very heart of culture or cultures.”<sup>230</sup>

The preface to the *GDC* describes the years between the Second Vatican Council and the third millennium as,

(M)ost providential for the orientation and promotion of catechesis. It has been a time in which the evangelizing vigour of the original ecclesial community has in some ways re-emerged.... The course of catechesis during this same period has been characterized everywhere by generous dedication, worthy initiatives and by positive results for the education and growth in the faith of children, young people and adults.<sup>231</sup>

Yet, at the same time, the preface describes a time of turbulence and difficulty: “...there have been crises, doctrinal inadequacies, influences from the evolution of global culture

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<sup>228</sup> Regan, quoting the *GDC*, #80 in *Toward an Adult Church*, 14.

<sup>229</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 57.

<sup>230</sup> Power and van den Hengel, citing #133 from the *GDC*, in “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 57.

<sup>231</sup> *GDC*, #2.

and ecclesial questions derived from outside the field of catechesis which have often impoverished its quality.”<sup>232</sup>

Thomas Groome agrees that there have been both challenges and blessings in the evolution of catechesis. He adds depth to this perspective by asserting: “Given the straight-jacket of question and answer memorization that was still the dominant paradigm, the fresh air from the Council’s open window was bound to prompt lots of alternative proposals and innovative approaches.”<sup>233</sup> Groome proceeds to examine the challenges and the growth in catechesis from a wider view by tracing its history since the Munich Method of 1900. He asserts that:

...Much ground has been gained in creating effective ways to educate and nurture people in life-giving and responsible Christian faith. Likewise, the wisdom gleaned from the experimentation of the pre- and post-Vatican II eras, though hard-won, can now contribute to great “guiding principles” to move us forward.<sup>234</sup>

Groome claims that because it is the most current normative document on catechesis, the *GDC* represents “the ‘mind of the Church’ about catechesis.”<sup>235</sup> He refers to the vision and guidance it contains as “the Church’s best hopes for educating in faith.”<sup>236</sup> Groome marvels at what he calls “the amazing both-and consensus”<sup>237</sup> contained in the *GDC* that essentially unites orthodoxy and orthopraxis.

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<sup>232</sup> *GDC*,#2.

<sup>233</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” *Theoform*, Vol.41, No.1, 2010, 14.

<sup>234</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” *Theoform*, Vol.41, No.1, 2010, 15.

<sup>235</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” *Theoform*, Vol.41, No.1, 2010, 29.

<sup>236</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” *Theoform*, Vol.41, No.1, 2010, 11.

<sup>237</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” *Theoform*, Vol.41, No.1, 2010, 22.

Working his way systematically through the Five Parts of the *GDC* Groome surfaces fifteen “Guiding Principles” for effective catechetical education.<sup>238</sup> While these principles apply to the whole of catechetical education, and are not exclusively directed toward adults, they reflect the conviction that effective catechesis must engage the whole person, be relevant and meaningful, and be intended for the purpose of forming mature Christian disciples.<sup>239</sup> I will return to these principles and practices suggested by Groome in Chapter Five.

### **The Disconnect Between Vision and Practice**

An obvious and central question emerges in relation to this intense support for the vision and guidance of the *GDC*: if the vision and guidance needed for effective catechesis exists, why is the vision not being fully realized in the Church’s practice of adult catechesis? Groome proposes the following: “...it is not the ‘mind’ of the Church that now falls short on catechetical education but its practice.”<sup>240</sup> Leona English shares this assessment. She names the fact that “(e)ducation of the adult lay faithful is an identified goal and aspiration for the Roman Catholic Church.”<sup>241</sup> English wonders if the commitment to this education has often remained at the rather abstract level in the form of the Church’s documents, letters and pronouncements.<sup>242</sup> If Groome and English are

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<sup>238</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” *Theoform*, Vol.41, No.1, 2010, 16-22.

<sup>239</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” 16-22.

<sup>240</sup> Groome, “*The ‘Mind of the Church’*,” 24.

<sup>241</sup> English, “*Education of the Laity*,” *Theoform*, 131.

<sup>242</sup> English, “*Education of the Laity*,” *Theoform*, 137.

correct, then the questions that arise are: What is preventing the Church from practicing its vision? What are the obstacles?

In 2003, Jane Regan assessed the problem regarding effective adult catechesis in the United States in a way that seems to also accurately describe the current Canadian reality:

So if we have been talking about this (adult faith formation as the central task of the catechetical enterprise) for over 30 years, why does the vision of vibrant parishes with adult faith formation at the center of community life still seem so far away?... Religious educators and pastoral ministers generally recognize the necessity and importance of adult faith formation. So why is there such a general mismatch between our convictions and our actions? ...I believe it is due to a failure to recognize the significant shifts in attitudes that this new focus requires... What is needed are not more programs but the genuine investment of focused energy and resources to make fundamental shifts in how we think about parish life, adult faith formation and the mission of the church.<sup>243</sup>

Regan identifies four shifts that are essential to effective adult catechesis. The first shift identifies the movement from a focus on children to a focus on adults in catechesis. Regan claims that this shift is necessary because we have not yet moved to the insight expressed in the 1971 General Catechetical Directory, and reiterated in all of the catechetical documents since, that catechesis for adults is the principal form of catechesis. All the other forms are in some way oriented to it.<sup>244</sup> Regan articulates this dimension of the struggle very clearly: “For the most part, the models that dominate

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<sup>243</sup> Jane Regan, “Adult Faith Formation: Will it Catch On This Time?” *America*, Vol. 189, No.8, No. 4622, September 22, 2003, 5-9.

<sup>244</sup> Congregation for the Clergy, *General Catechetical Directory* (Vatican City: Vatican Press, 1971), #20.

contemporary religious education have as the first...and often primary (sometimes all but exclusive) focus to inform; and usually to inform children and youth.”<sup>245</sup>

The second shift named by Regan is the need to move from information to transformation in adult catechesis.<sup>246</sup> With this observation, Regan expresses the conviction shared by so many writing in the field of religious education: that effective adult catechesis must engage the whole person. The third shift Regan names as essential for effective adult catechesis is the move from programmes to process. Regan claims that tendencies to focus on providing adults with new information can eclipse the essential need adults have to engage in sustained critical reflection about issues that really matter to their lives.

The final shift named by Regan as essential for effective adult catechesis is the movement from membership to mission. This is the movement that Regan says may be the most radical of the four, since it invites a fundamentally different view of the Church’s catechizing ministry than the one often modelled. Regan claims that the Church continues to struggle in this way because, in the same way the Church does not clearly understand and embrace its fundamental mission, it also does not clearly understand and embrace the need for adult faith formation. Referring to Paul VI’s

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<sup>245</sup> Jane Regan, *Toward an Adult Church*, 16.

<sup>246</sup> Regan is expressing a general conviction in education and one that is certainly common in Adult Education. As one example, see Chapter Two in Patricia Cranton’s, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults*, second edition. (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2006). The author describes instrumental, communicative and emancipatory learning, emphasizing that a move away from “informing” towards “emancipatory learning” is essential for transformation and at the heart of adult education.

statement, “The Church exists to evangelize,”<sup>247</sup> Regan explains: “The goal of adult formation is not only to enrich the faith life of the participants and strengthen the parish community. It does these things in response to the church’s primary task and reason for being: to evangelize.”<sup>248</sup> The catechizing mission of the Church exists to empower the mature Christian disciples needed to achieve this mission.

Jane Regan emphasizes the fact that mature Christian believers are essential to bringing this Church firmly into the twenty-first century and being agents of transformation and change, so that the reign of God can be announced and lived.<sup>249</sup> In other words, she affirms that the Church cannot fulfill its mission without mature Christian disciples. Each of these shifts provides a significant frame of reference from which to better understand and address the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis in the Church’s documents and our practice of adult catechesis.

### **A Partnership with Adult Education, and Transformative Learning Theory**

Regan proposes that it is at the intersection of evangelization, transformative learning and adult faith formation that a framework for an adult Church may be constructed. This proposition highlights the necessary interplay between adult catechetical education and these other disciplines.

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<sup>247</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, #14, 1974. In this document Pope Paul VI’s claim that the “Church exists to evangelize” has fundamentally shaped the view of the Church’s mission since and the place of catechesis within it. Catechesis is understood as a central and inextricable dimension of this mission.

<sup>248</sup> Jane Regan, “Adult Faith Formation: Will it Catch on This Time?” 5.

<sup>249</sup> Jane Regan, *Toward an Adult Church*, 16.

Regan emphasizes the potential and needed contribution that the expertise of adult education can offer to help create effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. She explains that:

(T)he best process for adult faith formation is not lecture but conversation. Sustained, critical conversation is an essential component of the faith formation of adults. It is sustained in that it takes place regularly over an extended period of time, and each conversation is long enough to allow for a genuine interchange of experience, insights and commitments. It is critical in that the conversation is directed so that participants are invited to examine and talk about their beliefs and experiences of faith, consider the source of those beliefs and discuss what it means to live a Christian life.<sup>250</sup>

Regan draws upon Gadamer's theory of the hermeneutical circle to describe the kind of connected learning and discourse that are the underpinnings for this sustained and significant conversation. If people can engage in conversation that listens deeply until they can truly understand one another, then the new levels of knowledge take shape<sup>251</sup> as Gadamer describes. Regan indicates the need for parish communities to create places where this kind of conversation can happen. She expresses her concern that the challenge to accomplish this kind of process is significant, given that orientations toward presenting information, not engaging in dialogue and conversation, have been the commonplace approach to adult education in faith. A shift of this kind entails a change in vision, approach, and practice. Yet, it is vital to engage in this practice of adult catechesis given that "(T)he work of being able to step back from one's beliefs and the

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<sup>250</sup> Jane Regan, "Adult Faith Formation: Will it Catch On This Time?" 5.

<sup>251</sup> Regan explains in *Toward an Adult Church*, 110: "Gadamer's notion of conversation moves beyond the commonplace exchange of information or pleasantries and sees the genuine conversation as a place where the conversation partners are at risk and where the conversation itself takes control... Two people coming to an understanding in conversation has a genuine application to hermeneutics...."

perspective of the community in order to name and appraise their foundations and presumptions – [is] a step necessary to the process of transforming.”<sup>252</sup>

Leona English points to the disturbing reality that the Church has not embraced the expertise of adult education when it is, in fact, “...adult educators who have done a great deal to advance an understanding of how adults learn and how learning might be fostered.”<sup>253</sup> English highlights the need for the Church to integrate two dimensions of adult education in particular: critical pedagogy, which holds the keys for both needed critical reflection about the purpose of education in the Church,<sup>254</sup> and for engaging adults in the critical reflection that is essential and integral to adulthood; and “(t)ransformative learning [that] allows for change in ways that supersede the rational and logical. It can incorporate the body, the emotions and the spirit in the learning encounter, an aspiration for those long frustrated with a theology that is aimed exclusively at the head and is less than receptive to women’s ways of knowing.”<sup>255</sup> English indicates that for the way forward for adult catechetical education, “(t)he Church community might do well to look at what critical thinking, self-directed and transformative learning have to offer.”<sup>256</sup>

English indicates another link between adult catechetical education and adult education that is germane to the relationship between the two and helpful for other

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<sup>252</sup> Regan, *Toward an Adult Church*, 16-17.

<sup>253</sup> English, “Education of the Laity: A Church Concern,” *Theoform*, 145.

<sup>254</sup> English, “Education of the Laity,” *Theoform*, 145-146.

<sup>255</sup> English, “Education of the Laity,” *Theoform*, 147.

<sup>256</sup> English, “Education of the Laity,” *Theoform*, 148.

considerations. She makes the observation that "... adult education, by its nature, involves the spiritual...authentic spiritual development involves: strong sense of self; reaching out to others; continuous construction of meaning and knowledge."<sup>257</sup> This authentic spiritual development is the hallmark of a mature Christian disciple. These strong connections between adult catechesis and adult education suggest a necessary collaboration between them. This has the potential to help heal the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice.

Adult education specialist, Patricia Cranton, defines "transformative learning as a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions beliefs, values and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open and permeable, and better justified."<sup>258</sup> Cranton builds upon Jack Mezirow's theory that describes the process of transformative learning: it begins with a disorienting dilemma that leads to the questioning of established frames of reference; engagement in critical reflection with the assumptions, beliefs and values embedded in the frame of reference, can bring to light a better way of knowing that leads to letting go of the old frame of reference and allowing new assumptions and beliefs to shape the knowing; finally, the old frame of reference is truly transformed in favour of the new, when the new insight is integrated and engaged in the concrete actions of life.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> Leona English, "Spiritual Dimensions of Informal Learning" in Leona M. English and Marie Gillen, eds, *Addressing the Spiritual Dimensions of Adult Learning: What Educators Can Do* (San Francisco, California: Jossey- Bass, 2000), 30.

<sup>258</sup> Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults*, second edition (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2006), v.

<sup>259</sup> Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think as an Adult" in Jack Mezirow and Associates, *Learning as Transformation* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 3-35.

Cranton points out that, “(t)his cognitive rational approach has been elaborated on by theorists who incorporate the role of imagination, intuition, soul and affect into their understanding of the transformative process.”<sup>260</sup> Cranton has been very instrumental in the expansion of this framework to include *extra-rational* dimensions. For example, her initiatives to include the work of scholar John Dirkx<sup>261</sup> in the ongoing development of transformative learning, has helped to open up the theory to be more inclusive.<sup>262</sup> Dirkx’s *soul-work* provides another lens through which to view the process of transformation. He incorporates imagination, intuition and creativity in ways that are essential to the ongoing development of the theory. Furthermore, Dirkx has helped to introduce the insight that not all transformations are *burning bush* moments.<sup>263</sup> Rather, one may change a meaning frame incrementally over time through many experiences and reflections that facilitate critical reflection on assumptions.

Cranton claims that a principle at the heart of transformative learning is the establishment of a learning environment that encourages and supports the critical self-

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<sup>260</sup> Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, vi.

<sup>261</sup> See, for example, John Dirkx, “Nurturing Soul Work: A Jungian Approach to Transformative Learning” in Edward Taylor and Patricia Cranton, eds, *The Handbook of Transformative Learning* (San Francisco, California: John Wiley and Sons, 2012), 116-131.

<sup>262</sup> Patricia Cranton invited Jack Mezirow and John Dirkx to meet for a dialogue about the integration of the emotional and spiritual into transformative learning theory. Cranton facilitated this conversation which has been recorded as an article, “Musings and Reflections on the Meaning, Context, and Process of Transformative Learning: A Dialogue between John M. Dirkx and Jack Mezirow,” *The Journal of Transformative Education* (April 2006), 4 (2), 123-139.

<sup>263</sup> John M. Dirkx, “After the burning bush: Transformative Learning as Imaginative Engagement with Everyday Experience,” Proceedings of the *Third Annual International Transformative Learning Conference, Columbia University*, October 26-28, 2000 (New York, New York: Teachers College Press), 247-252.

reflection that is necessary for transformative learning.<sup>264</sup> She suggests a variety of learning strategies and tools to help facilitate this environment where learners may be able to construct new frames of reference for knowing. She also stresses the importance of the role of the educator in helping to create such a learning environment.<sup>265</sup> All of these are important considerations for constructing effective adult catechetical opportunities.

Patricia Cranton's work helps to highlight evident parallels between transformative learning models and the model for adult catechesis that are operative in the encounter on the road to Emmaus. It is on the road where the disciples experience *metanoia*, or a transformed perspective, as a result of their encounter with Jesus who is able to help them see things in a completely new way. The need for adult catechesis to draw upon the expertise of transformative learning to develop effective learning opportunities that empower mature Christian disciples seems evident. I will explore this further in Chapter Five.

### **Transformative Learning and Power Relationships**

Transformative learning also invites a critique of power relationships that may be very helpful to understanding obstacles to effective adult catechesis and gaining greater insight into the disconnect between the vision and practice of adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. There may be factors within the Church

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<sup>264</sup> Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 135-136.

<sup>265</sup> Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 135-157.

structure and among internal relationships that need to be identified and changed in order to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis.

Patricia Cranton explains: “If we agree, and I think that many adult educators do, that transformative learning is a primary goal of adult education, we need to pay attention to how to put it into practice.”<sup>266</sup> She notes that historically adult education has been seen as a political movement, one dedicated to freedom and liberty both personally and socially.”<sup>267</sup> In this regard, Jack Mezirow reminds us that:

Adult educators are never neutral. They are cultural activists committed to support and extend those canons, social practices, institutions, and systems that foster fuller freer participation in reflective discourse, transformative learning, reflective action and a greater realization of agency for all learners...Adult educators do not indoctrinate.<sup>268</sup>

Theologian John P Boyle helps to highlight the tensions generated by an interplay between the role played by the teaching authority of the magisterium and the vision of education promoted by transformative learning: “...it is clear that the expected response to the teaching of the magisterium is assent of the mind and will.”<sup>269</sup> Clearly, the search for effective adult catechesis involves careful consideration of these power-relationships and the implications for the empowerment of mature Christian disciples.

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<sup>266</sup> Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, vi.

<sup>267</sup> Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, v, vi.

<sup>268</sup> Jack Mezirow, *Learning to Think Like and Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory in Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, Jack Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 30.

<sup>269</sup> John P. Boyle, “The Teaching Office of the Church” in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.* Peter Phan, ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), 366.

Education specialist Stephen Brookfield brings another perspective to bear on the political nature of transformative learning. Critical reflection, true to its purpose to be a source of freedom from oppressive authority and unjustified beliefs, functions to help people learn to recognize “uncritically accepted and unjust dominant ideologies [that] are embedded in everyday situations and practices.”<sup>270</sup> Furthermore, critical reflection serves to move toward transformed social action.<sup>271</sup> Brookfield claims that “examining power relationships and hegemonic assumptions must be integral to the definition of critical reflection, thus turning it into a political idea.”<sup>272</sup> Considerations of power relations and learning are very significant for adult catechesis in the context of the Roman Catholic Church with its hierarchical structure of power and authority. In Chapter Five I will consider the implications of these ideas in dialogue with the findings from my case study research.

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<sup>270</sup> Stephen Brookfield, “Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique” in Jack Mezirow and Associates, 128.

<sup>271</sup> Brookfield, “Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique” in Jack Mezirow and Associates, 143.

<sup>272</sup> Brookfield, “Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique” in Jack Mezirow and Associates, 125.

### ***Shared Christian Praxis as a Method for Adult Catechesis***

Thomas Groome places transformative learning at the centre of adult catechesis with his use of *Shared Christian Praxis* as a method for effective adult catechesis intended to empower mature Christian disciples. Groome's most current writings continue to call for adult catechetical education that engages the whole person in a *Shared Christian Praxis* approach, or, as he refers to it, a *life to faith to life* approach that engages the whole person; heads, hearts and hands.<sup>273</sup> When asked, in relation to the challenges from secularity at this time, will there be faith? Groome's response is "(s)o much depends on how we share it."<sup>274</sup> Groome claims that engaging the whole person in *Shared Christian Praxis* is precisely the way we ought to share faith. It is an answer to secularity's current challenges to faith, according to Groome, because the process engages the whole person in a reflection on their experience in dialogue with their faith in a way that is relevant and full of meaning. Its focus is the empowerment of mature Christian disciples who are engaged in the Church's mission to bring about God's reign, or the transformation of the world.<sup>275</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> This is the language Groome uses to refer to Shared Christian Praxis in his recent book *Will There Be There be Faith? A New Vision for Educating and Growing Disciples* (New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2011).

<sup>274</sup> Groome, *Will There Be There be Faith?*, 1.

<sup>275</sup> Groome's 2011 publication, *Will There Be There be Faith?* is an in depth exploration of the process of Shared Christian Praxis, and his explanation for why it is the current solution to creating effective catechetical education that forms disciples.

Groome has constructed a five-movement process he calls *Shared Christian Praxis* to facilitate this whole learning as a method<sup>276</sup> for catechesis. The emphasis, building on Freire, is critical reflection on practice, which leads back into reformed practice:

1. One begins by describing the current praxis, an experience of life;
2. The experience is analyzed for greater understanding;
3. The Christian tradition is explored in relation to the experience;
4. The insights from tradition are brought into hermeneutical discourse with the experience;
5. The results of the discourse are integrated to create renewed praxis.

The purpose of this process is to bring “faith to life to faith” as a way of opening those who engage in it to ongoing conversion and transformation.<sup>277</sup>

Professor Sue Singer, from Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, conducted a “Qualitative Research study of a series of classes on Christian practices of hospitality designed to respond to issues raised for adult Christian education by postmodernity.”<sup>278</sup> These classes were built on Groome’s *Shared Christian Praxis*

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<sup>276</sup> Groome advocates this method of theological reflection for religious education as well as for the practice of all areas of ministry.

<sup>277</sup> See Groome, “Part II, Shared Christian Praxis” in *Sharing Faith*, for an in depth explanation of this process and each of its movements, 133- 280.

<sup>278</sup> Sue Singer, *We Break This Bread:” Christian Practices, Critical Reflection, and the Construction of Adult Religious Identity*, a paper given at the 2006 meeting of the Religious Education Association.

approach. She explains that “(t)heir purpose was to empower class participants in the construction and transformation of religious identity, both for themselves and for their faith community.”<sup>279</sup>

Singer’s findings are significant for the practice of effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. While she affirms the effectiveness of Groome’s method of *Shared Christian Praxis* she highlights the fact that,

Groome’s use of transformative pedagogy is certainly directed towards personal religious transformation, but within a context that assumes coherent religious traditions and well-formed practitioners, both of which are singularly lacking in postmodern culture.<sup>280</sup>

This suggests that there is a fundamental integral education in the Christian tradition that adults require before they can competently engage with it as a source for critical reflection that leads to transformation and action. Echoing the insights of Power and van den Hengel, Martin and Martinez de Pison, Singer points to the great challenges post-modernity presents to finding meaningful language and constructing effective narratives that can engage people in an education in “faith and life.”<sup>281</sup> Like these other authors, Singer stresses the fact that:

Above all, post-modernity demands a holistic approach to forming adult religious identity over the long haul...Ideally, all Christians should be engaged in trajectories of formation that are long, broad and deep, within faith communities that provide a rich ecology of participation in Christian practices, and multiple

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Accessed November 2012, November 2013,  
[http://old.religioeducation.net/member/06\\_rea\\_papers/Singer\\_Sue.pdf](http://old.religioeducation.net/member/06_rea_papers/Singer_Sue.pdf), 1.

<sup>279</sup> Singer, *We Break This Bread*, 1.

<sup>280</sup> Singer, *We Break This Bread*, 6.

<sup>281</sup> M. Myrtle Power, “Religious Education and Vatican II: The Aftermath, Editor’s Introduction,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol. 41, No 1, 6.

opportunities for critical reflection on religious identity as it is lived out in both church and culture.<sup>282</sup>

Singer's findings and conclusions are important points of reference for understanding the obstacles to effective adult catechesis and finding positive solutions. I will return to these insights in Chapter Five.

### **Partnership with Practical Theology**

*Shared Christian Praxis* is a method of theological reflection. It is at this particular conjunction that the intersection among adult catechesis, transformative learning and practical theology becomes evident. Transformative learning is foundational to theological reflection, and theological reflection is the central tool of practical theology. Transformative learning that enables theological reflection to lead to transformed praxis is central to considerations regarding processes that empower mature Christian disciples. Groome describes how the process of theological reflection mirrors the intention at the heart of Jesus' pedagogy: "He invited people to recognize for themselves what this faith might mean for their lives and then to make decisions for discipleship."<sup>283</sup> Transformed praxis is the goal of each of these disciplines, and transformed praxis is the goal of mature Christian discipleship.

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<sup>282</sup> Singer, *We Break This Bread*, 6.

<sup>283</sup> Groome, *Will There Be Faith?* 37.

Practical theologian Sally Brown refers to Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis* as "Christian education in a fundamentally hermeneutical key."<sup>284</sup> Referring to Groome's use of conation, borrowed from Spinoza as a term that encompasses the life commitments associated with the focus on praxis,<sup>285</sup> Brown highlights the reason why *Shared Christian Praxis* is such an effective approach to effective adult catechesis intended to empower mature Christian disciples: "The [process] is designed to evoke in learners a thoroughly intentional and practical, faith-imbued engagement with their world at every level."<sup>286</sup>

Thomas Groome, and practical theologian, Don Browning, have articulated the strong connections between practical theology and religious education. As Don Browning points out, referring to the similarities between his fundamental practical theology and Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis*, "(t)ransformation comes from the two-and-fro play between our questions, thickly understood, and the manifestation of truth contained in the classic texts."<sup>287</sup> The ultimate goal of both practical theology and *Shared Christian Praxis* is to lead to a more faithful Christian life that contributes to God's household or God's reign in the places of human activity and relationships.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Sally Brown, "Hermeneutical Theory," in *Practical Theology*, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, ed. (West Sussex, England: Willey-Blackwell, 2012), 118.

<sup>285</sup> Brown, "Hermeneutical Theory," in *Practical Theology*, 118.

<sup>286</sup> Brown, "Hermeneutical Theory," in *Practical Theology*, 118.

<sup>287</sup> Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 216

<sup>288</sup> See, for example, Elaine Graham's description of the relationship between "practical theology" and "public theology," in *Words Made Flesh: Writings in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Norwich, England: SCM Press, 2009), xiv.

Theological reflection, the central method of practical theology, is designed to bring experience into dialogue with the established wisdom of the Christian community, so that they may illumine one another and lead to transformation. Since it is the goal of adult catechesis to empower mature Christian disciples for agency in the world, it intersects with the purpose of practical theology to “...inform the everyday practice of the laity...to reflect on practical issues and to offer theological resources for better and more faithful praxis.”<sup>289</sup>

Practical theologian Carol Lakey Hess expresses the close connection between practical theology and religious education in another manner: “I suggest that, in contrast to scholars in other theological areas, it is the practical theologian’s distinctive task to generate a “questioning theology,” and it is the religious educator’s task to uncover and re-ask the questions that are the very pulse of a tradition.”<sup>290</sup> One can recognize, in both of these disciplines, the central role questioning and critical reflection play. The engagement in such processes is essential to the empowerment of mature Christian disciples.

### **Insight from Jewish Adult Religious Education**

Looking outside of one’s own environment can help provide fresh insight and helpful perspectives. Concern about how to effectively engage adults in faith education, including attention to the challenges associated with this particular time in history, is not

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<sup>289</sup> Elaine Graham, *Words Made Flesh*, xiv.

<sup>290</sup> Carol Lakey Hess, “Religious Education,” in *Practical Theology*, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, ed., 105.

exclusive to the Christian community. For example, religious educators in the Jewish community are also concerned to discover how to effectively educate adults in their faith and to prepare them to share this faith with others. As Diane Tickton Schuster and Lisa Grant explain,

(I)n recent years a renaissance of interest in Jewish learning has occurred... This upsurge of engagement with Jewish study reflects a number of internal and external societal forces that have pushed many Jewish adults to question how well they understand their religion and whether they are in a position to authentically transmit their heritage to succeeding generations.<sup>291</sup>

Quoting from their earlier study of Jewish believers, they describe research findings about Jewish believers that closely mirror significant findings from Bibby's studies: "As they mature, they yearn to achieve Jewish competence and connection and to explore their Jewish heritage in ways that feel relevant and emotionally safe."<sup>292</sup> This study confirmed the need for the expertise of adult education to be integrated into faith education processes. Tickton Schuster and Grant identify eight observations on adult religious education from recent studies in adult Jewish learning:

1. That at times of major life transitions adults seek new learning to help them make meaning of their experience;
2. That adult learners expect teachers to accommodate the diverse life experiences and motivations;
3. That adults are looking for content that is relevant for them and which they can apply;

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<sup>291</sup> Diane Tickton Schuster and Lisa D. Grant, "Adult Jewish Learning: What Do We Know? What Do We Need to Know?" *Journal of Jewish Education*, 71, 2005, 179-200.

<sup>292</sup> Tickton Schuster and Grant, "Adult Jewish Learning," *Journal of Jewish Education*, 181.

4. That transformative learning experiences promote dialogue, critical reflection that brings new perspectives, to build community through collaborative inquiry and discussion, and to see learning as a life-long process;
5. That greater tolerance and an increased sense of community and shared faith emerge among adults who probe meaningful questions together;
6. That adults strive to become self-directing in their learning, even if there are insecurities upon first entering a new learning environment;
7. That the more adults learn the more they seek to learn;
8. That adults value being treated as partners in their learning and appreciate teachers who facilitate.<sup>293</sup>

The observations from this study confirm the contention that there is an essential connection between adult faith education and the expertise of adult education. It supports the conviction of many scholars and practitioners that adult catechesis must integrate and be informed by the expertise of adult education, a perspective that I have examined in this chapter.

Rabbi Zadok ha-Cohen of Lublin wrote about effective Jewish faith education: “This is the principle: when one’s heart is actively inspired by the study of Torah, then it has vitality and is internalized.”<sup>294</sup> This insight is, of course, the same for adult catechetical education: adults are transformed by learning experiences that reach their

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<sup>293</sup> Tickton Schuster and Grant, “Adult Jewish Learning,” *Journal of Jewish Education*, 186-187.

<sup>294</sup> Linda J. Vogel, “Book Review of *A Journey of Heart and Mind: Transformative Jewish Learning in Adulthood*. By Lisa D. Grant, Diane Tickton Schuster, Meredith Woocher, and Steven M. Cohen. New York, New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America,” *Religious Education* (January 2006), 101 (1), 135.

hearts. These insights, along with Schuster's and Grant's observations from their research, reveal shared educational concerns, insights and challenges with the search for processes that empower mature Christian disciples.

### **The Partnership between Adult Catechesis and Adult Development Theory**

Defining maturity and understanding processes that are needed to support adult development is a key point of inquiry in the search for processes that empower mature Christian disciples. Many transformative learning theory and adult development theorists have common roots in the soil of constructivist-developmental theory, and the work of Piaget and Erikson. Therefore, there is significant overlap at their foundations.<sup>295</sup> Adult development theory holds the view that persons continually evolve in their interpretations of the world by constructing, over time, ever more complex frames of reference for knowing. Also, as Patricia Cranton points out, adult development is a central goal of transformative learning:

One goal of adult education, and transformative learning in particular, is individuation, the development of the person as separate from the collective, which in turn allows for the person to join with others in a more authentic union.<sup>296</sup>

It is important to consider the implication of this insight for adult catechesis whose purpose is the empowerment of mature disciples.

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<sup>295</sup> Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994), or Robert Kegan, "What Form Transforms? A Constructivist-Developmental Approach to Transformative Learning," in *Learning as Transformation*, Jack Mezirow and Associates (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 35-71.

<sup>296</sup> Patricia Cranton, "Individual differences and Transformative Learning," in Jack Mezirow and Associates, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, 189.

Human beings are makers of meaning by their very nature. Robert Kegan has constructed a development theory of *The Five Orders of Consciousness* to express how this meaning-making takes place and how it develops in complexity.<sup>297</sup> Like Groome's epistemology based upon conation, Kegan's theory also rests upon the conviction that knowing includes the cognitive and the affective dimensions of the person. Each of the five orders is a meaning-making structure that determines *how* we know which, in turn, regulates *what* we know. It is not *what* we know but *how* we know that marks the trajectory of adult development. In other words, it is a "qualitative change in the complexity of our minds..."<sup>298</sup> that allows us to mature in our mental capacities. These theorists explain:

Developmental movement from one order to the next is driven by limitations in the current way of constructing meaning; this can happen when a person faces increased complexity in the environment that requires a more complex way of understanding themselves and the world.<sup>299</sup>

The experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus is a good example of a situation that requires a more complex way of understanding. It is the encounter with events that do not fit with what a person already knows that initiates a transition into the next stage or order of consciousness. The disciples were deeply despairing because their understanding of the Jewish Messiah could not be reconciled with the death of Jesus that

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<sup>297</sup> Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads*.

<sup>298</sup> Kegan, *In Over our Heads*, 6.

<sup>299</sup> Cynthia D. McCauley, Wilfred H. Drath, Charles J. Palus, Patricia M.G. O'Connor, and Becca A. Baker, "The Use of Constructive –Developmental Theory to Advance the Understanding of Leadership," in, *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 17, 2006, 636.

that just had occurred. Their identity was embedded in a particular meaning-making system constructed from their tradition.

When we are faced with a crisis that questions the validity of our habitual structures of meaning, as the disciples were on the road to Emmaus, we may respond in a number of ways: dismiss the experience; interpret the experience in a way that makes it fit our current ways of knowing; acknowledge that the experience does not fit our current ways of making meaning, and work to accommodate our ways of knowing to include the experience. The encounter with Jesus on the road to Emmaus prompted the disciples to respond in the third way and, thus, to begin the process of transforming their way of knowing.

Kegan identifies the shift in our relationship to how we know with a shift in the subject-object relations. When our habitual meaning-making structures by which we understand what is real and true are called into question, we move from being subject to them to making them the object of our knowing. This shift from subject to object is facilitated by critical reflection about the frame of reference. Connecting transformation in epistemology with the way adults grow in autonomy and “complexification of mind,” Kegan explains that “[this] is not merely the addition of new capacities or the substitution of a new capacity for an old one. Instead, it is the subordination of once-

ruling capacities to the domination of more complex capacities.”<sup>300</sup> Kegan describes the process as a movement from “being psychologically written” to “writing upon.”<sup>301</sup>

The last three of Kegan’s orders, or stages, are normally associated with adulthood. He calls these: “traditionalist, modern or self-authorizing, and post-modern or self-transforming.”<sup>302</sup> The traditionalist, also known as the dependent or conformist order, is marked by subjectivity to external authority. According to the research of Suzanne Cook-Greuter approximately 55 percent of the adult population functions at this level of stage three.<sup>303</sup> Practical theologian Lorraine Ste-Marie presents important information regarding this developmental stage:

Developmental practitioners report that institutions and culture, in general, offer very little social support to move beyond this stage. In some cases, there is much pressure put upon people to stay here in an effort to maintain the status quo.<sup>304</sup>

Loyalty to hierarchical institutions, such as the Church, relies on obedience to external authority.<sup>305</sup> The move toward mature Christian discipleship calls for a shift in relationship to that authority in order to critically and constructively make it one’s own.

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<sup>300</sup> Robert Kegan, “What ‘form’ Transforms? A Constructive Development Approach to Transformative Learning,” in Jack Mezirow and Associates, *Learning as Transformation* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 60.

<sup>301</sup> Kegan, “What ‘form’ Transforms? 59.

<sup>302</sup> See Kegan, *In Over our Heads*.

<sup>303</sup> Suzanne Cook-Greuter, “Postautonomous Ego Development: A Study of Nature and Measurement.” Doctoral Thesis. Harvard Graduate School of Education” (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Bell & Howell, 1999), 35, cited in Laske, *Measuring Hidden Dimensions*, Vol. 1, 30.

<sup>304</sup> Lorraine Ste-Marie, “Adult Development and Theological Field Education,” *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* (2011), Vol. 31, 213.

<sup>305</sup> For a discussion on the role of authority in the Church see John P. Boyle, “The Teaching Office of the Church” in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.*, Peter Phan, ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), 355-373.

This requires a level of development that is at, or moving toward, stage four according to Kegan's orders of consciousness. It is important to ask if effective adult catechesis may be impeded in the Church by an institutional concern to maintain the status quo. If so, it creates a serious dilemma that must be addressed. I will consider this further in Chapters Five and in the Conclusion of this thesis.

The defining characteristic of Kegan's fourth order of consciousness is self-authorization or full autonomy. Cook-Greuter's research indicates that only about 25 percent of the population reaches this stage of development.<sup>306</sup> In the movement toward the fourth order of consciousness, persons gain greater self-awareness of their needs, beliefs and value systems in relation to the external authority that has shaped them over time. Persons at stage four are marked by "actions [that] flow from their striving to live out of the value systems<sup>307</sup> that they have critically and constructively integrated. This is accomplished through critical thinking that engages the questions that emerge from their lives in conversation with the tradition that has formed their ways of knowing.

Kegan's fifth order of consciousness is reached by about 10% of the adult population, according to Cook Greuter.<sup>308</sup> In the transition toward this fifth order the person moves from a subject to an object relationship with their own beliefs and value systems allowing for self-transformation. In this movement persons move into a state of interdependence as they seek out and welcome the contribution of others to the making

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<sup>306</sup> Suzanne Cook-Greuter, "Postautonomous Ego Development" in Laske, *Measuring Hidden Dimensions*, 35.

<sup>307</sup> Lorraine Ste-Marie, "Adult Development and Theological Field Education," 213.

<sup>308</sup> Suzanne Cook-Greuter, "Postautonomous Ego Development" in Laske, *Measuring Hidden Dimensions*, 35.

of their identity and integrity. “As the need to control lessens, an awareness of limitations leads to greater humility.”<sup>309</sup>

It is important to understand that changes in epistemology are marked by shifts in identity and values systems that can be very difficult, even threatening, for persons to undergo. Kegan discusses how transitioning from one order of consciousness to another depends upon a process of bridge-building between orders of consciousness. One end of the bridge must be firmly grounded on each end. The balance this bridge creates between challenge and support results in what Kegan calls the best process for allowing adults to construct new more complexified forms of knowing. Educational models designed with the intention of creating opportunities for the learning that facilitates this development can help adults to make these transitions.<sup>310</sup> Kegan explains that “this kind of learning cannot be accomplished through informational training, or the acquisition of skills, but only through transformational education....”<sup>311</sup>

Ste-Marie presents research that suggests that “(t)he greater the learners’ self-awareness and capacity for integrative learning, the greater their capacity for theological reflection.”<sup>312</sup> *Shared Christian Praxis* is a method of theological reflection that Groome and others suggest as the central method for effective adult catechesis that empowers

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<sup>309</sup> Ste-Marie, “Adult Development and Theological Field Education,” 214.

<sup>310</sup> See Chapter 8 of Robert Kegan’s *In Over Our Heads* for his exploration of the connections between his development theory and learning and education.

<sup>311</sup> Kegan, *What Form Transforms?* in Mezirow and Associates, 30. It is germane that one of Mezirow’s central points, in the concluding chapter of Mezirow and Associates, *Learning as Transformation*, is about the need for ongoing interdisciplinary collaboration to continue to piece together the puzzle of transformative learning.

<sup>312</sup> Ste-Marie, “Adult Development and Theological Field Education,” 217.

mature Christian disciples. Theological reflection contributes to adult development, and one's capacity to reflect theologically depends upon one's developmental stage. Given that the largest percentage of the population is at stage three, establishing educational processes that encourage and support the movement of adults through Kegan's Stage three, and toward Stages four and five is important for effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples.

It is helpful to keep Kegan's insight in mind, when considering catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. As a person transitions toward higher orders of consciousness, he or she becomes more able to deal with the complexity that allows a person to become more inclusive and more oriented toward the welfare of others. Furthermore, as Patricia Cranton points out, a person's individuation from the collective allows for a more authentic relationship with others to develop.<sup>313</sup> Adulthood is marked by autonomy characterized by the capacity of the person to engage in critical reflection. These are capacities that define and support mature Christian discipleship. The insights from adult development theory demonstrate that effective adult catechesis depends upon the ability to facilitate the development of these capacities by engaging educational processes that promote this development.

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<sup>313</sup> Cranton, "Individual differences and Transformative Learning," in Jack Mezirow and Associates, 189.

### **Fowler's Adult Faith Development Theory as a Theological Construct for Mature Discipleship**

Kegan's cognitive development theory and Fowler's stage theory are quite compatible. They are both constructive-development theories as well as theories focused on how people make meaning. Fowler's stages three, four, five and six, respectively, *Synthetic-Conventional, Individuative-Reflective, Conjunctive and Universalizing*,<sup>314</sup> indicate movement from dependency to autonomy and faith marked by a widening circle of concern for others. While faith at a stage six level is extremely rare, the characteristics of adulthood which mark Fowler's stages three, four, and five are very close to those observed by Kegan in his third, fourth and fifth orders of consciousness.

Fowler's theory focuses on meaning-making constructed in relationship with others. In keeping with the foundations of constructivist-developmental theory, Fowler expresses *adulthood*, not as a fixed state, but as a continuous process of complexifying and unfolding. This path is fundamentally both relational and ethical in nature. Fowler's vision of God in this relationship is powerful and essential to his understanding of adult development as Fowler expresses in his own words:

What we have been considering, however, is that the sovereign Godhead, that dynamic relational Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, sets Himself the task of nurturing people and movements who can be partners in shaping and fulfilling the glory of God's divine vision. In doing so God takes the risk of placing the fulfillment of the Divine dream in significant part, in the hands of finite men and women. He entrusts partnership to finite churches and groups and frequently to persons and whom God trusts, not because they are church members or even

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<sup>314</sup> See James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development* (New York, New York: HarperCollins, 1995) for a thorough exploration of Fowler's original stages of faith development theory.

Christians but because they are able and they are accessible to the Spirit of God.<sup>315</sup>

One can describe Fowler's theological notion of the mature adult Christian by carefully unpacking this statement. He proposes that persons fulfill their identity as adult believers when they recognize and claim their vocation: they enter into an ongoing process of conversion where their partnership in the triadic relationship among self, God and others deepens, expands and is exemplified in a commitment to society and its good, the fruits of discipleship. Fowler recognizes communities of faith as those responsible for inviting, supporting and facilitating this growth. Fowler's insights mirror, quite clearly, the vision for adult catechesis that is contained in the Catholic Church's documents.

Fowler's faith development theory is one of the central links between adult development theory and adult catechetical education. Notwithstanding the debates about whether a *stage* or *step* approach is marked by caveats, and a more fluid or *spiral* view of development is more appropriate,<sup>316</sup> Fowler's faith development theory points to significant characteristics of adulthood that are essential for consideration in adult catechetical education. Stage theory is not itself an accessible tool for adult catechists intended for use in adult catechetical settings. Yet, the insight that adults evolve over

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<sup>315</sup> This is a citation from an unpublished paper "How Can We Speak of the Providence of God?" presented by Fowler at the University of Edinburgh, summer, 2000. This excerpt from the paper is cited by Richard R. Osmer and Friedrich L. Schweitzer, in *Developing a Public Faith*, 109.

<sup>316</sup> Jane Regan explores the limits of developmental theories in *Toward an Adult Church: A Vision for Faith Formation* (Chicago, Illinois: Loyola Press, 2002), 30-72. Regan points out that in spite of the limits to these theories, those who critique them recognize the value of the insight that faith changes over time and there are identifiable "dynamics that effect that change." Regan, *Toward an Adult Church*, 54.

time and that there are particular learning processes that help adults develop as mature believers is very important for effective adult catechesis.

The capacity for critical reflection that is necessary for maturing in faith is a central point of concern. Adult development theory suggests that this capacity begins to strongly express itself at what Fowler's stage four, or *individuating-reflective* stage, Kegan's fourth, or *self-authoring*, order. Effective adult catechetical education that has the capability to empower mature Christian disciples ought to devote careful attention to educational processes that will help adults to develop these capacities.

It is important to note that while Fowler's research is rooted in several theoretical foundations that fall within the field of adult development theory - including constructivist-developmental theory - his research can also be squarely situated in the field of theology. Practical theologian, Richard Osmer, credits Fowler with helping to redefine the field of practical theology because of the way Fowler integrated psychology, theology, culture and ethics.<sup>317</sup> Fowler's work is a meaningful and significant intersection between adult development theory and adult faith development theory. Terms like faith, vocation, discernment, call, conversion and transformation have been brought into familiar usage in relation to adult development theory as Fowler has connected them with his insights about human development, maturity and human agency in relationship with self, others and God. This is an essential bridge with adult catechesis whose aim is the formation of mature Christian disciples.

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<sup>317</sup> See Richard Osmer and Friedrich Schweitzer, eds, *Developing a Public Faith: New Directions in Practical Theology* (St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2003), Introduction, 1-15. This book is, in fact, a series of essays dedicated to James Fowler. It is germane that it contains an essay by Thomas Groome which acknowledges the significant connections between Fowler's Stage theory and religious education.

Fowler's notion of a mature adult is fundamentally shaped by his affiliation to Richard Niebuhr from whose work Fowler derives the activity of meaning-making as a human universal and the 'triadic dynamic' of this activity."<sup>318</sup> This theological anthropology lies at the heart of Fowler's work. Practical theologian Gordon Mikoski explains:

Faith development theory owes its origins to Fowler's attempt to bring Niebuhr's mature theological vision into constructive dialogue with the rich and textured accounts of human experience provided by Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg. Another way to say this is that, in faith development theory, Fowler attempted to describe how persons might attain the theological vision of the reign of God found in Niebuhr's work in the course of their unfolding and potentially transformed lives.<sup>319</sup>

Niebuhr's notion of God as *Creator, Governor, Liberator/Redeemer* lies at the heart of Fowler's theories.<sup>320</sup> Mikoski points out that it is this notion of God that "(f)unctions in Fowler's theological anthropology as a source of the cluster of metaphors for partnership with God in working towards the realization of the commonwealth of love and justice."<sup>321</sup> When this relationship – the partnership between God and the person - is empowered toward maturity, it is characterized by a growing triadic relationship with God, others and the community that continually deepens and widens. Fowler explores

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<sup>318</sup> David Heywood, "Faith Development Theory: A Case for Paradigm Change," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* (December, 2008), Volume 29, Number 3, 268.

<sup>319</sup> Gordon Mikoski, "H. Richard Niebuhr and Fowler's Evolution as a Theologian," in Richard R. Osmer and Friedrich L. Schweitzer, eds, *Developing a Public Faith* (St. Louis Missouri: Chalice Press, 2003), 107.

<sup>320</sup> Mikowski,, "H. Richard Niebuhr and Fowler's Evolution as a Theologian," in *Developing a Public Faith*, 107.

<sup>321</sup> Mikowski, "H. Richard Niebuhr and Fowler's Evolution as a Theologian," in *Developing a Public Faith* , 110.

this in the context of a Christian understanding of the human vocation that it is a  
 “...partnership with God in God’s work in the world.”<sup>322</sup>

### **Concluding Remarks**

This cross disciplinary review of literature establishes the theoretical framework needed for the search for adult catechetical processes that empower mature Christian disciples. This theoretical framework also provides the basis from which to examine some of the obstacles to reclaiming the heart of adult catechesis. It also provides some helpful orientations from which to gain understanding regarding the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis in the Church’s documents and our practice of adult catechesis.

I will briefly summarize some of the key elements of this theoretical framework. Perspectives from sociology of religion establish that people are seeking relevance and meaning they are not always finding in their churches. Sociology of religion theorists also challenge current interpretations of secularity, and question assumptions that a lack of engagement in the Christian community signifies a lack of interest in one’s spiritual life.

Religious education theorists establish the need to overcome intellectual biases and doctrinal approaches in catechesis to engage the whole person – to reach the heart in

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<sup>322</sup> Fowler, *Becoming Adult Becoming Christian* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 74. Fowler’s perspective on Christian vocation and human maturity underlies my working definition of mature Christian discipleship constructed for the case study in thesis. I derive his perspective from ideas throughout this book, *Becoming Adult Becoming Christian*, but especially from Chapter Four, “Adulthood, Vocation and the Christian Story,” 62-86.

the full biblical sense. Theologians present a challenge to those responsible for adult catechesis to find ways to deeply connect with people's experience as a way of overcoming the challenges of meaning-making in a post-modern culture. Efforts to reclaim the language of catechesis reveal central orientations and goals of current efforts in this field. It also reveals the awareness that the language we use has a significant function.

Some current research in Adult Jewish education invites us to look beyond the confines of the Christian community to see how others are addressing the challenges of creating effective adult faith education opportunities. Transformative learning theorists present the central place of critical thinking in adult education, and highlight a goal of education as transformation that leads to maturity and more authentic relationships.

Practical theology and religious education identify theological reflection as a key educational process for effective adult catechesis as well as a central tool in the life of mature Christian disciples. Adult development theory presents concepts of maturity and adulthood that are essential for mature Christian discipleship and suggest some educational approaches that support this development.

I will return to this theoretical framework in my interpretative analysis of my case study research findings in Chapters Four and Five. I will proceed to Chapter Three, and the presentation of the design and methodology for this case study research of *Putting Out into the Deep*.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A CASE STUDY OF *PUTTING OUT INTO THE DEEP*

The purpose of this thesis is to search for processes that empower mature Christian disciples. An objective of my research is to identify obstacles to effective adult catechesis and to search for understanding regarding the disconnect between the Church's vision of adult catechesis in its documents and the practice of adult catechesis. To help achieve objectives goals I conducted a research study of the adult catechetical series, *Putting Out into the Deep*, that I designed and led, in collaboration with an Advisory Committee,<sup>323</sup> for a six-year period from 2003 - 2009. This process was designed as a three-year cycle, and was offered twice, once from 2003-2006, and again from 2006-2009 in the Archdiocese of Ottawa. My observations of participants' experience of this process, including feedback received during regularly conducted evaluations during the three-year cycles, suggested that it was an effective process of adult catechesis that empowered them as mature Christian disciples.

Four central goals define the purpose for engaging in this case study: to explore participants' experience of this catechetical series in order to gain insight into the processes that were effective for them; to explore what participants' experiences reveal about obstacles to processes that empower mature Christian disciples; to search for insights about the disconnect between the vision expressed in the Church's documents

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<sup>323</sup> I established this committee as soon as I assumed the position of Director of Adult Faith Development. It consisted of 12 members, men and women, lay and ordained, parish priests, parish pastoral associates, experts in formation and education, and representatives of diocesan leadership and the curia. The members were appointed by the archbishop for a 3-year term. Members agreed to meet once every 4-6 weeks as a consultative, advisory, "think-tank" body.

regarding adult catechesis and the practice of it; to contribute to a greatly needed body of empirical research that studies adult catechesis.

The design, leadership and unfolding of this catechetical process involved many phases, processes and participants. For this reason, case study is an excellent research method since “(it) is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case)...through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information....”<sup>324</sup> As Robert Yin explains, “The case study shows the explanatory and not just descriptive or exploratory functions of the single case.”<sup>325</sup> This capacity of a case study to both describe and explain experience within a bounded system is effective for realizing the objectives of this research study. It allows for thick rich description of the processes involved in *Putting Out into the Deep* to emerge. Also, it provides the framework needed for the careful exploration of the experiences of the participants who were involved in the process.

### **The Case Study Design: a Mixed Approach**

Although case studies often utilize only qualitative data, this research method may employ a “mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence.”<sup>326</sup> I decided to add a small amount of quantitative evidence to an otherwise qualitative approach to strengthen the triangulation of my study. I will explain my reasons for this choice later in this chapter

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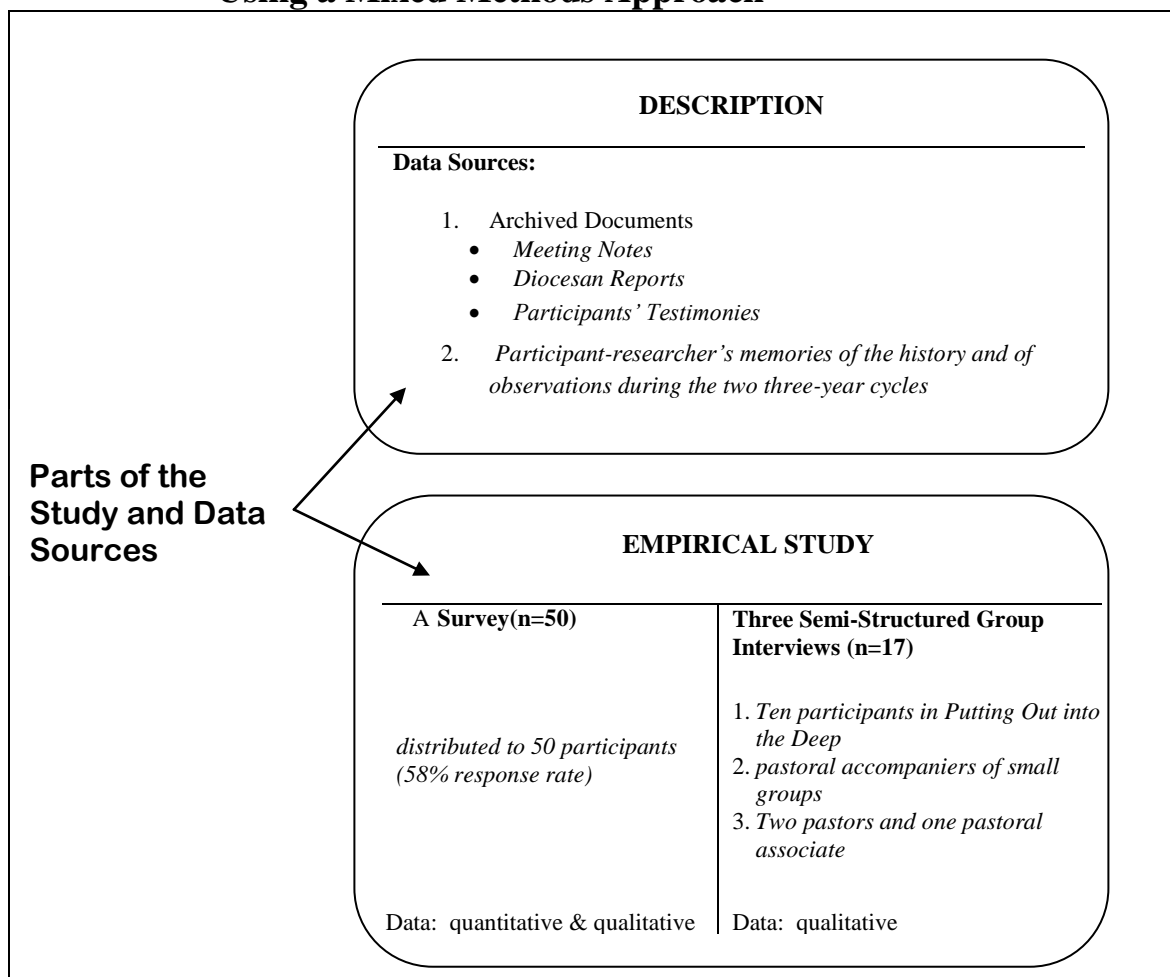
<sup>324</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 73.

<sup>325</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2009), 6.

<sup>326</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research*, 114.

when I describe the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The diagram that follows illustrates the parts of this case study and their data sources.

**Table 1: Case Study, *Putting Out Into the Deep* Using a Mixed Methods Approach**



### A Mixed Methods Approach and Multiple Sources

I gathered a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence using multiple data collection techniques. Among the “wide array of procedures” the researcher may utilize to build “an in- depth picture of the case”<sup>327</sup> Creswell identifies those I employed:

<sup>327</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 132.

documents and archival records, direct observation, participant observation (gleaned from both the interviews and the survey) and interviews.<sup>328</sup> A description of *Putting Out into the Deep* is the first step in this case study. The description provides background and significant data for the case study research. The description is followed by an empirical research study of *Putting Out into the Deep*. This empirical study utilizes two data collection methods: a survey distributed to 50 participants in the adult catechesis and a series of three semi-structured small group interviews with a total of 17 participants.

Given that this adult catechetical series is the result of the activity of many people, processes and events, the descriptive data allow a comprehensive picture of these people, processes and events to be presented. The data for the description were derived from two sources: archived documents that include meeting notes, diocesan reports, and participants' testimonies and memories of my observations of the people and processes involved in *Putting Out into the Deep* as participant-researcher.

I used a survey designed to generate quantitative data that would either verify or question my assumption that participants had an experience of empowerment as mature Christian disciples. It also requested responses from participants that evaluated various dimensions of the educational process.

Based on positive findings from my survey data, I conducted three small group semi-structured interviews, with three different groups of people who were engaged as participants and/or leaders in the catechetical series. These group interviews allowed me

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<sup>328</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 132.

to probe the participants' experiences deeply for insight into the dimensions of the catechetical series that were effective in empowering them as mature Christian disciples. The data from the case study also allowed me to explore obstacles to effective adult catechesis, and to search for insight about the disconnect between the Church's vision of adult catechesis and its practice of it.

It is important to clarify the use of this mixed approach. As John Creswell points out, "(q)ualitative study represents a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without apology or comparisons to quantitative research."<sup>329</sup> Yet, quantitative data can be used to supplement and support qualitative data to provide a fuller understanding. Qualitative research instruments helped me to deeply probe the meaning of participants' experience of *Putting Out into the Deep* in my research study. The exploration of this meaning is crucial for discovering significant insights about processes of adult catechesis that empower mature Christian disciples from this research study.

All of the data taken together – from the descriptive sources, the survey and the semi-structured interviews - corroborate some significant findings related to my central research questions. This is valuable since, as research expert Tim Sensing explains, "(M)ultiple data-collection technologies...provide a complex view...enabling a "thicker" interpretation. It is a way to cross-check your data that provides breadth and depth to

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<sup>329</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 11.

your analysis and increases the trustworthiness of your research.”<sup>330</sup> Therefore, it helps to serve in the triangulation of my research findings.

Questions addressing: *How much? How many?* are often best accommodated in a survey. As Yin explains, “These strategies are advantageous when the research goal is to describe the incidence or prevalence of a phenomenon or when it is to be predictive about certain outcomes.”<sup>331</sup> It is the strength of surveys, and other quantitative research instruments, that they allow generalizations to the population (the population in this situation being all of the participants in *Putting Out into the Deep*) on the basis of statistical claims.<sup>332</sup> Since the many opportunities for evaluation and feedback, in addition to my observations throughout both three-year cycles, suggested that it was, in fact, an example of effective catechesis that empowered participants as mature Christian disciples, conducting a survey allowed me to confirm this with some quantitative evidence and thereby strengthen the claim.

Robert Yin explains that, “(A) major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence.”<sup>333</sup> Theorists Ellinger, Watkins and Marsick describe how “(s)urveys may be followed by fieldwork or interviews to deepen understanding, provide rich description, or test other explanations for the

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<sup>330</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Thesis* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 72.

<sup>331</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 6.

<sup>332</sup> Yin, *Applications of Case Study Research*, 19.

<sup>333</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 115.

phenomenon.”<sup>334</sup>This describes the process which I followed. My goal was to explore the data for insight regarding my central research questions: What catechetical processes engage the whole person and empower them as mature Christian disciples? What processes promote Christian maturity? What are the obstacles to effective adult catechesis and how might they be addressed? What is fueling the disconnect between the vision and practice of adult catechesis and how might this be addressed?

In addressing the issue of mixed methods research, Yin emphasizes the fact that “The use of multiple sources in case studies allows an investigator to address a broader range of historical and behavioral issues.”<sup>335</sup> As the investigator of this adult catechetical series, I discovered this to be true. Furthermore, the presentation of the descriptive data in the first step of the case study produced some important converging lines of inquiry with the data collected in the survey and semi-structured interviews with small groups. Yin explains that “The most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation...Thus, any case study finding or conclusion is likely to be more convincing and accurate if it is based on several different sources of information...”<sup>336</sup> I will explore this more fully in my data presentation and analysis in Chapters Four and Five.

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<sup>334</sup> Andrea Ellinger, Karen Watkins, Victoria Marsick, “Case Study Research Methods,” *Fast Fundamentals, the White Paper Series* (San Francisco, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009), 6.

<sup>335</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 115.

<sup>336</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 115-116.

## **A Definition of Mature Christian Discipleship as a Point of Reference**

The definition of a mature Christian disciple I presented in the Introduction to this doctoral thesis was constructed for use in the empirical research of my case study. It is as follows:

A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.<sup>337</sup>

This definition served as the point of reference for mature Christian discipleship for all who participated in my study. It was included as part of the survey, and presented to all participants in the semi-structured interviews.

## **The Survey**

### ***Participant Recruitment***

Persons who participated in fewer than ten sessions in *Putting Out into the Deep* were removed from the list of potential respondents to the survey. Although approximately 200 and 300 people participated in the first and second three-year cycles respectively, only those who attended at least ten sessions were eligible to participate in this research study. This means that the population eligible to receive a survey, the target population was a total of 110 people. To avoid any bias in the sampling, I used simple random sampling. An administrative assistant, who had no substantial connections with

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<sup>337</sup> See the Introduction of this thesis, pp. 11-12 for a description of the construction and theoretical framework for this definition.

the eligible respondents, and I chose 50 participants' names randomly from a list of the 110 names of eligible respondents by scrolling down the list with a cursor and stopping arbitrarily until 50 names were accumulated. This represents 45% of the total target population of 110. Random sampling is a strong research technique for maximizing external validity.<sup>338</sup>

The survey was mailed to each of the 50 people in the random sample with the covering letter explaining the purpose of the survey, asking for their participation and clarifying the following: the freedom to refuse to participate; (if the person chose to participate) freedom to refrain from responding to any question or to complete any exercise; a request that the person refrain from identifying themselves in any way, either on the survey document itself, or by indicating a return address; and the importance of complete honesty in responses to ensure good research. The participants received a pre-paid, self-addressed return envelope to use for the return of the survey.

### *Contents of the Survey*<sup>339</sup>

The survey was intended to provide quantitative data to verify the hypothesis that *Putting Out into the Deep* was an effective experience of adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. I also included six open-ended segments. These invited participants to provide explanations for their answer choices, further remarks, comments and feedback about their experience that could contribute to a deeper qualitative

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<sup>338</sup> See, for example, for a discussion of this, "Research Methods Knowledge Base" at *Centre for Social Research Methods*. Accessed November, 2012. <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/external.php>

<sup>339</sup> A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 5.

understanding of the experience as well.

The survey was designed with eight sections. The first sections gathered information about the extent and nature of the participants' engagement in the series. The rest of the survey allowed participants to assess the effectiveness of the series as a source of empowerment for them as mature Christian disciples and to provide specific feedback about processes that helped or hindered their experience. The survey also provided opportunities for participants to add further comments according to their discretion. Each of the sections will be described in detail in Chapter Four.

### ***Response Rate***

There is extensive debate in social science research literature about acceptable response rates to be able to consider research findings valid in representing a larger population.<sup>340</sup> Survey response rates have been consistently dropping over the past thirty years. Current thought in regard to response rates suggests that “(i)n general, studies with a response rate of less than 20% should be interpreted with caution. But it is unclear whether a 40% or 50% response rate is large enough for inferences to be made within a reasonable margin of error.”<sup>341</sup> Twenty-eight completed surveys were returned to me of the 50 that were sent out. This reflects a response rate of 56% overall, and 25% of the total target population.

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<sup>340</sup> For a discussion of this see Lisa R. Carley-Baxter, Craig A. Hill, David J. Roe, Susan E. Twiddy, and Rodney K. Baxter, “Changes in Response Rate Standards and Reports of Response Rate over the Past Decade” a paper presented to *RTI International*, NC, December, 2005. Accessed December, 2012. [http://www.rti.org/pubs/TSM2006\\_Carl-Bax\\_Hill\\_paper.pdf](http://www.rti.org/pubs/TSM2006_Carl-Bax_Hill_paper.pdf)

<sup>341</sup> This statement can be found in the *Cultural Policy and the Arts National Data Archive*. Accessed February, 2013. [http://www.cpanda.org/cpanda/help/evaluating/evaluating-response\\_rate](http://www.cpanda.org/cpanda/help/evaluating/evaluating-response_rate). .

### ***Sampling for the Survey***

I chose to send surveys to 50 participants rather than to all 110 who met the survey sample criterion. My rationale for doing so was to obtain an adequate number of responses to verify my hypothesis - that participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* experienced it as an effective catechetical process that empowered them as mature Christian disciples - while maintaining a manageable amount of data for myself as the sole researcher in this project. The transcription, coding, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data is very labour-intensive. I wanted to ensure that I could complete the research project within the allotted time.

### ***Analysis of the Survey Data***

Since I was working with a small number of 28 surveys, I was fairly readily able to carry out simple statistical analyses. I present these findings in Chapter Four. There were a number of sections that also involved qualitative feedback. I also was able to summarize these data, noting the patterns and themes that emerged. I was able to compare these findings to the themes and patterns in both the descriptive section of the case study, and in the data gathered from the semi-structured small-group interviews. All of this data together allowed me to gain insight into a number of central themes, provided corroboration of findings from the interviews, and aided in identifying areas that require further attention and research. I will present these findings and analysis in Chapters Four and Five.

### Semi-Structured Small-Group Interviews

The weakness of quantitative survey research is its inability to deeply explore experience and uncover the meaning of experience. Qualitative research, on the other hand, focuses on experience. As Sharan Merriam explains, “It is assumed (in qualitative research) that meaning is embedded in people’s experiences...”<sup>342</sup> Therefore, “(t)he key concern is understanding the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspective, not the researcher’s.”<sup>343</sup> All qualitative research is characterized by the emphasis placed on experience and interpretation that underlie phenomenology – a school of philosophical thought.<sup>344</sup> The major thrust of this case study of *Putting Out into the Deep* is to probe deeply for what the participants’ experiences can reveal about their experience of *Putting Out Into the Deep* – the particular phenomenon they share.

Regarding the role of interviews in studying a particular phenomenon, Creswell explains that “collecting information involves in-depth interviews...with as many as 10 individuals. The important point is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it.”<sup>345</sup> I chose semi-structured, small-group interviews as the technique for data collection to reach this end because:

A small number of individuals, brought together as a discussion or resource group, is more valuable many times over than any representative sample. Such a

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<sup>342</sup> Sharan Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 6.

<sup>343</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 6.

<sup>344</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 15.

<sup>345</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 131.

group, discussing collectively their sphere of life and probing into it as they meet one another's disagreements, will do more to lift the veils covering the sphere's of life than any other device that I know of.<sup>346</sup>

This method of data collection uses open-ended questions that allow the researcher to investigate specific areas of inquiry while remaining open to new areas for exploration that may be raised by the interview participants. This ensured that while pre-determined aspects of the adult catechetical process were explored, the discussion could move in unplanned directions that raised further relevant issues for consideration. This room for spontaneity encouraged depth of feelings and insight in responses from participants, and allowed for unexpected insights to be explored.

I chose three semi-structured small-group interviews. These are represented by the table to follow.

**Table 2: Participants: Three Semi-Structured Interviews**

Interview 1		Interview 2	Interview 3
10 Participants in <i>Putting Out into the Deep</i> (those who attended at least ten sessions)		4 pastoral companions of the small groups (which met monthly)	2 Pastors and 1 Pastoral Associate (from parishes that had participants)
<b><u>Names (pseudonyms)</u></b>	<b><u>Age-Group</u></b>	<b><u>Names (pseudonyms)</u></b>	<b><u>Names (pseudonyms)</u></b>
Denis	55-60	Jane	Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne
Freda	55-60	Nancy	Reverend Jack
Mary	55-60	David	Reverend Francis
Paul	55-60	Richmond	
Nellie	50-55		
Paula	50-55		
Rick	50-55		
Marjorie	45-50		
Heather	40-45		
Mike	35-40		
Female-Male ratio= 3:2			

<sup>346</sup> Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research, third edition* (London, England: Sage Publications, 2006), 191.

The first interview was with participants in the adult catechetical series.<sup>347</sup> This group represents a mixture of life-long Catholics and one newly initiated Catholic, Heather, who was recently engaged in an R.C.I.A.<sup>348</sup> process. Denis, Mary and Paula were educated with the Baltimore catechism. Freda, a French Canadian, was raised in the Church in Quebec. Paul was a recent immigrant from China.

The second interview was with four pastoral accompaniers of small reflection groups who – along with the pastors and pastoral associate in the third interview group – served in a supporting role of the participants.<sup>349</sup> Since the focus of these interviews with people in supporting roles was to gain further insight from them into the experience of the programme participants, I didn't collect information such as gender or age, about these interviewees.

The small reflection groups were a constitutive part of *Putting Out into the Deep*. As leaders in these small groups the pastoral accompaniers were in a privileged position to be able to share observations of the experience of the participants. I will describe their role in detail in Chapter Four.<sup>350</sup> The third interview was with three pastoral leaders

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<sup>347</sup> The interview questions I explored with participants are attached as Appendix 6. I divided participants into two groups of five persons each. The same questions were used with both groups.

<sup>348</sup> R.C.I.A. stands for Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. It is a process for preparation for initiation into the Church that is modelled on the catechumenate process of the early Church. The Second Vatican Council called for its renewal. The English translation of the rite was completed in 1985 and published for use in Canada by the CCCB in 1987.

<sup>349</sup> The interview questions I explored with the small group pastoral accompaniers are attached as Appendix 7.

<sup>350</sup> The role of the small groups and of the pastoral accompaniers is described in detail in Chapter Four, 146.

- two pastors and a pastoral associate who are pastoral leaders – lay or ordained – from parishes with participants in *Putting Out into the Deep*.<sup>351</sup> Since evidence of transformative learning may be indicated by concrete changes in behaviour, these pastoral leaders were invited to discuss any changes they were able to observe in the participants in the adult catechesis.

The group interview with 10 participants and with two pastors and a pastoral associate lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. The second group with pastoral accompaniers agreed to extend the interview for another 30 minutes due to the quality of the conversation and the fact some participants were not finished giving their input. With the consent of the participants, all of the interviews were audio-recorded for the purposes of data analysis. I transcribed the interviews into written text for review and analysis using a constant comparative approach.

As Sharan Merriam describes it, the constant comparative method of data analysis “...is the continuous comparison of incidents, respondents’ remarks, and so on, with each other: Units of data – bits of information – are literally sorted into groupings that have something in common.”<sup>352</sup> The point to the constant comparative method is to find patterns in the data. Merriam explains that “(t)he constant comparative method of data analysis was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as a means of developing grounded theory”<sup>353</sup> which is, as Merriam indicates, “theory that is grounded in the data

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<sup>351</sup> The Interview questions I explored with two pastors and a pastoral associate are attached as Appendix 8.

<sup>352</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Case Study Applications in Education*, 179

<sup>353</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Case Study Applications in Education*, 159.

and emerges from them...”<sup>354</sup> Grounded theory can provide substantive findings that can contribute to theory building when the patterns are seen to repeat themselves in other settings as well. Analysis will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Five.

### ***Sampling for the Interviews***

Sampling in qualitative research is not based on numerical size as it is for quantitative research. Instead, it employs “purposeful sampling (which) means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study.”<sup>355</sup> Thus, I chose the people for each interview who I believed could describe experiences that would contribute to a thick rich description of the experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*.

### ***Participant Selection and Recruitment***

Persons who participated in fewer than ten sessions of *Putting Out into the Deep* were removed from the list of potential respondents for the first semi-structured group interview.<sup>356</sup> Potential participants were listed in one of two groupings: *certificate participants*, and *participants*.<sup>357</sup> I created an interview group with a mix from these two groupings, because exploring the significance of small reflection groups was an

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<sup>354</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Case Study Applications in Education*, 190.

<sup>355</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 125.

<sup>356</sup> A total of 11 out of the 17 participants in the semi-structured interviews were on the same list of 110 eligible participants for the survey. There is a slightly less than 10% chance that any interview participant also completed a survey. I do not know if this occurred.

<sup>357</sup> The distinction between “participants” and “certificate participants” will be explained in Chapter Four.

important dimension of this study. Only *certificate participants* were required to participate in these as part of the adult catechesis process.

I moved through a list of names in the two groupings in alphabetical order and extended an invitation to participate in the interview. Since males constituted approximately 30% of the participants in the adult catechesis, I tried to ensure a similar ratio for the interview. Since the number of female participants was higher, this meant that in the interest of ensuring approximately one male per every three females, I occasionally skipped a potential female participant and proceeded to invite the next potential male participant. When 10 people had accepted the invitation to participate, I divided them into two groups of five. I conducted two interviews with five people at a time, using the same list of open-ended questions with each group. Each group had a mix of male and female participants, as well as *participants* and *certificate participants*.

#### ***An Interview with Pastoral Accompaniers of Small Reflection Groups***

The semi-structured interview with pastoral accompaniers of the small reflection groups in which certificate participants participated used a convenience sample. I wanted to conduct a group interview of four pastoral accompaniers. I knew that several from among this group were not available at the time I planned to conduct the interview, so, I invited four people who were available to participate.

#### ***An Interview with Pastoral Leaders of Participants' Parish Communities***

There were only three parishes in the Archdiocese with a relatively large number of parishioners (six or more) participating in the series on a regular basis. Therefore, I

intentionally chose a pastoral leader from each of these parishes to participate in this interview. These leaders were well positioned to discuss the effects of the catechetical series on their parishioners and to describe observable changes in them over time.

### ***Analysis of the Data from Semi-Structured Interviews***

Semi-structured interviews are an interpretive methodology in which I as the researcher engaged in a thematic analysis of the feedback offered during the interviews.<sup>358</sup> I invited a member of the Advisory Committee, Mrs. M. a trained social scientist, to join me for all of the group interviews. She took notes during the interviews and listened carefully to all of the exchanges. We met after each interview to discuss the experience. Since the purpose of these interviews was to search for processes that empowered mature Christian disciples in the experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*, Mrs. M. and I reviewed the insights offered by participants. We highlighted discussion that confirmed propositions and discussed any input that surprised or challenged us. Mrs. M's presence and input helped me to maintain an awareness of the biases and assumptions I brought to this study.

Our dialogue helped me to focus on carefully hearing the experience of each interview participant and what insight their experience could reveal about processes that empower mature Christian disciples. We were also attentive to any insights from the interviews regarding obstacles to effective adult catechesis and the disconnect between the Church's vision of adult catechesis and its practice. I transcribed all of the interview recordings so that I could refer to the written data. This transcription process helped me

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<sup>358</sup> See the table outlining the procedure for Case Study, in Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, 78-79.

to become very familiar with all of the interviewees' input. And, the written data allowed me to return again and again to these sources of information to search for the meaning revealed. I did not consult the interview participants again for to review their responses for accuracy. However, transcribing the interviews directly from complete audio recordings of each interview ensured that participants' responses were accurately recorded.

After I became familiar with all of the data I began category construction. As case study expert Sharan Merriam explains, "These categories or themes are concepts indicated by the data."<sup>359</sup> Merriam describes how "(d)evising categories is largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study's purpose, the investigator's orientation and knowledge, and the meanings made explicit by the participants themselves."<sup>360</sup> Using the constant comparative method allowed me to compare data from interviews with data collected from the survey and from the descriptive data sources in the case study. As Merriam suggests I looked for units of data that are "heuristic – that is, the unit should reveal information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular information."<sup>361</sup> As Merriam points out, "(i)n effect, categories are the answers to your research question(s)."<sup>362</sup> So it is the central questions of my research that provided the conceptual framework for my analysis.

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<sup>359</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 179.

<sup>360</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 179.

<sup>361</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 180.

<sup>362</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 183.

### **The Relationship between the Interviewer and the Interviewees**

Recently, much attention has been given to the importance of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Theorists have noted that this relationship contains an asymmetrical balance of power that can affect the responses of the interviewees.<sup>363</sup>

### ***Participant-Researcher***

It is important to understand that “unlike quantitative approaches to research which can utilize complex tools of analysis such as statistical software.... the primary tool of the qualitative researcher is herself.”<sup>364</sup> Practical theologian Richard Osmer identifies the key role that participation plays in qualitative research by indicating that “(t)his takes the skill of observing.”<sup>365</sup>

Sharan Merriam describes the various stances a researcher may assume in relationship with those being observed: a complete participant; a participant as observer (the observing role is subordinate to the participant role); an observer as participant (the participant role is subordinate to the observing role); a complete observer.<sup>366</sup> My participant-researcher’s role in *Putting Out into the Deep* may be best described as a participant as observer stance which evolved into an observer as participant role as the

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<sup>363</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, 140-141.

<sup>364</sup> John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Quantitative Research* (London, England: SCM-Canterbury Press, 2006), 58.

<sup>365</sup> Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology, An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 60.

<sup>366</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 100-101.

study evolved. I was the leader of this group for more than 3 years before I decided it would become the focus of my qualitative research. In those 3 years I was firmly established as the designer/director of the catechetical series, and I had solid relationships of openness and trust with many of the participants.

I revealed my stance as researcher only to those who were directly implicated by it. I did not want to interrupt the natural flow of the 3-year cycle any more than necessary. When the 50 surveys were mailed, the second 3-year cycle was within a few months of concluding. When I conducted the semi-structured small group interviews, the second 3-year cycle was recently finished.

The letter that accompanied the survey was explicit in its description of the purpose of my research study and the freedom of recipients to participate according to their discretion. Similarly, I was completely transparent about the nature and purpose of my research with those I interviewed.

I was concerned that participants in the study may feel that I used our trust and their confidence in me to elicit their participation in the research. However, this did not seem to be the case when I discussed participation with the participants in small-group interviews. They were highly supportive of the objectives of my research and were eager to share their experience with me.

The fact that I have known the participants in my research project for several years, and we have built collaborative relationships of trust and mutual appreciation, minimized this problem. Our positive relationship strengthened the interview process by fostering a space of trust that encouraged candour and depth in conversation. However, my relationship with participants is also a confounding variable in this case study. Many

of the participants in this adult catechesis process were very supportive of me and wanted my research to go well.

It was very important that I clearly explained to participants that their honesty in their responses was the very best way to support this research. I explicitly invited them to resist any temptation to provide the responses they thought I was hoping to hear. This was the primary reason I decided to introduce a survey into the study. It provides a means for participants to anonymously describe their experience of *Putting Out Into the Deep*. The survey data - which includes a small amount of quantitative data -strengthens the study findings.

### **The Challenges and Limits of this Case Study**

One of the pressing challenges of case study research is the management of the range of data sources as well as the large volume of data. Merriam states:

In addition to a tremendous amount of data, this range of data sources may present disparate, incompatible, even apparently contradictory information. The case study researcher can be seriously challenged in trying to make sense out of the data. Attention to data management is particularly important under these circumstances.<sup>367</sup>

Three commonly expressed concerns about case study research are: case studies are lengthy; case studies lack rigor; it is difficult to generalize from case studies.<sup>368</sup>

There are some particular actions required by the researcher to address the first two

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<sup>367</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 193.

<sup>368</sup> Palena Neale, Shyam Thapa, and Carolyn Boyce, "Preparing a Case Study: A Guide for Designing and Conducting a Case Study for Evaluation Input" in *Pathfinder International Tool Series, Monitoring and Evaluation* – 1, May, 2006, 4.

concerns. First, it is important for the researcher “to provide the rich information in a digestible manner.”<sup>369</sup> Second, the importance of careful data collection and analysis is essential for ensuring a reliable and valid study. Merriam suggests that “validity and reliability are concerns that can be approached through careful attention to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented.”<sup>370</sup> Triangulation is a technique that, “especially in using multiple methods of data collection and analysis...strengthens reliability as well as validity.”<sup>371</sup>

Merriam explains that, regarding the third concern, “(t)he question of generalizability has plagued qualitative investigators for some time.”<sup>372</sup> She presents Friedrich Erikson’s position that the purpose of interpretive research is not to arrive at “abstract universals...by statistical generalizations.”<sup>373</sup> The purpose is to arrive at “concrete universals...by studying a specific case in great detail.”<sup>374</sup> Qualitative research rests upon this assumption that “the general resides in the particular.”<sup>375</sup>

Merriam explains that using the strategies of thick rich description, and

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<sup>369</sup> Neale, Thapa, Boyce, “Preparing a Case Study” in *Pathfinder International Tool Series*,” 4.

<sup>370</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 199-200.

<sup>371</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*. 207.

<sup>372</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 207.

<sup>373</sup> Merriam, referencing F. Erikson, in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 210.

<sup>374</sup> Merriam, referencing F. Erikson, in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 210.

<sup>375</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 210.

“(m)ultisite designs – using several sites, cases, situations....will allow the results to be applied by readers to a greater range of other situations.”<sup>376</sup> Yin shares this view, advising case study researchers to observe the same “replication logic”<sup>377</sup> that underlies scientific research: strong support is gained for a theory by replicating the results a few times.<sup>378</sup> In this regard it is important to note the results of this study represent simply one case study.

Another limit of this study concerns the quantitative data collected in the survey. Even though there is debate about acceptable sample sizes in quantitative research, I am aware that the confidence level of the survey findings would have been significantly increased if I had sent the survey to all 110 eligible participants. In hindsight, I realize this would have made the survey results more compelling. I also recognize that I could have used the survey as a more intense quantitative research instrument by designing it to test a variety of variables related to mature discipleship. Instead, I used it to primarily collect additional qualitative data.

### **Reflexivity in Qualitative Research and World Views**

Reflexivity on the part of the researcher is essential for any successful qualitative research.<sup>379</sup> In keeping with the importance of this self awareness, I realize the passion

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<sup>376</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Application in Education*, 212.

<sup>377</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 44.

<sup>378</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 44.

<sup>379</sup> For a thorough discussion of the importance for the qualitative researcher to be self aware of the biases that shape his or her interpretations, see John Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, 178-180.

and commitment I bring to this research project. My subjectivity in my own experiences, observations and interpretations of this process of adult catechesis constitute an important part of my data. Creswell encourages the researcher to be aware of the “world views”<sup>380</sup> they bring to their interpretation. I am aware of two “world views” I hold that shape my inquiry. The first is what Creswell calls a *social constructivist* view, where the goal is to understand the world as much as possible. One of my research goals is to reveal, as much as possible, the views of the participants. Therefore, I want to hear as much, and as clearly as possible, what participants experienced in this adult catechesis.

The second world view that I am aware that I hold is a strong *advocacy and participatory* world view. I introduced this as a dimension of my reflexivity in the Introduction to this thesis. This view sees a need for reform, and holds a conviction that research should contain an action function toward that reform. According to this worldview, it is a significant goal of research to help identify marginalization, hegemony, and oppression so as to recommend reform.<sup>381</sup> I bring to this research the conviction that adults deserve an effective adult catechesis that empowers them as mature Christian disciples, and that there are many factors that limit and even at times prevent effective adult catechesis. Therefore, it is important for me to be aware of this conviction and to intentionally search for data that provide evidence for this contention and to search for hopeful solutions to injustices in this regard.

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<sup>380</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, 224.

<sup>381</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, 21-22.

## Ethics Review and Approval

I presented a proposal to conduct my case study research to the Ethics Board at Saint Paul University.<sup>382</sup> The Ethics Board required a revision in my original proposal before they granted approval of the research study. They asked me to explicitly inform participants in the semi-structured interviews that their anonymity could not be guaranteed because they knew one another and were meeting with me in groups. Once this was explicitly written into the letter of consent to be signed by each interviewee, approval for the case study research was granted.<sup>383</sup> I also received approval from the Archdiocese of Ottawa to conduct my case study research.<sup>384</sup>

The 50 participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* who received a survey also received an accompanying letter.<sup>385</sup> The letter indicated their freedom to either respond to the survey or to decline to respond. If they chose to respond they were asked to remain anonymous by returning their survey without any identifying information. The objectives of the research study were clearly explained. The importance of their honest responses was emphasized.

All 17 participants in the semi-structured interviews were required to sign a letter of consent to participate in the study.<sup>386</sup> The letter indicated their complete freedom to

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<sup>382</sup> Information about the Ethics Review Board, its policies and procedures, can be found at the link to follow, accessed November 26, 2013, [http://ustpaul.ca/en/research-research-ethics-at-spu\\_674\\_599.htm](http://ustpaul.ca/en/research-research-ethics-at-spu_674_599.htm),

<sup>383</sup> The Ethics Board Approval is attached as Appendix 1.

<sup>384</sup> The Letter of Approval from the Archdiocese of Ottawa is attached as Appendix 2.

<sup>385</sup> The letter that accompanied the survey is attached as Appendix 3.

<sup>386</sup> The Letter of Consent is attached as Appendix 4.

withdraw from the study at any time, and to decline to respond to any questions during the interview according to their discretion. The letter also explained that these small group interviews would be audio-recorded for the sole purposes of data collection and analysis of the researcher. It assured participants that that the recordings would be kept strictly confidential and be stored in a secure location. The letter attested to the fact that anonymity could not be guaranteed because participants in the semi-structured interviews were meeting with me in groups of people who knew one another. However, the letter requested that all participants respect the confidentiality of the interviews.

Finally, the letter indicated that anonymity would be maintained in all published data since participants would not be identified by name.<sup>387</sup> Accordingly, I have changed the names of all participants that I discuss in this thesis, including in the Appendices, to honour anonymity. For the participants in the semi-structured interviews, participants were promised, as a condition of their consent to participate, that their names would not be used in any published data. I conducted the survey in such a way that the identity of participants remained unknown. I stated in my request for approval to the Ethics Board that the real names of participants in my research study would not be used in my published data.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I have presented the design of my case study, the methodology and a number of considerations regarding the strengths and limits of this design and method. I will now move onto the presentation of the findings from my case study research which is the focus of Chapter Four.

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<sup>387</sup> I use pseudonyms, in this thesis, for all participants in the case study research.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **FINDINGS: A CASE STUDY OF *PUTTING OUT INTO THE DEEP***

The first step in the presentation of my case study data is a description<sup>388</sup> of *Putting Out into the Deep* that draws upon several sources: archived documents including meeting notes, diocesan reports, and participants' testimonies; my memories as participant-researcher of the history of the adult catechetical series, and of observations during the two three-year cycles. This description establishes the context for *Putting Out into the Deep* which is the case under review. It also provides some significant information about the people, processes and events that established and sustained this adult catechetical series over its two three-year cycles. I will demonstrate, in Chapter Five, how these descriptive data work with the other data sources in this case study research to corroborate some of the findings related to *Putting Out into the Deep*.

#### **A Description of *Putting Out into the Deep***

In September, 2002, I was invited by the Archbishop of Ottawa, Marcel Gervais to take the position of diocesan Director of Adult Faith Development with the expressed purpose of designing and leading an adult faith development process for the English-speaking sector of the Archdiocese.<sup>389</sup> The Archbishop knew of previous work I had done to establish an adult faith development series in the Diocese of Timmins, Ontario.

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<sup>388</sup> See p. 111 of this thesis for a diagram that situates this description within the overall design of the case study.

<sup>389</sup> I had been in this position for four years when I began my doctoral studies.

He chose me as the person he wanted to direct a similar initiative in the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

An Advisory Committee for “Adult Faith Formation” was already in place in the Archdiocese. In consultation with the Archbishop I renewed this committee and invited new advisors according to the various leadership abilities and expertise needed for our work.

### ***The Central Role of the Advisory Committee and the Guiding Principles***

The members of the Advisory Committee included parish priests and pastoral associates,<sup>390</sup> experts in ministry formation, adult education and catechesis,<sup>391</sup> and representatives of the Archbishop’s Curia. Among us we shared an excellent knowledge of the Archdiocese, a solid grounding in the Church’s documents related to catechesis, and considerable experience and expertise designing faith education events for adults. The Advisory Committee worked closely with me during the preliminary planning stages and throughout the two three-year cycles of this adult catechetical series.

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<sup>390</sup> Pastoral Associates are lay persons hired to share the pastoral responsibility for a parish community with ordained ministers (priests and/or deacons).

<sup>391</sup> A professor of religious education, and the director of ministry formation, at Saint Paul University in Ottawa, were both members of the advisory committee. A professional social worker who had expertise in adult education and group facilitation was also a member. I had been working as a diocesan director of adult catechesis (in the Diocese of Timmins and then in the Archdiocese of Ottawa) for ten years when we began to design “Putting Out into the Deep,” and I was completing a Masters in Religious Education at the time. I was completing a term as the coordinator of the Association of Ministries Programmes, a national association for leaders in adult faith education, comprised, mainly, of diocesan directors of adult catechesis from across the country. I was also serving as an advisory committee member for the National Office of Religious Education (NORE) of the CCCB. The director of NORE was a frequent presenter at our sessions and offered frequent helpful feedback and advice regarding “Putting Out into the Deep.”

As we developed a vision and plan for the curriculum design and the process for our adult catechesis, we developed several principles that came to consistently define our approach to adult catechesis. These principles are listed to follow.

1. It is the whole community that is responsible for its catechizing ministry.<sup>392</sup>
2. The purpose of adult catechesis is to form Christian disciples.<sup>393</sup> Catechesis that can achieve this goal needs to be about an integration of “*information, formation and transformation.*”<sup>394</sup>
3. The catechumenate is a model for all catechesis.<sup>395</sup> The model demonstrates that faith is a journey that unfolds over time and requires catechesis that integrates liturgical practice and life experience.
4. Reginald Bibby’s research<sup>396</sup> indicating that churches are not always meeting the needs of people for meaning and significance needs to be considered. Our catechesis will be designed in response to the expressed needs of people.
5. The principle of adult education that adults need to help shape their own learning opportunities will be honoured in our adult catechesis.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>392</sup> The notion that the whole Christian community is responsible for catechesis is frequently expressed in the Church’s documents. See, for example, this statement in the *General Directory for Catechesis*: “The entire Christian community should feel responsible for this (catechesis) service.” *GDC*, #219(a).

<sup>393</sup> As I described in Chapter One, this vision of adult catechesis permeates the Church’s documents, and defines its practice in the early church. While many of the Church’s documents informed our work, including *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community: Some Principles and Guidelines*, we were working most closely with the *GDC* as the Church’s current normative text on catechesis.

<sup>394</sup> We were aware of this perspective about effective catechesis that Thomas Groome was advocating in his work. See, for example, Thomas Groome, *Educating For Life* (New York, New York: Crossroads, 1998).

<sup>395</sup> See *GDC*, #'s 90, 91.

<sup>396</sup> We were aware of the central research findings presented in Reginald W. Bibby, *There’s Got to be More! Connecting Churches and Canadians* (Kelowna, British Columbia: Wood Lake Publishing, 1995).

<sup>397</sup> Patricia Cranton points out that the idea of adults as “self directed learners” has become almost synonymous with adult education. She highlights the need to clarify the meaning of this assumption, especially given that “(Malcolm) Knowles saw self-directed learning as a process by which people made the instructional design decisions – identifying their needs, setting their own goals, choosing how to learn...” Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 3. Cranton also points out that, “(t)hrough the influence of

6. We will honour the baptismal vocation of our participants, as adults called to respond as mature Christian disciples, by inviting them to name their needs for learning and to help shape a process of comprehensive adult catechesis.<sup>398</sup>
7. If people have significant input into the adult catechesis, they will be more invested in the initiative.

Our work was shaped by these principles, and we sought to consistently uphold them throughout the two three-year cycles of *Putting Out into the Deep*. We established a highly collaborative approach to the design and implementation of *Putting Out Into the Deep* among ourselves as members of the Advisory Committee, with the participants, and with the archdiocesan community. We accomplished this by including numerous opportunities for evaluation, feedback and consultation over the course of the two three-year cycles.

### ***A Beginning Consultation Process***

Although the Archbishop wanted this process to begin as soon as possible, he agreed to a one-year consultation period. I considered this as important for a number of reasons, and the Advisory Committee agreed. First, consultation sessions allowed us to engage the archdiocesan community in its responsibility for shaping adult catechesis. It also allowed us to invite adults to invest in the process and shape their learning by expressing their needs and hopes. Second, I was newly arrived in the Archdiocese, and a consultation allowed me to establish a relationship with people and to understand the

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humanism, we tend to see adult learning as collaborative and participatory” (Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*), 4.

<sup>398</sup> This perspective was shaped by the Church’s documents regarding adult catechesis, as well as by insight from adult education, especially transformative learning.

diocesan context related to adult catechesis. Finally, we recognized that we would need to overcome some disillusionment on the part of many people.

A *synodal process* in the Archdiocese during the early 1990's had resulted in a recommendation for a plan "that all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Ottawa be committed to a wide-ranging vision for adult faith development and to the articulation of the means necessary for the ongoing implementation of this vision."<sup>399</sup> The recommendations included evaluation of current processes and the study of possible new models, as well as training for leadership in adult faith development and for the development of programs. The need for strong centralized leadership at the archdiocesan level was emphasized.<sup>400</sup> Though there were some local initiatives underway in various parishes in 2002, a diocesan position designated exclusively to the leadership of adult catechesis had not yet been established.

The Archbishop explained to me that the delay implementing the recommendations from the synodal process was due to added responsibilities he assumed as a member of the executive of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops that concluded with a two-year term as president.<sup>401</sup> It was close to a decade following this synodal process when the Archbishop invited me to assume the position of director of adult faith development, and to design and lead a diocesan-wide educational

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<sup>399</sup> Jean Goulet, "A Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Ottawa," *Caravan* (Winter 1995), Vol. 8, No. 33, 12.

<sup>400</sup> Goulet, "A Synodal Process in the Archdiocese of Ottawa," *Caravan*, Vol. 8, No. 33, 12.

<sup>401</sup> I had several conversations with the Archbishop about this matter. He attributes the delay in responding effectively to the plan for adult faith development that emerged from the synodal process to the added responsibilities he acquired as president of the CCCB at that time.

programme intended for the faith development of adults. We realized that “(t)here [was] a certain disillusionment to be overcome because of thwarted efforts in the past.”<sup>402</sup>

As the consultation process progressed, it became clear that this disillusionment was wide-spread and deeply felt by many people across the Archdiocese, especially by those who had actively participated in the synodal process and did not see follow-up to their recommendations. Our consultation provided an opportunity for people to express their disillusionment and to advise me that trust and credibility would be earned when people could see that their recommendations were heeded and concrete initiatives were in place. Knowing about this disillusionment alerted me and the Advisory Committee to the importance of a timely and concrete response to the feedback we received from the consultation process. It also impressed upon us that earning trust and building credibility would not be easy to achieve. Doing so became an important objective.

The Archbishop sent a letter to all of the parishes introducing me as the new director and inviting all interested persons to participate in the consultation process. Those in positions of pastoral leadership, such as priests and pastoral associates, were strongly encouraged to take part. The Advisory Committee discussed the importance of emphasizing that the primary purpose of adult faith formation is to form Christian disciples. I designed a series of questions for parish communities to consider before

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<sup>402</sup> See Appendix 9, *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting Out Into the Deep! A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector* (Presented to the Archdiocese of Ottawa, August, 2003, by Carol Kuzmochka, co-ordinator of lay leadership formation and adult faith development, English sector), #3.H.

attending the consultation process that reflected this.<sup>403</sup> Some participants came to the meeting with written summaries of extensive responses to the questions from parish council consultations or from meetings with other groups within their parishes. Others engaged in minimal reflection having spent perhaps just a few minutes reflecting on the questions alone. All of this input formed the foundation for our reflection and discussion during the consultation sessions.

The English-speaking sector of the Archdiocese of Ottawa is divided into four regions. We held a consultation session in each region. The number of participants to attend from each parish was left to the discretion of the parish leadership. By the end of the consultation process 203 people had participated. Participants represented 40 of 64 parishes within the English-speaking sector of the Archdiocese.

At each of the consultation meetings, chairs were placed in a circle to help good communication and place the focus on the community that gathered and our intention to actively participate in dialogue. A member of the Advisory Committee facilitated the

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<sup>403</sup> The understanding of *discipleship* as the primary identity and the vocational call of all the baptised to go out in mission to the world was clear for me and for the Advisory Committee members as we were planning. We shared this vision in preliminary information we sent to parishes as they prepared for the consultation. Parishes were then invited to gather in groups to reflect on the following questions: *What is most important about the formation of adults in faith? What are hopes and concerns about creating a formation process? What are the “signs of the times” to which we must pay attention to help form adults as mature Christian disciples? What are two recommendations you’d like to make to help this project move forward?* We were well aware of the emphasis on the formation of mature Christian disciples as a central focus of the Church’s catechetical documents. At the consultation sessions, themselves, I discussed the origins of *discipleship* in the early Church, and described how one of the intentions of the Second Vatican Council was to reclaim and deepen these orientations. One of the ways I chose to emphasize the purpose of adult Catechesis was to explain that *disciple* and *volunteer* are not synonyms. This clearly had an impact on some people who explained that they were quite accustomed to regarding themselves and others as “volunteers” in the parish. A summary of the Consultation feedback is attached to this thesis as *Appendix10*. Some of this discussion can be found there.

sessions with me. We wanted to emphasize a team approach, and I wanted to benefit from the feedback of another person who could help reflect on the experience of the consultation sessions and the feedback we received.

People were invited into small groups to reflect on their greatest hopes and concerns for the project, the “signs of the times” to which we needed to pay attention, and to conclude with each group’s two wisest recommendations to help the project succeed. All groups presented a summary of their discussion in a plenary session.

After the consultation sessions were completed a summary was compiled and distributed to all of the participants. A final summary session was held at the request of participants in the consultation sessions. They expressed a desire for an opportunity to hear and discuss the input from the other regions. This session was attended by 110 people. The summary<sup>404</sup> of all of the responses from the consultation sessions was distributed and discussed, and people were given the opportunity to make some final recommendations for the shaping of the diocesan initiative. The discussion during the meeting based on this summary led to a decision to name the series *Putting Out into the Deep*. It also led to the decision that the question that ought to frame the series was “What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today?”

### ***A Proposal***

I used all of the feedback, including that from the final summary session, to compile *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting Out into the Deep: A Proposal*

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<sup>404</sup> A detailed summary of responses and more about the process is included as Appendix 10.

for the *Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector*.<sup>405</sup> Following feedback from the Advisory Committee, regarding the report, and a presentation to the Diocesan Pastoral Council, this proposal was presented to all of the pastoral leaders - priests and pastoral associates - for their feedback and approval.

The proposal pointed out a foundational theme shaping the landscape for further initiatives that “...our fundamental identity as disciples of Christ called to fulfill the mission of the Church is what gives meaning and direction to everything we do.”<sup>406</sup> It spoke of a number of people’s convictions: that lay and ordained need to work collaboratively with a common vision and commitment, that pastoral leadership supporting collaborative ministry is needed in the parishes, that putting out into the deep means supporting one another in fears and uncertainties, that accountability and inclusivity are needed, that discernment of “the signs of the times” is essential, that the people of the Archdiocese are eager for formation in their faith, and that the significant questions and concerns of people’s lives need to be addressed, that good efforts already underway need to be furthered, supported and made known. It also highlighted the need for ongoing consultation and evaluation.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> This proposal is attached as Appendix 9, *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting out into the Deep: A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector*.

<sup>406</sup> See Appendix 9, *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting out into the Deep: A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector*, #2.

<sup>407</sup> See Appendix 9, *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting out into the Deep: A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector*, #3. It should be noted that the most concern regarding a diocesan initiative mentioned most frequently during the consultation process was the fear that diocesan leadership may not follow through on their commitment to creating such an initiative.

Following the consultation process, and after the proposal was presented to all of the pastoral leaders, it was clear that the first aim and the priority for lay formation needed to be adult catechesis.<sup>408</sup> A commitment was made and approved by the Advisory Committee to give exclusive attention to the design and implementation of a diocesan process for adult catechesis. The promise was to return to other aims once this first priority was effectively addressed.

The proposal concluded with suggestions for how to begin to achieve objectives, suggested time-lines and a plan for accountability.<sup>409</sup> In order to discourage divisions between lay and ordained, the Archbishop encouraged all of these to be referred to as *adult faith development and leadership formation* initiatives, rather than as initiatives for *lay formation*. Thereafter I ceased to use the term *lay formation*. The Archbishop approved the final copy of the proposal and I began to design the process and curriculum for the adult catechetical series. The Advisory Committee gave regular feedback and input to help accomplish this.

### ***Designing Putting Out into the Deep***

We created an adult catechetical series called *Putting Out into the Deep*. It was designed to unfold over a three-year cycle. The sessions were held one Saturday per

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<sup>408</sup> See Appendix 9, *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting out into the Deep: A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector, #4*. It should also be noted that the third aim, ministry formation of mandated pastoral associates, which had been clearly articulated as a need during the consultation sessions, generated an uneasy response from the clergy at the subsequent meeting to discuss the proposal. They indicated that they did not wish to see such formation initiated at the current time, and wanted to take more time at a later date to discuss it.

<sup>409</sup> See Appendix 9, *Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Putting out into the Deep: A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English Sector, #5*.

month, beginning in the fall, and continuing for eight months of each year. The overarching question, endorsed by the consultation, “What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today?” became a central reference point. And the scripture-based theme *Putting Out into the Deep*, chosen during the consultation, kept us focused on the need to take risks, to trust, to be engaged in a process that was leading us toward mature discipleship. The session topics chosen for the first year of the three-year cycle were based upon feedback from the consultation.

Over the three-year cycle, participants explored topics such as the relationship between faith and culture (and the Christian call to engage culture), dealing with moral dilemmas (especially related to end-of-life issues and reproduction), what it means to be a baptized person called to mature Christian discipleship, how to build healthy relationships, strengthening one’s spiritual life through prayer and discernment, what evangelization means for Catholics, social justice, how reading and praying with the bible can influence how we live, healing the relationship with the aboriginal community in Canada, building peaceful relationships among people of all religions (especially between Christians and Muslims), how Catholic liturgy is constructed and celebrated and the role of the Word of God and the Eucharist in the celebration, the spirituality of aging, the spirituality of parenting, pastoral care for the ill and aged, catechesis for children and adults, creating a just society.

### *Streams of Participation*

The members of the Advisory Committee and I designed three streams of participation in *Putting Out into the Deep*. The goal was to make it as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

#### *i. Certificate Participants*

Certificate participants were required to complete 180 hours of sessions over the three-year cycle. Of these, 140 hours of sessions were provided as part of the series *Putting Out into the Deep*. Participants were responsible for engaging in an additional 40 educational hours outside of these sessions. Many choices from a variety of learning opportunities were available. Some certificate participants completed courses in theology or human sciences at Saint Paul University, while others engaged in a pastoral care training programme offered by Christian churches in the Ottawa area. Other participants completed a course in spiritual discernment offered by a local Jesuit community, while others attended the Summer Institutes in Pastoral Liturgy and Religious Education at Saint Paul University. The objective of this dimension of the process was to encourage participants to broaden their learning, to take advantage of other learning venues, and to gain further formation in areas that were of particular interest to them.

This became a source of exploration and discovery of new areas of discipleship for a number of people. For example, Elsa, a certificate participant who was recently retired, found herself feeling very passionate about the call to justice. Following a session on social justice that included an exploration of the Church's social teaching, she

wanted to engage more actively in social justice action and also to invite others to become more knowledgeable about the Church's body of inspiring teaching about justice. She joined a local ecumenical and inter-faith group concerned with promoting affordable housing in the Ottawa area. Its seminars, which explored poverty and homelessness in the area, fulfilled Elsa's requirement for an additional 40 hours of formation for her certificate. She also convinced three other people from her parish to become involved in the project, and they began meeting independently, once a month, to read and discuss different documents on social justice.

Certificate participants were also required to belong to a small reflection group and to attend a 90- minute meeting with the group, once a month, in between sessions. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an opportunity for ongoing reflection and conversation related to the topics from the sessions. Our hope was that the group would provide an opportunity for critical reflection and sustained discussion that would help to encourage significant learning and growth. Each small group had pastoral accompaniment from someone with experience in pastoral ministry. The pastoral accompanier<sup>410</sup> did not facilitate the meetings, but was present to provide support and

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<sup>410</sup> One pastoral accompanier – a person with pastoral experience – was assigned to each of the small groups of certificate participants. They met with the group once monthly for 90 minutes between sessions of *Putting Out Into the Deep*. Most of the pastoral accompaniers also attended the *Putting Out Into the Deep* Sessions. The pastoral accompanier was an ongoing presence in the small group. He or she ensured that groups met regularly, offered encouragement and support to participants, and brought an experienced voice to the discussions. He or she also read and offered feedback to certificate participants on the reflection papers they prepared each month. The pastoral accompanier also provided me, as director of the programme, with regular feedback about the monthly meetings that I shared with the advisory committee. There were no clearly established criteria for the pastoral experience required to be a pastoral accompanier. Our pastoral accompaniers consisted of a woman religious retired Catholic High School principal, a woman religious professor of theology at Saint Paul University, parish priests, permanent deacons, and parish pastoral associates.

encouragement. A process was provided for the small group meetings and participants took turns facilitating the meetings.<sup>411</sup>

Finally, certificate participants were asked to write a brief reflection paper (2-3 pages typed, double-spaced), following each of the sessions, that expressed their most important insights from the session, and the implications for them and for the Church. Our hope was that this would afford another opportunity to engage in fruitful critical reflection for the participants. Pastoral accompaniers gave feedback to certificate participants about their reflections.<sup>412</sup>

Receipt of a certificate at the end of the three-year cycle did not signify a particular qualification but it was a symbol of the adult faith development process the participant had completed. The hope was that pastors and others in leadership positions in the parish community would recognize and support the accomplishment of the certificate participant, and encourage them to continue to take their responsibility according to their baptismal vocation and their call to be mature Christian disciples.

### *ii. Regular Participants*

Regular participants attended as many sessions as they desired but were not required to engage in additional educational hours or to participate in small group meetings or to write reflection papers. Several regular participants wanted to participate in a small group and were able to do so. Regular participants were awarded a certificate

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<sup>411</sup> A sample copy of this process is attached as Appendix 11.

<sup>412</sup> See Appendix 11, attached for a sample of the instruction for reflection papers and a sample of the group process provided for the small reflection group meetings for certificate participants.

of participation at the end of the three-year cycle if they had participated in a minimum of 15 sessions. Several regular participants attended all of the 24 sessions in the three-year cycle.

### *iii. Participants*

In addition to the invitation to become Certificate Participants or Regular Participants there was also an option for people to participate in any sessions they chose. Many people came to one or a few sessions according to their interest.

### ***Resource People and Leadership of the Sessions***

A large number of the resource people for the catechetical sessions were faculty members of Saint Paul University in Ottawa. Other resource people included staff of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, some local bishops, and experts in various fields, such as a local Imam, a local Rabbi, a local Muslim scholar, Catholic palliative care physicians, and the director of a local affordable housing project.

In addition to our resource people I acted as host and facilitator for the sessions. I would typically welcome people, introduce the presenter for the session<sup>413</sup> and lead periods of integration and reflection throughout the day. Hospitality was a core value. I practiced it by spending time with participants, learning names quickly, encouraging participants, listening carefully to feedback, and responding to the feedback we received from evaluations and other forms of feedback. I also acted as an advocate for participants during the sessions by asking for clarification of terms when I thought the

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<sup>413</sup> On several occasions we welcomed a panel of presenters on certain topics.

meaning might be unknown, and ensuring that there were times for conversation among the participants and with the session presenters.

I established a pattern to encourage engagement by using a simple process for thanking our resource people that included an invitation for everyone to contribute. I would ask the assembly, “What words and phrases of thanks would you like to express to (name) for his or her contribution today? This became a simple but meaningful way that leadership was shared. It was also a meaningful experience for the presenters who received immediate and direct feedback from the participants about what they appreciated from the session. Further to this, quite early on, participants began to take responsibility for certain tasks and a core group of people would come early to help set up, prepare refreshments and tend to registration.

### ***Physical set-up***

The number of participants per session averaged between 70 and 130 people. The chairs in our meeting room were always set in a semi-circular pattern to emphasize the gathering as a learning community and to encourage conversation. The aim was to arrange the chairs such that as many people as possible could see one another, while providing a comfortable place for the session presenter where he or she, as well as any visual aids, were clearly visible.

### ***Structure of the Sessions***

The sessions began with prayer which frequently included the Gospel passage (Luke 5) from whence the theme, *Putting Out into the Deep*, was derived. The prayer was interactive inviting participants to reflect on connections between the prayer and

their life experiences. During the second year of the first three-year cycle we began to celebrate the Church's formal rite of *Morning Prayer* to begin the sessions. Participants assumed the various leadership roles for this.

The balance between content and process for the sessions was carefully considered. I worked with session presenters to ensure there were opportunities for small group discussions, plenary reflection, and conversations between the presenter and the participants. I would usually facilitate these parts of the session. We ended each of the sessions with a reflection period that invited participants to articulate their most important insights and challenges from the session, and to begin naming some of the potential concrete ways they might respond, in the experiences of their own lives, as disciples of Christ. Our concluding reflection questions were generally: "How has this helped me to put out into the deep?" "What does all of this mean for me as a Catholic in the world today? and What might I do to respond?"

### ***Participants over the Two Three-year Cycles***

By the end of the first three-year cycle approximately 200 people had participated by attending at least one session. Sixteen Certificate participants, from 11 parishes, received *Certificates in Adult Faith Development*. Fourteen participants, from 12 parishes, received a *Certificate of Participation* for attending at least 15 sessions. Some were present for all sessions.<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>414</sup> See Appendix 12, *A Brief Report on the Activities of 2005-06*.

More than 300 people participated in the second three-year cycle, from 2006-2009, by attending at least one session of formation. There was a core group of 70 people: 55 were certificate participants, and 15 were regular participants who attended at least 15 sessions. Eight of the regular participants attended all of the sessions.

Participants were approximately 70% female and 30% male ranging in age from approximately 20 to 85. Most were life-long Catholics. A few were initiated into the Church as adults. Most participants were first-language English and Canadian-born. Several Canadian-born first-language French were also among the participants, as well as participants from multi-cultures including Chinese, Filipino, German, Haitian, Korean, and Latin American.

### ***The Challenge of Publicity***

Each session of *Putting Out into the Deep* was publicized on the website of the Archdiocese, and following each of the sessions a brief summary was posted on the website as a source of information. Publicity about upcoming sessions and the various streams of participation was sent to all of the parishes with a request to publicize the events and to encourage people to participate. One of the major challenges we faced, throughout the two three-year cycles, was that information was not well publicized in the parish communities. Frequently people would come to sessions, at the invitation of a fellow participant, and comment that they had not heard about the series in their respective parishes.

I asked the Advisory Committee for feedback about this silence. Two explanations were offered by the parish priests on our committee: pastoral leaders - priests and

pastoral associates - are extremely busy and likely overlooked the information; parish secretaries, who are often responsible for publicity in the parishes, were not receiving the information. We responded by changing our strategy and also sending information to parish secretaries. However, we did not notice a significant improvement in publicity.

We made another observation, at the end of the first three-year cycle, which prompted us to ask if there was a lack of support from some pastoral leaders. At the end of the three-year cycle, we held a ceremony, led by the Archbishop, to honour the certificate participants and to acknowledge the regular participants. A special invitation to the celebration was sent to pastoral leaders of the certificate participants' parishes. The invitation contained an RSVP. Certificate participants came from 11 parishes. Two pastoral leaders attended the ceremony, and five others answered the RSVP. Six of the invited pastoral leaders did not respond to the invitation. When the reasons for this were explored with the Advisory Committee, busyness and the fact that the celebration was held on a Saturday afternoon were suggested as reasons for the lack of response.

That pastoral leaders - priests and pastoral associates - did not support the adult catechetical series was a puzzling possibility since, during the initial consultation period, they had almost unanimously identified adult catechesis as the most urgent need in the area of adult faith formation. Yet, observations of the lack of publicity for the sessions, as well as the lack of response to invitations for the ceremony and celebration, suggested that the possibility needed to be considered. I explored this question in the small group interview I conducted with pastoral leaders. While no definitive explanations were offered, some significant insights emerged from the discussion which will be described as part of my findings later in this chapter.

### ***Maintaining a Collaborative Approach***

The Advisory Committee and I worked closely together during the two three-year cycles. We met on a regular basis, and discussed all matters related to the series.

Advisory committee members often attended sessions of *Putting Out into the Deep*, participated in evaluation session, along with participants, and helped me to prepare and present reports for the Archbishop and the rest of the pastoral leaders of the Archdiocese. This collaboration helped us to honour the principles we established for adult catechesis.<sup>415</sup> Regular opportunities for evaluation and feedback as well as involving participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* in the curriculum design were essential. We achieved this in the following ways:

1. Following each of the *Putting Out into the Deep* sessions participants were provided with a form for evaluation of the session. This allowed them to affirm what was positive for them and to identify anything they wished had been done differently. They could also provide any comments according to their discretion;
2. At the end of each of the years in the three-year cycle, we held a session of evaluation intended to elicit as much feedback as possible from the whole diocesan Church. In June of 2004, following Year-One of the first three-year cycle, three different opportunities to participate were offered to all in the Archdiocese. Individual invitations were sent to all participants in *Putting Out into the Deep*, pastoral accompaniers, and to all who participated in the initial consultation process. Parishes were asked to extend the

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<sup>415</sup> See pp. 137-139 of this chapter for a list of these principles that shaped the approach to adult catechesis that I adopted with the Advisory Committee.

invitation to all parishioners. Participants received a report on the first year, heard testimonies from a few participants and gave feedback for future sessions.<sup>416</sup> This same format was repeated in June, 2005 at the end of the second year of the three-year cycle.

3. All participants' in *Putting Out into the Deep* were invited to shape the curriculum. They were invited to name issues that were important for them, and to identify topics that would help them find meaning and relevance in their faith and life. To help ensure a comprehensive adult catechesis, I used a grid as a frame of reference for offering input about session topics. The mission of the Church is made up of four dimensions: word, liturgy, community life, and service.<sup>417</sup> As religious educator Maria Harris points out, "Should any of these be left out as full partners in the education work of ministry; should any of these be downplayed; should any of these be exalted to the denigration of others, we will not be able to educate fully."<sup>418</sup> As I reflected with participants on the topics we had chosen for our sessions we asked: In which of these areas has our curriculum been strong? In which of these areas has our curriculum been lacking? Responses to these questions provided important feedback that was used to help us make choices about our session topics. Furthermore, this grid provided us with an opportunity

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<sup>416</sup> A Summary is attached as Appendix 13.

<sup>417</sup> The idea of the fourfold mission of the Church is a common understanding in ecclesiology. It is often expressed using the Greek terms, Kerygma (the word), Koinonia (community of Christian witness), leitourgia (worship) and diakonia (service). Theologian Richard McBrien expresses it this way: "The mission of the Church, which is for the sake of the Kingdom, or the reign, of God, is fourfold: word, sacrament (or worship), witness and service." See Richard P. McBrien, *The Church: The Evolution of Catholicism* (New York, New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 3.

<sup>418</sup> Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Know Press, 1989), 44.

to discuss the fourfold mission of the Church and how we were attending to it in our catechetical series. We used this feedback to determine our choices of topics.<sup>419</sup>

4. The Archbishop invited priests and pastoral associates to regular meetings to discuss our initiatives and to offer their feedback. I typically co-facilitated these meetings with the vicar general of the Archdiocese. As a result of one of these meetings, the Archbishop asked that every parish appoint a liaison person responsible for adult faith formation. Subsequently, 40 out of 64 parishes appointed a liaison.

### *A Ceremony*

The ceremony that concluded the first three-year cycle was another opportunity for evaluation. More than 100 people, including participants and their families, resource people from the sessions, the Archbishop and the Vicar General, members of our Advisory Committee, and a few parish pastoral leaders gathered together for this event. Several of the participants gave testimonies about their experiences. It was quite clear from the testimonies that the experience had been one of effective adult catechesis that empowered them as mature Christian disciples. These testimonies became an important point of reference for future planning for the catechetical series.

A testimony was given by Mike,<sup>420</sup> a 35-year-old high school teacher and father of a young family, who identified several dimensions of the adult catechetical series that were meaningful for him. Other participants identified similar dimensions as important for them. Even though Mike participated in almost all of the sessions during the three-

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<sup>419</sup> A list of the topics chosen for the first three-year cycle are included as Appendix 14.

<sup>420</sup> Mike's (a pseudonym for this participant) speaking notes, from that event, are used with his permission and are attached as Appendix 15.

year cycle, he mentioned that, as the father of a young family, the flexibility of the series was very helpful as it allowed him to participate only in the sessions of his choice. More fundamentally to his empowerment as a mature Christian disciple, Mike explained that:

(It) used to be I wanted to know the answers, but now, it's learning to embrace the gift of mystery [sic]. When I look back over these three years, I realize how much more there is to our Catholic faith and the many ways I can come to know Christ and deepen my relationship with him. This series provided and furnished me with the tools to be able to do that.

Mike spoke about the deepening of relationship that happened for him in the sharing and discussing of faith with others, and he gave a number of examples of the insights offered by the various resource people that inspired him to grow. Among other things, his testimony confirmed that the quality of the resource people for the sessions played a very significant role in the effectiveness of the catechetical process.<sup>421</sup> The evaluations distributed following each of the sessions suggested this as well. Mike observed that “[it’s] the struggle to live an authentic “Catholic identity”... in our world today that this course has taught me. I struggle - each day - but I’ve learned that it’s a journey, a process.”<sup>422</sup> In this statement, Mike expressed a fundamental characteristic of discipleship: the recognition that it is an identity and a way of life that continues to unfold. Mike’s testimony, along with those given by two other participants at the ceremony and celebration to conclude the first three-year cycle, were an important source of feedback for all who attended. This feedback continued to shape the planning that ensued for the second three-year cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep*.

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<sup>421</sup> See Appendix 15.

<sup>422</sup> See Appendix 15.

### *A Symposium at the End of the First Three-year Cycle*

The Advisory Committee and I recognized that the conclusion of the first three-year cycle was a significant opportunity to engage as many people in the diocesan Church as possible in reflection and discernment about what the next steps in adult faith formation needed to be. We organized a Symposium to be held following the conclusion of the first three-year cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep*. Parish liaisons for adult faith formation were invited to ensure that consultation took place in their communities to prepare for this event. Parishes were invited to revisit the five aims for adult faith formation<sup>423</sup> that were identified from the initial consultation period prior to the three-year cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep*. They were invited to reflect on these, to consider what was achieved over the past three years, to articulate what they would like to see the Archdiocese achieve in adult faith development in three-year's time, and to recommend what next steps needed to be taken. Each parish representative was invited to bring a summary of the parish reflection to the Symposium. A comprehensive report of the results of the symposium is attached as Appendix 7.<sup>424</sup>

A few results bear mentioning here as significant observations: the symposium participants clearly affirmed the continued priority of adult catechesis and the *Putting Out into the Deep* series as a way to realize the priority. A desire for a new three-year

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<sup>423</sup> A Description of the Five Aims can be found in Appendix 9. They are as follows: Adult Catechesis; Ministry-specific Formation; Formation of Mandated Pastoral Associates; Brief Opportunities (sessions/workshops) on a Variety of Timely Topics; To Identify and Help Coordinate Opportunities for Shared Formation among Parishes or Groups of Parishes.

<sup>424</sup> A copy of the summary report from the Symposium is attached as Appendix 7. It describes the process used for the symposium as well as the significant findings from the event.

cycle to begin was evident. The importance of bringing more effective adult catechesis into the parish community was raised. Adult catechist formation was expressed as a need. The question was posed: perhaps some of the people who finished the first three-year cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep* might be good candidates for this adult catechist formation? Several participants in the symposium asked, “Where are our pastors?” The need for pastoral leaders to be more involved was emphasized along with an expressed need for their formation in collaborative ministry. A need for all the baptised to study the roles of lay and ordained together was mentioned.

Some experts in adult catechesis, two from Saint Paul University and one from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops staff, gave valuable input to the symposium, affirming what had been accomplished in *Putting Out into the Deep* and encouraging the continuation of the process. The collaborative process used for shaping the curriculum and evaluating the process was affirmed. The need to remain focused on the questions and concerns of participants, as well as on the current pressing social-cultural issues, was highly encouraged as essential for determining the curriculum. The importance of helping participants build a strong, mature life of prayer, contemplation and critical reflection was also encouraged.

### ***A New 3-year Cycle of Putting Out into the Deep***

As a result of all of the feedback received over the three-year cycle of the adult catechetical series, as well as that expressed at the symposium, a new cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep* began in the fall of 2005. We continued the same pattern of evaluation and consultation throughout. In the summer of 2006 we received a new Archbishop

upon the retirement of the Archbishop who initiated the adult faith development process. I designed the curriculum, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, for all three years of the new cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep*. However, after the second year of the cycle was completed, I left my position as coordinator of adult faith development for the Archdiocese of Ottawa to assume a new position. With the help of the Advisory Committee I was able to ensure that a new coordinator was in place and that there was a firm commitment on the part of the new Archbishop to finish the three-year cycle.<sup>425</sup>

The next step in this case study is the presentation of the findings from the survey and the semi-structured interviews conducted in this case study of *Putting Out into the Deep*. I begin this step by presenting the data from the survey.<sup>426</sup>

### **Findings from the Survey**<sup>427</sup>

As described in Chapter Three, surveys were distributed by mail to 50 participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* chosen randomly sample from a target population of 110 participants. Twenty-eight surveys were returned anonymously in a self-addressed/postage paid envelope. **Section 1** of the survey gathered information about the nature of the respondents' participation in *Putting Out into the Deep*. It established in which of the two three-year cycles they participated, how many sessions

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<sup>425</sup> Even though I had left my position as the leader of this adult catechetical series, I received permission from the episcopal vicar for the English sector of the Archdiocese to conduct my research study of the series. I began to do this at the conclusion of the Third Year of the second 3-year cycle. This permission is attached as Appendix 2.

<sup>426</sup> See Table 1, p. 111 of this thesis, for a diagram that shows the place of the survey in the case study of *Putting Out into the Deep*. See of this thesis 108-109 for an explanation of the methodology.

<sup>427</sup> A copy of the survey is attached as Appendix 5.

they attended, and if they were a certificate participant.<sup>428</sup> **Section 2** described if the respondent participated in a small group and, if so, **Section 3** invited respondents to indicate the level of importance they attributed to this dimension of their experience.<sup>429</sup>

**Section 4** invited people to identify the phrase that best described their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*. I wanted to check to see if they would identify their experience as something that had engaged them as a whole person - mind, heart, spirit? Or did they have an experience of being engaged in one of these dimensions more than the others? Respondents were invited to offer a few words of explanation for their response.

**Section 5** dealt exclusively with respondents' perception of the series as an experience that was effective in helping them grow as mature Christian disciples. In reference to my constructed definition, they were invited to choose one response from among the following to describe the effectiveness of the process for them: not effective, somewhat effective, effective, or very effective. A place for a few words of explanation of their response was provided. **Section 6** allowed me to test for consistency of the responses in sections four and five. I presented a series of statements. Respondents were invited to check off only those that applied to their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*. Participants' responses also allowed me to check for indications that some of the central goals and objectives for *Putting Out into the Deep* were met. **Section 7** invited respondents to choose five words that best describe their experience of the series. I

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<sup>428</sup> See pp. 146--147 of this thesis for a description of certificate participants.

<sup>429</sup> See pp.148 of this thesis for a description of small groups.

wanted to see if any themes might emerge that could provide helpful data about the experience.

Finally, **Section 8** asked any participants who participated in the final year of the second three-year cycle to comment on any noteworthy differences they may have wished to mention. I did not know at the time I constructed the survey if the change in the leadership of the series for the final year of the second three-year cycle was significant for participants and this question allowed commentary if there was any to be offered.

As I described in Chapter Three, in addition to the quantitative data I hoped to gain from the survey, I used the survey to also obtain some qualitative feedback from respondents by including a number of open-ended portions. These invited respondents to explain their answer choices or to offer further comments. I pursued further exploration of this qualitative feedback in the small-group semi-structured interviews. I have summarized this qualitative feedback as part of my survey findings. As I mentioned in Chapter Three, working with a small random sample of 50 surveys and a return-rate of 56%, or 28 surveys, allowed me to carry out a simple statistical analysis of the quantitative data and summarize these findings in table form.

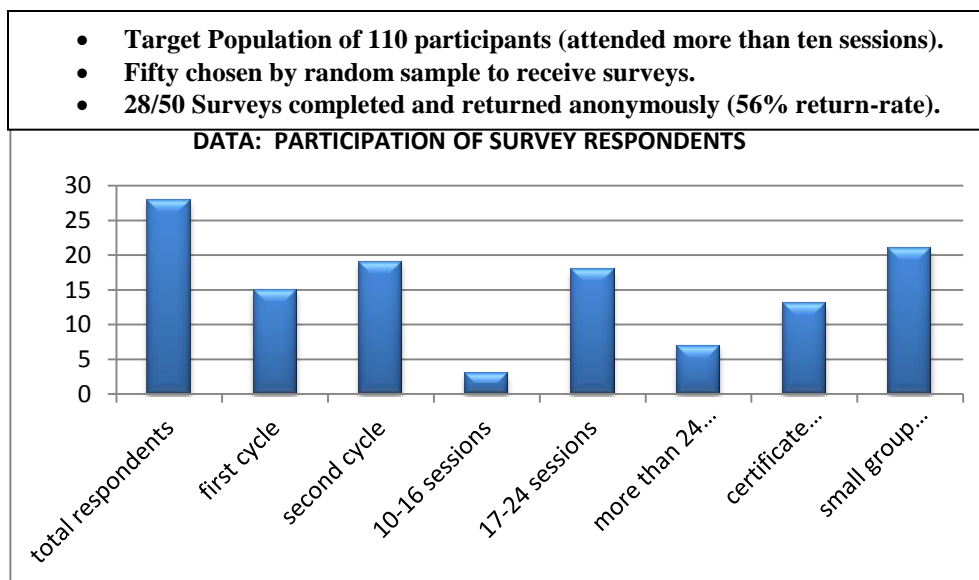
**Table 3: Survey Data – *Putting Out into the Deep***

Table 3 presents the data I received in the survey sections one and two. It shows that, of the total 28 respondents, 15 participated in the first three-year cycle and 19 in the second. This means that six participants were involved in sessions in both three-year cycles. While 3 participants attended between 10-16 sessions, and 8 attended more than 24 sessions, the largest number of respondents, 18 in total, attended between 17-24 sessions. Thirteen of the respondents were certificate participants, and 21 participated in small groups. This means that eight of the participants chose to participate in small groups even though it was not a requirement for their participation. Only certificate participants were required to attend small group sessions. Seven respondents did not participate in small group sessions.

This over-view of the respondents' participation in *Putting Out into the Deep* presents a group with substantial involvement in the catechetical series who were, therefore, well equipped to offer feedback about the experience.

### *The Significance of the Small Group Experience*

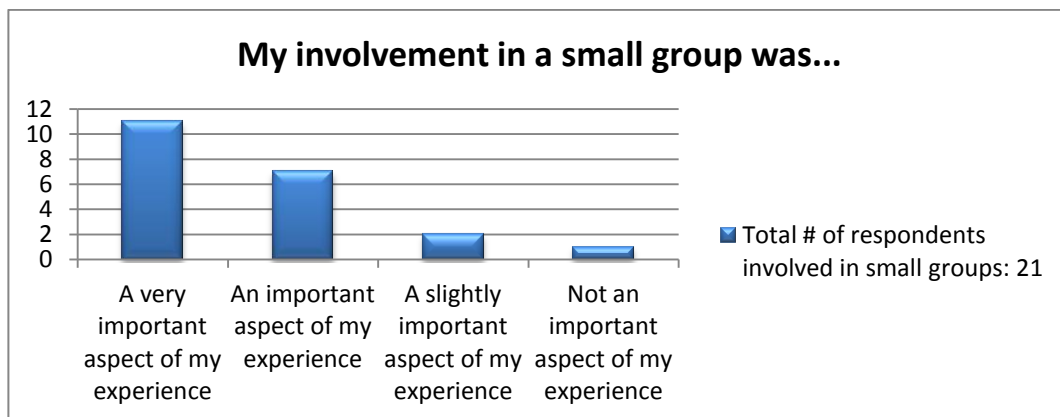
This survey gave me an opportunity to ask respondents who had been involved in a small group to indicate if it was an important part of their experience of the series.

Those who participated in small groups were invited to respond to the following: “Please choose the answer below that best describes your experience. My involvement in a small group was...”

- Not an important aspect of my experience of this adult development series;
- A slightly important aspect of my experience of this adult development series;
- An important aspect of my experience of this adult development series;
- A very important aspect of my experience of this adult development series.

Table 4 summarizes the survey findings.

**Table 4: Respondents’ evaluation of the importance of Small Groups**



Eighteen respondents indicated that their involvement in a small group was either a very important or an important aspect of their experience of this adult faith development series. This is a strong indication of the importance of this dimension of the experience. Two respondents indicated that it was a slightly important aspect of their

experience, and one indicated that it was not an important aspect for them. Respondents were asked to provide a few words of explanation for their answers.

The person who indicated that it was not an important aspect explained that after participating in the first five group meetings he/she chose not to continue because some of the group members were having difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings. This person chose to continue as a participant but not as a certificate participant in the series. A participant who indicated the small group experience was slightly important for him/her explained that the group did not meet regularly enough and was, therefore, not as cohesive as the participant would have liked for the purpose of reflection on the sessions. This person noted, however, that enduring friendships resulted from the small group interaction. Explanations from those who indicated that the small group experience was either important or very important for them provided helpful insight about the significance of this dimension of the adult catechesis.

Many spoke of the value of hearing the opinions and insights of other group members and how that enriched their learning. Numerous respondents described the help that the small group discussions gave them in clarifying their own thoughts about what they had learned from the sessions which, in turn, helped them to write their reflection papers. Others mentioned the value of sharing the experiences with others and the motivation this provided to continue with the series and to complete their reflections papers following.

Numerous respondents reflected on the Christian community they experienced with others in their small group, an experience of challenge, support and maturing faith. Many valued the opportunity to listen to the perspectives of others, describing how this

helped them to expand their own views and to further process insights from the sessions. Others described the experience as a source of insight. One person named the diversity of Catholic views and perspectives the conversations allowed them to experience, and spoke of the companionship on the journey of faith that this experience provided. One respondent commented, “It opened me up, giving me confidence and helping me develop a higher level both spiritually and intellectually....I heard what others had to say, felt understood, thus, learning from one another [sic].” Others commented on the experience as a valuable place of integration of the material from the sessions, and a place to practice active listening.

Many described the experience as an opportunity to go deeper and to develop better understandings. Some commented on the tensions and challenges of discussions explaining that while they learned from different view-points there were times when group members were tense with one another because they did not see things in the same way. A person also commented that not everyone in their group was willing to engage and share their ideas. This created tension.

Numerous people commented on the valuable opportunity the small group provided for reflection and deepening insights. A number of people described the small group as a safe environment where they could speak honestly and benefit from the different views of others. One person described their small group experience this way: “It was important to hear other people’s stories, their ‘ups’ and ‘downs’ on their journey towards a more mature relationship with a loving and merciful God.”

### *Findings Regarding the Two Central Questions*

The two central questions of this survey were: Was *Putting Out into the Deep* an experience that engaged the participant as a whole person? Was this adult catechetical series ineffective, somewhat effective, effective or very effective in inviting and supporting participants to grow as mature Christian disciples?<sup>430</sup> Feedback from evaluations and consultations held throughout the two three-year cycles suggested that participants had experienced *Putting Out into the Deep* as a source of engagement as a whole person, and as a source of empowerment as mature Christian disciples. My primary goal for this survey was to either confirm or challenge this contention. Sections four and five of the survey were devoted to this goal.

Section 4 of the survey was designed to determine if this experience of adult catechesis had engaged participants as a whole person - mind, heart and spirit - or if they experienced engagement in one of these dimensions of themselves more than the others. Table 5, to follow, presents the section and the participants' responses on the survey.

#### **Table 5: Survey Data – *Putting Out into the Deep***

##### **Summary of Survey Section Four**

**Instruction to respondents:** *Please consider the following statements and choose the best response below:*

	A) This experience engaged me as a whole person; mind, heart and spirit.	
	B) This experience engaged my mind more than my heart or spirit.	
	C) This experience engaged my heart more than my mind or spirit.	
	D) This experience engaged my spirit more than my mind or heart.	
<hr/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	A) Best describes my experience.	26 responses
<input type="checkbox"/>	B) Best describes my experience.	2 responses
<input type="checkbox"/>	C) Best describes my experience.	0 responses
<input type="checkbox"/>	D) Best describes my experience.	0 responses
<input type="checkbox"/>	None of these statements above describes my experience.	0 responses

<sup>430</sup> The working definition of “mature Christian disciple” used throughout this case study is: A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.

Twenty-six out of 28 of the respondents indicated that A) best described their experience. This gives a solid indication that this catechetical experience engaged the whole person, mind, heart and spirit. None of the 28 respondents chose C), D), or “None of these” as the best description for their experience. Two respondents chose B) indicating that that the experience engaged their minds more than their hearts or spirits.

Participants were invited to write a few words to explain their choice. One person explained their choice of B): “Many of the topics were new to me, and thus appealed to my knowledge base.” The other mentioned that they tend to be more “a thinking” than “a feeling” person. Thus, the sessions engaged their mind most.

On the one hand, this strong indication of A) as the best description supports my impression that participants did not experience the sessions as an exclusively intellectual or rational engagement with the Church’s teachings. Furthermore, additional feedback in participants’ words of explanation of their experience corroborates findings from both sections of my case study that I will discuss later. However, following the administration of this survey I became aware that I did not construct an adequate definition of *the whole person* for my inquiry in section four. A colleague inquired “what about the engagement of body as part of the whole person? Don’t you consider a person’s actions as an essential dimension of an experience of *the whole person*?” Indeed, I realized that choosing *mind, heart and spirit*, to represent *the whole person* fell short of encompassing all of the constitutive dimensions of the human person - cognitive,

affective and behavioural. It does not properly define, for example, Thomas Groome's notion of conation which includes "heads, hearts and hands."<sup>431</sup>

Nevertheless, participants provided further insight in their explanations for their answer choices that identify this adult catechetical experience as one that engaged the whole person. Several words and phrases were repeated by respondents to describe their engagement such as *all-encompassing*, *holistic*, *being opened*, *expanding my horizons*, and *being on a journey*. One person explained that they were "...engaged as an adult person and stimulated to be aware of the history of (his/her) faith... to reflect on what it means in (his/her) life.... to deeply explore [their] faith, and to consider the responsibilities that come with faith."

Several people chose a similar approach to their explanation by naming the fact that they were intellectually stimulated and learned new things at the same time. One respondent expressed it this way: "I was moved towards greater love of God and neighbour;" another explained that, "(t)he sessions motivated my spirit to act in new and different ways." Several people claimed that mind, heart and spirit cannot be divided and explained that "to a greater or lesser extent all of me was touched." One person described it this way: "I must have mind, heart and spirit, all connected for things to have meaning." Another person chose these words, "My mind, heart and spirit were constantly engaged in a life-giving dialogue." A number spoke about being encouraged and having their "spirit lifted" by their participation. One expressed appreciation for the integration of social justice as a constant theme and call to action. One person

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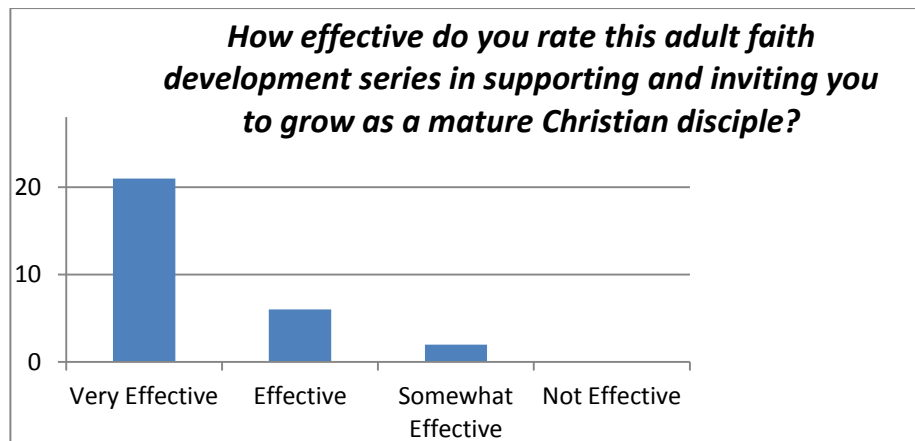
<sup>431</sup> Thomas Groome, *Will There Be Faith?* 6.

commented, “It made me a better Christian and gave me the tools to exercise my disciple’s role.” Another person remarked that “the blend of liturgy plus scholarly presentations in a community atmosphere helped touch mind, heart and spirit.”

Section 5 of the survey presented the working definition of mature Christian disciple that underlies this study.<sup>432</sup> It invited respondents to consider the definition and then answer the question, “How effective do you rate this adult faith development series in supporting and inviting you to grow as a mature Christian disciple?” by indicating one of four possible responses: very effective; effective; somewhat effective; ineffective. Table 6 to follow represents participants’ responses to this query.

**Table 6: Survey Data – *Putting Out into the Deep***

**Summary of Responses to Survey Section Five**



<sup>432</sup> The working definition that underlies this study was constructed from a number of sources, as described in the Introduction, and is as follows:

A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.

Respondents' choices of answers strongly indicate that they experienced this adult catechetical series as one that supported and invited them to grow as mature Christian disciples according to the working definition provided. Of the 28 respondents, 26 indicated that it was *very effective* or *effective*, 2 described it as somewhat effective, and none described it as *ineffective*.

One person, who described the experience as *somewhat effective*, indicated in their explanation that "(y)ou cannot assume a personal relationship with Jesus Christ." The exact meaning of this response is not clear, except that it is related to "the personal relationship with Jesus Christ" dimension of the working definition. A conversation with participants in the semi-structured interviews broached the idea that more Christology may have been helpful in this series, especially with a view to explicitly presenting and studying the person, Jesus Christ, with whom one is to build a personal relationship as his disciple.

Respondents who gave the series a rating of *very effective* or *effective* for empowerment as mature Christian disciples offered explanations for their responses. A number of people spoke of how they think about things or see things in a new way as a result of their experience of this adult catechesis. One person described it this way: "The series shifted my thinking in many areas: the meaning of discipleship, engaging the Scriptures, the richness of liturgy, especially the Eucharist, what it means to be a Catholic, the meaning of catechesis." In keeping with this perspective, several others spoke of how their better understanding of liturgy, the mass, Eucharist and discipleship were helping them have a more significant experience of community and faith in their parish life. Another person described how, "(t)he course helped me to discover what it

means to be a Catholic in the world today. I had many “aha!” moments. I felt that my soul was being fed.” Allusions to *new insights*, *new ideas* and *broader horizons* were frequent in this feedback.

The fact that the sessions addressed issues that were significant and relevant for participants was mentioned a number of times. Several people expressed appreciation for being presented with new and challenging view-points that invited them to be *open-minded*, more *tolerant* and *welcoming of diversity*. The words *maturing* and *adult faith* were used a number of times to describe the experience. One person commented: “Fundamentally we were called, in that safe space, to meet each other, to mature and reground ourselves in the scriptures.”

Several people spoke of the importance of being invited to reflect on the content of sessions in terms of its meaning for their lives, and how they could respond concretely. One person mentioned the fact that they would find themselves thinking of insights from the sessions long after they were over, referring to this “lingering” as a sign of the power of what they had learned. Only one person explicitly named “personal relationship with Jesus Christ” as a reason for the rating she gave. This person stated: “We knew the reason of our gathering – Jesus alone.” Others alluded to this relationship as a central factor by speaking about a deepening sense of discipleship and about a sense of integration in their learning. One person describes it this way: “This was the beauty of the series – I took in new knowledge. Yet, once I was finished processing it I was compelled to act on what I had learned - or, at least, to try to implement it in my daily life.” Several people spoke of their hunger and thirst for education in faith and described being *satisfied* or *fulfilled*.

Several people referred to the quality of the presenters as a key factor in their experience. One referred to being moved by the humble way they (the presenters) brought such excellent scholarship to the participants, and how the presenters invited integration between faith and life: “While drawing upon scripture and tradition, the presenters clearly indicated that we needed to seek answers and discern direction...from a dialogue with the Spirit and with the community.”

Section 6 presented a list of twenty-two statements. Participants were asked to check off only those that described their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*. Table 7 presents the results.

**Table 7: Summary of Survey Section 6***Instruction to respondents:*

Please check off only the boxes next to all of the statements to follow that describe your experience of this adult faith development series. Please check off only as few or as many that apply to your experience

Total Respondents

✓ 26	1. It was an experience of growing as a mature Christian disciple.
0	2. I have grown very little or not at all as a mature Christian disciple as a result of my involvement.
✓ 28	3. It has helped me understand my vocation as a baptized person better.
✓ 20	4. The sessions challenged me to act on what I had learned in concrete ways.
✓ 22	5. I was invited to engage in interaction and conversation during the sessions.
✓ 2	6. There were not always times for interaction since the views of the presenters were always the most important focus.
0	7. My views were not important during the sessions.
✓ 2	8. It was an experience of being instructed rather than formed as a Christian disciple.
0	9. These sessions focused on indoctrination.
✓ 21	10. The approach was mostly collaborative and interactive.
0	11. The approach was mostly didactic.
0	12. The sessions were more focused on giving me information than on engaging me as a whole person
✓ 23	13. It was an experience of Christian community.
✓ 25	14. It challenged me to grow in faith.
0	15. It did not challenge me to grow in faith.
✓ 26	16. This experience has encouraged me to want to learn and grow more.
✓ 25	17. It has inspired me to take more responsibility for living my baptismal vocation.
✓ 24	18. I found the approach respectful of and inclusive of me as an adult Christian disciple.
✓ 26	19. The topics were relevant and helpful to my life.
0	20. The topics were not meaningful for me.
0	21. My participation has not strengthened my identity as a Catholic believer.
✓ 24	22. I have a better understanding of myself as a Catholic in the world today.

I prepared the statements in section six (Table 7) with two goals in mind. First, participants' choices in this section allowed me to check the consistency of their responses in sections four and five about the effectiveness of *Putting Out into the Deep* as a source of empowerment as mature Christian disciples and their engagement as a whole person. Ten of the 22 statements expressed a view contrary to an experience of empowerment as a mature Christian disciple and/or of engagement of the whole person. In sections four and five respondents either affirmed or did not affirm that they had grown as a mature Christian disciple, and that they were engaged as a whole person through their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*. Their choices of statements in section 6 allowed me to establish consistency in their responses by determining that they did not choose statements that are contrary to their answers in sections four and five.

The Advisory Committee and I designed *Putting Out into the Deep* to uphold a number of principles for effective adult catechesis advocated by the Church's documents, as well as principles for effective adult learning advocated by adult education specialists. This exercise allowed me to realize a second goal – to see if respondents' choices would suggest that these principles were being realized in their experience of the learning processes.<sup>433</sup> Note that in Table 7 ten statements – #'s 2, 6, 7,

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<sup>433</sup> As I described earlier in this chapter, the Advisory Committee and I wanted to ensure that participants felt engaged in their learning process, respected as adult learners and invited to take leadership in the process. We wanted to respond to Reginald Bibby's findings that people were searching for meaning and relevancy in their experiences of the Church (Bibby, *There's Got to be More: Connecting Churches and Canadians*, 1995) by ensuring that session topics were meaningful and relevant. We wanted to engage the whole person, "heads, hearts and hands" in the process. We were committed to an interactive and collaborative approach focused on discipleship, the baptismal vocation, and helping people develop a deeper sense of responsibility as Catholics in mission to the world. These were principles upon which we built the catechetical series.

8, 9, 11, 12, 15 20, and 21 - are contrary to an experience of empowerment as a mature Christian disciple/and or engagement as a whole person in the process of *Putting Out into the Deep*. I have highlighted these in the table with white print on a black background. Table 7 shows that only 2 of these statements were chosen by 2 respondents.

Statements #'s 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 22 indicate an experience of empowerment as mature Christian disciples and/or an experience of engagement as a whole person in the adult catechetical process. A careful read of these statements in the table to follow reveals that they reflect some of the central principles I established with the Advisory Committee. In response to each of these statements between 20 and 28 of the respondents indicated that it described their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*. This is consistent with the strong positive findings in sections four and five.

These data in section 6 indicate an experience of empowerment as mature Christian disciples by the participants in this adult catechesis series. The response suggests that, from the perspective of the participants, many of the learning principles I established with the Advisory Committee were upheld. I asked respondents to provide a few words of explanation for their answers. These comments provided further insight.

The importance of an adult learning model was mentioned several times by way of explanation for the statements chosen in this exercise. As one person described, “(t)he adult learning model was exemplary throughout both (cycles) series. The material was challenging, as were the presenters, and we were engaged. But I never felt that anyone was put on the spot. It was a respectful environment.” Several people referred to their experience of a “safe place or safe space for learning.” Another person called it a

“trustworthy environment.” A number of people mentioned the importance of good facilitation in creating this environment. They felt welcomed and engaged. As part of the process we used during most of the sessions, I would invite participants, usually about mid-way through the session, to name a few words or phrases aloud that would summarize what was important. Then, at the end of the day, a longer time was generally taken for some reflection and conversation, especially about how participants may respond in concrete ways in their own lives.

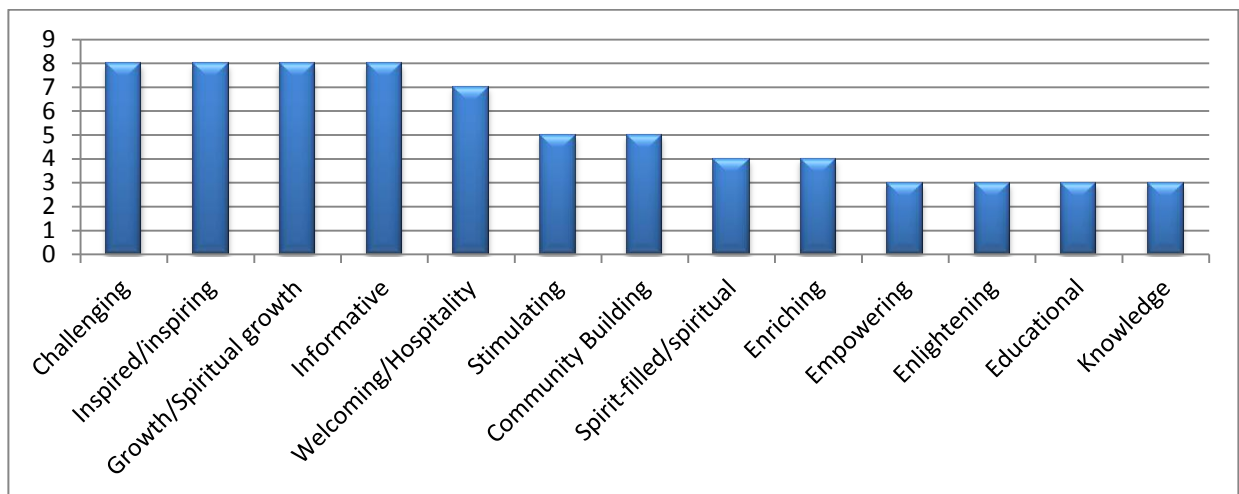
Several people mentioned the importance of these opportunities to express themselves and listen to others. Some participants described their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep* as life-changing (this is mentioned in a few other sections as well). As one participant says, “Adult faith has been a turning point in my life. It has grounded me further and has helped me focus on prayer and the quality of the charity I practice in my everyday life. I have become aware of ways to improve the quality of the way I relate to others.” Others use expressions like “a gigantic step on my journey,” and “served to crystallize some things,” developed “a more fully engaged disciple who is responsive and dynamic,” to describe their experiences. The quality “honesty and open-mindedness” of presenters was mentioned as a source of hope and encouragement for the Church. One person remarked, “I learned so much!” The relevancy of topics was mentioned again as an important factor in respondents’ choices in this section.

### ***Words that Best Describe the Experience of Putting Out into the Deep***

Section 7 invited respondents to choose five words that best describe their experience of this adult faith development series. I wanted to see if any pattern in word

choices would emerge. Four terms were repeated eight times, one term was used seven times, and eight terms were used three or four times. These are represented in Table 8 to follow. A much broader assortment of terms was chosen than I anticipated. Further to those represented in the table, eleven terms were used twice, ranging from *grace* and *hope* to *encouraging* and *valuable*. Finally, 31 additional terms were used once. All of the word choices were positive expressions suggesting engagement of the respondent in an integral experience of growth.

**Table 8: Words to Describe the Experience**



### ***Additional Remarks from Respondents to the Survey***

Section 8 of the survey allowed me to do two things. First, in Part A) I invited any additional comments about *Putting Out into the Deep* respondents wanted to make. When I was designing the survey for this case study, I did not know if the change in leadership during the last year of the second three-year cycle was significant for participants. There were some parts of the process for the sessions that did not continue

in the third year. I wanted to see if that has any impact for participants. So, second, I added a Part B) to section eight and asked the question,

If you participated in all three years of the second cycle (2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-08) are there any noteworthy differences in your experience of the third year from the first two years you may wish to mention?

In response to Part A), the invitation to share any additional comments, a number of significant insights emerged from respondents. Common themes reflect gratitude on the part of participants who used the following terms to describe their experience: *nourished, fed, opened, engaged, stimulated, challenged, energized, inspired, engaged in community of faith.*

People spoke of gaining confidence and a sense of responsibility for their faith, and of the “desire to know” that had increased in them. Others spoke of being more knowledgeable about the mass and community life which was bringing them greater fulfillment. One person commented, “I have learned so much, especially, that this is a life-long journey.” Another participant described how “(t)he scope of being Catholic is much broader now. It touched on everyday life and the journey of faith. While growing in a personal understanding I have also felt connected globally.” Another participant remarked, “(i)t has been a very positive experience for me. Yet it is a challenge to live as a mature Christian in the world today.” One person alluded to the synodal process of 1992, in which they had taken part. I explained the significance of that process in Chapter Three. This person commented:

This has been the most educational program to-date in this Archdiocese. I was a host in the earlier diocesan synodal process where adult faith development was as a key point of interest to parishioners. This program was the first sign many people experienced that they had been listened to as participants in the synodal process.

As well as remarks of insight and gratitude among these additional comments, concern and some sadness, anger and disappointment were concretely expressed by a number of respondents. One participant observed:

There is a seeming disconnect between the program's purpose and goal under the auspices of the Archdiocese and the parishes. We need the support of the pastor to pass this onto the parishes so the evangelizing and discipleship can be realized.

Several participants mentioned their hope that the adult catechesis would continue, and their concern that more parishes were not involved. One person called the series "a gift to the Archdiocese and the Church."

With the help of the Advisory Committee, I was able to secure a director to finish leading the final year of the second three-year cycle. However, there was no commitment from the archdiocesan leadership to continue the adult catechesis beyond that point, even though it was growing in numbers and the feedback was extremely positive. A number of respondents expressed their dismay about this. One person commented, "Our formation as servants and leaders is not optional." Two respondents wrote two full additional pages of comments about this issue and attached them to their surveys. They both spoke of the necessity for this adult catechesis and their anger and disappointment at the lack of commitment from diocesan leadership for it to continue. One of these respondents explained, "I do not understand how such a valuable resource to the spiritual life of the Archdiocese and to specific parishes as well as to many individuals can be left by the wayside. The experience is one of faith-filled people living into their vocation as people of God."

Participants' responses to Part B of this section of the survey revealed a few important things about the value of some dimensions of the process we used during the first two-years of the second cycle that were not continued in the third year. People valued the times for reflection and integration throughout the day, and realized - in their absence- that these aspects of the process helped to build a learning community. One person expressed that these dimensions of the process were important for them as an adult learner because they valued and affirmed their experience. Another respondent mentioned how important it was to her to be "called by name" by the facilitator, and how this mirrored a deeper sense of being called by name.<sup>434</sup>

A few participants commented on the value of the opportunity to share a few words of thanks with the presenters. Significance was accorded, as well, to a good collaborative relationship between the facilitator and the presenter in which presenters were invited to engage with adult learners and to offer occasions for interaction, conversation and sharing of experience. Hospitality and room arrangements, designed to encourage discussion and relationship building, were affirmed in these comments.

### **Research Findings from the Small-group Semi-structured Interviews**

Robert Yin explains that, "mixed method research can permit the investigator to...collect a richer and stronger array of evidence than can be accomplished in any single method alone."<sup>435</sup> Engaging in semi-structured interviews allowed me to deeply

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<sup>434</sup> This alludes to God calling by name in the Bible. See, for example, Isaiah 43: 10, NRSV.

<sup>435</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 63.

probe participants' experience of *Putting Out Into the Deep* for quantitative data that cannot be gathered using a survey. I wanted to hear as much about their experience of this adult catechetical series as possible. The qualitative data gathered from these semi-structured small group interviews are complemented, enriched and strengthened by the survey findings.

### ***Summary of Findings from the Interview with Participants***<sup>436</sup>

As described in Chapter Three, I conducted three kinds of semi-structured small group interviews. The first interview participants were a mixture of certificate participants and regular participants<sup>437</sup> in *Putting Out into the Deep*. The female to male ratio of interviewees was 3:2; a close approximation to the actual ratio of 3:1 over the two three-year cycles. Only those who had attended at least ten sessions were considered to be part of the small-group interview.<sup>438</sup> See the following table for an overview of the participants in the first interview.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>436</sup> A copy of the process and questions I used for the interview is attached as Appendix 6.

<sup>437</sup> See pp.147-149 of this these for a description of certificate participants and regular participants.

<sup>438</sup> See Chapter three, pp. 116 and 124 of this thesis for an explanation of recruitment.

<sup>439</sup> See p. 121 of this thesis for a table that illustrates all three interviews. And see p. 111 for a diagram of the case study and the place of this interview in it.

<b>Table 9: Semi-structured Interview 1</b>	
<b>10 Participants in <i>Putting Out into the Deep</i> (attended at least ten sessions)</b>	
<b><u>Names</u> (pseudonyms)</b>	<b><u>Age-Group</u></b>
Denis	55-60
Freda	55-60
Mary	55-60
Paul	55-60
Nellie	50-55
Paula	50-55
Rick	50-55
Marjorie	45-50
Heather	40-45
Mike	35-40
<i>Female-Male ratio=</i> 3:2	

The goal was to search for insight about processes that empowered the participants as mature Christian disciples. I also wanted to learn about any obstacles to effective adult catechesis that participants could identify, and to note any insights from them that could contribute to an understanding of the disconnect between the Church's vision of effective adult catechesis, expressed in its documents, and our practice of adult catechesis.

After a welcome and an explanation of the process we reviewed the working definition of a *mature Christian disciple*<sup>440</sup> and established it as our point of reference for the interview. Each of the participants had a copy to which to refer. I began by

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<sup>440</sup> The working definition that underlies this study was constructed from a number of sources, as described in the Introduction (see pp. 11-12 of this thesis). I repeat it here for the convenience of the reader:

A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.

asking the participants if their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep* had helped them to grow as mature Christian disciple and, if so, in what ways. I invited them to consider all of the dimensions of the working definition.

i. *Empowerment as Mature Christian Disciples*

All of the participants identified their involvement in *Putting Out into the Deep* as an experience that empowered them as mature Christian disciples, in some or many ways, according to this working definition.

ii. *A First Opportunity to Develop an Adult Perspective for Several Participants*

It is significant that Paula, Mike, Heather and Marjorie – mature adults – identified this experience of adult catechesis as the first opportunity they had to challenge what they identified as a “child-like” perspective of faith. Mike expressed it this way: “(O)ne of the things I’m left with is asking, after each session, ‘Why haven’t I heard of this before?’” He described learning essential things from sessions of *Putting Out into the Deep* that he was astonished he had not heard before. He associated this learning with having a developed and mature faith. Heather spoke about how this was the first time she was exposed to the scriptures as primarily theological texts, not texts about historical facts. She described how this realization “shook” her. But because of it she was able to move to greater depth in her understandings.

I invited the participants to compare this experience of adult catechesis with any others they had experienced. Was this experience more or less empowering as mature Christian disciples than others they had? What were the similarities and differences? It is important to note that the experiences participants used for comparison were mostly

experience of catechesis from their childhood. From this comparison important insight emerged about characteristics of catechesis participants found disempowering.

*iii. Three Movements to Describe Empowerment as Mature Christian Disciples*

Paula, Freda, Marjorie, Nellie and Denis spoke about moving from what they called “a child’s outlook on faith” to an “adult perspective.” This was identified by them in three different ways: (a) as a movement away from fear of God and the authorities (teachers, priests, parents) who represented God toward a desire to respond to and cultivate a loving relationship with God based upon mature Christian spirituality; (b) as a movement away from a child’s outlook, characterized by simple acceptance of answers such as those learned through rote learning, toward a deeper exploration and understandings of the Church’s teachings; (c) as a movement from a sense of discipleship defined by intellectual assent to certain statements of doctrine, toward discipleship characterized by a desire to respond to God. Heather spoke about how she could see this movement in her growing integration of belief and practice.

(a) Freda, Marjorie, Nellie, Paula and Denis spoke at length about their childhood relationships being based upon a fear of God and a fear of the authorities (teachers, priests) who represented God and presented God to them. They were taught that God was watching and judging and would punish them for their transgressions. The religious authorities (parents, teachers and priests) created fear by presenting themselves as God’s representatives who knew about God. These participants reported being very concerned about sinning and regarding themselves as sinful. They were aware of many rules they needed to obey, and failing to do so meant displeasing God and inviting punishment. For

Freda this type of childhood experience was particularly intense. She spoke about how she still does not feel God's love for her. However, she is hopeful that she will be able to experience this love some day. "I think God pushed me into this. Perhaps God was saying okay it's time," Freda shared with us. She continued, "I think that even though it was disturbing for awhile (being involved in the adult catechesis) that it may have been the beginning of the healing process." Freda also explained that she cannot say that she has a sense of discipleship rooted in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.<sup>441</sup> She explained that participating in *Putting Out into the Deep* has helped her to begin a healing process. She described herself as "wanting to know more," and as empowered by the learning she has experienced. But she assessed herself as far from the mature discipleship described in the working definition. The adult catechetical series provided her with a way to reconnect with the Christian community with which she had disconnected, and to begin a process of healing about which she feels hopeful.

Nellie and Freda spoke about their fear-based images of God as still somewhat operative for them. They recognized that their experience of *Putting Out into the Deep* had helped them to deconstruct these images of God and to begin to construct new relationships based on loving response, and a sense of responsibility to others. Paula reported the conflicting nature of her childhood experiences of learning about her faith. She described the religious sisters who taught her as very loving. They taught her that she was never far from God's loving sight. On the other hand, she had an experience of

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<sup>441</sup> This led to a discussion about whether or not more Christology would have been helpful as part of the series. While both discipleship and the vocation of the baptised were explored at length, addressing the person of Jesus, *per se*, at more length could have strengthened the sense, for participants, of a personal loving relationship with him.

having her coat ripped by one of these teachers because she mistakenly stepped out of the line-up on the way to confession. She was grabbed by her coat and placed back into the line with enough force to tear her coat. She remembers both tenderness and terror. She reported that both of these have shaped her relationship with God.

(b) Regarding the second movement toward an adult perspective, interviewees expressed this in a variety of ways. Paul, Freda, Mary and Denis are in their late fifties and early sixties and were taught the Baltimore Catechism<sup>442</sup> as children. The rote learning that was involved in that process symbolizes, for them, what it means to have a “child’s outlook.” A child memorizes both the questions and the answers and trusts not only that the information is correct, but also, implicitly, that the correct question is being posed. For these participants, exploring their own questions regarding their faith, as well as probing deeply for answers was very significant. Heather spoke of how she had not developed much beyond her childhood perspectives of faith when she became involved in the adult catechetical series. She described learning some things as very uncomfortable. For example, learning that the Bible is not intended to teach history but theology, and that many of the stories are not based on historical fact but on theological insight, was disconcerting for her. She described how it took time before she realized that understanding these things was helping her “expand her thoughts” and that this was part of moving into a mature faith perspective. Other participants shared similar

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<sup>442</sup> This is “A Catechism of Christian Doctrine, Prepared and Enjoined by Order of the Third Council of Baltimore... was the *de facto* standard Catholic school text in the United States from 1885 to the late 1960s. It was the first such catechism written for Catholics in North America...The Baltimore Catechism remained in use in nearly all Catholic schools until many moved away from catechism-based education....,” “Publisher’s Preface” in *Forgotten Books: The Baltimore Catechism*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Third Council of Baltimore, first published in 1885, republish, 2007 by Forgotten Books). Accessed November 26, 2013, [www.Forgottenbooks.org](http://www.Forgottenbooks.org).

experiences. Denis spoke of feeling “very fragile” as he opened himself to many new ways of seeing things and deepened both his questions and his answers.

Other participants were either not old enough to have experienced the question-answer models associated with the Baltimore Catechism or, like Heather, had become Catholic later in life and did not have the same experience of catechesis as a child. Mike described how living his faith was important for him and he decided to engage in *Putting Out into the Deep* to learn more. He discussed how he started the process with the idea that he wanted more information. As he engaged in the process he began to realize that it was more than information he was seeking. He was searching for understanding and meaning. He described his interest in his faith before engaging in the adult catechesis as “routine.” He explained that as he became involved his “breadth of understanding” became so much greater. He described himself as “never more grounded in my faith than I am now.” And claimed that “Now, I can’t get enough.” Heather spoke of having a deep sense of God’s love as a teenager. She described how *Putting Out into the Deep* helped her further develop this sense of love and of being called by God as she explored the stories of scripture more deeply.

(c) Mary, Nellie and Rick referred to the third movement from a notion of discipleship based upon intellectual assent to certain statements of doctrine, toward discipleship that is characterized by integration as a whole person in which belief and practice are not separate but are integral. Mary expressed it this way:

From early on I had always said that I didn’t want to be a Catholic who was stuck at grade eleven. It was really important for me to be an adult Catholic (I’ve been saying this since I was in my twenties). So, I started studying theology. What this process did for me was to help me move from intellect, and integrate heart and

spirit as well. I've learned a lot about discipleship in the sense that who I am in the world is the disciple I am. It's not two different options.

This sense of integration was mentioned by a number of other participants as well. They described recognizing the responsibility that comes with discipleship and their growing sense that this responsibility is grounded in their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Recognizing oneself as a follower and learner came readily for the participants. Mike, Paula, Freda, Heather, Paul, Marjorie and Denis spoke of a desire to learn more that has opened up in them. They spoke of their growing realization that it is a life-long journey or process. Marjorie described how the process "broke me open, and allowed me to make an inner journey. Who are we as Catholics in the world today? Asking that question opened me to so many things." Freda talked about how she is reading different things than she used to. She now seeks out books that were recommended during the sessions. Rick indicated that he is doing the same. Mary, Marjorie and Nellie described their sense of being disciples of Jesus Christ as deeper and more meaningful.

Mick, Nellie, Heather and Denis described themselves as more open and tolerant than they were before engaging in the adult catechesis. They explained that the diversity in topics and the way they were invited to engage in conversation and listen to others expanded their views. Denis named various polarizations in the Church community on a variety of issues and the harsh ways that various groups criticize one another as a source of pain and alarm for him. He believes that it is the responsibility of mature disciples to be models of openness to diversity and to help heal such divisions through tolerance and respect for one another. He explained, "I'm more patient and less judgemental than I

used to be. I used to have a black and white definition of vocation and I don't see it that way anymore."<sup>443</sup> Paula spoke about how she is much more curious, more interested than she used to be. She wants to know more. Words such as *deepening*, *enriching*, *broadening* were used frequently during this part of our discussion.

iv. *Thinking for Oneself*

Underlying all of this reflection about moving into *adult perspectives* of faith and becoming mature Christian disciples was a key insight to which participants attached great significance throughout our conversation: *thinking for oneself*. Paula spoke of it this way: "As a Roman Catholic I have a sense that I have always been told what to think." She went on to explain that to be mature, she needed to be able to think for herself. This was a particularly important dimension for Paul who came to Canada from an Asian country where the education in faith was, as he describes it, "rational, and authoritarian." Because a large number of people from his country moved into the Ottawa area they established a national parish.

Paul is a recognized and respected leader in his community, and he invited a large number of people from his national parish to participate in *Putting Out into the Deep* together. He explained that *thinking for oneself* in an environment of adult catechesis was a new and surprising experience for them. He described it this way: "Those from my country say, 'What? We can have our own interpretations? It's not just what father or sister thinks? You mean we can think?'" Paul went onto describe how they had never experienced a forum for discussion, reflection or to entertain diverse

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<sup>443</sup> He described moving from a notion that vocation belongs to the ordained and religious to a view that it is all the baptized who are called to be Christ's presence in the world.

points of view regarding Christian faith. He explained that it was very important for his community to see that the Church can hold diverse view-points, and that there is not one correct answer for every question. From his perspective, this was empowering for them as mature Christian disciples.

Paul acknowledged the irony that while *thinking for oneself* and engaging in challenging conversations and experiencing diversity were sources of empowerment as mature Christian disciples in the experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*, if such practices were made known to the religious leaders responsible for catechesis in his home country they would regard these practises as heretical. When I asked Paul why he thought this would be so, he explained that the primary goal of catechesis in his home country is indoctrination – to be sure that everyone knows the correct information about the teachings of the Church. Thinking, discussions and sharing diverse viewpoints would be seen as an obstacle to reaching this goal.

Although the experience described by Paul was perhaps more extreme than that of the other interviewees, the value of *thinking for oneself* was revealed in the comments of many to be an essential source of empowerment as mature Christians. Nellie commented that “(i)t (being involved in the adult catechesis) created a more mature person in me - in my faith-life – because I was starting to think more, and use my conscience. So for me, a key aspect was the maturity.” Referring to one of the presenters Freda exclaimed, “When (name of the presenter) said, ‘the Church wants you to think for yourself’ ...that’s the statement that will stay with me for life!” Paula explained very clearly how *Putting Out into the Deep* allowed her to experience this empowerment:

We've always been told what to think. But during this process we were asked what we thought. So it was a very different experience....There was room there for the person....You were able to be really engaged. You were asked, how do you hear that? How do you see that? How do you live that? -Very different. Like I say, it's an adult approach.

v. *Presenters, Presentations, Relevance of Topics*

In addition to these insights participants indicated that the quality of the presenters and the presentations was a central source of empowerment. They named the relevance of the topics as a key factor. All of the participants commented on key insights shared by presenters that were inspiring and sometimes life-changing for them. For example, Mike spoke of how effective evangelization can only be achieved when one is aware of and responsive to the “soil of the believer.”<sup>444</sup> That insight changed the way several of the participants saw their mission in the world and how to go about it. As Denis said, “I still think about that.” Mike added, “When I meet people I ask myself all of the time, now, what is this person’s soil?” Mike, a high school teacher, spoke about how this changed his approach to teaching because he became very attentive to “the soil” of his students.

Another of the presenters suggested that the mission of the Church is like one beggar showing another beggar where they may find some food. This had a powerful impact on each of the participants, and helped them better understand their identity and role as disciples. One of our presenters gave a session on discipleship that focused on the theme of “The Three Tables.” She described the inextricable link among “the table of

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<sup>444</sup> This presenter used the image of “the soil” which comes from the *General Directory for Catechesis* in which the Gospel parable of the *Sower and the Seed* is the central biblical metaphor for evangelization and catechesis.

the Lord at the Eucharist,” “the table of the Word” and “the table of the World.” She composed a song with this message that she shared during the session. Paul, Nellie and Rick explained that the powerful images of discipleship she shared continue to shape their understanding of discipleship and influence their responses.

Gifted, competent presenters, many of whom were superb educators, played a very significant role in the empowerment of participants. The modelling of presenters who themselves had a strong identity as Christian disciples had a significant impact on participants, especially on those who had experienced teachers and authority figures as those with all of the answers. For example, one presenter, an expert in aboriginal spirituality - a priest and a scholar who himself is of aboriginal descent - told the participants, following his presentation, that some of their input was very significant for him and would change his approach to the research in which he was engaged at that time. Freda and Marjorie were particularly impacted by this. Freda explained, “All I could think was, you mean **you** have something to learn from **us**?” It fundamentally changed how she viewed the relationship between *teacher* and *student*, and how she viewed herself as *a learner*.

*vi. Facilitation Processes*

The processes used for facilitation were also a source of empowerment for participants. Being welcomed, affirmed, included and engaged throughout each session played a significant role in their learning. Nellie described how even in the brief sessions of integration<sup>445</sup> she was stimulated and enriched by the insights of others. She explained

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<sup>445</sup> Several times during a session we would pause and open the floor, sometimes for just a few minutes, for participants to name some of the significant ideas, insights, or challenges that were emerging for them.

how this helped her build a sense of community with the other learners. Rick spoke of how frequently returning to the scripture passage from whence the theme *putting out into the deep* was derived, and using the text as a source from which to reflect on insights gained from the session, was very helpful. I would frequently pose questions for plenary reflection and discussion such as, how has this session invited me to put out into the deep? This was meaningful for him. Paul told us that this was important for him as well. Participants also valued the fact that presenters were advised about the interactive process of the sessions, and were invited to work with the facilitator to ensure that participants had the opportunity to engage with one another and the presenter.

*vii. Small Groups*

Participants who were part of small groups spoke of the importance of this place of conversation and reflection. Mike and Paula, who were not involved in small groups, spoke about the importance of the small group discussions during the sessions themselves. Mike described how,

(l)istening to all of the perspectives was very important for me. I've grown more respectful and tolerant because of it. It was the stories - the things that were happening in people's lives- that taught me so much. And also being asked to express myself and having to articulate myself was helpful.

*viii. Integration of Prayer*

Beginning the sessions with prayer was significant for participants and the few moments we took following the prayer to reflect on the meaning of it was also significant for them. I would ask the assembly questions like, "Is there anything you heard, or saw or sang, or said in this opening prayer that you needed this morning?" We would take a few minutes to hear a few responses. Participants explained that this helped

them focus for the session. It also helped them make the connection between prayer and all that was being learned in the session.

*ix. Physical set-up of the Learning Environment*

Paul and Freda commented at length about how important the physical arrangement of the session room was for him. The chairs were placed in a semi-circle. The aim was to ensure that as many people could see one another as possible. “We had to face each other” Paul commented. Marjorie, Paula, Denis, and Rick described how this set-up made them feel included and important.

*x. Consultation and Evaluation*

I asked the participants if it was important for them to be consulted about the topics for the sessions and to be regularly asked for feedback about the series. Mike and Denis indicated that they appreciated being invited and found it respectful, but they chose not to participate. When I asked them why, they explained that things were progressing just as they hoped and they felt no need to discuss it. For others this collaborative approach to decision-making about the sessions was key. Paula, Marjorie, and Nellie participated in the synodal process<sup>446</sup> in the early 1990’s when adult faith development was named as a priority. They experienced first-hand the bitterness and disappointment that ensued when there was no immediate follow-up. They spoke about how *Putting Out into the Deep* restored faith. Paul commented, “Boy did the diocese need it (*Putting Out into the Deep*). After the whole synodal process and then having it dropped. People were so bitter. And, all of a sudden, life was back.”

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<sup>446</sup> See, pp. 140-142 of this thesis for an explanation of the significance of this event in relation to *Putting Out into the Deep*.

A number of interview participants, Rick, Marjorie, Mike, Paula, Mary and Freda contributed to the consultation sessions<sup>447</sup> in the parishes, before *Putting Out into the Deep* was launched, and continued to give input into the topics and design of the series throughout the two three-year cycles. They described a sense of ownership of the catechesis and of feeling respected as adult disciples because of the collaborative nature of the planning. They also expressed their conviction that the continual input from participants and other interested persons helped to keep topics relevant and meaningful.

*xi. Additional Comments*

When I asked the participants if they had anything they wanted to add to our discussion, each of them expressed gratitude for all we lived together, and thanked me for my leadership. Rick, Mary, Paula, Nellie, Heather, and Marjorie shared their disappointment and concern that the process may not be continued. Mary, Paula and Marjorie expressed disbelief and anger that an experience that had been so successful and enriching might not be continued.

***Summary of the Interview with Pastoral Accompaniers of Small Groups***<sup>448</sup>

Four pastoral accompaniers<sup>449</sup> comprised the second interview group.<sup>450</sup> Pastoral accompaniers were in a privileged position to reflect on the experience of the participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* and, in particular, to discuss the value of the

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<sup>447</sup> See pp. 138-143 of this thesis for a description of the consultation process.

<sup>448</sup> See pp. 148-154 of this thesis for a description of the small reflection groups.

<sup>449</sup> See footnote, #408, p. 148 of this thesis, for a definition of the role of the pastoral accompanier.

<sup>450</sup> A copy of the process and questions I used for this interview is attached as Appendix 7.

small group experience. The pastoral accompaniers I interviewed were chosen as a convenience sample according to who could attend the interview at a particular time.

**Table 10: Semi-structured Interview 2<sup>451</sup>**

<b>Interview 2</b>
<b>4 pastoral accompaniers of the small groups ( met monthly)</b>
<b><i>Names (pseudonyms)</i></b>
<b>Jane Nancy David Richmond</b>

Following a welcome and an explanation of the process, the pastoral accompaniers were presented with the working definition of mature Christian disciple which we reviewed together. Richmond accompanied a group of participants all from the same parish. The other three small groups were a mix of people who formed a group according to meeting times, availability and location. They were from a variety of parishes.

The purpose of the small groups was to provide a supportive, safe and stimulating environment in which ongoing discussion and reflection about the topics from the *Putting Out into the Deep* sessions could take place. The focus was on helping participants identify their significant learning and to identify concrete ways they may try to act upon what they had learned. Writing a few pages of reflection about this was part of the small group process.

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<sup>451</sup> See p. 121 of this thesis for a table that illustrates all three interviews. And see p. 111 of this thesis for a diagram of the case study and the place of this interview in it.

*i. Empowerment as Mature Christian Disciples*

I began by asking the pastoral accompaniers if, from their perspective, the participants in their small groups had an experience of *Putting Out into the Deep* that empowered them as mature Christian disciples. Each of them affirmed that the members of their groups had experiences that were empowering. They often used the word *journey* to speak of this process of adult catechesis. Nancy commented on the fact that the impact of sessions on participants differed according to interests and needs. Each of the pastoral accompaniers spoke of changes they could see in participants over time that spoke of maturing discipleship. Richmond explained that he witnessed people gaining confidence and a sense of direction. David and Nancy experienced their group members developing the ability to articulate their views more clearly and opening themselves more generously in their small groups. David described how he accompanied people as they grappled with serious issues and worked them through. He saw faith deepening and finding concrete expression among the people he accompanied. The other accompaniers shared similar experiences.

*ii. Struggles in the Small Group Experience*

Jane's group experienced many struggles and she expressed some regret because she did not think the experience was as effective as it could have been for participants. When I asked her, she was able to identify a few of the obstacles. First, there were a few people in the group who Jane identified as "very opinionated." She regarded their expressions of their opinions as "excessive" which made it difficult for other group members to express themselves. Second, there were a few people who did not engage easily and who were reluctant to express their thoughts and insights. Third, Jane

identified her own struggle, as a retired teacher, to maintain a facilitating role and not to become what she called *instructive*. While the group struggled she felt that these obstacles lessened over time, and some community-building took place at least among some of the group members.

Jane indicated that the group continued to struggle until the end of the process. While some meaningful discussions took place and some good insights were expressed in reflection papers, she did not feel that the group ever reached a level of trust or mutuality that she would identify as a strong community of support.

*iii. An Environment of Trust Where Faith and Life were Shared*

The other groups had experiences that were very productive. All three accompaniers described the development of an environment of trust where participants began to discuss very significant experiences and insights. They became places where faith and life were being deeply shared among the members. David, Nancy and Richmond described how they looked forward to their meetings and how some lasting friendships had formed among members. They identified the opportunity to gather in an intimate environment and discuss significant issues in a supportive environment as key to the success of these gatherings. The importance of hearing one another's points of view was identified as significant for the experience.

*iv. Reflection Papers*

Each of the pastoral accompaniers affirmed the reflection paper as an effective part of the process. As Nancy explained:

Sometimes people would come to the small group meeting with their paper finished, other times they would wait and write it after the meeting when more ideas had been generated. But, in either scenario, it gave them a chance to put some thoughts together and to articulate them and also to receive some feedback for further thought. I think many things came together for people in that exercise. I was blown away by some of the profound reflection that was going on.

v. *Pastoral Accompaniers' Learning and Growth as Mature Disciples*

Pastoral accompaniers also spoke of their own learning and growth that empowered them as mature Christian disciples. Richmond was discerning his vocational direction and found the group discussions and the feedback he received as the accompanier of the group very helpful for his own process of discernment. Nancy, David and Richmond described how participants shared significant experiences and insights that were humbling and challenging for all in the small group. Nancy explained that significant events transpired in the lives of participants during the three-year cycle of meetings: family illnesses were faced; some participants had personal health challenges emerge during the three-year cycles; one participant dealt with becoming unemployed. Each of these important life experiences became a source of growth for all involved in the small group as they shared with one another and supported one another in the catechetical process. The accompaniers used words such as *humbling, a gift and a privilege*.

vi. *Meeting People Where They Are*

An important goal of the adult catechesis was to model the interaction on the road to Emmaus and try to “meet people where they are.” I asked the pastoral accompaniers if they thought we had been successful in doing this. Each of the pastoral accompaniers indicated that we were successful in this regard. Nancy and Richmond

attested to participants who felt very welcomed and included. The accompaniers indicated that the small group process was an essential part of this because it provided a privileged opportunity for each to be heard, to receive support and to listen to and support others.

*vii. Collaboration in Planning and Evaluating*

The accompaniers also affirmed the importance of inviting people to participate in the evaluation and planning of the series. Nancy and Richmond named the respect this demonstrates for adults in faith. David and Jane spoke of this invitation as an important challenge to all of the participants to take responsibility for their own learning.

*viii. Additional Comments*

I concluded by asking the pastoral accompaniers if there was anything they wanted to add to our discussion. Richmond offered the following:

I think one of the challenges we have as Church is to have active participation when it was, at one time, considered a virtue to be passive – the empty vessel that turns up to get filled up. We invited people into an active participation, even in being invited to help plan the topics for the series. This opens important doors and windows....I worry about clericalism in all of this, people go back to their parishes all revved up and keen to take responsibility and they are discouraged or dismissed. It's an ongoing part of being Church with which we need to struggle.

***Summary of Interview with Pastors and a Pastoral Associate***

My final semi-structured interview was with Reverend Jack, Reverend Francis and Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne – three pastoral leaders from parishes with several participants in *Putting Out into the Deep*.<sup>452</sup> These pastoral leaders were very supportive

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<sup>452</sup> The questions and process I used for this group interview are attached as Appendix 8.

of the adult catechesis and encouraged their parishioners to attend. One of pastors served on the Advisory Committee as well. Another was a small group accompanier during the first three-year cycle. I knew that they would be in a privileged position from which to give feedback about the experience of their parishioners in *Putting Out into the Deep*. In keeping with the idea in transformative learning that transformation is confirmed by a change in action or behaviour, I wanted to see if these interviewees could provide any feedback in this regard.

**Table 11: Semi-structured Interview #3<sup>453</sup>**

<b>Interview 3</b>
<b>Two Pastors and one Pastoral Associate</b> <i>(from parishes that had participants)</i>
<b><u>Names (pseudonyms)</u></b>
<b>Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne</b> <b>Reverend Jack</b> <b>Reverend Francis</b>

Following a welcome and an explanation of the interview process, a copy of the working definition of a mature Christian disciple was given to Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne, Reverend Francis and Reverend Jack. We reviewed it together.

*i. Empowerment and Mature Christian Disciples: Changes in Behaviour*

I began by asking them if, from their perspective, those who participated in the adult catechesis had been empowered as mature Christian disciples and, if so, what differences in behaviour indicated this empowerment. Reverend Jack explained how the

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<sup>453</sup> See p. 121 of this thesis for a table that illustrates all three small group interviews. And see p. 111 for a diagram of the case study and the place of this interview in it.

parishioners who participated from his parish found it very empowering. He described the group as people with varying levels of involvement in the parish. He noticed that they gained confidence through the adult catechesis, became more enthusiastic and more articulate in their faith.

Reverend Francis expressed a similar view and added that he marvelled at how participants grew in faith while engaged in *Putting Out into the Deep*. He noticed their desire for more, and how they blossomed as a group when they returned to the parish. He described their increased energy to take on responsibility and to support one another. He noticed that they would come early to meetings and events and stay late because they wanted to spend time together. He was very impressed by the fact that a few newly initiated Catholics, who were among the participants from his parish, were very comfortable in this group of parish participants that included others who had been members of the parish for a longer period of time. He described this as “a wholesomeness of their faith. They weren’t afraid to question and discuss their views. You could see that they were participating.”

Reverend Jack could see that these parishioners were undergoing “a rich personal life experience” that was making this so significant for them. He spoke about the meaningful and powerful life experiences that marked these participants. As he described it, “when they started to talk about it, it was enlightening for them and for me because it was so powerful.... It was all part of the rich tapestry of who they are.” Reverend Jack perceived the involvement of these parishioners in the adult catechetical series as a process that helped them integrate their significant life experience with their Christian faith. He saw this as very empowering for them. He described “the common

experience of those who went to the sessions was ‘we’re going to have to go back for more’.” He explained that each time they returned from a session they would bring an energy and enthusiasm to the parish so that others were also enlivened by it.

Reverend Francis noted confidence and greater engagement in the life of the parish as the most significant changes he could identify in his parishioners as a result of their involvement in the adult catechesis. He explained how they returned to the parish after just a few sessions insisting that they needed to start a similar process of adult catechesis in the parish so others could benefit. He explained that they were being nourished by the process and they wanted others to be nourished as well. He said he believes it was the first time they had an experience of catechesis so relevant and enriching. He saw that they were finding meaning and answers to important questions in their lives. He described the experience of one participant from his parish - a middle-aged single mother. She developed a new and strong connection to the parish community as a result of her participation. “I think it (*Putting Out into the Deep*) nourished her a great deal,” he explained, “she no longer saw herself as a faithful bystander.” She realized she is an essential, responsible member of the Church, called and empowered by her baptism.

Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne described the people who were participants from her parish as committed members of the parish. She saw a joyfulness emerge in one of the participants that had not been present before. She noticed that another participant became more tolerant and peaceful and the other more involved in certain projects, especially having to do with social justice.

ii. *What Processes Empower*

When I asked these three what dimensions of the catechetical series they thought were empowering for participants I was surprised at how well they understood the process. I had frequently wondered if reports about *Putting Out into the Deep* and invitations to come to meetings designed for feedback and evaluation of the process were reaching the pastoral leaders of parishes. The fact that these pastoral leaders were so well informed about the process indicated that they were, in fact, receiving the reports. They affirmed the effectiveness of some central aspects of the series. Reverend Jack identified the theme, *putting out into the deep*, and the accompanying question, *what does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today?* as “excellent thematic orientations.”

Both pastors and the pastoral associate identified the importance of involving participants in the process of planning. They commented on the quality of presenters and the variety and relevance of the topics. They affirmed the interactive structure of the day as well as the integration of prayer. They spoke of the importance of the small group meetings where experience can be deeply shared in a supportive environment. This corroborated similar affirmations that emerged from other sources in my research.

This portion of our interview ended with Reverend Jack, Reverend Francis and Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne asserting that this process for adult catechesis needed to be adapted at the parish level. We discussed how it had always been the intention to work toward more support for adult catechesis in the parishes. We spoke about how we had hoped to offer education for catechists for adult catechesis as a next step in realizing all of the aims for adult faith development.

iii. *Engagement of the Parish Pastoral Leaders - Lay and Ordained - and Ownership of the Adult Catechetical Process by the Whole Diocesan Community*

I realized that these interviewees were in a privileged position to offer feedback on an important goal we had established, during the consultation process that preceded the commencement of the adult catechetical series: to encourage the whole diocesan community to assume ownership of it. I asked these pastoral leaders if, in their opinion, this goal was achieved. Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne and Reverend Francis indicated that they did not think it had been accomplished because many of the parish pastoral leaders – priests and pastoral associates - had not engaged and supported it.

Reverend Jack did not directly answer my question about whether or not the whole community took responsibility. However, he offered two points of view: that if already busy parish pastoral leaders realize people will come back from sessions with questions and needing support they may hesitate to encourage them to participate; that part of discipleship for the participants in the catechetical series is to realize their responsibility to encourage others to come. This responsibility ought not to be regarded as the exclusive responsibility of the parish priest or pastoral associate. He did not engage further in this discussion until the conclusion when he added two things: “We have a long way to go in collaborative ministry” (and referring to the signs of empowerment from engagement in *Putting Out into the Deep*) “Yeah, that baptismal call, though. It’s like a resurgence of that. They’re able to live out of that.”

Reverend Francis and Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne offered more insight about the reasons for the lack of engagement of many of the parish pastoral leaders. They both appealed to excessive busyness of pastors and pastoral associates as the central reason.

They spoke of their own tendencies to lose track of important events in the midst of their busyness. Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne spoke about her feeling of guilt that she had not publicized *Putting Out into the Deep* well enough because she was often over-worked and distracted by other things. She was one of those who had failed to reply to the invitation to attend the closing ceremony for the first three-year cycle. She described her dismay and regret when she discovered the invitation under a stack of papers on her desk several days after the event. After we probed this issue further, Reverend Francis suggested that another reason parish pastoral leaders may not have supported the adult catechetical process is because people return to their parishes from these events thinking they can take over. This led to a long discussion about the need for education of all the faithful, lay and ordained together, about collaborative ministry, and the role of all the baptised together in the mission of the Church. Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne, Rev. Francis and Rev. Jack each expressed a strong opinion that lay and ordained need to progress in collaborative ministry.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter has presented the data findings from the case study of *Putting Out into the Deep*. The study gathered a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data by utilizing several collection techniques: descriptive documents, a survey and semi-structured interviews. I will now proceed to Chapter Five and a more extensive analysis of the data findings related to *Putting Out into the Deep*, the case in review.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FURTHER ANALYSIS OF THE DATA: IN SEARCH OF PROCESSES THAT EMPOWER MATURE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

Case study research experts describe how “(a)nalysis is guided by the story emerging from the data and by predefined conceptual frameworks that may grow and change over the lifetime of the study.”<sup>454</sup> They explain that “(a) good rule of thumb for data analysis is to read and analyze the data for three sequential, somewhat overlapping purposes:

First read and code the data for a *descriptive* purpose – that is, the telling of the story or the stories in the case (s) that best answer the research questions. At this point, the story is holistic and often chronological; it is an account that the people in the case could recognize as an accurate portrait of what they have said or done in the circumstances within the time period of the case study. Once the story is told, the researcher reads and codes the data for a second time for an *analytic* purpose, pulling apart the story and case in different ways to get underneath the story and shed light on the how, what, and why dynamics that drove the study’s research questions. The final reading is done for interpretive and explanatory purposes – that is to integrate knowledge and insights gained from different kinds of data and data sources in light of the conceptual framework and theoretical purposes of the study.<sup>455</sup>

I completed a descriptive analysis of my case study data in the previous chapter. I will continue the process of data analysis in this chapter by constructing some conceptual categories. Then, I will move to the “final reading” of the case data, as described above, for interpretive and explanatory purposes.

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<sup>454</sup> Andrea Ellinger, Karen Watkins, and Victoria Marsick, “Case Study Research Methods,” in *Fast Fundamentals, the White Paper Series* (San Francisco, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009), 16-17.

<sup>455</sup> Ellinger, Watkins, Marsick, “Case Study Research Methods” in *Fast Fundamentals*, 16-17.

### **Constructing Thematic Conceptual Categories**

Semi-structured interviews are an interpretive methodology. Therefore, I followed the three semi-structured interviews I conducted with a thematic analysis of the responses offered by the interview participants.<sup>456</sup> Next, I used a constant comparative method to analyze all the case study data I have gathered for themes, or “recurring regularities and patterns” in the study<sup>457</sup> from which to construct conceptual categories. “It should be clear that categories are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves...The most common situation is when the investigator comes up with terms, concepts and categories that reflect what he or she sees in the data.”<sup>458</sup>

The data analysis using the constant comparative method was framed by my search for three things related to my central research questions: what the data revealed about processes that empowered the participants as mature Christian disciples in this experience of adult catechesis; what the data revealed about obstacles to effective adult catechesis; what insight the data offered about the disconnect between about the disconnect between the Church’s vision and practice of adult catechesis. Framing my data analysis in this way allowed me to construct “emergent categories”<sup>459</sup> from the data that respond to these areas of inquiry. I constructed eleven conceptual categories from the constant comparative analysis. Eight of these categories respond to the central

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<sup>456</sup> See the table outlining the procedure for case study, in Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research*, 78-79.

<sup>457</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 181.

<sup>458</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 181-182.

<sup>459</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 183.

research question of my case study, “What processes empower mature Christian disciples?” The final three categories provide points of reflection regarding potential obstacles to effective adult catechesis. They also offer insights suggested by these research findings that may help to contribute to an understanding of the disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis expressed in the Church’s documents and the practice of adult catechesis. The identification and description of the eleven conceptual categories follows.

**1. *Consistency and Stability: Vision, Committed and Capable Leadership, a Collaborative Approach***

A constant comparative analysis of the data from this case study allowed me to observe a pattern of consistency and stability in several aspects of the experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*. These aspects are: vision; committed and capable leadership; and a collaborative approach.

A clear vision for adult catechesis was established by me along with the Advisory Committee at the start of the consultation period that preceded the implementation of *Putting Out into the Deep*. This vision was maintained throughout the two three-year cycles: the purpose of adult catechesis is to empower mature Christian disciples. Generated from this vision a scripture-based theme, *putting out into the deep*, was chosen and framed with the overarching question: What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today? They were endorsed as the key question and defining theme for the adult catechetical process by participants in the initial consultation and reaffirmed by the participants in the symposium after the completion of the first three-

year cycle. They served as a constant, grounding and stabilizing point of reference for all of the planning and design of the process.

The leadership offered by me along with the Advisory Committee was also consistent and stable. The descriptive data allowed me to identify the framework that shaped our leadership. It consisted of a number of principles that emerged over time and guided our work.<sup>460</sup>

The descriptive data - the archived documents and my memories as participant-researcher – present the essential role played by the Archbishop, who initiated the process. He maintained a strong commitment to the catechetical series and ensured that the human, financial and material resources were allocated; he hired a qualified full-time director whose mandate it was to provide formation in faith for adults; he supported the appointment of an Advisory Committee of people with various leadership abilities and areas of expertise needed for effective adult catechesis; he also agreed to a consultation period that proved effective for engaging many members of the community in their role of responsibility for adult catechesis. The consultation process also initiated an ongoing process of consultation and collaboration with the diocesan community that extended throughout the two three-year cycles of the adult catechetical series. Data from the survey and the semi-structured interviews reveal that some participants explicitly attributed their involvement in the consultation period, and in the adult catechesis that followed, to the

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<sup>460</sup> See pp. 138-139 of this thesis for the list of seven principles that guided the work of the Advisory Committee.

resolution and healing of their disillusionment because of thwarted efforts in the past.<sup>461</sup>

As one survey respondent commented, “This program was the first sign many people experienced that they had been listened to as participants in the synodal process.”

The Archbishop was a public voice of authority and support for the empowerment of mature Christian disciples. The data reveal this in numerous ways. However, one good example of his support for the empowerment of mature Christian disciples was his request that we cease to use the language of *lay formation* and adopt, instead, the term *adult faith development*.<sup>462</sup> His hope was to encourage all of the baptised – lay and ordained – to grow in faith together, and to respond as one community of mature Christian disciples

The study findings, especially the descriptive data, reveal that the members of the Advisory Committee and I understood the vision of the Church’s documents, and recognized that the empowerment of mature Christian disciples was our primary goal and commitment for effective adult catechesis. It was apparent from the beginning of our work that engaging the community in its role and responsibility for adult catechesis was essential. In addition to an understanding of the fundamentals of adult catechesis that we knew from the Church’s documents, we had the knowledge among us of the principles of adult learning, some essential insights from sociology of religion, and the facilitation skills necessary for designing the process. The framework that consistently

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<sup>461</sup> See pp. 140-141 of this thesis for a description of the disillusionment that many were feeling at the time of the consultation period because of thwarted past efforts.

<sup>462</sup> See pp. 145 of this thesis for a description.

shaped our leadership arose from these foundations. It provided stability in our work, and shaped our commitment to engage in a collaborative approach.

The research findings demonstrate the central role of each of these elements for establishing and maintaining this effective adult catechetical series: a consistent vision; committed and capable leadership; a collaborative approach. Together they provided the necessary foundation.

## **2. *Engaging the Whole Person: Content and Process***

The second conceptual category identifies the engagement of the whole person—the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions – in a process of adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. Participants provided descriptions of their empowerment as mature Christian disciples that indicated their engagement as whole persons in the process. This is identified in data from all of the sources - description, survey and semi-structured interviews. One of the survey respondents quoted in Chapter Four strongly expressed this engagement at work in him/her: “I took in new knowledge. Yet, once I was finished processing it I was compelled to act on what I had learned.” Mike, a semi-structured interview participant, reported a similar experience: “I thought I came (to the adult catechetical sessions) for my head. But as I look back I can see it has affected my heart. I know that because of the changes it made to my life. I am living it.”

The balance between content and process helped to facilitate this engagement. One of the most significant ongoing challenges during the two three-year cycles of this adult catechetical series was to design content and process that could effectively address participants’ important faith and life questions, and allow for participants’ ongoing input

into the design, while maintaining a process of comprehensive adult catechesis. This reveals a significant point of intersection between orthodoxy and orthopraxis and the crucial need to hold the creative tensions between them. The findings demonstrate that it is possible to combine content chosen according to expressed questions and concerns of participants with comprehensive catechesis. My research demonstrates that using a grid that outlines the four dimensions of the mission of the Church - Word, liturgy, community life, and service -<sup>463</sup> can be a helpful tool for this process.

The research findings also suggest that the relevance of topics played a key factor in the empowerment of participants, and that presenters who are experts in their fields were highly valued because of the vibrant content they were able to offer. The presenters who identified themselves as people on the journey of discipleship, and who were open to learning from the participants had a significant impact. This is suggested by all of the data sources. Freda, a small group interview participant, expressed this very well. As I described in Chapter Four, at the conclusion of one of the sessions the presenter told the participants that he planned to change some content of his doctoral thesis due to new insights he gained while interacting with them during the session. Freda described the powerful effect this had on her: “All I could think was, you mean **you** have something to learn from **us**?”

The research findings reveal that an interactive session, designed for integration was an effective means by which to engage the whole person in *Putting Out into the Deep*. This was marked by a process that incorporated time for reflection, that

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<sup>463</sup> See footnote # 415, p. 156 for a detailed explanation of these four dimensions and my use of them for curriculum design.

challenged participants to articulate what they were learning and what it meant for them, and that invited participants to consider concrete responses to their learning. The data point to this process as key for participants' learning. It gave them the opportunity to express themselves and process their learning. And it also allowed them to hear others and to encounter diverse points of view that helped expand and enrich their perspectives.

### 3. *Integration of Prayer and Learning*

A third category that I identified from the research findings suggests that the integration of prayer with learning sessions is empowering for mature Christian disciples. All of the data sources presented this insight. A survey respondent commented that “(s)tarting with the Church’s Morning Prayer was fruitful for me.” Several of the semi-structured interview participants referred to the “grounding” effect beginning with prayer had on them. Returning to the Gospel passage from where the theme, *putting out into the deep*,<sup>464</sup> was derived was identified as a source of enrichment by participants. This Gospel passage was often employed as a reference point from which to reflect on learning. And it was frequently used as a text during prayer.<sup>465</sup>

Our inclusion of prayer as an integral dimension of the learning sessions emphasized the integration between prayer and the life of the disciple called to the mission of the Church. When participants were invited to express how they were affected by liturgical prayer - whether it was inspiration, joy, challenge, or consolation –

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<sup>464</sup> See Luke 5:4, NRSV.

<sup>465</sup> Session frequently concluded with an invitation for participants to reflect on how the disciples’ experience in this scripture passage related to their learning in the session. Or, participants were asked to think about how themes from the session may be inviting them to “put out into deeper waters” in their own lives.

this integration was encouraged. Participants took responsibility for the planning and leadership of prayer which was another important dimension of collaboration and shared leadership. Using the Church's *Morning Prayer* allowed us to exercise the role of laity to preside at liturgical prayer. Integrating prayer as part of the learning process was another significant means by which to hold together orthopraxis and orthodoxy.

#### **4. *Physical Arrangement of Learning Environment, Hospitality, and Shared Leadership***

A physical space that is arranged to support the presenter in their role and to encourage communication among those assembled made a significant contribution to effective learning in *Putting Out into the Deep*. A room that was arranged for both presentation and interaction through conversation conveyed an important message to the participants. The data findings indicate that participants received an unspoken message from the physical arrangement that their presence was important for the session, and that they were invited to engage with one another. As Paula explained during the semi-structured interview, "There was room for the person. We mattered." She referred to the physical arrangement of the room as a key indication of this. Paul described how the physical setting impacted him by saying, "(w)e had to face each other." This was a significant dimension of the experience for him.

I intentionally arranged the chairs so that as many people as possible could see one another, while making the presenter comfortable and allowing room for any teaching equipment such as blackboards, flipcharts and audiovisual equipment. The data from the case study confirms that this contributed to effective adult catechesis.

The research findings demonstrate that a learning environment that is welcoming and respectful, and also challenging and inspiring, is conducive to learning experiences that are transformative in nature. One survey respondent indicated that, “Being called by name” by the facilitator mirrored, for her or him, a deeper sense of being called by name.<sup>466</sup> Survey respondents and semi-structured interview participants indicated that being welcomed, called by name and invited to share in the leadership of the session by expressing themselves, listening to others, and expressing gratitude to presenters for their expertise engaged and affirmed them.

Participants exercised shared leadership by participating in thanking the presenters at the end of the session. Data reveal that this was an important expression of communion with one another for some participants. It also gave participants and the presenter a valuable opportunity to hear a few words and phrases expressing the most important insights regarding their learning.

##### ***5. Bringing Experience and the Faith Tradition into dialogue, and the Role of the Community***

Several semi-structured interview participants reported that they were surprised by a discovery. Their original intention for deciding to participate in *Putting Out into the Deep* was to gain information about the Catholic faith. However, what proved to be their most significant source of learning was the engagement in the stories of others about the experiences of living life and faith. Mike described how he “came to get the nuggets of information” but found himself engaged in the challenge to live his faith more deeply.

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<sup>466</sup> See Isaiah 43:1, NRSV.

He spoke of moving away from a need to “have the answers” toward an ability to embrace ambiguity and to see his faith as a life-long journey. Mike attributed this movement to all he learned from listening to the experiences of others. He developed a new regard for sharing experience as a significant dimension of the learning process.

Participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* were invited to discuss their important life and faith questions with one another, and to bring these questions into dialogue with the wisdom of tradition. This was the primary method used for promoting reflection and learning. The study demonstrates that processes that bring life experience into dialogue with the faith Tradition were significant for this experience of adult catechesis. These processes were designed to help participants bring their critical faith and life questions into dialogue with the insights gained from session presentations. Examples of questions used to encourage this process are: Have I had an experience that relates to this dimension of our tradition? How does this dimension of our tradition relate to my experience? How does it (challenge, invite, console, affirm) me? What significance do these insights have for me? Does this help me answer questions of faith and life that are important for me? How might this insight be inviting me to respond? What is one concrete thing I may do to further my learning about this? What is one concrete thing I may do to act on my insights from this session?

The participants who gathered for sessions formed a significant learning community that facilitated reflection, conversation and sharing of experience. The data demonstrate that this learning community also enhanced participants’ sense of their communal identity as disciples learning from one another and sharing responsibility for

the mission of the Church. During the semi-structured interview Marjorie, expressed this experience of the learning community:

We are all in this [referring to mature Christian discipleship] journey together. So, to me it was not only what the presenter had to say [that was important]. It was what the community had to say in response to the presenter. I think that's a really significant and important part of it...And an important part of getting out of my own head...to a bigger world out there.

#### 6. *The Significance of Small Groups*

The data reveal that the small group experience became, for those who participated, a source of learning and support that deepened the experience of the adult catechetical sessions. It provided a space to engage in more in-depth conversation. It also became a place of friendship and support for many. The data from all sources - descriptive documents, the survey and the semi-structured interviews - present participants' comments that reveal that the small groups provided a valued opportunity to deepen critical reflection, engage in more in depth conversation about important faith and life experiences, and to learn from others. Although a sense of Christian community may be experienced in larger settings as my data suggest, the small group gatherings provided a privileged place to build trust and engage in relationships of support and friendship that empower mature Christian discipleship. The data findings also suggest that the small group experience was not optimal or even helpful for some participants when an environment of trust and mutuality was not achieved, or when a group failed to meet on a regular basis.

Certificate participants in *Putting Out into the Deep* were asked to complete a brief reflection paper following each session. The study findings reveal that the small

group became a place of enriching and supportive conversation for certificate participants regarding the contents of their reflection papers. Semi-structured interview participants Denis and Marjorie spoke about waiting for their small group meeting before writing their reflection papers so they could benefit from discussion about the session with other small group members.

The data suggest that the role of the pastoral accompanier was an important one that provided stability for the group, even though he or she did not usually facilitate the meetings. The ability to establish shared and meaningful conversation among the members of the small group was key to a successful experience. A survey respondent described how he or she decided to discontinue membership in the small group after attending a few meetings and discovering that a few of the other members did not engage in the discussion.

The research findings indicate that challenges arose for a productive small group meeting when members dominated the meeting, when facilitation became too directive, and when participants did not wish to engage in discussion.

### **7. *Collaboration, Evaluation and Feedback***

The opportunities for participants to engage in collaboration, evaluation and feedback were plentiful in *Putting Out into the Deep*. They began with the consultation process before the commencement of *Putting Out into the Deep* and continued throughout the two three-year cycles with evaluation at the end of each session, more intensive yearly evaluations and a symposium on the future of adult faith formation in the Archdiocese in between the two three-year cycles. Participants were invited to help design the curriculum by expressing their most significant faith and life questions. When

planning the curriculum they were also invited to consider the four-fold mission of the Church to help ensure a comprehensive adult catechesis.

Interview participants described this collaborative approach as highly valued by them. Even those who chose not to participate indicated that they greatly valued being invited. Evaluations of each session allowed for frequent feedback to help enrich the adult catechetical series. It also provided an opportunity for authentic needs and desires of participants to be made known. This helped to keep the curriculum relevant and meaningful.

#### 8. *Thinking for Oneself - Critical Thinking*

Many of the participants in the small-group interview indicated that “Thinking for oneself” was very important for them. Several participants emphasized it as a way of identifying what was empowering for them in the experience of *Putting Out into the Deep* and what distinguished it from other catechetical experiences that had “told me what to think.” This was a defining characteristic of moving into an adult perspective of faith from a child-like perspective for many. A child-like perspective was described as believing what one was told without questioning the belief, and being content with simple explanations. Paula, a semi-structured interview participant, identified the fact that she was thinking things through more and using her conscience as the most significant indication of her growth through the adult catechetical process. Other interview participants expressed similar perspectives. The importance of “thinking for oneself” was also revealed in the survey data. As one respondent commented, “It [this experience] challenged me to open up my thinking and take responsibility for it.”

According to the data, critical thinking may have added significance for adults who have

had experiences of faith instruction where the goal has been to memorize certain doctrinal statements and ensure the intellectual assent of the learner to these statements.

Thinking for oneself was engaged in the adult catechetical series in the form of dialogue with the self, others and the tradition. The research findings reveal the effectiveness of engaging adult learners with diverse perspectives and opinions expressed by others, and by inviting them to engage with the tradition. Invitations to engage in critical thinking were greatly appreciated by interview participants as a sign of respect for them as adult learners. Furthermore, the findings suggest that participants experienced this invitation as an affirmation of their value as autonomous free adults who were in the process of building a loving, mature relationship with God, others and the community.

### ***9. An Opportunity to Move from Child-like to Adult Perspectives of Faith***

Several participants in the semi-structured interviews identified *Putting Out into the Deep* as their first experience of adult catechesis that encouraged them to move from child-like to adult perspectives of faith. Participants' description of this experience may be summarized in the following three movements:

1. Moving away from fear of God (and those who represented God such as teachers, priests and religious and parents) toward a desire to respond to and cultivate a loving relationship with God based upon mature Christian spirituality;
2. moving from a child's outlook, characterized by simple acceptance of answers such as those learned through rote learning, toward deeper exploration and understandings of the Church's teachings;
3. moving from a sense of discipleship defined by intellectual assent to certain statements of doctrine, toward discipleship characterized by integration of belief and practice.

Several participants described past catechetical experiences that were disempowering. This disempowerment was marked by experiences of fear and judgment where God was represented by authority figures who prescribe rules for behaviour. When these rules were not followed God's anger and punishment were expected to follow. This disempowerment was also identified by learning focussed on memorization of information to which one indicated intellectual assent. The focus of the learning was on retaining the correct information and following rules. According to a number of participants in the semi-structured interviews, *Putting Out into the Deep* was the first opportunity they had to engage in a process of catechesis that invited them to expand their understanding and claim their beliefs as their own. Some of these study participants described the disempowering experiences of catechesis they had as children.

#### **10. *A Need for Adult Catechesis at the Parish Level***

The need for experiences of effective adult catechesis at the parish level is a theme that emerged from the research findings of this study. This need was expressed in the descriptive data and in feedback on the surveys and during the semi-structured interviews. Participants in the symposium held in between the two three-year cycles of *Putting Out into the Deep* strongly expressed the need for adult catechists in the parish communities. They requested a programme that could form adult catechists able to assume leadership in for adult catechesis in the parish communities. This was discussed a number of times by the Advisory Committee. Perhaps the identification of this need is related to the insight that this was a first experience of effective adult catechesis for many participants. If experiences of empowerment as mature Christian disciples are not,

generally, being offered in parish communities, then people may not have access to them.

### ***11. Disengagement of Pastoral Leaders (Priests and Pastoral Associates)***

The disengagement of pastoral leaders is a consistent theme that presents itself throughout the data of the case study. The degree of sadness and anger expressed by participants because of the lack of support from pastoral leaders for this experience of adult catechesis was striking. An intense desire for good collaboration among lay and ordained was expressed throughout the descriptive documents. Concern that pastoral leaders were not engaged enough in the adult catechetical efforts was also consistently expressed. These findings are corroborated by data from both the survey and the semi-structured interviews.

My findings suggest that most of the parish pastoral leaders of the Archdiocese disengaged from this adult catechetical series even though they strongly endorsed adult catechesis as a primary aim and urgent need during the consultation process prior to its implementation. The data point to this disengagement early in the first three-year cycle when parish publicity was failing. Further evidence is revealed in their lack of participation in the celebration honouring their parishioners who completed certificates in the first three-year cycle. Parishioners asked, “Where are our pastors?” during the symposium consultation process held between the two three-year cycles. Reading the symposium report carefully reveals that participants expressed a great desire for collaboration among all lay and ordained members of the community. They were greatly concerned at what they perceived as a lack of support.

Even though I did not ask any questions related to the involvement of pastoral leaders, it is important to note that concern, disappointment, anger and sadness about a lack of support from diocesan pastoral leaders were frequently expressed in comments on the survey. Similarly, group interview participants, with whom I did not raise any of these questions, revealed the same concerns and sentiments regarding what they perceived as a lack of involvement and support for adult catechesis on the part of the pastoral leaders of the Archdiocese. Respondents expressed particular displeasure about the fact that the adult catechetical series was not likely to be continued in the Archdiocese. Richmond, a pastoral accompanier who participated in the semi-structured interviews, expressed his perception that that some pastoral leaders may have a preference for a “passive laity.”

It is quite perplexing to consider that those in positions of pastoral leadership – lay and ordained - who endorsed adult catechesis as the first priority for adult faith formation in the Archdiocese should have then failed to promote and support it. Though no definitive reasons for the disengagement of pastoral leaders can be found within the data, busyness was consistently offered as a reason. A concern about clericalism as a contributing factor was expressed by one of the pastoral accompaniers in the small-group interview. And, Rev. Francis and Pastoral Associate Mary-Anne, identified a potential reason for disengagement as concern on the part of pastoral leaders in the parishes that adult catechesis causes pastoral leaders to believe that parishioners may take control of the parish. The need for both lay and ordained to be formed in collaborative ministry was a recurring suggestion from study participants and in the archived documents from consultative meetings and sessions of evaluation.

## **Twelve Statements Summarizing the Case Study Data**

Constructing the preceding eleven conceptual categories using a constant comparative method of all of the data collected in the case study of *Putting Out into the Deep* allowed me to study the categories. Further examination of them allowed me to create twelve statements that summarize the central insights related to adult catechesis contained in the categorical analysis. The first nine statements identify adult catechetical processes that empower mature Christian disciples. The final three statements reflect obstacles to effective adult catechesis. These obstacles may impede effective adult catechesis and contribute to the disconnect between the Church`s vision and practice of adult catechesis. I have listed these twelve statements to follow.

### *Nine Adult Catechetical Processes that Empower Mature Christian Disciples*

1. Effective adult catechetical is marked by a clear and stable vision of its central aim - to empower mature Christian disciples - and it has the authority, commitment, expertise, leadership and material resources needed to sustain it.
2. Effective adult catechesis invites the whole Christian community to take responsibility for the catechesis and includes participants in the ongoing planning and evaluation of the process.
3. Effective adult catechesis engages the whole person by offering interactive sessions that balance content and process. The content, presented by well qualified educators who themselves model the journey of mature Christian discipleship, offers challenging, insightful perspectives for participants related to their important faith and life questions. In addition to conversation, comments

and questions, participants are invited to reflect on how learning will be integrated into life experience.

4. Effective adult Catechesis attends to the integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxis on all levels including the integration of prayer and learning. This integration is supported in a number of ways: by including communal prayer as a central aspect of the learning experience; by sharing the leadership for prayer; by inviting participants to reflect on how the prayer affects them, relates to their experience, and invites them to respond.
5. Effective adult catechesis is marked by a hospitable learning environment that attends to the needs of the learner, the presenter, and the learning process. This includes a physical arrangement that emphasizes the importance of the learner, the needs of the presenter and encourages communication.
6. Effective adult catechesis facilitates the dialogue between life and faith by utilizing theological reflection as a fundamental dimension of the learning process. The learning community provides an essential location for this.
7. Effective adult catechesis encourages small group meetings that can help to deepen conversation, reflection and learning, and provide a place of trust, friendship and support in the learning process.
8. Effective adult catechesis constructs models for collaborative curriculum building and evaluation that can honour both the need to design curriculum that addresses participants' expressed critical life and faith issues, and the need to

design curriculum that honours comprehensive adult catechesis according to the vision of the Church's documents.<sup>467</sup>

9. Effective adult catechesis is characterized by processes that support critical thinking. It encourages adults to think for themselves and to take personal ownership of their beliefs.<sup>468</sup>

*Three Obstacles to Adult Catechesis that Empowers Mature Christian Disciples*

10. An obstacle to effective adult catechesis is a lack of opportunity for adults to have experiences of effective adult catechesis – in parishes or at the diocesan level - that empower them as mature Christian disciples. This may be associated with a related lack of adult catechists who have the ability and skill to design and lead effective adult catechesis.
11. An obstacle to effective adult catechesis is an approach characterized by the objective that learners will memorize doctrinal statements and give their intellectual assent to them.

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<sup>467</sup> Note that this is another essential means by which to integrate orthodoxy and orthopraxis. Engaging participants in this process honours their identity as mature Christian disciples - adults who need to shape their learning experiences – and also keeps the adult catechesis relevant and meaningful.

<sup>468</sup> Semi-structured interview participants described “thinking for oneself” and the movement from “child-like perspectives in faith to adult perspectives” as key experiences during “Putting Out into the Deep.” My contention is that these are defining features of adult maturity and a movement toward being self-authorizing as both Fowler and Kegan describe it in stages three and four of their development theories. I explored their developmental theories in Chapter Two of this thesis, 96-107.

12. An obstacle to effective adult catechesis is pastoral leaders – lay and ordained - who verbally express support for effective adult catechesis but who do not support it in practice.

### **Interpretive and Explanatory Analysis**

I will now proceed to the third and final analytic reading of my case study findings. Theorists Ellinger, Watkins and Marsick explain that “(t)he final reading [of three readings] is done for interpretive and explanatory purposes – that is to integrate knowledge and insights gained from different kinds of data and data sources in light of the conceptual framework and theoretical purposes of the study.”<sup>469</sup>

Sharan Merriam notes that at the beginning of this interpretive and explanatory stage of research analysis, “data often seems to beg for continued analysis past the formation of categories.”<sup>470</sup> Knowing that the category does not tell the whole story the researcher tries to “link the conceptual elements – the categories – together in some meaningful way.”<sup>471</sup> Linking together the conceptual elements of the case study data from *Putting Out into the Deep* in a meaningful way involves highlighting the significant connections between the findings and the major themes explored in the

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<sup>469</sup> I have added the qualifying phrase “of three readings” to this quote from Andrea Ellinger, Karen Watkins, Victoria Marsick, “Case Study Research Methods” in *Fast Fundamentals*, 16-17.

<sup>470</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 188.

<sup>471</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 188.

literature survey in Chapter Two that are related to the central research questions of this thesis.

Sue Singer claims that “(t)he value of an empirical study lies in the richness with which salient themes emerge from the data, and the vividness of the challenge they issue.” There are a number of salient themes that emerged from the data of the case study. I have identified them in the conceptual categories constructed from the data findings. These themes, considered in dialogue with some of the major insights I explored in the review of the current literature in Chapter Two, reveal significant challenges for effective adult catechesis that can reach the hearts of people and empower them as mature Christian disciples. The dialogue between the themes that emerge from my case study research and the major themes explored in the current literature also point to areas for further study and research in the area of adult catechesis. I will now explore some of these central themes and challenges, and identify some key considerations for ongoing study and research that are suggested by this interpretative analysis.

### **Catechetical Processes that Empower Mature Christian Disciples and the Challenges of Secularity**

My research findings illustrate a lack of opportunities for effective adult catechesis in parish communities among the people who participated in the study. This suggests two possible scenarios to consider: that opportunities for adult catechesis are not being offered in parishes; that adult catechetical opportunities are being offered in parishes, but they are not answering the needs that people have for relevance and meaning. Surely, if there is a lack of effective adult catechesis in parish communities, then it may be very difficult to address the need that people have to find meaning and

relevance in their churches. My findings suggest that this problem may be confounded by a related shortage of adult catechists who are able to design and implement catechesis that addresses the significant life and faith questions of adults. This is an important issue for further investigation. Why may church communities be failing to either provide adult catechetical opportunities or offer adult catechesis that meets the needs of adults for relevance and meaning?

Themes I explored in Chapter Two in sociology of religion provide important points for consideration in this regard. Bibby cautions against the “psychological shackles”<sup>472</sup> of the secularization thesis which views secularization “... as linear and relentless, leading to the inevitable demise of religion....”<sup>473</sup> As he points out, “...it simply does not provide an accurate analysis of developments in Canada.”<sup>474</sup> Paul Bramadat’s research suggests that secularization has never been fully realized in Canada and the future, in this regard, remains unknown.<sup>475</sup> It is important to ask if some of those who are responsible for the Church’s catechizing ministry may hold the assumption that secularization is relentless and inevitable. A belief that flows from this assumption is that people are not interested in their spiritual lives or in connecting with churches. If

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<sup>472</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 7.

<sup>473</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 8.

<sup>474</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 8.

<sup>475</sup> Paul Bramadat, “Our Current Interregnum and the Decline of Secular Modernity” A lecture delivered at a plenary session of the *Ethnicity and Democratic Governance Conference* Montreal, Quebec 27 October 2007, 3. Accessed January, 2013, [http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/Bramadat\\_e.pdf](http://canada.metropolis.net/pdfs/Bramadat_e.pdf)

this assumption is true, then surely it is not worthwhile to offer adult catechesis and invest in the formation of adult catechists when no one is interested.

It is also important to consider Bibby's research findings, supported as well by the observations of English and Tisdell,<sup>476</sup> that a person's lack of engagement with church communities cannot be interpreted as a lack of concern for their spiritual life.<sup>477</sup> Rather, according to these researchers, people are searching for relevance and meaning they are not always finding in their church communities. It is important to ask if some of those of us who are responsible for adult catechesis may hold the false assumption that a lack of engagement with church communities indicates a lack of interest in the church community or in one's spiritual life.

Uncovering false assumptions about secularization and its implications in the Canadian context is essential for a number of reasons. First, a misreading of secularity may lead to discouragement, and a sense of hopelessness that it is not possible to engage in effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. Second, false assumptions about secularization may cause misinterpretations of the meaning behind some actions. For example, if a programme such as Bible Study is offered in a parish community and people do not attend, this lack of response may be misinterpreted as confirmation that people lack interest in their spiritual lives and in connecting with the Christian community. Or, perhaps a programme leader may witness the disengagement

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<sup>476</sup> Leona M. English and Elizabeth J. Tisdell, "Spirituality and Adult Education" in Carol E. Kasworm, Amy D. Rose, Jovita M. Ross-Gordon eds, *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2010), 285.

<sup>477</sup> Bibby, *A New Day*, 17.

of participants from an adult catechetical programme. The participants' disengagement may be misinterpreted as an indication that they are not interested in growing in their Catholic faith. Third, a misreading of secularity may cause us to miss the signs of hope and the real challenges that present themselves in engaging in adult catechesis that reaches hearts and empowers mature Christian disciples.

It is important to recall Bibby's insight that many who are not connecting weekly or frequently with the Roman Catholic community continue to self-identify as "Catholic" and have indicated a willingness to reconsider connecting more with the church community if it could meet their needs for meaning and relevance.<sup>478</sup> Bibby's research suggests that these people are frequently present for baptisms, funerals and marriages and for feast days such as Christmas and Easter, which provide many opportunities for the community to connect with them. I suggest that this constitutes a hopeful challenge to those of us who are responsible for adult catechesis to be creative about how we might connect with people in a way that meets their needs for meaning and relevance. What can we do on the many occasions that people connect with parish communities to engage them? These issues require careful study and creative critical conversation among those who share responsibility for adult catechesis. Attention to Bibby's research findings can be very helpful in this regard.

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<sup>478</sup> This is a consistent finding in Bibby's research over the years. See, for example, his statement in *Restless Gods* (Toronto, Ontario: Stoddart, 2002), 48: "...beyond the 20% or so Canadians who attend services every week or more, there are another 60%-plus who continue to identify with the country's dominant traditions."; see Bibby's table, 50, that demonstrates that 56% of Catholics who attend Sunday mass less than once a month indicate that they would consider becoming more involved in their faith community if they found it more worthwhile.

### **Integrating Orthodoxy and Orthopraxis**

Notwithstanding the fact that secularization is neither relentless nor inevitable, and that people are interested in their spiritual lives, “it is probably true that educating in ‘faith and life’ was never more demanding than in our time.”<sup>479</sup> Power and Van den Hengel highlight the formidable challenge presented by the fact that “(t)he language of faith finds no resonance within people’s own language and experience.”<sup>480</sup> They propose that the hermeneutical process reveals the need for catechesis to remain rooted simultaneously in both the “constitution of our faith”<sup>481</sup> that has come to us by revelation, and in “the fragility and fallibility of our human community and of our relationship to the earth.”<sup>482</sup> Engaging in adult catechesis that is deeply rooted in the experience of the person is essential for such a process. The findings of this case study demonstrate that it is curriculum that addresses the significant faith and life questions of participants, and processes that engage them as whole people, that promote effective adult catechesis.

The division between orthodoxy and orthopraxis explored in Chapter Two which Groome refers to as the triumph of the mind alone,<sup>483</sup> and that Martin and Martinez de Pison identify it as “...the exaggerated primacy given to knowledge attained through

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<sup>479</sup> M. Myrtle Power, “Religious Education and Vatican II, The Aftermath,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol.41, No.1, 5.

<sup>480</sup> M. Myrtle Power and John van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform* (2010), Vol. 41, No.1, 58.

<sup>481</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 75.

<sup>482</sup> Power and van den Hengel, “Catechesis in an Age of Secularity,” *Theoform*, 75-76.

<sup>483</sup> Groome, *Sharing Faith*, 27.

reason,<sup>484</sup> continues to be a major obstacle to catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. The case study findings of this thesis strongly support the theories of these authors that this limited epistemology is crippling for effective adult catechesis. Several participants in my study had experiences of catechesis where the goals were to memorize propositions and indicate one's intellectual assent to them. At best these experiences were limited and ineffective for empowering discipleship. At worst they were damaging because the activity employed fear and abusive power.

A practice of adult catechesis that holds together the rich treasury of our tradition in conversation with the significant questions and concerns of people's faith and life is needed to address the demands of our time. Furthermore, in keeping with the purpose of forming mature Christian disciples, effective adult catechesis must encourage the following in the learner: deepening intimacy with Jesus Christ; engagement in a life-long learning process; growing ability to engage diversity and hold the tensions of paradox; movement outwards to respond to the needs of the community and justice for others; and movement outward to respond to the need for the integrity of creation which is inextricably linked to the vulnerability of human life in this current time. These are marks of a mature Christian disciple.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Miriam K. Martin and Ramon Martinez de Pison, "From Knowledge to Wisdom: A New Challenge to the Educational Milieu with Implications for Religious Education," *Religious Education* (Spring 2005), Vol. 100 No. 2, 157.

<sup>485</sup> Sally McFague, makes this point clear in her explanation that "...we are in God and we are called to live as disciples of Jesus...We live, also (and at the same time) on the earth; hence we can get busy caring for our garden home..." Sally McFague, *A New Climate for Theology: God the World and Global Warming* (Augsburg, Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 80.

It seems evident that the need for a movement from “programmes to process,”<sup>486</sup> as Jane Regan suggests, is what is required to provide effective adult catechesis that can respond to the search for relevance and meaning. A complex process is required that can hold together orthodoxy and orthopraxis to generate comprehensive catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples able to fulfill the mission of the Church. It requires the integration of faith and life within the curriculum and a learning process that promotes the integration of faith and life within the individual learner.

It is important to consider that this movement from programmes to process may be a simple concept to grasp. Yet, the practice of it may not be simple at all. I suggest that those of us who are responsible for the Church’s ministry of adult catechesis understand the concept of moving away from programmes, but are struggling to know how to practice this.

Since examples of process-oriented adult catechesis that are constructed according to the significant faith and life questions of participants do not seem plentiful, it is also important to consider if those of us who are responsible for adult catechesis may need to be convinced that it is possible to achieve comprehensive adult catechesis by utilizing the life experience – the significant life and faith questions of the learners - as a central starting point.

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<sup>486</sup> This is one of four shifts that Regan suggests are necessary for an “Adult Church” to be realized. I explain these on pp. 78-80 of this thesis. It is a reference to Jane Regan, “Adult Faith Formation: Will it Catch On This Time?” *America*, Vol. 189, No.8, No. 4622, September 22, 2003

### **Orthodoxy, Orthopraxis and Collaborative Curriculum-Building**

The following is one of the most significant findings of this case study: the data demonstrate that it is possible to construct a model for collaborative curriculum-building in adult catechesis that honours *both* the need to create curriculum that engages in comprehensive adult catechesis that is firmly rooted in the Church's wisdom and teaching, while also addressing participants' expressed significant life and faith issues. I would suggest that we need to develop greater conviction that the treasury of the tradition is so rich, so deep and so significant that it contains within it a powerful, natural and fundamental connection to all of life's essential questions. If we are certain of this, then we can be confident that the life experiences of learners are not just an adequate foundation upon which to construct experiences of comprehensive adult catechesis. They provide the ideal framework in which to construct adult catechetical processes that can tell the whole story of our faith.

It is important to ask if the complexity of constructing processes that promote effective adult catechetical experiences is contributing to the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice. Building such collaborative educational models is not a simple task. It requires careful consideration of how to hold in creative tension the critical faith and life questions of adults with the commitment to comprehensive adult catechesis. This case study research presents one example of a model that was successful in this regard. It is important for the ongoing development of catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples to continue study and research in this area. Empirical studies

that assess the effectiveness of adult catechetical models in reaching their goals may be particularly useful for establishing the credibility of these models.

### **Adult Catechesis that Engages the Whole Person**

Groome, Martin and Martinez propose that conation, or wisdom, is the goal of adult catechesis. What is required is the engagement of “the whole ‘being’ of people, their heads, hearts and life-styles, and is to form, inform and transform their identity and agency in the world.”<sup>487</sup> This entails the movement from information to transformation that Jane Regan describes.<sup>488</sup>

The principles for the empowerment of mature Christian disciples that emerge from the case study research of this thesis suggest nine processes that empower mature Christian disciples.<sup>489</sup> Six of these processes relate directly to the engagement of the whole person in their learning. They emphasize the balance between content and process. This includes presentations and presenters that can engage learners with challenging new perspectives related to important faith and life questions. It involves processes and process facilitation that encourage good communication, critical thinking, and the opportunity to reflect on practical responses to new insights. The processes attend to the integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxis in the curriculum, in the learning

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<sup>487</sup> Thomas Groome, *Sharing Faith: A Comprehensive Approach to Religious Education and Pastoral Ministry* (San Francisco, California: Harper, 1991), 2.

<sup>488</sup> This is the second of four shifts that Regan suggests are necessary for an “Adult Church” to be realized. I explain these on pp. 78-79 of this thesis. It is a reference to <sup>488</sup> Jane Regan, “Adult Faith Formation: Will it Catch On This Time?” *America*, Vol. 189, No.8, No. 4622, September 22, 2003, 5.

<sup>489</sup> This refers to the first nine (of twelve) summary statements I was able to compose from the conceptual categories. I list the twelve summary statements on pp. 227-230 of this thesis.

process, and in the learner. One of the expressions of this is the inclusion of liturgical prayer as part of the learning process and reflecting on the relationship between the prayer and their life experiences. A hospitable learning environment, including the physical arrangement which attends to the needs of the learner, the presenter, and the learning process honours the participants and encourages communication.

The small group model was identified in the case study findings as a particularly effective way to deepen the learning experience. This supports Regan's position that "...the best process for adult faith formation is not lecture but conversation...Sustained critical conversation [that is] long enough to allow for a genuine interchange of experience, insights and commitments..."<sup>490</sup>

This case study findings support the view that effective adult catechesis facilitates the dialogue between life and faith by utilizing theological reflection as a fundamental dimension of the learning process. The learning community provides an essential location for this. Thomas Groome's integration of theological reflection in his method of *Shared Christian Praxis* is an example of the kind of adult catechetical methodology that best serves the engagement of the whole person. A conviction shared among all of the sources I surveyed across disciplines - in adult catechesis, adult education, adult development, adult faith development, and practical theology – is that transformative learning, and the critical thinking that is associated with it, are essential for the empowerment of mature adults. The principles of transformative learning lie at the foundation of all of these theories. English points to the way forward for effective

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<sup>490</sup> Jane Regan, "Adult Faith Formation: Will It Catch On This Time?" 5.

adult catechesis in her suggestion that, “(t)he Church community might do well to look at what critical thinking, self-directed and transformative learning have to offer.”<sup>491</sup>

Effective adult catechesis is dependent upon the successful integration of processes that promote maturity and authentic discipleship. The data of this case study support the central role that critical, independent thinking plays in supporting maturity, the dignity of the learner and an authentic response of faithful discipleship. The words of one of the interview participants quoted in the study expresses this so well: “We’ve always been told what to think. But during this process we were asked what we thought. So it was a very different experience....There was room there for the person....You were able to be really engaged.”

### **A Need for Ongoing Study of the Challenges**

There are a number of significant challenges which arise in relation to the way forward for adult catechesis. Power and van den Hengel have identified the difficulty of finding meaningful language for faith in the current culture. Similarly, in her study of *Shared Christian Praxis*, Sue Singer describes the “waning power of metanarrative”<sup>492</sup> as a significant problem. While Singer affirms the merits of *Shared Christian Praxis* she identifies the challenge. As she explains:

Shared Christian Praxis is a classic pedagogical approach for good reason: it works. But in the context of cultural postmodernity, even with enhancements

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<sup>491</sup> Leona M. English, “Education of the Laity,” *Theoform*, 148.

<sup>492</sup> Sue Singer, “*We Break This Bread:*” *Christian Practices, Critical Reflection, and the Construction of Adult Religious Identity*, 3.

designed to respond specifically to postmodern challenges, it is harder to make it work.<sup>493</sup>

Singer identifies what she believes to be at the heart of this challenge:

Groome's use of transformative pedagogy is certainly directed towards personal religious transformation, but within a context that assumes coherent religious traditions and well-formed practitioners, both of which are singularly lacking in postmodern culture.

Singer's critique points to the need to engage adults in catechetical processes designed for the integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxis in their lives that can help adults build their knowledge of tradition as well as develop the capacities for critical reflection. Both of these are essential for theological reflection.

I have already discussed the need to work with models for collaborative curriculum-building in adult catechesis that address the crucial life and faith questions of participants. Another essential step is to experiment with more processes designed to engage adults in critical reflection that promotes the growth of these abilities and supports the development of independent thinking. Combining the wisdom of transformative learning and critical pedagogy with the insights of Robert Kegan's research is one potential way to achieve this. Kegan identifies the fact that adults are only able to change their meaning-making structures with the assistance of transformative learning. Therefore, he suggests that the educational line of thought (transformative learning) and the psychological line of thought (especially constructive-developmental thought that deals with the natural evolution of our forms of meaning-

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<sup>493</sup> Singer, "We Break This Bread," 4.

making) need to be in close dialogue and collaboration.<sup>494</sup> This seems necessary for adult catechesis to find the way forward.

### **Supporting Mature Christian Disciples**

Kegan's research demonstrates that the complexification of adults' ways of knowing is facilitated by constructing bridges – mental constructs – that help adults transition from one order of consciousness to a more complex one. As Kegan claims, “A bridge must be well anchored on either side,”<sup>495</sup> so that the learner is secure and respected as they are, yet they have a solid, reliable means by which to move forward.<sup>496</sup> As I presented in Chapter Two, Cook-Greuter's research demonstrates that the largest percentage of the adult population is at Kegan's stage 3 of adult development.<sup>497</sup> This means that effective adult catechesis will be well served by giving our attention and energy to constructing theological reflection processes designed to create a bridge between Kegan's stages 3 and 4. The aim is to create stability for adults in the conformist stage while encouraging them to transition forward toward more self-authorization. This development empowers mature Christian disciples.

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<sup>494</sup> Robert Kegan, “What Form Transforms?” in Mezirow and Associates, *Learning As Transformation*, 52-53.

<sup>495</sup> Robert Kegan, *In Over Our Heads*, 37.

<sup>496</sup> Kegan's Chapters 3 and 8 provide a detailed explanation of the construction of these bridges and the educational considerations involved in *In Over our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life*.

<sup>497</sup> On pp. 99-100 of this thesis I present research from Susan Cook-Greuter, “Postautonomous Ego Development: A Study of Nature and Measurement” cited in Laske, *Measuring Hidden Dimensions*, vol. 1, 30.

Several of the small group interview participants in the case study highlighted movement from a conformist way of knowing toward more self-authorization as their most valued and significant experiences of *Putting Out into the Deep*. Being invited to move from a subject to object relationship with their faith marked significant growth as mature Christian disciples for them. They highly valued being invited to think for themselves. And they described as central to their experience a number of movements that indicate adult development: from fear of God and authority toward a desire to respond and cultivate a loving relationship with God; from a child's outlook, characterized by simple answers acquired through rote learning, toward deeper exploration and understanding of the Church's teachings; from a sense of discipleship defined by intellectual assent to certain statements of doctrine, toward discipleship characterized by integration of belief and practice. These insights express the significance of adult development for the empowerment of mature believers.

Patricia Cranton's insight seems particularly relevant in relation to the development of educational processes that support and encourage adult development:

One goal of adult education, and transformative learning in particular, is individuation, the development of the person as separate from the collective, which in turn allows for the person to join with others in a more authentic union.<sup>498</sup>

Cranton's perspective affirms Kegan's point regarding the unity between the educational and psychological lines. Cranton also indicates that a goal of transformative learning is the development of the capacity for a more authentic union with others. This capacity for

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<sup>498</sup> Patricia Cranton, "Individual differences and Transformative Learning," in Jack Mezirow and Associates, *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, 189.

a more authentic union with others is key to mature Christian discipleship. It supports the capacity for intimacy between the person and Jesus Christ which is central to mature discipleship. Fowler highlights the inextricable connection between the development of a person as a mature Christian disciple and the development of the person as a mature adult: growth in human maturity provides the capacity for the triadic relationship with God, others and the community to deepen and widen.<sup>499</sup> Fowler describes this as a path of conversion and transformation that... “empowers us to a relationship....It means making an attachment to the passion of Jesus the Christ – a loving, committed and ready-to-suffer passion for the in-breaking commonwealth of love and justice.”<sup>500</sup>

Fowler’s description of maturing discipleship bears close resemblance to Anthony Gittins’ understanding of the centripetal and centrifugal forces that define mature Christian discipleship.<sup>501</sup> Mike, a small group interview participant, described this dynamic at work in his experience of *Putting Out into the Deep*: “This was the beauty of the series – I took in new knowledge. Yet, once I was finished processing it I was compelled to act on what I had learned - or, at least, to try to implement it in my daily life.” Mary, another interview participant whom I quoted in Chapter Four, adeptly described her desire for mature discipleship and her own movement towards a fuller integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxis:

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<sup>499</sup> See chapter four, “Adulthood, Vocation and the Christian Story,” in James Fowler, *Becoming Adult Becoming Christian* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 62-86.

<sup>500</sup> James Fowler, *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian*, 115.

<sup>501</sup> Gittins uses this image for discipleship frequently in his work. See for example, Gittins, *Called to be Sent: Co-missioned as Disciples*, 140.

From early on I had always said that I didn't want to be a Catholic who was stuck at Grade 11. It was really important for me to be an adult Catholic...What this process did for me was to help me move from intellect, and integrate heart and spirit as well. I've learned a lot about discipleship in the sense that who I am in the world is the disciple I am. It's not two different options.

Given the essential role adult development, and in particular adult faith development, plays for the empowerment of mature Christian disciples, I think that this is a vital area of ongoing study and research in adult catechesis. The continued effort to reclaim the language of "catechesis" expresses an important dimension of this quest. It reflects the desire to clearly convey the fundamental role and place in the Christian community of adult catechesis, as well as to distinguish it from any association with indoctrination. As I suggested in Chapter Two, adopting the language of "catechetical education," as Groome recommends, may help to support this objective while also continuing to place catechesis firmly in the realm of education.

### **Reflections about the Choice of Methodology and Methods for this Research Study**

As I bring this portion of interpretative analysis to its conclusion, it is appropriate to engage in some reflection about my choice of research method and methodology for this research study. The nature of case study methodology that allowed "intensive description and analyses of a single unit or bounded system"<sup>502</sup> was invaluable for this study of *Putting Out into the Deep*. It permitted me to explore the many facets, phases, participants and processes involved in this adult catechetical series as a bounded or connected system. This methodology facilitates the construction of the full picture of a catechetical series such as *Putting Out into the Deep*. This full picture gave me the

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<sup>502</sup> Merriam, *Qualitative Research in Case Study Applications in Education*, 19.

opportunity to observe, explore and make connections among numerous dimensions of the adult catechetical series that I could not have achieved using any other method. I am able to say, in hindsight, that the use of this method allowed for significant observations and insights to ensue. I have no doubt that it was an excellent choice for this research study.

My decision to include some quantitative data with the qualitative data strengthened findings. As Tim Sensing describes, “(t)he multi-method approach is an important aspect of the issues of triangulation and validity.”<sup>503</sup> Gathering extensive descriptive data, as well as conducting a survey that collected both qualitative and quantitative and conducting three semi-structured interviews generated a very large volume of data. The task of data gathering, coding, and analysis was extensive. The volume also made the organization and presentation of the data a difficult task.

It can be argued that a solid case study could have been constructed using any one of these approaches. However, the data collected using all of these instruments provided significant findings that led to valuable insights. They corroborated findings and generated a wide and meaningful view of *Putting Out into the Deep*. Exploring all of the data together presented me with insights I would not have been able to access otherwise. For example, survey data, and semi-structured interview data presented concern that pastoral leaders were not supportive enough of the adult catechetical process. I had already noted these data findings when I discovered the same concern

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<sup>503</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach*, 61.

expressed in archived documents that were several years old. My perception of the gravity and depth of this concern widened with this discovery.

Together the data presented a more comprehensive view. In a similar way, a more comprehensive view afforded by all of the data together allowed me to more fully appreciate the essential leadership roles played by the Archbishop who initiated the process, and by the Advisory Committee that worked so closely with me throughout the entire process. This comprehensive view revealed the consistency in vision, commitment and leadership for the adult catechetical series that I would not have otherwise been able to clearly recognize.

The survey provided an opportunity for data to be gathered anonymously from participants in *Putting Out into the Deep*. This was advantageous given that I had established a bond of trust and affection with many of the participants. I was also able to gather significant qualitative data from the survey. In hindsight I realize that the survey could have been crafted as a far more effective quantitative instrument if I had surveyed all 110 eligible participants and also sorted out some objective variables to test regarding mature Christian discipleship. It is a limit to this study that I did not do so. This is important insight for my future research in this area.

The semi-structured interviews allowed me to deeply probe the experience of participants in an atmosphere of trust and transparency. Using the constant comparative method for analysis of the data revealed many themes and patterns among the data that strengthened the findings. While the findings represent those of simply one Case study, they reveal results that corroborate the observations and assertions of many theorists in

the field of catechetical education. Further empirical research may help to make theories more credible and compelling.

### **Concluding Remarks**

I began this chapter with the construction of conceptual categories based upon a constant comparative analysis of the data findings from the case study of *Putting Out into the Deep*. I then identified twelve processes related to effective adult catechesis that emerged from the conceptual categories of the case study data. Nine of these are processes that empower mature Christian disciples, as I have defined the term. Three of them are obstacles to effective adult catechesis. These three obstacles may contribute to the disconnect between the vision in the Church's documents and our practice. I have discussed some of the significant connections between my data findings and the insights from the literature surveyed in Chapter Two. From this exploration I have identified a number of key insights and suggested some significant areas for ongoing study and research. I also reflected on my choice of method and methodology for this research study. I will conclude the thesis with an interpretive analysis of my research study findings. I will also suggest some areas for further study and research, and reflect on insights for renewed praxis in adult catechesis that emerge from this study.

## CONCLUSION

### RECLAIMING THE HEART OF ADULT CATECHESIS: IMPLICATIONS FOR RENEWED PRACTICE

The ultimate goal of practical theology is to lead to more faithful praxis that contributes to God's household or God's reign in the places of human activity and relationships.<sup>504</sup> This is also the ultimate goal of Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis*. Groome promotes this method of theological reflection as an approach to effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples, and also as an approach to living as a mature Christian disciple. The goal of Christian life for a mature Christian disciple is transformed praxis that brings about the reign of God.<sup>505</sup>

Don Browning points out that, "(t)ransformation comes from the to-and-fro play between our questions thickly understood, and the manifestation of truth contained in the classic texts."<sup>506</sup> I will engage the Church's vision for adult catechesis in the normative texts in dialogue with the case study data as well with the insights from interpretative analysis that I began in the previous chapter. The question which Browning places at the centre of historical theology is critical to this examination: "What do the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis when they are

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<sup>504</sup> See Elaine Graham's description of the relationship between "practical theology" and "public theology" in *Words Made Flesh: Writings in Pastoral and Practical Theology* (Norwich, England: SCM Press, 2009), xiv.

<sup>505</sup> Groome explores *Shared Christian Praxis* as an approach to all ministerial practice oriented toward transformed praxis in *Sharing Faith*, 295-417.

<sup>506</sup> Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 216.

confronted as honestly as possible?”<sup>507</sup> The objective of this concluding chapter is to discover the insights for transformed praxis in adult catechesis that emerge from this thesis. This chapter will continue to highlight the central findings from my study and suggest areas for ongoing research.

### **A Brief Summary of the Church’s Vision of Adult Catechesis from Chapter One**

Chapter One of this thesis presented the Church’s vision of adult catechesis that began on the road to Emmaus and continued in the life of the early Church. It was a practice that “met people on the road,” and brought together faith and life in a transformative experience that empowered mature Christian disciples for the mission of the Church. It engaged the heart in sense that *heart* is biblically defined. The vibrant spirit of *ressourcement* that pervaded the Second Vatican Council reunited this ancient practice with the current vision and commitment for adult catechesis. The desire was to foster the re-integration of orthodoxy and orthopraxis – faith and life – that had become separated, especially since the Age of Enlightenment. The documents regarding adult catechesis that have been generated since the Council have reclaimed the purpose of adult catechesis: to empower mature Christian disciples capable of realizing the mission of the Church, living the fullness of their baptismal vocation. These current documents identify a necessary partnership with education and human science for the expertise needed to design effective adult catechesis. The documents recognize catechesis as a central and indispensable ministry of the Church. The documents also identify the right

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<sup>507</sup> Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*, 49.

of adults to receive catechesis that empowers them for their identity and role as mature disciples. Sociological analysis in Chapter One established that there is a disconnect between the Church's vision and practice of adult catechesis.

### **The *GDC* as the Way Forward for Adult Catechesis**

I have mentioned Groome's claim regarding the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice of adult catechesis that "it is not the 'mind' of the Church that now falls short on catechetical education but its practice."<sup>508</sup> Groome describes the *GDC* as the "present mind of the Church"<sup>509</sup> since it is the most recent normative universal text, and it includes the Church's accumulated wisdom and insight regarding catechesis. Power and van den Hengel, and Regan all point to the *GDC* as a sign of hope for the future of adult catechesis.

My research findings hold much in common with the fifteen principles for effective catechesis that Groome derives from the *GDC*, and the practices he advocates for realizing them.<sup>510</sup> The twelve summary statements regarding adult catechesis<sup>511</sup> that I

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<sup>508</sup> Groome, "The "Mind of the Church"," *Theoform* , 24.

<sup>509</sup> Groome, "The 'Mind of the Church'," *Theoform*, 11.

<sup>510</sup> See Groome, "'The Mind of the Church'," 15-24. Groome presents fifteen guiding principles he derived from the *GDC* to define the Church's vision of catechesis. They affirm discipleship as the purpose of catechesis, and call for education that informs, forms and transforms. The principles recommend education in social responsibility for the fullness of life for all, and they call for education that engages the whole person, and that is comprehensive in teaching the whole story and vision of Christian faith in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The principles advocate dynamic education that is intended to reach the learner, that engages people in conversation and reflection that reaches their hearts. The principles call for education that engages people's experiences and reflections in teaching scripture and tradition, and that integrates faith and life into living Christian faith and life. The principles recognize "both seeds and weeds for the Gospel" in every religious context and invite religious educators to build on what is good. The principles suggest education that moves from being only child-centered to include all, and recommend that Christian communities receive all the resources needed for effective catechesis,

created from the conceptual category construction from my research data contain many of the same central insights Groome highlights in these fifteen principles. At the most fundamental level, we share the conviction that mature Christian discipleship must be strongly established and maintained as the vision and goal for adult catechesis. Groome concludes that “(n)ow we simply need to make the necessary investments of people, resources and imagination to implement its vision.”<sup>512</sup> I fully support Groome’s assessment of the wisdom of the *GDC* and our need to implement the vision and practice it advocates. However, I contend that doing so is not simple.

### **Identifying Obstacles and Challenges to Effective Adult Catechesis**

The disconnect between the vision of adult catechesis in the Church’s documents and the current practice of adult catechesis suggests that the movements that Jane Regan identifies as essential for effective adult catechesis - from programmes to process, from children to adults, from information to formation and from membership to mission – are not easy to achieve.<sup>513</sup> Leona English points to the disturbing reality that, for the most part, the Church has not embraced the expertise of adult education.<sup>514</sup> Furthermore, as

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including catechists who are thoroughly prepared for their role. See also Groome, “‘The Mind of the Church’,” 24-29 where Groome proposes 10 practices for implementing the principles.

<sup>511</sup> These statements are listed on pp. 227-230 of this thesis.

<sup>512</sup> Groome, “The ‘Mind of the Church’,” *Theoform*, 29.

<sup>513</sup> Jane Regan, “Adult Faith Formation: Will It Catch On This Time?” *America*, Vol. 189, No.8, No. 4622, September 22, 2003, 5.

<sup>514</sup> Leona M. English, “Education of the Laity: A Church Concern,” *Theoform*, 145.

the research presented by Lorraine Ste-Marie which I explored in Chapter Two<sup>515</sup> suggests, our current culture, and in particular institutions, offer very little social support to adults to develop autonomy and the self-authorization that comes with it. Instead, adults are encouraged to stay at a stage 3 level of development which encourages dependency on authority for self identity. “In some cases, there is much pressure put upon people to stay here (at stage 3) in an effort to maintain the status quo.”<sup>516</sup>

The case study data corroborate these points by describing catechetical experiences of adults that demonstrate characteristics of indoctrination, the lack of availability of adult catechesis in the parish communities, and the disengagement of support for effective adult catechesis by many parish pastoral leaders. I am not convinced that we will be able to successfully address the disconnect between our vision and practice if we continue to promote the vision and principles needed to achieve it, but do not attempt to address the underlying obstacles that are preventing the Church from reclaiming the heart of adult catechesis and empowering mature Christian disciples.

The perspectives expressed during the semi-structured interviews by Reverend Francis, who suggested that some pastoral leaders may be concerned that effective adult catechetical processes result in people who want to take over the parish, and by Richmond, who expressed his concern that there may a preference for a “passive laity” on the part of some pastoral leaders, raise important concerns. A significant contradiction is suggested by their perspectives that exemplifies the disconnect between

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<sup>515</sup> See this exploration on pp. 99-100 of this thesis.

<sup>516</sup> Lorraine Ste-Marie, “Adult Development and Theological Field Education,” 213. I added the qualifier “stage 3” in brackets.

the Church's vision of adult catechesis expressed in the documents and the practice of it: there is a concrete expression of support on the part of pastoral leaders, but the practical action does not follow.

Stephen Brookfield suggests that issues of hegemony must always be addressed as part of the agenda of transformative learning.<sup>517</sup> In this regard, it is important to ask how the tendency of institutions to discourage adult development in order to maintain the status quo may be impeding efforts to empower mature Christian disciples. Given John P. Boyle's claim that "it is clear that the expected response to the teaching of the magisterium is assent of the mind and will"<sup>518</sup> it seems apparent that those of us who are responsible for adult catechesis must address this. If there is a competing agenda between an institutional tendency to maintain the status quo and the requirement of adults to be engaged in transformative learning that encourages adult development marked by greater independence and self authorization, it is a serious dilemma that needs to be honestly explored.

Patricia Cranton's insight reveals an irony in this dilemma that may be helpful to highlight and study. As she explains, one goal of transformative learning is the individuation from the collective that empowers the person for more authentic relationships with others.<sup>519</sup> It is ironic that in becoming separate from the collective - in

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<sup>517</sup> Stephen Brookfield, "Transformative Learning as Ideology Critique" in Jack Mezirow and Associates, 143.

<sup>518</sup> John P. Boyle, "The Teaching Office of the Church" in *The Gift of the Church: A Textbook Ecclesiology in Honor of Patrick Granfield, O.S.B.*, Peter Phan, ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2000), 366.

<sup>519</sup> Cranton, "Individual differences and Transformative Learning," in Jack Mezirow and Associates, 189.

this case the Church community - the person becomes capable of belonging more deeply. Thus, the institutional desire to maintain the status quo by discouraging adults to move toward greater self-authorization is, in fact, self-defeating. It undermines the ability of the person to engage in more authentic relationships that, ultimately, would increase the quality of the relationships that constitute the Christian community. The capacity to engage in more authentic relationship with others supports and strengthens mature Christian discipleship. Since it is mature Christian disciples who have the capacity to engage in the mission of the Church, a failure to encourage adult development toward greater maturity undermines the quality of the Church's community life and its mission. Renewed praxis requires that processes of transformative learning be embraced to support and encourage the formation of mature Christian disciples. Perhaps this is the context in which the shift from membership to mission that Regan identifies as essential for effective adult catechesis<sup>520</sup> most needs to be explored.

How can those of us who are responsible for the Church's catechetical ministry identify and address this contradiction in a respectful manner that encourages new insight and forward movement for this ministry of the Church? Why is the Church, for the most part, not embracing the much needed expertise of adult education? What is sustaining the attitudes and practices that keep adults at a stage 3 level of development that prevents the autonomy essential for mature discipleship? Renewed praxis in adult catechesis depends upon our ability to effectively address these pressing issues.

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<sup>520</sup> I explored this perspective of Jane Regan on p. 79 of this thesis.

My case study research raises another important insight to be considered. Those responsible for adult catechesis may be overwhelmed by the complexities of this post-modern culture, the challenges of secularity, and the complex tasks it generates for adult catechesis. Efforts may appear futile or too difficult to undertake. How might these concerns be effectively identified and addressed so that those of us who are responsible for the Church's catechizing ministry can be faithful to the Church's vision and commitment? This is a significant concern that requires ongoing study and research.

One of the participants in the case study research, in response to his perceived lack of support on the part of pastoral leaders for *Putting Out into the Deep* asserted, "Our formation as disciples is not optional." This is a very important point of consideration that places the need to address the challenges in its proper perspective. The central world view I brought to this thesis is one that sees a need for reform and holds a conviction that research should contain an action function toward that reform. As this thesis has demonstrated, the Church's documents establish adult catechesis as a central ministry of the Church, and articulate the right of adults to receive catechesis that empowers them as mature Christian disciples able to fulfill the mission of the Church. It is a responsibility and a duty. If pastoral leaders are not supporting this primary ministry and mission of the Church this needs to be recognized, studied and addressed. If there is a competing agenda between an institutional tendency to maintain the status quo and the requirement of adults to be engaged in transformative learning that encourages adult development marked by greater independence and self authorization, this needs to be honestly explored.

If those of us who are responsible for this ministry are overwhelmed and discouraged by the challenges of our time, this requires identification and response. If there are false assumptions about secularity and the value people attribute to their spiritual lives that are diminishing our efforts for effective adult catechesis this needs to be recognized and addressed. Since a disconnect persists between the vision presented in the Church's documents and our practice of adult catechesis, it is very important that those of us who are responsible for this ministry continue to search for ways to confront it. This is crucial, not optional.

### **The Need for Critical Reflection to Renew Praxis**

My research findings demonstrate both processes that empower mature Christian disciples, and potential obstacles that may be contributing to the disconnect between the vision in the Church's document and our practice of adult catechesis. One of the central challenges facing those of us who are responsible for adult catechesis is to discover and promote strategies that encourage bishops, people with the expertise needed for this ministry, and others who are responsible for this ministry, to engage in study and dialogue that identifies and explores both the sources of empowerment for effective adult catechesis and the obstacles that may be impeding it.

A strong ongoing collaboration with those who have the expertise to inform the ministry of adult catechesis continues to be essential. Although the *GDC* emphasizes the much needed partnership between adult catechesis and adult education and human sciences, the greatest passion for this realization seems to be expressed in its

predecessor, the *General Catechetical Directory* of 1971.<sup>521</sup> The *General Catechetical Directory* explicitly identified the essential place of empirical research to help identify needs, evaluate effective catechesis and to propose helpful strategies. It acknowledged the indispensable role for national and international institutions that could provide the expertise for such research, and help develop formation programmes for competent catechists. It acknowledged that the vocation of catechist needed to include an ability to analyse current cultural realities and human problems, so as to be truly able to accompany people in the significant challenges and questions of their faith and life.<sup>522</sup> Perhaps an attempt to rekindle the vibrant spirit of *ressourcement* that marked this document, and the desire to join the wisdom of the ancient and the new, could be a source of current renewal.

An important focus of research may be to study processes for critical reflection and theological reflection that can be utilized by those who are responsible for the ministry of adult catechesis. Such processes may help those who are responsible to reconnect with the fundamental vision of adult catechesis, to develop greater understanding of the processes that empower mature Christian disciples, and to explore and address the obstacles that impede this ministry. This may help to generate insight, encourage accountability, and bring forth creative new responses.

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<sup>521</sup> As the first catechetical document following the Second Vatican Council, published in 1971, this document was keenly aware of the dependence on education and human science for the creation of effective catechesis. The following quote from the document reflects this: “Because of the rapid development in present-day culture, the catechetical movement will in no way be able to advance without scientific study.” *General Catechetical Directory, 1971, # 131.*

<sup>522</sup> *General Catechetical Directory, #’s 9, 27, 40-41, 46, 74, 97-105, 112, 120-123, 130-131.*

### **The Need for Ongoing Empirical Research**

Finally, the need to construct a solid body of empirical research in Canada is important for reaching all of these goals. Conducting empirical studies that can scientifically demonstrate the effectiveness of the principles and practices embodied in the *GDC* for empowering mature Christian disciples would significantly strengthen the efforts for adult catechesis. Furthermore, such research can help to discover new principles and practices that can support effective adult catechesis. In Chapter Two I referred to some of the research being done in Jewish studies that demonstrates the effectiveness of adult education methodology for helping to empower people in their Jewish faith. These studies indicate that it is engaging the hearts of people that is essential for whole learning. This is helpful insight that corroborates many of the theories about effective adult catechesis. Continuing to build a solid research base in Canada can expand and enrich our insight and knowledge, and provide much-needed scientific support for our educational theories.

It seems that a dearth in research is not unique to Canada. Freidrich Schweitzer, professor of religious education/practical theology in Germany, has made the similar observation that, "...different methods have their place in religious education, yet there is a clear need for doing more empirical research."<sup>523</sup> Similarly, Kevin Lawson, professor of Christian education at Biola University, California describes how, "(i)t is tempting to respond to the question of what research is needed in religious education by saying,

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<sup>523</sup> Friedrich Schweitzer, "Research in Religious Education: Perspectives for the Future in Religious Education," *Religious Education* (Spring 2006), Vol. 101 No. 2, 168.

“Everything!”<sup>524</sup> Lawson indicates that research in religious education is needed in all four areas: *Theological research* (Scripture and Tradition), *Historical research* (Tradition), *Philosophical/Conceptual research* (Reason), and *Empirical research* (Experience).<sup>525</sup> In relation to empirical research Lawson explains that, “We are in need of more qualitative research to develop theories worthy of testing. Much can be learned from careful and rigorous case studies, phenomenological studies, and ethnographic research.”<sup>526</sup>

The observations of these German and American scholars reflect the same need for further qualitative research into adult catechetical education in the Canadian context. My case study research can make a contribution to this much-needed research-base in Canada to support effective adult catechesis. Ongoing research in this field can help to increase support for the efforts to reclaim the heart of adult catechesis, and encourage a renewed praxis that empowers mature Christian disciples.

### **Final Remarks**

I began this Conclusion with a continuation of the interpretative analysis of the case study data, this time by engaging the Church’s normative texts that I presented in Chapter One with all of the data and analysis I have conducted. It was a goal of this conclusion to identify insights for renewed praxis in adult catechesis that emerge from this thesis. Regarding transformed praxis I suggest that the vision and commitment in

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<sup>524</sup> Kevin Lawson, “The Research We Need in Religious Education: Four Facets,” *Religious Education* (Spring, 2006), Vol. 101 No. 2, 157.

<sup>525</sup> Lawson, “The Research We Need,” 157.

<sup>526</sup> Lawson, “The Research We Need,” 161.

the normative documents compel those responsible for adult catechesis to engage in critical reflection that identifies processes that empower mature Christian disciples, and that grapples with the reasons for the disconnect between our vision and practice.

My study suggests that there are processes for effective adult catechesis that can be identified and practiced. My research also points to some serious underlying issues that may be contributing to the disconnect between the Church's vision and practice. Both the processes of effective adult catechesis and obstacles that impede it need to be recognized and studied so that a faithful practice of effective adult catechesis may be realized. It is a duty and obligation to address this serious matter.

It remains the challenge of those of us who are engaging in study and research to discover respectful and helpful strategies to assist progress in empowering mature Christian disciples. I suggest that one area for ongoing study involves constructing processes for critical and theological reflection that may help those responsible for the Church's ministry of catechesis to reconnect with the Church's vision, to develop greater understanding about the processes that empower mature Christian disciples and the potential obstacles to effective adult catechesis, and to be accountable for providing effective adult catechesis. It is quite possible that many of those who are responsible for this ministry may feel discouraged and overwhelmed by the prospect of constructing effective adult catechesis that can address the many complexities of our current context. In this present time, when the *new evangelization*<sup>527</sup> is the universal project shaping the

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<sup>527</sup> In his letter introducing the Year of Faith, 2012-2013, Pope Benedict XVI expresses the essence of this new evangelization, "Ever since the start of my ministry as Successor of Peter, I have spoken of the need to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ." Pope Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei* (Vatican City: Vatican Press) October, 2011, #2.

pastoral orientations of the Church it could not be more timely or necessary to attend to the ministry of adult catechesis. A renewed vision, commitment and practice of this ministry are necessary if we hope to reach the goals of the new evangelization: that people will be engaged in an encounter with Christ that revitalizes and empowers them. It is essential that we discover - for this time and place - the processes we need to meet the disciples on the road and to facilitate an encounter with the person of Jesus that can engage hearts and transform lives. It is this encounter which empowers mature disciples to reach out to others, and to all of creation in a mission of justice, peace and joy.<sup>528</sup>

It is vital that ongoing research continues that can propose models for effective adult catechesis that empowers mature Christian disciples. It is also important for ongoing research to demonstrate the effectiveness of these models with empirical study. It is my sincere hope that this Doctor of Ministry Thesis will make a meaningful contribution to the establishment of a solid, comprehensive body of research in this field in Canada.

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<sup>528</sup> A reference to NRSV, Romans 14:17.

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## Appendix 1

UNIVERSITÉ SAINT-PAUL

SERVICE DE LA RECHERCHE  
ET SERVICES INTERNATIONAUX

SAINT PAUL UNIVERS

RESEARCH SERVICES  
AND INTERNATIONAL SERVICE223 MAIN OTTAWA ON CANADA K1S 1C4  
TEL: 613-236-1393 FAX: 613-782-3001

Friday, May 29, 2009

Mrs. Carol Kuzmochka  
Faculty of Theology  
Saint Paul UniversityINTRA**Subject: Reclaiming the heart of adult catechesis: Praxis that empowers mature Christian disciples**

Dear Mrs. Kuzmochka,

Thank you for providing the amendments in responding to the above application. After the Research Ethics Board had reviewed your revision, I am pleased to inform you that your research project application has been accepted.

On behalf of the president and the committee members, I wish you a great success for your research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ming Zhang'.

Ming Zhang  
Secretary, Research Ethics Boardc.c. Miriam Martin  
John A. Jillions  
Lorraine Ste-Marie

## APPENDIX 2

DIX 8

Appendix B

ARCHDIOCESE OF OTTAWA

rvice

Carol Kuzmochka has permission to conduct her Doctor of Ministry research in the Archdiocese of Ottawa by engaging participants in the Adult faith Development Series, "Putting Out Into the Deep" in responses to surveys/questionnaires and in interviews about their experience.

JOSEPH MULDOON   
 Rev. Joseph Muldoon, Episcopal Vicar,

MARCH 2, 2009

English Sector, Archdiocese of Ottawa

date

## APPENDIX 3

UNIVERSITÉ SAINT-PAUL



SAINT PAUL UNIVERSITY

223 MAIN OTTAWA ON CANADA K1S 1C4  
 TEL: (613) 236-1393 FAX: (613) 782-3005

To: Participants in the Adult Faith Development series: "Putting Out Into the Deep!"

From: Carol Kuzmochka, Doctor of Ministry Student, Saint Paul University, Ottawa

Date: June 1, 2009

Re: An Invitation to complete a research survey

---

Dear Participant in the Adult Faith development series of the Archdiocese of Ottawa,

I am engaged in a research project for my Doctor of Ministry program at Saint Paul University which involves a study of the adult faith development series, "Putting Out Into the Deep!" I have the explicit permission of Rev. Joseph Muldoon, Episcopal vicar of the English sector of the Archdiocese of Ottawa, to engage in this research. I also have the approval of the "Ethics Board" of Saint Paul University to engage in this research project.

My objective is to assess how effective this adult faith development series is as an adult catechetical process at the service of mature Christian discipleship. The enclosed survey will allow you to offer feedback to a variety of questions that will help with this assessment.

If you choose to respond, please return the completed survey to me in the self-addressed return envelope provided by June 20<sup>th</sup> 2009. No respondents will be identified. Please do not include a return address on the return envelope or provide a signature on the survey. Your feedback will become part of a "pool" of responses. Honest feedback is definitely what I need for good research!

You are probably aware that I was the person responsible for the design and implementation of this adult faith development series throughout its first full three-year cycle (2002-2006), and for the first two of three-years of the second cycle(2006-2008) which is currently drawing to completion. The focus of my research is the Adult Faith Development series during the years for which I was responsible for it. Therefore, if you participated in the third year of the second cycle (2008-09) it is important that you exclude your experience of this third year from your responses. You will see that there is a space provided at the end of the survey if you want to comment on any noteworthy differences, in this 2008-09 year, from the first two years of this 3-year cycle.

Of course, you are completely free to either accept or decline this request to complete and return the enclosed survey. If you do choose to respond, I would like you to know how gratefully your responses will be received, and how helpful it will be to me for the completion of this doctoral research project.

With blessings, and much gratitude for your kind consideration of this request,

Carol Kuzmochka

Encl.: research survey; self-addressed, return envelope with postage included

## APPENDIX 4

For the D-Min project of Carol Kuzmochka

### **Informed Consent Form**

I have agreed to participate in a group interview for the D-Min research project of Carol Kuzmochka.

I understand that participation is strictly voluntary. I am free to withdraw from participation at any time, before or during the interview, and to refuse to answer questions without prejudice.

I understand that anonymity is not guaranteed since I will know other people in group interviews and they will know me. However, I agree to respect the confidentiality of the discussion during these interviews and the anonymity of all of the participants.

My anonymity will be assured in all published research data and analysis since my name will not be associated with the data. I also understand that the interview will be audio-recorded for the sole purpose of accurate data analysis and will be kept strictly confidential and stored in a secure location.

---

Name

---

date

## APPENDIX 5

**SURVEY**

page

1 of 4

**Putting Out Into the Deep**

**1. There were two 3-year cycles of "Putting Out Into the Deep" offered over a 6-year period. Each cycle consisted of 24 sessions. Please indicate which 3-year cycle(s) and approximately how many sessions you attended by checking the appropriate boxes below:**

- I participated in the first cycle of sessions between 2003-2006
- I participated in the second cycle of sessions between 2006-2009
- I attended 1-8 sessions
- I attended 9-16 sessions
- I attended 17-24 sessions
- I attended more than 24 (I've participated in both of the 3-year cycles)
- I participated for a certificate in Adult faith Development

**2. Did you participate in a small group that met in between sessions?**

- Yes
- No

**3. If your answer to Question 2. Was "Yes" please choose the answer below that best describes your experience?  
My involvement in a small group was...**

- not an important aspect of my experience in this adult faith development series;
- a slightly important aspect of my experience in this adult faith development series;
- an important aspect of my experience in this adult faith development series;
- a very important aspect of my experience in this adult faith development series

Please explain your response:

---

SURVEY

page 2

of 4

**Putting Out Into the Deep!**

4. Please consider the following statements and choose the best response below:

- A) This experience of adult faith development engaged me as a whole person: mind, heart, spirit
  - B) This experience of adult faith development engaged my mind more than my heart or spirit
  - C) This experience of adult faith development engaged my heart more than my mind or spirit
  - D) This experience of adult faith development engaged my spirit more than my mind or heart
- 

- A) best describes my experience
- B) best describes my experience
- C) best describes my experience
- D) best describes my experience
- None of these statements above describes my experience

Please offer an explanation for your answer:

5. For the purpose of this survey, a mature Christian disciple is defined as follows: A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus concretely and actively in the choices and actions of his or her life, who is engaged in the life of the faith community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.

How effective do you rate this adult faith development series in supporting and inviting you to grow as a mature Christian disciple?

- not effective
- somewhat effective
- effective
- very effective

Please offer an explanation of your response:

**SURVEY**

Page 3

of 4

**Putting Out Into the Deep!**

**6. Please check off only the boxes next to all of the statements to follow that describe your experience of this adult faith development series. Please check off only as few or as many that apply to your experience:**

- It was an experience of growing as a mature Christian disciple (see definition above).
- I have grown very little or not at all as a mature Christian disciple as a result of my involvement.
- It has helped me understand my vocation as a baptized person better.
- The sessions challenged me to act on what I had learned in concrete ways.
- I was invited to engage in interaction and conversation during the sessions.
- There were not always times for interaction since the views of the presenters were always the most important focus.
- My views were not important during the sessions.
- It was an experience of being instructed rather than formed as a Christian disciple.
- These sessions focused on indoctrination.
- The approach was mostly collaborative and interactive.
- The approach was mostly didactic.
- The sessions were more focused on giving me information than on engaging me as a whole person.
- It was an experience of Christian Community.
- It challenged me to grow in faith.
- It did not challenge me to grow in faith.
- This experience has encouraged me to want to learn and grow more.
- It has inspired me to take more responsibility for living my baptismal vocation.
- I found the approach respectful of and inclusive of me as an adult Christian disciple.
- The topics were relevant and helpful to my life.
- The topics were not meaningful for me.
- My participation has not strengthened my identity as a Catholic believer.
- I have a better understanding of myself as a Catholic in the world today.

Please feel free to offer any explanations or comments about your responses in the space provided below:

SURVEY

Page 4 of 4

## Putting Out Into the Deep!

**7. What are five words you would choose to best describe your experience of this adult faith formation series?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**8. a) Are there any other comments you would like to make about your experience of this adult faith development series?**

**b) If you participated in all three years of the second cycle (2006-7, 2007-8, 2008-9) are there any noteworthy differences in your experience of the first two years that you may wish to mention?**

**please note: you are welcome to attach another page if you need more space for your comments**

Thank you so much for your valuable feedback!

To be returned in the self-addressed postage-paid envelope included with your survey.

to:  
Carol Kuzmochka  
Saint Paul University  
223 Main Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1S 1C4

By June 20, 2009 please

*It is important for the validity of this research information that you remain anonymous. Please do not include any return address or any other information that may identify you. Thank you.*

## Appendix 6

D.Min Research Project – Carol Kuzmochka

### **A semi-structured Interview with 2 groups of Participants/Certificate Participants in “Putting Out Into the Deep”**

I will interview 12 people, participants and certificate participants, who attended at least 10 sessions of this adult faith development series. I will also advise them that I am available to meet individually with anyone who may wish to offer further feedback to me privately.

I will meet with these people in 2 groups of five/six in my office at Saint Paul University in late May or early June, 2009 according to availability. I will propose the following semi-structured interview questions and invite their responses. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes.

A colleague who serves on the Advisory Committee for “Adult Faith Development” for the Archdiocese of Ottawa will join the interviews as well. Her collaboration will help me to be aware of biases and misinterpretations of data.

**The interview will begin with:**

**a thank you to all for their participation;**

**All will be asked to respect the confidentiality of the interview by not discussing it with others;**

**all will be reminded that they are always free to decline to respond to any questions, they may leave at any time, they are invited to respond to questions with information they are comfortable disclosing;**

**It will be explained that the interview will be audio-recorded for purposes of accuracy in data collection. This recording is confidential and will be kept secure. Feedback will only be presented as “pooled data” without revealing participants’ identity; quotes may be used but without identifiers of identity.**

For the purpose of our discussion a mature Christian disciple may be defined as follows (each participant will have a printed copy of this to view throughout the interview):

***A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the faith community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.***

*The following questions will be explored:*

1. Has your experience in this Adult Faith Development Series helped you to grow as a mature Christian disciple? If “yes” in what ways?

(I will invite them to respond to each dimension of the definition above)

2. Have you had other experiences of faith education or formation? If yes, how do they compare (what is the same/what is different) to your experience of “Putting Out into the Deep?” Were there dimensions of the other experience (s) that were more or less helpful to you in your empowerment as a mature disciple?
3. What are the words that best describe this experience of Adult Faith Formation (please explain)
4. Would you say that this formation has helped you to “see things differently?” or to “do things differently?” Please explain.
5. It is an aim of this faith formation to meet people “where they are” on the journey of faith and to engage the whole person as an adult in faith. In your estimation was this series successful or unsuccessful in doing this? Please explain
6. How important was it to you to be invited into ongoing evaluation of the series and to give input into the content and process?
7. Is there anything you’d like to add?

## APPENDIX 7

### *D-Min Research Project of Carol Kuzmochka*

#### **Semi-Structured Interview with 5 small-group pastoral accompaniers**

The interview will begin with:

**a thank you to all for their participation;**

**All will be asked to respect the confidentiality of the interview by not discussing it with others;**

**all will be reminded that they are always free to decline to respond to any questions, they may leave at any time, they are invited to respond to questions with information they are comfortable disclosing;**

**It will be explained that the interview will be audio-recorded for purposes of accuracy in data collection. This recording is confidential and will be kept secure. Feedback will only be presented as “pooled data” without revealing participants’ identity; quotes may be used but without identifiers of identity.**

. For the purpose of our discussion a mature Christian disciple may be defined as follows (each participant will have a printed copy of this to view throughout the interview):

*A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the faith community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.*

1. In your experience with those engaged in “Putting Out Into the Deep!” has the process helped people to grow as mature Christian disciples? Please explain...  
We will explore each dimension of the definition above...
2. Has your own involvement helped you to grow as a mature Christian disciple? Please explain your response.
3. How important do you think the involvement in the small group was to the experience of the participants? What were the strengths/weaknesses of the experience?

4. Are there changes you can see in participants as they have moved through this process? If so, can you describe them?
5. It is an aim of this faith formation to meet people “where they are” on the journey of faith and to engage the whole person, mind, heart and spirit, as an adult in faith. In your estimation was this series successful or unsuccessful in doing this? Please explain.
6. How important do you think it was to everyone to be invited into ongoing evaluation of the series and to give input into the content and process?
7. Is there anything you’d like to add?

## APPENDIX 8

### *D.Min Research Project of Carol Kuzmochka*

#### **Semi-structured Interview with 2 Pastors, and 2 Pastoral Leaders in parishes where parishioners have been involved in “Putting Out into the Deep!”**

**The interview will begin with:**

- a thank you to all for their participation;**
- All will be asked to respect the confidentiality of the interview by not discussing it with others;**
- all will be reminded that they are always free to decline to respond to any questions, they may leave at any time, they are invited to respond to questions with information they are comfortable disclosing;**
- It will be explained that the interview will be audio-recorded for purposes of accuracy in data collection. This recording is confidential and will be kept secure. Feedback will only be presented as “pooled data” without revealing participants’ identity; quotes may be used but without identifiers of identity.**

For the purpose of our discussion a mature Christian disciple may be defined as follows (each participant will have a printed copy of this to view throughout the interview):

*A mature Christian disciple is someone whose faith is grounded in a loving relationship with Jesus Christ, who is committed to knowing and following the way of Jesus, who is engaged in the life of the faith community, and who is committed to service of others. He or she wants to learn more and grows in the ability to accept other points of view and to hold the tensions of paradox.*

1. In your experience with those engaged in “Putting Out Into the Deep!” has the process helped people to grow as mature Christian disciples? Please explain...

We will explore each dimension of the definition above...

2. Are there particular changes in people who have participated that are worth mentioning from your perspective?

3. Has the role people who participated in this process play in your parish community changed in any way as a result of their participation in this adult faith development process? Please explain?
  
4. It was the intention that the local Church would take ownership of this adult faith development process. In your experience has this happened? If yes, in what ways... If no, what, in your opinion, are the obstacles to that ownership?
  
5. Is there anything you would like to add?

**APPENDIX 9**

Lay Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa

# ***Putting Out Into The Deep!***

When they had done this they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break (Lk. 5:6).

<p>A Proposal for the Steps ahead in Lay Formation in the English sector</p>
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Presented to the Archdiocese of Ottawa, August, 2003  
By Carol Kuzmochka, co-ordinator of lay leadership formation  
and adult faith development, English sector.

## 1. FOUNDATIONS

September, 2002 found the English sector of our diocese trying to establish a solid foundation upon which to begin building a lay formation program. There is a certain amount of “vagueness” in this area. Even discovering the many different meanings we associate with “lay formation,” and the varying assumptions that come with these meanings, speak of the need to clarify, to discern, to establish a clear set of priorities. This past 10 months has been about that.

Several fundamental steps have taken place to facilitate this end: the Archbishop has set the establishment of a lay formation program as a clear priority and has made some important statements about the need for greater collaboration among lay and ordained; Carol Kuzmochka has been hired to lead the project; priests and lay people have been consulted, have explored some fundamental questions related to the development of a program, and have expressed hopes, concerns and made recommendations; an Adult Faith Development Committee, representative of the archdiocese, has been established as an advisory and consultative body for lay formation; the mandate for the project has been clarified. Links have been created so that we can journey with our sister lay formation efforts in the French sector. The last 10 months have engaged many in a rich and meaningful examination of our fundamental discernment process about where to go from here. There is a solid foundation upon which to build.

## 2. Some Fundamental Themes

There can be no doubt that an understanding of our fundamental identity as disciples of Christ, called to fulfill the mission of the Church, is what gives meaning and direction to everything we do. Indeed, any leadership formation, whether it be for lay or ordained, is about helping all to deepen this identity and to strengthen the ability to be God’s loving presence for our human community and to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to all. The prophetic call to “put out into the deep” of Jesus to his apostles is echoed for us in the words of John Paul II to make this time in our history a time of contemplation, discernment, deep communion, and courageous action in all it means to be Christian. Part of that call involves the realization that although what is often called “the shortage of priests” fuels our perception of the need for lay involvement in leadership roles, the vocation of all the baptised needs to be understood as a call of its own that exists regardless of whether priests are plentiful or few. The vocation of the lay person needs to be better understood and developed in its own right. This means also better understanding how lay and ordained minister together. This understanding will grow and evolve over time as lay and ordained enter into a time that clearly invites them to discover each other anew. There are many fears and uncertainties that accompany this endeavour. Yet, the call to move forward, to invite all to a more mature sense of identity and call as God’s people is filled with hope and joy. We will need to accept and accompany each other in our fears and uncertainties as we move forward.

We are invited to return to the scriptures to rediscover our identity and call, to join the pilgrim journey of our Church throughout the ages to find our way, to more deeply discover the wisdom of the guidance of the Second Vatican Council, and to heed again the words of Pope John XIII to “read the signs of our times,” to grapple with the direction our Archbishop is setting before us,

to allow ourselves to be accompanied by the experiences of our sister program in the french sector, to respond to our wisdom as a community of people of faith, to accompany each other in the fears many have about the changing face of leadership, to understand the complex world which is unfolding around us and our role as compassionate, hope-filled disciples of Christ within it, to courageously allow ourselves to part of a new journey in our history when the role of lay people is changing and where the relationship between lay and ordained is being rediscovered and redefined

### 3. To What Do These Themes Call us as we move forward in Lay Formation?

A preliminary encounter with many of these sources during our focus group sessions has helped to anchor us in the realization that since any formation we do is for discipleship a fundamental exploration of discipleship must underlie all we do. A variety of essential insights have emerged that ought to be named:

- A. There has been an astute observation on the part of the people of our diocese that whatever we do it is vital that lay and ordained do it together. Different understandings and agendas, or opposing agendas for lay formation, work against us. Similarly, our vision is compromised when some choose not to participate. All of our movement needs to be discerned and supported within the context of the entire diocesan community. There is a theology of communion that honours our unity of diversity in all ways, including as lay and ordained, and this needs to be recognised and explored. A powerful desire has been expressed to unite, not divide, our community. "Putting out into the deep" means being willing to explore and evolve together. We need to be able to address questions and face controversy honestly without hidden agendas, and with the expressed desire not to divide the community. Our aims and objectives must be clear and shared;
- B. We need leadership and parish communities that are able to accommodate the vision of collaborative leadership between lay and ordained that we are advocating, and that are able to call forth, support, accompany, and receive the people who are being formed.
- C. We are "putting out into the deep" of new and unknown territory and we must be willing to accompany each other in our fears and uncertainties.
- D. A developing sense of the need for discernment about leadership is evolving. The role of the individual, the pastoral leadership, and of the entire community needs to be developed. A vision for this is needed and the tools to accommodate it
- E. We will live our way into the answers to many of our questions. We are engaged in a process of discernment that is evolutionary and many answers must be discovered as we proceed.
- F. Accountability to each other and inclusiveness is essential. People have clearly asked to build our program together as a community of disciples, as people of faith. This means that ongoing consultation and evaluation in the pastoral regions is essential. It also means that those in leadership have a clear responsibility to address issues relating to lay leadership collaboratively, consultatively, and transparently.
- G. We have a responsibility to find better ways to "read the signs of the times" and to respond in faith. This is fundamentally the work of the Holy Spirit to whom we must remain open and responsive.
- H. The people of our diocese are eager and hungry for formation as lay persons that will help them better

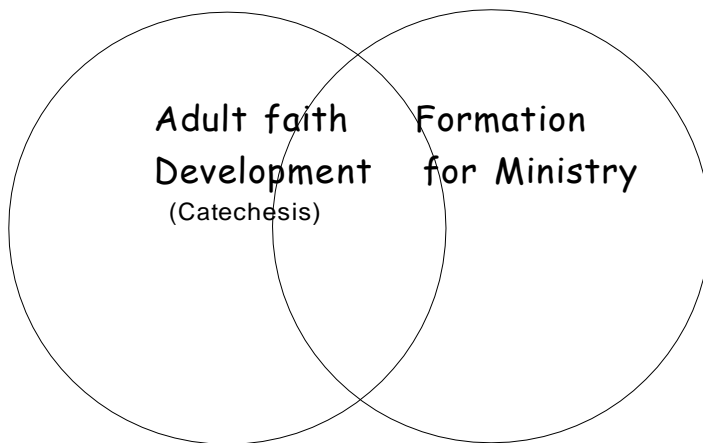
recognize, celebrate and respond to their call, and we need to act now. There is a certain disillusionment to be overcome because of thwarted efforts in the past.

- I. There is much formation already going on in parish communities that needs to be celebrated. Many parishes do not know what is going on in other parishes and would like to collaborate more with each other. This needs to be organized.
- J. We must meet people "where they are." We live in a complex world that we always must seek to understand. People have fundamental questions about faith and life that must shape our agendas. People are busy, and often disillusioned. Similarly, the face of our sector of the diocese is a multi-cultural one where "one size does not fit all." Formation that attempts to address people's reality and to address their most pressing needs and questions is a must

#### 4. Defining the Aims

There are five separate Aims for Lay Formation in the English sector that have surfaced at this time. While they are related in many ways they are also distinct. Clarity is important to ensuring that needs are met, confusion is avoided, and expectations are clear.

Starting Point: The Reason for any formation is to foster Discipleship (ministry or vocation of the baptized). These efforts take on two different faces that, although connected, are also distinct.



**Objective:**  
To help all deepen their relationship (inevitably this calls people into deeper relationship with Christ).  
is not the primary objective).

**Objective:**  
To provide formation to meet identified needs With Christ (inevitably this has a catechetical aspect but it into ministry but is not the primary objective)

**Who is catechized?**  
Everyone/all are always called into deeper relationship with Christ

**Who is formed for ministry?**  
Those who feel called/are called by the community/by leadership. Those who have the gifts to meet the particular needs. Ministry formation involves ongoing discernment with many parties.

Both of these are about deepening and strengthening discipleship (or the call of the baptized) within the individual person and within the community.

We have realized that the work we will do in lay formation will encompass both of these in different ways. This may be expressed in 5 aims for lay formation outlined on the page to follow...

**FIRST AIM of the Lay formation Program: Adult catechesis/adult faith development**

This will also be the most fundamental and far-reaching aspect of the Lay Formation Program

Purpose: the faith development of the person

Objective: to create an opportunity for ALL to explore more deeply and learn more completely about the vocation of the lay baptised person, the Catholic identity and purpose in our world, so that a deeper relationship with Christ is fostered.

We will build adult learning opportunities, that will extend over a few years, designed to achieve this (certificates of achievement will be offered).

**SECOND AIM of the Lay Formation Program: Ministry-specific Formation**

Purpose: To answer the specific needs of the parish/diocesan Church community

Objective: to provide the formation needed for people to meet specific needs in the community, such as for justice ministry, catechesis of adults, leadership in RCIA, catechesis of children, liturgical ministry, ministry to families, ministry to youth, ministry to the elderly etc...according to the needs of parish communities...

Parishes will be called upon to identify their needs and to help call forth the people needed to meet them using solid tools for leadership discernment.

Opportunities will be designed for people to gain the formation they need to engage in these ministries with competence...It will be a diocesan-led effort in conjunction with St. Paul University and other formation venues

**THIRD AIM of the Lay Formation Program:  
Ministry Formation of mandated Pastoral Associates**

Purpose: the preparation of lay people for positions of mandate leadership in parishes as members of collaborative teams that involve shared pastoral leadership between ordained and lay.

These people have a clear position of publically recognized leadership, are often paid for their work and consider it a vocation and profession. For the most part, this involves the assumption of pastoral leadership roles by lay persons where ordained leadership has been the norm. This formation may be for a person who will become the pastoral leader for a parish where there is no resident priest. It may also be for a person who will work with a resident priest to help with the pastoral responsibilities of a parish.

Objective: to provide the formation needed for people to take on these roles (in collaboration with St. Paul University which has a very well developed program of pastoral formation). The French sector has decided that a University certificate in pastoral theology or its equivalent is the minimal qualification for these positions.

Discernment from priests and other pastoral leaders, the community, and the individual, is being recognized more and more as essential to defining and supporting this role for the lay person. The proper orientation and tools need to be developed so that communities can call forth, affirm, support, and receive this form of lay

leadership.

Tools need to be developed for this. All of the particulars of this aim are still evolving. Yet we know we already have people in these roles, and will need more in the future.

**FOURTH AIM of the Lay Formation Program: To provide brief formation opportunities in a wide variety of areas that address timely topics and needs**

**Purpose:** To accommodate the need for adult learning of faith formation that addresses a wide array of situations, where a brief session (e.g. one or two sessions) is what is appropriate.

**Objective:** Lengthy, systematic programs of adult learning sessions are not always required. Rather, a wide array of needs may be met in a brief fashion. Timely questions related to Catholic identity, faith-life connections, parenting, prayer, and enrichment or refresher courses in various parish services and leadership roles may be best accommodated in an evening or day-long one or two part session. Some examples might include evenings of reflection or retreat, or days of study and sharing on a variety of

topics or questions. A one or two part workshop will likely be the format most often used for this

**FIFTH AIM of the Lay Formation Program: To identify and help co-ordinate shared Formation opportunities among parishes or groups of parishes**

**Purpose:** Collaboration among Parishes for formation opportunities

**Objective:** Much formation is already going on in parishes, but communications and sharing of resources among parishes is not always optimal. Many wish to join together to co-ordinate resources and share formation opportunities. This may be done in small groups, clusters, within pastoral regions or for the entire diocese depending upon individual circumstances. This needs to be organized and co-ordinated.

5. Beginning Objectives, Time-lines, and Accountability

This is how lay formation may unfold over the next few years. This is not exhaustive and things may be added. Similarly, it is not “cast in stone” and we may wish to make revisions. Nevertheless the following expresses some key steps and elements that may be strongly suggested at this time:

Fall, 2003: September 11<sup>th</sup>, Consultation with clergy on this Proposal, and request for approval to move forward

This proposal will also be received by all who participated in the consultation process in the regions and others who have asked for it. Any feedback is welcome from individuals, parish councils, and other committees, movements and associations until the end of September, 2003.

Fall, 2003 Responding to the need to begin:

People have been quite clear that we need to begin right away. To honour this, 2 adult learning sessions that address timely issues and questions will be held:

- **"The Spirituality of Parenting"** (a 2 part session that will be offered in two locations, one for pastoral regions 1 and 2 and a second for pastoral regions 3 and 4)
- **"What does It Mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today?"**(a day long session for all pastoral regions)  
  
(eg.'s of our fourth aim)
- **"Sharing our Caring"** an information-sharing, networking, brainstorming about the future of formation session for all involved in pastoral care in parishes. Co-hosted by archdiocese lay formation and pastoral care, Holy Cross Parish (an eg. of our fifth aim)

January, 2004

launching of a diocesan lay formation program in adult faith development: "Putting Out Into the Deep"

- 150 hours of sessions, over 3 years, covering the basic aspects of Catholic identity and call
- The fundamental questions of people's lives, in relationship with the fundamental dimensions of Catholic faith will form the agenda
- Those who wish a certificate will be required to prepare reflection papers and engage in small group integration with spiritual accompaniment
- A Certificate indicates a meaningful reflection upon and integration of material

It is expected that those who finish this formation will have a solid understanding of discipleship and of the vocation of the lay person in the contemporary world, a solid sense of Christian leadership, and the mission of the Church.

Summer, 2004

**Institute on the Catechumenate** (offered by the North Am. Forum on the catechumenate)

Hosted by the archdiocese (with collaborative efforts from the Diocesan Liturgy commission and Lay Formation and Adult Faith Development)

A must for all in any formation and for all presently in pastoral leadership roles.

Spring, 2004:

Evaluation of the efforts of the Fall 2003 - Spring 2004 period with all who wish to be consulted. This will need to be accomplished in several venues.

Fall, 2004                      Designs for Ministry-Specific formation and Formation of Lay Pastoral Associates to be tabled, including a description of the role in leadership discernment to be played by the individual, the community and those already in pastoral leadership (teams of people with expertise and experience in these areas will be invited to help create these designs).

Completion of the 3 yr (150 hour) adult faith formation program or an equivalent is a prerequisite for either of these areas of ministry formation.

Further Accountability: The Adult Faith Development Committee will continue to act as a consultative, think-tank, advisory body. This committee will continue to be directly accountable to the bishop, will operate in a consensus decision-making model, and will itself be engaged in ongoing evaluation of its work and the progress of its mandate.

Fall, 2005:                      Ministry Specific streams begin  
Plans for the formation of mandated pastoral associates

Ongoing accountability:            An annual evaluation of lay formation  
Those who participated in the consultation process regarding the future of lay formation during the Winter and Spring of 2003 have made it very clear that they would like to play an active role in the ongoing planning and evaluation of Lay formation. An annual evaluation will help to facilitate this. But this is not enough. Ongoing communications is also essential through e-mail distribution lists, the diocesan web-page and other means so that people are not only kept informed but also have the opportunity to offer feedback.  
It will also be important to ensure that pastors and other in pastoral leadership positions have the opportunity to evaluate lay formation and make suggestions for future directions. All of this is part of the call to “read the signs of our times” to “put out into the deep” and to intentionally allow the Holy Spirit to forge our path.

## 6. Where do We Go From Here?

It is vital that this proposal is well supported by our English sector of the Church of Ottawa if it is to meet with success. Every effort has been made to ensure that those who participated in the consultation process, through the focus group sessions of the Spring and Summer of 2003,

agree that this is a faithful reflection of all that was recommended. Our diocesan pastoral council has also been consulted in an ongoing manner and feedback from all of these sources, and all other interested persons, will be welcomed in an ongoing manner.

Now it is time to determine if this proposal is clearly endorsed by our archbishop and his episcopal council, by our priests and parish pastoral associates. It is only with a common vision and understanding and with the strong support of this leadership that our efforts will be successful.

We will begin to move forward, as planned, during the Fall of 2003, while allowing time for reflection, further consultation, and appropriate revisions to our plans as the process continues to unfold.

## Appendix 10

### Moving Toward a Lay Formation Program

Archdiocese of Ottawa, English sector

#### Summary of Focus Group Session on the Future of Lay Formation

June, 2003

Total # of sessions: 5 (one in each of the pastoral regions with one extra session for those who were unable to attend an earlier one)

Total # of participants: 207

Total # of participating parishes: 40

Total # of priests participating: 17

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#### **A common process was used for each session to ensure uniformity:**

1. An introduction of the new co-ordinator of lay formation and adult faith development and co-facilitator for the meaning (when present). And a prayer reflection period which focused on “disciple” as a term which captures, well, what it means to be a mature Christian.

2. As much attention as was reasonably possible for a morning session, to allow participants to introduce themselves and their parishes to each other.

3. An explanation that the archbishop has mandated the building of a lay formation program in the English sector and that the purpose of the focus group session was very concrete: to hear about what is going on to date; to respond with reflection, dialogue and then concrete recommendations which will move the agenda forward.

4. Carol led everyone in a further reflection on “discipleship” which highlighted its foundations in Jesus’ mission and in the early Church as well as the fullness of its ancient meaning as allowing oneself to be completely engaged and transformed by another (namely, Christ). Carol emphasized the importance of understanding that any formation is fundamentally about this before anything else. The fact that “volunteer” is not a synonym for “disciple” and caution was encouraged so as not to lose our fundamental identity persons called through baptism to discipleship.

5. Carol linked this to **a presentation about further sources which are foundations for building a lay formation program:** Our archbishop’s leadership as expressed, for example, in excerpts and insights from his article, “The Jewel in the Cross;” the vision of the Church as a living body, and the organic unity of diversity, initiated in the letters of St. Paul and carried on in many ways, most recently and forcefully in the writings of Pope John Paul II about the spirituality and ecclesiology of communion. His recent pastoral letter for the new Millennium is a wonderful example of this and source for direction as he calls to us as Jesus did, “Put out into the deep!”

She explained that a new Adult Faith Development Committee is now in place to consult, advise and act as a think tank for building and implementing the lay formation program. She explained that great successes have been had in the french sector program and although the realities are quite different, there is much to be shared between the two sectors. The role of the synodal process of the early 1990's is not forgotten, and recommendations made for adult faith development need to be brought forward in the current work. Carol has had many meetings and conversations around the diocese since last September and is receiving lots of feedback about where things need to go. She shared some of the words of wisdom which have been given to her.

She stressed that a program which will be faithful to the reality of the local church and which will endure needs to be the responsibility of the whole community to build and to maintain.

Carol outlined four aims of a lay formation program (everyone has received this “Draft”) which attempts to mirror something of where the diocese is now. She emphasized that this is a work in progress, that we need to live our way into the answers for our needs. The objectives mentioned are built upon the understanding that Adult Faith Formation (catechesis) and ministry formation, while intimately connected, are distinct and need to be addressed as distinct. In establishing objectives for formation, these need to be clarified. These 4 Aims Are:

a) To offer adult catechesis (this is the most far-reaching need) in an organized series of sessions which will extend over a few year period, and end with a certification in catechesis.

b) To offer ministry-specific formation which will help to meet the most pressing needs of our communities, such as justice ministry, catechesis with children, catechesis with adults, liturgy, ministry to youth, to elderly, to the family etc...according to identified needs.

c) Ministry formation of mandated pastoral Associates who will take on positions in parishes either as parish director in the absence of an resident priest or as parish team members with a resident priest. There is a strong desire to build in discernment processes which allow communities to call forth these people and to affirm them in their leadership.

d) To provide workshops in a variety of needs and in the area of a variety of interests expressed by communities.

6. Participants had the chance to offer feedback on everything relate to the future of lay formation. 4 focus group sessions had small group discussions followed by presentations in plenary. In these groups, people were asked to gather with people from parishes other than their own. 2 focus group sessions addressed the essential questions in plenary. All addressed the same basic questions. To follow is a summary of the feedback:

**(i) What are the most important things you are hearing about the future of lay formation?**

Many highlighted “discipleship” indicating that this is where we find our identity, that it is not just about knowledge, nor is it simply about practical application but about a way of being which

needs to be nurtured and explored. They commented that formation begins with our own faith development, that it is not “specialists” who are called but all of God’s people, and that we have a responsibility to go forward. The need to clearly distinguish between “volunteer” and “disciple” was strongly affirmed, and the need to respect and affirm all gifts.

Others pointed out that “disciple” asks for call/commissioning/community all to be considered. There was deep resonance with how important it is to call forth leadership and to truly discern leadership within the community. The role of the parish in calling forth its leaders was clearly affirmed. The tools for this are needed as one group indicated by saying, “discovering gifts/talents is a serious responsibility.” The great variety of needs to be met as well as the need for multiple ways of meeting these needs was affirmed.

People indicated how important it is to understand that our roots for discipleship are in the early Church. They spoke of the need for two-way communication between lay and ordained for shared leadership. They also spoke of the urgency of our needs and that people are ready and formation must move forward “now!” with clearly established objectives and time-lines. Many indicated the importance of keeping in mind that our mission is outside of the Church building and that evangelization in its fullest sense must be kept central to the call of discipleship.

**(ii) What are your greatest hopes for this lay formation program?**

Participants expressed many. The most common one was that this will indeed go forward and these aims will be met and in a timely fashion. Others frequently mentioned the importance of creating unity within communities as a real hope, and that lay and ordained would be brought together, be able to face and deal with conflict together, and to lead together within their respective roles. People are hopeful that this will not become elitist but will always strive to include everyone. They stressed their hope that with diocesan leadership, the approval of the bishop and curia and with the participation of all pastors and parishes that a real common vision and plan would be agreed upon. People hope for clear time-lines and objectives. They are hoping for a non-bureaucratic approach, and simple uncomplicated language and approaches. They also hope that leadership will be accountable and consultative in an ongoing way. Participants named

a certain amount of disillusionment and mistrust of leadership and the hope that this movement in lay formation may help to rebuild trust. People are hopeful that lay formation will help to call forth latent gifts and help each person discover his or her identity as disciple.

There is a hope that all parishes will look toward having paid mandated pastoral associates to help create stability and provide good leadership. Participants clearly ask that these questions be brought forth and addressed in an ongoing fashion. People hope we will be pro-active and not wait for a real crisis to deal with the shortage of priests which is imminent.

People hope the aims of the program as well as the programming itself will reflect the diversity of needs, of people, of communities. One size does not fit all and there is a real need to be creative in accommodating everyone. This is especially true given the multi-cultural nature of the English sector. It is hoped all needs may be met appropriately. Participants hope that in the catechetical realm, people will see that they are called to formation for its own sake, and that simply because they attend does not mean they are expected to commit to anything. It will be important to convey this clearly in publicity.

People hope we will be able to co-ordinate efforts already being made to help each other. So much is being done in parishes that others don't know about. RCIA is recognized as fundamental to realizing our mission. Social justice is also primary. We need more opportunities to live these things out realizing our mission is not "in here" but "out there." People hope formation will help to build that strong Christian identity which fosters all of this.

People hope we can move away from an academic agenda to create learning opportunities which respond to the real questions and realities of people's lives. It is hoped that these efforts will help to strengthen parents' sense of their role and to foster stronger partnerships between family, parish and schools.

People hope good communications, using all of the electronic technology available to us, will help to keep people up to date and aid in ongoing consultation and feedback.

They hope that lay formation will help to renew and revitalize the Church.

**(iii) What are your greatest concerns about this lay formation program?**

People are most concerned that this won't happen – leadership will not follow through.

They are equally concerned about managing this transition time when the roles of leaders are changing so much, the power struggles, the confusion about roles, the difficulty accepting change, the potential conflict between lay and ordained. They are concerned that people will be “formed” but pastors and parish communities may not be willing to receive them in leadership roles. They worry about have good discernment tools which ensure that the wrong people will not be placed in leadership roles. They worry about establishing consistent guidelines across the diocese for leadership roles. They also note that people are discouraged and participation may not be great. They worry that a real commitment from lay and clergy together may be difficult to achieve. They worry that the formation we do will be able to stand the force of the change in tides.

Some worry that the calling forth of lay people may discourage men from considering priesthood. Others worry that the right teachers are chosen. Others worry that each parish will be able to find itself in this since parishes are quite unique. There is also worry that it will become “top down” rather than both “bottom up and top down.”

Others worry that a minimalist budget doesn't cut it: there is a disconnect between saying this is so important and then not providing a real working budget. They are worried the diocese is not really willing to put the money into the program. Others worry that the next bishop will continue in lay formation.

Others worry that we will lose our sense that “discipleship” is the key and get stuck on the issue of mandated pastoral associates and lose the larger vision. There is also a worry that this will become “crisis driven” rather than solid prayerful reflection on where we need to go

That it will become academic and not really driven by the questions and needs people have, is a concern of quite a few. People also worry that the formation will be solidly grounded in the teachings of the Church.

People are concerned that our youth will find their place in all of this.

**(iv) What are the “signs of the times” to which we must pay attention if we are to promote real discipleship?**

A few were consistently mentioned: People don't have time; The declining numbers attending Sunday mass; The shortage of priests; Fear of change; adults are not catechized; People are disillusioned with the Church.

Others mentioned were:

Changing values and changing family structure are part of our times, eg. Sunday is just another day... we live in a materialistic consumer-based society, that operates on functionality.

People are hungry, yet they don't seem to find a place to be fed;

political correctness;

parish demographics are changing.

God's spirit is with us;

councils and committees we already have are a sign of the need for more development and renewal (people are burning out and afraid of being “voluntold”);

The desperate need for formation in adult faith – lay persons have not taken their responsibility!

There is a clear gap between faith and lived-culture (especially for youth);

Pre-vat II Catholics are static while post-vatican are detached and uncommitted expecting the priest to do everything for them;

Youth are absent

People are stressed and preoccupied

Where is God in it all?

People are hungry and searching for ways to make faith relevant

**(v) What are the two wisest recommendations your group wishes to make to help this lay formation program succeed?**

Lay and ordained must come together in this. Whatever decisions have to be made need to be made together and in an ongoing fashion. The program needs clear objectives which are supported at all levels. This calls us to much dialogue and commitment on all fronts. The priorities must be clear. Clergy and laity need to be of the same mind about what we are trying to accomplish.

Good tools for discernment need to be developed and put in place so communities can discover leaders.

We need to keep people on board, in the loop and consult and communicate in an ongoing way.

We need communications which is true and transparent – free of hidden agendas.

People have received good formation in the past which is not always accepted by the pastors or communities. Let's avoid this pitfall.

We need to be practical, to aim at something which can be achieved. We need clarity about how it is to be implemented and evaluated. Sessions need to be timely and accessible, taking people where they are.

Put out into the deep!

We need to help people take time for faith and remember that the family has many needs and is a major building block;

Replacing oneself needs to become a new sense of what it is to be a leader (shadowing and mentoring are very important!)

Money from the diocese needs to be part of the commitment as well as clear articulation of objectives;

Formation is a life-long process;

we need to address our multi-layered needs;

Do it! Go for it!

- I. All focus groups overwhelmingly requested and endorsed follow-up. They did this by asking for short-term follow-up by having a concluding/summary session to all of the focus group sessions where participants could all come together, hear about the experience of the focus groups in each of the regions, talk about themes and patterns which have emerged through dialogue and talk about what comes next. They also did this by requesting long-term ongoing follow-up by being kept in the loop of communications about lay formation, by being consulted about major decisions and by having the opportunity to evaluate the program regularly (perhaps once a year).
  
8. Carol assured that feedback would return to the table of the adult faith development committee for further recommendations. And also that she would continue to act on feedback in her role. E-mail distribution lists will be created right away as one way to ensure good communications. It is also hoped that updates providing lay leadership formation and adult faith development with its own space on the archdiocesan web-site will help communications. These are expected soon.

*A Summary of all of the evaluations is to follow. People were very pleased with these focus group sessions and are hoping for more of the same in the future.*

respectfully submitted,

Carol Kuzmochka, June, 2003

## APPENDIX 10

### Evaluation Summary of all Focus Group Sessions on the future of lay formation held from March - May, 2003 archdiocese of Ottawa

*105/207* participants completed evaluations

Please circle the response which best reflects your assessment.

This has been a worthwhile session...

Yes!	Yes	Mmm...	No
<b>83</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>→ 1 ←</b>	<b>1</b> (this person commented, "If it continues")

(One person did not indicated a response)

Responses to "Things I'd like to affirm;" "Things I wish had been done differently;" and "Further comments" are too numerous to mention here. They may be viewed in each focus group report. It needs to be said, however, that comments were extremely affirming and encouraging as well as hopeful about the future.

## Appendix 11



### Putting out into the Deep!

#### A Proposed Process for the Small Group Gathering following the session of May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007

(1.5 hrs)

The small group decides, prior, who from among the members will facilitate. He or she will organize the time and location of the meeting and will facilitate the gathering itself.

20 Min          Gathering

- Welcome and “transferring in” (the facilitator might wish to prepare a brief exercise or question that helps all to enter into the spirit of the gathering).
- Is there anything to which the group needs to attend before moving into reflection on the current topic?
- Prayer: a time to relax in God’s presence, ground the group in God’s Word and the life of the whole Christian community, and invite the presence of the Holy Spirit. (There are Scriptures passages, and Prayers from the liturgical life of the Church that can be chosen for this. Using these links the group with the life of the whole Christian Community The Gospel of the day or from a Sunday close to the meeting may be a good choice. Or, another reading of the day for Eucharist or Morning or Evening prayer may be suitable). The facilitator may invite all to listen to the scripture with a particular question in mind (eg. What does this passage say about our vocation as baptised persons?) That may help connect the prayer to the theme from the last session. All who wish may be invited to say a word or two about their reflection.

10 Min          Summarizing and Informing

- All are invited to help provide a summary of high-points from the session (this will be especially important if anyone present was not at the session).

40 Min          Reflection and Integration (all are invited to respond to the following questions)

- What are the themes that have meaning for you from the session?

- Have they appeared in your life since the last session? What insights and challenges are emerging for you? What are the implications for you? What are the implications for our Church?

15 Min      **Action Response**

- gathering?

5 Min      **Concluding**

- Our next Adult faith session will be on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Does your group wish to make plans for a next meeting?  
Missioning A brief final prayer (perhaps using a song or gesture) that sends everyone out to live and act upon all that has been shared would be most appropriate. (Suggestion: the very last prayer of the Mass where we are “sent out” and we answer “Thanks be to God” is a prayer of missioning. There are many beautiful versions that could be a helpful model, and adapted to the meeting).

**Questions for Reflection Papers for Certificate Participants:**

1. What are the most important ideas, insights, and themes I have encountered from this session?
2. What are the implications for me?
3. What are the implications for our Church?

Please respond to these questions in 1 - 3 pp. of writing (typed, double-spaced). Please submit this writing on or before \_\_\_\_\_ to:

Carol Kuzmochka, Archdiocese of Ottawa

1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, ON K1H 6K9

(613)738-5025 (x251); (613)738-0130 (FAX)

[ckuzmochka@ecclesia-ottawa.org](mailto:ckuzmochka@ecclesia-ottawa.org)

## Appendix 12



### A Brief report on the Activities of 2005-06

- The conclusion of the first full 3-year cycle of our adult faith development series.** Was marked on May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2006 with a day-long session of reflection and integration of learning over the three years, a certificate ceremony and Sunday Eucharist and banquet presided over by Archbishop Gervais and Msgr Beach. 16 people from 11 parishes received "Certificates in Adult Faith Development," 180 hours of comprehensive adult catechesis: sessions, small group participation, reflection papers and integration exercises, 40 hours of formation from sessions/courses outside of the diocesan series. 14 other people from 12 parishes received a certificate of participation for attending at least 10 sessions. Some were present for all 24 sessions.

Over this first 3 year cycle, approx. 200 people have participated by attending at least one session. This represents approx. 40 parishes. Several people are now entering the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of this formation. Applications for new certificate participants are now being accepted for the Fall, 2006.

- Collaboration with the Liturgy Commission**  
A vibrant and successful session marking the conclusion of the Year of the Eucharist was planned and led together in the Fall of 2005. Commitments were made to furthering attempts to collaborate where mandates overlap.
- Communications/PR Efforts**  
In an attempt to keep people well-informed about offerings in adult faith development, 2005-06 saw an expanding section of the web-site and a report posted after each session.

- **“Sharing Our Caring”**  
A day of ongoing leadership formation and networking for people engaged in Pastoral Care across the diocese was held in Nov., 2005. It has become an annual event at the request of those attending. Those involved in this ministry, mostly in parish communities, want ongoing formation on a topic of their choosing and an opportunity to connect with others at least once annually. Parishes take turns hosting and collaborating with Carol to plan the day. St. Basil hosted in 2005 with a session on “End of Life issues.” Approximately 100 people participated.
- **Design and implementation of “In Support of Life” Workshop.**  
A DVD and Workshop model developed by the adult faith development office to help parishes engage in helpful learning and dialogue about end of life issues. This was particularly desirable in the wake of the introduction of Bill C-407.

A solid Adult education experience, the workshop uses a DVD that raises important issues, and a COLF resource that clearly articulates Catholic teaching on life issues to help participants engage in meaningful reflection on their own experiences, concerns and hopes. The “Adult Faith Development” office has worked in close collaboration with a palliative care physician and a moral theologian for this work. Health-care workers, moral theologians and social workers have generously made themselves available in parishes where their help is needed. 2 evenings of training were held for those leading the workshop. To date 40 parishes have offered this.

- **Bursaries for Students Wishing to Study Theology**  
Since the joint bursary(diocese/St.Paul University) of \$200 per course was instituted last Spring, we have had 18 requests. Several people involved in the AFD series have naturally moved into a more formal theological study. It’s wonderful to be able to support this financially.
- **Some Further Resource to parishes and groups:**
  - a) ***A day of reflection for the leaders of Holy Cross Parish:*** The priests and pastoral associate of Holy Cross parish recognized that past turbulence in the parish had caused disillusionment and hurt in the

community, and decided to gather with leaders in the community to engage in dialogue and discernment that would help them move forward. They invited Carol to help design and facilitate a day of to help them accomplish this. The day was very helpful to them. It is most encouraging that they recognized a time of turbulence in the community as an opportunity for adult faith development!

- b) ***Advent Reflection evenings, St. Peter Parish:*** Carol led two evenings of Advent reflection at St. Peter Parish that were very well received.
- c) ***Help to our neighbouring dioceses:*** Help has been offered to Cornwall, Kingston and Pembroke, at their requests, for various efforts they are getting off the ground in adult faith development and leadership formation.
- **A consultative/advisory Committee** continues to provide invaluable support and help. This group includes representatives of pastoral regions, priests and pastoral associates, Diocesan Pastoral Council as well as people with relevant expertise. The committee meets about every 6 weeks to review, advise and recommend.
- **Establishment of “Parish Liaisons for Adult faith Development”**  
Since January, 2006, 40 parishes have designated a person responsible for this mandate. They have received a special invitation to the June symposium.
- **\*A Symposium on Adult Faith Development, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006**  
Our initial efforts in Adult faith Development are a direct result of the broad consultation done across the diocese prior to its beginning and the clear priority given to “adult catechesis”. 4 other aims were also specified. It’s time for another round of consultation. This symposium will revisit and evaluate current efforts and ask for recommendations regarding the other 4 aims. It will be a day of evaluation, dialogue, and vision for the future. Parishes have been given “Consultation Tools” to help them come prepared to offer feedback from their communities.

## Some Plans for 2006-07

### ***\*Naturally, our plans for 2006-07 will be shaped by the results of the June Symposium***

- **Our Adult Faith Development Series begins a new 3-year cycle in the Fall**  
dates have been set. Plans are underway
- **Increase in Bursaries and Scholarships**  
Discussions with St. Paul University indicate that bursaries for students sponsored by the diocese may be increased to \$300/course. Other scholarships are also being examined.
- **Symposium Follow-up**  
One of the primary tasks will be to follow-up, in consultation with the AFD Committee, on the recommendations that come from the June Symposium.
- **“Sharing Our Caring”** will continue with a day of formation in the Fall
- **A Day of Formation for Children’s Catechists**  
will be added on September 16<sup>th</sup> to help meet the expressed need of these people for formation. This is being done collaboratively with those who have been involved in sacramental preparation and are represented on the Liturgy Commission.
- **A day of formation on “Christian Hospitality”**  
will be offered in collaboration with the liturgy commission in Jan., 07. This will serve as a ‘spring-board’ for sessions on inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism
- **Follow-Up to “In Support of Life” Workshop**  
Feedback from parishes indicates a clear request for a follow-up resource that will help them continue and deepen the dialogue about these important and timely issues. It would be good to have a further tool ready by Advent, 2006 or, at least, by Lent 2007.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Kuzmochka, June, 2006

## Appendix 13



### Archdiocese of Ottawa

#### Putting Out Into The Deep!

*When they had done this they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break (Lk. 5:6).*

#### Evaluation Summary, June 2004

Three different opportunities for Evaluation of the first segment of Adult Faith Development sessions were held during June 2004. The purpose was to provide critical feedback on what has been done, so far, and to make suggestions for the future.

- **Evaluation Session One: Sat, June 12**  
*35 Participants: certificate participants, participants and pastoral accompaniers currently engaged in the faith development sessions*

They were asked for feedback, in whatever ways they chose, on the experience so far.

Feedback included: a strong affirmation of what has been lived, so far, as challenging, nourishing, relevant, stimulating and exciting, a real experience of community, a real experience of adult faith.. One person mentioned how much she appreciates the format and process for the sessions; another mentioned the quality of the presenters.

The small group experience has been very good for most: several groups are building a real sense of community and want to continue with present membership. Some are open to receiving new members. One group feels it is not working – too much diversity among members and unable to stay on track; another feels it's too small and would like to join with others. It was felt that it is important to emphasize that small group attendance is not an option for certificate participants.

The need for each small group to take responsibility for connecting with someone when she or he misses a meeting was expressed and confirmed. The possibility of inviting people to attend the small group meeting of another group, if they miss a meeting of their group was explored. It was wondered if this might encourage too much fragmentation and work against building strong community with each other.

Certificate participants are writing brief reflection papers after each session. They report that the feedback received on papers is very helpful and appreciated. Some papers have been handed back quickly and the feedback is most helpful. However, other papers have not been handed back in a timely fashion or even at all in some situations. This is experienced as very problematic and defeats the purpose. Carol will follow up on this and rectify the situation.

Participants find the absence of pastoral accompaniers from small group meetings not desirable. It is greatly appreciated by many when pastoral accompaniers are present for Sat. sessions. Some groups find they are easily able to bring pastoral accompanier into the experience if he or she is not able to be present on the Sat; other groups found it very difficult to bring the accompanier into the conversation if they weren't present for the Sat session.

People would like the certificate to represent something well honoured and respected by the diocese and would like the particulars "spelled-out." However, they do not wish that the completion of it would oblige them to parish service pre-determined or assumed in any way. The majority of participants are mostly motivated by the desire to grow in faith, the fruits of which they live out in all aspects of their life.

One person found that the sessions do not allow enough time just to ask questions. It is felt that content is sometimes a bit heavy which may erode time for questions and answers.

Beginning each time with the Sunday scripture and re-visiting our theme Gospel was appreciated.

People would like a lot more of the same and confirmed that the theme "Putting out into the deep!" as well as the question, "What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today?" Still capture exactly what this is about for them and we ought to continue to pursue it...

The effectiveness of panel discussions was strongly affirmed.

Some topics surfaced for the future: more on moral life (esp., marriage issues, life issues such as Reproductive technologies, end-of life issues);

Discipleship, a desire to further explore and understand the vocation of the baptised;

Spirituality, especially related to prayer, discernment, personal identity and understanding new age; and exploring aboriginal spirituality

communications, especially in how to effectively “get our message out” to others;

also interfaith issues and especially understanding the other great rel of the world, especially in how it helps us to understand Islam.

It was emphasized that we need to clearly get the message out to parish communities and in other places that this opportunity is available and all are welcome. One participant felt it most important to emphasize that people do not have to register for the certificate (the responsibilities for which may be daunting for some) to take advantage of this opportunity for learning and growth.

*It was strongly affirmed that the theme “Putting Out Into The Deep!” And the question: What does it mean to be a Catholic in the world today? Continue to encapsulate what we wish to be about.*

**• Evaluation session 2:      Monday June 21<sup>st</sup>, 7-9 PM  
*participants: 42 people: participants and certificate participants from the current sessions, pastoral accompaniers, people from past focus group sessions, committee members***

Carol presented an update on progress so far. This was followed by a “sharing of experience” from 3 people, representing each mode of participation: 1 participant, 1 certificate participant, 1 pastoral accompanier

All were invited to reflect on what was resonating and to gather in groups to discuss things they wanted to affirm, things they would like to see done differently and any other recommendations:

**affirmations:** the community experience; the quality of presenters; the format of sessions; the practicality of sessions; the need to belong to a faith community; the small

group experience; the way our sessions begin and end; the 2 different ways of participating: certificate participant or participant; writing of reflection papers is very helpful for deepening and integration for certificate participants; people are having fun! It is most enjoyable, informative, formative... participants are being transformed; very good adult education process being used -- respect for adult learners; we have “re-claimed” evangelization! Contact, interaction, sharing of personal experience, no ‘preachiness’; we leave “charged” and hopeful; sessions have built one upon the other very well; they have been excellent,

**Things to be done differently:** small groups for certificate participants have some logistical challenges to work out re: meeting times and locations etc...; One small group is struggling to “gel”; Book purchases ahead of sessions and reading material prior might be helpful; add some sharing of food/potluck; Adding a mass at the final session of the next segment; bring back some of the same presenters! We need more time just to ask questions; Some sessions have had too much material.; We need to advertize and invite more people; We all have to take responsibility for this; Perhaps sessions might be taped and tapes made available?

**Recommendations:** Sessions on: communications; reproductive technology; discernment; baptismal vocation; spirituality; prayer; end of life issues; Creative listening; More on moral life;, faith and culture; social justice. More panel format! A session on roots of adult education as creating community and promoting social order and empowerment of others

Let’s get participants speaking in parishes about experience and inviting others! Could we have a Sat session devoted just to deepening how to apply what we’re learning. Maybe we could pool our ideas and then brainstorm about how to make it all happen... We could pilot strategic plans in chosen parishes,

*It was affirmed that the theme “Putting Out Into The Deep!” And the question: What does it mean to be a Catholic in the world today? Continue to encapsulate what we wish to be about.*

**Evaluation session 3: Wed, June 23rd**

*participants: Pastoral Accompaniers(5/9 accompaniers attended) of small groups for certificate participants*

reports of very strong experiences in groups. Several groups are really becoming community with each other and living a deep and formative experience together, One group feels it is just finding its identity and would not wish to make any changes in the near future to membership, others are open to new membership and will check with participants. One group is struggling to gel and this needs to be followed-up.

Its helpful when accompaniers are able to be at Sat session. Papers need to be returned in a timely way to facilitate growth, its not desirable for accompaniers to miss small group meetings

Overall experience very positive and hopeful, life-changing, sign of Church as living growing body of faith, all wish to continue

How do we “spread the news” and get our pastors “on board” were discussed at length.

Other topics to cover surfaced: Biblical studies, Pastoral liturgy, pastoral theology

*It was affirmed that the theme “Putting Out Into The Deep!” And the question: What does it mean to be a Catholic in the world today? Continue to encapsulate what we wish to be about.*

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**Carol explained at each of these evaluation sessions that the Archbishop has invited all of the priests and pastoral associates to join him for a day-long session in September to look at all of the progress and recommendations, so far, and to add their own for the future of adult faith development. She will co-facilitate this gathering with Msgr Pat Powers.**

**September will be used as a time of publicity and registrations. The idea is to create three different cycles that may be completed in any order so that people may join in the process at any point along the way. More people will be most welcome in September. A few people are willing to go to parishes to give a brief presentation on the experience and to invite people to get involved. These names and contact information will be made available to parish communities in the Fall. Our first session in the next segment will take place in October.**

**Sometime during the next segment, all will be invited to gather again and the four foundational aspects of our Christian community: The Word, the Liturgy, the Community and Service will be brought into dialogue with all of the topics that have surfaced. Then we'll ask, in which areas are we strong and in which are we weaker? This will help to determine areas for focus in the final of the first three years.**

**APPENDIX 14**Topics for the first Three-year Cycle of *Putting Out into the Deep*

Below are the topics that were chosen for the first three-year cycle. Some of the topics were presented in two sessions:

- What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today in this post-modern culture?
- What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today as a disciple of Christ?
- How do I share the Good News with others (evangelize) as a Catholic in the world today?
- What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today in relationship with Islam and other faiths?
- What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today making moral decisions about life and relationships?
- What role does the Word of God play for me as a Catholic in the world today?
- What is the call of the baptised and how do we live this call as Catholics in the world today?
- What role do Liturgy and the Eucharist play for us as Catholics in the world today?

- What role do the sacraments play in helping us as Catholics in the world today?
- How do we teach/catechize others, our children, as Catholics in the world today?
- Why do we need to be reconciling people as Catholics in the world today?
- How can we be a source of healing for our Aboriginal community and how can we welcome Aboriginal Spirituality as Catholics in the World Today?
- How can I build a life of prayer and rich spirituality as a Catholic in the world today?
- How do we pray and engage in discernment as Catholics in the World today?
- What is the role of ecumenism for Catholics in the world today?
- What does it mean to be a Catholic in the world today as people of justice?
- What does it mean to be a Catholic in the world today in relation to the decisions about end-of-life?
- How can we become mature critical thinkers about the issues related to being a Catholic in the World today? How can we develop our own ability to use theological reflection to help us engage in this process?
- What are the major challenges to families and communities as Catholics in the world today? What support is needed?
- What are the most pressing justice issues in the area of the Ottawa archdiocese? How can we respond as Catholics in the world today?
- What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today in an aging society?

## Appendix 15

*These are the outline/Notes used for a testimony given at the Certificate Ceremony (May 12, 2006) for the conclusion of the first 3-year cycle of "Putting Out Into the Deep!" by (Mike)<sup>529</sup>, a participant who attended more than 20 out of 24 6 ½ hour sessions*

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Good afternoon (Archbishop Gervias etc..)

Been asked to highlight and share my experiences of AFF - *Putting out into the Deep* - and how the series has challenged me both personally and professionally.

- upfront - as **participant** allowed me flexibility to attend w/o meetings & papers (young family)
  - for my own faith formation: in a nutshell, committed Catholic educator & it's trying to live out my faith and learn more about it (to me, not just about talking the talk but walking the walk that's essential when dealing with issues of faith amongst young adults in the education system).
    - used to be I wanted to know the answers, but now, it's learning to embrace the gift of mystery.
- when I look back over these 3 years, I realize how much more there is to our Catholic faith and the many ways I can come to know Christ and deepen my relationship with him. This series provided and furnished me with the tools to be able to do that. For example:
  - Richard Cote's session on faith, culture and call has challenged me to view culture as a gift, to see the Catholic identity as an invitation to cross (with true compassion) boundaries that impose that impose pain or injustice on others, and to see the invitation to evangelize as one to truly inculturate faith, not to offer it superficially.
  - Joanne Chafe's session helped me to better understand the meaning of evangelization in the Catholic context; specifically the *GDC*: instrumental: knowing one's soil (student's on missionary, best method of instructing = witness, thus the daily struggle + learning to share and open up)

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<sup>529</sup> I have changed the name on these notes to honour anonymity

- Prof. Noel Simard: challenged me to look at the Catholic perspective of what it means to be a moral being and to engage in moral actions. ethical issues: *In Support of Life*

- Ft. Bill Ryan & Joe Gunn: Social Justice - 2 feet of Christian service (direct service and social service) **where students appetite's are at**

- Prof. Luc Tardiff who talked about a spirituality of communion and how the great challenge facing us in the millenium is to make the Church the home and the school of communion. He also shared how the discipline of theological reflection is an essential tool for being Catholic in the world today.

- new found love for scripture & tradition of our Church: Arch Gervais + Maureen Duffy prayerful reading of scripture + history of the Sunday lectionary (norm bonneau) + have the mass broken down and the importance of the Sunday eucharistic liturgy spelled out (Susan Roll) - hearing the meaning or the story behind the symbols gives it so much more of a richness and for me, an appreciation

- **IDENTITY:** Came to know who I was. "Catholic label" vs. "Catholic identity" . One session (Catherine Cherry & Raymond Lafontaine - Who are you? A child of God. + Miriam Martin's 3 tables: Table of our lives, eucharistic table, table of the world. Corbin Eddy - said it's at the altar that we get our true Catholic identity and if you ever forget who you are, think back to what takes place each Sunday at that altar. Thus, our true Catholic identity comes from "putting out into the deep"
- Really then, it's that - the struggle to live an authentic "Catholic identity" (and not just live the label) in our world today that this course has taught me. I struggle - each day - but I've learned that it's a journey, a process.
- **RELATIONSHIP** In essence, each session like a branch on a tree - tree is Christ.
- **COMMUNITY:** Richard Rohr, in his new book Adam's Return The Five Promises of Male Initiation states: "Our religious institutions are not giving very many men access to credible encounters with the holy or even with their own wholeness." In the context of this 3-year series, I would beg to differ. One of the strengths of this program is the community building that takes place. Sharing and discussing our faith with others. Again, the theme of relationship or being in relation with others. For me, this has been a tremendous help - shy, reserved. Yet, Ft. James Mulligan - we must open ourselves up to our students. This has allowed me to do that: Examples:

**Why I might recommend this to others:**

- it's enriching and it's challenging all in one. It gets you moving - and if you're serious about your faith, it's for you. Again, wanted to know the answers but now, learning to live in the mystery. This has changed me - more at peace.

- It gets you talking and sharing. This is where I have a deep conviction about the value of the series as an important experience of local Church: It lends itself quite openly to people from across the diocese to gather together on any number of collaborative projects (ie - *In Support of Life* initiative at St. John and other parishes). You have the resources, people who have gone through the series, available. Why not take advantage of this opportunity? It should not simply be limited to only the parish community. Could also have the parish reps responsible for Adult Faith Formation meet and discuss what is happening in their own parishes and do some collective planning or undertake various initiatives. Here, I think of Youth Ministry - in particular young adults (18-30 range) who have a great spiritual hunger and thirst. Great benefit and opportunity here.
- allows you your own entry point - certificate or participant



## Appendix 16

### ***A Report on a Symposium on Adult faith Development and Leadership Formation, Archdiocese of Ottawa, Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006***

Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006 found 67 people from all of the corners of our diocesan Church gathered for a Symposium on Adult Faith Development and Leadership Formation. Archbishop Marcel Gervais opened the day with a challenge to all to develop a mature faith that has a truly “Catholic” or universal view of the whole community and its needs, that can hold the difficult issues and questions of our time without dividing or polarizing the community, that studies issues and uses sound insight and a spirit of reconciliation to dialogue and solve problems, that is responsive and responsible.

Participants spent time sharing the results of consultations about needs in adult faith development and leadership formation they conducted in their parishes prior to the Symposium. This shaped the foundation for dialogue for the day which also included a review and re-evaluation of the original 5 aims for adult faith development that had been set 3 years ago, the theme “Putting Out Into the Deep!” and the organizing question, “What does it mean for me to be a Catholic in the world today?” Participants indicated that these continue to “frame” our endeavours in adult faith development and leadership for the diocese for the next 3 years.

A panel of experts, Ms. Joanne Chafe, director of the National Office of Religious Education for the Canadian Bishops, and Professors Miriam Martin and Luc Tardif of St. Paul University provided rich and helpful insights and challenges related to adult faith development and its essential, life-giving and normative place in the Christian community. They helped the assembly root itself in the rich perspectives and guide-lines of our Church’s documents and challenged the community to, among other things, grapple with the invitation to see adult faith development as the right and duty of the community, to understand that adult catechesis has particular principles, guidelines and objectives, and that it must always be inculturated into the needs of the community.

Ms Nancy and Mr. Mike<sup>530</sup>, both certificate recipients from the first 3-year cycle of Adult Faith Development, added another layer to the dialogue by witnessing to their experience of adult formation. Ms Carol Kuzmochka, co-ordinator for the archdiocese, added a review of endeavours so far that also added reflection and dialogue.

Participants spent some time preparing a final input about where they would like to see things in 3 year’s time and some recommendations for how to achieve these goals. The three panellists provided some concluding reflections that: affirmed the experience so far and encouraged the formation of adult catechists who can engage in this leadership in the parish

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<sup>530</sup> Names of participants have been changed to honour anonymity

communities; that stressed the importance of continuing to engage in catechesis which rises up out of the dialogue and discernment of the Christian Community; that challenged the community to be open to widening the reflection and questions that are shaping and framing our endeavours.

Msgr Kevin Beach gave a final word of thanks to all participants, and affirmed the importance of re-claiming all that it means to engage in both adult catechesis as well as attending to the need for leadership formation in our local Church.

Evaluations submitted by participants indicated a strong level of satisfaction with the day and hope for the future. Several suggested that a symposium ought to be held on a regular basis.

A Summary of the input from participants is included on the pages to follow. It will provide an ongoing reference point for continued efforts and has already influenced the offerings for the "Putting Out Into the Deep!" adult faith development series commencing a new 3-year cycle in the Fall.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Kuzmochka, co-ordinator

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006

## Summary of Input from Participants:

*Many came with broad consultation from their parishes. The following reflects the summaries of information provided from the small group work at the symposium. Some parishes chose to submit written responses. This has been added as well.*

### **1. Our fundamental identity as disciples of Christ called to fulfill the mission of the Church is what gives meaning to everything we do. This is our baptismal vocation.**

#### **A) What do people need to deepen their sense of discipleship (baptismal vocation)?**

The need for a solid, strong sense of Catholic identity/baptismal identity was emphasized over and over. Formation in faith was named as an urgent need in this regard. Faith development that helps people explore the relevance of faith in daily life and that frames the challenges of the world today in a Christian context and values was the common theme.

People need to be formed for leadership. Not only do they need to know their gifts but also what the roles of lay and ordained are together. We need to be formed for collaborative leadership. Consciousness raising of baptismal responsibility, what it means to be a disciple, and accountability, what is the role and identity of the laity? What is the baptismal call? People need to deepen their sense of moving from spectator to participant. People need opportunities to connect faith/discipleship and day-to-day life.

The role of the community was stressed many times as a place where people need to feel welcomed, supported, formed and invited to share their gifts. A sense of belonging to the broader "Catholic" community and the need to know that we are a community called to mission/to be of service were emphasized. Some mentioned how we need to continue to educate about Vatican II and all it calls us to if we are to move forward. Some mentioned that "we don't understand discipleship, what it means to be baptized and called. We need formation that deals with this." The need to take the difficult issues of the world and reflect on our response as the baptized was emphasized over and over. It was felt that the faith development series, as it has been experienced over the first 3 years, is facilitating this process well and needs to be strengthened and continued.

The need for comprehensive faith education was mentioned so "we will know the teachings of our faith and be able to explain it to others."

Some stressed the need for processes like the "Spiritual Gifts Inventory" that helps people discover what their gifts are and calls them to take leadership.

People need deep personal experiences of faith that are relational. They need opportunities to know that they are loved by God. They need to be able to connect their ideas and experiences of faith and what it means to be baptized with a growing sense of discipleship, being called into action and mission to all. This asks for movement from a passive to an active stance and to a maturing sense of what it means to be "called." Discipleship is indicated by the Gospel integrated into action and a way of life. Some emphasized the need to bring people into dialogue with current moral and justice issues

The need to support the many movements that encourage this, such as cursillio, and prayer groups was emphasized. Others emphasized that Bible study, "Drinking from the Well" and "Alpha" have served them well.

reaching out to young families and children, as well as the need to attend to the formation needs of young adults 18-35 yrs was stressed.

### **1. B) How can our present adult faith development series better meet these needs?**

The effectiveness of what we are already doing was confirmed and encouraged to continue.

The need for better involvement of pastors, and working on collaborative ministry was emphasized. Many asked, "Where are our pastors?" And many encouraged ongoing formation for clergy in collaborative ministry. Many pointed to the need for all to have skills training to better live leadership. The need to clarify the relationship between clergy and lay was emphasized as well as helping lay people better understand how to support priests and train for parish-based ministry.

A need for more parish-based adult catechesis was emphasized. Some asked if the diocesan series could not be adapted for parish use. The need to train people to lead adult catechesis in parishes was emphasized. Others asked if more could not be done "on-line" to help people with daily growth and reflection.

Suggestions were made to help parishes connect more with each other/ and work on regional efforts. On the whole, better communication in the diocese was emphasized as a need.

The importance of advertizing adult faith dev opportunities that are already in place and encouraging parishes to share resources and work together was stressed.

Ecumenical and inter-faith connections were mentioned as priorities, especially because we are surrounded with so much conflict and need to build peaceful relationships.

Many mentioned that "Vatican II seems still undiscovered" and encouraged adult faith development efforts to help with this.

## **2.a) What are the most pressing needs for adult faith development in your community?**

and the diocese needs a "mission" for this. The "real life" issues of people need to be at the forefront shaping the agenda (eg. Parenting, sexuality, spirituality in the workplace and at home, world issues, Christianity and consumerism, creation, ecclesiology, Catholicity, the universality of the Church, stewardship, reaching young families and parents, Catholicism and feminist/liberation theology, cosmology). Some stressed the need to understand ecclesiology and decision-making, to understand our Church structure, and how all the baptized are called to active participation.

Exploring our identity as "disciples" was mentioned many times as a real need. People need to experience conversion, being called to serve, and to be accountable and discern their gifts.

Many stressed the need for more formation in our liturgy. People need to better understand what are we doing at mass in the Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Word .

Some said that evangelization is most pressing, asking "how do we reach this modern world?" "How do we re-connect with those who have left the Church?" "Who are we as Catholics in this modern world?" Some asked, how can we help people to be more hospitable and flexible? How do we welcome people?

Many indicated that reaching young adults 18-30 must be a priority. Reaching parents of children preparing for sacraments was emphasized; some asked, how do we reach the "baby-boomers" who have disconnected from the church and young adults?

The need to respond to everyone's needs was mentioned: children, university-aged parishioners, elders, leadership formation for young adults.

Need was expressed to form adult catechists who can accompany people in faith in the parish.

Some participants cautioned against using vocabulary that is exclusive.

Some mentioned how reconciliation has been lost, and we need to re-learn and re-interpret

Many emphasized the need to focus on servant-leadership principles, social justice issues.

The need to foster links among parishes and in regions was emphasized.

## **2. b) What are the most pressing needs for ministry formation in your community?**

Some indicated that formation for all ministries is needed, emphasizing that:

Qualified lay people must be given more authority to assist the priest;

and people need to be formed for sacramental prep. and mystagogy, formation in children's liturgy, faith sharing, baptismal team, wake vigils, for lectors and eucharistic ministers , hospitality and marriage prep, sacramental prep, parenting

Formation is also needed in the discernment of gifts, ministry to seniors, shut-ins

Also in Pastoral care ministry, in general

Some suggested that Needs surveys would be helpful in parishes

Principles of servant-leadership formation in ministry itself need to be emphasized.

The need for formation in theological reflection was mentioned, saying that meetings that include ethical reflection and decision-making are essential for parish communities.

Others stressed that communities need to be formed who can hold the tensions of cultures, age variation, other diversity such as issues of human sexuality

### **What would you like to see in 3 year's time...for 1 and 2?:**

Better formal networks and teams around the diocese and a firm link in every parish; more trained leaders

more openness between clergy and lay

reception and celebration of the gifts people bring joyfully throughout the diocese...

Explore and honour gifts beyond parish involvement... Stronger ecumenical and inter-faith connections, regional contacts and resources

groups to support each other in Catholic values, life, struggles to be faithful...

## **3. One of the most prophetic calls in our modern/post-modern times came from Pope**

**John XXIII at the opening of the Second Vatican Council when he invited us to "read the signs of the times."**

**What are the "signs of our times" to which we need to pay attention? Are there any unique "signs of the times" in your particular community that need to be noticed?**

*General:* complacency (puts us asleep - we need to wake up!); religious ed co-ordinator looking at post Catholic schools, post Christian era; ecumenism, interacting and sharing; the Church is in crisis, will Christ find faith on earth? Society is very immoral, political correctness, people do not like to identify themselves as Christian Catholics at work too hectic a life/ lack of time...,inter-faith",issues like "holiday- tree" how do we deal with the controversies and questions of our time...awakening to the need to be aware of the teachings of other Faiths (eg. Islam), diversity within the Church, cultural and religious diversity, ethical and moral trends - need for ethics and accountability for all members of the Church; issues of inclusivity and exclusivity, consumerism and materialistic society, current affairs opportunities to discuss in the light of faith; technology, disconnection (from each other, from our roots) fear-generated society (terrorism, violence, a general malaise), need for joy and a caving for spirituality, life

issues, marriage, divorce (support opportunities);/ we can't ignore our priests shortage and the shortage of religious personnel; people are distracted and focused on entertainment; women continue to call for a role in priestly ministry; political correctness carries much power; individualism is powerful; uncertainty and dissension around Church teaching; People are disillusioned and leaving the Church; ecumenism seems forgotten; there is a disparity between an increasing conservative clergy and the people; we need to better understand how the Church is governed and the role of laity; people are confused

*Unique:* celebration of cultural identity especially for immigrant communities;

cultural diversity/mono-cultural some are inter-generational and some are single

generational; people are so busy. We need to find ways within this to help them recognize their vocation; our parish needs to welcome; transportation, organizational Church has hurt people and we need reconciliation

**4. Please reflect on the 5 Aims that came out of our consultation of 2003. Do these still hold or do they need to be re-shaped( and what re-shaping do you recommend?)?**

#1 "Adult Catechesis or Adult faith Development" **ongoing and still clearly the first priority;**

#2 "ministry-specific formation to meet certain needs" **needs priority over 4,5**

#3 "formation on various topics of interest and concern" **an important ongoing need**

#4 “to help parishes connect and share” **this is important and needs help through better communication. Is a “list-serve” possible?**

#5 “to form pastoral associates for collaborative ministry in parishes”

**it was endorsed but reservations and suggestions were mentioned: one group emphasized the need for special training for this role, especially in theological reflection; another group emphasized the need for this role to be discussed and clarified, and for expectations and aims to be clarified, another group suggested that parishes ought to nominate people for these positions and then support them in their formation process.**

### **5. Are there any other recommendations for our next steps in adult faith development and leadership formation you'd like to make?**

We need to reach and welcome the disenfranchised, marginalized; poor, non practicing - many people are disconnected; we need to help people to expand their visions of God; we need to identify objectives in the adult faith development series early on, and have a synopsis of sessions available; clustering groups of parishes together to share best practices is important; We need to strengthen the link among home, parish, school; keep the “graduates” from the first cycle active - quarterly meetings and invitations to be involved in activities; the focus on real-life issues is so important; invite those who have experienced the first cycle to give testimony to others in parishes; let’s remember that learning can make people uncomfortable - change and transformation. We need to accompany them well; we need to better understand the gift of the sacrament of reconciliation, and we need better collaboration and understanding between lay and ordained;

We need sessions on: leadership, how to reach parents and bring others back, on youth and the

Church, how to pass on our faith ; Sessions on collaborative leadership are essential. Where are our pastors? Why aren't we having this conversation together? We want to work collaboratively. We are all responsible together. Our clergy need to be re-educated along with us. Can we make sure our clergy know what adult faith development is all about and what's going on?

Sessions need to be better advertized. We're not hearing about them.

We need listening skills and conflict resolution skills that help us solve the problems of our times We need to train people who can lead adult faith development in their parishes

**Finally, Small groups of Participants were asked to give summary feedback to two final questions:**

## 1. Where would we like to be in 3 year's time in Adult faith Development and Leadership formation?

Greater awareness of discipleship among all in our diocese; more adult faith development going on in more places; a "graduate program" that helps people continue...; every parish represented and more men among participants; a clear mandate from the diocese about supporting the formation series in ALL parishes, and a clear statement about the meaning of the formation; parish priests who support this formation and who are willing and prepared to work collaboratively with formed lay people; more joint efforts among parishes; more prayer groups and movements like "Landings" to welcome people back; we need a syllabus of the "adult faith development" series that includes objectives and goals; We need parishes that understand what good adult catechesis is about.

## 2. What are two recommendations your group would like to make to get us there?

Parishes need to be open to have people give testimony about what they have lived in the formation series and encouraging others to participate; prepare formation packages that can be used in parishes; prepare catechists of adults who can lead in parishes; form an association of alumnus who are still accompanied in their journey of faith; publicize more, we are not hearing about adult faith development in our parishes; we need to develop a "culture of discipleship" as a diocesan theme.

### ***And our 3 experts/panellists provided some closing recommendations:***

Joanne Chafe affirmed the flexibility of what is being offered as very important, and named the "Putting Out Into the Deep!" series as cutting edge, contemporary and relevant adult catechesis. She stressed the importance of adult formation that can tackle the real issues of the world and people's lives;

Miriam Martin emphasized that the kind of listening and consultation that has helped shape our direction is vital and not to be lost. She highlighted her own respect for the quality of what has been lived so far and encouraged it to continue. She also affirmed the fidelity of those who have been involved in the first 3-year cycle;

Luc Tardif encouraged space for education for contemplation; a place where people can learn to be contemplative. He also encouraged helping people develop specific skills and competencies for dialogue, facilitation and witnessing - important for life and the future of the world. He also suggested changing our organizing question to a slogan that is more life-giving and positive.