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Adults Study the Catechism

What is the most Catholic word in the English language? Is it *Jesus? Love? Church? Sacrament?* Another answer might be: "*and*". Yes, the simple conjunction: *and*.

We enter into communion with God through his grace *and* our freedom. We come to know the Lord, one *and* triune, by faith *and* reason.

We receive the fullness of divine Revelation, Jesus the incarnate Word, in Scripture *and* Tradition. As Christ fully reveals the truth by his words *and* actions, we too are called to spread the Gospel, by deeds *and* words.

We grow in holiness by faith *and* works. Our spiritual growth is both personal *and* social, within our family the Church.

Yes indeed, *and* is a very Catholic word. This is an idea that Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport, Connecticut, stressed at the two gatherings held in Clongowes Wood College, on 4 and 5 of July.

Bishop Caggiano is no stranger to these shores, having catechized thousands of young people at *Youth 2000* Summer Festivals in 2009 and 2013. This time he came at the request of the *Adult Studies of the Catechism*, an initiative which is growing in parishes all over Ireland, with hundreds of people studying the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* on a weekly basis, aided by a user-friendly course from the Maryvale Institute in Birmingham.

July 4th focussed on bringing the Catechism to young people. Bishop Caggiano spoke of the idealism of youth, coupled with the contemporary crisis in society. The advantages and pitfalls of new technologies were explored in the context of finding new ways to transmit the beauty of the Faith to young people.

The following day was for those involved in the study of the Catechism, and brought together people from every corner of the island, enthused by their study and keen to offer it to others.

And: It was everywhere! Participants spoke of how the study of the Catechism is enriching their own spiritual lives *and* helping to strengthen parish and family life.

In fact the Clongowes meetings were a beautiful experience of ecclesial communion because they were attended by women *and* men of all walks of life, young *and* old, laypeople *and* religious *and* priests.

The participation of the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Brown, Archbishop Neary of Tuam, and of Bishops Kelly, Duffy and Nulty, was hugely appreciated by everyone.

The four “pillars” of the Catechism; Creed, Liturgy, Life in Christ *and* Prayer, make for an organic presentation of Catholic belief. Drawing on Scripture *and* Tradition, *and* on the lived theology of the saints, the Gospel is shown to be ever new *and* ever faithful to its origins.

The link between spiritual life *and* knowledge of the Faith, between knowing *and* loving Jesus, was another hallmark of the gathering. The celebration of Mass and of Morning and Evening Prayer had pride of place. To study the truths of the Faith is to come to know the Truth who is a Person: Jesus Christ. Every page of the Catechism speaks of Christ, true God *and* true Man, supreme Catechism *and* Catechist.

To know and to love Christ in his Church; to be articulate, joyful and credible witnesses of the Gospel: these were the challenges emerging from those two memorable days.

Pope Francis asks us: “Every Christian is challenged, here and now, to be actively engaged in evangelization ... So what are we waiting for?” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 120).

Adult Studies of the Catechism is a wonderful way to respond to the Holy Father’s challenge.

For information on the study-group nearest you, or to get help in starting one, contact: 087-795 0325, or catechism@corkandross.org

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