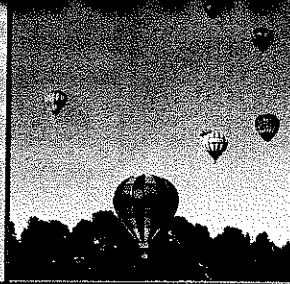


# Discovering Jesus Christ the Path to Freedom



A Christian education program  
of the Church of Gatineau-Hull



*Discovering Jesus Christ: The Path To Freedom* is published by the Diocese of Gatineau-Hull, Diocesan Services for Christian Life. The launch took place on the feast of Pentecost, Sunday, May 30 2004.

Translated from French:

"À la découverte de Jésus Christ, chemin de liberté",  
by Pamela Levac.

May 2004

Registrations of copyright ISBN: 2-921762-05-4  
Quebec National Library  
National Library of Canada

**Diocese of Gatineau-Hull**

180, Mont Bleu Blvd

Gatineau, Québec,

J8Z 3J5

Phone : 819•771•8391

Fax: 819•778•8969

Website: [http:// www.diocesegatineau-hull.qc.ca](http://www.diocesegatineau-hull.qc.ca)



### Discovering...

Because we are searching for life  
in abundance,  
Because we are called to journey in our hearts,  
Because following the path leads to discoveries,  
encounters, exchanges, challenges and adventure...  
It is an invitation for us  
to explore the signs of God  
who likes to walk with us.

### Jesus Christ...

Because walking with Jesus Christ  
transforms the way we see life,  
Because walking with Jesus Christ  
becomes a meeting between brothers and sisters,  
Because walking with Jesus Christ  
becomes the heart of the Good News.

### The path to freedom...

Because through his resurrection,  
Jesus Christ went from death to life,  
Filled with the Holy Spirit,  
Jesus Christ became the Living One,  
Following the Living One  
makes us free and more alive,  
men and women standing strong.



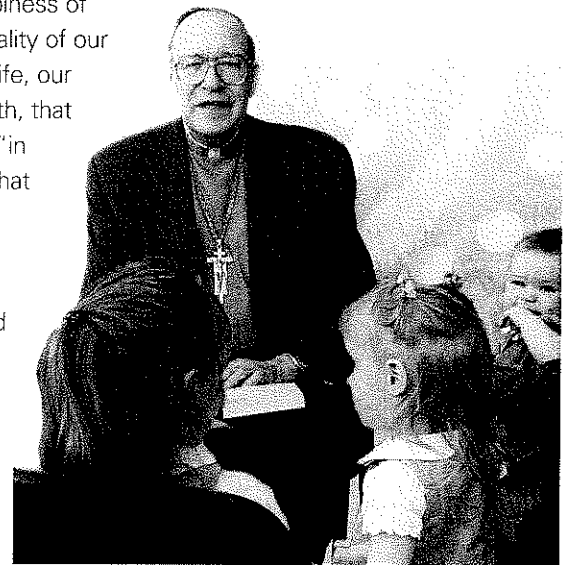


## To the Church of God that is in Gatineau-Hull,

I come to you, the Church of Gatineau-Hull, with a happy and hopeful heart, and speak to the diversity that makes up your individual parishes and communities. May God, the Father of Jesus, who sends the Spirit to renew the face of the earth, shower you with his generous blessings, and may he be your Peace!

It is with this Peace, on this day of Pentecost, that I entrust to you our catechetical diocesan project. This document reflects the murmurings of the Spirit, who wants to nurture new life in our Church, as at Mary's breast. The Church was born in a public square on this day, blown by the powerful breeze of the Spirit, after having sprung from Jesus' open heart on the cross. Today, the story of the disciples being sent into the world is entrusted to us as a treasure that we must continuously update in our world.

For two thousand years, communities have been worshipping and praying to God, listening to his Word, living fellowship and sharing with the poor. They proclaim and witness to the Gospel and its relevance to the happiness of believers. Today, it is through the quality of our community life, our enthusiasm for life, our celebrations and how we live our faith, that people nearby will hear us proclaim "in their language" the great message that God is acting among us, that he is tenderness, faithfulness, mercy and forgiveness. Thus, many will dare to believe, dare to put their hope in God and let themselves be loved by this Love that transforms personal and social lives, families and human structures, like yeast in dough.





This is the path we are called to walk on. We must now have the humble courage to journey forth from the practice of preparing the sacraments to the practice of learning to live a Christian life, where all the life-forces of families and communities and different generations, from grand-parents to little ones come together. The Risen Lord will walk with us along this path. With Him, like in Emmaus, we will walk and talk with others in order to draw them out of their sadness, explain the Scriptures, and set their hearts on fire. We will share the wine and bread of our friendship, of our goods, of the Word and the Eucharist. In this way, our world here and now will know what it is like to be loved by God and will taste a joy that no one will be able to take away.

This day is a joyful day! The Spirit of Pentecost fills us with boldness, makes us creative and pushes us out "into the deep". Let us dare to not be afraid! And may He who is Peace walk with us on this journey.

†Roger Ébacher  
Bishop of Gatineau-Hull

On this Sunday of Pentecost  
May 30, 2004



<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>So let us raise our sails! Today we are strengthened in our call to become communities that are schools of catechism. ....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>"Vous le verrez en Galilée" The Outaouais... it is our Galilee today. ....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Our challenge: Proposing Jesus Christ today as the path to freedom .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>The main points of the project for Christian education .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Our model: A catechesis of the journey .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Characteristics of the catechesis of the journey .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A catechesis that is inspired by the baptismal catechumenate: .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>A catechesis for everyone .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>An intergenerational catechesis .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>In the spirit of baptismal catechumenate and the catechesis of the journey .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Several areas of focus .....</b>	<b>14</b>



Our goal: Become communities that are schools of catechesis .....	15
Places for the Word: .....	16
Places for prayer and celebration: .....	18
Places for community life and fellowship: .....	17
Places for changing the world: .....	17
A project in the works: A catechesis of the community .....	18
Guidelines for the future .....	20
Existing paths for catechesis .....	20
 A great adventure of faith, courage, freedom .....	 25
 Bibliography .....	 29





---

*"If man doesn't make the wind,  
he can raise the sails"*

**Saint Augustine**

---

On this day of Pentecost 2004, we are taking a chance on being outside, like pilgrims subject to every wind and open to new encounters; like explorers ready to raise anchor and cast off for adventure; like passers-by open to newness and ready to stop and take part in conversations and fellowship. A meeting worthy of Pentecost.

*Outside, in the weakness,  
Because the outdoors belongs to everyone,  
It is a public place, not private,  
It is a place for passers-by, for waiting...  
It is the place for all those who do not know where to go,  
The place for all those whom no one is expecting,  
The place for those who are excluded, marginal,  
Poor, hungry, thirsty and cold...*

*Outside, new life is born,  
There where plants sprout, seeds are sown, buds grow and all  
the signs of life appear.  
To go outside is to take a chance, it means leaving, going  
out, daring!<sup>1</sup>*

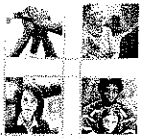
---

<sup>1</sup> Jean Debruyne, *Points de Repère*, February 2004, number 190.



Pentecost marks the birth and the growth of the Church, the call to mission, the celebration of the Spirit who breathes life into us and enthusiasm and energy into our communities, allowing us to try something new, leave our old safety nets and dare to announce *the Gospel in today's world and offer Jesus Christ, life force, the way to become fully human.*

***So let us raise our sails! Today we  
are strengthened in our call to  
become communities that are schools  
of catechism.***



*"Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He  
has been raised  
from the dead, and indeed he is going  
ahead of you  
to Galilee; there you will see him.'"*

**Matthew 28:7**



**"Vous le verrez en Galilée" The  
Outaouais... it is our Galilee today.**

A beautiful land of rivers and lakes, springs and waterfalls,  
hills and valleys, bridges and portages.

A big city, urban and rural towns...

A crossroads, where people from diverse horizons have made  
their homes:

from Luskville to Fasset, along the Outaouais River,

from Kasabazua to Point-Gatineau, from Saint-Pierre-de-Wakefield  
to Hull Island, along the Gatineau river,

From Val-des-Bois and Notre-Dame-de-la-Salette to Buckingham and  
Masson-Angers, along the Lièvre,

From Duhamel and Chénéville to Montebello and Plaisance along  
the Petite-Nation,

around Lakes Simon, MacGregor, Sainte-Marie and Deschenes...

So many paths to walk, bike, snowshoe, ski or canoe...

So many stopping places, lakeshores and riverbeds to discover and  
visit...

So many neighbourhoods and parishes to visit and people to meet...

So many public parks and squares to celebrate in and share our joy,  
our solidarity and our friendship...



The roads in the Outaouais are also our *roads to Emmaus*. Don't we need to "*walk through our area*", stopping to chat, in order to know it better, to know ourselves better, to "*share*" everything that makes us wonder, that makes us alive, and risk making a connection that is worthy of the Gospel?

We are launching this document on the occasion of Pentecost in order to set the new course that we have been charting for nearly four years. The main guidelines will serve as points of reference for activities and journeys which are being developed in our respective communities and for all of the catechetical activities that we will put together to rise to the challenge of evangelization. May the Spirit of Pentecost guide us along the paths of the Outaouais, allowing us to *Discover Jesus Christ, the path to freedom!*



## Our challenge: Proposing Jesus Christ today as the path to freedom

---

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

---

Just as on the morning after Easter, the mission of the Church, right here and right now, is *to evangelize, to announce the Good News of Jesus Christ*. The aim of the catechesis is therefore an encounter with and discovery of Jesus Christ, an invitation to follow Him and be guided by the Holy Spirit. The General Directory for Catechesis defines it as, *"the itinerary for faith development, learning and training for all Christian living."*<sup>2</sup>

How can we rise to this challenge when the Gospel no longer seems pertinent to today's social, cultural and religious context? How can we undertake this mission in our Church in the Outaouais? How can we rediscover in *Jesus the true path to becoming human*, that meets us in our search for happiness and touches the core of what is at stake in our struggle to become fully human? How can we propose Jesus, giver of life and freedom? These are questions that we have been considering together for over three years in order to develop guidelines for our Christian education program. We noted several key points that came up during the preparation stage.

---

<sup>2</sup> General Directory for Catechesis, number 30, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997.



- The Christian message is for people of all ages who have embarked on different journeys with very diverse faith itineraries. It reaches them where they are, and in different ways: at the moment the Gospel is first heard, at the time of Christian initiation, and when faith matures. These are the three moments of evangelization.
- Through baptism, we become the authors of this *mission of evangelization*. The Holy Spirit is the motor that drives this great adventure. We all participate on different levels, witnessing through our daily lives, the way we are present to others and involved in the world, and through the communities we create in our attempts to follow Jesus.
- Today, the community is the *leader of the catechesis*:
  - because it offers us the possibility of living all aspects of Christian life;
  - through its welcome and sharing of the Word;
  - by its liturgy-centered gatherings and through the celebration of sacraments and events in the life of the community;
  - through the witness it is to society;
  - and more specifically by proposing catechetical activities tied to the preparation of sacraments for people of all ages: introduction to faith, initiation and education. The lines that distinguish these activities are more and more blurred, with each individual taking what they need, at whatever crossroads they may find themselves.



For a more detailed  
description of the project  
for the Ministry  
of Education

---

*"What are you discussing with each other  
while you walk along?"*

**Luke 24:17**

---

### **Our model: A catechesis of the journey**

To journey means to cover ground, walk a path slowly,  
progressively and according to a certain itinerary. The **catechesis of  
the journey** means walking part of the trail *with others*: men,  
women and children from around here; people who are *reflections  
of life that have been touched by the light of the gospel* and who  
propose Jesus Christ today as the path to freedom, life  
and happiness.

The road is a privileged symbol in the Bible. Think of everyone that  
God sent on a journey: *Abraham and Sara, Moses and his people,  
the prophets, the disciples of Emmaus, Paul, Philip...* and Jesus  
himself "*of no fixed address*", always moving.

The Gospel tells stories of journeys that illustrate the evangelical  
way to accompany others on their journey or in their daily lives.



"Now on that same day *two of them were going* to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking *with each other* about all these things that had happened. While they were *talking and discussing*, Jesus himself *came near* and *went with them* ... And he said to them, '*What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?*'" Jesus' first concern is what was preoccupying them, he *draws nearer* to them in their difficult situation.

Then, after having walked and listened to each other, Jesus tells them in detail about Moses and all the prophets, and he explains to them everything in the Scriptures that refers to him.

And when they reached the *village towards which they had been walking*, Jesus wanted to *go further*. But the two travelers held him back, saying: "*Stay with us*". He then went in to be with them.

(Luke 24:13-35)

On the road to Gaza, Philip meets an Ethiopian government employee, a stranger who is returning, full of questions, from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Philip *runs to him* and asks: "*Do you understand what you are reading?*"

(Acts 8:26-30)

While crossing the town of Jericho, Jesus meets up with Zacchaeus. He calls to him to come down from the tree, saying "*I must stay at your house today*".

(Luke 19:1-7)

On the road from Judea to Galilee, Jesus stops near Jacob's well in Samaria. He meets a woman who is walking alone towards the well because she has been excluded from the group. "*Give me a drink*," he says.

(John 4:1-7)





These *tales of journey* and *hospitality* give us seven catechetical points to consider:<sup>3</sup>

- ✦ Jesus is the one who *draws near*, who involves himself in the lives of others;
- ✦ the one who *journeys with others*, who walks down all of life's roads, who gets off the beaten path;
- ✦ the one who *asks questions and listens, who joins conversations*;
- ✦ the one who *opens the Word* and makes it available, accessible and meaningful;
- ✦ the one who *allows himself to be welcomed*: who asks for news, for a drink, who accepts hospitality and sits down for a meal. He knows how to welcome and be welcomed at the same time. How sensitive! A sign of trust and respect, like God;
- ✦ the one who *celebrates*, who makes sacred moments important;
- ✦ the one who *lets people be free*, who *lets them choose whether to stay or go*.

Along the way, the memory of an old fairy tale and its' interpretation come along to clear up the meaning of the catechetical conversation. We could call it the *pastoral story of Tom Thumb*: to know how to *throw little stones full of evangelical meaning on the twisted roads of peoples' lives*. Perhaps some day someone will pick up one of these stones and remember, become aware, and say: "*wasn't our heart on fire...*". And in Perrault's tale, the stones were also little pieces of bread that can feed peoples and relieve their hunger.

<sup>3</sup> Reinhold Houteveld-Minet, *Il nous parle en chemin, la catéchèse paroissiale. Communauté. Parole. Chemin*, Lumen Vitae, 1999, chapitre 2.



What little *stones of meaning* do we have to spread today? What *grains of salt* do we have to offer to savour life? What *sources of water* can we direct people to, in order to quench their thirst for life?



*"People from my country are people of words and conversations"*

It should not surprise us, then, as we embark on this catechetical journey, to hear André Fossion call upon us to use our capacity of *entering into a conversation*, our ability to learn the language of those we meet and to learn to share their interests. We must ask ourselves, as Jesus did on the road to Emmaus: *"What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"* This, he tells us, is the most important evangelical quality.

"It is not possible to evangelize without the ability to have a friendly dialogue with another about anything that makes up life itself. Sometimes we say that our contemporaries are indifferent to Christianity, but isn't the opposite true? Are we not also indifferent to what makes them tick, incapable of talking with them about what they are passionate about in their lives, their pastimes, their work or their relationships?"<sup>4</sup>

This is also the path that Vatican II told us to follow in 1965:  
*"The joy and the hope, the sadness and the anguish of people of our time — of the poor especially and of all those who suffer — are also the joy and the hope, the sadness and the anguish of Christ's disciples. Everything that is truly human echoes in their hearts".*

---

<sup>4</sup> André Fossion, quoted by H. Deruelle, *Inter-a conference, Passage, October 2007*



*The paths and the words with which we  
tell each other about God pass through  
our history, pass through you and me.<sup>5</sup>*

## Characteristics of the catechesis of the journey

### **A catechesis that is inspired by the baptismal catechumenate:**

The catechumenate is a tradition that goes back to the beginning of the Church; it is the process of initiation into Christian life for adults, for teens and school-age children who request baptism and whose mind and development can help us breathe life and coherence into our catechetical projects.

This is the true catechesis of the journey. It unfolds over time:

- with stages and thresholds to overcome;
- individual and community support;
- community sponsorship;
- times of learning about Christian life, discovering the Gospel, welcoming Church traditions (the sign of the cross, the Our Father and the Apostles Creed);
- a time of Lenten conversion;
- the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist during the Easter Vigil;
- a time to reflect on my experiences with the new found community and to engage in a plan for the future.

<sup>5</sup> *Il est une autre fois*, text by Josée Bourgault and music by Suzie Arseneault, Carleton Place, septembre 2002



A long journey of initiation *into the heart of faith*, carried out by a Christian community and directed towards the Easter mystery.

The baptismal catechumenate is therefore a model of the catechesis of the journey, with emphasis on missionaries, liturgies, and communities that are intergenerational and available to all. It contains the essential elements of a faith journey that can inspire the development of other Christian training programs for all ages.

### **A catechesis for everyone**

The catechesis of the journey guides us along the road to meet people of all ages — children, youth, adults and the elderly — who all have different faith itineraries. Not so long ago, the word catechesis only brought to mind childhood and adolescence. But we are aware today that our whole lives are crisscrossed with moments of catechesis:

- ✠ times of awakening, initiation and training;
- ✠ times of questioning and new beginnings;
- ✠ times to recharge one's batteries and to grow.

If we continue to compartmentalize to childhood, it will be further and further removed from the true challenges of life, and the issues that keep us from becoming fully human in our society.

A catechesis in which everything is de-compartmentalized: age, time, place, the journey one is taking, different types of accompaniment, various pastoral service. More and more, it becomes important to strengthen the ties between different types of services: between teams that help prepare Baptism, the Eucharist, Confirmation and Marriage, between social pastoral teams and liturgical teams. It is also important to integrate catechesis into the pastoral life of the entire community, and to keep the whole community up to date on catechetical activities so that everyone feels concerned and involved.



### **An intergenerational catechesis**

The catechesis of the journey encourages different generations to interact (children with adults, teens with the elderly) in order to allow them to share time and space, knowledge and experience. The knowledge and experience of each individual can thereby serve the whole community.<sup>6</sup>

### **In the spirit of baptismal catechumenate and the catechesis of the journey**

- we could progressively organize Christian education for children with different programs that emphasize the Bible, liturgy, art and culture, community or intergenerational, experiences, spiritual experiences or ways to get involved;
- we could set up different types of welcome or sponsorship in the community;
- we could experience times of conversion to the light of the Gospel together;
- we could offer more structured programs, or shorter ones, for small groups of young people, families and the community as a whole, with steps and thresholds to cross;
- the preparation of the sacraments would therefore become a place of integration and more immediate preparation for the celebration of the sacraments;
- we could create times in which we can share our experiences, name what we have learned in the Christian community and become involved in future projects;
- in this same spirit, Christian communities must tell children of all ages, teens and adults about baptism and offer this experience to them.

<sup>6</sup> Anne-Marie Authier, during a meeting in our diocese in the fall of 2022



### Several areas of focus

Emphasize **adult Christian education**: The General Directory for Catechesis states that catechesis for adults must be a high priority. It is important that the programs that we have in place for children connect with programs for adults: intergenerational and community activities can ease these encounters. We can no longer consider catechesis as the domain of children. This may leave them with no future.

We must learn the **language** of those we meet; know how to get close to people and their culture. This is another one of God's teachings from Pentecost: *"each one heard them speak in his own language... and everyone expressed himself according to the gift of the Spirit."*

We must get used to **pastoral dialogue**, in pairs or in small groups. It is important to learn to truly listen to others, *to read the map for their journey with them to see how far they have gone*. We need to have interesting, pertinent and meaningful programs of catechesis to offer them that will meet their spiritual needs.

We must consider **people's experience**. Trusting their experience: *"is this not the place where we meet God, our history of God, where we find our individual holy journey?"*<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> *Faire route ensemble, la pastorale des parcours demandant le Baptême de leur enfant*, the Church of Gatineau-Hull, March 2001, page 9



This is particularly true for young people and adults. We have already integrated it into our program for the preparation of Confirmation and Baptism with young families.

*"What is important is that life experiences of those undergoing the catechesis may be told and that they enter into the content of the catechesis as material to be worked with. The end result will be a reinterpretation of life's experiences in the light of the Gospel and a better knowledge of the Gospel itself."*<sup>8</sup>

**Privilege these experiences** in relation to the four dimensions of Christian life. Experience is a place of learning and discovery that is interactive and dynamic, that leads to encounters and encourages greater knowledge. It is important therefore to find a good balance between experience and knowledge.

**Our goal: Become communities that are schools of catechesis**<sup>9</sup>

It is a project for the whole Christian community. We are called to enter into this vision and to put it into practice. We need to set up a community catechesis, *within and beginning with communities which will become schools of catechesis.*

In the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:42), Luke outlines the major characteristics of the lives of the first communities: *a community that proclaims and meditates on the texts upon which it was founded, that celebrates its rites and prayers, that lives fraternal solidarity and seeks justice for the poor.* This is how they transmit their treasure from generation to generation, according to Péguy's lovely image, *from hand to hand, from heart to heart...*

<sup>8</sup> André Fossion, *Dieu toujours communion*, essai sur la catéchèse diocésaine, Lumen Vitae 1997, page 86; and all of chapter 6: *En et ad, des relations complexes.*

<sup>9</sup> Roger Énard, *Devenir une communauté qui soit une école de catéchèse: les implications théologiques du projet catéchétique diocésain*, September 2003.



The four dimensions of Christian community life, as they are outlined in Acts, are linked to the *four places of community catechesis*:

**Places for the Word:**

*"faithful to the apostles' teachings"*

Offer places where the Word can circulate among members of the community:

- a meaningful and pertinent comment during celebrations of baptism, marriage and funerals, and during important celebrations throughout the liturgical year;
- suggestions about how to continue to discuss the homily throughout the week;
- small groups for Bible study, coffee hours to discuss the Word, classes about the Bible, workshops, book clubs, "theological teas" ...;
- places that are careful to use a language that reflects each person's experience in order to offer them faith in a believable way that is pertinent and interesting for all.

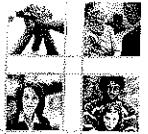
**Places for prayer and celebration:**

*"faithful sharing the bread and praying"*

Sunday mass is an essential time and place for Christian education.

- How can we offer lively Eucharists that promote exchange and dialogue?
- How can we be more inclusive and offer different suggestions for location of worship, and different ways to pray and celebrate?
- The liturgical year can be an opportunity for a long catechesis spread out over time and particularly emphasized during the high points of the Christian calendar.





### **Places for community life and fellowship:**

*"faithful to life in fraternal communion"*

- by offering a friendly welcome, sharing, hospitality and caring for one another;
- in the administrative offices, in the church, during diverse meetings and activities...;
- in places that encourage fellowship, the exchange of ideas and assistance;
- by having office hours, leaving phone messages or sending e-mails;
- during community work days and community celebrations;
- through the quality of our communication with each other and the spread of information.

### **Places for changing the world:**

an essential place for evangelical witnessing

- using our faith to encourage us to make a commitment to help those who are less fortunate than we are;
- in close contact with the whole network of pastoral services: social services, health and other organizations working to humanize our society;
- meeting with people in coffee shops, in schoolyards, in the "small village bar"...



### **A project in the works: A catechesis of the community**

Catechesis must now become a community project: all Christians, with their diverse talents and calls to ministry, must bear the responsibility for spreading the Gospel. This can no longer be left to a small group of catechists who are in close contact with the priest or the pastoral team responsible for the project. Everyone's experience must be put to the service of the whole church, to accompany today's pilgrims on *life's bittersweet path, the path of serving, the path of sharing the Word among believers, the path of one's inner life and broken bread in memory of the risen one.*<sup>10</sup>

And in the community, *all generations are called to work together.*

The foundation of a *community catechesis* is the belief that each person has a particular and pertinent experience of Christian life that can be meaningful to others that he or she meets along the way. How can we develop our catechetical strengths together? We don't all have the gift of storytelling, witnessing, music or leadership, helping the sick or the poor... But there are so many ways to become involved in the Christian experience, so many possible meeting places, and there is plenty to do for everyone: from the experienced pastoral counselor to the shy witness who has never spoken out. We are all called to share along the way.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Forming Faith in Young People: United Assembly of Christian Bishops, Paris 2000, chapter 7*



The challenge is great. It is not enough to just give the boat a shove and then let it go where the wind blows. We also have to provide anchors and navigational points. We have to ask pertinent questions in order to direct our journey and make it coherent. Let us continue to reflect on our bishop's words that invite us to become *communities that are schools of catechesis*:

- ▣ How can we become communities that are schools of catechesis?
- ▣ What projects do we already have in place?
- ▣ How can we share this responsibility in the community?
- ▣ What is the role of the pastoral team and of each member of this team?
- ▣ The role of churchwardens, the parish Pastoral Council or the Unit Pastoral Council?
- ▣ The role of families?
- ▣ The role of the liturgical committee, the social-pastoral committee, the elderly? Other services?
- ▣ Who will oversee this vision and manage this project in our communities?
- ▣ How can we integrate catechism into the pastoral projects for the whole community and the pastoral unit?
- ▣ What training, what help and what kind of support network do we need?



---

*Draw me a community!*

---

### **Guidelines for the future**

Following a diocesan meeting that took place in the Fall of 2003, we were asked to *imagine the Church 25 years from now*, a church that can meet the challenges that arise from today's mission. It is an invitation to consider the characteristics of our present Christian community that will serve us in the future, and to develop others that will be needed. Here is a list, taken from Normand Provencher's book, *Trop Tard?* (Too late?)

A Church where "we" the baptized are recognized, confirmed.

A Church where diverse ministries are practiced.

A Church that calls on the talents of its members to ensure the vitality of its communities.

A Church that encourages the growth of different types of communities or networks where everyone can feel at ease.

A Church that takes the back roads, even dirt roads, and that recognizes that life grows there where men and women live, work, suffer and rejoice.

Tomorrow's Church will not grow out of vast, anonymous prairies, but out of the fields that we walk across.<sup>11</sup>

### **Existing paths for catechesis**

The paths for the catechesis of the journey are many, varied, de-compartmentalized and *full of the future when we dare to walk in a new direction*. Here is a quick overview of some activities that are based on the different strengths of our Christian communities. They include the participation of the different teams that help prepare the sacraments, liturgical teams, prayer and meditation teams, teams

---

<sup>11</sup> Normand Provencher, *TROP TARD? L'avenir de l'Église d'ici*, Novalis, 2002, pages 217-218.



that help the sick and bereaved, social-pastoral teams, and also individual initiatives. We can participate all together by offering different paths that are varied, free, meaningful and pertinent:

- activities to accompany Christian education:
  - set up a Committee for Adult Education, arrange a potluck supper (ALPHA), Small Share Groups, a community kitchen...
  - groups for Bible recitatives
  - movements such as Cursillo and the Neo-Catechumenate...
- projects connected to the celebration of the sacraments :
  - sponsorship programs
  - outdoor activities, summer camps, prayer vigils...
- activities centered around life's sacred moments:
  - birth, love, sickness and death, forgiveness (forgiveness is far more than a sacrament associated more or less with first communion; it is a fundamental part of Christian life that we need to rediscover and experience at every stage in our life).
- activities connected to rites of passage, times of crisis or questioning (the experience of groups of people involved in Beginning Again).
- activities centered around Sunday celebrations and important celebrations throughout the liturgical year:
  - youth and adult choirs,
  - the Easter Vigil, Pentecost celebrations for artists...



- activities centered around social justice and initiatives that are in the service of humanizing the world in the name of the Gospel:
  - community kitchens, food banks,
  - centres for families and youth, support groups, sponsorship activities;
  - fighting poverty and illiteracy;
  - a round table on hunger;
  - invitations to other Christian groups that are in solidarity with our goals;
  - projects to encourage international solidarity: creating Development and Peace teams in our parishes and with young people, teams of Partage Tiers-Monde, solidarity projects with Haiti, Peru, the Dominican Republic, India;
  - activities, talks and workshops with religious in the Outaouais;
  - cooperation with the schools and their community outreach projects.
- activities centered around spirituality:
  - groups of Christian meditation and prayer; ...
  - pilgrimages, times of silence and meditation at Bethel or Champboisé or the boutique du silence;
  - with groups that are associated with spirituality and the mission of our local religious communities;
  - expressions of compassion: spending time with the elderly, those who are suffering, the disabled, those who are losing their autonomy or approaching the end of their lives...



- activities inspired by social, cultural and political events:
  - ✦ the Messe Québécoise during the summer at Saint-François-de-Sales and an exhibit about our religious heritage;
  - ✦ participation in democratic debate; participation in the creation of the new city of Gatineau and the 40th anniversary of our diocesan church: an invitation to imagine our city and our Church;
  - ✦ a visit to the Museum of Civilization to see and discuss an exhibit related to our Christian faith;
  - ✦ an outing to see The Passion of the Christ or another religious movie;
  - ✦ Outaouais' Sacred Music Festival.
- activities centered around cultural diversity:
  - ✦ mass with the communities from Zaire and Latin America;
- activities that are tied to the Christian calendar:
  - ✦ marche des millénaires, to enter the new millennium guided by witnesses from the history of our faith;
  - ✦ the Way of the Cross on Holy Friday;
  - ✦ celebration of the Seder, prayer vigils and the Easter Vigil;
  - ✦ celebrating Pentecost.



We have already taken a few steps off the beaten path and have begun to explore the catechetical capacity of life and events. Now we need to learn to support and accompany all of these places and meetings, however small they may be, so that they can become places of awakening, training, integration and spiritual maturity. The word catechesis means making the Word resonate throughout our lives, hearing an echo of the Word that makes sense of our lives as in the meeting with Jesus along the road to Emmaus, to Gaza or at Jacob's well...

All of these activities and places contribute in their way to the establishment of a great service of community catechesis that will eventually support the Christian education of young people and the preparation of the sacraments. We have a broad network of connections and collaboration to build between all of the creators of this catechesis.





*How will it be? A church open  
to God's work.<sup>12</sup>*

Mary is the patron saint of our diocesan church, and this is her question. It is how she welcomed God's project into her life. Just like Mary, we must dare to ask the same question today: *"How will it be?"* And with her, we will enter into a time of *openness to the future and availability to serving the Word*.

Mary brings us to the Outaouais, *our Galilee*, and invites us each in turn to *accept the project that God is lovingly developing for our time*, in a Church:

- ✱ that accepts itself as a free gift from God, "you will receive...";
- ✱ with an attitude of acceptance, openness and active collaboration with God's work;
- ✱ a church that is entirely turned towards God's Word because "with God, no word will be without power, without dynamism."

<sup>12</sup> Indicated by Pope Francis's book, *The Gospel of Joy*, chapter 1, number 11 of the 1905 chapter 2.



Evangelical wisdom also asks us to trust the seed, the weather, the growth and the harvest (Mark 4:27). Spreading seed is an act of faith and hope in the power of the Gospel and in the work of the Spirit in human history.

---

*With five loaves of bread and two fish.*

---

Faced with this large array of suggestions to make and roads to travel, we often feel like the apostles that day on the mountain, poor and with no way to feed the hungry crowd. What can we do?

---

*"Give them food to eat," Jesus told them.*

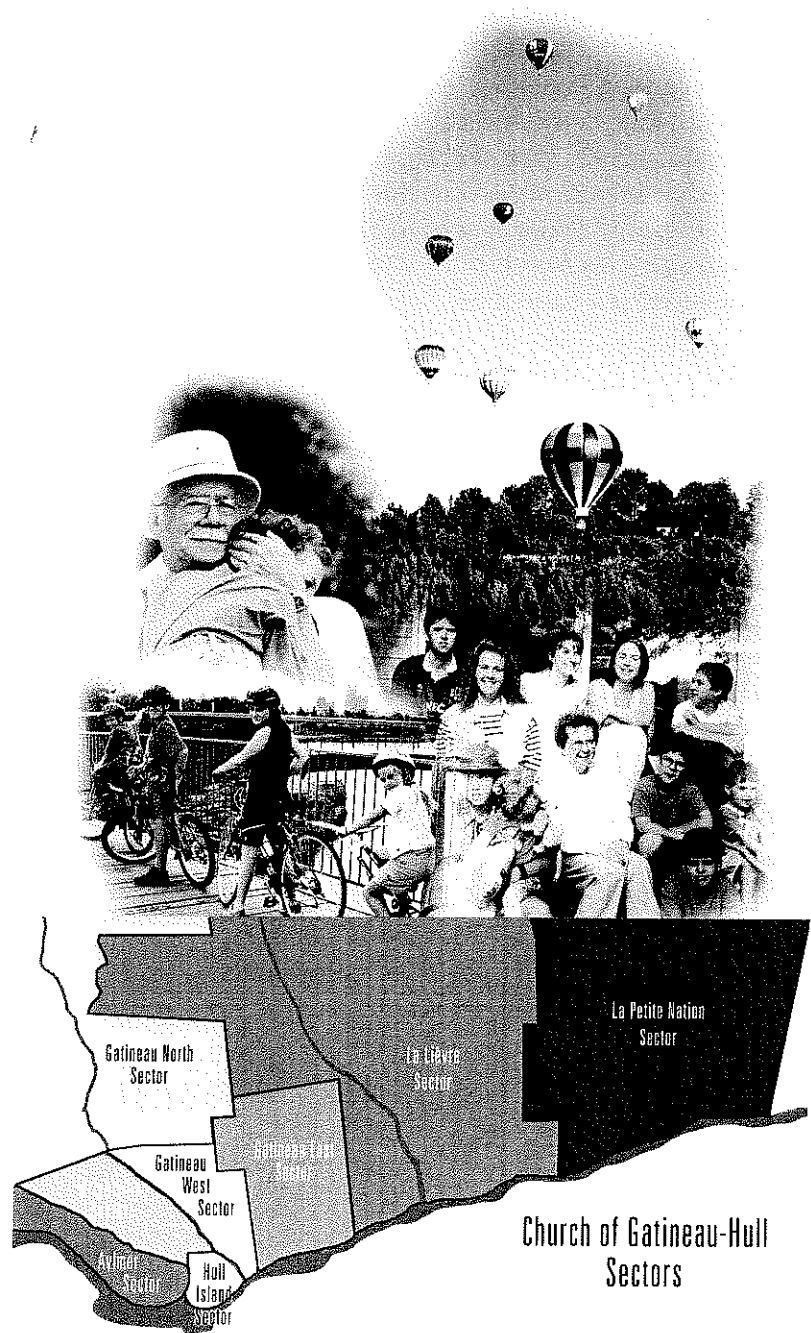
---

This event made a big impression on the four authors of the Gospels, because it is told four times: in Matthew 14, Mark 6, Luke 9 and John 6. With five loaves of bread and two fish... With such limited means, what can we do? The disciples see clearly what there is to be done, but with so little, they don't think they will be able to feed the hungry crowd. The amount they have is ridiculous: *five loaves of bread and two fish*.

But Jesus gives them the bread and the disciples hand it out. Jesus also takes the first steps and gives the living water. Two loving gestures that look after the hunger and the needs of people that He meets along the way.



Here and now, in the Outaouais as in Galilee, Jesus asks us to search for living water and daily bread and to participate in the mission of evangelization. What trust on both sides! Our strength even today is the strength of the Good News and the One who calls us to serve, if we believe, despite all our weakness and poverty, that we are the *bearers of the Word of salvation*, a Word that brings life and sets people free.





#### **Diocesan documents:**

*Faire route ensemble, la pastorale des parents demandant le Baptême de leur enfant*, Church of Gatineau-Hull, March 2001.

*Catechetical Mission of the Church of Gatineau-Hull*,  
Diocesan Committee Report, December 21, 2001.

*Catechetical Mission*, Church of Gatineau-Hull, September 2002.

*The Diocesan Catechetical Project*, Church of Gatineau-Hull,  
Preliminary Version, June 2003.

*Becoming Communities that are Schools of Catechesis, the biblical foundation of the diocesan catechetical project*, Roger Ebacher,  
Church of Gatineau-Hull, October 2003

#### **Documents from the Assembly of Quebec Bishops (AEQ)**

*Annoncer l'Évangile dans la culture actuelle au Québec*,  
AEQ, Fides, 1999.

*Jésus Christ Chemin d'humanisation*, AEQ, Médiaspaul,  
Montreal, 2004.

*Proposing Faith to Young People Today*, AEQ, Fides, 2000.



### Other documents

*General Directory for Catechesis*, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997.

*Catéchèse et maturité de la foi*, Paul André GIGUÈRE, Novalis/Lumen Vitae, from the collection entitled *Théologie pratiques*, Brussels, 2002.

*Dieu toujours recommencé*, Essai sur la catéchèse contemporaine, André FOSSION, *Théologies pratiques*, Lumen Vitae/Novalis/Cerf/Labor et Fides, Brussels, 1997.

*Il nous parlait en chemin, la catéchèse paroissiale : Communauté, Parole, Chemin*, Reinhilde HOUTEVELS-MINET, Lumen Vitae, 1999, chapter 2.

*TROP TARD? L'avenir de l'Église d'ici*, Normand PROVENCHER, Novalis, 2002.

*Une Église qui s'appauvrit, Drame ou ouverture d'avenir?*, Marc GIRARD, Fides, 1999, chapter 2.

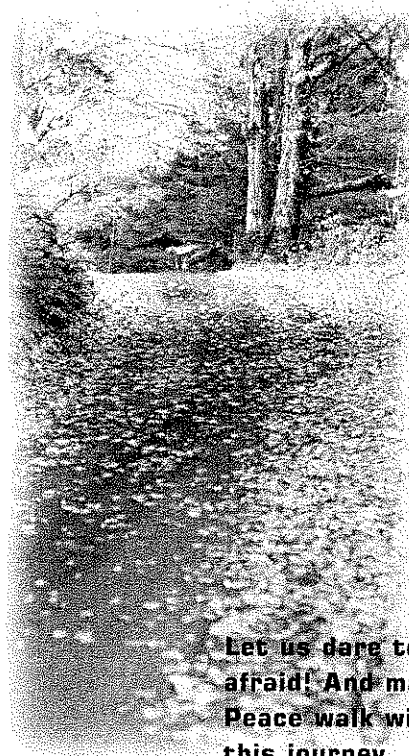
*The publication of this document was made possible thanks to the Élisabeth-Bruyère Fund.*

*The diocese of Gatineau-Hull wishes to thank all the people who collaborated in the publication of A Christian education program: Discovering Jesus Christ, the Path to Freedom.*

Drafting: **Françoise Lagacé**

Graphics: **Daniel Dufour**

Translation: **Pamela Levac**



**Let us dare to not be  
afraid! And may He who is  
Peace walk with us on  
this journey.**

Roger Ébacher