

Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council began on October 11, 1962 and concluded on December 8, 1965. Sixteen documents were enacted by the council fathers. One of those documents involved the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It wasn't until Saint Pope John Paul II on January 25, 1985 where he convoked an extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the 20th anniversary of the close of the Council. On that occasion the Synod Fathers stated: "Very many have expressed the desire that a catechism or compendium of all catholic doctrine regarding both faith and morals be composed to be a point of reference for the catechisms or compendiums that are prepared in various regions. The presentation of doctrine must be biblical and liturgical. It must be sound doctrine suited to the present life of Christians."

Following the renewal of the liturgy and the new condification of the canon law of the Latin Church and that of the Oriental Catholic Churches, this catechism will make a very important contribution to that work of renewing the whole life of the Church, as desired and begun by the Second Vatican Council.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is the result of very extensive collaboration; it was prepared over six years of intense work done in a spirit of complete openness and fervent zeal.

In 1986, Saint Pope John Paul II entrusted a commission of twelve Cardinals and Bishops, chaired by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, with the task of preparing a draft of the catechism request by the Synod Fathers. An editorial committee of seven diocesan Bishops, experts in theology and catechesis, assisted the commission in its work.

The commission, charged with giving directives and with overseeing the course of the work, attentively followed all the stages in editing the **nine** subsequent drafts. The editorial committee, for its part, assumed responsibility for writing the text, making the emendations requested by the commission and examining the observations of numerous theologians, exegetes and catechists, and, above all, of the Bishops of the whole world, in order to produce a better text. In the committee various opinions were compared with great profit, and thus a richer text has resulted whose unity and coherence are assured.

This catechism is not intended to replace the local catechism duly approved by the ecclesiastical authorities, the diocesan Bishops and the Episcopal Conferences, especially if they have been approved by the Apostolic See. It is meant to encourage and assist in the writing of new local catechisms, which take into account various situations and cultures, while carefully preserving the unity of faith and fidelity to catholic doctrine.

Signed: by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, on October 11, 1992, the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, the fourteenth year of his Pontificate.

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