

# Bridgeport bishop announces catechism 'institute'

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The Connecticut bishop who is chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Subcommittee on the Catechism has proposed what he called a "catechism institute" that would "respond to new challenges in catechesis."

While Bishop Frank J. Caggiano of Bridgeport said the institute would not be a physical structure, he said it would be an "initiative" to accompany publishers and users of catechetical materials in changing times for the Catholic faith in the U.S., as more people leave the Church, and the Church sees a rise in Latino Catholics who may be in need of more "inculturated" materials.

He addressed the topic June 18 during the last day of the bishops' June 16-18 spring assembly conducted via Zoom this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Bishop Caggiano said a well-formed catechetical consultant working directly for the subcommittee would be trained to ensure the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church "is faithfully represented in publishers' texts."

With the rise of Latino Catholics in the Church, the initiative also would be bicultural for catechetical formation "to reflect the gifts and needs of the Hispanic and English-speaking communities in one integrated institute." It would carry out yearly formation conferences in a retreatlike environment with collaboration from other USCCB committees and other Catholic institutions. Formation also would be ongoing, he said.

The institute would aim to implement a vision of "evangelizing catechesis" to respond to the various challenges to the Faith and the Church in the changing landscape, Bishop Caggiano

explained. Some of those challenges include facing the fact that focusing catechetical material on mostly on student texts was “yielding little fruit.”

So, the focus now has now been shifted to catechists, teachers and parents who are more hands-on with the material they are charged with transmitting.

He also spoke of the need to stop translating catechetical texts from English into Spanish because Hispanic Catholics needed inculturated catechesis “that could not be addressed by our review process,” he said.

Other challenges, he said, include younger people leaving the Catholic faith “at an unprecedented rate” and at a younger age than ever before. That led those exploring implementation of the initiative, he said, to consider the need to focus on mission and encounter with Christ when it comes to catechesis.

He also urged bishops to shepherd the use of technology in catechesis as more was in use during the pandemic and while “technology can help proclaim the Gospel, it cannot replace the Christian community, which mediates the encounter with Christ,” he said.

This institute, he said, was expected to be launched in late 2021 and meet in person in November 2022, prior to the bishops’ annual fall meeting in Baltimore, for formational experiences with bishops and diocesan staff.