

Sacramental Preparation Protocol II,  
First Penance and First Holy Communion  
(for the sixth grade or above)

A Working Instrument of the Subcommittee on the Catechism  
Approved June 9, 2013

**PROTOCOL FOR ASSESSING THE CONFORMITY OF CATECHETICAL MATERIALS  
WITH THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In his apostolic constitution, *Fidei depositum*, Pope John Paul II points out that the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* “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” (Pope John Paul II, *Fidei depositum*, #3). In light of this objective and the charge of the Administrative Committee of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Subcommittee on the Catechism is reviewing catechetical materials voluntarily submitted as to their conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

To guide this process and to provide as objective an instrument as possible, the Subcommittee on the Catechism has developed this *Protocol for Assessing the Conformity of Catechetical Materials with the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Sacramental Preparation II, First Penance and First Holy Communion, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade or above*, as a working instrument. This working instrument has been derived from previously approved documents.

The following points introduce some important *caveats* in the use of the *Protocol* in the review of catechetical materials:

- As far as possible, the evaluative points of reference employ the language of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in order to underscore its dependence on the *Catechism*
- A text for preparation for the Sacraments should only be used as supplementary to a basal text presenting all of the material to be covered in a given year of a catechetical program.
- The assessment is concerned only with the content of the catechetical materials and, like the *Catechism*, “does not consider the adaptation of doctrinal presentations and catechetical methods”( *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #24)

## PART ONE

### PRINCIPLES OR CRITERIA TO ENSURE CONFORMITY WITH THE BASIC THEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

According to our *Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials*, the first principle for assessing the conformity of catechetical materials to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is “that the Christian message be authentic. For expressions of faith and moral teachings to be authentic, they must be in harmony with the doctrine and traditions of the Catholic Church, which are safeguarded by the bishops who teach with a unique authority”( *Guidelines for Doctrinally Sound Catechetical Materials*, United States Catholic Conference, p.7).

#### AUTHENTICITY

In order for catechetical materials developed from the *Catechism* to be authentic, the following criteria should be observed:

- Minimally, the catechetical materials should contain nothing contradictory to the *Catechism*
- They should encourage and assist in the development of a common language of faith within the Church
- They should promote a healthy and vital Catholic identity in such a way that the believer is encouraged to hear the message clearly, live it with conviction and share it courageously with others
- Since the *Catechism* should not be reduced to its *in brief* sections, catechetical materials should evidence the wider context of teaching from which the *in brief* sections are drawn

In order for catechetical materials developed from the *Catechism* to be authentic, the theological structure as indicated below should be at least implicit in the catechetical materials:

- Trinitarian organization

The *Catechism* does not simply treat of the Holy Trinity when it treats of God or expounds the creed. The creative and saving initiative of God the Father, the salvific mission of God the Son and the sanctifying role of God the Holy Spirit permeate the *Catechism*'s treatment of worship and liturgy, the life of grace underpinning the moral life and the life of prayer.

- Christological centrality

The *Catechism* breathes the person, life and mission of Jesus Christ. The entire *Catechism* is a breaking open of the mystery of the Word made flesh. Christ is presented as fully God and fully man.

- Ecclesial context

The *Catechism's* treatment of the Church is not restricted to a commentary on the article of faith in the Creed that focuses on the Church. The entire *Catechism* presents the continuing presence and mission of Christ in and through the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. Adherence to Christ through faith involves immersion in the life of the Church.

- Treatment of the sacraments within the paschal mystery

The *Catechism* presents as an underlying and unifying motif in its treatment of the sacraments the Christian's participation in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. Sacraments receive their origin and receive their efficacy in relationship to the paschal mission of the Savior and his presence in the sacramental encounter with his people.

- Presentation of the moral life in the personal and social teachings of the Church as a new life in the Holy Spirit

The *Catechism* makes clear that the moral life is not a merely human endeavor nor is it simply a series of dos and don'ts. It is rooted in a real new life made possible by the presence of the Holy Spirit and the gift of grace within the human person.

- The Church's teachings on the dignity of human life related to the section on the 5th Commandment

The Church's teaching and commitment to life should be integrated into the treatment of moral life, and the nuances provided should show both the distinctiveness and the relationship of the various life issues to one another.

- The Church's teachings on human sexuality related to the section on the 6th and 9th Commandments

The *Catechism* treats human sexuality within the context of education in sexual morality. This arrangement now supersedes the development of separate segments on education in human sexuality apart from the moral teaching.

- The Church's teaching on social justice related to the section on the 7th and 10th Commandments

The *Catechism* offers a succinct presentation of the Church's teaching on social justice both in the introduction to the Commandments and in the treatment of the 7th and 10th Commandments. This presentation also preserves the relationship between teaching and social justice with the rest of the moral teaching of the Church.

## COMPLETENESS

The second principle for assessing the conformity of catechetical materials to the *Catechism* is “that the Christian message be complete” (*Guidelines*, p.7).

In order for catechetical materials developed from the *Catechism* to be considered complete, the doctrines of the Church should be presented as an integrated whole and there should be an intrinsic cohesiveness to the presentation of the faith:

- The materials for sacramental preparation should reflect the second pillar of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and be presented in an age appropriate manner.
- They should also include an appropriate presentation of the rootedness of the teaching in Sacred Scripture
- They should reflect in an appropriate manner the variety and multiplicity of the sources of the faith found in the *Catechism*, for example, the teachings from the Councils, the Eastern and Western Fathers, liturgical texts and spiritual writings
- They should show that God’s love is revealed primarily in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ
- They should give proper importance to the biblical, anthropological, liturgical, moral and spiritual, as well as to the ecumenical and missionary dimensions of the *Catechism*

*These principles and criteria are the most fundamental ways in which catechetical materials should reflect the Catechism of the Catholic Church. They touch the underlying theological teaching and give spirit to the specific content which Part Two fleshes out in a more concrete way.*

## PART TWO

### EVALUATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE FOR AUTHENTICITY AND COMPLETENESS

The points of reference are intended to guide both reviewers and publishers in assessing the conformity of the catechetical materials to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. On the pages that follow, the first column, marked *Evaluative Points of Reference for Authenticity and Completeness*, contains the doctrine which should be treated in the materials. The number in parenthesis at the end of each point of reference is the paragraph from the *Catechism* that is the source of that particular point of reference. The following instructions should assist you in completing the review.

#### REVIEWER INSTRUCTIONS

- The *Protocol* is the standard instrument of review. It should be used in tandem with the publisher's own assessment of the materials, which is also based on the *Protocol*.
- When an item of the *Protocol* is covered adequately, a "Yes" in the second column, marked *Conformity*, will suffice.
- When an item is not covered or is only partially covered, please write either "No" or "Partial" in the *Conformity* column. In addition, please note in the third column, marked *Required Changes, Recommendations, Suggestions*, where in the material you believe the publisher could efficiently address the deficiency.
- You can also note in the third column any recommendations or suggestions you believe would strengthen the presentation of the doctrine.

#### PUBLISHER INSTRUCTIONS

- Even though the third column is titled *Required Changes, Recommendations, Suggestions*, you should use this column to cite the text and/or page reference where the specific *Protocol* item is treated in your materials.
- If possible, mark the actual text and/or page of the materials where the specific *Protocol* items are correlated.

**First Penance and First Holy Communion Preparation**  
(for children in the sixth grade or above)

	<b>EVALUATIVE POINTS OF REFERENCE For Authenticity &amp; Completeness</b>	<b>CONFORMITY Yes/No/Partial</b>	<b>REQUIRED CHANGES Recommendations and Suggestions</b>
1.	teach that in the liturgy of the Church, God the Father is blessed and adored as the source of all the blessings of creation and salvation with which he has blessed us in his Son, in order to give us the Spirit of filial adoption. (1083, 1110)		
2.	during his earthly life, Jesus shared his life with others through his words and actions; now he shares the very same life with us through the sacraments. (1115-1116)		
3.	explain that Christ's work in the liturgy is sacramental: because his mystery of salvation is made present there by the power of his Holy Spirit; because his Body, which is the Church, is like a sacrament (sign and instrument) in which the Holy Spirit dispenses the mystery of salvation; and because through her liturgical actions the pilgrim Church already participates, as by a foretaste, in the heavenly liturgy.(1111)		
4.	explain that the mission of the Holy Spirit in the liturgy of the Church is to prepare the assembly to encounter Christ; to recall and manifest Christ to the faith of the assembly; to make the saving work of Christ present and active by his transforming power; and to make the gift of communion bear fruit in the Church.(1112)		
5.	present the sacraments as efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.(1131)		
6.	the whole Christ, head and members, celebrates in the liturgy, but all members do not have the same function. '[Ordained ministers] are called by God in and through the Church, to special service of the community. [They] are chosen and consecrated by the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which the Holy Spirit enables them to act in the person of Christ, the head, for the service of all members of the Church.' (1140-1142, 1188)		
7.	present the liturgy as the work of the whole Christ, head and body.(1187)		
8.	explain that the Liturgy of the Word is an integral part of the celebration.(1190)		
9.	sacred music helps us to worship God. (1156-1158, 1191)		

10.	teach that Sunday, the “Lord’s Day,” is the principal day for the celebration of the Eucharist because it is the day of the Resurrection. It is the pre-eminent day of the liturgical assembly, the day of the Christian family, and the day of joy and rest from work. Sunday is “the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year.”(1193)		
11.	explain that the Church, “in the course of the year,...unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from his Incarnation and Nativity through his Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.” (1171, 1194)		
12.	teach that by keeping the memorials of the saints – first of all the holy Mother of God, then the apostles, the martyrs, and other saints – on fixed days of the liturgical year, the Church on earth shows that she is united with the liturgy of heaven.(1195)		
13.	explain that the diverse liturgical traditions or rites, legitimately recognized, manifest the catholicity of the Church, because they signify and communicate the same mystery of Christ.(1208)		
14.	explain that the criterion that assures unity amid the diversity of liturgical traditions is fidelity to apostolic Tradition, i.e., the communion in the faith and the sacraments received from the apostles, a communion that is both signified and guaranteed by apostolic succession.(1209)		
15.	the blessing of the Baptismal water celebrates the events of the Old Testament that prefigure the mystery of Baptism. (1217-1222)		
16.	the catechumenate is a form of preparation for Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist intended especially for adults. It aims at bringing conversion and faith in response to God’s initiative and in union with an ecclesial community. (1247-1248)		
17.	teach that Christian initiation is accomplished in three sacraments together: Baptism which is the beginning of new life; Confirmation which is its strengthening; and the Eucharist which nourishes the disciple with Christ’s Body and Blood for his transformation in Christ.(1275)		
18.	present Baptism as birth into the new life in Christ. In accordance with the Lord’s will, it is necessary for salvation, as is the Church herself, which we enter by Baptism.(1277)		
19.	explain that the essential rite of Baptism consists in immersing the candidate in water or pouring water on his head, while pronouncing the invocation of the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.(1278)		

20.	present the fruit of Baptism, or baptismal grace, as a rich reality that includes forgiveness of original sin and all personal sins, birth into the new life by which man becomes an adoptive son of the Father, a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit. By this very fact the person baptized is incorporated into the Church, the Body of Christ, and made a sharer in the priesthood of Christ.(1279)		
21.	teach that Baptism imprints on the soul an indelible spiritual sign, the character, which consecrates the baptized person for Christian worship. Because of the character Baptism cannot be repeated.(1280)		
22.	teach that those who die for the faith, those who are catechumens, and all those who, without knowing of the Church but acting under the inspiration of grace, seek God sincerely and strive to fulfill his will, can be saved even if they have not been baptized.(1281)		
23.	explain that since the earliest times, Baptism has been administered to children, for it is a grace and a gift of God that does not presuppose any human merit; children are baptized in the faith of the Church. Entry into Christian life gives access to true freedom.(1282)		
24.	explain that with respect to children who have died without Baptism, the liturgy of the Church invites us to trust in God's mercy and to pray for their salvation.(1283)		
25.	teach that, in case of necessity, any person can baptize provided that he have the intention of doing that which the Church does and provided that he pours water on the candidate's head while saying "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."(1284)		
26.	though Confirmation is sometimes called 'the Sacrament of Christian Maturity,' that does not mean its reception must await physical, mental or social maturity. (1308)		
27.	teach that Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds.(1316)		
28.	explain that Confirmation, like Baptism, imprints a spiritual mark or indelible character on the Christian's soul; for this reason one can receive this sacrament only once in one's life.(1317)		
29.	explain that in the East Confirmation is administered immediately after Baptism and is followed by participation in the Eucharist; this tradition highlights the unity of the three sacraments of Christian initiation.(1318)		

30.	explain that a candidate for Confirmation who has attained the age of reason must profess the faith, be in the state of grace, have the intention of receiving the sacrament, and be prepared to assume the role of disciple and witness to Christ, both within the ecclesial community and in temporal affairs.(1319)		
31.	teach that the essential rite of Confirmation is anointing the forehead of the baptized with sacred chrism (in the East other sense-organs as well), together with the laying on of the minister's hand and the words: Be sealed with the Gift of the Holy Spirit.(1320)		
32.	the Sacrifice of the Mass is directed to communion; thus, the altar is also a table. (1325, 1382-1383)		
33.	the Eucharist is thanksgiving to God, the Father for all creation. (1356-1361)		
34.	the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's Passover in the sense of <i>anamnesis</i> , it not only recalls, but makes present. (1362-1367, 1409)		
35.	the ultimate fruit of the Eucharist is the unity of the mystical body of Christ. This is why divisions in the Church are so painful and why we must pray for reunion. (1396, 1398)		
36.	Mass can be offered for the living and the dead. (1370-1371)		
37.	we receive Christ whole and entire under either form of bread or wine; but receiving under both forms is a more perfect sign. (1390)		
38.	the Eucharist commits us to the poor. (1397)		
39.	the Eucharist is a pledge of the glory of heaven. (1402-1405, 1419)		
40.	the Eucharist teaching of John 6 (1384, 1406)		
41.	the Eucharist is prefigured in the Old Testament Passover and the New Testament multiplication of the loaves, but is fulfilled at the Last Supper. (1339-1340)		
42.	teach that the Eucharist is the heart and the summit of the Church's life, for in it Christ associates his Church and all her members with his sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving offered once for all on the cross to his Father; by this sacrifice he pours out the graces of salvation on his Body which is the Church.(1407)		
43.	explain that the Eucharistic celebration always includes: the proclamation of the Word of God; thanksgiving to God the Father for all his benefits, above all the gift of his Son; the consecration of bread and wine; and participation in the liturgical banquet by receiving the Lord's body and blood. These elements constitute one single act of worship. (1345-1355, 1408)		
44.	explain that the Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's Passover, that is, of the work of salvation accomplished by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, a work made present by the liturgical action.(1409)		

45.	teach that Christ himself, the eternal high priest of the New Covenant, acting through the ministry of the priests, offers the Eucharistic sacrifice.(1410)		
46.	explain that only validly ordained priests can preside at the Eucharist and consecrate the bread and the wine so that they become the Body and Blood of the Lord. (1348, 1350, 1411)		
47.	teach that the essential signs of the Eucharistic sacrament are wheat bread and grape wine, on which the blessing of the Holy Spirit is invoked and the priest pronounces the words of consecration spoken by Jesus during the Last Supper: “This is my body which will be given up for you.... This is the cup of my blood...”(1412)		
48.	explain that by the consecration the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is brought about. Under the consecrated species of bread and wine Christ himself, living and glorious, is present in a true, real, and substantial manner: his Body and his Blood, with his soul and his divinity. (1333, 1413)		
49.	teach that, as sacrifice, the Eucharist is also offered in reparation for the sins of the living and the dead and to obtain spiritual or temporal benefits from God.(1414)		
50.	explain that anyone who desires to receive Christ in Eucharistic communion must be in the state of grace. Anyone aware of having sinned mortally must not receive communion without having received absolution in the sacrament of penance. (1385-1387, 1415)		
51.	teach that communion with the Body and Blood of Christ increases the communicant’s union with the Lord, forgives his venial sins, and preserves him from grave sins. Since receiving this sacrament strengthens the bonds of charity between the communicant and Christ, it also reinforces the unity of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. (1391-1392, 1416)		
52.	explain that the Church warmly recommends that the faithful receive Holy Communion when they participate in the celebration of the Eucharist; she obliges them to do so at least once a year.(1417)		
53.	Baptism does not remove the inclination to sin called concupiscence. (1426)		
54.	Catholics must receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at least once a year, if they have serious sin. (1457)		
55.	the formula of absolution (1449)		
56.	the penitent in this sacrament in a certain way anticipates the final judgment. (1470)		
57.	the new life of grace can be lost by sin. (1420)		
58.	the Sacrament of Penance reconciles us to God and to the Church. (1422, 1496)		

59.	God's mercy is shown to us in the Sacrament of Penance; God's mercy calls us back to himself. (1422, 1449)		
60.	teach that the forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance, or reconciliation.(1486)		
61.	explain that the movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. (1451, 1490, 1492)		
62.	teach that the sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest's absolution. The penitent's acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation.(1491)		
63.	explain that repentance (also called contrition) must be inspired by motives that arise from faith. If repentance arises from love of charity for God, it is called "perfect" contrition; if it is founded on other motives, it is called "imperfect."(1492)		
64.	explain that one who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church. (1451-1456, 1493)		
65.	explain that the confessor proposes the performance of certain acts of "satisfaction" or "penance" to be performed by the penitent in order to repair the harm caused by sin and to re-establish habits befitting a disciple of Christ. (1459-1460, 1494)		
66.	explain that only priests who have received the faculty of absolving from the authority of the Church can forgive sins in the name of Christ. (1461, 1465, 1495)		
67.	the priest must keep secret all sins confessed to him (1467)		
68.	teach that the spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are: reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace; reconciliation with the Church; remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins; remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin; peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation; an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.(1496)		
69.	explain that the individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.(1497)		
70.	explain that through indulgences the faithful can obtain remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory.(1498)		