



# Proper Catechesis



## Returning to the Roots of the Catholic Faith

### Why Catechesis Matters More Than Ever

Catechesis — the Church's formal teaching of the faith, is meant to hand on the truths of Jesus Christ as revealed through Scripture and Tradition. But for many Catholics today, catechism classes may have offered only a surface-level understanding, focusing more on rules or routine than on the deep richness of the Church's origin, identity, and mission.

In many cases, what's missing is **the story of who we are and where we came from**. The beautiful, sometimes painful, but always providential **history of the Catholic Church** that Christ Himself instituted.

### The Catholic Church: Founded by Christ

At the heart of our Catholic identity is a powerful truth: **Jesus Christ Himself founded the Catholic Church**.

- In **Matthew 16:18**, Jesus says to Simon:  
*"You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*
- Peter, the first pope, was entrusted with the keys of the kingdom. From him began the **unbroken line of apostolic succession**, a continuity of leadership passed down for over 2,000 years.

This isn't just tradition, it's **divine institution**. It's a history many Catholics never fully hear in their catechism classes.

### What We Miss When History Is Overlooked

When the Church does not emphasize her deep and unbroken historical roots, we lose:

- A sense of **belonging** to something greater than ourselves
- The ability to **defend the faith** when questioned
- The awareness that Catholicism isn't just one option among many, it is the **original Church**, founded by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit through centuries of both triumph and trial.





# Proper Catechesis



## Returning to the Roots of the Catholic Faith

### Key Historical Moments Every Catholic/Christian Should Know

#### The Canonization of Scripture (Late 4th Century)

- The Bible didn't fall from the sky. The **Catholic Church discerned and canonized** the books of Scripture through Church councils such as **Hippo (393 AD)** and **Carthage (397 AD)**.
- The **New Testament canon**, as we know it today, was preserved and protected by the Catholic Church long before there were any other Christian denominations.

#### The Great Schism of 1054

- The first major split in Christianity occurred between the **Roman Catholic Church** and the **Eastern Orthodox Church** due to theological, cultural, and political differences.
- This division hurt the unity of Christendom but also reminds us of the need for **truth, humility, and reconciliation** in defending the deposit of faith.

#### The Protestant Reformation (1500s)

- Martin Luther and other reformers, frustrated by corruption and error, broke away but in doing so, they also **separated from apostolic authority and Sacred Tradition**.
- Many Catholics today do not know that the Reformation was not just about indulgences, it rejected core Catholic teachings such as the Eucharist, confession, and the authority of the pope.

### Why Proper Catechesis Needs to Include History

When Catholics understand their history, they:

- Grow in confidence and conviction in the truth of the Church
- Develop compassion toward those who have separated from it
- Learn to defend the Church not just with Scripture, but with history, reason, and love

Proper catechesis is not just about knowing what we believe, but **why** we believe it, and **where** it came from.





# Proper Catechesis



## Returning to the Roots of the Catholic Faith

### A Gracious Path Forward

This is not a criticism of our beloved Church but rather it is a **call to deepen the mission**. The failures in catechesis were never a failure of the faith itself, but often a lack of formation or passion in its presentation.

The solution is not to walk away, it is to **return to the roots**, to the Apostles, to the Fathers, and ultimately to Jesus Christ, who still speaks through His Church.

*"To be deep in history is to cease to be Protestant."* – Blessed John Henry Newman

### What Can We Do?

- Teach the historical foundations of the faith, especially to youth and converts
- Reconnect catechesis with Scripture, Tradition, and history
- Encourage questions and honest discussion about past schisms, mistakes, and reform
- Invite Catholics to love the Church not just emotionally, but intellectually.



# Proper Catechesis



## Returning to the Roots of the Catholic Faith

### The Importance of Apologetics

In a world where faith is often challenged and misunderstood, **Catholic apologetics** becomes an essential part of catechesis. Apologetics means **defending the faith with reason, evidence, and charity**, not to argue, but to illuminate.

Proper apologetics teaches us to:

- Answer common questions about Church authority, the sacraments, and Mary
- Respond respectfully to objections from Protestant or secular viewpoints
- Share the truth of the Church with clarity and love

When catechesis is rooted in apologetics, history, and Scripture, it equips Catholics to not only **know their faith**, but to **live and explain it confidently**.

*"Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence."*

— 1 Peter 3:15