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## UPHOLDING CATHOLIC FAITH, UNITY, AND TRUTH IN CHRIST

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*In response to the NCW practices in our Diocese and the opening of the Redeptoris Mater Seminary*

### Mission Statemant



We, the “Voice of the Catholic Faithful” of Las Cruces, are dedicated to preserving the integrity and unity of the Catholic faith in our diocese. Grounded in Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, we advocate for the reverent celebration of the Holy Mass and vibrant parish life in line with Catholic liturgical and theological norms.

Through prayer, education, and collaboration, we strive to strengthen our Catholic identity, seek unity in Christ through the grace of the Holy Sacraments, support our clergy and laity. Together, we seek to amplify the voice of the Catholic faithful within our community and beyond.



If you're interested in having us host a presentation and/or petition signing event in your community, please send us an email at:

**[voiceofthecatholicfaithfullc@gmail.com](mailto:voiceofthecatholicfaithfullc@gmail.com)**

For more information and updates on events, visit our website:

**[voiceofthecatholicfaithful.org](http://voiceofthecatholicfaithful.org)**

# ***What is the Neocatechumenal Way?***



The Neocatechumenal Way (NCW) is a lay organization that began in the early 1960s in the shantytowns of Madrid, Spain. Kiko Argüello, a painter inspired by his personal conversion, and Carmen Hernández, a former missionary, started gathering with the poor to reflect on Scripture and celebrate faith in small communities. What started as a grassroots effort quickly spread across Europe and beyond, presenting itself as a “new catechumenate” for baptized Catholics. Despite eventual recognition by the Vatican, the NCW has faced strong criticism for its separatist liturgical practices, secretive catechesis, and authoritarian leadership style. Its communities often celebrate the Eucharist separately from the parish, introducing changes that many see as causing confusion and fostering division instead of unity. Additionally, its Redemptoris Mater seminaries raise concerns that priests trained there become more loyal to the movement than to their dioceses. While the NCW claims to renew faith, many argue it undermines parish life and diocesan structures, functioning more like a parallel church within the Church. The founder, Kiko, does not believe in relying on the Church’s discernment to distinguish what comes from the Holy Spirit and what does not.

Kiko, the founder, teaches that the current Church is flawed, that “natural religiosity has infiltrated Christianity.” He diagrams how, since 314 AD, and the decrees of the Emperor Constantine to legitimize Christianity, there has been a process of dechristianization, which he calls a divorce between Christianity and life. (Neocatechumenal Way, Catechetical Directory for Teams of Catechists, Vol 1, (Pasadena, CA: Hope Publishing House, 2012) pg 53. Kiko teaches that from the time of Constantine until the Second Vatican Council, the Church has been flawed. Kiko has a new way to teach people about Christianity, and he uses quotes from the popes to legitimize his teachings. This goes directly against St. John Henry Cardinal Newman, recently named a doctor of the Church, who teaches that through the ages, since the time of Christ, there has been a genuine and authentic development of Christian doctrine. (John Henry Cardinal Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).



“Good is never accomplished except at the cost of those who do it, truth never breaks through except through the sacrifice of those who spread it.”

— John Henry Newman



## **Practices of the Neocatechumenal Way that Differ from the Catholic Liturgy**

- In the Neocatechumenal Way, Mass is celebrated in small community settings rather than in the main parish church. In Las Cruces, for example, these gatherings take place in the lobby of St. Albert the Great Newman Center. Instead of a traditional altar, a table is placed at the center of the room, covered with a cloth, decorated with candles and flowers, with the participants seated around it.
- Music during these celebrations is lively and energetic, often filling the space, though it can distract from quiet prayer. The only music used is written and composed by Kiko Argüello.
- Lay people's reflections are encouraged before and after each Scripture reading, and members are invited to share their personal reflections.
- Members of the community bake the bread for the Eucharist. During consecration, the priest breaks the bread at the table, often scattering crumbs. Communion is received in a particular way: participants stand up only when the priest places the bread in their hands. They then immediately sit and hold it until the priest finishes passing the bread around, and finally, the priest consumes the bread along with the congregation, who remain seated. The same practice is followed with the Precious Blood. At no point in the celebration do participants kneel or bow. After the final blessing, chairs are removed, and the community dances around the table.
- After initial catechesis in the NCW, all subsequent meetings are held privately, without published texts or open access to teaching materials.
- Financial contributions are also a common part of the experience. Collections are often taken multiple times during gatherings to cover costs for flowers, food, hotel expenses, and retreats. Members may be encouraged to give generously, sometimes with significant pressure and the reassurance that “the Lord will provide.”

## Does the Vatican approve the Neocatechumenal Way?

While the Vatican has officially approved the statutes and catechetical directory of the Neocatechumenal Way; their liturgical practices have been subject to repeated corrections. Popes from St. John Paul II to Pope Francis have insisted they follow the liturgical norms of the Roman Rite, yet they have continued with liturgical practices that do not conform to the Church's liturgical discipline.

### Timeline of Papal Guidance to the Neocatechumenal Way

#### • Jan 12, 2006 – Pope Benedict XVI

Reminds the NCW to follow Vatican norms for the Eucharist: "I am sure you will attentively observe these norms that reflect what is provided for in the liturgical books approved by the Church... By faithfully keeping to every Church directive, you will make your apostolate even more effective."

([https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/january/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060112\\_neocatecumenali.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060112_neocatecumenali.html))

#### • Jan 17, 2011 – Pope Benedict XVI

Praises the NCW as "a special gift inspired by the Holy Spirit," while continuing to call for fidelity to Church teaching. [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/january/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20110117\\_cammino-neocatec.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20110117_cammino-neocatec.html)

#### • Jan 20, 2012 – Pope Benedict XVI

Warns against separation: "Always seek... profound communion with the Apostolic See and with the Pastors... It is important not to be separate from the parish community, precisely in the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the true place of unity."

([https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-vi/en/speeches/2012/january/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20120120\\_cammino-neocatecumenale.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-vi/en/speeches/2012/january/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20120120_cammino-neocatecumenale.html))

#### • Mar 6, 2015 – Pope Francis

Affirms their mission: "I confirm your call, I support your mission and I bless your charism... the Neocatechumenal Way does great good to the Church."

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150306\\_cammino-neocatecumenale.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco_20150306_cammino-neocatecumenale.html)

#### • May 5, 2018 – Pope Francis (Tor Vergata, 50th global Anniversary)

Calls for humility and authenticity: "Only a Church free from power and money, free from triumphalism and clericalism, bears witness in a credible way that Christ frees man."

([https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/may/documents/papa-francesco\\_20180505\\_50anniversario-camminoneocat.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/may/documents/papa-francesco_20180505_50anniversario-camminoneocat.html))



MOST HOLY TRINITY, FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT, I ADORE THEE PROFOUNDLY. I OFFER THEE THE MOST PRECIOUS BODY, BLOOD, SOUL, AND DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST, PRESENT IN ALL THE TABERNACLES OF THE WORLD, IN REPARATION FOR THE OUTRAGES, SACRILEGES, AND INDIFFERENCE BY WHICH HE IS OFFENDED. AND THROUGH THE INFINITE MERIT OF HIS MOST SACRED HEART, AND THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, I BEG OF THEE THE CONVERSION OF POOR SINNERS.

## Concerns About the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Las Cruces

The establishment of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in our diocese, connected to the Neocatechumenal Way (NCW), raises serious concerns about the future of priestly formation in Las Cruces:

### Key Issues:

- Redemptoris Mater Seminaries operate under the auspices of the Neocatechumenal Way, a lay organization, not a religious order.
- Formation Focus: Seminarians are trained as global missionary priests under the influence of the NCW, not specifically for our local diocese.
- Diocesan Identity at Risk: The seminary shifts priestly formation toward the NCW's ideology, creating a parallel culture that may conflict with universal Church norms.
- Leadership Concerns: The early formation at the Diocesan St. Joseph Seminary, directed by clergy closely affiliated with the NCW, risks embedding its practices and values in future diocesan priests.
- Liturgical and Theological Differences: NCW-influenced formation emphasizes personal conversion and missionary zeal over traditional diocesan pastoral, sacramental, and theological preparation.
- Authenticity of Vocations: Testimonies from former seminarians reveal pressure to enter formation, fear-based culture, and insufficient preparation for real pastoral ministry.

### Why This Matters:

- Las Cruces currently has only 17 diocesan priests, with nine expected to retire in the near future. The proper formation of local priests is crucial for maintaining parish life, sacramental fidelity, and diocesan unity.
- Priests must be grounded in the Magisterium, the Roman Rite, and pastoral care for all Catholics—not just members of a specific movement.

### Our Call:

- Advocate for transparency in seminary formation.
- Accountability from the Diocese regarding how the Redemptoris Mater Seminary is funded and its impact on the financial needs of our parishes in the future.
- Ensure fidelity to Church teaching and liturgical norms.
- **Support diocesan priests trained in stable, accredited seminaries free from ideological influence, not in an experimental seminary.**
- Pray for Bishop Baldacchino to lead with wisdom, openness, and faithfulness to the universal Church.

### Summary:

We need priests formed in truth, humility, and sacramental fidelity—pastors who serve all the faithful, not a specific movement. The future of our diocese depends on it.



## Q&A

### Can members of the Catholic laity challenge their bishop?

Yes, the Catholic laity can challenge a bishop, but within specific parameters and typically through advisory roles, advocacy groups, or by appealing to higher authorities, such as the Pope. Canon law grants the laity rights, but not executive or juridical powers over Church governance. Challenges are generally focused on issues of faith or morals, and the process requires evidence of harm, high thresholds, and often involves appealing to the Holy See.

212 §1. Conscious of their own responsibility, the Christian faithful are bound to follow with Christian obedience those things which the sacred pastors, inasmuch as they represent Christ, declare as teachers of the faith or establish as rulers of the Church.

§2. The Christian faithful are free to make known to the pastors of the Church their needs, especially spiritual ones, and their desires.

§3. According to the knowledge, competence, and prestige which they possess, they have the right and even at times the duty to manifest to the sacred pastors their opinion on matters which pertain to the good of the Church and to make their opinion known to the rest of the Christian faithful, without prejudice to the integrity of faith and morals, with reverence toward their pastors, and attentive to common advantage and the dignity of persons.

Can. 214 The Christian faithful have the right to worship God according to the prescripts of their own rite approved by the legitimate pastors of the Church and to follow their own form of spiritual life so long as it is consonant with the doctrine of the Church. [https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic\\_lib2-cann208-329\\_en.html#TITLE\\_I.](https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuris-canonici/eng/documents/cic_lib2-cann208-329_en.html#TITLE_I.)

## **Call to Action**

Please sign our petition if you support the following:

- A clear and uncompromising rejection of the introduction of Neocatechumenal Way priests into our diocese. Their presence would bring liturgical confusion, theological divergence, and pastoral disunity. We do not want clergy from a movement that does not reflect the spiritual heritage of our Catholic community.
- Preserving the traditional celebration of the Mass, strictly according to the Roman Missal and Church norms, without unauthorized adaptations.
- Encouraging and forming vocations within our communities, with a focus on seminarians who understand our people, culture, and needs.
- Sending our seminarians to long-established seminaries that are faithful to Catholic doctrine and tradition.
- Renewing parish life and outreach, especially to those who have fallen away, through time-tested methods of evangelization and pastoral care, not experimental or ideologically-driven programs.
- Supporting our current diocesan priests, ensuring they receive the respect, formation, and care they need to continue their vocations with joy and fidelity.

By signing, you stand for unity, tradition, and a future rooted in the Church's proven path, not one shaped by unfamiliar and divisive movements. **Thank you for your support**

*Our newest Diocesan Seminarians*  
*Please Keep Quentin, Gary, and Jack in your prayers.*

O GOD, HEAR OUR PRAYER FOR THE MEN YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO WALK IN  
THE FOOTSTEPS OF YOUR SON.

GRANT THEM HUMILITY AND FIDELITY, THAT THEY MAY SERVE OTHERS  
WITH SELFLESS HEARTS.

DEEPEN THEIR DEVOTION TO OUR BLESSED MOTHER, QUEEN OF  
VOCATIONS, SO THAT THEY MAY ALWAYS SEEK AND DO YOUR HOLY WILL.  
STRENGTHEN THEIR LIFE OF PRAYER, SHIELDING THEM FROM WORLDLY  
DISTRACTIONS AND HELPING THEM TO GROW IN SPIRIT AND VIRTUE.

GIVE THEM COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE IN THEIR STUDIES, AND MAY  
THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE AND CONSOLE THEM IN MOMENTS OF STRUGGLE.  
LEAD THEM TO THE JOY AND FULFILLMENT OF THE PRIESTHOOD, WHERE  
THEY MAY FAITHFULLY SHEPHERD YOUR PEOPLE.

WE ASK THIS THROUGH CHRIST OUR LORD.

AMEN.

