

Voice of the Laity Mission Statement

We, the "Voice of the Laity" 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.

WHAT IS THE NEOCATECHUMENAL WAY?

- The Neocatechumenal Way (NCW) is a lay movement founded in the early 1960s in the shantytowns of Madrid, Spain.
- It was started by Kiko Argüello, a painter inspired by his personal conversion, and Carmen Hernández, a former missionary.
- The movement began through small communities gathering to reflect on Scripture and celebrate the faith.
- The NCW presents itself as a "new catechumenate" for baptized Catholics and has spread worldwide.
- Although it received Vatican recognition, the NCW has faced criticism for:
 1. Separate Eucharistic celebrations from parish life
 2. Distinct liturgical practices viewed by many as divisive
 3. Secretive catechesis and internal teachings
 4. Authoritarian leadership structures
- Critics argue that the movement can create division within parishes instead of fostering unity in the wider Church.
- Concerns have also been raised about Redemptoris Mater seminaries, where some believe priests may become more loyal to the movement than to their dioceses.
- Many faithful believe the NCW functions as a "parallel church within the Church," weakening diocesan unity and parish life.



Catholic Teaching on the Development of Doctrine

- Saint John Henry Newman taught that Christian doctrine develops authentically and continuously from the time of Christ through the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- His work, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, defends the continuity of the Catholic Church throughout history.
- Many Catholics believe this stands in direct contrast to claims that the Church was fundamentally corrupted for centuries before modern reforms.

Concerns About the Teachings of Kiko Argüello

- Kiko teaches that the Church became deeply flawed after Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in 314 AD.
- He describes a long process of "dechristianization" and claims that "natural religiosity has infiltrated Christianity."
- According to NCW catechetical texts, this period extended from Constantine until the Second Vatican Council.
- Kiko proposes a new way of teaching Christianity, often using papal quotations to support his catechesis.
- Critics argue these ideas conflict with authentic Catholic teaching on the continuity and development of the Church through history.

Neocatechumenal Way practices that Differ from the Catholic Liturgy



- In the Neocatechumenal Way, the liturgy 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 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?

- The Vatican has officially approved the statutes and catechetical directory of the Neocatechumenal Way (NCW).
- However, the NCW's liturgical practices have received repeated corrections and guidance from the Holy See.
- Multiple popes have emphasized that the NCW must follow the liturgical norms of the Roman Rite and remain united with parish life.

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."

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.

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."

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."

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."

January 2026 - Pope Leo XIV

- Praised the NCW's missionary zeal and its contribution to evangelization.
- Strongly emphasized unity with the wider Church and parish communities.
- Warned against isolation, superiority, rigidity, coercion, and moralism.
- Stated that charisms must serve the whole Church and never become a source of division or exclusion.
- Encouraged the NCW to move forward "in joy and humility" as "builders and witnesses of communion."



UPHOLDING CATHOLIC FAITH,
UNITY, AND TRUTH IN CHRIST

In response to the practices of the Neocatechumenal Way (NCW) in Las Cruces, NM and the opening of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary

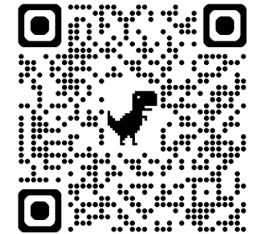
Concerns About the Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Las Cruces

Key Concerns

- The Redemptoris Mater Seminary is connected to the Neocatechumenal Way (NCW), a lay movement rather than a religious order.
- Seminarians are formed primarily as missionary priests under the influence of the NCW, rather than specifically for the pastoral needs of the Diocese of Las Cruces.
- Critics fear the seminary could create a parallel culture within the diocese, shaped more by the NCW's spirituality and practices than by traditional diocesan formation.
- Leadership and formation directed by clergy closely affiliated with the NCW may strongly influence future diocesan priests.
- Concerns exist about liturgical and theological formation that may differ from the broader traditions and norms of the Roman Rite and diocesan life.
- Some former seminarians have reported experiences of pressure, fear-based formation, and insufficient preparation for parish ministry.

Why This Matters

With only 17 diocesan priests and more set to retire, the future of parish life depends on strong and faithful formation. When formation tilts toward a single movement, unity and stability can suffer. Priests need clear grounding in Church teaching, the Roman Rite, and pastoral care that embraces every Catholic.



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