THE PERSPECTIVES OF CATECHESIS IN EUROPE

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Preface

On May 1, 2004 the European Union celebrated access of ten new countries. That was a moment when eight mid-eastern European countries joined the EU for the first time, and Poland was one of them. On January 1, 2007 the European Community was joined by following two countries from former Eastern bloc, Bulgaria and Romania, and as a result the number of EU members increased to 27 countries. At present an EU candidate country is Croatia. "And so, two 'lungs' of Europe knit, as Pope John II called Eastern and Western Europe. At the same time the EU wants to strengthen inner member relations by accepting the *Constitution*, even if such an enterprise is subject to an ordeal."[1] It is difficult to understand the meaning of European culture and its unification efforts without reference to Christian heritage. In the light of contemporary history, it is also difficult to explain ongoing events without viewing them from religion and faith perspective. As cardinal Karl Lehmann says: "Even totally distancing oneself from faith, every single European has now repeatedly asked oneself about the meaning of Christianity and the culture inspired by it."[2] The meaning of religion still remains important in contemporary social life. It is not merely a peripheral phenomenon or an effect accompanying economic changes. What is more, religion cannot be reduced to a personal private area. In general, religions also mean public matters, human matters in general, as well as proper understanding of God or political authority.[3]

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[1] "Damit wachsen die beiden «Lungenflügel» Europas, wie Papst Johannes Paul II. das westliche und östliche Europa bezeichnet hat, zusammen. Gleichzeitig will die Europäische Union die Beziehungen ihrer Mitgliedstaaten vertiefen, indem sie sich eine Verfassung gibt, auch wenn dieses Vorhaben derzeit auf eine harte Probe gestellt wird." K. LEHMANN, *Die Zukunft des christlichen Glaubens in einem sich verändernden Europa*, [in:] *Europa – Bildung – Religion. Demokratische Bildungsverantwortung und die Religionen*, eds. P. Schreiner, V. Elsenbast, F. Schweitzer, Münster-New York-München-Berlin 2006, p. 27.

[2] "Auch der einzelne Europäer, selbst wenn er sich vom Glauben völlig lossagen sollte, muss sich immer wieder der Frage nach dem Sinn des Christentums und der von ihm inspirierten Kultur stellen." Ibid., p. 30.

[3] Cf. ibid., p. 29.

Modern European countries are becoming a colorful mosaic of many different cultures, religions and traditions, rooted in places from which numerous crowds have arrived and are still arriving to the Old Continent, trying to find their home here. Therefore important questions appear today, concerning multi religious encounters in a relatively small area, within borders of European cities and countries, and at the same time questions concerning religious education within pluralistic society.[4]

Existing in this world, the Church has to take under consideration some ongoing changes. Vatican II in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes* stressed that "the Church down through the centuries and in the light of the Gospel has worked out the principles of justice and equity demanded by right reason both for individual and social life and for international life" (GS 63). Thus it is a task of the Church to react to these changes. Among the tasks is first and foremost preaching the Gospel at all times and in all places. The process of evangelization is done in a certain social, cultural, political and economic context. A proper recognition of the atmosphere surrounding evangelization must be done, to determine both opportunities and threats. It is therefore impossible that the Church's documents omit changes ongoing within the world. The *General Directory for Catechesis* states: "Many communities and individuals are called to live in a pluralistic and secularized world, in which forms of unbelief and religious indifference may be encountered together with vibrant expressions of religious and cultural pluralism. In many individuals the search for certainty and for values appears strong. Spurious forms of religion, however, are also evident as well as dubious adherence to the faith. In the face of such diversity, some Christians are confused or lost. They become incapable of knowing how to confront situations or to judge the messages which they receive. They may abandon regular practice of the faith and end by living as though there were no God, often resorting to surrogate or pseudo-religions. Their faith is exposed to trials. When threatened it risks being extinguished altogether, unless it is constantly nourished and sustained" (GDC 193).

In the face of contemporary cultural situation one of the Church's particular concerns is the growth in faith of the young generation. A commitment often made by young people: "I am a Christian", entails a decision of standing for Christ and accepting His teachings. It should be reflected in accepting a certain lifestyle and social engagement, as well as taking on the responsibility for shaping one's life. As it turns out, being lost in the world is the most vital

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[4] Cf. E. J. Korherr, *Welche Katechese für welches Europa?*, "Christlich-pädagogische Blätter" 4 (1992), p. 158.

problem of contemporary youth, also the believers. It is deepened by negative opinions on teaching religion in both pluralist and lay public school, as well as by parish crisis. Pluralist social structure existing in Europe in the area of religion, nationality, and economical status requires particular members of the Church and society to be ready to listen carefully the opinions of others and undertaking dialog. It also demands care for their own identity.

For Christians living in contemporary pluralist world a properly run catechesis, deepening and strengthening the believers' identity, becomes of great importance. The task of catechesis is therefore uniting with Christ and leading to deep intimacy with Him (cf. GDC 80), but also developing an authentic missionary sense in reference to other religions, reflecting in a clear testimony of one's own faith, in a respectful attitude of mutual understanding, in dialog and cooperation at defending personal rights, as well as supporting the poor and direct preaching of the Gospel (cf. GDC 200).

It is stressed on the ground of Christian humanism that a human being cannot be fully understood without Christ; therefore a personal value system cannot be created without Him either. Thus a presence of religious dimension in education and upbringing process of young Europeans seems essential. Gradual recognition of values and accepting responsibility is at the same time shaping one's conscience. It is a task particularly important in the atmosphere of coexistence of many religions and outlooks, and the question to be considered in such a light is included in a quest for adequate models of catechesis so that it becomes an answer to the life condition of contemporary Christians in European countries.

The history of catechesis demonstrates that the style of catechetical work had been changed several times, and different catechetical models had been proposed, through which an attempt to solve an effective faith message problem was made. New solutions often appeared under the influence of complex socio-religious factors or the appearance of new pedagogical concepts. One can state with no exaggeration that the present crisis of catechesis reflects a different, deeper crisis that touches the very root of humanity in its religious dimension. Catechesis is notably affected by social context. Therefore it seems that a moment has come to ask a question for the condition of Roman Catholic religion teaching in European countries.

A survey of the condition of school religion teaching was taken in years 2005–2007 under a patronage of the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE).[5] It was this survey that encouraged to follow this path,

[5] Council of European Bishops' Conferences – Concilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae (CCEE). The chairman for CCEE' s catechization, school and university affairs

as it stressed the importance of religion and Christianity in the political context, as well as decisions taken at the level of the EU authorities or in EU documents.

One of the most up to date studies concerning this topic is a corporate study entitled *How Teachers in Europe Teach Religion. An International Empirical Study in 16 Countries*.[6] It is a piece of mosaic creating a picture of comparative surveys of teaching religion in Europe.

The above studies are not a complete study of the issue. They are an encouragement for further analyses in the field of comparative catechetics that would gather and analyze information on catechetical models in different countries of Europe and other continents. Therefore an idea emerged to summon basic information on Roman Catholic religion teaching models in Europe, thus demonstrating its prospects for the better future.

The problem may as such be formed as a question: in what shape the catechesis of Roman Catholic Church is realized in European countries? What is its context, namely effects favoring evangelization as well as some negative factors? To what extent is catechesis attractive to young people? What are its prospects for growth in the future?

Empirical studies have started in October 2007 and ended in March 2009 and were carried out using survey and poll methods. A questionnaire[7] was sent to all EU, EFTA countries, as well as to the EU candidate country, Croatia. The questionnaires were first of all addressed to state catechetical centers, chairmen and secretaries of catechetical committees of the Episcopal conferences, academics of theological departments, persons and offices responsible for catechesis in dioceses (or their equivalents), pastors and catechists (in case of no response from a given person, the questionnaire was directed to another recipient). Among ca 141 questionnaires sent, filled in papers have been received from 24 countries. These are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France (Alsace and the department of Moselle), Spain, Holland, Lithuania, Malta, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom (England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland), Croatia, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (2 cantons: St. Gallen and Tessin). Unfortunately no feedback was obtained in desired time from 7 countries:

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is bishop Vincent Nichols. Cf. Consilium Conferentiarum Episcoporum Europae, http://www.ccee.ch/index.php?&na=2,3,0,0,e.

[6] *How Teachers in Europe Teach Religion. An International Empirical Study in 16 Countries*, ed. by H.-G. Ziebertz, U. Riegel, Berlin 2009.

[7] See *Appendix*.

Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Luxembourg and Latvia. All returned questionnaires have been qualified to further analysis.

Questions included in the questionnaire concerned the system of teaching Roman Catholic religion at school and in parishes, sources of hope for the future of catechesis in Europe, the latest publications in catechetics, as well as characteristic traits (the specific) of catechesis in a given country. The outcome of the survey was entirely published in Polish in a study entitled *Models of Teaching Roman Catholic Religion in the European Countries*.

A book now being handed to the Reader is a publication of a part of this survey. It includes information demonstrating prospects of European catechesis. Several factors have been taken into consideration; these factors may show some specific features of religious education activities undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe now. These elements have been identified as: important publications concerning religious education that appeared in a given country in recent years, vital factors influencing both adversely and favorably the teaching religion process. Taken into consideration were statistical data, showing changes in the overall number of persons subject to religion classes observed by those polled in recent 10 years. The respondents were also asked to point out specific features that are decisive in the character of religion teaching process in their country. Answers given to these questions were to demonstrate dangers and chances of religion teaching mission of the Church in Europe. Their analysis in the text given below will serve for sketching the outline of religion teaching future in European countries.

We hope this short study will contribute to searching visible signs of hope for the future of European catechesis, and at the same time stimulating thinking over its proper shape and development in the future.

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1. Major Publications on Catechesis and Religion Teaching in the Surveyed European Countries

A group of questions of the survey concerned vital catechetical publications, i.e. whatever was recently published in a given country in the area of catechetics, apart from catechetical documents. These publications are a form of research for appropriate evangelization and catechetical activity tools, for its proper shape in the diocese or in the country. In the same time they are an inherent part of catechetical ministry, as such named by the Roman *General Directory for Catechesis.* These include:

– examining the pastoral activities;
– the analysis of the religious situation;
– socio-cultural analysis
– the formulation of an operating program;
– developing guidelines and teaching materials for catechesis (cf. GDC 279–283).

Accomplishing these tasks requires certain order, pointed out by the Roman *General Directory for Catechesis*, and at the same time attention in the ministry to take up adequate catechetical actions. It is therefore needed to develop appropriate publications that would cover individual levels of the analysis pointed out in the document and would include in its content what is being called for in the Roman *Directory*. What it looks like in particular European countries? Unfortunately full sets of data were not collected from all surveyed countries. Information considering catechetical publications appeared in answers of almost a half of those polled.

Table 1. Major Publications on Religion Teaching and Catechesis in the Surveyed European Countries

Country	Publications
	EU Countries
Austria	New course books and religion teaching plans – 2001

Country	Publications
Belgium	1) Déclarations des évêques de Belgique, *Devenir adulte dans la foi. La catéchèse dans la vie de l'Eglise*, 2006 2) Commission épiscopale pour l'évangélisation, *Grandir dans la foi. Note de travail à propos de 'Devenir adulte dans la foi'*, 2007
Spain	1) *La adaptación a los nuevos currículos* (Com. Ep. de Enseñanza y Catequesis 2005) 2) *Proyecto Marco de la Formación de Catequistas* (Com. Ep. de Enseñanza y Catequesis 1998) 3) *Legislación sobre la Enseñanza de la Religión a partir de la LOE* (Conf. Episc. Espan. 2006/2007)
Holland	1) *De glans van Gods woord. Brief over catechese van de Nederandse Bisschoppenconferentie*, Utrecht 2004 2) *Kriterienliste*
Germany	1) Die deutschen Bischöfe, *Katechese in veränderter Zeit*, 2004 2) Die deutschen Bischöfe, *Religionsunterricht von neuen herausforderungen* , 2005 3) Die deutschen Bischöfe, *Kirchliche Richtlinien zu Bildungsstandards für den katholischen Religions-unterricht in der Grundschule*, 2006
Poland	1) *Jesteśmy dziećmi Boga*, eds. J. Szpet, D. Jackowiak – a program for teaching religion on pre-school level and '0' class; 2) *Przyjąć blask Bożej Prawdy*, eds. J. Szpet, D. Jackowiak – a program for teaching religion in lower secondary (middle school (*gimnazjum*); 3) *Jezus Drogą, Prawdą i Życiem*, eds. M. Krawczyk, B. Misiek, W. Osial – a program for teaching religion in lower secondary (middle) school (*gimnazjum*); 4) T. Biłyk, T. Homa, K. Wojtkowska, S. and C. Danes, *Problemy współczesności a chrześcijanie. Zagadnienia etyczne i społeczne do dyskusji dla młodzieży i wychowawców*, Kraków-Warszawa 2004.
Slovenia	1) A periodical *Glasilo* for parish catechesis (1984–2002), later renamed into *Naša katecheza* (*Our catechesis*). It is addressed to priests, lay and religious catechists and parents. It is issued fourfold a year. 2) Since 1971 Roman Church in Slovenia organizes a catechetical symposium: 5 days in two different dates and locations: Minerski Grad (Nova Gorica) and Celje, and also in 2006 an abbreviated version (3 days) in Ljubelja. For this occasion a book is published, that is a compilation of all the lectures. Every participant receives it on arriving at the symposium. 3) Many books discussing upbringing and religious education.
Slovakia	1) *Kompendium Katechizmu Katolíckej cirkvi*. Trnava: SSV, 2006. 2) Fogassy J., *Príručka katechumenátnej katechézy*. Bratislava: Komisia pre katechizáciu a školstvo KBS, 2007. 3) Plešková E., *Základy vyučovania náboženstva*. Spišská Nová Ves: KPKC, 2006.
Sweden	*På väg med Kristus* – a catechism series. 1) *Gud kommertui oss* (for children aged 7–8) 2) *Kyrkan vårt hem* (for children aged 9–10)
Hungary	1) *Hungarian Catechetical Directory*, 2000 2) *Adult catechumenate*, 1999
EFTA Countries	
Norway	1) *Ekko* (a parish based course in catechetics for catechists, developed by CTS and Maryvale Institute in England) 2) *Jeg er Alfa og Omega*, (a book for catechesis in eight grade) 3) *Nærmere deg* (a book for catechesis in the fifth grade)
Switzerland (St. Gallen)	Theo Stieger, *Ich bin mit euch, Lehrmittel für die 4.–6. Klasse*

Publications mentioned by the respondents of the questionnaire are mainly catechetical documents of local churches (Belgium, Spain, Holland, Germany, Hungary), syllabuses and textbooks (Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Norway, St. Galen canton; in Liechtenstein new catechisms are being worked out), formation and legal aids (Spain, Slovakia, Norway), and also other publications that are a product of catechetical meetings and symposiums (Slovenia). It is to be viewed as a positive sign of Church's activity. There is however a lack of other types of publications, namely those analyzing catechetical situation in a given country or being an academic study of catechetical issues. The emphasis is put mainly in the catechists' formation and teaching aids for the catechized, so it is an implementation

of the two latter tasks pointed out previously, emphasized by the *General Directory for Catechesis*. Nevertheless, documents of the Episcopal Conferences of given countries are also important, as they seem to give catechetical activities the proper direction. Also the analysis of religious and socio-cultural situation is to be tracked there. Formulating an operating program is specifically stated in program documents, concerning both catechization and formation of those who catechize.

Properly carried out catechetical activity should result also from current reflections concerning both the ministry and social conditions. Further development of the situation may be hoped for in countries where it was specifically articulated and published. This hope is also to be expected in other factors pointed out by the respondents of the poll, that positively influence catechization process in Europe.

2. *Signs of Hope* – Factors Positively Influencing Catechesis in Europe

The questionnaire included a question what the factors positively influencing catechization process are. What attracts children and teenagers to the church? These are fundamental signs of hope in the look for the future of European catechization, at the same time marking new directions of its development and vital moments to be emphasized in evangelization and catechesis. Watching contemporary signs we look to the future searching proper models of teaching religion, which would be an answer to current needs of the Church and European society. These factors were mentioned in the order of particular countries, in which they were observed and noted by the respondents. As they occur in particular countries, they are not completely isolated, displaying many common features that should be subsequently noted. The results of the survey are presented below (in Table 2).

Table 2. Factors Positively Influencing Catechesis in the Surveyed European Countries

Country	Factors
EU Countries	
Austria	– large number of participants, and in catholic schools good quality of religion lessons, therefore children and teenagers participate eagerly
Belgium	– Flemish Community: none – French and German speaking Communities: "Catechetical activities are directed currently towards adults, not excluding children and teenagers, which is required by the 1997 Roman *Directory*. As such, they stimulate restoration as a part of Sunday congregation assemblies, which become better corresponding with the catechetical process" ("La catéchèse se réoriente vers les adultes, sans exclure jeunes et enfants, comme le demande le Directoire romain de 1997 et suscite ainsi un renouveau dans les assemblées dominicales mieux associées au processus catéchétique." *Questionnaire, Belgique francophone et germanophone*).
Czech Republic	– pre-evangelization of particular groups and the whole urban and rural areas; – education programs carried out in primary schools, pre-schools, high schools, such as *The Message of Christmas, Easter, Czech saints,* introducing to the Holy Scriptures; exhibitions devoted to these topics showing the meaning of Christian tradition and liturgical rites; – more interest in ethics.
Finland	– possibility of teaching catholic religion in schools and gradual preparation of religion teaching materials.

France (Alsace and the department of Moselle)	– "Personally I think that religious education and partaking in Church life by children should be distinguished. Attending religious education classes does not seem to be the indicator determining the society's attitude to the Church and religion, even if parents are responsible for it in great measure. It depends on many other factors, not connected to faith and religion at all, such as: suitable or not bus schedule, the amount of assigned homework, the manner of excusing religion classes, etc. As for today we have a big group of teenagers who participate in sacraments' preparation, are very zealous and excused from religion classes (something that may seem totally illogical…). On the other hand, what attracts children to the church is the attitude of the leader (whether a catechist, priest or any other person), that makes children become active participants of the liturgy. In my opinion it is the way we leave children and teenagers the space to prepare celebration and vital events from the life of the Church that decides whether they cling or not to the life of our Christian communities. – The sign of hope for the future of our communities could be an effect, that is becoming more and more common: parents who propose their participation in catechetical classes for children and teenagers want to also benefit from religion teaching that would allow them to take up again or come back to Christian life practices that they know poorly or that that they have abandoned. They are the new «God seekers». To me it seems very important to take this effect into account and to organize adult catechization in this context. But all this is still ahead of us!"*
Spain	– no hope for positive changes in catechization; – children and teenagers are attracted by Christian values, but in low number.
Germany	– adult catechesis –increasing interest in the so-called "faith courses" (*Glaubenskurse*); – increasing number of baptisms of adults and comebacks to the Church.
Poland	– children, teenagers and adults are engaged in parish ministerial groups (altar boys, choirs, animator's courses, youth and apostolic groups, Catholic Youth Society groups, charity teams, children's missionary groups etc.); – pilgrimages, summertime retreat, masses for children and teenagers; – adult catechesis based on the 'Domestic Church' activity, i.e. in the form of family meetings with the priest, parent's meetings for parents of children who belong to parish groups, as well as a part of children's sacramental preparation; – Lay Apostolate Study – an adults' formation deepening their theological knowledge and encouraging to become more engaged in pastoral activities.
Slovakia	– systematic catechesis at school and in the parish; – Holy Masses for children and teenagers; – piety in families; – catechesis of high quality for children and teenagers, evangelization, Biblical groups and small communities (circles) in parishes.
Slovenia	– parents who take their faith seriously, evangelize their children and bring them up religiously; – Church is more and more aware of the need for new evangelization; – youth seeking for the sense of life; – parish catechesis of good quality; – catechists that are well trained pedagogically and professional in theology, they learn continually.
Sweden	– parents' growing interest in their children's catechization.
United Kingdom	
England, Wales	– children eager to serve the Holy Mass; – some parishes manage good quality youth clubs.
Scotland	– A national review of the school curriculum is enabling the Church to review syllabus and resources for Religious Education in Catholic schools. This provides the opportunity for a refreshing of teachers' knowledge and commitment and for the development of new resources.
Northern Ireland	– music, youth activity and pilgrimages
EFTA Countries	
Liechtenstein	– very well prepared catechists; – preparation for the First Communion and confirmation is a part of school catechesis; – the Church attracts with: altar boy service, Masses and pilgrimages for teenagers.
Norway	– "We are having more and more trained catechists. That has a huge influence on the interest, stability and the collegiality among the teachers. In the next run it makes much better catechesis."
Switzerland (St. Gallen)	– "people that are engaged in the Church life, in whose life faith is marked as an important factor of success."**

* "Personnellement, je pense qu'il faut différencier la catéchèse et la participation des enfants à l'Eglise. La fréquentation de la catéchèse ne me semble pas constituer un indice déterminant de la référence de la société à l'Eglise et à la religion, même si les parents y sont responsables pour une large part, elle est tributaire de beaucoup d'autres éléments qui n'ont rien à voir avec la foi et la religion : comme l'horaire compatible ou non avec l'emploi du temps de l'élève, les navettes des bus, la quantité de travail que les enseignants donnent aux élèves en matière de devoirs du soir, la manière dont se font les dispenses aux cours de religion etc. Nous avons à l'heure actuelle, beaucoup de jeunes qui suivent une préparation aux sacrements, qui sont très assidus, et qui sont dispensés de l'heure de religion (ce qui pourrait paraître complètement incohérent…).

Par contre, ce qui attire les enfants à l'Eglise, c'est la manière dont une personne s'y prend (qu'elle soit catéchiste, prêtre ou autre) pour les rendre acteurs d'une célébration. Je pense que c'est dans la mesure où nous laisserons un espace aux enfants et aux jeunes dans la préparation des célébrations et des temps forts que ceux-ci adhéreront ou non à la vie de nos communautés de croyants.

(…) Un signe d'espoir pour l'avenir de nos communautés pourrait être, un phénomène de plus en plus courant : des parents se proposent pour accompagner un groupe de jeunes ou d'enfants dans leur cheminement catéchétique pour bénéficier eux-mêmes, autant que les enfants, d'une instruction religieuse qui leur permettra de nouer ou re-nouer avec une pratique chrétienne qu'ils connaissent mal ou qu'ils ont abandonnée. Ce sont les nouveaux « chercheurs de Dieu ».Il me semble très important de prendre ce phénomène en compte et d'organiser, dans ce contexte, une catéchèse pour adultes. Mais tout reste à faire !" *Questionnaire, France.*

** "Engagierte kirchliche Personen, bei denen deutlich wird, dass der Glaube ein wesentlicher Faktor für ein gelingendes Leben sein kann." *Fragebogen, Diözese St. Gallen (Schweiz).*

It may be distinctly seen that those polled mentioned three groups of issues, being a basis for hope for better tomorrow of catechization in Europe. The first group consists of issues connected to the new organization of adult catechesis. Even today growing commitment of parents in the catechization of their children is visible (France – Alsace and the department of Moselle, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia), as well as interest in new forms of adult evangelization (Belgium, Germany), what makes the evangelization integrated with family environment. As the Roman *General Directory for Catechesis* teaches "the witness of Christian life given by parents in the family comes to children with tenderness and parental respect. Children thus perceive and joyously live the closeness of God and of Jesus made manifest by their parents in such a way that this first Christian experience frequently leaves decisive traces which last throughout life. This childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable" (GDC 226).

At the same time, the message of faith addressed to adults includes experiences they are going through, asked questions and needs towards faith. As in case of children's and teenager catechesis then, mentioned can be catechization of:

– adult Christians who consistently live their faith option and desire to deepen it;

– adults who have been baptized but who have not been sufficiently catechized, or have not brought to fulfillment the Christian initiation, or who have fallen away from the faith;

– non-baptized adults, to whom the catechumenate truly corresponds (cf. GDC, 172).

Amongst special forms of adult catechization mentioned by the *General Directory for Catechesis* (176), the following were mentioned by those polled:

– catechesis for the Christian initiation or catechumenate of adults (Czech Republic, Germany);

– traditional forms of catechesis of the people of God, duly adapted to the liturgical year (Belgium);

– the on-going catechesis for the engaged in ministry of formation in the community: catechists and those involved in the lay apostolate (Poland, Slovenia, St. Gallen canton).

The so called 'faith courses' were mentioned among other forms of catechesis (Germany).

In this context we note instructions developed back in 1990 by the International Council for Catechesis, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, where it was stated that in the Church there is always a need of creating mature Christian communities: "these communities must express a clear faith identity and must be centered on a clear proclamation of the Gospel, a meaningful celebration of the liturgy and a courageous witness in charity. All catechesis must be directed to this goal, beginning with the catechesis of little children. Obviously, in the catechesis of adults the effects are more immediate and incisive" (COINCATI 35). This form of catechization should touch *great themes of the Christian religion* (the mystery of God and the Trinity, Christ, the Church, the sacraments, human life and ethical principles, eschatological realities, etc.), and simultaneously must lead to a knowledge and evaluation, in the light of faith, of the socio-cultural order and of the changes that are taking place in the world today and in the life of individuals (cf. COINCATI 43–45).

The second type of factors is bound to parish catechesis for children and teenagers, especially sacramental and liturgical catechesis. The role of mass for teenagers is stressed here, as well as systematic, high-level parish meetings (France – Alsace and the department of Moselle, Poland, England and Wales, Liechtenstein), engaging in parish clubs, teenage groups and pilgrimages (Poland, England and Wales, Northern Ireland,

Liechtenstein). The parish should be a particularly catechization-friendly place; it is to be a catechetical environment. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi tradendae* John Paul II admitted the need of "taking into account the necessary diversity of places for catechesis: the parish as such, families taking in children and adolescents, chaplaincies for State schools, Catholic educational establishments, apostolic movements that give periods of catechesis, clubs open to youth in general, spiritual formation weekends, etc." (CTr 67). Regardless of catechetical diversity the parish is to be interested, engaged and responsible for catechesis, and to devote all efforts to propagate catechization. It is of high importance to be "watchful about the quality of the religious formation of the various groups and their integration into the ecclesial community" (CTr 67). Contemporary situation of the Church in Europe all the more demonstrates the role and meaning of properly run parish catechesis that introduces both teenagers and adults into the Christian community. At the same time, none of relevance is lost by such proposals as: pilgrimages, trips, religious groups or parish youth clubs and meeting places for people of all ages.

And there is finally the third type of positive factors that is bound to good organization and good quality of school religion education, as well as good pedagogical and theological training for catechists (Austria, Czech Republic, Finland, Slovakia, Scotland, Lichtenstein, Norway). It is then pointed out that through proper factual preparation of religion teachers a positive picture of faith can be shaped, thus attracting young people to the Church and showing a good image of the Christian community.

All these factors find their complementation in specific qualities of catechization given by those polled in regard to their countries.

3. Specific Traits of Catechesis in the Surveyed European Countries

There was a question of the survey concerning specific traits of catechesis in a given country. Its aim was to emphasize factors that in the eyes of those polled appear as particularly characteristic and important in currently binding model of catechesis in their countries. Therefore, the answers appearing were of very different character, and arguments taken from different areas of catechetical places.

Table 3. Specific Traits of Catechesis in the Surveyed European Countries

Country	Specific Traits of Catechesis
EU Countries	
Austria	– cooperation between priests and private schools should be more intensive; – the remuneration of teachers and religion textbooks of all denominations are financed by the state; – religion classes are fully integrated in the school timetable; – the religious aspect is an important part of education; – the youth tends to shape their personal *"puzzle-type" religion* – therefore the offer of the Church would become even more important; – freedom to choose the method (*Methodenfreiheit*) in the catechists' work; – very wide variety of offers in the area of further education for religion teachers.
Belgium	– "A change in catechesis model was started, from an inner Christian culture model to a model where a human is not born a Christian, but becomes one through conversion. Therefore we are facing a paradigmatic cultural-ecclesiological change that the French Church has carried out to a much bigger degree. We are experiencing a very radical crisis of faith, also within our Church and its structure, most visibly seen in almost a complete lack of vocations (*sensu lato*, i.e. including the Sacrament of Marriage). «The new» is growing on sidelines, but is still statistically/structurally not visible. To my general opinion your questions are not adequate to our situation, as classic catechetical structure (that you are asking of) and the life of catechesis are very distant from each other. – The other case is that we understand «regeneration» in a sense from «catechesis as the catechism» (learning, understanding) to «catechesis as initiation», as enabling personal contact with God in the Bible, the Word of God, in the liturgy and the Church community (to what the Roman *General Directory for Catechesis* calls). With regard to this, questions included in this questionnaire seem to me education and information oriented, although I naturally fully agree with the important function of the content of faith and its understanding."*
Czech Republic	– priests as well as lay and religious catechists often teach a group consisting of sometimes one, sometimes three pupils, often from different classes; – apart from catechesis in small groups, the catechist must also pre-evangelize, as children and teenagers catechized have very little knowledge of God and faith.
France (Alsace and the department of Moselle)	– French specificity in teaching religion is a possibility given by concordat regulations, which regulate teaching issues and the status of religion in Alsace and the department of Moselle, i.e. in three Eastern departments: Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin and Moselle.

Germany	– teaching religion at school in cooperation with community catechesis; – catechesis is changing – it is not only a sacramental preparation, but it is becoming more and more a missionary catechesis for all age groups; – "personal offer" of people involved in catechesis and pastoral ministry (*personales Angebot, Betreuunugs-maßnahmen*), nuns, who undertake it.
Poland	– parishes introduce catechesis for high school teenagers, which is to help discover their own vocation. Diocese materials were prepared among catechists, in the Archdiocese of Kraków, entitled *Strong with the Power of Love*. Pastors of particular parishes are responsible for arranging the catechetical meetings. The meetings are to be held within 2nd high school grade (25 meetings and celebrations); – school religion lessons of good quality and parish catechesis.
Slovakia	– merging school religion teaching and parish catechesis is a vital characteristic; – the ecumenical character of catechesis; – advantage of children's and teenagers' catechesis over adults'.
Slovenia	– regular catechesis in parishes; – all catechetical work of lay and religious catechists is financed by the Church alone. Until this day the state does not pay for anything at all; – training for catechists who teach without required qualifications and canonical mission.
Sweden	– all lay catechists are volunteers (apart from priests and sparse nuns).
Hungary	– live faith in many families; – in some public schools the board is very helpful; – *General Directory for Catechesis* was translated to Hungarian in 1998; – publication of *Hungarian Catechetical Directory* in 2000; – there are many parishes where people live by faith, where catechesis is very important and where the youth are actively involved in parish life; – adult catechization becomes more and more important; – the role of catechumenate is also growing, as well as the catechumenal character of sacramental catechesis; – the role of parish community becomes more and more vital.
United Kingdom	
England, Wales	– "Catechesis is not specifically taught in schools. Programs are run in parishes for different groups. Religious education in secondary schools is the best opportunity to pass on faith knowledge and practice."
Northern Ireland	– "We need to move from a purely school-based catechesis to one that is also parish-based."
EFTA Countries	
Switzerland (St. Gallen, Tessin)	– 4 official languages, 26 cantonal school systems and thus 26 different principles for religion classes and catechesis.

* "Wir haben gerade angefangen die Katechese um zu beugen vom Modell innerhalb einer christliche Kultur zum Modell wo man nicht langer als Christen geboren ist aber Christen wird durch Bekehrung. Wir haben also einen Kulturel-ekklesiologischen und katechetischen Paradigmenwechsel vor uns wie zum Beispiel die Französische Kirche schon weiter vollzogen hat. Wir erleben sehr radikal die Krise des Gottesglaubens auch innerhalb unserer Kirche und ihrer Strukturen, was sich am besten zeigt am fast völligen mangeln an Berufungen (auch sensu lato, zum Beispiel zum Heirat). Neues wachst in margine, aber ist statistisch/strukturell noch fast unsichtbar. Meinen Gesamteindruck ist daher das ihren Fragenstellung unserer Situation nicht ganz gut angemessen ist, weil die klassische katechetische Strukture (wie sie die anfragen) und das Leben der Katechese bei uns weit aus einander liegen.

Eine zweite Sache ist dass wir eine Erneuerung betrachten von ‚Katechese als Katechismus' (unterricht, erkenntis) zu, ‚Katechese als Initiation', als möglich machen der personale Begegnung mit God in der Bibel und das Wort, in dem Glaubenseinhalt, in der Liturgie und in der Kirchengemeinschaft (so wie es auch das Römische Allgemeines Direktorium für die Katechese fragt). In dieser Hinsicht scheinen mir die Fragen in dieser Untersuchung ziemlich erkenntnis- und unterricht-orientiert, obwohl Ich natürlich die Wichtigkeit des Glaubensinhalt und -Erkenntis völlig zustimme." Fr*agebogen, Belgien.*

Some general conclusions concerning catechetical models present in Europe can be driven out from given answers, as well as the dominant tendencies in surveyed countries. Those polled paid attention to vital importance of religion classes at school (Austria, France – Alsace and the department of Moselle, Germany, Slovakia) and its union with parish catechesis (Germany, Poland, Slovakia). Some stressed the significance of parish catechesis itself (Slovenia, England and Wales, Northern Ireland) - either due to the lack of school confessional RE, or also as a result of over emphasizing it at the expense of parish catechesis.[1] In Poland, there have been introduced the new forms of parish catechesis for high school teenagers. Those polled noticed difficulties of organizational, financial and legal nature (Czech Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland), but above all noticed are progressing changes in catechesis model accepted to date. The reason for these changes is experiencing religiousness by modern Europeans. Both tendencies towards shaping personal religion as well as diminishing religiousness of entire social groups, namely adults, teenagers, and consequently children are observed (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary). In these countries catechesis takes on a form of catechumenate or missionary catechesis, and includes all age groups (until today it used to be more a sacramental and deepening catechesis). Currently it must become an initiation catechesis, pre-evangelization that aims for basic range of knowledge about God and religion, but more to enable personal contact with God through reading the Holy Scripture, participating in the liturgy and joining in the living Church community, because "catechesis runs the risk of becoming barren if no community of faith and Christian life takes the catechumen in" (CTR 24). These communities have generally changed their social status, what was noticed by a respondent from Belgium mentioning the crisis of faith in God, also within the Church and its structures.

In the light of the *General Directory for Catechesis*, presently, in a multi-religious world the aim of properly delivered catechesis should be deepening and strengthening the identity of believers, particularly where they are a minority. Therefore its goal is to help the believers realize the presence of other religions, development of the missionary sense that manifests in a testimony of faith, in an attitude of respect and mutual understanding, dialog and cooperation in favor of personal rights, as well as involvement for the poor (cf. GDC 200).

Having in mind the socio-cultural context of the modern world, in which a man is basically not born a Christian, but becomes one through conversion

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[1] On the other hand, sacramental catechesis carried out in schools was being found a positive factor in teaching religion in Liechtenstein, as it was noticeable above. Cf. Table 2.

(what is being experienced also by contemporary Europe), Pope Benedict xvi in his *Letter on the Urgent Task of Educating Young People* draws attention to the fact that in a common atmosphere, mentality and culture leading to doubt in the value of human being, in the meaning of truth and good: "It then becomes difficult to pass on from one generation to the next something that is valid and certain, rules of conduct, credible objectives around which to build life itself. (…) Not even the greatest values of the past can be simply inherited; they must be claimed by us and renewed through an often anguishing personal option. (…) Therefore, an education would be most impoverished if it were limited to providing notions and information and neglected the important question about the truth, especially that truth which can be a guide in life."[2]

In such a view initiatory and evangelizing catechesis, which itself is not a simple task to accomplish (what has been pointed out by those polled from Belgium and Czech Republic), turns out to be one of vital links of the values' message in a pluralist society. One of the most basic tasks of catechesis comes to the fore, namely education for community life (cf. GDC 86). It decides of an authentic adoption of evangelical values, as "Christian community life is not realized spontaneously. It is necessary to educate it carefully" (GDC 86). Personal choice of greatest values combined with upbringing for community life can therefore bear fruit of authentic clinging to "the truth that can be a guide for life."

Pluralism and multi religiousness of modern Europe's societies require ecumenical dimension of catechesis. "Catechesis will have an ecumenical dimension if, while not ceasing to teach that the fullness of the revealed truths and of the means of salvation instituted by Christ is found in the Catholic Church, it does so with sincere respect, in words and in deeds, for the ecclesial communities that are not in perfect communion with this Church" (CTr 32). This respect will be the bigger, the better the ecumenically directed catechesis "and fosters a true desire for unity. This will be true all the more if it inspires serious efforts – including the effort of self-purification in the humility and the fervor of the Spirit in order to clear the ways – with a view not to facile irenics made up of omissions and concessions on the level of doctrine, but to perfect unity, when and by what means the Lord will wish" (CTr 32). The need of ecumenism seems necessary and urgent in the time of religious pluralism, however it requires a duty of maintaining one's own faith, Christian identity and doctrinal integration. In case of organizing teaching religion

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[2] BENEDICT XVI, *Letter to The Faithful of The Diocese and City of Rome on The Urgent Task of Educating Young People* (January 21, 2008).

ecumenism also has its clearly stated boundaries that, if crossed over, do not mean true catechesis, as "the civil authority or other circumstances impose on the schools in some countries a common instruction in the Christian religion, with common textbooks, class periods, etc., for Catholics and non-Catholics alike. Needless to say, this is not true catechesis. But this teaching also has ecumenical importance when it presents Christian doctrine fairly and honestly. In cases where circumstances impose it, it is important that in addition a specifically Catholic catechesis should be ensured with all the greater care" (CTT 33).

In what way this particular catechesis' specifics, as well as its changes translates into dynamism of changes in general number of those subject to catechization within last 10 years in surveyed countries? This question was asked to gather information concerning present approach tendencies towards school religion classes of children and teenagers within recent years. Obtained data show differentiated, yet not pessimistic results.

Table 4. The Dynamism of Changes in School Religion Education Classes' Participation in the Last Decade in Europe

Country	significantly decreased	significantly increased	slightly decreased	slightly increased	remained unchanged
EU Countries					
Austria			•		
Belgium	•				
Czech Republic					•
Finland				•	
France (Alsace and the department of Moselle)	•				
Spain	•				
Holland			•		
Lithuania	no data				
Malta			•		
Germany			•		
Poland					•
Portugal	•				
Romania					•
Slovakia			•		
Slovenia					•
Sweden				•	
Hungary	•				
Italy					•

United Kingdom					
England, Wales	no data				
Scotland					•
Northern Ireland					•
EU Candidate country:					
Croatia	•				
EFTA Countries					
Liechtenstein			•		
Norway		•			
Switzerland					
St. Gallen	•				
Tessin	•				

The dynamism of changes in last decade's school religion classes' participation in particular countries demonstrates predominantly its decrease (in 14 surveyed regions), however the scale of this effect is different, from a significant decrease (8 countries) to slight decrease (following 6 countries). Only in three countries an increase of the number of school religion classes' participants was noticed – significant (Norway), or slight increase tendency (Finland and Sweden). What is interesting, the increase tendency concerns Scandinavians, at the same time two of them are characterized by major predominance of Protestant believers and obligatory religious studies in public schools – *learning about religion* (Sweden, Norway). Swedish data concern only parish catechesis, Norwegian data include also teaching religion in several Catholic schools present in Norway. In Belgium the number of those subject to catechization decreased. Data from Holland show that their number is slightly decreasing, what can be caused also by demographic factors and thronging masses of immigrants.

According to the data collected, in Spain the number of religion classes participants significantly decreased. 2007 data show that in all levels of the educational system (except from the academic level), despite difficulties presented by educational administration almost 5.5 million from over 7 million Spanish schoolchildren attends religion classes. A report was published by the Commission for Catechesis and Teaching of the Spanish Episcopal Conference. According to 2007/2008 School Year Report, in schools run by religious congregations 98 per cent of students have chosen religion classes, and in public schools – 68.5 per cent. As far as particular stages of education are concerned, in pre schools and elementary schools religion classes are attended by 84 per cent of pupils. This number decreases in secondary school (63 per cent) and in high school (48.9 per cent). According to the Commission for Catechesis and Teaching, in the two latter stages it is

students themselves who chose whether to attend religion classes or not, and usually chose most convenient options. The other reason is the alternative subject, as the so called 'form periods', which means learning or revision time, or even rest. This option was chosen by 35 per cent of students. In comparison with school year 2006/2007 the number of students who have chosen religion classes decreased by 1.3 per cent. This is not much, taking into consideration all the difficulties encountered by parents in many schools. Despite the fact that the subject is compulsory (with full opt-out possibility), sometimes it does not appear in the timetable, or a public school postpones employing a catechist even for several months. The Commission wishes to thank parents and students for choosing Catholic religion classes. This is a proof of a "very positive assessment of religious formation."[3]

Chart 1. The Dynamism of Changes in School Religion Education Classes' Participation in the Last Decade in Europe
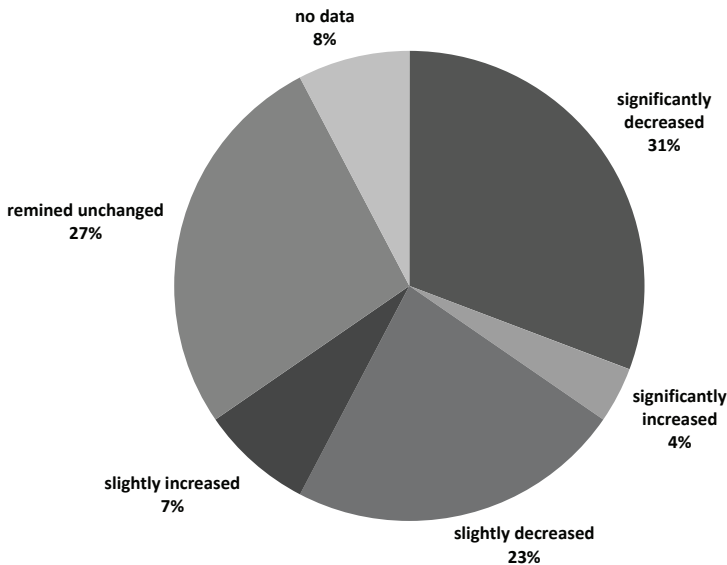
Tendencies in changes are therefore diversified and are ambiguously reflected in the dynamism of changes in a number of those subject to catechization, both at school and in the parish. However in more than half of surveyed countries this number decreased, and increased only in every tenth. In almost every fourth it remained unchanged. No doubt apart from country specific

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[3] Comisión Episcopal de Enseñanza y Catequesis, *Informe sobre el número de alumnos que reciben formación religiosa y moral católica en el curso 2007–2008*, http://www.conferenciaepiscopal.es/ensenanza/estadisticas/2008/InformeEre2008.pdf

characteristics of catechesis, this effect should be viewed influenced by negative factors that in today's Europe impact catechetical process.

4. Most Important Factors Negatively Influencing Catechetical Action in the Surveyed European Countries

Apart from factors that have positive influence on teaching religion in European countries, noted are effects of different character negatively influencing catechetical action and teaching religion. These were organized according to occurrence in particular countries in a table below. It seems that presenting them in such a way to a much better extend reflects local situation and condition of the Church in countries in which these factors are present. It also reflects sensitivity of those responsible for catechesis to processes taking place in their countries that obstruct teaching religion. A closer look on these factors shows fundamental difficulties that local Churches in Europe cope with in their catechization ministry. Impediments pointed out result however from both civilization and social changes, as well as inter church effects.

Table 5. Most Important Factors Negatively Influencing Catechetical Action in the Surveyed European Countries

Country	Factors
EU Countries	
Austria	– growing privatization of religion; – possibility of abandonment of religion classes' participation; – loosing national identity, turning away from the Church in the society.
Belgium	– crisis in parishes; – school religion lesson is mostly not catechetical; – "We have traditional channels but they don't function any more. We need a new, minority Church model, what we have now matches a majority Church."*
Czech Republic	– general number of children attending school has decreased (ca ⅓ of small primary schools was closed); – major influence of communist godlessness remnants in the nation; – large number of children renounces religion classes, whether in school or in the parish, after their First Communion.
France (Alsace and the department of Moselle)	– "First and foremost, parents recede more and more from religion, or become completely non-participating in the Church life. It becomes obvious that the children would like attending religion classes, but parents won't."**
Spain	– secularization that touches families and children

Germany	– *signum temporis*: little interest in Church and faith
Poland	– the number of schools organizing Lent school retreat is decreasing; – the number of secondary school graduates participating in closed retreat is decreasing; – as to this moment, few parishes have taken up catechization for high school youth; – the number of youth committed to parish groups is decreasing.
Portugal	– social transformations: secularization; – legal conditions: religion is discriminated in relation to other school subjects.
Romania	– decrease in number of children
Slovenia	– irreligious public opinion and Church criticism, secularization, media impact: TV, the internet; – no faith in families, atheism, indifference (neutrality), indecisiveness of parents, their practical atheism; – numerous sects; – the youth escape to unreal world, drug addiction.
Hungary	– irreligious family background; – in some state schools no cooperation, even hostility, obstruction in conducting religion lessons; – financial problems, lack of money, poor remuneration of the catechist; – no respect for the catechist; – in the country catechists teach in many places, and thus belonging to one parish they do not take part in the life of the others; – in some places the priest does not take catechization seriously, but neglects it; – catechetical presumptions and documents are out of the way; – outdated views, many do not see that Hungary has become a missionary state; – some catechists are not suitable for teachers due to lack of suitable predispositions.
United Kingdom	
England, Wales	– secularization, liberalism; – political correctness; – street culture.
EU Candidate Country	
Croatia	– communist regime mentality is still present in regards to teaching religion at school; – neo liberal ideas emerge.
EFTA Countries	
Norway	– a wide gap between the cultural and ideological environment where the children live their daily lives – at schools and often at homes – and the church. So they are given little help during daily life in internalization of what they learn during catechesis; – the low frequency of the catechetical lectures; – the catechist not being able to connect to the pupils lives what he/she teaches; – the catechist not being able to challenge the pupils; – and most of all, that catechesis begins at the wrong place, not starting with a pre-catechumen face of evangelization, but entering the more catechumenal material when there is not enough faith built up in the pupils to receive it in a proper way.
Switzerland	
St. Gallen	– incidents that impact the media – negative events from universal and Swiss Church.
Tessin	– family crisis; – sport's competition; – Sunday has lost its religious dimension; – deep crisis is caused by the fact that young priests are not prepared well enough to run catechization.

* "Wir haben alle traditionelle Kanale, aber sie funktionieren nicht langer. Wir brauchen ein neues Kirchenmodell für eine Minderheitskirche; unsere Strukture entspringen eher einer Mehrerheitskirche." *Fragebogen, Belgien.*

** "Essentiellement les parents qui, de plus en plus, n'ont plus aucun repère religieux ou ne sont plus pratiquants du tout. Il arrive de plus en plus que des enfants aimeraient suivre l'enseignement religieux mais les parents ne le souhaitent pas." *Questionnaire, France.*

– Irreligious family background, unbelieving parents and their indifference, as well as family crisis are the factors that occur at first place among those mentioned (France – Alsace and the department of Moselle, Spain, Hungary, Norway, Tessin canton). Others factors are: demography – decline in the number of children (Czech Republic, Romania), impact of the public opinion (Czech Republic, St. Gallen canton), social transformations – secularization and privatization of religion (Austria, Spain, Portugal, Slovenia, Great Britain and Wales), remnants of the communist regime (Czech Republic, Croatia), unfavorable legal conditions for teaching religion at school (Portugal, Hungary), or inefficient work of the catechists at school or in the parish (Poland, Norway). There are also reasons that arise from both social tendencies and organizational difficulties taking place within the local Churches (Belgium, Hungary, Tessin canton). When it comes to Hungarian Church these are: improper predispositions of some of the catechists, ignorance of principles found in catechetical documents of the Church, or catechists neglecting catechetical work in some places. Adding to this, there are also external factors influencing the ministry.[4] In Tessin canton the priests' preparation to catechization still needs refining. In Poland there is still a need of complete organization of parish catechesis for high school students.

Comparing the above mentioned factors with other statements of those polled, one can see also contradicting trends occurring in local churches in Europe. E.g. among positive factors mentioned in France was greater involvement of parents in catechization of children and youth. However, hand in hand with this process go deepening tendencies of parents drifting away from religion, although their children would gladly be involved in the liturgical celebrations or school religion classes. Therefore, changes in this country develop in two directions. In general however, these unfavorable factors mentioned by those polled can be divided in two groups, according to their source. These are intra-Church and socio-civilization factors. The first group includes such factors as: crisis in parishes, problems with the catechists' remuneration, their poor involvement or education, bad organization of catechetical action or improper preparation of the priests to catechetical ministry. In group two included would be all other factors possibly

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[4] As Father Radosław Chałupniak notes, in Hungary "as in Poland, a major problem for parish ministry is to stay in touch with the youth and adults. (…) The pressure of peers who do not have religious roots is so strong, that many young Catholics withdraw from active participation in the life of the parish and other religious communities, thus leaving the Church. At present this is the greatest challenge for Hungarian ministers and catechists. R. Chałupniak, *Chrześcijaństwo i wychowanie chrześcijańskie na Węgrzech* [*Christianity and Christian Upbringing in Hungary*], "Katecheta" 1 (2002), p. 53ff.

having their sources outside the Church, as: secularization, privatization of religion, media impact, sects' activity, addictions, cultural and ideological environment, as well as demographical, economical and family factors.

In spite of appearances it is these two groups of factors, and not only positive aspects, induce to rethinking catechetical models proposed by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe. Based on these experiences and statements of those polled, it is worthwhile to pay attention to possible factors determining proper models of catechesis in European countries.

5. What a Model of Catechesis for Contemporary Europe?

While trying to envisage the prospects of catechesis in Europe, one needs to take into consideration these statements of the polled, which surely are symptomatic towards the value crisis in European civilization, as well as two groups of factors pointed out that condition this process, namely: intra-Church and social factors. Catechetical studies and suppositions need also to be taken into consideration, as they note possible changes that ought to be introduced in the current model of catechesis in European countries.

Social changes that have taken places in Europe and were mentioned by those polled from Belgium, Norway or Hungary cause the current structure of the Church not to carry out as successful ministry impact as it used to be. Statements of those polled (respondent from Flemish community in Belgium suggests the necessity of transforming the Church's model into one that would be more matching with the Christian minority in this country's society) introduce a need of discussion on Church models in particular countries of changing Europe and its implications for catechesis. Catechization is an essentially ecclesial act, as the Church passes on faith that she is living with, and does it in an active way (cf. GDC 78). It is therefore difficult to see a distinct division between catechesis and the Church's faith, as its christocentrism and theocentrism results in its ecclesiocentrism.[5] Such a division is therefore unthinkable. It is not possible to think of the catechetical function without referring to the Church as its undisputed subject and point of reference.[6] The Church is the true subject of catechesis, so it should simultaneously become its theme and

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[5] Cf. P. Tomasik, *Wpływ modelu Kościoła na koncepcje katechezy* [*The Influence of Church Model on Concepts of Catechesis*], [in:] *Katecheza w Kościele i dla Kościoła* [*Catechesis inside the Church and for the Church*], ed. by R. Czekalski, Płock 2006, p. 306.

[6] Cf. E. Alberich, J. Vallabaraj, *Communicating a Faith that Transforms*, Bangalore 2004, p. 162ff.

purpose, leading both catechumens and those catechized to a community with God and with people.

Determining a proper model of the Church is obviously inevitable for proper catechesis. The fact that catechesis an ecclesial act allows to presume that there is an influence of accepted Church model not only on the content of concepts about the Church, but on the concept and method of conducting catechesis as well. One sidedness is strongly discouraged when forming conclusions, as the look on ecclesiology happens to be simplified and divides the understanding of the Church to pre-Vatican II, emphasizing the institutional-juridical dimension, and post-Vatican II, promoting the ecclesiology of communion and service. It can be truly said that the Council has promoted a new way of understanding and envisaging catechesis. It signals in a way, the end of an extended catechetical era, the whole of the Modern period, characterized by the excessive use of and importance given to the memorization of catechetical formulas and invites everyone to reconsider catechesis from the perspective of its primary source, the Word of God rediscovered especially in the Bible, to rethink it in terms of education to the faith, which is an existential and global attitude of the person, and to re-situate it in the plan of the Church that is oriented more towards communion and service.[7]

Among models of expressing Church's reality distinguished are the following: a model of the Church as an institution (the so-called «pyramid», where the institutional, clerical element is crucial for understanding the Church); a model of a mystical community (emphasizing the People of God – a social dimension of the Church); a sacramental model (the Church as a visible sign of Christ, an instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race), or two other models, originating from the Protestant theology: the Church as a proclamation (in its primary meaning proclaiming the Word of God), and a servant (above all taking up activity, charity – the diaconate).[8] Each of the mentioned models has its limitations, and at the same time a specific influence on catechesis. In the institutional model the Church is the guardian of the Revelation. Clergy is the active and responsible element, somewhat governing elite, and in catechesis attention is drawn to essential obedience of the people of God towards directives given by the ministers, the vertical order dominates and almost no attention is given to the charismas and ministries of the laity. On the other hand, in the community model, the priestly ministry is to integrate and coordinate all charismas of the community, what in the

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[7] Cf. ibid., p. 8.
[8] Cf. ibid., p. 164–169; P. Tomasik, *Wpływ modelu Kościoła…*, op. cit., p. 309–314.

light of this model may cause the catechesis to become very individualized and classified among small groups or communities of particular character. Further, the sacramental model of Church gives an opportunity of a strong stress on the fact that it is Jesus Himself who acts in catechesis –methods of teaching faith in this view must reflect Christ's.

The remaining two models, the Church as a proclamation and as a servant, include a danger of becoming involved in too far reaching dialog with the world, that could cause loosing what distinctly differentiates Christianity from the realm of the world. It can even cause resigning from preaching the Word of God as binding for people, situating It only among many other propositions directed to them. In the contemporary thought and catechetical documents there are distinctly stressed both the necessity for supporting catechetical model and forming plurality, as well as creating concepts that would be open to fast changing circumstances of preaching the Word of God.[9]

It seems impossible to create a uniform model of catechesis, since its truly ecclesial dimension necessarily leads to a multifarious look and to avoid one-side solutions. "Proper understanding of the Church, not in narrow, time-place perspective, but in a broad one, crossing over space-temporal limitations allows catechesis, understood both as a concept and a content, to sound with the faith of the People of God throughout history."[10] It is to be noted that a potential change in the Church's model, thus a change in the catechesis model can result from former one-side and institutional understanding of the Church or over emphasizing too hastily the role of community, which led to the crisis of institution. One-side look on the Church has affected its image causing crisis in parishes and inadequacy of the Church's structure to changes taking place in the modern society. We should perceive Church not only as a «pyramid», but as a communion of Particular Churches united in faith and love.[11] Pluralism in ecclesiology can thus be an adequate answer and the sign of times for the Church in a situation of social and outlook pluralism. As the *General Directory for Catechesis* teaches, "when catechesis transmits the mystery of Christ, the faith of the whole people of God echoes in its message throughout the course of history: the faith received by the Apostles from Christ himself and under the action of the Holy Spirit; that of the martyrs who have borne witness to it and still bear witness to it by their blood; that of the saints who have lived it and live it profoundly; that of the Fathers and doctors

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[9] Cf. P. Tomasik, *Wpływ modelu Kościoła…*, op. cit., p. 315–318.

[10] Ibid., p. 319.

[11] Cf. E. Alberich, J. Vallabaraj, *Communicating a Faith…*, op. cit., p. 170.

of the Church who have taught it brilliantly; that of the missionaries who proclaim it incessantly; that of theologians who help to understand it better; that of pastors who conserve it with zeal and love and who interpret it authentically. In truth, there is present in catechesis the faith of all those who believe and allow themselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit" (GDC 105). It is difficult to find a one-side view here. Catechesis expresses continuity, and at the same time pluralistic character of the Church's faith in the message of the Gospel proclaimed throughout the ages. One-sidedness causes this chain of continuity to break, thus resulting in dangerous denials and extremely reformatory reactions, causing potential troubles mentioned in statements included in the survey's answers.

On the other hand, it is worth to remember about social and economic processes enhancing degeneration of faith among the nations of Europe. Therefore attention must be paid in contemporary catechesis to its missionary character in the united Europe. The social phenomena analysis done by John Paul II in the context of new evangelization tasks can prove useful.

Pope John Paul II in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* notes that throughout the ages "Europe has been widely and profoundly permeated by Christianity. There can be no doubt that, in Europe's complex history, Christianity has been a central and defining element, established on the firm foundation of the classical heritage and the multiple contributions of the various ethnic and cultural steams which have succeeded one another down the centuries. The Christian faith has shaped the culture of the Continent" (EE 24). In the same document the Pope remarks that the Christian heritage distances from contemporary European culture. Many people in Europe "are no longer able to integrate the Gospel message into their daily experience; living one's faith in Jesus becomes increasingly difficult in a social and cultural setting in which that faith is constantly challenged and threatened" (EE 7). One of the reasons of this dechristianization is an attempt to force over European culture anthropology without God and Christ. Human being is concerned "the absolute center of reality, a view which makes him occupy – falsely – the place of God and which forgets that it is not man who creates God, but rather God who creates man. Forgetfulness of God led to (…) the unrestrained development of nihilism in philosophy, of relativism in values and morality, and of pragmatism – and even a cynical hedonism – in daily life"(EE 9). This experience of changes in European culture proves regularity, namely that culture is something changeable, dynamic, a project of life by its nature that a man constantly creates in the world, as awaiting for accomplishment, unfinished. No human community creates perfect

cultures. Christianity presents as culture inspiring power, however there is no such thing as a perfect Christian culture, in other words no Christian community can perfectly embody the Gospel principles in all aspects of their life.[12] This belief has found its grounding in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, which states multiple relations of the Good News with human culture and concludes that "there are many ties between the message of salvation and human culture. For God, revealing Himself to His people to the extent of a full manifestation of Himself in His Incarnate Son, has spoken according to the culture proper to each epoch. Likewise the Church, living in various circumstances in the course of time, has used the discoveries of different cultures so that in her preaching she might spread and explain the message of Christ to all nations, that she might examine it and more deeply understand it, that she might give it better expression in liturgical celebration and in the varied life of the community of the faithful" (GS 58). Therefore, the Church, being sent to all nations, is not exclusively bond neither to any race, nation, time, nor to any particular system of social customs, meaning culture, whether present or past, but she remains faithful to its universal mission. It establishes connections with different forms of culture, enriching itself and other cultures (cf. GS 58). Owing to such an approach towards relationships between culture and the Gospel, the Church can demonstrate its ability to coexist in many cultures and communities, at the same time being independent to some degree, however not isolated, and taking into consideration regional identities and cultural differences.[13] The Church is not dependent on the form of culture in which it supposedly bore greatest fruit or from which he received greatest understanding of the message of the Gospel. It proves that the Gospel does not particularly associate with a culture. From what has been said above, it is not advisable to strive to confront the alleged "Christian European culture" with other cultures, not yet permeated with the message of the Gospel. Changes that have taken place in recent century show that as in the past nations and cultures of Europe needed missionary activities, so they need re-evangelization today. This was mentioned by the Pope John Paul II, when he said that "in various parts of Europe a first proclamation of the Gospel is needed: the

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[12] Cf. J. Różański, *Europa w misyjnej działalności Kościoła* [*Europe within the Missionary Activity of the Church*], [in:] *Europa dla Chrystusa – Chrystus dla Europy. Reewangelizacja cywilizacji zachodniej* [*Europe for Christ – Christ for Europe. Re-evangelization of the Western Civilization*], ed. by B. Giemza, Kraków 2009, p. 43.

[13] Cf. K. Lehmann, *Die Zukunft…*, op. cit., p. 34ff.

number of those not christened is growing, both because of the significant presence of immigrants of other religions and because children born into families of Christian tradition have not received Baptism, either as a result of the Communist domination or the spread of religious indifference" (ee 46). The need for re-evangelizing Europe results therefore from two vital reasons. One is connected to mixing of cultures and influx of immigrants representing other beliefs and religious traditions, what causes the number of not christened persons and children in Europe to increase. The second, much more dangerous reason indicates degeneration of sense and religious awareness in Christian families in Europe, who stop conveying faith to their children. This was caused by social and ideological factors that create the picture of European culture of the past century, communism and spreading religious indifference all over Europe.

During his pontificate Pope John Paul ii had made two crucial syntheses assessing changes in the Old Continent. In his first diagnosis of European situation from 1985 the Pope calls the entirety of changes as 'involution', as an opposition of evolution. The signal for such a term was a symptomatic conflict between Gospel-rooted morality, and social models in Europe that result from changes in culture, ethics, religion, and the society itself. Abortion legislation was found by John Paul ii as the most destructive, even though it is commonly accepted as a confirmation of freedom principle. It in fact means a failure of a man and woman, and was called Europe's 'demographical suicide', as according to the Pope "it can be seen as a serious symptom of losing a will of life, loosing future-oriented prospects, and even more so, a symptom of deep spiritual alienation."[14]

As John Paul ii notes, an average European is a man without God, as in the course of recent history of his continent he has lost the religious dimension of his life, has lost or deliberately removed God off his life's horizon. Geopolitical divisions in Europe caused the same process to run in two different conditions. In western Europe it was caused by philosophical trends that propagated 'the death of God' as well as the society's individualistic tendencies, in which an individual desired to independently establish goals and values for one's life. Whereas in Eastern Europe weeding out 'the per-

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[14] John Paul II, *Allocution to the vi Symposium of European Bishops*, November 11, 1985, [in:] Idem, *Europa zjednoczona* w *Chrystusie. Antologia* [*Europe United in Christ. An Anthology*], eds. L. Sosnowski, G. Turowski, Kraków 2002, p. 73. Demographic factors have been pointed out by respondents from Czech Republic and Romania as having negative impact on catechization process.

spective of God' was taking place on the plane of political and ideological compulsion. In a European's soul "all this has created an enormous void."[15]

Rejecting the existence of God has led a man to withdraw and shut away, very often in an atmosphere of hopelessness for positive solving of problems. Fading hope gave birth to the 'culture of death', for a man can't live without hope (cf. EE 10).

In another analysis of European culture included in the Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa* John Paul II reminded that even though this continent used to belong to traditionally Christian places, it now needs new evangelization, and in some places even first evangelization, as there are some vast social and cultural areas in which a true mission *ad gentes* is needed (cf. EE 46). The *ad gentes* mission in Europe should not only include masses of its indigenous inhabitants, but also a growing number of immigrants, who create in Europe, and especially in big cities, true cultural islands. Owing to the internet and mass media theses people can live in a reality distant from the continent's daily life, and much closer to cultures and places of descent. This also requires from the Church accepting every man, regardless of his background (or searching for just ways of coexisting as well as for appropriate legislation and order in the process of integration) on one hand, and on the other, even accepting missionaries from the outside, from young Church communities from other continents (cf. EE 64, 100ff).[16]

A spark of hope for the Church in Europe is a progressing reconciliation of nations and growing mutual cooperation. A joint European awareness in being born, and also aiming for unity is growing strong, as well as a need for determining and respecting human rights. *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe*, that is to determine direction for the future, does not refer to Christian heritage of the continent.[17] Indeed, rights of churches and religious communities are guaranteed in the content of the *Treaty*, however they were given a place only within a political agreement, without mentioning traces they had charted in regard to Europe's foundations. According to the principles of Enlightenment and secular European culture, only Enlightenment norms and contents can determine Europe's identity even today, and as a consequence every country that assimilates its criteria

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[15] Ibid., p. 75.

[16] Besides social and cultural effects pointed out by John Paul II we are currently dealing with new forms of the so called 'state atheism', which allows 'private religion', meaning purely personal, present only outside the public forum. If however somebody professes 'private' religion, he must act like an atheist on a public forum, which leads a believer to a necessity of maintaining contradicting attitudes. Cf. Buttiglione's case).

[17] Cf. *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe*, O.J. EU 2004, C 310/01.

is able to belong to Europe. Therefore, a sign of hope for the heritage under the name of 'Europe' remains the accomplishment of the papal idea of 'culture of solidarity', within which there is no place for marginalization, nor negation of common history heritage, leading to the future. This culture includes some elements of Enlightenment humanism, yet it is permeated with a new spirit, as in 20th century Europe has both given examples of great humanism, peacefully defeating inner ideological-political divisions, and exceptional brutality as well. Despite contrasts, it is able to teach others "mutual acceptance in interpersonal, international and inter-state relations, within cultural, religion and social system differences."[18] As cardinal Karl Lehmann notes, the Church decidedly turning away from the so called 'uniting obsession', which "passes indifferently by plurality of European language, thought and life forms, without any embarrassment. Here, due to its deep rooting in particular countries, churches will support European mentality (*Europa-Mentalität*), that agrees with what is generally binding, but does not erase what is local and regional."[19] The idea of the 'culture of solidarity' proclaimed by John Paul II and developed by his successor Benedict XVI is therefore a sign of hope and promotion for the future of united Europe. Following this papal thought in the context of religious education and catechesis, it should be clear that upbringing is to help a man "to become more and more a man". The teacher and the catechist is the one who is to prevent threats, by becoming like a general practitioner, a tutor and therapist who treats diseases and shows the right way. The subject of upbringing understood as such is justice and social love, meaning plenitude of moral order as a foundation of live for a man and society.[20]

Christian roots of humanism understood in this way guarantee that Europe can become an example of solidarity for the world, both when it comes to internal solidarity, as well as external, which is first and foremost the ability for the rich North to open up for the needs of poor South. This opening for the needs of the poor, not so long ago strictly bound to Europe

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[18] John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Beginning of the World War II*, Vatican, August 27, 1989, [in:] Idem, *Europa zjednoczona w Chrystusie...*, op. cit., p. 126.

[19] "Es gibt eine Einheitsbesessenheit, die ungeniert an der Vielheit der Sprach-, Denk- und Lebensformen Europas vorbeigeht. Die Kirchen werden hier gerade durch ihre feste Vewurzelung in den einzelnen Ländern eine Europa-Mentalität fördern, die das verbindliche Allgemeine bejacht, ohne die Bedeutung des Lokalen und Regionalen zu verwischen." K. Lehmann, *Die Zukunft...*, op.cit., p. 34 ff.

[20] Cf. J. Mastalski, *Szkolne interakcje zaburzające skuteczne wychowanie* [*School Interactions Disturbing Effective Upbringing*], Kraków 2005, p. 7, 184ff.

with colonial dependency bonds would allow to fulfill the task set up for Europe.[21] It will give a sense of community and guarantee human rights and local diversity, but it can't take place without this European culture opening to a transcendent dimension. Its opening to modern culture is also a task of the Church in a new, global reality. And if it is a task of the Church, then it is a task of catechization carried out by the Church. What can be then said of its model in a European reality?

Surely resigning from a doctrinal dimension of catechesis is not possible: "Knowledge of the faith is required by adherence to the faith" (GDC 85). Faith properly understood entails a certain level of intellectual knowledge acquired during catechesis. It should strengthen the identity of believers, and thus lessen anxiety of contacting members of new religious movements. This is a broader vision of catechesis committed to "integral Christian formation" (GDC 84) of the experience of the faith that is open to action and commitment in the world. Faith teachers, namely ministers and catechists should demonstrate the inner integrity of the catholic doctrine, thus giving a satisfactory answer to the most urgent questions. Broadly understood Christian formation should help realize the presence of God in different religions, demonstrate how necessary the effort of understanding these religions and denominations is to see authentic values Christianity, and these religions give, as well as developing the missionary sense. Human community, living in a particular historical moment is a particular context of upbringing, including Christian one. This context is subject to influence from many socio-cultural and religious processes characteristic of contemporary changes. A catechesis prevalently focused on the 'individual' should give way to 'group' or 'community' catechesis. Thus the necessity of community is emphasized in the process of growth in the faith. There is an

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[21] John Paul II describes more broadly this theme of external solidarity in the context of the safety of Europe's future, and compensation of development chances in a world's scale: "One could say that the condition for building Europe's future is to be capable of looking beyond its boundaries, especially towards the immense southern hemisphere, which for centuries has been the area where the most numerous conflicts have arisen and where injustice weighs in a manner that can no longer be borne. Backwardness, demonstrating in many forms, is a growing threat for peace. Social and economic chasm, dividing rich countries of the North from poor countries of the North needs to be removed, as otherwise establishing new world order will not be possible. John Paul II, *Letter to the Participants of the 6th International Meeting "People and Religions*, Vatican, September 10, 1992, [in:] Idem, *Europa zjednoczona w Chrystusie...*, op. cit., p. 202. In regard to Europe's responsibility for the world, especially for poor and developing countries see also: K. Lehmann, *Die Zukunft...*, op.cit., p. 35.

urgent task for the creation and formation of active, open and convinced communities with a sense of communion.[22]

Father Emilio Alberich points out that no doubt there are many positive aspects and many promising experiences in contemporary ministry and catechetical reality. Among them he numbers: growing need for religious formation, especially from the lay; satisfactory abundance of lay catechists, re-discovering the Holy Scripture as the main source of cognition and privileged catechization tool; promising boom of catechetical experiences, noted in almost all places; differentiated forms of adult catechization; bold revision of traditional Christian initiation, with new orientations and proposals; new forms of Christian communities appearing in the Church; progressive, yet slow promotion of the lay and women in the Church; efforts leading to enculturation and introducing new language in passing on faith etc. These are no doubt promising symptoms, bearing hope for the future. On the other hand, a situation characterized by prepotent crisis in a traditional model of catechesis is not to be negated. It is not difficult to create a list of 'problematic facts', including: relative failure of a traditional Christian initiation process, that for many has become practically a process concluding Christian life; evident crisis of religious socialization in family and at school; the situation of adult catechesis, though still unstable and marginal; still relevant problem of the language the faith is being communicated with, often incomprehensible for modern men and women; permanent insufficiency and inadequacy of ministry and catechetical formation of seminary students, priests and persons engaged in the ministry etc. All this becomes even more problematic if we become aware that we are found in a community of rapid and constant changes. To be honest, we do not live only in the age of changes, but as people use to say, in a true 'change of the age' that does not allow to see our world's future clearly enough, as well as of our community, in which modern children and youth would live in. No doubt we are heading towards a true *terra incognita*, towards a fascinating, yet mysterious future, due to the fact that it includes a task of passing on new faith to new generations. A very clear conviction appears over this murky panorama, namely that the world and society viewed in the future by the young, will become distinctly different from the present.[23]

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[22] E. Alberich, J. Vallabaraj, *Communicating a Faith…*, op. cit., p. 301ff.

[23] Cf. E. Alberich, *Na 50-lecie "Katechety." W poszukiwaniu nowego "paradygmatu katechetyki." Refleksja nad sytuacją katechezy* w *Europie* [*On the 50th Anniversary of the Journal "Katecheta. In Search for a New "Paradigm of Catechetics. Reflection on the Situation of Catechesis in Europe*], Katecheta 10 (2007), p. 72–73.

Dissimilarity of the young's world results from intensely dynamic changes that the world is subject to in the field of economy, culture, and especially of communication means ('change of the age'). In 1962 a Canadian philosopher and sociologist, Herbert Marshall McLuhan called the world a 'global village'. Due to modern mass media and new methods of communicating the world has shrunk to a village size. Electronic media have radically reduced the real distance between people. Regional affairs are bound in between in a planet scale, they cross boundaries of states and cultures, and information can reach every corner of the world without any delay. Airports, standard restaurants and bars, supermarkets, internet cafes, music stores and cinemas are places where we can feel the atmosphere of the global outreach of our possibilities.[24] Therefore, accomplishing basic tasks presented to catechesis demands new accents, so in new ministry situation a successful accomplishment of the supreme aim of catechization, that is uniting, putting people in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ, is possible (cf. CTR 5). It is however worth mentioning that "Christian faith has in the age of European culture been always strong and culture-creating, if it didn't seal in itself, but opened to the age's challenges every time."[25] These words of cardinal K. Lehmann should motivate catechetical efforts, as taking up challenges of the age, the European catechesis is to create cultural and social image of Europe in new conditions, by bringing to attention its cultural identity, and leading to meet with Christ. It is accomplished by a new way of fulfilling tasks included in documents issued by the universal Church.

Accomplishing the task of knowing faith should therefore lead to becoming aware of fundamental existential questions, demonstrate teachings of Christ and the Church as an answer to these questions, revealing and fulfilling at the same time human desire to know the inviolable truth. This truth is the one about Triune God, Personal God, who wants to have a loving relationship with a man gifted with freedom. Liturgical upbringing should demonstrate this dimension, stressing God's transcendence and the role of signs and liturgical symbols. Discovering one's limitation leads to becoming aware of the need of prayer, both individual and common, and

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[24] M. ALBROW, *The Global Age*, Stanford 1997, p. 2ff, 125; A. GIDDENS, *Runway Word. How Globalization Is Reshaping our Lives*, New York 2000, p. 64; R. WORTHINGTON, *Rethinking Globalization. Production, Politics, Action*, New York-Oxford 2000, p. 18; J. ORZESZYNA, *Kościół wobec globalizacji* [*The Church in the Face of Globalization*], Kraków 2003, p. 9ff.

[25] "Der christliche Glaube war in der europäischen Geschichte immer dann stark und kulturprägend, wenn er sich nicht auf sich selbst zurückzog, sondern sich offen den Herausforderungen der jeweiligen Zeit stellte." K. LEHMANN, *Die Zukunft…*, op.cit., p. 30.

as a consequence, to discovering one's place within the human and ecclesial community, which despite of existing divisions has its roots in God, demanding a clear testimony of this truth towards the world.

Uniting Europe is a historical challenge for catechesis which needs to remain in dialog with basic problems of the age, proclaiming its evangelic directions towards human solidarity. Therefore, cooperation between Local Churches, harmony between family, parish, and school, cooperation with mass media, as well as coherent catechetical program within units operating in the Church itself is necessary, so that one coherent message of the Gospel reaches the public by many channels in a clear and comprehensive way. Increased and direct work with the catechized is also needed, as it constitutes a proper atmosphere of understanding (personal and not institutional authority – the catechist as a tutor, who is a 'guide to the world'). There is a need for new searches and analyses that would stay in a critical dialog with trends of contemporary culture (resulting in appropriate catechetical aids and textbooks). The catechetical language is also important and still continues to be a problem, as it needs to correspond with a young man's mentality, and at the same time instilling in his culture an evangelical 'leaven'. Using an understandable language during catechization process confronts on the other hand the didactic staff with the problem of translating the teenagers' language into universal one and enriching it with Biblical and liturgical phraseology.

Father E. Alberich sets a specific canon of qualities for contemporary catechesis in the idea of 'a catechesis that transforms'. Such a catechesis is to be:
– evangelizing;
– at service of Christian initiation;
– intended for adults and for 'becoming adults';
– intergenerational;
– focused on the community;
– liturgical: promoting «a liturgy of life»;
– animated by the experience of service and commitment;
– open to a variety of communicative languages: narration, symbol, testimony, celebration, art, etc.
– open to inter-religious and inter-cultural dialog.[26]

Models of catechesis pointed out by the Author come within boundaries of proposals presented by those polled, as they refer both to catechesis for children and youth and as well the one for adults. They underline the importance of parish meetings (ecclesial catechesis), along with school religious

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[26] Cf. E. ALBERICH, *Na 50-lecie "Katechety"…*, op. cit, p. 75–76; E. ALBERICH, J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith…*, op. cit., p. 301–306.

teaching in their openness to inter-religious and inter-cultural dimension, demonstrate the role of evangelizing and initiatory catechesis, and last but not least, they stress the role of liturgical catechesis. These models are at the same time becoming an inherent part of philosophy adopted by the EU, concerning education of children, teenagers and adults (*Lifelong Learning Program – LLP*), what demonstrates the importance of knowledge in one's life (Europe as a 'community of knowledge').[27] Similar dispositions are needed in the context of Catholic Church's catechesis, that will cause Europe to regain its 'soul', thus becoming more and more 'a community of values', open to future, knowing better the mystery of Jesus Christ, who can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity (cf. CTR 5).

Pope Benedict XVI in the *Letter on the Urgent Task of Educating* sees the negative effects impacting contemporary man as limited, stressing that every human is an active, self-shaping participant of life. "Indeed, ideas, lifestyles, laws, the orientations in general of the society in which we live and the image it has of itself through the mass media exercise a great influence on the formation of the new generations, for good but often also for evil. However, society is not an abstraction; in the end we are ourselves all together, with the orientations, rules and representatives we give one another, although the roles and responsibilities of each person are different."[28] Searching for God, more visibly present in contemporary generation of adults can be its distinct sign, and the Church's answer can be a successfully carried out catechization for this age group. The document of the International Council for Catechesis states: "A catechesis of adults will be acutely sensitive to *men and women insofar as they are adults*. It will approach them in their adult situation, which is for the most part the lay state, and will be attentive to their problems and experiences. It will make use of their spiritual and cultural resources, always respecting the differences among them. Finally, adult catechesis will stimulate the active col-

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[27] *Lifelong Learning Programme* (LLP) is to be completed in years 2007–2013. This is an EU program concerning education and professional training, aiming at strenghtening cooperation between EU countries, as well as EU students' and teachers' mobility. The main goal of EU's educational policy is currently a mutual exchange of students and employees, their mobility, stimulating learning opportunities across Europe, as well as the possibility of their further training in one of the member countries. The currently binding strategy provides for increasing social integrity due to this strategy, and acknowledging professional qualifications of employees and students in particular countries. Cf. EUROPEAN COMMISSION EDUCATION & TRAINING, *Lifelong Learning Programme overview*, http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

[28] BENEDICT XVI, *Letter to The Faithful of The Diocese and City of Rome on The Urgent Task of Educating Young People* (January 21, 2008).

laboration of adults in the catechesis which involves them" (COINCATI 27). The special tasks of the Christian lay person in the Church and in society, which vary according to the widely different situations in which adults find themselves, should be given a prominent place in the formation program. Special attention should be reserved for teaching adults how to pray" (COINCATI 50).[29] It then seems to be obvious that catechesis should be combined with liturgical 'practice'. Teaching and explaining is not enough. One should constantly seek occasion to celebrate, conduct the liturgy with the group, preparing it carefully and engaging them in active participation. It is to be continually, persistently brought into attention that the liturgy itself is a catechesis, where present and acting Jesus is the most important one. Therefore, appropriate moments of silence and personal prayer are also needed. Educative character of the liturgy is of vital importance in the process of rising to social responsibility and in restoring morality.[30]

Adult catechesis is to be matched by a good quality ecclesial catechesis for children and youth (liturgical catechesis), as well as school religious teaching. Contemporary education systems enable such a possibility in many countries, however often religious education at school assumes the contours of an educational and cultural approach rather than that of a religious upbringing.[31]

These issues were addressed by the *Polish Directory for Catechesis,* stating that: "Secularization that has affected countries with rich Christian past, demands that, within broadly understood catechization, the catechesis involves new evangelization, namely re-evangelization, That is why is such situations pre-catechization is suggested. It is a proposal of the Good News in regard to permanent faith choice for those who have already showed interest to the Gospel. Only when it is taught to those who have «believed», and who have faith as their inner foundation, *catechesis sensu stricto would be able to develop its specific task of raising faith.* In all other cases first pro-

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[29] Syllabuses for adult catechization that includes the above mentioned demands, have already been developed in Poland. Cf. A. DERDZIUK, *Współczesny kryzys moralny* [*The Contemporary Moral Crisis*], [in:] *Wyznawać wiarę dzisiaj. Katecheza dorosłych na podstawie Katechizmu Kościoła Katolickiego* [*Professing the Faith Today. Adult Catechesis Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*], ed. by S. Łabendowicz, Sandomierz 1999, p. 448–452; J. NAWROT, *Wychowanie do modlitwy* [*Teaching to Pray*], [in:] *Wyznawać wiarę dzisiaj…,* op. cit., p. 709–714.

[30] Cf. T. PANUŚ, *Konieczność katechezy parafialnej* [*The Necessity of Parish Catechesis*], [in:] *Katecheza parafialna – reaktywacja. Duszpasterstwo katechetyczne w parafii* [*Parish Catechesis – Reactivation. The Catechetical Ministry in the Parish*], eds. R. Chałupniak, J. Kochel, J. Kostorz, Opole 2006, p. 129.

[31] Cf. E. ALBERICH, J. VALLABARAJ, *Communicating a Faith…,* op. cit, p. 305.

claiming of the Gospel is rather needed. Evangelizing catechesis, connected when need be to first proclaiming of the Gospel and pre-catechization, is the requirement of new evangelization. It should bring to the students' awareness their own life situations, help them define the sense and discover religious dimension of problems they go through" (PDC 56).

There is no way of speaking and thinking of catechesis for children and teenagers without properly carried out adult catechesis. This definitely is a sign of time, equally important as the symptoms that come from unfavorable social processes (secularization or privatization of religion). Along with them comes in a growing stream of adult people who seek for God in today's society. The answer should be a catechesis that is directed to teaching prayer and the history of salvation that should be effectively evoked, illustrated and lived. So it should be at the same time an initiation into ecclesial community. The parents who today desire to find God in their lives would also work for future catechesis of their children.

In the field of both ecclesial catechesis and school religious teaching the formation of catechists is equally important as preparing appropriate syllabuses and textbooks, as it is the factor prevailing the quality of religion classes. Children and youth tend to demonstrate growing sensitivity not only to authority and the importance of institution, but above all to personal engagement of the person in charge – catechist or teacher of religion, who becomes a witness of faith for them and a guide to the 'world of values' that she or he is proclaiming. In some cases, the catechists lack appropriate formative resources and are abandoned to themselves in this delicate mission.

The youth, subject to catechesis, need moral support today, not in a form of callous casuistry, but in the form of 'opening the eyes of their consciousnesses' for the world of values. Accomplishing this task leads, according to Christian personalism, straight to undertaking a trial of materializing the demand of 'civilization of love', and at the same time 'culture of solidarity' in certain conditions. It is here that catechesis plays a vital role, as it supplies tools for making decisions. In times of moral confusion a return to traditional, cultural and religious values is important, as they enable to make a quick and infallible choice, allowing for effective actions. Therefore a man has a great longing for values that stimulate development of an individual and the community. The society and especially its young and adolescent members need the 'social and moral road map' as their directing post.[32] Above all, this is to be delivered by moral and religious upbringing.

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[32] Cf. J. Mastalski, *Zarys teorii wychowania* [*An Outline of The Upbringing Theory*], Kraków 2002, p. 129–131; T. Panuś, *Przekaz treści religijnych* w *pluralistycznym*

Conclusion

The changes that the Roman Catholic religious education in the European countries face start from searching for its proper paradigm. The pursuit is accomplished in those from surveyed European countries, where new catechetical publications take up current challenges. These are first of all new handbooks and religion syllabuses. Changes are conditioned by the factors positively influencing ecclesial catechesis and school religious teaching, noted in many countries. Among them, to the fore comes a lively interest of adult catechesis; popularity of properly carried out sacramental and liturgical catechesis for children and youth in parishes, as well as good quality school religious teaching. All this has made the number of those subject to catechization increase or remain at the same level within 10 years in every third surveyed country. However, in almost half of them a slight or visible decrease was noted, which means that the effect of unfavorable means is equally prepotent. These are above all: faith crisis in families and their practical indifference, resulting from effects commonly characterizing European societies, as secularization, privatization of religion, and remnants of the Communist regime and ideology. This inclines to re-thinking the models of catechesis proposed by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe. In determining the prospects of catechetical ministry one should take into consideration both social and intra-Church factors. The latter includes a reflection on accepted Church models, out of which strictly results the model of catechesis suggested. The need to support pluralism in catechesis, both in attitude and methods, is therefore distinctly stressed, as well as creating an idea of catechesis open to the changing conditions of proclaiming God's Word in contemporary society.

Uniting Europe is a historical chance for the Church to reach the message of the Gospel in a new way, to reach those, who in the course of social changes have lost it or do not feel the need of accepting it. However, through accomplishing tasks set to catechesis by catechetical documents of the universal Church, it requires constant reinforcing of the identity

of believers, confidence of their consciousness and religious knowledge in a multi-religious and multicultural panorama of 21st century Europe, at the same time implanting living humanism, based on the 'culture of life' and the idea of solidarity in the body of the uniting Continent. Being closer to God, true Christians become also close to their neighbors, and therefore witness in favor of the values accepted.

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List of Abbreviations

COINCATI – International Council for Catechesis, *Adult Catechesis in the Christian Community*, Vatican 1990.

CTr – John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation on Catechesis in Our Time *Catechesi tradendae*, October 16, 1979.

EE – John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Europa*, June 28, 2003

GDC – Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, August 11, 1997.

GS – Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et spes*, December 7, 1965.

PCD – Polish Episcopal Conference, *Directory for Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*, June 20, 2001.

Appendix

Krakow, …

Dear Sirs,

The Department of Catechesis of the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow has opened a research programme that concerns catechetical models in European Union countries. After the collapse of the Communist system in Poland, in the time of reshaping our democracy, the model of catechesis in Poland is being changed, hence we would like to take advantage of other European countries' experience to optimize our teaching. Seventeen years after catechesis was brought back to Polish schools we entered into the time of renewed discussions on the sense of religion education at school. Therefore we consider it necessary to take advantage of other countries' experience.

We refer to the research held by the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) on the religion education in Europe, however we take under consideration the context of parish catechesis and above all the specific character of catechesis in Poland.

We would kindly request to answer the questions of the attached questionnaire. To facilitate the answering they have been divided into groups. We would like to ask about the religion situation in your country, i.e. existing denominations and their share in the country's population (group I). Then, we would like to ask about the school system in your country (group II), the principles of teaching religion at school (group III) and the rules of assessment in catechesis (group IV) We are also interested in the professional training and qualifications of catechists (group V), forms and organization of parish catechesis (group VI) and the characteristics of children and youth attending catechesis (group VII). The national documents on catechesis, curriculum currently in force and textbooks are topics of questions in group VIII. Finally, we would like to ask some open questions concerning the signs of hope for the future of catechesis in your country and we are very keen to have them answered.

If it happens that you are unable to fill with the questionnaire, due to some usual reasons, please be so kind to indicate any other institution or person whom we could apply to for answers. If it is necessary we serve with questionnaire in German, French or Italian.

Please send back the answered form by email at: kielianandrzej@yahoo.com and wddim@diecezja.krakow.pl. or by post at the given address:

Kuria Metropolitalna w Krakowie
Wydział Katechetyczny
ul. Franciszkańska 3
31-004 Kraków
POLAND

If you had any other remarks or questions, please note them down at the end of the questionnaire. We deeply appreciate your assistance in the exchange of experience and hope

that our cooperation will be fruitful in searching for new effective models of catechesis in your country.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Prof. Tadeusz Panuś

The Questionnaire
Models of Catechesis in the European Countries

Country name:

I. Basic Information

Total number of inhabitants:
Number of dioceses:
Number of priests in the country:
Number of parishes:
The approximate percentage of worshippers of each religion in your country:
    Catholics (%):
    Protestants (%):
    Orthodox (%):
    Muslims (%):
    Jewish (%)
    Others: (including atheists) (%):

II. The School System

1. School education is compulsory for children between the ages of … and …
2. Describe shortly the school system in your country.

	Age of children	Type of school
Kindergartens		
Primary education		
Secondary education		

3. What is the name of an exam at the end of secondary education?
4. How long is a lesson?
5. Where can we find some information on the school system in your country (books, Web sites)? Please, list them below:

III. Teaching Religion at School

1. What kind of the state law guarantees that catholic religion is taught (or not) at school?

Concordat (since when?)	
Constitution, Act (which, since when?)	

Agreement (what kind?)	

2. Is religion taught at:

a) All types of schools and educational institutions (e.g. nurseries, kindergartens, etc.)	YES	NO
b) Only schools of certain kind (what kind?):	YES	NO
c) only schools in certain areas of the country (which?):	YES	NO
d) None of the schools?	YES	NO

3. Is religion lesson at school:

a) denominational	YES	NO
b) nondenominational	YES	NO
c) including information on different religions	YES	NO
d) other:		

4. Is catechesis at school:

a) obligatory for all pupils	YES	NO
b) facultative	YES	NO
c) of other type:		

5. Who decides about participation of children and youth in school catechesis (in the facultative model):

a) Parents or legal parents;	YES	NO
b) Parents or pupils at the age of … or more;	YES	NO
c) others:		

6. Are there ethics lessons at schools? | YES | NO |

7. Is catechesis (or religious education) at school:

a) a regular subject, treated in the same manner as other school subjects	YES	NO
b) can be chosen as a subject to be taken at secondary school final exam	YES	NO
c) is in the school timetable/curriculum	YES	NO
d) believers of other denominations may attend Catholic religion lessons?	YES	NO

8. How many catechesis lessons per week are there at school?

Nursery, kindergartens	a) 1	YES	NO
	b) 2	YES	NO
	c) none	YES	NO
Primary schools	a) 1	YES	NO
	b) 2	YES	NO
	c) none	YES	NO

Secondary schools	a) 1	YES	NO
	b) 2	YES	NO
	c) none	YES	NO

9. Are there any kinds of discrimination of catechesis or RE at school? If there are, how do they manifest?

10. Do other religions have the right to teach religion at school?

a) Protestants	YES	NO
b) Orthodox	YES	NO
c) Muslims	YES	NO
d) Jewish	YES	NO
e) Others:		

11. What is the legal foundation for their teaching at school?

a) The same as for Catholic religion lesson	YES	NO
b) Founded by religious institutions	YES	NO
c) Other:		

IV. The Assessment in Catechesis

1. What are the rules of assessment in catechesis?

a) are the students assessed?	YES	NO
b) are grades in catechesis counted into the average mark of the school year (GPA)?	YES	NO
c) is the grade in catechesis indicated on the school certificate?	YES	NO
– with the name of denomination indicated	YES	NO
– without that indication	YES	NO
d) does the grade influence pupil's promotion?	YES	NO
e) does practising religion influence the grade?	YES	NO

2. Are there any other specific rules of assessment in catechesis in your country

V. The Catechist

1. What is the total amount of catechists in your country?

Priests:	
Nuns:	
Lay teachers:	
TOTAL:	

2. The majority of catechists in your country:

a) are university graduates with catechetical preparation;	YES	NO
b) completed catechetical institutes with the right to provide university diplomas;	YES	NO

c) completed courses and preparation organized by dioceses;	YES	NO
d) completed courses in parishes;	YES	NO
e) other:		

3. In your opinion the professional preparation of catechists is:

a) outstanding, meeting contemporary requirements;	YES	NO
b) in accordance with Church documents and instructions	YES	NO
c) sufficient	YES	NO
d) superficial	YES	NO

4. What kinds of permanent spiritual formation are proposed to catechists:

a) retreat and spiritual meetings in dioceses;	YES	NO
b) regular meetings in parishes with priests;	YES	NO
c) individual retreat and spiritual exercises;	YES	NO
d) other:		

5. Are catechists in schools:

a) regular teachers paid by the state	YES	NO
b) volunteers	YES	NO
c) obliged to have canonical mission from the bishop	YES	NO

6. Who is the supervisor of school catechesis?

from the Church's side	a) Bishop of the diocese or his representative	YES	NO
	b) Pastor of the parish	YES	NO
	c) Other:		
from the civil authorities' side	a) School principal	YES	NO
	b) Representative of a local authority	YES	NO
	c) Representative of a local education authority	YES	NO
	d) Other:		

VI. Parish catechesis

1. Is there a uniform system of parish catechesis in your country?	YES	NO
It is organized for children between the ages	of	and
youth between the ages	of	and
Meetings are held:		
a) once a week	YES	NO
b) twice a week	YES	NO
c) once a month	YES	NO
d) Occasionally	YES	NO
e) otherwise:		

2. The purposes of parish catechesis are:

a) preparation for the sacraments (first communion, confirmation, marriage)	YES	NO
b) complement to school catechesis	YES	NO
c) substitution of school catechesis	YES	NO
d) initiation into the faith	YES	NO
e) other:		

3. Who is animating the meetings in the parish?

a) mostly priests and religious;	YES	NO
b) mostly lay teachers	YES	NO
c) others:		

4. Is participation in parish catechesis for children and youth:

a) compulsory	YES	NO
b) voluntary	YES	NO

5. What is the percentage of children and youth attending parish catechesis?
CHILDREN: … %   YOUTH: … %

6. Who is supervising catechesis in the parish?

a) bishop of the diocese	YES	NO
b) pastor of the parish	YES	NO
c) representative of the Bishop	YES	NO
d) other:		

VII. The participants of catechesis

1. What is the estimated percentage of schoolchildren attending school catechesis?

a) Nurseries, kindergartens	%
b) Primary schools	%
c) Secondary schools	%
d) Others:	%

2. How many catechized children and youth take part in Ecclesial movements and pastoral groups?

a) 0-10%	b) 11-20%	c) 21-30%	d) 31-50%	e) 51-70%	f) above 70%

3. Within the past ten years the total amount of catechized:

a) decreased significantly	YES	NO
b) increased significantly	YES	NO
c) decreased slightly	YES	NO
d) increased slightly	YES	NO

e) levelled off	YES	NO

4. What are the most important factors having negative influence on the process of catechization?

VIII. Programmes and textbooks

1. Is there a National Directory for Catechesis in your country?	YES	NO
Full title:		
Date of publication (year):		

2. Is there a central national office for coordinating and programming catechesis?	YES	NO
Full name:		
The year of establishment:		

3. Do particular dioceses have their own instructions for organizing catechesis?

a) yes, all have	YES	NO
b) some have	YES	NO
c) dioceses follow national instructions	YES	NO
d) other:		

4. Is there a national curriculum for school catechesis?	YES	NO
Title of the programme:		
By whom was it accepted?		
When was it accepted?		

5. What are the rules of using textbooks for school catechesis?

a) The Bishop of the diocese is to accept textbooks	YES	NO
b) National textbooks are accepted by the Bishops' Conference	YES	NO
c) The textbook is at catechist's choice	YES	NO
d) The pupil or his/her parents choose textbooks	YES	NO
e) Are there any other rules concerning the usage of textbooks in school catechesis?		

6. How could you evaluate the performance of the national curriculum for school catechesis?

a) positively	YES	NO	c) very positively	YES	NO
b) negatively	YES	NO	d) I don't know	YES	NO

7. Is there a national curriculum for parish catechesis?	YES	NO
Title of the programme:		
When was it accepted?		

8. How could you evaluate the performance of the curriculum for parish catechesis?

a) positively	YES	NO	c) very positively	YES	NO
b) negatively	YES	NO	d) I don't know	YES	NO

9. Could you give some examples of textbooks for usage in parish catechesis?

Age level in catechesis	Title and year of edition	What does it concern
Children catechesis		
Youth catechesis		

IX. Additional Information

1. What are the most important recent publications (books, articles, etc.) on catechesis in your country?

2. What are the signs of hope – positive factors influencing catechesis in your country? Are there things that attract children and youth to the Church?

3. COMMENTS – what else can you add to the topic of the specific model of catechesis in your country?

Table of contents

THE PERSPECTIVES OF CATECHESIS IN EUROPE

Catechesis is notably affected by social context. It seems necessary then to ask a question: what is the condition of Roman Catholic religion teaching in European countries? The book being handed to the Reader is a publication of a part of empirical survey on catechetical models in Europe. Several factors have been taken into consideration to present specific features of religious education activities undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, including information demonstrating perspectives of European catechesis in a multicultural and multi-religious society.