

# GIVING A TEACHING

## INTRODUCTION

Teachings a central aspect of the activity of a Christian community. This is because so much depend on teaching. It can be said that every other matter gets better or worse, is well handled or poorly done, based on the quality of teaching received and internalized. For example, prayer can be wrongly approached if it is based on poor teaching; and it can greatly improve if it springs from sound teaching. Because of this, it is important to pay close attention to matter that correct, sound, effective teaching. This course set out to provide guides for giving a good teaching that truly edifies.

## THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT TEACHING

1. Response to a mandate (commission): Mt 28:16-20. Teaching is the Christian's community response to Christ's mandate to his disciples at the end of Matthew's gospel. Teaching is the final point of Christ's tripartite (three point) mandate to make disciple, to baptize, and to teach. The public ministry of Jesus was spent teaching the multitudes. When he saw the crowds looking harassed like sheep without a shepherd, he took pity on them and began to teach them (Mk. 6:34) and when his earthly ministry was over, teaching was one of the key mandate he gave to his disciples. This shows the central place, the importance and the urgency of teaching in Christian ministry.

2. Catching fish into the net: teaching is a process of the net casting. Remember, Peter was called to become a fisher of men. (Mt. 4:19). Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a dragnet, cast into the sea which brings up a lot of fish (Mt; 13 ;47). If the fishes are men and the sea is the world, then we see teaching as the casting of net to catch men out of the world and into God's kingdom. The problem is not sin but sinner, because God has dealt with sin on the cross. It is left for sinner to be converted through teaching.

3. There is a message from the owner to be transmitted: Christ is both the messenger and the message. And so to give the message effectively, the teacher must put on Christ completely by continuously yielding to the Holy Spirit and to the person of Christ.

4. Therefore, it is not your message. You are to discern the message from the sender through:  
(a) prayer: you must ask God in prayer about the message to be transmitted. You must also ask him to give power to the word to be spoken from your lips, from effectiveness. Human words are like humans themselves – no more than dust, they are flat and have nothing to offer. (Jn6:63) . God must therefore be invited to speak his own word to the heart of the listeners.

(b) study: you must take time to study the word of God and the teaching of his church concerning the message to be delivered. Thus, apart from the bible, the catechism of the catholic church (CCC) is really important. Along with other documents, the CCC offers very rich and deep reflections and explanations on every Christian topic.

(c) interactions with other messengers: you also seek the assistance or viewpoint of others especially the insight of those who have been effective teacher over time, those who have had sufficient growth in the lord.

## **MINISTRY OF TEACHING**

Eph 4:12 tells us about the ministry of teaching, among other ministries, in the Christian community.

1. Some have particular callings ministries, and gifts. Yet everyone should be able to exercise the ministry of teaching. Even though each person has a particular gift(S), every Christian should be able to witness to Christ in every situation of life, since it is the same lord who functions in all, to serve his high purposes.
2. Preaching exhorts; teaching instructs. This distinction is important to show the difference between these two ministries despite their similarity. Both of them deal with bringing God's message to the people. But while preaching is about proclamation and exhortation, teaching is about instruction and deepening of understanding. Thus preaching tends more to growth and edification.
3. Discern the content of the topic:
  - a. if asked to choose a topic, then it is better to choose from one's experience: In other words, it is better to be familiar with a topic before teaching it.
  - b. Long term/short term discernment: these are topics that need not take a long time to prepare, because we already have sufficient familiarity with it. These are equally topics that deliberate preparations over a fairly long time, giving us the opportunity to know enough about it and be and be able to effectively communicate it to others. To this effect, it is important to sit continuously at the Lord's feet, leaning from him.
4. Context/Audience: paying attention to the audience and the particular context or situation is very important. Thus the language, the examples illustrations, the choice of words, the approach, and several other things matter as they differ from audience to audience.
5. Information of the group size: the size of the audience is equally important. The tone of voice of the teacher varies with the size of the audience. For example in a small gathering, the loudness of the voice must be reduced and the tone more familiar. The public address system, when used must equally vary in volume with the number of people present. It also good to note that, the larger the group or audience the more varied and complex the audience is likely to be.
6. Study/Research the topic more than you are to deliver: you must know about the topic than you are to deliver, so as not to be easily exhausted on the subject matter. This become particularly important if there is a question and answer session after you give the teaching. You are expected to know more than your audience about the topic. The more enlightened you are about the topic: the more confident you are about it

## **HOW TO STUDY**

A. The word of God: teaching is a presentation of God's instruction. Therefore, a heavy reliance on the bible the word of God is necessary. If the lord has a message for his people, it is for us to point out how God himself had communicated the same message in the past through his revealed word.

Heavy reliance, however does not mean quoting endlessly from the bible, but finding the core or your message in the word of God, especially in the words of Jesus the gospels.

**B. Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC):** The CCC is a comprehensive resource book on the teachings of the church, and it is useful material for the teaching every Christian topic. In fact it is necessary to know what the CCC says about the topic we are to speak on, not as a law but because of the rich insight it offers, and also to know what the church teaches concerning the matter.

**C. Other church document Vatican II document:** papal teaching, writing of the early church fathers, etc. are very useful for our instruction as well.

**D. Internet:** the internet can be a very useful source of information on what is to be taught, as it contains today several works that have been written concerning a wide variety of topic. Care must however be taken to ensure that only useful contents of the internet are employed, because the internet contain a lot of information that are either useless or misleading.

**E. Reflect on the topic:** while preparing to deliver a teaching, it is good to take time to reflect about the topic: we should ponder on it and seek better insight about it. Apart from this, reflecting on a topic also help us to examine ourselves to seek how the matter affect us in our personal life.

**F. Prayer:** Above all else, prayer is all- important, because brings in God who is the sender and content of the message. The presence and action of God is what distinguishes a Christian teaching from a mere lecture delivery. We must therefore pray constantly about the teaching we want to give, asking God to reveal his will to us, and to speak his word to the audience through us.

## **PRESENTING**

- 1. Get attention (introduction):** In introducing the topic of the teaching, the teacher tries to establish some basic matters while telling the audience what to expect from the teaching. In the introduction, the teacher is also weighing his audience's attention; if not, the entire message might be lost.
- 2. The fewer the points, the better:** it is better for your hearers to go home with one point that strikes them than to go with many points that only create confusion and distraction. A teacher does not necessarily have to give only one points, but it is better to make as few points as possible, and to tie them all to a central topic, so that the listeners can see how each point relates to central theme. When using illustrations too, it is better not to use examples that take the audience's attention away from the main point.
- 3. Conclusion-climax:** The conclusion should be the climax or high point of your delivery. This is because, after this point, your listeners go away. And so it is important to let them go away with the most important point you have to give. It is also at this point that your audience responds to the teaching already received. Therefore, your delivery at the concluding part must be such that it invites them to a positive response to the words spoken to them by Christ.

### **❖ Questions**

- What do you understand by teaching?

- **What should we note about teaching?**
- **How do you understand the ministry of teaching?**
- **How do you prepare what you teach?**
- **How do you present what you have prepared to teach?**