b. Criticism against CCC's use of the spiritual sense

Reacting against the preeminence of the spiritual sense over the literal sense, Sloyan claimed that the first method is conveniently forgotten in favor of the second method or the spiritual approach to Scripture. In the same way, Boys pointed out how CCC stresses the spiritual approach to Scripture.

Boys noted that in CCC's attempt to pay attention to the content and unity of Scripture, CCC was led to assemble Scripture texts with no regard for the theological perspective of the particular source. The criterion tends to obscure the distinctiveness of the various biblical books. Sloyan argues that the principles for interpreting the Bible (the intentions of the authors, the conditions of their time and culture, the types of literature found there) are subordinated to the unity of the Scriptures "as if all its books had the same purpose." They are also subordinated to "the reminder that the Holy Spirit brought it all about." He observed that this is the way Scripture has been employed throughout CCC. Sloyan declared that it is nowhere made clear that Scripture text can best be understood in context — the context in which the text occurs and its place in the whole of Scripture.

"...and then by the principle of totality, which the Fathers and the medieval theologians well recalled."

In also Concerning the Historical Truth of the Gospels (1964), Scripture and Christology (1985) and Joseph Fitzmyer, "Bible and Christology," Theological Outlook 4 (1985) 408-43 (this article was later published in book form with a commentary Joseph Fitzmyer, Scripture and Christology: A Statement of the Biblical Commission with a Commentary [New York: Paulist Press, 1986]). The document "Scripture and Christology" emphasizes that the truth of the biblical witness about Jesus Christ can be fully grasped only in the full scriptural witness. The full truth of Jesus Christ, that is, an "integral Christology" can be found only in the "global witness" of the whole Bible, including the most primitive and most developed stages of christology in the New Testament and its preparation in the Old or First Testament. Roch Kereszty, "The 'Bible and Christology' Document of the Biblical Commission," Communio 4 (Winter 1977-78) 16.
Given this lack of concern for the original *Sitz im Leben* of the text, Boys correctly observed that in the *Universal Catechism*, the typological interpretation of Scripture plays a central role. Boys cited the “Suffering Servant” as the most frequently used typology to give meaning to Jesus’ passion and death. She acknowledged that it was understandable that Jesus is identified with the Suffering Servant since classic texts allow for, as in the words of Paul Ricoeur, surplus of meaning. However, she recognized that the songs of the Servant “now form part of the constellation of images crucial to Christian identity, but they are robbed of their depth when read prosaically as predictive prophecy.”

In like manner, Sloyan observed that CCC looks at the biblical events in the history of Israel as a typology of Christ, the antitype. This makes it appear that revelation to Israel becomes obsolete. Furthermore, he asserted that while the typological interpretation familiar to the patristic and medieval periods is helpful as an illustration of foreshadowing places, events and persons, it does not give an explanation of the Old Testament text’s meaning. Sloyan further remarked that CCC speaks of typology as if it were the only means of understanding the unity of the Old Testament and the New Testament. He also stated that, in CCC, stress is placed on the divine authorship, not giving proper place to the human author.

By emphasizing the typological interpretation, CCC has been chided as a supersessionist document that rendered the revelation

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20Ibid.

21Typological interpretation of Scripture starts from the fact that Scripture consists of two major parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament carries the promise of salvation. The saving events in the Old Testament simultaneously save in and point beyond themselves to the final completion of God’s saving plan. The Old Testament anticipates the universal salvation that God promised to bring. It is in the New Testament where the fulfillment of the promise given to the Israelites is finally fulfilled.

22Boys, 47.
made to the people of the Old Testament as merely foreshadowing the Christ-event.\textsuperscript{23} Thus, the revelation in Jesus Christ is taken as rendering the revelation to Israel obsolete. In CCC, the Old Testament text is often viewed merely as a promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the center and summit of revelation.

These Scripture scholars have great reservations on CCC’s preoccupation with the meaning of the text drawn from typological interpretation. They claim that the Old Testament is viewed only as a promise compared to the fulfillment in the New Testament. They wonder why typology should figure so prominently in the CCC when earlier ecclesial documents manifested its problematic character. Pius XII’s \textit{Divino Afflante Spiritu} exhorted exegetes to “scrupulously return from proposing as the genuine meaning of the Sacred Scripture other figurative senses” (DAS 27). The Old Testament seems to be robbed of its own intrinsic value as God’s revelation when it is seen only as a source book of the types or preparation or prefiguration of the New Testament.

\section*{Responses to the criticisms}

Those who justify the way CCC used Scripture assert that interpretation of the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament proceeds well with the unity of the divine plan in the two Testaments.\textsuperscript{24} Moreover, Catholic scholars recognize that hermeneutical theory justifies, and indeed dictates, going beyond the literal sense of an individual text.\textsuperscript{25} They stress that inherent in a Scripture text is an excess of meaning beyond its literal interpretation, and the new hermeneutical theories justify this. Furthermore, the incorporation of the text

\textsuperscript{23} Pius XII defines supersessionism as the notion that the revelation in Jesus Christ so overshadowed the revelation to Israel that the prior revelation has been rendered obsolete.

\textsuperscript{24} Joseph Jasan, “Beyond the Literal Sense: The Interpretation of Scripture in the \textit{Guide of the Catholic Church},” \textit{The Living Light} 29 (1993) 50–60.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 54.
into the Church’s biblical canon may have modified the original sense of a text.

In its attempts to stress the intrinsic value inherent in the Old Testament, CCC raised three points regarding the Old Testament. First, “it is an indispensable part of the Sacred Scripture” and it states that these “books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value” and “the Old Covenant has never been revoked” (CCC 121; cf. 14). Second, in view of its relationship to the New Testament, CCC states that “the economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented that it should prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, redeemer of all men.” Yet Dulles, a systematic theologian, supports CCC’s manner of employing Scripture, and writes:

The Catechism is entitled to speak from the perspective of Christian faith, which it intends to affirm. Its emphasis on the typological meanings of the Old Testament, moreover, accords well with the use of the Old Testament in the New... A classic text, even one that is more divinely inspired, contains depths of meaning that escape the original author and appear only in the light of later reflection.26

He also states that “the word of God must be able to shine forth as a power of salvation. The truths of revelation must be presented in their organic unity, apart from which they seem meaningless.”27

Finally, CCC states that “even though they contain matters imperfect and provisional, the books of the Old Testament bear witness to the whole divine pedagogy of God’s saving love” (CCC 122). While CCC expressed and affirmed the value of the Old Testament, its texts have been used in CCC merely to foreshadow the Christ event. CCC was overly preoccupied with the fact that the salvific economy of the Old Testament was deliberately so oriented to prepare for and declare in prophecy the coming of Christ, the redeemer for all people. The meaning of Old Testament texts independent of the New Testament realities is ignored. CCC has contradicted in practice what it affirmed in theory.

Typological reading of Scripture was common during the patristic and medieval periods. But when a catechism uses this as the main approach to reading a Scripture text, the meaning of the text can become distant from the present experiences of today’s readers and to most. The exploration of the text’s meaning has to take into account the minds and hearts of people today.

A. Nature and goals of catechesis and religious education

Catechesis and religious education have to recognize the salvific role of the Old Testament, independent of, as well as in relation to, the New Testament. The Old Testament in itself bears witness to the economy of salvation. The Old Testament as part of God’s revelation in the sacred text is viewed from the perspective of its continuity in the community with Jesus Christ who is the center and summit of revelation. Readers and hearers of the text have to realize that the passages which attributes messianic themes or meanings to Old Testament text did not stem from the pre-Christian Old Testament context. They have to recognize the intrinsic value of the Old Testament as part of God’s revelation.

While it is true that certain Old Testament persons, places and events are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who is the definitive revelation of God and that the revelation “will never pass away and no new public revelation to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ,” nevertheless God continues to reveal himself in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit in the Scripture (DV 4). Vatican Council II taught that the Holy Spirit is active in continuing the economy of the revelation already given.”28 Hence, “God’s action continues in Jesus Christ did not stop with Christ’s ascen-

27Ibid., 52.
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sion to his Father” (CCC 71). The readers and hearers continue to search and find God’s manifestation of himself in the inspired Word of Scripture in the ever changing events of their lives. They discern through the help of the Spirit how God is living and active in their lives and inviting them to share in the life that the Risen Lord offers.

The use of Scripture in catechesis and religious education is a divine and human encounter. Scripture communicates not only about God but is the Sacrament of God’s self communication. God is not only present in Scripture but is actively present and communicates personally with the contemporary readers and hearers. The ultimate goal of reading Scripture in catechesis and religious education is to mediate God’s transforming grace in Scripture in order to bring about the formation and transformation of the present readers and hearers.

3. Weak Use of Catholic Tradition

a. CCC’s Teaching on the Use of Catholic Tradition

According to CCC, the second criterion for interpreting Scripture in conformity with the Holy Spirit is to “read the Scripture within the living Tradition of the whole Church” (CCC 113). The use of Scripture based on this criterion encourages the linking of the present day understanding and interpretation of the Scripture text to the living tradition of the Church. The living tradition of the Church guides the Church to an ever deepening and progressive understanding of the revelation she received through the Spirit who leads her toward the fullness of the divine truth until the Word of God reaches its complete fulfillment in her.

b. Criticism against CCC’s Use of Tradition

Boys pointed out that while the Universal Catechism states that the interpreter of Scripture reads it in “the living Tradition of the whole Church,” its disregard for the development of tradition weakens the implementation of this criterion. She remarked that the Universal Catechism was not faithful to the Church’s traditional teaching presented in Nostra Aetate 4 on the relations of the Catholic Church to Judaism. She also observed that although the Universal Catechism quoted sources from Scripture and tradition, such as Qoheleth, Augustine and Joan of Arc, it appeared as though all were of one univocal mind.

For example, while CCC’s main reference in explaining the Church’s teaching on the person of Jesus Christ (CCC 457) is the Gospels, particularly the Gospels and the Pauline letters, it also draws to other sources such as citations from other New Testament texts, the writings of the Ecumenical Councils, the writings of the Fathers and medieval theologians like Gregory of Nyssa and St. Thomas Aquinas, the Roman Catechism, the liturgy of the East and the East and from Papal statements. There is a marked conflation of Catholic tradition with patristic and conciliar teachings.

Similarly, criticism for Filipino Catholics has been criticized for giving summaries of official Church teaching. These summaries are expressed in a technical language belonging to a distant age when they need some “exegesis” to be understood. A fundamentally trained theologian can handle them, but is it necessary to make them into catechism that is addressed primarily to committed Filipino Catholics? Westyn’s review shows that he did not deem nec-

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on its implementation of this criterion. She remarked that the Universal Catechism was not faithful to the Church’s traditional teaching presented in Nostra Aetate 4 on the relations of the Catholic Church to Judaism.\textsuperscript{30} She also observed that although the Universal Catechism quoted sources from Scripture and tradition, such as Qoheleth, Augustine and Joan of Arc, it appeared as though all were of one universal mind.

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Similarly, Catechism for Filipino Catholics has been criticized for giving a number of summaries of official Church teaching. These summaries are expressed in a technical language belonging to a distant context, hence they need some “exegesis” to be understood. A professionally trained theologian can handle them, but is it necessary to include them in a catechism that is addressed primarily to committed Filipino Catholics? Wostyn’s review shows that he did not deem nec-
essary the inclusion of the official Church teachings in a catechism because of the seeming difficulty for committed Filipino Catholics to handle them. This statement seems to be unaware of Sacred Tradition as a source in catechism and in catechesis and religious education. 31

These criticisms show a very narrow understanding of Church tradition and teaching. Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and human experience are the sources in catechesis and religious education. Tradition and Scripture are bound closely together for they “flow out from the same divine wellspring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal” (DV 9). The endorsement to exclude Church teaching in the catechism shows a lack of “critical appreciation of Catholic Tradition, including the Creed and Conciliar teaching, and its enduring value in its creative dialogue with ongoing inculturation.” 32 Admittedly, there is a certain difficulty in the use of Church teaching together with Scripture and human experience but an exclusion of Church teaching altogether is not viable.

The idea of reserving official Church teaching proclaimed by Church councils only to professional theologians seems to contradict the basic purpose of Church teaching. Filipino catechists really want to know “what the Church teaches.” Conciliar teaching on the essentials of the faith is often clearer and more helpful to the great majority of Filipinos engaged in the catechetical and religious educational ministry than are most of the current expositions proposed by contemporary theologians or theological schools. The use of tradition in explicating the faith of the Church necessitates a continuing study and investigation of its use together with Scripture and

human experience to achieve an integrated use of the sources of ecclesial and religious education.

II. Nature of catechism

Those who justify the route CCC takes in the use of Scripture, point out that Scripture itself must go beyond the originating historical circumstances and be read as integrated within the whole of Scripture of tradition, and in the whole of revelation. 33 A catechism, however, has to link and integrate the sources of catechesis and religious education, namely, Scripture, Church’s teaching and liturgy—to the point of context of the reader whom it wishes to address. The use of catechesis from tradition has to communicate faith not as dead and lifeless but living and alive in the lives of the great majority of contemporary readers and hearers.

III. Nature of catechesis and religious education

Catechesis, tradition, and human experience are the sources in catechism and religious education. This critique against CCC’s weak and limited, helpful in stressing the urgent continuing need for a more methodologically improved use of tradition not only in CCC but in catechesis and religious education. Admittedly, there is a certain difficulty in using tradition together with Scripture in elucidating the faith of the Church, doctrine, morals and worship in CCC and in catechesis and religious education, but this must not be an excuse to drop tradition altogether.


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Nature of catechesis and religious education

Scripture, tradition and human experience are the sources in catechesis and religious education. This critique against CCC’s weak use of tradition is helpful in stressing the urgent continuing need for a better and markedly improved use of tradition not only in CCC but also in catechesis and religious education. Admittedly, there is a certain difficulty in using tradition together with Scripture in elucidating Catholic doctrine, morals and worship in CCC and in catechesis and religious education, but this must not be an excuse to drop tradition and Church teachings altogether.
4. Compilation of Scriptural Citations

a. Criticisms against proof-texting in CCC

The last criterion for interpreting Scripture in conformity with the Holy Spirit is to “be attentive to the analogy of faith” (CCC 114). Boys questioned whether the Universal Catechism actually exhibits such a coherence of truths because it seems more like a collection or a compilation of scriptural citations rather than a synthesis of faith. In her conclusion she judged that the compilation of scriptural citations to explicate doctrines gives the impression that Scripture exists primarily to verify doctrinal assertions of the catechism.34 Boys declared that Scripture has apparently been used as a “prop and proof.” She asserted that this is not at all surprising since the same charge had been levied against previous Church documents.

Johnson went further and pointed out that the Universal Catechism constructed doctrinal propositions upon biblical texts that cannot support them.35 Buckley alleged along the same lines that CCC’s use of Scripture is not kerygmatic; rather, it is a “confirmation of some doctrine already decided upon.”36

b. Response to the criticisms

Sloyan, however, with more experience in religious education rightly disagreed with those who say that CCC’s use of Scripture is “proof-texting.”37 He stated that CCC proclaims what the Church has believed and points to scriptural texts that gave rise to these beliefs rather than explore Scripture to discover what it contains that led to the Church’s faith and practice. He concluded that Scripture is

34Boys, 52.

35Johnson, “Jesus Christ in the Catechism,” 208.

36Buckley, 303.

37Proof-texting is a fundamentalist way of using Scripture. The Scripture text is cited as “proof” in explaining some points in Catholic doctrine, morals, or worship.
used as an originating source that justifies already known doctrines and ethical teachings.

Following Vatican II, CCC affirms that Scripture should be read in the framework of the Church’s faith. CCC makes no claims that the Scripture texts it cites are “proofs” of the Church’s doctrine. They are used as indications pointing toward what the Church, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, has come to believe in the course of history.38

As in any catechism, Scripture texts are cited as the basis and grounding of what the Church believes while explaining the doctrine of the Church. The critique of “proof-texting” ignores the way Scripture has actually been used by the people down through Christian times. “It equivalently rejects the actual role and impact of Catholic Tradition on the use of Scripture, while demanding the exact opposite—a highly informed sensitivity for the Scripture texts’ Sitz im Leben—for their proper use.”340

On the other hand, there are other critics who raised the point that CCC refers to scriptural citations to explicate doctrines. They criticized that Scripture has apparently been used as a “prop and proof.”445 However, CCC does not use Scripture in a fundamentalistic way nor as “proof-texts.” “Scripture text is cited while explaining some point of Catholic doctrine, morals, or worship—the “proof” dimension is added gratuitously by the critic.”442


An example of historical work in this field is Pamela Jackson, “Cyril of Jerusalem’s Use of Scripture in Catechesis,” Theological Studies 52 (1991) 43.


A similar criticism that Scripture is used as proof has been raised against “Scriptural texts tend to be used as mere proof-texts for the articles of creed.” Wostyn, 140.

A catechism proclaims what the Church has believed and believes, and points to scriptural texts that gave rise to these beliefs. It cannot enter into detail to explore Scripture in order to discover what it contains that led to the Church's faith and practice. Scripture is brought in as an originating source that has grounded the Church's doctrine and ethical teachings. The catechism's use of Scripture is not "proof-texting." Citing Scripture to confirm and verify doctrinal, moral, and worship assertions in the catechism is a practice that has actually been used by the Church down through the centuries.

Avery Dulles states that

the Catechism (CCC) makes no claim that the biblical texts it cites are proofs of the Church's doctrine. Rather, they are seen as indications pointing toward what the Church, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, has come to see in the course of centuries. Often enough the biblical grounding consists in the convergence of many texts, no one of which is decisive in itself. 43

c. Criticism against CCC's citing of Scripture texts in footnotes

Buckley raised another point regarding CCC's use of Scripture. He observed that CCC draws heavily from Scripture texts which are referred to only in the footnotes, while full Scripture texts are rarely given. For example, CCC 652 attempts to elucidate the Resurrection as the fulfillment of the promises in the Old Testament and of Jesus himself during his earthly life by citing and referring to the following texts: Matt 28:6; Mark 16:7; Luke 24:6-7,26-27,44-48.

d. Nature of a catechism

While the nature of a catechism necessitates citing Scripture texts as a source of what the Church has believed and held, however, in general the full text should be given in order that the readers and hearers see the link of the text to the doctrine of the faith. Furthermore, citing just one or two parallel texts may be more beneficial in: