

Porta Fidei Talk 2: The Kerygma

Aims

1. To help teachers understand the basic Christian message and to invite them to a personal response.
2. To share experiences of encounter with Jesus and to reflect on how these experiences may apply to your own journey of faith.
3. To help teachers understand the importance of injecting the kerygma into the curriculum of a Catholic school and into their teaching.

1. Introduction

In the first talk we focused on God's love for us. This is important to reflect on and to remember as educators. All the talks in Porta Fidei are essentially about encountering God's love. To live in God's love is to live in your true identity. In this second talk we want to focus on what's called the 'kerygma', to invite you to a personal response to this message and to help you understand the importance of injecting the kerygma into the curriculum of a Catholic school and into your teaching. The talk will have some personal sharing throughout.

2. What is the Kerygma?

kerygma *noun* ke-ryg-ma \kə-'rig-mə\: the apostolic proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ.

- The initial or essential proclamation of the Gospel message
- It's used 9 times in the Greek NT, and it's different from teaching, instruction or doctrine
- Kerygma is the introduction to Jesus. The 'shaking hands' if you will, of the Gospel message. An encounter.
- Synod for the New Evangelisation(2012) came up with a list of propositions. Proposition 9: NEW EVANGELIZATION AND INITIAL PROCLAMATION
The "first proclamation" is where the kerygma, the message of salvation of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, is proclaimed with great spiritual power to the point of bringing about repentance of sin, conversion of hearts and a decision of faith.

3. Why is it important? (Why do we need to go back to it?)

- a) Generally in the Church there is an imbalance between initial proclamation and catechesis. For the most part, try to do it in reverse!
Traditionally, it was the kerygma that was taught at home and in the Parish. Now we live in a post Christain era and we cannot presume that students and families understand the kerygma. In many ways our approach in the Church is to 'sacramentalise' the students or to catechise them (too much emphasis on catechesis). Catechesis is important but it all flows from the kerygma. The kerygma is the essential or foundations of the Catholic faith. In teaching we need to be constantly going back to basics. We simply cannot assume that is there. Students in senior years in a Catholic school often do not understand the kerygma after 10 years of Catholic education. We need to ask the question why?
- b) Church documents emphasise the importance of the kerygma:
Redemptoris Missio (1990 Saint JP II)

Proclamation is the permanent priority of mission. The Church cannot elude Christ's explicit mandate, nor deprive men and women (*cannot deprive our students and teachers of this great message*) of the "Good News" about their being loved and saved by God. "Evangelization will always contain—as the foundation, center, and at the same time the summit of its dynamism—a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ . . . salvation is offered to all people, as a gift of God's grace and mercy." All forms of missionary activity are directed to this proclamation, which reveals and gives access to the mystery hidden for ages and made known in Christ (cf. Eph 3:3-9; Col 1:25-29), the mystery which lies at the heart of the Church's mission and life, as the hinge on which all evangelisation turns. (RM 44)

Evangelii Gaudium

Centrality of the kerygma: "In catechesis too, we have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the center of all evangelizing activity and all efforts at Church renewal." (164) "The centrality of the kerygma calls for stressing those elements which are most needed today: it has to express God's saving love which precedes any moral or religious obligation on our part; it should not impose truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance which will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical." (165)

Kerygmatic catechesis: "On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: 'Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.'" (164)

"First" proclamation: It is first in a qualitative sense because it is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways, the one which we must announce one way or another throughout the process of catechesis, at every level and moment." (164)

Christian formation and the kerygma: "All Christian formation consists of entering more deeply into the kerygma," (165)

- c) As teachers, we must first know the kerygma if we are going to effectively communicate it to others, especially in the school environment. It is important to not just know it at a 'head' level, but to experience it in your life. To know it in your 'heart'. This is where it comes down to an encounter with Jesus who invited us into a personal living relationship with him. The kerygma is about Jesus and the life that He offers each of us.
- d) Personal Sharing...(or later after the 'curriculum of the kerygma')

4. What is the basic curriculum of the Kerygma?

We have already started to answer this question! Key points are:

1. God loves us and wants our happiness.
 - God made me good (Genesis 1:26)
 - God made you the way you are (Psalm 139:13)
 - God loves me unconditionally (John 3:16)
 - God gave me a purpose in life – to be in relationship with Him (Jer 29:11)
2. We often do not feel or experience this love. Sin separates us from this love and from one another.

- When you look around the world and in our own lives, we realise that there is something seriously wrong (wars, poverty, riots, drugs, murder, exploitation). Many experience loneliness, isolation, anxieties, insecurities, lack of direction.
 - Example including the news each night which usually reports constant ‘bad news’. Show a brief episode if possible.
 - Scripture tells us that behind all these wrongs is something bigger than we can handle – sin. We are all guilty. The problem is too big for us to handle. Something major is needed to correct this problem of sin.
3. Jesus died on the cross to restore our relationship with God and to empower us. This is the good news!
- Jesus went to the cross for our sin so we could be forgiven and restored. The penalty has been paid. It is a free gift offered to us.
 - Jesus also went to the cross and to the Father to send the Holy Spirit. This is another great gift offered to us. Jesus promised He would not leave us alone, but send the advocate to be with us forever (
4. We need to respond to this message through repentance and deciding for Christ.
- We need to ask for forgiveness and receive it to be united to God. It is God’s gift to us.
 - This is why the Church gives us the Sacrament of Reconciliation which we celebrate in Porta Fidei.
 - We are called to put Jesus back at the Centre of our lives (illustration). We can tend to box God in. Let God out of the room and into our whole heart. We have the choice. Consider this on the retreat.



There can be further elements of the kerygma, captured especially in Acts 2:42, the fellowship of the early believers:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (ACTS 2:42)

Will pick up on these aspects in the vocation talk.

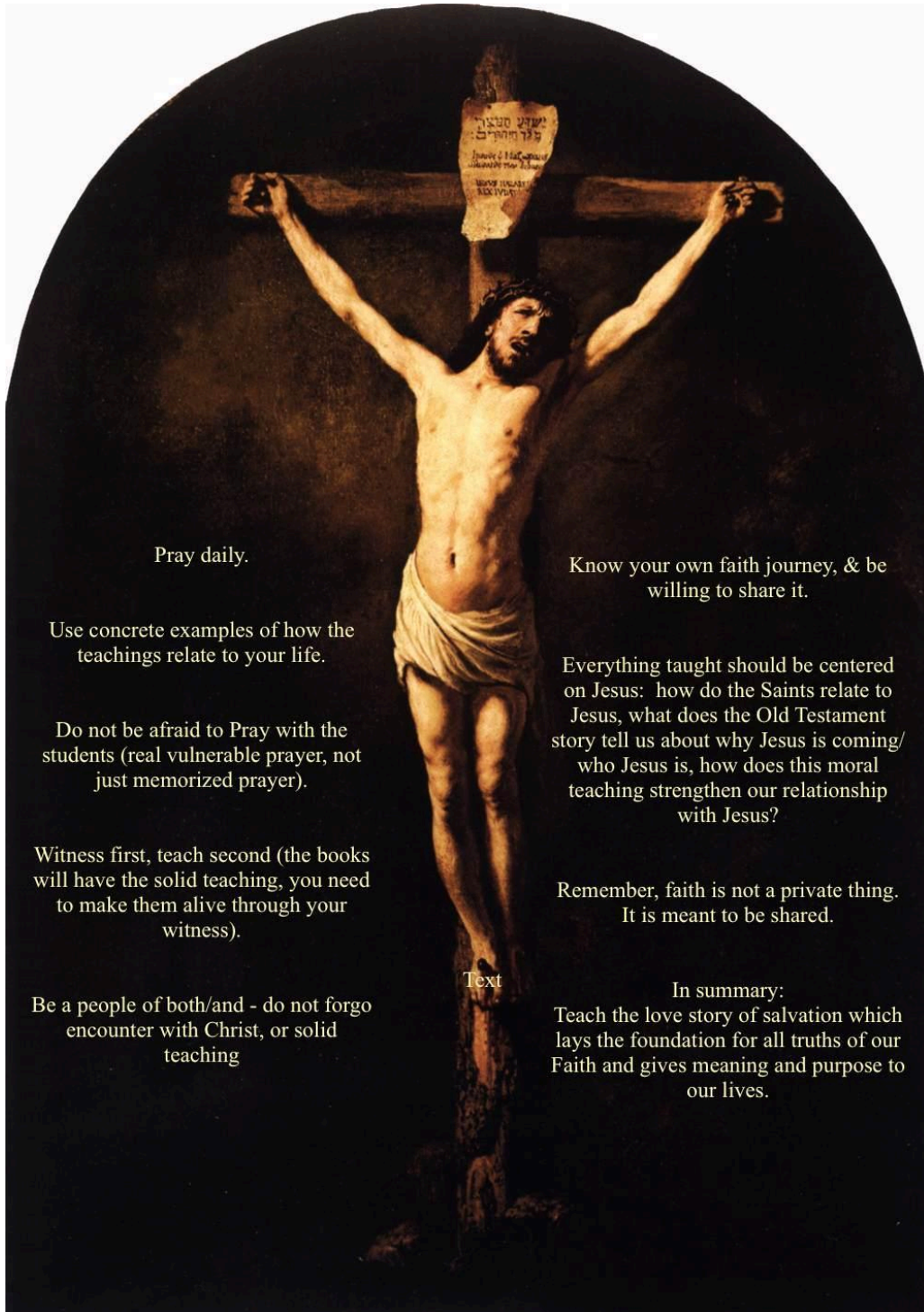
5. Injecting the Kerygma into the Curriculum

- As teachers we must place this message at the centre of our curriculum. Nothing should be taught in RE without looking through the lens of the kerygma. When the kerygma is brought into the classroom we are no longer teaching theological

statements but introducing students to a relationship with God. We need to point to Jesus constantly. In Catholic education we need to shift our gaze to Jesus.

- There is power when the Word is proclaimed (Proposition 9: NEW EVANGELIZATION AND INITIAL PROCLAMATION)
- The following Rembrandt image has some ideas on it about injection the Kerygma into the curriculum. It is taken from:
<https://ipreligiousused.wordpress.com/2015/10/01/kerygma/>.

As teachers we can inject the kerygma into the curriculum through (share personal examples).



Pray daily.

Use concrete examples of how the teachings relate to your life.

Do not be afraid to Pray with the students (real vulnerable prayer, not just memorized prayer).

Witness first, teach second (the books will have the solid teaching, you need to make them alive through your witness).

Be a people of both/and - do not forgo encounter with Christ, or solid teaching

Know your own faith journey, & be willing to share it.

Everything taught should be centered on Jesus: how do the Saints relate to Jesus, what does the Old Testament story tell us about why Jesus is coming/ who Jesus is, how does this moral teaching strengthen our relationship with Jesus?

Remember, faith is not a private thing. It is meant to be shared.

Text

In summary:
Teach the love story of salvation which lays the foundation for all truths of our Faith and gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Attachments:

A. Creative presentations that can be used to help illustrate the aims of the talk:

Video: <https://viewthestory.com/watch/en>

App: <http://appcrawlr.com/ios/share-your-faith> (have it on your phone to show!)

Talk on the Kerygma (You tube): <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=NpxjhVFEKIY>

Story of the slave girl: Re-counted in Steve Brown's riveting book, *A Scandalous Freedom*.

Abraham Lincoln went to a slave market. There he noted a young, beautiful African-American woman being auctioned off to the highest offer. He bid on her and won. He could see the anger in the young woman's eyes and could imagine what she was thinking, 'another white man will buy me, use me, and then discard me'.

As Lincoln walked off with his 'property', he turned to the woman and said, 'You're free'. 'Yeah. What does that mean?' she replied. 'It means that you're free.' 'Does it mean I can say whatever I want to say?' 'Yes,' replied Lincoln, smiling, 'it means you can say whatever you want to say.' 'Does it mean,' she asked incredulously, 'that I can be whatever I want to be?' 'Yes, you can be whatever you want to be.' 'Does it mean,' the young woman said hesitantly, 'that I can go wherever I want to go?' 'Yes, it means you are free and you can go wherever you want to go.'

'Then,' said the woman with tears welling up in her eyes, 'I think I'll go with you.'

Brown continues...

That is what God has done for us. It is what the Christian faith is all about. We have been bought with a price, the price of God's own Son. We now have a new master, one who, once he paid the price, set us free.

Do you realize that you are free? Jesus never twists our arm—and he never does a hard-sell on us. He simply sets us free and lets us decide what we will do with that freedom. The question each of us must answer is: Will we turn and walk away—or will we, like the slave girl—follow him?

36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36, ESV)

B. Fr Chris Ryan's CSYMA article on the importance of the Kerygma

CATCH THE WAVE

BY FR CHRIS RYAN
CSYMA BOARD MEMBER

CATHOLIC
SCHOOL AS
CENTER OF NEW
EVANGELISATION



PRIMACY OF
KERYGMA



PROCESS OF
EVANGELISATION



ARDOUR, METHOD
& EXPRESSION

CSYMA

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AS CENTRES OF THE NEW EVANGELISATION

A core conviction for Catholic Schools Youth Ministry Australia is that Catholic schools can be centres of the new evangelisation. In other words, Catholic schools can provide a context for students to encounter the God revealed in Jesus Christ, and to enter into a lifelong path of discipleship with others in the context of the Catholic Church. As schools and teachers seek to implement the CSYMA program, some of the principles of the new evangelisation that undergird CSYMA could be overlooked. Unless the CSYMA program incorporates these principles then it runs the risk of being ineffective. There are three elements I wish to highlight: the primacy of the kerygma, the integral process of evangelisation, and the new ardour, methods and expression of the new evangelisation.

RECAPTURING THE PRIMACY OF THE KERYGMA

If there is one aspect of the new evangelisation for CSYMA that I wish to emphasise most it is this: CSYMA requires a basic proclamation of the Gospel or the kerygma. This is the fundamental proclamation of the basic or core story of Christianity: that God created the world out of love for us, and sought to be in a covenantal relationship with the human family. We have all broken that relationship of love with God, and the world is filled with the consequences of that broken relationship: the devastating effects of sin in our personal lives, in our communities, and globally. God sent his only Son to become one of us: In the person of Jesus of Nazareth we encounter God, and through his death and resurrection we are forgiven and drawn into communion with the God of Love. This new communion requires our participation in God's mission: we share with God in bringing about the communion or redemption of others through our compassionate service to others, and by sharing the Good News that we have received. The kerygma is the crucial point of our faith; for from it everything else that we believe as Catholics follows. And so we must be clear that we are to communicate it clearly. We believe that there is an intrinsic power – the power of the Spirit – in this proclamation, that when people simply proclaim the kerygma with faith it calls for a response in the hearts and minds of those who are listening. When we do this, what we will find is that young people will want to explore, discover and deepen in their faith as young followers of Christ. In the CSYMA 'Catch the Wave' program the kerygma is presented through a series of teachings from experienced educators and personal sharings from young people who have been through, or are currently engaged in, the program.

Fr Chris Ryan (MGL) breaks open the growing potential of youth ministry in Catholic Schools and the way initial proclamation and ongoing formation go hand in hand.

THE INTEGRAL PROCESS OF EVANGELISATION

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Paul VI outlined a process of evangelisation that underpins the CSYMA four-phase program. This process is not a series of hoops to jump through; it is a dynamic process that defies any systematization. Nonetheless, these steps can be clearly defined. Evangelisation in a real sense begins with the witness of people of faith. In CSYMA this witness comes in the first instance from the retreat leaders, from peers and older students who are in or who have been in CSYMA, from the teachers in the CSYMA program, and from the people that they meet in the broader Church through CSYMA. These witnesses make the message of the Gospel credible and attractive by their lives.

The second element of the process is the proclamation of the Gospel, which I have already highlighted above as the announcement of the kerygma. The Catch the Wave program is the central but not only means of presenting the kerygma in CSYMA. This proclamation invites (but in no way forces or compels) a response of faith to the God revealed in Jesus Christ. This is first and foremost an encounter with Jesus, the love of God made manifest. This response of faith always happens over time, but it may be concentrated in important moments such as times of prayer, through the sacrament of reconciliation or in time of retreat in the CSYMA process. Young people are then invited to enter into a journey of discipleship, not in a solo manner, but as part of the Catholic faith community.

This means that young people are to be invited to a broader experience of catechesis. This catechesis is not to be understood as simply an exercise in imparting information (rarely explaining the 'truths' of the Catholic faith), but a catechesis that is directed at the whole person: forming them intellectually, spiritually and in their actions. This catechesis thus involves learning more about the Catholic faith, but it also includes deepening in prayer, the sacramental life of the Church and living out the Church's moral and social teaching.

NEW ARDOUR, NEW METHODS AND NEW EXPRESSIONS

John Paul II's call for new methods and new expressions in our evangelisation of young people finds particular resonance in the CSYMA program. Again and again I have personally witnessed young people finding new and creative ways to express the Catholic faith and the kerygma in particular in a language that resonates and connects with their peers. Both the CSYMA program itself and the assessment and methods employed by students themselves have produced really innovative methods for connecting with young people through the use of multimedia and testimony. CSYMA ought to provide a context for really creative expressions of the Gospel in a language that young people recognise as their own. John Paul II's call for new ardour also must resonate with those who implement the CSYMA program.

As teachers, priests and youth ministers engaged in ministry with students in Catholic Schools, we will see genuine evangelisation only to the degree that we possess our own living relationship with Jesus Christ. The Porta Fidei retreats for teachers are designed to help teachers nourish their own relationship with God so that they can bear witness to and share that relationship with their students. It is vital that teachers pay attention to these principles of the new evangelisation as they implement the CSYMA program. CSYMA is built upon them, and the fruit of CSYMA is therefore dependent upon them too.

