



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC LETTER

LAETAMUR MAGNOPERE

IN WHICH THE LATIN TYPICAL EDITION OF THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

IS APPROVED AND PROMULGATED JOHN PAUL, BISHOP

SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD

FOR EVERLASTING MEMORY

To my Venerable Brothers the cardinals,

Patriarchs,

Archbishops,

Bishops,

Priests,

Deacons,

and to all the People of God. IT IS A CAUSE FOR GREAT JOY THAT THE LATIN TYPICAL EDITION OF THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH* IS BEING PUBLISHED. It is approved and promulgated by me in this Apostolic Letter and thus becomes the definitive text of the aforementioned *Catechism*. This is occurring about five years after the [Apostolic Constitution *Fidei Depositum*](#) of October 11, 1992, which, on the 30th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, accompanied the publication of the first, French-language text of the *Catechism*. We have all been able to note with pleasure the broad positive reception and wide dissemination of the *Catechism* in these years, especially in the particular Churches, which have had it translated into their respective languages, thus making it as accessible as possible to the various linguistic communities of the world. This fact confirms how fitting was the request submitted to me in 1985 by the Extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that a catechism or compendium of all Catholic doctrine regarding faith and morals be composed. Drawn up by the special Commission of Cardinals and Bishops established in 1986, the *Catechism* was approved and promulgated by me in the aforementioned [Apostolic Constitution](#), which today retains all its validity and timeliness, and finds its definitive achievement in this Latin typical edition. This edition was prepared by an Interdicasterial Commission which I appointed for this purpose in 1993. Presided over by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, this Commission worked diligently to fulfill the mandate it received. It devoted particular attention to a study of the many suggested changes to

the contents of the text, which in these years had come from around the world and from various parts of the ecclesial community. In this regard one can certainly understand that such a remarkable number of suggested improvements shows the extraordinary interest that the *Catechism* has raised throughout the world, even among non-Christians, and confirms its purpose of being presented as a full, complete exposition of Catholic doctrine, enabling everyone to know what the Church professes, celebrates, lives, and prays in her daily life. At the same time it draws attention to the eager desire of all to make their contribution so that the Christian faith, whose essential and necessary elements are summarized in the *Catechism*, can be presented to the people of our day in the most suitable way possible. Furthermore, this collaboration of the various members of the Church will once again achieve what I wrote in the *Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositum*: "The harmony of so many voices truly expresses what could be called the 'symphony' of the faith" (no. 2). For these reasons too, the Commission seriously considered the suggestions offered, carefully examined them at various levels and submitted its conclusions for my approval. These conclusions, insofar as they allow for a better expression of the *Catechism's* contents regarding the deposit of the Catholic faith, or enable certain truths of this faith to be formulated in a way more suited to the requirements of contemporary catechetical instruction, have been approved by me and thus have been incorporated into this Latin typical edition. Therefore it faithfully repeats the doctrinal content which I officially presented to the Church and to the world in December 1992. With today's promulgation of the Latin typical edition, therefore, the task of composing the *Catechism*, begun in 1986, is brought to a close and the desire of the aforementioned Extraordinary Synod of Bishops is happily fulfilled. The Church now has at her disposal this new, authoritative exposition of the one and perennial apostolic faith, and it will serve as a "valid and legitimate instrument for ecclesial communion" and as a "sure norm for teaching the faith," as well as a "sure and authentic reference text" for preparing local catechisms (cf. *Apostolic Constitution Fidei Depositum*, no. 4). Catechesis will find in this genuine, systematic presentation of the faith and of Catholic doctrine a totally reliable way to present, with renewed fervor, each and every part of the Christian message to the people of our time. This text will provide every catechist with sound help for communicating the one, perennial deposit of faith within the local Church, while seeking, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to link the wondrous unity of the Christian mystery with the varied needs and conditions of those to whom this message is addressed. All catechetical activity will be able to experience a new, widespread impetus among the People of God, if it can properly use and appreciate this post-conciliar *Catechism*. All this seems even more important today with the approach of the third millennium. For an extraordinary commitment to evangelization is urgently needed so that everyone can know and receive the Gospel message and thus grow "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (*Eph* 4:13). I therefore strongly urge my Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, for whom the *Catechism* is primarily intended, to take the excellent opportunity afforded by the promulgation of this Latin edition to intensify their efforts to disseminate the text more widely and to ensure that it is well received as an outstanding gift for the communities entrusted to them, which will thus be able to rediscover the inexhaustible riches of the faith. Through the harmonious and complementary efforts of all the ranks of the People of God, may this *Catechism* be known and shared by everyone, so

that the unity in faith whose supreme model and origin is found in the Unity of the Trinity may be strengthened and extended to the ends of the earth. To Mary, Mother of Christ, whose Assumption body and soul into heaven we celebrate today, I entrust these wishes so that they may be brought to fulfillment for the spiritual good of all humanity. *From Castel Gandolfo, August 15, 1997, the nineteenth year of the Pontificate.*

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