



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

March 6, 2020

Dear Pastors,

I am writing to you now with important information you will need as we move from “Restore” to “Renew”. What I want to communicate to you now is the choice of materials that has been provided after a long (several years) period of focused and widely participatory research.

We began with initial surveys and information provided by all parishes in the diocese. Presentations of materials specifically for our going forward more purposefully and committed to renewing a community of shared and common catechesis was the next step. Then, through prayerful consideration, focus groups of pastors, catechists and faith formation leaders participated in a final review of materials and made recommendations to me as Bishop.

The choice of materials is important and serious. Allow me to say why that is so. I begin by quoting from the beginning of Eucharistic Prayer I (*The Roman Canon*)

“To You, therefore, most merciful Father, we make humble prayer
and petition through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord,
that You accept and bless these gifts,
these offerings these holy and unblemished sacrifices,
which we offer You firstly for Your holy catholic Church.
Be pleased to grant her peace, to guard, unite and govern her
throughout the whole world,
together with Your servant (Francis) our Pope and (Peter) our Bishop,
and all those who, holding to the truth, hand on the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.”
(*Eucharistic Prayer I “The Roman Canon”*)

This prayer, which continues to be central to the Mass from antiquity to the present, sums up our mission: to implore the Father to accept us in this life through our offering to Him the sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ. We entreat God the Father to grant the Church peace. We pray that He will guard, unite and govern the Church that is so diverse in geography, language, custom and experience and that He will do so through human beings entrusted with the mission of handing on the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

This, the prayer says, must be done by those who hold to the truth. Holding to the truth so that we do hand on the catholic and apostolic faith – the faith that comes to us from the Apostles to the present.

Handing on the authentic faith is a commission that is so revered that we implore, pray and entreat Almighty God to receive the sacrifice of the Church even as we are committed to strive in

our commission, through His help, to hand on the Catholic and Apostolic Faith. This is why the choice of materials is so important.

To hand on the Catholic and Apostolic Faith our materials must be reliably and authentically Catholic. They must be clear and understandable. They must lift up the religious imagination so that teacher and student, master and apprentice together are able to transcend the limits of what is visible in this world. Through word, art, music and engagement in prayer, we ought to be able to appreciate and enter into the holy mystery and majesty of God. Holding to the truth that inspires apostolic courage, saintly companionship and “a hope that does not disappoint” enables us to know what now is unseen will be revealed at last in heaven.

For Parish and Catholic School Faith Formation AND Sacrament Preparation with children and youth in grades K-8 and for Parish Family Faith Formation, the materials recommended to me by the final focus group of pastors, youth ministers, faith formation leaders, and catechists are the following:

Loyola Press

- *Christ Our Life* series for use in parish and school classroom faith formation
- *Finding God* series for use in Parish Whole Community and Family Faith Formation models

Sadlier Publishers

- *We Believe* series for use in parish and school classroom faith formation
- *Christ in Us* series for use in Parish Whole Community and Family Faith Formation models

Sophia Institute for Teachers

- *Spirit of Truth* series for use in parish and school classroom faith formation
- *A Family of Faith* series for use in Parish Family Faith Formation models

As mentioned above, I have accepted the recommendations that were made to me by the final focus group. Based upon their insights I am announcing that these three publishers’ texts, then, are the only ones acceptable in our diocese. The choice for parish, Catholic School and home school going forward is limited to these. Whichever of the three you choose it **MUST BE YOUR FOUNDATIONAL AND PREMIERE** material. You must be using your chosen text by September 2021.

You may choose to augment or highlight certain aspects of your chosen text with other ancillary material that reflects the criteria made clear in this letter – authentically, reliably Catholic, etc.

For those who have been trained in it, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd would also be accepted as an ancillary experiential model of handing on a portion of the faith, but the foundational materials are to be of primary importance and use.

The preparatory work that was done in order to come to this point demonstrates the amount of listening, attentiveness and purposeful commitment we have made and together must all share as we move into this second and vitally important phase of our initiative of “Restore, Renew and Proclaim the Hope that is Christ”.

Be assured of my gratitude and my confidence that this movement forward is grounded in the grace of God and the watchful care of our Blessed Mother. It is they who will ensure that the Holy Spirit will enliven and transform what is sometimes seen as a difficult task into a proclamation of the faith, hope and love that is, in Christ Jesus, the hope of the world.

May God bless you and all that you will do to bring about this joyful vision that is the Catholic and Apostolic Faith.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Libasci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Tenth Bishop of Manchester