



Subcommittee on the Catechism

COMMITTEE ON EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS

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January 26, 2010

Attn: Catechetical Publishers

Dear Friends,

At the September, 2009, meeting of the Subcommittee on the Catechism with catechetical publishers, a request was made that the Subcommittee clarify the criteria and applicability of the conformity review process.

Of particular concern to publishers is the questioning in the marketplace about catechetical materials and programs that do not have a declaration of conformity, when the materials in question have not been judged to be deficient, but are simply not eligible for a conformity review.

In order to clarify this situation, the Subcommittee is pleased to issue the enclosed clarification entitled *The Conformity of Catechetical Materials with the Catechism of the Catholic Church - Criteria and Applicability* (January 2010). This will also be published on our website.

It is our hope that this will benefit both publishers and those responsible for catechetical texts at the diocesan and parish levels.

If you have any questions or are in need of assistance, please contact the staff to the Subcommittee on the Catechism.

Thank you for your dedication in serving the catechetical ministry of the Church in our country. May the Lord continue to bless our work

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Chairman

cc: Reverend J. Brian Bransfield
Jem Sullivan, Ph.D.

**THE CONFORMITY OF CATECHICAL MATERIALS
WITH THE *CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*:
CRITERIA AND APPLICABILITY**

The Bishop members of the *Subcommittee on the Catechism* of the USCCB are charged with the responsibility of making a determination as to whether a given catechetical text or catechetical series is in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Catholic publishers voluntarily submit their catechetical materials to the Subcommittee for review.

A text is eligible for a conformity review if it falls into one of the following categories:

- 1) A religion textbook series for students in Catholic elementary schools and/or parish Religious Education programs;
- 2) A religion textbook series for junior high students in Catholic schools and/or parish Religious Education programs
- 3) A religion textbook series or individual high school texts for students in Catholic high schools or parish Religious Education programs;
- 4) Teacher manuals or catechist manuals designed to accompany any of the above;
- 5) Student Religion workbooks.

The Subcommittee's conformity review process focuses primarily on the accuracy and completeness of doctrinal content, not catechetical methodology. However, the methodology employed can sometimes have a bearing on accuracy and completeness in a particular text.

The conformity review process leads to either a judgment of conformity or of non-conformity with the *Catechism*. Items judged to be in conformity appear on the "Conformity List" published by the Subcommittee.

If a given item fits one of the five categories above and does not appear on the Subcommittee's "Conformity List," then either it has been judged not to be in conformity with the *Catechism* or the publisher has not submitted, or has not yet submitted, the item for the Subcommittee's review.

It is important to note, however, that not all catechetical texts and materials are subject to a conformity review. The fact that a given item does not appear on the Subcommittee's "Conformity List" does not necessarily mean that it has been reviewed and found to be deficient, or that the publisher has failed to submit it.

A conformity review is **not** applicable to materials that fall into one of the following categories:

- 1) Catechetical materials that provide doctrinal content in teacher or catechist manuals rather than in student materials. The Subcommittee will undertake a conformity review of teacher or catechist manuals only when they complement student materials that already have a declaration of conformity or are under review for conformity.

- 2) Catechetical materials that are published in the form of regularly updated leaflets or periodicals with frequently changing content. These include materials related to the Church's liturgical year.
- 3) Individual monographs which focus specifically on individual topics, teachings or devotions, including biblical commentaries and college level student texts.
- 4) Materials focused on chastity and human sexuality that include biological and physiological content along with catechetical content.
- 5) Audio tapes, video tapes, websites, and DVD's or CD-Rom's.

Even if these materials are not eligible for a conformity review by the Subcommittee, individual Bishops and their diocesan offices typically monitor and approve such catechetical materials for use in schools and parish catechetical programs.

It may also happen that the competent bishop will grant a *nihil obstat* or *imprimatur* to materials that meet the church's criteria for these declarations.