

Significant Aspect Of Journeying With The Youth Formation Process Of The Catechist

Antonius P Sipahutar^{*1}, Megawati Naibaho², Martina Rosmaulina Marbun³, Sergius Lay⁴, Bartolomeus Sihite⁵

¹²³⁴⁵ STP Dian Mandala Gunungsitoli, Indonesia

parlin_nov@stpdianmandala.ac.id¹, carolinekym79@stpdianmandala.ac.id²,
martina.rosmar@stpdianmandala.ac.id³, giuslay.zone@stpdianmandala.ac.id⁴,
bartolomeus.sihite@stpdianmandala.ac.id⁵

Alamat: Jln. Nilam 4 Gunungsitoli

Korespondensi Penulis: parlin_nov@stpdianmandala.ac.id*

Abstract. *The modern lifestyle is a vibrant on the society. The research background of this research is the contemporary youth has enthusiastically embraced the dynamics of market economy and less on the faith formation. The objectives of this research find that the contemporary youth is energetic, idealistic, and courageous, on the other hand, the youth is confused, dazed by the forces of consumerism. This situation calls for preparation the catechist so that they will make a good contribution for faith and character formation. The finding this research open awareness about the significant journey with the youth of today, joining their quest for a meaningful and purposeful life, the mission of the Church looks for an effective formation program for catechists grounded in the teachings of the Magisterium. Hence, this research has grounded implications on reflecting for effective present formation program. With a solid theological foundation, a clear goal, and a renewed method, journey with youth as new generation towards the human maturity, towards a faith-filled life, empowers the youth to respond God's call with a right life-choice and stimulates their intensified participation in the society and other communities.*

Keywords: *awareness, catechist, character, youth*

1. INTRODUCTION

The world has learned a great deal from Vatican Council II about the laity and their fashion to wake up from the sleeping (Yesudoss et al., 2024). Among the laity, the situation of the youth today has emerged as a tremendous power to be reckoned with. Pope John Paul II, has given extraordinary apprehension to his “dear young people” (John Paul II, 1990). Through his shepherd guidance, he has anchored a tremendous hope on the youth, and has appealed to the Church to strengthen the youth ministry. This pastoral area call for significant to the formation of the catechist (Caroline Farey, 2011).

In the plans as Church in Asia for the twenty first century, the Asian bishops committed to devote more vigor on the formation of the laity, especially on the catechist (Spollen, 2007). The catechist has an important task in the Church on building faith, hope and charity to all. The bishops are aware that sixty percent of the Asian population is young so that needs to journey with them. The Church calls to discern the path to ‘A New Way of Being Church’ of establishing a ‘communion and communities’, we will have to learn to walk with the young”(FABC, 1997b). However, the means that are used to approach the young must be different in the new millennium. Therefore, in the year 1995, the Asian bishops agreed that the youth is one of the priority areas of pastoral care.

The youth of the twenty-first century is enjoying the pleasure of material wealth; at the same time, they have become the victims of a poor spiritual life, even some of them remarkable with the porn movies (Manik, 2020). Nevertheless, the youth naturally pursues truth and authentic happiness. This provides the Church with a golden opportunity to open wide the gate for formation of the catechist in order to build dialogue within the third millennium (Green, 2017). It is also an opportunity for the youth to get in touch with others, and to come to know about faith, religion and way of being good. Therefore, in confronting the developments and changes taking place in the life of the youth, the Church needs to be alert to, and to anticipate the future directions of these developments (Koa et al., 2024).

Precisely as the light of the world, the Church must be the prime and ideal companion of her youth in their life journey, especially through formation the catechist. However, the Church has not sufficiently prepared itself for this journey (Naibaho & Sipahutar, 2024). For example, the Church has the national youth commission but it was not well organized even most local Churches have no particular ministry for the youth. In the context of Indonesian society, most of the Dioceses owns the school for catechist, but there are very few programs which have some sporadic youth formation programs (Yesudoss et al., 2024).

The most important should establish that the way of doing the journey together with the youth. With this activity, we believe that the youth who faces many problems will find the right solutions. The youth needs truly guidance and journey together through formation of conscience (Naibaho et al., 2023). Therefore, it is hoped that this study will provide some advantage to the Church so that she may get on the right track, and more ably do youth ministry (Collins, 2014). In this way, the Church will prepare the youth to become the “Catalysts of Social Change in the society in general and the Church in the particular.

Life is a journey to fulfill self-awareness. The young people confront this journey with great ideals and zeal, but also with insecurity and confusion. They need someone to journey with them as a wise teacher and a faithful friend (Keenan, 2010). For the authentic happiness of the youth in the third millennium, the Church must voluntarily carry out this important role, especially through formation process for catechist (Naibaho, 2023). We do believe through all effort on guiding the youth with the intensive programs, they may participative act to support this mission of the Church and building good environment in the society (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2010).

2. METHOD

This research uses the method literature study (library research). Literature research is a theoretical study, references, and other scientific literature. In the literature study method, the authors search for and collect various sources containing the information and data needed specially related to the theme of this research. The information and data come from books, journals, encyclopedias, magazines, the internet and other literature that supports the title of this research. After the author finds the sources, the author reads and explores reading materials related to the title of the thesis while making important notes about the information, theories and data needed in analyzing, processing and writing this research. Thus, after the source books have been collected and are sufficient, the authors combine them into a scientific work in order to come with significant purpose of writing this research, especially for ongoing process of formation for the catechist.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Particular Social Environment of the Youth

The youth has more capacity and talent in order to face many realities and circumstance in the society. The needs or hunger of the material life has become more affluent and, the nutrition system has also changed, so the youth people have a tendency to mature earlier. The phenomenon of the internet, mass media and so forth, provides the youth with more channels of information (Utomo, 2023). The reality of development in the market economy gave rise to various problems related to inter-personal relationships, law and morality and social responsibility, including to the social environment of the youth.

Poverty increased because of the lack of understanding to manage good life, such as drug, online gambling, online games, and others (Schroeder, 2018). The youth life style without thinking the dangers of bad attitude had created problems in the family life as well in the society. On the society, the poor families could not provide adequate housing, medical care, education and the other needs of their children. The poverty is a challenge for parents to send their children to continue their education at quality schools and require educational costs (Ndoa et al., 2024).

The formal education level was not transform necessarily guided the youth to understand how to behave on the true attitude, through faith formation and character building (Koa et al., 2024). The formal education cannot adequately prepare the young people to face the demands of living in a fast developing society. Many and diverse ideas, and behavior styles, tend to erode the traditional values and moral norms (Ola et al., [tanpa tahun]). The rapid

development of society and the restlessness of adults have negatively affected the younger generation, leading them on the wrong path. The collapse of traditional structures and the basic unit of society (family) is necessarily needed serious attention from ministers in the Church. Actions for cultivating the faith of the people and pastoral visits are very effective means for cultivating the faith and character of the people (Marbun et al., 2024). On the other hand, if the Church Lack of providing guidance to people, especially young people, will cause shallowness of faith and a lack of awareness to walk together.

These changes of the social environment had a big impact on the growth on the youth. A substantial endurance pressure is placed on the slight carries of the new generation. The positive characteristic of the younger generation is the remarkable power and energy wielded by them in their guidance of society (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2010). This is particularly accurate when the society creates a peaceful and conducive environment to the youth. The Advances in technology and advanced communication facilities can be used to build a harmonious environment for young people. The zone of media and communication give opportunity to the youth to develop talents and abilities (Ndoa et al., 2024). In efforts to build a respectable living environment for everyone, especially young people, the parents have a very important role. It is very possible that young people experience errors and mistakes in using media. The key positions were conquered by the young (Caroline Farey, 2011). The elders should have a passion to guide the youth in the society in order to help the young generation about what is right and what is wrong.

Characteristics the Formation of the Lay Faithful

Pope John Paul II is well known by the whole world as “The Pope of the Young”. A profound apprehension was shown throughout his apostolic mission, especially after 1984. In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation the vocation and the mission of the lay faithful *Christifideles Laici*, Pope John Paul II gave significant directives on the formation of the lay faithful (John Paul II, 1989). Although this exhortation is addressed to all the lay faithful, the Pope also showed his usual concern for his “dear young people” (John Paul II, 1989). He declared that, in the life of each member the society, especially in the Church community, of the lay faithful offered the meaningful contribution.

It takes determination and effort to shape personality that is useful for personal development and maturity of faith. This characteristic has very substantial and influential moments for discerning God's call and embracing the mission entrusted by him. Among these are the stages of youth. Farey in line with Pope John Paul II also insisted that the call to growth

and maturation is one of the fundamental aspects of the mission and the life of the laity. Therefore, the holistic and continuous formation process and ongoing formation of the lay faithful is necessary (Caroline Farey, 2011).

Together with the Synod Fathers, Pope John Paul II has clearly affirmed that, “the formation of the lay faithful must be placed among the priorities of a diocese” (John Paul II, 1989). It should be so engaged within the strategy of pastoral action that the determinations of the whole community (clergy, lay faithful and religious) converge on this goal. (Koa et al., 2024) In line with Pope John Paul II, Yesudas also clearly states the primary objective of the formation of the laity, is an ever-clearer discovery of one's vocation and the ever-greater willingness to live it so as to fulfill one's mission (Yesudoss et al., 2024).

In determining and living their appropriate vocation and mission, the lay faithful must be molded according to the union which exists because they are members of the Church and citizens of human society (FABC, 1997c). Being placed in this accord of life, there are three fundamental characteristics that need to be elaborated on the formation of lay people, especially to be a humble catechist. There are three characteristics namely: spiritual formation, the doctrinal formation, especially the Church's social doctrine, and the cultivation of human values. These three characteristics should be nurtured as the straightforward demands about the formation of the laity, especially for the catechist (Naibaho, 2023). Some questions can arise such as, where are the youth faithful molded? What are the quality resources and necessities of their formation? Who are the persons and the communities called upon to undertake the duty of a completely incorporated formation of the lay faithful, particularly to be a humble catechist?

To desire the characteristic of the youth, the formator or shepherd should place God as the first and greatest teacher of his people. On the other side, the people of God, especially the youth, require to accept Mary as a Mother Church who takes part in this divine formation (Caroline Farey, 2011). Mary has a good model of simplicity and humility in responding to God's will. Imitated faith and living in holiness of Mary, hence each particular Church or diocese, and especially the parish, should afford a more personal and immediate formation of the lay faithful, especially to be a humble and good catechist (Naibaho, 2023). The Church, aware of the Christian family, as the “domestic Church”, also makes up a natural and fundamental school for formation in the faith. The family, especially the parents, become a first teacher for children and then the house as well as centers of spirituality in the formation of the lay faithful (Koa et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Farey identified the awareness of Pope John Paul II clarifies that formation in faith for youth is a privilege in order to be a right and duty of all. During the mission,

on the Church and community, the formation of the laity, especially the youth is to be developed appropriate courses or suitable schools. The final purpose of the formation is truly incisive and effective pastoral activity (Caroline Farey, 2011). On the other hand, the formation requires of humble and faithful formators who has ability in a general and widespread formation of all the lay faithful, and a responsible self-formation of all. Finally, the effort of formation will cover all aspects of human being such as: spiritual, intellectual, psychology, and others, so that the lay people, especially catechist available from human science and more effective to respond God's will (Lay et al., 2024).

In his apostolic letter "To the Youth of the World", Pope John Paul II expressed his great concern for the youth on behalf of the Church. He endorsed distinctive significance to the period of youth as a key phase in the life of every human being. He said, "the youth, in itself, independently of any material goods is a special treasure of young people", "a possession of humanity itself" (John Paul II, [tanpa tahun]). Inspired by this letter, Paulinus and companions carry out coaching actions for the youth in order to build the strong foundation principles, so that every youth can experience the personal love of Jesus Christ, and share this love to others (Ndoa et al., 2024).

Pope John Paul II views toward the youth young generation who is on the line of growth process. He emphasized that to grow in reliable humanity, as Jesus has grown in figure and in wisdom will come about through contact with nature, with the rich achievements of humanity, with other people and with God. Finally, confronting the complex modern world, the Pope encourages the sign for the young connected with the Word of God (John Paul II, 1992).

The Church's Teaching about the Youth

The formation for the youth should be included on the aspect of humanity, faith, pastoral care and spiritual aspect, so that the Church should invite the youth to be co-worker in the Church mission (Paul VI, 1964). The Second Vatican Council has expressed its profound apprehension for the wellbeing of the youth. The "Message to the Youth" declared that it is for the future of the youth, the reform enthusiasm of the Vatican II was enkindled. The Church saw the absolute crucial role of the youth in this enormous transforming moment of the world history. "It is you who, receiving the exemplary virtue of your parents and teachers are to form the society of tomorrow (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2010). The youth will either save themselves or will perish the parents and shepherd has responsibility for it. In this message, the Church should encourage the youth to build up a better world, a world in which faith will be carried forward, and human dignity, freedom and rights will be respected.

In the Decree on the Laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, the Church recognized that youth must be, and are capable of being effective missionaries, especially among the youth. However, the Church also admitted that the youth face many difficulties. Therefore, she calls the adults to form the youth through their words and deeds, watering the enthusiasm of the youth with the Gospel spirit, and to help them to respect the valuable tradition (Vatican II, 1984). In the research field, it is necessary to find the form young people that family has significant right on guiding the youth.

The family is the first environment which the younger generation grows and received the values of life (Naibaho et al., 2024). On the other hand, the society requires the sincere generation to be experts doing an activity as the teachers, doctors, technician, and so on. The parents should prepare the guidance and provide suitable entertainment to protect the youth from the unhealthy environment aspects of the media (Pontificium Consilium de Communicationibus Socialibus, 1992).

The Second Vatican Council has mentioned the term ‘youth’ many times in their documents, especially in *Gaudium et Spes* and *Gravissimum Educationis* (Vatican II, 2011). It is the obligation of each local Church and parish to deliver this message of love and hope to every young person. This remainder needs to be conveyed in such an approach that the youth individual experiences the love, trust and concern of their Church community. This will allow the young people to grow into a love and trust for the Church and for society (Vatican II, 2011). Hopefully, that love and trust will give the young the desire and strength to work at building a better world for all people.

Pope Paul VI deliberates the formation of these “new workers” of the Lord to be an urgent task. In many of his documents, he urges the older people, including all those who are responsible for the Catholic educational institutions, such as parents, catechists and teachers, to be the guardians of truth and love through their own authentic Christian life. In his Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Pope Paul VI, 1993). Furthermore, Paul VI stressed that, in order to give the young people systematic spiritual instructions and fundamental teachings of the Church, the catechetical instruction should not be neglected; and yet, the suitability of the texts and an updating of the methods were highly recommended. Above all, Pope Paul VI realized that the witness of life has become more than ever an essential condition for real effectiveness in preaching. He said, modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. His statement was especially directed at the youth (Pope Paul VI, 1993).

Aware of the compound societal condition, and the abundant responsibility for the future of the society and the Church, which the Asian youth is facing, Pope John Paul II, together with the Synod Fathers, highly recommended the promotion of youth formation. The formation should include two aspects: give good pastoral care to the youth and, invite them as the agents and co-workers in the Church's mission (John Paul II, 1999). Farey inspiration by Pope John Paul II recommended that every Asian diocese, should appoint more youth chaplains, or directors, for Catholic schools and parishes, to provide all-round formation and to develop in youth the human qualities and true discipleship that mission requires (Caroline Farey, 2011). The formation process for the youth will prepare them to participate in the mission of the Church with their own ability. In the context of the Church in Asia, the Asian youth have the potential to be peacemakers and agents of dialogue. Ecclesia in Asia stresses the needs of the youth must not be overlooked in any genuine liturgical inculturation (John Paul II, 1999).

The Asian bishops have suggested some tangible resources for performance youth ministry. They suggested that the parishes need to help the young people to develop their charism for leadership. Those working with them need to be profound to youth difficulties and anxieties, and to be trained to pervade human and Christian principles and ideals into these areas of apprehension (FABC, 1997c). In order to respond the need of the youth, the community should open their guidance to journey together with activity plan realistically for youth; and it is necessary to open youth centers. They need to provide entertaining accommodations for all youth, and have a special concern for delinquents (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2010).

Later, the Asian bishops underlined those who work with the young people should have a special concern the importance of the prayer, characters, virtue, and morality. The formation process especially in prayer is always indispensable in Catholic education; catechesis, which is educated in the faith, is essential to evangelization (FABC, 1997a). The Church also recognizes that the proclamation of Jesus obligation be urgently directed towards all the people of Asia; especially to the young. The sincere formation through new ways of accompaniment and dialogue with them will encourage them to be a good person (Manik, 2020). The young people currently are investigating for meaning and spiritual values. We must learn to accompany them in their search and enter into a dialogue of life with aware the importance of their conscience. Through the formation of their conscience, they are enabled to be open to hearing God's demands through the act of listening to their conscience (Naibaho et al., 2023).

Finally, the youth will partake actively to support and promote Christian values to be part of the culture they are even now shaping.

The Youth, the Evangelizers of Other Youth

From the year 1990 onwards, following the call of the Pope John Paul II for the Christian formation of the laity, the Asian youth ministry concentrated on the formation of the young evangelizers. The Asian bishops envisioned a thorough education of Catholic youth in the social doctrine of the Church, as well as the formation of their hearts toward just and compassionate living in present-day Asian society (FABC, 1997a).

The Church open minded to renew the approach of looking at the youth. The new method of journeying with the youth requires a renewed recognition their unique. The Asian Church has positive expressions at the youth as a reality today, not only as a hope of tomorrow. The capacity and wonderful power of youth was recognized. The Church understands that the youth facing many sheer numbers, their needs accompaniment to strength and zeal can be tapped and channeled to liberate society from oppressive and destructive forces (Lay et al., 2024).

However, in this contemporary world, the youth are the most vulnerable and victimized group. This reality stretches the Asian Church a new consciousness and acceptance that youth ministry is an essential and integral part of the Church's mission and ministry. The Asian Church has resolved to invest more energy, resources, and personnel for the integral formation of the Laity (FABC, 1997c). The new pastoral approach maintains on entering into the world of the youth. The active accompaniment to the youth will create space to understand their vocation. They are being rocked in their boat, amidst their uncertainties, fears, competitiveness, challenges, peer and other pressures. So that they may have a good understanding about the social influences, pluralistic ideologies and seeing the world through their eyes that we will be able to establish communion (*Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2010).

The comprehensive youth formation strategies were proposed by the Bishops through the Institute for Lay Apostolate (BILA) on Youth held in January, 1977. They gave suggestions and ideas for the formation process should include some valuable aspects such as: exposure and immersion programs, empowering based on personal conviction, ongoing formation, Christ-centered, contextual, relevant to their needs, and leading to personal commitment. Formation in Christian values developing their own spirituality (FABC, 1997a). Fashioning the youth to be aware of social issues; educating them on the social teachings of the Church, helping them to become agents of social transformation. Hence, integration of faith and life

habitually and systematically will lead the youth to self-reliance. This also becomes as effective way of forming youth to be effective leaders. Family involvement in the process of youth formation (Naibaho, 2023).

The bishops of Asia have proposed several changes that must take place in the Church's approach to the youth. The youth formation must be seen as an essential and integral element of the Church's mission, and as a life-long journeying together. Therefore, the person who trusts as shepherds or leader should understand her or his responsibility (Pontificium Consilium de Communicationibus Socialibus, 1992). Therefore, all the program formation to all groups cannot be several lectures, or meetings, that happen occasionally. All the plan of formation must be a well-organized, sustained, and continuous program.

The formation program must be holistic, and have solid purposes. The meaning of holistic understands that all the programs cover for all aspects of the person and his /her faith need to be included in the program. On the other hands, the goal of the program should useful for personal or community growth in all of those aspects. Thus, it is increasingly evident that the formation must for human growth and development, and for nourishing authentic human dignity (Manik, 2020). There must be a spiritual formation that is Christ-centered. There must be a doctrinal formation; a formation on the Church's teachings, especially, on teachings about those social issues relevant to the formation of the youth, particularly formation of catechist. These modifications will truly flourish with commitment to journey together with all (Naibaho & Sipahutar, 2024).

In creating such a program, the formator must express upon the youth with respect, gratitude and love. They are not the cause of the problems, but they are real persons who are the image of God. Therefore, in creating a formation program, the formator necessary to vigorously and often collaborate with the youth. The formator should serve and guide them and became part of their story. Hence, the formation process is good news to all especially to the youth. An effective step into the world of young people means a person must enter the world of the youth; listen to them, and involve them in the decision-making process on many levels and in many areas (Issler, 2012). The spirit of walking with others becomes an effective, creative and valuable pastoral tool. In walking together, everyone becomes valuable, accepted with all their uniqueness and beauty. The experience of being loved and accepted encourages everyone to love and make good contributions.

4. CONCLUSION

The youth formation, especially the process formation of catechist theologically grounded at the service of the mission of the Church. The process formation essential be rooted in Sacred Scripture, centered in Christ and situated in today's society's realities. The foundation of youth formation is put in a concrete testimonial of all forms of Christian ministry. All the formation in preparation of catechist requires the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the service of the needs of the neighbor and the worship of God. On the other side, all the process the implementation of the formation program necessity responds to other needs of the youth.

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