

Philippines - Certificate in Catechetical Leadership and Supervision (CCLS) 2023-2024

From 10 to 15 July 2023, catechetical leaders from several dioceses in the country gathered at De La Salle University in Manila for the *Certificate in Catechetical Leadership and Supervision* (CCLS) 2023-2024.

The CCLS is a training programme for catechetical directors and coordinators organised by the Lasallian Catechetical Centre of De La Salle University in Manila in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines - Episcopal Commission for Catechesis and Catholic Education (CBCP-ECCCE).

The sessions began with an introduction to the life and spirituality of St John Baptist de La Salle, catechist and patron of Catholic educators, who dedicated his ministry to faith formation and the education of young people in the 17th century. Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, OMI, DD, concluded the opening day of the programme with a solemn Eucharistic celebration.

Br Raymundo Suplido, FSC, on the other hand, welcomed the new group of CCLS students, praising the hard work of Filipino catechists, calling them "the foundation of Christian formation". He also reiterated the need for catechists to have 'leaders capable of guiding them, listening to their stories and, from there, guiding our communities towards a more fruitful catechetical ministry'. Br. Suplido also challenged the participants to be open to learning not only from the experts and facilitators, but also to share their struggles and hopes as catechetical leaders and to make the programme an experience and an expression of the synod process.

In a video message, Archbishop Rino Fisichella, Pro-Prefect for the New Evangelisation Section of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, greeted the participants, emphasising the Holy Father's call "to be catechists and not [simply] to do catechesis". He expressed his joy that many catechetical leaders in the country had taken the opportunity to participate in the programme, pointing out that the new Directory for Catechesis talks a lot about the formation of catechists.

Archbishop Fisichella also urged the participants to prepare for the celebration of the Jubilee in 2025.

The following days were devoted to the daily celebration of the Eucharist, studying and discussing the different chapters of the Directory for Catechesis, and listening to each other's experiences. As part of the module on catechesis and popular piety, a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Caysasay in Batangas was also organised. There, participants were introduced to the centuries-old devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Eucharistic celebration presided over by Bishop Daniel O. Presto, DD, President of the CBCP-ECCCE, on the last day of the personal sessions, coincided with the awarding of diplomas to the three CCLS groups.

The CCLS aims to help dioceses in the Philippines build a catechetical ministry that responds to the needs, trends and realities of the country's socio-cultural contexts. True to its innovative approach, CCLS 2023-2024 is in a hybrid mode, with in-person classes held at DLSU Manila from 10-15 July and online learning sessions for the next nine months of the programme. Like its predecessor, this year's CCLS focuses on two recent Church documents: the Directory for Catechesis and Pope Francis' Apostolic Letter *Antiquum Ministerium* establishing the lay ministry of the catechist.

The programme's lecturers included some of the leading experts in the fields of catechesis, theology and pastoral ministry: Archbishop Gilbert Garcera of Lipa, Mother of Life Centre Director Dr Waltraud Linnig and Salesian priest Fr Renato de Guzman.

Cardinal Orlando Quevedo, OMI, DD, concluded the opening day of the programme.

The speakers were Monsignor Gerry Santos of the Archdiocese of Manila, Sister Rhea Castillo, OP of *Siena College-Quezon City*, and Dr. Lysander Rivera, Director of the Lasallian Catechetical Centre and member of the International Council for Catechesis of the Vatican.





