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MOTU PROPRIO

for the approval and publication
of the Compendium of the ***Catechism of the Catholic Church***



To my Venerable Brothers the Cardinals, Patriarchs,
Archbishops, Bishops,
Priests, Deacons and to all the People of God.

Twenty years ago, work began on the Catechism of the Catholic Church that had been requested by the extraordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops held on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council.

I am filled with heartfelt thanks to the Lord God for having given the Church this Catechism, promulgated in 1992 by my venerated and beloved Predecessor, Pope John Paul II.

The great value and beauty of this gift are confirmed above all by the extensive and positive reception of the Catechism among Bishops, to whom it was primarily addressed as a sure and authentic reference text for teaching Catholic doctrine and, in particular, for formulating local catechisms. But it was also confirmed by its vast favorable reception in all segments of the People of God, who have come to know and appreciate it in more than fifty translations which to date have been published.

It is with great joy that I now approve and promulgate the Compendium of that Catechism.

The Compendium had been fervently desired by the participants in the International Catechetical Congress of October 2002, which gave voice to a need widely felt in the Church. My beloved Predecessor, recognizing this desire, decided in February 2003 to begin preparation of the text by entrusting the work to a Commission of Cardinals, over which I presided, and which was assisted by various experts. In the course of the work, a draft of the Compendium was submitted to all the Cardinals and the Presidents of Conferences of Bishops, the

vast majority of whom evaluated the text favorably.

The Compendium, which I now present to the Universal Church, is a faithful and sure synthesis of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It contains, in concise form, all the essential and fundamental elements of the Church's faith, thus constituting, as my Predecessor had wished, a kind of vademecum which allows believers and non-believers alike to behold the entire panorama of the Catholic faith.

In its structure, contents and language, the Compendium faithfully reflects the Catechism of the Catholic Church and will thus assist in making the Catechism more widely known and more deeply understood.

I entrust this Compendium above all to the entire Church and, in particular, to every Christian, in order that it may awaken in the Church of the third millennium renewed zeal for evangelization and education in the faith, which ought to characterize every community in the Church and every Christian believer, regardless of age or nationality.

But this Compendium, with its brevity, clarity and comprehensiveness, is directed to every human being, who, in a world of distractions and multifarious messages, desires to know the Way of Life, the Truth, entrusted by God to His Son's Church.

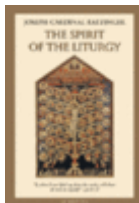
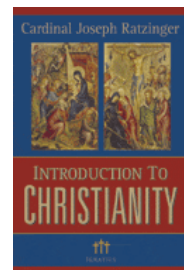
Through the intercession of Mary Most Holy, Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church, may everyone who reads this authoritative text recognize and embrace ever more fully the inexhaustible beauty, uniqueness and significance of the incomparable Gift which God has made to the human race in His only Son, Jesus Christ, the "Way, the Truth, and the Life" (Jn 14:6).

Given on 28 June 2005, the vigil of the Solemnity of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul, in the first year of my Pontificate.

[Introduction to Christianity - Cardinal Ratzinger](#)

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