

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Speech to Italian Catechists on Vatican II

Pope Francis

*The teachings of the Second Vatican Council are not open to selective interpretation but must be accepted as they are, Pope Francis told participants in a meeting organized by the Italian bishops' National Catechetical Office. "Either you are with the church and therefore you follow the council, and if you do not follow the council or you interpret it in your own way, as you wish, you are not with the church," the pope said Jan. 30 in the Vatican's Clementine Hall. "We must be demanding and strict on this point," he added. Pope Francis encouraged the Italian church to take up the task of organizing a national synod, as was recommended at the*

*"Please, no concessions to those who try to present a catechesis that does not agree with the magisterium of the church."*

*national church convention in Florence in 2015. The pope said catechesis "should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance that will not reduce preaching to a few doctrines that are at times more philosophical than evangelical." Church teachings must also be transmitted in a "language that comes from the heart, that is inherent, that is the most familiar, the closest to everyone," he said. "It is a time for free and disinterested missionary communities that do not seek prominence and advantage but rather walk the paths of the people of our time, stooping to tend to those on the margins," Pope Francis added. He spoke in Italian; a Vatican translation follows, copyright © 2021 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.*

■ welcome you, and I thank Cardinal Bassetti for his kind words. He has regained his strength, thank you! I greet the secretary general, Bishop Russo, and all of you who support the commitment of the Italian church in the field of catechesis. I am happy to share with you the memory of the 60th anniversary of the birth of the National Catechetical Office. Established even before the episcopal conference took shape, it was an indispensable instrument for catechetical renewal after the Second Vatican Council.

This anniversary is a valuable occasion for remembering, giving thanks for the gifts received and renewing the spirit of proclamation. To this end, I would like to share three points that I hope will help you in your

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