

DIVINE PEDAGOGY AND COVENANT MEMORIAL

The Catechetical *Narratio* and the New Evangelization¹

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Introduction

In the 1997 *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC) from the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy², the ancient catechetical *narratio* [narration] finds a surprisingly prominent place. The narration was a standard part of the evangelization and catechesis of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries, but had all but ceased to be a standard part of the Church's pedagogy. The catechetical narration of salvation history is mentioned first, explicitly, in number 39 of the GDC and there in the form of an imperative:

“Catechesis, for its part, transmits the words and deeds of Revelation; it is *obliged* to proclaim and *narrate* them and, at the same time, to make clear the profound mysteries that they contain” (my emphases).

While the GDC will go on to make the character of that narration clearer in succeeding paragraphs (even numbering the three parts of the historical narration among the “seven foundation stones” of catechesis at number 130), already here in its introduction it has made of it an obligation for Catholic teachers of the faith. Despite the weight of that clear imperative, no one would claim that in the sixteen years since the GDC's promulgation by Blessed John Paul II this ancient disclosure of what the GDC calls the “mysteries” of salvation history has been treated as an obligatory part of the curriculum for any part of the catechetical regime in our parishes. Perhaps this lack of response is because very few of the underpaid staff and volunteers who serve the catechetical ministries in our parishes read Vatican documents. Even if they did, very few would have recognized what the GDC was referring to. The ancient *narratio* is unknown, so unpracticed, and that is the

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- 1 Some small portions of the following were previously published as “Time for Liturgy: ‘Appointed Times’ in Judaism and Christianity,” in *Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass*, Scott Hahn and Regis Flaherty, eds. (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2004).
 - 2 *General Directory for Catechesis*, Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997, (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1998). All references will be taken from this English edition, and the citations for this and all ecclesial documents will be made with the internal numbering system, rather than by page number.

problem I hope to address, in some small measure, in the pages that follow. What is the *narratio* and why does the GDC oblige us to use it?

This article will explore the history and character of the *narratio* and suggest ways in which it might be applied today so as to make possible a positive response to the call of the *General Directory for Catechesis*. Specifically, I hope to show that the enduring value of the narration of salvation history in evangelization and catechesis generally, and in the New Evangelization in particular, rests upon its capacity to replicate in the ecclesial setting the pedagogy that God himself uses to incite a personal response of faith in us. This inducement to faith—according to St. Augustine of Hippo—consists in the demonstration the narration provides to its hearer that the love of God is the source of the unity and order of that history and in that same divine love shown by the catechist who recites it.

I intend to do this in three steps. First, we need to ascertain the reason for the GDC's imperative regarding the narration of salvation history. What we will find is that the *General Directory* seems to link the qualities of the *narratio* to the divine pedagogy, the original pedagogy of faith, which it asserts as the model for all catechetical forms.

Second, I will examine the *narratio* as it comes to us in its fullest expression from the patristic era in St. Augustine's seminal catechetical work *De catechizandis rudibus* (DCR). In that work Augustine describes and then demonstrates the shape of a first evangelistic catechesis given to those who are approaching the Church for the first time, preparatory to entry into the catechumenate. Augustine's work is the likely source for the GDC's own insistence upon the employment of such a catechetical narration and so this will provide important background, specifically on the rhetorical structure and methodology of the ancient *narratio*.

Then, in the third part of this article, I intend to take an unusual step by looking back at the Old Testament pattern of covenant formation and renewal as an early instance of that divine pedagogy which is declared to be normative by the GDC and which we also find reflected in Augustine's catechetical work and that of the other fathers.³ By reflecting on the narrational pattern of the divine pedagogy in the formation of Jewish identity in the Old Testament, I hope to show that the power of the catechetical *narratio*, as a preparation for full entry into a Christian identity, gives warrant to the obligation that the GDC makes of this practice. That is, our confidence in its place in the New Evangelization ought not to be secured simply because of its presence in an important Father of the Church or the mandate in the GDC, but because it represents an ecclesial participation in the divine pedagogy itself—that means by which God has always encouraged His

3 See GDC 129, "The fathers model the catechumenate on the divine pedagogy; in the catechumenal process the catechumen, like the people of Israel, goes through a journey to arrive at the promised land: Baptismal identification with Christ."

people to memorialize His love for them and so celebrate and maintain covenant communion with Him.

I. "Pedagogy of God, Source and Model of the Pedagogy of the Faith."⁴

As the quote just cited in the subtitle of this section suggests, a signal theme in the GDC—and one as surprising, in some ways, as its imperative on the *narratio*⁵—is that the method best suited to evoking a personal response of faith, and the primary pedagogical point of reference for all catechesis is the divine pedagogy.

God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: he uses human events and words to communicate his plan; he does so progressively and in stages, so as to draw even closer to man. God, in fact, operates in such a manner that man comes to knowledge of his salvific plan by means of the events of salvation history and the inspired words which accompany and explain them.⁶

The reference to "events and words" is drawn from *Dei Verbum* 2 which speaks of revelation as "realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other."⁷ In describing the interplay between the deeds and words of the economy, *DV* goes on to say, "as a result, the works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain." Importantly, *DV* asserts that revelation is not a merely verbal phenomenon, but salvation historical, as well.⁸ The events and words are

4 GDC, title of Chapter I of Part III. The citations made in the footnote to this chapter title (n.1) in the GDC represent the genealogy of the theme of the divine pedagogy in previous documents from the magisterium.

5 The GDC is markedly different from its immediate predecessor, the 1971 *General Catechetical Directory*, Congregation for the Clergy (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1971), which highlights that the historical revelation, in prophecy and figure and which finds its fulfillment in Christ, should yield to an ecclesial pedagogy which begins with simple, "summary formulas." (See numbers 33 and 38.)

6 GDC 38.

7 *Dei Verbum* [The Word of God], The Second Vatican Council Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, (November 18, 1965), in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin Flannery, ed., (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1975).

8 The significance of this assertion is, of course, not confined to catechetics. It is a bedrock principle for a specifically Catholic fundamental theology and responds to the sundering of word and event that we see both in Francisco Suarez in the 16th and in Rudolph Bultmann in the 20th centuries. See Joseph Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), 185 et seq. See also Tracey Rowland's incisive recounting of the origins of *DV* 2 as a response to the word/event dualism of Suarez and as an attempt to recover the participatory faith of the classical Thomist position which it distorted, in *Ratzinger's Faith* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 48–52. See also *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2d. ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997),

mutually interpretive. The history is even said to “bear out the doctrine.” Even that which most often is conceived of as primarily verbal or propositional, that is, doctrine, is shown to percolate up out of the history of salvation. Even the words of revelation—again, most often considered to be the bearers of doctrinal content—are described as proclaiming and bringing to light the mystery behind the events.

In accord with *DV*, the *GDC* asserts the necessarily “historical character of the mystery of salvation.”⁹ “The salvation of the person, which is the ultimate purpose of Revelation, is shown as a fruit of an original and efficacious ‘pedagogy of God’ throughout history.”¹⁰ Here the *GDC* makes clear that the reason for that temporal, historical quality of the divine pedagogy is that it is personal. God makes use of the history in which we humans are ensconced to make a personal overture to us. Although entirely transcending history, God deigns to use history for our good, as the very language of his demonstration of love.

In number 139 the *GDC* returns over and over to the term “person” to show that the divine pedagogy is an accommodation to the needs of human persons in order to invite them to a personal relationship with God, such that God “assumes the character of the person,” “liberates the person,” “causes the person to grow.” “To this end,” the *GDC* states, “as a creative and insightful teacher, God transforms events in the life of his people into lessons of wisdom, adapting himself to the diverse ages and life situations.”¹¹ The *GDC* concludes, “Truly, to help a person to encounter God, which is the task of the catechist, means to emphasize above all the relationship that the person has with God so that he can make it his own and allow himself to be guided by God.”¹²

So, the divine pedagogy (in word and deed) is gradual and historical, as an accommodation to persons who live and act in history. In the *GDC* the central paradigm for discerning this gradual and personal divine pedagogy is Christ himself “who determines catechesis as ‘a pedagogy of the incarnation.’”¹³ Christ is “the center of salvation history. ... the final event toward which all salvation

no. 53, which quotes *DV* 2, calling the interplay of “deeds and words” in the “plan of Revelation” “a specific divine pedagogy.” On the importance of a propositional revelation to the Church’s apostolicity and indefectibility and so also the necessary primacy of the catechetical over the theological order in the ministry of the Word, see Eugene Kevane, “Apostolicity, Indefectibility, and Catechesis,” *Divinitas, Pontificae Academiae Theologicae Romanae Commentarii*, Rome (September 1985): 207–233.

9 *GDC* 107, title. “The ‘economy of Salvation’ has thus an historical character as it is realized in time: ... in time past it began, made progress, and in Christ reached its highest point; in the present time it displays its force and awaits its consummation in the future” (citing, *GDC* 44, emphasis in original).

10 *GDC* 139.

11 *GDC* 139.

12 *GDC* 139.

13 *GDC* 143.

history converges.”¹⁴ It is in Christ’s incarnation that the pedagogy of God as a carefully ordered series of words and deeds in the economy of salvation comes to be known in its fullness. His advent gives intelligibility to the events of the Old Testament economy and so “the catechetical message helps the Christian to locate himself in history and to insert himself into it, by showing that Christ is the ultimate meaning of this history.”¹⁵ The centrality of Christ as the fulfillment and continuation of the pedagogy of God is shown in the first chapter of Part Three, “The pedagogy of the faith.” There, after asserting Jesus as the “one Master,” in accord with Matthew 23:10, the GDC notes that by uniting his action with “Jesus the Teacher,” the catechist is joined to the “mysterious action of the grace of God,” and so also to the “original pedagogy of the faith.”¹⁶

In so saying, the GDC makes clear that the divine or original pedagogy and the work of the catechist can be expressed in a *concursum*—that they can function together in an intimate way. The GDC sees so great a concurrence of the two pedagogies that it can say that “the Church actualizes the ‘divine pedagogy’” in local catechisms¹⁷ or that a “divine education” is “received by way of catechesis,” so long as the action of the Holy Spirit is received by “teachers of the faith ... who are convinced and faithful disciples of Christ and his Church.”¹⁸ At GDC number 143 catechesis is said to be “radically inspired by the pedagogy of God.” Thereafter the divine pedagogy is described in its holistic dimensions as being personal and interpersonal, progressive, Christocentric, communal and relational, didactic and experiential, truthful and loving. At 144 the GDC references “the wonderful dialogue that God undertakes with every person,” stating that for our catechesis this “becomes its inspiration and norm,” and goes on to assert that, of this dialogue with God, “catechesis becomes an untiring echo.”¹⁹ At number 141 the GDC goes so far as to say that the Church’s mission itself is “a visible and actual continuation of the pedagogy of the Father and the Son.”

It is this original, divine pedagogy, which is to be the standard for all other catechetical activity, that grounds the GDC’s insistence on the *narratio*. At number 129 the GDC notes that “the fathers model the catechumenate on the divine pedagogy; in the catechumenal process the catechumen, like the people of Israel, goes on a journey to arrive at the promised land: Baptismal identification with Christ.” This immediately precedes the GDC’s mention of the importance of the

14 GDC 143.

15 GDC 143.

16 GDC 138, citing John Paul II, *Catechesi Tradendae* [On Catechesis in Our Time] (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1979), 58.

17 GDC 131.

18 GDC 142.

19 The GDC is here quoting from number 11 of the *Message to the People of God*, the document from the 1977 Synod of Bishops, and also cites *Catechesi Tradendae* 58, which it inspired.

“organization of the content of catechesis in accordance with the stages of that [catechumenal] process” and another mention of the “primary role” assigned to the *narratio* in patristic catechesis. Catechesis, then, “radically inspired” by the divine pedagogy, should itself take the “form of a process or journey”²⁰ and the terrain of that journey, so to speak, is disclosed to the catechumen by the *narratio*.

The journey of Israel in history, the very locus for the exercise of the original divine pedagogy, must be narrated in order for the catechumen to fall under the power of that same pedagogy. It is also critical to note that the trajectory of the journey of the catechumenate is, as noted in 129, toward Baptism. As we know from the modern practice of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, the journey is ritual all along the way; in fact, it is a kind of continual liturgical procession.

Having ascertained the important place of *narratio* to the GDC’s program for a modern ecclesial catechesis—modeled, as it is, on the divine pedagogy as historical and so gradual, staged, personal, and ritual—we can now turn to Augustine’s practice of the *narratio* to see how he witnesses to this concurrence of the divine and catechetical pedagogies.

II. Augustine’s *Evangelistic Catechesis: De Catechizandis Rudibus*

The term, *narration/narratio*—as we’ve seen, so prominent in the GDC—is applied to the recitation of the history of salvation made to those who approach the Church to enter the catechumenate by Augustine of Hippo in his *De catechizandis rudibus* [*Instructing Beginners in the Faith*].²¹ While it is here that the term *narratio* seems to have first been applied in this catechetical sense (at least so far as the documentary evidence shows), it was a standard part of the classical oration, as we see in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria* [*Institutes of Oratory*], the handbook for Roman rhetoric and other educational practices from the first century A.D.²²

²⁰ GDC 143.

²¹ *De catechizandis rudibus* could be translated “On the catechizing of the uninstructed” or, as Raymond Canning renders it in his 2006 annotated translation, *Instructing Beginners in the Faith*. See Augustine of Hippo, *Instructing Beginners in Faith*, Translation, Introduction, and Notes by Raymond Canning (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2006). The translation of *De catechizandis rudibus* used throughout this work is Canning’s, unless otherwise noted, but the reference numbers cited will be those which are internal to DCR itself, rather than Canning’s page numbers. Where Canning’s commentary on the work is cited, the page numbers will be used.

²² Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria* [*Institutes of Oratory*], H. E. Butler, trans., vols. 1–4 (London: Loeb Classical Library, 1953), IV, 1–2; see also Cicero, *De inventione* [*On Invention*] I, 19–21. *De inventione*; *De optimo genere oratorum*; *Topica* [*On Invention*; *On the Best Kind of Orators*; *Topics*], H. M. Hubbell, trans. (Cambridge, MA and London: Loeb Classical Library, 1949). See also the description in William Harmless, *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995), 123–124. See Raymond Canning on the three forms of *narratio*, *fabula*, *historia*, or *argumentum*, the second of which—“a credible account of actual occurrences”—Canning concludes, is what Augustine had in mind in using the term. *Instructing*, 17.

In using the term *narratio*, Augustine may have been simply drawing from his background as a *rhetor* [rhetorician] in the classical pagan tradition or he may have been using a term which had already found a place in the Christian catechetical vocabulary.²³ This latter possibility may well be indicated in that *De catechizandis rudibus* was penned at the request of a deacon of Carthage named Deogratias who appears, from Augustine's response, to have specifically asked about the place to start and finish the narration and whether it should be followed by an exhortation or a mere list of precepts.²⁴ Given that *exhortatio* [exhortation] was also a standard element in classical orations,²⁵ Deogratias' question about the inclusion of *exhortatio* may indicate that he assumed that something called *narratio*, even if catechetical rather than rhetorical, ought to be followed by *exhortatio*, as was common in formal discourses, thus suggesting that the term *narratio* had already become standard in catechesis, at least in the Churches of Latin North Africa.

The essential point for the present study, however, is that Augustine's *narratio* is more than just one element of the elaborated formal rhetorical presentation (*dispositio* in Latin or, in the Greek, *taxis*, both referring to the ordering of a speech).²⁶ In the Aristotelian rhetorical system it belongs to one of the three "*entechnoi*, the artistic or internal modes of proof"²⁷ (*pistis*). The three forms are usually designated by the three terms *ethos* [ethical appeal], *logos* [rational appeal], and *pathos* [emotional appeal]. The *narratio* belongs to the second category, *logos*, the appeal to reason by way of a disclosure of the facts of the case; in that capacity it represents the substance of an argument. The full Augustinian catechetical address is really a very lean piece of rhetoric, with only vestigial elements of *ethos*, in the introductory *exordium* [appeal for a hearing], in the *pathos*, in the closing *exhortatio* [exhortation to action], and even less of the other explicit elements of the more elaborated classical Ciceronian *dispositio*.²⁸

23 See Joseph Patrick Christopher's 1926 commentary *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis Episcopi de Catechizandis Rudibus Liber Unus* [St. Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo's, *On Catechizing the Uninstructed*] Joseph Patrick Christopher, trans.; The Catholic University of America Patristic Studies vol. VIII (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1926), 128.

24 DCR 1,1.

25 Harmless notes that while an *exhortatio* was not a formal part of the Ciceronian model, as he outlines it on page 124 of *Catechumenate*, "exhortatory digressions were both common and expected," citing Cicero's *De inventione* 1, 97.

26 For what follows, see Edward Corbett and Robert Connors, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 11–24 and George Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 63–74.

27 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Christian and Secular*, 68.

28 See William Harmless' attempt to show the elaborated parts of the classical *dispositio* in DCR in his chart on page 155 of *Augustine and the Catechumenate* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995). It is striking that the only ones clearly identifiable are the *exordium*, the attempt to render the audience well-disposed [corresponding to *ethos*], the *narratio*, the facts of the case [*logos*], and the *exhortatio*, the arousal to action [*pathos*], corresponding to the fundamental Aristotelian

Augustine's *narratio* is historical and inductive, neither fabulous nor abstractly argumentative—as would be characteristic of the more juridical forms. With reference, again, to the Aristotelian rhetorical pattern—this time with reference to the type of audience addressed—it belongs to that category of orations called deliberative, that sort of appeal made to a hearer who is being invited to judge a proposed future course of action, in this case, entry into the Church's catechumenate.²⁹

With reference to a renewed application of *narratio* in the modern setting as called for by the GDC, it is important to stress that the *narratio* makes for compelling catechesis not on the basis of rhetorical panache, nor even just because it makes an appeal to *logos*, but because it discloses the work of the *Logos*, demonstrating that Christ is what the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* calls "the key, the center, and the purpose of the whole of man's history."³⁰ Augustine is very much concerned with winning the soul in front of him, and that by the use of his considerable rhetorical skills if they will serve that purpose. But he is utterly convinced of the truth of his case and so seems to think that it requires not much rhetorical adornment, if the bare-bones product we have in DCR is the real measure of the question.³¹

In the Prologue to DCR, Augustine tells us that the *narratio* is intended to display "the central points of the faith" and that it "gives us our identity as

schema. On the character of Augustine's rhetorical concerns in this regard, see also Canning, *Instructing*, 16–17, n. 14; Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 155 and Kevane, *Augustine the Educator: A Study in the Fundamentals of Christian Formation* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1964), 235–243; as well as R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 11 et seq.

29 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Christian and Secular*, 68: "logos [is] that mode of proof found in the argument and most characteristic of rhetoric." And on page 70, "proof by example is more suitable to deliberative than to judicial oratory, since we must predict the future on the basis of our knowledge of the past." And on page 74, "Much of Christian oratory is deliberative." Quoting from Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, Kennedy sees the classical Aristotelian scheme still operative in this most deliberatively rhetorical of his works in noting that "the Christian teacher should 'conciliate those who are opposed [ethos], arouse those who are remiss [pathos], and teach those ignorant of his subject [logos],' 156.

30 *Catechism*, no. 450.

31 In *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 48 and following, James Murphy explains the way in which Augustine, whose distaste for the crass rhetoric of what is called the Second Sophistic would have been a commonplace among the Christian commentators of the fourth century, nevertheless in *De doctrina Christiana* [On Christian Teaching] he encourages the Christian orator not to "stand unarmed in the fight against falsehood" (4,1,2) and so to take up the art of eloquence in the service of wisdom. In this, Augustine charts the course of a western appropriation of the classical patrimony but, like his contemporaries, he always asserts the superiority of wisdom over mere eloquence ("Eloquent speakers give pleasure, wise ones salvation." 4,6,9). See further Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 42 and DCR 9,13 where Augustine speaks disparagingly of those who, like himself, "have been to the run of the mill schools of grammar and rhetoric" and who must be especially enjoined to "clothe themselves with Christian humility."

Christians.”³² He goes on to say that it represents an “initial grounding in the faith” and then, that through it, “the content of the faith is communicated” to these newcomers.³³ That a half-hour to an hour-and-a-half discourse could do all that might seem a rather exalted claim, but Augustine is clear that in either a shorter or longer form, when constructed properly, the *narratio* will be “at all times perfectly complete.”³⁴

What becomes clear in *DCR* is that an effective narration of salvation history has no less to do with the character of content than with a particular methodological choice: the willingness on the part of the catechist to ally his will with that of God in the pursuit of His pedagogical purposes.

There are certainly constants to the content of the Augustinian address, what we could call its essentials: a Christological and ecclesial centrality in the narration, the importance of encouraging moral rectitude in accord with Church teaching, the alluring mystery and cogency added by the allegorical or typological interpretation of the letter of the Scriptural story, the importance of enabling the hearer to join his journey to that which he sees in the scriptural story, and the ultimate purpose of disclosing the love of God in Christ and so encouraging the hearer to receive the *sacramenta*, or the initial ritual signs of entry into the catechumenate and the journey toward full Church membership by way of the rites of initiation.³⁵

But despite this stability of content, Augustine is equally insistent upon an absolute methodological agility on the part of the catechist in docility to the need of the hearer of the address. He repeatedly indicates that Deogratias must strive to meet the needs of the individual in front of him and not merely rely upon a stock fund of tools.

In fact, this fundamental methodological principle makes up a large part of the advice he gives in this last portion of Augustine’s “directions for formulating the address.”³⁶ Even his extended advice on overcoming discouragement and encouraging cheerfulness in the catechist is actually entirely ordered to the end that the words of the discourse may “be drunk in with pleasure” by the inquirer.³⁷ In fact, one of the very causes of discouragement in this sort of catechesis, according to Augustine, can be just the imperative to “improvise and adapt our words to another person’s way of thinking.”³⁸

32 *DCR* 1,1. Christopher translates this, “that truth, the belief in which makes us Christians.”

33 *DCR* 2,4.

34 *DCR* 2,4. In *DCR* Augustine gives a longer example of a *narratio* and a shorter one.

35 See *DCR* 26,50.

36 *DCR* 10,14.

37 *DCR* 14,22. See also 2,4: “we are given a much more appreciative hearing when we ourselves enjoy performing our task” and “our greatest concern is much more about how to make it possible for those who offer instruction in faith to do so with joy. For the more they succeed in this, the more appealing they will be.”

38 *DCR* 10,14.

Augustine's advice about how to overcome discouragement in the catechist, as well as his tips on measuring the class, education, and motives of the candidate, aim entirely at preparing the soil of the soul of the student for the *narratio*.³⁹ His concern for the receptivity of the audience is what informs the first part of his oration, the *exordium*, the appeal for a hearing that aims to make the hearer "well disposed, attentive and receptive."⁴⁰ According to the Aristotelian rhetorical paradigm that I have set out above, this is *ethos*.

At 3,5 Augustine says that the *narratio* is "telling the story in our own words." But that doesn't mean that the catechist is free to tell the story in only one way, as from a script he has prepared. Although such a summary of the sacred history describing the journey of Israel will be one that keeps to the "most well-trodden path," and will inevitably include "oft-repeated phrases,"⁴¹ it must still be a case of fitting "our own words to the actual circumstances" which the state of the listener presents to the catechist. Again, Augustine acknowledges that

even when we know how to make our address attractive, we still prefer to hear or read something which has been better expressed and which can be delivered without effort or uneasiness on our part rather than to have to improvise and adapt our words to another person's way of thinking.⁴²

For the catechist to surrender his preferences and make this adaptation is a work of accommodation in which he imitates the divine condescension. Augustine insists on this precisely because "what we dispense is God's, and the more we love those to whom we speak, the more we want them to find acceptable what is offered them for their salvation."⁴³ Augustine strings together a series of Pauline texts to illustrate the Christological kenotic principle that must be at play in such a catechesis⁴⁴ and concludes that

the more love goes down in a spirit of service into the ranks of the lowliest people, the more surely it rediscovers the quiet that is within when its good conscience testifies that it seeks nothing of those whom it goes down but their eternal salvation.⁴⁵

39 See Damian Halligan, "Augustine: A Teacher's Teacher," *Lumen Vitae* 22:2 (June 1967): 281–292.

40 Cicero, *De inventione* 1,20, cited in Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 141–142, who notes that Augustine cites this phrase in *De doctrina Christiana* 4,4,6.

41 DCR 11,16 and 12,17.

42 DCR 10, 14.

43 DCR 10, 14.

44 1 Pet. 2:21; Phil. 2:6–8; 1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 5:13–14 and 1 Thess. 2:7.

45 DCR 10,15. This suggests again the way in which *ethos*, while "arising from the speaker's personal

This accommodation to the person can even take rather extreme forms, for example, the case of an inquirer who comes professing the best motives while actually seeking some worldly advantage in becoming a Christian, to curry favor with the powerful or to gain some financial advantage. Augustine counsels that Deogratias “make the matter of the lie itself the starting point of your address . . . to the point that he actually enjoys being the kind of person that he wishes to appear.”⁴⁶ Such adaptation may also mean departing from the narration to supply “authoritative statements and rational arguments” when we find that the hearer holds to some error⁴⁷ or to ask probing questions of the hearer when the catechist finds him unresponsive due to boredom or a possible lack of comprehension.⁴⁸

When the catechist commits himself to this imitation of the divine condescension for the sake of the salvation of the inquirer, whatever his state or need, “fluent and cheerful words will then stream out from an abundance of love.”⁴⁹ When the good steward (*dispensatore*) of the kingdom opens up the “oracles of the scriptures”⁵⁰ to his charges, offering “the address that [he is] actually called to deliver,”⁵¹ rather than the one he might prefer, then the catechist becomes himself an oracle, such that “he who is listening to us—or more precisely, listening to God through our agency—begins to make progress on his way of life and in his understanding and to advance eagerly along the way of Christ.”⁵² This accommodation to the needs of the student unites the teacher and his student in such a way that

when our listeners are touched by us as we speak and we are touched by them as they learn, each of us comes to dwell in the other, and so they as it were speak in us what they hear, while we in some way learn in them what we teach.⁵³

qualities” (Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 4), can help to determine the receptivity of the audience.

46 DCR 5,9. One is reminded here of Chesterton’s definition of hypocrisy as the compliment that vice pays to virtue.

47 DCR 11,16.

48 DCR 13,18.

49 DCR 14,22.

50 At DCR 1,2 Augustine obliquely refers to Deogratias as among “the stewards (*dispensatores*), my companions in service.” In this regard, Canning refers to 1 Cor. 4:1–2, and 1 Pet. 4:10–11 at *Instructing*, 55 n.7. These texts refer to the figure of the *oikonomos* who in the latter reference from 1 Peter “utters oracles of God.” One might also suggest that the *oikonomos* as the catechetical oracle is the one who can “bring out of his treasure what is new and what is old” in disclosing the shape of the divine *oikonomia* (see Matt. 13:55). See also Harmless, *Catechumenate*, 180–181, on these “monetary metaphors,” that is, on the catechist dispenser as the bursar of the word of God.

51 DCR 11,16.

52 DCR 7,11.

53 DCR 12,7. See Canning’s note on the proverbial quality and import of this expression, which

Augustine avers that if catechists will “cheerfully allow him to speak through us,” God will work through their words.⁵⁴

In short, Augustine’s program for a personal grounding in the faith by the *narratio* calls for the catechist to put himself at the complete disposal of God, to make God’s goal of love his or her own and so to draw the student to align his or her own goal with that same divine love. This all is expressive of the establishment of the authority of the speaker (the catechist), which is the aim of the classical *exordium*, and that Aristotelian mode of proof called *ethos*.

That first part of a rhetorical presentation that establishes trust on the part of the audience is, in Augustine’s view, nothing less than a participation in the divine love showed by God, shared in by the catechist, and which is now offered to the hearer. For the Christian *rhetor* the authority proposed is not, in fact, that of the speaker, as would have been the case in the classical oration, but of the loving God in which both the catechist and the inquirer are to trust.⁵⁵

Augustine’s view of the *content* of salvation history is that it is a fundamentally Christocentric and unified whole, the very integrity of which discloses the love of God and moves us to love him in return for the love he has shown us in ordering it so. His *methodology* demands that the kenotic condescension of the divine love, as shown in the historical content, must be imitated by the catechist in his or her willingness to adapt the particulars of the address to the person being addressed in such a way that the divine love is communicated to the hearer in both content and method.

Augustine sums up the “manner in which the historical exposition is to be presented” in the following two ways:

The historical exposition should then begin from what is written about God’s having created all things very good and continue, as we have said, down to the present period of the Church’s history. Our account should focus on explaining the deeper meaning of each of the matters and events that we describe: a meaning that is brought out when we relate them to the goal constituted by

Augustine may have borrowed from Ambrose in *Instructing*, 97, n. 123.

54 DCR 11,16.

55 See Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric Christian and Secular*, 120–121. There he notes that “in its purest form Judeo-Christian rhetoric shows similarity to philosophical rhetoric: it is the simple enunciation of God’s truth, uncontaminated by adornment, flattery, or sophistic argumentation; it differs from philosophical rhetoric in that this truth is known from revelation or established by signs sent from God, not discovered by dialectic through man’s efforts,” 121. See DCR 10,14: “what we dispense is God’s.” For a fuller argument on the differences between Augustinian and Ciceronian rhetoric based upon his intention to teach *doctrina*, rather than merely to persuade, see Ernest Fortin, “Augustine and the Problem of Christian Rhetoric,” *Augustinian Studies*, 5 (1974): 85–100.

love; and whatever we are doing or saying, our eyes should never be turned away from this goal.⁵⁶

Earlier, at 4,8, he gives another summary in which the theological virtues serve as a form and the measure for the proper delivery of the address, with love again as the ultimate goal:

Keeping this love before you then as a goal to which you direct all that you say, recount every event in your historical exposition in such a way that your listener by hearing it may believe, by believing may hope, and by hoping may love.⁵⁷

This, then, describes in sum the manner and the desired outcome of the whole historical exposition. I would contend that this seminal dictum at 4,8 also expresses a theological description of the three modes of proof, *logos* [in *narratio*], *pathos* [in *exhortatio*], and *ethos* [in *exordium*], as ordered, respectively, to faith, hope, and love.⁵⁸

Although in examining Augustine's *narratio* I've been most concerned with his methodological dispositions, because we have been looking for likeness with the divine pedagogy, we mustn't forget that the love toward which the whole catechesis is aimed as its methodological principle is not just a feeling, but an holistic experience. Augustine's *narratio* is ordered toward conversion and to the *sacramenta* that signal reception into the catechumenate.⁵⁹ These could be described as an "enactment" or "performance" of the story that the *narratio* tells.⁶⁰ Augustine's historical exposition clearly has a sacramental trajectory. Those who enter into the catechumenate through the *sacramenta* will undergo a long apprenticeship in the word before they will be allowed to receive Baptism, Confirmation and, finally, the Word in the Holy Eucharist. His whole concern with the proper content and delivery of the narration is ordered toward not just enabling his hearers to see the love of God, but seeing those he addresses surrounded by the love of God in the sacramental embrace of the Church.

56 DCR 6,10.

57 *Hac ergo dilectione tibi tamquam fine proposita, quo referas omnia quae dicis, quidquid narras ita narra, ut ille cui loqueris audiendo credit, credendo speret, sperando amet.*

58 The attentive reader of DCR will note that this pattern at 4,8 of faith, hope, and love in relation to *narratio* (3,5–6,10), *exhortatio* (7,11–8,12) and *exordium* (8,12–9,13, viz. the hearer, and then 10,14–14,22, viz. the speaker) fits the overall pattern of the work itself.

59 DCR 26,50.

60 For example, "Christ's passion symbolically foreshadowed in that people when they were ordered to kill and eat a sheep, and to mark their doorposts with its blood, and to celebrate this event every year, and to call it the Passover of the Lord. ... With the sign of his passion and cross you are today to be marked on the forehead—your doorpost, so to speak—and all Christians are marked in the same way." DCR 20,34.

III. The Divine Pedagogy in the Old Testament

In what follows I will explore the way in which the historical prologue of the ancient covenant formularies functioned in the Old Testament as a ritual act of memorialization to form the covenant people of Israel and how that was then reflected in the liturgical life of ancient Israel. This is admittedly a catechetical reflection on Scripture by a catechist, aided by a few scholars who are much more than catechists. My intention is to suggest in broad strokes the tenor of the worldview that informed the ancient Jewish communities and those who sought to enter them. Obviously, I can't claim by this to settle any exegetical questions beyond my competence and the scope of this article, but only to apply what scholars have taught me to the realm of catechetical content and practice, with particular reference to how what they teach applies to our understanding of the pedagogy of God and the *narratio*.

1. History as Prologue

In his now classic 1962 study on *Memory and Tradition in Israel*, Brevard Childs, commenting upon Deuteronomy 8, which commands at verse 2, "And you shall remember all the ways which the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness," says, "In this passage historical memory establishes the continuity of the new generation with the decisive events of the past. God's plan for Israel unfolds in her history."⁶¹ He goes on to note, "Memory plays a central role in making Israel constantly aware of the nature of God's benevolent acts as well as of her own covenantal pledge."⁶² Childs, who stands at the beginning of what came to be called canonical criticism, uses form critical skills to establish the centrality of *zeker* (remember) and *zikaron* (remembrance) to the covenantal relationship between YHWH and Israel.⁶³

61 Brevard Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (Naperville, IL: Alec C. Allenson, Inc., 1962), 51. This now classic study of the terms surrounding the concept of memory in the Old Testament is an indispensable starting point for a theology of memory and history. Building upon the work of James Barr, Childs concludes that "zkr" and related terms possess a wider semantic range than is common in the English term "memory," but that the breadth of the term is not suggestive of a so-called "primitive" Hebrew psychology, as J. Pedersen (*Israel*, 1926) had concluded. Childs adds to this semantic evaluation a close "form-critical analysis of the passages which employ the important words describing the role of memory" (30).

62 Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 51.

63 See H. Eising, "zākhar; zēkher; zikkārōn; 'azkārāh," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. IV, G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringren, eds., David Green, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 64–82. This scholarly treatment of *zkr*, its etymology and various forms, explains the mode and purpose of Israel's remembering and then also of God's remembering with a close evaluation of the context in each case, along with the recounting of special instances of the acts of remembering and forgetting. See also Lawrence Hoffman's "Does God Remember? A Liturgical Theology of Memory," in Michael A. Signer, ed., *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 41–72. He argues that *zekher/zikaron* are both best rendered as "memorial."

In *Sinai and Zion*, Jon Levenson focuses our attention on the “Sinaitic event” as that moment when Israel passes from a “prehistorical” or “protohistorical” stage to one which records an “awesome” and “transcendent” event which “occurred on the plain of human history.”⁶⁴ That event was the formation of a covenant between Israel and YHWH which we find in compressed form in Exodus 19:3–8.

3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples; for all the earth is mine, 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.” 7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the Lord had commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together and said, “All that the Lord has spoken we will do.” And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord.

Levenson calls these verses an “introduction to the entire revelation on Sinai.”⁶⁵ Following the earlier work of G. E. Mendenhall and K. Baltzer, and later scholars of covenant like D. J. McCarthy, Levenson sees in this prophetic announcement from Exodus an abbreviated form of the typical covenant formulary of the Late Bronze Age Hittite suzerainty treaty.⁶⁶ Although “covenant” or “*berit* indicates different kinds of agreements or relationships, political, social, tribal, familial, etc.,”⁶⁷ Levenson focuses on the suzerainty form. The elaborated formulary would

64 Jon Levenson, *Sinai and Zion* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1985), 24.

65 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 24.

66 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 26–32. Although Levenson stresses the suzerainty covenant form, what follows ought to be understood, too, with reference to the larger kinship model that other scholars explore. See Frank Moore Cross, “Kinship and Covenant in Ancient Israel,” in F. M. Cross, ed., *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 3: “The social organization of West Semitic tribal groups was grounded in kinship. Kinship relations defined the rights and obligations, the duties, status, and privileges of tribal members, and kinship terminology provided the only language for expressing legal, political, and religious institutions. Kinship was conceived in terms of one blood flowing through the veins of the kinship group.” See also Scott Hahn’s extensive treatment of this in *Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God’s Saving Promises* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Hahn distinguishes between kinship-type, treaty-type, and grant-type covenants. Kinship-type covenants involve two persons of equal status who both come under the covenant obligations (parity). Treaty and grant-type covenants are formed between a superior and inferior parties and the obligations are unequally distributed (vassalage), 29.

67 Paul Kalluveettil, *Declaration and Covenant: A Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from*

typically have included six parts: 1. a preamble or titulary in which the suzerain identifies himself; 2. the historical prologue or antecedent history, which states the past relationship between the two parties to the covenant and is aimed at instilling a sense of gratitude and obligation on the part of the vassal to the suzerain; 3. stipulations or terms of the treaty to ensure the *personal* fidelity of the vassal to his one lord⁶⁸; 4. the deposition of the text of the treaty, often in the temple of the god who would serve as the witness of the treaty, with some treaties requiring a periodic, “liturgical”⁶⁹ rereading by the vassal; 5. the list of witnesses, these being the gods who witness and guarantee covenant fidelity, sometimes also “mountains, rivers, heaven and earth, stand in witness,”⁷⁰ too; 6. lastly, the blessings and curses which provide a “moral mechanism,” “reward for the faithful, punishment for the faithless.”⁷¹

While in Exodus 19:3–8 Levenson only finds “reflexes of the formulary,”⁷² particularly the historical prologue in verse 4, the stipulation in verse 5, and the oath in verse 8, he goes on to analyze Joshua 24:1–28 (with some supporting instances from Deuteronomy and Leviticus) in which all the six elements of the formulary can be found in some measure. He also notes that the Joshua text is a covenant renewal rather than a covenant formation ceremony. Based on his analysis of these relatively early fragments he concludes that the “covenantalization of Israelite religion was so thoroughgoing that we are almost reduced to hypothesis in our effort to reconstruct the prior stages.”⁷³ Levenson cites Baltzer’s work on the covenant formulary in the Old Testament to support his assertion that, apart from the two samples that he evaluates, “there are dozens and dozens of other texts whose structure and setting become lucid in the light of the discoveries about covenant.”⁷⁴

For our purposes, Levenson’s concern with “the theology of the historical prologue” is primary. He says of the function of the historical prologue as the ground of the covenant obligations of Israel that “the unstated assumption is that meaning can be disclosed in history.”⁷⁵ “The present is the consummation of the

the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East, *Analectica Biblica* 88 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1982), 15. Recent scholarship has found that “a ‘covenant’ is, in its essence, a legal means to establish kinship between two previously unrelated parties.” *Catholic Bible Dictionary*, Scott Hahn, ed. (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 168.

68 Levenson notes that the “ubiquitous metaphor” in these treaties describing the suzerain/vassal relationship was that of shepherd and flock. *Sinai and Zion*, 28.

69 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 29.

70 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 29.

71 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 30.

72 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 31.

73 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 36.

74 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 37.

75 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 37.

past, the assurance that it can continue.”⁷⁶ The recital of the history has as its major function “to narrow the gap between generations,” says Levenson.⁷⁷ In this way it serves as the engine for the formation and maintenance of the collective identity of Israel:

History is telescoped into collective biography. What your ancestors saw is what *you* saw. God’s rescue of them implicates *you*, obliges *you*, for *you*, by hearing this story and responding affirmatively, become Israel, and it was Israel whom he rescued. Telling the story brings it alive. The historical prologue brings the past to bear pointedly on the present. In the words of the rabbinic Passover liturgy (*Haggadah*), “Each man is obliged to see himself as if he came out of Egypt.”⁷⁸

This is not an expression of a deductive or existential philosophical system. The Jews do “not determine who they are by looking within, by plumbing the depths of the individual soul,” one does not find a “philosophical system” or “theorem” in the Hebrew Bible; rather, Israel infers and affirms her identity “by telling a story.”⁷⁹ The public, the historical, determines the private and the personal, “[o]ne’s people’s history becomes one’s personal history.”⁸⁰ This is nearly the polar opposite of the modern view that “history is man’s self-understanding.”⁸¹ This is not the autonomous person as the arbiter of the meaning of history but history as the determinative prologue of human destiny. “Israel affirms the given.”⁸² And, as Alasdair MacIntyre has shown in his description of classical heroic cultures and their heirs in the tragedians and philosophers of ancient Greece, this is the formative quality of tribe and tradition among premodern peoples.⁸³ History is determinative of one’s personal relations and moral obligations; history yields covenant and not the reverse. And it is history that establishes the trustworthiness of God, who he is, not a philosophical or religious system.⁸⁴

76 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 37.

77 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 38.

78 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 38. It is interesting to note here the confluence of collective identity and individual obligation. The association of the covenant historical prologue and the Passover *Haggadah*, albeit allusively, in Levenson is important for understanding this as precursor for Augustine’s *narratio*. Covenant formation and renewal, even in the new covenant, calls for a return to the historical recital of the grounding covenantal events.

79 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 38–39.

80 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 39.

81 Gabriel Moran, *Catechesis of Revelation* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966), 45.

82 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 39.

83 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3d. ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

84 If there is a philosophical dimension to be found here, it is best expressed by Brevard Childs,

Levenson shows that although a covenantal theology of history takes shape around the Exodus event, the entire *Torah* can be read as a covenant text. Even though the historical prologue that we see in the covenant formulary arises later, the creation account and the migrations of Abraham are folded into its horizon.⁸⁵ “Most of the recapitulations of the sacred history begin, like Joshua 24, sometime in the Patriarchal period.”⁸⁶

Levenson is also eager to allay the sense that the telling of salvation history is anything like an end in itself. He rejects the classical Lutheran reading in which law and grace are opposed. In the view of ancient Judaism, the historical prologue is to incite the sense of obligation, to encourage observation of the covenant stipulations, the commandments, in *mitzvot* [righteous deeds]. He disputes the Lutheran reading of Romans 10:4 of Christ as “the end of the law,”⁸⁷ asserting as the Old Testament position that *mitzvot* are the proper goals of covenant formation and a loving response to the gratuitous acts of God toward Israel. What Levenson misses, however, is that the Greek of Romans 10:4 has Christ not *ending* the law, but serving as its *telos* [end as goal].⁸⁸ In the older Christian understanding, which is beginning under scholarly scrutiny to be the more widely accepted view of the arguments that Paul is making in Galatians 3 and Romans 4, the “obedience of faith,” with which Paul begins and ends his presentation in Romans,⁸⁹ represents a very similar vision to the Old Testament vision advanced by Levenson.⁹⁰

“It [memory] serves in making Israel noetically aware of a history which is ontologically a unity. There is only one redemptive history.” *Memory and Tradition*, 52. Lawrence Hoffman suggests this dimension from the perspective of Jewish moral reflection: “Halakhah is a synchronic medium, a mode of discourse in which eternal truths are spelled out much as in the philosophy of essences. Verbs in halakhic debate are present participles, implying what one does or does not do, not just now but forever. What eternal truths are for the philosophers, halakhic propositions are for the Rabbis.” From “Does God Remember? A Liturgical Theology of Memory” in Michael A. Signer, ed. *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 56.

85 Scott Hahn, in *A Father Who Keeps His Promises* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1998), elaborates the covenantal elements latent in the symbols of the creation account in his second chapter “Creation Covenant and Cosmic Temple.” He supplies a smattering of scholarly support for these (from R. Murray, R. de Vaux, and J. Ratzinger) in endnotes 7 and 8 on pages 270–271.

86 Levenson, *Sinai*, 40.

87 Where “end of the Law” would mean that the Law, now that Christ has come, is no longer needed and is therefore terminated.

88 On this and what follows, see Michael Wyschogrod’s arresting analysis of St. Paul’s treatment of the Law in Galatians and Romans in light of the decision of the so-called Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15 which binds the gentile Christians to the requirements of the Noachide law (vv. 19–20) but says nothing about the abrogation of the requirements of the Law for Jewish Christians. *Abraham’s Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, R. Kendall Soulen, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 188 et seq.

89 Rom. 1:5 and 16:26; see also 15:18 and Paul’s charge to “win obedience from the Gentiles.”

90 See also N.T. Wright, *Paul: In Fresh Perspective* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005); and, again, Hahn, *Kinship By Covenant* on what Paul means by “works of the law.”

Levenson's theology of the historical prologue suggests that the proper order in Old Testament covenant formation is *Haggadah* (telling the story), *Torah* (teaching on the obligations covenant requires), and *Halakah* (walking in covenant fidelity).⁹¹ In this connection, Donald Gowen in his work *Theology in Exodus* makes clear that despite their universalization in later Jewish reflection, the commandments of Exodus are only for Israel.⁹² That might seem a surprising claim until one realizes that the experience of the exodus, whether had directly or by way of liturgical covenant renewal, as in the Passover *Haggadah*, is the necessary pedagogical precursor to the acceptance and living of the stipulations of covenant life.

The commandments are *covenant* stipulations. God first saves Israel (as he reminds them in the titulary and historical prologue) and then invites them to obedient covenant relation, not the other way around.⁹³ And that is not only a necessity of plot, but of anthropology and psychology. Any law which is imposed apart from the narrative circumstances of human experience will be treated as an imposition. This is also just the order that we saw in Augustine's *narratio: exordium, narratio*, then *exhortatio*. First, the catechist invites a hearing in the *exordium*, then tells the story of God's saving work in the *narratio*, and only then advances to an appeal for a loving response in the *exhortatio*. Parenthesis follows *narratio*, just as *Torah* and *Halakah* follow *Haggadah*.

As Levenson helps us to see, the intimate covenantal knowing (*yada*) of God that comes by way of walking (*halakah*) in the commandments is not merely a cognitive thing but historical from start to finish, past history bestowing intelligibility upon present and future obligations.⁹⁴

91 Levenson, *Sinai and Zion*, 50–56. Jacob Neusner provides simple definitions of these three on pages 216 and 218 of *The Emergence of Judaism* (Louisville and London: John Knox Press, 2004). For his seven meanings of *Torah* see chapter four, notably called, "Torah: The Worldview of Judaism," 57 et seq. The arrangement that I'm proposing here: *Haggadah*, *Torah*, *Halakah*, depends upon Levenson's identification of the importance of the historical prologue in covenant formation and renewal. I'm not suggesting that the *Haggadah*, understood as the "narrative read at the Passover banquet (Seder)" [Neusner, 16], occurs first in the scriptural history. I'm proposing that the historical experience of Israel is itself preparatory to the reception of the *Torah* and covenant stipulations at Sinai and that the later Seder *Haggadah* stands in for that experience in the ongoing life of Judaism and its catechetical formation of the young.

92 Donald E. Gowan, *Theology in Exodus: Biblical Theology in the Form of a Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 180–182. The *Catechism* notes the same point at paragraphs 2057 and 2060. The commandments, to be understood and accepted, need the context of the exodus and covenant.

93 R. Kendall Soulen, in his commentary on the theology of Michael Wyschogrod says of it, "Even the *Torah*, for many interpreters Judaism's center of gravity, arises from the prior reality of God's election of the Jewish people. Israel is not the accidental bearer of the *Torah*. Rather, the *Torah* grows out of Israel's election and God's saving acts performed for his people." *Abraham's Promise*, 9.

94 The obverse of this can be seen in an essay called "Jewish Thought as Reflected in the *Halakah*" by Louis Ginzberg. Commenting on the phrase from the Talmud, "He who studies the *Halakah* daily may rest assured that he shall be a son of the world to come," Ginzberg says, "he who

That is nowhere more apparent than in Deuteronomy 6 where we read:

When your son asks you in time to come, "What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD our God has commanded you?" 21 then you shall say to your son, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; 22 and the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes; 23 and he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land which he swore to give to our fathers. 24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as at this day. 25 And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us."⁹⁵

In this explicit Old Testament directive on catechesis of the young, the answer to the question "Why should I live like a Jew?" is not "Because I said so." or "Because it is the virtuous thing to do." or "Because you are the author of your own history." or "Because you will bring about the workers' paradise." or even "Because Yahweh said so."⁹⁶ but, rather, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out." Marc Brettler, in agreement with Levenson about the preparatory character of the recollected salvation history, notes that the phrase

"you shall remember that you were slaves in Egypt" and its variants ... appear five times in Deuteronomy. The phrase never ap-

studies the *Halakah* may be assured that he is a son of the world—the Jewish world—that has been. Not that *Halakah* is a matter of the past; but the understanding of the Jewish past, of Jewish life and thought, is impossible without a knowledge of the *Halakah*." From *The Jewish Expression*, Judah Goldin, ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), 164.

95 Deut. 6: 20–25.

96 I don't mean by this that obedience to God, as such, is unimportant to the Jew. See, for example, Abraham Joshua Heschel's essay, "The Meaning of Observance" in *Understanding Jewish Theology: Classical Issues and Modern Perspectives*, Jacob Neusner, ed., (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1973). He notes that "To say that the *mitzvot* have meaning is less accurate than saying that they lead us to wells of emergent meaning" (99). He means that "Divine meaning ... is experienced in acts, rather than in speculation" (98, emphasis in original). Note, that, just as *Torah* surfaces out of the lived experience of Israel as expressed in the *Haggadah*, the meaning of both surface out of the lived experience of *Halakah*. History yields covenant, covenant means obedience, but that obedience is only fully meaningful when lived. Again, history and the tradition it bears is not opposed to the vital experience of God in the present, as some suggest, but is the very source of the meaning of the present when lived anew. So the *narratio* and the doctrine which percolates up out of it can only be understood fully by an experience of lived faith. And that experience testifies to the meaning, the veracity of the *narratio* and its doctrinal grammar.

pears in isolation; this too suggests that the act of memory itself is not central. Rather, it appears as a motivation of five different laws . . . Here, too, “remembering leads to doing.”⁹⁷

But in the life of Israel the thing remembered didn’t disappear after it was effected. “Thus, life in the covenant is not something merely granted, but something won anew, rekindled and reconsecrated in the heart of each Israelite in every generation.”⁹⁸ Levenson cites the form of Psalm 81, which Jews today chant on Thursday mornings, as a holdover of a regular liturgical re-presentation of the Sinaitic covenant event.⁹⁹ He notes the urgency with which the current generation of wanderers is addressed in Deuteronomy 5:1–4 as indicative of the importance of retaining the immediacy of the covenant with the passage of time: “It was not with our fathers that YHWH made this covenant, but with us—us!—those who are here today, all of us living. Face to face YHWH spoke with you on the mountain, from the midst of the fire” (vs. 3–4). Levenson suggests that this is to allay any sense that they are only “obliged in a distant way by the covenant of Sinai/Horeb, but not as direct partners in it.”¹⁰⁰

2. *The Sevening of Time: Ritual Remembrance*

Because that act of memorialization which is essential to covenant formation and preservation must be renewed and can’t be left to chance, the divine pedagogue included among the stipulations of the covenant itself not just the Passover celebration but the seven feasts of the liturgical year of ancient Judaism.¹⁰¹

97 Marc Brettler, “Memory in Ancient Israel,” in Michael A. Signer, ed., *Memory and History in Christianity and Judaism* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 5–6. It is important to note that for scholars like Marc Brettler the Old Testament is not history in the modern sense but a “premodern history,” which as memory presents not necessarily “the past,” but rather, “a past.” (Brettler, *Memory and History*, 10–11).

98 Levenson, *Sinai*, 81.

99 Levenson, *Sinai*, 80. For the historical-paradigmatic quality of Psalm 89, which “comprehends at once the history and destiny of the Jewish faith,” see Jacob Neusner’s early essay, “The Eighty-ninth Psalm: Paradigm of Israel’s Faith,” in his *History and Faith: Essays on Jewish Learning* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965) and his later, mature reflections on the emergence of the “paradigmatic thinking” which makes for the “presence of the past” and the “pastness of the present,” in chapter seven of Jacob Neusner, “The Story Judaism Tells,” in *Judaism When Christianity Began: A Survey of Belief and Practice* (Louisville, KY and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002).

100 Levenson, *Sinai*, 81. Levenson goes on to argue that the *mitzvah* [command] to twice daily recite the *Shma* prayer “is the rabbinic way of actualizing the moment at Sinai when Israel answered the divine offer of covenant . . . In short, the recitation of the *Shma* is the rabbinic covenant renewal ceremony,” 85–86.

101 The cursory treatment here of the ancient feasts as *zikaron* or memorial of the exodus has as its background Lawrence Hoffman’s concise treatment of *zekher/zikaron* in liturgical use in “Does God Remember?” 41–72.

These are delineated in the twenty-third chapter of Leviticus. There the Lord tells Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, The appointed feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, my appointed feasts, are these."¹⁰² The first bedrock observance is, of course, the Sabbath of solemn rest that sanctifies each week. The Sabbath observance had been enjoined in the Ten Commandments.¹⁰³ It is also assumed in the event of the provision of manna in Exodus 16. That miraculous bread, which normally went foul if kept until the next day, was both unavailable for gathering on the Sabbath and was preserved for the Sabbath from the previous day. Further, and importantly, the Pentateuch sees the roots of the Sabbath observance in the account of creation itself, as seen in Genesis 2:3: "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."¹⁰⁴

This blessing of the seventh is played out again and again in the process of sanctifying time in the Old Testament. In Leviticus 25, God commands that every seventh year be a "Sabbath" year of solemn rest for the land—a solemn rest from plowing and pruning, for man and beast. God even calls for a jubilee year after "seven weeks of years" ($7 \times 7 = 49$), that is, in the fiftieth year, beginning on the first day of the feast of Atonement, during which the Jews are to rest from labor for a whole year and to offer return of land and freedom to those who had lost either because of debt or sale since the last major jubilee.¹⁰⁵ In Deuteronomy 31 Moses commanded, in keeping with the fourth part of the typical covenant formulary that we saw above (deposition of the text), that on the Feast of Booths in the jubilee year "you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing."¹⁰⁶

This "sevening" of time can be seen, too, in the yearly feasts of Israel, of which there were seven commanded in Leviticus 23.¹⁰⁷ Three of these, Passover (*Pesach*)¹⁰⁸,

102 Lev. 23:2.

103 Exod. 20:11. "The same *Kiddush* prayer that gives us the Sabbath as a 'memorial of the work of creation' says also that it is a *zekher li'tsiyat mitsrayim*, 'a memorial of the Exodus.'" Hoffman, "Does God Remember?" 55.

104 Exod. 31:12–17. For a brief but comprehensive account of the scriptural roots and rabbinical reading of the Sabbath see Baruch Levine and Jacob Neusner (respectively) in chapters seven and eight of Jacob Neusner, Bruce Chilton, and Baruch Levine, *Torah Revealed, Torah Fulfilled: Scriptural Laws in Formative Judaism and Earliest Christianity* (New York and London: T&T Clark, 2008).

105 For the Sabbath and Jubilee as a return to the perfection of Eden and as a desist from creation, see Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 67–78.

106 Deut. 31:10–11. See Levenson, *Sinai*, 29 and 34.

107 Hoffman ("Does God Remember?" 55), citing the *Kiddush al hakos*, relates that "'It [the Sabbath] is the day [that marks] the first of the sacred convocations [*mikra'ei kodesh*], a memorial of the Exodus . . . ' Technically, then, all sacred convocations, not only the Sabbath, are memorials of the Exodus." The OT citations identifying the following feasts as sacred convocations and so also as memorial (*zikaron*), as indicated in the paradigmatic text for Passover which Hoffman cites from Exodus 12:14–16, will be cited below.

108 Lev. 23:7–8; Num. 28:18, 25.

Unleavened Bread (*Matzot*), and First Fruits (*Bikkurim*), were celebrated in the first month of the Jewish calendar, Nisan, which falls in the spring. They combined the commemoration of the first Passover with a memorial of the first harvest in the Promised Land. One other feast, that of Weeks (*Shavuot*),¹⁰⁹ fell one day beyond seven weeks after First Fruits (again, 7×7 days + 1, or 50 days) and so was, and still is, called Pentecost, from the Greek for fifty days. It celebrates both the full harvest and the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

The three other feasts, Trumpets (*Rosh Hashanah*),¹¹⁰ Atonement (*Yom Kippur*),¹¹¹ and Tabernacles or Booths (*Sukkot*),¹¹² were celebrated during Tishri, the seventh month of the year. These seven feasts divide the year into two great blocks of feasts in the first and seventh months, in the spring and fall, with Pentecost standing on its own in late May or June.¹¹³ Three of the seven feasts, Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, were called pilgrim feasts because able-bodied men were expected to come to Jerusalem for their observance.¹¹⁴ In this way, the year was punctuated by religious celebrations that served as a kind of life breath of Judaism as she inhaled her pilgrims into the Jerusalem Temple and exhaled them out again into the towns and villages of Israel, and even into the diaspora beyond.¹¹⁵

These feasts were commanded by God. By them, he was claiming a place in the lives of his people and was hallowing time. These feasts served to keep the founding events of Mosaic Judaism—the events of the exodus—deeply etched in the memory of the Jewish people. As I’ve already mentioned, the Jewish feasts recalled the mysteries of God’s saving action among His chosen people. God’s command to celebrate memorial feasts of this kind acknowledge an important psychological principle. Stated simply, (and forgive the apparent tautology) when we don’t remember God and what he has done for us, we tend to forget him. As Childs notes, to remember or keep the festival (which is to recall the event it recalls)

109 Lev. 23:21; Num. 28:26.

110 Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1. The monthly New Moon celebration, of which Rosh Hashanah is the first of the (civil) year, is cited at Isa. 1:13.

111 Lev. 23:27; Num. 29:7.

112 Lev. 23:35, 37; Num. 29:12.

113 Phillip Sigal gives a very helpful description of the feasts in *Judaism: The Evolution of a Faith*, revised and edited by Lillian Sigal (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1988), 19–25.

114 Exod. 23:14–17.

115 “Pesach, Shavuot (or Shabbuoth), and Sukkot (or Sukkoth) are known as the “pilgrimage festivals” because of the biblical requirement that pilgrimages to the sanctuary be made at those crucial times in the agricultural calendar. They were times of harvest, and gifts of first fruits were to be presented to the priests.” Sigal, *Judaism*, 21. See also Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 135–146.

means “to act in obedience toward” God. Likewise, to forget is commensurate with covenant failure, to “go after other gods and serve them and worship them.”¹¹⁶

Whenever Israel became lax in observing God’s ritual commands, it tended to forget altogether the covenant with him. For example, at the time of the sweeping religious reforms of King Josiah in the seventh century B.C., as the author of 2 Kings notes, “[N]o such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah.”¹¹⁷ So, in direct opposition to God’s command in Exodus 12 and Leviticus 23 that the Passover be kept as the principal yearly memorial feast of God’s saving work, there had been no such official celebration of it for four centuries!

During that same period, the kings of Israel and Judah consented to or directly engaged in horrendous acts of idolatry, including ritualized sexual misconduct, and even child sacrifice.¹¹⁸ It was this continual and wanton disregard of the covenant, in part caused by the disregard of the covenant liturgy, that had occasioned the reforms of King Josiah, who “put away the mediums and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might establish the words of the law that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord.”¹¹⁹ And despite Josiah’s best efforts to draw the southern kingdom of Judah back to covenantal fidelity, disobedience and idolatry would eventually lead Israel into exile, this time to Babylon rather than Egypt, beginning in 586 B. C.

In accord with the educational dictum that repetition is the mother of learning, it seems that God was saying to Israel, “If you won’t ritually recall the last time I saved you from (Egyptian) bondage, I’ll just have to exile and save you again to refresh your memory.” In this respect the regime of Christianity is no different than that of Judaism: to fail to memorialize God’s works will tend to lead to negligence. Therefore, it is no surprise that when Jesus fulfills and perfects the Passover, he will command, “Do this in memory of me,” to ensure that by liturgical recollection of his salvation, Christians, too, would be moved to covenantal fidelity.

In this regard, the Bible seems to suggest a psychological imperative of human nature that the God of the Bible feeds by commanding Israel to memorialize his saving work in acts of worship throughout the year.¹²⁰ The biblical view

116 Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, 54. See Deut. 18:18–19.

117 2 Kings 23:22.

118 The prophet’s chilling indictment of Judah over the “Topheth” in Jer. 19 includes the charge that “they have filled this place with the blood of innocents, and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal” (vv. 4–5).

119 2 Kings 23:24. This suggests that the part of the covenant formulary called the deposition of the text, which required both the placement of the covenant text in the temple and then its periodic reading, had only been observed in regard to the first requirement.

120 The Hebrew root term *mo’ed* refers to appointed times of worship and immediately suggests to Jewish ears a time of a specifically religious assembly for liturgical purposes. It is this word

of time is that its seasons and cycles are, from their creation, precisely for the ritual remembering that was intended to help Israel remain covenantally faithful. Creation itself, and the movements of the stars and planets, are ordered to these “appointed times.”¹²¹

IV. Conclusion

As we have seen, Levenson associates the covenant historical prologue with the Passover Seder *Haggadah*. Both are expressive of the conviction that “telling the story brings it alive, actualizes it, turns it from past into present and bridges the gap between individual and collective experience.”¹²² In God’s command to Israel to keep the Passover as a perpetual ordinance he says, “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance forever.”¹²³ In regard to this paradigmatic memorial of the Jewish ritual cycle the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says:

In the sense of Sacred Scripture the *memorial* is not merely the recollection of past events but the proclamation of the mighty works wrought by God for men.¹⁸⁴ In the liturgical celebration of these events, they become in a certain way present and real. This is how Israel understands its liberation from Egypt: every time Passover is celebrated, the Exodus events are made present to the memory of believers so that they may conform their lives to them.¹²⁴

Christians, of course, hold that it was in conformity with this command for a perpetual memorial that Christ Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, said, “Do this in remembrance of me.”¹²⁵ And in so doing Jesus was acting exactly in accord with the thought-world of ancient Judaism. Sacred memorials of the saving events of God’s acts in history are an essential part of covenant formation and maintenance and so the “new covenant in my blood” that Jesus references would presumably require the same. Lawrence Hoffman confirms this by saying that encouragement for a proper ritual memorial of the Passover that we find in rabbis like Hillel is the same thing we find in Rabbi Jesus’ “Do this in memory of me.” “They are of a piece,

that is used in Genesis 1:14 (“for signs and for seasons” [RSV]) and Leviticus 23:2 when God commands that the seven feasts be kept at the “time appointed.” See K. Kock, “*mô’ed*,” *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* Vol. VIII, G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringren, eds., David Green, trans. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 167–173.

121 See Ps. 104:19, “Thou hast made the moon to mark the seasons (*moadim*); the sun knows its time for setting.”

122 Levenson, *Sinai*, 42.

123 Exod. 12:14.

124 *Catechism*, no. 1363, emphasis in original.

125 Luke 22:19.

each being a set of words that accompany a ritual act In both cases, we have liturgy as the Rabbis understood it, liturgy as *zikaron*, liturgy as memory, or better, as pointer, drawing God's attention to what matters."¹²⁶ What this suggests to us is that the divine pedagogy is thoroughly covenantal, memorial, and so also historical, as well as thoroughly ritual.

What we've seen so far comports roughly with the list of the features of the divine pedagogy that I presented from GDC 143. The ritual, memorial, covenantal system that constitutes the Judaism of the Bible is dialogical, but by God's initiative. The treaty form of the covenant is bilateral, although between unequals: God playing the role of the liege sovereign and Israel the role of lesser vassal king. God's Old Testament pedagogy is progressive and adaptable. He alters his approach based upon the fidelity or infidelity of his people. It is a pedagogy of signs, or what Hoffman calls "pointers," which is the more literal translation of the *zekher/zikaron*. The liturgical life of Israel is woven out of these memorial signs. It is both communal and interpersonal, the collective history supplying the collective identity into which each Jew is incorporated with each celebration of the yearly Passover.¹²⁷

Levenson's work suggests that the covenantal nature of the relationship, which requires an historical prologue to establish relationship and obligation, may in some measure be the very reason for the whole of the Old Testament corpus. The narrative portions and certain Psalms supply the historical prologue or the *Haggadah*; the legislative portions or *Torah* represent the covenant stipulations; the prophets regulate covenant fidelity and measure *Halakhic* conformity. The very preservation of the texts through the ages suggests the importance of deposition and ritual recital of the covenant documents. As Levenson makes clear, all of this depends upon the recitation of the tribal or national history of Israel as the engine of covenant formation and maintenance.

This all suggests, as Jacob Neusner puts it, that "Israel's history is taken over into the structure of Israel's life of sanctification, and all that happens to Israel forms part of the structure of holiness built around cult, *Torah*, synagogue, sages, Zion, and the like."¹²⁸ To put it in the succinct formulation borrowed from narrative theology, the story is performative in character. According to the telling of that story in the Old Testament, as well as its haggadic retelling in Judaism, this is all at God's direction. In this sense we could conclude that the divine pedagogy of the Old Testament is very much what I have called narrational.

126 Hoffman, "Does God Remember?" 66. Hoffman, after surveying the post-biblical rabbinical literature, concludes that the terms *zekher* and *zikaron* really mean "pointer" and these things can be both signifiers and the thing signified, these things can be events, places, objects, which point to the mercy of God, who is both remembered and the one who remembers Israel.

127 The Christocentric character of the pedagogy, as cited at point 3 in the list from GDC 143 will obviously have to wait for the "fullness of time."

128 Neusner, *Judaism When Christianity Began*, 88.

Further investigation would show that the New Testament practice is expressive of the characteristics of the divine pedagogy that the GDC elaborates as well. Of course, in the New Testament pedagogy we see the Christocentric dimension (or what GDC 143 calls a “pedagogy of the incarnation”) that a Christian faith would add to the Jewish reading of the Old Testament. This Christocentric addition highlights the progressive and gradual nature of the divine pedagogy as a whole. The enduring importance given to the types of the Old Testament in the New suggests, too, that this is not a pedagogy that rushes to the punch line, so to speak, without allowing the story to unfold.

The story matters all along the way, just as the stages of the journey toward faith must each be given their season. Again, doctrine and morals, *Torah* and *Halakah*, don’t come before the story, the *Haggadah*. They don’t supersede it, but percolate up out of it in the lived “community experience of faith.”¹²⁹ Even in the canonical arrangement of the New Testament this can be seen. The epistolary doctrine and its parenesis follow the narrative Gospels and Acts, while the apocalyptic and mystagogical Revelation draw up the rear.¹³⁰ Even the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* follows this narrational pattern of the divine pedagogy: first it presents the Creed and sacraments preceding the commandments and prayer (*Haggadah*, *Torah*, *Halakah*), making sure in its echo of the divine pedagogy that the telling of God’s saving history in the Creed and our graced entry into those saving works in the sacramental liturgies precede the application of the covenant stipulations and our observance of them in the moral life and prayer.

This is why the GDC enjoins so strongly the telling of the *narratio*. It is the elaborated story of the Creed, which represents the doctrine which percolates up out of that story and which serves as the grammar to our proper reading of it. Without the story, we lose the “why” of doctrine and morals. I would suggest that much of the work of the New Evangelization will involve providing the answer to the question “*why* should I be a Christian?” A very similar question is posed in Deuteronomy 6: “What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the ordinances which the LORD our God has commanded you?” The Old Testament answers, not with a rational apologetic, but with a story, a *narratio*: “We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand; and the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. . . .”¹³¹

This deeper exploration of the divine pedagogy in the Old Testament would suggest that the GDC’s imperative regarding the *narratio* is telling us that if we hope to help the West regain its Christian identity in this New Evangelization, we

129 GDC 143.

130 See Scott Hahn’s *The Lamb’s Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth* (New York: Doubleday, 1999) for the Book of Revelation as a kind of mystagogy of the Eucharist.

131 Deut. 6: 20–22.

must first help it regain its memory. It is the central place of memory and ritual remembrance to the construction of both Jewish and Christian identity that establishes the importance of a narrated rehearsal of the past works of God.

I would suggest that the New Evangelization of those peoples from cultures formerly committed to Christianity but which have now given up the faith requires that that they be helped to overcome the amnesia of the divine favor so clearly shown in salvation history. Without that recovery of memory there will be no hope of a return to Christian practice, nor even to the exercise of the moral patrimony of the West. What we need in the New Evangelization is to regain the capacity to tell the story that God tells in history, so that his love might be manifest again to people who have forgotten it, and so refuse to return it.