

A Pastoral Analysis of the Catechetical Development with reference to Christian Initiation within the Chinese Catholic Community in Macau (1576-2026)

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Original Title:

‘Catechesis under the Sign of Misericordia’ serving the [New Evangelization](#):
[Pastoral Analysis of Catechetical Approaches in Macau](#)

Problem:

‘Catechesis under the Sign of Misericordia’: It is one of the 3 new forms proposed in the Directory for Catechesis, which was promulgated in 2020 by Vatican. After data collection, it is found that this concept lacks a complete model or reference framework → difficult to establish concrete evaluation criteria for academic research

[New Evangelization](#): This concept first emerged during the time of Pope Paul VI. After more than half a century of development, by 2026 the concept has been extensively extended → potentially leading to "conceptual generalization" in academic research.

[Pastoral Analysis of Catechetical Approaches in Macau: Remain! Now with historical depth \(450 years of Catholic Church in Macau\)](#)

The title must reflect what I CAN do, not what I HOPE to do.

Converts, by means of "a period of formation, an apprenticeship in the whole Christian life", are initiated into the mystery of salvation and an evangelical style of life.

Those who have converted to Jesus Christ and who have been educated in the faith by means of catechesis, by receiving the sacraments of Christian initiation. Catechesis, is thus, a fundamental element of Christian initiation and is closely connected with the sacraments of initiation, especially with Baptism, "the sacrament of faith".

Research Motivation

- Opportunity: 450th anniversary → time for academic review and future planning
- Existing research: institutions, missionaries, architecture, church-state relations
- Missing: Long-term, systematic pastoral analysis and theological reflections of Chinese community's initiation and catechesis

Research Gaps

1. Lack of historical periodization of catechesis
2. Lack of pastoral evaluation
3. Unclear logic of evolution (internal/external forces)

4. Insufficient practical guidance

These gaps are NOT just historical – they are PASTORAL gaps. → Filling them requires THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION.

Research Questions

- **Periodization:** What events changed HOW catechesis operated?
- **Pastoral shift:** From "caring for Portuguese" to "mission to Chinese"? When?
- **Inculturation:** Was adaptation used, abandoned, or transformed? Why?
- **Pastoral analysis of each historical period:** What worked? What failed? What drove change?
- **Recommendations:** What can we learn from past and plan for beyond?

Each question asks NOT just "what" but "what does this mean for pastoral practice?"

Research Objectives

1. Establish Periodization: as framework for theological reflection
2. Evaluate Effectiveness: Apply the Theological-Pastoral Discernment Method to assess catechetical practice across periods.
3. Propose Recommendations: Ground concrete pastoral guidance in historical wisdom, not abstract ideals.

The Core Contribution —

Not History Itself, But Theological Reflection and Pastoral Analysis

What This Research is NOT	What This Research IS
✗ A historical chronicle of Macau Church	✓ Theological reflection on that history
✗ A narrative of "what happened"	✓ Pastoral analysis of catechetical effectiveness
✗ Adding new historical facts	✓ Discerning the logic and driving forces behind evolution

Research Design & Methods

1. Data Collection:
 - Quantitative:** Population, clergy, vocations, parishes, institutions.
 - Qualitative:** Pastoral plans, catechetical materials, teaching methods, catechist profiles.Combines numerical data with primary documents to show how catechesis happened on the ground.
2. Periodization
 - Boundaries set by operational changes in personnel, language, materials, or sacramental requirements.
 - Divides history by real changes, not arbitrary decades.

3. Pastoral Analysis
Reconstructs each period's catechetical reality.
Examines what catechesis looked like in each historical period.
4. Synthesis
Traces cross-period themes — bilingual context, lay catechist roles, inculturation.
Identifies patterns across periods to show how the Church adapted teaching to local context.
5. Future Directions
Proposes catechetical methods informed by historical patterns.
Uses historical insights to inform contemporary catechetical practice.

Tentative Outline

Part I: Foundation (Ch 1-3)

- Sets up the PASTORAL question, not just historical inquiry

Part II: Historical Empirical Account (Ch 4)

- Periodization as FRAMEWORK for theological reflection

Part III: Cross-Period Synthesis (Ch 5)

- Where the THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION happens

Part IV: Recommendations & Conclusion (Ch 6-7)

- Pastoral wisdom FOR TODAY from history discerned

Current Progress & Next Steps

Completed:

- Research question refinement (pastoral focus clarified)
- Theoretical framework: Theological-Pastoral Discernment Method established

In Progress:

- Archival data collection (quantitative background)
- Periodization criteria determined
- Qualitative pastoral data gathering

Next:

- Apply discernment method to each period
- Cross-period synthesis → identify logic & forces
- Formulate evidence-based recommendations

Significance & Contribution

- **For the church:** Evidence-based guidance for catechetical renewal — honoring 450 years of heritage while planning for the future.
- **For Academia:** First systematic pastoral analysis of the Chinese Catholic community in Macau — a model for applying the Theological-Pastoral Discernment Method to historical research.
- **For the Candidate:** Preparation for catechetical formation and for serving the local Church with theological depth and pastoral wisdom.