

The Textbook Policy in the Diocese of Peoria

Douglas Grandon

Until very recently, the Diocese of Peoria had a very short list of approved religion textbooks, all of which were included in the much longer list of USCCB-approved texts. We have recently adopted the policy that parishes and schools may select *any* text found on the USCCB Conformity Listing, so long as they (1) correct for deficiencies of content, which would keep them from fulfilling the diocesan curriculum guidelines for any particular grade level and (2) compensate for any methodological or other deficiencies of the series.

Our diocesan Office of Catechetics does not have adequate staff to regularly review new texts which appear on the USCCB Conformity List. Therefore, we rely on the textbook reviews conducted by the Diocesan of Pittsburgh's Secretariat for Education. The Secretariat's reviews are posted on Pittsburgh's diocesan website at www.diopitt.org/education/download.htm. The same website is available through our Diocesan of Peoria website, under "Diocesan Offices, Catechetics."

We understand that there exist certain books, especially those used at the High School level, which don't fall within the category of texts reviewed by the USCCB, e.g. Christopher West's *Good News about Sex and Marriage*. Such texts may be used, but they should always be approved by the High School chaplain. Family Formation material is also of a different type than that reviewed by the USCCB, although it will be subject to USCCB review if it is ever assembled into textbook format.

Once our Regional Directors of Religious Education are selected and in place, they will be available to assist those responsible for selecting the best texts from the USCCB list for their parish or school. In the meantime, we would ask our catechetical leaders to verify that their texts are included on the USCCB Conformity Listing, which may be found under "Diocesan Office, Catechetics" or at www.usccb.org/catechism/document/Currentlist.pdf. For those not handy with the computer, a paper copy of the USCCB Conformity Listing will be mailed upon request. The Office of Catechetics should be informed of any texts presently used, which have not been declared in conformity by the USCCB.

Please note that a committee is presently working on revisions to our diocesan Curriculum Guidelines. Once completed and approved, the updated Guidelines will be posted on our website. However, it will be some months before they are available. In the meantime, each parish should have a copy of the present guidelines on hand for reference. Paper copies may be ordered at cost by calling the Office of Catechetics.