The Importance of a Christian Framework for Reality

Catholicism means the union of men with God in Christ. That is Catholicism, that is all of Catholicism. That is the fact they should have standing up clear and clean from all the mass of things they know.

As they come through school, they have learnt a great number of things, but there is no order, no hierarchy, in the things they have learnt about the faith. They have all sorts of pious practices, good salutary practices, rubbing shoulders, so to speak, with essentials. They hardly know which is which, they are all there together in a kind of – I was going to say rag bag, but that would be rude – they are all there in a kind of heap. The absolutely essential activities of Catholicism and the quite desirable but non-essential pious practices – all there together – the Trinity hardly larger than Our Lady of Fatima! **They need some framework on which they can arrange their knowledge, to which all the rest can be related.**

The union of men with God in Christ is Catholicism; and, that being so, **whatever else they are clear or vague about, whatever else they remember or do not remember, they should be absolutely clear on *what God is, what man is, what Christ is, what union is.*** Those four should stand out like a great plateau – you can arrange all the other things around these.

One way or another, what all this comes to is this: you are trying to give them **a mental framework for reality**, in which they can live healthily and grow in knowledge and love. They are going out into the world, and they are going to have all sorts of vital experiences which will test the framework – not simply intellectual objections to the faith, but the sufferings and temptations which no one can avoid.

We must do all that lies in us to see that the framework is so strong and so true that none of life's experiences will ever succeed in smashing through it. The mark of a true framework is that it is stronger for the testing.

(Taken from: *Are We Really Teaching Religion*, by Frank Sheed)