

(Aid to the Church in Need) - **THE first worldwide catechism for the Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholic Church** is set to transform catechesis throughout the rite.

Six years in the making, the historic book is almost finished – and will be published in 2010.

Sister Luiza Ciupa, whose work at the Catechetical Institute in Lviv, western Ukraine, has been vital in the Church's recovery from 70 years of communist atheism, told Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) that the catechism was intended for Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholics around the world.

“Because this will be the book of our faith for our Church – and will unify our faith – it will be translated into at least six languages,” she said. As well as Ukrainian the catechism is due to be published in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian and Polish, with versions in other languages possible. Essential aid of more than \$30,000 to cover editing and other costs related to its preparation was provided by ACN. Sr Ciupa said: “It’s a costly project, but it’s also very important for our Church.”

Stressing its significance for a Church that was not allowed to teach catechesis in Ukraine under communist rule, Sr Ciupa said: “The catechism is important because it leads people into the sacraments and into the life of the Church. “I think that every time we open ourselves to the deepening of our faith, our tradition, our membership of our particular Church, it helps us live our faith more deeply and better express our faith – and so it helps us in some way to better know our identity and testify to our faith.”

The completed text is due to be presented to the synod of bishops in November for their final approval.

Sr Ciupa has been heavily involved in the project, which has drawn contributions from experts including theologians, catechists, liturgists and biblical scholars, under the guidance of Bishop Peter Stasiuk of Melbourne, Australia.

With many Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholics now living abroad, Sr Ciupa said the catechism would help unite people in their faith.

“It will help others to discover the beauty of our tradition and our rite,” she told ACN. “The Ukrainian soul will find itself wherever [the faithful] live: Brazil, Argentina, London, Australia, wherever!”

A series of conferences, workshops and meetings with priests is planned to implement the catechism into the life of the Church – part of a 10-year strategy by the Ukrainian bishops.

ACN has helped with numerous catechetical projects in Ukraine, including printing 70,000 Bibles as well as building churches.

Sr Ciupa added: “ACN has made very substantial contributions and we are profoundly grateful to the staff and benefactors for all the various projects.”