



Sunday, September 18, 2022

Dear pastors, catechists of children, youth and adults, teachers of the faith,

Today in our Diocese we are celebrating Catechetical Sunday. This Sunday allows us to reflect on the role that each of us has, by virtue of our baptism, in handing on our faith and being a witness to the Gospel. Flowing from the Bishop's ministry as teacher, catechesis is a whole parish project and a life-long work. Each baptized person is responsible for deepening his/her own understanding and living of the faith, and for helping to ensure that catechesis is available for others in the community.

There are, of course, those who have a particular responsibility in this ministry. Those who lead children's liturgy, teach catechism, and accompany parents with their children in the completion of their Sacraments of Initiation. Catholic schoolteachers play a crucial role in being both witnesses and teachers of the faith in their classrooms. There are also those who accompany adults, whether preparing for marriage or the baptism of their children or journeying to full initiation in the parish community through an RCIA process. And there are those who lead bible studies or other adult faith groups.

I am very grateful to the many persons in our Diocese who devote themselves to catechesis and teaching, or who support these efforts in their parishes and schools. On behalf of our people, I want to thank you for the life-giving ministry and witness that you offer.

The theme for Catechetical Sunday this year is taken from the Gospel of Luke: "This is My Body Given for You" (Luke 22:19). It invites us to reflect on how the Risen Lord Jesus nourishes and sustains us through his Body in the Eucharist and through his Word. Through his Life in us he in turn inspires and enables us to give of ourselves to others in loving relationship.

In the encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, Pope Francis says, "Persons always live in relationship. We come from others, we belong to others, and our lives are enlarged by our encounter with others. Even our own knowledge and self-awareness are relational; they are linked to others who have gone before us: in the first place, our parents, who gave us our life and our name" (*Lumen Fidei*, 38). This is also true for us as catechists. We belong to those we serve, and our lives are enlarged by them.

As catechists journeying through this next year, may we seek first to grow in our faith at the Table of the Lord's Word and Body and then, through our ministry, to give of ourselves to those we serve.

In Christ our Teacher and Saviour,

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