



EPARCHY OF MISSISSAUGA

For the Glory of God

Prot. No.155/2022

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CIRCULAR

Dear priests, religious, parents, youth, catechists, and beloved children,

May Almighty God bless you all abundantly as we celebrate the second Catechetical Sunday in our eparchy on November 6th. We celebrate the feast of St. Charles Borromeo, the patron of catechists on November 4th and the Convention of catechism teachers on November 5th.

Catechetical Sunday is a remarkable occasion to reflect on the role that each person plays, by the virtue of Baptism, in handing on the faith and being a witness to the Gospel. The ministry of teaching in the name of the Church has a profound dignity. The Catechetical Sunday offers an opportunity for all to strengthen the Catechetical ministry and set apart a day to appreciate and pray for those who serve as Catechists in our Parish communities. Further, this day invites you all to reflect on our responsibility to uphold and share our faith with others.

It is a source of joy to greet you all today because I am deeply aware of your commitment to the transmission of faith. You join the Church's responsibility of imparting the joy of Good News to many people- children, young people and adults who intensely strive to carry out a journey of faith. Our priests and religious sisters are first and foremost are catechists who are called



to resonate the Gospel in the heart of every person and their genuine efforts are praiseworthy.

Who is a Catechist?

The New Directory for Catechesis points out that “while all the baptized have some share in the mission of the Church to pass on the faith, there are those who have a particular calling or vocation to this ministry: These people are catechists” (NDC 111). The catechists “unite the transmission of right doctrine with personal testimony, with the firm commitment to live according to the commandments of the Lord and with the lived experience of being faithful and active members of the Church” (Pope Benedict XVI). There are two important aspects of the catechist’s identity. First, the catechist is grounded in a community and serves from within the community. Second, the catechist accompanies others as a sign of the care of the community and on behalf of the community. Thus, catechists bear witness to (the Church’s) living Tradition and become a mediator who facilitates the incorporation of new disciples of Christ into His ecclesial Body.

Church reminds you catechists of the greatness of your ministry by using different images and titles to describe who is a catechist. Here are a few examples:

- 1) Catechist is a witness of faith: one who bears witness to their own personal encounter with the person of Jesus.
- 2) Catechist is a keeper of the memory of God: one who awakens the memory of God’s saving history to the members of the Church.
- 3) Catechist is a teacher: an icon of Jesus the teacher and Christ’s spokesman, enabling Christ to teach with his lips. Thus, catechists transmit the content of faith.



- 4) Catechist is a mystagogue: one who introduces others to the mystery of God.
- 5) Catechist is an accompanier: one who is able to listen and travel with others with patience in his/her faith journey. (NDC)

Dear catechists be proud of your divine ministry entrusted to you in the Church and for the Church. You accompany our younger generation to guide them to belong to the Church as a devout member of the community. Our parishes, mission centers and the entire eparchy is blessed by the divine ministry of our catechism teachers. I express my deep gratitude to our catechism teachers for sharing my responsibility of imparting the true of the Church in our eparchy.

What is Catechesis?

Catechesis speaks to the totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples of all people, to help them "believe that Jesus is the Son of God so that believing they might have life in his name, and to educate and instruct them in this life, thus building up the body of Christ" (CCC 4; CT 1,2).

The primary and essential object of catechesis is, "the mystery of Christ" and the "heart of catechesis is Jesus". Catechizing is in a way to lead a person to study this mystery in all its dimensions. So, by seeking to understand the meaning of Christ's actions and words and of the signs worked by Him, mystery of Christ is revealed to the finite human intellect. It is in the Person of Christ God revealed and fulfilled the whole of God's eternal plan for us. Accordingly, the definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ: only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 5).



Personal Encounter with Christ

The *kerygma* is the first proclamation of faith; the essence of this *kerygma* or the proclamation is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ that is both the foundation of the Church and the foundation of faith. Catechesis is what helps each of us to grow in our faith once there has been conversion inspired by the *kerygma*. If the Holy Spirit sows the seed of faith through *kerygma*, catechesis helps that seed to grow, develop strong roots, and produce good fruit. That growth is a lifelong journey. As Pope Francis emphasizes, “catechesis is the echo of the Word of God. At the heart of the proclamation is a person, Jesus Christ; therefore, catechesis is a privileged space for a personal encounter with Him (Pope Francis to the members of Italy’s National Catechetical Office, 30 Jan 2021).

Dear children, your catechism class is a privileged place to encounter with Jesus Christ, your Saviour and to enter into a personal relationship with Him. “Jesus Christ loves you; He gave His life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you” (*Joy of the Gospel*, 164). This encounter with Christ will touch your heart, mind and senses. This internalization of your faith will transform you to a Christian personality. Changes in behavior ought to follow from your relationship with Christ. The motive for rejecting the evils and sins that endanger our life emanate from your relationship with Jesus. To put it in the words of the Gospel, “if you love me, you will keep my commandments” (Jn. 14:15).

Internalization of faith is reflected in your affective relationships, community life in the parish, Messiah experience in the Holy Qurbana and other sacraments and your service to others. Thus, you become a missionary disciple of Jesus who not only follow Jesus, your saviour but a disciple who share the



mission of witnessing Jesus and profess that Christ is the Saviour of the world.

Role of Parish and Families

Catechesis is the most responsible activity of the Church and the faithful community. A person who is united to Jesus Christ by faith and is endeavoring to consolidate that faith by catechesis needs to live in communion with those who have taken the same step. Ecclesial community has the twofold responsibility of providing the adequate space for faith formation and of welcoming them into an environment where they can live as fully as possible what they have learned. The parish community is the prime mover and pre-eminent place of faith formation and accompanies all of us to grow into a mature faith (Cf. CT). The paschal mystery celebrated in the Holy Qurbana and other sacraments in a parish community is the heart of all Catechesis, the cornerstone of Christian faith and paradigm of the Christian life, both for individuals and for a community of faith.

Dear parents, you are the primary catechists of your children at the families, that is 'Domestic Church'. Through the sacrament of marriage, you have the vocation to enrich the spiritual life and the faith life your children. Preserve the good values and spiritual practices of our families in a changing world. Parents are obliged to ensure the regular participation of your children in Holy Qurbana, reception of sacraments, Catechism classes, family prayer, Bible reading, observance of Lent and Fasting.

Finally, I am glad to bring to your notice that Department of Catechesis in our eparchy has commenced *Mission Catechesis – A Virtual Academy of Faith Formation* in this academic year exclusively for children from the locations where we do not have



regular catechism classes. Thus, we reach out to the remote places of our eparchy to sow and nurture the seeds of faith to everyone.

I appreciate the dedication and the different initiatives in faith formation by the Department of Catechesis, Catechetical Commission, principals, catechists and the faithful community involved in this sacred ministry.

May God bless you to become a joyful messenger of the Gospel with fidelity to the Church.

May God Bless us All!

Yours in Christ,



Mar Jose Kalluvelil

Bishop, Eparchy of Mississauga

NB: *This circular is to be read in every parish and mission centers of the eparchy of Mississauga on November 06, 2022*

