



September 25, 2024

**Catechetical Sunday – September 29, 2024**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

This weekend in our Diocese we celebrate Catechetical Sunday, when all who are engaged in the faith formation of children, youth, and adults will be recognized and blessed. This year's theme is "Lord, when did we see you hungry?" (Matthew 25.37) which describes the final judgement when those who have lived their faith by serving those most in need are separated from those who have not.

This is a very interesting theme for a day when the focus is on celebrating and recognizing the gift of those who serve in our parishes and schools as catechists. To understand this theme, one needs to consider who the catechists are and the role they play in the lives of those they accompany.

This year's theme invites us to consider our call to be missionary disciples. St. John Paul II reminded us that the universal call to holiness is closely linked to the universal call to mission. From our common Baptism, every member of the faithful is called to holiness and mission.

This means that each of us is both disciple and missionary. A disciple is one who believes and follows the Lord Jesus. A missionary is one who is sent. Some may say, yes, of course, I am a disciple, but I am not a missionary as no one has sent me. At the end of every celebration of the Eucharist, we are all sent out with phrases that begin with the word "Go," such as "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life." The "Go" is meant to be our 'missioning' each week.

All of us are to "Go" and, by sharing the Good News in words and witness, to invite others to become disciples. Catechists, those recognized as serving in the faith formation ministry of the Church, are also sent each week. In their role as catechists, their teaching focuses on forming the children, youth, and adults they accompany to become missionary disciples themselves. May God bless and inspire all catechists and teachers for their very important service!

As we celebrate Catechetical Sunday, may we support and pray for all catechists but also remember our own call to be missionary disciples. Nourished by Word and Sacrament, may we "Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by [our] life."

Sincerely in the Risen Lord,

*† Stephen A. Hero*

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