



DIOCESE OF ARLINGTON

Office of the Bishop

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September 14, 2017

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On Sunday, September 17, 2017, the Church in the United States celebrates Catechetical Sunday, a day especially set aside to give thanks to God for the faithful service and witness of those who hand on the saving message of the Gospel. In our Diocese, there are nearly 5,000 volunteer catechists who teach the Catholic faith to over 40,000 children and young people enrolled in our parish religious education programs.

The theme of this year's Catechetical Sunday is "Living as Missionary Disciples." As Pope Francis reminds us, "The joy of the Gospel is for all people: no one can be excluded" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 23). Each of us is called by the Lord to be a missionary disciple who bears witness to the saving and life-transforming power of God made known to us in Jesus Christ and kept alive in our hearts by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Our Catholic faith is a gift that is meant to be shared. On this Catechetical Sunday, we give thanks for all who hand on our faith to others, including the catechists and teachers who lead children, adolescents and adults to encounter Jesus Christ. These catechists accompany those they teach, inviting them to a deeper bond with the Body of Christ, the Church. What a beautiful privilege they have, as well as a great responsibility!

As the Diocese of Arlington joins the Church throughout the United States to celebrate Catechetical Sunday, may we continue to pray for all catechists and teachers – including parents, guardians, women and men living the consecrated life, deacons, and priests – that through their dedication and witness they may continue to encounter the love of God in Christ Jesus and proclaim that saving love to everyone by their lives as missionary disciples of the Lord.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
Bishop of Arlington