

Blessed Echoes

Last Sunday, our Church celebrated *Catechetical Sunday*, a time for all Catholics to acknowledge the importance of the Church's teaching ministry and to honor all who serve the Catholic faithful in a teaching role. The Church began this special observance in 1935 and now it is celebrated each year on the third Sunday in September.

This year's theme for Catechetical Sunday was "Open the Door of Faith" in honor of the Universal Church's Year of Faith. The theme is a perfect image for the important work we are all called to do as baptized Christians, that of sharing the Faith with others and being a witness to the Gospel.

This sharing of the faith is often referred to as catechesis, which comes from a Greek word meaning "to echo." Each of us with a teaching responsibility—moms and dads, Catholic school teachers and religious education instructors, as well as bishops, priests, and deacons—is echoing the Church's teachings that others in the world might hear them.

Ask any teacher and he will likely tell you that a child's first and most influential teachers are his parents. I was fortunate to recently celebrate Mass for our homeschooling families in the Archdiocese where I preached about the role of parent as teacher. "Parents provide homes where there is peace and order, thereby providing an environment in which faith and virtue can grow and flourish," I said in my homily. "In so doing, they create a domestic church in which children can learn to 'Seek first the Kingdom of God ... [so that] all these things [can] be given [them] besides.'"

Catechetical Sunday, therefore, is an important reminder to us all that in addition to catechesis taking place in our schools and parishes, it is also occurring in the home. Just as we work hard to ensure that our schools and parishes have healthy environments in which our children can learn, so too should we work to ensure the homes they live in, where the domestic church is found, are places where the faith can be cultivated and shared.

Please join me in thanking all who embrace the role of “teacher” in our Archdiocese, as we pray for the Holy Spirit’s continued and ever-present guidance over this most important work.