



Archdiocese of Newark

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

September 20, 2015

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

The Catholic Church in the United States invites us, as it does each year at this time, to focus attention on the Catechetical Ministry as we celebrate Catechetical Sunday 2015, this year on Sunday, September 20th. We do this employing the theme established by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops for this year's observance: "Safeguarding the Dignity of Every Human Person." As we celebrate this theme in each of our parishes, those who serve as catechists in our parish faith formation programs, in our Catholic Schools and in our youth ministry programs, adult catechetical programs and in the RCIA will be called forth to be commissioned for their very important ministries for the life of our parishes. At the same time, we need to recall that the task of catechesis belongs also to parents in a very special way as they nurture their children but also to grandparents as they share their faith with their grandchildren. Indeed, this task belongs to all of us because of the call we have all received at Baptism to proclaim the Gospel by the way in which we live and by the choices that we make.

The Bishops of the United States have given us a very powerful theme to consider this year. "Safeguarding the Dignity of Every Human Person" is a theme which is full of significance for us. It recalls the many important life issues which confront our society and with which we as Catholic Christians must grapple in the public forum: abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, are certainly all important and current issues which we must address from a Gospel viewpoint and which the ministry of catechesis must assist us in understanding from a faith perspective. But our Holy Father, Pope Francis has also recently called us to widen our perspective in "Safeguarding the Dignity of Every Human Person" when in his recent encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, the Holy Father has reminded us that this theme also involves protecting the earth and all who dwell in it, protecting those who are impacted by the abuse of the environment, most often the poor and the marginalized, as well as those who are negatively affected by unjust economic systems. These, too, are areas where the Catholic Christian is impelled by the power of the Gospel to "Safeguard the Dignity of Every Human Person." It is the purpose of catechesis to draw us ever closer to Jesus, to a deeper understanding of our Catholic faith and to understand how because of what we believe, we are called to "Safeguard the Dignity of Every Human Person."

I wish to join with the faithful of the Archdiocese, as Bishop of this local Church, in recognizing those who give of themselves so generously in fulfilling the critically important ministry of catechesis for the Church in our parishes and schools. I extend my gratitude and that of the whole Church of Newark to our catechists, our parish catechetical leaders and our Catholic school teachers and administrators and pledge to them our support and our prayers.

May God richly bless you for all you do for God's people of the Church of Newark.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Sincerely in the Lord,

✠ Most Reverend John J. Myers
Archbishop of Newark

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Archdiocesan Center