

**Catechetical Sunday 2025, this year's theme ("Always be ready to give an explanation... for a reason for your hope" — 1 Peter 3:15). Who is a Catechist?** A catechist is a baptized member of the Church who is entrusted with the ministry of handing on the faith and forming others as disciples of Christ. The word comes from the Greek *katechein* ("to echo" or "to resound"), meaning a catechist "echoes" the Word of God to others. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 4–5) reminds us that all catechesis aims at "intimacy with Christ." Pope Francis, in *Antiquum Ministerium* (2021), established the ministry of catechist as a formal instituted lay ministry in the Church. Canon Law (can. 785 §1) recognizes catechists, especially in mission territories, as lay people who exercise an outstanding apostolate in teaching the faith under the direction of pastors. **The Role of Catechists in the Catholic Church: Transmit the Faith** – Catechists introduce people to the saving mysteries of Christ, rooted in Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium. **Form Consciences** – They guide students to live as Christians in daily life, shaping their moral and spiritual lives. **Accompany and Witness** – Catechists are not just teachers of doctrine but witnesses of faith who walk with students on their journey (cf. General Directory for Catechesis 238). **Collaborate in Evangelization** – They extend the work of priests and deacons, helping to build up the Church, especially where clergy are few. **Guardians of Tradition** – They echo the living faith of the Church, linking past, present, and future believers. **The Significance of Catechists:** Builders of the Church: As St. Paul says (1 Cor 3:6), some plant, others water, but God gives the growth. Catechists are planters of seeds of faith. Missionary Spirit: In mission territories, the Church often survives because of catechists who lead prayer, teach children, and sustain communities when priests are absent. Role Models: Their holiness and integrity make the faith credible. St. John Paul II in *Catechesi Tradendae* (6) stressed: "The Church is bidden to give catechists who are deeply rooted in the faith and living witnesses." **How They Can Influence Faith Formation Students: By Example:** A catechist's life often speaks louder than words. A joyful, prayerful catechist attracts students to Christ. **By Relational Approach:** When catechists show genuine care, students experience the Church as family. **By Integrating Faith with Life:** Students learn how the Gospel applies to school, friendships, technology, and challenges. "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."— St. Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (41) **How Catechists Could Be Effective in Teaching:** **Rooted in Prayer** – A catechist must first be a person of prayer; the Holy Spirit is the true teacher. **Well-Formed** – Continuous study of Scripture, CCC, Church documents, and the lives of saints keeps their teaching authentic. **Creative and Contextual** – Using stories, visuals, role plays, and digital tools makes faith relevant. **Accompaniment** – Knowing each student's struggles and strengths allows catechists to guide personally. **Sacramental Spirit** – Always linking catechesis to the Eucharist, Confession, and parish life ensures holistic growth. **Practical Example:** In a parish with many young students preparing for Confirmation, the catechist does more than explain the gifts of the Holy Spirit. She shares her own testimony of how the gift of fortitude helped her forgive someone who hurt her deeply. Then she invites the students to reflect on challenges in their own lives where the Spirit can give them strength. Result: Students not only memorize the seven gifts but begin to see how the Holy Spirit is active in their personal stories. This bridges head knowledge and heart experience. **In summary:** A catechist is a witness and teacher of the faith, recognized by the Magisterium and Canon Law, indispensable to the Church's mission. Their significance lies not only in transmitting doctrine but in shaping disciples through word and example. By being prayerful, authentic, and creative, catechists influence the faith formation of students, leading them to a living encounter with Christ.

**A Catechist's Prayer:** *Loving Father, pour forth your Holy Spirit upon me that I may be a good catechist of your Word, your Son, Jesus Christ. Render my mind and heart so open, receptive and responsive to your Holy Spirit that, like Mary, I might become a living instrument of your Word to others. Help me to be a faithful witness to Gospel life so that your Church may become ever more alive. Let the fire of your love so enkindle my heart that I may be an instrument of drawing others to love of you in the Church of your Son. I ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

### **Announcements:**

A special Thanks to Thani Carothers for doing the Cash raffle at our parish and to all others who helped with it. The results of the St Leonard Cash Raffle are as follows: **1st Place - \$5,000 - Maya LeMaster; 2nd Place - \$1,250 - Claire Krawze; 3rd Place - \$250 - Scuba from Newald; 4th Place - \$250 - Brea Albrecht; 5th Place - \$250 - Russ Yaeger; 6th Place - \$250 - Tyler Anderson; 7th Place - \$250 - Melanie Wagoner;** Please contact Chad Albrecht for your winnings! And thank you to all that bought tickets and all that volunteered to sell tickets! The raffle was a great success and helps our parish greatly. God Bless!

**On October 28th**, priests, deacons, parish staff, lay volunteer leaders, council members and trustees will gather for a **Jubilee Day of Encounter** at the KI Center in Green Bay. Our keynote speaker for the day will be Monsignor Michael Clay of the Diocese of Raleigh. **Registration is now open and will close on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Call the Parish office to register.**

If you want to become a Catholic and join the St. Leonard Parish through the RCIA program kindly register your names with Fr. Anil.

There will be no morning mass on Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.

Kindly sign up to receive the Travelling statue of the Blessed Mother Mary as we begin October, the Month of the Holy Rosary. The sign-up sheet is available at the Church entrance.