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Dear People of God,

CATECHETICAL SUNDAY 2022

Theme: Family: A Path to Holiness (1 Cor. 12: 12)

At the beginning of a new year, it is a good time to look back on the previous one and reflect on our experiences. The past year 2021, was marked by the widespread restrictions of the Covid 19 pandemic, which caused life as we knew it to change almost beyond recognition at all levels, including in the Church.

Among these changes was the closure of catechism classes in the parish, which had been the primary source of catechesis for many in the past. Almost immediately, we had to shift away from the traditional way of catechising our children and teenagers, as well as RCIA candidates and catechumens, and move to online teaching and learning methods. Thankfully, due to the dedication and creativity shown by our parish catechists in preparing and conducting catechism online, we were able to ensure that our children, teenagers and adults continued to receive regular faith formation.

This situation has also placed parents and families at the front and centre of faith formation for their children. While this is a new experience for many, the Church has always regarded the family as integral to the ministry of catechesis. This is why it is important that for this year's Catechetical Sunday, we reflect deeply on the role of parents and the family in this ministry of the Church. With this in mind, the Malaysian Catechetical Commission has chosen the theme, "*Family: A Path to Holiness*".

The Catechetical Sunday Message explains the essential and irreplaceable role that parents and families play in the area of faith formation. Parents take on the responsibility of educating their children in the faith on the day of their marriage, and serve as their primary catechists. Indeed, the family is the true setting for catechesis. The efforts made by catechists in the parish, although important and noteworthy, can only supplement but never replace the catechesis that takes place in the home. As stated by Saint John Paul II, "Family catechesis precedes, accompanies and enriches all forms of catechesis" (*Catechesi tradendae*, 68). This is a reminder not only for parents and families, but for all members of the Church.

With this in mind, besides the Catechetical Sunday Message, the Malaysian Catechetical Commission has also prepared the poster highlighting the event, the Catechetical Sunday Kit and the Rite of Commissioning for Catechists, all of which are available in Bahasa Malaysia, English, Tamil and Chinese languages. These materials have been prepared in order that dioceses and parishes may use them for liturgical celebration and activities organised in line with Catechetical Sunday.

On behalf of the Bishops of Malaysia, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to parish priests, catechetical coordinators and catechists, parents and guardians and all who are in some way involved with the ministry of catechesis. It is heartening to know, that in spite of the challenges and changes that have taken place over the past years, you have continued your service to God and the Church with faithfulness and zeal. Truly, circumstances may change and challenges may come, but the mission given to the Church by Jesus Christ still continues (cf. Mat. 28: 19-20).

Yours in Christ,

+Most Reverend Julian Leow Beng Kim, D.D.

Episcopal President, Malaysian Catechetical Commission