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Dear People of God,

In 2022, the Catechetical Sunday Message on the theme *“Family: A Path to Holiness”* touched on the important and irreplaceable role that parents and families play in the area of catechesis. Parents take on the responsibility of educating their children in the faith by virtue of the Sacrament of Marriage. This is why the Church calls parents the primary catechists of their children. In fact, the Church has always regarded the family as integral to the ministry of catechesis.

In view of this, the Malaysian Catechetical Commission (MCC) has decided to continue placing emphasis on the role of the family in catechesis. For Catechetical Sunday 2023, the MCC has selected the theme: *“Renewing the Church with Families of Faith”*. In the Catechetical Sunday 2023 message, some key questions are put forward. For example: in spite of the efforts made in catechising our young people in the parish, why is it that a large number of them don’t come back to Church? Why do so few remain in the Church or are regularly involved in service projects or youth groups?

In addition, although we repeatedly remind parents of their responsibility as primary catechists, could we, by having catechism classes and regular faith formation events and activities in the parish for young people, be communicating to families (and especially to parents), that the best thing they can do for their children and teenagers is to ‘drop them off’ at church, and we will make disciples out of them? Could it be that we have conditioned them to think that catechesis is the responsibility of the parish, and more specifically, of the catechists?

These are difficult questions that we have to ask, and finding the right answers is even more challenging. What is clear however, is that all of us need to work together to “raise the bar in our commitment to challenge and support all families in their faith-building efforts”. As stated in the 2023 Message, we have “to shift the paradigm of household faith growth from something viewed as optional and hoped-for to something that is expected; from extraordinary to ordinary”.

On that note, I am happy to share that we will soon be releasing a parent’s guide to catechesis, titled *“As For Me & My House”*. This publication, among other key matters pertaining to family catechesis, will explore the paradigm shift spoken about in the 2023 Message. This book aims to assist parents in the formation of their children’s faith, and give form and substance to their family’s unique spirituality. Let us reinforce our efforts to provide proper and effective catechesis to our children and young people in the home, and in the parish community as a whole.

Finally, 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 involved in the ministry of catechesis. May Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd lead and guide us.

Yours in Christ,

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