



United States  
Conference of  
Catholic Bishops

# Pilgrims on the Way of Hope: A Resource for the Jubilee of Catechists

## **Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope**

United States Conference  
of Catholic Bishops

## **Jubilee of Catechists: Resource Packet**

September 26-28, 2025

## **INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW**

The Holy See has designated a number of Jubilee Days throughout 2025 to recognize and celebrate different groups of people and various ministries in the Church. The Jubilee of Catechists will be held from Friday, September 26, to Sunday, September 28, 2025; however, these resources can be used for engaging and celebrating catechists at any time throughout the Jubilee Year.

It should also be noted that the official language used for this particular celebration on the Vatican calendar calls it a Jubilee of Catechists. A catechist is a "Christian who receives a particular calling from God that, when accepted in faith, empowers him for the service of the transmission of faith and for the task of initiating others into the Christian life" (*Directory for Catechesis*, no. 112). Though

the official celebration of the Jubilee of Catechists in Rome includes the institution of men and women in the ministry of catechist on Sunday, September 28, it should be noted that the Jubilee of Catechists includes those catechists who are not called to be part of the instituted ministry of catechist.



This resource packet is for anyone who finds it useful. It can be used and/or adapted by dioceses, eparchies, parishes, schools, campuses, apostolates, movements, organizations, or individuals to plan their celebration of the Jubilee of Catechists. It might also serve as a catalyst or inspiration for the creation and development of local or year-round resources for the local community of catechists.

For catechists or offices of catechesis that are making a Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome or to a Holy Door (or particular Jubilee celebration) in a diocese or eparchy within the United States during 2025, this packet can also serve as an aid in the preparation or experience of that trip.

Additional resources for the Jubilee of Catechists and other celebrations can be found online at the USCCB Jubilee Year web pages: available in English at <https://www.usccb.org/committees/jubilee-2025> and available in Spanish at <https://www.usccb.org/es/committees/jubileo-2025>.



## SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

"The Church was founded so that by spreading Christ's kingdom throughout the world to the glory of God the Father, every man and woman may share in the saving work of redemption, and so that through them the entire world may be truly directed towards Christ" (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 2). The Church teaches us that "in the building up of Christ's Body various members and functions have their part to play. There is only one Spirit who, according to his own richness and the needs of the ministries, gives his different gifts for the welfare of the Church" (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 7). **One of these roles, present in the Church from her earliest beginnings, is that of catechist.** The call to be a catechist is rooted in a person's Baptism, strengthened by Confirmation and by regular participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Originally the term *catechist* referred to one who taught by mouth, but soon the term came to refer to any person who "instructed in the Word." St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, writes that "One who is being instructed [*lit.* a catechumen] in the word should share all good things with his instructor [*lit.* a catechizer or a catechist]" (Gal 6:6). **Catechesis lies at the heart of the Church's mission to make disciples of all nations.** Pope St. John Paul II called it a "sacred duty and inalienable right" of the Church (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 14).

Lay catechists have a beautiful part in the call to bring people to Christ, as we read in the *Directory for Catechesis*:

*The immediate reasons why a catechist is called to serve the word of God vary greatly, but they are all means which God, through the Church, uses to call people to his service. Through this calling, the catechist is made a participant in Jesus's mission of introducing disciples*

*into his filial relationship with the Father. The true protagonist of all authentic catechesis is however the Holy Spirit, who by means of the profound union with Jesus Christ, which is nurtured by every catechist, gives efficacy to human efforts in catechetical activity. This activity is carried out in the bosom of the Church: the catechist is a witness to her living condition and a mediator who facilitates the incorporation of new disciples of Christ into his ecclesial Body* (*Directory for Catechesis*, no. 112).

Catechists must recognize that the teaching they hand on is not their own but Christ's. **Through their words and life catechists proclaim the kerygma, and they make known Jesus' teachings and life to those whom they catechize** (see *Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 6). This time of Jubilee set aside for catechists is a reminder of the ongoing role that many of the Christian faithful have in supporting the Church's mission to "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt 28:19).

"Catechesis is necessary both for the maturation of the faith of Christians and for their witness in the world: It is aimed at bringing Christians to 'attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'; **it is also aimed at making them prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls them to account for the hope that is in them**" (*Catechesi Tradendae*, no. 25).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PILGRIM PREPARATION

One major element of the Jubilee celebration for Catholics is making pilgrimage. For some, that may involve going to Rome, where international pilgrims traditionally visit the Holy Doors of the



four great basilicas (Saint Peter, Saint Paul Outside the Walls, Saint Mary Major, and Saint John Lateran). For most others, though, local Jubilee pilgrimages can be made to diocesan or eparchial cathedrals, churches, and/or religious sites.

*If headed to Rome for the Jubilee of Catechists:*

Should you or your ministry/group/community decide to travel to Rome, in particular for the Jubilee of Catechists (September 26-28, 2025), the following may be helpful:

- You can develop a trip on your own or go through a licensed tour operator that specializes or has experience in religious travel. The latter option may cost extra, but can save a local organizer time, may have existing connections with vendors, and would be able to advise on travel concerns. PLEASE NOTE: The USCCB does not endorse nor identify any licensed tour operator as the official U.S. tour operator.
- The official Jubilee events for catechists, beginning September 26 ([see here](#)), include Pilgrimages to the Holy Door; opportunities for confession in the Jubilee churches; welcome and reception offered by the Diocese of Rome (in the Piazza of St. John Lateran); catechesis sessions in the various Jubilee churches, in language groups; Holy Mass presided over by the Holy Father (in St. Peter's Square), where he will institute new catechists for the Church.
- Pilgrims and groups may also consider additional activities, either planned on their own or events hosted by organizations, apostolates, episcopal conferences, or movements.

- Prepare in a manner similar to World Youth Day, with liturgies, retreats, devotional and service experiences, community building, catechesis, and fundraising, as needed. Take time for prayer, especially with the Blessed Sacrament. Recommended reading should include *Catechesi Tradendae* or the *Directory for Catechesis*.
- Practical travel preparation will be essential, especially since the Jubilee of Catechists (and other Jubilee events in 2025) in Rome might draw large crowds. Though this time of year is not as hot as summer in Rome, it is still important that pilgrims recognize causes, symptoms, and support for dehydration, sickness, and heat exhaustion should they arise.
- Pilgrims should bring backpacks, comfortable shoes, appropriate summer clothing, necessary medications and supplies, and resources that aid in pilgrim prayer. Packing light is essential.
- After returning home or to the United States, take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage to Rome. If you went as a group, continue to gather in the weeks and months following the trip to support one another and coordinate missionary actions.

*If coordinating a local pilgrimage within the United States for catechists:*

It is highly recommended to make pilgrimage to one's own diocesan or eparchial cathedral or other church(es) or religious site(s) designated by the bishop or eparch.

- Planning for a local pilgrimage can take place at any time of year, or it can be done at the same time as the events for catechists in Rome (around September 26 to 28, 2025). The timing, as well as the exact local destination, is at the discretion of the local organizer(s).



- Research the pilgrimage destination to ensure that your visit does not coincide with liturgical or local community events or is being done within the posted opening hours for the site. You may wish to contact someone in leadership at the location in advance, especially if you plan to bring a group.
- Before embarking on the local pilgrimage, consider taking time for prayer and community-building similar to the type of spiritual preparation one would take for an international journey (i.e. to Rome or World Youth Day).
- Prepare with a walking pilgrimage within or around the parish, campus, or local community, in particular if the journey to the cathedral or other major site involves some walking. In fact, consider adding a walking component if one is not naturally part of the program, as the spirituality of physical movement is a key ingredient to a spiritual pilgrimage.
- After returning home (even if the trip was local), take time for prayer and theological reflection on the graces of God received during the pilgrimage experience. If you went as a group, continue to gather in the weeks and months following the trip to support one another and coordinate missionary actions.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR CELEBRATING CATECHISTS LOCALLY

### *Suggestions for Parishes*

For parishes with fewer catechists, consider joining with other parishes in the deanery or diocese to support each other and help build a network for catechists.

- Use the weekend liturgies on September 27-28 to recognize all the catechists in the community: in the homily, general intercessions, with a special blessing, or by inviting catechists to serve in key liturgical roles. An example of a petition for the Prayer of the Faithful might include:

*For all the catechists in this parish, in our families, and throughout the Church, that through their words and life they may proclaim the kerygma faithfully, and they make known Jesus' teachings and life to those whom they catechize, always ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks for a reason for their hope, we pray to the Lord.*

- Set aside time for prayer and formation, or for the building of community of catechists in the parish during the weekend of September 27-28. During this time, offer food and drink, opportunities to meet-and-mingle, and invitations to deeper faith engagement for the catechists.
- Set aside time sometime between September 26 to 28 to recognize all catechists in the parish, active or retired, acknowledging their gifts and their contributions to the Church.
- Use the Jubilee celebration as an opportunity to engage the wider parish community and parish leadership to help people see how they too might be called to be catechists, whether in the parish, in their own families, or in some other way. *The Directory for Catechesis* (2020), chapter 3 provides an explanation of various ways in which people might be catechists, including parents, grandparents, priests, religious, etc. Help parishioners to see how catechesis is central to the mission of the Church.





- Plan a local pilgrimage for catechists to the diocesan/eparchial cathedral or to another religious site or church in your area, using the ideas laid out in the previous section.
- Invite catechists in your parish to engage in “acts of hope” during the Jubilee Year, which can include visits with marginalized communities, evangelizing outreach to those who are disaffiliated from the Church, and/or engagement with their own families on issues of faith.
- Livestream or replay video of key Jubilee events (e.g., the Mass with the Holy Father) taking place in Rome on September 28 at a gathering of catechists held at the parish (noting the time difference between Rome and your local area). You may also consider coordinating catechist programs at the parish during the livestream viewings such as liturgies, Eucharistic adoration, confessions, catechesis on being a catechist, service projects, small groups, or social activities.

#### *Suggestions for Dioceses and Eparchies*

- Celebrate a liturgy or host a prayer service aimed at catechists throughout the diocese at the diocesan/eparchial cathedral between September 26 and September 28, concurrent with the Jubilee celebrations happening in Rome.
- Hold a diocesan/eparchial-wide Jubilee walking pilgrimage for catechists from the cathedral (or another site of your choosing) to religious sites, churches, universities/schools, and/or to a Catholic-led social services center or institution. Consider also inviting the bishop or eparch on this journey.
- Post stories about catechists on the diocesan or eparchial website, social media channels, and communications (magazine, newspaper, newsletter, etc.) prior to and/or during the Jubilee of Catechists in September 2025.

- Host a diocesan/eparchial-wide Jubilee gathering of catechists with the bishop/eparch. This can be a presentation, dialogue/discussion, meet-and-greet social, meal, liturgy, and/or a virtual event, allowing catechists across the diocese/eparchy to engage with their episcopal shepherd, who is the chief catechist within the diocese (see *Directory for Catechesis*, no. 114).
- Encourage all diocesan/eparchial offices and departments to feature, celebrate, or acknowledge catechists during September 2025, centered around the global Jubilee celebrations. This might need to be preceded by a workshop or meeting with diocesan/eparchial staff to coordinate efforts.
- Inaugurate a diocesan/eparchial initiative for catechists beginning with the Jubilee celebrations. This might include an area-wide evangelization effort (for example, around the beginning of the school year or at Easter); an annual award/recognition ceremony; an annual liturgy with the bishop; scholarship funds for college or graduate students; or an annual pilgrimage, etc.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & DOCUMENTS**

- [Catechesi Tradendae \(On Catechesis in Our Time\)](#), Pope St. John Paul II (1979): an apostolic exhortation that celebrates catechesis as a primary task of the Church. John Paul II teaches that catechesis must be Christocentric, and also based on Christ’s teachings and life. This apostolic exhortation aims to revitalize the call for the Church to provide an authentic catechesis, responding to situations and contexts in which it takes place. Available in print and in e-book from several Catholic publishers and online.



- **Evangelii Nuntiandi (Proclaiming the Gospel), Pope St. Paul VI (1975)**: the Holy Father calls attention to Christ's final command to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15). The Church should ever be on mission to make disciples of all nations. Wherever she is present, she is called to preach the Gospel, which includes the act of catechesis. Available in print and in e-book from several Catholic publishers and online.
- **General Catechetical Directory, Congregation for the Clergy (1971)**: the first of three directories on catechesis, this text provides an explanation of how Revelation informs catechesis, and how the Church lives out this call to preach the Gospel through catechesis. Available online.
- **General Directory for Catechesis, Congregation for the Clergy (1998)**: a successor to the 1971 General Catechetical Directory, on which it depends, this text addresses problems that arose due to doctrinal deficiencies in catechesis, as well as challenges that continued to be faced in the Church. It too was meant to help foster a renewal of the catechetical ministry in the Church. Available online.
- **Directory for Catechesis, Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization (2020)**: a further continuation of the first two universal directories on catechesis written after the Second Vatican Council, the 2020 *Directory for Catechesis* reminds us of the centrality of the *kerygma* for the Church's efforts to catechize in this world. This document seeks to reinvigorate catechesis in the Church today, reminding us that not only Sunday-school teachers are catechists: parents, religious, deacons, priests, etc. are all called to catechize. Available to purchase from various Catholic

publishers. Extra resources on the Directory can be found on the USCCB website, offered through the Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis.

- **Guide for Catechists, Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (1993)**: though this was written primarily for catechists in mission territories, it provides helpful reminders to catechists about the missionary zeal that catechists should have, living out their special vocational call, rooted in their baptism. It offers guidelines on the type of work that catechists should undertake as they make Christ and his teachings known to those whom they catechize. Available online.

## KEY SAINTS AND BLESSED

### *Holy Catechist Companions*

- **St. Paul the Apostle (1st century, feast days January 25 and June 29)**, patron of Rome, evangelists, missionaries, and theologians. The great preacher of the *kerygma* and catechizer of Christians.
- **St. Charles Borromeo (1538-1584, feast day November 4)**, patron of bishops, catechists, catechumens, cardinals, seminarians, and spiritual directors and leaders: helped greatly in the development of the Roman Catechism and helped to implement the reforms called for by the Council of Trent.
- **St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621, feast day September 17)**, patron of canon lawyers, catechists, and catechumens: a cardinal who knew Sacred Scripture and doctrine very well, he composed two catechisms, which have had a lasting effect on the Church. Robert helped bring about a renewal of the Church after Trent, reminding us that we should direct ourselves to intensely knowing, loving, and imitating Jesus Christ.



- **St. Peter Calungsod (1655-1672, feast day October 21)**, patron of the Philippines and Filipino youth, Visayans, altar servers, and catechumens: sent as a young boy from the Visayas region in the Philippines to the Mariana Islands, to the modern-day island of Guam, to catechize the Chamorro people who lived there. While accompanying a priest who was to perform a baptism, Peter was martyred by hostile aggressors who were jealous and suspicious of the Christian missionaries. Peter was only 17 years old at the time.

- **St. John Bosco (1815-1888, feast day January 31)**, patron of editors, juvenile delinquents, publishers, students, young children, founder of the Salesian Congregation. St. John Bosco dedicated his life to educating young girls and boys, beginning with orphans, whom he taught to read and write.

- **St. Clelia Barbieri (1847-1870, feast day July 13)**, patroness of catechists: when her mother moved close to the parish while Clelia was still young, she would spend much of her day in prayerful contemplation. As a young teenager, Clelia joined "The Workers of Christian Catechism," and quickly became an inspirational leader. Though many men sought to marry her, Clelia knew she was called to devote her life to serving the Church and others. She founded the religious institute of the Little Sisters of Our Lady of Sorrows at the age of 21, an order dedicated to serving the poor and sick. She died at 23 from tuberculosis.

- **Bl. Carlos Manuel Cecilio Rodríguez Santiago (1918-1963, feast day July 13)**: Charlie, as he was known during his life, grew up in Puerto Rico. He suffered from ulcerative colitis, a disease which debilitated him for most of his life. In spite of his condition, he

formed discussion groups to promote Catholic liturgy, driven in large part by his fondness of the Easter Vigil. He taught catechesis to high school students, providing them with study guides that he furnished with his own money.

## PRAYERS

*Prayers for Catechists*

### A Prayer for Catechists

*Loving Father,*

*We pray today for our catechists.*

*We thank you for their gift of ministry in your Church.*

*Grant them your wisdom that they may grow in the understanding and teaching of your Word. Grant them also your love that they may be fruitful heralds of your Word and lead others to love you.*

*Pour forth your Holy Spirit upon them to grant them wisdom about what is important; knowledge of the truths of faith; understanding of their meaning; right judgement about how to apply them in life; courage to persevere even in the face of adversity; reverence before all that is sacred and holy; and that loving zeal which leads others to a transforming encounter with your Son.*

*We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

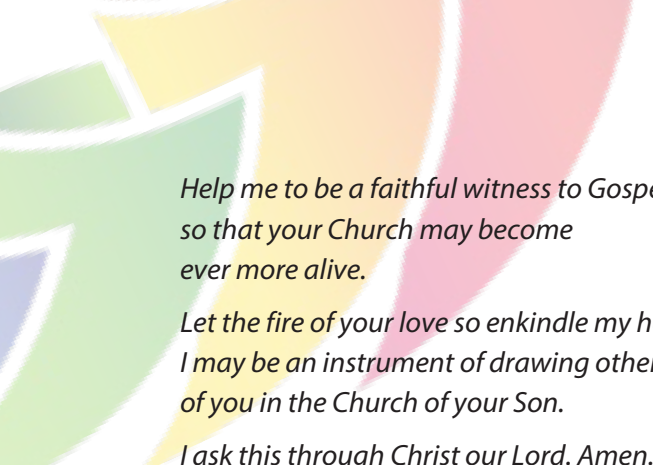
### A Catechist's Prayer

*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.*

**Prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of  
the New Evangelization**

*Star of the new evangelization,  
help us to bear radiant witness to communion,  
service, ardent and generous faith,  
justice and love of the poor,  
that the joy of the Gospel may reach  
to the ends of the earth,  
illuminating even the fringes of our world.  
Mother of the living Gospel,  
wellspring of happiness for God's little ones,  
pray for us.  
Amen. Alleluia!*

(Excerpt from Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*,  
no. 288)

