

25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Catechetical Sunday
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CATECHETICAL SUNDAY

Today we celebrate Catechetical Sunday – in a few minutes we will bless and commission those individuals who have chosen the ministry of forming and enriching the faith of our children and adults.

As I reflected on today's readings and those of the last few weeks, I couldn't help but think of the last stanza of Robert Frost's poem "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, And that has made all the difference." In these past weeks we have listened to the story of the Prodigal Son, the mandate to take up the cross, the directive to go through the narrow gate, and today the statement that you cannot serve God and money. Each of these seem to ask us to make a choice – to choose God's way – which may seem to ask us to turn from the things of this world or to take the difficult less traveled path.

There was a time in our Christian history where spirit and matter seemed to be in opposition – where holiness was tied to abandoning things of this world. It is true that we cannot let possessions possess us. But we must remember that God created and stepped into our world – embraced our very being by sending Jesus – God Incarnate - to show us that God is not distant - not other worldly– that creation and community are reflections of God's presence among and within us. Jesus did not denounce the world – he embraced it – the birds of the air, the flowers of the field, the children. He embraced all that we experience – joy in the beauty of the earth, strength of community and friendship, success and failure. He also embraced the pain and sorrow that are part of life – betrayal, misunderstanding, conflict with authorities, loss of loved ones, injustice. Jesus taught us that God is not a distant God but a God who is present in all things – waiting for us to discover God's presence everywhere and in all experiences.

So what does this have to do with Catechetical Sunday? I believe it has everything to do with the ministry of a catechist. "Pope Francis defined a catechist as one who "walks from and with Christ". A catechist is so much more than a person who just teaches the doctrines of our faith – the catechist MODELS our faith in prayer, in action, in being. A catechist brings Christ into the hearts as well as the minds of those they teach. How does the saying go – faith is caught not taught. But if the catechist is to make Christ and God present, they must know who is this God in whom they believe.

Last year one of our parents, Scott Emery, led a short activity on "Who is God" at one of our Family Gatherings. It was undoubtedly one of the best explanations of God I have ever experienced. Those of you who were there may remember that he called three persons forward – he asked them to join hands and explained that God is relational – God is to be found in our reaching within ourselves and reaching out to the other. One of the three persons had a mirror around their neck – God is mirrored in us – WE are the image of God – God is present in each of us not distant. Finally, Scott had the three persons begin to move around the room, as they did so they took the hands of others and invited them into the movement. God is active, God unifies and calls us constantly to move with the Spirit and join in the dance. God is relational, God is imaged in us, God is dynamic.

Each of you (as parent, grandparent, brother, sister, neighbor, stranger) is called in some way to be a catechist. The root of the word catechist is a Greek word ([katēkhizein](#)) which means to echo – to resound. We are each called to echo the word of God who is Jesus. We are called to be the presence the reflection of God HERE TODAY in every moment. We witness God in profound experiences - in the beauty of the sunrise over the ocean, in the birth of a child, in the exhilaration of successfully finishing a marathon, or the relief of surviving a life threatening illness. Yes, God is certainly to be found there – but the challenge is to find God in the simple, mundane experiences of everyday living – in the folding of a mountain of socks, the cleaning up after a family meal, in the weeding of a garden, even in the paying of bills and the waiting in line at the grocery store.

On Thursday night, our daughter and grandsons joined us for dinner – the boys – aged 6 and 11 years – chattered on and on about their day – everything from doing cartwheels to Mindcraft to Checkers the snake shedding her skin to the pride in being complemented by a teacher ...the chatter went on for the entire dinner. That's how it should be with us and God – constant communication about the little and big things of life—as relaxed and natural as conversation at dinner.

I want to end my reflections with a question -- perhaps the most important thought I share today –

Who is the God in whom YOU believe? Because this is the God you will reflect and echo to your children to the others in your world. Do you echo a distant God who is found only on Sunday mornings or in profound experiences?

Or do you echo a personal God who has chosen to be deeply involved in your everyday life – and to whose presence you have opened your total being OVER AND OVER AGAIN EACH DAY.?

Who is this God in whom you believe?

Amen