

PL ON CATECHISM AND FAITH FORMATION

Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and my dear Faithful,

Thy Kingdom Come!

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”(Mt. 28: 19-20).

Catechizing and faith formation are the primary mission of a baptized Christian. It has different realms. The first teachers of faith are parents themselves. They must focus attention not only handing over faith to the future generation (Joel 1:3, Deut 4:9) but also guide them to avail opportunities of faith formation from the Church, schools and boardings. The moment our children start speaking and learning, the parents must direct them and help them to learn basic prayers, catechism and Bible. The role of parents in faith formation of their children is very important. Daily family prayer is the first catechism class of our children. So parents must take interest to do it without fail. It is not only to introduce children to primary lessons of faith but also to help them to sustain their faith and grow in Christian values.

The catechism in the schools and in our boardings/hostels place our children in the track of systematic and scientific study of Christian doctrines as per the syllabus. It helps them to acquire clarity of notion in Christian faith and clear the doubts about bible as well. Gradually it enables them to deepen their faith. In the socio-religious and political context of our country we need to take defensive stand to protect our faith. In one sense we have to adapt an apologetic approach in catechizing and faith formation. In this context we the missionaries have to be well equipped to do this task. We have ample materials (talk and articles) available in the social media particularly in youtube. Please use them and prepare for the task to be effective missionaries.

A challenging practical problem in catechesis is that, can we adopt the same pedagogy for catechesis everywhere? As we know, the life situation, pattern of thinking and the behaviours of people are guided to a great extent is governed by the culture, social setup and faith background. Therefore, catechesis will have to use a language which the people of the land understand. By ‘language’ what we mean here is all the specificities of a particular culture which the catechists are addressing.

Needless to say that we have to use the opportunities and infrastructures effectively to impart regular faith formation and catechizing of our people. I exhort every priests-in-charge, the sisters and those involved in school ministry to take adequate interest to do the needful to be effective instruments of evangelization. It is our primary mission. We stand for it and we live for it. What St. Paul exclaims is a boost to each missionary to involve in the mission - “Woe to me if I do not preach” (1 Cor 9:16). Further he states: “How great is the feet of those who preach the good news” (Rom 10:15). There are number of papal encyclicals and teaching magisterium that reminds us of our primary mission of evangelization: *Gaudium et Spes* (Vat II), *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Pope Paul VI, *Redemptoris Missio* by John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* by Pope John Paul II, *Ubicum et Semper* by Benedict XVI *Evangelium Gaudium* by Pope Francis, etc. are but a few of them. The Vatican Council document *Ad Gentes* categorically states that Church by her very nature is missionary AG, 2. Church stands for proclamation and Church is the sacrament of evangelization.

So my dear parents, Fathers, Sisters and Brothers, I exhort everyone to take the mission sincerely and seriously. Schools as well as our mission stations should become effective means that involve in catechizing and faith formation. Every Christian child in the parishes or schools should become under its purview. The Children in the government hostels should be given opportunities during summer holidays for their faith formation. It is our mission. We shall not fail in it. Our Lord reminds us. “The Kingdom of God is at hand, Repent and believe in the Gospel” (Mk 1:15). May God bless everyone.



Yours devotedly in Jesus,

† Ephrem Nariculam
Bishop, Eparchy of Chanda

NB: Please read to the people the translation of it in local language or explain its content on any convenient Sunday in January 2023.