August 31, 2022

Dear Pastors,

Early in the Catechism of the Catholic Church we read that catechesis is the “totality of the Church's efforts to make disciples.” (CCC 4) This call to boldly form disciples is integral to all that we do and say as a church but is often done with special intention in our parish faith formation programs for young people and families—religious education, youth ministry, and formation for the sacraments. Every day across our archdiocese, dedicated lay people walk in faith with young people. They do this freely, not seeking compensation or accolades. They do this because they believe our young people have a right to know, love, and follow Jesus Christ as members of the Catholic Church.

As pastors, the Church calls you “the catechist of catechists” laying a special responsibility on you to ensure their formation, “dedicating the utmost concern to this task and accompanying them in the maturation of their faith.” (Directory for Catechesis, 116) We, in the Department of Youth Faith Formation, would like to assist you in this role. Besides the free catechist and youth ministry team formation we offer, another incredible opportunity are the *Forums for Catechesis and Youth Ministry*. The Forums provide a special environment where catechists and youth ministry team member from all over the archdiocese can gather to hear from national level speakers, learn tips and ideas from practitioners, be nourished spiritually through prayer and liturgy, and to be honored for their achievements.

Your catechists and youth ministry teams give so much to your community. Would you consider honoring them in return by sponsoring their participation in this year’s Forums? They will be held on October 15 at Cardinal Spellman High School in the Bronx and October 22 at St. Francis of Assisi in West Nyack. The cost is only $30 per person and includes lunch.

New to this year, we will be honoring the catechists that have received their Level 1, 2, 3, or 4 certificate, those who have served for 10, 15, or 20 years, as well as two special honorees. We would like to invite you to come with your catechists, concelebrate mass, and celebrate the gift these wonderful men and women are to your parish, the archdiocese, and the Church. Come for the day, for a few hours or just for the liturgy. If you would like to concelebrate mass at 9:15am please email Jennifer.Annuniziata@archny.org and specify that you will be attending the Forum in the Bronx or in West Nyack.

See the attached flyers for registration information.

And as always, please know our department is here to serve you and your community. Please feel free to reach out to any of us for advice, concerns, or resources.

In Christ,

Ela Milewska, Executive Director