



MESSAGE FOR CATECHETICAL MONTH 2026

**“Renewed by Christ,
Renewing the Church
Through Missionary Discipleship”**

“Be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”
Romans 12:2

A message to the Catechists of the Antilles

RENEWED BY CHRIST

Renewal begins in relationship with Jesus.

Beloved catechists, the theme chosen for Catechetical Month 2026, “Renewed by Christ, Renewing the Church Through Missionary Discipleship” invites us to reflect on what it means to be renewed by Christ, so that our missionary discipleship will renew the Church.

A CALL TO RENEWAL

Take the Word of God, read it, pray with it, and live it.

Our lives as disciples and catechists must be constantly renewed by Christ. What does this mean? It means that our relationship with Jesus must be renewed through the Word of God and the Sacraments. Our Catechetical Month this year falls within the Jubilee year of St. Francis of Assisi, who challenged people 800 years ago, and continues to challenge us today, to read the Gospel and live the Gospel. Everyday mother Church proclaims the Word of God in its liturgy, not just that we may read the text, but that reflecting and meditating on it, we can respond to God’s Word in ways that makes the Word alive in our lives and the world in which we inhabit. The Word of God has power to renew our lives, and to empower us to live His way. So, take the Word of God, read it, pray with it, and live it.

The second source of our renewal is our sacramental life, especially the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through the sacrament of the Eucharist, “we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body”. (CCC. 1331). Through the sacrament of Reconciliation, God makes our hearts return to him and gives us the strength to begin anew. (CCC 1432). The sacraments are moments of encounter with Christ that invite us to live in relationship with Him. Through these moments of encounter, Christ shares his life with us and invites us to continue His mission in the world. As St. Paul would say: “It is not I who live anymore but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20) Every time we intentionally open ourselves to the grace that each Sacrament offers us, we are renewed by Christ.

LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION

Faith formation does not stop. It is a constant renewal by and in Christ, as we open our lives to His transforming grace.

My dear catechists, the church speaks of lifelong faith formation, a faith formation that never stops by finishing a course, getting a degree, or even being recognized in the ministry of catechists. Lifelong Faith Formation is a constant renewal by and in Christ, and it begins when we open our lives to the transforming grace of Christ. We all need ongoing faith formation so that we can be fully open to the renewal that Jesus offers us every day through the Gospel and the Sacraments. (Directory for Catechesis 74)

LOVED, CALLED & SENT

YOU ARE LOVED

You are loved by Christ. You are loved as you are. You are a gift to the Church; you are a gift to others.

Being renewed by Christ means to know that Christ loves me. I am loved as I am. Even before I do anything for Christ, He loves me as I am. My dear catechists, you are loved by Christ. You are loved as you are. You are a gift. You are a gift to the Church; you are a gift to others. When we accept this truth, we are renewed. When we accept the truth that God loves us as we are then we become capable of responding to His love.

In 1965 Jackie DeShannon recorded and made popular the song: "What the world needs now is love sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of..." Some will say that we are living in a world that cries out for love, people are longing to be accepted, longing for healthy relationships, longing for peace. We are living in a world that cries for spiritual renewal.

My beloved catechists, your response to God's call to be a catechist is a vocation. Being a catechist is not an additional task or a job that you must do in your free time. Being a catechist is a humble journey with others, accompanying them in their faith formation. We are called to be there for others! Many times, I am sure that you would have experienced that journeying with others is stepping on holy ground, when others meet Christ, when they recognize that they are loved and forgiven. It is a great privilege to witness this. But being a catechist is also a responsibility. Today you and I are invited to renew the Church through Missionary Discipleship.

RENEWING THE CHURCH THROUGH MISSION

When St. Francis of Assisi heard from Jesus: "Francis, rebuild the church", he started to rebuild the church of San Damiano, the structure of the building, but soon after, St. Francis realized that Jesus was asking for something different. Jesus was asking him to rebuild the people, to reach out to them and tend to them. Renewed by Christ, we are sent out as missionary disciples. Disciples who renew the Church by reaching out to others. We can no longer stay in the church waiting for children, young people, and adults to come. Today, we need to be missionaries: on the road, in the communities, on the streets, and in our schools.

MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

We can no longer stay in the church waiting for others to come. We are called to meet people on the road, in communities, on the streets, and in our schools.

This year, we, catechists of the Antilles, through our theme are invited to be attentive to our renewal by Christ, so that we can renew the Church through our missionary discipleship. We are sent out to encounter others, to build relationships, to accompany others in their faith journey, to show them that they are loved as they are. We are sent out to witness that Christ is real, and that He is working in our lives. We are sent out to be instruments of peace.

Dear Catechists, we need you; the Church needs your authentic life with Christ. The Church needs your witness that Christ strengthens you daily; He gives you direction and guides you through the Gospel and the sacramental life.

As missionary disciples, we meet people where they are; we build communities where others feel welcome, where people know that there are people who care and are there for them. Our Church can and will be renewed by creating opportunities for forming missionary disciples. Catechesis leads others to a personal encounter with Christ. Catechesis also forms for mission, where others grow in faith and are made aware of their call to proclaim the Gospel and make the kingdom of God present in this world. (Directory for Catechesis 50)

A PRAYER FOR THE CATECHETICAL YEAR

I pray that this Catechetical Year 2026-2027 will truly be a time of renewal. May we be renewed by Christ, and may we commit ourselves to renewing the people of God through our ministry of catechesis.

On behalf of your Bishops, please accept our heartfelt thanks for your ministry and be assured of our prayers.

With every good wish and prayers,

Yours in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Derek Persaud', with a small cross symbol to its left.

John Derek Persaud

Bishop of Mandeville

Chair of the AEC Commission on Doctrine and Faith Formation