

Today is Catechetical Sunday. At the Sunday Mass, we will be blessing the catechists and teachers, as well as the school and religious education administrators.

In the blessing of the parents that happens at Baptism, we hear the words:

*God is the giver of all life, human and divine. May he bless the [parents] of this child. [They] will be the first teachers of their child in the ways of the faith. May they be the best of teachers, bearing witness to the faith by what they say and do, in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

So, before any child ever set foot in a school building, they had several years of 'religious education' from their parents ... particularly by their parents' "*witness to the faith by what they say and do*".

It gets even more intense when you dig into the Catechism:

*Education in the faith by the parents should begin in the child's earliest years. This already happens when family members help one another to grow in faith by the witness of a Christian life in keeping with the Gospel. Family catechesis precedes, accompanies, and enriches other forms of instruction in the faith. Parents have the mission of teaching their children to pray and to discover their vocation as children of God. The parish is the Eucharistic community and the heart of the liturgical life of Christian families; it is a privileged place for the catechesis ...*

So, what does that mean?

1. It means to put God first.
2. It means to live a Christian life.
3. It means to pray as a family.

The theme for this year's Catechetical Sunday is: "*Teaching About God's Gift of Forgiveness.*"

In the First Reading, we hear "*Seek the Lord while he may be found, call him while he is near.*"

In the Psalm, we repeated, almost as a reply to that: "*The Lord is near to all who call upon him.*"

St. Paul dives right into the reality of the situation ... namely, that we are, all of us, trapped between human and divine. There is the old saying that

*“To err is human to forgive divine.”* But in response to that, we should consider that *“Grace builds on nature.”*

We may be *“only human,”* but we also have God’s sanctifying grace to rise above our present condition.

And finally, in the Gospel Jesus tells the parable of the generous landowner. He pays everybody for one day’s work whether they worked an hour, three hours, six hours, or twelve hours.

What does that have to do with forgiveness?

No matter what you’ve done ... no matter how you present yourself to Christ ... anyone who comes to Jesus and repents is forgiven. Salvation does not come in first class, second class, or third class packages ... rather, for those who seek salvation in Jesus Christ ... who repent of their sins ... are saved.

God isn’t keeping score. Rather, God desires to pour out His love, and grace, and mercy upon all of us ... so long as we are willing to be honest about who we are.

The best way we can *“teach about God’s gift of forgiveness”* is to seek forgiveness when we need it ... and to give forgiveness as freely and generously as God does. Not counting the cost ... not keeping a ledger ... but by forgiving as we have been forgiven.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us desire to receive the graces we need to (1) put God first, (2) to live a Christian life, (3) and to make prayer a solid part of our lives.

And as we recite the Lord’s Prayer before Communion, let the words: *“forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us”* penetrate our hearts, our minds, and our souls ... so that we may *“teach about God’s gift of forgiveness”* by *“what we say and do”* ... through our words and our actions ... every day.