



The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle
Diocesan priests serving the poorest of the poor since 1958.

November
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"Go Forth and Make Disciples..."

Dear Friends,

Pope Francis explained, *"The catechist is a witness who lives the joy of the Gospel and shares it with others."* When we speak about mission, it is easy to imagine distant lands, new cultures, or journeys into the unknown. However, for us working with The Missionary Society of St. James the Apostle, here in Peru, the mission work begins here and now in our Faith Formation School. Over the past four years, the Faith Formation School for Catechists has grown into a beautiful and transformative expression of that mission. It has reformed not only how we teach but how we live and share our faith. We have 125 catechists training in four different age groups.

The idea of a Faith Formation School was born to form our catechists not only as people sharing religion lessons, but as disciples who witness their faith with their lives and share it with others. The participants hail from three parishes where the Society is serving. Together they study, pray, and reflect on the Word of God. They receive guidance from experienced instructors and pastoral leaders who accompany them as mentors. The atmosphere is one of fraternity, prayer, and shared mission.

Every formation cycle begins with a Mass and prayer. In the stillness, we listen to God's voice that continues to echo in our hearts; we remember why we are here: because we have been called. Throughout the year, our program combines theological depth with pastoral practice. We study scripture, the sacraments, and Church history, and apply it to our daily life. It is much more than a series of classes; it is a journey of faith, helping catechists deepen their personal relationship with Christ so they can better share His message with others. Each class invites us to see how doctrine breathes when it encounters the realities of our people: the hopes of families, the struggles of the youth, the questions of those searching for God. Formation, then, is not a set of lessons but a path of conversion.

Our catechists often say that this process has opened their eyes to a new way of understanding mission. Lourdes, one of our participants, explained: *"Before, I thought my task was to teach children about God. Now I realize that God was using them to teach me"*. Those words capture the heart of our formation, mutual learning. We discover Christ, not only in books or lectures, but in the faces and stories of those we serve.

Therefore, through the School of Faith Formation for Catechists, we are helping those who teach the faith to grow not only in knowledge but also in spiritual maturity and missionary commitment.





A mature faith is not about having all the answers but about learning to trust even when answers seem far away. In our Faith Formation School, we encourage catechists to face their questions honestly, to bring their doubts into prayer, and to discover that faith matures precisely when it wrestles with reality. We break into small groups, to pray and share experiences, and discern what it means to follow Christ today. Many catechists rediscover a faith that becomes friendship. During one of our sessions, we invited participants to write a letter to God about their faith journey: what they believe, what they struggle with, and what they desire. One catechist wrote: *"Sometimes I feel like Peter, walking on the water. I want to believe, but I'm afraid. Yet every time I start to sink, I feel Jesus reaching out His hand again."* A mature faith is one that keeps walking even when the waves rise. It does not deny fear but learns to trust God amidst it. We also talk about faith in difficult

times: illness, loss, family crises, because the catechists cannot accompany others if they have not allowed God to enter their own pain. It is important that the catechists be better prepared to serve in their parishes and also more aware of their calling to be witnesses of faith in everyday life. They need to listen more, judge less, and radiate peace.

When we serve God, as a catechist with love, God takes care of the rest. One catechist said, *"I went to teach, but I came back evangelized"*. This missionary spirit has renewed our parishes. Faith has become visible, joyful, and contagious. Our catechists are now involved in other ministries (youth, liturgy, choir, pastoral social) and



they bear an enthusiasm born from their encounter with Christ. Beyond the parish, some have started neighborhood bible groups or prayer services. They are living proof that formation leads to transformation, and transformation leads to mission. Our Faith Formation School ultimately points outward, to serve more effectively in their parishes. Mission is less about *speaking* and more about *being*. Looking back, we see how far we have come, while knowing more remains ahead. Formation is never complete; faith is never static; mission never ends. Our mission continues to grow, and we invite all who feel called to serve as catechists to join this journey of formation and faith with us. As one young catechist said: *"This school didn't just teach me how to teach; it taught me how to live my faith with joy"*.



We believe that forming catechists is one of the most important missions of the Church, in order to build strong foundations for mission. Our Faith Formation School for Catechists is more than a program; it is a living expression of what it means to be Catholic today. Through a process grounded in formation, a mature relationship of faith, and a renewed missionary spirit, we are witnessing lives that are touched by the quiet and powerful work of the Holy Spirit.

May our School of Faith Formation for Catechists remind us and others that the mission begins here, where hearts are formed, faith matures, and disciples are sent into the world, carrying the fire of love: “Go forth and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19). For us, this work begins at home, among our people, and within ourselves. We are very grateful to the Missionary Society of St James the Apostle and all of our benefactors, who make this mission possible. ~ *Fr. Nilton Íman Chero.*



With Every Good Wish in Christ,

Rev. David Costello, Director



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