



Brazil has its first 19 instituted Catechists

19 aprile 2024



Brazil has its first 19 instituted Catechists. On Saturday 13 April, during the Mass at the General Assembly of the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), the Archbishop of Santa Maria, Dom Leomar Brustolin, conferred the Ministry of Catechist on candidates representing the 19 regional bases of the CNBB.

During his homily, at the Santuário Nacional de Aparecida, in front of a large congregation, Dom Brustolin reiterated the importance of the ministry of catechist and its fundamental role in the proclamation of the Word of God. “What would our Church be without your mission?”, he said, focusing on the need to strengthen the proclamation of the Gospel and the accompaniment of people in the Christian community.

During the first part of the rite, the President of the Biblical-Catechetical Commission entrusted a cross and a bible to the first group of new catechists, 18 women and one man. The cross in the hands of the catechist is the symbol of faith and deep commitment to the work of evangelizing. By immersing themselves in the Sacred Scriptures, those who are called to accompany others in Christian formation find answers to life's deepest questions and a source of hope and consolation.

The Archbishop then invited the new catechists to pray for those who called them to this ministry, for their families and for their home communities. He encouraged them to remain steadfast in their vocation, trusting in the constant presence of the Lord in their lives.

Among the catechists instituted at the ceremony was Deolinda Melchior da Silva, an indigenous woman from the Macux people, in the Uiramutã area, in the far north of the country. She has been working as a catechist with her people for 42 years, helping to create a Church with an indigenous face in the Amazon region. The President of the Biblical-Catechetical Commission said that Deolinda's

presence "shows the greatness of the faith of this land and, above all, how much the Gospel needs to be enculturated and incarnated in the land of Brazil."

The role of the formally instituted catechists will be fundamental to the evangelization plans the Bishops of Brazil are drawing up for coming years to take account of the great multiculturalism of the country. "As soon as Pope Francis established the Ministry of Catechist, in 2021," explained Father Wagner Carvalho, coordinator of the Biblical-Catechetical Commission of the CNBB, "the Commission got to work, developing an itinerary, and drawing up the criteria for the institution of the ministry here in Brazil. In 2022, this text was approved during the General Assembly of Bishops. In many dioceses, diocesan schools have provided a useful space for initial and ongoing training."

The celebration of the Rite of Institution of Catechists, he continued, "responds to the Holy Father's request for us to be an outgoing Church, that is, always ready to go towards the different cultural and existential realities that make up our country, to recognize the gifts of the Spirit. It is a grace to recognize how fruitful the power of the Gospel is in the hearts of our people who give themselves and serve as God's instruments in evangelizing action."