



3/Sunday of the Word of God. Interviews with catechists and lectors 17 January 2024



Maria Erivan Silva, of the Archdiocese of Fortaleza, Brazil, will be instituted as a Catechist.

When did you feel the call to serve as a Catechist?

"I have been a catechist since I was 14, when I was preparing for the sacrament of Confirmation in my home parish of São João Batista - Horizonte-Ce. I started out working with 7 and 8 year olds. At the beginning what I loved about the Church was the liturgy, especially the singing. In my teenage heart there was a desire to sing in church!

"When I started serving as a catechist, however, I really found the answer to my desire to serve the Church and to contribute to its evangelizing mission. From that day on, I have continued to teach catechesis, educating children, young people and adults in the faith; today I train and accompany catechists at different levels, trying to support the catechesis of initiation into Christian life with catechumenal inspiration in parishes. I can say with all my heart that in catechesis I have found my calling as a person, as a lay person, as a Catholic Christian, aware of my baptismal mission."

What role does the catechist have in your diocesan Church and in your country?

"The catechist in the Archdiocese of Fortaleza is a person passionate about Jesus Christ, about the Church, who feels deep within the desire to participate in the mission of initiating people in the faith. We feel a desire to accompany the many men and women who want to know Jesus Christ and his Church, with a loving determination to go wherever people are, even to the most remote places. Catechists are men and women who work, who take care of their families and who put their Saturdays and Sundays at the service of others - being with the people entrusted to them by the Church through catechesis in small communities and chapels."

What emotions do you feel at the thought that you will receive this ministry from the hands of Pope Francis?

"I am very excited. I feel a mixture of surprise, joy and honor at such a great gift. I don't know how I will feel on the 21st, at the time of the celebration. I don't think I deserved such a great grace, but I accepted it with humility and silently said to the Lord: 'Here I am'. To be there, in front of Pope Francis, receiving the Ministry through the laying on of his hands, is an amazing event, a great blessing for me, and I dare say for all the catechists of our country and of the Archdiocese of Fortaleza. Pope Francis, in my opinion, is a person who, with his loving way of doing things, manages to say exactly what people need to hear. He touches hearts without needing too many words. And as Peter's successor, he offers the Church of today a new way of looking at the poor and excluded and of caring for our common home. For me, this is undoubtedly a point of reference that tells the world that Christ calls everyone to himself and gives them new life."