

JANET SCHAEFFLER, OP

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PRESENT  
MOMENT  
PRAYER

*for Catechists*

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# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	5	Attentive Listening . . . . .	20
Hospitality . . . . .	7	New Ways . . . . .	21
Witness . . . . .	8	It's about the Resurrection . . . . .	22
We! . . . . .	9	Beyond the Familiar . . . . .	23
Courageous Response . . . . .	10	Concerned or Complacent? . . . . .	24
The Gift of Joy . . . . .	11	Today's News . . . . .	25
The Blessing of Family . . . . .	12	Never-ending Gratitude . . . . .	26
Centered in Jesus . . . . .	13	Cloud of Witnesses . . . . .	27
New Surprises . . . . .	14	Revolution of Tenderness . . . . .	28
Called to Holiness . . . . .	15	Care for Our Common Home . . . . .	29
Centrality of Family . . . . .	16	Missionary Disciples . . . . .	30
Learning to Cry . . . . .	17		
God in Each Person . . . . .	18		
No Couch Potatoes . . . . .	19		

## Introduction

**M**ost spiritual writers and guides, as well as today's self-help books, remind us that one of the keys to living a healthy, wholesome, and holy life is to live in the present moment. As disciples, as catechists, we live in the present moment through everyday prayer, reflective awareness, and loving action. These three responses to life make our lives a present-moment prayer.

Pope Francis inspires and challenges us to live this “present-moment prayer” in his motivating words and in his faith-filled life.

Often in his writings, he speaks to us about how the Christian way of life is a blending of three realities that can never be separated: prayer, reflective awareness, and action.

Awareness and prayer are our foundation: “In the face of so many wounds that hurt us and could harden our hearts, we are called to dive into the sea of prayer, which is the sea of God’s boundless love, to taste his tenderness” (Homily, March 5, 2014).

But being a Christian also demands action. It is, says Pope Francis, “not healthy to love silence while fleeing interaction with others, to want peace and quiet while avoiding activity, to seek prayer while disdain[ing] service” (*Gaudete et Exsultate*, 26).

This booklet endeavors—through capturing a few of Pope Francis’ words—to provide time for all three responses: opportunities for prayer, time for reflection, and suggestions for actions in our everyday lives and in our lives of ministry as catechists.

Some of Pope Francis’ words quoted here are from messages explicitly directed to catechists. He has always exhibited deep love and intense support for the catechists within the church. Many other quotes come from his various writings or homilies addressed to all Catholics (and, at times, to all people). These messages, too, have profound meaning for our faith journey and for our privileged journey as catechists.

As you pray, reflect, talk with others, and act on Pope Francis’ words, may God the potter continue to form you. May your openness to our gospel mission keep reshaping you for the privileged work of present-moment prayer in building the reign of God.

*Janet Schaeffler, OP*

# — Hospitality —

*“Thank you for your quiet, faithful work each week, for your ability to be Good Samaritans who offer hospitality out of faith, by being familiar faces and dear hearts...”*

✠ AUGUST 2012 LETTER TO CATECHISTS OF BUENOS AIRES

Throughout Scripture, hospitality is one of the marks of God’s people (Hebrews 13:2).

Especially in our times, each parish and (arch)diocese is called to be welcoming. Pope Francis reminds us that our hospitality is rooted in faith, expressing itself through care, interest, and unconditional love.

Pope Francis compares catechists to the good Samaritan, the person who stops what he is doing to care for another, the person who gives from his heart, a person who doesn’t respond just once but returns (for as long as he is needed).

**APPLICATION FOR MINISTRY** » Catechists have a unique opportunity to be hospitable, to be constantly caring to many, not just to our learners but to their families: presence, acceptance, listening, affirming phone calls, and notes. As you think about your time with your learners, how do your environment, your words, your actions, and your concern convey hospitality? What else might you do?

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**MEDITATIVE MUSING** » How is my heart open and hospitable in all the situations of my daily life?

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**PRESENT-MOMENT PRAYER** » *God of hospitality, thank you for your call that welcomed me as a catechist. Teach me to take things slowly and faithfully, so there is always time for hospitality from my heart.*

## Witness

*“Even when the task seems too much, the resources too few, the obstacles too great, it should never be forgotten that yours is a holy work....The message you bring will take root all the more firmly in people’s hearts if you are not only a teacher but also a witness. Your example should speak to everyone of the beauty of prayer, the power of mercy and forgiveness, the joy of sharing in the Eucharist....”*

✠ ADDRESS TO CATECHISTS IN UGANDA, NOVEMBER 27, 2015

After the first day of catechetical sessions, a dad asked his son the name of his catechist. The young boy responded, “Oh, I forget; but she must be Jesus’ grandmother.” Puzzled, the dad inquired why he thought that. The youngster replied, “That’s all she talked about.”

How we talk about our relationship with Jesus is a significant beginning. How we live the everyday instances—of disappointments, joys, worries, concern for others, and respect for all—deepens our call to be witnesses. In our everyday living, we are the face of God.

**APPLICATION FOR MINISTRY** » Pope Francis is echoing the words of Pope Paul VI: “Modern man [and woman] listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he [she] does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.” How am I a catechist and a witness?

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**MEDITATIVE MUSING** » Because of my words and actions, how would people describe me as being related to Jesus?

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**PRESENT-MOMENT PRAYER** » *Strengthening God, touch my lips, so that I may proclaim you; guide my life, so that I may live as a witness of your unconditional love.*