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Catechetical Sunday: 'Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope'

By **NICHOLAS SOELLNER**
Associate Director of the Office of Catechesis

A publication I recently read shared the following observation:

"A further consideration is a general lack of interest on the part of the children and youth in religion. They are taken up with other things and are attracted by games and exercises of physical culture, or by worldly shows where not infrequently moral discipline is relaxed; and thus led away, even on feast-days, the result is failure to attend the parish catechetical instruction. Thereupon forgetfulness and neglect of the things of God . . . take root in early childhood and grow worse with the years."

As uncanny as this description is to our modern situation, it may sur-

prise you that this quote comes from a document written in 1935! Ninety years ago, Pope Pius XI's "On Better Care for Catechetical Teaching" addressed a situation many Catholics in the U.S. are still concerned about today. For those who imagine the pre-Vatican II era of the church akin to halcyon days, with the Baltimore Catechism in wide circulation and the traditional Latin Mass as the liturgical norm, here is evidence that even in a time when society was generally more Christian than it is now, there remained a grave concern for the future of the youth in our Church.

The annual celebration of Catechetical Sunday exists precisely for this reason. To call to mind a renewed sense of vigilance for our mission to hand on the faith taught

See **SUNDAY**, page 5



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Catechetical Sunday
September 21, 2025

Pope Leo canonizes two young saints, the first of his pontificate

By **CAROL GLATZ**
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The greatest risk in life is to waste it by not seeking to follow God's plan, Pope Leo XIV said, proclaiming two new saints — two young laymen of the 20th and 21st centuries.

"Sts. Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis are an invitation to all of us, especially young peo-

ple, not to squander our lives, but to direct them upward and make them masterpieces," the pope said Sept. 7.

"The simple but winning formula of their holiness," he said, is accessible to everyone at any time. "They encourage us with their words: 'Not I, but God,' as Carlo used to say.

And Pier Giorgio: 'If you have God at the center of all your actions, then you will reach the end.'"

Before canonizing the first saints of his pontificate, Pope Leo greeted the more than 80,000 faithful who had gath-

See **SAINTS**, page 5

OSV News photo/Matteo Minnella, Reuters
A nun holds a picture of Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati on the day Pope Leo XIV leads the canonization Mass of Blessed Carlo Acutis, a British-born Italian boy who will become the first millennial to be made a Catholic saint, and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican, Sept. 7.



Donations total \$3,300 during ninth annual Hunger Bowl game

By **JOHN ROHLF**
The Message assistant editor

A total of \$3,300 was collected for the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry during the Friday Knights Hunger Bowl clash between Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial High Schools.

Mark Hackert, co-chair for the ninth annual Friday Knights Hunger Bowl, confirmed they collected \$3,300 at the gate and at half-time during Friday night's game at Enlow Field in Evansville. As of Sept. 14, just under \$33,000 had been raised for the food pantry through this initiative. See **HUNGER**, page 7



The Message photos by John Rohlf
Above, Donations are collected at the gates during the Friday Knights Hunger Bowl matchup between Mater Dei and Reitz Memorial. Reitz Memorial wide receiver De'Andre Fellows, at left, carries the ball during the Sept. 12 game.