



February 16, 2026

Dear Pastor, Director of Religious Education or Catholic School Principal:

Please find enclosed information about the 10th Annual Sr. Marie Celinie Joubert Catechetical Award for Excellence in Forming the Faithful. *The National Directory for Catechesis* (NDC) states that: “The Church entrusts the ministry of catechesis to exemplary followers of Christ with unquestioned personal integrity and moral character.” (#55b) Later on, the NDC stipulates that one of the roles of a Diocesan Catechetical Office and its leader is to: “encourage and motivate catechists through diocesan and parish commissioning rites, recognition ceremonies, catechetical awards, and ongoing affirmation.” (NDC #59c)

In 2014, after a year of study and discussion, Bishop Estévez approved **The Sr. Marie Celinie Joubert Catechetical Award for Excellence in Forming the Faithful**. Sr. Marie Celinie Joubert, SSJ, was one of the original 8 religious sisters who came to Florida at the request of Bishop Augustine Verot. Her ministry extended not only to the original mission of educating the African American population in St. Augustine but to some of the early outposts in Fernandina Beach as well as to Jacksonville’s north side. Her mission was to teach African American students first in St. Augustine, then at St. Catherine School on Main Street in Jacksonville. Over the years, this school moved often and eventually became the location we know today, St. Pius V (1921). Sr. Celinie and two other Sisters also went north to found St. Michael School in Fernandina Beach. When the yellow fever epidemic struck while the Sisters were on retreat in St. Augustine, they returned to visit and care for the sick in Fernandina. Sr. Celinie died on September 22, 1877, while tending to the needs of the victims of yellow fever.

Bishop Pohlmeier has continued this recognition of those who excel in catechetical ministries within the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Enclosed you will find the criteria for the awards as well as a nomination sheet. You may nominate all you feel are deserving of recognition for their work in forming the faithful in the doctrine of the Church. The nomination sheet may be copied as you see the need. Criteria have been set up for this award based on a wide variety of catechetical endeavors. The first set of criteria is for parish and school catechists, including those who work in OCIA and in Adult Faith Formation. The second set is for the leaders of these ministries.

A committee will be formed that will determine the honorees. The committee will have rotating members based on the nominees...so a member of the committee would not be someone who has nominated an individual. A reception for the honorees will be held on Monday, April 20, 2026. The deadline for nominations is March 27, 2026.

Thank you in advance for recognizing excellence in catechetical ministry and the need to recognize it! Please do not hesitate to call the Office with any questions you may have on this recognition.
May our good God enrich you in all that you do!

With every good wish, I am

Erin A. McGeever

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Director of Christian Formation