

Celebrating the Third Millennium: Evangelized Through Adoration

(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)

Opening Prayer

Let us put aside the busyness of our lives as we gather here to share, to pray and to be open to God through the many ways we give adoration to our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture

“The Lord appeared to Abraham and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ So Abraham built an altar there to the Lord who appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country east of Bethel, pitching his tent with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. He built an altar there to the Lord and invoked the Lord by name.” (*Genesis 12:7-8*)

(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)

Introduction

The millennium brings us the opportunity to reflect on a variety of our Catholic Traditions and to recommit to those that have been part of our heritage for so long. The purpose of this program is to affirm the importance that adoration has within the Catholic Tradition so that we can begin to include adoration as part of our conversion within and our outreach to others.

(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)

Documentary Tradition

In our Catholic tradition, the experience of adoration is expressed by reflecting upon God with reverence and awe. Through this simple act of devotion, we come to acknowledge God’s intimate love and glory in continual creation. Adoration is much more than a precise moment in our day. It is the directing of our whole being toward God in every activity. This turning to God is at the heart of conversion. Participation in the sacraments for us and that of our church community can deepen our conversion. As adoration affects our spiritual and mental attitudes, we experience a turning within our hearts that causes us to grow in our relationship with God and our understanding of what it means to be Christian. This moves us to reach out to others and share our faith with them.

We may experience traditional forms of adoration such as sitting before the Blessed Sacrament, going on a pilgrimage, participating in Forty Hours, novenas and First Fridays but there are new forms as well, such as meditating on the scriptures and centering prayer, seeking out natural settings, and walking the labyrinth. These forms of adoration constantly remind us of the reality represented in the adoration itself, which is God’s merciful love.

“The dual dimension of the Christian liturgy as a response of faith and love to the spiritual blessings the Father bestows on us is thus evident. On the one hand, the Church, united with her Lord and in the Holy Spirit, blesses the Father for his inexpressible gift in her adoration, praise, and thanksgiving. On the other hand, until the consummation of God’s plan, the Church never ceases to present to the Father the offering of his own gifts and to beg him to send the Holy Spirit upon that offering, upon herself, upon the faithful, and upon the whole world, so through communion in the death and resurrection of

Christ the Priest, and by the power of the Spirit, these divine blessings will bring forth the fruits of life to the praise of his glorious grace.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1083)

(The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)

Discussion Questions

1. What forms of adoration have you experienced and found meaningful?
2. How could adoration affect the way we celebrate this year?
3. How can your Serra Club participate in different forms of adoration during the next year?

Closing Reflection

As Christ continues to make all things new in us, we turn our minds and hearts to praise and thanksgiving through our acts of adoration. By opening doorways in this new millennium, we are called to be children of light. What better way to do this than to direct our adoration toward the Lord in the living mission of Serra International. Let us pray for vocations to meet the needs of all humanity.

Bibliography

Pope John Paul II. *Celebrate 2000: Reflections on Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father*. Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1996.

Pope John Paul II. *On the Coming of the Third Millennium (Tertio Millenio Adveniente)*. Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1994.

Roman Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1992 English 1994.

Celebrating the Third Millennium: Reconciled Through Community

(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)

Opening Prayer

Lord God, we are all too often wrapped up with ourselves, lost in a seemingly indifferent world, where we allow ourselves to become cold to those who are around us. Help us to reconcile the past and call us into new ways of caring for each person around us. We are able to pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture

“Therefore, brothers since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love, and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (*Hebrews 10: 19-25*)

(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)

Introduction

To experience reconciliation reminds us of God’s mercy and helps us to experience divine forgiveness by being reconnected with others. The purpose of this program is to identify the parish community as home to reconciliation and forgiveness, so we can come to encounter Jesus Christ in the reception of Holy Communion.

(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)

Documentary Tradition

“A parish is definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a particular church; the pastoral care of the parish is entrusted to a pastor as its own shepherd under the authority of the diocesan bishop. It is the place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. The parish initiates the Christian people into the ordinary expression of the liturgical life: it gathers them together in this celebration; it teaches Christ’s saving doctrine; it practices the charity of the Lord in good works and brotherly love...” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church # 2179*)

The church founded by Christ, for the salvation of all, is a model society. Our parish community fills the gap in our experience of being disconnected, by embracing the spirit of reconciliation with God and one another. In essence the parish is where Church happens because people come together in faith. There the word is proclaimed, sacraments are celebrated, the community gathers as the people of God, and their lives are a living demonstration of gospel values.

Through our involvement in our faith community we recognize our need for healing and reconciliation. We have the opportunity to constantly begin anew and to acknowledge our need for forgiveness from God and one another. There is the recognition that we are an Eucharistic people opening the door to a new millennium with the challenge to examine the ways we participate in the community of believers. We are invited to look at how we can be instruments of Christian unity. As we enter the church community through our baptism, we celebrate the Eucharist, and embrace the spirit of reconciliation with God and one another.

(The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)

Discussion Questions

1. What is your experience of reconciliation?
2. How has that experience drawn you closer to God, or others?
3. In what ways do you participate in your parish community?
4. How does Serra International serve the Christian community?

Closing Reflection

A basic element of being human is experiencing relationships that are strained or completely ripped apart. The alienation that occurs can only be removed by forgiveness and healing in our relationships, with Christ, the world, and daily life. Once this is accomplished we can experience a complete change of heart that gives birth to radical change in our lives.

Bibliography

Pope John Paul II. *Celebrate 2000: Reflection on Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father*. Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1996.

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Celebrating the Third Millennium: Celebrated as Serrans

(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)

Opening Prayer

Strengthen, O God, what you have begun in us. You gave your apostles the Holy Spirit, commanding them to hand down that gift to the faithful. Look with favor on us as we continue in this tradition through our efforts as Serrans. We make our prayer in Jesus name. Amen.

Scripture

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, “ABBA, Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.” (*Galatians 4:4-7*)

(Take time for silent reflection, then read the Introduction out loud.)

Introduction

The Church prepared for the millennium by reflecting on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit during the years of 1997 through 2000. Serrans not only celebrated this event in their parishes but also celebrated their special role in serving the Church. This program will help Serrans appreciate their responsibility for the future by promoting vocations to religious life and the priesthood.

(Introduce a speaker or the facilitator can read the following paragraphs with pauses in between.)

Documentary Tradition

A Final Word On The Great Jubilee by John Paul II,

“I invite the faithful to raise to the Lord fervent prayers to obtain the light and assistance necessary for the preparation and celebration of the forthcoming Jubilee. I exhort my Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and the ecclesial communities entrusted to them to open their hearts to the promptings of the Spirit. He will not fail to arouse enthusiasm and lead people to celebrate the Jubilee with renewed faith and generous participation.

I entrust this responsibility of the whole church to the maternal intercession of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer. She, the mother of Fairest Love, will be for Christians on the way to the Great Jubilee of the third millennium the star, which safely guides their steps to the Lord. May the unassuming young woman of Nazareth, who two thousand years ago offered to the world the Incarnate Word, lead the men and women of the new millennium toward the One who is true light that enlightens every man.” (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente #59*)

“Because human nature was assumed, not absorbed, in the mysterious union of the Incarnation, the Church was led over the course of centuries to confess the full reality of Christ’s human soul, with its operations of intellect and will, and of his human body. In parallel fashion, she had to recall on each occasion that Christ’s human nature belongs, as his own, to the divine person of the Son of God, who assumed it. Everything that Christ is and does in this nature derives from one of the Trinity. The Son of God therefore communicates to his humanity his own personal mode of

existence in the Trinity. In his soul as in his body, Christ thus expresses humanly the divine ways of the Trinity... “(*Catechism of the Catholic Church # 470*)

(The facilitator can read the Discussion Questions out loud for general or small group discussion.)

Discussion Questions

1. With what expression of celebration are you most comfortable?
2. How can you participate in celebrating a year of favor?
3. What can your Serra Club do to highlight this year and participate with rest of the Church?

Closing Reflection

As Christians we have a story to tell. We know we are called to share it with the world. As Serrans we also have another story to tell the world: one of service to the Church and commitment to personal vocations and the priesthood. May this Great Jubilee which led us into this millennium be the door through which we walked with faith and hope. May we continue to share and celebrate our common heritage around the world.

Bibliography

Pope John Paul II. *Celebrate 2000: Reflection on Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father*. Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1996.

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