

Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ

December 25

(Read the Opening Prayer and Scripture out loud.)

Opening Prayer

God our Father, we rejoice in the birth of our Savior, Jesus, who made us your children. May we share in His life by living as He taught and be welcomed into your kingdom where He lives and reigns with you forever and ever. Amen.

Scripture

“When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go then to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told about this child.” *(Luke 2: 15-17)*

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

Introduction

Through Jesus, a great light came into the world. He showed us how to love each other and his Father. When we love as He did, we glimpse peace and know joy. With a humble beginning, shepherds came to see the wonder of this child. They heard the good news and were filled with wonder to be the first to behold the salvation of all nations through the power of God. The purpose of this program is to appreciate the revelation of God is given to the simplest and most humble.

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

Documentary Tradition

“To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: ‘To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ‘From the beginning was the ‘one who the Father consecrated and sent into the world.’” *(Catechism of the Catholic Church, #437)*

The birth of Jesus is surrounded by a variety of theological themes. How one experiences the miracle of the incarnation depends on what perspective they take when reading the infancy narratives. It is always interesting to take a position or view from the least obvious. For example what was the experience of the shepherd’s journey to Bethlehem? Many were expecting the Messiah to come in great splendor. Jesus’ humble beginnings set in motion the mission to be with and for the least powerful of this world. Throughout his life Jesus’ main concern was not for the great and powerful, but for the common people, the poor and the hungry and disadvantaged and the unloved. It was appropriate that he was born in simple surroundings. The shepherds were fitting visitors, open to receive him at birth.

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

Discussion Questions

1. Why did God give the birth announcement to shepherds?
2. When Jesus lived on earth, he always paid special attention to the outcasts: prostitutes, lepers, tax collectors, etc. If he were here today, to whom would he pay attention?

2. How can we as Serrans, receive Jesus' simplicity as a gift to our efforts to foster vocations to the priesthood and religious life?

Closing Reflection

As we encounter the glitter and bright lights of the Christmas season we can remember that Jesus came to bring light to the darkness. The shepherds are like many of us. We experience times when darkness is real and pervasive, when danger, confusion and despair are part of life. The light given to us by Jesus burns through the terrors of the world and replaces them with confidence and hope. Essentially, the message given to the shepherds in the field was, those in darkness can see the light when their hearts and minds are open to God.