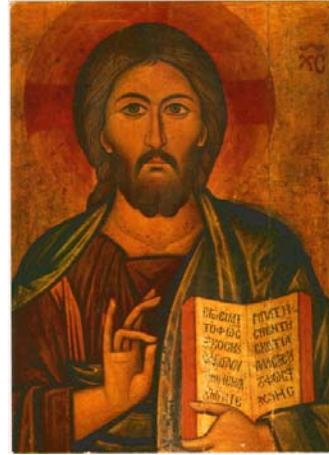


Catholic to the Core: Exploring Catholic Faith Identity

By Tom East



Purpose

Our faith identity is an important part of our personal identity. As our Catholic faith becomes the compass for our lives, the elements of our faith identity shape our actions and choices. Young adolescents are in a crucial time for naming, forming and strengthening characteristics of their identity. This session explores the topic of Catholic faith identity and gives youth an opportunity to reflect on the role of faith in their life.

Session at a Glance

7:00 PM	Welcome, Opening Prayer, Community Building <i>Extend the Session: Writing Acrostic Poems</i> (add 20 to 30 minutes)
7:15 PM	Catholic Faith Reflection Process
7:35 PM	Tour of Catholic Beliefs and Practices
8:05PM	Growing in Catholic Faith Identity
8:20 PM	Closing Prayer
8:30 PM	Announcements and Refreshments

Extend the Session: Writing Acrostic Poems (20 to 30 minutes)

In this session extension, participants continue to explore the idea of identity by creating an acrostic poem for a holy person and for themselves. An acrostic is a type of poem that is a list of words or phrases. The first letter of each word or phrase creates a word or phrase. For instance, an acrostic for the movie character, Shrek, could be:

Scary at first
Huggable once you get to know him
Really green
Enchanted
Kisser of Princess Fiona

An acrostic for St. Mary could be:

Mother of Jesus
Admitted for her gentle courage
Regarded as the first disciple
Yes, was her answer to God's invitation!

Pass out index cards and markers and invite youth to work together in small groups to create an acrostic for a saint or a holy person that they admire. Provide examples such as the ones above. Allow several minutes for groups to work and then provide an opportunity for groups to share their responses.

After the sharing, invite participants to work individually to create an acrostic using their name. Allow several minutes. Ask for volunteers to share their acrostic. Remind youth that their identity is always growing and changing, like the saints and holy persons. We all can choose to have our faith become an important part of our identity.

Materials Needed

- Nametags (see #1 in Prepare in Advance) and fine-tip markers, sign-in sheet
- A pencil or pen for each participant
- **Handout 1, Reflecting on Catholic Faith Identity**, one for each participant
- **Handout 2, Catholic Beliefs and Practices**, one for each participant (copy double-sided)
- **Resource 1, Witness Preparation**, for each of the four witnesses
- **Resource 2, Witness Resource for Catholic Beliefs and Practices**, for each of the four witnesses
- **Resource 3, Call of Samuel Choral Reading**, for each of the four readers (optional)
- Song for closing prayer: [“In This Place”](#) by Trevor Thomson and Victoria Thomson (*Spirit & Song*, OCP) or [“Somos El Cuerpo de Cristo—We are the Body of Christ”](#) by Jaime Cortez (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)

Prepare in Advance

1. Consider involving high school youth to assist you in this session. They could assist with the witness presentations (see Step 5) and with the preparation of the four stations for the Tour of Catholic Beliefs and Practices (see Step 6). It would be a wonderful witness for the middle school youth to see the high school youth and adults working side by side.
2. Have nametags available for each participant. Ask participants to make nametags as they arrive.
3. Prepare a prayer focus area by covering a small table with a cloth. On the table place a Bible, a cross and a candle. Have matches or a lighter close by.
4. Invite two participants (youth or adults) to proclaim the readings for prayer. One reader will proclaim Ephesians 3:14-16 for the Opening Prayer, and the second reader will proclaim 1 Samuel 3:1-10 for the Closing Prayer. There is also an option for proclaiming this reading as a drama or as a choral reading

using **Resource 3, Call of Samuel Choral Reading**. This option will require four readers.

5. Prepare a newsprint sheet entitled: Prayer Responses. Include these two responses:
 1. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.
 2. Hear our prayer.
6. Prepare to provide an example of your personal reflections for **Handout 1, Reflecting on Catholic Faith Identity**.
7. Select four youth or adults to prepare in advance to provide a brief witness presentation as part of the Tour of Catholic Beliefs and Practices. You will need one witness for each section:
 - Beliefs
 - Prayer and Worship
 - Practices
 - Justice and ServiceWitnesses should prepare by using the question in **Resource 1, Witness Preparation**, and by reviewing the materials for their section in **Resource 2, Witness Resource for Catholic Beliefs and Practices**. This could prove to be a great time for an intergenerational witness. These speakers would need to collaborate together in advance. It could be a very powerful experience to see that across the generations it is One Faith with many expressions.
8. Prepare displays for the Tour of Catholic Beliefs and Practices. The display should give the feeling of a museum by providing symbols, objects, and pictures that correspond with the elements of each section. Begin by setting up four tables.

For the Belief section, consider the following:

- Images of the Trinity
- Crèche with an infant Jesus
- Crucifix
- Image of the risen Jesus
- Picture of your parish's worship space
- Picture of St. Peter's Cathedral / Vatican Square

For the Prayer and Worship section, consider the following:

- Symbols of liturgy – Sacramentary, Lectionary, chalice, ciborium
- Symbols of sacraments – basin of water, towel, alb, chrism
- Paschal candle
- Advent wreath
- Bowl with ashes
- Statues of saints or holy cards with saint images

- Rosary
- Book of Catholic prayers, opened to standard prayers such as the Hail Mary, Our Father, or Glory Be

For the Practices section, consider the following:

- Image of the Ten Commandments
- Bible
- Symbol of forgiveness such as a torn heart that is mended
- Pictures of your parish community involved in community life
- List of ministries in your parish
- Donuts and juice

(Note to Leader: You could set the refreshments up at this station to be enjoyed later.)

For the Justice and Service station, consider the following:

- Globe or map of the world
- Bowl of rice
- List of seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching
- Food collected in bags
- Money in a basket
- Picket sign with slogans such as – Stand for Human Rights, Justice for All, etc. Consider inserting your parish’s own priorities as the picket signs (or use priorities of the diocese, such as housing or immigration issues).

9. Prepare refreshments for after the session. Consider serving donuts and juice since this a “traditional” after-Mass snack.

Session Outline

Welcome, Opening Prayer, Community Building (15 minutes)

Warmly welcome the participants as they arrive. Invite them to put on their nametags. Introduce the session in these or similar words:

As you wrote your name on your nametag, you probably didn’t even think about it. It is just your name, you see it everyday. Our names identify who we are, but there is more to each of us than just our name. Our identity is made up of the people and communities we care about, the things we believe, the things we care about, the things we are good at, the things we like and don’t like and much, much more. Tonight we are going to explore how faith is part of our identity. So let us begin with prayer...

Opening Prayer

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

We gather in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Invite the reader to proclaim Ephesians 3:14-16. Allow a few moments of quiet reflection.

Prayer Leader:

Loving God, we are a family gathered in your name as a sign of your love. Be with us tonight as we remember you and your friendship. Strengthen our inner selves and guide us as we explore all of the ways that we can grow in your friendship. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Community Building - Guessing Game: Joe is Someone Who Would Never...

Divide group into pairs and invite them to play this guessing game. Each person should think of someone famous, someone that they are sure their partner would know about. Partners take turns trying to guess the name of the famous person. The one who is guessing asks questions about what the person would do, wouldn't do, and about what they would like or not like.

For example, is this person someone who would go camping? The partner responds by saying "yes" or "no". Eventually, if they are stuck they can give a clue. Provide an example by taking a turn and having the large group guess a famous person you select. Allow three or four minutes for each partner, then ask for everyone's attention. Ask for sample responses to these questions:

- What made it easy to guess?
- What made it hard?

After several responses, provide some ideas about identity that connect to the activity:

Sometimes, we can figure out the identity of someone by knowing what they like and what they don't like, what they would do and what they would never do. The dictionary tells us that one definition of identity is: the distinguishing characteristics of a person. These characteristics form our personality and shape our choices.

Reflecting on Catholic Faith Identity (20 minutes)

Provide a brief presentation about Catholic faith identity. Be sure to include these points:

Catholic faith identity can be a very important part of who we are as people. I have even heard some people describe themselves as "Catholic to the core." What does it mean to be Catholic to the core?

- Being Catholic to the core means that our faith is at the heart of who we are; the values, practices and norms of the Catholic faith have become intertwined with our sense of self-identity.
- It doesn't mean that we should waste energy trying to determine who is more Catholic. It's not about comparing.

- Catholic identity has been forged over time through centuries of the practice of faith. Catholic identity represents a rich mix of values we hold, knowledge we know, symbols that remind, practices that we do, and disciplines that we live by.
- Aspects of Catholic identity can be an idea, an image, an object, a behavior, a religious practice, a person, a prayer, or something we do together as part of our worship.
- Our Catholic faith identity becomes a compass for our life, helping us make choices and put our faith into action.
- Being Catholic to the core means that the beliefs and practices of our faith aren't things we put on or take off. They are part of us, right to the core.

After your presentation, invite youth to reflect on one aspect of their Catholic Faith. Distribute **Handout 1, Reflecting on Catholic Faith Identity**, and pens or pencils for each participant. Provide a personal example for each question. Ask participants to reflect on the questions individually. Play soft instrumental music in background while youth are completing the questions. Circulate through the room and provide additional instructions and examples individually as needed. Allow several minutes for individual reflection, then ask youth gather in small groups of four or five to share from their reflections. After several minutes of small group sharing, ask for two or three large group examples.

Tour of Catholic Beliefs and Practices (30 minutes)

Introduce the **Tour of Catholic Faith Identity** in your own words or using this introduction:

As we listened to each other's stories of Catholic faith identity, we were reminded of the variety of aspects of our rich faith tradition. We are now going to take a "tour" of some of the important aspects of our tradition and hear more about the personal experience of Catholic faith identity for our team members.

Distribute **Handout 2, Catholic Beliefs and Practices**. This will be a "guide" for the tour and will also be used for reflection following these presentations. Ask youth to gather around the first station on the tour of Catholic Faith Beliefs and Practices that focuses on Beliefs. Provide an overview of the elements in your display in this station and review these points:

Beliefs

- We believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus Christ became human, lived, died on a cross and was resurrected from the dead.
- We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic church.
- We believe in the communion of saints, which means that we are joined as one Church with all those who have died in faith.

Invite the team member who prepared in advance to provide a personal sharing about their experience of one aspect of Belief.

Ask youth to gather around the next station on the tour that focuses on Prayer and Worship. Provide an overview of the elements in your display in this station and review these points:

Prayer and Worship

- We participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist as our central prayer.
- We pray as a Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.
- We pray in special ways in the various seasons and holy days within the liturgical year such as Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Assumption, All Saints Day,
- We pray by asking for the intercession of Saints
- We pray devotional prayers, including Adoration of the Eucharist, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross and cultural devotions.
- We begin prayer using the Sign of the Cross
- We pray in a variety of ways, including prayers such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be.

Invite the team member who prepared in advance to provide a personal sharing about their experience of one aspect of Prayer and Worship.

Ask youth to gather around the next station that focuses on Practices. Provide an overview of the elements in this station and review these aspects:

Practices

- We follow the Ten Commandments and strive to love God with our whole heart and treat others as we would treat ourselves.
- We read the Bible and strive to live according to God's word.
- We forgive others and seek forgiveness from those we have hurt. We also experience forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- We make big decisions in our lives by asking for God's help through prayer and through the advice of members of our family and faith community.
- We make people feel welcome and wanted by providing hospitality.
- We share our time and talents with the faith community by getting involved and working with other in ministries and community events.
- We witness to our faith by sharing with others about our experience of God's love and call.
- We participate in the community life of our parish.

Invite the team member who prepared in advance to provide a personal sharing about their experience of one aspect of Practices.

Ask youth to gather around the final station on the tour that focuses on Justice and Service. Provide an overview of the elements in your display for this station and review these points:

Justice and Service

- We serve those who are in need.
- We work for justice by trying to change laws and structures that treat people unfairly and deny people their basic human rights.
- We live our lives in a way that honors and respects other people and the earth.
- We strive to live in a simple way, without showing off or being extravagant, so that we can stand with those who go without and so that we can share with those in need.
- We give a portion of our money to the poor.
- We respect God's creation by caring for the earth.

Invite the team member who prepared in advance to provide a personal sharing about their experience of one aspect of Justice and Service.

Growing in Catholic Faith Identity (15 minutes)

Invite youth to return to the gathering space and to reflect on their experience of Catholic faith and practices. Share some ideas for ways to grow and include resources in your community. Consider sharing these comments:

We can grow in understanding parts of the Catholic tradition by spending time with people in our community and by participating in the practices of the Church.

Consider these ideas for ways to grow:

- People who live and know their faith are a wonderful resource for learning Catholic beliefs and practices. Consider identifying someone, a family member, ministry leader, or friend, who lives the faith in an especially striking way and asking them more about their beliefs and practices.
- Worship, programs, retreats, service projects, and activities of the parish can also be a way to learn and grow.
- A variety of print and online resources can help us learn about our tradition.

Consider these online sources to do a search:

www.americancatholic.org

www.disciplesnow.org

Guide the participants through their reflection on Steps 1 to 4 on the second page of **Handout 2, Catholic Beliefs and Practices**. After allowing several minutes for reflection, ask for volunteers to share their responses.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Post the newsprint sheet with the prayer responses listed. Refer to the sheet as needed to encourage the participants to respond.

Gather

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

We gather in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.
Let us now sit and listen to God's word.

Listen

Invite the reader (or readers) to proclaim 1 Samuel 3:1-10.

Reflection

Prayer Leader:

In this reading, God calls Samuel, but Samuel doesn't understand at first. God has called each of us by name. Our name is just part of our identity. At this time, I am going to call each of you by name. As I say your name, please stand.

Call each person's name, one at a time.

Respond

Prayer Leader:

Those of us that are baptized were marked with the sign of the cross to celebrate that we are marked as the children of God. Like Samuel, we are all called to listen to God and to serve him as best as we can. To remind ourselves that we are called to serve God together, I invite you to turn to the person next to you and make the sign of the cross on their forehead, saying: ____ (name of person), you are chosen to serve God.

Allow time for participants to sign each other.

Go Forth

Prayer Leader:

Let us ask Jesus to be present with us and remind us of how we are called to listen to him as Samuel was called to listen to him.
Our response will be **Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.**

All: Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Prayer Leader:

Loving God, help us take the time to listen and to be open to learning more about the beliefs and practices of our Catholic faith.

All: Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Prayer Leader:

Loving God, strengthen us to participate in our parish community through worship, service, community life and faith learning so that we can know you better and become stronger disciples.

All: Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Prayer Leader:

Loving God, guide us to put our faith into practice by living our beliefs, praying, participating in worship, practicing our faith and working for justice.

All: Speak Lord, your servant is listening.

Prayer Leader:

Let us close in prayer by asking for the intercession of the saints in strengthening us to live our call. Our response is **Pray for us.**

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**

St. Gabriel, **pray for us.**

St. John the Baptist, **pray for us.**

St. Joseph, **pray for us.**

St. Peter, **pray for us.**

St. Paul, **pray for us.**

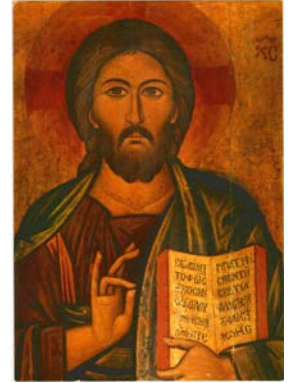
Continue the litany using the patron saint for your parish and the saints that correspond with names of those gathered. Conclude with:

All you holy saints of God, **pray for us.**

All: **Amen.**

Sing the closing song you have selected.

This session was written by Tom East , Director of the Center for Ministry Development, Gig Harbor, Washington.



Reflecting on Catholic Faith Identity

Catholic Faith Identity can be a prayer practice, a belief, a person, a devotion, or an idea. What is one aspect of Catholic Faith Identity that you especially treasure?

Why do you value this aspect of Catholic Faith?

Think of a time when you experienced this part of our tradition. Who helped you to know about this aspect?

Catholic Beliefs and Practices

As Catholics, we believe, we pray, we practice the faith, and we work for justice.

The following listing includes many central beliefs and practices for Catholics.



Beliefs

- We believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
- We believe that Jesus Christ became human, lived, died on a cross and was resurrected from the dead.
- We believe in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.
- We believe in the Communion of Saints, which means that we are joined as one Church with all those who have died in faith.

Prayer and Worship

- We participate in the Liturgy of the Eucharist as our central prayer.
- We pray as a Church through the sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Matrimony.
- We pray in special ways in the various seasons and Holy Days within the Liturgical year such as Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, the Assumption, All Saints Day,
- We pray by asking for the intercession of Saints
- We pray devotional prayers, including Adoration of the Eucharist, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross and cultural devotions.
- We begin prayer using the Sign of the Cross
- We pray in a variety of ways, including prayers such as the Our Father, the Hail Mary and the Glory Be.



Practices

- We follow the Ten Commandments and strive to love God with our whole heart and treat others as we would treat ourselves.
- We read the Bible and strive to live according to God's word.
- We forgive others and seek forgiveness from those we



have hurt. We also experience forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

- We make big decisions in our lives by asking for God's help through prayer and through the advice of members of our family and faith community.
- We make people feel welcome and wanted by providing hospitality.
- We share our time and talents with the faith community by getting involved and working with other in ministries and community events.
- We witness to our faith by sharing with others about our experience of God's love and call.
- We participate in the community life of our parish.

Justice and Service

- We serve those who are in need.
- We work for justice by trying to change laws and structures that treat people unfairly and deny people their basic human rights.
- We live our lives in a way that honors and respects other people and the earth.
- We strive to live in a simple way, without showing off or being extravagant, so that we can stand with those who go without and so that we can share with those in need.
- We give a portion of our money to the poor.
- We respect God's creation by caring for the earth.



Reflection

Step 1: Review the list and circle things which describe you, things that feel like part of your identity. You may circle just one word, several, or the whole sentence.

Step 2: Look over parts of the list that you did not circle. Underline things that you would like to learn more about.

Step 3: Choose one of the underlined sections that you would like to know more about and write that aspect here:

Step 4: What is one thing you could do this week to learn about or grow in your faith identity?

Resource 1

Witness Preparation Tour of Catholic Beliefs and Practices

You have been asked to provide a witness and presentation about an aspect of Catholic Beliefs and Practices. To prepare for your presentation, review the section that has been assigned to you using **Handout 1, Catholic Beliefs and Practices**. Select one aspect from that listing that has special meaning for you.

You will provide a three minute presentation that explains this aspect of belief or practice. Review the resources for your section in **Resource 2, Witness Resource for Catholic Beliefs and Practices**. Include your personal experience. Consider these questions:

- *Why is this aspect of Catholic Tradition important to you?*
- *When did you first experience this aspect?*
- *Who were some of the people and communities that helped you experience this aspect?*
- *How did you learn and grow in your experience of this aspect?*
- *How does this aspect of Catholic faith make a difference in how you live your life?*

Witness Resource

Catholic Beliefs and Practices

Beliefs

253 *The Trinity is One.* We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the "consubstantial Trinity". The divine persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: "The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e. by nature one God." In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), "Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature."

639 The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve. . ." ⁴⁹¹ The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus. ⁴⁹²

780 The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign and the instrument of the communion of God and men.

750 To believe that the Church is "holy" and "catholic," and that she is "one" and "apostolic" (as the Nicene Creed adds), is inseparable from belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the Apostles' Creed we profess "one Holy Church" (*Credo . . . Ecclesiam*), and not to believe *in* the Church, so as not to confuse God with his works and to attribute clearly to God's goodness *all* the gifts he has bestowed on his Church.

946 After confessing "the holy catholic Church," the Apostles' Creed adds "the communion of saints." In a certain sense this article is a further explanation of the preceding: "What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?" ⁴⁷⁹ The communion of saints is the Church.

957 *Communion with the saints.* "It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened. Exactly as Christian communion among our fellow pilgrims brings us closer to Christ, so our communion with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from its fountain and head issues all grace, and the life of the People of God itself" ⁴⁹⁸:

Prayer and Worship

2040 Thus a true *filial spirit toward the Church* can develop among Christians. It is the normal flowering of the baptismal grace which has begotten us in the womb of the Church and made us members of the Body of Christ. In her motherly care, the Church grants us the mercy of God which prevails over all our sins and is especially at work in the sacrament of reconciliation. With a mother's foresight, she also lavishes on us day after day in her liturgy the nourishment of the Word and Eucharist of the Lord.

2720 The Church invites the faithful to regular prayer: daily prayers, the Liturgy of the Hours, Sunday Eucharist, the feasts of the liturgical year.

1131 The sacraments are efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required dispositions.

1525 Thus, just as the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist form a unity called "the sacraments of Christian initiation," so too it can be said that Penance, the Anointing of the Sick and the Eucharist as viaticum constitute at the end of Christian life "the sacraments that prepare for our heavenly homeland" or the sacraments that complete the earthly pilgrimage.

1211 Following this analogy, the *first chapter* will expound the three sacraments of Christian initiation; the *second*, the sacraments of healing; and the *third*, the sacraments at the service of communion and the mission of the faithful. This order, while not the only one possible, does allow one to see that the sacraments form an organic whole in which each particular sacrament has its own vital place. In this organic whole, the Eucharist occupies a unique place as the "Sacrament of sacraments": "all the other sacraments are ordered to it as to their end."

2157 The Christian begins his day, his prayers, and his activities with the Sign of the Cross: "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen." The baptized person dedicates the day to the glory of God and calls on the Savior's grace which lets him act in the Spirit as a child of the Father. The sign of the cross strengthens us in temptations and difficulties.

1378 *Worship of the Eucharist.* In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession."

Practices

2067 The Ten Commandments state what is required in the love of God and love of neighbor. The first three concern love of God, and the other seven love of neighbor.

141 "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord" (DV 21): both nourish and govern the whole Christian life. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (*Ps* 119:105; cf. *Is* 50:4).

2844 Christian prayer extends to the *forgiveness of enemies*, transfiguring the disciple by configuring him to his Master. Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God's compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin. The martyrs of yesterday and today bear this witness to Jesus. Forgiveness is the fundamental condition of the reconciliation of the children of God with their Father and of men with one another.

910 "The laity can also feel called, or be in fact called, to cooperate with their pastors in the service of the ecclesial community, for the sake of its growth and life. This can be done through the exercise of different kinds of ministries according to the grace and charisms which the Lord has been pleased to bestow on them."

Justice and Service

1928 Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority.

852 Missionary paths. The Holy Spirit is the protagonist, "the principal agent of the whole of the Church's mission." It is he who leads the Church on her missionary paths. "This mission continues and, in the course of history, unfolds the mission of Christ, who was sent to evangelize the poor; so the Church, urged on by the Spirit of Christ, must walk the road Christ himself walked, a way of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice even to death, a death from which he emerged victorious by his resurrection." So it is that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians."

2462 Giving alms to the poor is a witness to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God.

(*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>.)

Resource 3

Call of Samuel - Choral Reading



Narrator:

A reading from the book of First Samuel

¹ During the time young Samuel was minister to the LORD under Eli, a revelation of the LORD was uncommon and vision infrequent. ² One day Eli was asleep in his usual place. His eyes had lately grown so weak that he could not see. ³ The lamp of God was not yet extinguished, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was. ⁴ The LORD called to Samuel, who answered,

Samuel:

“Here I am.”

Narrator:

⁵ He ran to Eli and said,

Samuel:

“Here I am. You called me.”

Eli:

“I did not call you. Go back to sleep.”

Narrator:

So he went back to sleep. ⁶ Again the LORD called Samuel, who rose and went to Eli.

Samuel:

“Here I am. You called me.”

Eli:

“I did not call you, my son. Go back to sleep.”

Narrator:

⁷ At that time Samuel was not familiar with the LORD, because the LORD had not revealed anything to him as yet. ⁸ The LORD called Samuel again, for the third time. Getting up and going to Eli, he said,

Samuel:

“Here I am. You called me.”

Narrator:

Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the youth. ⁹So he said to Samuel,

Eli:

“Go to sleep, and if you are called, reply, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’”

Narrator:

When Samuel went to sleep in his place, ¹⁰the LORD came and revealed his presence, calling out as before,

God

“Samuel, Samuel!”

Narrator:

Samuel answered,

Samuel:

“Speak, for your servant is listening.”¹

Narrator:

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

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