

Why is Christmas so important to evangelize families?

Christmas is the celebration of the birth of the baby Jesus, but not just that. Christmas is the celebration of families. With the birth of Jesus came the most important family in the history of mankind for Christianity: the Holy Family.



God wanted Jesus when he came into this world to have a family. Jesus also wanted it. For this reason, for years he lived with the Blessed Virgin and with St. Joseph as he grew in grace and wisdom (Lk 2,52).

The fact that Jesus was born and remained with his mother and his adoptive father demonstrates the importance, nobility and holiness of the families. This is why the Church points out in the dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, one of the most important texts of the Second Vatican Council, that “It is in the bosom of the family that parents are “by word and example . . . the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children” (LG , 11).

St. Joseph and the Virgin Mary were teachers of Jesus, educating him in love, as examples of giving their lives for the fulfillment of God’s purposes. So, must be all families. However, many families live as if God did not exist.

It is urgent, therefore, to evangelize families, Christmas is an indispensable opportunity for this. If during this date, the Church also celebrates the sanctity of families, why not rescue those who are estranged from God and seek to strengthen those who are already present in the communities?

But in what way? The process of evangelizing families can begin by exalting their role in the Church as the cradle of vocations – whether religious or matrimonial. Their importance should be indicated in the formation and moral and Christian education of the children so that they will be, in the future, conscious Christians, engaged in their community and so that they also form their families to the example of the Holy Family.

St. John Paul II said that the family is the sanctuary of life, and that is how they need to be treated and perceived (see Letter to Families, 11). Christmas is the opportunity to highlight the importance of a marriage whose journey leads its members to God.

Sources:

Holy Bible

Dogmatic Constitution Lumen Gentium

Letter of Pope John Paul II to families – GRATISSIMAM SANE – 1994 – Year of the Family

4 Practical Tips on Involving the Community in Advent and

Evangelization

With Advent, a new liturgical year for the Church begins. In the four weeks leading up to Christmas, we prepare for the coming of the Child God, and more than ever, the community must be ready to evangelize.



4 DICAS PRÁTICAS SOBRE COMO ENVOLVER A COMUNIDADE NO ADVENTO E NA EVANGELIZAÇÃO

But, what can be done so that the community grows in evangelization during this period?

Tip 1: Explain the meaning of the Advent Crown to people and invite them to do it in their homes

More than a mere Christmas ornament, the Advent Crown has a liturgical meaning, something that every parishioner should know, which enriches the Christian's faith. That is why a detailed explanation of its meaning and of what it refers to is important. The crown can also be an object that assists in the Christmas novena. Which we explain better how to motivate the community with tip 4.

Tip 2: Encourage families to set up the Christmas crib together at home

The Christmas crib helps the faithful, especially the children, to remember that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus our Savior. It is in the Church that we rescue the Christian values that are constantly being replaced by appealing commercial campaigns that wound the sacred for

convenience. Putting the Christmas crib at home, even of paper or making it from recyclable products, unites the family in the true sense of the advent: the wait. In addition to encouraging families to set up the Christmas crib, catechesis can be an excellent channel for children to have access to this Christmas devotion.

Tip 3: Encourage the Spirit of Sharing and execute the Evangelization Collect

Every year, since 1999, the National Council of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) has been promoting the Evangelization Campaign during Advent. This campaign wants to remember that every believer in his community must be committed to evangelization. Therefore, on the third Sunday of Advent, as a concrete gesture, the Church collects for the campaign, aiming to collect and guarantee resources for evangelization and actions of solidarity to those in need. With any amount we can reach many souls for God. One suggestion would be to invite some pastoral members to give a brief testimony after Sunday Mass on the importance of evangelization.

Tip 4: Promote the Christmas Novena within the Parish and in the homes

A practice that has been somewhat forgotten, but which has great value, is the Christmas novena. Promoting a Christmas novena is an opportunity to help the faithful to live a proper preparation for the birth of Christ in their lives, in their homes. A Christmas novena unites Christians around the real meaning of the Advent period: the expectation of the birth of Jesus coming to live and reign with us.

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Our suggestion would be the preparation, in partnership with the Pastoral of the Communication, of a pamphlet with dates and times of the novena in the parish and/or in the houses of the families. This pamphlet can even guide the meaning of this devotion and also, as we mentioned in Tip 1, in the preparation and meaning of the Advent crown.

Why you need to spend more time organizing the liturgy of your parish

Although the main function of the Liturgy is not to evangelize, if we are facing a Eucharistic Celebration lived with zeal and reverence and, from the liturgical, organized and harmonious point of view, it is very clear that all this will favor the experience of the first announcement for those who are approaching faith and personal experience with God.

“The Church evangelizes and is evangelized with the beauty of the Liturgy, which is also a celebration of the evangelizing activity and the source of a renewed impulse to give itself” (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 24).

Because it is a vital aspect of the Church's life, the liturgical dimension deserves commitment, investment of time and labor so that it can be this sign of the beauty of Christ. As a reminder of what deserves attention in the organization of the Liturgy in a community, we separate in this text some points for reflection.



Liturgical Team in communion with the other pastoral

The saying goes that a swallow does not make summer, does it? The liturgical life of a parish is something so grand and at the same time so simple, that it must always walk in communion with the other pastoral and sectors.

Often there is not much talk and alignment of strategies for the development of actions among pastoral. Example: a music team that does not relate to the liturgy. This can lead to a mismatch in the celebrations, because the liturgy prepares one thing and the music ministry can prepare something that is unrelated to the proposal, and vice versa. This can happen to several other pastoralists.

Therefore, our suggestion is that the liturgy team always keep the channels of dialogue open with the other pastoral and, in

addition, seek to align strategies so that everything is lived in unity and communion.

The sacred space and the reception

Busy life, routine, haste and stress are not the “privileges” of a few. The present generation has different rhythms of life, but in general, a lot of people are immersed in this context. And when they can visit a church, they look for a peaceful, quiet and welcoming environment. Seek an experience with God’s comfort!

Sacred space, zeal with liturgical vestments, and welcome can contribute to this expectation. On this, Pope Francis also teaches us: “The beauty of everything that is liturgical is not reduced to the adornment and good taste of the vestments, but it is the presence of the glory of our God that shines in his living and comforted people.”

In general, it is very important to observe how the space of your community is, regardless of the resources available for investments or the social class in which it fits.

A clean, affordable, beautiful and organized environment make all the difference. From the smallest details to the architecture, the space must be oriented to favor the encounter with God. From this assessment, ask yourself how you can act to improve or even transform this context in your community.

Children and the liturgy



For parents, the challenge of educating in the values of faith, showing that the Church is a place of experience with God and that there are some protocols to be observed there. And this requires repetition, love and understanding. The challenge of teaching about silence without harming the spontaneity that is characteristic of the little ones. For the community, there is the exercise of charity and generosity, since it is necessary to give children access to the symbols of faith, to the liturgy.

The Liturgy team must learn to cope with all expectations and creatively transform liturgical celebrations into occasions where everyone can live under that grace.

Our tip, especially for the parents, is to initiate the child in the catechesis lived at home, in the called Domestic Church. Just as one teaches to read, to sit at the table to eat, to speak properly, one must teach one to pray as well. And there is nothing more effective from an educational point of view than learning from good examples. Therefore, parents should cultivate spiritual life at home. It will make a big difference when children see themselves in the Church environment.

For the Liturgy Team, the recommendation is from the Directory for Mass with Children, document of the Church prepared by the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship (1973). "[...] care must be taken so that children do not feel forgotten because of their inability to participate and understand what is accomplished and proclaimed in the celebration. Take their presence into account, for example, by addressing them with certain appropriate ammunitions at the beginning and end of the Mass, in some part of the homily, etc. "

It can not be forgotten that in the process of welcoming children, the Church gains the trust and affection of the parents as well, because it overcomes any kind of hostility and indifference towards the family, which is so precious to

God and to humanity .

These are only 3 points for reflection, but even in this internal evaluation process, it is possible to identify several others. Make the experience of bringing together the leaders of your community to share experiences, expectations and proposals and thus make the liturgical life fully fulfill its role.

The fundamental questions about Liturgy that you should know how to answer



As perguntas fundamentais sobre liturgia que você deveria saber responder

"You do not just hear about Liturgy, but live and experience the Liturgy!"

In general, the concept may be so present and latent in your everyday life that words may be lacking to actually name what it represents.

In many parishes, there are service teams whose primary

mission is to look after and care for the liturgical life. Priests, laypeople and religious spend years dedicating efforts and commitment to the study of the Liturgy, because of the richness of details, meaning and importance for the Church and the life of God's people.

But would you know how to answer what is the Liturgy? Do you know the origin of the word? Do you know the relationship between Catechesis and the Liturgy?

In this text, you will be able to know some references that answer fundamental questions about the liturgy of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman rite. Check out:

1. What is the Liturgy?

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CIC), "the word "liturgy" originally meant a "public work" or a "service in the name of/on behalf of the people." It means that the people of God participate in his Work. "Through the liturgy Christ, our redeemer and high priest, continues the work of our redemption in, with and through his Church." (§ 1069, CIC). The Catechism also teaches that in the New Testament the word "liturgy" refers not only to the celebration of divine worship but also to the proclamation of the Gospel and to active charity. (cf. , 12).

2. What is the importance of the Bible in the Liturgy?

According to the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium, adopted during the Second Vatican Council in 1963, the Holy Scriptures are of the utmost importance in the liturgical celebration. "It is from her that the texts that are read and explained in the homily are taken, as well as the psalms that are sung; it was from his texts and

from his inspiration that the liturgical prayers, prayers and hymns were born; and it is from her that actions and signs receive their meaning “(Sacrosanctum Concilium, 24).

3. How does Christ work in the liturgical celebration?

In the Liturgy, God serves men and men serve God. This service of the Church is in the image of Christ, who acts as high priest and makes us participate in his priesthood in a prophetic (when performing worship) and real way (when we serve in charity). “The Liturgy is rightly regarded as the exercise of the priestly function of Jesus Christ. In it, through sensible signs and in the proper way of each one, the sanctification of men is signified and accomplished and the integral public worship is exercised by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the head and the members. Therefore, any liturgical celebration, as the work of Christ the Priest and his body which is the Church, is a sacred action par excellence and no other action of the Church equates it in efficacy with the same title and in the same degree “(Sacrosanctum Concilium, 5) .

4. What is the relation between Catechesis and the Liturgy?

St John Paul II, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Catechesi Tradendae*, wrote: “Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of human beings” (23). It is an experiential relationship. Liturgical catechesis is sacramental. It aims to initiate people into the mystery of Christ “by proceeding from the visible to the invisible, from the sign to the signified, from the sacrament to the mysteries” (CCC, no 1075).

5. Is there a type of music the Church recommends for liturgical celebrations?

Yes. The Church recognizes Gregorian chant as a “proper chant of the Roman liturgy,” but emphasizes that “polyphony will by no means be excluded in the celebration of the divine offices, provided they are in harmony with the spirit of liturgical action” (SS, 116).

Also according to the musical dimension, the Church also mentions – especially on missionary occasions – peoples with musical traditions different from Western culture and who have a great importance in the religious and social life of the people. “Give this music the proper esteem and the suitable place, not only in the education of the religious sense of these peoples, but also in the adaptation of the cult to its character” (SS, 119).

6. Do you know what liturgical implements are?

It is called implements, small panels and objects covered with cloth that is used next to the sacred vessels: corporal, pala, sanguine, manustérgio, veil of the chalice and corporal bag. On the presentation of the implements, in the manner in which sacred art will be applied to them, the Sacrosanctum Concilium directs them to “contribute to the splendor of worship with dignity and beauty, accepting the changes in matter, form and ornamentation, which technical progress was introduced in the course of time “(SS, 122).

7. Does the liturgy provide different colors for each time?

Yes. According to the General Instruction of the Roman Missal

(GIRM), “the different colors of the sacred garments are intended to express externally the character of the celebrated mysteries, and also the awareness of a Christian life that progresses with the unfolding of the liturgical year” (345).

The green color is used in Common Time. White is used in the Offices and Masses of Paschal Time and the Christmas of the Lord; in addition, in the celebrations of the Lord, except those of his Passion, the Blessed Virgin Mary and some saints. Red is used on Sunday of the Passion and on Easter Friday, Pentecost Sunday, the celebrations of the Passion of the Lord, the holiday of the apostles and evangelists, and the celebrations of the holy martyrs. The purple, in Advent and Lent. It can also be used in the Offices and Masses of the Dead.

The pink can be used, where it is customary, on Sundays Gaudete (Advent III) and Laetare (IV in Lent). Black can be used, where it is customary, at the Masses of the Dead.

For more solemn days, the Missal foresees the possibility of wearing holy or festive robes, even if they are not the color of the day.

Priestly Vocation: What is your path?

Qual o seu caminho?



In this episode, Bishop Jorge Carlos gives a beautiful testimony about the discovery and the path to the priestly vocation. In this itinerary, it was essential the support of the family that made him feel free to seek the will of God.

“Do not be afraid! Because God’s plans are wonderful not only to you, but to many people through your life! ”

Watch the video:

Dom Jorge Carlos Patrón Wong is Secretary of the Congregation for the Clergy (responsible for the seminaries).

Priestly

Vocation:

Perseverance in following Jesus even facing difficulties



It is precisely when facing battles, challenges and graces that we are called to persevere and not to be discouraged even with adversity.

In this video, Frei Jaime Spengler, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, speaks about the decision to remain faithful to the call that God makes to us and to respond with love and creativity to the dynamism of life.

Watch the video:

Fr. Jaime Spengler, OFM is Metropolitan Archbishop of Porto Alegre and President of the Pastoral Episcopal Commission for the Ordained Ministers and Consecrated Life of the CNBB.

Priestly Vocation: What Is Liturgy?



“Let people not see me, but see Him.”

This is how Father Alexandre Nunes, in this 4th episode of the Priestly Vocation Series, defines his experience with God, as a priest, within the Liturgy.

Check out the video.

Father Alexandre Nunes, on November 5, 1983, in São Paulo. He was ordained on December 13, 2014 in Rome, and belongs to the Congregation of the Legionaries of Christ. He is a trainer at the Pontifical International College of Mary Mater Ecclesiae in Rome and is completing a master's degree in liturgy.

Priestly Communication

Vocation:



Just as in the life of every Christian, God communicates with us and makes us instruments in each other's lives. With the priest, especially for the mission entrusted to him, communication with God is fundamental for people to have an experience of faith and love.

In this video, get to know the testimony of Father Arnaldo Rodrigues.

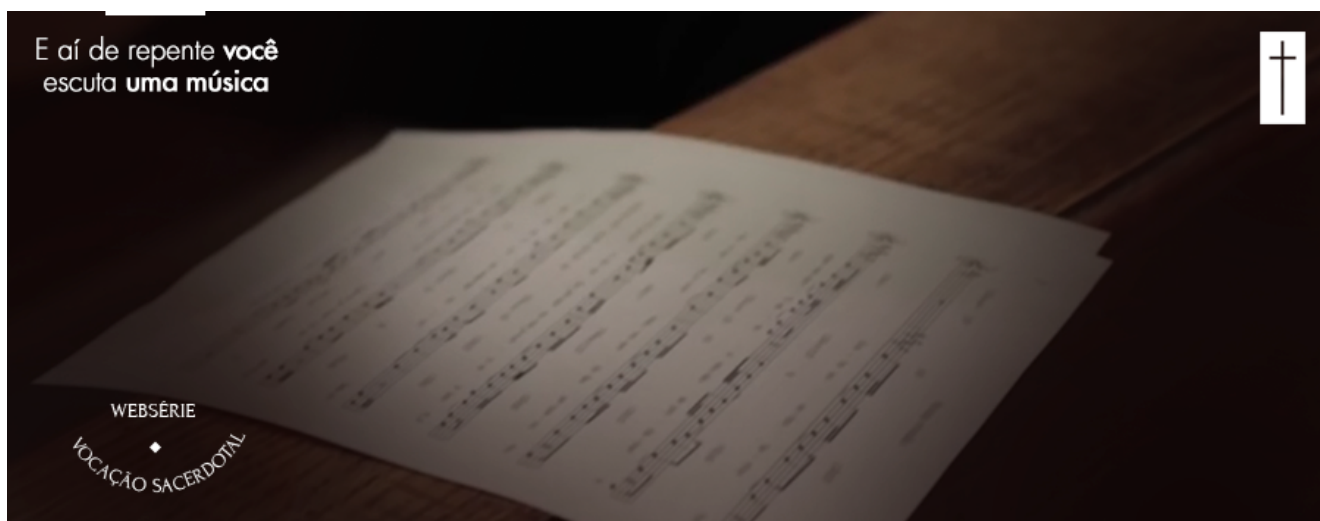
"Our greatest communication relationship is primarily with God. "

Check out the video!

Father Arnaldo Rodrigues was born on March 7, 1977 and was ordained on April 14, 2012, in the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro. He is currently a doctoral student in Communication

from Sapienza University in Rome.

Priestly Vocation: And then suddenly you hear a song



Saint John Paul II, when he wrote the Letter to Artists, he related the beauty expressed in art and the Superior Good, which is God.

"How many times did God use beautiful songs to talk to us?"

In the life of the seminarist John Paul, it was also like this. And with you, did God speak that way?

Watch the video

João Paulo Garcia is a seminarian in Rome and is completing his Philosophy course at the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum. He is 25 years old, from Extrema (MG), he is son of Tadeu Evangelista Garcia and Luci de Oliveira Pereira Garcia and has 3 siblings.

Priestly Vocation: We Love the Poor not the Poverty



The priest is a friend of the poor. He is like a shepherd and, as Pope John Paul says, he must “smell the sheep”.

“A priest is someone who is not indifferent to the needs of people and, in the heartbeat of Christ, gives his life for the Church, for humanity and for those who experience material, moral and spiritual poverty.”

Watch the video:

Father Renato dos Santos, SDB (Salesians of Don Bosco) was born on October 12, 1961, in Rio do Sul (SC), and was ordained a priest on December 8, 1991. He is currently in the Vatican, Technical director of the Vatican Typography, entity responsible, among other works, for the printing and

dissemination of the newspaper L'Osservatore Romano.