Celebration of the Wonder of Life

Teacher Background

It is innate for people of all cultures and societies to celebrate. Celebration often involves the commemoration of an event with ceremonies and festivities where public announcements and proclamations are made, frequently praises are given and appropriate rites are performed and solemnised. Sometimes celebrations take the form of a party or festival and others are religious in nature. All celebrations contain elements of ritual. During celebrations people of a like mind or interest gather, eat, drink, sing, speak, gift, dance and move in particular way for particular purposes and contexts. Celebrations may be formal or informal. It is the love and joy of life and its wonders that give rise to celebrations. It is also the mystery of life such as the death of a loved one that causes all people to gather, ritualise, commemorate and celebrate the life of that individual.

As created beings believers celebrate the wonders of God’s creation and add this dimension to many of their celebration whether they be religious or secular. Believers frequently celebrate in a religious fashion and this is often accompanied with some form of worship in a sacred place. Worship is an act of reverence and honour shown to God. It encompasses dimensions of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, love and petition. It is both a personal and a community act. Worship can be expressed in many ways. Prayer is one of the commonest forms. Because worship deals with the spiritual dimension of life, we often use symbol and ritual to express our worship. This gives witness to our being a worshipping community, and it allows people to participate together in one of the deepest human activities

In the Catholic tradition, the community gathers each Sunday to celebrate Eucharist and ‘the great events of salvation history,’ that is, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The liturgical seasons lead Christians through an ordered celebration of the great events of salvation history. As well, the community gathers to celebrate the birth and marriage and death of its members. Other celebrations mark the devotional life of Christians. Marian processions, Sacraments such as Baptism, Funerals, Stations of the Cross, and honouring of patron saints are examples.