

The Children's Holy Hour at Epiphany is modeled after an international children's Eucharistic Adoration program known as "*Children of Hope*" founded by Fr. Antoine Thomas from the Congregation of St. John. The following is a copy of a letter from Fr. Antoine to parents and teachers of the youth regarding the importance of and benefits of children's Eucharistic Adoration.

*Dear parents, priests, catechists, and all who care about the formation of children's souls:*

*Over the years I have heard many reasons why parents hesitate to bring young children before the Eucharist each week to adore Jesus. Among these reasons are that they are too young to sit still, or that they won't understand what is happening. Some feel that it is hard enough to get them to be attentive at Mass and if they add another hour on Sunday, how can they expect them to behave?*



*Well, I remind them that Jesus Himself told us, "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them; for to such belong the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matt 19:14) And, that our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, has made this request, "I urge priests, religious and lay people to continue and redouble their efforts to teach the younger generations the meaning and value of Eucharistic adoration and devotion." (From the Vatican, 28, May, 1996) So, how else can we respond than to bring children to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus!*

*After many years of leading Holy Hours for children, I can tell you the benefits are numerous for both children and their families:*

- 1. Children who previously had only the weekly experience of Mass, discover that the Host is actually the person of Jesus, mysteriously hidden.*
- 2. They develop a greater interest in the mysteries of our Faith and the liturgy of the Mass.*
- 3. They understand-more than other children of their age who have not experienced Eucharistic Adoration-the relationship between the gift of the Eucharistic Presence of Jesus and His sacrifice on the Cross out of love for mankind.*
- 4. They become much more aware of the various degrees of sin and seem very eager to receive the sacrament of Confession often.*
- 5. Families accompanying their children witness a growing desire for peace and forgiveness within the family.*

*It is my prayer that after watching the videos and reading through this manual, you will have found the inspiration you need to begin your own Holy Hour for children in your parish. When children become friends with Jesus, by spending time with Him, do they not become living signs of faith in Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist of those who doubt, and therefore also become wonderful signs of hope for those who despair in finding God on earth? May our Lord bless you through the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist.*

*Fr. Antoine*

Jesus' call to His children to adore Him in the Eucharist is the inspiration of this ministry at Epiphany. May your family find peace, unity, and joy within the beautiful mystery of the divine love of Jesus in the Eucharist!