

# Faith Based Conversation 1<sup>st</sup> Monthly Meeting

## A few words from Pope Francis

Evangelii Gaudium 20

"Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey His call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the “peripheries” in need of the light of the Gospel."

Evangelii Gaudium 10

The Gospel offers us the chance to live life on a higher plane, but with no less intensity: “Life grows by being given away, and it weakens in isolation and comfort. Indeed, those who enjoy life most are those who leave security on the shore and become excited by the mission of communicating life to others”. When the Church summons Christians to take up the task of evangelization, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment. For “Here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure that it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means”.

## What is a faith based conversation?

It is far more than talking about the weather and current news stories. It is more than talking about priests, church music, and who needs to be on our prayer list. A faith based conversation talks about God's action, and has the potential to bring a person closer to Him or to help them become a better follower of His. It has the capacity to make disciples or to make better disciples. Usually it includes personal testimony either from your own life or from someone close to you.

Face to face conversation is becoming rarer in day to day life. Take every opportunity to talk in person to someone else, and always assume that they are lonelier than you until proven otherwise.

## Practical ways to give someone else an 'in' to starting a faith based conversation with you

Wear something that identifies you as a believer in God, eg crucifix on chain, rosary ring, holy picture on your desk at work etc

Have holy pictures etc displayed prominently at home. Traditionally Catholics have loved the promise of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to give peace to those families that display an image of the Sacred Heart in a place of honour and respect in their homes.

Be friendly towards those you pass in the streets or in the shops. Doing this, over time, often paves the way for more than a simple greeting at some point in the future.

Don't be in a hurry.

## Prayer

John Wimber, *Everyone Gets to Play*, Chapter 6, "Praying after an event may be just as important as praying before. It might be more important."

James 5:7 'Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains!'

In the Gospels we see Jesus pray not only before big events, but also after them. Likewise we need to pray before opportunities to talk to people that their hearts may be prepared for seeds of faith AND to pray afterwards that those seeds of faith would grow and flourish.

## Getting started

Don't ask status based questions, ie Where do you live?, What do you do for a living? Are you married? Do you have children?'

Ask: How are you going? What brings you to this event? Did you go to the parish mission/fete/e-conference/other event? What has God been doing with you lately? How long have you lived in the parish? Have you been OK since I saw you last? What is your biggest challenge at the moment?