

## Faith Based Conversation 4th Monthly Meeting

### **A few challenges from Pope Francis**

Evangelii Gaudium 88

The Christian ideal will always be a summons to overcome suspicion, habitual mistrust, fear of losing our privacy, all the defensive attitudes which today's world imposes on us. Many try to escape from others and take refuge in the comfort of their privacy or in a small circle of close friends, renouncing the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel. For just as some people want a purely spiritual Christ, without flesh and without the cross, they also want their interpersonal relationships provided by sophisticated equipment, by screens and systems which can be turned on and off on command. Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction. True faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others. The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness.

From the Message for the World Day of the Sick 2015, 3a and 4a

*Wisdom of the heart means being with our brothers and sisters:* Time spent with the sick is holy time. It is a way of praising God who conforms us to the image of His Son, who “came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). Jesus Himself said: “I am among you as one who serves” (Lk 22:27)...*Wisdom of the heart means going forth from ourselves towards our brothers and sisters:* Occasionally our world forgets the special value of time spent at the bedside of the sick, since we are in such a rush; caught up as we are in a frenzy of doing, of producing, we forget about giving ourselves freely, taking care of others, being responsible for others. Behind this attitude there is often a lukewarm faith which has forgotten the Lord's words: “You did it unto Me” (Mt 25:40).

### **Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic – Matthew Kelly**

Prayer: A committed daily prayer life.

Study: Daily spiritual reading/reading on topics of religion

Generosity: Giving to parish and charity, time, talent and resources

Evangelisation: Sharing good stuff from God, lending good books, talking about what you have learned and experienced from God

How are you doing on these things?

Lent is a good time to work on your weakest one.

### **Be open to wonder and awe**

Before a person ever steps foot in a Catholic church for the first time, God has already done an extraordinary amount of work on their minds and hearts. Respect that. Rejoice in it. Be ready with open arms to complete the process with welcome and friendship. Be prepared to be amazed at how God has been drawing them towards the Church.

### **Be mindful of the small stuff**

A friendly wave at a person walking by or on a bus can have a big impact. Starting an encounter with 'Isn't it a wonderful day?' prepared to list a few happy reasons if the other person can't see them yet, can have a big impact for good too.

If you get negative reactions, remain calm and instead of reacting with upset comebacks, keep your voice gentle and friendly.

Inclusion means that if you are not there that you will be missed. So look out for the missing ones and find out whether they are OK.

Be open to what the Holy Spirit might be trying to say through the person you have been talking with: there are no co-incidences only God-incidences.

### **Questions that might launch a good conversation**

What have you decided to do for Lent? Why that?

How is your spiritual/prayer life going?