

“To be a strong and faith-filled Catholic fraternity committed to serving our Church throughout Australia.”

Theme: Our Landscape – the “now” of the Church

When trying to discover what matters would be useful to present for reflection by the Knights one of the constant suggestions is “youth”. I find this yet another sign of the Holy Spirit working through this fraternity to indicate how we might ‘serve our Church throughout Australia’. It might be appropriate therefore just to develop this a little further as a follow-on from the last session by looking at another dimension of how we might meet the need identified. The Holy Spirit speaks to all – the young as well as the not so young.

Step 1: Opening prayer: from the Order’s Prayers

Step 2: READINGS ON THE THEME

“Let us ask the Lord to free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at a standstill. But let us also ask him to free her from another temptation: that of thinking she is young because she accepts everything the world offers her, thinking that she is renewed because she sets her message aside and acts like everybody else. No! The Church is young when she is herself, when she receives ever anew the strength born of God’s word, the Eucharist, and the daily presence of Christ and the power of his Spirit in our lives. The Church is young when she shows herself capable of constantly returning to her source.” (*Christus Vivit* Para 35)

“Although many young people are happy to see a Church that is humble yet confident in her gifts and capable of offering fair and fraternal criticism, others want a Church that listens more, that does more than simply condemn the world. They do not want to see a Church that is silent and afraid to speak, but neither one that is always battling obsessively over two or three issues. To be credible to young people, there are times when she needs to regain her humility and simply listen, recognizing that what others have to say can provide some light to help her better understand the Gospel. A Church always on the defensive, which loses her humility and stops listening to others, which leaves no room for questions, loses her youth and turns into a museum. How, then, will she be able to respond to the dreams of young people? Even if she possesses the truth of the Gospel, this does not mean that she has completely understood it; rather, she is called to keep growing in her grasp of that inexhaustible treasure.” (*Christus Vivit* Para 41)

“The Synod recognized that the members of the Church do not always take the approach of Jesus. Rather than listening to young people attentively, “all too often, there is a tendency to provide prepackaged answers and ready-made solutions, without allowing their real questions to emerge and facing the challenges they pose”. Yet once the Church sets aside narrow preconceptions and listens carefully to the young, this empathy enriches her, for “it allows young people to make their own contribution to the community, helping it to appreciate new sensitivities and to consider new questions” “. (*Christus Vivit* Para 65)

“Youth is not something to be analyzed in the abstract. Indeed, “youth” does not exist: there exist only young people, each with the reality of his or her own life. In today’s rapidly changing world, many of those lives are exposed to suffering and manipulation.” (*Christus Vivit* Para 71)

Step 3: *Allow a few moments reflective silence.*

Step 4: SCRIPTURE READING

“There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many different forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all. The particular manifestation of the Spirit granted to each one is to be used for the general good. To one is given from the Spirit the gift of utterance expressing wisdom; to another the gift of utterance expressing knowledge, in accordance with the same Spirit; to another, faith, from the same Spirit; and to another, the gifts of healing, through this one Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another,

prophecy; to another, the power of distinguishing spirits; to one the gift of different tongues and to another, the interpretation of tongues. But at work in all these is one and the same Spirit, distributing them at will to each individual.” (1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 11)

“All who are guided by the Spirit of God are children of God; for what you received was not the spirit of slavery to bring you back into fear; you received the Spirit of adoption, enabling us to cry out, ‘*Abba*, Father!’ The Spirit himself joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are the children of God. And if we are children, we are heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, provided that we share his suffering, so as to share his glory.” (Romans 8: 14 – 17)

Step 5: REFLECTION (5 Mins)

Step 6: SHARING (10 Mins)

In the Holy Father’s teaching what are the five elements that identify the Church that is young?

What makes the Church credible for young people?

Do I have difficulty in listening?

Step 7: CONCLUSION

We pray together;

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love only what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy. Amen (St. Augustine)

Step 8: *The meeting proceeds*

Step 9: CLOSING PRAYERS – FROM THE ORDER’S PRAYERS