

Faith Based Conversation 2nd Monthly Meeting

A few words from Blessed Pope Paul VI

Evangelii Nuntiandi 3

The conditions of the society in which we live oblige all of us therefore to revise methods, to seek by every means to study how we can bring the Christian message to modern man. For it is only in the Christian message that modern man can find the answer to his questions and the energy for his commitment of human solidarity.... It is absolutely necessary for us to take into account a heritage of faith that the Church has the duty of preserving in its untouchable purity, and of presenting it to the people of our time, in a way that is as understandable and persuasive as possible.

Evangelii Nuntiandi 21

Above all the Gospel must be proclaimed by witness. Take a Christian or a handful of Christians who, in the midst of their own community, show their capacity for understanding and acceptance, their sharing of life and destiny with other people, their solidarity with the efforts of all for whatever is noble and good. Let us suppose that, in addition, they radiate in an altogether simple and unaffected way their faith in values that go beyond current values, and their hope in something that is not seen and that one would not dare to imagine. Through this wordless witness these Christians stir up irresistible questions in the hearts of those who see how they live: Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? What or who is it that inspires them? Why are they in our midst? Such a witness is already a silent proclamation of the Good News and a very powerful and effective one.

Taking hold of opportunities

Neighbours are more observant of our activities than we give them credit for. At some point they will ask, 'Where do you go every morning so early?'

to those who go to daily Mass and 'What do you do every Sunday morning / Saturday evening?' When the question comes have an answer that invites another question. 'I go to Church to worship God because... I find great comfort there / it is the best way to thank Him that I know / it is the source of life to me' is a much better answer than 'I go to Church'. Giving a more detailed answer allows you to then ask, 'Would you like to hear how God's comfort got me through a difficult time in my life?' If you get a positive response to that, take the opportunity and tell them one of the ways going to Church Sunday by Sunday has helped you.

From Diocesan 'Reaching out to Visitors at Christmas' information

Over Christmas and the New Year a parish can expect to see considerable numbers of people who do not normally attend Mass. Many of them will be 'lapsed/resting' Catholics or 'seekers/returning' Catholics who are perhaps visiting relatives over Christmas, while others will have little or no connection with the Church.

How should we respond to these visitors? Maybe the spark of faith is just alive in their hearts. Maybe some personal search or difficulty known only to God has brought them to Church this Christmas. Maybe some hurt inflicted by the Church in the past has been temporarily overcome by the warmth of the season.

Sometimes a gesture or word on our part can make all the difference.

Invest and Invite

Guests of all ages are going to be more receptive to an invitation to attend Christmas Mass with you if you have worked on improving your relationship with them by taking extra time to listen to them and extra effort to understand them. Also invest some time in praying for each guest prior to their arrival, and each night of their stay.

Seeking Christmas mail to give containing religious images and adding 'with love and prayers', 'may God bless you' will remind them of holy things.