

## Faith Based Conversation April 2015

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

It “happens often in life: a man- a woman - who feels sick in spirit, sad, who has made many mistakes in life, at a certain point feels the water stirring”. It is “the Holy spirit who moves something”. Or the person “hears a word” and reacts: “I want to go!”. Thus “they find courage and go”. But “how often today in Christian communities” does that man “find the doors closed”. Perhaps he hears: “You cannot, no you cannot; you’ve made mistakes here and you cannot. If you want to come, come to Mass on Sunday, but stop there, don’t do anything more”. Thus it happens that “what the Holy Spirit does in people’s hearts, Christians destroy with the psychology of the doctors of the law”. Pope Francis said he was unhappy about this, because the Church “is Jesus’ house and Jesus welcomes, but not only does He welcome: He goes to find people”, just as “He went to find” that man. “And if the people are wounded”, the Pope asked, “what does Jesus do? Does He rebuke them for being wounded? No, He comes and carries them on his shoulders”. This, the Pope stated, “is called mercy”. God speaks of this when “He rebukes his people: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice’”. Who are you, who close the door of your heart to a man, to a woman who wants to improve, to re-join the People of God, because the Holy Spirit has stirred his or her heart? Let us ask the Lord today” for “conversion to the mercy of Jesus”: only in this way “will the law be fulfilled, because the law is to love God and neighbour, as ourselves”.

*Homily 17 March 2015*

First, “Asking forgiveness is not simply making an apology”, but “is being aware of the sin, of the idolatry that I have done, of the many idolatries”; second, “God always forgives, always”, but He also requires that I forgive, because “if I don’t forgive”, it is in a sense as if I were closing “God’s door”. This is a door that we need to keep open: let us allow God’s forgiveness to come in so that we may forgive others. *Homily 10 March 2015*

**Stuck for what to do? Imitate Jesus.** At the Last Supper, what did Jesus do? He washed the feet of His apostles. After His resurrection, what did Jesus do? He made breakfast for His disciples. Personal service done with love goes a long way. It can be as simple as opening a door for someone else or passing the salt to someone before they think about asking for it.

### **Easter stocktake**

When Jesus returned to the Father He commanded us to go make disciples, to baptise, and to teach them how to live out His Gospel. How are we doing? Have we done anything since last Easter that has helped someone else decide to follow Jesus; that has helped them receive the sacraments; that has helped them grow in holiness?

If you find yourself stuck for ways of responding to these commands of Jesus think about who in the past year has helped you deepen your commitment to Jesus, has helped you appreciate the sacraments more, has helped you turn away from those things in your life impeding your relationship with God. Who were they, and what did they do?

### **You don't have to reinvent the wheel**

If you have read a book which brought you closer to God, write a review for it and post it online or send it to a Catholic newspaper or magazine. If you read a helpful article online, share that link with others through an email, Facebook or other social media. If you see an image or message online that lifts your mind and heart to God, don't leave it before you Like or Share it.

### **Clever Gift Giving**

Consider spending a little less on the regular kind of gifts you give, and use that 'little less' to arrange for a Mass to be said for him or her. That way you will spend the same, but with greater eternal value. If you are giving a book as a gift, why not add a bookmark that has a holy picture on it? Or if you are giving a handbag or luggage attach a holy medal to the inside of it?