

Faith Based Conversation 8th Monthly meeting

A few challenges from Pope Francis

Today, as the Church seeks to experience a profound missionary renewal, there is a kind of preaching which falls to each of us as a daily responsibility. It has to do with bringing the Gospel to the people we meet, whether they be our neighbours or complete strangers. This is the informal preaching which takes place in the middle of a conversation, something along the lines of what a missionary does when visiting a home. Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey.

In this preaching, which is always respectful and gentle, the first step is personal dialogue, when the other person speaks and shares his or her joys, hopes and concerns for loved ones, or so many other heartfelt needs. Only afterwards is it possible to bring up God's word, perhaps by reading a Bible verse or relating a story, but always keeping in mind the fundamental message: the personal love of God who became man, who gave Himself up for us, who is living and who offers us His salvation and His friendship. This message has to be shared humbly as a testimony on the part of one who is always willing to learn, in the awareness that the message is so rich and so deep that it always exceeds our grasp. At times the message can be presented directly, at times by way of a personal witness or gesture, or in a way which the Holy Spirit may suggest in that particular situation. If it seems prudent and if the circumstances are right, this fraternal and missionary encounter could end with a brief prayer related to the concerns which the person may have expressed. In this way they will have an experience of being listened to and understood; they will know that their particular situation has been placed before God, and that God's word really speaks to their lives. *Evangelii Gaudium 127,128*

Fr Richard Umbers @FrRichardUmbers Jul 2

The #NewEvangelisation calls for the baptised to be Nerds (theologically well read), Geeks (tech savvy) and Good Eggs (loyal friends).

Nightfever

In Chicago on Saturday nights they open the doors to the Cathedral at 9pm. Inside there are candles aplenty, soft worship music, a monstrance, and priests in the confessionals. Outside there are young adults asking those who pass by if they would like to light a candle and pray for peace. If they get a 'yes' the young adults walk them up to the doors of the cathedral and hand them a tea-light to put on the altar steps. Sometimes on the way out drinks of hot chocolate are handed out.

<http://www.cruxnow.com/faith/2014/12/24/young-catholics-evangelize-one-candle-at-a-time/>

Prayer shawls

In Melbourne members of a pastoral nursing network knits shawls prayerfully. Sewn on to the shawls are religious medals and two small felt hearts. When asked to visit a woman in hospital who had just given birth to a stillborn child, Leonie decided to offer them a prayer shawl. Leonie said: 'I don't know what faith tradition you are but would you accept this prayer shawl ... it has religious medals sewn on, but if that's not where you're at, I'm happy to take them off.' The parents, though not Catholics, were quite happy to not only accept the shawl but also to leave the medals on. When Leonie returned later, the parents had wrapped the baby up and put a red felt heart in each of the baby's hands. The mother said: 'Our baby is holding our hearts now'. Several weeks later, Leonie visited them at home and saw the prayer shawl was now draped over the end of the parents' bed. <http://catholicleader.com.au/people/claras-uncovering-the-gifts-of-the-holy-spirit>