

KSC 2018 FORMATION PROGRAMME TOPIC CHOSEN – YOUTH

Session Five: **Theme:** **Guidance**

*“Too often we talk about young people without asking what they think ...” (Pope Francis, 19th March 2018 Pre-Synodal Meeting Rome)
There are those, said the Pope, who tend to “idolize” youth, and others who prefer to keep young people “at a safe distance”, rather than allowing them to be protagonists of their own futures. (Report from Vatican Media)*

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

Step 2: **READING ON THE THEME**

The following are some excerpts from some of the statements made by some of the youth delegates to the Pre-Synod Meeting with young people from around the world. The meeting included 300 young people and was held in Rome at the Mater Ecclesiae (Mother of the Church) College 19-24 March. Australia was represented by Angela Markas.

The calling together of young people from all over the world was seen by many to be a great risk. This meeting was an adventure in preparation for the Synod of Bishops Meeting to be held in October this year on the Theme: “Youth, faith and vocational discernment”. Already there has been conducted on-line surveys both locally and internationally to try to get some measure on what the younger members of the faithful are concerned about. Already some of the local (i.e. Australia) survey outcomes have been shared and they have been proven to be a gold mine of valuable information. The local survey conducted by the Pastoral Research Office of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference was very comprehensive and has resulted in not only a ‘national’ picture but also each Diocese that participated has a ‘local’ report.

The Holy Father has had quite a lot to say about taking risk in many contexts. During this meeting Pope Francis reminded young people that we need to “dare new paths, even if it involves risks”. “We must risk because love knows how to risk. Without risking, a young person ages, and the Church also ages”. “.. it is important that you speak openly. I assure you that your contribution will be taken seriously”.

Already three themes have emerged from the Meeting: the need felt by youth for guidance, the need for more effective engagement with secularism, and the toxic nature of clericalism. As one observer (Claire Giangrave writing for ‘Crux’) reports: “Without shying away from addressing the real issues young people face in a secular age, which make youth sceptical towards religious institutions, the 20-somethings all voiced the need for the Church’s guidance and mentorship in the murky waters of the modern world.”

Following on from delegates from North America, Europe and Asia, the Australian delegate – Angela Markas – said: “As youth, we are in need of guidance. Youth feel disconnected from the Church. Whether it is because they feel divided by an older clergy, unwelcomed for their different ideas and beliefs, or that they don’t feel listened to or approached with love and empathy. Youth do not always feel they have a place in Church.” She continued “Young people are seeking depth. We want, and are able, to understand the complexity of it all and be able to have a voice. There is a tendency in the Church to avoid matters that are not-so-easy to talk about. This includes same-sex marriage, our sexuality, and also, the role of women in the Church.”

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

Step 4: **SCRIPTURE READING** From the Acts of the Apostles – Chapter 2, verses 17-18

‘In the last days, - the Lord declares – I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young people shall see visions, your old people dream dreams.’

Step 5: **REFLECTION** (5 Mins)

Step 6: **SHARING** (10 Mins)

So far the risk seems to have worked. There is no doubt the 300 young people gathered have expressed the same needs even though their own ‘home’ context is quite different. Given that common expression of a need for ‘guidance’ it is perhaps timely for us to try to understand what ‘guidance’ is sought and how it is given.

What do we understand by that word ‘guidance’? Can there be a difference between what the modern young people mean by that word and what some of the older generations understand by it?

What forms can ‘guidance’ take – action (the example we give), vocal reaction (the way we express values), approach (how to express correction or encouragement), engagement (reflective interest in matters displayed), encouragement (affirming the good we observe), perseverance (patient endurance in maintaining truth in face of contradiction), etc.

Again we might like to share the revelations of our own experiences and observations particularly in regard to what has worked and what has not worked.

Step 7: **CONCLUSION** We pray together;

Come Holy Spirit of this Great Southland
Inspire our entire faith community,
As we prayerfully discern new horizons for spreading joy
in the lives and communities of the People of God.

Come Holy Spirit of Youth
Fill the hearts of young people with the hope and love of Jesus Christ.
Enliven our community with the creativity, energy and joy of youth.
Guide us together, as we strive to offer God’s mercy
to those who feel abandoned or outcast.

Come Holy Spirit of Faith
Empower our community to be courageous.
Unite your people as witnesses of love.
Walk with us, as we blaze new trails of discipleship,
Accompanying young people as we renew the Church together.

Come Holy Spirit of Vocation
Stir within young people an awareness of God’s call.
Reveal to us the graces of young people.
Guide us all, in finding our place and raising our voices
To build a civilization of love.

Amen

Our Lady of the Southern Cross, Help of Christians, pray for us.
St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, friend of the young, pray for us.

Step 8: *The meeting proceeds*

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