



10 MINUTE INSET: NOTES

TEN MINUTE INSET PART ONE: Tragedy and interruption

Is it tempting to think that we are doing our job when only when our strategies achieve their aims. Our reality is different. We can also achieve by the way in which we respond to interruptions. Jesus teaches this powerfully in Luke Chapter 10. Here Jesus praises the “Good Samaritan” because he allowed his journey to be interrupted. In the lives of the saints we see this pattern repeated. Where would we be had the Mother of Jesus not allowed her life to be interrupted. In Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book *Life Together* he writes, “We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and cancelling our plans...”

QUESTION: *In what ways is this terrible virus also a timely interruption?*

TEN MINUTE INSET PART TWO: Stop! The rediscovery of contemplation

Sometimes we are too busy to think. The Bible is full of stories of people who are blind to reality. Jesus is the Light of the World because he reveals truth. He helps us to see and think differently. This requires us to do what Thomas Merton calls, “contemplation.” Contemplation casts light into circumstance. For some people contemplation took them by surprise during the pandemic and remarkable things began to happen;

- a) A heightened gratitude
- b) A reconnection to nature (Bird song)
- c) Recognition of our shared vulnerability (We are in this together)
- d) A reconsideration who the real heroes are
- e) An openness to learning new things
- f) We met our neighbours
- g) We reconsidered our priorities

TASK: *Why do people say “I don’t want it to go back to how it was” and what do they really mean?*

TEN MINUTE INSET PART THREE: We are meant for each other

We are not wired to socially distance. So the pandemic hit many hard. For some, loneliness was the hardest aspect. Pope Francis draws our attention to Luke Chapter 24 where we meet two dejected disciples heading for a village called Emmaus. He notes how Jesus accompanied them, shoulder to shoulder until they could see beyond despair. He refers to the Church (Your school perhaps) as a canoe, in which the elderly plot the course and the young paddle like fury. This is how we were made to be, in the canoe together.

TASK: *In what ways has the pandemic given us an opportunity to rethink who we are together?*

TEN MINUTE INSET PART FOUR: Remembering what this is all about

Before we get back on the horse and start galloping back into frantic and relentless list of things to do, let's remind each other of just what we are, when we are together. Our school communities;

- a) Have a healthy sense of God's presence. We pray because we are not alone. A Catholic school can't exist without that connection. We pray in two ways. We have inherited prayers like the Lord's Prayer which we can share. We also have contemplation, which encourages us to shut up, listen and be grateful.
- b) Have a healthy sense of God in each other. We recognise that people are also Holy ground and so we treat everyone with dignity. We look to one another with what Pope Benedict called "The eyes of the heart".
- c) Have a healthy sense of God in all things. "The World is charged with the Grandeur of God" wrote Gerard Manly Hopkins. This is a sacramental view and it encourages what the Church calls a "Sense of Awe and Wonder." So in our Schools God is alive in the science, the PE, the History books and the wisdom of Shakespeare. Nothing is lost to this principle and it is why the Catholic Church built schools.
- d) Have a healthy sense of purpose. Catholic schools help to build consciences so that people mature. In this way we can become authentic, truly who we are. This is the only way we can transform society for the good of everyone. We have to be real. Pope Francis warns us not to settle for mediocre. We have a duty to become who God created us to be and we get there by perseverance.
- e) Have a healthy sense of Grace. Catholics say before they receive communion at mass "Lord I am not worthy". It is true. We don't put our faith in ourselves. We put our faith in God's love for us. So stop thinking you are not good enough, holy enough or clever enough. You are not an imposter. You work in a Catholic school because God has a purpose for you which he won't give to another.

Reading

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Life Together. Harper Collins. June 2008.

Thomas Merton: Contemplation in a world of Action. University of Notre Dame Press. February 1998

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

Gerard Manley Hopkins: God's Grandeur 1877

