

**Vatican II – Saturday Morning Sessions**  
**Session 14: Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014**  
**Feedback from Group Work**

**Part 1: Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity**

**Group 1 Feedback**

What do you think are the main points the Council Fathers are making about missionary activity in this chapter (paragraphs 2-9)?

- To make God's/Christ's presence known more by our actions than by our words
- There is a fountain of love for all
- Making Christ's message understandable in all languages and in every culture
- To plant the seed of the word so that people start to hear and want to know more
- Para 7. "We believe that God's plan...and to the Cath Church – it should be open to all Christian faiths not just to the Catholic Church

We are called to spread the Good News of the Gospel. What can each one of us do on a daily basis?

- Better to show it through action than to try to force it through our words
- Someone said: "preach the gospel but only use words if you have to..."  
St F
- Taking time out for others in the worlds, sometimes in a moment of quiet reflection speaking to God
- Conscientiously treating people well in all circumstances even though they may treat us badly we reply in words and actions in a positive way. Don't retaliate.

**Group 2 Feedback**

Summarise each of the paragraphs (10-18) in one statement

- The church wants to be present as Christ is present to the many millions in the world who have not heard the Word. The church is present through the love and example and lifestyle of its members.

- Christians in the context of missionary work should be animated by love and be willing to stand beside all people, especially the poor, to share their experiences.
- They should be willing to cooperate with the authorities but to challenge when necessary.
- Everyone should be welcome to join Christ but never forced.
- The process of the catechumenate puts us back in touch with an ancient rite whereby we all take responsibility to share and support the journey of those who are moving towards membership of the church community.
- We are all called to help form Christian communities and to be Christ-like both as leaders and as servants.
- Training of priests should take place locally and be rooted in their understanding of the needs of the local culture and communities where they belong.
- The role of the catechist is vital and they should have access to ongoing training and be justly recompensed.
- Religious and contemplative life offers a rich treasure to the church and should always be supported.

We are called to spread the Good News of the Gospel. What can each one of us do on a daily basis?

- We should give a good example in our daily lives. We are called to holiness in our daily acts of self-giving love.

### **Group 3 Feedback**

Summarise each of the paragraphs (23-34) in one statement.

- The word "missionary" makes us think of Africa or China but we are all called to be missionaries. Special and deliberate training is needed especially about a country's culture and language. All too often the missionary's values are imposed on the missionary country.
- A missionary needs a good knowledge of the Scriptures and needs to be patient, prayerful and willing to bear solitude.
- There should be a connection to a community, a missionary should never be working in isolation.
- Rome (Propagation of the Faith) coordinates missionary work and should use modern means of communication and consult the world's bishops and other experts.
- It was noted that these new guidelines were not followed when the new liturgy was composed!

- Various missionaries should coordinate and cooperate with each other to save time and money.

### **Group 4 Feedback**

Summarise the main points made in this chapter (paragraphs 35-42).

- "...the first and most important duty however is not missionary work, but to lead a profoundly Christian life."(bottom of p 189.)
- We looked at the statement and worked backwards...
- We have to have an everyday witness to Christ and we have to lead a profoundly Christian life – if we do these then "others will be attracted to us."
- To be attractive to others is not something we can control, it lies in the other.
- Perhaps we will be attractive in that we have something which others would like to have. Others see something about our lives of Christian witness which they too would like to have.
- This will lead to renewal in the church. This comes down to our personal prayer, faith, devotion and love of Jesus – that is both the choice and the challenge for us.
- Para 37. Renewal is the responsibility of parishes and dioceses...
- What is renewal? For church renewal to happen globally we need to have personal renewal.
- If I'm not renewed how can the church be renewed?
- Bishops, priests and the laity all have a responsibility to reach out.

We are called to spread the Good News of the Gospel. What can each one of us do on a daily basis?

- What does loving my neighbour mean? It means having mutual respect for each other and treating all people kindly – even if we don't approve of them or like them.
- Lay people need to recognise that they have a spread of different gifts and if we care and respect each other and recognise our gifts then we may not be "looking inward " so much and be more open to those outwith our community.

## Part 2: Declaration on Christian Education

### Group 6 Feedback

The church has a responsibility in the formation of young people and adults. In what ways has the church discharged its responsibilities and how effective has it been?

- Some ways it provided – RC schools in Scotland state provided, diff from in England where they are voluntary aided and Catholics needed to pay for some of this.
- The partnership between parish, home and school was emphasised – parents and teachers co-responsible but some “passing of the buck” had taken place where parents were being asked to do more.
- Many educated before Vat 2 – a lot of rote learning from the catechism.
- Post Vat 2 – very different but not a clear and definitive curriculum and experience varied greatly as well as the quality of it.
- Post Vat 2 there was a difference between what parents had been taught and what kids were now being taught and so there was a bit of a disconnect here.
- A big feature was the closing of the Catholic teacher training colleges (Craiglockhart and Notre Dame); formation of the teachers was limited and this had a knock on effect on their education of the children and in parish formation.
- Society has changed; the document has some encouraging thoughts about being more open minded (working with the discoveries in science) not just looking inwards but looking at ways of providing for non-Catholics in Catholic schools and providing for Catholics in non-Catholic schools; Catholic school population is more diverse, and this raises challenges in schools need to be addressed more effectively. Pope Francis is offering a more compassionate and pastoral, more open and friendly attitude in this context.
- Primary provision was much more positive than in secondary education where things were less clear but at least we were encouraged to be more open in our outlook and this led to a better relationship with the outside world.
- Children are very at the mercy of the teacher you get; faith formation is a bit of a lottery; if you’ve been a given a good healthy wholesome Christian education then that is a good foundation for life, but it is a bit of a hit or a miss depending on who teaches you.
- There are courses which are available at Gillis, and within our parish but important that we can make use of what we learn and that this will be welcomed and not be seen as a threat.

- There was some discussion of the positive role of catechists in parishes in some Latin American countries.
- The result of this formation should be seen in our personal daily prayer, and in looking at the way we treat other people; how well do we follow Jesus in the way we do this?

### **Group 7 Feedback**

The church has a responsibility in the formation of young people and adults. In what ways has the church discharged its responsibilities and how effective has it been?

- 4 broad declarations
  - All people have the right to education
  - The faithful have the right to a Christian education
  - Key role of the family in the formation of that Christian education
  - What was the role of the church in the formation of Christian education, school and higher education
- Nothing in here jarred with our feelings to date – innovative in tone and ethos in faith formation
- But the lived experience of teachers after 1960 did not echo this – there was a disconnect here.
- Enlightening to hear it was actually taught:
- It was compulsory but not inspected officially.
- The religious inspectors were priests who conducted these informally but in a draconian and punitive way and children's experience was quite fearful.
- Rote learning was the norm – without too much learning.
- After the Millar Report (1970), RME was given an equal status with other subjects with qualified teachers, a formal curriculum and exams. It was broadened and other religions were taught in RC schools and the latter were still much favoured by Christians in general.
- Faith formation in terms of adults
- It was noted that chaplains introduced and were effective to some extent
- Adults – faith formation was piecemeal.
- Role of priests and religious in school life today – and in further and higher education.
- Has the church prepared and trained people well?
- We know that there is some good practice but it is not universal.

- More needs to be done systematically to ensure that this formation is experienced by everyone.
- Seminarians need to better prepare priests in the ways of faith formation.