

Vatican II – Saturday Morning Sessions

Session 4: Saturday 23rd March 2013

Feedback from Group Discussions

How do you feel about the man who has been appointed as our Holy Father; could he meet the expectations we set out last time we met?

- Over the last few days have experienced a feeling of being hopeful.
- Our hope comes from the first words he spoke on the balcony when he was introduced - Buona sera (good evening).
- Joyful.
- Optimistic.
- Relieved.
- We needed uplifted and that's what we feel.
- Like his warmth and his smile.
- He is a good, simple people's man.
- Admire his simplicity.
- Impressed his simplicity and that he should not be put on a pedestal
- He is brave, humble, open and visionary.
- He fits the bill in terms of the hopes we expressed during the last session.
- Struck by the fact that he went out in the open-top popemobile.
- Somebody who wants to walk with us as sisters and brothers in Christ.
- He needs our support.

In the light of what you have read and shared in your group, if you had to whittle it down to one priority, what would you say to our Holy Father, Francis, his number one priority should be?

✧ Group 1

- We want Francis to be true to what he knows the Church needs.
- We want him to listen to the Church, his people.
- We want him to know that we are behind him and that he is one of us.
- We need him to reflect Jesus.

- ✘ Group 2
 - Collegiality.
 - Openness.
 - A root and branch reform of the church, starting with the hierarchy and then continuing throughout the whole church.

- ✘ Group 3
 - Collegiality.
 - The role of women throughout the church.
 - A renewal of the Curia.

These three points can be summed up as having respect for each person as a baptised Christian and incarnating the Holy Spirit.

- ✘ Group 4
 - Involve everybody in the church (including the laity) in discussions about how the church should be. Everything else will flow from this.
 - We need to be careful not to place too much expectation on him.

- ✘ Group 5
 - Reform the Curia (cf. openness and involvement).
 - Appoint the right people around him.
 - Fully implement Vatican II.
 - The church is community/people and needs to be in relationship with its people.
 - We would ask Francis not to lose his simplicity and contact with people.

- ✘ Group 6
 - The position of women at all levels throughout the church, which will require a reform of the Curia.

- ✘ Group 7
 - All of what we said last time we met (session 3) but would sum this up by asking Francis to fulfil, implement and develop Vatican II.

Fr Mike then shared with us the three steps he would like Francis to take:

1. Call all nuncios and papal delegates back to Rome, dismiss them and send them back to their own diocese to become pastoral priests and bishops.
2. Establish effective communication between himself and the episcopal conferences throughout the world, without any intermediaries.
3. Abolish the college of cardinals as it currently exists and then re-constitute it, with an openness to the appointment of females and males, lay people and clerics.

Having reflected on the death of John XXIII, what is the contribution made by him?

✘ Group 1

- What he said can't be undone – witnessed in some way by the fact that almost 50 years after his death we are sitting here today.
- He was a man of simplicity and great vision who sought a Christ-centered church.
- Openness to people and the world.

✘ Group 2

- A vision of what the church could and should be – church fully opened up.
- A great love for the church and the world - a loving church at the heart of the world.
- The strength of his love enabled him to deal with opposition.
- Inspiration was his lasting legacy.

✘ Group 3

- His love of people set an example for all of us.
- He had the courage to call and then shape the Council.
- He made possible changes to the liturgy that enabled lay people to participate.
- He respected, valued and embraced people of all religions and none, making ecumenism a major focus.

✘ Group 4

- He had both the vision and the courage to reform the church.
- He gave Christ's church back to the people.
- He ignited the Ecumenical movement by inviting those of other Christian denominations to come to Vatican II.

✘ Group 5

- He made the liturgy/Mass more accessible.
- He touched people with his love and listened to people.
- He opened the windows of the Vatican and let the world come in.
- He was a brave and courageous man who gave the church back to the people.

✘ Group 6

- He reached out to the whole world – "all may be one."
- He broke down the exclusiveness and defensiveness of the church.
- He was an example of good leadership – his visible and loving goodness enabled him to make changes.

✘ Group 7

- A man who was thought to be an interim/stop-gap appointment, having the courage within two months of his appointment to 'go for it'. He was a visionary who had the determination and inner courage to go for Vatican II.
- He embraced the philosophy of universality and inclusiveness, symbolised in some way by the presence at Vatican II of various Christian denominations and those of other faiths.
- Reconciliation with Jews.