

CALLED TO BE

—allowing space for listening and healing—



It is time to listen to our young people, to let them *be*, to feel that they belong, their voices matter and they are being heard. Therefore, this session is not content heavy but rather provides some insightful questions that, with your young people, you can perhaps reflect over individually or in groups and share with one another. In this space, it is hoped that your young people can safely address their fears, as well as hopes, for the future, to dream together, form one another and offer their challenges. We remember that healing takes time, and it is hoped that, with the support of one another, we may heal from this and find new ways to *be* in the world, seeking positive transformation out of this time.



Reflections

For a short reflection:

Amidst the suffering, what are the signs of life, of resurrection? During World War II Viktor Frankl was interred in four concentration camps. His wife, parents and brother all died in the camps. Viktor survived the Holocaust. Reflecting later, he said that, 'the secret to enduring great suffering is not to try and imagine its end but to find meaning in its present.'

What have you appreciated during this difficult time?
What have you learnt to appreciate about yourself?
What have you come to appreciate about others?

For a longer reflection:

Pope Francis – *Why are you afraid?* – Address 'To the City and the World' during the Extraordinary Moment of Prayer, Sagrato of St Peter's Basilica, 27 March 2020.

"[Lord], You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others.

We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial.

It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees,

cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves.

In the face of so much suffering... we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility? How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer? How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all? Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons."

**Take time to reflect on what has happened and our experience of lockdown.
Pope Francis tells us to look on this time as a time of choosing how we want our world and society to be following the coronavirus pandemic.
Is there anything we have stopped, and don't want to resume?
Anything we've discovered and want to continue?**

Reflective exercise

In groups, pairs, or as individuals think over the questions below. If it's possible, and you are together, you could use two whiteboards/ flipcharts and two different coloured post-it notes: one for things we are ready to let go of, and another for things we want to continue and take forward (following the prompt questions below). Let your young people write their answers on the post-it notes then bring them forward to put on the corresponding whiteboard/ flipchart (maintaining social distancing). If you are not physically together, ask your young people to feed back their responses verbally and perhaps someone can make a note of them.

Lockdown no doubt disrupted our regular routines, our past-paced lifestyle, and took the frantic out of life. Now can we see what was happening before as perhaps being *abnormal*? If we think about the stress placed on individuals, the reigning culture of consumerism, materialism and individualism, and how we may have pushed care and community aside and put in its place wealth, success, profit and Instagram likes? Perhaps for some of us, quarantine granted an opportunity for more space and time to think about the way we live and how we are as a society.

Questions

- During the time of quarantine, is there anything we have stopped, and don't want to resume? Anything we've discovered and want to continue?
- What happened; what did we do/ witness/ realise that we would like to take forward as we move into a post-pandemic society?
- What is it time to let go of?
- Have we been able to come to know ourselves better – when we've been alone and in solitude?

After you have had time to discuss your responses, ask each young person to write down on a card one thing that they will take away from this discussion. Perhaps it's something they're ready to let go of or something they'd like to continue. If you are doing this together online, ask your young people to write it down on a piece of paper and hold them up to the camera – perhaps you could capture this with a screenshot.

Prayer From Pope Francis

Loving God, Creator of Heaven, Earth, and all therein contained.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we can be part of Creation, your gift.

Be present to those in need in these difficult times,
especially the poorest and most vulnerable.
Help us to show creative solidarity
as we confront the consequences of
the global pandemic.
Make us courageous in embracing
the changes required to seek
the common good.

Now more than ever, may we all feel
interconnected and interdependent.
Enable us to succeed in listening and
responding to the cry of the Earth and the
cry of the poor. May their current sufferings
become the birth pangs of a more fraternal
and sustainable world.

We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Further questions

If you would like to explore these questions further, you could continue by asking:

- What crossroads do we stand at right now? What choices are we facing as individuals and a wider world?
- What can we build together? How can we improve our lives together?
- What talents and gifts do we have in our midst, here that we haven't yet fully expressed?
- What resources at our disposal can we use to make our neighbourhood one in which everybody looks out for one another?

(Based on questions from the book, *The Second Mountain* by David Brooks)

Explore Pope Francis' speeches in 'Life After the Pandemic'

https://www.vaticannews.va/content/dam/lev/la-vita-dopo-la-pandemia/pdf/INGLESE_11_05.pdf

Read Luke 8:22-25 - Jesus asleep in the boat, then calming the storm
Invite the young people to reflect on the passage:

- How have these times been like the storm - difficult and turbulent?
- Have you felt in need of help? Have you felt alone?
- Where have you asked for help?

Now consider the words of Pope Francis:

'In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!"

- Address 'To the City and the World' during the Extraordinary Moment of Prayer, Sagrato of St Peter's Basilica, 27 March 2020.

However, Pope Francis highlights that it was *us* who was not awake, to what we were doing and how we were behaving. Pope Francis calls us to see this time as a time of choosing:

- Do we carry on the way we were living before this crisis, knowing that there is so much poverty, conflict, pollution? Or do we come out of this with a change of attitude, a change of heart, a change of living?

He asks us to, once again, care for one another, to see the poor and to be present in new ways, to people at every level: psychologically, emotionally and materially. Perhaps this has been an invitation to step more fully into our lives, to transcend the stories that control us in our culture and do something really meaningful with our lives.

- Are you ready to ask for help to 'step up'?

Extra:

Perhaps if you want to focus on the Black Lives Matter movement, you could ask your young people:

- How have you been affected by what is currently happening in America?
- What responsibility do we have to address racism and race-relations? How can we be part of the transformation to a more equal and compassionate society?