

# CALLED TO RELATIONSHIP

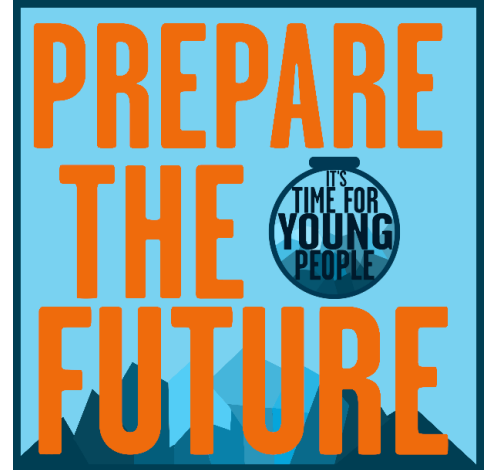
renewing our relationship with God; ourselves; one another



## a. Part One: *Renewing our relationship with God; ourselves; one another*

*The 2020 COVID pandemic has given us an opportunity to reconnect with ourselves, our communities and God. Staying connected to the Lord, not being distanced from ourselves, connecting to our deepest desires (themes covered in previous units), then turning out to others, will be critical in our transformation coming out of this time. May we be part of the forces in society that nurture attachment, connection and solidarity and not those that foster social isolation, division, or rampant individualism. Lord, help us to realise that we too can be part of the problem we complain about, so that we can be reconciled with it, open to change and transformation.*

*This session explores the theme of relationships - nurturing and deepening the ones we have, with those around us, along with widening our 'scope of concern' beyond our immediate neighbours, to the 'stranger' and 'foreigner'. Shown in the example of the Good Samaritan, where we are called, by God, to a relationship with one another and to demonstrate love through our interactions with all whom we share this life.*



## Reflections

For a short reflection:

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."* - John 15:12  
Jesus taught us to treat one another how we wish to be treated.

Watch this clip:

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (1:38 minutes): <https://www.bible.com/videos/35-parable-of-the-good-samaritan-from-jesus-film-project>

If you have time, see also: As one friend speaks to another - Christ is Alive (2:02 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x5G0RdrPhc>

Activity:

Can you think of an example of a modern-day Good Samaritan? Someone you know who has been helping others or your community? How are they responding to the call of Jesus?

Example of those who have been helping their community during this pandemic: <https://millionminutes.org/2020-blessed-pier-recipients>

Prayer:

[A Good Samaritan Prayer](#) (from clicktopray.org)

Lord, help me to be ever aware of the commandment to love You and to love my neighbour as myself.

Lord, help me to be a merciful neighbour, even when it is inconvenient, time is short or other responsibilities loom.

Help me to remember the Good Samaritan and Jesus' simple message: Go and do likewise.

Amen.

**For a longer reflection:**

## **Cultivating our relationship with God:**

- Pope Francis in 'Christus Vivit': 158. That is why you need to **stay connected to Jesus**, to **"remain online" with him**, since you will not grow happy and holy by your own efforts and intelligence alone. Just as you try not to lose your connection to the internet, make sure that you stay connected to the Lord. That means not cutting off dialogue, listening to him, sharing your life with him and, whenever you aren't sure what you should do, asking him: **"Jesus, what would you do in my place?"**

**In what ways do you 'stay connected' to Jesus?  
How is your relationship with God? How is that  
affecting your life?**

**Cultivating our relationship with others:**

- **Christus Vivit: 163.** *Paths of fraternity.* Your spiritual growth is expressed above all by your growth in fraternal, generous and merciful love. Saint Paul prayed: "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love **for one another and for all**" (1 Thes 3:12). How wonderful it would be to experience this "ecstasy" of **coming out of ourselves and seeking the good of others**, even to the sacrifice of our lives.

How is it that, through the Lord, we receive an increase in love 'for one another and for all'?  
Are we 'seeking the good of others'? What does this mean?

## Faith sharing: The Parable of the Good Samaritan - Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So, too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

### Clip and discussion questions:

Watch this clip then use the discussion questions below: Daryl Davis Did the Unthinkable (10.53) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=waVrJEIfahc>

*Themes: Listening, culture of encounter, love and understanding, overcoming fear.*

**How did Daryl Davis touch/change the hearts of Ku Klux Klan members?**

**Where do we need to build bridges in our society?  
(Between race, gender, across socio-economic class)**

**How can we have difficult conversations (with great love)?**

**Where do we find opportunities 'to plant the seed'?**

**How can we help others overcome fear?**

## Discussion Questions:

Consider St. Thomas Aquinas's words: *"We must love them both, those whose opinions we share and those whose opinions we reject, for both have laboured in the search for truth, and both have helped us in finding it."*

*Challenge: Can you practice this with those you disagree with?*

Why is relationship so important to us? As humans we are social animals, made for community.

We all need attention, sympathy, shared joy, love and friendship (as well as the basics of food, shelter and clothing) – may we all learn the importance of care once again, caring for one another and providing attention and support in a sustained way.

## Reflective exercise/activity

Pick up any object in the room (it can be your pencil case, lunch box, a shoe, or notebook). In groups, or pairs, think about how many people might have touched that item before it reached you. If it is a piece of food, how many stages did it go through (from planting, harvesting, packaging, transporting, etc) and how many people did this involve? Where in the world is it from? Draw this out as a flow-chart or mind-map.

Can we begin to see that we, the human family, and all of creation, are in relationship with one another? We are called to recognise this relationship, this interconnectedness, and see ourselves as one family - God's children. That means that we must respect and uphold the dignity of those around us, *and* those far away. Our neighbour *and* the stranger. We cannot function without one another. During this time, we are called to see beyond our own narrow vision of the world, to a world that is interconnected. Think: who makes your clothes? What are their lives like? How do we have access to cheap clothes? We *are* in relationship, so we must make it one that works for us all. Jesus said, *'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.'* (Matthew 25:45).

## Further exploration on this topic...

Our news and media can often cause us to fear, not only the world and what is happening (war, environmental destruction, exploitation, slavery...), but even one another. Take, for example, the representation of refugees and asylum seekers in our mainstream media. A simple search via Google Images, using keywords '[refugee crisis UK media](#)' will demonstrate this point.

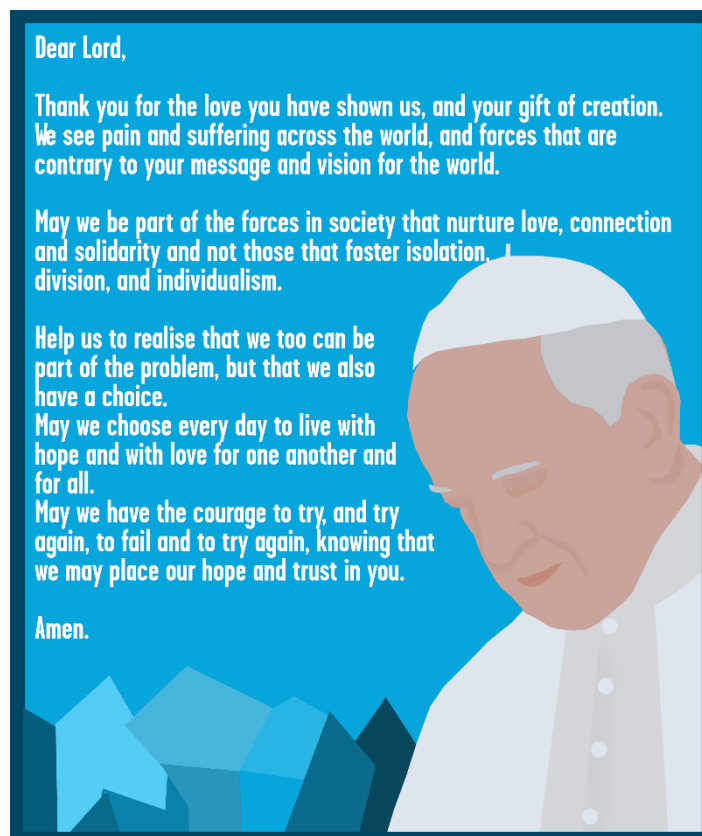
Whilst our attention has been on the coronavirus pandemic, the cameras have turned away from the plight of refugees, yet suffering endures. Our brothers and sisters around the world face hardship. We need systematic change to address this.

Watch this YouTube video by BBC Media Action:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=171&v=m1BLsySgsHM&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=171&v=m1BLsySgsHM&feature=emb_logo)

When we start with ourselves and our love for our neighbour, we begin to reconcile the crises we are experiencing. It starts with us showing mercy to one another and entering into a deeper relationship (which can be messy!) to find solutions for our complex challenges. This will be explored further in the upcoming units.

## Prayer:





## b) Part Two: Reconciliation

Essential to all relationships is forgiveness. We may already experience this and live this out daily with friends and family. In the Gospels we are told to forgive, and more importantly, to love our enemies. This is undeniably very difficult.

If we bring our grievances before the Lord, we start with the light. Tell God and give thanks for the graces and gifts in your life. Think about when you have experienced God's goodness. Being open, and becoming aware of these, may help us when we need to forgive others, or even ourselves. It could be a means to grace and may help bridge divisions and prevent conflict and despair.

### A Forgiveness Litany – Steps:

1. Recall why you got hurt, and how it made you feel. Imagine that the person who caused you hurt is in front of you and say everything you want to say to them.
2. Put yourself in their shoes, try to see where they are coming from (with love and compassion, see it from their perspective).
3. Pray about this.
4. Repeat until you feel you have exhausted the anger.

Adapted from Anthony de Mello – *Release from Resentment*. <http://dt.pepperdine.edu/courses/regents%202015/Anthony%20de%20Mello%20-%20Sadhana%20-%20A%20Way%20to%20God.pdf> See pages 74-75.

#### Faith Sharing - Matthew's Gospel (5: 38-48): Eye for Eye

"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth'. But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour' and 'Hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

**Prayer:** (from <https://www.catholic.org/prayers/prayer.php?p=2895>)

Father,

I acknowledge that I've held resentment and bitterness against (name).

I confess this as sin and ask You to forgive me.

I forgive (name).

Remind me, Lord, to not hold any more resentments,  
but rather to love this person.

Father, I ask You to also forgive (name).

Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer.

In Jesus' Holy Name,

Amen.

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**IT'S TIME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**