

'RECONCILED IN JESUS – REFLECTING WITH POPE FRANCIS ON JESUS'  
HOMILY - 10 SEPTEMBER 2017

As we ponder today's Gospel Matthew 18:15-20,  
we see it in the context of the whole of Chapter 18  
- living as a church community.

Reconciliation processes have steps or stages.

Reconciling within church has stages.

Opportunities are provided.

Sometimes many first steps. Sometimes we don't know the outcome.

**WHAT IS OUR MODEL OF CHURCH?  
TO WHOM DO WE RECONCILE?**

In being reconciled, we hear in the Gospel,

*"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."*

We are not alone.

**We are called to accompany Jesus, as Jesus is among us.**

**IS THERE ADVICE ON HOW TO ACCOMPANY JESUS?**

**POPE FRANCIS**

In this reflecting on **CHURCH, RENEWAL, MISSION, SPIRITUALITY, PRAYER**

let us pause and reflect on **some of the insights of Pope Francis**

as he addressed the executive committee of CELAM

(the Latin American Bishops Conference) this week.

**Pope Francis did not seek from the church**

*"a collection of programmes that fill agendas and waste precious energies"*

**Instead he asked them to**

*"place the mission of Jesus at the heart of the Church,  
making it the criterion  
for measuring the effectiveness of her structures,  
the results of her labours, the fruitfulness of her ministers  
and the joy they awaken. For without joy, we attract no one."*

*"At stake is the salvation that Christ brings us,  
which has to touch the hearts of men and women by its power  
and appealing to their freedom,  
inviting them to a permanent exodus from themselves  
and their self-absorption,  
towards fellowship with God and with our brothers and sisters."*

**Pope Francis speaks of going with Jesus, not alone.**

*"How greatly we need to be recollected, within and without!  
Our crowded schedules, the fragmentation of reality,  
the rapid pace of our lives:*

*all these things might make us lose our focus and end up in a vacuum.  
Recovering unity is imperative.  
Where do we find unity? Always in Jesus.  
What makes the mission last is  
not the generosity and enthusiasm that burn in the heart of the missionary,  
even though these are always necessary.  
It is rather the companionship of Jesus in his Spirit.  
If we do not we set out with him on our mission,  
we quickly become lost and risk confusing our vain needs with his cause.  
If our reason for setting out is not Jesus,  
it becomes easy to grow discouraged by the fatigue of the journey,  
or the resistance we meet, by constantly changing scenarios  
or by the weariness brought on by subtle but persistent ploys of the enemy.”*

**Pope Francis stressed the Gospel is concrete.**

*“The Gospel is always concrete,  
and never an exercise in fruitless speculation.”*

**Pope Francis said that hope  
has a young face and a woman’s face in Latin America.**

***“In Latin America, hope has a young face***  
*We often speak of young people and we often hear statistics  
about ours being the continent of the future.  
Some point to supposed shortcomings  
and a lack of motivation on the part of the young,  
while others eye their value as potential consumers.  
Others would enlist them in drug trafficking and violence.  
Pay no attention to these caricatures of young people.  
Look them in the eye and seek in them the courage of hope.  
It is not true that they want to return to the past.  
Make real room for them in your local Churches,  
invest time and resources in training them.  
Offer them incisive and practical educational programmes,  
and demand of them, as fathers demand of their children,  
that they use their gifts well.  
Teach them the joy born of living life to the full, and not superficially.  
Do not be content with the palaver and the proposals found in pastoral plans  
that never get put into practice.”*

***“In Latin America, hope has a woman’s face***  
*I need not dwell on the role of women on our continent and in our Church.  
From their lips we learned the faith, and with their milk  
we took on the features of our mestizo soul and our immunity to despair.  
I think of indigenous or black mothers,  
I think of mothers in our cities working three jobs,  
I think of elderly women who serve as catechists,*

*and I think of consecrated woman  
and those who quietly go about doing so much good.  
Without women, the Church of this continent would lose its power to be continually  
reborn.  
It is women who keep patiently kindling the flame of faith.  
We have a grave obligation to understand, respect, appreciate and promote the  
ecclesial and social impact of all that women do.  
They accompanied Jesus on his mission;  
they did not abandon him at the foot of the cross;  
they alone awaited for the night of death to give back the Lord of life;  
they flooded the world with the proclamation of his risen presence.  
If we hope for a new and living chapter of faith in this continent,  
we will not get it without women.  
Please, do not let them be reduced to servants of our ingrained clericalism.  
For they are on the front lines of the Latin American Church,  
in their setting out with Jesus,  
in their persevering amid the sufferings of their people,  
in their clinging to the hope that conquers death,  
and in their joyful way of proclaiming to the world that Christ is alive and risen.*

**Pope Francis describes hope passing through lay people.**

*"In Latin America, hope passes through the hearts, the minds and the arms of the  
laity"*

**Pope Francis highlighted passion**

*"We need to put our heart into everything we do.  
We need to have the passion of young lovers and of wise elders,  
a passion that turns ideas into viable utopias,  
a passion for the work of our hands,  
a passion that makes us constant pilgrims in our Churches."*

I invite us to reflect on the Pope's Address to the CELAM Executive – below - and pray it.

**WHAT APPLIES TO US IN AUSTRALIA, AND WHAT IS DIFFERENT?**

For Christians, reconciliation is not just with each other,  
It is being reconciled in Jesus.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Reconciled in Jesus. Reflecting with Francis on Jesus – 10 September]

[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/091017.cfm>]

[Parish Facebook: <http://bit.ly/parishFacebook10092017>]

Other References:

[The Full Address of Pope Francis to the CELAM Executive](#)