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Evangelii Gaudium

Prayer Module 3

‘The Smell of the Sheep’





Help us mature in our work as evangelisers. Although we know we can have this through better training and a zeal to deepen our love and to be clearer witness to the Gospel, but what we most need is to allow ourselves to be evangelised by others. We are called to witness your saving love to each other. May our imperfection and those of others not discourage us (#121). E te Ariki...

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

Let us share our personal intentions. E te Ariki

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

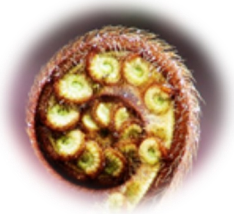
Final Blessing

Close this liturgy with the song "The Summons" by John Bell and Betty Graham Maule on answering the call to service.



i New Revise3d Standard Version. 1989, Matthew 4: 1-11

ii Some texts were redacted to suit as intercessory prayers



Reflection

- * Do you see these issues in your parish and within yourself?
- * What can we do to look after each other's vocation as Missionary Disciples?

Intercessory Prayersⁱⁱ

(Assign a person to read each prayer.)

Sometimes the society we live in, our places and even our families are deserts, where you, O God, have no place. These places can cause us to hide our faith less we be judged and attacked. May we rediscover in the desert the value of what is essential for living. May we recognise people's thirst for you, O God, and for the ultimate meaning of life. And may we, by example as people of faith, point out the way to the Promised Land and keep hope alive (#86). E te Ariki...

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

Open our eyes to see when our practice of faith has been more self-serving. Help us to recognise those times when we try to tailor our relationship with you into how it fits into our worldview; when we pick only the parts of this relationship which feel good and when we keep the uncomfortable and disturbing demands of the Gospel at arm's length (#89-91). E te Ariki

Response: Whakarongo mai ra kia matou

The Smell of the Sheep

Prayer-reflection for Pastoral Workers
(Chapters 2 and 3)

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4: 1-11 (Temptation of Jesus)

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and nights, and afterwards he was famished. The tempter came and said to him, "if you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread." But he answered "It is written, *'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'*". Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written *'He will command his angels and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone'*". Jesus said to him, "Again it is written *'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'*". Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me". Jesus said to him "Away with you, Satan! For it is written *'Worship the Lord your God and serve only Him'*". Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.



Reflection: *As you heard the Gospel reading, share a word or phrase that struck you.*

Wisdom from Evangelii Gaudium

Challenges faced by pastoral workers (#61-75)

Francis says it as it is - we are not perfect. He calls us to look at our flaws, especially those that hinder the mission of evangelisation. We cannot evangelise if we do not submit ourselves to conversion, and we are always in need of it. Below are the challenges which Francis wrote as those faced by pastoral workers.

(Take turns to read each challenge):

- **Heightened individualism:** ... an inordinate concern for their personal freedom and relaxation, which leads them to see their work as a mere appendage to their life, as if it were not part of their very identity (#78)
- **Crisis of identity:** At times, our media culture and some intellectual circles convey a marked scepticism with regard to the Church's message, along with certain cynicism. As a consequence, many pastoral workers, although they pray, develop a sort of inferiority complex which leads them to relativize or conceal their Christian identity and convictions (#79)
- **Cooling of fervour:** ... acting as if God did not exist, making decisions as if the poor did not exist, setting goals as if others did not exist, working as if people who have not received the Gospel did not exist. It is striking that even some who clearly have solid doctrinal and spiritual convictions frequently fall into a lifestyle which leads to an attachment to financial security, or to a desire for power or human glory at all cost, rather than giving their lives to others in mission. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm! (#80)

- **Pastoral Acedia:** (*Acedia is apathy in the practice of virtue, such as prayer*). The problem is not always an excess of activity, but rather activity undertaken badly, without adequate motivation, without a spirituality which would permeate it and make it pleasurable... Today's obsession with immediate results makes it hard for pastoral workers to tolerate anything that smacks of disagreement, possible failure, criticism, the cross (#82).
- **Sterile Pessimism:** Nobody can go off to battle unless he is fully convinced of victory beforehand. If we start without confidence, we have already lost half the battle and we bury our talents. While painfully aware of our own frailties, we have to march on without giving in, keeping in mind what the Lord said to Saint Paul: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9) (#85).
- **Spiritual worldliness:** Spiritual worldliness, which hides behind the appearance of piety and even love for the Church, consists in seeking not the Lord's glory but human glory and personal well-being. It is a subtle way of seeking one's "own interest, not those of Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:21) (#93).
- **Warring among ourselves:** How many wars take place within the people of God and in our different communities! In our neighbourhoods and in the workplace, how many wars are caused by envy and jealousy, even among Christians! Spiritual worldliness leads some Christians to war with other Christians who stand in the way of their quest for power, prestige, pleasure, and economic security. Some are even no longer content to live as part of the greater Church community but stoke of exclusivity, creating an "inner circle". Instead of belonging to the whole Church in all its rich variety, they belong to this or that group which thinks itself different or special (#98).