

Cotonou 2016 Reflexion themes for the preparation

1/ A Pilgrimage of Trust

“God said to Abram: “Leave your country, your relatives and your father’s house and go to the country I will give you. I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, and you will become a benediction!” (Ge 12, 1-2)

Since the origin God reveals himself inviting people to leave their securities in order to establish a unique relationship with him, to become a visible sign of his blessing and a witness for all human family. Setting ourselves for a Pilgrimage of Trust, we contribute to a new stage of God’s journey with humanity.

Which word of God is source of trust for me?

How can I make myself available to live out God’s calling? What can I leave?

What are resistances and obstacles to trust?

Who are those around me who are creators of trust?

Which steps can I make to let trust grow around me?

2/ An option for faith

“Jesus told them: “Come and follow me, I will make you fishers of people.” Immediately, leaving their nets they followed him.” (Mt 4, 19-20)

Becoming Christ’s disciple means to take an option for trust. No longer to control and manage ones or other people lives but to entrust everything to god. Because Christ is waiting for me and believes in me, he is the source of trust.

Which people, which events of my life have made myself more available to God and to others?

Which are the realities which oppose faith today?

How to renew trust after a failure?

How can I become a servant of trust? How can I awake others to trust?

3/ Solidarity

“Truly I tel you, what you have done to one of these least brothers of mine, you have done it to me.” (Mt 25, 40)

Sciences and technologies are constantly developing, yet the human family is torn apart in many ways. Where can we draw courage and inspiration to write a new page of fraternity?

In which circumstances have I made myself close to the little one, the poor, the sick, the foreigner or the prisoner? How does Christ offer a new solidarity?

What is transformed in me when I make myself close to the little ones?

4/ Share with those around us a zest for life

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its flavour, how can it be made salty again?” (Mt 5, 13)

To be salt of the earth is a gift from God that we want to welcome with joy. By being salt of the earth, we can communicate a zest for life. And when we make life beautiful for those entrusted to us, our life becomes meaningful. If, faced with the great number of obstacles, we ask ourselves: “Why keep on struggling?” we should remember that just a little salt is enough to give flavour. Through prayer, we learn to look at ourselves as God looks at us; God sees our gifts, our abilities. Not losing our flavour means committing ourselves body and soul, and trusting the gifts of God

within us.

In my daily life full of commitments and diverse responsibilities, what space do I dedicate for prayer?

What helps me to listen to God?

What gestures and initiatives contribute to raise up a spirit of festival where I live?

5/ Committing ourselves to reconciliation

“When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you realize that your brother or your sister has something against you, leave your gift there and first go and be reconciled to him or her.” (Mt 5, 23-24)

In all of us there is the aspiration to live together as one human family, but that does not happen by itself, neither in a family, nor with friends, nor in our cities and towns, nor between nations. When Christians are reconciled, they become a sign in the midst of a humanity that is seeking its own unity. There are situations where reconciliation is urgent. To commit ourselves to this, we need to understand the fears that imprison others in prejudices; we should also realize that other people may have something against us. The Gospel calls us not to transmit around us or to the next generation resentments inherited from the past.

Where do I see a call to reconciliation around me ?

How can we invite others to initiate gestures of reconciliation ?

How can my faith support me in this ?

6/ Work for peace

“Blessed are the peace makers, for they shall be called children of God.” (Mt 5, 9)

Peace is more than the absence of conflict. It is happiness; it gives everyone their rightful place; it is fullness of life. When we welcome God’s peace within us, it extends to those around us and to all creatures. The desire for peace makes our heart more encompassing and fills it with compassion for all. It comes to expression in an attitude of hospitality and kindness in our families, in our neighborhoods, in our daily activities. Peace is also at the root of justice on a larger scale. In societies where luxury and poverty exist side by side, should we be surprised that different forms of violence arise? Sharing wealth relieves tensions and is a major contribution to the common good. Some people make a commitment to promote peace by taking on responsibilities in the public life of their country — in an association, in the company where they work, by serving people with special needs.

Who are persons of peace around me ?

What opposes inner peace ?

How can I commit myself for peace ?

7/ The Church as Communion

“They were faithful to the teaching of the apostles, the fraternal communion, the breaking of the bread and to the prayers” (Ac 2, 42)

At Pentecost, unity desired by Jesus takes a visible form. The assembly of the believers bear witness to Christ's forgiveness and proclaim through its life the Good News of salvation offered to all.

How can I bear witness to the Gospel through my life? With whom can I commit myself?

How can I participate in building the local community?

How can we keep open the doors of our community to welcome people from outside and reach out to others?