

In our day, when many experience broken relationships and unexpected changes in their lives, the relationship with Christ can provide continuity and meaning.

Faith does not cause our inner contradictions to vanish, but the Holy Spirit disposes us to live a life of joy and love.

Fourth Proposal

Be open without fear to the future and to others

The conviction of faith does not close us up in ourselves. Trust in Christ opens us to trust in the future and to trust in others. It encourages us to face the problems of our time and of our own lives with courage.

Faith is like an anchor that gives us a firm attachment in the future of God, in the risen Christ with whom it binds us inseparably. The Gospel offers no room for speculation about life after death, but it holds out to us the hope that we will see Christ, who is already our life.

Faith leads us not to be afraid of the future or of others any longer.

The trusting of faith is not naive. It is aware of the evil that is present in humanity, and even in our own hearts. But it does not forget that Christ came for all.

Trust in God brings to birth in us a new way of looking at others, at the world, and at the future—a way of looking that involves gratitude and hope, and attentiveness to beauty.

Trust in God frees us to be creative.

And then we can sing with Saint Gregory of the fourth century: “You who are beyond all things, what mind can grasp you? All beings celebrate you. The desire of all reaches out to you.”

From 28 December, 2013 to 1 January, 2014, the next **European Meeting** will be held on the border of France and Germany, in Strasbourg. We shall be welcomed in Alsace on the French side and in Baden on the German side.

In August 2015:

In Taizé, a gathering for a new solidarity

75th anniversary of the Taizé Community

100th anniversary of Brother Roger's birth

Four Proposals to Uncover the Wellsprings of Trust in God

The Letter “Towards a New Solidarity” (available on www.taize.fr) will support our searching over the next three years. In 2013 we are focusing on ways to “uncover the wellsprings of trust in God.” Here are four proposals for this:

First Proposal

Talk together about our faith journey

What is the meaning of our lives? How do we deal with suffering and death? Where do we find life-giving joy?

These are questions that every generation and every person is called upon to answer.

The answers cannot be contained in ready-made formulas.

“And if God exists...?” The question of God has not vanished from the horizon, but the way it is asked has changed radically.

The fact that individuality is central in our age has a positive side: it enhances the value of the human person, human freedom and autonomy.

Even in societies where religion is very present, trust in God is less and less self-evident; it requires a personal decision.

“God dwells in unapproachable light. No human being has ever seen or can see God” (1 Timothy 6:16). These words of the apostle Paul are still very relevant today. What consequences can we draw from them?

Let us search together, talking about this with other believers, agnostics or atheists! The dividing-line between faith and doubt passes through believers as well as non-believers.

When those who seek God are less affirmative in expressing their faith, that does not mean that they believe less, but rather that they are very aware of God's transcendence. They refuse to imprison God in concepts.

If nobody can see God, then how could the early Christians say that in Jesus we see God? “He is the image of the invisible God,” writes the same apostle Paul (Colossians 1:15).

Jesus is one with God, true God and true man, without separation or mixture. How many struggles have been waged in the course of history to refine the meaning of these paradoxical expressions of the mystery of God! They do not take the place of our own searching; they are markers along the way.

By all he is and does, Jesus shows that God is love. He reveals the heart of God. God is not arbitrary power, but the One who loves us.

The early Christians testified that Jesus rose from the dead and that he is in God. And he comes to set God's life, like a treasure, in the hearts of those he meets. And that treasure is itself a personal presence; it bears the name "Holy Spirit", who comforts and encourages.

The names "Father," "Son" and "Holy Spirit" indicate that God is communion, relationship, dialogue, love...so that the three are only one. Thus the Christian faith contains such a great paradox that we can never become masters of truth.

Second Proposal

Look for ways to encounter Christ

Jesus did not teach a theory; he lived a human life like ours. The only difference was that, in him, God's love shone out with no shadows.

Even during his lifetime, many were mistrustful of him: "He is out of his mind" (Mark 3:21), "He considers himself the equal of God" (John 5:18).

No one is forced to believe in him. But believing is more than just a feeling. It is also a rational act; it is possible to make a well-thought-out decision to have faith in Christ.

What makes Jesus credible? Why is that, for two thousand years, he has had so many followers? Is it not his humility? He did not impose anything on anybody. He simply went towards all people, to tell them that God was near.

He trusted those whom society refused to trust. He restored their dignity. He himself consented to be despised and excluded, so as not to deny God's love for the poor and excluded.

We can encounter Christ by reading the story of his life in the Gospel. He still asks us today: "Who am I for you?" (Matthew 16:15). And he told us that he was giving himself to us in the Eucharist.

We can encounter him in the fellowship of those who believe in him, when our Churches are welcoming communities.

Next year, we will look for practical steps to take to help make the visible communion of all who love Christ a reality.

We encounter him in the very poor. Jesus had a special love for them.

"What you do for one of the very least of my brothers and sisters, you do for me" (Matthew 25:40), we would like to confirm the truth of these words of Christ for our gathering in 2015.

We can encounter him when we look to the witnesses who rely on him.

Let us go, alone or with a few others, to meet and speak with a woman or a man whose life was changed by an encounter with Christ.

Or let us read together the life of a witness to the faith: Francis of Assisi, Josephine Bakhita, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero, Alexander Men, and many others.

They were all very different from one another, each one with their unique gifts. We should not try to copy them but to see how their trust in Christ transformed them.

They had their faults. But they all spoke to God in prayer, even if some of them experienced inner nights. Friendship with Christ made them free, and in this way what was best in them was able to flourish.

Third Proposal

Look for ways of relying on God

Believing in God, trusting in him, means relying on him. Having faith does not mean being able to explain everything or having an easier life, but finding stability and a starting point.

It means not being dependent on our successes or failures, and thus ultimately on ourselves, but on Another who loves us.

Nobody can live without something to rely on and so, in this sense, everyone believes something. Jesus invites us to rely on God, as he did and because he did. He teaches us to pray "Our Father in heaven."

Silent worship nourishes reflection and understanding. But more importantly, it places us before and within the mystery of God.

Developing "Sabbath" moments, times when we stop and do nothing, offering our time to open a nearby church for a couple of hours a week, praying with others, joining the local Church each week to recall the death and resurrection of Christ...all this allows God to find a place in our daily lives.

In every human being there is an inner life, where light and shadows, joys and fears, trust and doubt mingle. Amazing breakthroughs can take place there.

When we know we are loved or when we love, when we experience bonds of friendship, or when the beauty of creation or human creativity touches us, it strikes us that life is indeed beautiful. These moments can take us by surprise; they may arise even in a period of suffering, like a light that comes from elsewhere.

In them we can see, in simplicity, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.