Parents and Guardians Confirmation Preparation Sessions



'...For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.'
2 Timothy 1:7

The Search for Happiness



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1A:

- What games or activities did you enjoy as a child?
- What were your favourite sweets or meals as a child?
- What part of the world did you grow up in and what was it like?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

1B:

- What do you think people are looking for most in their lives?
- What is happiness? Is it possible to find?
- If you knew the world was going to end in one hour, what would you do?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

1C:

- What helps you to relax and de-stress?
- What advice would you give someone who says they are too busy?
- How would you cope without your mobile phone or the internet?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

WISDOM FROM THE BIBLE



Psalm 46:10

"The Lord says: Be still, and know that I am God!"

Psalm 23:1-3

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul."

Deuteronomy 4:29

"You will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and soul."

1 Kings 19:11-13

"The Lord said to Elijah: 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave."

Matthew 7:7-11

Jesus says: "Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!"

John 14:27

Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

John 16:33

Jesus says: "I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

KEY IDEAS FROM THE FILM

1A – The impossibility of sitting still

We are very domestic creatures, and the idea of home is almost built into us like an internal compass. I think it explains why Grand Designs and a hundred other TV programmes about housebuilding are so popular.

On the other hand, we long for adventure, romance, and a little bit of drama. We get easily bored. The writer Jack London said that our deepest purpose is to live, and not just to exist.

You see this in all the great road movies, when the hero leaves home, willingly or unwillingly, and discovers the freedom of the road. You see this in every classic Western, when the cowboy gets on his horse and rides into the wilderness, looking for riches or romance, or both. It's the Greek mythology of The Odyssey; it's Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz; it's Frodo Baggins in The Lord of the Rings. It's the idea of being on a quest.

There is a restlessness in every human heart. It's good to acknowledge it now and then. We're searching for something. We're made for something more. It doesn't mean I need to pack up my bags and walk out the door: probably not a good idea. But at least I can give myself permission to listen to the deepest longings of my heart and ask the question: What am I really searching for?

1B – What is happiness?

Sometimes desire is uncomplicated. We want food, friendship, freedom, love. We want the things in front of us. We want the things we don't have. If you've been fired, you want a new job. If you've lost your keys, you want to find them. If you're practicing for

your driving test, you hope you can pass the first time. But sometimes we realise we are looking for something more.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle said we are all searching for happiness, even if we can't agree on where to find it. He believed that true happiness is found in a life that has meaning and purpose. It's to do with the way I live, and the kind of person I am, and not just with the things I have.

How do you know what's really important to you? One simple way is to look in your diary, and then in your wallet. What have you spent your time and money on over the last week? It tells you a lot about your priorities and what you think is the meaning of your life.

What are we looking for? What is happiness? I don't think there's a simple answer. And perhaps if we think about it too much it tends to disappear. Edith Warton said: "If only we'd stop trying to be happy we could have a pretty good time".

But imagine if you only had one hour left, or one week. What would you do? Who would you call? Where would you go? And when you get your answer, it's still worth thinking: Is that it? Or is there something more?

1C – How to press the pause button

People are searching for more than rest or relaxation. There is a real hunger for stillness and silence, to step back from the rush of life and make space for reflection. It's a human need; I'd even call it a spiritual need. It's why most cultures, traditionally, have had a Sabbath day, a day of rest.

In the Bible, the prophet Elijah expected to find God in the noise of the wind and the earthquake and the fire, but in the end he found him outside the cave, in the sound of sheer silence.

Many religious traditions speak about the symbol of the desert. Leaving the city and the noise and going into the wilderness, in order to get some perspective. Not to escape to another world, but to rediscover what is truly important in your own world. The poet TS Eliot said that there are some things we can only hear "in the stillness between two waves of the sea".

I don't know how you personally can press the pause button. It might seem impossible. I just know how important it is. This programme, Sycamore, is partly about helping you create some space to think and reflect – whether you are using this in a group or watching it at home. If it helps – that's great! There is lots more to come. If not, then I hope you can find another way. Don't give up!

The Power of Prayer



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8A:

- Have you ever prayed or gone to a religious service? What was it like?
- If you pray: Why do you pray? What's your usual way of praying?
- If you don't pray: What holds you back?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

8B:

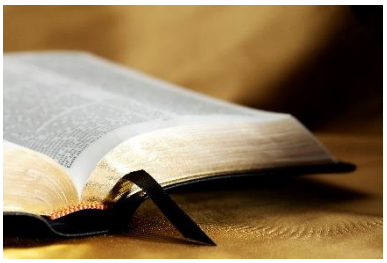
- Do you think that prayer can make a difference to people's lives?
- Do you know other people who pray? Do you know why or how they pray?
- If God is all powerful, why do you think he sometimes seems to ignore our prayers?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

8C:

- Why do you think many people find it hard to pray?
- What do you think about the idea that God is listening to us and wants to answer our prayers?
- What do you think about the idea of praying with other people?

- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

WISDOM FROM THE BIBLE



Psalm 141:1-2

"I call upon you, O Lord; come quickly to me; give ear to my voice when I call to you. Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice."

Psalm 18:6

"In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears."

Matthew 6:6

Jesus says: "But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

Matthew 6:9-13

Jesus says: "Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one."

Matthew 18:19-20

Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Philippians 4:4-7

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the

peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

Romans 8:26-27

"Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

KEY IDEAS FROM THE FILM

8A – What is prayer?

A traditional definition of prayer goes like this: Prayer is "raising up the mind and the heart to God". We need to stretch out to God, to look up and to look beyond. This is part of prayer. But you could also say that prayer is "opening the mind and the heart to God", because he is not just "up there", he is present with us here, whether we are praying or not.

There are so many different ways of praying. Prayer can be informal and spontaneous: I often pray on the bus or walking to the shops. Prayer can be formal and solemn: if you go, for example, to a beautiful Choral Evensong in an Anglican Cathedral.

Prayer can be something very private, very personal. It's a relationship, a conversation. Many people pray in the quiet of their bedroom when they get up in the morning or just before they go to sleep.

And prayer can be a powerful experience of the church and of community.

I guess the default prayer for most of us is to ask for things. We want God's help, and we are very good at telling him exactly what we need. But there is much more. It's also important to worship him, to praise him, to thank him, to say sorry to him. And it's

equally important, sometimes, to say nothing: just to sit in the stillness of prayer; listening, thinking, wondering.

If you listen carefully you'll hear that nearly every Christian prayer finishes with the words "in the name of Jesus" or "through Christ our Lord" or something similar. We never pray alone. Through our faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit dwells within us. He unites us with Jesus, the Saviour, who brings our prayer to God the Father.

That's the secret and the power of Christian prayer. It's the friendship we have with Jesus Christ. If we open our hearts to God in prayer, we discover a peace that can never be found elsewhere.

It doesn't mean that prayer is always easy. Sometimes I have to force myself to say my prayers: I'm so tired or distracted or spiritually dry. I love the saying of the French writer Georges Bernanos: "The desire for prayer is itself a prayer".

8B – Does prayer make a difference?

So here is a question: Does prayer make a difference? And here is my answer: "Sometimes, but not always…"

Sometimes, when we pray, we feel very close to God. There is an experience of peace and joy and consolation. Sometimes, when we pray, we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in a very concrete way. And sometimes, when we pray for something, it actually happens, in quite a remarkable way. It feels like a small miracle. Jesus wants us to ask for things. He told us that God is a loving Father who longs to give us what we need.

So sometimes, prayer definitely makes a difference. But not always. At other times, when we pray, we can feel very empty and alone. We can be full of doubts or distractions or disappointment or anger. Or we're just tired.

Sometimes we need to learn that God is beyond us. We can't put him in a box. There is darkness and mystery and silence. God says in the bible: My ways are not your ways; my thoughts are not your thoughts. His plans are bigger than we can understand.

The difficulties help us to go deeper, to be faithful. They teach us to be patient and humble. We can ask the Holy Spirit to pray within us, because his prayer is more powerful than our own.

8C – How to pray

So if you want to pray, what do you actually do? Well, there are a thousand options, and that's part of the adventure of prayer. You can talk to God as a friend. You can read the bible. You can pray the formal prayers of the Christian tradition. You can sit in silence. You can weep. You can sing. You can pray alone or with friends or at your local church.

All that matters at the beginning is that you begin. And in fact one of my favourite sayings about prayer is this: the secret of prayer is to pray. You just have to start; to take a first step.

And another saying I often share with people is this: pray as you can, not as you can't. In other words, find a way of praying that is helpful for you, that works. There is no pressure. Prayer is not a competition.

But if you don't know where to start, let me give you two suggestions. First, find a quiet space, maybe in your room at the beginning or end of the day, and simply talk to God in your own words. You can speak to him as you would to a close friend or a loving parent. You can talk about whatever is on your heart. You don't need to be afraid. And then if you have time, you can read a passage of the bible, or sit in silence, or use one of the prayers of the Christian tradition.

My second suggestion, after personal prayer, is for you to go to your local church and join in their Sunday worship. I know you might feel shy, and it might seem very new. But it will help you to have a much bigger experience of prayer: of the Christian community coming together in praise and worship and song.

I really encourage you to take a step into prayer. It's not just for saints or for special people. It's for ordinary people. And it could make such a difference to your life. When you pray, it's like opening a door. You give God permission to come into your life,

and he can reveal himself to you more and more. He loves you, and he longs to lead you closer to him and to give you his peace.

The Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

14A

- What's the most interesting or inspiring religious service you have you been to? What stood out for you?
- Have you been at church when someone was celebrating a sacrament? Which one? What do you remember about the service?
- Can you share any particular ways that Jesus has "spoken" to you or "touched" your life?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

14B

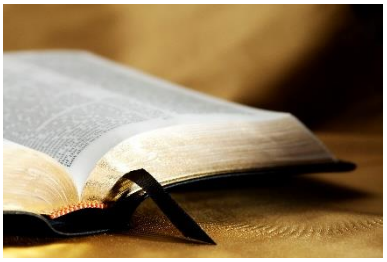
- If you could make a new start, with God's help, and change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
- What excites you about the knowledge that you have been baptised or that you might get baptised?
- What makes it hard for you to believe or to witness to your faith in front of other people?

- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

14C

- Who is the wisest person you have known? What makes them special?
- Have you prayed to the Holy Spirit? If you could ask for one spiritual gift (e.g. prophecy or compassion or working miracles or teaching) what would it be and why?
- If you are confirmed: What do you remember about your confirmation? What difference did it make for you? If you are preparing for confirmation: Why do you want to be confirmed?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

WISDOM FROM THE BIBLE



Matthew 3:11

St John the Baptist says: "I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

John 3:5

Jesus says: "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit."

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus says: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Acts 2:38

St Peter says: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 6:3-4

"Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

John 20:19-23

"Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they have forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Acts 2:1-4

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."

KEY IDEAS FROM THE FILM

14A – The power of the sacraments and the liturgy

If there is one word that captures the idea of how God continues to reach out to us it's the word "sacrament". A sacrament is a visible sign of invisible grace. It's a special prayer of the Church, a ritual, that unites us with Jesus Christ and fills us with his Holy Spirit.

The sacraments are at the centre of what's called the Sacred Liturgy. This is the solemn, public worship of the Christian Church. The sacraments help us to worship God

"in Spirit and in Truth". They make us holy. And they give us the strength to love our neighbour and to witness to our faith.

The seven sacraments come from Jesus. He instituted them. They weren't just invented hundreds of years later. They are part of his plan. And there is something objective about the sacraments. There is a grace, a spiritual power, that doesn't depend on how holy or inspiring the minister is, or on the feelings of the congregation. The sacraments are bigger than us. They are a gift. They depend on Jesus Christ and on the faith of the Church.

At the same time, they are sacraments of faith. If we want them to bear fruit in our lives, to make a difference, then we need to have a living faith and to be open to the graces God wants to give us.

They are sacraments of eternal life. They give us a glimpse of heaven. We join with the angels and the saints in their worship of God. It makes us long to be with him for all eternity.

14B – How baptism can change your life

Why do Christians get baptised? Isn't it enough just to believe in Jesus Christ? Well faith matters, absolutely. But Jesus himself is very clear about the importance of baptism as well. At the end of St Mark's Gospel, he says: "Anyone who believes and is baptised will be saved" (Mk 16:16). Baptism is the gateway to salvation. And at the end of St Matthew's Gospel Jesus tells his disciples to baptise people of every nation (Mt 28:19).

Baptism unites you with Jesus Christ in his death and resurrection; the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within your soul; and you become a beloved child of God the Father. Your sins are completely forgiven, and the burden of Original Sin is lifted from your shoulders.

You are given the gifts of faith, hope and charity. You become a member of Christ's body, the Church. You share in his priesthood: praying in his name, going out to serve others, sharing your faith with them.

Baptism is like a seal that's burnt into your very being. You have an identity which can never be taken away.

Who can be baptised? Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ and in the apostolic faith, who has repented of their sins, and who is trying to live the Christian life. So baptism involves faith, repentance and conversion. It can include children who are brought to baptism based on the faith of their parents and of the wider church.

14C – Confirmation and the gift of the Holy Spirit

In the bible it says that our God is "a consuming fire" (Heb 12:9). He is not a tame God. Sometimes he burns and purifies. He is not in our control.

You see this is the sacrament of confirmation. It's the fire of God's love sweeping down upon our lives and filling us with his power. There is a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, just as there was on the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

It's not the first time we receive the Holy Spirit, who comes upon us at baptism. But there is a new energy, a confirmation and a strengthening of his gifts. We are anointed with the sacred oil of chrism as we hear the words, "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit".

There are great debates about the best age for confirmation. In the Eastern Churches, you are confirmed as a baby just after your baptism. In the Western tradition, it varies a lot, depending on what your bishop decides. It can be anywhere from seven or eight to your late teens.

But whatever the age, the meaning is the same. We are filled with the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are their traditional names: wisdom, understanding, right judgment, courage, knowledge, reverence, and the fear of the Lord – a fear that brings not anxiety but a sense of wonder and awe in his presence.

There is a well-known prayer to the Holy Spirit. It reminds us that we can talk to the Holy Spirit and pray to him, just as we can to Jesus and to the Father. It goes like this: "Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Amen".

Forgiveness, Healing and Mission



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

16A

- Do you think forgiveness is possible? Can you give any examples? (Without sharing anything too personal!)
- Why is it hard to overcome our sins and bad habits? What can help us? (Without giving too much personal detail!)
- What positive experiences have you had of going to confession? (Please don't share your actual sins!)
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

16B

- When someone is sick, what kind of support do they most need?
- As a society in general, and as a Christian community, how do you think we can reach out more to help the sick?
- Do you have any experiences of healing, whether physical or psychological or spiritual?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

16C

- What's your experience of talking about religion or sharing your faith with others? Is it easy or difficult?

- How have other people shared their Christian faith with you or witnessed to what they believe?
- How, practically, could you share your own faith with others? What holds you back?
- What other ideas or questions strike you from this part of the film?

WISDOM FROM THE BIBLE

Psalm 103:10-12



"He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us."

John 20:21-23

"Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'"

1 John 1:8-10

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

James 5:16

"Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."

Matthew 9:35

"Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness."

Matthew 10:1

"Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness."

James 5:14-15

"Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven."

Mark 16:15

Jesus says to the Apostles: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation".

Acts 1:8

Jesus says "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth".

1 Peter 3:15-16

"Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence."

KEY IDEAS FROM THE FILM

16A – Forgiveness and the Sacrament of Confession

Jesus said to his Apostles, 'If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven…' (John 20:23). Catholics believe that this ministry of forgiveness continues today in the sacrament of penance (often known as "confession"), when the priest acts in the name of Jesus and of the whole Church.

The first and most fundamental sacrament of forgiveness is actually baptism. Then the Eucharist brings us God's forgiveness for our minor faults. But the sacrament of confession renews the grace of baptism in a powerful way. And if we have committed any serious sins, then we need to go to confession in order to be reconciled with God and the Church.

Confession is not a barrier that comes between us and God: it's a gateway that allows us to meet Jesus, heart to heart, face to face, through the ministry of the priest. We are touched by God's mercy in a very personal and direct way.

We are forgiven and set free. We are reconciled with God and with his Church. We can make a new start. And we know that the priest will never, ever betray our sins to anyone, for any reason. This is called the "seal of confession".

Confession also brings healing for all the damaging effects of sin. God can begin to put things right and mend what was broken. Things you never thought could be fixed. And confession can bring peace, consolation, joy and spiritual strength as we go out to live our Christian faith.

Coming to confession is not complicated. You can pray for God's help. Spend a few minutes thinking about your life and examining your conscience. Find out when confession is taking place at your local Catholic church. And go.

Don't be anxious: the priest will help you if you get stuck. Tell him when you last went to confession. Then tell him your sins. And at the end, tell him when you have finished.

The priest will give you a penance to fulfil, later on. This is often a simple prayer, as a sign of putting things right and wanting to make a new start. He will ask you to say a prayer of sorrow, called "an act of contrition". If you don't know one he will help you. Then he will give you God's forgiveness by saying the words of absolution and making the sign of the cross.

That's it. Just make sure that you are being honest with God and with the priest, and don't hide any serious sins. God will do the rest.

16B – Healing and the Sacrament of the Sick

One of the sacraments is called the Anointing of the Sick. In his New Testament letter, St James writes: "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" (James 5:14). And today a Catholic priest will anoint those who are very sick or close to death, using olive oil that has been specially blessed by a bishop.

This sacrament brings forgiveness. It helps the sick person to stay close to Jesus. It brings them consolation and peace and helps them offer up their sufferings to God for the good of others. It can bring physical and mental healing to the sick person, if it is God's will.

The sacrament also helps the dying person to prepare for a happy death, at peace with the Lord. And through the ministry of the priest, it allows the sick person to receive the support of the Church, and to know that they are not alone or forgotten.

Sickness is a terrible burden. But with the help of Christ, it is possible to bear. Those who are sick need our love and our personal help. They also need the spiritual help offered by the Church. That's why the sacrament of the sick is such a gift.

There are many other ways that we need healing as well. There can be painful memories or psychological wounds. There can be difficult relationships or tensions within a marriage or a family. We can struggle with jealousy, resentment, misunderstanding, or anger; with bad habits or addictions; with unfulfilled dreams or frustrated ambitions; with an unwillingness to forgive.

Jesus wants to bring help and healing to all these different situations. It doesn't mean he takes away all our problems like a magician. But he steps into our life. He gives us reassurance and hope. He begins to put things right.

16C – Christian mission and the call to share our faith

Pope Francis says that every Christian is called to be a "missionary disciple". We are sent out on a mission to share our faith with others. Another word for this is "evangelisation", which literally means "to share good news".

Here are three reasons why you can't be a Christian without sharing your faith.

First: joy. If you receive great news, you want to share it with people. It's natural. So if the Christian message is true, how could you not want to share it with others?

Second: love. If you really care for someone, you want to help them. One of the greatest gifts you could give them is your faith. Not to impose anything, but to share what is truly important. It's an act of love.

Third: obedience. This is simply what Jesus asks. He tells us not to hide our light under a bucket. He tells us to make disciples of all nations, teaching and baptising as we go. This is not an optional extra, it's a fundamental part of being a Christian.

Sometimes we witness to others just by our example. We don't always need words. We just live our Christian faith. It doesn't feel very special, but it touches people, even if we don't notice.

Sometimes we do need to talk about our faith. Maybe there is a discussion about religion or morality, or someone asks us what we believe. So we just have an honest conversation. Or maybe an issue comes up, and our conscience tells us that we need to explain what we believe or take a stand. It's not about winning an argument, but witnessing to our faith, and speaking from the heart.

And sometimes we might be a bit more proactive and look for opportunities to share our faith.

We are never alone. When Jesus sent his disciples out on mission, he also made them a promise. He said: "Remember, I am with you always, until the end of time" (Mt 28:20).