

Mission to Love

For those of us in mission-oriented leadership, our task is to ask: how, exactly, do we play our vital role in God's mission today?

1. Begin with the gospel

Here we discover the communal story of God and God's relationship with God's people. In the Gospel narrative community and communion are the focus and individualism is minimised. Pope Francis explained, "through our witness of faith and the proclamation of the Gospel, God may continue to manifest his love and in this way touch and transform hearts, minds, bodies, societies, and cultures in every place and time... and invites us to rediscover that we need social relationships as well as our communal relationship with God. Far from increasing mistrust and indifference, this situation should make us even more attentive to our way of relating to others."

2. Be resurrection people

Pope John Paul II in his 1986 visit to Australia told us, "We live in the light of his Paschal Mystery – the mystery of his Death and Resurrection. 'We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song!' We are not looking for a shallow joy but rather a joy that comes from faith, that grows through unselfish love, that respects the 'fundamental duty of love of neighbour, without which it would be unbecoming to speak of Joy.'" As we now live with Covid it may appear complicated to love our neighbour, but it's more important than ever as many people still suffer from isolation, loss of health, and economic

uncertainty. We must continue to remember the gift of the Cross and rejoice in the grace it brings.

3. Be authentic

Throughout the Bible we see imperfect people living God's mission and bringing hope to the world. Pope Francis reminds us, "the mission that God entrusts to each one of us leads us from fear and introspection to a renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give ourselves to others." When we give ourselves to others it is with authenticity and vulnerability and by doing so, we witness to others that we all need acceptance and grace. Stephen Bevans SVD assures us, that "God is vulnerable... In many ways, the image of Jesus on the cross is the dearest image we have of God. God will go to such lengths to reveal a love that so deeply respects human freedom."

4. Be responsive

Bevan goes on to ask us. "Do you want to dance? Do you want to join in that great Conga Line that has moved through the world since the beginning of time and which is also the heartbeat of God's deepest self?" And he reminds us that with or without us, "the dance goes on, the movement, which is God continues to move, God continues – joyfully, indefatigably – to be in mission" and it doesn't matter if we can't sway to the rhythm or keep up with the beat, all that is asked is that we respond and if "we do join, we won't regret it."

Let's ensure we respond "YES" to God's call and join in the Conga Line to live God's mission in the here and now.



"Group Conga Line" by San Diego City College is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

REFLECTION

How do you express your vital role in God's mission?

References: 1. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/missions/documents/papa-francesco_20200531_giornata-missionaria2020.html; 2. http://data.over-blog-kiwi.com/0/51/25/32/20140225/ob_674873_bevans-mission-has-church.pdf; 3. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/angelus/1986/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_19861130.html

We acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the lands on which our ministries exist and the Elders both past and present on whose land we walk, work and live. We support the Uluru Statement from the Heart.