

Signs of the Times: Setting the Scene since 2011

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World Context

- Conflict and war;
- Financial crises and loss of employment;
- Loss of respect for leaders;
- Forced movement of peoples;
- continued degradation of our planet;

Australian Context

- Political landscape;
- Financial stability but social problems;
- Not for Profit reforms;
- Challenges/ politicisation/ loss of respect;
- Media power - Royal Commission;
- Complexity: Gonski; reforms in aged care ...
- Extreme weather - responsibility for our planet.

Universal Church Context

- Motu Proprio “On the Service of Charity” of Benedict XVI;
- Resignation of Pope Benedict;
- Election of Pope Francis;

Australian Church Context

- Vacancies in Dioceses - religious as Bishops;
- Ageing of Church attenders; Parishes combined;
- Catholic migrants and refugees;
- Priests from overseas;
- Laity educated in faith and
- Laity with leading roles in Church affairs
- PJPs and association of these;

Australian Religious Life Context

- Decline in Numbers and ageing;
- overseas religious;
- Reconfiguring of Congregations;
- Australian Provinces part of Asia;
- Newer groups;
- Leadership in Ministries transitioning;
- ACBC/ CRA –Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry and Royal Commission.

Signs FOR the times?

A creative tension:

- We are creatures whose job it is to remember that life is a gift.”.....
- But with responsibility to use our creativity as a means to transform ourselves and the world

Prophetic role

- **A Prophet's role was and is:**
- **to uncover,**
- **inspire,**
- **clarify the vision,**
- **then to empower the people to bring the vision to reality.**
- **from a position of powerlessness**

Leadership role within Laity

- to live the new commandment “**to love one another as I have loved you**”.
- In this love we are urged to bring closer the dream of Jesus, “**that they may have life and have it to the full**”.
- Relational and communitarian dynamics that honour social justice and creation.

As Religious

- community,
- prayer that grounds us in peace and consciousness of the dignity of individuals and of our environment;
- minister with enthusiasm, BUT God is the “master builder”;
- living simply to serve the poor
- Obedience that is mutual discernment of God’s will
- A range of charisms - gifts of the Spirit, distinctive ways of living the Gospel, for the building up of the kingdom.
- leadership that is service not power.

Ministry PJPs

- Continuation and development of the ministry
- as a work of the Church
- adopt and develop individual charisms.
- tradition of leadership as service/ministry.

Formation of leaders

- Prophetic leaders - fundamental religious task
 - in overseeing, evaluating and reviewing
 - the idea that the organisation holds of itself
 - the way it actually functions
 - what it might be called to do and be
 - in the light of the vision that gives it life.
- deepen and recall its
 - fundamental vocation,
 - remember its history,
 - care for its common life and
 - carry out its mission and programs

Prophetic Leaders

- True prophets are not popular; then never were.
- Most needed when people need to be “brought back” to a true vision. ... Their lives must be their primary witness and they herald hope for the possibility of such a vision coming to fruition.

Ongoing Challenges

- Formation of leaders
 - governance, not management,
 - keeping the organisation on course
 - True to mission
- Ongoing formation within Ministries
 - culture of service,
 - focus on the poor
 - Embedding living of values and ethics;

Ongoing Challenges

- Resources for formation;
- Relationships of trust and openness;
- Ways to choose leaders.

Aware of the signs of the times for the times

“Truly our hands are very full, but if we emulate the Spirit of St Ignatius we shall do our little best faithfully knowing that it is only our Lord Himself who can effect his own work.”