

KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS FORMATION PROGRAMME 2019

Introduction

This will be a remarkable year in so many different ways. It promises to be a year of great challenge.

In the political landscape – at least at the Federal level – our community will be selecting those who will represent us and shape our nation.

In the ecclesiastical landscape – internationally, nationally and locally – our faith community will continue to seek what we must do to be true disciples of the Lord Jesus. Some obvious challenges facing the whole Church are our response to the issues identified by our youth, to those who are seeking refuge from persecution, and to the continuing revelations about sexual abuse in past decades are only a few. Nationally our faith community will have to seek to respond to issues like an increased secularism in society generally, to a loss of moral credibility in the community as a result of the appalling revelations about the management of child sex abuse victim-survivors, to a prayerful discernment of how we will relate to each other (and to the rest of the community) in the future, seem for many to be the most demanding matters. Locally some of the interests that demand the attention of our Faith communities are our need to continue to grapple with poverty (material and spiritual), the economic reality of ‘making ends meet’ in times of reduced income, increased costs and influences like the drought, increased numbers of elderly needing care, ensuring our faith community activities are safe for children and the vulnerable, supporting those who are finding difficulty in coping with the issues of life, developing ways to cope with reduced numbers of clergy and religious in our parishes, and how to transition from the ‘familiar’ experience to ‘new ways’ so that we can better engage with the values of our faith in an ‘unfamiliar’ landscape.

In previous years as I started the process of developing our Formation programme I asked for an indication from the leadership of the Knights of what theme might be useful for everyone. I thought this was the proper way to go and it was certainly my preferred way because, in this way, I was able to better identify what might be of interest and currency for the Knights. Until this year there was always an indication of what might be useful and the feedback given was positive and I took some comfort from the knowledge that my contribution might not have been a complete waste of time both for the Knights and for me. When I asked for some indication again for this year sadly no theme was identified. So with some trepidation and feeling more than a bit vulnerable I have after some time in prayer and openness to the prompting of the Holy Spirit put together a few thoughts that I hope will be useful to you. The starting point is indeed the Holy Spirit and then trying to see how He might influence us in the following ways by providing inspiration, encouraging expression, developing personal holiness, being the foundation for a century of service, underpinning our attempts to participate, stability in affirmation and direction, and as a source of cohesion and unity.

I entrust this and all our efforts to the grace of the Holy Spirit and in doing that acknowledge that He has been the source, inspiration and means used by the Christian community since the beginning as exemplified by the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints including our own patroness St. Mary of the Cross McKillop. May we rejoice in that company and draw confidence from knowing of their prayerful support and intercession in all our endeavours to follow Jesus.

FORMAT FOR THE SESSIONS.

Each Session should be limited to only 20 - 25 minutes.

Step 1. OPENING PRAYER

Opening Prayers are taken from the Order Prayers for Meetings of the Order.

Step 2. READINGS ON THE THEME

Taken from many acknowledged sources on the theme .

These can be read aloud entirely by one or by several Knights taking one each. It might be helpful if the readings were read, perhaps as part of daily prayer, before the scheduled meeting.

Step 3. A few moments of reflection on these readings in silence.

Step 4. SACRED SCRIPTURE

The Readings from Sacred Scripture should be read slowly and reflectively one by one allowing a brief pause between each reading.

Step 5. SILENT REFLECTION

Then follows 5 Minutes for silent reflection on both the Readings on the Theme and the Sacred Scripture. Knights might find it useful to underline or make notes on the texts during this time.

Step 6. SHARING

Knights are invited to share their thoughts and reflections with each other. No more than 10 Minutes should be allowed for this.

There are some discussion points in each Session – they are meant to be helpful – but there may be other points that emerge from the reflections and these should be given ‘first place’ in any sharing.

Step 7. CONCLUSION of Sharing – and of the Session -is signalled by the Prayer identified.

Step 8. The normal business of the Meeting continues at this point.

Step 9. CLOSING PRAYERS

From the Order Prayers for Meetings.

GENERAL POINTS

1. Choose a Formation Leader for the year so that someone is responsible for the facilitation of each Session. This means someone will ‘do the homework’ beforehand, allocate readers, and keep an eye on the time during each Session.
2. It is important that each member has his own sheet for the Session so that he can make any notes, underline things, etc.

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