

The Holy Father has made the point many times that change in our life is not only to be expected but, even more, is a strong reminder of God's continued involvement in our pilgrimage. God's presence is an influence that we cannot ignore – He offers it freely. Our response can be on a number of levels and perhaps begins with some reflection. Even when we reflect we can react in different ways – intellectual assessment, academic interest, and social application are some ways. But there is always a danger that we can manage this reflection from a primarily 'distant' perspective even when this reflection seems to spur us into some action. This is not at all to be discouraged. But, and there is always a 'but', Jesus abiding in us calls for something more intimate. Given that the Holy Father's spiritual heritage is as a member of the Society of Jesus, we can gain benefit from keeping that in our mind as we accept his encouragement to embrace change.

Our translation of things from their original language into English can sometimes be a bit inadequate. In the original language of the founders of the Jesuits (the Society of Jesus) the description they adopted was more like 'companions' or 'travellers with' or 'being in the company' of Jesus. This has a far more personal and intimate dimension than what the word 'society' at first indicates. Even a brief review of the Holy Father's personal history will highlight for us his very personal involvement in the lives of those around him and his constant awareness of a personal presence of Jesus. Who will ever forget his opening words when he was presented to the assembled crowd in St. Peter's square after his election – "Good evening" and then it was closely followed by his plea "Please pray for me".

In his recent Christmas Address to those who work with him in Rome (the Roman Curia) Pope Francis developed this notion of change more deeply drawing on the elements to be found in Sacred Scripture (both Old and New Testaments) and in the writing of the Saints and especially on Saint John Henry Newman. "For Newman *change* was *conversion*, in other words, interior transformation" said the Holy Father. He went on to say: "Christian life is a journey, a pilgrimage. The history of the Bible is a journey, marked by constantly new beginnings. So it was with Abraham. So it was too with those Galileans who two thousand years ago set out to follow Jesus: 'When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him' (LK 5:11). From that time forward, the history of God's people – the history of the Church – has always been marked by new beginnings, displacements and changes. This journey, of course, is not just geographical, but above all symbolic: it is a summons to discover the movement of the heart, which, paradoxically, has to set out in order to remain, to change in order to be faithful."

In this context of history, and reflecting upon our own times, our formation programme seeks to provide a vehicle whereby we can immerse ourselves in this divine invitation to change in order to be faithful in these our own days.

Let us recall at the very outset the Vision Statement adopted by the Knights during this centenary year:

***"To be a strong and faith-filled Catholic fraternity committed to serving our Church throughout Australia."***

## 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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