

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

Theme: The Landscape

This year of grace 2020 is shaping up to be another eventful year for the Church in Australia. Who knows what the year will bring? We do know are that the First Session of the Plenary Council will be held in Adelaide in October and that will have a lasting impact on the Church in Australia; that the Church will continue to address most actively the changes (that word again!) to ensure that our Church will continue to improve our ability to ensure it is a safe, encouraging and affirming place for all that is “Christ-centred”; and, that the relationship between faith and religion and society standards is very much a work in progress. While these are more ‘strategic’ levels that can be somewhat nebulous, there are more day-to-day issues that must also be managed. Matters like the economy, the drought, floods and bushfires, aged care, migrants and refugees, ‘beginning and end of life’ legislation occupy our immediate concern and can cause an increasing level of personal stress. Where are the Knights in this landscape and what can they do?

Step 1: Opening prayer: from the Order’s Prayers

Step 2: READINGS ON THE THEME

Being a ‘strong and faith-filled Catholic fraternity’ is an important part of the answer to the question about where are the Knights in the landscape and what they can do. You exercise what is called technically by the theologians the *sensus fidei*. In fact this term is used by many in the discussions encouraging debate in the Church on a variety of matters. Let’s not be put off by the words used (*sensus fidei*) which in English mean “the sense of the faith”. Knights have that already and in abundance. This programme is far too short to address this *sensus fidei* in any depth. It is a subject that, over centuries, has been studied and applied in different ways. If you want to read further into the matter I encourage a reading of a document by the International Theological Commission entitled “SENSUS FIDEI IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH” which was published in 2014. In essence it deals with the fact that the Holy Spirit continues to inspire and inform all the faithful in the ways of the Gospel. Everyone receives the Holy Spirit and is obliged to acknowledge that the discernment of the Holy Spirit is never contradictory. How can it be? Where there are differences in understanding or appreciation our response must always be to depend – in prayer and faith – on the grace of that Holy Spirit for clarity and resolution. We must always draw encouragement from that presence and always be open to the voice of that Advocate promised and sent by Jesus from the Father. Below is a brief quote from that document which, I hope, will affirm the importance of the Knights in answering those questions and strengthen us in our vision.

“As a result, the faithful have an instinct for the truth of the Gospel, which enables them to recognise and endorse authentic Christian doctrine and practice, and to reject what is false. That supernatural instinct, intrinsically linked to the gift of faith received in the communion of the Church, is called the *sensus fidei*, and it enables Christians to fulfil their prophetic calling. In his first Angelus address, Pope Francis quoted the words of a humble, elderly woman he once met: ‘If the Lord did not forgive everything, the world would not exist’; and he commented with admiration: ‘that is the wisdom which the Holy Spirit gives’. The woman’s insight is a striking manifestation of the *sensus fidei*, which, as well as enabling a certain discernment with regard to the things of faith, fosters true wisdom and gives rise, as here, to proclamation of the truth. It is clear, therefore, that the *sensus fidei* is a vital resource for the new evangelisation to which the Church is strongly committed in our time.” (*Sensus Fidei in the life of the Church’ International Theological Commission, Vatican 2014*)

Step 3: Allow a few moments reflective silence.

Step 4: SCRIPTURE READING

“Look, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves; so be cunning as snakes and yet innocent as doves. Be prepared for people to hand you over to sanhedrins and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought

before governors and kings for my sake, as evidence to them and to the gentiles. But when you are handed over, do not worry about how to speak or what to say; what you are to say will be given to you when the times comes, because it is not you who will be speaking; the Spirit of your Father will be speaking in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will come forward against their parents and have them put to death. You will be universally hated on account of my name; but anyone who stands firm to the end will be saved.” (Matthew 10: 16-22)

“In the last days – the Lord declares – I shall pour out my Spirit on all humanity. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young people shall see visions, your old people dream dreams. Even on the slaves, men and women, shall I pour out my Spirit.” (Acts 2:17,18)

Step 5: REFLECTION (5 Mins)

Step 6: SHARING (10 Mins)

Step 7: CONCLUSION

We pray together;
Our Father, ...

Step 8: *The meeting proceeds*

Step 9: CLOSING PRAYERS – FROM THE ORDER’S PRAYERS