

# READ REFLECT AND REVIEW

## SESSION 1                      LETTERS, ENCYCLICALS AND LIVES OF SAINTS AN OVERVIEW

### **READ**

WHY THIS THEME? PERHAPS IT TO REMIND US THAT IT REALLY DOESN'T TAKE TOO MUCH TIME TO EXTRACT SOME MEANINGFUL PASSAGES FROM THE BIBLE, FROM PAPAL ENCYCLICALS AND EVEN FROM THE LIVES OF SOME OF OUR SAINTS. READING THE PASSAGE IS A START – THEN REFLECTING ON ‘WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TODAY FOR ME IN THE ORDINARINESS OF MY LIFE’ LEADS US INTO THE REVIEWING OF HOW THIS MIGHT INFLUENCE MY DAILY LIFE .

IN THE INTRODUCTION ATTENTION WAS DRAWN TO **ST PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS**. WE HEAR THESE LETTERS READ OFTEN AT MASS. LETTERS TO THE GALATIANS, THE ROMANS , TIMOTHY ( ONE PERSON) AND MANY OTHERS. SO, WE SEE THAT IT HAS BEEN A NORMAL PRACTICE OVER TIME FOR THE APOSTLES TO WRITE TO THE CHRISTIANS.

ALTHOUGH FORMAL PAPAL LETTERS FOR THE ENTIRE CHURCH WERE ISSUED FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE CHURCH, THE FIRST COMMONLY CALLED AN ENCYCLICAL WAS *UBI PRIMUM*, DEALING WITH EPISCOPAL DUTIES, PUBLISHED BY BENEDICT XIV IN 1740.

POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS WRITTEN A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF LETTERS AND STATEMENTS, BUT ONLY FOUR ENCYCLICALS. THREE WRITTEN BETWEEN 2005 – 2009 FOCUSED ON THE THREE VIRTUES OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE. THIS PROGRAM TAKES A GLIMPSE AT THE MEANING BENEDICT IS OFFERING US IN EACH OF THESE. THE FOURTH WAS COMMENCED, BUT WAS JOINTLY COMPLETED BY BENEDICT WITH HIS SUCCESSOR, POPE FRANCIS, WAS CALLED LUMEN FIDEI- THE LIGHT OF FAITH AND WAS ISSUED IN 2013 ON THE FEAST OF SAINTS PETER AND PAUL.

**ENCYCLICALS** ARE WRITTEN BY THE POPE. THE WORD “ENCYCLICAL” MEANS “CIRCULAR LETTER”. IMPORTANTLY, AN ENCYCLICAL IS A PASTORAL LETTER ADDRESSED BY THE POPE TO THE WHOLE CHURCH. ENCYCLICAL LETTERS GENERALLY ADDRESS MATTERS OF FAITH OR MORALS, ENCOURAGE A PARTICULAR COMMEMORATION OR PIOUS DEVOTION, OR DEAL WITH MATTERS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE WHICH ARE TO BE UNIVERSALLY OBSERVED. THE POPE WRITES OTHER DOCUMENTS WITH SPECIFIC PURPOSE FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT THIS YEAR WE WILL CONFINE OUR STUDY TO THE ENCYCLICALS FROM THE TWO MOST RECENT POPES OF OUR TIME: BENEDICT XVI AND FRANCIS.

**THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS** GIVE US GREAT HOPE AND ARE THERE TO HELP US SEE THE LOVE OF GOD IN ACTION IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS. SOME SAINTS HAVE ALSO HAD GREAT INFLUENCE ON THE PAPAL ENCYCLICALS, WHICH WE WILL DISCOVER IN THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS, ALSO HIGHLIGHTING **MARY AS MOTHER OF FAITH** IN ONE OF THE LATER SESSIONS.

OUR AUSTRALIAN SAINT AND PATRON OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS, **SAINT MARY MACKILLOP**, WAS AN ORDINARY PERSON, A GIRL FROM A POOR FAMILY, EDUCATED IN FITZROY, WHOSE LOVE OF GOD WAS SHOWN IN THE GREAT PERSONAL SACRIFICES SHE MADE IN HER DAILY LIFE. HER INFLUENCE EXTENDS TODAY THROUGH THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH FOUNDED IN 1867. HER LIFE OF DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT TO GOD'S WILL CONTINUES TO INFLUENCE CATHOLICS, MANY OF WHOM WILL RECALL HER BEATIFICATION AND CANONISATION.

### REFLECT

WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR ME, REALISING THAT ST PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS READ IN OUR INTRODUCTION WAS ALSO A WAKE -UP CALL TO ME?

### REVIEW

- 1 DO I PLAN TO DO ANYTHING DIFFERENT AFTER READING AND REFLECTING ON THIS BRIEF PASSAGE FROM ST PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EARLY CHRISTIANS IN CORINTH?
- 2 COULD I THINK OF A FEW AREAS IN MY LIFE WHERE THIS NEW COMMITMENT WOULD BE A BENEFIT TO OTHERS?
- 3 HOW MUCH DO I REALLY KNOW ABOUT THE LIFE OF OUR PATRON?
- 4 ANY THOUGHTS ON THE PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS?

- **EACH KNIGHT IS INVITED TO BEGIN THE DAY, AS PERHAPS MANY OF YOU ALREADY DO, WITH THE PEACE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS:**

LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE.

WHERE THERE IS HATRED, LET ME SOW LOVE;

WHERE THERE IS INJURY, PARDON;

WHERE THERE IS DOUBT, FAITH;

WHERE THERE IS DESPAIR, HOPE;

WHERE THERE IS DARKNESS, LIGHT;

WHERE THERE IS SADNESS, JOY.

O, DIVINE MASTER, GRANT THAT I MAY NOT SO MUCH SEEK

TO BE CONSOLED AS TO CONSOLE;

TO BE UNDERSTOOD AS TO UNDERSTAND;

TO BE LOVED AS TO LOVE;

FOR IT IS IN GIVING THAT WE RECEIVE;

IT IS IN PARDONING THAT WE ARE PARDONED;

IT IS IN DYING THAT WE ARE BORN TO ETERNAL LIFE.

**THAT WOULD SURELY MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**