Group Discussion 3
Kevin Manning

Red Group;
Question 1

a. 1. Many Catholics are ignorant about Muslim/Jews of Palestine
2. Economical prayers OK. Dialogue now difficult in inter-faith dialogue

We have to learn to participate – can't shun because of what happens in other countries – it will take a long time. No compass to show how.

Work to correct mistaken view so many of us have; admit education.
Once Muslims came, we didn't know how to relate to them.
Challenge them to be tolerant also.

b. Preaching
Read and become familiar, documents

Question 2

Can't have dialogue without a good knowledge of one's own faith and the faith of those with whom we dialogue. No central authority – danger in dialogue.

What is common ground, and concentrate on positives. Prayer, fasting, alms, giving.

Question 3

Wars – Modern leaders see themselves as Crusaders. Religion was hijacked by extremists. We have conflicting biases of history.

Question 4

Sport – Olympics – guest celebrations of humanity, no matter where you come from.

They leave aside religion. Also naturalization ceremonies.

Vulgarity of our media – conception and decadence is no help. Not religion – it's in morals. Religion confused with morality.

Green Group;
1. a) Do not know how to dialogue with other faiths. Do not know the Church's position on dialogue, especially with Muslims.

On a general level this is not a problem, but in practical situations (marriage) the differences come up, therefore problems arise.

b) Meet with people, because we don't know their beliefs, we feel afraid, therefore prejudice arises.
Openness- respect beliefs – acceptance.

Priests can help in promoting dialogue and celebrating mixed marriages.

2. Try to find common beliefs – like Muslims believe in Mary, as the mother of a prophet so that would be a starting point.

3. 9-11- influence of media. Statements from their leaders (remember the time that they talked about how women should dress)
Disrespect from the symbols that we use, such as the cross/nuns wearing veils.

4. Teach them about the symbols – inviting people to come and show them the different celebrations. Promotion of the formation of the different religions, including a subject (at the seminars) about comparative religion. (We promote multiculturalism, but we don't practice much, eg. Sudanese).

Blue Group;
Extremists

Sudan: So difficult to dialogue with Muslims
- no openness
- one way traffic (not dialogue at all)
- non-Muslims are infidels

It's easier to dialogue with other faiths but not with Muslims.

1. Lots of Catholics do not know about other faiths. However, it's difficult to dialogue with Muslims, but we continue to talk and search for a common basis.
   - true there is a good relationship between Buddhists and Christians.
   - There is recognition of common and similar beliefs and values.

Yellow Group; (Monday afternoon, 2)

1. Know and Appreciate Position
   Croatia – Catholic/Muslim/Orthodox war. Dialogue very difficult if no deep faith. 'Don't need dialogue', forgiveness is very difficult. Father forgive them.

As priests we know it, those deep in their faith. Australians may appreciate it but hard to generalise.

Hard when war for 20+ years. Family killed in front of you (Sudan, Bosnia). Difference from country to country. Some struggle and come to forgiveness.

Full admiration for those who maintain dialogue. What is the goal of dialogue?
- to understand, work and live together.
- But difficult: one small thing can spoil everything.

Dealing with moderates – can't with extremists.

What can we do?

- It is our duty to promote dialogue. We have dialogue.

2. <u>What are the ways knowledge aids?</u>
   - we can pray to God
   - Know what offends people
   - Knowledge can emphasise difference
   - Purpose: mateship?
   - Eg. Lutheran dialogue – resulted in coming together.

3. Australian culture has lessened aggression in general Spanish = at war for hundreds of years.
   Bosnian – 500 years
   Dialogue a must, duty. Difficulty; you cannot be against anything, but they will be.
   Idea is good but in practice it is often difficult.

4. Strategies – helpful/unhelpful
   Food and drink
   - scholar (Catholic) and Muslims – moderate scholarly
   - Catholics to encourage their Muslim friends and acquaintances.
   - Common project.

<u>Purple Group;</u>

People who truly live their faith have no problems with interfaith dialogue. The problem is not about faith but with religion.

With the Muslims, they don't have a unifying figure, like the Pope for us.

One difficulty is that Muslims are not always flexible and open to engage in dialogue.

The starting point for dialogue is respect. The dialogue happens more in a practical way when people just go to their neighbours for needs and for socialising.

Faithful people in the parishes are not aware of what is happening at a higher level. It is something new for some of us who were brought up in Catholic countries. We have no idea what it means to be with Muslims.

In Sudan, positive experience in participating in each others special celebrations. One difficulty is that Muslims do not accept others as equals. They believe that they are superiors. The respect is not reciprocated.

- We see that the questions presented are about the Muslims. How about other religions? How about other Christian Churches?

  Catholics are more open-minded. If Catholics would react every time someone insults the Catholic faith, there would be bloodshed everywhere.

  We should be careful not to confuse the positive aspects of the faith with the attitude of some fanatics.

<u>Orange Group;</u>

Interfaith Dialogue – New Understandings, Skills and Strategies

Question 1

Yes, we know enough and appreciated other people's faith.

- Discuss the common ground amongst us.
- Understand and respect their faith.

Question 2

The more you know others, the more we understand them and respect each other.

- If you know more, you may comprehend the dialogue.
- Celebration i.e. dancing and foods and cultural presentations of Music and arts.
- WYD08 Cross, when visited the Mosque, at Bonnyrigg, it was a great welcome and accepted by the Muslim communities.

Question 3

Foods, music and dances

Foods for the Muslims must be put on the tables – it is a custom of welcoming you. Muslim families are existing and accepted in some Catholic schools.

Question 4

Education;

Is there a common policy about non-Christian children in Catholic schools?

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Discussion Group 3
Monday
Kevin Manning Talk

Brown Group:

First session

1. Catholic Seminarians:

It is the policy of some Australian Diocese to recruit seminarians overseas and have them trained in Australia so that at the end of their studies, they would be fluent in English and accustomed to Australian culture, enabling them to work at once in the parishes.

It would be good if, during their seminary training, they were sent out to work in parishes to expose them to the Australian Pastoral system.

In the seminaries, these foreign boys live with Australians and then will be mutual influence enabling the Australian seminarians to learn foreign cultures and understand their companions and their countrymen.

The abolishing of Catholic devotions like the novenas, triduums, rosary, processions, blessing of the fishing-feet, have had a negative influence on migrants who often view Australian Catholics like half-protestants.

2. "international pastors"

A few were in favour of the new term but the common opinion was to leave the term "migrant chaplain". All Australian parish-priests in the cities are already "international pastors" as they have to administer to a very mixed racial population. The migrant chaplains are primarily for their linguistic group and only afterwards helpers in the Australian parish.

3. A few feasts could be added to the Australian Liturgical calender like the Philipino St. Lorenzo Ruiz, Vietnamese Martyres, Chinese Martyres, but not too many.
4. In Melbourne, Perth and some other diocese, ethnic laymen are already working as deacons. They can be recruited asking them during conferences, big meetings: Bishops should tell them that they will be welcome- This also holds for vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.
5. Many activities are already in place for the care of the aged like Scalabrini Homes, curation, German Otchiar villages. Many people visit the aged and care for them.
6. Internet, website, E-mail, are already being extensively used for ethnic groups to give news, programmes etc. The Indonesian chaplains also have direct connections with their Bishops and Indonesian organizations.

Second Session

This is a difficult session as few in the group know much about Muslims and have little or no contact with them. The only groups who have some contact are the Indonesian and Filipino groups.

1. Most know nothing about the Church's position on dialogue with people of other faiths and so cannot appreciate these efforts.

2. Knowledge of the Muslim faith is good but most important groups don't come into contact with them and prefer to leave them alone. There seems to be a mutual distrust.
    - As to mixed marriages, if a Catholic marries a Muslim, the woman or man becomes a Muslim. If there is a mixed marriage between Catholics and Protestants, there are one of three possibilities:

    a) one converts to the religion of the other
    b) both go to one church on a Sunday, and the next Sunday go to the other church – take turns.
    c) Both stop practicing their faith out of respect for the other partner.

3. No experience. It seems that living like good neighbours and helping one another in sickness and child care is helpful.
4. No opinions.

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