



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office



Australian Catholic
Migrant &
Refugee Office

Group Discussion, Session One – Tuesday Mark Coleridge

Brown Group;

1. What is distinctive about Christian leadership?
 - The 12 months points outlined by Archbishop Coleridge.
 - There must be a call from God and acceptance: the leaders are strong when they are weak.
 - Do not expect too much from others
 - Lay people who help in the liturgy, readings, cleaning of church etc. They have a sense of commitment to the Church and to the parish.
 - Leaders not only in Church and prayer – leaders must be able to represent the Church and then communities in the Town Hall, in Governmental meetings, pro-life groups.
2. It is better now: there is more dialogue; more delegation of functions; things are better now than before.
3. Culture: in some cultures, young people do not speak in the presence of elders: the amount of influence depends on the size of the community. Most Oriental cultures do not permit drinking from the same cup, or do not like priests kissing women, drinking alcohol in public etc.
4. Yes, until now

Red Group:

Question 1

1. Based on Christ, our role model
2. Must be guided by love of the people we are serving and the members of our church, the love of culture.
3. Empathy
4. Must feel intricately a part of the people and work with them, grow with them, learn from them for they will enrich you with their joys, sufferings etc.

Question 2

1. More lay involvement
2. We are becoming more collaborative

Question 3

1. Face problems before overseas Priests come to join us.
2. Faith values and morals unite us but there is often misunderstanding
3. Must be prepared to accept and work with lay people.
4. Many understandings of “Church”, we have faith in Christ, rapture, and church.
5. Being open to expressing the beautiful devotions of other cultures and blend it with your own.



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Question 4

1. Fault on both sides: migrant priests isolated migrant communities and didn't help integration and they didn't give a welcome
2. task of collaboration

Yellow Group:

1. "Distinctive"
 - Service – also has been the change from 'big boss' – now moved to equality.
 - Centrality of Christ – real leader, not my ability
 - Holy Spirit leading us
 - Generosity needed today
 - Willingness to share leadership – support for different ideas.
2. "Different to Past"
 - used to be a pyramid, top down, now more sharing.
 - Democracy is pervasive influence. Helpful, but also creates problems – lack of decisions, don't want to risk.
 - Now shared, even Bishops. Parish councils play at least an advisory role.
 - Leader is chosen for the community
 - In religious communities, decisions are discussed
 - It used to be hard to meet/discuss issues with Parish Priest, now accessible
 - Mode of communication was "we preach, you listen", but now can be difficult to decide.
3. Culture Shaping Leadership
 - depends on country
 - Spanish speaking = 14 nations, need to listen.
 - Maltese – need to organise feasts etc.
 - Position of the leader.
 - Polish priest is trying bringing his own mentality to parish.
 - Distinguish culture – the culture of the church in country of origin and that of the church/situation here.
4. Too isolated before? Various experiences
 - in general yes, isolated, but not too much.
 - Spanish church is not ours so work in with parish – don't feel separate or isolated.
 - African: was initially difficult – local church was not welcoming; not supported by local clergy. Still not getting much support.
 - In certain cases it is still a problem.



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Green Group:

1. Migrants are not separated from Church service.
 - not patronising but real knowledge of the people
 - agree with 12 points given by Bishop Mark
2. Empower lay people – more open.
 - women are more visible in church e.g. part of parish councils
 - Bishops are more attentive to pastoral care of parishers, then the administrative work.
 - Leaders of Churches not only give orders, but listen to their people
3. True integration between cultures. Learn about the culture that you will be working with. Challenge them (leaders) to learn about different cultures.
4. Sometimes migrants isolate themselves because of attitudes of local priests towards them. It's a challenge for people from varying cultures to get to know each other and to overcome isolation that goes both ways.

“We have to start referring to people as ‘us’ and not ‘we’ and ‘they’.
In theory this is fine, but not in practice. There's still a lot to be done.

Blue Group:

1. Christ is the one who leads
 - therefore the importance of prayer
 - Service (for others) other oriented
 - Leadership: there is an element of Holiness
 - Service, love, sharing
 - A lot of listening, openness, talk to God and to people.
2. past very hard – to be leader is to be more powerful, mentally enslaving
 - past – not much listening to people , not being practiced.
 - Past – very formal and less friendly

Present – more open, more respectful to customs and traditions of others.

 - more friendly
 - more collaboration with the layity.
 - Church as the ‘people of God’ (in the past, church was very clerical)
 - There is an element of equality and involving women in the work of the church (although women are asking for more)
3. Isolated in some cases, especially those who have difficulty in speaking English.
 - not really isolated but there is not much initiative from the local church to bring people of different ethnic communities together.
 - In some cases – the migrants are considered as the other church because of the migrants themselves who want to be a distinct group.
 - Isolation issues sometimes happened not because the priests are not welcoming but the general attitude of the people who tend to move to other places when migrants come.



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Purple Group:

1. Jesus is our good leader. If we follow in Christ's footsteps and our faith and destiny is with the Cross of Christ, to love and be compassionate to understand their faith, Jesus came to save. If we follow Christ we will achieve all aspects of Christian leadership.
2. Yes, there are some changes in leadership. Mentor, speaker, dialogue. There is not much change, only the style of leadership. Bishops and priests have to sit down and discuss all the issues, more collaboration (change in technology). Lay people exchange ideas (different religious order)
 - Money maker rather than spirituality. Young people were not recognised in the past. If youth is to be our main focus – will create more vocation. Australian more sacramental church.
3. Women have now become good leaders of the church.
4. Yes, Migrant communities think that they will invade the parishes.

Orange Group:

Preparing Leaders From Migrant Communities

Question 1

- Need to work within the communities
- To give witness and testimony to the people
- Break down barriers within the parishes on how they operate
- Leadership still applied to the structures and authorities.
- Leaders listening to the Spirits threw the thoughts of the peoples.
- Spirit within the Church.
- Church should allow more experimentation, bring in new styles, i.e. bands, music.

Question 2

- lay peoples are more educated then in the past
- Structure of the Church still the same as the past. Need the spirit as the base.

Question 3

- part of the priest's role is to play his part with his ethnic leaders and groups.
- Applying without any proper instructions always come to a major problem.

Question 4

- More links with the present church in Australia then their ethnic groups.
- 50 + 50.

