



FRAMEWORK FOR POSSIBLE LOCAL ROUNDTABLE CONVERSATIONS

1. Prayer and Meditation:

Beginning with prayer and meditation, Including the practice of deep silence for listening and thus for better discernment in the Holy Spirit.

2. The Theology and Spirituality:

Key principles include:

- A trust in the healing power of our Risen Lord Jesus.
- A recognition of Jesus life-giving teaching on forgiveness and kindness; our wanting to become people of the beatitudes that are in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount'.
- A living of the Lord's Prayer and a sharing in the transformation that takes place when we practice this teaching.
- An awareness that the way people think, speak and act shapes culture.
- A recognition of the need for patient, careful work to heal and transform relationships that do not embody love, forgiveness and an understanding of kindness.
- A humble recognition of our own failures in relationships and our difficulties in learning from our mistakes.
- An openness to where God might be leading us and of the partnerships this might involve, including as regards Interreligious Cooperation.



3. Our Context:

“Between the idea and the reality falls the shadow” (TS Eliot)

We analyse our context to be clearer about what we see and what we hope to see.

What we see is that patterns of dysfunctional behaviour are deeply ingrained.

“Humanity is a family that has barely met” say the poets.

We must help humanity meet in new ways that bring healing and reconciliation; a forgiving kindness - much more loving kindness.

The need for this needs little elaboration.

We are trying to deal with a global pandemic that requires a higher quality of global co-operation and generosity.

There are millions of refugees and stateless people with no safe place of belonging. They are distressed, displaced and in need of resettlement. The gender and racial violence that this involves is heartbreaking.

There are continuing wars and rumours of wars which fuel an expanding arms race. The opportunity cost of this is causing more of the poor to starve. Little children are starving to death today in the arms of their grieving parents. There is a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons but because the nuclear weapon states have not implemented it, we still live with the risk of nuclear annihilation.

Catastrophic climate change is taking place but there is not yet the global agreement and quality of leadership needed for preventive ‘climate action’ at UNCOP 26 this November. This is the reality even though it is recognised that COP26 is one of the most significant meetings in the history of humankind!

What we see shapes what we want to see and then want to give.



How can we imagine our giving and forgiving will enable a better relational context?

As the wise ones convey: “The problems are huge. What we can do seems insignificant. Nevertheless, it is absolutely crucial that we do it!”

4. Towards a more loving, forgiving and understanding culture:

What then are the practical initiatives we can each take and which we can take together?

***Oneself and with family?**

<https://www.i4give.com>

This encourages us to forgive one other person in a sustained way and gives us resources to assist in this process.

We may need to recover learning on how to give and receive an apology so we can give back hope.

This may intersect with both careful work towards the healing of our personal “soul wounds” and with our participation in initiatives like a “National Forgiveness Week” each year.

We may also renew our appreciation of “the power of gratitude “.

What helps us be more loving, forgiving and understanding of ourselves and close family?

***In our Neighbourhood?**

A more loving, forgiving and understanding culture is nurtured in the daily opportunities of conversation and interaction.

Hence the importance of spiritual practice that helps us to have better self -awareness of what we think about and what we let influence our thinking.



We will become what we think. Our thoughts will shape our words and actions. The pattern, over a period of time, will shape our character and our destiny.

Our contribution to a better culture involves attentiveness to these realities.

A better culture can be imagined through the genius of our artists: *“Love, love. Love - that is the soul of genius.” (W.A. Mozart)*

All good and all harm is done relationally.

How can our spiritual practice help with neighbourly renewal?

What enhanced role can we give to the artistic imagination?

***Nationally and Internationally?**

Our global context is as it has been sketched briefly above.

In prayer, service, and advocacy we can each make the contribution that is ours to make.

Our contributions can be a sign “of the coming unity of the whole human family” (World Council of Churches).

In the Australian context, we discern the necessity of listening well to the insights of our First Nation Christian leaders.

Nationally and internationally, there is much need for the “healing of places” where there has been and still are traumas, woundings and massacres. For people of faith this involves the patient, careful building of trust so this healing becomes relationally possible.

What are the initiatives we can take to build trust?

Bishop Philip Huggins

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