



*Reflection*

## State Conference 2019

# RCIA Conference: Friday 11 - Sunday 13 October 2019

Held at the Passionist Monastery Conference Centre, Glen Osmond, S.A

## Some preliminary thoughts:

- Earlier in the month, Pope Francis named October as an Extraordinary Missionary month, with World Mission Sunday celebrated on Sunday October 20th.
- The theme of this month's focus is: **'Baptised and sent – the call to be missionary in Catholics' daily lives.**
- The theme of our RCIA conference was: **'It takes a community to nurture a Disciple.'**

We began the conference in that spirit, coming along as disciples to hear the Word of God, to listen attentively and then to go out on mission together, in a spirit of unity and community. Nourished by our time together, with the help of key-note speakers, we were challenged by the dynamic Word of God, to share our insights and questions, to listen to the truth that we share and to honour the sacred in one another's lives.

Being together for this conference was a response to the invitation to **'Come and see.'**

- **Come and see what it means for us to be missionary disciples**
- **Come and see what the Lord is saying to us in our daily lives**
- **Come and see and listen to the stories of others seeking to be or become missionary disciples**
- **Come and see what our communities can do to support the search for truth and meaning in the Catholic tradition.**

In **'The Joy of the Gospel,'** Pope Francis says:

'The church which *'goes forth'* is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice.'

Over the days of the conference we had the opportunity to explore what this great venture might mean for us personally, and therefore for our communities.

The conference began on the day that the Church celebrates the feast of **St. John 23rd** – a remarkable man whose vision propelled us along the paths of seeking and working for Christian unity and how the Church must take its place in the modern world differently if the gospel message is to be proclaimed energetically and authentically.



At the beginning of the conference, **Fr. Philip Marshall** led us in a reflection on the Gospel pathways or directions that form the solid basis of the renewal of parishes in the Archdiocese. At the heart of the matter is our need to be connected to one another, to be in relationship and to work together for the building of the Reign of God.

**Sr. Bernadette Kiley** led us in a challenging and thought-provoking session on what it means to be a Disciple, and how Mark addressed this issue in his gospel. In this session, we began with the question Jesus posed to the disciples: **“But who do you say that I am?”**

In what followed, Jesus repeatedly pointed out to the disciples what it would mean if they were to follow him. There would be suffering, misunderstanding, rejection, loss of life, betrayal. And yet the disciples squabbled among themselves as to who would be the greatest, and who would be the most important. Jesus’ response was to take a little child in his arms and say that if they wanted greatness, they needed to become child-like. Not only that, they must be prepared to be of service to one another.

**Fr. Elio Capra** led us in reflections on the following:

### **Is it a RCIA Team or RCIA Parish?**

We considered how the community needs to take responsibility for welcoming, supporting and nourishing the stirrings of faith in those who enquire. This welcome extends to the sharing of faith, reflections on Scripture and life stories, including potential candidates in the works of the local parish community.



### **How do the RCIA Rites shape the Catechumens and the whole community?**

In this session we looked at the elements that make up the Rites of the RCIA and how the role of the community is crucial.

The third session focussed on:

### **Is it content or life experience? Is it a program or process?**

Once again we were drawn into the community of disciples called to be community, to proclaim the gospel, to be engaged in prayer and worship and to go out on mission.

We considered each of these aspects via different forms of Catechesis within the RCIA, namely:

- Instructional Catechesis
- Scriptural Catechesis
- Liturgical Catechesis
- Ecclesial Catechesis
- Mystagogical Catechesis.



For more images of the conference, please go to our website [www.ofw-adelaide.org.au/events](http://www.ofw-adelaide.org.au/events)

We celebrated the Eucharist together as a community and this led into the final session:

### How do we solve the problem of Mystagoga?

At the heart of this section was the simple reflective process:

- What did you hear?
- What did you see?
- What does it mean for me?

### Tribunal of the Catholic Church

The final session of the conference was led by **Sue Rivett**, Director of the Marriage Tribunal in the Diocesan Office. Sue introduced the work of the Tribunal and provided practical information about pastoral issues relating to divorce, annulment, re-marriage. These challenges are often encountered by those in the parish who are supporting candidates, and conference-goers now know who to contact.

### Conclusion:

We began by responding to the invitation to **'Come and See.'**

As with the disciples, **we came**, not sure how the days would unfold, but we took the time, we formed a community for the weekend, and together we allowed our hearts to burn within us with the Word of God. **We saw** what the Lord was doing in each of us.

**We stayed** and we pondered all these mysteries and our roles; we had the chance to learn more about the RCIA process, to share our concerns, our joys and new learnings. Finally, nourished by the Eucharist we shared, **we left** to go back to our daily lives, our families and our parishes, renewed for the journey ahead.

**Kathy Horan**  
RCIA Coordinator



For more images of the conference, please go to our website [www.ofw-adelaide.org.au/events](http://www.ofw-adelaide.org.au/events)



Our Adelaide store closes on 31 October 2019.  
The sisters will remain in Adelaide until the end of November to finalise orders and accounts.  
Orders can be placed online at [www.paulinebooks.com.au](http://www.paulinebooks.com.au)  
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**The Sisters and Staff thank you for your support over the years**