

Colloquium of European Parishes (CEP)

Youths

Malta 2013

Workshop Reports

Workshop One: Monday, 8th July 2013

1. What does faith mean to you and how do you express your faith?

- Faith is serenity expressed through prayer.
- Living with a purpose.
- Seeing Jesus in every person, even in those who are difficult.
- Not just pray as a ritual but look at a personal relationship with God.
- Opening your heart to God to believe in your calling.
- Faith is something I can rely on
- It is very concrete part of my life
- Having God in your life, believing in him and making God part of one's life
- Express it by one's life
- Example teaches more than words – so that people may question
- The importance of sharing, speaking about faith sharing it what you believe without the need preaching.
- Faith gives a sense of security
- Family prayer
- A life built upon life is contagious.

2. Can you tell of an experience when you felt God was with you the most or an experience which made you mature in faith or an experience of conversion – can you describe this experience?

- At University, experiencing God's call in calling for a vocation.
- An encounter with a seminarian helped in realizing that it is we find God not in the big things in life that count but the small ones thus restoring one's faith in God.
- Experienced courage to conquer a fear.
- Feeling God's love and understanding through the eyes of a disabled person.
- We see God in nature.
- We see God in the people around us especially in those who suffer and in the daily miracles eg those who suffer accidents.
- Reading the Scripture – reading what the Lord says and reflecting what this Word has to say on my life.
- The sense of realization that God loves me.
- An experience of a family member healing from cancer.
- An experience of a baby who survived after being born prematurely.

3. How do you trust God when life is tough and He's silent?

- Problems help us to grow.
- In times of silence we can read and interpret God's signs.
- In these situations, life is like a plant, you water it, you do not see it grow but you know that the water is helping the plant to grow. Prayer is like the water which helps the plant of God. The commitment in prayer helps so that the difficult moments become fruitful.
- There is the challenge of waiting for God, we tend to become impatient with God.
- If we wait in faith God surprises us – because His ways are not our ways as God is beyond us.
- Remembering the difficult moments and how God is has helped us through.
- Prayer is the food for spiritual life.
- “366” – Don't worry I'm worry I'm with you always – remind yourself to await on God.
- It not that God is silent but it is us who are impatient to listen – especially when have our own agenda, our own ideas: when we tell God “let me do my things,” when I think that I am in control, above God.

Workshop Two: Tuesday, 9th July 2013

1. Do you form part of a religious group or movement? What is the vision of this group or movement? How your involvement in this group changed the way of living your faith?

- Scouts movement in Ukraine – national country culture, Ukraine, Byzantine Christianity, Desert Monks: growth in spiritual power, communion with God, contemplation – invite the people for meditation and contemplation based on Orthodox Christianity – helps to deep their spirituality.
- Seminarians, Comunione e Liberazione, Pilgrimage Community – Hungary.
- Through these groups, members learn what is essential in life and what brings true happiness.
- The groups are a link between prayer and daily life.
- Pilgrims help the person to clear his thoughts and even emptying oneself.
- Groups help you discover creative and innovative ways of praying and teach you to share spiritual life with others.
- The pilgrimage helps the person to understand the meaning of life and God's will.
- As we walk as a whole group of people in pilgrimage we feel as walking as a Church.
- Groups help those who are still seeking God and to know about him.

2. Describe how your involvement in a religious group influences your own vocation in life and the relationship with the people and society around you?

- These small communities serve as mirror that help us to know ourselves better and encourages us to make changes.
- On a human level it helps us to make friends and learn to accept ourselves more.
- It helps us to become aware of the needs of others and how can we contribute to help them to meet their needs – being there for them rather doing for them.
- It helps in clarifying my role and aim in life and helps me to share what I have received.
- A sense of responsibility
- It helps me to see God in every body no matter who you are
- Involvement in youth groups helps the youths to realize the importance of social involvement
- Knowing and accepting new people
- Through international involvement, especially with youth coming from other religions or denominations, broadens the vision of life.
- One realizes the different realities the Christian youths face.
- An opportunity to evaluate one's organization with an other organization, especially through encounters.

3. How do you inform your conscience so that it is well-formed and ready to assist you in making good choices?

- Catholic education helps in forming a good conscience and this leads the person to form good decisions.
- Encountering people: is a teacher of life. Meeting good people enriches one's experience.
- Life is like a diamond, you can look at it from different perspectives.
- Decision making and giving out information implies greater responsibilities.
- Prayer is crucial in order to make decisions and form one's conscience.

Concluding Session: Thursday, 11th July 2013

1. How have you seen God reveal himself to you during this week?

- With so many people coming from different backgrounds, with different languages, one would have thought or would have been difficult to communicate, but when one's heart is open to the Lord all barriers are broken down. There are no more obstacles but only opportunities to grow.
- The religiosity of the Maltese, they are still very religious.
- The sense of friendship which grew between us.
- The Maltese participants gave me a new understanding of how to live faith in a practical way, according to one's realities.
- The experiences of the Maltese participants showed me how to regain one's faith or become a stronger person in faith.

2. What was that particular moment or experience which touched you most?

- The mass which was celebrated in St Paul's Grotto
- One mass which was celebrated in a spirit of fraternity
- It was a joy of heart so many different languages and styles of worship all celebrating the love of our God.
- Visiting the community of people with disability and listening to the vision of the priest for his community
- From the community of rehabilitation from drug problems I could see that we have to take care of our life as it is precious.
- Encounter with the youths in the parish of Xaghra - Gozo. The joy of living our youth in faith.

3. What is the most important thing that you will be taking with you back home?

- Friendship
 - More appreciation of my faith
 - More commitment in my youth group
 - More importance to prayer
 - Be more thankful to my vocation
 - When God is in our midst no one is a stranger anymore. We all become brothers and sisters members of the Lord's family.
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