

Reflections 1

Living Simply

If John was writing his gospel today, who would be the people who stand in need?

Global, National, Local

Financial or Spiritual poverty

- People out of work, on benefits, on low pay
- People using food banks
- Asylum seekers, refugees, the homeless
- The mentally ill,
- Families experiencing domestic abuse
- As a result of inequality or lack of education

How do we define who is 'rich'?

Global, National, Local

Financial or Spiritual poverty

- It is all relative.
- If you have more than you need you are rich
- Those able to contribute to society are rich
- The poor may be rich in faith, i.e. in Africa/India...
- The many Philanthropists who go unnoticed

*(The world's **richest 1%**, those with more than \$1 million, own **43.4%** of the world's wealth)*

Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report

Does our definition safeguard ourselves?

- We hope not.
- The story of the two sons – one said 'no' but later did it, the other said 'yes' but didn't
- We need to develop a conscience

How can we show God's love in the world?

- Pray to the Holy Spirit for discernment
- The ripple effect – knowing God's love ourselves helps us to love others
- Caring and providing for another's particular needs
- Showing kindness
- Being friendly
- A smile, listening, making time for kind words

Reflections 2

Living Sustainably

Populorum Progressio #15

Reflect on this passage and discuss

- The need to grow, to prepare our 'soil'
- Prayer, the Sacraments, reading the word of God
- God's plan, not our own
- Recognising gifts, talents and abilities
- Tell our family members the gifts we see in them
- Encourage without criticism (pray for the right words)
- Help to unwrap the gift of faith
- Enable others to develop their skills without imposing or rescuing

What does it mean to live sustainably?

- To live alongside and to help one another and creation
- Avoid exploitation
- Allow natural growth, not forced growth
- Practical Action – small is beautiful
- Sharing vaccines and technology, big and small
- Forests are a resource for heating and cooking – need to be managed sustainably
- Energy and water – basic needs for everyone
- Giving morally, direct to the people in need

What implications do you think 'living sustainably' will have?

- The need for good public services, especially transport
- To buy locally and in season
- **Dilemma:** Does this deny developing countries a source of income?
- Two-way link up – skills, technology, resources, without exploitation (some countries will always be poor due to lack of resources)
- Encouragement to provide for their own needs, not just to export
- Large corporate companies – investigate the use of profits from arms, banking etc.

Reflections 3 - A reflection on *livesimply*

What does it mean to be God's partners in creation?

- We are made in God's image
- All God made He saw was good
- We are stewards with a duty of care for our common home
- God has given us everything we need to restore His original plan
- We are to be involved, not just observers

What has gone wrong with our relationship with God?

- Loss of faith – people have drifted away from Him
- Rich and poor countries not sharing earth's resources
- Greed and self-interest have replaced God
- Man has abused his power

In what way is our world fragmented?

- Great differences, mostly created by wars
- Some countries have more food than they need while others starve
- Breakdown in relationships with others goes alongside a breakdown in our relationship with God
- Gender and race inequalities
- Intolerance and lack of trust
- We need community to support one another

How can we restore wholeness to our world?

- By following Christ more closely
- Reaching out – showing God's love for one another
- Putting in rather than taking out
- Being aware of divisions and trying to build bridges
- Recognising the dignity of each person and that we are all equal
- Restoring the balance in nature
- Small actions have a ripple effect

What is meant by 'the tyranny of profit'?

- Exploitation of humanity and resources – money without morals
- The arms trade – good for one country and disastrous for another
- Profit above all else

What is the difference between freedom and licence?

- Freedom = choice
- Licence = being 'allowed' to do something without having a free choice
- False freedom?

What does Luke 4:17-21 tell us about our own calling?

- We are God's partners
- We should model ourselves on Jesus and take the Good News to everyone
- We are anointed – the Holy Spirit at work in us
- We are activists on his behalf
- We can 'preach' by example

How can we as individuals and as a community give value to each other?

- We are encouraged to listen and find common ground
- Respect one another
- Encourage and affirm each other, especially those who do not respect themselves
- They are loved by God and forgiven by him
- Making sure laws are not prejudiced against the family or the community

Sharing what we have

Questions for reflection on John 6:8-11
(*feeding the 5,000*)

What is the significance of the child in the story?

- Trusting in Jesus, he gave all he had
- Spontaneous generosity
- People with no rights often have generous hearts
- Everyone's contribution is important
- What seems a little is worthwhile and of benefit to others
- Children understand the importance of doing things i.e. Climate Change

How far is our giving affected by how we think other people see us?

- We need to value what others do, not necessarily with money, but actions, giving time and donations
- Good example to others?
- Does what we do really matter if it results in donations being given?
- Human nature needs praise

Do we believe that our contribution can make a difference?

- YES! Every little helps
- 'Little things done with great love become great things' *Mother Teresa* (the widow's mite)
- It is the same with prayer

When we share, do we share whole heartedly?

- You don't do it to get something back
- Sharing time, not just resources
- No holding back
- God loves a cheerful giver

What message do you think the bread and fish on the *livesimply* logo convey?

- Sustenance
- Sharing
- Nourishment
- Bread – Eucharist
- Fish – Apostles
- Spreading God's word
- Basic need – essentials