

The LANTERN SERIES

EVANGELISATION



Witnessing Christ in the World

No. 5

The Marginalised

“Go out into the highways and byways, and compel them to come in...” Luke 14:23

Challenge:

Below are three rows of three dots each. Join all nine dots by drawing four straight lines. You must complete the task without retracing any part of any line, or without lifting your pen from the page.



Hint: The only way to do this exercise is by “thinking outside the square.” (PTO for answer)

This issue tells stories of people who see and hear those who are on the edges of our society. In being with them, they get to know God and learn more about love. They are walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

The Lantern series dealing with the three faces of mission: Witness, Pastoral Activity and New Evangelisation is in keeping with what Pope Benedict XVI has described as his mission which is divided into "concentric circles." In the innermost circle, he explained, "Peter's Successor confirms Catholics in the faith, in the intermediate circle he meets other Christians, and in the outermost circle he addresses non-Christians and humanity entire."

Pope reflects on visit to Turkey (Independent Catholic News, 7/12/06) www.indeatholicnews.com

For too long we have ignored you

I remember the day I began to walk the road to Emmaus. I began to regularly visit the Mou Deong Institution, in Kwangju City, where many people with mental disabilities lived in overcrowded conditions. Unlike other disadvantaged groups they were less capable of promoting their own rights. They needed the support of advocates. At first I did not have the courage to respond, believing I had neither the skills, language or finances. Then an incident occurred that changed all that. I received a call from the institution to visit You Hai, a 19 year old girl who had been suddenly hospitalised. She turned her eyes to me and uttered the words *kumsumnida* (thank you) – and breathed her last. She had no immediate relatives. We acquired a plot in a Catholic cemetery

and gave her a Christian burial. At the grave we erected a tombstone on which the following was engraved: “Will you forgive society, will you forgive the Church? For too long we have ignored you.”

Today there are five centres called Emmaus. “Over the last twenty years there have been many positive signs that a change of attitude is occurring at all levels. The closed door approach that treated these special people as non-persons is passing and we hope that it will never return.” Fr Noel O’Neill has been in Korea since 1957.



“As small communities living ‘at the edge’, Asian Catholics remind us that it has always been by going to the ‘edge’ that the Church rediscovers itself.” (John Prior, svd).

They speak openly of their brokenness

I work in prisons in Perth. I find myself among people many of whom are damaged in spirit. Most are poorly educated, many addicted to alcohol or drugs. Some are in gaol for heinous crimes that have left their victims traumatized. Others are in for minor offences like driving without a licence. All have in some way been publicly shamed.

Yet I find in significant numbers of these prisoners an openness to the gospel and a readiness to face their sinfulness which is humbling. When reading the scriptures together, I encourage them to say how the words and actions of Jesus, for instance, relate to their own experiences. They speak openly of their brokenness, their struggle with addictions, etc. and how Jesus gives them courage and hope. They give me hope and sustain my faith in our crucified and risen Lord. Fr Peter Toohey is a Columban priest in Perth.



If you want to turn a table around you don't try and hold it in the middle and twist – the weight and inertial resistance at the centre make it virtually impossible. Rather, you take the table by its edges and turn it without strain.

If you want to move anything you find a fixed place from which you can push so that your efforts will be effective. Archimedes said: "Give me a place on which to stand, and I will move the Earth."

Jesus followed these two principles in changing our world into the Reign of God.

First, he went to the margins of society: to sinners, lepers, tax gatherers, prostitutes and outcasts, even though it scandalised the religious and political powers at the centre of his world.

Secondly, Jesus had a place on which to stand which was not based on the popularity, power, or wealth of this world. That place was his sure and certain conviction of the Father's love for him and for all creatures. He took his stand on that, even though it cost him his life ... and the resurrection is his vindication. "Therefore Jesus also suffered *outside* the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood." (Heb 13:12)

To make our world a better place, like Jesus, we too will have to leave the security and safety of our comfort zones and go to the edges of society, to be in solidarity with the poor, the excluded, the marginalized of our world. To move the world, like Jesus, we too will have to find a place on which to take our stand, even though it may involve many sacrifices, but we can be confident that God's love does triumph. "Let us then go to him *outside* the camp and bear the abuse he endured." (Heb 13.13)



We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us: it's in everyone..... As we are liberated from our fears, our presence automatically liberates others.
Nelson Mandela, 1994.

...Mission is not just a matter of doing things for people. It is first of all a matter of being with people, of listening and sharing with them.
Donal Dorr,
Mission in Today's World.

Prayer

Compassionate and just God, comfort those who are trapped on the edges of society by our indifference to them. Forgive us our silence in the face of structures that trap people.

Never criticize someone until you've walked a mile in their moccasins.
American Indian Proverb.

What Can I Do?

- Move from my comfort zone.
- Study current media to ascertain who is being demonised, blamed, ignored. Ask why?
- Promote awareness of their situation.
- Volunteer with organizations that work with the marginalized
- Address these issues in my social justice group

Learn More @

'The Cana Communities' choice is always for the person with least options: the lonely, addicted, homeless, prostitutes, people of transgender or other factors which alienate them within society.

www.cana.org.au

Find out about them and others like them:

- Jean Vanier and the L'Arche Communities www.larche.org.au (03) 6278 3633
- St Canice's Parish, Kings Cross www.jesuit.org.au
- Christian Social Action Centre (Perth) email ccsa@arach.net.au

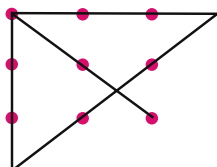
Chat Points:

Put yourself in the shoes of:

- The single parent expected to be both mother and father.
- The disfigured in a society which admires the body beautiful.
- The gay person in a church that offers little pastoral care.
- The unskilled in a work addicted society.
- Discuss where and how these people and others are ignored, scapegoated, pushed to the edge.
- What do you think of the term 'non-Catholic'?

Answer:

Explanation: Because of the way the dots are arranged, we imagine them as a 'square'. If we remain within the imaginary square, we cannot complete the assigned task. But if we go beyond the margins, if we go beyond the self-imposed limits, then the assigned task can be done easily.



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