

# GOSPEL VALUES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

North West Dioceses, PGCLP Residential

4 March 2017, Whalley Abbey

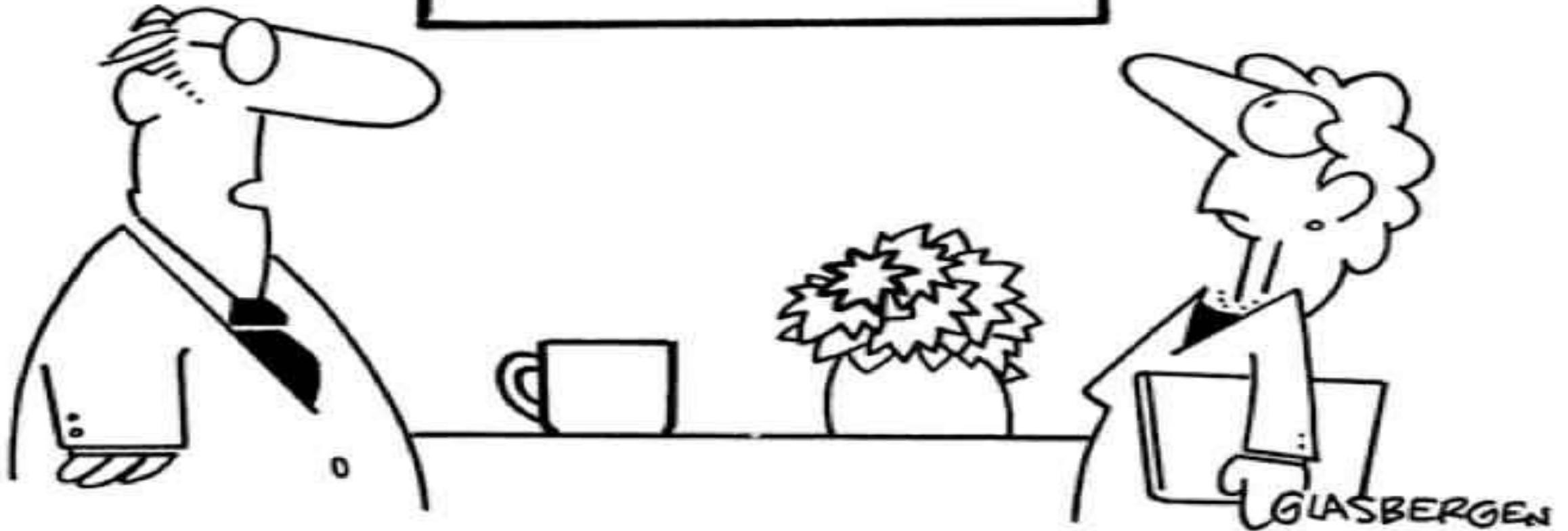


## SOME GOOD NEWS...

“Strange things are happening to Christianity in the United Kingdom. While critics prophesy its imminent demise – as critics have done for several hundred years – Christians across the country are doing what they, too, have done for many hundreds of years: worship, pray, witness, serve. There is nothing, of course, strange about this. What is strange – or at least worthy of greater notice than it usually receives – is that the breadth, depth and intensity of this Christian service is deepening. From personal debt advice to marriage counselling, from foodbanks to street pastors, from rehabilitation to reconciliation, the Church and Christian charities across the country are rolling up their sleeves, struggling on behalf of human dignity, pursuing the common good – and doing it all in the name of Jesus.”

Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Justin Welby, from the Foreword to *Doing Good: A Future for Christianity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* by Nick Spencer (Theos, 2016)

WHY ARE WE  
DOING THIS?



**“It’s not a great mission statement,  
but we’ll revise it if things get better.”**

# KEY VATICAN DOCUMENTS ON EDUCATION

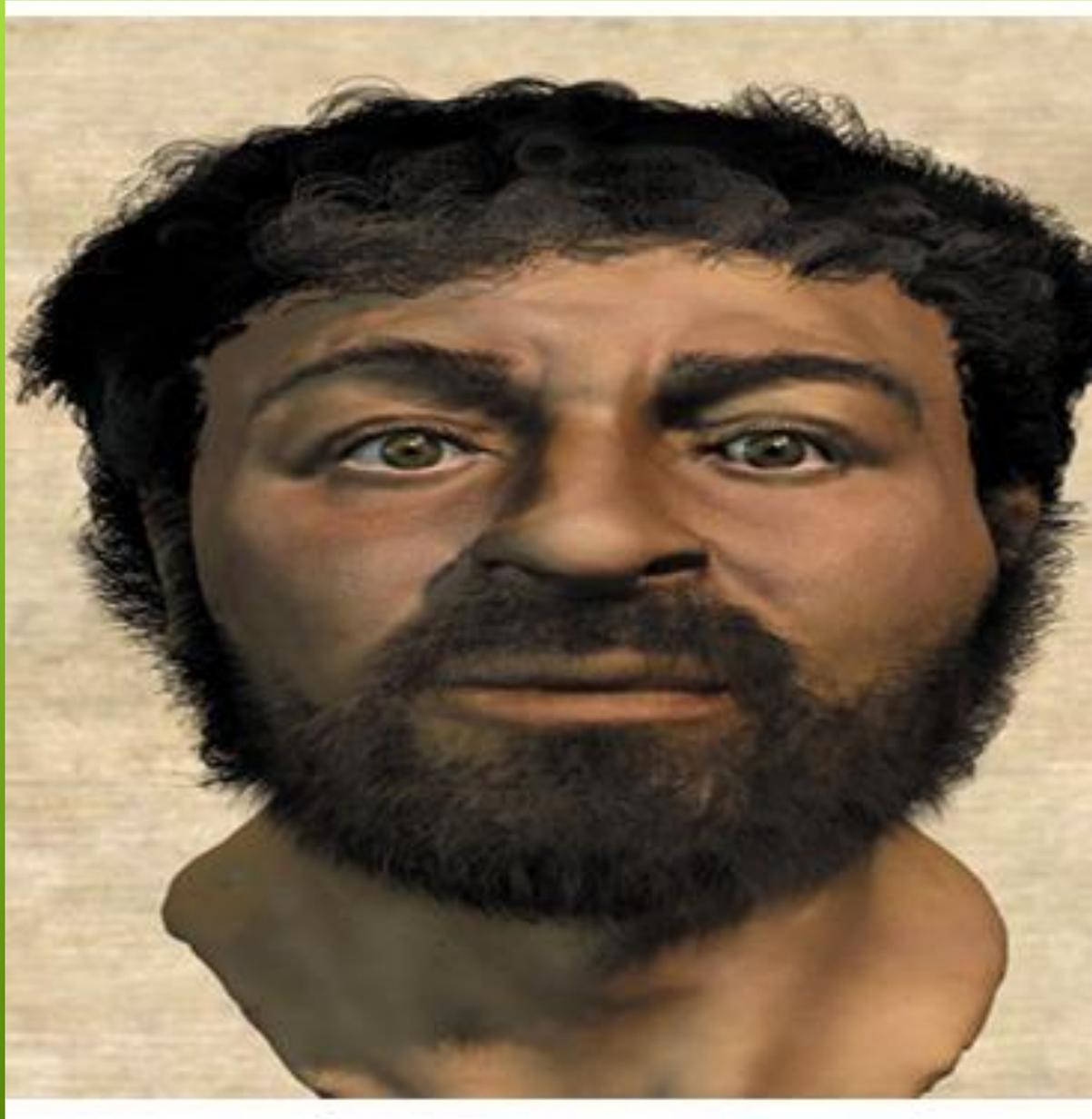
- *Spectata Fides*, Leo XIII encyclical to English Bishops (1885)
- *Divini Illius Magistri*, Pius XI encyclical on Christian education (1929)
- *Gravissimum Educationis*, Vatican II's Declaration on Christian Education (1965)
- *The Catholic School*, The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1977)
- *Canon Law* (1983) – Canons 793-821
- *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, Congregation for Catholic Education (1997)
- *Educating Today and Tomorrow: a Renewing Passion*, Congregation for Catholic Education (2014)

“The Catholic school loses its purpose without constant reference to the Gospel and a frequent encounter with Christ. It derives all the energy necessary for its educational work from Him and thus ‘creates in the school community an atmosphere permeated with the Gospel spirit of freedom and love.’ In this setting the pupil experiences his dignity as a person before he knows its definition.”

- *The Catholic School*, 55 (1977)

“If we want to avert a gradual impoverishment, Catholic schools must be run by individuals and teams who are inspired by the Gospel, who have been formed in Christian pedagogy, in tune with Catholic schools’ educational project, and not by people who are prone to being seduced by fashionability.”

- *Educating Today and Tomorrow* (2014)



# THE MISSION STRATEGY OF JESUS

- ❖ He told new stories about God
- ❖ He separated people from their guilt
- ❖ He made people well again who wanted to be well
- ❖ He broke bread with broken people
- ❖ He struggled with religious authorities and worthiness
- ❖ He told us not to worry about power, prestige or possessions
- ❖ He told us to repent: to look for happiness in a different place
- ❖ He gave us his body and gives us his spirit
- ❖ *He was tempted to do otherwise....*

# THE TEMPTATIONS: DISTORTIONS OF MISSION

- ❖ **What sustains you?** “One does not live by bread alone.” (Lk 4:4)
- ❖ **Whom do you serve?** “Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.” (4: 8)
- ❖ **In whom do you trust?** “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.” (4: 11)

Or, in a nutshell –

- ❖ **What are you doing with your power?**

# CENTRALITY OF GOSPEL VALUES IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

“A Catholic school should place Christ at the centre of all that it does. This will mean integrating Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church into every aspect of learning, teaching and the totality of school life.”

“Rooted in the teaching of Christ, these Gospel values should constitute the targets and outcomes of the educational enterprise in every Catholic school. For this to be possible, these Gospel values need to be explicitly named, their meaning unpacked and pupils helped to understand how they relate to their lives both at school, at home and in society. This enterprise is not in addition to the quest for high academic standards and vocational excellence but integral to it.”

- Bishop Marcus Stock, *Christ at the Centre*

# THE VALUES OF JESUS IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

## ❖ **Compassion**, kindness, service of neighbour

"When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her." (7:13), Good Samaritan (10:36)

## ❖ **Non-violence**, gentleness

"If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also." (6:29) Samaritan Village (9:54)

## ❖ **Justice**, action against corruption and oppression

"And will not God grant justice..." (18: 7) The Parable of the Ten Pounds (19: 11-26)

## ❖ **Integrity**, honesty, truth-telling –

"You will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify." (21: 12-13) "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup" (11:39)

## ❖ **Simplicity**, non-attachment to wealth

"You cannot serve God and wealth." (16:13), "Do not worry about your life." (12:22)

❖ **Humility**, lack of ego, disinterest in status, dependence on God

"God be merciful to me a sinner." (18:13) "I am among you as one who serves." (22:27)

❖ **Preferential option for the lost and the least**

"The Son of man came to seek out and save the lost." (19:10) "I have found my sheep..." (15:6)

❖ **Love**, generosity, magnanimity

"Love your enemies." (6:27), "This is my body given for you." (21:19)

❖ **Forgiveness**, reconciliation

"Her sins, which were many, have been forgiven." (7:47) "Father, forgive them..." (23:24)

❖ **Hope**, resilience, perseverance

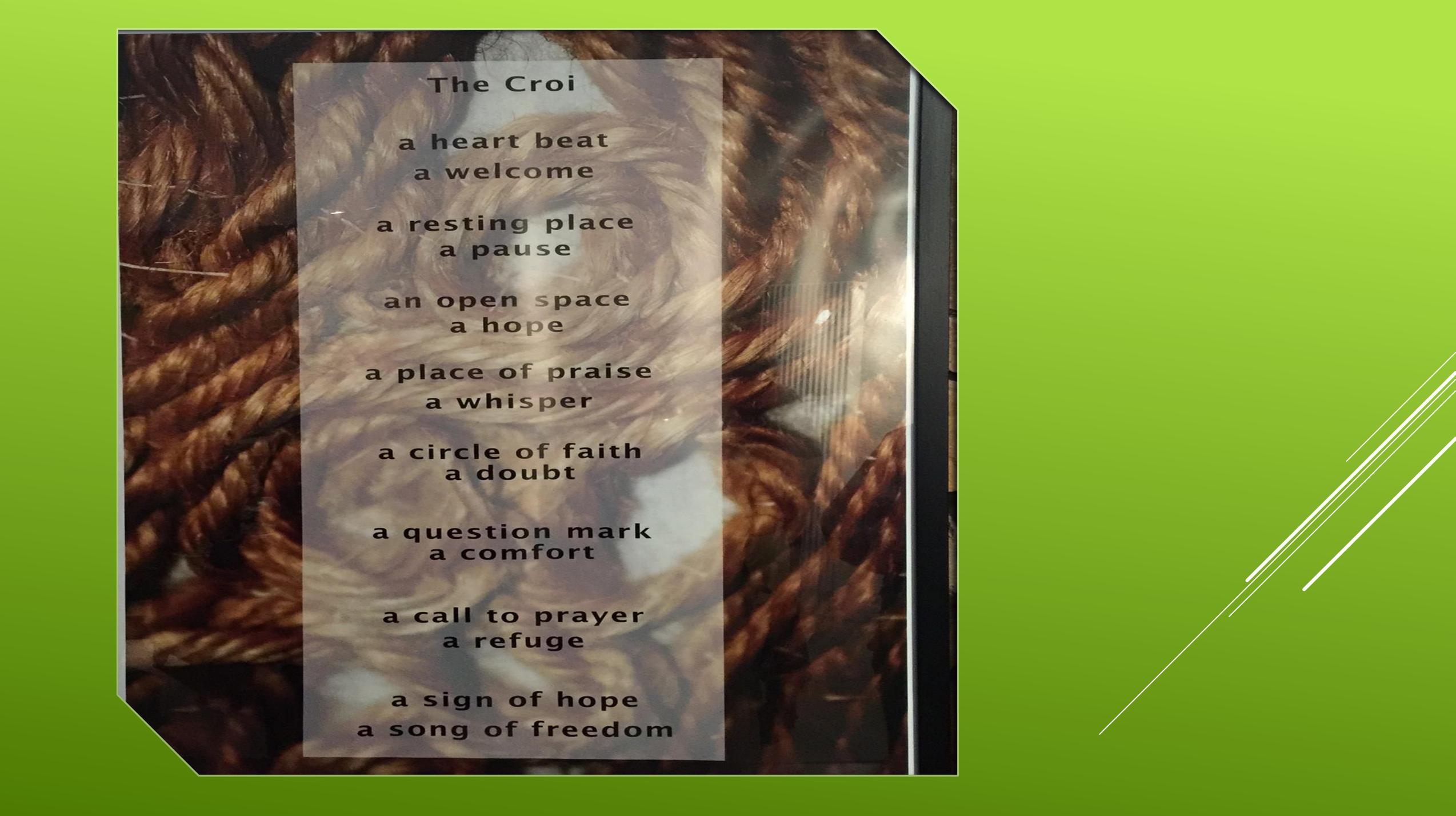
"Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." (24:52)

# EXEMPLARS OF GOSPEL VALUES: *FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION*

**Saint Stephen** (martyred c. AD 34) - Stephen was the first Christian martyr and died the way Jesus died. He was filled with the Spirit, spoke out bravely in front of the people, did not resist his captors and forgave them as they stoned him to death. The execution was approved of by Saul who would later undergo dramatic conversion to Christ. (Acts 7: 54-60)

**Family of Jimmy Mizen** – following the murder of 16-year old Jimmy Mizen in a bakery in Lewisham, South East London, the Mizen family and local community have been determined that something good will come from it. For more information on the work for peace and reconciliation of the Mizen Foundation visit [www.forjimmy.org](http://www.forjimmy.org)

**Corrymeela Community** – the Corrymeela Community was founded in Northern Ireland in 1965 by Rev Dr Ray Davey whose experiences in World War II as a prisoner of war and a witness to the Dresden bombing made a profound impression on him. He founded Corrymeela as a centre for reconciliation in society. For more information on the inspirational work of this community down to the present time visit <http://www.corrymeela.org/>.



## **The Croi**

**a heart beat  
a welcome**

**a resting place  
a pause**

**an open space  
a hope**

**a place of praise  
a whisper**

**a circle of faith  
a doubt**

**a question mark  
a comfort**

**a call to prayer  
a refuge**

**a sign of hope  
a song of freedom**

# GOSPEL VALUES IN ACTION

- ❖ Does your school practice restorative justice when relationships are broken?
  - ❖ Does your school make it clear to students who have been in the wrong that they are forgiven and not forever labelled as a troublemaker?
  - ❖ Is the sacrament of reconciliation offered to the students in a way which helps them to understand the mercy of God? Is an equivalent found for students who are not Catholic?
  - ❖ What are the opportunities and challenges of embedding Gospel values in our schools?
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# DISCUSSION

What do you regard as the main challenges we face?

What are the temptations to distort or compromise our mission?

In what ways can we embed Gospel values in our school as central to our mission and purpose?



# ST. SCHOLASTICA'S, MANILA

1900 – 1974: Academic Excellence

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1974 – present: Academic Excellence for social  
justice and transformation



# THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL, WHAT IS OUR VISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION?

- ❖ What does it mean to be a human being?
  - ❖ What does it mean for human beings to flourish?
  - ❖ What are we educating for?
  - ❖ How are we educating?
  - ❖ Who are we there to educate?
  - ❖ What is our pupils' experience of the Church?
  - ❖ What values guide our decision-making?
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# POPE FRANCIS TO CATHOLIC EDUCATORS

“Do not be disheartened in the face of the difficulties that the educational challenge presents! Educating is not a profession but an attitude, a way of being; in order to educate it is necessary to step out of ourselves and be among young people to accompany them in the stages of their growth. Give them hope and optimism for their journey in the world. Teach them to see the beauty and goodness of creation. The sole objective of the educating community is to develop mature young people who are simple, competent and honest, who know how to live with fidelity, who can live life as a response to God's call, and their future profession as a service to society.”

- Pope Francis, quoted in *Educating Today and Tomorrow...*

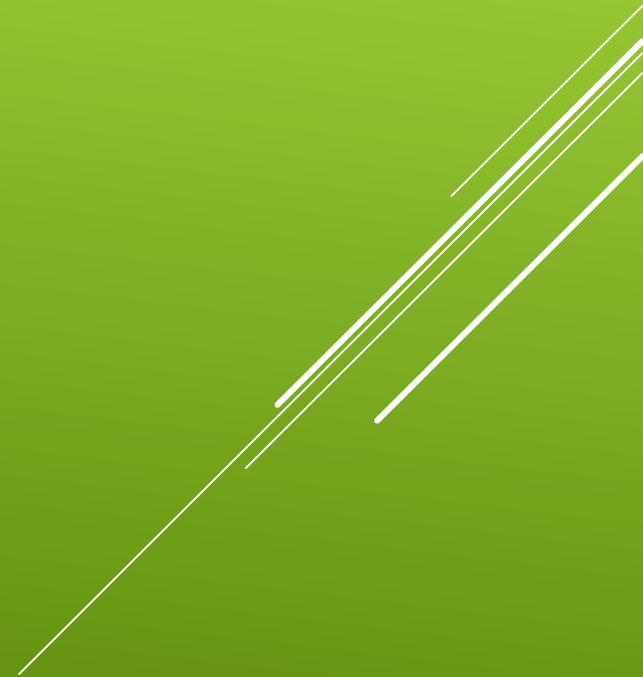
## ▶ **Session Two: Gospel-Inspired Leaders**



## CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

“Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.”

Matthew 14: 13-14



# EIGHT SIGNS OF GOSPEL-INSPIRED LEADERSHIP

- **Personal formation/inner conversion** – daily encounter with Christ – faith leader, ‘practising Catholic’ means being a mystic - bear fruit, gifts of the Spirit = **mission integrity**
- **Connected to the Church** – local, national and international - education documents from Bishops’ conference, Vatican
- **Articulate the vision** – prophetic voice – ambassadors for Christ - public witness - mission review – what is your vision for Catholic education?
- **Outward-facing** – compassion for world - community-minded, reading signs of times, ‘conduit’ for what is good e.g. growth mind-sets

- **Gospel stewardship** – resources allocated as befits Catholic school – money and time - where is your treasure?
  - **Servant leader** – persuasion not power – not lording it over them – visibility and availability - formation and development of others
  - **Think well** and name reality with courage – **accountability** – not a doormat!
  - **Commitment to excellence** and standards – canon 806 – education for social justice and transformation
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## CHRISTIAN LEADERS AS MYSTICS

“Christian leaders cannot simply be persons who have well-informed opinions about the burning issues of our time. Their leadership must be rooted in the permanent, intimate relationship with the incarnate Word, Jesus, and they need to find there the source for their words, advice and guidance. Through the discipline of contemplative prayer, Christian leaders have to listen again and again to the voice of love and to find there the wisdom and courage to address whatever issue presents itself to them. When we are securely rooted in personal intimacy with the source of life, it will be possible to remain flexible without being relativistic, convinced without being rigid, willing to confront without being offensive, gentle and forgiving without being soft, and true witnesses without being manipulative. For Christian leadership to be truly fruitful in the future, a movement from the moral to the mystical is required.”

- Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

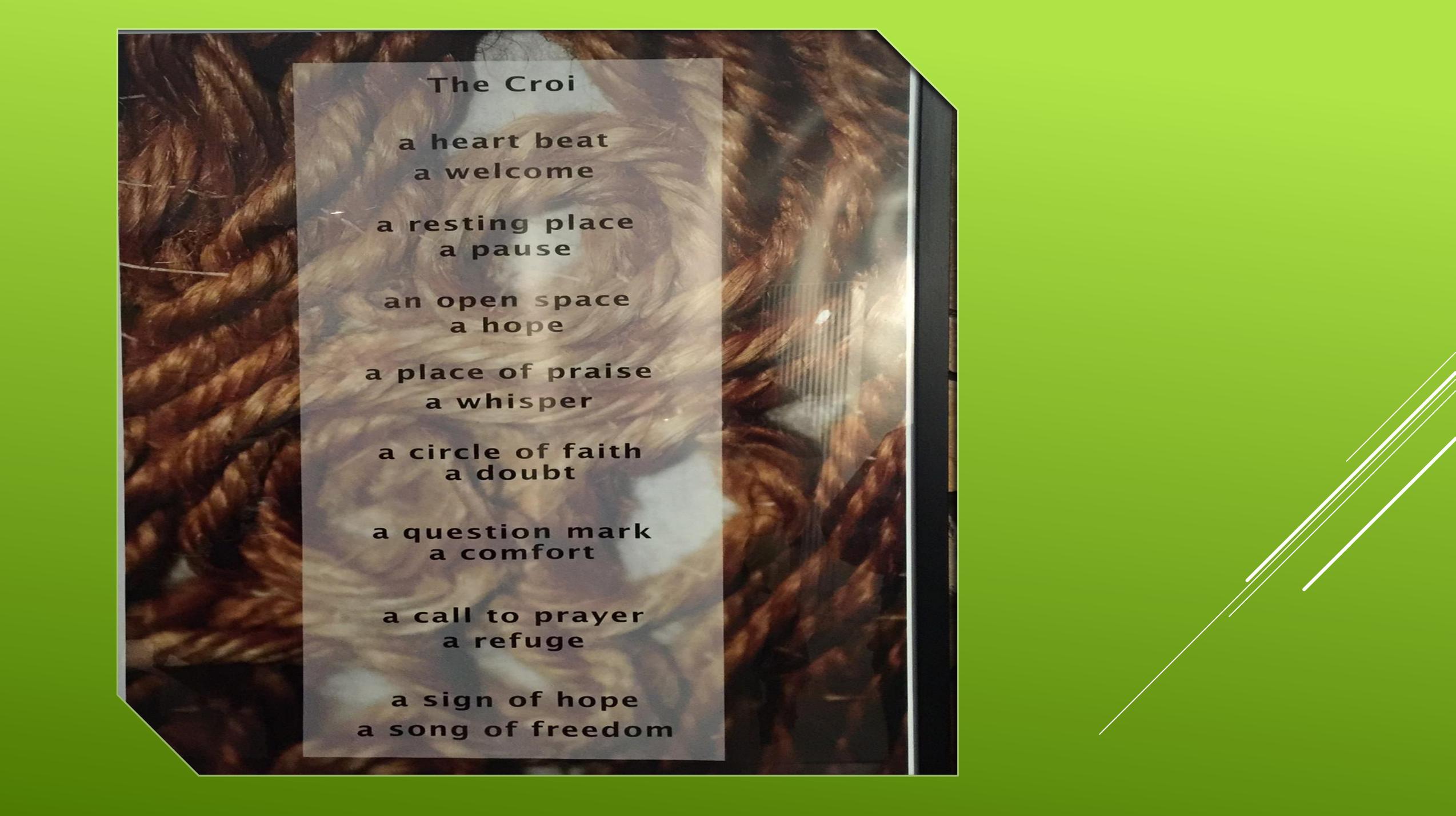


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“We need heralds of the Gospel who are experts in humanity, who know the depths of the human heart, who can share the joys and hopes, the agonies and distress of people today, but are at the same time contemplatives who have fallen in love with God.”

– John Paul II, *Address to the VI Symposium of European Bishops*,  
11 November 1985

“I get up half an hour early every day at 5.30 am so that I can pray and I use an online resource called Sacred Space ([www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)). It’s been my lifeline as a headteacher. The reading this morning was all about the bread of life and it was wonderful because as a headteacher you get those days when you think ‘I haven’t got a clue. I wish somebody had given me a map when I started this because what on earth am I doing’ and the contemplation that went with it was to the effect that God is always looking after you and nurturing you.”

- Secondary Headteacher

Jim Collins' research team found five ascending levels of leadership characteristics, all of which were needed for success. But the Level Five leader, the one who consistently achieved and sustained greatness in all the companies analysed in the research, had two very compelling characteristics: **humility and will.**

See: J. Collins, *Good to Great* (2000)



“It has been said that an important role of any leader is to **name or define reality** and part of what gives people hope is the leader’s ability to accurately describe what is currently taking place. Effective leaders also have a long term perspective and are able to **point a direction** that it makes sense to move towards. They do not simply fire-fight or react to events as they occur but **operate with a vision** of where they want to get to.”

- Dr Sean Ruth: <http://www.seanruth.com/article>

“The ability to **think well** is one of the most fundamental attributes of an effective leader and one that is often overshadowed by the popular focus on the styles of leaders.”

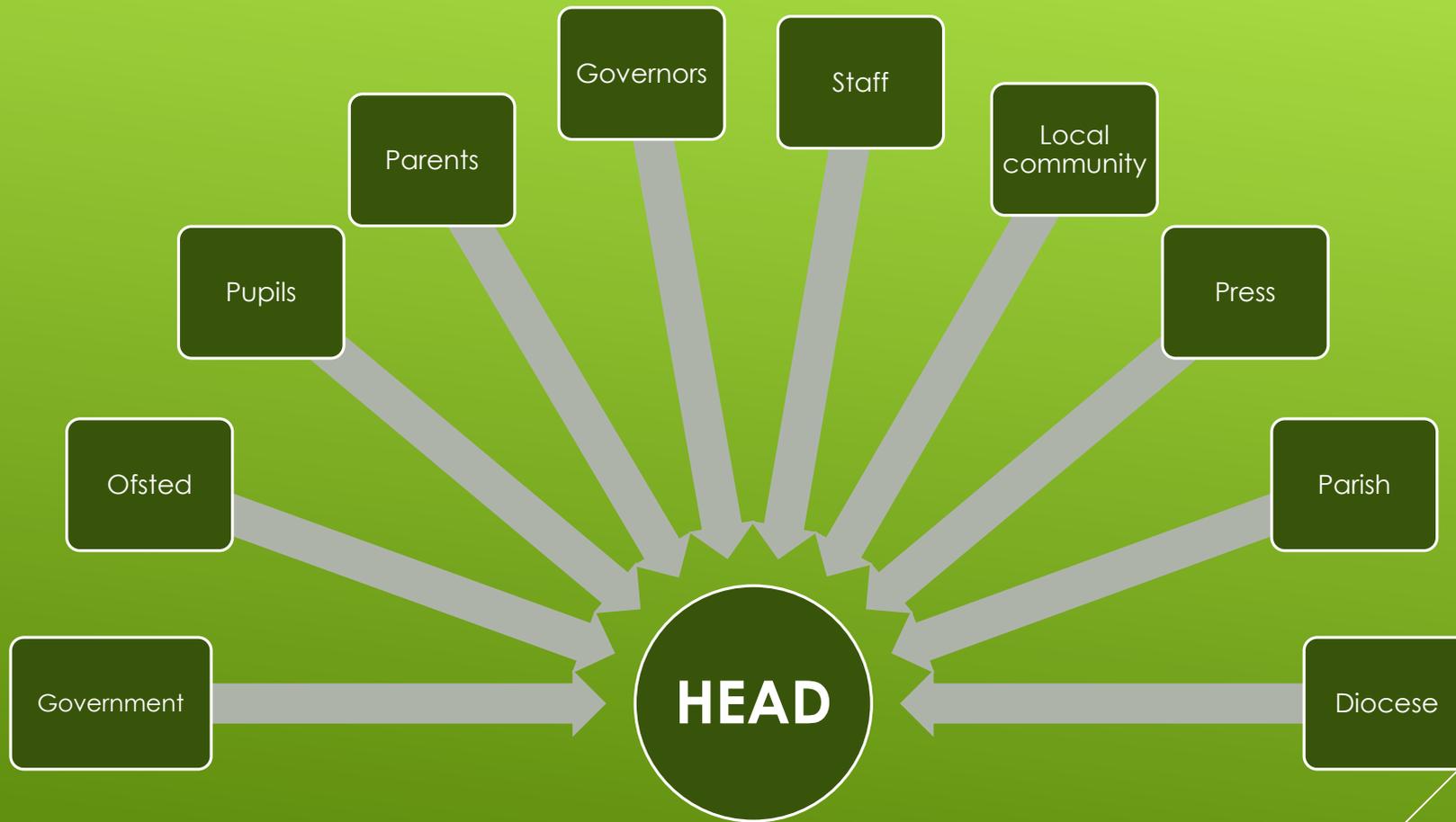
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“I think dealing with people, adults who are suffering because they’ve reached a stage where they cannot come up to the standards that are expected, for whatever reason, is the biggest challenge. I think that’s really hard because there’s a part of you that compassionately wants to say ‘it’ll be fine’ and there’s another part saying ‘I can’t say that, I’ve got to see this through.’ I’ve had to get rid of about twenty staff since I arrived, one way or another, either encouraged or paid or told and with some it’s been genuinely very, very difficult to do that.”

- Secondary Headteacher





“Slow down, smell the roses, take time to be with your life! That’s the inner transformation centering prayer is supporting in you, not only emotionally but psychologically as well. The very fact that centering prayer sets no goals – other than deep, open availability to God’s presence – and renews that availability simply through a gentle release of whatever you happen to be clinging to at the moment, gradually imprints the realization that this might be a good way to do life, too.”

- Cynthia Bourgeault, *The Heart of Centering Prayer*

“Anyone who does not win feels that he is no good in this culture, whereas in the quiet of deep prayer, you are a new person, or rather, you are you.”

- Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart*



# SABBATH AS RESISTANCE

- ❖ God's rest bestows on creatures a restfulness that contradicts the 'driven-ness' of the system of Pharaoh (no work stoppage, 'bigger barns')
- ❖ Sabbath is a practical divestment so that neighbourly engagement, rather than production and consumption, defines our lives
- ❖ Our motors are set to run at 'brick-making speed.' To cease, even for a time, is to find ourselves with a 'light burden' and an 'easy yoke.' It is now, as then, enough to permit dancing and singing into an alternative life.

- Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance: Saying No to the Culture of Now*

“Come to me, all you that are weary are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.”

- Matthew 11: 28



# QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What do you consider to be the challenges facing those who wish to grow as spiritual leaders in Catholic schools?
  - What are the main qualities you will need to develop in Catholic leadership today?
  - What are the tensions and dilemmas involved in servant leadership?
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# SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Robert Barron, *Catholicism*

Enzo Bianchi, *Lectio Divina*

Walter Brueggemann, *Sabbath as Resistance*

John O'Donohue, *Benedictus*

Raymond Friel, *Gospel Values for Catholic Schools*

Gerald Grace, *Faith, Mission and Challenge in Catholic Education*

Thomas Keating, *Open Mind, Open Heart*

James Martin, *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*

Archbishop J. Michael Miller, *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*

Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*

Padraig O'Tuama, *In the Shelter*

Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*



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