

Talk

Teaching as a Vocation

Porta Fidei Staff Retreat

Background

Theme: Teaching as a Vocation

This session explores the vocation of teaching with an emphasis on hearing in a new way the calling to be a teacher and the importance of this vocation. The goal is to help teachers commit to taking the steps they need to ensure that they will grow in their faith which will empower them for the ministry of teaching. The input will focus on the importance of staying close to Christ in the Christian journey through prayer, participation in the Sacraments, reading the Word and being in the Community. It includes an understanding of vocation in light of a renewed relationship with Christ. The session includes sharing from teachers about the call to teaching they have responded to in their own lives.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing *John 15: 5*

During this time we will need to keep our gaze fixed upon Jesus Christ, the “pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (Heb 12:2): in him, all the anguish and all the longing of the human heart finds fulfilment. *Porta Fidei 13*

By faith, the disciples formed the first community, gathered around the teaching of the Apostles, in prayer, in celebration of the Eucharist, holding their possessions in common so as to meet the needs of the brethren (cf. Acts 2:42-47). *Porta Fidei 13*

Four parts to the talk:

1. Introduction
2. Teaching as Vocation
3. Sustaining the Call
4. The heart of the Call

1. Introduction

- Title of the talk is ‘Teaching as Vocation’. As we all know teaching is more than a good job or a noble profession it is a calling or a vocation
- Vocation comes from the latin word ‘vocare’, which means to call. If there is a call there must be a caller: Jesus Christ. This porta fidei retreat is about renewing this sense of call, hearing in a fresh way the call of Christ and entering more deeply into relationship with Him. I trust it has been a positive experience to this point. Primary call in life.

Call to
Relationship

Call to Teaching

- I firmly believe that Jesus calls us into this vocation of teaching and gives us a task, a mission to accomplish (commission is to go and make disciples). Wonderful vocation...an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ to the young people we teach.
- Need to listen to the two calls – many distractions and many callings. This retreat is about reminding ourselves that God has called us into relationship with Christ and also called us into the vocation of teaching.
- In the talk today I want to cover three main points:
 - 1) Highlight this call – through my own personal story
 - 2) Sustain the call – key elements
 - 3) Heart of the call – share Christ's love to the young people we teach.

2. Teaching as Vocation

Share my own personal story from two levels: Personal faith story and calling into teaching.

Personal faith story

Calling into teaching

Ecclesia in Oceania captures the importance of this work of being a teacher:

Secondary schools then provide a privileged means by which "the Catholic community gives the student an academic, vocational and religious education" (Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Oceania*). The document elaborates further: "The Synod Fathers wish to acknowledge the work of the religious men and women who have laboured generously in the field of Catholic education.

"For the lay people involved, teaching is more than a profession: it is a vocation to form students, a widespread and indispensable lay service in the Church. Teaching is always a challenge; but with the co-operation and encouragement of parents, clergy and religious, the laity's involvement in Catholic education is a precious service of the Gospel, and a way of Christian sanctification for teacher and students.

As teachers we need:

- i. A profound deep conviction about the importance of this vocation
- ii. Vision for living this out in your School.

3. Sustaining the Call

How do we sustain the call? It can be difficult and draining at times so how can we sustain the faith and the call. Would like to mention four key elements that I believe are crucial to this.

- (1) Prayer and Retreat. As teachers we need to be steeped in prayer. This is absolutely crucial. In prayer Jesus speaks to us if we give him a chance, in prayer Jesus fills us in new ways for the journey.
In prayer we can intercede for our schools, students and staff.
Set aside time each day for prayer. Decide on a particular time and to stick to it. E.g. morning time. Chapel at School and Blessed Sacrament.
Not going into how to pray but just to say that you need to be praying daily in this vocation and you will then see the fruit of it.
Important aspect of prayer is retreat. The Porta Fidei is meant to be an experience of retreat but also silent retreats.

(2) Christian Community

Two types for teachers – one is at School and the other is in the context of the broader Church. To be a part of something bigger than the School and connected to the Church is crucial. This connection really sustains and strengthens teachers who can then share with the students.
For me I am involved in...

Part of our vision with csyma is to provide a community of teachers who do experience a place of fellowship and strengthening of their faith.

(3) Regular Eucharist

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian journey. Sunday Mass important. Mass at School important.

- (4) Committed to sharing the faith and in service. As we do this in the broader Church or in our School our faith is strengthened.
Share an example of this.

4. The heart of the call

At the heart of the Call in the vocation of teaching in a Catholic School is to share Christ's love to those we teach...EVANGELISATION!