

Leading Change.... Nurturing High Trust Communities

Life is not static and as educators we need to be attuned to cultural change, the challenges of the gospel and with these in dialogue allow schools to become communities where people flourish. This will involve a listening heart, continual personal renewal... it begins alone in response to this invitation of Jesus in Matthew:

'When you pray, go to your private room, shut yourself in, and so pray to your Father who is in that secret place.' (6:6)

A reflection on this text:

HIDDEN PLACE

We wear many disguises;
suits for work,
uniforms of power,
habits and collars,
labels and badges,
roles and titles,
coats of many colours.

Is there a dreamer inside?
Is there a dwelling-place
in our hearts
where the God who works in secret
can enter?
Do we dare to be naked
in our own inner room?

An invitation to go into that secret place,
at the end of each long day.
Off comes the painful shoes,
the heavy clothes,
the tight hat.

A naked child again –
free to be me,
free to give expression
to all that is most precious.

Our hidden self grows strong,
planted and built on love,
rooted in God,
beyond all disguising.

Gemma Simmonds CJ
– *The Invitation*



Is there a challenge for you personally in this poem or the scripture text?

Take time to ponder this....

In the secret of my heart teach me wisdom

Psalm 51:6

Much of the research on leadership and change highlights the importance of high trust cultures where diversity of gifts is welcomed and celebrated. Trust allows this difference to be brought into dialogue around issues in school communities which need attention. Good listening skills underpin high trust. As Stephen Covey would say we listen in order to understand another point of view, reflect back what you have heard so that the other feels understood before sharing your point of view. Then with differing perspectives work together to come up with a decision that is better because of this shared difference. The mantra *Listen with the ear of your heart* should remind us to listen deeply to another is to strengthen the relationship.



LISTEN

Listen, the voice of Your God is calling.
Listen, the voice of Your God is calling,
Listen with the ear of your heart,
The voice of Your God is calling.

Listen

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Let this poem invite us to dialogue around some of the issues that need attention in our school

A PSALM OF NEW WINESKINS

Comfortable and well-worn are my daily paths
whose edges have grown grey
with constant use.

My daily speech is a collection of old words
worn down at the heels
by repeated use.

My language and deeds, addicted to habit,
prefer the taste of old wine,
the feel of weathered skin.

Come and awaken me, Spirit of the new.
Come and refresh me, Creator of green life.
Come and inspire me, Risen Son,
you who make all things new:
I am too young to be dead,
to be stagnant in spirit.

High are the walls that guard the old,
the tired and secure ways of yesterday
that protect me from the dreaded plague,
the feared heresy of change.

For all change is a danger to the trusted order,
the threadbare traditions that are maintained
by the narrow ruts of rituals.

How can an everlastingly new covenant
retain its freshness and vitality
without injections of the new,
the daring and the untried?

Come, O you who are ever-new,
wrap my heart in new skin
ever flexible to be reformed by your Spirit.

Set my feet to fresh paths this day:
inspire me to speak original and life-giving words
and to creatively give shape to the new.

Come and teach me how to dance with delight
whenever you send a new melody my way.

Edward Hays – *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim*

Recall two of the Commitments of Francis in Lowney's book **Pope Francis: Why he leads the way he leads* in the prayer **Leading from Within**

**Live in the present and revere tradition,
but create the future**

In what ways does this poem challenge us to respond to that commitment?

Our faith tradition asks us to be prophets ... leading change is an expression of this charism...

The work of the prophet is to:

- Name the dominant consciousness that no longer serves the community
- In dialogue imagine and articulate an alternative future
- Engage the community in initiating this change

Like Micah we too are called to action...

A reading from the prophet Micah

With what gift shall I come into Yahweh's presence and bow down before God on high?

Shall I come with holocausts, with calves one year old?

Will God be pleased with rams by the thousand, with libations of oil in torrents?

Must I give my first-born for what I have done wrong, the fruit of my body for my own sin?

What is good has been explained to you;
this is what Yahweh asks of you:

only this: to act justly,
to love tenderly
and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:6-8

Some time alone to ponder what
change would enrich the education
of our students....

Some sharing in twos or in small
groups

THE STORY WE SHARE

It's a story that's older than you or me,
deep as a well in the desert must be,
a journey begun in that far off time
when Abraham believed the sign God gave.

**And the story is mine, the story is ours,
if we open our ears, we can hear;
a story that grows with the passing of years;
made of our laughter, struggle and fears.
The story we share, the journey to there
is happening here.**

It's a story the child and the grandmother share;
a mystery to ponder, a journey to make.
If we dare, a story to help us grow tall.
A tale of love, the story of us all

It's the story of dying and rising again;
friendship found in the wine and the bread.
Round a fire that glows at the end of the day
we share the news and sing the blues away.

It's a story that's woven strand by strand;
the weaving of lives and the linking of hands;
no need to be lonely, the story we share
is drawing us, calling us to care.

It's the story of God, concerned for the small,
providing the earth as a mother for all;
giving power to build and power to burn.
'Where to now?' Is surely our concern.

Peter Kearney –
Growing in God

www.peterkearneysongs.aradium.com/

