



A house of prayer for all nations

„Stop turning my Father’s house into a market!“ (Gospel, 3rd Sunday of Lent, Jo 2:13-25)

“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?” (Mk 11,17)

For the people of Israel the temple was the center of religious, economic and political life. Jesus wants to free religion from the influence of economic and political interests and rededicate the temple to its original purpose: to be a house of prayer and encounter with God. And he opens the purified temple not only to Israel, but to all nations who in the vision of the prophet Isaiah will one day go up to the mountain of the Lord and to the house of the God of Jacob. (cf. Jes 2.3)

Many people are disappointed by the superficiality and the emptiness of our “throw away culture”. In their search for spirituality they often look to other religions and esoteric groups. They appreciate the churches for their social services, but do not see Christianity anymore as a way and a school to live a spiritual life. Liturgy and prayer often seem to be a lifeless routine. Christian communities give the impression of being a closed society where people who think and live differently are not welcome.

And yet Christians proclaim their faith “in the one, holy, catholic Church”. To become truly a holy Church would mean making God the center of our personal and of our community life and allowing us to be guided by God’s Word and God’s Spirit. To become truly catholic, in the original sense of the word, means to be turned toward the whole of reality, to be open to people of other cultures and religions, to think and act worldwide, universally, globally.

- In virtue of this **catholicity** each individual part contributes through its special gifts to the good of the other parts and of the whole Church. Through the common sharing of gifts and through the common effort to attain fullness in unity, the whole and each of the parts receive increase... All men are called to be part of **this catholic unity of the people of God** which in promoting universal peace presages it... (LumenGentium 13)
- The history of the Church shows that Christianity does not have simply one cultural expression, but rather, “remaining completely true to itself, with unswerving fidelity to the proclamation of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church, it will also **reflect the different faces of the cultures and peoples** in which it is received and takes root... In the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth **the beauty of her varied face**.” (EG 116)
- There is no greater **freedom** than that of **allowing oneself to be guided by the Holy Spirit**, renouncing the attempt to plan and control everything to the last detail, and instead letting him enlighten, guide and direct us, leading us wherever he wills. The Holy Spirit knows well what is needed in every time and place. (Evangelii Gaudium 280)



- What are my feelings when I encounter people of other cultures and religions? Fear? Interest? Respect?...
- How open is our parish, our community, our family to strangers and marginalised people? How concerned about the problems of our times? How open to new ideas?
- Do we regularly take the intentions of the universal Church and of the human family into our prayer and thanksgiving to God?

***We are grateful for the holy, catholic Church
which strives for unity in diversity
among the nations and cultures of the world.***