

RECONCILIATION IN PRACTICE: 2

TALK 5

Spiritual Requirements &
Challenges

DIFFERENT LEVELS

There are different levels of reconciliation:

1. Society: International, national, regional, city, village
2. Church: Rome, nation, diocese, deanery, parish

Normal order is that we begin at local level, and the Lord will raise some to work at

FROM COMPLETELY PRIVATE TO FULLY OFFICIAL

There is a spectrum of possible initiatives from the most private to the fully official.

A strict categorization is not possible.

But I give you some example to show the range of possibilities – particularly how they concern priests.

Private

A small group of people are led to pray for some local issues requiring healing:

- Bad relations between Catholics and Protestants
- Tensions between priests and lay people
- Treatment of Jews in your city in the past

Is Permission Needed?

Lay people do not need permission to come together and pray.

But right relations and proper respect recommend informing the priest and asking his blessing. Permission is needed to name a group a Catholic group (Canon 216) – but then it is no longer private.

Such private initiatives of prayer are a secret between the people praying and the Lord. They

TOTALLY OFFICIAL

Statements of repentance for reconciliation
made by official leadership

Society: President/Prime Minister/Mayor

Church: Archbishop/Bishop/Bishops
Conference

Dean/senior priest of city/all priests and
pastors of city

In Between

There are many possibilities between the private and the official.

- a. Initiative in which a priest takes part as one among others, not as leader or spokesperson.

Here you are supporting the initiative of others.

People know you are a priest. You participate as who you are, a priest, but not in

b. Initiatives which are initiated by a priest and in which the priest plays a leading role. Here an official element enters in.

But it only becomes fully official when the priest acting as leader makes a declaration or statements on behalf of the Catholic community/the Catholic Church in the area.

IN WHOSE NAME?

Private: You still pray as Catholics, as Czech Catholics, as Czech Catholics from this city or diocese.

Repentance/confession prayer is before God.

Public: can arise from place and/or from people

Publicity should not make claims for what is

HONESTY & HUMILITY

- Sins of past always involved lies and arrogance. These can only be undone by the opposite: honesty (truth) and humility.
- Do not claim to be more than you are
- Do not act as less than you are; act as Spirit-filled Christians empowered by the Lord

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4: 2 – 3).

The sins that have produced divisions, hatred and suspicion, have involved arrogance, attitudes of superiority, Überheblichkeit.

SPIRITUAL REQUIREMENTS

For being part of reconciliation activities:

Prayer Teams engaging in intercession

Specific Initiatives

- Addressing historical evils in your area
- Reconciliation with other Church communities

SPIRITUAL LIFE

- Personal knowledge of the Lord
- Regular reading of the Scriptures
- Accustomed to examination of conscience
- Freedom from spiritual bondage, from anger

Reconciliation initiatives address spiritual strongholds of evil spirits: Matt. 12: 25 – 29.

PRAYER TOGETHER

- “I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.” (Matt. 18: 19 – 20)
- Significance of two or three from different Christian churches and denominations (important for societal issues, Holocaust memories)
- Reconciliation already being expressed in the

DYING WITH CHRIST

Confessing the sins of the past means a real dying to wrong attitudes, distorted histories, exaggerated nationalism, to all forms of triumphalism.

It involves a deep purification.

There must be a willingness to follow Jesus in criticism and rejection by some of one's own people/nation/church. Being a pioneer of future reconciliation.