



# FAITH IN ACTION AWARD

## Reflection Point



### Theme: Service 2. Servant Leadership

#### **Objectives:**

**Explore** the joys and sorrows of living a life of service

**Understand** that Jesus challenges us to change

**Reflect** upon how service transforms not only us, but those whom we serve in the wider community

#### **Before you begin:**

*Create a reverent, quiet and comfortable space for the group. Ensure that all relevant materials are printed and readily available for the group and that the sacred space is set up ready for the closing liturgy.*

#### **Each reflection point should include:**

- Reading a passage from the New Testament
- Exploration of the Church's Story (teachings from the Catechism and/or the Pope, research into the life of a saint)
- The opportunity for the participant to reflect on their personal experience
- An activity
- A Liturgy

#### **You will need:**

- Print-outs of the chosen scripture passage/church's story for participants
- Instructions from the chosen activities
- For the liturgy:
  - Olive Oil
  - A bowl
  - Cotton Wool
  - Focal Candle
  - Sacred Space Materials
  - Scripture

#### **Welcome, Introduction & Opening Prayer**

**Gather the group together.**

**Briefly introduce the theme for this reflection:**

As you all know, the essence of the Faith in Action Award is exploring and deepening your faith through serving others. This is because our faith is based upon a life lived in service of others. Christ came to us as a leader and a king, but not as we know it. The kind of leader Christ was would not have been recognisable in his day, nor would it be in ours. Jesus came as a servant king, a peaceful ruler, clothed in humility, love and mercy. In this reflection point, we will explore what it means to live a life of service, and how doing so is both fulfilling and challenging. We will also explore what it means to be a good leader, and how Christ challenges us to re-think what it means to lead others.

**Say the Faith in Action Prayer together:**

God our Father,  
We thank you for the gift of your love which you give to every person in the world. We thank you that because of your love, we are never alone and should never feel afraid.

We thank you for the gift of faith which allows us to know you, one God, three persons. We thank you that because of that faith, the whole of our lives are directed to living for other people.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our friend and brother, you show us how to love.

Give us the strength we need, through your Holy Spirit, to live lives of love and faith. May the world come to know your Son more and more through our actions and words as we seek to live lives which help to build your kingdom here on earth.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen

**The Good News**

*Choose a passage from scripture that will help the group to reflect on the theme. Below are some suggestions followed by discussion points:*

**Luke 22:24-27**

An argument also began between them about who should be reckoned the greatest; but he said to them, "Amongst the gentiles it is the kings who lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are given the title Benefactor. With you this must not happen. No; the greatest among you must behave as if he were the youngest, the leader as if he were the one who serves. For who is the greater: the one at the table or the one who serves? The one at the table surely? Yet here am I among you as one who serves!"

## **John 13:4-10**

And he got up from the table, removed his outer garment and, taking a towel, wrapped it round his waist; he then poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel he was wearing.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand." "Never!" said Peter. "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you can have no share with me." Simon Peter said, "Well then, Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus said, "No one, who has had a bath needs washing, such a person is clean all over. You too are clean, though not all of you are."

### **Pointers for discussion**

What qualities are required for a good leader?

Do I value the contributions I make and the work I do?

Why would someone want to follow me?

Am I inspiring to others?

Is it a sign of weakness to show love and forgiveness?

Whose feet would you wash?

Can you only be a leader if people follow you?

### **The Church's Story**

*To help reflect and explore the Good News further, share some of the Church's teachings from the Catechism, the Pope's writings or the lives of holy people with the group:*

### **Catechism of the Catholic Church**

#### **CCC 1889**

Without the help of grace, men would not know how "to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives into evil, and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse." This is the path of charity, that is, of the love of God and of neighbour. Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it."

#### **Pope Francis**

"Every leader, to be a true leader, has to be above all, a witness." (*October 2010*)

"Power is service, and service, to do it well, should attend to the smallest detail. The one that makes the other feel as if he has been well cared for and dignified." (*August 2005*)

"No one can demand that religion should be relegated to the inner sanctum of personal life, without influence on society. An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely

personal – always involved a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave the earth somehow better than we found it.’ (*Evangelii Gaudium* 183)

“The created things of this world are not free of ownership; “For they are yours, O Lord, who love he living” (Wis 11:26). This is the basis of our conviction that, as part of the universe, called into being by the one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bond and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us all with a sacred affectionate and humble respect.” (*Laudato Si* 89)

## **Lives of the Saints**

### **St Oscar Romero**

“Aspire not the have more, but to be more.”

Oscar Romero was born into a large family on 15 August 1917 in El Salvador.

Although they had more money than many of their neighbours, Oscar’s family had neither electricity nor running water in their small home, and the children slept on the floor.

Oscar’s parents could not afford to send him to school after the age of twelve, so he went to work as an apprentice carpenter. He quickly showed great skills, but Oscar was already determined to become a priest. He entered the seminary at the age of fourteen and was ordained a priest when he was 25.

Recognising the power of radio to reach the people, he convinced five radio stations to broadcast his Sunday sermons to peasant farmers who believed they were unwelcome in the churches.

In 1970, he became Auxiliary Bishop in San Salvador, and in 1974, the Bishop of Santiago de Maria. At this time, Oscar Romero was described as a conservative, not wanting to break from tradition. He supported the hierarchy who encouraged conformity and was uncomfortable with the social action that was challenging political leaders of his time.

During his two years as Bishop of Santiago de Maria, Romero was horrified to find that children were dying because their parents could not pay for simple medicines. He began using the resources of the diocese and his own personal resources to help the poor, but he knew that simple charity was not enough. Romero wanted the Church and the government to participate in changing the lives of these people for the better, not just giving them the occasional “hand-out”.

Romero became a source of strength and hope for the poor and the oppressed. He worked with and for them, taking their struggles as his own. Despite threat and danger from those who opposed his ideas, Romero would write and speak passionately and publicly of the need for Christians to work for justice.

In 1977, Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador. The situation in El Salvador was becoming worse. The military were putting themselves above the law, carrying out widespread killings and other atrocities amongst the populace. Romero was surrounded by the deaths of those who demanded justice, such as teachers, nuns and priests, and even his close friend, Fr Rutilio Grande. Thousands of people began to go missing. Romero demanded that the President of El Salvador thoroughly investigate the killings, but he failed to do so.

In his actions and words, Oscar demanded a peace that could only be found by ensuring people had access to basic needs and their rights upheld. He raised awareness globally about the people in his country who had been killed or “disappeared”. When he visited the Vatican, Oscar Romero presented the Pope with seven detailed reports of murder, torture, and kidnapping throughout El Salvador.

In 1979, with the number of people being killed amounting to more than 3000 per month, Oscar Romero had nothing left to offer his people except faith and hope. He continued to use the radio broadcast of his Sunday sermons to tell people what was happening throughout the country, to talk about the role of the Church and to offer his listeners hope that they would not suffer and die in vain.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1980, after reporting the previous week’s deaths and disappearances, Oscar Romero began to speak directly to soldiers and policemen: “I beg you, I implore you, I order you...in the name of God, stop the repression!” The following evening, while saying Mass in the chapel of Divine Providence Hospital, Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot dead.

Only moments before his death, Romero spoke these prophetic words: “Those who surrender to the service of the poor through love of Christ will live like the grain of wheat that dies...the harvest comes because of the grain that dies.” Like many great leaders who have fought for truth, Oscar Romero was killed and became a martyr, but his voice could not be silenced. He is a symbol of hope in a country that has suffered poverty, injustice and violence. St Oscar Romero was canonised on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018. His Feast Day is 24<sup>th</sup> March.

### **St Peter**

St Peter was from the village of Bethsaida in the province of Galilee. He was the brother of Andrew and worked as a fisherman when Jesus called him to be one of the Twelve.

Peter was the first to publically confess Jesus as Messiah. As God had revealed this to him, Jesus appointed him as the ‘Rock’ upon which the foundations of the Church would be laid. Peter was therefore the first Pope of the Catholic Church.

When Jesus was taken to be tried, Peter was afraid. Just as Jesus had predicted, Peter denied even knowing Christ, three times. At the moment he realised he had fulfilled Jesus’ predication, he wept bitterly.

After the Resurrection, Jesus reinstated Peter, by asking three times, “Do you love me?” Jesus commanded Peter; “Feed my sheep.”

St Peter was a great preacher and spoke to the crowds gathered at Pentecost, which resulted in the conversion of many.

St Peter was sentenced to death by crucifixion, but he requested that he be crucified upside down, because he did not feel worthy to die in the same way as Jesus.

His remains are contained at St Peter's Basilica, Rome.

### **Personal Story**

*During this time, the young people should be encouraged to think about their FIA journey so far and share with the group how they have been serving others. They might wish to discuss what they have enjoyed about serving others and what they have found more difficult and challenging.*

*You can, at this point, review the acts of service young people have participated in thus far, and give them the opportunity to reflect in their journal the acts of service they have done, if they have not done so already.*

### **Activity Suggestions**

#### **Exploration**

Research the life of a saint or exemplary Christian. Make a list of the sorrows and the joys of their leadership.

Create a piece of artwork that expresses the joys and the sorrows of servant leadership.

Create a job description for a leader.

#### **Understanding**

Role play scenarios where people struggle to establish their authority and power. How would Jesus resolve these disagreements?

Write a letter addressing a Christian audience, challenging their expectations of a leader.

Jesus washed feet to demonstrate servant leadership. What symbolic actions could Christians use to express servant leadership to a modern audience? List examples.

#### **Reflection**

Produce a creative piece of work (narrative, craft, art, prayer, etc.) or a video/broadcast/podcast with the title 'Actions Speak Louder than Words'.

#### **Liturgy**

Begin with the Sign of the Cross.

#### **Reflection on Kingship**

*Sing Graham Kendrick's Servant King or play in the background during litany.*

### **Response: What kind of king is this?**

Kings are born into wealthy families, with high social status. But you, Jesus, you were born in a stable and were raised as a carpenter. **Response.**

Kings are grand, regal, noble, triumphant. But you, Jesus, you made your triumphant entry into Jerusalem on a humble donkey. **Response.**

Kings are military leaders, fierce warriors, war lords. But you, Jesus, you called for peace. **Response.**

Kings have authority and power. They are leaders. They come first. But you, Jesus, you taught us that the first will be last and the last will be first. **Response.**

Kings defend traditions. But you, Jesus, you called for a new way of thinking. **Response.**

Kings protect their laws by serving harsh punishments as a lesson to all. But you, Jesus, you forgive and deal in second chances. **Response.**

Kings have servants and personal assistants. But you, Jesus, you put on a servant's robe and washed the feet of your Disciples. **Response.**

Kings rule by fear and force. But you, Jesus, you rule with love. **Response.**

### **Concluding Prayer & Anointing**

Let us pray,

Lord, you challenge us to turn away from our sinful lives and begin a new life in you.

You challenge our old way of thinking.

Power and authority does not come from aggression of force or selfishness.

It comes from a place of love.

As we come forward to be anointed, fill us with your Holy Spirit, so that we can be strong enough to be the kind of leader you are.

Let us commit ourselves to a determination to be more like you.

Amen.

*Participants then take it in turn to anoint the hands of each other.*