

## October 25 Questions For Conversation

1. Pope Francis said, "I invite you not to build walls but bridges, to conquer evil with good, offence with forgiveness, to live in peace with everyone."

-What do you think the difference is between being a person or a community that builds bridges versus a person or community that builds walls?

-What are some walls you may experience or recognize in your neighbourhood, in the church, in our city, or in this country?

-Are there ways bridges could be used to facilitate the lowering of those walls? How would you go about that?

2. René August suggests that the narratives we are told form the way we live and the way we view others. She points out that we need to take the time to interrogate those narratives to see if there is a disconnect between who we say we are and how we are actually living.

-What are some of the narratives that you hear or experience that create walls? What are some of the narratives that you hear or experience that build bridges?

-Can you think of any narratives told in the context of church that create a disconnect from who you understand Jesus to be? How can those disconnects be corrected?

-How do you think repentance leads to building bridges?

3. Lisa Sharon Harper suggest that following 'the Jesus way' (the very Good News of the Gospel) can serve to bring healing and restoration to the many broken places of the world.

-Do you agree with her assessment? Why or why not?

-If you were asked, how would you define what the 'Jesus way' is?

-How do you see the 'Good News of the Gospel' working to build bridges, bring healing, bring restoration, and making things new again? How do we participate in this kind of work?

4. Father Gregory Boyle said, 'The natural by-product of kinship is peace and justice. Kinship is what is of interest to Jesus. Jesus was only about dismantling the barriers that exclude. Jesus was only about expanding the circle of compassion, hopeful that no one would be standing outside.'

-What does the word kinship mean to you? How is kinship built?

-How does kinship bring peace and justice? Do you even agree with this statement?

-What are some barriers that create exclusion that you feel need to be dismantled? In what practical ways could we as *the connection* be working at dismantling barriers that exclude and expanding our circle of compassion?

5. René August says that, 'the very good (of creation) is a narrative that says that we are co-creators. It's not just that God is creating, we become co-creators, we co-labour with God in the production of goodness in the world. We don't just wait for the goodness, we pursue the work that makes for goodness. Goodness between us, goodness between Israel and Palestine, goodness between black and white, goodness between rich and poor...and so this entire picture of the reign of God, or the dream of God, or biblically people talk about the kingdom of God – this kingdom is intentional about making us co-heirs, co-rulers, giving us power but it's power for the benefit of the other, power for the good making of all creation, and power that breaks the yoke of oppression.'

-What does it mean to co-labour with God in the production of goodness in this world?

-How does goodness serve to erode walls between people? How does goodness serve to build bridges between people?

-What does it look like to be a community committed to using power to benefit others? Can you think of some practical or tangible examples of this work?