

Discussion points

These questions are offered to spark discussion. They aren't essential!

- 1 Encounter and relationship:** What is it that we learn by relating to another human being – casually, or deeply?
Talk about the way we learn what being human is, and how this challenges our self-centredness. What limits do we draw to such learning?
- 2 God and Us:** If God has decided to relate to us, if we are, according to his plan, going to be his people, how will that relationship be unfolded?
God has to teach us how to be divine. We need to converse with him, to watch him, to think about him, to decide about him.
- 3 Consecration:** is there a point where we commit ourselves to a human relationship by sacrificing alternatives? How is this reality displayed in our behaviour? What are the conditions for our doing it?
We decide to commit ourselves because of a symphony of positive perceptions and judgments which together carry our whole personal authority. Little by little we give of ourselves.
- 4 God and Us:** what does relating to God cost us – what consecration does he ask of us?
We learn about God in the midst of a world that does not know God; our attitudes and assumptions can have more to do with the world than with God. “It was on the night that he was betrayed that Jesus took bread” – and our celebration of the Sacraments can be sinfully impeded – for instance, by pretending to celebrate the Eucharist whilst people are starving within our reach. “You eat and drink judgment to yourselves, because you do not discern the Body of Christ” (1Cor 11)
- 5 Community:** In order to grow together as a human community, we must create a language (for communication). This language springs from the evolving community. Sacraments are God’s language to create his people (discuss!).
This is heavy stuff! It makes a special place for the Sacraments, as a language which can only grow out of the community between God and Us. If we try to confine God to human understanding or language, we will lose the divine dimension, and end up miserably trying to worship an idol (something even smaller than we are). The Sacraments have to be left open to the mystery of eternity, which underlies all intermediate mysteries, and in the end will receive them, as humanity passes out of the limited world, into a face-to-face encounter which needs no signs or words.