



Community Meeting

The Message: Mark's Gospel

Reflection 1

The Gospel of Mark was written to provide meaning and encouragement to a community whose faith and hope were being profoundly tested. In our congregation and in our Church today are we not being challenged in the same manner by the sexual abuse scandals we are witnessing.

Mark presents the image of the Cross as the central most important experience of Jesus. He lets us know that Jesus had a vision of the kingdom. He proclaimed it. He lived it. He suffered for it and he died for it. It cost him his very life. Are we, too, his followers, to expect anything different than the Master? In our own day, in our own time, in our own place the invitation is to take up the Cross. Mark asks the question: "Who knows the shape of God?" He claims he does. The shape of God is Jesus! And the shape of Jesus is cruciform! Do we get it? That is hard! Are we in shape? Following Jesus today as a Christian and as a religious Brother means that we are called to be in cruciform shape! This simply means *allowing the story of Jesus to penetrate deeply our own life story.*

In the life of Jesus there were three outstanding characteristics which stood out and it would be good for us to analyse our own life in the light of these three characteristics to see what shape we are in. Let us take what is written about each one, reflect on it and then I invite you to share your reactions: thoughts and feelings.

Music is played while reflecting.



### 1. Openness

Jesus was absolutely open in all his relationships, so open, in fact, that he became divine.

Am I open or closed to the Spirit who is speaking to us today?

Am I closed down to the possibility of new life emerging from the crisis of sexual abuse?

Am I open enough to explore the Mystery we call God or am I content with what does not work anymore?

Am I open to God speaking to me and to us in a new and dynamic way?

How is my heart? Open or closed?



## 2. Inclusivity

Jesus in the Gospels was inclusive of all people. He shut out nobody.

He welcomed all.

He believed that everyone had within them the power and possibility of bearing the Good News.

Am I really open to allowing the charism of Edmund Rice to fly free or do I want to contain it for only vowed celibate members only?

Where does the inclusive spirit operate in this community today?

Am I closed off and exclusive in my relationships in community, in my ministry and in society?

Am I or are we hospitable people?

How can we judge if we are hospitable or not?

How can I (we) be more inclusive like Jesus?



### 3. Vulnerability

Jesus allowed himself to be vulnerable all during his life. His heart was never hard. He wept. He laughed. He enjoyed life.

On the Cross he showed his vulnerability to an outstanding degree.

He is our model of what we must be every day.

How is the shape of my (our) heart?

Do I have a heart of stone or a soft vulnerable, compassionate one?

As we try to build heart-centered communities, do I experience any movement towards vulnerability in our community relationships?

Do I see any movement within my heart?

We have been called to heart-centered spirituality.

Because we are called to living in community animated by heart-centered spirituality,

am I ready to risk leaping and falling as the Munnar Document says or

am I just going to remain closed, hard, hidden and doing what I have been doing

in community, in prayer and in my routine for years?



What shape are we, am I in?  
Is it cruciform like Jesus?

Concluding Prayer: Our Father

Live Jesus in our hearts! Forever!