

# Heart to Heart – Session 1

Hello everybody. Thanks so much for joining me. I'm Archbishop Christopher Prowse from in Canberra. I'm the Archbishop of the Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese and at present, I'm the administrator of the Wagga Wagga Diocese. So dear friends were embarking on a bit of a journey together now, and I'm quite excited about this. I hope you are too we've called it Heart-to-Heart eSeminar.

Because today we've got restrictions. I'm not able to go outside the house, but with a bit of a smile on my face, we've got no restrictions on going on a journey inside the house.

And by inside the house, I mean something quite literally there. I mean inside our hearts. So the idea is now that perhaps some of you would have a little bit more time. Perhaps your routine is a bit more flexible. You might be able to join us for this 10 session seminar. I propose that we meet twice a week Tuesdays and Thursdays. It'll be about this time, but if it's not suitable for you later on in the day, you can obviously tune in when convenient but It'll be live at this time.

So dear friends. What are we hoping to do? Well, we're hoping the Lord does something new with us in this extraordinary world that we're now in even this morning I heard on the news that people generally have been adhering to the restrictions because of the covid-19 pandemic but it is making people feel isolated the word that they use was lonely.

And the word that they use was also fragile in their life and people are tuning in as we are right now to the internet more than ever before. So if we can't go to the church, let the church come to you and to your home and to your work space wherever you are right now, so I'd like to first of all say welcome. Welcome. The Lord wants you to be here. I don't want you to feel sort of that you passively sitting back there making an adjudication. See when we've got screens in front of us, we sort of feel that we need to be entertained and we need a lot of information. Well, I think for a start we have to be able to say immediately when were talking about things of God. We're not here to be entertained. Yes. There will be certain amount of information but we're not here only for the head. It's a heart-to-heart. Now, what does that mean the heart of God?

Speaking to the heart of humanity

So dear friends when we think of about that that's really basic fundamental Christianity because Christianity in comparison to the other big world religions. We are an encounter religion.

A number of my friends who follow other religions - their religion isn't an encounter religion. Sometimes it's an illumination religion something to illuminate us mindfulness. But no, no, we're an encounter religion. It's an Easter religion. I'll explain that clearly and you'll understand it quite clearly when we look at some scripture text particularly after the resurrection. Jesus coming into people's lives going right into their place.

Speaking to them saying peace be with you and even one stage he goes to the side of the lake of Galilee and cooks breakfast for the apostles. They were startled - he eats, you know, he's not a ghost. It's not a resurrected reanimated Lazarus. No, no, it's the Risen Lord a new epoch of human history which begins with the Risen Lord. And that's why we say it's an encounter religion.

So friends, we want to go deeper than ever before. I think about the famous Saint who was only made a saint last year in 2019. I think it was October by Pope Francis St. John Henry Newman and his motto when he became a bishop was *Heart speaks to Heart*.

And this man, English man was the greatest really English Theologian. We've produced in probably 2,000 years - English-speaking and wrote in English. He was a convert to Catholicism. He was an Anglican and slowly but surely converted to Catholicism and his whole life was virtually the whole of the 19th century the eighteen hundreds.

And heart speaks to heart was the summary statement from this great English-speaking Theologian of all that Christianity means heart speaks to heart - heart to heart. So let's take the lead from a great exponent of the Catholic understanding of our Doctrine and about teaching. It is a relation of religion. It's a witness to the resurrection religion and it's a heart speaks to heart.

Of course we haven't just made this up this, this is very much in our Psalms coming from a Jewish background. So I mean the psalm comes to mind but you perhaps use

this as a bit of a prayer to begin our seminar Psalm 42 *like the deer that yearns for running streams. So, my soul is yearning.*

*For you my God.*

*My soul is thirsting for God.*

*The Living God when can I enter and see the face of God?*

*Then further down, why are you cast down my soul? Why grown Within Me?*

*Hoping God I will praise him still my savior and my God.*

Here it is. Everyone deep is calling on deep.

*In the Roar of your torrents*

*Your Billows and all your waves swept over me.*

*Why are you cast down my soul? Why grown within me. Hope in God I will praise him*

This is to me is a wow psalm. The best way of going deeper with the Lord is by starting with the Psalms. Jesus himself would have known all these Psalms off by heart his mother and Joseph would have taught him being an observant Jew the Psalms are the prayer of Jesus the prayer of the Old Testament.

Jewish praise which we as Christians take on and each psalm - that was number 42. There's psalm 40 which is very similar one of trusting –

*I waited I waited for the Lord. He stooped down to me. He heard My Cry.*

*I trust in the Lord.*

*I Delight in your will oh God your instruction lies deep within me*

Deep within me.

That's what I'm saying religion Christianity is a deep religion - deep calling on deep.

So I'm not here to tickle your head but I hope what happens will be nourishing to your mind. I'm asking would you allow me to lead you on a journey a little Camino. We're not going to Spain. I know a lot of you have gone to the Camino and the different pilgrimage walks geographically. We can't do it at the moment because of the coronavirus pandemic, but we can make a pilgrimage within your house within your heart. They say the longest distance anyways between.

One's mind to one's heart. We're making the big the very big pilgrimage the heart-to-heart one. That's all I want to say on the general introduction, but I'd like to make some other introductory remarks. In fact today. Today's session is introductory, setting the scene for the journey within. Can I make a few observations? It's good to have a pen and a piece of paper. You might want to jot these down to look at the replay later if you feel what I'm about to say is helpful to you.

***First compass point: Go and Tell (Scripture Matt 28)***

I'm just going to give some basic benchmarks for the Christian Journey. These are sort of compass points. So the first compass point I think is always to go to the Bible the scriptures and the wonderful compass point here is in Matthew's gospel the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew's gospel.

This is immediately after the resurrection. So here's Mary Magdalene and some others they go to the tomb and there's an angel there.

And the angel says what are you who are you looking for? And this is what the angel says "He's not here. He has risen from the dead just as he would." And then the answer is come and see?

Come and see the place where he was laid. I love that expression "come and see" There's the invitation come and see then a few verses further on so the 28th of twentieth chapter of Matthew on verse 10.

Jesus says to them do not be afraid go and tell the others and for them to meet me at Galilee. I'll see them there go and tell put those two together everybody. I think there's the first benchmark of Christianity. We are a come and see and a go and tell religion.

Now over these weeks I'm asking you to come and see let's allow the Lord to take us on this deep in a journey not so that we become inward-looking. No, no, no so that we become better at going and telling as missionary disciples its inward motion, but with an upward motion both first point second point

***Second compass point: Come as you are***

Come as you are as a song they are but I'm not such a good thing as I won't sing it to you. But you know that famous well-known song We Sing It Come As You Are that's how I love you come as you were be what that's it. Please don't come don't come with the guy with the person you want to be in the future or the person you have been in the past. Just come as you are the way you are today. Come as you are, no pretence.

Just be yourself because Jesus who lovingly looks at you knows your true self. So secondly, please don't put on a pretence just humbly in a sense of repentance and conversion. Just come as you are – warts and all.

***Third compass point: Truly loving Jesus***

The third point? It's not so much about just simply loving Jesus. These days are going to be truly loving Jesus. I love that word truly. Truly loving him in the difficult times as well.

***Fourth compass point: Waiting and Surrendering***

So the fourth point St Theresa of Avila, one of the greatest Catholic Mystics we've ever produced in the 16th century. She was born in 1515 and went to 1582 – the greatest prayer I suppose this Carmelite nun. She said when she thought about her prayer life, she said "I'm a plant of slow growth needing a lot of watering."

She's just coming to the Lord and she's come as you are. I'm a plant of slow growth needing a lot of water in this one of the greatest prayers we've ever produced so humble and she's talked about the four ways of getting water. She said I need a lot of watering because of this plant. He says there's four ways, four stages, four steps on retrieving the water for the spiritual life. The first one she says you need a bucket.

To get the water

After a period of time, maybe the place where you get the water there's a pump so you don't need the buckets. You don't have to dip down. There's a pump there and you that makes it easier

Thirdly; irrigation and makes it even easier. You don't have to go up there to the water will come to you and fourthly. She said that deeper stage. The highest stage of prayer is waiting for it to rain.

Waiting for the water. Can you see? The more she went on with her prayer life the more her prayer life became something that God does in her not so much that she does for God. When you get a bucket you have to get the bucket, get the water and at the end one two, three, four, you just wait for the water; waiting surrendering.

I think this is that helps me a lot. Maybe it helps you. I'm just sort of throwing out the seeds maybe some seeds with her.

You others will not so everybody just to sort of draw things to conclusion on this first section. Everybody. Today's the introductory session setting the scene when we meet again Thursday, I'm going to the topic is what is needed practically for the inward Journey. The Practical Australian is a very practical people. So what is required practically?

Thirdly what is needed inwardly?

For the journey the Camino pilgrimage hard to had then after that topics are as follows

- God who is love
- Christ saves you
- He is alive
- The holy spirit gives life
- These are topics coming from Pope Francis.
- God's microphone the poor

- Missionary disciples and
- Mary's marry the first amongst the faithful.

This is an outline of the topics.

We're now coming to the conclusion of the first phase of three phases every time we meet.

In a moment. We're going to have a bit of a quiet time and you'll see up on your screen three questions.

That will explore a little deeper from your point of view. What you bring to the seminar today and over the next few weeks. We'll have a little bit of Silence not a great deal.

If you want to share already at some response that you make we've got the chatroom, they haven't where you could type a few things in it's not so much what we want to ask a question you can but I invite you over the next period of time if you want to make any response, so it's a bit interactive. I can see the study to come through right now. So in the next 15 minutes, we'll have three questions will come up then we'll have some quiet time. We'll have some time when I can respond perhaps to some of the

Issues that you're presenting and then the third one really the ball is entirely in your court the third one can happen or not happen the third one. I think it'd be great if it could happen is that you take the initiative and perhaps contact a few of people that you know or would like to join our little group with you leave it up to you. How many of the group would be but I think it'd be great. If you could form a little Zoom group. We all can't gather unfortunately together physically, but because of the restrictions with the pain, but we can form a little chat room or Zoom or whatever FaceTime whatever two or three people be good to be able to share with somebody how you're going with this seminar so that you learn from them and they learn from you perhaps talk about some of the things I've said or some of the things I haven't said that comes to your mind and we'll just see how that builds up. So that's what it's about. That's what's happening. And what we're about to do now.

Good many thanks Archbishop Christopher for your time a great chance to connect reflect and pray. Thank you. That's the Marist Foundation good. Well, I'm thinking of the Mars today because today is the Feast of the great martyr of Oceania and Peter Chanel's and Peter Chanel and we might conclude with a little prayer and invoke his presence given the fact that the Marist Foundation have reminded me of this. So let's all pray together in the name of the Father the Son.

The Holy Spirit. Amen, let's just pause for a moment in silence and thank Jesus for this start that we're making.

And let's pray that Mary very much is with us and leads us to Jesus his son. Let's say together Hail. Mary full of grace. The Lord is with thee blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

About to conclude with a beautiful prayer from the saint that I mentioned earlier John Henry Newman, and I think this summarizes our first session together. Thank you so much. I think we've made a great start but we just starting and when I read this last night, I thought well, I might share this desert concluding prayer.

So this is John Henry Newman. The man that was made a saint by Pope Francis October in 2019 in Rome convert from Catholicism became one of the greatest English speaking English writing theologians of the centuries and use his life and really spend the whole of the 19th century and he prays this.

*My God, you know me infinitely Better Than I Know Myself.*

*How little I love you.*

*I should not love you at all except because of your grace I can.*

*It is your grace, which is Open the Eyes of My Mind and enable them to see your glory.*

*It is your grace that has touched my heart and brought upon it the influence of what is so wonderfully beautiful and fair.*



*Oh my God.*

*Whatever is nearer to me than you.*

*Things of this Earth the things more naturally pleasing to me.*

*We'll be sure to interrupt the sight of you unless your grace intervenes and interferes in my life.*

*Is that one of thy Grace interfering?*

*Keep my eyes my ears my heart from any miserable tyranny.*

*Break the bones raise my heart.*

*Keep my whole being fixed on you Lord Jesus.*

*Let me never lose sight of you.*

*And while I Gaze on you*

*Let my love of you grow more and more everyday.*

We make this and all our prayers through Christ the lord our men and they met the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. See you on Thursday. God bless.