

## THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION (TR) SESSION

**1. Preparation:** This aims at offering a conducive environment for the TR and making sure that the exercise has a clear focus. In particular, you would:

- = **Focus on the theme** and what the group needs to engage: this had better be a generative theme in the group, emerging from concrete and vivid experience.
- = **Identify where** the group needs **to arrive at** (e.g. the critical gaps they need to become aware of and reflect upon; change of attitudes of participants; new way of looking at a problem, etc.) – NB: be aware that it is also important to leave the process open to surprises and insights that you cannot anticipate!
- = **Choose a passage** (not too long, not with many themes in it): this is not meant to *offer “solutions” to the problem, to advise* the group on what they should do; but rather it is best chosen as a passage that helps the group discern what change in themselves and in the situation they might be called to bring about.
- = **Prepare the questions** you are going to use to facilitate the reflection: here you need to be very much conscious of where you are trying to accompany the participants.
- = Prepare the place, sitting arrangement, symbols (if needed) etc.

**2. Climate setting:** The objective is to foster a prayerful and open atmosphere to allow the participants to listen to the Word and the Holy Spirit; TR is not a group discussion, where participants reason out things with the head... first and foremost is an exercise of the heart, of attentive listening and discernment. In particular, you would:

- = Welcome participants
- = Invite the Lord, with words, songs, or gesture
- = Awareness exercise: help participants to focus on their presence, on the purpose of the session, on the presence of God, on the personal experience on which they are about to reflect
- = You may at times use a Psalm to connect with the experiences you are going to reflect on

**3. The Reflection:** here it is very important that as a facilitator you listen keenly to the contributions of participants and help them focus their reflection; you also need to perceive what the Spirit is prompting in them and help them bring it out. In particular, you would:

- = **Read the Gospel twice**, possibly different translations
- = You may help focusing on the theme by using **symbols**
- = **Facilitate the reflection:**
  - . Resonance
    - . *What is happening in the scene?* Here you may help participants engage key elements in the scene, the feelings of the various characters, symbols that may help connect the Gospel with their reality or experience
    - Ask a *correlation* question, helping participants link the Gospel to the situations they are reflecting on, using the Gospel as a key to reinterpret the experience.
  - . Ask a *displacing question*, that helps participants to think out of the box: from the Gospel, they can be invited to look at their experience in a different way, to construct new meaning – the purpose is to go beyond what we normally take for granted, our conventional wisdom.
  - . Lead the participants to reflect on *how the Gospel is calling them to respond, considering the insights and key learnings emerging from the process.*
- = **Summarise** the major insights from the reflection, and invite for prayers based in them

**4. Conclusion:**

- = Bring the insights into **petitions**
- = **Make the group choose a way forward**
- = Closing prayer and recessional hymn