



...and how
are they
to hear
without a
preacher?

ROM 10:14

Reflection:

May 2025

Have you ever considered how one act of engagement can change a life? Could stepping out of our comfort zones be what allows God to work through us? How often do we hold back due to fear of rejection or misunderstanding, when these moments of discomfort might be where true growth begins?

This is a true story of two Catholics, both Jesus Youth—one born and raised in a Catholic family, and another who chose to become one, or rather, was chosen. Sukhwinder Singh, a devout Sikh who wore a turban and sported a beard—symbols of his faith—was a medical doctor by profession. Anu invited him to a Jesus Youth program, which he initially accepted nonchalantly. However, after Anu's repeated invitations, Sukhwinder felt compelled to make a conscious decision to attend the retreat.

Although he didn't have a dramatic encounter with Christ during the retreat, Sukhwinder was deeply impressed by the sight of young people coming together in prayer. This experience led him to the firm conviction that a higher power was at work, inspiring these young people to pray instead of indulging in worldly activities. This realization ultimately led him to find Jesus. Transformed by the Lord, Sukhwinder became a wonderful missionary and Jesus Youth, through whom the Lord worked powerfully, even using him for miraculous healings.

If Anu hadn't chosen to step out of her comfort zone and engage with Sukhwinder, he might never have known Jesus.

Engagement can be daunting, requiring us to be vulnerable and take risks. It often involves stepping into unfamiliar territories, interacting with people from diverse backgrounds, and facing the discomfort of potential rejection. Yet, it is precisely in this discomfort that our faith can grow. Could engagement be more than just a task – an opportunity for transformation, not only for ourselves but also for others?

Anu's actions may have seemed insignificant, but despite her initial inhibitions, she persisted in following up with Sukhwinder. Rather than letting fear prevail, she chose to trust in the One who strengthened and helped her.

As the Jesus Youth Movement approaches its Ruby Jubilee, we find ourselves navigating a world undergoing rapid and profound transformation. Pope Francis aptly reminds us that we are not merely experiencing an era of change, but rather a time of epochal transformation. In such tumultuous times, how do we ensure that our faith remains vibrant and relevant? Are we willing to reassess and adapt our approaches to reaching out?

It's tempting to stay within our comfort zones, doing only what feels safe and familiar. However, faith rarely flourishes in such environments. Genuine engagement requires us to wholeheartedly welcome others, embracing their unique perspectives and celebrating the beauty of diversity. Do we create inclusive spaces where others feel genuinely seen and valued, or do we inadvertently hold ourselves back?

Perhaps, deep down, we all yearn to embark on a journey with people from diverse backgrounds. While we've made significant progress, can we strive to do more? Rooted in our cultural identity, can we further open ourselves to the richness of other cultures and perspectives? Pope Francis urges us to move beyond the mindset of "it has always been done this way." Might there be new ways to grow, reach out, and live our faith with renewed enthusiasm?

Stepping out in faith demands courage, but we don't walk alone. We have a God who strengthens and helps us. Who might God be calling you to engage with today? Is there someone on your heart, waiting for a simple invitation? Pope Francis offers a powerful challenge: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security." (Evangeliium Gaudium, 49) Are we willing to be part of a Church that takes risks and ventures out? Will you step out with God, trusting in His strength and guidance? Who is God inviting you to reach out to today?

- Fr Anthony Xaviour

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