

# PATIENT TRUST

"Above all, trust in the slow work of God.

We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without delay.

We should like to skip the intermediate stages,

we are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new.

And yet it is the law of all progress

that it is made by passing through some stages of instability -

And that it may take a very long time.

And so it is with you.

Your ideas mature gradually -

let them grow,

let them shape themselves,

without undue haste.

Don't try to force them on,

as though you could do today what time (that is to say,

grace and circumstances acting on your own good will)

will make you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.

Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that His hand is leading you and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself in suspense and incomplete."

*(Pierre Teilhard de Chardin S.J. excerpt from 'Hearts on Fire' Loyola Press)*

## THE PARISH

One of the most important tasks for us now is facilitating parishes in taking independent, adult responsibility for faith life and community. It is clearly better for everyone if we would now facilitate and work towards this as opposed to leaving communities to collapse further as the number of priests in dioceses diminishes. This is not so much a matter of deconstructing parish structures and replacing them with new structures (although to some degree this is already taking place through clustering, etc.), but, rather, of now creating spaces (physical, psychological, and spiritual) for people in a community to meet and discuss faith, to read the scriptures, to share experiences of faith, and so on. *The key element is that of enabling exchange and conversation on the Gospel.* This is not as easy as it might sound; and we can no longer hide behind sacramental practice. Enabling others to voice their faith beyond clichés and pre-fabricated ideas is a real challenge and an urgent task. When, for generations, people have become accustomed to being silent in terms of expressing and talking about faith, a whole support system needs to be put in place to enable them to find their voices.

*(From 'New Beginnings and Painful Endings', Michael A Conway. The Furrow May 2017)*

'New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings'

*(Lao Tzu, Founder of Taoism)*