



Can We Talk?

RE-SOURCE #1 — February 2, 2023

Some helps for continuing our conversations

Recent Society-wide Conversations

The whole Society enjoyed inter-provincial conversations during Advent and some of our associates and other friends joined with us to talk together about the images or names of Christ that touch us most deeply. On January 15th, Cornelia's birthday, the SLT launched a 25-minute video called WATCH THIS SPACE — <https://vimeo.com/789359862/2a9d368c2c> — in which eight sisters shared their experience of the conversations and feedback posted on shcj.org. At the end of the video Pauline Darby announced the opening of a new “portal,” also called a “dedicated webpage,” a “virtual space” where we can continue to probe the mystery of Incarnation as the 2022 General Chapter called us to do. So, the door is open to exploring the mystery in every way we can imagine, including by **good conversation**, be it in local, national or international circles. **Here are some excerpts, references and links that should be helpful for all those who want to organize some good conversation, or simply to help all of us to sharpen our awareness of the dynamics and possibilities of any impromptu conversation:**

1. The quote below is from a **13-minute video** about **spiritual conversation**, offered by **John Dardis, SJ**, in which he explains the key elements of spiritual conversation and offers a simple process for engaging in it; the whole video is well worth a watch:

“Intentional speaking: I’m listening to myself; what’s the spirit saying to me on this issue. Spiritual conversation is about very real practical things. Our God is incarnate; God became incarnate, involved in the world. Spiritual conversation can be my faith sharing, but it’s also for discussing controversial issues, something we don’t agree on that’s conflictual. I do that by listening to you and respecting that the Spirit is speaking through you, and speaking through me. I listen to myself. I’m ready to show feelings, thoughts, reactions — this is becoming a contemplative in action.”

Link: “Introduction to Spiritual Conversation” by Fr. John Dardis, S.J.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7EDySgbWogU>

2. The exchange between **St. Augustine and his mother Monica at Ostia**, just days before she died, is a classic in the genre of spiritual conversation. In this excerpt from *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, he talks to God as he looks back on an experience of talking with his mother. For both of them, conversation began in a simple, ordinary way, and unfolded into a stunning, shared vision and taste of heaven. It reminds us not to under-estimate the power of good conversation!

“... She and I stood alone, leaning in a certain window from which the garden of the house we occupied at Ostia could be seen. Here in this place, removed from the crowd, we were resting ourselves for the voyage after the fatigues of a long journey.

We were conversing alone very pleasantly and ‘forgetting those things which are past, and reaching forward toward those things which are future.’ We were in the present – and in the presence of Truth

— discussing together what is the nature of the eternal life of the saints: which eye has not seen, nor ear heard... We opened wide the mouth of our heart, thirsting for ... 'the fountain of life' which is with you, that we might be sprinkled with its waters according to our capacity and might in some measure weigh the truth of so profound a mystery.

And when our conversation had brought us to the point where the very highest of physical sense and the most intense illumination of physical light seemed, in comparison with the sweetness of that life to come, not worthy of comparison, nor even of mention, we lifted ourselves with a more ardent love toward the Selfsame [sic], and we gradually passed through all the levels of bodily objects, and even through the heaven itself, where the sun and moon and stars shine on the earth. Indeed, we soared higher yet by an inner musing, speaking and marvelling at thy works.

And we came at last to our own minds and went beyond them, that we might climb as high as that region of unfailing plenty where you feed Israel forever with the food of Truth, where life is that Wisdom by whom all things are made, both which have been and which are to be....

And while we were thus speaking and straining after her [Wisdom], we just barely touched her with the whole effort of our hearts. Then with a sigh, leaving the first fruits of the Spirit bound to that ecstasy, we returned to the sounds of our own tongue, where the spoken word had both beginning and end. But what is like your Word, our Lord, who remains in himself without becoming old, and 'makes all things new'?

St Augustine's and St Monica's shared vision at Ostia — Confessions, Book 9, Chapter 10

Does something on this page move you to want to have a conversation with others about something related to our focus on Incarnation?

Think about inviting them to a conversation; if it's to be a virtual conversation, you are welcome to ask Carmen Torres (ctorres@shcj.org) or Sam Strike (sstrikeshcj@gmail.com) to help you set it up.