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## Food for Thought

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# Food for Thought

God's dream for us is that we become the best version of ourselves

Matthew Kelly, *Mission 2007*, Vision TV

In today's world the Church needs to teach, which means explaining and convincing, rather than simply declaring what we are obliged to think and to hold. Aristotle's dictum is still valid, that no teaching takes place until someone has actually been taught.

**Fr. Sean Fagan CM, *The Tablet***

A substantial part of the population is two or three generations away from the Christian faith and they don't know the story or the language. The church has to learn how to begin again for this generation. Our motive is not to get people back into church. It is to find a new way of being church for them.

**Rev. Steve Croft, *The Tablet***

All change must come from the people themselves. I cannot push my projects or myself forward unless the people accompany me. It is useless being in a hurry to see results, as that often entails eliminating important steps in the process ... We do not always have sufficient humility to realize that we are not always right. My vision and my way of doing things are not always those of the people and I have to find ways to correct my mistaken ideas.

**Fr. Mietek Ropinski CSSp, Mexico**

A few years ago, in my congregation our leaders asked their friends, neighbours and work colleagues "Why do people not attend church today?" These are some of the illuminating responses:

1. It isn't relevant to our lives. It's too remote and emotionally disconnected.
2. Our past experience of church has been very negative.
3. Many people who frequent the church don't live out their faith at home or in work or in the community.
4. People used to go to church for social acceptance or because they were afraid that something awful might happen to them. Today nobody cares.
5. Church people are too dogmatic. They think they are right and everybody else is wrong. There is no space to ask questions, discuss ideas or explore Jesus Christ. Faith is not about "Open your mouth and take the tablets!" We are not stupid; we have minds of our own.
6. Churches don't give leadership on big community or global issues. They are afraid to stand up, speak out and confront injustice and corruption right on their own doorstep. How can you believe in the church when you have lost respect for it?

**Dr. Ken Newell, Fitzroy Presbyterian Church, Belfast**