

Dear Fr. David

On Friday I was the opening guest speaker at Onkaparinga Leadership.

There were about 60 people there.

This is a local council initiative where people in the community who work in various fields supporting their own communities are Trained in Leadership.

These people are handpicked from many applicants and out of 100 every second year they only choose 20 – 25 people.

The training is very intensive for one year with as many as 40 speakers and 5 main trainers.

It is run at the Onkaparinga Council with some of the lectures at Flinders University.

I did this course in 2016 and it has been incredibly valuable.

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This time I was introduced as Deacon of the Western Fleurieu Anglican Church.

In my opening remarks I talked about what a Deacon is and does, "Out There In The Community".

Then I spoke about the hardships of leadership and followed that with the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

That which gives us the passion to concentrate on the Job at hand and not the flack in the air.

I played on the fact that most folks are not Christian and quite defensive looking at a bloke speaking to them wearing a collar.

At one stage I said, "We have to have faith" then paused for a few seconds.

Then I said "I bet you are wondering where I'm going to go with that statement"

The truth is in those few seconds of silence they all said a little sermon to themselves.

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Coming into the room for the meeting on Friday I was looked at from a distance.

After many people came up to chat and in a few occasions I shared about Christ and faith in him.

[Well they started the conversation and I continued it.]

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The course coordinator, has just done a full page story about my work in the community and this will be in the Onkaparinga Councils own news magazine.

This is put in as an attachment in the local messenger news paper that is dropped on everyone's lawn in the region which is a very big area.

She has also asked me to come to the graduation of the next group of Leaders.

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What I am seeing is an amazing open door to be a witness not only in my own personal circles but in places that are influential.

I ask How did this happen, don't people usually run away from people openly Christian.

Don't the upper echelon look down, bemused over the rim of their glasses; but not necessarily so.

Yet here I am in the middle of all this.

I do not compromise but I do enter into their worlds with respect.

I will not put on a religious higher than thou demeanour, or foolishly behave, look at me in a collar using rough language.

I stay simply being me yet rely on the Holy Spirit Himself to shine Christ through my words and actions.

If I am invited to speak at civic events, then the Holy Spirit is working on hearts and minds people that put these events together.

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However, in my involvement in the community, I have been laying down a foundation where I have allowed people to get to know me.

This has not happened over night, but over many years.

I have worked on community councils and associations, with community events, simply being in the market place where I meet and greet people every day.

I put myself in places where I am challenged and confronted, where there are needs and people needing care.

At times things may not be comfortable for me and other times we bare the grief and frustration of others hurt by the church.

I get alongside the average people on the street, even our local footy team.

I know politicians, Mayors, and other influential leaders in our region and they have grown to know me.

As a Deacon I am in my element, and I have found most non-Christian people who know me are excited and happy when they see me in a collar.

Not shocked.

They say it's about time, and this too has opened up some amazing conversations.

So now when I am asked to speak in formal engagements or civil events I will jump at the chance.

My talks are not preachy, but I carefully sew in the word of God and the Gospel.

I play with the typical mindsets of what non-churched people think of God, church and what faith is.

I use humour, quote stereo typical Christian lingo the world already know, but with word play.

And at times I shoot straight from the hip, because on particular points they know the truth of it and would agree without argument.

In my speech on Friday I used the fruits of the Holy Spirit as aspects of good, strong and stable leadership.

And in the end said when you know you are doing something Good you know it is a righteous thing.

The word "Righteous" is a word the world now uses for something that is very good in whatever form.

None of them knew that I probably sewed in about 10 scriptures but what they all knew in the end is that they all agreed.

.Well that is what is happening now, glean from it what you will.

I will always be out there as an ambassador for Christ and His universal Church.

I am so glad I have St Ann's as my back up because my ministry would be a lame duck without a strong fellowship behind me.

When I welcome folks into the church, I know they truly will feel welcome.

St Ann's is still growing and there is a great desire there amongst the people to be a light for Gods Glory.

It is so wonderful to be in a fellowship that demonstrates God's love amongst themselves and this flows onto others.

Bless Yu heaps David.

Peter Chapman.