# Awakenings to Faith

 As we accompany others, there are four realities and corresponding questions that often lie in the unspoken consciousness of those who are seeking to find meaning in their life, seeking a relationship with Christ or are curious about the teachings of the Church. Becoming adept at recognizing how these realities express themselves and how to speak to them is a necessary skill for discipleship.

**Exercise 1.** Consider the following scenario:

A young person is questioning the Church’s teaching on sexuality and asks you “Why does the Church care about pre-marital sex?”

How do you answer this question? (share the development of your answer by noting the main points below):

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**The Four Realities and Questions**

1. **Anthropological Questions:** What does it matter if we have faith? How does faith speak to our deepest longings, hopes and fears?

(Anthropology of religion is a concentration of study that examines religion in relationship to other social institutions especially in relation to everyday beliefs and practices across cultures)

1. **Christological Questions:** What difference does it make if I believe in Jesus? Is Jesus more than just a “good guy”? Why do I need a Savior?

(Christology is the study concerned with the person, nature and role of Christ.)

1. **Eschatological Questions:** What difference will faith make in the end? Can’t I just be a good person without believing in religion?

(Eschatology is the field of study concerned with death, judgment and the final destiny of humanity)

1. **Ecclesial Questions:** What difference does the Catholic Church make to my life? How does it speak to the any of the other questions?

(Ecclesiology is the theology of the nature, purpose and structure of the Church)

**Exercise 2:** Go back and look at your answer to the question on the first page. In which order did you address the four realities??

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3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For post-modern young adults already skeptical of organized religion and who place a high premium on experiences, beginning with an ecclesial approach does not engage them. This does not mean that there is no place for addressing questions about the Church, there is a time and a place for that, but for young adults who are curious about faith, beginning with the longings of their heart is the best place to begin.

In fact, this approach is modeled in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, particularly the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. The first chapter of the USCCA is titled “My soul longs for you, o God” which is taken from Psalm 42:2 and subtitled “the human quest for God”. On page 31 of the USCCA it states that “people have always asked fundamental questions” and outlines a number of helpful questions that people wrestle with:

**“Who am I? Where did I come from?**

**Where am I going? Why do I need to struggle to achieve my goals?**

**Why is it so hard to love and be loved? What is the meaning of sickness, death, and evil? What will happen after death?”.**

**Exercise 4:** Consider the same scenario once again:

A young person is questioning the Church’s teaching on sexuality and asks you “Why does the Church care about pre-marital sex?” How do you **now** answer this question? (share the development of your answer by noting the main points below):

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**Reflection:**

Did your approach change through the exercises? What shifted?

What was most helpful to you in this exercise?
What was a new insight?