

Pope's "Letter to Young People" Read by Students

University students from various countries read Pope Francis' "Letter to Young People" about the upcoming synod of bishops on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment."

03/13/2018

“Make your voice heard”

The Pope wants to hear the voice of young people, to know how they

view themselves and the world, how they live their faith, what helps them and what hinders them on their Christian path. He wants to know how they see their future, how they are trying to discover what God wants of them, how much they feel a part of the Church, what the Church offers them and what they are seeking there.

Therefore several months ago young people from around the world were invited to respond to a series of questions about the role of the faith in their own lives. And from March 19-24, three hundred young people from all over the world will gather in Rome to consider the topic of the upcoming synod: "On Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment." Any person between the ages of 16 and 29 is invited to take part in this gathering by signing up for a Facebook group before Friday March 16.

More information is available at the web page for the synod of bishops.

How Youth Can Participate in Pre-Synodal Meeting:

Pope's Letter to Young People

My Dear Young People,

I am pleased to announce that in October 2018 a Synod of Bishops will take place to treat the topic: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.” I wanted you to be the centre of attention, because you are in my heart. Today, the Preparatory Document is being presented, a document which I am also entrusting to you as your “compass” on this synodal journey.

I am reminded of the words which God spoke to Abraham: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you” (*Gen 12.1*). These

words are now also addressed to you. They are words of a Father who invites you to “go,” to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfilment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you. I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit.

When God said to Abram, “Go!”, what did he want to say? He certainly did not say to distance himself from his family or withdraw from the world. Abram received a compelling invitation, a challenge, to leave everything and go to a new land. What is this “new land” for us today, if not a more just and friendly society which you, young people, deeply desire and wish to build to the very ends of the earth?

But unfortunately, today, “Go!” also has a different meaning, namely, that of abuse of power, injustice and war.

Many among you are subjected to the real threat of violence and forced to flee their native land. Their cry goes up to God, like that of Israel, when the people were enslaved and oppressed by Pharaoh (cf. *Ex* 2:23).

I would also remind you of the words that Jesus once said to the disciples who asked him: “Teacher . . . where are you staying?” He replied, “Come and see” (*Jn* 1:38). Jesus looks at you and invites you to go with him. Dear young people, have you noticed this look towards you? Have you heard this voice? Have you felt this urge to undertake this journey? I am sure that, despite the noise and confusion seemingly prevalent in the world, this call continues to resonate in the depths of your heart so as to open it to joy in its fullness. This will be possible to the extent that, even with professional guides, you will learn how to undertake a journey of discernment to discover God's plan

in your life. Even when the journey is uncertain and you fall, God, rich in mercy, will extend his hand to pick you up.

In Krakow, at the opening of the last World Youth Day, I asked you several times: “Can we change things?” And you shouted: “yes!” That shout came from your young and youthful hearts, which do not tolerate injustice and cannot bow to a “throw-away culture” nor give in to the globalization of indifference. Listen to the cry arising from your inner selves! Even when you feel, like the prophet Jeremiah, the inexperience of youth, God encourages you to go where He sends you: “Do not be afraid . . . because I am with you to deliver you” (*Jer 1:8*).

A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit who

proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master. The Church also wishes to listen to your voice, your sensitivities and your faith; even your doubts and your criticism. Make your voice heard, let it resonate in communities and let it be heard by your shepherds of souls. St. Benedict urged the abbots to consult, even the young, before any important decision, because “the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best” (*Rule of St. Benedict*, III, 3).

Such is the case, even in the journey of this Synod. My brother bishops and I want even more to “work with you for your joy” (*2 Cor 1:24*). I entrust you to Mary of Nazareth, a young person like yourselves, whom God beheld lovingly, so she might take your hand and guide you to the joy of fully and generously

responding to God's call with the words: "Here I am" (cf. *Lk* 1:38).

With paternal affection,

Francis

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