

Pope Francis Invites All Young People to Help Prepare October Synod

In his Angelus address on the first Sunday of Lent, Pope Francis invited young people everywhere to help prepare the upcoming synod "On Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment," through the use of social media.

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Before the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

On this first Sunday of Lent, the Gospel refers to the themes of temptation, conversion, and the Good News. The evangelist Mark writes: “The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan” (*Mk 1: 12-13*). Jesus goes into the desert to prepare Himself for His mission in the world. He has no need of conversion but, as a man, must pass this test, both for Himself, to obey the will of the Father, and for us, to give us the grace of resisting temptation. This preparation consists of fighting against the spirit of evil, that is, the devil. For us too Lent is a period of spiritual “challenge”, of spiritual combat: we are called to face the evil one through prayer so as to be capable, with God’s help, to defeat him in our daily life. We know that

evil is unfortunately at work in our existence and around us, where violence, rejection of others, closure, wars and injustice manifest themselves. All these are the work of the devil, of evil.

Immediately after the temptations in the desert, Jesus begins to preach the Gospel, that is the Good News, the second word. The first was “temptation”, the second, “Good News”. And this Good News demands conversion – third word – and faith. He proclaims: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel” (v . 15), that is, believe in this Good News that the kingdom of God is near. In our life we are always in need of conversion – every day! – and the Church makes us pray for this. Indeed, we are never sufficiently oriented towards God and we must continually redirect our mind and our heart to Him. To do this, it takes

the courage to reject all that which leads us astray, the false values that deceive us, slyly appealing to our selfishness. Instead, we must trust the Lord, His goodness and His plan of love for each one of us. Lent is a time of penance, yes, but it is not a sad time of mourning. It is a joyful and serious commitment to strip ourselves of our egoism, of the old man within, and of renewing ourselves in accordance with the grace of our Baptism.

God alone can give us true happiness: it is pointless for us to waste time seeking it elsewhere, in riches, in pleasures, in power, in a career ... The Kingdom of God is the realization of all our aspirations because it is, at the same time, the salvation of man and the glory of God. In this first Sunday of Lent we are invited to listen attentively and to respond to this appeal of Jesus to convert and to believe in the Gospel.

We are exhorted to undertake with commitment the path to Easter, increasingly to receive the grace of God, Who wants to transform the world into a kingdom of justice, peace, and fraternity.

May Mary Most Holy help us to live this Lent with fidelity to the Word of God and with incessant prayer, as Jesus did in the desert. It is not impossible! It means experiencing the days with the ardent desire to receive the love that comes from God, Who wants to transform our life and the whole world.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

In a month, from 19-24 March, some 300 young people from all over the world will come to Rome for a meeting in preparation for the October Synod. However, it is my ardent wish that all young people

may be actively involved in this preparation. Therefore, they will be able to participate on line through linguistic groups moderated by other young people. The contribution of the “online groups” will join that of the meeting in Rome. Dear young people, you can find the information on the website of the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops. I thank you for your contribution in journeying together!

I greet you, families, parish groups, associations and all pilgrims from Italy and from different countries. I greet the faithful of the dioceses of Murcia, Vannes, Warsaw and Wroclaw, as well as those of Erba, Vignole, Fontaneto D’Agogna, Silvi and Troina. I greet the young people from the deanery of Baggio, Milan, and those of Melito Porto Salvo.

At the beginning of Lent, which as I said is a journey of conversion and a

struggle against evil, I wish to express a particular greeting to the imprisoned: dear brothers and sisters who are in prison, I encourage each one of you to live the Lenten season as an opportunity for reconciliation and renewal of your life under the Lord's merciful gaze. He never tires of forgiving.

I ask you all to remember me and my collaborators of the Roman Curia in prayer, as this evening we begin a week of Spiritual Exercises.

I wish you a good Sunday. Have a good lunch and goodbye.

Pope's Letter to Young People

More information at Synod2018.va

Facebook page for Synod2018

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