

Dear young people, (Words of Pope John Paul II to youth)

Jesus Christ is your friend.

Build your lives on the one model that will not deceive you! I invite you to open the Gospel and discover that Jesus Christ wants to be your "friend" (Jn 15:14). He wants to be your "companion" at every stage on the road of life (Lk 24:13-35). He wants to be the "way," your path through the anxieties, doubts, hopes and dreams of happiness (Jn 14:6). He is the "truth" that gives meaning to your efforts and struggles. He wants to give you "life,"... He is your "resurrection," your victory over sin and death, the fulfillment of your desire to live forever (Jn 11:25). Because of this He will be your "joy," the "rock" on which your weakness will be turned into strength and optimism. He is our salvation, our hope and happiness and peace. 10th World Youth Day, Manila, 1/15/95).

The Eucharist

Jesus lives among us in the Eucharist, the supreme fulfillment of His real presence, a presence contemporary with the history of humankind. Amidst the uncertainties and distractions of daily life, imitate the disciples on their way to Emmaus; like them, say to the Risen One, revealed in the act of breaking the bread: "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent" (Lk 24:29). Call out to Jesus to remain with you always along the many roads to Emmaus of our time. May he be your strength, your point of reference, your enduring hope. May the Eucharistic Bread, dear young people, never be lacking on the tables of your existence. And may you draw from this Bread the strength to bear witness to the faith! (12th World Youth Day, Paris, 1997).

God has something special for you to do.

The fundamental problem of youth is profoundly personal. Young people know that their life has meaning to the extent that it becomes a free gift for others. A question therefore is directed to each one of you personally: are you capable of giving of yourself, your time, your energies, your talents, for the good of others? Are you capable of love? If you are, the Church and society can expect great things from each one of you. The vocation to love, understood as true openness to our fellow human beings and solidarity with them, is the most basic of all vocations. It is the origin of all vocations in life. That is what Jesus was looking for in the young man when he said: "Keep the commandments" (Mk 10:19). In other words: "Serve God and your neighbor according to all the demands of a true and upright heart." And when the young man indicated that he was already following that path, Jesus invited him to an even greater love: "Leave all and come, follow me: leave everything that concerns only yourself and join me in the immense task of saving the world". Along the path of each person's existence, the Lord has something for each one to do. (10th World Youth Day, Manila, 1/14/95).

Take Christ to the world.

Like Mary, you must not be afraid to allow the Holy Spirit to help you become intimate friends of Christ. Like Mary, you must put aside any fear, in order to take Christ to the world in whatever you do - in marriage, as single people in the world, as students, as workers, as professional people. Christ wants to go to many places in the world, and to enter many hearts, through you. Just as Mary visited Elizabeth, so you too are called to "visit" the needs of the poor, the hungry, the homeless, those who are alone or ill. You are called to stand up for life! To respect and defend the mystery of life always and everywhere. You are called to work and pray against abortion, against violence of all kinds.... Stand up for the life of the aged and the handicapped, against attempts to promote assisted suicide and euthanasia! Stand up for marriage and family life! Stand up for purity!

(Central Park NYC, 10/7/95).

Place your enthusiasm and talents at the service of life.

Christ needs you to enlighten the world and to show it the "Path to life" (Ps 16:11). The challenge is to make the Church's "yes" to Life concrete and effective. The struggle will be long, and it needs each one of you. Place your intelligence, your talents, your enthusiasm, your compassion and your fortitude at the service of life!... Do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places, like the first Apostles who preached Christ and the Good News of salvation in the squares of cities, towns and villages. This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel. It is the time to preach it from the rooftops. Do not be afraid to break out of comfortable and routine modes of living, in order to take up the challenge of making, Christ known in the modern 'metropolis.' It is you who must go out into the byroads' and invite everyone you meet to the banquet which God has prepared for his people. The Gospel must not be kept hidden because of fear or indifference. It was never meant to be hidden away in private. It has to be put on a stand so that people may see its light and give praise to our heavenly Father. The Church asks you to go, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to those who are near and to those who are far away. Share with them the freedom you have found in Christ. In your hands, carry the cross of Christ. On your lips, the words of Life. In your hearts, the saving grace of the Lord! (8th World Youth Day, Denver, 8/15/93).

Accept God's invitation to the consecrated life.

To you, young people, I say: if you hear the Lord's call, do not reject it! Dare to become part of the great movements of holiness which renowned saints have launched in their following of Christ. Cultivate the ideals proper to your age, but readily accept God's plan for you if he invites you to seek holiness in the consecrated life. Admire all God's works in the world, but be ready to fix your eyes on the things destined never to pass away. The Third Millennium awaits the contribution of the faith and creativity of great numbers of young consecrated persons, that the world may be made more peaceful and able to welcome God and, in him, all his sons and daughters.

IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM OF THE REDEMPTION GOD IS PREPARING A GREAT SPRINGTIME FOR CHRISTIANITY AND WE CAN ALREADY SEE ITS FIRST SIGNS.