



Remain in my love
Jn 15:9

Easter 2018

At the start of Lent in this Year of Youth, the Church collectively reflected on its interaction with young people in the life of the church. Through reflection and acknowledgment of a need for forgiveness, the Church lamented its past failure to protect our young people and committed itself to greater transparency and to transforming its internal culture through dialogue and reverence for the dignity of every human person. The true joy of Resurrection which we proclaim at Easter will best be experienced by our people as they witness a rebirth of truth and integrity in our church and concrete evidence of our desire to do better by our young people into the future.

The theme for the Year of Youth is “Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy: Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment”. The experience of resurrection for the disciples of Jesus enabled them to move beyond closed doors into territory totally unfamiliar to them. In our desire to welcome young people into our community, how open are we to new possibilities, or do we expect the young simply to conform to our understanding of how things should be, because this is how they have been in our lifetime? Indeed, how open are we to the mystery of Christ’s Resurrection, allowing ourselves to be touched and transformed so that we are able to open both personally and as Church to New Horizons?

Young people are open to spiritual encounter as I witnessed firsthand at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival last year. We need to encourage and empower the young people in our schools and community to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in today’s world but we ourselves first need to be the change we wish to see. Unless we become energised by the movement of the Spirit in our own lives, how can we hope to stir faith in the hearts of our young people? Enlivened by the Spirit we will be able to nurture the energy and yearning of the young and bring them into the life and mission of our Catholic faith community. We need to find ways to foster personal and spiritual growth for our young people, just as generations before us have built our sense of the joy of the gospel.

In proclaiming the gospel we should bear witness to the dignity and the vocation of every person and to the communion of persons. The new law of love embraces the entire human family and knows no limits since the proclamation of the salvation wrought by Christ extends to the ends of the earth. This is a call not just to young people but to all of us.

As we celebrate Easter 2018 let us renew our faith and hope in the Risen Christ who lives within and among us. With new eyes may we be alert to opportunities and respond in hope to the challenges that face us each day. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

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