
« A Mighty Wind Arose » (2)



In this second article on the XVIIth World Youth Day I want to point out how some witnesses view this activity as a new Pentecost for our Church. Not only was the July 28 mini-tornado a potent sign, but the youth's enthusiasm and their determination for a lasting change in their lives and their communities point to what the Spirit of God wants to work among us and throughout the world. As Mrs. Manon Ruest-Bourgoin, our diocesan WYD coordinator said in a TV interview, it is only "a question of adding one's grain of salt," day after day.

FRIEND OF YOUTH

As I reflect on the wonderful words spoken by the Holy Father in Toronto, I am reminded of the Message of the Vatican II Council Fathers to the youth of the world, December 8, 1965. Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was present there and I am convinced that he approved each and every statement of the message, as well as its challenges. I invite you to join me in a rereading of the message, a source of evangelical inspiration, and a surprisingly timeless vision. John Paul II, messenger of this great Council and a man who was deeply marked by his contacts with youth and his ministry to them, often referred to and actualized this message filled with hope and forceful challenges.

SAVE YOURSELF OR PERISH WITH IT

"It is to you, young men and women of the world, that the Council wishes to address its final message. For it is you who are to receive the torch from the hands of your elders and to live in the world at the period of the most gigantic transformations ever realized in its history. It is you who, receiving the best of the example of the teaching of your parents and your teachers, are to form the society of tomorrow. You will either save yourselves or you will perish with it."

THE LIGHT WHICH ILLUMINATES YOUR FUTURE

"The Church has been working to rejuvenate her image in order to respond the better to the design of her Founder, the great Living One, the Christ who is eternally young. At the term of this imposing re-examination of life, she now turns to you. It is for you, youth, especially for you that the Church now comes to enkindle your light, the light which illuminates the future, your future. The Church is anxious that this society that you are going to build up should respect the dignity, the liberty, and the rights of individuals. These individuals are you. The Church is particularly anxious that this society should allow free expansion to her treasure ever ancient and ever new, namely faith, and that your souls may be able to bask freely in its helpful light. She is confident that you will find such strength and such joy that you will not be tempted, as were some of your elders, to yield to the seductions of egoistic or hedonistic philosophies or to those of despair and annihilation, and that in the face of atheism, a phenomenon of lassitude and old age, you will know how to affirm your faith in life and in what gives meaning to life, that is to say, the certitude of the existence of a just and good God."

TO THE DIMENSIONS OF THE WORLD

"It is in the name of this God and of His Son, Jesus, that we exhort you to open your hearts to the dimensions of the world, to heed the appeal of your brothers, to place your youthful energies at their service. Fight against all egoism. Refuse to give free course to the instincts of violence and hatred which beget wars and all their

train of miseries. Be generous, pure, respectful, and sincere, and build in enthusiasm a better world than your elders had.”

IN HER, THE YOUTHFUL CHRIST

“The Church looks to you with confidence and with love. Rich with a long past ever living in her, and marching on toward human perfection in time and the ultimate destinies of history and of life, the Church is the real youth of the world. She possesses and constitutes the strength and the charm of youth, that is to say, the ability to rejoice with what is beginning, to give oneself unreservedly, to renew oneself and to set out again for new conquests. Look upon the Church and you will find in her the face of Christ, the genuine, humble, and wise Hero, the Prophet of truth and love, the Companion and Friend of youth. It is in the name of Christ that we salute you, that we exhort and bless you.”

AN EVER TIMELY MESSAGE

Thanks to his extraordinary charisma, Pope John Paul II has captivated the attention of the world’s youth and has enlisted them in building a better world where there is more justice and fellowship, a world that is better than yesterday’s and today’s. He knows how to do this because he leads the youth to a real encounter with Christ Jesus himself, with the Living One, the eternally Youthful One. And when this encounter takes place, the Pope surrenders all to the Risen Jesus, and it is this Christ who will henceforth guide, he who declared himself “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Here is an example of what the Pope said, in Toronto:

THE WORLD NEEDS YOU

“The world you are inheriting is a world that desperately needs a renewed sense of fellowship and human solidarity. It is a world that needs to be touched and healed by the beauty and richness of God’s love. The world today needs witnesses of this love; the world of today needs you. It needs you to be salt of the earth and light of the world. By following Jesus, you must improve the flavour of human history. By your faith, your hope and your love, by your intelligence, your courage and perseverance, you must make the world in which we live more human.” Then there are the recurring themes: “Do not be discouraged!” “Do not be afraid!” “Serve!” “Do good!” Nor does he fear to address delicate situations: “If you love Jesus, love the Church! Do not get discouraged by the faults and sins of some of her sons. The prejudice caused by certain priests and religious to young and fragile people fills us with deep sorrow and shame. But think of the great majority of priests and religious who generously live their commitment and whose only desire is to serve and to do good. There are many priests, seminarians and consecrated persons here, today: be close to them and support them. And if, in the depths of your heart, you hear the same call to the priesthood or the religious life, do not be afraid to follow Christ along the royal way of the Cross.” May these words of the Holy Father which were drawn from the living waters of the Gospel, renew our faith in the eternally youthful Jesus.

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