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## A SECRET FOR KEEPING YOUNG

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Here is the message I gave to the A.M. Sormany Cité des Jeunes graduates in Edmundston, a few days ago; the message will also be aired on the Radio Canada *Le Jour du Seigneur* national television programme, July 3. I was very happy to be part of this wonderful celebration and I am certain that through television we shall join in communion with our brothers and sisters all over the country. May this desire for communion be with us always: "Together we Were, United we Shall Remain" is your graduating class's motto. We are creating strong bonds between us, and may this feast reinforce even more our solidarity and communion.

### **"I PROCLAIM YOUR PRAISE"**

In a few hours, this graduation ceremony will have made you alumni of the A.M. Sormany Cité des Jeunes Regional High School of Edmundston, New Brunswick. This shall be one of your claims to fame, to have passed through this great learning institution and partaken in its enviable education. Today you are joining your parents and friends in thanksgiving for the faith received from them, for the love they have had for you, and for the seeds of hope they have placed in you. With all my heart I thank you for this gesture of gratitude, faith, and communion. Like me you have heard the prayer of Jesus to his Father, and the invitation made to us, a very simple prayer which every graduate can make his or her own: "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I proclaim your praise." Then in your own words you can tell the Lord how grateful you are to him for your years in school, for all you have learned from reading, research, teaching, and all the school and after school activities. "Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I proclaim your praise. I am your child, and I thank you for all that I have lived at the Polyvalente with my friends, my teachers, and my parents."

### **"BECOME MY DISCIPLES"**

In the words you sang as you processed into the cathedral: "There is life ahead for us despite the time that's flying by, there is life waiting for us, to fill our days fully. A life remains to be lived, whatever path it takes, there is life left, to take us to Love." May you be able throughout your life, to answer Jesus' call to you in his Gospel: "Take my yoke and become my disciples, because I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." What a wonderful invitation: "Become my disciples." My dear friends, I had the pleasure of giving most of you the great sacrament of Confirmation. At that time you were given everything needed to become more and more true disciples of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is in you, he is always in you, and it is through him that you shall live.

### **TRUE HAPPINESS**

In late Pope John Paul II's last letter, he addressed the youth of the world who are preparing for this coming August's World Youth Day, and this is what he wrote: "Listening to Christ and worshipping him leads one to make courageous choices, to sometimes make heroic decisions. Jesus is demanding because he is concerned with our true happiness. He calls some to leave everything to follow him in the priesthood or the consecrated life. May those who hear this invitation not be afraid of saying "yes", and may they generously follow him. However, besides special vocations to consecration, there is the vocation proper to every baptised. This, too, is a vocation to the high degree of Christian life leading to holiness. Whenever we meet Christ and accept his Gospel, life changes and one is led to pass on one's experience to others. Dear young people, the Church needs authentic witnesses for the new evangelisation, men and women who are capable of communicating this experience to others. The Church needs saints. We are all called to holiness, and only the saints can renew the world." Yes, you have heard correctly: "Only the saints can renew the world." Dear friends, you who dream of a world of peace and justice, such a mission may seem too heavy for you. Do not be afraid! The Holy Spirit will always be with you.

## A CAUSE FOR LIFE

Dom Helder Camara, a Third-World prophet I had the privilege of meeting a number of times in Brazil, wrote these words: "The secret for being and remaining forever young despite the passing years which leave their mark on the body, is to have a cause to which your life is dedicated. At twenty, without the shadow of a wrinkle or the least white hair, one can already be defeated by life, be pessimistic, and old! He who does not decide to make out what life is all about nor the reasons for facing it head-on, has a youth that is very endangered. It is important to dedicate one's life to a cause. But one must nevertheless not choose the wrong cause. Without underestimating the causes that are worth total dedication to them, we can say that there are some which we cannot dodge: respect for individual and collective human rights, the right to civil and religious life, the right to a dignified and productive life, the right to share in the goods of the earth, and beyond these rights and responsibilities there are the exciting causes of knowing, accepting, and proclaiming the Gospel, living according to the Beatitudes, and becoming disciples of Jesus. Dear graduates, you know of the esteem which I and the entire Edmundston Church have for you. One of our pastoral priorities is to "build vibrant communities enlivened by youth." May this celebration revive in you your wish to be more and more united to your brothers and sisters. "Together we Were, United we Shall Remain!" Such is your determination, today. This desire for deep and lasting communion is all to your honour. Such a cause will always remain passionate. Become specialists in the art of discovering the good side in every person. You have in you priceless treasures. Despite our weaknesses, we can affirm this in all simplicity at this time of celebration which revives our strength and desire for communion.

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