



From A Bishop's Journal (661)

A Message to Our Young People

A few days before leaving for Rome, in May, I wrote a song for our young people. It was set to music by Mathieu Lang, and it was sung by Raymonde Bellefleur at the 2006 Foire Brayonne Mass.

Young People of Ours

Refrain:

Young people of ours,

Come build with us

A Church that looks like you,

Full of joy, and life, and peace.

A Church that incites us

To ever greater heights.

1. Young people, Jesus Christ calls you
To a new land.
He gives you precious gifts
To help you serve, in your milieu.
Use all of those talents
With love and enthusiasm.
2. Young people, the Church calls you.
Do not fear, her wish is that you be beautiful.
Be truly salt of the earth.
Give to the world a zest for life.
Rejoice your sisters and brothers
In a great burst of laughter.
3. Young people, the world calls you.
Be everywhere the spark
To enkindle the earth;
Join in the dance,
So the feast may begin.
Always be a brilliant light.

4. Young people, the earth calls you
To save the water and the sky.
Protect the environment
With your whole heart and your hands;
Save for coming generations
The beautiful sanctuary to be built.

Dear Young People

On the occasion of the new school year, or as you enter the work force, I want to tell you over and over that I think of you often. I am always happy to meet you, at confirmation celebrations, or at graduation. I prayed in a special way for you at the tomb of John Paul II: you know how much this pope loved you: his trip to Toronto was a sign of this. Despite his age and precarious health, he insisted on coming to celebrate the 2002 World Youth Day together with us. Pope Benedict XVI is continuing the work that had already begun. He told us of his unforgettable meeting with the youth, in Cologne, in 2005.

A Message That Crosses the Centuries

Towards the end of the Bible, in the First Letter of Saint John, there is a message that crosses the centuries and is still timely, today. I encourage you to read those few, comforting words that stimulate us on our journey. Writing to the young people of his day, the elderly John can find no better language than words of endearment: "Little children."

A Desire for Communion

Saint John wishes so much for us to be in communion with the Risen Jesus that he gives us a few guidelines: to break away from sin, obey the commandments and especially the commandment of love, to protect oneself from the temptations of the world, and from the antichrists. He so desires us to live as children of God that he writes: "See what love the Father has bestowed on us in letting us be called children of God. Yet that is what we are. The reason the world does not recognise us is that it never recognised the Son. Dearly beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall later be has not yet come to light. We know that when it comes to light we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him keeps himself pure, as he is pure.. The one who sins has not seen him or known him. Little ones, let no one deceive you: the one who acts in holiness is holy indeed, even as the Son is holy. When anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Our love is brought to perfection in this, that we should have confidence on the day of judgment; for our relation to this world is just like his. Love has no room for fear; rather, perfect love casts out all fear. And since fear has to do with punishment, love is not yet perfect in one who is afraid. We, for our part, love, because he first loved us. The commandment we have from him is this: whoever loves God must also love his brother."

Message of Love

This is the message of love that I wanted to pass on to you, today. Never doubt that you are God's beloved children, that He loves you with infinite and eternal love. I urge you to respond to this love as sincerely as you can. Life can at times seem difficult and, even, absurd. Do not be afraid: God has loved you from all eternity. He gave you life, and He maintains it. He invites you to join Him in building a world of fellowship and peace. Allow me to tell you once again that you always have your place in the Church. Baptised in Jesus, you are always called by God and sent out to your brothers and sisters to proclaim His message of love. You were confirmed, and were given very precious gifts: I urge you to use them in your daily life: a kind smile, a helping hand, a task well done, more

positive relationships. I also ask you to pray for me, for the whole Church and for all humankind, and to pray especially for peace in the world. May this peace be in your family, your school, your workplace. And you yourselves be peacemakers. Be assured of my daily prayer for us to be in communion with each another. I wish you all a lot of happiness, peace, and joy throughout the coming year. Young people of ours, I tell you once again that you mean a lot to the Lord and to the Church.

+ François Thibodeau

+ François Thibodeau, C.J.M.
Bishop of Edmundston

09-06-06