

## Young People's Missionary Hearts are Pope's Focus for World Mission Day 22 May, 2018

Pope Francis has emphasised the importance of young people in the life and mission of the Church in his message for the 92<sup>nd</sup> World Mission Day, which will take place on October 21, 2018.

World Mission Day is held each year in October across the world witnessing the missionary commitment of Catholic communities and individuals to building a better world for all of God's people.

Catholic Mission echoes the youth-focussed sentiment with its attention to the nation of Myanmar and beyond.

For several years, Catholic Mission's collaboration with the Church in this growing Asian country has been specifically directed toward the growth and fostering of the educational gifts of young people.

Fr Brian Lucas, National Director of Catholic Mission, spoke of the importance of young and vibrant hearts leading in areas of evangelisation and development.

"Building on the very successful Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney at the end of last year, our challenge as a Church in Australia is to engage with young people and help them become the missionary disciples Christ is calling them to be", he said.

He emphasised the partnership that Catholic Mission has created with the Young Christian Students and Workers (YCS/YCW) movement in assisting young people to find opportunities for reflection and action in bring Christ to their world.

The Pope's Message draws on previous works such as *Redemptoris Missio* and the words of St John Paul II in a letter that promotes a Christian faith that remains "ever young when it is open to the mission that Christ entrusts to us."

Pope Francis writes of the history of the Pontifical Mission Societies in his message and addresses it to young people as they prepare for October's Synod on Young People.

"This coming October, the month of the missions, we will hold the Synod devoted to you. It will prove to be one more occasion to help us become missionary disciples, ever more passionately devoted to Jesus and his mission, to the ends of the earth."

"No one is so poor as to be unable to give what they have, but first and foremost what they are. Let me repeat the words of encouragement that I addressed to the young people of Chile: "Never think that you have nothing to offer, or that nobody needs you. Many people need you. Think about it! Each of you, think in your heart: many people need me".

Ultimately, this message reminds us that we give what we are, not what we have. In his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis wrote, "I am mission on this earth" [EG 273], emphasising that by not only sharing what we have, but our hearts and minds for Christ, then we will truly be missionary disciples.

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