



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### Pope Francis writes to young people – the ‘now of the Church’

Media Release

April 2, 2019

Pope Francis has urged young people to embrace their role as the present and the future of the Catholic Church by building relationships with their community and with God.

The Holy Father this evening issued the apostolic exhortation following last year’s Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.

The exhortation, *Christus Vivit (Christ is Alive)*, takes the form of a letter to young people and, through them, to the entire People of God.

Sydney Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, a Synod delegate and then-Bishop Delegate for Youth, said Pope Francis “presents a vision of and for youth that is optimistic and hopeful”.

“I am pleased that the Holy Father dedicates much of this letter to encouraging young people to cultivate a friendship with Jesus Christ and to invest in family life, in building relationships within their community and to join with others to serve the poor,” Archbishop Fisher said.

“There are so many voices in society today promoting individualism and independence as a means of personal fulfilment, but this has left too many youth feeling increasingly isolated, even with the ease of present forms of communication.”

Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE, the current Bishop Delegate for Youth, also honed in on Pope Francis’ strong message of hope in *Christus Vivit*.

“In the midst of all the problems in our world and in our Church that cause anxiety and alienation among many young people, the Pope’s exhortation offers young people the hope of Christ,” Bishop Macbeth-Green said.

“Pope Francis is not afraid to name the problems facing young people in our world, particularly exploitation in all its many forms, but he does not dwell on the negatives. He invites young people to take their place as the ‘now of the Church’, work in solidarity to fight evil and live the gift of the ‘present’.”

Bishop Macbeth-Green said he was particularly heartened by the three “truths” Pope Francis offers to young people: “God loves you”; “Christ saves you”; and “Jesus is alive”.

“The challenge now for young people – and indeed for all the Church – is to bring the Pope’s words off the page and into our hearts,” he said.

Malcolm Hart, director of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference’s Office for Youth, said it will take time to reflect upon the 68-page document, but some early messages speak loudly.

“*Christus Vivit* acknowledges many of the challenges facing the young, including how older people sometimes dismiss them, but also the gifts and energy they bring to our world,” said Mr Hart, who also serves as a consultant to the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life.

“Pope Francis calls the Church to become young again and embrace the opportunities presented by young people.

“*Christus Vivit* highlights the need to accompany young people so they can answer the call to lead the Church in new ways, as did Mary and many other saints like St Francis of Assisi.”

*Christus Vivit* can be downloaded from the ACBC website: [www.catholic.org.au](http://www.catholic.org.au)