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**BOLLETTINO**

HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE BUREAU DE PRESSE DU SAINT-SIÈGE PRESSEAMT DES HEILIGEN STUHL  
OFICINA DE PRENSA DE LA SANTA SEDE SALA DE IMPRENSA DA SANTA SÉ  
BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

N. 240325d

Monday 25.03.2024

**Message of the Holy Father to young people on the fifth anniversary of the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “Christus vivit”**

The following is the Holy Father Francis’ Message to young people on the fifth anniversary of the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit*.

**Message of the Holy Father**

Dear young people,

Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive! This certainty always makes my heart overflow with joy, and now it inspires me to write you this Message, five years after the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, the fruit of the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops that had as its theme: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment”.

Above all, I would like my words to be a source of renewed hope for you. In today’s world, marked by so many conflicts and so much suffering, I suspect that many of you feel disheartened. So together with you, I would like to set out from the proclamation that is the basis of our hope and that of all humanity: “Christ is alive!”

I repeat this to each of you individually: Christ is alive and he loves you with an infinite love. His love for you is unaffected by your failings or your mistakes. He gave his life for you, so in his love for you he does not wait for you to be perfect. Look at his arms outstretched on the cross, and “let yourself be saved over and over again”.<sup>[1]</sup> Walk with him as with a friend, welcome him into your life and let him share all the joys and hopes, the problems and struggles of this time in your lives. You will see that the path ahead will become clearer and that your difficulties will be much less burdensome, because he will be carrying them with you. So pray daily to the Holy Spirit who “draws you ever more deeply into the heart of Christ, so that you can grow in his love, his life and his power”.<sup>[2]</sup>

How greatly I want this proclamation to reach every one of you, for you to accept it as living and true in your own lives, and feel the desire to share it with your friends! For you have received a great mission: to bear witness before everyone to the joy born of friendship with Christ.

At the beginning of my Pontificate, at the World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, I urged you to make your voices heard! *Hagan lio! Make a mess!* Today, once again, I ask you: make your voices heard! Proclaim, not so much in words but by your life and your heart, the truth that Christ is alive! And in this way, help the whole Church to get up and set out ever anew to bring his message to the entire world.

On 14 April 2024, we will mark the fortieth anniversary of the first great gathering of young people that, in the midst of the Holy Year of the Redemption, was the seed of the future World Youth Days. In 1984, at the end of that Jubilee Year, Saint John Paul II consigned the WYD Cross to young people and gave them the mission of carrying it to the entire world as a sign and reminder that in Jesus alone, crucified and risen, do we find salvation and redemption. As you know very well, that was a plain wooden cross, not a crucifix, precisely in order to remind us that it celebrates the victory of the Resurrection, the triumph of life over death. To everyone, it says: "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (*Lk 24:5*). See Jesus in this same way: as alive and overflowing with joy, the victor over death, a friend who loves you and wants to live in you.[3]

Only in this way, in the light of his presence, will your memory of the past prove fruitful, you will find courage in the present and be prepared to face the future with hope. You will find the freedom you need to carry forward the history of your families, your grandparents, your parents, and the religious traditions of your countries, and to be in turn the leaders of tomorrow, "artisans" of the future.

The Exhortation *Christus Vivit* is the fruit of a Church that wants to move forward together by listening, dialogue and constant discernment of the Lord's will. That is why more than five years ago, in preparation for the Synod on young people, many of you, from various parts of the world, were asked to share your own hopes and expectations. Hundreds of young people came to Rome and worked together for several days, collecting ideas to present to the Synod. Thanks to their work, the Bishops were able to come to a broader and deeper vision of our world and the Church. It was a genuine "synodal experience"; it bore great fruit and prepared the way for a new Synod, which we are celebrating now, in these years, precisely on the subject of synodality. As we read in the Final Document of the 2018 Synod, "the participation of the young helped to 'reawaken' synodality, which is a 'constitutive element of the Church'".[4] Now, at this new stage in our ecclesial journey, we need more than ever to draw upon your creativity in order to explore new paths, always in fidelity to our roots.

Dear young people, you are the living hope of a Church on the move! For this reason, I thank you for your presence and for your contribution to the life of the Body of Christ. And I encourage you never to leave us without your good way of "making a mess", your drive, like that of a clean and well-tuned engine, and your own particular way of living and proclaiming the joy of the risen Jesus! This is my prayer; and I ask you, please, to pray for me.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 March 2024,

Monday of Holy Week.

FRANCIS

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[1] Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, 123.

[2] *Ibid.*, 130.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 126.

[4] SYNOD OF BISHOPS, XV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, Final Document*, 121.

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