



Good morning/afternoon/evening brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is my joy to write to you on this Feast of Christ the King! This is a special day in the life of the Church, as we recognise Jesus' kingly authority over all creation and enthrone Him as the King of our hearts. On this great feast we celebrate World Youth Day, a day in which we thank God for the gift of our young people, pray for them and ask the Lord for the graces and inspiration we need to help us accompany them on their journey of faith.

Address to Young People

To each youth and young adult who is gathered here or reads this letter, I want to thank you for opening your heart to Jesus and for being here to celebrate Him as your King. I also want to invite you to listen and respond to this year's World Youth Day theme, which is,

“Stand up! I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen.”

(Cf. Acts 26:16)

These words, spoken by Jesus to Saul, are taken from the Acts of the Apostles.

Saul was not a follower of Jesus. In fact, he had set out on his own mission and that was to persecute Christians. Yet on this day, Jesus called him by name. Jesus broke into the mess and destruction of Saul's life and invited him to become His disciple, giving him a new mission. Saul's mission now was to stand up and witness to how Jesus did not forsake him, did not abandon him, but in great love saw him, called him, and changed his life forever. In listening to Jesus and following Him, Saul went onto become a great friend of Jesus and we now call him Saint Paul.

Today, Jesus extends this same invitation to you! He sees you in your pew, just as He saw Saul on the road to Damascus. He knows what is going on in your heart and in your life, just as He knew with Saul. He calls you by name, just like He uttered, “Saul, Saul” and He entrusts you with this same mission, to be a witness to Him.

You belong here! You have a place and a mission here in your parish, your community, your diocese and this world. God knows the plans he has for you (Cf. Jer 29:11) and is calling you to grow in your relationship with Him, through prayer and the Sacraments, and to be formed into who he has created you to be. As the theme suggests, you are not called to live out your faith in private, rather, you are called to be a witness of what you have seen, just like St. Paul and the many saints who have gone before you. It is your mission to share your faith with your friends and family, in word and in action, to remind them of God's love and the Good News of the Gospel. Jesus is calling you to 'stand up,' to be counted, to be open to the Holy Spirit in your life and to be the saint that our Father has willed you to be.

I pray that you are encouraged by this message and by this feast and inspired to live your life vibrantly, boldly and in union with Jesus, Who is always drawing you closer to His Sacred Heart.

Address to the Parish

The theme of this year's World Youth Day is one that should not only inspire the young but should be a rallying invitation to each of us here or who reads this letter, regardless of age. Jesus is continually calling us, individually, to spend time with Him, to renew our faith in Him, to remember what He has done for us and to witness to what we have seen.

As we reflect on the Scripture passage from where we get our theme, we can see some parallels between Saul and many of our young people today. Like Saul, we can see our youth and young adults wandering along various roads, searching for meaning and purpose. Like Saul, we can see that some lack an understanding of who they truly are, as beloved sons and daughters of the Father, brothers and sisters redeemed by Christ Jesus and temples of the Holy Spirit. Like Saul, we can see that frequently they do not know what direction Jesus is leading them in and like Saul, they need to encounter the Lord on the road and find their sense of belonging in Him and in His body, the Church.

Pope Francis, in *Christus Vivit*, reminds us that we, 'the community, have an important role in the accompaniment of young people and that we are collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them'. (Cf. CV

243) He also thanks those who are already walking the road with our dear young friends, and says that your "efforts are like a great forest that quietly grows." (CV 99)

It is our mission to accompany our young people, to imitate Christ and meet them on whatever road they are venturing, to love them, to provide opportunities for them to encounter Jesus and to walk with them in their journey of discipleship. For each of us, this role will look different. I write to you, today, to beg you not to dismiss your role. You, individually, have something unique to offer these young people and collectively, in each of our parish communities, we have a task to reach out to our young people, to create a space to welcome them and to walk with them on the road with Christ. Therefore, today I invite you to ponder how best as a parish community, and individually, you can respond to this call of accompaniment.

I also want to assure you that you are not alone on this journey of youth ministry. Our staff at RCAG Youth, the Youth Office of the Archdiocese of Glasgow, have been accompanying young people individually and in parish settings for many years and are here to support you in your ministry to young people.

Therefore, on this the Feast of Christ the King, let us enthrone Jesus once more as the King of our hearts and invite the Holy Spirit to inspire and guide us as we seek ways to help the Father's little ones walk in the light of Christ.

On this day, in particular, I am reminded of the love that our late Archbishop Philip had for his 'dear young friends' and I would be grateful if you would pray for him and for the appointment of our next Archbishop, that he too would have a heart for our young people and walk alongside them.

Thank you for your time and openness.

In Christ,



Rev G Tartaglia
Youth Office Director