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Message from Archbishop Makarios of Australia for International Youth Day



The United Nations, aiming to highlight the challenges and issues faced by young people and to promote their active participation in society, has designated August 12th of each year as International Youth Day.

For the Orthodox Church and, specifically, for the Holy Archdiocese of Australia, caring for the needs of the younger generation has consistently and continuously been a central pillar of our pastoral work. This is even more relevant during the current period of transition from the first to the second centenary of our local Church, as we know that the unwritten chapters of our new era will be filled by our members who are currently in their youth.

To the youth, therefore, we entrust our hopes and visions for an Orthodox witness shining brightly within the multicultural Australian society, standing out like a city “set on a hill that cannot be hidden.” For this reason, we continually intensify our efforts to bring our young people closer to the Church, but primarily to approach them ourselves—the clergy, the Bishops, and myself—to give them a voice and to listen to their thoughts, concerns, and reflections.

In an era where many speak about the needs of the youth without truly listening to them; in a time when controversial standards are promoted and imposed on young people without their input; in an age where, despite contrary declarations, the future of humanity is being shaped in the absence of the younger generation; in this time, more than ever, our Church insists on planning for the youth, together with the youth.

An expression of this commitment is also the Youth Conferences, which are being held this commemorative year at all of our Holy Dioceses and in Sydney, the See of the Holy Archdiocese. It is truly a blessing to witness young people, full of vitality, zeal, and enthusiasm, coming together to share ideas and concerns, present and discuss proposals, and chart pathways for the world they envision, guided by the spiritual compass of God’s Word.

Here is the message that we should take from today, for all of us and especially for parents who bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing and guidance of our youth: Let us instil in their souls Christian values and faith in God, and surround them with trust, providing them with space and roles to express their virtues. They must and can create a future better than the one we are handing over to them!