

Message of His Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia for International Youth Day



Today is dedicated to the “flower” of our society – our young men and women. To those noble souls who, despite the harshness of our times and the many distractions they face, keep alive within them the flame of purity, innocence, and hope. To those souls who, even more than we older ones, envision a world without injustice, exploitation, and violence; a world of peace.

Indeed, youth is a blessed period of our earthly life. Blessed, yet vulnerable. For it is threatened by the snare of disappointment, which in turn leads to abandoning lofty goals, to compromise, and ultimately to isolation. How can we help our youth to continue fighting the good fight, to resist individualism and self-interest?

Christ is the answer to every question connected with what is good, peaceful, and hopeful. When one walks alongside Christ, one journeys on a bright path, even if everything around has sunk into darkness. When one walks alongside Christ, one is not distracted by the fleeting and vain things of this world. And above all, when one walks alongside Christ, one strives to share with others the light that has flooded one’s soul without losing hope, without bowing before difficulties, without giving up or compromising. For as Apostle Paul assures us: “I can do all things through Christ

who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

Our Lord, therefore, is the most precious companion our young men and women need, so that they may steadfastly continue to cultivate their virtues and see them bear fruit for the benefit not only of themselves and their families but also of the wider community. Our duty is to stand beside them with love and understanding and to guide them towards Christ; not by controlling them, but by inspiring them; not by pressuring them, but by reflecting the light of our faith through our good works.

Our Holy Archdiocese, unwaveringly committed to this sacred mission, will never cease listening to the concerns of our youth, to trust them, to support them, and to encourage them to fight with courage for the fulfilment of their noble visions. May our young people become beacons of light in a world besieged by darkness, and may their lives bear witness that "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"!