20/11/2020

Message from the Archbishop of Australia for the World Day on the Rights of the Child



The 20th day of November has been assigned as World Day for the Rights of the Child.

This day, as well as yesterday and tomorrow, and indeed every day of the year, all children, wherever they may be around the world, hope and envision a better world, for themselves, for their families, for the communities in which they live and for all humanity. And when we, the adults forget, and when we are indifferent, when we become alienated and, in the end give up, they insist on hoping and envisioning a world with more love and compassion, with kindness and peace. A world that seems so close to the one that Christ showed us through his teaching.

Therefore, this day, which is dedicated to the rights of children, constitutes an opportunity to think about, and to reflect on our responsibilities to them and to whatever beautiful reality they long to create. We are called to consider that everyone, depending on their position and strengths, must contribute to the formation of an environment which is secure and prosperous, free from all forms of violence and danger.

We do not overlook that we have before us a long road to travel, as millions of children around the world continue to suffer abuse, exploitation and social exclusion; continue to face serious risks to their health and lives, growing up deprived of basic goods and freedoms. However, we do not despair and, on the occasion of this day today, we renew our commitment to daily struggle, in the community and society where each of us lives and works.

Our Holy Archdiocese, serving with devotion the command of the Lord: “Let the children come to me” (Mt 19:14), works tirelessly to bring young people closer to Christ and to make Him the precious compass to their dreams in life. But beyond this, however, with our good bishops and priests across the states of Australia, we strive every day to also follow the converse path: that is, to turn our own steps towards the children, so that we can recognise and meet their needs, both material and spiritual, to listen to their anxieties and worries, to offer them opportunities for expression, participation, creation.

I hope, with God’s help, that we might be able to have added a little stone to the edifice that the custodians of the hope of this world dream of building.