

Assistant Bishop Benedict urges young people to be enthusiastic, joyful and full of hope



In a message on National Youth Day (May 2), His Grace Benedict of Bistrița, Assistant Bishop to the Archdiocese of Vad, Feleac and Cluj, urged young people “to be enthusiastic, joyful and full of hope” and be inspired by the experience of older people.

Being one of the youngest hierarchs in the Romanian Holy Synod, Assistant Bishop Benedict began his message with a quote from Elder Arsenie Papacioc – “If only youth knew and if old age could” – and concluded it using Patriarch Daniel’s remark: “Happy feast day, young people of different ages!”

“If youth knew and if old age could”

To young people, on their feast day,

This sentence, attributed to Elder Arsenie Papacioc, expresses, on the one hand, the enthusiasm of youth but without the experience necessary for good self-control that comes with time, and, on the other hand, old age with its experience of many years, but lacking vivacity and the resources needed to complete more projects, work or significant actions.

In a sense, this saying depicts a man in two potential extreme and incomplete postures, and its dominant tone seems pessimistic.

Today, when we mark National Youth Day, I will offer an extended interpretation of this word of wisdom dedicated to the young, but in the icon of the meeting with the old and with old age, in the context of the Solemn Year of the pastoral care of the elderly.

So, typically, youth is synonymous with enthusiasm, large projects, rich intuition, and, we might add, a generous future; however, it appears that youth lacks the necessary knowledge that comes from life experience, which will give them balance, realism, and measure in their thinking.

We see the solution in a proverb about young people and youth: “he is young, but

he walks in the paths of the old,” which means that even without much experience, a young person utilises those with experience and what is learned from them to channel their personal resources well, in a work of a life project along a happy encounter between generations with their unique characteristics.

Regarding the elderly, we will quote a profoundly inspired phrase frequently used by His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel when discussing generations: “young people of different ages,” implying that psychological age can differ from biological age.

A young individual suffering from “fatigue syndrome” may no longer have a youthful outlook and way of life.

In addition, an older man can refute his age through his open, flexible, and benevolent demeanour by offering his resources to create a harmonious community of individuals of various ages, qualities, and projects. Still, all brought to a common denominator regarding what is called collaboration.

So, on National Youth Day, my appeal goes to the “young people of age,” first and foremost, urging them to be enthusiastic, joyful, and full of hope, to which they can add the experience of those older than them, but also to the older people, “young people with attitude,” urging them to show themselves cheerful, enthusiastic, and energetic, borrowing these qualities from those younger than them, in a joyful encounter between generations, so necessary in the Church, but also current society.

Happy feast day, young people of all ages!

Assistant Bishop Benedict of Bistrița

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