

楊鳴章主教
天主教香港教區主教



Most Reverend Michael Yeung
Bishop of Hong Kong

A Season of Expectant Hope

May Your Joy be Complete in the Joy of Christ! (cf: John 15:11)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Advent is a season for appreciation, for looking forward, for sharing with one another. How much we appreciate the great gift the Heavenly Father has given to us in the power of the Holy Spirit—His life in the form of His only begotten son!

Let us then, with expectant hope and reverence, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary our Mother, enter into the awesome Mystery of the Incarnation, the Word made Flesh, the Infant Jesus who is “Emmanuel”, God with us!

We prepare ourselves so that we may see Him and let us share His journey and ours with Him. “Lord let me see!” (Mark 10:51).

Let us also recall with thanksgiving and joy the words spoken by the Lord Jesus at His Last Supper. He assured the Apostles that he would not leave them orphans, that he would come to them and that “in a little while” they would see him. “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (John 15: 11). Lord, complete our joy!

In this season of expectant hope, it is also right and fitting that I should, once again, stress the importance of continuing, with renewed faith and love my engagement and dialogue with our young people. You, the young people, are our hope.

I recall the words of St. Paul to the young Timothy: “Let no one look down on your youthfulness...”

(1 Timothy 4:12). To all our youth, especially but not only the leaders that I have been meeting and speaking with since becoming Bishop of Hong Kong, I say from the bottom of my heart: Thank you!

Thank you for your initiative and your enthusiastic, courageous and creative response to the call of the Church in so many different ways.

I humbly pray that the Lord will give me “a listening heart” (1 Kings 3:9). You have given me much to listen to and food for thought. The following are just a few examples of what you have told me so frankly:

- You long for a Church which is more outreaching;
- You desire more transparency in Church affairs;
- You ask for a greater and more active participation, as well as platforms for dialogue, training and in caring for the poor and the needy;
- You want the Diocese to follow up on World Youth Day or Asian Youth Day, lest such events as these just become fireworks in the sky or a flash in a pan;
- You need more caring support and accompaniment and thirst for continuing catechesis, spiritual formation and capacity-building;
- You want the Church to tap and make available more resources;
- You want in particular a Special Sunday Collection every year to be earmarked and used for youth ministry;
- You want the Diocese to improve its audio-visual work and make better use of digital contacts to reach out to youth in this digital age.

Let me say here at once that personally I agree with you. I shall, with God’s help and yours, in consultation and with the cooperation of the clergy, the laity and others concerned, make every effort to achieve what you have suggested.

We are often told there is opportunity in danger and danger in opportunity (危中有機,機中有危). But there is a greater danger in not making use of opportunities or in refusing to take up the challenges that face us, from which we cannot excuse or reclude ourselves.

In his address at the World Youth Day Prayer Vigil on 31 July 2016, Pope Francis called on young people to leave their mark on history, not to be *couch potatoes* that confuse true happiness with comfortable sofas (sofa happiness).

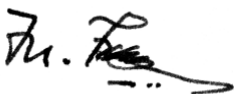
He said, “Jesus is the Lord of risk, of the eternal ‘more’. Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus’ demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths, to blaze trails that open up new horizons capable of spreading joy, the joy that is born of God’s love and wells up in your hearts with every act of mercy...”

In line with the Pope Francis’ exhortation and in order to complement the 2018 Synod on *Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, the Diocese has decided, and I hereby declare that 2018 shall be for the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong the *Year of Youth*.

It will commence on the First Sunday of Advent 2017 and close on the feast of the Solemnity of Christ the King 2018.

Let us walk the talk and, through solidarity, prayer and action, help build a better world together with God and for His greater glory.

May God bless you all and your loved ones!

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Bishop of Hong Kong
First Sunday of Advent, 2017
Hong Kong