



*We proclaim a crucified Christ*

1Cor.23

21 November 2021

Dear friends

My prayerful greetings to you all!

These past two years of the pandemic have carried a great loss of belonging for us all, and have certainly challenged us spiritually, mentally and physically. I'm mindful that many of you have been unable to gather with one another in prayer and fellowship during this time. Gathering as a community of faith remains such an important, foundational aspect to our life as members of the Body of Christ.

I certainly have fond memories of gathering with the young people of Melbourne during the last Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Perth and local gatherings, and I am glad that we can begin to come together once more.

It is no coincidence that we gather today for World Youth Day (WYD) on this Solemnity of Christ the King, as the heart of every disciple beats loudly with the love of our Lord and, Jesus Christ, who is our friend. As Pope Francis has said, "The centre of the celebration remains the Mystery of Jesus Christ the Redeemer of Man, as Saint John Paul II, the initiator and patron of WYD, always emphasized."

As we begin to emerge from this time of the pandemic, I encourage you to reflect on this year's WYD theme: "Stand up. I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen." (cf. Acts 26:16) These words are taken from the Acts of the Apostles, where St Paul recounts his initial encounter with Jesus, who tells him to stand on his feet and bear witness to the Lord.

The Lord meets us where we are to invite us into a deeper life in him. Even in the midst of these challenging times, we know that he has been with us – and remains our constant source of strength and life.

How might you draw upon your encounter with Jesus and serve him in this time and place?

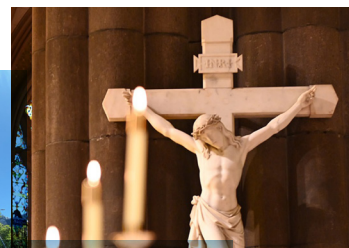
Jesus calls each one of us, by virtue of our baptism and confirmation, to follow him and become his disciples in the world, making the Gospel known by our words and actions. Like the Apostle Paul, Jesus sees deep within our hearts and emboldens us to engage in a life in service to him and others. Each of us is sent as a missionary disciple, to embark on the Gospel mission using our own gifts in the service of God's kingdom. It is his Spirit that urges us on.

In the coming weeks and months, you will hear from the Discipleship Team of the Proclaim Office for Mission Renewal about some new initiatives that seek to build up our young people and equip you on your journey of faith.

So, take courage and be bold! Do not be afraid to witness to your faith and invite others to do so as well, for Jesus is with us – and promises to remain with us until the end of time.

With every blessing, I remain,  
Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev Peter A Comensoli  
Archbishop of Melbourne



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