



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE
35th INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FESTIVAL ("MLADIFEST")**

[Medjugorje, 1 - 6 August 2024]

Dear young people,

I am happy to be able to address this message to you on the occasion of the 35th Youth Festival, which has brought many of you together in Medjugorje, so that the encounter with the Lord Jesus in communion with the Virgin Mary may kindle the flame of your faith. In these intense days, reflect on the theme: "Mary has chosen the good portion" (*Lk 10:42*). Starting from this phrase of the Lord, I would like to offer you some brief suggestions for your spiritual growth and your commitment in the Church and in the world.

Jesus, with what he says to Martha, the sister of Lazarus and Mary, reminds us that the approach of an authentic disciple is to listen to the Word of the Lord. Mary realizes that the Lord has entered her house, but he also wants to enter into her heart. In fact, she sat at his feet to listen to him, thus choosing the better part that "will not be taken away from her".

Another authentic disciple is Mary of Nazareth. God entered the house of this young girl and spoke to her. She welcomed the Word of God into her heart and participated in his plan, making herself fully available when, in the fullness of time, God sent his Son. She was present in silence at the foot of the cross when Jesus, the Son of God and her Son, redeemed the world; she followed the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when the Church was born in the Holy Spirit. By allowing the Word of God to enter her heart, the Virgin Mary fulfilled her mission with fidelity and attention. She too chose the best part: the Lord Jesus.

In the same way, you, dear friends, are called to become authentic disciples of Christ. Remain in the Master's presence to meditate on the Word of God, allowing it to illuminate your mind and

heart to discover and collaborate in the plan that the Father has for each of you. For this reason, I encourage you to establish a close bond with the Gospel and to have it with you, so that it may be for you like a compass that shows you the path to follow. By reading it you will learn to know Christ, “the Son of God made man, is the Father’s one, perfect, and unsurpassable Word. In him he has said everything; there will be no other word than this one” (CCC, 65), as Saint Jerome also confirms: “Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ” (PL 24, 17). Strengthen yourselves also with the power of the sacramental grace of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, visit the Lord in this “heart-to-heart” encounter, that is, in Eucharistic adoration.

An authentic disciple, moreover, becoming wise and strong in the Spirit, necessarily transmits the Kingdom of God to others, because announcing His Word is not an obligation only for priests and religious, but also for you, dear young people. You must have the courage to speak of Christ in your families, in your educational and working environment, in your free time. Announce him above all with your life, manifesting the visible presence of Christ in your existence, in your daily commitment and in coherence with the Gospel in every concrete decision. The Lord wants you to be fearless apostles of the Good News and builders of a new humanity.

Dear friends, may my blessing accompany you. I entrust each of you to Mother Mary, Mother of the Church, so that she may intercede that you may have the strength and wisdom to be able to speak with God and speak of God. May her example urge you to be heralds of hope, love and peace in the world. Lastly, I kindly ask you to pray for me.

Francis

L'Osservatore Romano, Weekly Edition in English, Fifty-seventh year, number 32-33, Friday, 9-16 August 2024, p. 10.

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana