

Supporting Our Good Young People



The Bishop Speaks

I don't think I'm alone in saying that I often worry about our young people. *Worry* is probably not quite the right word since, as I often say to people, "If you're concerned about somebody or something don't worry, since worry doesn't achieve anything, instead pray for that person or that situation."

So, I am concerned for our young people and often pray for them. I'm not concerned because our young people are bad. I'm concerned because they are good and because it seems so much harder these days than it was in mine for good young men and women to stay true to themselves, to God, and to their faith.

One thing that certainly helps young people in their life of faith and goodness is support: support from their family and support from their friends. It was such a joy to see nearly twenty thousand young

Australian Catholics supporting each other at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney in December.

This three-day festival included concerts, talks, testimonies, Masses, prayer, confessions, workshops, Q&A's, an EXPO of all things Catholic, and much, much, more. Sydney Olympic Park was transformed into Catholic Disneyland for three days. Everywhere you went you saw young people enjoying themselves and talking openly and joyfully with nuns in habits, priests in collars, and bishops in colourful robes.

One of the things that I and the other bishops enjoyed most about the festival was simply wandering about and talking with the youth. We wanted them to know that we support them, that we are there for them. Dear young people, we want to talk with you, to



Bishop Michael Kennedy with the youth from the Diocese of Armidale at the ACYF17

Front Cover: Kindergarten are keen to learn at St Joseph's West Tamworth



The Moree representatives with Bishop Michael Kennedy: Joshua Elbourne, Maddison Bell, Nicholas Fisher, Chloe Makim, Mr Richard Clark, Isabella O'Neile, Clancy Carroll, Fr Christopher, Miss Lauren Donnelly.

answer your questions, and to listen to you. We want to get to know you and enable you to get to know us.

I witnessed thousands of young people express publicly and loudly their joy in being Catholics and in being loved by God, as well as their desire and commitment to be faithful and courageous even though it will not be easy. Indeed, it is not easy to stay true, and some may fall short. I am praying for them and ask us all to pray for them, that they will not give up no matter how often they may fall.

About a hundred young people from the Diocese of Armidale took part in the festival and I hope even more young people will travel with me to Perth for the next festival in December 2019.

The Sydney festival saw the launch of a “Year of Youth” in Australia to run throughout 2018 to coincide with ten years since Sydney World Youth Day and to coincide with the Synod of Bishops to take place in Rome in October this year on the theme “Young people, faith, and Vocational Discernment.”

The Church in Australia is taking as its inspiration for this Year of Youth something Pope Francis said to the millions of young people gathered for the 2016 World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland. “My friends”, he said, “Jesus is the Lord of risk, he is the Lord 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 couch 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



Liam Skinner, Isabella O'Neile, Kantalli Quinlin, Sophie Warner, and Olivia Moore

is born of God’s love and wells up in your hearts with every act of mercy.”

Lets all make a special effort this year to pray for and support our good young people.

Most Reverend Michael Kennedy
Bishop of Armidale