

February 3, 2019

Dear Parishioners,

The Pope's Message to Youth. Last week, Pope Francis was in Panama for the 34th World Youth Day. Running from January 22-27, the theme this year was, "I am the Servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) In his homily at the closing Mass, the 82 year old pontiff addressed the youth by reminding them that we may possess everything, but if we lack the passion of love, we will have nothing..."Let us allow the Lord to make us fall in love." He went on to tell them that Jesus was inviting each one present to join him in His mission today, not tomorrow. Jesus began his ministry when he went into the synagogue at Nazareth and stood up. He put into action God's dream by proclaiming "good news" to the poor.

If love is real then God is real. If love is concrete, then God is concrete. Concrete love is an essential element in the life of Christians. He then warned them not to think that your mission is far off in the future, having nothing to do with the present. He also advised them against making a future where everything is safe and secure, a "make-believe" happiness that allows you to believe your now has not yet come and you are too young to dream and work for the future. He reiterated (from the Synod on Youth) the call for intergenerational dialogue. May we realize we need one another. "Jesus wants to enter and win over your heart."

What Pope Francis proposes to young people is discipleship. He is calling them to take their experiences of life, reflect on them, and then go forth in action. The reaction of the crowd estimated at over 600,000 from 155 different countries, was enthusiastic. Some, in their cynicism, may scoff at this man, calling young people, from a church wounded by its own sins and scandal. Some may wonder if such an event is little more than a pep rally. Yet, after the closing Mass, Francis then went to the nearby Casa Hogar El Buen Samaritano, built in 2005 by the local church to assist young people and adults affected by AIDS. What this house represents is the kind of love Jesus invites His disciples to embrace. And, despite our wounds, this kind of love is what the church must continue to do. Perhaps such a way of living, will attract enough young people that "good news" for the poor will continue to be proclaimed. Perhaps this alternative to the powerful worldviews of today will appeal to a new generation in a way that will grow God's kingdom.

Fr.Jeff