The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY TO RIO DE JANEIRO
ON THE OCCASION OF THE XXVIII WORLD YOUTH DAY

MEETING WITH THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE XXVIII WYD

ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS

Pavillon 5 of the Rio Center, Rio de Janeiro
Sunday, 28 July 2013

[Multimedia]

Dear Volunteers, Good evening!

I could not return to Rome without first thanking all of you in a personal and affectionate way for the work and dedication with which you have accompanied, helped, and served the thousands of young pilgrims, and for the countless little ways by which you have made this World Youth Day an unforgettable experience of faith. With your smiles, your acts of kindness and your willingness to serve, you have shown that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (*Acts* 20:35).

The service you have given during these days brings to mind the mission of Saint John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus. Every one of you, each in his or her own way, was a means enabling thousands of young people to “prepare the way” to meet Jesus. And this is the most beautiful service we can give as missionary disciples. To prepare the way so that all people may know, meet and love the Lord. To you who in these days responded with such readiness and generosity to the call to be volunteers for World Youth Day, I say: May you always be generous with God and with others: one loses nothing thereby, but gains great enrichment in life.

God calls you to make definitive choices, and he has a plan for each of you: to discover that plan and to respond to your vocation is to move toward personal fulfilment. God calls each of us to be

holy, to live his life, but he has a particular path for each one of us. Some are called to holiness through family life in the sacrament of Marriage. Today, there are those who say that marriage is out of fashion. Is it out of fashion? In a culture of relativism and the ephemeral, many preach the importance of “enjoying” the moment. They say that it is not worth making a life-long commitment, making a definitive decision, “for ever”, because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. I ask you, instead, to be revolutionaries, I ask you to swim against the tide; yes, I am asking you to rebel against this culture that sees everything as temporary and that ultimately believes you are incapable of responsibility, that believes you are incapable of true love. I have confidence in you and I pray for you. Have the courage “to swim against the tide”. And also have the courage to be happy.

The Lord calls some to be priests, to give themselves to him more fully, so as to love all people with the heart of the Good Shepherd. Some he calls to the service of others in the religious life: devoting themselves in monasteries to praying for the good of the world, and in various areas of the apostolate, giving of themselves for the sake of all, especially those most in need. I will never forget that day, 21 September – I was 17 years old – when, after stopping in the Church of *San José de Flores* to go to confession, I first heard God calling me. Do not be afraid of what God asks of you! It is worth saying “yes” to God. In him we find joy!

Dear young people, some of you may not yet know what you will do with your lives. Ask the Lord, and he will show you the way. The young Samuel kept hearing the voice of the Lord who was calling him, but he did not understand or know what to say, yet with the help of the priest Eli, in the end he answered: Speak, Lord, for I am listening (cf. *1 Sam* 3:1-10). You too can ask the Lord: What do you want me to do? What path am I to follow?

Dear friends, I thank you once more for all you have done during these days. I thank your parish groups, and the movements and new communities who have placed their members at the service of WYD. Thank you! Do not forget what you have experienced here! You can always count on my prayers, and I know I can count on yours. One last thing: pray for me.

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