



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY
OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 6th ASIAN YOUTH DAY
(13-18 AUGUST 2014)

CLOSING MASS FOR THE SIXTH ASIAN YOUTH DAY

HOMILY OF POPE FRANCIS

Haemi Castle
Sunday, 17 August 2014

Dear Young Friends,

The glory of the martyrs shines upon you! These words – a part of the theme of the Sixth Asian Youth Day – console and strengthen us all. Young people of Asia: you are the heirs of a great testimony, a precious witness to Christ. He is the light of the world; he is the light of our lives! The martyrs of Korea – and innumerable others throughout Asia – handed over their bodies to their persecutors; to us they have handed on a perennial witness that the light of Christ's truth dispels all darkness, and the love of Christ is gloriously triumphant. With the certainty of his victory over death, and our participation in it, we can face the challenge of Christian discipleship today, in our own circumstances and time.

The words which we have just reflected upon are a consolation. The other part of this Day's theme – *Asian Youth! Wake up!* – speaks to you of a duty, a responsibility. Let us consider for a moment each of these words.

First, the word "*Asian*". You have gathered here in Korea from all parts of Asia. Each of you has a unique place and context where you are called to reflect God's love. The Asian continent, imbued

with rich philosophical and religious traditions, remains a great frontier for your testimony to Christ, “the way, and the truth and the life” (*Jn 14:6*). As young people not only *in* Asia, but also as sons and daughters *of* this great continent, you have a right and a duty to take full part in the life of your societies. Do not be afraid to bring the wisdom of faith to every aspect of social life!

As Asians too, you see and love, from within, all that is beautiful, noble and true in your cultures and traditions. Yet as Christians, you also know that the Gospel has the power to purify, elevate and perfect this heritage. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit given you in Baptism and sealed within you at Confirmation, and in union with your pastors, you can appreciate the many positive values of the diverse Asian cultures. You are also able to discern what is incompatible with your Catholic faith, what is contrary to the life of grace bestowed in Baptism, and what aspects of contemporary culture are sinful, corrupt, and lead to death.

Returning to the theme of this Day, let us reflect on a second word: “*Youth*”. You and your friends are filled with the optimism, energy and good will which are so characteristic of this period of life. Let Christ turn your natural optimism into Christian hope, your energy into moral virtue, your good will into genuine self-sacrificing love! This is the path you are called to take. This is the path to overcoming all that threatens hope, virtue and love in your lives and in your culture. In this way your youth will be a gift to Jesus and to the world.

As young Christians, whether you are workers or students, whether you have already begun a career or have answered the call to marriage, religious life or the priesthood, you are not only a part of the *future* of the Church; you are also a necessary and beloved part of the Church’s *present*! You are Church’s present! Keep close to one another, draw ever closer to God, and with your bishops and priests spend these years in building a holier, more missionary and humble Church, a holier, more missionary and humble Church, a Church which loves and worships God by seeking to serve the poor, the lonely, the infirm and the marginalized.

In your Christian lives, you will find many occasions that will tempt you, like the disciples in today’s Gospel, to push away the stranger, the needy, the poor and the broken-hearted. It is these people especially who repeat the cry of the woman of the Gospel: “Lord, help me!”. The Canaanite woman’s plea is the cry of everyone who searches for love, acceptance, and friendship with Christ. It is the cry of so many people in our anonymous cities, the cry of so many of your own contemporaries, and the cry of all those martyrs who even today suffer persecution and death for the name of Jesus: “Lord, help me!” It is often a cry which rises from our own hearts as well: “Lord, help me!” Let us respond, not like those who push away people who make demands on us, as if serving the needy gets in the way of our being close to the Lord. No! We are to be like Christ, who responds to every plea for his help with love, mercy and compassion.

Finally, the third part of this Day’s theme – “*Wake up!*” – This word speaks of a responsibility which the Lord gives you. It is the duty to be vigilant, not to allow the pressures, the temptations and the

sins of ourselves or others to dull our sensitivity to the beauty of holiness, to the joy of the Gospel. Today's responsorial psalm invites us constantly to "be glad and sing for joy". No one who sleeps can sing, dance or rejoice. I don't like to see young people who are sleeping. No! Wake up! Go! Go Forward! Dear young people, "God, our God, has blessed us!" (*Ps* 67:6); from him we have "received mercy" (*Rom* 11:30). Assured of God's love, go out to the world so that, "by the mercy shown to you", they – your friends, co-workers, neighbors, countrymen, everyone on this great continent – "may now receive the mercy of God" (cf. *Rom* 11:31). It is by his mercy that we are saved.

Dear young people of Asia, it is my hope that, in union with Christ and the Church, you will take up this path, which will surely bring you much joy. Now, as we approach the table of the Eucharist, let us turn to our Mother Mary, who brought Jesus to the world. Yes, Mother Mary, we long to have Jesus; in your maternal affection help us to bring him to others, to serve him faithfully, and to honor him in every time and place, in this country and throughout Asia. Amen.

Asian youth, wake up!