



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
TO DUTCH YOUNG PEOPLE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL
CELEBRATED IN THE ABBEY OF MARIËNKROON IN NIEUWKUIJK
[28-29 JUNE 2014]**

Dear young friends,

I send affectionate greetings to you on the occasion of the National Catholic Youth Festival which has brought so many of you together at the Abbey of Mariënkroon in Nieuwkuijk. I wish also to greet and to thank your Pastors, who have planned this meeting centred on the theme: “*New, pure and intense*”.

As you know, every year I write a Message to the young people of the whole world for the World Youth Day. Starting from this year until WYD 2016, which will be celebrated in Krakow, I have proposed an itinerary of spiritual preparation based on the Beatitudes. In this wonderful text from Matthew’s Gospel (*Mt* 5:3-12), you can find a concrete program of life that can serve as a guide for us on the path to true happiness.

The three beatitudes that I propose for your reflection are:

2014: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (*Mt* 5:3);

2015: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (*Mt* 5:8);

2016: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy” (*Mt* 5:7).

As you can see, the Beatitudes of Jesus are new. In fact, they are revolutionary. They present a model of happiness contrary to the logic of this world. Those whom Jesus proclaimed blessed are regarded as useless, or “losers”. What the world glorifies is success at any cost, affluence, the arrogance of power and self-affirmation at the expense of others. Jesus offers a different definition of what it means to be “blessed”; he shows us the way to life and happiness, the way that he himself has taken. In fact, Jesus himself *is* the way! Throughout his entire life he showed us how

to live each one of the Beatitudes. Jesus loves each one of you, each one of us, with an infinite love! By his death on the cross and his resurrection, he proved his boundless mercy, gave us salvation and opened the way for us to a new life.

If we accept his love and salvation, if we contemplate Jesus in his own poverty, his purity of heart, and his mercy, we will realize how beautiful our Christian vocation is, and we will not hesitate to ask the Lord for the grace to imitate him. I invite you to do just that. “Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything” (*Benedict XVI*).

Dear brothers and sisters, Saint John, writing to young people, told them: “You are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one” (1 Jn 2:14). Young people want to live intense experiences! I challenge you: Say no to an ephemeral, superficial and throwaway culture, a culture that assumes that you are not strong, that you are not capable of facing great challenges in your life! Think big! As Blessed Piergiorgio Frassati once said: “To live without faith, to have no heritage to uphold, to fail to struggle constantly to defend the truth: this is not living. It is scraping by. We should never just scrape by, but really live”.

May the Virgin Mary, whom all generations call “blessed” (cf. Lk 1:48), intercede for you, so that you can experience that joy which is *new*, *pure* and *intense*, the joy which you can find only in Jesus. To each of you, your families, and to all the young people of the Netherlands, I gladly impart my blessing as a pledge of joy and peace.