



World Youth Day “Aussie Gathering” Homily

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The Gospel today, “Go and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:29), which is the theme of World Youth Day, really offers us two things: it calls us to *do* something, and it calls us to *be* something.

The doing part is pretty clear: go and make disciples of all nations. The Lord is sending us out. He is calling us to be people who stop looking inward and *start looking outward*. He is asking us to make sure that our faith isn't just about ourselves but is *about others*.

Here in Rio we have experienced once again what a fantastic gift our Catholic faith is. To be a Catholic is to belong to a family that is full of energy, full of enthusiasm, full of hope, full of life.

To be a Catholic is to know that God gives us the gift of life and the gift of faith because he loves us and he wants us to reach out with both hands, grab hold of these gifts, both of them, life and faith, and live them to the full.

Who wouldn't want to share these gifts with others?

Who wouldn't want to invite others into the family?

Who wouldn't want to say "yes" with enthusiasm and determination to Jesus's invitation, "Go and make disciples of all nations"?

Today, here in our Aussie gathering, I think the Lord is asking each one of us to hear this invitation very personally - Peter, Joanna, Josh, or Rebecca - you go, yes you - and start making disciples. You go and spread the word that the fantastic gift of faith is there for you if you are ready to reach out and accept it.

This then is the *doing* part - but what of the *being* part?

I think really it's pretty simple. You can't work with the Lord to offer the gift of faith to others, you can't work with the Lord to make new disciples - and remember that in the end making new disciples is the Lord's work and not ours - if you are not a disciple yourself.

This is the being part. You have to be a disciple if you want to make a disciple.

Our first Australian saint, Saint Mary McKillop, had a famous saying which I'm sure you have all heard lots of times before: “Never see a need without doing something about it.” This is the doing part - and you certainly can't be a disciple without it.

But there's another saying of Saint Mary McKillop's which I think is just as important: “Never forget who it is you are following.”

There are lots of people in the world who do good things. There are lots of people in the world who do much more than many of us do - but they are not Christians.



Doing good things for others is not enough to make you a Christian, although you can't be a Christian without this.

It is not so much what we do that makes us Christians - it is *why* we do what we do.

We want to reach out and help others because we are disciples, followers, imitators, friends, lovers of Jesus. He is at the heart of our faith and He is at the heart of our lives.

We know this in Australia because we have all just lived through the Year of Grace. For the last twelve months we have been reminded over and over again to look to Christ, to contemplate His face, to start again from Him, to put Him back where He belongs - at the centre of everything.

Who is this Christ whom we follow?

He is the one who said "I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life".

If you want to know the way to a better, richer, fuller future, follow Him because He is the Way.

If you want to know the truth, about who you really are, who God really is, what God is inviting you into, what life is really all about, listen to Him, because He is the Truth.

If you want to live life to the full, with real integrity, deep peace and great joy, then model yourself on Him because He is the Life.

Here in Rio, this I think is the great invitation:

- Make room in your life each day for Him.
- Do what you can to develop your love for Him.
- Get to know Him by reading the gospels.
- Spend time with Him in Eucharistic adoration,
- Receive Him into your life and your heart as often as you can in Holy Communion.

Let Him be the friend to you that He so desperately wants to be. He will not force His friendship on you but it's always there on offer.

"Come to me" He says in the Gospel of today's Mass. "Come to me and I will refresh you. I will give you life."

- This is His invitation.
- This is His plea.
- This is His cry.

For your own sakes don't miss the opportunity this World Youth Day offers to give Him your "YES".

Make it clear, make it loud, make it strong - and make it count!