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28TH WORLD YOUTH DAY

The Concluding Mass of WYD Rio 2013

Rio de Janeiro, 28 July 2013

Words of gratitude addressed to the Holy Father

Holy Father,

The 28th World Youth Day is coming to an end. Here before you, Your Holiness, there are young people from every corner of the world. This is a beautiful picture of the young Church, full of hope. Here, Holy Father, are young disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ. These young people who have come to Rio – with their gaze directed towards Christ the Redeemer of Corcovado that watches over this wonderful city – have accepted as their life plan the missionary mandate of the Master: “*Go and make disciples of all nations!*” (cf Mt 28:19).

This has really been a marvellous few days of extensive planting of the Gospel. Around 300 bishops have given catechesis in 27 different languages; there have been so many opportunities for silent prayer; many young people have received the sacrament of reconciliation; there has been so much joy at being together as brothers and sisters to witness to the world that it is beautiful to be Christian, and that it is worthwhile following Christ in our lives. So many decisions have been pondered and made at this time: important choices – as you have taught us – the option for Christian marriage or priesthood or consecrated life. How can we not thank the Lord for this gift of grace!

Holy Father, since your election to the See of Peter, these young people have discovered that you are the Successor of Peter, an affectionate father and a friend who can be trusted. Your cordial simple words provide them with answers to many of the questions that trouble their hearts. They have so much need to hear you urge them on with your heartfelt words of encouragement: “Do not be sad men and women! A Christian is never sad”; “Let nobody rob you of your hope!”; “Reach for high ideals, for the big things!”; Do not be afraid to go against the current, even though it is not easy!”; Let us keep Christ in our lives so that we can safeguard others and safeguard creation!” These ongoing words of advice stimulate young

people to go beyond themselves and to go out to the existential peripheries of our world to bring the Good News – to the poor, the excluded, those on the margins, and thereby to touch the suffering flesh of Christ himself.

Now, as we conclude this wonderful unforgettable time spent in Rio de Janeiro, Holy Father, the young people, with hearts full of joy, would like to express their devotion and gratitude. Thank you for being with us at this WYD! Thank you for your words addressed to these young people, words of hope that point the way along the road.

Together with you, Holy Father, we would like to express our gratitude to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. It was he who chose Rio de Janeiro to host the 28th WYD, and he gave young people a beautiful message to guide them in their spiritual preparation. We would like to renew our gratitude to Blessed John Paul II for the providential gift of WYD in the Church, as we await his now imminent canonisation.

Holy Father, the time has come for the missionary sending-forth. At the conclusion of the WYD, the young people, send forth by you, are ready to go out to the whole world as apostles of the new evangelisation. To a few of these young people representing the five continents, you, Holy Father, will give a small statue of Christ the Redeemer of Corcovado, a sign of the missionary mandate they have received: *“Go and make disciples of all nations!”* (cf Mt 28:19)

Holy Father, bless this people of young disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ. They are ready to go forth from this immense open Cenacle – just as the apostles came out from the Cenacle at Pentecost – to give witness of their faith, even to the ends of the earth.

Thank you, Holy Father.