

Signs of the Times: Called to live our founding story (*a prayer created by Chris Swain*)

Leader:

The future, then, is reflected in the prayer, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Our spirituality of recalling that we are in the presence of God not only illuminates the reality which exists, but also gives us hope in the reality that is coming. Mindful that we live in God’s presence gives all of us (faculties, staffs, all associated with our mission) the ability to be educators who plant the seed of God, to be sowers without demanding the benefit of reaping. It gives us the ability to be women and men of hope who keep telling the story of God.

(Donald J. Kavanaugh, AFSC, La Salle Academy, Providence RI)

We take time, in this moment to recall our founding story. The story of our calling (even our callings) leads to our responses and our going forth—to “see all things through the eyes of faith” and to respond with ardent zeal. Our presence and attention are called here to **this space and these people**. We ask God to unite us in his presence.

Pause for a moment of quiet reflection

Leader: Let us remember...

Community: That we are in the holy presence of God.

The following adapted texts come from a statement created by more than 300 young adults from around the world who gathered in Rome, March 19-25, 2018 to listen to one another and who shared their thoughts and feelings with the Institutional Church to shape its perspective as it enters into a synod gathering in October that will offer reflection and direction to the Church’s ministry.

Reader: Young People and the Future

Young people dream of safety, stability and fulfilment. Many hope for a better life for their families. In many places of the world, this means looking for physical safety; for others this relates more specifically to finding a good job or a specific lifestyle. A common dream across continents and oceans is the desire to find a place where the young person can feel that he or she belongs.

We envision greater opportunities, of a society which is coherent and trusts us. We seek to be listened to and to not merely be spectators in society but active participants. We seek a Church that helps us find our vocation, in all of its senses. Furthermore, sadly not all of us believe sainthood is something achievable and that it is a path to happiness. We need to revitalize the sense of community that leads us to a sense of belonging.

Response: (*Several Readers and Community Response*)

Many young people, when asked the question, “What is the meaning of your life?” do not know how to answer. They do not always make the connection between life and transcendence. Lots of young people, having lost trust in institutions, have become disaffiliated with organized religion and would not see themselves as religious. However, young people are open to the spiritual.

R: God, open us to your love, let us be authentic and encourage the young.

Many also lament how infrequently young people seek the answers to life’s meaning in the context of faith and church. In many places around the world, young people attach meaning to their lives through their job and personal success. The difficulty of finding stability in

these areas produces insecurity and anxiety. Many have to migrate in order to find a good place to work. Others, due to economic instability, abandon family and culture.

R: God, open us to your love, let us be authentic and encourage the young.

The Church can play a vital role in ensuring that these young people are not marginalized but feel accepted. This can happen when we seek to promote the dignity of women, both in the Church and in wider society. Today, there is a general problem in society in that women are still not given an equal place. This is also true in the Church. There are great examples of women serving in consecrated religious communities and in a variety of lay leadership roles.

R: God, open us to your love, let us be authentic and encourage the young.

Throughout the world, the relationship to the sacred is complicated. Christianity is often seen as something belonging to the past and its value or relevance to our lives is no longer understood. Meanwhile, in certain communities, priority is given to the sacred since daily life is structured around religion. How are the young to respond?

R: God, open us to your love, let us be authentic and encourage the young.

Together as Accompaniers of the Young:

It is both a joy and a sacred responsibility to accompany young people on their journey of faith and discernment and the movement to meaning found in the depths of their heart. The young are more receptive to hearing the meaning our own life story than abstract theological discourse. They are conscious and receptive, think and feel deeply. They seek to find their own meaningful commitments as they read the signs of the times in which they live - in the world of which the Church is a part.

Pause for a moment of quiet reflection

In these reflections by international young adults, what touches you?

Leader: *You are invited to take a few moments to share that with your prayer partners at the table.*

Closing Prayer (Together as a Community)

Spirit of God, breathe life into your world and all communities of faith.

Help us read the signs of the times and how we might best respond through our educational mission.

Let our lives be testimony and witness to authenticity on the path to holiness.

Guide us as we call others to holiness through our word and witness.

Inspire us in our role as accompaniers of the young which is the mission you have entrusted to us.

Let us love all those entrusted to our care as we touch their minds and their hearts. AMEN!

Saint John Baptist de La Salle...Pray for us
Live Jesus in our Hearts...FOREVER!