



DEPARTMENT OF LAITY, FAMILY AND LIFE
YOUTH OFFICE

MINI WORLD YOUTH DAY PROGRAMME



Southern African Catholic
Bishops' Conference



Speech presented by Ursula Collings Chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council for the Archdioceses of Durban at the MWYD for 2017 at the opening mass celebrating the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Your Eminence CARDINAL WILFRED NAPIER, in his absentia the Nuncio Steven Wells, President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference Archbishop STEVEN BRISLIN....fellow bishops, Priests, Deacons, Nuns, guests and especially to you the pilgrims for 2017 Good morning beautiful people of God and a happy feast day to you all. On behalf of the Archdiocese of Durban and the Cluster of Dioceses of the Durban Metropolitan Province, I extend a warm welcome to you all and take this opportunity to thank all the organising committees and volunteers for the many tireless months they have spent in organising and hosting the Mini World Youth Day Pilgrimage of 2017.

....Young People of God ...consider this pilgrimage to be a **defining milestone** in your life as I unpack for you the **THE PARADOX OF OUR TIME***

1. *We live in times when we **see many humans, but not enough humanity**;
 2. *We live in times when **smart phones** bring you closer to those who are far, **but distance you from those who are close**;
 3. *We live in times when **we open Facebook, more than we open the Holy Bible** *
 4. *We live in times when a **single mother can look after 10 children**, but **10 children can't look after a single mother**;
 5. *We live in times when our **contact lists are huge, but our relationships are poor**;
 6. *We live in times when **our possessions are more, but our appreciation is less**;
- Indeed, we live in a strange world.**

Today in this moment of time which I would like to call a moment of GRACEGod is calling you as individuals, communities and parishes to make difference NOW. YOU are armed with more tools of influence and empowerment than any other generation in history because in your world of **Youtube ... Facebook and Twitter and Instagram**, you can reach billions in just seconds. You're the generation that has the power to set the country and our world on a different path. I believe it starts first with you building and having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ were you will experience Christs peace, love and Joy. By having a personal relationship with God you will be empowered to **be the Evangelizer** spreading your Faith serving God, humanity and all creation. This is not an easy task I am not going to lie to you... you will have to be the voice of reason because you know who God is.....you will have to be the voice for the voicelesswhen others are going in one direction, YOU will have to go in the opposite direction....you will have to create paths that no one has walked before...Do not be afraid to challenge the norm.... Be willing to take a chance and to stand up for justice and DARE TO CARE ... **THIS IS YOUR APPOINTED TIME....** you are called by God to make an **IMPACT and leave a LEGACY.**

*The other day I asked my daughter Jessica, what are the fears that young people are experiencing, she is only 15years old, she looked at me and said "we are stressed about our future, jobs, financial instability **And often you feel like you are aging more instead of being young**".* My young people of God I urge you, don't let your fears and failings stop you from dreaming and living your dream for the Spirit of the Lord is in you. God has not given you a spirit of **fear** but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ..Young people of God our Mother Mary on this the feast of the Immaculate Conception challenges you to **live a life of Grace** in purity of mind and heart, to have respect for yourself and each other.

St Francis of Assisi said "Start by doing what is necessary, then what is possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible"

God does not limit His work in us based only on our strengths and capabilities. Disabilities, limitations and disappointments do not disqualify us from His grand plan for us. In history think of the following people:

- Deafen him and you have a Ludwig van Beethoven
- Have him born in a society filled with racial discrimination, and you have Martin Luther King
- Call him a slow learner, "retarded", and write him off as uneducable and you have Albert Einstein
- Imprison him for 27years and you have Nelson Mandela

Young people of God our country needs you... our country needs people that are able to stand apart ... in Government, in business ... to have people who are honest and courageous, having good moral values... **Courage** my young people... **is GRACE under pressure.**

If I can share this with you I have met a young aspiring entrepreneur here at the MWYD his name is Clinton Ngobo, he is approximately 25 years old ...**he was a waiter** who turned his life around through hard work, determination and a desire to improve the lives of the many unemployed young adults in his community... over the past few days your meals have been served to you by his staff of over 80 young adults whose lives have been changed because he cared **YES one person** can make a difference to the lives of others. If we close ourselves **off to service**, we will never create the space within ourselves to be filled with the love of God.

What is the IMPACT you want to make personally, in your family, parish and society Today Jesus is calling you to leave your legacy **What's Your Legacy?**

There is a sense that young people have an attitude of entitlement ... that the world OWES you.. that parents OWE you...that the Church OWES you... But this is not the message Jesus has He came to serve, to love, and to give of himself. AND that is what you young people have to take from the Mini World Youth Day of 2017 into your families, communities and parishes ...is **to SERVE in the vocation that God leads you.** An army General once said,"If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed. If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride, and will encourage you to do another task, and another, and another. By the end of the day, that one task completed will have turned into many tasks completed. Making your bed will also reinforce the fact that **the little things in life matter.** If you can't do the little things right, you'll never be able to do the big things right. If, by chance, you have a miserable day, you will come home to a bed that is made. That you made. And a made bed gives you encouragement that tomorrow will be better."

Speaking of tomorrow YOU are the leaders of today and know our **greatest challenge** we are facing in the world today my young people of God is **Climate Change** ... we are all responsible for the pollution and destruction of our planet. I challenge you young people to become champions for the

environment in which you live. Go out and start campaigns in your areas to pick up the litter, clean up your communities, plant vegetables take responsibility for the environment for yourself and generations to come. Pope Francis urges us and says” We are all called to care for creation, not only as responsible citizens, but also as followers of Christ.” God has chosen YOU for greatness. Greatness does not necessarily equate to trophies, medals, certificates of recognition. TRUE GREATNESS is far beyond them all. GREATNESS simply means being the best you can ever be, being the person He has intended you to be and to know that GREATNESS awaits those who DARE TO CARE.

We need you as missionaries and evangelizers.. this world needs Good News and you are the Good News... You are energetic , you are intelligent , you are valued , WE value YOU...you are God’s perfect creation. You know the many challenges you face .. BUT I SAY TO YOU... DON’T GIVE UP....Listen to the voice of the Lord saying, "**Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am Lord Send me!" X 3** for the **Mighty One has done** great things for me— holy is his name. **To God be praised.**