

## Excerpt from Pope Francis' Year of Mercy Message to Young People

The Church is celebrating the Holy Year of Mercy, a time of grace, peace, conversion and joy. It is meant for everyone: people of every age, from far and near. There are no walls or distances which can prevent the Father's mercy from reaching and embracing us....

To be merciful means to grow in a love which is courageous, generous and real. It means to grow physically and spiritually. You are preparing to be Christians capable of making courageous choices and decisions, in order to build daily, even through little things, a world of peace.

Yours is a time of life which is full of amazing changes. Everything seems possible and impossible all at once. I repeat what I said to some of your friends: "Remain steadfast in the journey of faith, with firm hope in the Lord. This is the secret of our journey! He gives us the courage to swim against the tide. Pay attention, my young friends: to go against the current, this is good for the heart, but we need courage to swim against the tide. Jesus gives us this courage! With him we can do great things; he will give us the joy of being his disciples, his witnesses. Commit yourselves to great ideals, to the most important things. We Christians were not chosen by the Lord for little things; push onwards toward the highest principles. Stake your lives on noble ideals". (Homily, Sacrament of Confirmation, 2013).

Here I can not forget those of you who are living in situations of war, extreme poverty, daily troubles and loneliness. Don't ever lose hope! The Lord has a great dream which, with your help, he wants to come true!

Your friends, young people your age living in less trying conditions than your own, have not forgotten you; they are working for peace and justice for everyone everywhere.

Don't be taken in by the messages of hatred or terror all around us. Instead, make new friends. Give of your time and always show concern for those who ask your help. Be brave and go against the tide; be friends of Jesus, who is the Prince of Peace (cf. Is. 9:6). "Everything in him speaks of mercy. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion" (Misericordiae Vultus, 8).

*As Pope Francis addresses Youth, do I also hear God inviting me to keep the flames of faith, justice, peace and mercy alive in my own heart and in my community?*

*What am I asked to be and to do to help make a profound difference in our world?*

Sr. Teresa Morrison, CPS

