

Be agents of social change: Pope Francis

In a personally signed letter to the Pax Romana movements on 22 July 2022, Pope Francis called on Catholic students and professionals to work for the spread of the Gospel, its values of justice, peace and solidarity, and to be agents of social change.

Pax Romana, which comprises two movements - the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) and the International Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMICA) - has just concluded its centenary year commemorating its foundation in 1921.

In his letter, Pope Francis thanked Pax Romana leaders for maintaining a “spirituality of action” and for fulfilling “your mission of addressing the spiritual and material needs of young people in tertiary educational institutions throughout the world.”

“I am likewise appreciative of the contribution you have made within the Church,” the pope continued, “and for the notable fruits that have been borne in nurturing leaders and supporting the faithful in promoting Catholic social teaching in the Americas, Africa and Asia.”

“Your vital apostolate encourages young people to take the lead in striving for a more just social order within their countries,” the pope noted, even though “not all of you live in environments that easily facilitate the pursuit of your dreams or that help you to grow in faith.”

“Support one another in the life of faith and the pursuit of virtue. In a world of widespread inequality, may you be mindful too of your fellow students and peers in so many parts of our world whose dreams are threatened by war, injustice, and political, economic and ecological crises. Keep them in your prayers and support them by works of practical solidarity,” the pope added.

Recalling the theme for World Youth Day 2023 - “Mary arose and went with haste” - he urged leaders “to ‘arise’ like Mary, and work for the change you want to experience within your communities

“Demonstrate and spread the (Pax Romana) values of ‘Respect and Integrity, Trust and Solidarity, Diversity and Inclusivity, Transparency and Accountability” so that “your service to the liberating message or the Gospel will be effective and will bear lasting fruit,” Pope Francis concluded.

The Australian Cardijn Institute (www.australiancardijninstitute.org) is a corresponding member of Pax Romana ICMICA (www.icmica-miic.org).





To the Members of the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS-MIEC) Pax Romana and the International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMCA-MIIC) Pax Romana

I send prayerful good wishes to the students and professionals celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the International Movement of Catholic Students – Pax Romana. Your Movement received official recognition by the Holy See in 1921, and I am pleased that you have maintained your spirituality of action and fulfilled your mission of addressing the spiritual and material needs of young people in tertiary educational institutions throughout the world. I am likewise appreciative of the contribution you have made within the Church over this period, and for the notable fruits that have been borne in nurturing leaders and supporting the faithful in promoting Catholic social teaching in the Americas, Africa and Asia. Your vital apostolate encourages young people to take the lead in striving for a more just social order within their countries.

Over the past Century, Pax Romana has enabled many university students and young professionals to grow in their faith and to work for the spread of the Gospel and its values of justice, peace and solidarity. I encourage you to continue to be agents of social change, steadfast in your efforts to help build a more inclusive, harmonious and sustainable world. Be ever ready to give the best of yourselves in meeting the challenges that lie ahead, attentive to the signs of the times and committed to the service of the poor, the vulnerable and the underprivileged.

Dear young friends, at this stage of your lives, you have much energy and a plethora of opportunities and choices before you. Yet, while you have many wishes and interests that you want to explore, not all of you live in environments that easily facilitate the pursuit of your dreams or that help you to grow in faith. Support one another in the life of faith and the pursuit of virtue. In a world of widespread inequality, may you be mindful too of your fellow students and peers in so many parts of our world whose dreams are threatened by war, injustice, and political, economic and ecological crises. Keep them in your prayers and support them by works of practical solidarity.

As you know, young Catholics are preparing to meet in Lisbon in August 2023 for World Youth Day, with the motto, “Mary arose and went with haste” (Lk 1:39), I look forward to seeing many of you there! I urge you to “arise” like Mary, and work for the change you want to experience within your communities. Demonstrate and spread the values of “Respect and Integrity, Trust and Solidarity, Diversity and Inclusivity, Transparency and Accountability” that your Strategic Plan highlights. In this way, your service to the liberating message of the Gospel will be effective and will bear lasting fruit.

With these sentiments, I send my blessing to all the members of IMCS and ICMICA, I ask you, please, to pray for me, and for peace in our world, that young people everywhere may enjoy a future filled with hope and joy.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 22 July 2022