

Dear Friends,

I had the privilege of speaking with several hundreds of young people in the last few weeks during whole school Masses.

I spoke about a life of virtue, comparing repeated making of good choices to the development of muscles. If we exercise it becomes easier to be fit, to build up endurance and to do better at sports, etc.

Virtue means repeated and deliberate choosing what is good and not just what is easy.

I quoted Dumbledore talking to Harry Potter reminding him that he was now growing up and that he needed to learn to choose to do what is good and right, and not just what is easy.

Harry Potter, of course, is a 'Fairy Tale'. Our Christmas story is not a fairy tale. We celebrate that God is truly one of us in Jesus.

His message is that we matter absolutely to God. We are not victims of past mistakes. With the grace of God we can leave unhealthy aspects of our life behind and make fresh starts.

Christmas is about hope. Despite many challenges in our own lives, both personal and as a Church and as a human race, we are not alone.

A person who truly lives a Christian life is living a life that makes us truly human. To be Christian is to be who God is calling us to be.

We are called to be a prophetic people. As Christians we cannot compromise our values just because popular culture does not like them. It is important as Jesus said to be awake, alert, so that we do not accept as normal what is against what we believe.

This applies to the value of human life, the treatment of vulnerable people such as refugees, aspects of morality, chastity and the common good.

We need to act out of the inspired energy and grace of the Holy Spirit to resist a certain helplessness and powerlessness.

We can be true to our beliefs and live out of those beliefs. We can be 'salt of the earth and light of the world'. We can pursue a life of virtue and holiness.

The hope of Christmas calls us to live our discipleship.

As we prepare for the plenary council let us pray that we can listen to the Holy Spirit so that we can be the Church that God calls us to be.

We pray that we can do our part so that our Catholic Church can indeed be good news for all of creation in Jesus Christ.

Blessings on all at this special and sacred time as we keep in mind those for whom Christmas is not such a happy time.

Bishop Charles Gauci