



AUSSIE BISHOPS PARTNER WITH YOUTH Express Commitment to Work Together for Social Justice

SYDNEY, Australia, SEPT. 16, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- The Australian prelates are expressing their commitment and support to work with young people to address injustices in their country and in the world.

The Australian bishops' conference affirmed this in their 2009 Social Justice Sunday Statement, released today in anticipation of the Sep. 27 celebration.

The statement, launched at an event today at the Australian Catholic University, is titled, "And You Will Be My Witnesses: Young People and Justice."

In the opening letter, Bishop Christopher Saunders of Broome, chairman of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, recalled the words that Benedict XVI addressed to young people at World Youth Day in Sydney last year: "What will you leave to the next generation? [...]"

"What legacy will you leave to young people yet to come? What difference will you make?"

He affirmed that "young people are among the strongest fighters in the cause of justice, but at the same time, they can be among the most vulnerable to injustice."

The bishop affirmed, "We are called to persevere in witnessing to the magnificence of God's love for us, to act justly in his name and to be agents of hope and peace."

He noted that this statement "is about youth, but it is for all of us."

The prelate explained: As the bishops say, the power the Spirit gives us is the power to change -- to change ourselves and in so doing to change the world.

"As Catholics, we know that that power to change also gives us the responsibility to work for justice and to live and embody the message of the Gospel in everything we do in our lives."

Force for change

In the statement, the bishops expressed the desire to promote and support the commitment of youth to social justice "in the life of the Church and in the world and to reassert the central theme of World Youth Day: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses."

They urged: "Consider the plight of homeless and unemployed people, Indigenous communities, asylum seekers, the lonely and isolated in our own communities. How will we address not only the human need before us, but also be a force for change to institutions and policies that have contributed to their plight?"

The bishops stressed the need for Catholics to be ambassadors of faith, justice and hope, and pledged their commitment to work with young people and to give them support.

The statement affirmed, "We the Catholic Bishops of Australia recognize our responsibility to stand with young people wherever they are affected by injustice. We take seriously our role as advocates, speaking out when they are unable to be heard or when society is unwilling to listen."

It addressed four main areas of injustice in the country, "Indigenous youth, youth employment, mental health and the prevention of abuse," as well as two international concerns, "the environment and justice in the wider world."

"Building on the energy of World Youth Day," the bishops stated, "we seek to enhance the reign of God in our land through forging reconciliation, acting for justice and making peace."

The statement concluded, "The Holy Spirit invites us, bishops and Australian youth together, to step into a new future."

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On the Net:

Bishops' statement: www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au