



DICASTERIUM
PRO LAICIS FAMILIA ET VITA

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INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CATHOLIC STUDENTS
Seventy-fifth Anniversary of its foundation
(1946 - 2021)

Message by Cardinal Kevin Farrell,

Prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I would like to extend to all you, young students, my greetings and best wishes on the 75th anniversary of the founding of your association.

The International Coordination of the *Young Christian Students* Movement was founded immediately after the Second World War, in an international context marked by division amongst peoples, by violence and by the immense suffering caused by injustice and hatred. The idea of starting again with the youth was a prophetic idea, particularly in such a historical moment of material and spiritual devastation. Young people are "bearers of hope", capable of looking to the future with pure eyes, free from cynicism, resentment and prejudice. Young people are very sensitive to the great Christian and human ideals of justice, brotherhood and the overcoming of hatred and division through reconciliation, solidarity and cooperation. Hence, it was only right to leave behind the tragedies of war and to start afresh from young people.

Seventy-five years later, we find ourselves living in a world still very much torn apart by strain and conflict. Even in those countries where no wars are underway, there are, however, all kinds of ideological exasperation that push entire sectors of society towards conflict. Today it seems like there are opposing factions and sides fighting each other everywhere, in the world of culture, politics, social media, and even the Church. Everything seems polarized. It seems that people all over are looking not for an encounter, rather for conflict in order to fuel tension and hatred towards their rivals. Therefore, the invitation to universal brotherhood that the Pope addressed to the whole world in his Encyclical Letter "*Fratelli Tutti*" is urgent. And this is precisely why even today there is a need to restart from young people. The duty that awaits each of you, young students, and the mission of your association has not concluded; on the contrary, it is highly contemporary. Today, more than ever, there is a need for a global

movement of young people who are committed to building a peaceful, just and sustainable world.

The words you have chosen to celebrate your 75th anniversary are very appropriate: formation, action, global solidarity.

I would like to recall a passage from a speech that the Holy Father gave a few days ago, speaking precisely to a group of people engaged in Christian animation of society. Pope Francis said: «...God himself, who, as Trinity, a communion of persons, inspires us to find our fulfilment in generous openness *to others* (solidarity), through collaboration *with others* (cooperation) and through commitment *to others* (responsibility). He inspires us to do this in every aspect of our life in society, through our relationships, our work and civic engagements, our relationship with creation and our participation in political life. In every sphere of life, today more than ever, we are bound to witness our concern for others, to think not only of ourselves, and to commit ourselves freely to the development of a more just and equitable society where forms of selfishness and partisan interests do not prevail. At the same time, we are called to be vigilant in upholding respect for the human person and his or her freedom, and in safeguarding his or her inviolable dignity». (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Participants in the International Convention of the "Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice" Foundation, October 23, 2021*).

It is with these terms that one can best comment the words of your theme: formation, action, solidarity. In fact, “formation” is a “generous openness *to others*”, it means putting oneself at the service of others in order to enrich them from a human and spiritual point of view so that each person can fulfill the mission that God has assigned to him or her; "action" means implementing our ideals "for others", for their good and their happiness; solidarity means overcoming individualism and the temptation of closure in order to cooperate "with others", to achieve brotherhood among men and women and to work together for the care and protection of creation and the Earth that has been entrusted to us, our common home.

Dear friends, I hope that the commitment to formation, action and global solidarity that each of you is called to make, as a member of the *Young Christian Students*, will help you transform your entire lives into a journey of holiness, making you too a «message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people» (*GE, n. 21*).

I entrust the entire apostolate of the *Young Christian Students* to the motherly intercession of the Virgin Mary, assuring you of my closeness in prayer and my blessings.

Card. Kevin Farrell
Prefect