

## **An Advent message from our bishop: A season of expectant hope**

***May Your Joy be Complete in the Joy of Christ! (cf John 15:11)***

**Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,**

Advent is a season for appreciation, for looking forward, for sharing with one another. How much we appreciate the great gift the Heavenly Father has given to us in the power of the Holy Spirit—His life in the form of His only begotten son!

Let us then, with expectant hope and reverence, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary our Mother, enter into the awesome Mystery of the Incarnation, the Word made Flesh, the Infant Jesus who is “Emmanuel”, God with us!

We prepare ourselves so that we may see Him and let us share His journey and ours with Him. “Lord let me see!” (Mark 10:51).

Let us also recall with thanksgiving and joy the words spoken by the Lord Jesus at His Last Supper. He assured the Apostles that he would not leave them orphans, that he would come to them and that “in a little while” they would see him. “I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete” (John 15: 11). Lord, complete our joy!

In this season of expectant hope, it is also right and fitting that I should, once again, stress the importance of continuing, with renewed faith and love my engagement and dialogue with our young people. You, the young people, are our hope.

I recall the words of St. Paul to the young Timothy: “Let no one look down on your youthfulness...” (1 Timothy 4:12). To all our youth, especially but not only the leaders that I have been meeting and speaking with since becoming Bishop of Hong Kong, I say from the bottom of my heart: Thank you!

Thank you for your initiative and your enthusiastic, courageous and creative response to the call of the Church in so many different ways.

I humbly pray that the Lord will give me “a listening heart” (1 Kings 3:9). You have given me much to listen to and food for thought. The following are just a few examples of what you have told me so frankly:

- You long for a Church which is more outreaching;
- You desire more transparency in Church affairs;
- You ask for a greater and more active participation, as well as platforms for dialogue, training and in caring for the poor and the needy;
- You want the Diocese to follow up on World Youth Day or Asian Youth Day, lest such events as these just become fireworks in the sky or a flash in a pan;
- You need more caring support and accompaniment and thirst for continuing catechesis, spiritual formation and capacity-building;
- You want the Church to tap and make available more resources;
- You want in particular a Special Sunday Collection every year to be earmarked and used for youth ministry;
- You want the Diocese to improve its audio-visual work and make better use of digital contacts to reach out to youth in this digital age.

Let me say here at once that personally I agree with you. I shall, with God's help and yours, in consultation and with the cooperation of the clergy, the laity and others concerned, make every effort to achieve what you have suggested.

We are often told there is opportunity in danger and danger in opportunity (危中有機,機中有危). But there is a greater danger in not making use of opportunities or in refusing to take up the challenges that face us, from which we cannot excuse or recluse ourselves.

In his address at the World Youth Day Prayer Vigil on 31 July 2016, Pope Francis called on young people to leave their mark on history, not to be couch potatoes that confuse true happiness with comfortable sofas (sofa happiness).

He said, "Jesus is the Lord of risk, of the eternal 'more'. Jesus is not the Lord of comfort, security and ease. Following Jesus' demands a good dose of courage, a readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new and uncharted paths, to blaze trails that open up new horizons capable of spreading joy, the joy that is born of God's love and wells up in your hearts with every act of mercy..."

In line with the Pope Francis' exhortation and in order to complement the 2018 Synod on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment, the Diocese has decided, and I hereby declare that 2018 shall be for the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong the Year of Youth.

It will commence on the First Sunday of Advent 2017 and close on the feast of the Solemnity of Christ the King 2018.

Let us walk the talk and, through solidarity, prayer and action, help build a better world together with God and for His greater glory.

May God bless you all and your loved ones!

**+ Michael Yeung**

Bishop of Hong Kong

First Sunday of Advent, 2017

Hong Kong

## 2017 年將臨期牧函 「一個期盼中充滿希望的節期」

基督內親愛的弟兄姐妹：

願你們的喜樂在基督的喜樂內圓滿無缺！（參閱：若望十五 11）

**將臨期是感恩、盼望、彼此分享的節期。**我們感謝天父，藉著聖神的大能，以自己唯一獨生子的形式，賜予了我們一份極大的禮物——祂的生命！

因此，讓我們懷著殷切的期盼與虔敬，藉著我們榮福童貞聖母瑪利亞無玷之心，進入嬰孩基督道成肉身、不可思議的奧蹟之中！這位嬰孩基督就是「厄瑪奴耳」，意即天主與我們同在。我們要作好準備，方能看見祂，並且讓我們與祂同行，在彼此的旅途上共苦同甘。「主！叫我看見！」（馬爾谷十 51）

讓我們也懷著感恩之心、喜樂之情，回憶主耶穌在最後晚餐時說過的話。祂向宗徒們保證，其中包括：祂必不留下他們為孤兒；祂要回到他們這裏來；而且，「再過片時」，他們又要看見祂。「我對你們講論了這些事，為使我的喜樂存在你們內，使你們的喜樂圓滿無缺」（若望十五 11）。上主，請你使我們的喜樂圓滿無缺！

**在這個令人期盼且充滿希望的節期，我感到自己應當重申，就是我們必須抱著煥發的信德和愛德，持之以恆地與我們的年輕人交往、對話。青年們，你們就是我們的希望！**

我想起聖保祿對年輕的弟茂德說過的話：「不要讓人小看你年輕……。」（弟茂德前書四 12）。我們親愛的青年們，尤其包括我自從履任天主教香港教區主教以來曾會見過和交談過的青年領袖，我由衷地說：謝謝你們！

謝謝你們的倡議，也謝謝你們以種種不同的方式——滿腔熱忱、勇敢堅強、富有想像力——回應教會的召叫。我懷著謙遜之心祈求，求主賜我「一顆慧心」（列王紀上三 9）。你們給了我許多我應聆聽和深思的佳果。以下所舉，僅僅是你們曾經坦誠告訴我的幾個例子：

- 你們說，教會應當走出自我，加強對外聯繫接觸。
- 你們希望增加教會事務的透明度。
- 你們要求有更大和更具意義的參與，建立對話、培訓和行動等平台。
- 你們希望教區多跟進普世青年節或亞洲青年節，免得這些活動儼如夜空中綻放的煙花，一瞬即逝。
- 你們需要更多關懷備至的支持和相伴，也希望獲得持續不斷的教理講授、靈修培育和能​​力建構。
- 你們希望教會尋找並提供更多資源。
- 你們希望每年舉行一次特別主日募捐，撥作青年工作用途。
- 你們希望教區加強影音視聽工作，並且更加善用數碼媒體，從而主動接觸生活在這個數碼年代的年輕人。

讓我在此毫不遲疑地表明，我個人完全同意。在天主和你們的幫助之下、在與司鐸團體、教友和其他有關人士商議，並且在他們的共同合作之下，我定必竭盡全力，實現你們的建議。

常言道，危中帶機，機中藏危。可是，如果我們不好好把握當下的契機，又或拒絕迎難而上、託辭退避，那麼，危險就會愈大。

教宗方濟各在二零一六年七月三十一日主持普世青年節守夜祈禱時，呼籲年輕人要在歷史中留下印記，不要當「懶散的人，整天賴在沙發上——沙發的幸福」，將舒適的沙發與真正的幸福混淆。他說：「耶穌是冒險之主、是永恆『超越』之主。耶穌不是舒適、妥定和安逸之主。追隨耶穌要求一股份量不少的勇氣，樂意以沙發轉變為一雙步行鞋，踏上陌生且未知的路徑、開闢帶來嶄新視野的道路，好能傳揚喜樂。這份喜樂來自天主，而且隨著每一個惠澤他人的善舉而充盈你們的內心……。」

根據教宗的勸諭，並為配合二零一八年世界主教會議（主題為「年輕人、信仰與聖召明辨」），教區已經作出決定，而我特此宣布，二零一八年將會是天主教香港教區的「青年年」，由二零一七年將臨期第一主日開始，至二零一八年基督君王節結束。

讓我們坐言起行，透過團結共融、祈禱和行動，彼此幫助，與天主共同建設一個更加美好的世界，愈顯主榮。

願天主降福你們各人和你們的摯愛！

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天主教香港教區主教  
二零一七年將臨期第一主日·香港