



Remarks — Christian Service 4LIFE

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Carson, California
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Greetings my young friends!

It is so great to see so many of you here today! What a beautiful witness to the God of Life!

My young friends, Jesus needs you! The Church needs you and our society needs you! We need your energy, your enthusiasm and your hope. You are the future!

I hope you are following our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and what he is saying.

At World Youth Day, the Pope said:

“Today ... as always, the Lord needs you, young people, for his Church. ... Today ... he is calling each of you to follow him in his Church and to be missionaries. The Lord is calling you today! Not the masses, but you and you and you — each one of you. Listen to what he is saying to you in your heart.”¹

Jesus gives each of us a responsibility. A command. He is calling us to be his disciples — to follow him. He is calling us to be missionaries — to go and serve others; to tell others about him.

This is what it means to be a Christian. This mission means making our world a better place. It means making our society more like what God intended it to be. A culture of welcoming. A culture of life.

Our God loves and cares for every one he has created — especially the innocent and defenseless, those who can't take care of themselves. Especially those lives that are weak and fragile, “inconvenient” or a burden to others — the child in the womb, the sick and the handicapped, the elderly.

We have to be a voice for the people God loves! In our homes. Among our friends. We need to tell every one the good news of life, peace, hope and love.

Our society has lost its respect for human life. We see this in so many ways. We see it obviously in abortion and euthanasia. We see it also in the violence in our streets and in our homes. We see old people and sick people ignored and “discarded.” We see so much indifference to the sufferings of others.

Our job as Christians is to show our society a *new way*. A way of love. A way of welcoming and hospitality.

Let's work together, my young friends! We need to defend the sanctity and dignity of all human life — from conception, through life until natural death. We need to reach out to everyone with the helping hand of Jesus Christ — from the woman expecting a child to the handicapped and the aged. We need to be people of mercy and understanding — welcoming to everyone.

Pope Francis says we should be asking Jesus all the time: “Jesus: what do you want me to do, what do you want from my life? ... Speak continually with Jesus, in the good times and in the bad, when you do right, and when you do wrong. ... This is prayer.”

My young friends, Jesus is calling us to be saints! And you are never too young to answer that calling! The history of the Church is filled with young men and young women — your age — who became saints and blessed and venerables of the Church.

Many of these young people lived very ordinary lives. They just lived with a desire to love and share Jesus with others. This is how you should be saints — by living your own lives with love and care for others.

Do you know the story of St. David Roldán Lara, who lived in Mexico about a hundred years ago?

Do you know that at that time — not so long ago — thousands of people were tortured and killed in Mexico — just for believing in Jesus and wanting to go to church? It's true!

David went to Catholic schools like you. He was a good son, and he worked as an altar server in his church. He wanted to be a priest, but he had to quit school to help support his family. Everyone who knew David remembered him as a kind young man, one who cared for his family and his friends, and had compassion for others.

When the government's persecution of the Church got really bad, David worked to stop it in his own way. His work was all peaceful, nonviolent.

But the government arrested him. Along with several of his friends, including his parish priest, David was made to suffer and was executed by a firing squad.

People who saw him in his last days, said David was smiling and joyful — even though he knew he was going to die. Why was he able to be happy in that situation? The secret is faith. St. David knew Jesus. And he dedicated his life to serving him.

When he died his last words were a prayer: “Long live Christ the King and the Virgin of Guadalupe!”

St. David Roldán Lara was only 19 when he died. He was a young guy — just like a lot of you. You are called to that same joy, my friends! You are called to be Saints for Life!

So let's go be Christian servants for life! Go to Jesus and serve him by your love and compassion for others. Serve him by your witness to the Gospel of life!

And let us ask Our Blessed Mother Mary, the Mother of Life, to watch over us and to help us to build the culture of life in our time!

Long live Christ the King and the Virgin of Guadalupe!

ⁱ Prayer Vigil with Young People (July 27, 2013).