

National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples

December 12, 2018

Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment

*The National Day of Prayer in Solidarity with Indigenous People is celebrated by the Catholic Church in Canada every year on December 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas. This year the Canadian Catholic Aboriginal Council has chosen the theme **Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment**, the theme of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops which took place this year in Rome, October 3 to 28.*

In addressing the young people at the beginning of the pre-synodal meeting with youth in Rome on March 19 of this year, Pope Francis quoted the Prophet Joel, saying: "For me this is today's prophecy: 'Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams' (Joel 2:28)." He then went on to say: "We need young prophets but take care: you will never be prophets if you do not seize the dreams of the elderly. ... Make the elderly dream and these dreams will help you to go onward; "

The Pope's comment speaks beautifully to the interconnectedness of generations -- that for young people to achieve their potential, to become the prophets of the future that God has made them to be, they are in need of the dreams of their Elders, of the prophets who have gone before them.

There is a story told among the Indigenous people of an Elder explaining to a youth that in each person there are two wolves that are constantly at war, a Good Wolf fighting to make us strong and noble and wise, and a Bad Wolf fighting to make us weak and evil and foolish. The youth asked the Elder which Wolf wins this war taking place within us and the Elder replied: "the Wolf that we feed."

To grow strong and noble and wise, young people need to be nourished by the dreams, wisdom and love of their Elders. Pope Francis' prayer for this year's Synod captures well the dream and hope of the Prophets of today for our Young People, the Prophets of tomorrow:

Lord Jesus,

your Church turns her attention to all the young people of the world.

We pray that they might boldly take charge of their lives,
aim for the most beautiful and profound things of life
and always keep their hearts unencumbered.

Accompanied by wise and generous guides,
help them to respond to the call you make to each of them,
to realize a proper plan of life and achieve happiness.
Keep their hearts open to dreaming great dreams
and make them concerned for the good of others.

Like the Beloved Disciple, may they stand at the foot of the Cross,
to receive your Mother as a gift from you.
May they be witnesses to your Resurrection and be aware that you are at their side
as they joyously proclaim you as Lord.

Amen.