My dear young people of the Archdiocese of Brisbane

My very warmest greetings to you on this wonderful feast of Pentecost. I want to strengthen my relationship with you who are the Church of the present and the future. Over many years I have come to know many of you through events and meetings, especially through the four World Youth Days in which I have participated. Sadly however there are many who for different reasons I do not see and do not know. Possibly, some of you who hear my message may not have close connection with the Church and may still be searching for an understanding of your Christian faith. This concerns me, not only as a Bishop and leader of this Catholic Archdiocese, growing in numbers not always in faith, but also as one who, at the ripe age of 72, has never been more excited about Jesus Christ, His vision, and His relevance for our lives. Therefore, I want to communicate with you so that, in addition to what I say, you will realise how important you are, how I think about you, am concerned about you, pray for you and seek ways to welcome you more deeply into the life of the Church. It is also my intention because you are so important that my communication to you as young Catholics needs to be an annual event.

Recently I travelled around the Archdiocese speaking about our exciting Archdiocesan vision summed up in the words Jesus, Communion and Mission, a vision that captures the life-giving essence of Christianity. 

First of all there is Jesus: we must always remember that Jesus is the centre of our faith. It was Jesus who told us that God is love and that if we want to know what God is like, all we need do is to look at Jesus. In Jesus we see God living among us in terms we can understand as He reached out to the poor and needy, and to each and every one of us. He is available to us in prayer every moment of our lives, prayer as simple as, “Jesus, I invite you into my life here and now in this situation or with this person or with this hard decision. I open myself up to your direction …” Jesus can be our anchor always whether in times of fun or suffering. But to trust Jesus as our anchor we need to know him and invite him into our lives through the power of God’s Holy Spirit. In this way we will discover the desire of Jesus to know us intimately and for us to know Him intimately in return. In Sydney I heard a young woman explain at a WYD gathering “I fell in love with God only after I realised that God had already fallen in love with me.” It comes as quite a shock to realise that we are loveable and that God loves us. To build such a deep relationship with Jesus we need to hear the Gospel on a regular basis. That is why it is important to read the Gospel stories, alone if necessary, but most importantly with our community at Mass, because in the Mass the grace of the Holy Spirit can work powerfully through others, if we are open to the Spirit’s presence.

Jesus is not only Son of God and saviour who teaches us what God is like, but Jesus is God Himself.
who lives in our world and in us, together with the Holy Spirit.

Secondly there is Communion: not the Body and Blood of Jesus we receive at Mass but the Communion that links us in relationship to God and one another. Through Jesus the Holy Spirit draws us into the great Communion of love and life that is God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That Communion extends to all who believe in Christ past and present, and to all people of good will. What this means is that no matter what our life situation is we are never alone. We are part of the great family of God right here and now and then forever in eternity. Through the Holy Spirit, we have at our disposal the power of this Communion to handle any situation that life throws at us. A particularly important expression of such Communion is the Church, the community of believers. Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to the Church making it possible for the Church to tell us the story of Jesus and then to help us live the life of Christ in a way that draws people into living relationship with Him. So close is this relationship, that Jesus shares, not only His story with us, but His very own life again and again at Mass through His Body and Blood. This is how you and I first heard the message of Jesus - through someone connected to the Church, and that is why the Church is so important. We should therefore stay close to the Church and find ways to share, celebrate and discuss our faith as we seek answers to life’s big questions – and have fun as well! WYD2008 gave us all an experience of the marvellous life-giving power of God’s great Communion that we experience through the Church. God’s Communion should be so real to us that we can look at each and every person and say with conviction “that is my sister or brother in the one family of God”.

In the third place there is Mission: according to Jesus, God is not like a great Santa Claus sitting around waiting to respond to our every whim and fancy. Instead, in Jesus and through the Holy Spirit, we see that God is on mission as He seeks to lead the world and all people into the fullness of life. In fact, God invites all of us to be part of His mission in our own unique way. According to Jesus, we each have a role to play. And in a mysterious way the Holy Spirit harmonises all our efforts, so much so that St Paul saw the risen Christ as one body in which we all exist, each of us with an important but different role. For you and I, the mission question is: am I willing to open my life to the values, attitudes, behaviour and direction that Jesus calls me to through the Holy Spirit? This mission question applies to big matters like vocation and career choices, and to very big relationship decisions, or to smaller things like: ‘what am I going to do with my time today?’, or ‘how will I behave towards this person now?’, or ‘what is the right thing to do in this situation?’.

Jesus Communion Mission, sums up our entire Christian life.
My dear young people, I am sending this message to you on Pentecost Sunday, the great feast of the Holy Spirit, because it is the Holy Spirit who inspired and built the early Church. The same Holy Spirit remains with the Church always and lives in each and every one of us as well. The Holy Spirit reveals to us who Jesus really is and inspires us to love and follow him. The Holy Spirit did this for the first disciples of Jesus when they were timid and afraid after the death of Jesus. The Holy Spirit does this for us again today. It was for this reason that Pope Benedict called for a new Pentecost after World Youth Day, a fresh outpouring of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the young Catholics of the world.

World Youth Day enabled us to experience Jesus, speaking to us through the words of the Pope and through the faith and example of thousands of young people from around the world. It was a challenging experience that led many young people to think about their lives, what they are doing with them, and what mission the Holy Spirit may be leading them towards. All aspects of Jesus, Communion and Mission were there for us to experience, leaving us to think about the larger questions of life.

At WYD08 many of you showed your passion and enthusiasm for your faith. Now is the time to live out that passion wherever you are: in family and relationships, parishes, schools, tertiary institutions, community groups and in the wide array of careers you have chosen. Before World Youth Day I directed resources towards ministry to young people, assisting you to be part of the WYD08 experience. I am just as committed to using Archdiocesan resources to assist the next chapter of your journey towards spiritual growth as you learn more and more about the remarkable vision of Jesus. Our major new effort over the next few years to engage young people in the life of the Archdiocese is called Come, Walk in the Light which I am launching with the release of this pastoral message. Come, Walk in the Light outlines the main ways in which the Archdiocese will support you and others in Church.
groups to help you develop a living and vibrant Christian faith. I therefore invite YOU to *Come, Walk in the Light* by taking four steps:

To **CONNECT** with the message of Jesus through the Church;

To **GROW** in the knowledge and love of Jesus, deepening your faith and experiencing the fullness of life promised by Jesus;

To **CHOOSE** to respond to the loving call of Jesus who invites you to become part of His mission in the world; for some people that mission may mean becoming a priest or a religious.

Finally, we are all asked to **GO** out on mission everyday, and to live it with a sense of purpose; in other words ‘come on board’ with Jesus through your daily choices.

**CONNECT, GROW, CHOOSE and GO** – the four steps of *Come, Walk in the Light*.

I thank you for taking the time to listen to my message. Know that you can change the world for the better. Don’t underestimate the impact of your life on those around you, especially when you live in Communion with others through prayer, and when you accept the help of Mary and all the Saints whose task it is to lead you ‘home’ to the heart of God that they have already experienced. Know that I am praying for you daily.

God bless you all.

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