

Bangladeshi student leaders pledge to promote Christian values

Bangladeshi student leaders pledge to promote Christian values A national training program held by Young Christian Students is an opportunity to renew a passion for the church.



Bangladeshi Catholic student leaders have pledged to promote Christian values at their schools and colleges to help their peers in a complex and addictive world.

Some 80 student leaders from eight Catholic dioceses in the country, made the pledge during a national training program held by Young Christian Students (YCS) on Sept. 8-11 at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Bangladesh center in Dhaka.

The Bangladesh Catholic bishops' Episcopal Commission for Youth organized the program with the theme "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." It included sessions on spiritual formation, life and social responsibility.

"This was a moving and eye-opening program for me. When I go back to the village, I will work with school students to conduct Bible study sessions, religious work and do charity," said Geoffrey Rema, 24, a Catholic student from Dorgachala Parish in Mymensingh Diocese.

Dolly Hembrom, 15, a student from Moheshpur northern Dinajpur Diocese, agreed.

"It is important for Christian students like us to learn to help others from young age," Dolly said.

"More and more students need to realize there is a great joy in service."

"It's been more than year since I joined YCS and I have found great joy participating in the activities. There are many more students who need to be involved. It is our responsibility to reach them and engage with them," she said.

From the beginning, YCS has been a campus-based ministry depending on Christian teachers. The movement is running well where teachers are active but not where teachers are too busy, said commission chairman, Holy Cross Bishop Lawrence Subrato Howlader of Barisal.

"We want to promote leadership among students. The church wants them to engage in good and constructive activities so they can avoid becoming home-centric, addicted to electronic devices and fall prey to bad companions," said Bishop Howlader.

Holy Cross Sister Runu Mrong, office secretary of the commission, said that despite enthusiasm among students about YCS, the movement faces challenges.

"Nowadays, students are so busy with studies, private tuition and cultural arts that they don't even have time to go to the church," Sister Mrong said. "Our goal is to diminish this gap and help them stay connected with the church so they can grow in Christian values for proper physical, psychological and spiritual development in life."

In Bangladesh, the YCS movement started in 1980s. Currently, there are 1,200 YCS members in 150 units across the country, according to Sister Mrong.

"Besides regular training for young student animators, we are also working with parishes to attract more students to this movement and embolden it further," she added.

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