

Vietnam youth have duty to proclaim, witness God's mercy

Annual gathering coincides with Jubilee Year of Mercy, gives Catholics chance to reflect on values of mercy and truth Vietnam youth have duty to proclaim, witness God's mercy



They came in their thousands, Catholic young people from 10 dioceses in northern Vietnam, to hear again the timeless messages of truth and mercy.

More than 20,000 young Catholics attended the "Go and Do Likewise" gathering held by Vinh Diocese at the square in front of the Bishop's House in Nghe An Province on Nov. 16-17. Also present were other bishops and some 300 priests. This year the annual youth gathering was a special event that coincided with the conclusion of the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Bishop Joseph Vu Van Thien of Hai Phong, deputy secretary general of the Vietnamese bishops' conference, called on participants to "receive the God of mercy who touches your hearts and let Him be in your daily life."

"When we return to our normal life after the gathering, we all have the duty to proclaim and give witness to God's mercy," Bishop Thien said, adding that the young people should share the Good News with truth and joy.

Bishop Paul Nguyen Thai Hop of Vinh looked out on what he called "the future of the church and society" and asked them to bring kindness, dignity and compassion into a modern society beset by selfishness, consumerism and injustice.

The gathering also featured cultural performances, dramas, dance and songs all highlighting themes to do with human dignity and works of mercy.

The first gathering for young people from nine dioceses under Hanoi Archdiocese was in 2003 and has been held annually at each diocese respectively.

Pope Francis declared the "Year of Mercy" encouraging people to "be merciful like the Father." Pope Francis declared an "Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy" beginning Dec. 8 on the feast of the Immaculate Conception and concluding Nov. 20 on the feast of Christ the King.

Pope Francis recently urged each and every person to perform at least one work of mercy on a daily basis. All it takes is just one person carrying out one simple, loving act of mercy every day to start a revolution and stamp out the "virus of indifference," media reported the pope as saying.

Sharing God's mercy is not about expending a huge amount of effort or performing "superhuman" acts, he said during his general audience Oct. 12 at St. Peter's Square.

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