

Sunday, July 29, 1923

Young people of Pollone,

Today God's minister has blessed your prayer, and he has invoked upon you the blessings of heaven, so that every one of you may be worthy of this flag and may defend it against every attack.

Because this flag, young people, represents in a symbolic way a divine doctrine, given by Jesus Christ for our redemption.

Young people, I see on your flag the motto "Prayer, Action and Sacrifice." These are three words which summarize a very vast program whose implementation requires our energies and those of generations to come.

Prayer is the noble supplication which we lift up to the throne of God. It is the most efficient means to obtain from God the graces which we need, and especially the strength of persevering in these times, in which the hatred of the sons of the devil is breaking out violently against the sheep who are faithful to the fold.

In recommending heartfelt prayer to you, I am including all the practices of piety, first of all the most Holy Eucharist.

And remembering that apostle of the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Father Pius X² of venerable memory, I urge you with all the strength of my soul to approach the Eucharistic Table as often as possible. Feed on this Bread of the Angels from which you will draw the strength to fight inner struggles, the struggles against passions and against all adversities, because Jesus Christ has promised to those who feed themselves with the most Holy Eucharist, eternal life and the necessary graces to obtain it.

And when you become totally consumed by this Eucharistic Fire, then you will be able to thank with greater awareness the Lord God who has called you to be part of his flock and you will enjoy that peace which those who are happy according to the world have never tasted. Because true happiness, young people, does not consist in the pleasures of the world and in earthly things, but in peace of conscience which we can have only if we are pure in heart and in mind.

After having fortified our spirit by applying ourselves with great diligence to works of mercy, and after having intensely studied the questions which are troubling us, then we can throw ourselves into the apostolate. And there are three distinct apostolates.

First of all there is the apostolate of good example. We Catholics must strive to have our whole life guided by Christian moral law. Then there is the apostolate of charity by going among those who suffer and comforting them, among the unfortunate and saying a comforting word to them, because the Catholic religion is based on charity which is nothing other than the most perfect Love.

The Apostle St. Paul says, "The charity of Christ needs us," and without this fire, which little by little must destroy our personality so that our heart beats only for the sorrows of others, we would not be Christians, much less Catholics.

Finally there is the apostolate of persuasion. This is one of the most beautiful and necessary. Young people, approach your colleagues at work who live their lives away from the Church and spend their free time not in healthy pastimes, but in vices. Persuade those unfortunate people to follow the ways of God, strewn with many thorns, but also many roses.

But if every one of you were to possess these gifts to the highest degree, and did not have the spirit of sacrifice in abundance, you would not be a good Catholic. We must sacrifice everything for everything: our ambitions, indeed our entire selves, for the cause of the Faith.

In order for our life to be Christian, it must be a continual renunciation, a continual sacrifice which however is not burdensome when only we think about what these few years passed in sorrow are, compared with a happy eternity, where joy will have no measure nor end, and where we will enjoy a peace beyond anything we could imagine. And so, young people, learn how to sacrifice from our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to atone for our horrible sins, He sacrificed Himself

as an Innocent Victim on Calvary, and He renews this wonderful Sacrifice every day in every part of the world during Holy Mass.

From this day forward you have become part of the great family of the "Italian Catholic Youth." Hold high the place that the Lord in His Goodness has wanted to award you.

The times which we are going through are difficult, because persecution against the Church rages as cruelly as ever. But you fearless and good young people, do not be afraid because of this small problem. Bear in mind the fact that the Church is a divine institution that cannot end and will endure until the end of the world, and "the gates of hell will not prevail against her." Therefore keep this beautiful white flag immaculate, and if the occasion should present itself tomorrow, defend it, because from now on it is sacred: it not only represents your club, it also represents the most beautiful patrimony of our Italy and of the civilized world.

And in order to bring these poor words of mine to an end, let me cry out with you: Long live Jesus Christ! Long live the Pope!

Pier Giorgio Frassati

From: "Pier Giorgio Frassati, Letters to his Friends and Family"
ST PAULS/Alba House, 2009