



The Holy See

***ADDRESS OF POPE FRANCIS
TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE DIOCESE OF ROME
INVOLVED IN VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT***

*Grotto of Lourdes in the Vatican Gardens
Saturday, 28 June 2014*

First of all, I apologize for the delay, but the truth is I lost track of time. I was having such an interesting conversation and I didn't realize. I'm sorry! This is unacceptable, we must be punctual.

I thank you for this visit, this visit to Our Lady, who is so important in our lives. And she accompanies us also in making this definitive choice, the choice of a vocation, because she accompanied her Son on his vocational path, which was so difficult, so painful. She accompanies us always.

When a Christian tells me that it's not that he doesn't love Our Lady, it is just that he does not seek out Our Lady or pray to Our Lady, I feel sad. I remember one time, almost 40 years ago, when I was at a conference in Belgium, there was a couple who were catechists, both university professors with children, a beautiful family. And they spoke about Jesus Christ so well. At one point I said, "And devotion to Our Lady?". "But we have passed that stage. We know Jesus Christ so well, that we have no need of Our Lady." And what came to mind and into my heart was "Oh... you poor orphans!". Am I not right? Because a Christian without Our Lady is an orphan. Even a Christian without the Church is an orphan. A Christian needs these two women, two women who are mothers and virgins: the Church and Our Lady. And the "test" of a good Christian vocation is to ask yourself: "How is my relationship with these two mothers going?", with mother Church and with mother Mary. This is not a question of "piety", no, it's pure theology. This is theology. How is my relationship with the Church going, with my mother the Church, with the holy mother the hierarchical Church? And how is my relationship going with Our Lady, who is my Mum, my Mother?

This is good: never leave her, do not go off by yourself. My best wishes for your journey of discernment. The Lord has a vocation for each of us, that place where He wants us to live our life. But we must search for it, find it, and then continue forward.

I would like to add something else — besides the Church and Our Lady — it is the meaning of definitive. This is important for us, because we are living in a temporary culture: yes, this for a time and something else at another time... Will you marry? Yes, yes but while love lasts, then each one returns home once again...

A boy — a bishop once told me — a young person, a young professional said to him: “I would like to become a priest, but only for 10 years”. The temporary is like this. We are afraid of what is permanent. And to choose a vocation, any vocation, also those vocational “states”: marriage, consecrated life, the priesthood, we must choose with a permanent outlook for life. And this is contrary to the culture of the temporary. It is a part of the culture which we are living today, and we must live it and overcome it.

Very well. Also on this aspect of the definitive, I believe that one of those who most surely has a definite path is the Pope! Why the Pope? Where will the Pope end up? There, in that tomb, right?

I thank you very much for this visit and I invite you to pray to Our Lady, and, I don't know, to sing... The “Salve Regina”... Do they know how to sing it? Shall we all sing the “Salve Regina” to Our Lady together? Come on!

(Hymn...)

Now I impart to you and all your families the blessing, and I ask you to please pray for me.

(Blessing...)

Thank you! Many thanks! Have a good journey!