

Christ the King Homily 2021

Pope Francis was talking to young climate activists just before the recent climate change conference, telling them they are “making the future today”.

He was praising them for their vision and for challenging the “adult world”.

He told [the youth activists](#) that he encouraged them “to develop your work for the good of humanity”.

“It is said that you are the future, but in these matters, you are the present, you are those who are making the future today, in the present.”

Today is the feast of Christ the King and Youth Sunday. In a sense Christ the King is a patron of our parish because it is to Christ as King that the first parish priest chose to offer this church as we see in our stained-glass window (which you cannot see at night!) Now since 1837 the parish has changed in many ways, as has the wider Church as a whole. It's true too that people's approach to the Church has changed as well, the way in which we celebrate our Catholicism. Just looking at ourselves today, one question we might well have to ask is where are so many of the young people. (And that is one we need to discuss.) One answer is that young people are very ready to make up their own minds these days. They are full of enthusiasm as Pope Francis points out, and ready to take up many a challenge, as you can see if you go to Lourdes where prayer, celebration go together as they have since pilgrimages began (remember the Canterbury Tales). Go to any World Youth Day, or climate change conference, and you can see young people's, Catholic young people's, enthusiasm and concern for good causes. At the same time they are much more ready to be critical than perhaps in the past, to ask questions. One result is that they are often ready to 'speak truth to power' as has happened at the conference, like Greta Thurnberg.

So with regard to Mass they may well ask: 'how does this have a part in my life?' 'What is its meaning to or for me or for our world?' If we are asked those questions we should not to ignore them but discuss it. To listen to what they are saying.

I know from my time at University that not being at Mass may not mean that they are no longer people of faith. Far from it. It is just that at that moment they seek other ways in which to approach God, to walk with Jesus. They are exploring 'faith'.

This weekend we have two groups of young (and younger people) speaking to us. From the Youth Centre at Castlerigg and Mary and Iain who have been called to set up a new charity for young people.

As Pope Francis said, 'you are the future, but today you are the present.' We should never be despondent about the Church or its future. But we do have to be ready for its members in the widest sense to do things in a different way to previous generations. That has always been the way throughout history.

Let's use this feast day to praise our young people and remember to encourage them in what they attempt.