



EMBARGOED UNTIL MONDAY 25th JULY 00:01 BST

**ADDRESS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CATHOLIC STUDENTS (IMCS PAX ROMANA) AND INTERNATIONAL YOUNG CATHOLIC STUDENTS (IYCS)
TO YOUNG CATHOLICS AND WORLD LEADERS**

**On the occasion of Catholic World Youth Day, Krakow, Poland,
25th-31st June 2016**

A CALL FOR INVESTMENT IN OUR FUTURE

This World Youth Day, taking place in Krakow from 25th-31st June, is the first since Pope Francis released his challenging and inspiring Encyclical *Laudato Si'* just over a year ago.

The Encyclical is an invitation to come together to discuss, debate, and celebrate our relationship with the environment, with each other, with economics, with work and with many other interconnected aspects of life. For Catholic young people from around the globe, World Youth Day is a perfect forum for this discussion.

In his 'Appeal' at the beginning of *Laudato Si'*, the Pope writes that 'Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded' (13). We, the undersigned, representing millions of Catholic students the world over, continue to demand change, and continue to wonder.

The Encyclical, referring to the teachings of Poland's own Pope Saint John Paul II, speaks of the 'value of labour' (124): '[w]e were created with a vocation to work'. At a time when youth unemployment is already extremely high in many countries, we demand that our governments invest now in the jobs that this and future generations of students and young people will occupy in the years to come.

Investment in the extraction and burning of fossil fuels despite warnings that these activities will cease to exist in the decades to come must, for example, be replaced with investment in other, more sustainable jobs, such as those linked to renewable energy technologies.

For these jobs to be truly fulfilling and useful rather than counter-productive, they must also be ethical. Those jobs which involve the mass burning of fossil fuels – an activity harmful to the environment, the climate and human health – should be phased out in a fair manner, with former workers retrained or guided into other jobs that match their skillsets and desires. We furthermore hope, and as the entrepreneurs of the future endeavor to ensure, that business models that rely on the exploitation of the vulnerable will be replaced by models that empower employees and build communities.



Inspired by the Encyclical, we challenge governments and our fellow young people to work with us towards a positive vision of the future in which our activities do not compromise human dignity or threaten the beauty of our common home. For us, the Encyclical is as much a celebration of God's gifts to us as it is a warning that our systems are currently leading to their abuse.

In addition to asking for the reform of systems of governance and economics, we are inviting all young people to work and be actors of change in their communities by being a new generation of leaders, aware of the urgent need to create a new world marked by solidarity, ecologically responsible lifestyles, justice and peace.

May God bless us all.

Signed,

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