

Pope Francis encourages young people at Bethlehem University to “build a future of dialogue”

Before the end of 2024, **Pope Francis sent “greetings of spiritual closeness” to the educational community and the young people of Bethlehem University**, in a letter addressed to Brother Héctor Hernán Santos, Vice Chancellor of the University, dated 19 December.

In the context of the beginning of the Jubilee Year, the Bishop of Rome offers his prayers for the staff and students of the University, so that the Jubilee and the Nativity of the Lord, “which signify new life, hope and reconciliation”, may also be an opportunity “for **spiritual renewal and a strengthening of perseverance in your vocation to be joyful disciples of Christ**”.

Sharing the gift of faith

In a particular way, the Pope addresses the young people at the Bethlehem University, inviting them to “**always safeguard your precious gift of faith**, not as something to be hidden, but as a treasure to be shared with others”.

Therefore, Francis continues, “although if in your youth you may at times feel weak, confused or even disillusioned, **entrust everything to Jesus in prayer, for He is the source of enduring hope**”.

Jesus is the source of hope for young people, and “hope does not disappoint” (Rom 5:5). The Pope knows this very well when he insists to the students at Bethlehem University that “your youth is worthwhile”, reminding them that in this way “**you will not deprive the world of the contribution that you alone can make, in all your uniqueness and originality**”.

Instead of “going it alone” in life and isolating themselves, the Pontiff urges the young Lasallians at Bethlehem University to “foster the bonds of academic and social friendship that are a precious legacy of your student years”, and which also involve making “great sacrifices for others and for the community”.

In the face of violence, be an example of solidarity

“Our human family needs examples of hope-filled solidarity in the current context of violence that affects so many of our brothers and sisters”, Pope Francis said, hoping that “your enthusiastic witness to the perennial values of the Gospel will serve as an example to religious and political leaders of different faiths and traditions”.

Finally, the Pope encourages the young people of Bethlehem University to build **“a future of dialogue, mutual understanding, fraternal harmony and justice for all”**. A task which we, all Lasallians, must also take on.

Photo: Bethlehem University.