



## 30th annual Youth Festival opens in Medjugorje



Cardinal De Donatis celebrates Mass to inaugurate the 30th Youth Festival being held in Medjugorje, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

By Francesca Merlo

Over 50,000 young people from all over the world have gathered in Medjugorje to reflect, this year, on the theme “Follow me”.

The opening Mass, presided over by Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, Vicar General of Rome, on August 1st, inaugurated the start of the 6 day long Festival; while the closing ceremony is expected to be presided over by Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation on August 6th.

Cardinal De Donatis began his homily by expressing amazement “at the grace that the Lord continually pours out upon us”. “Everything”, he said, “is grace”.

Three indications

The Cardinal said that in order to listen to Jesus when He said ‘Follow me’, it is necessary “that the Holy Spirit open our hearts and that He fill them with divine wisdom”.

“Today’s gospel”, he continued, “presents to us the scribe of the New Covenant, the wise man according to the Gospel”. The Cardinal then went on to describe three indications “amongst others” that can be drawn from him.

The first: As a good fisherman

“The Kingdom of heaven- as we have heard of it - is similar to a fishing net”, began the Cardinal. “The net”, he explained, “is thrown at sea in order to collect as many fish as possible”. The fishermen then select the good fish, to be eaten, and the bad, to be discarded, he said. “Every Christian”, explained the Cardinal, “is like a good fisherman, who watches over the sea of his mind holding back the holy thoughts and throwing away the useless or poisonous ones”.

“Courage”, said the Cardinal. “The Gospel invites us to purify our thoughts in order to welcome the thought of Christ. An evangelical heart asks for a free mind!”

The second: Seeking the horizon of truth

Cardinal De Donatis then introduced the second indication. “Jesus speaks of a Judgment”, he began. “This Judgment”, he said, “is a happy light of truth, not the judgment of a tyrant”. Cardinal De Donatis described the Final Judgment as the “triumph of divine love” for all those who believe. For those who have denied Christ, he continued, this light “full of goodness” will “highlight the truth of a life lived without fruit”.

He explained that we must “anticipate the true judgment of God by immediately placing ourselves on the horizon of truth. A young Christian”, he concluded, “is wise” when he or she “speaks the truth, seeks the truth, offers the truth”.

The third: Old with new

Finally, the Cardinal introduced the third indication. The day’s Gospel, he said, “explains that the scribe of the Kingdom is the Christian who draws old and new things from the treasure of his heart”. This wonderful expression, he explained, can be used to understand the relationship between old and new. “The Old Testament prepares the New”, he said. But, he continued, it can only fully be understood when making reference to the Old. “Old and New need each other in order to open up to each other”.

“The authentic Christian”, concluded Cardinal De Donatis, “is neither traditionalist nor progressive”. The authentic Christian “preserves the good taste of homemade bread” he said: “Fragrant and appetizing precisely because it is kneaded and baked with an ancient recipe”.