

Youth and Hope – International Youth Day, 12 August 2020



An excerpt from the UN Youth Strategy, Youth 2030:

Connected to each other like never before, young people want to and already contribute to the resilience of their communities, proposing innovative solutions, driving social progress and inspiring political change, in urban as well as rural contexts. Young people constitute a tremendous and essential asset worth investing in, opening the door to an unparalleled multiplier effect.

The way in which the shifting demographics in the world are leveraged, and how young people navigate their transition into adulthood, are critical for the progress of humankind and the health of the planet. With the large and increasing number of young people across the globe, it is abundantly clear that it is only by engaging and working with them, supporting them in standing up for their rights and creating the conditions allowing them to progress and play an active role, that the international community will be able to achieve peace, security, justice, climate resilience and sustainable development for all.

The theme of International Youth Day 2020, “Youth Engagement for Global Action” seeks to highlight the ways in which the engagement of young people at the local, national and global level is enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes, as well as draw lessons on how their representation and engagement in formal institutional politics can be significantly enhanced.

In the video below, UN Secretary-General António Guterres shares a short message to all people about the importance of supporting the world’s youth and doing all we can to encourage and enable them to contribute to the fullest of their great potential.

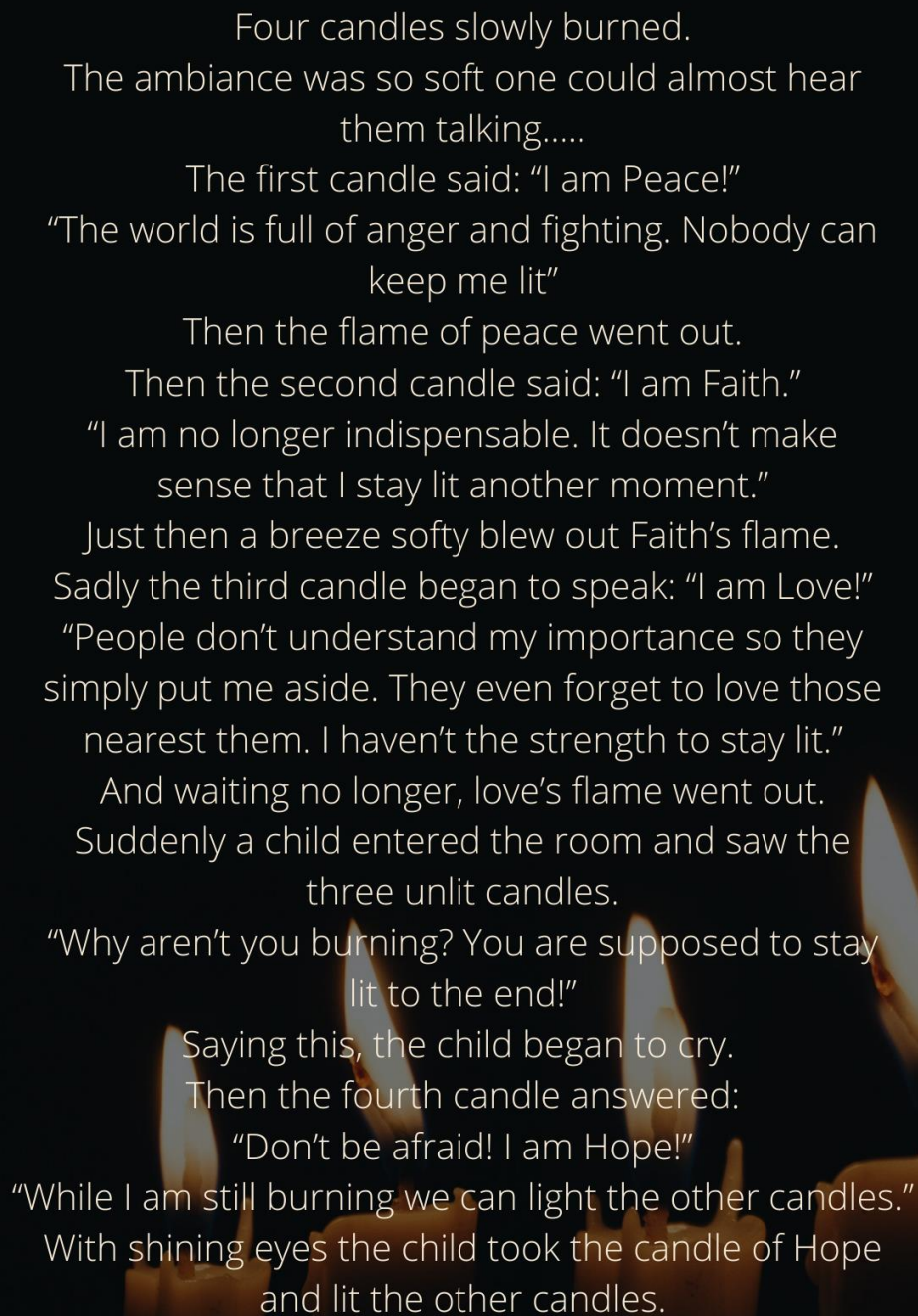
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=120&v=XM6jlpEVJvM&feature=emb_title

For Reflection

In what ways can you/we support young people in these challenging times?

The most inspiring message for several Young Mercy Links SA members in Pope Francis’ Exhortation to Young People is to be ‘protagonists of change’. Urging young people and all people to ‘continue to fight apathy and to offer a Christian response to the social and political troubles emerging in different parts of the world’.

The reminder in this Exhortation that Jesus was not a bystander and that like him, we must immerse ourselves in the reality of life has felt extremely clear throughout the challenges we have faced, and continue to in 2020. Our young people’s response to

The image shows four lit candles in a dark room. The candles are arranged in a row, and their flames are bright against the dark background. The text is overlaid on the image, centered and in a white font. The text tells a story about four candles representing Peace, Faith, Love, and Hope. Peace and Faith go out, Love goes out, and Hope remains lit, eventually lighting the other three candles.

Four candles slowly burned.
The ambiance was so soft one could almost hear
them talking.....
The first candle said: "I am Peace!"
"The world is full of anger and fighting. Nobody can
keep me lit"
Then the flame of peace went out.
Then the second candle said: "I am Faith."
"I am no longer indispensable. It doesn't make
sense that I stay lit another moment."
Just then a breeze softly blew out Faith's flame.
Sadly the third candle began to speak: "I am Love!"
"People don't understand my importance so they
simply put me aside. They even forget to love those
nearest them. I haven't the strength to stay lit."
And waiting no longer, love's flame went out.
Suddenly a child entered the room and saw the
three unlit candles.
"Why aren't you burning? You are supposed to stay
lit to the end!"
Saying this, the child began to cry.
Then the fourth candle answered:
"Don't be afraid! I am Hope!"
"While I am still burning we can light the other candles."
With shining eyes the child took the candle of Hope
and lit the other candles.

Adapted from the John Mark Ministries by Rowland Croucher
and Others, 2006. Original author unknown.

these challenges has been a source of hope to many and it is important to recognise
the power of hope during this time.

- In what ways do young people encourage you to feel more hopeful? Is there a recent experience or encounter that you recall?
- Are there more ways you would like to share your knowledge with young people to deepen their understanding? How could you do this?
- How do you think we could better support our young people to continue lighting candles of peace, faith, love and hope in our world?

UN Youth Strategy:

https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf

Pope Francis' Christus Vivit:

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html