

I had the great opportunity of going to World Youth Day in Toronto in 2002. It was an incredible grace. The theme, which Saint John Paul II preached on at the closing Sunday Mass, was Jesus' invitation to be salt and light that we also heard today in the Gospel. The entire [homily](#) is worth a read, and the final line of his homily is one I quote often. His closing words also perfectly echoed my own sentiment that week – the oddity of so many youth finding such inspiration in someone so much older, as heart spoke to hearts.

“You are young, and the Pope is old, 82 or 83 years of life is not the same as 22 or 23. But the Pope still fully identifies with your hopes and aspirations. Although I have lived through much darkness, under harsh totalitarian regimes, I have seen enough evidence to be unshakably convinced that no difficulty, no fear is so great that it can completely suffocate *the hope that springs eternal in the hearts of the young*. You are our hope, the young are our hope.

Do not let that hope die! Stake your lives on it! *We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures*; we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of his Son.”

In the interim as we still look to hire a Youth Minister for Mary, Queen of Peace and St. Joseph, I have been in conversation with Amy Laurino, a parishioner, about hosting some one-off events for our youth, as we look to foster the life and faith of our young people. If you are interested in helping her, please contact youth@mqp.org. More information soon on upcoming youth events.

Additionally, we are going to start organizing our trip to the Steubenville NW Youth Conference in Spokane, which will be July 10-12 this year. It's a powerful weekend with about a thousand other youth, great speakers, breakout conversations, Masses and prayer and Eucharistic adoration, praise music, and more. I have volunteered almost every year since I helped start it in 2004. If you are interested in sending your incoming 9th graders through 12th graders who graduate this year, please contact Jennifer Carney at youth@mqp.org, who is going to organize our trip this year. Registration, transportation, lodging at the hotel, meals and a t-shirt included. Final subsidized price TBD while we work out details (last year I think it was \$200 per person), and aid is available. Chaperones go free, and we are looking for a few more. I hope you will join me and other parish youth in this great opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ.