

CCO Fundraiser

5 November 2017

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Introduction

What's asked of me by Eric is an easy and pleasurable task: to offer endorsement for a group of fervent young people who give courageous witness to our Catholic faith on the Simon Fraser and UBC campuses and in many other activities around the Archdiocese.

As an ecclesial movement, now with thousands of alumni across the country – and happily with many here in the Archdiocese of Vancouver – CCO members are at the forefront of bringing the Gospel to young adults who do not know Christ or whose faith is being challenged as never has before. Who, for example, even five years ago knew of the challenges posed by a radical gender ideology?

Indeed, we must be realistic about just how tough it can be for university students to maintain, let alone enrich their faith, on our campuses today. I just came from Spirit Day, the great two-day youth rally for seventh graders who will be confirmed next spring. They already face a lot of challenges, but it's nothing compared to what will face them in five years when they enter college. I know when I confirm them that, despite my pleas and those of those teachers, they will not continue their catechesis, and for many of them, the seeds of being evangelized and coming to a personal, intimate knowledge of Jesus

Christ will not sprout.

CCO is one providential instrument that the good Lord has given to the Church in Canada to reverse this trend. How could I not support it, and enthusiastically?

Pope Francis, speaking to young people in Manila a couple of years ago had this to say to them:

What is the most important lesson which you have to learn at the University? What is the most important lesson that you have to learn in life? It is learning how to love. This is the challenge which life sets before you today. Learning how to love. . . .

For this to happen, the Gospel proposes to us a serene and tranquil thing to do. It is to use the three languages: the language of the mind, the language of the heart and the language of the hands. All three together, harmoniously: what you think, you feel and you do. Your information descends to the heart, moves it and gets translated into action.¹

CCO helps with these three languages. It gives students the solid nourishment of sound doctrine. It offers them genuine fellowship and the

¹ Francis, Address to Young People, Manila (18 January 2015).

Church's sacramental life, both of which are necessary for anyone to mature in the Christian life. It leads them to action, above all that most important of actions for a disciple, to become a missionary. To share with their peers what they themselves have received.

St. Paul wrote to his young assistant Timothy: "Let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity" (1 Tim 4:12). I think those who take up the challenge offered by our CCO missionaries have heard St. Paul. They are setting an example for us of enthusiastic reception of the Gospel.

And they are doing on campus what the rest of us cannot do ourselves. They are on the front lines. They are peers to those to whom they are bringing the Good News. We can't be there in the same way. So, it seems to me, our task is to support them by our prayers and by our concrete and effective solidarity.

We have, as many of you know, Archdiocesan priorities and goals. One of these is "Get closer to Jesus." It has never been clearer that the Church's mission in the world must be anchored in a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Without this, all our efforts to make the Gospel known and love will fail.

But this is precisely what CCO offers to students. The missionaries concentrate their evangelizing efforts on what is essential. They present

the Gospel as compellingly attractive and concentrate their efforts on bringing to others “the beauty of the saving love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ who died and rose from the dead.”²

I invite you this evening, as I have in the past and as you have so generously responded, to once again offer your hand of partnership to this great endeavour of the marvelous young people of CCO. With God’s grace, they are working to ensure that the upcoming generation of Catholics will be fervent in their love for Jesus Christ and his Church.

Since witness plays a vital role in evangelization, friend speaking to friend, we are now privileged to hear from three university students who can share with us the influence that CCO has had on their own pilgrimages of faith.

✦ J. Michael Miller, CSB
Archbishop of Vancouver

² Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 36; cf. 11: “The heart of its message will always be the same: the God who revealed his immense love in the crucified and risen Christ.”