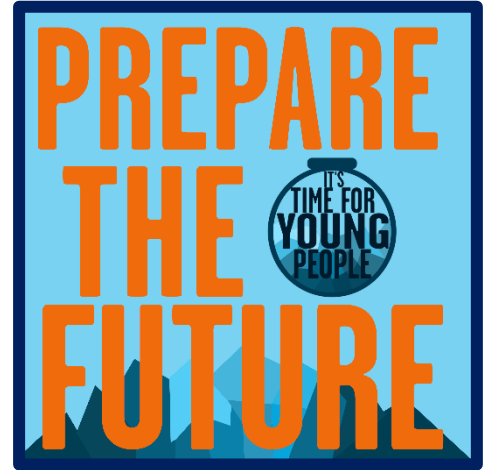


# CALLED TO HOPE

embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope



*This wakeup call, provided by the climate crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, is a huge opportunity for transformation. For change to happen, we must start with ourselves. Should we continue living lifestyles that serve us, whilst hurting the poorest and most vulnerable, as well as our Earth - or should we turn to a new way of living, and of being? We can find beauty in this process of change, caring more, living out the Gospel and reconnecting ourselves with nature. Good news! The Gospel revelation shows us the truths about ourselves. It gives us the wisdom and strength to do something about injustice and the rising tide of fear and scapegoating in our society. No one has the right to take hope from us. How do we encourage people to consider these points in the climate in which we live? How do we persevere in the face of struggle?*



*In this session, we meet great examples of people who have demonstrated hope that went beyond their own lives, and outwards towards humanity, and to Christ. We will also start to explore the requirements of sustained activism, the reality of how long it takes and how hard it is to make change. Commitment, sacrifice and hope are some of the essential components for those ready and willing to change the world.*

**Cardinal Turkson: 'Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.'**

## Faith sharing

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

—Matthew 11:25-30

## Clip

Pope Francis' message of hope (2:28 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUVxa3tbp04>

Facing Challenges - Christ is Alive (2:08 minutes):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRw3xJ0BecE>

# Reflection

For a short reflection:

"The past is no longer yours; the future is not in your power. You have only the present wherein to do good." - St. Alphonsus Liguori

When is the best time to start a new life, dedicated to God and to others?  
Is it now?

A longer reflection:

**Laudato Si', 205:** "Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning. We are able to take an honest look at ourselves, to acknowledge our deep dissatisfaction, and to embark on new paths to authentic freedom. No system can completely suppress our openness to what is good, true and beautiful, or our God-given ability to respond to his grace at work deep in our hearts. I appeal to everyone throughout the world not to forget this dignity which is ours. No one has the right to take it from us."

How can we reframe our worldview to see beauty, hope and love rather than hate, violence and destruction?  
Where is your hope?

## Activity

Explore the lives of one, or all, of the people below. They are great examples of people who have dedicated their lives to Christ and have shown great perseverance and integrity during times of struggle and hardship, and even in the face of death.

Choose one, in pairs or in groups. Find out what you can about them and write a short biography of their life and work:

**Sister Dorothy Stang:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHpQ8lONGtY> (1hr:06:09);  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogRAW2iRNjM> (3:23 minutes)

**St. Oscar Romero:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6h1G8-dtnY> (5:08 minutes)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5aFOWz\\_Ds](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s5aFOWz_Ds) (2:31 minutes)

**Sophie Scholl:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nIEJ4X-c6go> (2:43 minutes);  
[https://open.spotify.com/episode/3MMrIFtKw0cJ2BUOdhQ3fX?si=95dihBxaSjmNh6iV\\_h0\\_n\\_g](https://open.spotify.com/episode/3MMrIFtKw0cJ2BUOdhQ3fX?si=95dihBxaSjmNh6iV_h0_n_g) (Podcast: 58 minutes) Website: <https://columbans.co.uk/reflecting-on-the-courageous-life-of-activist-sophie-scholl>

**Sean Devereux:** Website: [http://www.donboscoliberia.org/pagina\\_base.asp?id=1346](http://www.donboscoliberia.org/pagina_base.asp?id=1346)

Next, imagine you are one of these people and write short diary entries. Consider the prompts below when writing.

- (1) In the first one, explore their thoughts and feelings as they begin their mission of helping those in need around them.
- (2) In the second, write about the difficulties and struggles they are facing, perhaps even their fear that what they are doing could lead to their death.
- (3) In the third, write an entry documenting their thoughts and feelings after they have been killed (perhaps they did not know that that would be their final day). What legacy would they have wished to leave behind? What is their message to the world? How do they wish to be remembered?

*Idea: If you do not wish to use the form of diary entry, try the same exercise but using 'tweets'. Write three 'tweets' (using 140 characters) at these three significant moments in their life, and death, documenting what has happened and how they are feeling. Alternatively, if you/ your group like drama, why not do a 'hot-seating' activity, where one person is acting as one of the individuals above and they are given either moment (1), (2), or (3) - ask them what has happened and how they are feeling. In the 'hot-seat' they become the person and try to think like them. The rest of the group may ask them questions and the individual in the hot-seat must improvise, in character.*

*Alternative activity: Write a letter to someone when they are at the point of despair. For example, Rosa Parks or Martin Luther King on the day of their arrest. Write a letter of hope to them, letting them know that what they were fighting for will happen, and it will go down in history.*

## Activity 2

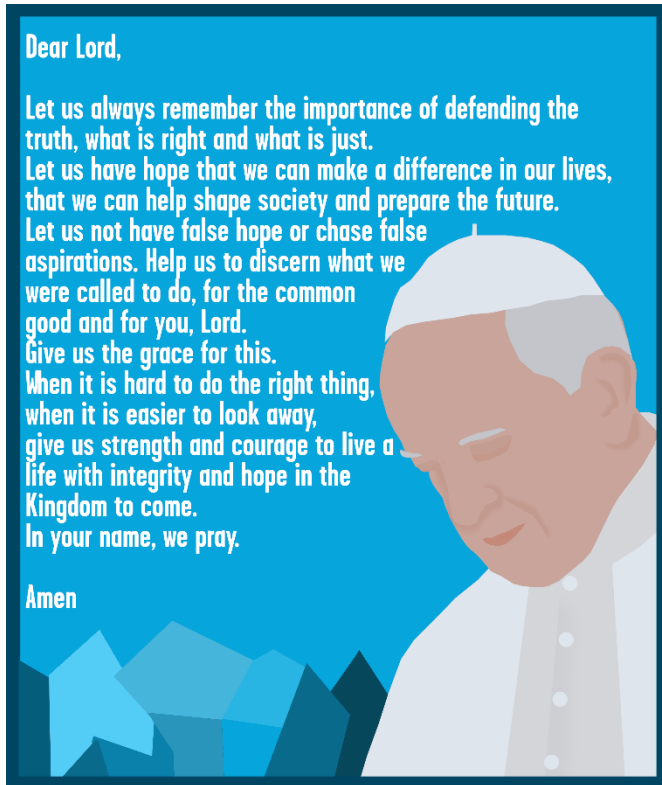
*Reading Thomas Merton's 'Letter to a Young Activist', followed by a debate.*

Together, read Thomas Merton's Letter to a Young Activist:  
<https://jimandnancyforest.com/2014/10/mertons-letter-to-a-young-activist/>

Then, split your group into two for a debate. The topic is: **'This house proposes that activism is useless unless it leads to direct and tangible results'**. One side will be arguing 'for' this proposition, the other side will be 'against'. It might be helpful for each team to reflect on the following questions:

- How important is 'success', and how do you define success? For example, is it about being successful in making the change you set out to do, or is it simply about doing the right thing, even if you fail?
- What previous movements can you think of that have either been successful, or have failed - what were the reasons for this?
- Is there a difference between 'hope' and 'optimism'?

# Prayer



St. Teresa of Avila prayer:

“Let nothing disturb you,  
nothing frighten you,  
all things are passing,  
God is unchanging.  
Patience gains all;  
nothing is lacking to those  
who have God:  
God alone is sufficient.”

## Extra resources / further reading:

Pax Christi - Stories that celebrate non-violence:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/nonviolence-in-action/>

Pax Christi - Peace People: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/peace-people-2/>

Explore the life of Blessed Franz Jägerstätter:

<https://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/peace-people-2/blessed-franz-jagerstatter/>

Book: 'Generation Y, Spirituality and Social Change' - Edited by Justine Afra Huxley

Another example of a young person who dedicated their life to serving others: Carlos Acutis - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dSi3qtmBfNw> (2:11 minutes).