**Rev. Fr. Edwin Hunja**

**Youth Chaplain: Archdiocese of Nairobi**

Dearest youth of Nairobi!

The desire to follow Christ and His Church is at once compelling and overwhelming. It is compelling because it is an adventure and one who follows it to the end becomes a blessing among many. It is compelling because it is about your life in this world and in the world to come. At the same time, it is overwhelming because it means going against the majority culture. It means following the Lord even in moments of darkness and solitude. And we know quite well that sometimes following the Lord can make you a misfit and unpopular.

But the Lord consoles us and assures us of His closeness and love. The service of God leads one to deep joy, a joy that the world cannot give. Whereas the joy of the world passes and it is mostly based on pleasure, the joy that Christ gives to those who open themselves up to him is a joy that cannot be taken away by sickness and tribulations. It is a joy that remains even when you are alone. With time, this joy passes to your friends and this is what we call witnessing!

Pope Benedict XVI said, “Dear young people, the happiness you are seeking, the happiness you have a right to enjoy has a name and a face. It is Jesus of Nazareth, hidden in the Eucharist. He only gives the fullness of life to humanity, With Mary, say your own yes to God for he wishes to give himself to you”

Moreover, when we fail, the Mercy of God is abundant! As Catholics, we have the opportunity to go for the Sacrament of Confession and Eucharist. Let us not hesitate to make good use of these. Moreover, we Catholics know and believe that we do not make this journey alone; we are surrounded by Our Mother and the Saints! Ask them for help and support and they will surely walk with you.

Dear young people, I have always been inspired by the scriptural verse Luke 2:51+52, which says that Jesus lived under their authority and he grew in Wisdom, in stature, in favor with God and with People. I call upon all young people to follow the example of Christ’s journey of growth.