



This homily, which was given by Monsignor James Curry on the occasion of a Mass of Thanksgiving 9th October 2017 for the success of the Beaumont Union and marking 50 years since the closure of Beaumont. The text has been edited lightly to accommodate the written word.



“I first heard one particular song in Lourdes. It was being sung by HCPT Liverpool pilgrims in a café by the Alba Hotel and it was neither the Beaumont Pater Noster, nor the Domine Salvam Fac.

The song rejoiced in the title “We are Young”. After closer inspection, I learned that its lyrics deal with some difficult and dark themes of youth. But that night in Lourdes one particularly catchy line struck me: “Tonight we are young. So let’s set the world on fire, we can burn brighter than the sun.”

Some say we are never more ourselves than when we are young – we are at our most natural, spontaneous and open. In our youth we are also at our most impressionable and at our most vulnerable to the hurt and disappointment that can mark us for life.

Others argue that we are but seedlings when we are young; our lives full of promise, full of potential that we squander or realise. Many educators contend that we grow into our true selves if we are given the right nurturing and opportunity.

But a wise old parishioner once said that we only truly become ourselves when we enter into mature, adult, life-giving relationships.

The truth is much more complex. Just as our lives are and just as is the mystery of God. Our lives are journeys of discovery and rediscovery, of failure and triumph, of rising and falling.

And then of course there is the experience of those who, in the last age of life, find that childhood and the memories of youth become more real than the present.

We who are gathered here today know only too well that youth is wasted on the young! Perhaps this explains our nostalgia for our youth, for being young. In our remembering, with the benefit of hindsight, we imagine how we could have better embraced the gift of youth.

But as the Indian proverb goes: “The past is a good place to visit, but I wouldn’t want to live there”. I’d put it more strongly: The past is a good place to visit; but I *will* not live there.

If we are to be truly happy or wise as we enter to the autumn of our lives; if we are to come to some peace, we need to avoid reliving our youth. Instead, we must embrace the passing of our years with gratefulness.

If we are to achieve any understanding or resolution of the lives we have led, we need to live out of a grateful heart. It is of course possible to live out of a bitter, angry or regretful heart; many people do. But it is no way to *live*.

In today's celebration these contrasting thoughts and emotions touch us, touch you the old boys and members of the Beaumont Union as you mark 50 years of the closing of the school.

It is a time of remembrance of things past, of our youth and a Thanksgiving of lives lived and given. Perhaps it is also a moment of sadness that Beaumont's doors have long been shuttered.

But Beaumont *is* because you still *are*. It is young again because of the seeds that you have planted in the lives of family, friends, HCPT and countless others, not least in the blessing of the young who now study at St John's.

I am personally grateful for the brotherhood of those gathered today. In particular to the HCPT BOFs Group, whose chaplain I have thoroughly enjoyed being these past few years.

That song I mentioned earlier ends with the words: "So if by the time the bar closes, and you feel like falling down. I'll carry you home tonight."

I have always found that Beaumont men do.

So together we celebrate and we remember. To remember is most human *and* divine.

In the Eucharist we take bread and wine. We do this in memory of Jesus, as he asked us to. In the 5.remembering He is present; the past is made present in this moment. In the Mass we are all in some sense young again. The future Kingdom of God is present even as it remains full of yet unrealised promise.

For whom are you grateful today; what do you remember? With St Paul we can perhaps be grateful for the wisdom of a teacher or a preacher. We can show appreciation for a kindness shown, a friendship made, or a grace received. We can be thankful for the Jesuit way of St Ignatius, the way of discernment, of finding a path in life.

We are invited to tell those we encounter all that the Lord in his mercy has done for us. By doing so, we live fully in the present.

Today, like Solomon, may we turn our hearts toward God. May we be thankful to the God of Jesus Christ for his eternal gifts of faith and gratitude. They are no transitory things, but blessings that last forever.

As Beaumont men say: Aeterna non caduca.

.Dear friends, eschew what is transitory and live gratefully. Live for what is eternal.”

The readings where:

The Book of Kings CH. 8 v55-61

Frist letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.Ch1.v 3-9

The Gospel of Mark Ch. 5 v1-5