

## Message to Secondary school students

May 10th

Good morning, Fr Jimmy, Mr Ungaro, management team, educators and students of St Aloysius College.

Grazzi talli lqajtuni fostkom!

I am so delighted to be here with you during my first visit to Malta.

This morning, I wish to share a few thoughts about this year's College theme: 'being with and for others'. This theme is really special. During your primary school years, and now in secondary school, you have often heard about the value of being people for others, of being men and women for others and with others. But what does this motto really mean? How does it fit in with today's technologically advanced and AI-dominated world? Can I survive alone in this type of world?

I would like to tell you something about this. Did you know that the phrase 'men for others' is fifty years old? It is, but we can also say it is brand new. It is fifty years old because in 1973, Fr Pedro Arrupe coined the motto 'men for others' when addressing graduates of our school in Valencia, Spain. He explained to them that men and women for others are persons who cannot love God without loving their neighbour, and that this should be the portrait of a Jesuit school student. He repeated the same words here, in this theatre, soon after his visit to Valencia. We can say the motto is brand new because it is so relevant to us today, in our personal relationship with God, with our neighbour, and in our daily lives as citizens of our world.

Fr Arrupe himself was a living example of a person for others and with others. Let me tell about two important initiatives in his mission: some time before he was the Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr Arrupe worked in Hiroshima, Japan, where he was master of novices. When Hiroshima was bombed on the 6th of August 1945, he used the novitiate house to take in wounded people. But in that desolate situation, together with others, he turned to God, he fell on his knees and prayed. Fr Arrupe's experiences in Hiroshima marked his whole life.

The Jesuit Refugee Service is another of Fr Arrupe's initiatives. He founded JRS in November, 1980 when he was Superior General of the Jesuits. When Fr Pedro Arrupe saw that so many Vietnamese refugees were being killed by pirates or drowned as they ran away from their war-ravaged homeland, he felt he had to do something. He asked the Jesuits to help 'to bring at least some relief in such a tragic situation.' Conflicts around the world continued to grow, and, from helping Vietnamese boat people in a few camps, JRS grew rapidly to working with refugees around the world. JRS is even present in Malta. It helps refugees heal, learn, and determine their own future.

These two examples are evidence of how being men and women for others and with others has worked and continues to work. How does it work? We are the ones to make it work, each and every one of us, together. Let's collaborate and have a united vision as we journey together towards personal and spiritual growth, towards a better and peaceful world. Each and every one of us here can contribute in their own way so that together we can work for change, justice and peace.

Like other Jesuit schools, St Aloysius College is providing you all with a good number of unique initiatives and opportunities, both academic and formative. All the subjects you learn at school offer you such opportunities for growth: whether it's a class discussion during Maltese, English, a foreign language or an option subject, whether it's a project, a science experiment or a Maths problem you're working on together, a leagues match, a game of chess, talent night, tree planting or any other task in your learning journey - with all your uniqueness and diversity, you are growing together, using your talents and potential with others and for others, whoever they are.

St Aloysius College offers you other special opportunities and experiences such as the 'Connecting with God' examen, the class retreats, eucharistic celebrations, the People for Others Programme, the Eucharistic Youth Movement. You may be visiting the Soup Kitchen, id-Dar tal-Kleru or Loyola House, for example - all these are unique experiences to treasure because they help and coach us as we journey to become men and women for others and with others. All these occasions enrich us on a personal level, and even offer us the chance to understand other challenging realities where people are vulnerable, sad, lonely, and at times even living on the margins of society.

We can all be men and women for others and with others. There are quite a few access points offering us possibilities. The chances are everywhere: at home, at school, at our sports training sessions, at the youth centre - wherever we are. We can easily start - when we think about other people and how we can love them. Pope Francis tells us 'to connect, to work in synergy and harmony ... This means passing from "I" to "we": not "I work for my own good", but "we work for the common good, for the good of all". Remember this: let's work together for the good of all. Pope Francis encourages us to "pay attention to others, to listen to them in their fundamental needs, to heal their wounds, to be instruments of compassion and healing for him or her. This is the care that Jesus has towards humanity, in particular towards the most fragile, and of which the Gospel speaks often. From mutual "caring" an inclusive society is born, founded on peace and dialogue."

The College theme for this year: *being with and for others*, also means that we need to pay attention to others. We are surrounded by terrible wars, by crises - our world is going through very serious and threatening crises and: environmental, economic, political, social crises that are affecting us all. Even Artificial Intelligence - AI - is all around us; generative AI is very powerful and we need to find ways of harnessing its powers.

We cannot face these realities alone. Pope Francis tells us to 'be awake not asleep, not stay lying on the sofa', not waste time on social media, but to use information media well, to listen carefully, and to pray. We need love, we need courage, we need constant commitment, we need each other. And remember! We are not alone, we have each other.

I pray that all the educational community of St Aloysius College continue to grow in becoming a community with others and for others.

Thank you for your attention.