

Jesus' "heart was moved with pity for them for they were like sheep without a shepherd."

Please forgive me for repeating myself but this is the way the Spirit is moving me. Our youth are "sheep without a shepherd." Of course they are not the only ones but they are suffering, lost, confused. 42% of them are experiencing persistent feelings of sadness, of hopelessness. And the teenage girls are doing far worse. And for the most part they are not coming here to Mass or paying attention to Jesus.

You have heard about this from me before. What was Jesus' solution? Today's Gospel tells us Jesus "began to teach them many things."

Lot's of luck! We don't have them here and they have pretty much rejected our way of life. Are we defeated? I constantly ask myself this question.

The experts say that teens have "lost most of their social lives to their phones". They are living a "phone based childhood" and social media is addictive. This epidemic of hopelessness should be considered "a national crisis."

I am not telling you that we are defeated, that we are helpless. I'm suggesting that we begin to pray for our youth at every Mass, every Prayer of the Faithful. That we begin to talk to each other. That we search together for steps we can take to help our youth.

Just as Jesus' heart was moved by the vast crowd, let our hearts be moved by the suffering of our children. We are not failures. We are pilgrims on the road with Jesus. Today we pray for our youth, remembering their sufferings from this epidemic of hopelessness.

And let's imagine them at the Holy Communion table, receiving the Body and Blood of Jesus.