



## A NOT SO LONG AND A NOT SO STRANGE TRIP TO THE FUTURE



On Sunday, 14 October 2018, His Holiness Pope Francis canonized seven people: Pope Paul VI (1897–1978), Archbishop Oscar Romero (1917–1980), Father Vincenzo Romano (1751–1831), Sister Nazaria Ignacia de Santa Teresa de Jesus March Mesa (1889–1943), Father Francesco Spinelli (1853–1913), Sister Maria Katharina Kasper (1820–1898), and Nunzio Sulprizio (1817–1836). Unlike *the man who with his many possessions went away sad from Jesus* (cf. Saint Mark X:22), “all these Saints, in different contexts” said Pope Francis, “put today’s word into practice in their lives, without lukewarmness, without calculation, with the passion to risk everything and to **leave it all.**”

All of us have the ability to “leave it all”. We left it all when we emerged from our mother’s womb. We left it all when the doctor severed the umbilical attachment when it was no longer necessary to sustain life. We left it all as we continued to grow (like Jesus) in grace and Wisdom before God and man and laid ourselves down to sleep with the door shut and the lights out, and then as we boarded

the school bus for the very first time, or an airplane as we went off to an out-of-state college.

There is no need to take you through the various stages of “letting go” that – regardless of race, language, colour, sex, or creed – are common to all of us. Even if it could prove useful in developing the case for *leaving it all* to follow Jesus, I depart at this stage of development because it is there that I actually want you to return; youth: not yours (which no matter how hard you try you cannot reclaim), but rather the young people living among us.

The invitation to return actually comes from Pope Francis, who a few weeks before Sunday’s Mass with Canonization, gathered with brother Bishops for the opening of the *Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Development*. At that gathering the Pope addressed his “Dear Beatitudes, Eminences, Excellencies, Brother and Sisters, and beloved Young People; “those present for the Synod and “the many people, who throughout this two-year period of preparation have worked with dedication and passion – here in the Church of Rome and in all the Churches of the world” and asked them to “**spend time with the future**”.

How does one spend time with the future? Is it even possible to spend time with the future? At first consideration, the thought of spending time with something that hasn’t happened yet might seem a little odd. It may in fact lead people to think that Pope Francis is out of his mind. Yet if our Bishops, and in fact if all of us give the idea of spending time with the future some serious attention, the Wisdom of such an invitation becomes strikingly clear. It’s a trip that doesn’t require a ride in a DeLorean “Back to the Future” with Christopher Lloyd, or a ride in a rocket to the “Planet of the Apes” with Charlton Heston. All that is required is faith in Jesus and a walk into the life of the young person living under your roof, sitting at a desk in school, or shooting baskets in a gymnasium. Once there (here comes the Wisdom) you can teach them to love Jesus, listen to Him and talk to Him in prayer, meet Him in the Sacraments, in Holy Mass, in Confession, and (in the words of Pope Francis) “inspire in them a vision of the future filled with the joy of the Gospel.” And while that walk may in fact be as risky as time spent aboard the DeLorean or in Ape City, it’s a risk worth taking!