

# Listen to young people, take seriously their radar for fakes, pope says

**By Cindy Wooden**

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VATICAN CITY – Young people are honest and bold in identifying fakes, which is something church leaders should not be afraid of, Pope Francis told the bishops of South Korea and Mongolia.

“When we speak with young people, they challenge us to share the truth of Jesus Christ clearly and in a way that they can understand,” he said in the written message handed to the bishops March 12. The bishops met with the pope during their “ad limina” visits to report on what is happening in their dioceses.

Later in the day, Pope Francis, to the surprise of tourists, briefly entered St. Peter’s Basilica to greet the bishops again and speak to members of the Korean community who had joined them for Mass.

Noting how Korean laypeople brought Catholicism to the country and kept it alive for decades before the first priests arrived, the pope told the bishops they must help Catholics today recognize they have “inherited this glorious history” and take responsibility for helping build up the church.

In addition, he urged them to “be on guard against religious well-being,” lulled by a life that is comfortable into thinking that they do not have to stand up for their faith or that their faith does not require them to make sacrifices.

In his written message to the bishops, Pope Francis said that just as Korea’s Catholic martyrs – mostly laypeople who were unwaveringly committed to the faith and to charity – call the peninsula’s Catholics to continue caring for others, today’s Korean young people “challenge us to hear one another.”

The pope encouraged the bishops’ efforts to find “new ways to involve your youth so that they may have a voice and may be heard in order to share the richness of our faith and life in the church.”

Young people, he said, “test the authenticity of our own faith and fidelity,” because they “very quickly will call us to task if our lives do not mirror our faith.”

“Their honesty in this regard can be a help to us, just as we seek to assist the faithful to manifest the faith in their daily lives,” he said.

Pope Francis had special words of encouragement for the apostolic prefect of

Mongolia, Bishop Wenceslao Padilla. The country has more than 3 million inhabitants and fewer than 900 Catholics.

“Though a small community in a vast territory,” the pope said, “it is like the mustard seed, which is the pledge of the fullness of God’s kingdom.”

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