

DICASTERY FOR LAITY, FAMILY AND LIFE

Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches

1. World Youth Day

The institution of World Youth Day was certainly the result of great prophetic insight on the part of St John Paul II. He explained the reasons for his decision as follows: “All young people must feel that they are cared for by the Church. Therefore, may the entire Church on a worldwide level, in union with the Successor of Peter, be more and more committed to young people, to their concerns and worries and to their aspirations and hopes, so as to meet their expectations by communicating the certainty that is Christ, the Truth that is Christ, the love that is Christ...”¹

Pope Benedict XVI took up the baton from his predecessor. On various occasions he stressed that these events are a providential gift for the Church. He described them as “a remedy against faith fatigue”, “a new, more youthful form of Christianity” and “new evangelisation put into practice”.²

In Pope Francis’ view too, World Youth Day provides an extraordinarily powerful missionary thrust for the whole Church and, in particular, for the younger generations. Just a few months after his election, Pope Francis inaugurated his pontificate with WYD in Rio de Janeiro in July 2013, at the end of which he said that WYD “was a new stage on the pilgrimage of youth crossing the continents bearing the Cross of Christ”. He went on to say that “we must never forget that World Youth Days are not ‘firework displays’, flashes of enthusiasm that are an end in themselves; they are the stages of a long journey, begun in 1985, at the initiative of Pope John Paul II”.³ He clarified a central point: “Let us always remember: young people do not follow the Pope, they follow Jesus Christ, bearing his Cross. And the Pope guides them and accompanies them on this journey of faith and hope”.⁴

As we all know, international celebrations of the event are generally held every three years in a different country each time with the participation of the Holy Father. The ordinary celebration of WYD, on the other hand, takes place every year in the particular Churches that undertake the organisation of the event.

¹ JOHN PAUL II, *To the College of Cardinals and members of the Roman Curia for Christmas*, 20 December 1985 [our translation].

² Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Christmas greetings to Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Directors of the Governorate of Vatican City State*, 22 December 2011.

³ POPE FRANCIS, *Angelus*, 4 August 2013.

⁴ *Ibid.*

2. WYD in the particular Churches

World Youth Day celebrated in each particular Church has great significance and value, not only for the young people who live in that particular region, but for the entire local ecclesial community.

Some young people cannot take part in the international WYDs because of their studies, work or financial difficulties. It would therefore be good for each particular Church to offer them the possibility, even if at a local level, of a personal experience of a “festival of faith” that can be a powerful occasion for witnessing, communion and prayer similar to the international events. Those global WYDs have profoundly touched the lives of very many young people in every part of the world.

Moreover, when World Youth Day is celebrated at the local level, it has immensely important significance for particular Churches. It serves to raise awareness among the ecclesial community as a whole – laity, priests, consecrated persons, families, adults and the elderly – of their mission to transmit the faith to the younger generations. The General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the theme of “Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment” (2018) reminded us that the whole Church, including the universal and the particular and each of its members, must feel responsible for young people and be willing to allow ourselves be challenged by their questions, their desires and their difficulties. The celebration of these Youth Days at a local level is therefore extremely useful in keeping the Church mindful of the importance of walking with young people, and of welcoming them and listening to them with patience while proclaiming the Word of God to them with affection and power.⁵

Specifically on the subject of holding WYD at a local level, this Dicastery, within the framework of its competencies,⁶ has drawn up some pastoral guidelines for the Bishops’ Conferences, the Synods of the Patriarchal Churches and Major Archbishopsrics, the dioceses/eparchies, the ecclesial movements and associations and, last but not least, for young people all over the world, so that the “diocesan/eparchial WYD” may be fully experienced as a moment of celebration “for young people” and “with young people”.

These Pastoral Guidelines are intended to encourage the particular Churches to give increasingly more importance to the diocesan celebration of WYD. They are to look on it as a favourable opportunity to be creative in planning and implementing initiatives that show that the Church considers its mission with young people to be “a pastoral priority of epoch-making significance in which to invest time, energy and resources”.⁷ We need to ensure that the younger generations feel that they are at the

⁵ Cf. *Final Document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment*, 4. Hereafter, this document will be referred to as FD.

⁶ The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life “expresses the particular concern of the Church for the young, promoting their agency in the midst of the challenges of today’s world. It supports the initiatives of the Holy Father in the field of youth ministry and is at the service of the Episcopal Conferences, of international youth movements and associations, promoting their collaboration and organizing meetings on an international level. An important aspect of its activity is the preparation of World Youth Day” (Statutes, art. 8).

⁷ FD 119.

centre of the Church's attention and pastoral concern. Indeed, young people want to be involved and appreciated, and to feel that they are co-protagonists in the life and mission of the Church.⁸

The guidelines that follow were drawn up mainly with individual dioceses in mind because dioceses are the framework and expression of the local Church. However, these recommendations must obviously be adapted to the different situations in which the Church finds itself in various regions of the world. Examples include cases where the dioceses/eparchies are small and have few human and material resources at their disposal. In these specific cases, or where it is seen to be pastorally expedient, it is possible for neighbouring or overlapping jurisdictions to join forces to celebrate Youth Day. It could be a group of several jurisdictions or an ecclesiastical region, or it could be at the national level.

3. The celebration of WYD at the local level on the Solemnity of Christ the King

At the end of Mass on the Solemnity of Christ the King on 22 November 2020, Pope Francis called for a relaunch of the celebration of WYD in the particular Churches. He announced that this celebration which has been traditionally held on Palm Sunday, starting in 2021 will be held on the Sunday of the Solemnity of Christ the King.⁹

In this regard, we recall that on the Solemnity of Christ the King in 1984, St John Paul II summoned young people to a gathering on the occasion of the International Year of Youth (1985). That occasion, together with the convocation of the Jubilee of Young People in the Year of the Redemption (1984), marked the beginning of the long journey of WYD. Pope John Paul II said, "On this feast day [...] the Church proclaims the Kingdom of Christ, already present, but still growing in all its mystery towards its full manifestation. You, young people, are indispensable bearers of the dynamics of the Kingdom of God, the hope of the Church and the world". This, then, was the genesis of WYD: on the day of Christ the King, young people from all over the world were invited "to come to Rome for a meeting with the Pope at the beginning of Holy Week, on Saturday and Palm Sunday".¹⁰

Indeed, it is not difficult to see the link between Palm Sunday and Christ the King. In the Palm Sunday celebration, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is commemorated as that of a "king, gentle and riding on a donkey" (*Mt* 21:5) and acclaimed as Messiah by the crowd: "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (*Mt* 21:9). The evangelist Luke explicitly adds the

⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*

⁹ Cf. POPE FRANCIS, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Remarks of the Holy Father at the Conclusion of Holy Mass, 22 November 2020. It is suggested that World Youth Day be held on the same date as the Solemnity of Christ the King, including in Churches where their rite does not provide for this Solemnity, although it can be celebrated on another day. Nevertheless, Ordinaries have the faculty to decide on an alternative.

¹⁰ JOHN PAUL II, *Angelus*, Sunday 25 November 1984 [our translation].

title “King” to the crowd’s acclamation of “the one who comes”, thus emphasising that the Messiah is also King, and that his entry into Jerusalem is in a certain sense a royal enthronement: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord” (*Lk* 19:38).

The kingly dimension of Christ is so important to Luke that it appears from the beginning to the end of Jesus Christ’s earthly life and accompanies his entire ministry. At the Annunciation, the angel prophesies to Mary that the child she has conceived will receive from God “the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end” (*Lk* 1:32-33). At the dramatic moment of the crucifixion, while the other evangelists merely mention the insults of the two crucified men on either side of Jesus, Luke presents the moving figure of the ‘good thief’ who prays to Jesus from the scaffold of the cross, saying, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (*Lk* 23:42). The words of welcome and forgiveness that Jesus pronounced in response to this prayer make it clear that he is a King come to save: “today you will be with me in paradise” (*Lk* 23:43).

The key proclamation that must be addressed to young people and that must be at the centre of every diocesan/eparchial WYD celebrated on the day of Christ the King is therefore: receive Christ! Welcome him as King into your lives! He is a King who came to save! Without him there is no true peace, no true inner reconciliation and no true reconciliation with others! Without his Kingdom, society too loses its human face. Without the Kingdom of Christ, all true fraternity and all genuine proximity to those who suffer will disappear.

Pope Francis noted that at the heart of the two liturgical celebrations, Christ the King and Palm Sunday, lies “the Mystery of Jesus Christ the Redeemer of humankind...”.¹¹ The core message is always that the full stature of humankind stems from love that gives itself to others “right to the end”.

This is therefore an invitation addressed to dioceses/eparchies to celebrate WYD on the Solemnity of Christ the King. It is a desire of the Holy Father that this should be a day for the universal Church to place young people at the centre of our pastoral attention, to pray for them, to engage young people as protagonists, to promote communications campaigns, etc. Ideally, an event (diocesan/eparchial, regional or national) should be organised on the day we celebrate Christ the King. There may be, however, reasons for the event to be held on another date.

This celebration should be part of a broader pastoral journey of which WYD is only one stage.¹² It is no coincidence that the Holy Father recommends that “Youth ministry has to be synodal; it should involve journeying together”.¹³

¹¹ POPE FRANCIS, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Remarks of the Holy Father at the Conclusion of Holy Mass, 22 November 2020, op. cit.

¹² FD 142.

¹³ POPE FRANCIS, Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christus vivit* (ChV) 206.

4. The cornerstones of WYD

During the Synod of Bishops on the topic of “Young people, faith and vocational discernment”, several contributions made by the Synod members concerned World Youth Day. In this regard, the Final Document states that “World Youth Day – the fruit of a prophetic insight of Saint John Paul II, who continues to inspire young people in the third millennium – and national and diocesan[/eparchial] meetings, play an important part in the lives of many young people, since they offer a living experience of faith and communion that can help them meet life’s great challenges and responsibly take their place in society and in the Church”.¹⁴

While stressing that these gatherings point to “the ordinary pastoral accompaniment provided by individual communities, where the Gospel has to be shared and translated into life decisions”,¹⁵ the Document affirms that “they offer the possibility of journeying together as if on pilgrimage, of experiencing fraternity with all, of sharing the faith joyfully and growing closer to the Church”.¹⁶

Let us explore some of these “cornerstones”¹⁷ that must be at the heart of every WYD, even at the local scale, and that therefore have clear programmatic value.

a. Youth Day as a “festival of faith

WYD offers young people a lively and joyful experience of faith and communion, a space to experience the beauty of the face of God.¹⁸ At the heart of a life of faith is our encounter with the person of Jesus Christ, so it is good that every WYD should resound with the invitation for each young person to meet Christ and enter into a personal dialogue with him. “Then there is the greater celebration which is the feast of faith, when together we praise the Lord, sing, listen to the word of God, remain in the silence of worship: all of this is the culmination of WYD”.¹⁹

In this sense, the programme of international WYD (the kerygmatic, formative, witnessing, sacramental, artistic dimensions, etc.) can inspire at the local level where it can be adapted creatively. Particular attention should be paid to moments of silent adoration of the Eucharist as an act of faith par excellence, and to penitential liturgies as a special place of encounter with God’s mercy.

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind how in every WYD the natural enthusiasm of young people, the eagerness with which they embrace anything that makes them feel involved and with which they live out their faith, all of this stimulates and reinvigorates the faith of the whole people of God. When young people are called

¹⁴ FD 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁷ For more on the contribution of WYD to the spiritual journey of young people see: BENEDICT XVI, *Christmas greetings to Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Directors of the Governorate of Vatican City State*, 22 December 2011, *op. cit.*; POPE FRANCIS, *General Audience*, 4 September 2013.

¹⁸ Cf. FD 16 and 142.

¹⁹ POPE FRANCIS, *General Audience*, 4 September 2013, *op. cit.*

by the Gospel and invited to an experience with the Lord, they often become courageous witnesses to the faith. This always results in the WYD event becoming something surprising and unique.

b. Youth Day as an “experience of Church”

It is important that the diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD be an occasion for young people to experience ecclesial communion and to grow in their awareness of being an integral part of the Church. The first way to involve young people is to listen to them. In preparing for the diocesan/eparchial Youth Day, we need to find appropriate times and ways for the voices of young people to be heard within the existing structures of communion: diocesan/eparchial and inter-diocesan/eparchial councils, presbyteral councils, local councils of bishops, etc. Let us not forget that they are the youthful face of the Church!

Alongside the young people, there should be room for the various charisms present in the jurisdiction. It is essential that the organisation of the diocesan/parish celebration of WYD be choral and involve the various states of life in a project calling for synodal work, as the Holy Father asked for in *Christus Vivit*: “Motivated by this spirit, we can move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people and women, consecrated persons, as well as groups, associations and movements. No one should be excluded or exclude themselves”.²⁰ In this way, it will be possible to gather and coordinate all the dynamic forces of the particular Church, as well as to reawaken those that are dormant.

In this context, the presence of the local Bishop and his willingness to be among the young people show them a clear sign of love and closeness. It is often the case for many young people that the diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD is an opportunity to meet and converse with their bishop. Pope Francis encourages this pastoral style of proximity, where “we need to use above all the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life, and awakens hope and desires”.²¹

c. Youth Day as a “missionary experience”

WYD at the international level has proved to be an excellent opportunity for young people to have a missionary experience. This must also be the case for diocesan/eparchial Youth Days. As Pope Francis says, “youth ministry is always missionary”.²²

For this purpose, missions can be organised in which young people are encouraged to visit people in their homes carrying a message of hope, a word of

²⁰ ChV 206.

²¹ ChV 211.

²² ChV 240.

comfort or simply being willing to listen.²³ Wherever it is possible, the enthusiasm of young people can be harnessed to allow them to lead occasions of public evangelisation with songs, prayer and testimonies. They can go to streets and squares in the city where their peers meet, because young people are the best evangelisers of young people. Their very presence and their joyful faith already constitute a “living proclamation” of the Good News that attracts other young people.

Activities in which young people have an experience of voluntary work, freely given service and self-giving are also to be encouraged. It should not be forgotten that on the Sunday before the Solemnity of Christ the King, the Church celebrates World Day of the Poor. What better occasion to promote initiatives in which young people donate their time and energy for the benefit of the most disadvantaged, the marginalised and those who are discarded by society. In this way, young people are offered the chance to become “protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, capable of resisting the pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism”.²⁴

d. Youth Day as an “opportunity for vocational discernment” and a “call to holiness”.

As part of a rich ecclesial and missionary experience of faith, priority should be given to the vocational dimension. It is a gradual approach that first of all helps young people understand that their whole life is placed before God who loves them and calls them. God has called them first and foremost to life and continually calls them to happiness. They are called to get to know God and to listen to his voice, and above all to accept his Son Jesus as their teacher, friend and Saviour. To recognise and come to terms with these “fundamental vocations” is the first great challenge for young people. When these first “calls” from God are taken seriously, they already point towards demanding life choices. These include accepting that our existence is a gift from God that must therefore be lived in reference to God and not in a self-referential way; the choice of a Christian way of living in our affections and social relationships; the choice of studies, of work commitment and of our entire future in such a way that it is fully in tune with the friendship with God that we have embraced and want to preserve; the choice of making our entire existence a gift for others to be lived in service and selfless love. These are often radical choices in response to God’s call that give a decisive direction to a young person’s whole life. Pope Francis tells them that “life [...] is a time for making robust, decisive, eternal choices. Trivial choices lead to a trivial life; great choices to a life of greatness”.²⁵

Within this broader “vocational horizon”, there is no reason to be afraid of proposing to young people the choice that must be made of a state of life, one that is in accord with the call that God is addressing to each of them individually, whether it be to the priesthood or the consecrated life, including in the monastic form, or marriage and family. In this sense, the involvement of seminarians, consecrated persons,

²³ Cf. ChV 240.

²⁴ ChV 174.

²⁵ POPE FRANCIS, Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Homily, 22 November 2020, op. cit.

married couples and families can be of great help. By their presence and witness, they can help to prompt young people to ask the right vocational questions and to desire to set out in search of the “great plan” that God has in mind for them. In the delicate process that guides them to make these choices, young people must be accompanied and prudently advised. When the time is right, they should be encouraged to make their own personal option in a decisive way with trust in God’s help. They should not be stuck in a perpetual state of indecision.

Every vocational choice must have at its heart the even more profound call to holiness. WYD must resonate in young people the call to holiness as the true path to happiness and self-fulfilment.²⁶ It is holiness that is commensurate with the history and personality of each young person. It does not set limits to the mysterious ways that God has in store for each one that can lead to heroic stories of holiness – as has happened and still happens with many young people – or to the “holiness next door” from which no one is excluded. It is therefore appropriate to make the most of the rich patrimony of saints of the local and universal Church, elder brothers and sisters in the faith, whose stories confirm to us that the path to holiness is not only possible and practicable, but that it brings great joy.

e. Youth Day as an “experience of pilgrimage”

WYD has been a great pilgrimage right from the beginning. It has been a pilgrimage through space and time. Pilgrims have travelled from different cities, countries and continents to the place chosen for the meeting with the Pope and the other young people. The pilgrimage through time has gone from one generation of young people to the next cohort who ‘pick up the baton’, and this has profoundly marked the past thirty-five years in the life of the Church. The young people of WYD are therefore a pilgrim people. They are not vagabonds who move around aimlessly. They are a united people, pilgrims who ‘walk together’ towards a goal, towards an encounter with the One who can give meaning to their existence, the God who became one of us and who calls every young person to be a disciple, to leave everything and to follow. Pilgrimage requires a minimalist approach that asks young people to leave behind empty comforts and certainties, to adopt a style of travel that is sober and welcoming and open to Providence and to “God’s surprises”, a style that teaches them to go beyond themselves and to face the challenges that arise along the way.

The diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD can propose specific ways for young people to have real pilgrimage experiences. These are the kind of experiences that encourage young people to leave their homes and set out on a journey, and on the way they are introduced to the sweat and toil of the journey, the fatigue of the body and the joy of the spirit. It is often through pilgrimage together that we make new friends, and we experience the excitement of sharing the same ideals as we look together towards a common goal with mutual support in difficulties and the joy of sharing the little we have. All this is of vital importance at the present time because many young people risk isolating themselves in virtual unreal worlds, far from the

²⁶ Cf. POPE FRANCIS, Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* 2.

dusty roads and streets of the world. As a result, they are deprived of the deep satisfaction that comes from painstakingly and patiently reaching the desired goal, not with a simple click, but with the tenacity and perseverance of body and soul. In this sense, the diocesan/eparchial Youth Day is a great opportunity for the younger generations to explore local shrines and other significant places of popular piety. We bear in mind that “various manifestations of popular piety, especially pilgrimages, attract young people who do not readily feel at home in ecclesial structures, and represent a concrete sign of their trust in God”.²⁷

f. Youth Day as “an experience of universal fraternity”

WYD must be an opportunity for young people to meet that is not restricted to just young Catholics. “Every young person has something to say to others. He or she has something to say to adults, something to say to priests, sisters, bishops and even the Pope”.²⁸

In this respect, the diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD can be an opportune time for all the young people who live in a given area to come together and talk to each other, regardless of their beliefs, their vision of life or their convictions. Every young person must feel invited to take part and be welcomed as a brother or sister. We need to build “youth ministry capable of being inclusive, with room for all kinds of young people, to show that we are a Church with open doors”.²⁹

5. Youth involvement

As already mentioned, it is important for youth ministry workers to be increasingly attentive to involving young people in all the steps of pastoral planning for WYD. It needs to be done in a synodal-missionary style and to make the most of the creativity, language and methods that are typical of that age bracket. Who knows the language and the problems of their peers better than they do? Who is more capable of reaching out to them through art, social media, etc.?

The testimony and experience of young people who have previously taken part in an international WYD deserve to be highlighted in the preparation of the diocesan/eparchial event.

In some particular Churches, the young people who have taken part in an international WYD or who have helped organise national and diocesan/eparchial youth initiatives, are now the “veterans” of these experiences and they have been involved in setting up youth ministry teams in a number of different settings including parish, diocesan/eparchial, national, etc. This shows us that when young people become prime movers in the organisation of particularly significant events, they can easily take on board the ideals that inspired those events. They fully grasp their importance and

²⁷ ChV 238.

²⁸ POPE FRANCIS, Address at a prayer vigil in preparation for World Youth Day, 8 April 2017.

²⁹ ChV 234.

become passionate about them, and they are willing to devote time and energy to sharing them with others. Their powerful experiences of faith and service often lead to their willingness to commit themselves to the routine pastoral care in their local Church.

We would like to stress that we must have the courage to involve young people and entrust active roles to them. We should include youth from the various pastoral groups present in the diocese as well as those who do not belong to any community, youth group, association or movement. The diocesan/eparchial WYD can be a wonderful opportunity to highlight the richness of the local Church. It is important to ensure that young people who are less present and less “active” in established pastoral structures do not feel excluded. Everyone must feel “specially invited”. They must all feel expected and welcome, each one in their individual uniqueness and human and spiritual potential. In this way, the diocesan/eparchial event can be a very good opportunity to motivate and welcome all those young people who may be looking for their place in the Church and who have not yet found it.

6. The Holy Father's annual Message for WYD

Every year, in advance of the diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD, the Holy Father publishes a Message for young people. It would therefore be appropriate for the preparatory meetings and the diocesan/eparchial WYD itself to be inspired by these words of the Holy Father to young people, and in particular by the biblical passage that is highlighted in the Message.

It is also important for young people to hear the Word of God and the word of the Church first hand from people close to them – people who are familiar with their characteristics, their history, tastes, difficulties and struggles, expectations and hopes. They would know how best to apply the biblical and magisterial texts to the actual real-life circumstances that these particular young people are encountering. This work of mediation, carried out in catechesis and dialogue, will also help young people to be able to identify specific ways in which to bear witness to the Word of God that they have heard, to live it out in their daily lives and to embody it at home, in their places of work or study and among friends.

The direction proposed by the Pope’s Message, which is intended to accompany the journey of the universal Church with young people, can therefore be interpreted with intelligence and great cultural sensitivity by taking into account the local context. It could also inspire the path of youth ministry in the local Church while not forgetting the two main lines of action that Pope Francis has identified: *outreach and growth*.³⁰

It cannot be excluded that the Message could also be conveyed through various artistic expressions or initiatives of a social nature, as the Holy Father invited us to do in his Message for the 35th WYD when he said, “offer the world, the Church and other young people something beautiful, whether in the realm of the spirit, the arts or

³⁰ Cf. ChV 209.

society”.³¹ Moreover, the content of the Message could also be taken up in other significant moments during the pastoral year, such as Mission Month or the months devoted to the Word of God or to vocations, always taking into account the indications given by the respective episcopal conferences.

Last but not least, the Holy Father’s Message could become the theme of various other meetings for young people that are proposed by those working in youth ministry for the local Church, and by associations and ecclesial movements.

7. Conclusion

The diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD is undoubtedly an important element in the life of each particular Church. It is a special moment of encounter with the younger generations and an instrument of evangelisation of the world of youth and of dialogue with them. Let us not forget that “the Church has so much to talk about with youth, and youth have so much to share with the Church”.³²

The Pastoral Guidelines contained in these pages are intended to be a resource that presents the ideal motivations and possible practical implementations that will allow a diocesan/eparchial WYD to be an opportunity to bring out the potential for good that is in each young person, with their generosity, thirst for authentic values and great ideals. We therefore repeat our insistence on the importance of particular Churches devoting special attention to the celebration of the diocesan/eparchial Youth Day, so that it may be properly utilised and appreciated. To invest in young people is to invest in the future of the Church. It is about encouraging vocations, and it effectively means the initiation of remote preparation for the families of tomorrow. It is, therefore, a vital task for every local Church and not simply one more activity.

Let us entrust the path of youth ministry throughout the world to Our Lady. Mary our Mother, as Pope Francis reminds us in *Christus Vivit*, “looks to this pilgrim people: a youthful people whom she loves, and who seek her in the silence of their hearts amid all the noise, the chatter and the distractions of the journey. Under the gaze of our Mother, there is room only for the silence of hope. Thus Mary illumines anew our youth”.³³

*The Holy Father Pope Francis has given his approval
for the publication of this document*

From the Vatican, 22 April 2021

Anniversary of the handing over of the WYD Cross to young people

³¹ POPE FRANCIS, Message for the 35th World Youth Day 2020.

³² JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* 46.

³³ ChV 48.

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