

Press Conference

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

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The impetus to draft these orientations came to us from the choice made by Pope Francis to move the date of diocesan WYDs and to relaunch their celebration in the particular Churches. In fact, at the end of the Eucharistic celebration on the Solemnity of Christ the King, November 22, 2020, the Holy Father announced that the local edition of WYD, hitherto celebrated on Palm Sunday, will henceforth be held on the Sunday upon which falls the Solemnity of Christ the King. This change of date, dictated above all by reasons of pastoral expediency, maintains the emphasis on the "mystery of Jesus Christ, Redeemer of mankind" and at the same time seeks to expand possibilities regarding the proposal of activities and initiatives that place young people in a cone of light that radiates from the same mystery.

In the final document of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment, we read that the Church “considers her mission [with young people] a pastoral priority of epoch-making significance, in which to invest time, energy and resources” (n. 119). And before that, the Synod Fathers wrote: "World Youth Day, [...] and national and diocesan 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" (DF 16).

These meetings, born of the prophetic intuition of St. John Paul II, have been recognized by most as a source of grace for many young people, for youth ministry and for the entire Church. How many conversions, how many vocations are born during WYD! According to Pope Benedict XVI, they represent a providential gift for the Church, a "remedy against the fatigue of believing." Pope Francis has defined them as a missionary thrust of extraordinary strength for the whole Church and, in particular, for the younger generations.

Therefore, our Dicastery, in reflecting upon how to concretely implement the proposals of the Synod and strengthened by its decades of experience in coordinating WYD, thought to collect in a document some key elements that have made these meetings fruitful over the years, to make it available to the particular Churches. We recall that, since the institution of WYD, the particular Churches have been invited to celebrate it every year at the local level, while its international edition takes place approximately every three years. It is known, however, that a

large number of young people, for one reason or another, are unable to participate in international events. Therefore, through these *Pastoral Guidelines*, we would like to make all young people participants in this rich heritage. Their pastors and the various services of youth ministry of the particular Churches will thus be able, with pastoral freedom and creativity, to enrich their local experience of the "youth festival".

We firmly believe that the international WYD and its local counterpart are mutually enriching. The international dimension broadens the horizons of young people and opens them to universal brotherhood. The local WYD, because of its geographical and physical proximity, can more easily generate a commitment in young people that will change the face of the society in which they live and increase their sense of belonging.

We have designed these *Guidelines* for Bishops' Conferences, the Synods of the Patriarchal and Major Archbishops, dioceses/eparchies, ecclesial movements and associations and, last but not least, young people all over the world. Our hope is that all the recipients will find in it inspiring elements to give new impetus to youth ministry in the various parts of the world.

I thank you for your attention and I now give the floor to Fr. João Chagas, head of the Youth Office of the Dicastery, who will present the document to us in broad outline.