

## **Press Conference**

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

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#### **OPENING THE DOOR TO DIALOGUE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE**

How beautiful the Church is! As I read the text, I thought about just that. The Church continually strives to open itself, to improve itself, recognising the people who most need to be loved and guided by the Church, helping them to find their identity as children who belong to God.

At WYD in Krakow in 2016, I had my first international pilgrimage experience, in which I participated together with a group of young people from the Holy Land, mainly from Nazareth and Haifa. We spent some days of preparation in Haifa and then, arriving in Krakow, we met so many young people from different countries of the world, each group with their own flag of belonging, while we were there without any flag, to avoid any political conflict. However, it was the events of WYD that reminded us that we belong to Mother Church and that we are children of one Father, united with all the youth of the world.

Despite the many conflicts in my land, it always remains a place of pilgrimage, where young people and pilgrims come to meet Jesus. For this reason, it would be important to encourage more local young people to go out to discover the Gospel by walking in the footsteps of Jesus in the places where he lived. How many young people, as the text of the Guidelines says, would not come for a prayer in church but would be willing to participate in a pilgrimage experience, walking and discovering together, forming new friendships and sharing moments of joy.

The Holy Land is a small territory with different religions, where Christians are a minority. How important it would be, especially in these days given the situation in Jerusalem and throughout the whole territory, to open the door to dialogue among young people of different religions. I believe that all of us young people, despite our differences, start from a common point, we are on the lookout for something, or rather Someone, that can give meaning to our existence. Promoting the opportunity for such a dialogue in the churches of the Holy Land, through WYD, and thereby giving everyone the chance to express themselves, would mean being able to hope that one day peace will reign in the Land where Jesus was born and lived.