

Press Conference

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

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Responsible

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The document is simple and agile as befits a pastoral tool; it can be read easily in an hour. It is structured in 6 chapters [and a conclusion] and is accompanied by many photographs.

The first chapter summarizes what WYD has represented over the past 35 years in the life of the Church: they have been essentially a gift for the entire ecclesial community, as confirmed by all the Popes who have celebrated them.

The second chapter considers the importance of the celebration of WYD at the local level. Many particular Churches already have in their calendar some kind of event dedicated to young people, even if on different dates and in different ways (regional, national, continental...). To those local realities, these orientations will come as a confirmation and enhancement of what they already do. Where nothing similar exists, the purpose of these guidelines is to encourage the particular Churches to discover the many fruits that can be born from the diocesan/eparchial celebration of WYD.

The third chapter returns to the choice of the new date for the celebration of the diocesan/eparchial WYD on the Solemnity of Christ the King. On this day, the whole Church is called to gather around its young people, around **ALL young people**, to send them this great message: "Jesus loves you and you are in the heart of the Church. The Church has a message for you and you too have much to say to the Church. Today she wants to meet you, to listen to you, to pray with you and for you. She wants to celebrate you." The *Guidelines* state: "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.[...] 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.”.

The fourth chapter is the longest and most detailed. It brings together some of the salient aspects that have emerged from several decades of experience in celebrating the international versions of WYD. It lists several pastoral proposals that reflect the richness of the event. But the key word here is "**pastoral creativity/imagination**". We are not proposing a univocal model to be followed to the letter, rather, we are essentially giving suggestions that each Church or ecclesial reality can adapt and re-elaborate, in whole or in part, according to its own experience and pastoral needs.

The fifth chapter focuses on **youth leadership**. With this chapter, we desired to re-propose the strong message that emerged from the 2018 Synod, namely, to make young people participants - today - in the life and mission of the Church, because, as Pope Francis often says, young people are not the future of the Church. They are its present. They are today, the now (see the Homily at the Final Mass of WYD Panama 2019). The document urges the overcoming of a pastoral care "for young people" in favour of a pastoral care "with young people." This is what young people are asking of the Church: an opening of credit. They are asking for trust and they want to be accompanied and encouraged so that they can make use of the vital force that moves them.

Finally, **the sixth chapter** explains the importance of the **Holy Father's Annual Message for WYD**. Every year, the Church celebrates young people. Each year the Holy Father addresses a message to them on the occasion of WYD, a true "spiritual compass" for young people and a valuable tool for planning youth ministry.

I will now give the floor to some young people to hear from them what struck them as they read this document.