

Press Conference

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

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THE CLOSENESS OF THE CHURCH TO YOUNG PEOPLE

My name is Gelson Fernando Augusto Dinis. I come from Luanda, Angola. I am 24 years old. I am a seminarian and have completed my undergraduate studies in Philosophy and Theology. I am currently pursuing a Licentiate in Dogmatic Theology at the Pontifical Urban University.

I had the opportunity to read the document "Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches." Its depth and beauty truly struck me. In particular, the emphasis it gives to the Church as the mediator of the encounter of the young person with God, and to her ministers as facilitators of this encounter. In the Church each person must feel welcomed and loved, but above all accompanied, and in particular young people, who are called to be witnesses of God's love where they are.

The World Youth Days were born precisely with this intention: to show Christ's love to young people through the closeness of the Church. Young people are her precious and much-loved children who must be at the heart of her evangelizing mission.

Young people, as precious pearls of the Church, find in Diocesan Youth Days an opportunity not only to experience ecclesial communion, but also to learn to feel like members of the community in which they find themselves. Therefore, on these occasions, the closeness of the parish priest, of the bishop, is fundamental, such that the young people feel welcomed and understand that they are essential to the mission of the Church, which in itself excludes no one.

On the other hand, these Days are also a space for vocations, for the true discovery of God's will in one's life. In some meetings similar to these, I too have had important experiences in my vocational journey. For example: before coming to Rome, I was able to participate both in several Masses for the diocesan celebration of World Youth Day, presided by the bishop of my diocese, and in various vocational vigils, some of which were held in the various parishes of the diocese, to involve young people. The dedication and closeness of those who guided me made me want to enter the seminary myself a few years later.

Therefore, as has been well pointed out in the document, the closeness of pastors, whether bishops or priests, particularly on these occasions, serve as a stimulus for the discernment of each young person. But in addition to the accompaniment of bishops or priests, the witness of families - especially younger couples - is fundamental so that each young person, evangelised by their presence, may discover God's plan within himself and not be afraid to make a definitive choice for his life.