

## **Press Conference**

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

**Holy See Press Office, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Dorota Abdelmoula**

Good morning everyone!

In my intervention, I've decided to focus on the protagonism of young people. Actually, this protagonism doesn't even really need to be spoken about, as we have just heard it resonating throughout this hall. Indeed, Maria and Gelson didn't only speak *about* the Church but above all *as* the Church.

In my opinion, it is significant that today, on the anniversary of the birth of St. John Paul II, who was so fond of the active presence of young people in the Church, here in the Press Office of the Holy See, it is precisely young people who are speaking about the faith lived in first person, with their own language and their own sensitivity. I believe that this example of theirs is also an indication of the way in which these guidelines could be put into practice: that they not only be considered as a document dedicated to those responsible for youth ministry, but that they be read, meditated upon and put into practice together with young people.

This would also be a very concrete sign of the trust that in my opinion is fundamental to putting young people's protagonism into motion.

For years, when I think back to WYD, I am always struck precisely by the trust that first John Paul II, then Benedict XVI and now Pope Francis have placed in young people, in gathering thousands of them - who before seemed anonymous - in front of the whole world by means of cameras and telephoto lenses, with a strong announcement: "This is the Church of today. These are the people who will carry the Gospel of Christ into the coming decades."

I dare say that this sign of confidence is a desire that every young person carries within themselves and that can rekindle their life. This is why it would be important - and this is one of the encouragements we promote with these guidelines - not to be satisfied with already having a group of young people involved in the parish or diocese, but rather to seek out more and more - especially among those who perhaps feel inadequate, unworthy or unbelieving.

My own journey, which brought me here to the Holy See, began with a gesture of trust from a priest who simply told me, "Pick up your guitar and come play at Sunday Mass, we need you. And don't worry, you'll learn everything along the way."

From that gesture of trust, many experiences were born: from the youth ministry of the missionaries of La Salette to the organization of World Youth Day in Krakow 2016, up to the work in the Catholic press in Poland and now in the Holy See.

Mine is a story like many others; there are so many examples just like it. They are all examples that show that when trust is given, that trust is always repaid. Especially by young people.

I hope that these guidelines will become an impetus to nurture even more of this mutual trust. For all those who wish to consult or download them - and we hope that there are many who do wish to do so – they will be available from today on the website of the dicastery *laityfamilylife.va*, in 5 languages and in various formats, including a version ready for printing.