
2023 WORLD YOUTH DAY. The Organising Committee's visit to Ukraine. Young people: “Our hearts are wounded”



[...deputy director of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church's Office for Youth Ministry. He spoke to SIR about the main stages of this trip and, above all, its significance. The Portuguese Bishop - who will be made a Cardinal at the next Consistory, scheduled for 30th September - had two meetings in the last few days: on Saturday 15th July at the Marian Shrine of Zarvanytsia, with young people from the Greek Catholic Church, and on Sunday 16th July at the Ukrainian Shrine of the Mother of God in Berdychev, with young people from the Latin Catholic Church.](#)



. "Let us leave all of our sorrows, all of our tears, in her motherly heart. I have come here to pray with you, for you and for all those who are now heroically defending their country. The young people of Lisbon are waiting for you and will welcome you with open arms. Those who cannot come or who are already in heaven, I will bring them to Lisbon in my heart. The Ukrainian youth spoke next. "Today our hearts are full of anger and hatred towards those who destroyed our peace," the young people said with great sincerity to the head of the WYD organising committee. "Forgiveness is a gift. We need inner reconciliation to forgive those who came to our land to kill us. Hundreds of thousands of young people will not be able to attend this year's WYD. They are on the front lines defending our country and your freedom. Young men and women are dying for the love of their country. I want to thank you for coming here to embrace us. Please help us defeat the enemy that is stealing our youth. Our young hearts are bleeding."



. "They wanted to make the cry of war heard, to let young people know that they are fighting for the right to life. Their hearts are wounded. They expressed a fear: to be wounded not only by those who fire missiles and weapons on their territory, but also by those who try to equate attackers and aggressors, victims and murderers, the raped and the rapists. They expressed these words with tears in their eyes. The young people thanked Bishop Americo for this visit, which was a gesture of solidarity and closeness, a sign of the love of the Church, which embraces her children like a mother, whose embrace heals because it makes us feel that we are not alone."



“This is our daily reality,” said Father Roman. “We bury our soldiers every day. The Bishop saw the wife and young children of this soldier, who died at the age of 30. We began to cry. What dreams did this young man have for himself and his family? Young Ukrainians dream of a just and lasting peace. They dream of victory. After the prayer service in the church, we visited the military cemetery where the soldiers' graves are located. Walking among the graves, the Bishop met a mother who had buried first her husband and then her son. The two embraced. We saw the names engraved on the tombstones, the dates of birth and death. All died between the ages of 20 and 30, in the prime of their youth. We are grateful for this visit and for the closeness of the Church. War is an absurdity in the 21st century. At the World Youth Day in Lisbon we will be present with more than 500 young Ukrainians. We hope that these days will be an oasis of spiritual peace for each of them, a place that will heal their hearts. For this to happen, we count on the understanding, encouragement and embrace of all the young people in the world.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wffy0sGIMrI&t=1s>

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