

WYD Lisbon. Card. Clemente: “Young people are the face of hope. The young generation will build a new future”

(from Lisbon) “One thing I can say for sure: this experience, involving tens of thousands of young people who served and worked to prepare and organise this WYD, won't disappear, it will live on. It shapes a generation. The young people who participated have developed a way of being and of dedicating themselves to doing good. They are the face of hope. I have no doubt that this generation will build a new future, here and throughout the world.” With these words, Card. **Manuel Clemente**, Patriarch of Lisbon, gave a preliminary assessment during the first press conference held at the Lisbon Media Centre in the presence of journalists from several countries. It has not yet begun and it is already time to take stock. It took time and dedication to prepare this World Youth Day, which has its roots in previous years. Along the way, it ran into the pandemic, which forced the organisers to postpone it for a year. But it is already halfway there.



. Along with the pilgrims, who will arrive in Lisbon tomorrow, Tuesday August 1, the symbols of the WYD - the Pilgrim's Cross and the icon of Our Lady of Salus Populi Romani - have also reached the Portuguese capital. They have completed an extraordinary journey, a true world pilgrimage that began in Angola in 2020 and will arrive in Portugal at the end of October 2021. Hundreds of thousands of kilometres covered, thousands of parishes visited all over the world. “Both initiatives”, said the Patriarch, “have exceeded expectations”, generating “extraordinary participation” in parishes and dioceses throughout the country. In this case too, the participation of young people was “decisive.” Father Filipe Diniz, responsible for youth ministry at the Portuguese Bishops' Conference and coordinator of the Diocesan Days and the “Symbol” pilgrimage, described events that reached beyond the parish to include shopping centres, even prisons and residential homes for the elderly.



On the long avenue of Colle Encontro in Eduardo VII Park, where the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon will celebrate the opening Mass of World Youth Day, preparations are in full swing. The WYD is a “unique event” that has been made possible, the Cardinal said, thanks to the “central role of young people” and the “enthusiasm” of the country’s civil and political authorities, from the government to the presidency and local authorities. One million people are expected to take part, almost a tenth of Portugal’s population of 10 million, notes Card. Clemente. The commitment is to ensure that “everything goes well” and efforts are being made to guarantee the security of each event. Regarding the participation of young people from other Churches and religions, the Patriarch assured: “There is a place for everyone, and all participants should feel at home.” He pointed out that a tree-planting ceremony, associated with six major religious families (Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam) will take place on August 2 at 6:30 pm in the Tropical Botanical Garden of the University of Lisbon. With regard to the arrival of Pope Francis, Card. Clemente confirmed that the route of the Popemobile had already been planned, as well as meetings and events. “But with Pope Francis - he adds - you never know. We will see what happens. Many people will have the opportunity to see him and those who cannot be here in person will be able to follow him through your media channels.”

