
WYD 2023. Card. Zuppi: “From Lisbon the joyful image of a Church that walks together”

(from Lisbon) “The Lord calls you as you are. That is how he calls everyone, he calls us individually, he calls us with our weaknesses, with our contradictions, but he calls us to do something. That's the beauty that these young people have discovered.” Speaking to journalists from news media of the Italian Bishops' Conference (CEI), Card. **Matteo Zuppi**, Archbishop of Bologna and CEI President, gave a preliminary assessment of the WYD ahead of tonight's vigil, the culmination of the young people's experience in Lisbon. “Young people know that a lot is said about them,” said the Archbishop, “and they find it difficult, like everyone else, to distinguish the charlatans from the educators, the true from the untrue. I believe that this great encounter with the Lord, involving young people in this extraordinary adventure that is the Church, will lead them to see the world through the eyes of Jesus. A world that needs to be healed, to be saved with our care, starting with the poorest. And this must be done just as we are, with our weaknesses and fragilities.” “It's not about finding all the answers, but finding *the* answer”, Zuppi continued. “Yesterday, in one of the Stations of the Cross, it was said: 'I didn't think I had a problem, I thought I was the problem'. On the contrary, I believe that this faith in the Lord is important.

It leads us to live the Gospel, a Gospel that gives fullness to our lives, that does not take away, but only completes.”

What will you bring with you from your experience with young people in Lisbon?

The image of a joyful, active Church that walks together, in a world with so many divisions, so deceptive and virtual.

This image is in itself an important response, not least to widespread uncertainty and fear. We sometimes tend to put more faith in our own strength than in the power of the Holy Spirit. Here the Spirit has proved us wrong and rekindled many hopes and many relationships. That doesn't mean ignoring the problems. It means being serenely aware of the great strength, great hope and great trust that young people want and deserve.

65,000 Italian youths in Lisbon. So many...

Indeed, and it was an arduous journey that involved a lot of hard work. I know that there were some young people who even undertook to collect the money needed to come. A beautiful presence in a great presence. This global dimension is also heartwarming, and it makes us realise that 'Fratelli Tutti' (Brothers All) is not a distant dream, but a reality that is already happening, and towards which we must go with haste, as the theme of the day says, continuing to go out to meet others.”

Yesterday, in an interview about the war in Ukraine, the Pope spoke of a 'peace offensive'. What does that mean?

Not to get used to war, to feel malaise. When we hear news of death, of violence, of clashes, we must always remember that people are dying. Pope Francis shows us this in a concrete way by never ceasing to seek peace, by constantly looking for ways to console those who are suffering and to open up new avenues to put an end to the conflict. I see that there is great solidarity. Three bishops from Ukraine with strong ties to the Italian Church are here in Lisbon. They are comforted by this fraternity, which gives them hope and concrete answers. The devastating suffering of the war does not end

there; there is also the tragedy of the refugees, of those who have lost everything and who live in a state of total uncertainty. For this reason, we must strive to show closeness and practical solidarity. And to continue to pray and to seek every possible way to put an end to the conflict.

Is there room for hopes of peace?

There must be peace, because without peace there is only the end, there is death. You cannot live with war, even if people get used to it.

War destroys life, and life does not automatically resume when the war ends. There is certainly room for peace. But it must be sought in every way, and everyone must do their part so that this peace may come soon.

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