
The Pope in Portugal: “You are the hope of a different world”

“May I, as an elderly person, share with you young people a dream that I cherish: it is a dream of peace, a dream of young people who pray for peace, who live in peace and who build a future of peace.” Closing the World Youth Day from Parque Tejo, **Pope Francis** – “the youngest of the young people here”, as Cardinal Farrell described him - shared his dream of peace with the 1.5 million young people present, and through the Angelus prayer he once again entrusted the future of humanity into the hands of Mary, Queen of Peace.

“On your way home, please continue to pray for peace”, was the Pope's invitation to the one and a half million young people who had spent the night in Lisbon's Parque Tejo for the prayer vigil and Holy Mass, the culminating moments of each World Youth Day: “You are a sign of peace for the world, you bear witness to the fact that different nationalities, languages and histories can unite rather than divide. You are the hope of a different world. Thank you for that. Keep it up!”

“**Obrigado**”. It is the word chosen to epitomise the days of the World Youth Day in Lisbon, before the Angelus prayer:

“*Obrigado* to you, Lisbon. You will be remembered by these young people as a house of fraternity and a city of dreams!”

“A special thanks goes to those who have watched over the World Youth Day from on high, to the Patron Saints of the event: first of all, John Paul II, who gave life to the World Youth Days,” said the Pope, who reserved his most important “obrigado” for the young people present: “God sees all the good that you are, He alone knows what He has sown in your hearts. Please cherish it. I want to say to you: commit it to memory, keep the most beautiful moments in your hearts. Then, when some inevitable times of tiredness and discouragement will come, and perhaps also the temptation to stop your journey or to close in on yourselves, rekindle the experiences and the grace of these days, because - you must never forget - this is the reality, this is you: the holy People of God, walking together in the joy of the Gospel!”.

“Let us accompany with our thoughts and prayers all those who could not be here with us because of conflicts and wars. There are so many in the world,” Francis said in his invitation before the Angelus prayer. “When I think of this continent, I am saddened by the beloved Ukraine, which continues to suffer so much”, Francis continued, adding “a greeting to the young people who could not be here but who took part in the initiatives organised in their countries by the Bishops' Conferences and dioceses; I refer, for example, to the brothers and sisters from sub-Saharan Africa gathered in Tangiers.”

Just before the announcement of the date and place of the next World Youth Day, which everyone had been waiting for, Francis surprised the huge crowd of young people with another announcement:

“Come to Rome in 2025 to celebrate the Youth Jubilee together! The next World Youth Day will take place in Asia, in South Korea, in Seoul”,

he then announced: "So in 2027, from the western borders of Europe, the WYD will travel to the Far East. This is a beautiful sign of the universality of the Church and of the fraternity to which you bear witness."

"How good it is to share this experience with Jesus and with one another. And now we have joined in prayer. Yet in the wake of these grace-filled days we can also ask an important question: what will we take back with us as we come down from the mountain to resume our daily life"? the Pope asked the youths in his homily. "To shine, to listen, to be unafraid", is the answer. "We too need a burst of light if we are to face the darkness of the night, the challenges of life, the fears that plague us, the darkness we often see all around us", the Pope said commenting on the Gospel passage on the Transfiguration. "We need the light of Jesus because he is the light that shines even in the darkness of the night." "We do not radiate light by putting ourselves in the spotlight, when we project a perfect image", Francis explained: "we may be strong and successful yet not radiate light. We radiate light when we welcome Jesus into our hearts and learn to love as he does." "If we become selfish, the light dims", the Pope added in unscripted remarks. "On the Mount a bright light overshadowed the disciples: 'this is my beloved son, listen to him.' The entire Christian life is enshrined in these words: to listen to Jesus." "This is the key: to listen to what Jesus is telling me", the Pope said, commenting on the Transfiguration: "Jesus reveals to us God the Father and teaches us the ways of love. Listen to Jesus: because we could follow paths that appear to be paths of love, but in reality they are paths of selfishness masquerading as love."

"Beware of forms of selfishness disguised as love!"

is the warning. The Pope then addressed words of hope to each of them: "To you, young people, who have great dreams, but who are often clouded by the fear of not seeing them come true; to you, young people, who sometimes think that you cannot make it; to you, young people, who are currently inclined to become discouraged, to consider yourselves inadequate or conceal your pain with a smile. To you, young people, who want to change the world and fight for justice and peace; to you, young people, you, who make the effort and use your imagination, but who feel that it is not enough; to you, young people, whom the Church and the world need like the soil needs the rain; to you, young people, who are the present and the future; yes, it is to you, young people, that Jesus says: 'Do not be afraid!' Let everyone repeat in silence in their hearts: 'Do not be afraid'. "Dear young people I would like to look at each of you in the eye and say: be not afraid!", the Pope said in his final remarks: "Let me tell you something even more beautiful: Jesus looks at you right now, he is looking at you, he knows you, he knows your joys and your sadness, your successes and your failures, he knows the heart of each one of you. And he tells you today, here in Lisbon, in this World Youth Day: 'Be not afraid. Take courage, do not be afraid."

"Be surfers of love",

the invitation to the volunteers, before leaving for Rome.

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