

World Youth Day 2023 - Our Holy Father's words of Wisdom, Love, and Light:



WELCOMING CEREMONY

The World Youth Day welcoming ceremony included the procession of flags from all the countries represented, accompanied by an original song, “*Um Dia de Sol*” (“A Sunny Day”), composed by Héber Marques especially for the occasion. The song highlights the desire to celebrate joyful faith in Jesus.

“At this World Youth Day, let us help one another to recognize this fundamental reality: May these days be vibrant echoes of God’s call of love.”

“Christ’s Church is the community of the called, not a community of the best people; rather, we are all sinners, all called as we are, with our problems and limitations. We are a community of brothers and sisters of Jesus, sons, and daughters of the same Father. I want to be very clear with you. There is room for *everyone* in the Church. Jesus expressed this clearly in the Gospels in parables where all are called: the young and old, the healthy and the sick, the righteous and sinners: everyone, everyone, everyone, everyone! Repeat after me: Todos! Todos! Todos! Everyone, Everyone, Everyone!”

“Never grow tired of coming to God with questions. Asking questions is good. It is often better than giving answers, because those who ask questions remain restless, and restlessness is the best remedy for a routineness that can anaesthetize the soul.”

“How beautiful it is that God loves us. God loves us as we are, not as we would like to be or as society would like us to be. Instead, we are called and loved as we are with our defects and limitations, but also with our desire to move forward in life.”

“This is what I wanted to tell you: Don’t be afraid, have courage, go forward knowing that we are loved. Repeat after me – “God loves us!”



WYD Vigil

The World Youth Day official motto and theme song (Ha Pressa no Ar) is taken from Luke 1:39: *“Mary set out and went with haste”*. This was the Holy Father’s base as he spoke to the young pilgrims at the vigil.

“Mary does something that was not asked of her, something that she really did not have to do. Why? Because she loved, and whoever loves flies, runs, and rejoices.” (taken from *The Imitation of Christ*).

“Joy is missionary! So, each of us has the duty to bring that joy to others.”

“If we look back, we recall the people who were a ray of light for our lives: parents, grandparents, friends, priests, religious men and women, catechists, animators, teachers. They are the roots of our joy.” After a moment of silence, our Holy Father urged everyone to “Do the same for others, so they too might grow roots of joy.”

“In order to offer joy to others, we must first search for joy and train ourselves to be joyful.”

“Even when we fail, the important thing is to get back up and try again. Nothing is free in life; everything requires payment. There is only one thing that is free: the love of Jesus! With this freely given love that we have received and with our desire to walk, let us walk in hope, look to our roots, and strive fearlessly ... fearlessly. Do not be afraid!”



WYD Mass

At the concluding Mass for World Youth Day, Pope Francis echoed the words of the apostles who witnessed the Transfiguration of Christ on the Mount: "It is good for us to be here!"

The Holy Father proposed three verbs: to shine, to listen, to be unafraid.

SHINE

"We, too, need light, a burst of light that is hope to face so much darkness that assaults life. That light is Jesus, because He is the light that does not go out, the light that shines even in the night. It is Jesus that enlightens our eyes, our hearts, enlightens our mind, enlightens our desire to do something in life – always with the light of the Lord."

"We do not become luminous when we focus the spotlight on ourselves. We become luminous – we shine – when, welcoming Jesus, we learn to love like Him. To love like Jesus: that makes us luminous, that leads us to do the most important works - works of love."



LISTEN

"It's all here. All that is to be done in life: Listen to Him! Listen to Jesus, every secret is there. If someone is unsure about what God is saying, read the Gospels. Jesus has the words of eternal life. He reveals that God is the Father, and He IS love. He teaches us the path to love by His love!"

BE UNAFRAID

"Get up, and do not be afraid! You have great dreams. You may fear they might not come true. You may be tempted by pessimism or discouragement. You may feel your efforts are not enough. But it is good for you to want to change the world, to fight for justice and peace. The world needs you like the earth needs rain." He asked them to repeat silently in their hearts, "DO NOT BE AFRAID."

"Dear young people, I would like to look into the eyes of each of you and say to you again: Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid."

"What is more, I tell you something very beautiful: It is no longer me; it is Jesus Himself who is looking at you, at this very moment. He is looking at you. He knows you. He knows the heart of each one of you. He knows the life of each one of you. He knows your joys. He knows your sorrows. Your successes, and your failures. He knows your hearts. And He says to you today, here in Lisbon, at this World Youth Day, 'Do not be afraid. Do not be afraid. Take heart, do not be afraid.'

"Dear friends, allow me, this old man, to share with you young people a dream that I carry within me: it is the dream of peace, the dream of young people praying for peace, living in peace and building a peaceful future. As you return home, please continue to pray for peace. What is more, you are a sign of peace for the world, showing how different nationalities, languages and histories can unite instead of divide. You are the hope of a different world. You are my hope."

Return Flight to Rome

When reporters asked the Holy Father why he thinks some people find him unclear on matters of inclusion:

"The Lord is clear. Who is welcome in the church? The sick, the elderly, the young, old, ugly, beautiful, good, and bad. As I encouraged the young people to remember who is welcome: todos, todos, todos – everyone, everyone, everyone."

"The church is a mother. I do not like reduction when it comes to discussing who can take part in the life of the church. This is gnostic. ALL must be accompanied by the church – as a mother does. Ask a mother why."

Here's to World Youth Day 2027! See you all in Seoul, Korea

