

# **WORLD YOUTH DAY** in Parishes

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*"Stand up. I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen."*



A guide to celebrate World Youth Day  
**2021**

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## **The Celebration of World Youth Day in Particular Churches - Some Updates**

At the end of Mass on the Solemnity of Christ the King on 22 November 2020, Pope Francis called for a relaunch of the celebration of WYD in the particular Churches. He announced that this celebration which has been traditionally held on Palm Sunday, starting in 2021 will be held on the Sunday of the Solemnity of Christ the King. It is a desire of the Holy Father that this should be a day for the universal Church to place young people at the centre of our pastoral attention, to pray for them, to engage young people as protagonists, etc.

When World Youth Day is celebrated at the local level, it has immensely important significance for particular Churches. It serves to raise awareness among the ecclesial community as a whole – laity, priests, consecrated persons, families, adults and the elderly – of their mission to transmit the faith to the younger generations.

The Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life has prepared a document with guidelines on how WYD can be celebrated in particular churches.

<http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/GMGpastoralGuidelines.html>

We understand that due to timing and pandemic restrictions, these guidelines may be difficult to follow. Therefore, we've prepared a guide for the celebration of WYD through the organisation of a prayer vigil & a dedicated mass.

We would like to stress that we must have the courage to involve young people and entrust active roles to them. We should include youth from the various pastoral groups present in the parish as well as those who do not belong to any community, youth group, association or movement.

## Some pointers for the Celebration of Mass on the Feast of Christ the King

The USCCB has developed a special guide that can be used for Christ the King Sunday. The local community should consider each of these in their planning efforts:

- Liturgical Music – Identify young people who are talented vocalists and instrumentalists. Coordinate together to involve young people in providing the music for the liturgy, including the selecting of liturgically appropriate music. When considering selections: as a group, read through the readings for the liturgy and give time for reflection.
- Lectors and Readers – Identify young people who are skilled at reading in public to proclaim the Word.
- The Homily – Here's a link to the Pope's Message for WYD should the priest choose to refer to it.  
[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco\\_20210914\\_messaggio-giovani\\_2021.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco_20210914_messaggio-giovani_2021.html)
- The Prayer of the Faithful – Invite young people to write and say the prayers of the faithful for the liturgy.
- The Collection – This is an opportunity to ask the community to invest in young people through their generosity during the collection. Discuss with the parish whether it is possible to allocate all or a portion of that weekend's gifts to ministries with youth and/or young adults in the community.
- A Blessing of Young People – At the discretion of the parish priest, a special blessing may be offered to all youth and/or young adults who are present at the Mass (or at all Masses that weekend).
- A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults – Consider using "A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults," found below at some point during the liturgy. One suggestion is to use this prayer after the Prayer of the Faithful. Ideally, it should be read by all present in the assembly.

Should you wish to access the full guide, you can find it here:

[https://www.usccb.org/resources/Christ%20the%20King%20Guidebook\\_Abbreviated%20Version\\_2021.pdf](https://www.usccb.org/resources/Christ%20the%20King%20Guidebook_Abbreviated%20Version_2021.pdf)

## **A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults**

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe,  
to you we turn in humble prayer.  
Look with favour upon all young people,  
bearers of hope for the Church and the world.

Jesus Christ, companion of youth and young adults,  
bless the paths of discovery and discernment,  
through times of joy and experiences of hardship,  
with the constant love and support of your Church.

Jesus Christ, alive in the hearts of all your people,  
grant that we may "journey together, young and old...  
to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge,  
awaken prophecies and enable hope to blossom."\*

Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all humankind,  
open our hearts to encounter all young people,  
to accompany and be in community together,  
and as one Church, embark upon our holy mission.

Jesus Christ, in the company of the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
graciously hear our prayer and be with us forevermore  
Amen.

\* Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 199

## Prayer Vigil

**“Stand up. I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen.” (cf. Acts 26:16)**

### Notes:

- Try to make this a moment for young people by young people. Youth can take care of music, prayers, readings and projections.
- Ideally, this moment of prayer is done in a parish church in front of the Blessed Sacrament.

<p><i>Introduction:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mention the fact that WYD is celebrated in particular parishes/diocese throughout the world on the Feast of Christ the King.</li> <li>• This will be a moment of prayer for young people with young people.</li> </ul> <p>This hour of prayer is based on the Pope’s message for WYD 2021<sup>1</sup>. Pope Francis meditates upon the passage of the Acts of the Apostles where Jesus says to Saint Paul: “Arise! I have appointed you to testify to what you have seen” (cf. Acts 26:16).</p>	5 min
<p><i>Opening song:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can have young people pick an appropriate song for this section.</li> <li>• Alternatively, you can use <i>Gracious Tempest</i> by Hillsong.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>	4 min

### Reflection Part 1

<p>A reading from the Acts of the Apostles 26:12-18</p> <p>‘With this in mind, I was travelling to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, when at midday along the road, your Excellency, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and my companions. When we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It hurts you to kick against the goads.” I asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The Lord answered, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. But get up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”</p>	2 min
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<sup>1</sup>[www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco\\_20210914\\_messaggio-giovani\\_2021.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/youth/documents/papa-francesco_20210914_messaggio-giovani_2021.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://youtu.be/3zKzZg1T1QQ>

<p>This is the word of the Lord</p> <p><b>Thanks be to God</b></p> <p><i>Short pause</i></p>	
<p><i>From the Pope's message:</i></p> <p>By calling Saul by name, the Lord made him realize that he knew him personally. It was as if he said: "I know who you are and what you are up to; even so, I am speaking directly to you". [...] Jesus shows that he knows Saul very well, "inside out". Even though Saul is a persecutor, even though his heart is full of hatred for Christians, Jesus realizes that this is due to ignorance. He wants to show in him his mercy. This grace, this unmerited and unconditional love, will be the light that radically transforms Saul's life.</p>	1 min
<p>"I know who you are and what you are up to; even so, I am speaking directly to you"</p> <p>What does it feel like to hear God speaking these words to you?</p> <p><i>Allow 2 mins of silence. You can play some instrumental music in the background.</i></p> <p><i>Song:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can have young people pick an appropriate song for this section.</li> <li>• Alternatively, you can use <i>Through and Through</i> by Will Reagan<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	6 min

## Reflection Part 2

<p><i>From the Pope's message:</i></p> <p>"It hurts you to kick against the goads" With these words, the Lord speaks to Saul after he had fallen to the ground. Yet for some time God had no doubt been mysteriously repeating those same words to Saul, in an attempt to draw him to himself. Saul, however, had resisted. The Lord chose someone who was persecuting him, completely hostile to him and his followers. We see that, in God's eyes, no one is lost.</p> <p><i>Short pause</i></p>	1 min
<p>Do you ever feel like you push God away?</p>	2 min

<sup>3</sup> <https://youtu.be/5Y7h6K13z0I>

<p><i>Allow 2 mins of silence. You can play some instrumental music in the background.</i></p>	
<p><i>Invite the young people to pray this psalm together.</i>  <i>Psalm 139:7-12</i></p> <p>Where can I go from your Spirit?  Where can I flee from your presence?  If I go up to the heavens, you are there;  if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.  If I rise on the wings of the dawn,  if I settle on the far side of the sea,  even there your hand will guide me,  your right hand will hold me fast.  If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me  and the light become night around me,"  even the darkness will not be dark to you;  the night will shine like the day,  for darkness is as light to you.</p> <p><i>Allow 2 mins of silence. You can play some instrumental music in the background.</i></p>	<p>3 min</p>

### Reflection Part 3

<p><i>From the Pope's message:</i></p> <p>Before this mysterious presence [of God] calling out his name, Saul asks: "Who are you, Lord?" (Acts 26:15) This question is decisive, and sooner or later all of us have to ask it. It is not enough to hear other people speak about Jesus; we need to speak to him ourselves, personally.</p> <p><i>Short pause</i></p>	<p>1 min</p>
<p>Take some time to ask the question "Who are you, Lord?"</p> <p>Give God the time to answer. Let him speak through any Bible passages which may come to mind, any past experiences or encounters you've had in your life.</p> <p><i>Allow 5 mins of silence. You can play some instrumental music in the background.</i></p>	<p>5 mins</p>



<p>Song:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You can have young people pick an appropriate song for this section.</li> <li>Alternatively, you can use <i>House on a Hill</i> by Amanda Lindsey Cook<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>	6 mins
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## Prayers of Intercession

<p><i>From the Pope's message:</i></p> <p>The Lord, the Church and the Pope trust you and appoint you to bear witness before all those other young people whom you will encounter on today's "roads to Damascus". Never forget that "anyone who has truly experienced God's saving love does not need much time or lengthy training to go out and proclaim that love. Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus"</p>	1 min
<p><i>Intercessory Prayers (adapted from the Pope's message). Feel free to ask young people to add their own spontaneous prayers or prepare prayers of intercession themselves.</i></p> <p>Lord, we thank you for meeting us where we are. We ask that we will have the eyes to continue to see your goodness and beauty in ourselves, in those around us and in our communities.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p>Lord, we also pray for those who have not yet encountered you. We pray that they too may come to know your love.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p>Lord, we pray for the relationships we hold in our lives: We pray for our relationships with our families, with our friends and with our colleagues, that we may always testify your love through our encounters with others.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p>Lord, we pray that young people, especially us present here today, will always uphold social justice, truth, integrity and human rights. Help us so that we may protect the persecuted, the poor and the vulnerable, those who have no voice in society and immigrants.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p>Lord, renew within us the way which we look at the world, so that we may view creation with eyes full of wonder and see the Earth as our common home. We pray that we may</p>	5 min

<sup>4</sup> <https://youtu.be/hLI7eiGZeB8>

<p>have the courage to promote an integral ecology and make the changes we need to make to achieve this.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p>Lord, we pray for those who feel like failures, for those who feel they are spiritually dead, for those who feel trapped or overwhelmed. We pray that your Spirit may rebuild, renew, and give freedom and hope to these lives.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p>Lord, we pray that we may always joyfully testify that you are alive! Bless us with the zeal to spread your message of love and salvation among our peers, at school and university, at work, online and wherever we may find ourselves.</p> <p>Lord hear us. <b>R. Lord graciously hear us.</b></p> <p><i>Allow time for personal prayers.</i></p>	
<p><i>Recite a decade of the Rosary for the intentions prayed communally and those in the hearts of young people.</i></p>	4 min

## Closing

<p>We start closing this moment of prayer by listening to Pope Francis' urgent message to young people:</p> <p>Today too, God is saying to each one of you: "Arise!" I fervently hope that this Message may help us prepare for new times and a new page in the history of humanity. Yet we cannot begin anew without you, dear young people. If our world is to arise, it needs your strength, your enthusiasm, your passion.</p>	1 min
<p><i>Invite the young people to pray the Adsumus Sancte Spiritus together.</i></p> <p>We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name. With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it. We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.</p>	1 min

<p>Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path nor partiality influence our actions.</p> <p>Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.</p> <p>All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever. Amen.</p>	
<p><i>End the adoration with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.</i></p> <p><i>Song:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>You can have young people pick an appropriate song for this section.</i></li> <li>• <i>Alternatively, you can use The Blessing by Bethel Music<sup>5</sup></i></li> </ul>	6 min

<sup>5</sup> <https://youtu.be/u9VL7AhXBKY>