



Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord – 06 August 2023

POPE SAYS MAKE ROOM FOR EVERYONE IN THE CHURCH



As Pope Francis officially launched a gathering of hundreds of thousands of Catholic young people here in the Portuguese capital, one direct message was repeated throughout multiple speeches – lest anyone forget it: Everyone is welcome in the church. "There is room for everyone in the church and, whenever there is not, then, please,

we must make room, including for those who make mistakes, who fall or struggle," the pope told a crowd of nearly 500,000 young people gathered here in Lisbon's Edward VII Park on Aug. 3 for the official welcome ceremony of World Youth Day. "The Lord does not point a finger, but opens wide his arms: Jesus showed us this on the cross," Francis continued. "He does not close the door, but invites us to enter; he does not keep us at a distance, but welcomes us." The pope's emphasis on openness is simple and has come to define much of his 10-year papacy as he has continually tried to preach a message of welcome to historically marginalized groups in the church, including women, the divorced and remarried, and LGBTQ Catholics. But it has been met with fierce resistance, including inside the church. Here in Lisbon, over the course of the last two days – and by explicitly pointing to the life of Christ – the 86-year-old pontiff's message seems intent on making sure a younger generation knows they have a home in the Catholic Church, regardless of their life's circumstances. "Let these be days when we fully realize in our hearts that we are loved just as we are," the pope told a sea of young people draped in their country's respective flags, many of whom waited in the park for several hours to greet the pontiff. Francis recalled that he had received letters from young people who have felt unwelcome in the church because of mistakes. "Everyone needs to know that God is near, and that all he needs is a small response on our part in order to fill our lives with wonder," he told them. Just hours before World Youth Day began, Bishop Joseph Strickland of Tyler, Texas, took to social media to lament the "tragedy" of World Youth Day, which he said had "fallen prey to the current trend to secularize the Catholic Church." And last month, a biographer of Pope John Paul II – the founder of World Youth Day – criticized the event for lacking a "Christocentrism." Despite his age and recent health issues, the octogenarian pope – who has made intergenerational solidarity an elevated theme of his papacy – seems reenergized by being among young people and by being back on the road. In the midst of an already overpacked schedule during his five days here, Francis also met privately today with a group of pilgrims from Turkey who had been affected by the massive earthquake in the country in February, along with a group of 15 pilgrims who had traveled to Portugal from Ukraine. The Vatican said the pope listened to their stories and shared in the sorrows, and an official photo from the event showed the pope kissing the Ukrainian flag. Earlier in the day, during a speech at the Catholic University of Portugal, the pope used his remarks to a crowd of some 6,500 students and young people to take aim at Catholics who seek to erect barriers of entry to the faith. "Christianity cannot be lived as a fortress surrounded by high walls, one that raises the ramparts against the world," he said. And in an unscripted dialogue with Portuguese young people in the nearby seaside town of Cascais, the pope reflected on the parable of the good Samaritan. He recalled that in the Gospel, a man had been left alone on the side of the road to die and that both a priest and a Levite would not stop to care for him because it was against the law to come into contact with blood. Even today, Francis lamented, legal purity continues to be prioritized over getting close to others in need. Those words echoed that of his message on Aug. 2, when in speaking to the country's priests, bishops, seminarians, and women and men religious, he said that it was their job to welcome everyone in the church,

using the Spanish word *todos* ("all" or "everyone") more than a dozen times. Among the hundreds of thousands of young people, it's a message that, so far during this World Youth Day, seems to be resonating. "He's not afraid of saying things," said 19-year-old Matilde Caeral after the pope's speech at the Catholic University of Portugal, where she is a student. "He's really direct," she told NCR. "He upsets some people, but he tries to do what's best for all of us, and I agree with that. It doesn't make any sense for us to exclude anyone for just one thing or one area in their life." João Gaspar, 22, concurred: "He's so down to earth," he said. "I think the church has to take that step so that everybody feels that they fit it. He's not like the other popes." At least one young person in the crowd seemed to agree, as she waved at Francis with a banner that read in Portuguese: "Pope Jorge, you made me believe again."

*Courtesy Christopher White
National Catholic Reporter*

SUNDAY MASSES

From Sunday 3rd September it is proposed to have one mass on a Sunday in each parish.

James's St: 10am

Meath St: 11am

Francis St: 12 noon

This rota will mean that when one of the two priests is not available the other will be able to celebrate all 3 masses. There is a 6.30pm mass on Saturday in James's Street and a 6pm Mass on Saturday in Francis Street. These will remain in place until the beginning of December when we re-assess the situation

FREE LUKE KELLY FESTIVAL

13 August at Smithfield Sq.,
from 12pm to 6pm

TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

Penitential Rite

Lord, you accept us as we are, for our refusal to accept one another, Lord have mercy

Lord, you are compassionate to all, for our refusal to offer forgiveness, Christ have mercy

Lord, you include everyone in your love, for the times we have excluded others, Lord have mercy

May the God of compassion & inclusiveness, forgive us our sin and bring us to life everlasting. Amen

Daniel 7:9-10,13-14

As I watched: Thrones were set in place and one of great age took his seat. His robe was white as snow, the hair of his head as pure as wool. His throne was a blaze of flames, its wheels were a burning fire. A stream of fire poured out, issuing from his presence. A thousand thousand waited on him, ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. A court was held and the books were opened. I gazed into the visions of the night. And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and people of all nations and languages became his servants. His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, nor will his empire ever be destroyed.

2 Peter 1:16-19

It was not any cleverly invented myths that we were repeating when we brought you the knowledge of the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; we had seen his majesty for ourselves. He was honoured and glorified by God the Father, when the Sublime Glory itself spoke to him and said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour.' We heard this ourselves, spoken from heaven, when we were with him on the holy mountain. So we have confirmation of what was said in prophecies; and you will be right to depend on prophecy and take it as a lamp for lighting a way through the dark until the dawn comes and the morning star rises in your minds.

Alleluia, alleluia!
This is my Son, the Beloved: he enjoys my favour.
Listen to him. Alleluia!

Matthew 17:1-9

Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain where they could be alone. There in their presence he was transfigured: his face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light. Suddenly Moses and Elijah appeared to them; they were talking with him. Then Peter spoke to Jesus. 'Lord,' he said 'it is wonderful for us to be here; if you wish, I will make

three tents here, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' He was still speaking when suddenly a bright cloud covered them with shadow, and from the cloud there came a voice which said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; he enjoys my favour. Listen to him.' When they heard this the disciples fell on their faces, overcome with fear. But Jesus came up and touched them. 'Stand up,' he said 'do not be afraid.' And when they raised their eyes they saw no one but only Jesus.

As they came down from the mountain Jesus gave them this order, 'Tell no one about the vision until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.'

Prayer of the Faithful

Lord God, you are Father, Son and Spirit. You bless us with so many gifts. We praise and thank you. Lord hear us

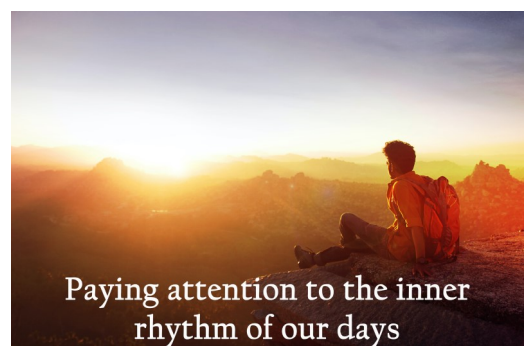
May your Word guide us to build a more just and inclusive Church, where all are valued and given the opportunity to take part fully in the life of the Church. Lord hear us.

We thank you for Francis our Pope who from the very beginning has worked to give us an experience of Transfiguration, which would transform the church according to the living Word, Jesus. We are grateful. Lord hear us.

For those with political power, that they will work for the benefit of all in our society and especially those with no voice. Lord hear us.

May we appreciate the beauty of creation and do all in our power to preserve and protect it for future generations. Lord hear us.

We pray in silence for those who need our prayer and support.....Lord hear us



Reflection

Spirituality is the art of transfiguration. We should not force ourselves to change by hammering our lives into any predetermined shape. We do not need to operate according to the idea of a predetermined program or plan for our lives. Rather, we need to practice a new art of attention to the inner rhythm of our days and lives. This attention brings a new awareness of our own human and divine presence.

John O'Donohue