

Get up! Christ is calling you. Christus Vivit in Europe
Youth Symposium. Kraków, 20-23 October 2022

Greeting of H. E. Msgr. Gintaras Grušas
Archbishop of Vilnius and CCEE President

Eminence,
Excellencies,
dear leaders and delegates of the working areas of our symposium,
dear young people.

Many thanks go to H.E. Archbishop Marek Jędraszewski and the Archdiocese of Krakow for welcoming us to this beautiful shrine dedicated to St. John Paul II and for organizing this symposium together with the Youth Commission and the CCEE Secretariat.

A special thanks to H.Em. Stanisław Dziwisz for your presence with us and bringing the closeness of St. John Paul II to us in a special way.

Towards the WYD in Lisbon

A heartfelt thank you to all of you for your presence: you got up, as the title of the symposium states, and came here to Krakow. We have made Pope Francis' call to rise up and walk together to Lisbon our own. From Krakow to Lisbon, via Panama and Rome: three WYDs and a youth synod, how much grace from God!

"In the stretch that still remains for us to reach Lisbon," the Holy Father reminds us in his message for the next WYD (2022), "we will walk together with the Virgin of Nazareth who, immediately after the annunciation, 'got up and went in haste' (Lk. 1:39) to go and help her cousin Elizabeth."

We care about the present and future of young people: we want to walk with them, to listen to their experiences, to know their lived experiences, to understand the problems they encounter in their daily lives.

We want them to tell us what "necessities" move them today. Again Pope Francis in the message, points us to Mary as the "model of young people on the move, not immobile in front of the mirror contemplating their own image or trapped in nets. She is all outwardly oriented. ... Mary is an example of a young person who does not waste time seeking the attention or approval of others - as happens when we depend on 'likes' on social media - but moves to seek the most genuine connection, the one that comes from encounter, sharing, love and service."

The difficult situation in Europe

In Europe we are experiencing a very delicate moment. We come to Krakow with a lot of hope but also with a lot of sadness in our hearts: when the Covid was loosening its grip and in every country we were looking optimistically to the future, war broke out in Ukraine. We were convinced that there would be no more wars in Europe, that we

would only read about them in history books, yet once again, the seduction of power and the greed of some led to war. In late 2021, we witnessed the massing of migrants on the borders of Belarus with Poland, Lithuania and Latvia used in a type of hybrid warfare as human shields to destabilize that region and blackmail the European Community. Then, in February 2022, the armed invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Now, the ensuing energy crisis: the lack of gas and its high price are bringing families, businesses, industries and transportation to their knees.

We, the bishops of Europe, continue to join our voice with that of the Pope to silence the guns, end the war immediately and work for peace.

We have made numerous appeals to the heads of nations and the international community to do everything in their power to end the current war that is destroying lives and causing untold suffering.

Personally, like many other bishops and national delegations, I have visited Ukraine to bring the closeness and affection of our Christian communities: we are close to all the Ukrainian people, especially the young people in this time of fear and uncertainty for their future and that of the country.

Throughout this time we have prayed for peace and will continue to do so. Not least was the Eucharistic adoration on the day of the Exaltation of the Cross, when, pastors and faithful from all over Europe, many of us gathered before the Blessed Sacrament to invoke from the Lord peace for Ukraine, making our own the invitation of Pope Francis who asks "each one to be a builder of peace and to pray so that thoughts and projects of concord and reconciliation may spread throughout the world."

The synod on youth

At the prayer vigil in preparation for World Youth Day 2017, Pope Francis began the path to the synod on youth by saying, "the synod is the synod for and of all young people! ... Every young person has something to say to others, has something to say to adults, has something to say to priests, nuns, bishops and the Pope. We all need to listen to you!"

And recalling the days of Krakow, he continued, "neither 'retired' young people nor 'couch' young people. Young people walking, young people on the street, young people moving forward, side by side, but looking to the future!"

We all remember what enthusiasm and commitment accompanied the synod work, we have imprinted in our hearts the Gospel image of the disciples of Emmaus, we have well in mind the beautiful Letter of the Synod Fathers to the youth of the world that accompanied the Final Document. Finally, as after every synodal assembly, we were given the apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, "a milestone in the framework of a synodal journey" (ChV. n.3).

Christus Vivit

Indeed, the synodal dynamic as a method emerged strongly from the assembly, confirmed by the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*: "before interpreting or making choices one must listen, one must recognize reality. ... It is not possible to listen to

young people if one does not walk with them on the streets of the world" (A. Spadaro, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, no. 4051).

"The attentive gaze of one who has been called to be the father, pastor and guide of young people," writes Pope Francis in the Exhortation, "consists in identifying the small flame that continues to burn, the reed that seems to break but has not yet broken (cf. Is 42:3). It is the ability to identify paths where others see only walls, it is knowing how to recognize possibilities where others see only dangers. ... The heart of every young person must therefore be considered 'sacred ground' ... before which we must 'take off our sandals' in order to approach and deepen the Mystery." (ChV. n.67).

At the heart of the document is the great Christian proclamation, "It is a proclamation that includes three great truths that we all need to hear again and again." (ChV. n.111).

"The first truth: 'God loves you.' If you have heard it before, it doesn't matter, I want to remind you: God loves you. Never doubt it, no matter what happens to you in life.

Whatever the circumstances, you are infinitely loved." (ChV. n.112).

"The second truth is that Christ, out of love, gave himself to the end to save you." (ChV. n.118). "Jesus loves us and cannot help it. We can do anything to Him, but He loves us, and He saves us. For only what you love can be saved. Only that which is embraced can be transformed. The Lord's love is greater than all our contradictions, all our frailties and all our pettiness. (ChV. n.120).

"There is, however, a third truth, which is inseparable from the previous one: He lives! We need to be reminded of this often, because we run the risk of taking Jesus Christ only as a good example from the past, as a memory, as someone who saved us two thousand years ago. This would do us no good; it would leave us the same as before, it would not set us free. The One who fills us with His grace, the One who frees us, the One who transforms us, the One who heals us and comforts us is someone who lives. He is the risen Christ." (ChV. n.124).

Here then are the three great truths of faith, "God loves you, Christ is your savior, He lives" (ChV. no.130).

Krakow Symposium

The apostolic exhortation is inspired by the Pope's confidence in young people (ChV 264) and his repeated invitation to them to fix their hope in Christ (ChV 1.33,109,141,173).

Our Krakow symposium is also part of this path to accompany young people in their encounter with the Lord Jesus: **"Get up, Christ is calling you!"**

In last November's symposium, I recalled that the primary purpose of the symposium that is to seek concrete answers for Europe to the questions raised by Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*.

We want to discuss how the Apostolic Exhortation has been received in our communities and what is being done in Europe since its publication, and to reflect on "two aspects: the awareness that it is the whole community that evangelizes them and the urgency for young people to be more protagonists in pastoral proposals" (ChV. no. 202).

The path traced by the synod and *Christus Vivit* cannot be considered concluded. On the contrary, it is the starting point of a new synodal journey, in which young people

are protagonists and active members of the Church, not the object of speeches handed down from above.

We too, like the synod fathers, say to you young people, "We want to be collaborators in your joy so that your expectations can be transformed into ideals. The Church and the world urgently need your enthusiasm. Be companions of the most fragile, the poor, those wounded by life. You are the present, be the brightest future." (To the youth of the world. Letter from the Synod Fathers, 2018).

That is why we are listening right now.

May St. John Paul II, St. Faustina Kowalska accompany us on this journey.

Thank you!