



The Holy See

APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
to PORTUGAL
ON THE OCCASION OF THE XXXVII WORLD YOUTH DAY
(2 - 6 August 2023)

HOLY MASS FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS

“Parque Tejo” (Lisbon)

Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

Sunday, 6 August 2023

[[Multimedia](#)]

After these exciting days, surely we feel like repeating the words of the Apostle Peter on the mount of the Transfiguration: “Lord, it is good for us to be here!” (*Mt 17:4*). Indeed, how good it has been to share this experience with Jesus, with one another, and to pray together with joyful hearts. Now, we can also ask an important question: What will we take back with us as we resume our daily lives?

I would like to answer this question with three verbs, drawing from the Gospel we have heard: *to shine*, *to listen*, and *to be unafraid*. What will we take back with us? I would respond with these three words: *to shine*, *to listen*, and *to be unafraid*

The first: *to shine*. Jesus is transfigured. The Gospel tells us: “his face shone like the sun” (*Mt 17:2*). Shortly before this, he had predicted his passion and death on the cross, shattering the disciples’ image of a powerful and worldly Messiah, and disappointing their expectations. Now, in order to help them embrace the loving plan that God has for each of us, Jesus takes three of the disciples, Peter, James, and John, and leads them up the mountain, where he is transfigured.

Through this brilliant burst of light, Jesus prepares the disciples for the dark night of the Passion.

Dear young friends, today we too need something of this burst of light, so that it can fill us with hope as we face the many failures of each day and the darkness that assails us in life, and respond to them with the light of the resurrection of Jesus. For he is the light that never sets, the light that shines even in the dead of night. As the priest Ezra said, God has illumined our eyes (cf *Ezra* 9:8). Our God illumines: he illumines our vision, our hearts, our minds, our desire to do something with our lives. The Lord's light always shines.

Yet, I would like to tell you that we do not radiate light by putting ourselves in the spotlight, for that type of light is blinding. No, we cannot illumine others by projecting a perfect, well-ordered, refined image of ourselves, or by appearing to be powerful and successful, strong but without light. No, we radiate light – we shine – by welcoming Jesus into our hearts and learning to love as he does. To love like Jesus: that is what makes us shine, makes us do works of love. Friends, I am telling you the truth: whenever you do works of love, you become light. But the moment you stop loving others and become self-centered, you extinguish your light.

The second verb is *to listen*. On the mountain, a bright cloud overshadows the disciples. And what does it tell us, this cloud from which the Father speaks? “This is my Son, the Beloved... listen to him!” (*Mt* 17:5). *Listen to him*. To listen to Jesus, that is life's secret. Listen to what Jesus is saying to you. “But I don't know what he is saying to me”. Well, take the Gospels and read there what Jesus is saying, what he is saying to your heart. For he has the words of eternal life for us, he reveals that God is our Father, that God is love. He shows us the way of love. Listen to Jesus; otherwise, even if we set out with good intentions along paths that seem to be of love, in the end those paths will be seen as selfishness disguised as love. Be careful of selfishness disguised as love! Listen to Jesus, for he will show you which paths are those of love. Listen to him.

The first word: to shine, so be radiant; then, listen in order not to take the wrong path; finally the third word: *to be unafraid*. Do not be afraid. We often find these words in the Bible, in the Gospels: “Do not be afraid”. These were the last words spoken by Jesus to the disciples at the moment of the Transfiguration: “Do not be afraid!” (*Mt* 17:7).

As young people, you have experienced these days of joy – I was about to say of *glory*, and indeed our encounters have been a kind of glory. You have great dreams, but often fear that they may not come true; sometimes you think that you are not up to the challenge, which is a kind of pessimism that can overcome us at times. As young people, you may be tempted at this time to lose heart, to think you fall short, or to disguise your pain with a smile. As young people, you want to change the world – and it is very good that you want to change the world – you want to work for justice and peace. You devote all your life's energy and creativity to this, but it still seems insufficient. Yet, the Church and the world need you, the young, as much as the earth needs rain. To all of you, dear young people, who are the present and the future, yes to all of you, Jesus now

says: “Have no fear”, “Do not be afraid!”.

Now, in a brief moment of silence, each of you repeat these words, in your own heart: “Do not be afraid!”

Dear young people, I would like to look into the eyes of each of you and say: Do not be afraid. I will tell you something else, also very beautiful: it is no longer I, but Jesus himself who is now looking at you. He knows each of your hearts, each of your lives; he knows your joys, your sorrows, your successes and failures. He knows your heart. Today, he says to you, here in Lisbon, at this World Youth Day: “Have no fear, take heart, do not be afraid!”.