



**Message of His Grace Most Rev. Francis Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto
World Youth Day 2024 (Solemnity of Christ the King - November 24)**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Youth of our archdiocese,

May Jesus and Mary be in your souls.

I am writing in anticipation of this year's upcoming World Youth Day which we are celebrating locally and with the Universal Church on the Solemnity of Christ the King. To mark this auspicious occasion, I will be presiding over Holy Mass at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica at 2 p.m., on Sunday, November 24th. The Eucharistic celebration will mark the conclusion of RENEW Toronto, our annual archdiocesan youth weekend conference, and will unite us spiritually with the millions of young people across the globe who will be celebrating World Youth Day in their dioceses. I encourage everyone between the ages of 19-39 who is able, to please consider joining us for the celebration of the Eucharist at St. Michael's and the social following Mass.

The theme for this year's World Youth Day, "*Those who hope in the Lord will run and not be weary*" (cf. Is 40:31) calls our attention to the importance of **hope**. We live in a world that needs to rediscover the virtue of hope. Our Holy Father reminds us that while we "live in times marked by dramatic situations that generate despair;" God opens a "highway before you, and he invites you to set out on it with joy and hope." ([*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXIX World Youth Day*](#)). I encourage everyone to read and meditate upon the Pope's Message. As we know, hope is one of the three theological virtues; it nurtures our desire to be with God in eternal life and corresponds to our natural longing for happiness (cf. CCC 1817-1818). As in the case of the prophet Isaiah, hope also gives us the strength to continue marching forward even in the face of adversity, knowing that we can always depend on God regardless of how bleak the outlook might seem (cf. CCC 1820-1821).

Pope Francis encourages us to focus on hope, not only during World Youth Day, but in the months to come as well. In fact, the theme for the 2025 Jubilee Year is "Pilgrims of Hope". Reflecting on hope, Pope Benedict XVI wrote: "To come to know God—the true God—means to receive hope" (*Spe Salvi*, 3). We live in a world where many people have lost the sense of a personal relationship with God and it is our task to proclaim the Good News, meaning, to evangelize, to remind the world that there is in fact much more, and that "more" is the Lord Himself and a personal relationship with Him in whom we place all our hope, in whom we find meaning for our lives, inspiration for our days, and upon whom we can cast all our anxieties and fears because he cares so much about us (cf. 1 Peter 5:7). Furthermore, the beginning verses of the prophet Isaiah (ch. 40) is a call to "comfort" God's people, to assure them of His love and assistance, in short, to be messengers of hope to others, to our peers, in our circles of influence, to our family and friends. To do so effectively, we must first be pilgrims of hope, walking the walk, committing ourselves personally to "set out on a journey, to discover life along the path of love, and to seek the face of God" (*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the XXXIX World Youth Day*, 3).



The Solemnity of Christ the King marks the end of the liturgical year and reminds us of who it is that we serve with loving and grateful hearts. Our hope informs our lives and how we live our lives day to day. Pope Benedict XVI reminded us: “The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life” (*Spe Salvi*, 2). I invite everyone to take up anew the invitation to rediscover the awesome and life-giving virtue of hope; to do what you can to intentionally live in hope daily; and to decidedly allow hope to pervade every aspect of our lives. In the manifold instances in which we experience darkness and despair, confusion and defeat - we are called to bear hope, the hope that never disappoints, as St. Paul wrote to the Romans (5:5). In the varied circumstances where we are faced with strife and conflict, anxiety and discouragement, let us respond with a renewed and heartfelt hope for we know that the Lord Jesus is with us and walks alongside us.

To the blessed Youth of the Archdiocese of Toronto, I invite you all to come and join in our archdiocesan celebration of World Youth Day, embrace the call of being pilgrims of hope, and remember that that God will provide you with the necessary strength for the journey you need to discover.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, of the Church and of our Youth, pray for us.