



The Holy See

PRAYER VIGIL WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE

DIALOGUE BETWEEN HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV AND YOUNG PEOPLE DURING THE JUBILEE VIGIL

Tor Vergata

Saturday, 2 August 2025

[Multimedia]

Question 1 – Friendship

Holy Father, my name is Dulce María, I am 23 years old and I am from Mexico. I come to you as a spokesperson for a reality that young people experience in so many parts of the world. Holy Father, we are children of our time. We live in a culture that shapes us without our realizing it; it is a culture marked by technology, especially by social media. We often get excited about having lots of friends and creating close relationships, but at the same time we increasingly experience different forms of loneliness. We are close and connected to so many people, yet they are not true and lasting relationships, but rather fleeting and often illusory. Holy Father, my question is: how can we find true friendship and genuine love that will lead us to true hope? How can faith help us build our future?

Dear young people, human relationships, our relationships with others are essential for each of us, starting with the fact that all men and women in the world are born as someone's children. Our life begins with a bond, and it is through relationships that we grow. In this process, culture plays a fundamental role: it is like the lens through which we understand ourselves and interpret the world. Just like a dictionary, every culture contains both words that are noble and words that are vulgar, values and also errors that we must learn to recognize. By passionately searching for the truth, we do not merely receive a culture, but also transform it through the choices we make. Truth, in fact,

is a bond that connects words to things and names to faces. Lies, on the other hand, divide these elements and lead to confusion and misunderstanding.

Now, among the many cultural connections that characterize our lives, internet and social media have become “an extraordinary opportunity for dialogue, encounter and exchange between persons, as well as access to information and knowledge” (Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 87). However, these tools are misleading when they are controlled by commercialism and interests that fragment our relationships. In this regard, Pope Francis recalled that sometimes “the whole apparatus of communications, advertising and social networking can be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism” (*Christus Vivit*, 105). It is then that our relationships become confused, restless or unstable. Furthermore, as you know, today there are algorithms that tell us what we should watch, what we should think, and who our friends should be. And so our relationships become confusing, sometimes anxious. When a tool controls someone, that person becomes a tool: a commodity on the market and, in turn, a piece of merchandise. Only genuine relationships and stable connections can build good lives.

Dear young people, every person naturally desires a good life, just as lungs long for air, but how difficult it is to find it! How difficult it is to find true friendship! Centuries ago, Saint Augustine understood the deepest desire of our hearts, the desire of every human heart, even without the technological developments of today. He too had a restless youth, but he did not settle for less, he did not silence the cry of his heart. Augustine sought the truth, the truth that does not disappoint and the beauty that does not fade. And how did he find it? How did he find true friendship and a love capable of giving hope? By finding the one who was already looking for him, by finding Jesus Christ. How did he build his future? By following the one who had always been his friend. In his own words, friendship is nowhere faithful but in Christ. Saint Augustine tells us there is no friendship that is authentic if that is not in Christ. And the true friendship is always in Jesus Christ with truth, love and respect. Only in him can it be eternal and happy (cf. *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* I, I, 1). The one who loves God in his friend, truly loves his friend (cf. *Sermon* 336), Saint Augustine tells us. Friendship with Christ, which forms the basis of faith, is not just one aid among many others for building the future; it is our guiding star. According to Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, to live without faith, without a patrimony to defend, without a steady struggle for truth, is not living, but existing (cf. *Letters*, 27 February 1925). It is when our friendships reflect this intense bond with Jesus that they really become sincere, generous and true.

Dear young people, love one another! Love one another in Christ! Know how to see Jesus in others. Friendship can truly change the world. Friendship is a path to peace.

Question 2 – The Courage to Choose

Holy Father, my name is Gaia. I am Italian and am 19 years old. Tonight, all of us young people

here would like to talk to you about our dreams, hopes and doubts. Holy Father, our years are marked by important decisions as we are faced with choices that will shape our future. However, due to the climate of uncertainty surrounding us, we are tempted to procrastinate, and we are paralyzed by the fear of an uncertain future. We know that choosing means giving something else up and this becomes an obstacle for us. Despite everything, we sense that hope points to achievable goals, even if they are marked by the precariousness of the present moment.

Holy Father, we ask you: where do we find the courage to choose? How can we be courageous and live the adventure of freedom, making radical and meaningful choices?

Thank you for this question. The question is, where can we find the courage to choose and to make wise decisions? To choose is a fundamental human act. Looking at it closely, we realize that it is not just a matter of choosing something, but of choosing someone. When we make a choice, in the strict sense, we decide who we want to become. The most important choice is the decision about the direction of our life: What kind of man do you want to be? What kind of woman do you want to be? Dear young people, we learn to choose through the trials of life, but above all by remembering that we have been chosen. This reality must be explored and fostered. We received life as a gift, without choosing it! Our existence did not originate from our decision, but from a love that wanted us. Throughout our lives, those who help us recognize and renew this grace through our choices prove themselves to be our true friends.

Dear young people, you said it well: “choosing means giving something else up and this becomes an obstacle for us.” To be free, we need to start from a stable foundation, from the rock that supports our steps. This rock is a love that precedes us, surprises us and is infinitely greater than us: the love of God. Therefore, before God, choice becomes a judgment that takes nothing away, but always leads to the greatest good.

The courage to choose comes from love, which God shows us in Christ. It is he who loved us with his whole self, saving the world and thus showing us that self-giving is the way to our fulfillment. For this reason, the encounter with Jesus corresponds to the deepest longings of our hearts, because Jesus is God’s love made man.

Twenty-five years ago, right here where we are now, [Saint John Paul II](#) spoke on this subject, saying: “It is Jesus in fact that you seek when you dream of happiness; he is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; he is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is he who provokes you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is he who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is he who reads in your hearts your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle” ([Prayer Vigil on the 15th World Youth Day](#), 19 August 2000). Fear then gives way to hope, because we are certain that God brings to completion what he begins.

We recognize his faithfulness in the words of those who truly love, because they have been truly loved. “You are my life, Lord”: this is what a priest and a consecrated sister say full of joy and in complete freedom, “You are my life, Lord.” “I take you to be my wife and I take you to be my husband”: this is the phrase that transforms the love of a man and a woman into an efficacious sign of God’s love in marriage. These are radical, meaningful choices: Matrimony, Holy Orders, and Consecrated Life. They express the free and liberating gift of self that makes us truly happy. That is where we find happiness, when we learn to give ourselves, to give our lives for others.

These choices give meaning to our lives, transforming them into the image of the perfect love that created them and redeemed them from all evil, even from death. I say this tonight, thinking of two young women, María, from Spain, who was 20 years old, and Pascale, from Egypt, who was 18 years old. Both chose to come to Rome for the Jubilee of Youth, and both have passed away in these days. Let us together pray for them; let us also pray for their families, friends and communities. May the Risen Jesus receive them into the peace and joy of his Kingdom. And I would also like to ask for your prayers for another friend, a young Spanish man, Ignacio Gonzalez, who was admitted to the “Bambino Gesù” hospital. Let us pray for him and for his health.

Find the courage to make difficult choices and say to Jesus: “You are my life, Lord.” “Lord, You are my life.” Thank you.

Question 3 – The Call to do Good

Holy Father, my name is Will. I am 20 years old and I am from the United States. I would like to ask you a question on behalf of so many young people out there who yearn, in their hearts, for something deeper. We are drawn to the interior life even if at first glance we are judged as a superficial and thoughtless generation. Deep within ourselves, we feel drawn to the beautiful and the good as sources of truth. The value of silence, as in this Vigil, fascinates us, even if at times it instills fear because of a sense of emptiness. Holy Father, I would like to ask you: how can we truly encounter the Risen Lord in our lives and be sure of his presence even in the midst of trials and uncertainties?

To launch this Jubilee Year, [Pope Francis](#) released the document called [*Spes non confundit*](#), which means “hope does not disappoint”. In that document, he wrote: “In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come” ([*Spes non confundit*](#), 1). In the Bible, the word “heart” usually refers to a person’s innermost being, which includes our conscience. Our understanding of what is good, then, reflects how our conscience has been shaped by the people in our lives; those who were kind to us, those who listened to us with love, those who helped us. Those people helped to raise you in goodness and, therefore, to form your

conscience to seek the good in your daily choices.

Dear young people, Jesus is the friend who always accompanies us in the formation of our conscience. If you truly want to encounter the Risen Lord, then listen to his word, which is the Gospel of salvation. Reflect on your way of living, and seek justice in order to build a more humane world. Serve the poor, and so bear witness to the good that we would always like to receive from our neighbours. Be united with Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. Adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the source of eternal life. Study, work and love according to the example of Jesus, the good Teacher who always walks beside us.

As we seek what is good, let us ask him at every step: stay with us, Lord (cf. *Lk* 24:29). Stay with us, because without you we cannot do the good we desire. You want what our good; indeed Lord you *are* our good. Those who encounter you also want others to encounter you, because your word is a light brighter than any star, illuminating even the darkest night. Pope [Benedict XVI](#) liked to say that those who believe are never alone. In other words, we encounter Christ in the Church, that is, in the communion of those who sincerely seek him. The Lord himself gathers us together to form a community, not just any community, but a community of believers who support one another. How much the world needs missionaries of the Gospel who are witnesses of justice and peace! How much the future needs men and women who are witnesses of hope! Dear young people, this is the task that the Risen Lord entrusts to each one of us!

Saint Augustine wrote: “You stir us to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you... Lord, I would seek you... and calling upon you is an act of believing in you” (*Confessions*, I, 1). Following those words of Augustine, and in response to your questions, I would like to invite each of you, dear young people, to say to the Lord: “Thank you, Jesus, for calling me. My desire is to remain as one of your friends, so that, embracing you, I may also be a companion on the journey for anyone I meet. Grant, O Lord, that those who meet me may encounter you, even through my limitations and frailties.” Through praying these words, our dialogue will continue each time we look at the crucified Lord, for our hearts will be united in him. Each time we adore Christ in the Eucharist, our hearts will be united in him. Finally, my prayer for you is that you may persevere in faith, with joy and courage! And we can say, “Thank you Jesus for loving us.” Stay with us Lord.

Words spoken by the Holy Father at the end of the Vigil:

I would like to thank the choir and the musicians: thank you for accompanying us! Thank you all! Please get some rest. We will meet here tomorrow morning for Holy Mass. Best wishes to you all. Good night!

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana