

National Pastoral Guidebook *for the* Global Celebration of Young People

*for the Annual Celebration of Youth and Young Adults in the
United States of America on the Solemnity of Christ the King*

A Resource for Catholic Leaders



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth * Washington, DC

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Rev. Michael Fuller
Interim General Secretary, USCCB

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A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults

Jesus Christ, King of the Universe,
to you we turn in humble prayer.
Look with favor upon all young people,
bearers of hope for the Church and the world.

Jesus Christ, companion
of youth and young adults,
bless the paths of discovery and discernment,
through times of joy and experiences of hardship,
with the constant love and support of your Church.

Jesus Christ, alive in the hearts
of all your people,
grant that we may
“journey together, young and old...
to nourish our enthusiasm, cause dreams to emerge,
awaken prophesies and enable hope to blossom.” *

Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all humankind,
open our hearts to encounter all young people,
to accompany and be in community together,
and as one Church, embark upon our holy mission.

Jesus Christ, in the company
of the Father and the Holy Spirit,
graciously hear our prayer
and be with us forevermore.

Amen.

** Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, 199*

Welcome Letter

President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

His Excellency Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles

Dear friends in Christ,

It gives me great joy to share with you, this USCCB guidebook for the annual celebration of the Global Celebration of Young People in your local Catholic communities across the United States.

The U.S. bishops stand in solidarity with His Holiness and the universal Church as we celebrate God's gift of youth and young adults every year on the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe (Christ the King Sunday). This special day in the life of the Church, centered on the Lord, reminds each of us to constantly imitate, draw close to, and share the Good News of Jesus Christ as we accompany young people on their journey through life.

While we hope that youth and young adults will remain in our hearts throughout the entire year, we have set this one day apart as a seminal moment of renewal and recommitment of the Church to young people, and an invitation to all youth and young adults to renew and recommit themselves to Christ, the Gospel, and his Church.

This guidebook is intended to assist Catholic leaders across the United States as they prepare for this annual celebration and implement the Holy See's *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches* through the outreach, liturgy, ministry, and actions of the Christian community on or around Christ the King Sunday, which may be adapted to suit local circumstances and needs. We hope that parishes, dioceses and eparchies, college campuses, ecclesial movements and apostolates, as well as other Catholic places and organizations, will use this guidebook and find its contents enriching and helpful.

Let me close by extending my gratitude, on behalf of the bishops of the United States, to every person who reads and looks to apply the ideas in this guidebook. Thank you for your care and concern for young people and for the invaluable work that you do to accompany youth and young adults in imitation of Jesus Christ. Allow me to echo the Holy Father from his apostolic exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, when he says:

“Particular gratitude is also due for the generous commitment of countless lay persons, priests, consecrated men and women, and bishops who daily devote themselves with integrity and dedication to the service of the young. Their efforts are like a great forest that quietly grows.” (CV 99)

We ask the Lord to bless you as you implement this guidebook in your churches and communities. May your local celebration be an opportunity for renewal and grace, especially for the youth and young adults in your area.

Be assured of my prayers and best wishes.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ José H. Gomez

Most Rev. Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of Los Angeles
President, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Preface and Introduction

This resource guidebook is being released to help local communities (in parishes, dioceses/eparchies, high school and college campuses, ecclesial movements, religious congregations, apostolates, and Catholic organizations) celebrate the **Global Celebration of Young People**. This guidebook will help Catholic leaders put into action the *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches*, released by the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life in May 2021, which itself was a response to the vision of the Holy Father, first promulgated in November 2021, that all Catholics commemorate young people annually on Christ the King Sunday. It should also be noted that the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), in March 2021, also designated Christ the King Sunday as the annual date for communities across this country to celebrate youth and young adults.

While the normative local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People should take place on the Solemnity of Christ the King in the liturgical calendar year (as outlined by the Holy See), it can be adapted to suit local norms and customs in each parish, campus, or community. However, even with an adaptation, it is highly recommended that the celebration take place within a few weeks prior to or following Christ the King Sunday to maintain the vital solidarity with the universal Church and the Holy Father.

This guidebook includes suggestions and ideas for local implementation related to the outreach, liturgy, ministry, and pastoral actions of the community. These were developed in collaboration with pastoral leaders in the fields of youth, college campus, and young adult ministries, and have the affirmation of the USCCB Committees on Doctrine and Divine Worship.

Before proceeding, an important note on terminology used throughout the text; first, it is important to recognize the audience of the celebration: *youth and young adults*. In the United States, those terms have very distinct meanings; throughout this guidebook and in other USCCB-related complementary materials, these terms will be used:

- **“Youth”** refers to adolescents, ages 12 to 18, in junior high and high school.
- **“Young adults”** refers to women and men, ages 18 to 39, inclusive of college students, singles, and couples.
- **“Young people”** refers to the combination of both groups (youth and young adults).



It should be noted that adolescence and young adulthood are distinct developmental stages in life, and as such, should not be confused for one another. The needs of youth ages 12-18 are vastly different than the needs of young adults ages 18-39. Hence, our Church’s response to their respective needs must be vastly different.

Even though this guidebook encourages a celebration of both age groups (as the Holy See focuses on “young people” in its broad international context, meaning those approximately 16 to 30¹), it is highly recommended that local communities across the United States seek out ways to acknowledge each of these respective demographics distinctively on their own, as well as be sensitive to the nuances within each age group/category.

The global Catholic Church calls this annual celebration “**World Youth Day**” to remind people that every year is an opportunity to celebrate and accompany young people. However, because the term “World Youth Day” is often associated with the major international event that has taken place every two or three years since 1985 (and due to the aforementioned notes about terms related to young people), we refer to the Christ the King Sunday experience as the “**Annual Celebration of Youth and Young Adults.**” Please be aware of the use of this term within the *Pastoral Guidelines* from the Vatican Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life and recognize how it is being used.

Additionally, we suggest consulting with www.usccb.org to see how other terms are defined in the Church in the United States (including but not limited to: “missionary disciple,” “evangelization” or “new evangelization,” the “disaffiliated” or “the nones,” “outreach,” “pastoral ministry” and “pastoral minister” or “lay ecclesial minister”) are used, as these are terms that may arise throughout this guidebook and in supplemental resources.

In some respects, this guidebook is incomplete, as every year, the celebration will continue to grow and evolve. This resource will be further supplemented throughout the coming years with the arrival of the Holy Father’s annual message to young people connected to the annual themes, as well as other initiatives and documents from the Holy See and from the USCCB, which might further impact or enhance the annual local celebration on Christ the King Sunday and in relation to the international WYD events.

We also recognize that there are heroic efforts already taking place in local communities across the United States and around the world that are not listed here. These initiatives are helping bridge the gap between young people and the faith community and encouraging Catholics to intentionally accompany and support youth and young adults in their midst. We hope that those ideas will emerge in supplemental materials.



No matter when this guidebook is being used, feel free to be in touch with the USCCB to share your stories, experiences, and lessons learned – so that we can pass those onto others in the field.

1 Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit*, 68. “The worlds of today’s ‘youth’ are so many that in some countries one tends to speak of ‘young people’ in the plural. The age group considered by the Synod (16-29 years) does not represent a homogenous category, but is comprised of distinct groups, each with its own life experience.” (Referencing the XV Synod *Final Document*, 10).



Section 1: Foundations

Celebrating Youth and Young Adults with Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

The centerpiece of the Global Celebration of Young People is Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis presented the Lord as the focus for every young person to follow in his 2019 landmark post-synodal apostolic exhortation on young people, *Christus Vivit*:

He is our hope, and in a wonderful way, he brings youth[fulness] to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life... He is in you, he is with you, and he never abandons you. However far you may wander, he is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and he waits for you to return to him and start over again... he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope (CV 1-2).

Because of the centrality of the eternal and always-youthful Christ in our lives, in our Church, and in society (“He is the true youthfulness of a world grown old, the youthfulness of a universe waiting,” CV 32), we make time on the annual Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, to celebrate youth and young adults. Pope Francis quotes St. Irenaeus in reminding us that Jesus was and is “young among the young in order to be an example for the young and to consecrate them to the Lord” (*Adversus Haereses*, II, 22, 4: PG 7, 784, qtd. in CV 22). Therefore, we cannot separate our focus on young people from our focus on Christ.

The original institution of a global celebration of youth and young adults was carried out by St. John Paul II in 1985 who reminded Catholic leaders that:

All young people must feel that they are cared for by the Church. Therefore, may the entire Church on a worldwide level, in union with the Successor of Peter, be more and more committed to young people, to their concerns and worries and to their aspirations and hopes, so as to meet their expectations by communicating the certainty that is Christ, the Truth that is Christ, the love that is Christ.²

Though the exact date of this universal celebration has shifted over the years, its current placement on Christ the King Sunday is an opportune time to “make all our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming to young people” (CV 216) and to “make the most of the great moments of the liturgical year” (CV 224) to help them experience the Catholic faith in joyful and engaging ways.

² St. John Paul II, To the College of Cardinals, Members of the Curia, and Roman Prelature, 20 December 1985.

In the United States, the proximity of Christ the King Sunday with the holiday of Thanksgiving is especially fitting. By being gathered together at a time like that in the calendar year, in each in our respective communities, “we can move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety, gratefully accepting the contributions of the lay faithful, including young people... No one should be excluded or exclude themselves” (CV 206). In the same way, at Thanksgiving, we are annually reminded of who is at our table and who is not at our table – and we can be motivated to invite and accompany all people, regardless of their age or their engagement within our faith communities, to the heavenly feast with Jesus (cf. Lk 14:1-24).

The Global Celebration of Young People can be celebrated on the Solemnity of Christ the King, as encouraged by the Holy Father, or for pastoral reasons, can take place on an alternative date. No matter how or when this celebration occurs, what is important is that:

- The Catholic community draw closer to youth and young adults and their realities.
- Young people experience a sincere concern for their lives from the Church and the community.
- Catholics of all generations have a greater understanding, awareness, and appreciation of the youth and young adults in the local area, and the Church’s ministerial work with them.
- There be a renewed call for all people in the community to accompany and celebrate young people.

Every three years, there are also special international gatherings for all young people around the world with the participation of the Holy Father called “World Youth Days” which attempt to do the same things listed above. These global events wonderfully complement the local celebrations by bringing together youth and young adults to encounter one another in a worldwide pilgrimage of faith, in the company of the pope and bishops from almost every country. It should be noted that some use the term “World Youth Day” to refer to both the every-three-years international event and to the annual local celebrations. In the United States, we advise a distinction between the use of these terms to avoid confusion and to draw special attention to those significant global experiences.

In 2021, the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life (an administrative division of the Holy See at the Vatican, which includes oversight of the Catholic Church’s ministries and pastoral care of youth and young adults) released the *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches*, which outlined six important “cornerstones” that should be at the heart of each yearly celebration in parishes, dioceses/eparchies, campuses, movements, and apostolates around the globe. In short, the annual occasion should be:

1. A festival of faith.
2. An experience of the Church.
3. A missionary experience.
4. An opportunity for vocational discernment and a call to holiness.
5. An experience of pilgrimage.
6. An experience of universal fraternity.

These six dimensions should be part and parcel of every community’s effort to engage youth and young adults on the Solemnity of Christ the King. This cannot all be accomplished within the context of a liturgical celebration alone; rather, these components can be achieved through a more holistic approach incorporating outreach, ministry, and specialized activities that can take place in the days and weeks proximate to the Sunday celebration.



This global moment of celebration of young people is meant for the entire local community.

Christus Vivit reminds us that “the community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging, and challenging them” (CV 243). Therefore, the annual celebration is not solely the responsibility or focus of the person or persons at the parish, diocese, campus, apostolate, or movement who have oversight of ministry with young people; rather, it is strongly recommended that this occasion is something that should be engaged by the entire community.

Finally, this celebration also rests on the “protagonism,” or the energy and ingenuity, of the young people themselves (cf. CV 174). “It needs to be done in a synodal-missionary style and to make the most of the creativity, language, and methods that are typical of that age bracket.” (*Pastoral Guidelines*, Part 5) Youth and young adults should actively work co-responsibly with their pastors and pastoral leaders in developing the plans for this annual celebration. Because “young people themselves are agents” (CV 203) of ministry with other young people, the Church must be open to following their advice and supporting their initiatives, especially for this global celebration. As Pope Francis noted, when we accompany young “protagonists,” the resulting effort “goes out to those places where real young people are active and fosters the natural leadership qualities and charisms sown by the Holy Spirit” (CV 230).



Christ the King

The annual celebration of Christ the King is a relatively new feast in the long history of the Catholic Church, being formally established in 1925. As with many feasts, the “Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe” was established in response to the need of the People of God at a particular time in history – yet it remains relevant to the generations that have followed.

In the aftermath of the Great War/WWI (from 1914 to 1918), people were hungry, infrastructure needed to be rebuilt, and there was political turmoil in many places. Longstanding empires and kingdoms had collapsed, and new governments had taken their place. Some governments, such as in the Soviet Union and Mexico, were aggressively atheistic and persecuted Christians, including the Catholic Church.

In order to provide a sign of hope, Pope Pius XI established the feast of Christ the King to serve as a reminder that Jesus Christ is the true “King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 19:16). The timing of this celebration at the end of the liturgical year was chosen to point to the fact that Jesus would return in glory to be judge of all peoples and nations (cf. Mt 25:31-46) and establish “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1) of which he will be the king.

In 1984, St. John Paul II chose the occasion of the feast of Christ the King to speak specifically to young people:

On this feast day [...] the Church proclaims the Kingdom of Christ, already present, but still growing in all its mystery towards its full manifestation. You, young people, are indispensable bearers of the dynamics of the Kingdom of God, the hope of the Church and the world.³

³ John Paul II, Angelus, 25 November 1984, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/angelus/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_19841125.html.

In this same address to young people, the pope invited young people to gather in Rome for another liturgical occasion that highlighted the kingship of Christ: Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion during the next year (in 1985).

On that following Palm Sunday, the Holy Father hosted a major meeting of young people at the Vatican during the United Nations' International Year for Young People. After this gathering, he formally established that a "World Youth Day" be annually celebrated in every diocese around the world.⁴ The date of this celebration, for John Paul II, was linked to Palm Sunday, the day when youth and young adults first proclaimed Jesus as their king.

In the liturgical texts over the centuries for Palm Sunday, the Church has acknowledged that it was the young people around Jerusalem (the "pueri hebraeorum," or the children of the Hebrews) who were the first people to call Jesus a "king" when he rode triumphantly into the city prior to his passion, death, and resurrection (cf. Mt 21:15-16). The younger generations of the first century knew instinctively that Jesus was different and that he was the one they owed their allegiance. The youth and young adults of Judea were the first of disciples to acknowledge the Lord's kingship.

Because of this connection, young people through the ages made pilgrimage trips to holy sites on Palm Sunday, and it made sense to St. John Paul II to align the universal Church's annual celebration of youth and young adults with liturgical moments when Christians continue to honor Jesus as their eternal king. St. John Paul II reflected on this decision during a homily on Palm Sunday in 1988, addressing the youth and young adults directly:

Why then has this day... become for the Church, for several years, a "feast of young people"?... The response is given by all of you who have been coming to Rome on pilgrimage for many years precisely to celebrate this day... Does this not mean perhaps that you yourselves are searching for Christ at the heart of his mystery? You are seeking it in the fullness of the truth which is Christ himself in the history of humankind.⁵

It is fitting then, that, in 2020, Pope Francis declared the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, as the new day the Church would celebrate young people every year.

The feast of Christ the King served as a foundation for the founding of World Youth Day in the 1980s. With the universal kingship of Christ first being noticed and proclaimed by young people when Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem to shouts of "Hosanna!," the connection between the two feasts (Palm Sunday and Christ the King) is undeniable: the initial proclamation and the never-ending promise of his divine protection over all humanity.

Pope Francis emphasizes that at the heart of these two liturgical celebrations lies "the Mystery of Jesus Christ the Redeemer of humankind."⁶ And young people continue to be an integral part of that Mystery.

These annual celebrations are also opportunities to emphasize the *kerygma* (the proclamation of the saving act of Jesus) and to proclaim the Good News, given to us by Jesus, to the entire world, most especially to young people. The yearly occasions can be great ways to accompany young people as they

4 cf. John Paul II, Address to the College of Cardinals, the Curia, and the Roman Prelature, 20 December 1985, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1985/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19851220_auguri-curia.html.

5 John Paul II, Homily, 27 March 1988. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19880327_domenica-palme.html.

6 Pope Francis, Christ the King Homily, 22 November 2020. (https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201122_omelia-passaggiocroce-gmg.html)

discern how their lived experiences and realities connect to the person of Jesus Christ, present in their lives “at every moment, to fill it with light and to take away all sorrow and solitude” filling it “with his unseen presence; wherever you go, he will be waiting there for you” (CV 125).

This is especially important as young people today are often overwhelmed and consumed by the realities of the world in which they live. The Solemnity of Christ the King is so important, then, because rather than being beaten down by the world, Jesus empowers the young “to fight apathy and offer a Christian response to the social and political troubles emerging in different parts of the world” and “to build the future, to work for a better world” (CV 174). Young people were the original proclaimers of Jesus’ kingship, and the Church Universal seeks to honor, celebrate, and encourage younger generations today as integral members of the Body of Christ and protagonists of change and transformation for the world.

Young people were the original proclaimers of Jesus as the universal king. Today, youth and young adults can continue to give us a glimpse of Christ, alive in their hearts.

Youth and Young Adults

Who exactly are the young people of today?

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis observes that “the worlds of today’s ‘youth’ are so many that in some countries one tends to speak of ‘young people’ in the plural” (CV 68). This is true for the United States, when *juventud* (the word the Holy Father uses to describe younger generations) includes those who are adolescents (teenagers, typically 12 to 18 years of age) and young adults (typically those in college, singles, and young couples, from 18 to 39 years of age).

This broad swath of age is vast, but, as Pope Francis stated, “[it] does not represent a homogeneous category, but is composed of distinct groups, each with its own life experience” (CV 68).

With that in mind, there are, within this extremely large demographic of “young people,” a number of those “distinct groups” each with its own life experiences. They include junior high, high school, college, and graduate students; young people in the working world; single, non-married adults; dating and engaged couples; newly married couples and parents; and those who are divorced or separated. They encompass those who are in industrial and trade fields and those in business and other professional careers, as well as those in military service and in religious discernment and formation, those who are unemployed and in varying degrees of poverty, those who are incarcerated, and those who are at-risk and marginalized. This group is increasingly diverse, comprised of youth and young adults from each cultural family, those of mixed races and cultures, and those of differing abilities. There are so many dimensions to being young – from generation to experience to vocational reality.



The uniting factor in bringing all these disparate groups together is the fact that most of them are in an intense period of transition, anxiety, and uncertainty as they grow developmentally from childhood to adult stability through these aforementioned life experiences. These young women and men are also part of population groups that are often overlooked in faith communities – which is a reason to give greater attention to them in the celebration on Christ the King Sunday.

In their lives, youth and young adults often find their faith eclipsed by the realities they are currently facing as they journey through the transitions, anxieties, and uncertainties associated with their developmental and societal growth. Yet, as *Christus Vivit* points out, “young people frequently fail to find in our usual programs a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues” (CV 202).

The annual celebration of youth and young adults on the Solemnity of Christ the King, then, can be a seminal moment in the liturgical year when the Church (within a local community, in a diocese, and globally) recommits to responding to those concerns, needs, problems, and issues. It can also be an occasion to communicate Christ to them through the compassion and love of missionary disciples who encounter them.

The Key Cornerstones

Celebrating young people once per year can be an opportunity for an annual rejuvenation of the Church’s ministry with youth and young adults. Rather than being a momentary focus for a community, the annual celebration can be a significant milestone within a given year of activities and accompaniment of a Church with young people. Some parishes, dioceses/eparchies, movements, or organizations might see the annual celebration as a “kick-off” or as a “culmination” of the year, while others could look at this event as one marker along the way.

No matter what, though, this celebration (and the international World Youth Day events held every two or three years) should not be the only outreach to young people that a Catholic diocese, eparchy, parish, or community carries out each year. Instead, it is recommended that the celebration be a significant marker on our ongoing journey of accompanying youth and young adults.

To achieve that goal, the Holy See offers six “cornerstones” of which the Church should be mindful in its celebration of young people on the local, national, or global levels. These cornerstones were inspired by two addresses given by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in 2011 and Pope Francis in 2013 and outlined in the *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches* given by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life in 2021:

The celebration as a “festival of faith.”

Since the annual celebration takes place on the Solemnity of Christ the King, attention should be paid to giving young people a chance to encounter Jesus – through the transcendent experience of the liturgy as well as in the community of the faithful and in the faces of those on the margins. This moment in the life of the Church can be an opportunity for young people to renew their faith commitments and discover God present in the Holy Eucharist.

The U.S. Bishops remind us that our pastoral ministry must help “foster the personal and communal growth and education of [youth and] young adults toward a relationship with Jesus Christ leading to Christian maturity.”⁷ Beyond the moment of encounter on Christ the King Sunday, the community can accompany young people through spiritual direction, catechesis, and formation, as well as through ongoing experiences of prayer and liturgy.

7 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults*, Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, November 12, 1996, Part Three, 27.

The celebration as an “experience of the Church.”

Our work with young people should best reflect the vision of the Church laid out in *Christus Vivit*, which challenges us to “move towards a participatory and co-responsible Church, one capable of appreciating its own rich variety” where “no one should be excluded or exclude themselves.”⁸ For the annual celebration on Christ the King Sunday, every ministry in the diocese, eparchy, parish, or apostolate can be actively involved in this effort to showcase to youth and young adults the synodality active in that community.

What does the experience of Church look like? In the United States, “young people experience the Catholic community of faith at home, in the parish... in Catholic schools, and in other organizations” that engage them.⁹ The annual celebration will often take place within church structures (like the parish, school, or at Catholic-sponsored activities); however, what is most important is that the Church also goes out to young people at that occasion and throughout the year.



The celebration as a “missionary experience.”

The Church’s ministries with young people are, at their core, missionary in nature (see *Christus Vivit* 239-241). Rather than sedentary experiences, passive participation, or closed groups, the accompaniment with young people must be constantly moving, actively alive, and outward-focused. In the same way, the celebration of Christ the King Sunday should inspire young people to be missionaries beyond the local faith community – and can inspire all Catholics to renew their commitment and intentionality in engaging and supporting youth and young adults.

Pope Francis states that this missionary approach should “stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervor, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love, and attraction,”¹⁰ and young people can help guide the entire community towards embracing this spirit. The U.S. Bishops remind us that “when we hear the words, ‘Go forth, the Mass is ended,’ our work as disciples begins anew. With these words, we share in the mission of Christ by bringing forth his message to the world.”¹¹ On Christ the King Sunday, those words of sending can stir up the enthusiasm of young people and all of us who are present, getting us ready for the work that lies ahead in the world.

8 *Christus Vivit*, 206.

9 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Renewing the Vision: The Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry*, Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, June 20, 1997, Part Two, 11.

10 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 261.

11 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis, *Living as Missionary Disciples: A Resource for Evangelization*, Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, March 21, 2017, Part One, 18.

The celebration as an “opportunity for vocational discernment” and a “call to holiness.”

God calls every person, and in a unique way during his or her youth and young adulthood, to a life of holiness, “to live according to the Gospel—to be grounded in Christ Jesus. It is the ever-present challenge to be a people of heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness (cf. Col 3:12). It is a call to embrace the Beatitudes.”¹² Complementing the cornerstone of mission, this dimension of the Christ the King annual celebration gives those engaged a chance to reflect on who they are in relation to the mission.

Pope Francis notes that “this missionary vocation thus has to do with service. For our life on earth reaches full stature when it becomes an offering.” He also notes that, as a Church, “every form of pastoral activity, formation, and spirituality should be seen in the light of our Christian vocation.”¹³ The moment of Christ the King Sunday can be, for each community and every person that celebrates it, a chance to discern who God is calling us to be at this moment in our lives. For youth and young adults, this occasion allows them to look ahead to their own future and how they will answer God’s call to serve the world, grounded in Christ, whose feast is celebrated that day.

The celebration as an “experience of pilgrimage.”

The synodal approach of the Church today is one of active movement and prophetic action. Like pilgrimage, ministry is always unfolding as one navigates uncertain terrain while also advancing towards a horizon of sacredness. The international World Youth Day (WYD) phenomenon is a physical manifestation of this approach, as young people leave their homes and communities to make long and sometimes difficult journeys to encounter their peers and the Holy Father in another nation or continent.

The annual and local celebrations of young people can also be a pilgrimage experience, even if one is not moving or traveling. The global nature of this moment in the life of the Church reminds us that we are celebrating together with young people of all nations and in union with the Holy Father, just like at the international WYD. On an even deeper level, when we celebrate that day, we are journeying alongside those of different generations, perspectives, and cultures in our mutual observance.

In their pastoral letter against racism, the U.S. Bishops noted, “To work at ending racism, we need to engage the world and encounter others—to see, maybe for the first time, those who are on the peripheries of our own limited view.”¹⁴ This requires an ongoing and communal pilgrimage “process in which every new generation must take part: a slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.”¹⁵ So, no matter where we may find ourselves on Christ the King Sunday, we are never alone: every person who celebrates are part of a global faith community of pilgrims on the way to an encounter with the Lord and one another.

12 *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, Part Two, 18.

13 *Christus Vivit*, 254.

14 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love: A Pastoral Letter Against Racism*, Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, November 2018, 19.

15 *Evangelii Gaudium*, 220.

The celebration as an “experience of universal fraternity.”

With its emphasis on looking beyond one’s local realities and gaining a global perspective, the annual celebration is an opportunity for “young people to go beyond their small groups and to build social friendship, where everyone works for the common good.”¹⁶ The liturgical and ministerial experiences around Christ the King Sunday can inspire and lead youth and young adults to embrace the diversity of humanity and fully engage in the social dimension of the Church’s mission. On that day, then, “we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people’s troubles... we need only have a pure and simple desire to be a people, integrate, and lift up the fallen... For our part, let us foster what is good and place ourselves at its service.”¹⁷

The vision of World Youth Day, set forth by St. John Paul II, was that it would become a celebration of every young Christian, no matter their culture or country. And recalling that this celebration takes place on the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the *Universe*, this occasion can inspire us to pastorally encounter, accompany, love, and work for justice, the care of creation, and universal harmony and peace alongside every person, wherever they may be and whoever they may be, around the world.

As dioceses, eparchies, parishes, campuses, movements, and Catholic organizations plan for the next annual celebration of youth and young adults in their community, it is important to pray over and remain mindful of these key cornerstones. In so doing, we can ensure that a once-per-year occasion does not remain an isolated incident, but can illuminate the Church’s mission, particularly with the young, throughout the year.



16 *Christus Vivit*, 169.

17 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 77.



Section 2: Local Community Celebrations

Celebrating Youth and Young Adults in the Parish, Campus, and Local Community

The Church is, at its heart, an experience of community. While the Catholic Church has a global reach to the ends of the earth, the local experience is paramount. That is why this guidebook is focused on supporting the celebration of youth and young adults in every parish, college campus, high school, or local apostolate or movement.

Catholic youth and young adults can find spiritual connection in multiple settings. However, the local community can hold a special place in the lives of young Catholics. Pope Francis noted, “The community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging, and challenging them.” (CV 243) In addition, the parish, as the proper location for the sacraments, brings “the Gospel to the People through the proclamation of the faith and the celebration of the sacraments... [The parish] is visibly characterized then, as a place of worship, a sign of the permanent presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his People.”¹⁸

This is not to minimize the significant impact of that diocesan or national ministries or apostolates can offer to young people. Those institutions often provide considerable evangelization and formation opportunities for young people and are often instrumental in developing their faith lives. Many Catholic youth and young adults have profound faith experiences in these settings. However, those communities can be transient by their nature and their influence wanes when that phase of engagement moves on. The parish can be the more permanent spiritual home that endures throughout the many transitions in the lives of young people.

Getting Started

A significant amount of planning and coordination is required to create a successful celebration in the local community. At the onset, the pastor or pastoral leader accompanying or coordinating ministries with youth and/or young adults (at a parish) or the chaplain or campus minister (at a high school or college campus) must understand the goals of the celebration. Questions to consider include:

- **Who is your audience?** This includes age range (such as youth and/or young adults, 20s and/or 30s), cultural communities, geographic boundaries, among other factors.

¹⁸ Congregation for the Clergy, “Instruction, ‘The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelizing mission of the Church,’” 20 July 2020,7: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/07/20/200720a.html>.

- **When will this take place?** This means deciding exactly when the Global Celebration of Young People celebration will occur in your community (including date, time, and/or timing for related activities).
- **What are your goals for the celebration?** This is an opportunity to vision and dream.
- **What is the theme?** This can include the global theme set by the Holy See as well as connecting this to other themes that are relevant to the life of the local community.
- **How are these elements communicated?** This includes sharing the direction with the local community, the young people themselves, and parish leaders and collaborators.

All these questions can help give shape to the activities chosen and give a focus for the liturgical ministers, pastoral leaders, and guests who are part of the local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People.

The first step in getting started is establishing co-leaders for the celebration in the local community. Co-leadership is helpful in that fosters a spirit of synodality and co-responsibility and relieves any one person from handling the organizational duties alone. The co-leaders might include:

- The pastor or church administrator.
- The pastoral leader in a parish focused on ministry with youth/adolescents.
- The pastoral leader in a parish focused on ministry with young adults (college, 20s and 30s).
- The high school or college campus minister (if in a high school or college campus setting).
- Young people (either/both a youth or young adult), with leadership skills and experience.

Once the co-leaders are identified, a core team should also be developed that includes a diverse group of individuals who can guide the planning of the project through to completion and be mindful of activities and initiatives beyond the local experience of the Global Celebration of Young People.

The core team should meet regularly in the weeks leading up to the Solemnity of Christ the King, always conducting its work in a spirit of prayer (NOTE: use “A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults” at the beginning of this guidebook at each meeting) and openness to the ideas of everyone involved. The core team should also meet in the weeks following the solemnity celebration, to assess the effort and develop ideas for continuing the journey beyond Christ the King Sunday (to remind everyone that ministry with young people takes place all year long).

Choosing the Date

Ideally, the local celebration of youth and young adults will take place on and around the Solemnity of Christ the King, in solidarity with the universal Church’s global celebration of young people.

On Christ the King Sunday, Catholic churches in every continent around the world will be celebrating youth and young adults in their own way. Dioceses, eparchies, ecclesial movements, apostolates, parishes, high school and college campuses, seminaries, religious communities, and national ministry organizations and episcopal conferences will mark the day with prayer and liturgies, presentations, music, sports, special events, and digital gatherings. At the Vatican, the Holy Father will also be addressing young people in his celebration of the solemnity.

Because of this global movement on Christ the King Sunday, it is highly recommended to use this date in the local community, knowing that the celebration is taking place in so many places at one time.

The date of the Solemnity of Christ the King varies slightly and generally occurs between November 20 and 26 in any given year. It marks the final Sunday of the liturgical year and Ordinary Time before the first Sunday of Advent.

It is also important to recognize that the Solemnity of Christ the King is proximate to the United States holiday of Thanksgiving (usually the weekend after, but occasionally the same weekend) and that the USCCB has designated Christ the King Sunday as a day to celebrate religious freedom (see <http://www.usccb.org/christtheking>).

Rather than competing with these national moments, it is recommended that Thanksgiving and the focus on religious freedom be integrated into the community's celebration of young people. Advance planning will require various approaches, especially if the holiday of Thanksgiving immediately precedes Christ the King Sunday. In addition to these occasions, be sure to consider any special ecclesial celebrations such as jubilee years and special local, national, or global commemorations that align with the dates of the celebration of young people. If the local diocese or parish has any special themes for that year or season, consider incorporating those as well.

However, there may be pastoral and local reasons or calendar conflicts with having this celebration on Christ the King Sunday (or the community wishes to use Christ the King to focus exclusively on religious freedom or the Thanksgiving weekend). In these instances, the celebration may be moved to a more appropriate date. If possible, it is best to choose a date close to the Solemnity of Christ the King (for instance, the week or two before).

There are a few observances in the calendar that should be brought to planners' attention. These celebrations can be used to promote the celebration of young people on Christ the King Sunday that year, or if for pastoral reasons the celebration cannot be held on Christ the King, leaders may consider holding the event on, around, or connected to one of the dates or occasions listed below. Additionally, if a community chooses to celebrate young people over the course of a week or longer, leaders will need to decide on the scheduling of that celebration week (that is, before or after Christ the King Sunday or whichever Sunday is chosen by the community).

The Dates of Christ the King Sunday and Thanksgiving

Year	Christ the King Sunday	Thanksgiving (USA)
2021	11/21/2021	11/25/2021 (After CTK)
2022	11/20/2022	11/24/2022 (After CTK)
2023	11/26/2023	11/23/2023 (Before CTK)
2024	11/24/2024	11/28/2024 (After CTK)
2025	11/23/2025	11/27/2025 (After CTK)
2026	11/22/2026	11/26/2026 (After CTK)
2027	11/21/2027	11/25/2027 (After CTK)
2028	11/26/2028	11/23/2028 (Before CTK)
2029	11/25/2029	11/22/2029 (Before CTK)
2030	11/24/2030	11/28/2030 (After CTK)

Important Dates Proximate to Christ the King Sunday

Below are moments throughout October, November, and December that may be occasions for choosing an alternative date to Christ the King Sunday, while keeping relatively proximate to the global celebration. These dates and liturgical moments are also good to keep in mind for the preparatory process leading up to Christ the King (within Ordinary Time), or immediately following it (through Advent and Christmas). NOTE: When “CV” is listed after a particular day on the calendar, it indicates a connection to young people through Pope Francis’ *Christus Vivit* (CV).

OCTOBER:

- (Entire month) - Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- (Entire month) - Respect Life Month
- (Entire month) - Month of the Rosary
- (Entire month) - Catholic Missions Month
- First Sunday in October - Respect Life Sunday
- October 1 - Memorial of St. Therese of Lisieux, patron of young people (CV 57)
- October 3-28 – Anniversary of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (in 2018) in Rome under the theme of “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment”
- October 4 - Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi, patron of young people (CV 52)
- Second Monday in October – Indigenous People’s Day / Columbus Day (USA)
- October 9 – Observance of St. John Henry Newman, patron of campus ministry
- October 12 – Observance of Bl. Carlo Acutis, patron of young people (CV 104-106)
- October 22 - Memorial of St. John Paul II, patron of World Youth Day
- October 29 – Observance of Bl. Chiara Badano, patron of young people (CV 62)
- Penultimate Sunday in October - World Mission Sunday
- Last Sunday in October - Priesthood Sunday

NOVEMBER

- (Entire month) - Black Catholic History Month (USA)
- (Entire month) - Indigenous People’s Month / National Native American Heritage Month (USA)
- First full week of November – National Vocations Week
- November 1 - Solemnity of All Saints (All Saints Day)
- November 2 - Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls’ Day)
- November 11 – Veteran’s Day (USA)
- November 12 – Anniversary of the formal approval (in 1996) of *Sons and Daughters of the Light*, a pastoral plan for ministry with young adults, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now USCCB)
- November 15 – Anniversary of the formal approval (in 1985) of *Empowered by the Spirit*, a pastoral letter on campus ministry, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now USCCB)
- November 20 – Anniversary of the formal pronouncement by Pope Francis (in 2020) that the Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, will be the annual global celebration of young people
- Sunday prior to the Solemnity of Christ the King - World Day of the Poor
- Last Sunday in Ordinary Time (November 20-26) – Solemnity of Christ the King, as the global celebration of young people in the Church and a national day for religious freedom (USA)
- Fourth Thursday in November (November 22-28) – Thanksgiving Day (USA)

DECEMBER

- December 8 – Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, patronal feast day of the United States
- December 10 – Memorial of Our Lady of Loreto, whose shrine (in Loreto, Italy) was chosen for the promulgation of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation on young people, *Christus Vivit*, in 2019
- December 12 – Observance of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas
- December 17 – Celebration of the birthday (in 1936) of Pope Francis, author of *Christus Vivit*
- December 20 – Anniversary of the formal declaration by St. John Paul II (in 1985) of an annual global celebration of young people to be celebrated by the universal Church
- December 25 – Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)
- Sunday after Christmas (or December 30) – Observance of the Holy Family (CV 24-29)

Additional Moments of Celebration

Throughout the year, there are other key moments in the life of Church that can also be set aside to commemorate youth and young adults, either in place of Christ the King Sunday (if no date or week during the three-month span of October through December can work for the community), or more ideally, as touch points to continue the celebration beyond that one moment in time. These occasions can involve less activity than the Global Celebration of Young People but are further ways to bring attention to younger generations in the Church.

JANUARY

- January 1 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God and World Day for Peace (New Year's Day)
- Sunday between January 2 and January 8 – Epiphany
- January 18-25 – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- January 20 – Memorial of St. Sebastian, patron of young people (CV 51)
- Third Sunday of Ordinary Time (January 21-27) - Sunday of the Word of God (see CV 5-21)
- Third Monday of January – Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (observed, USA)
- January 22 – Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (USA) (see CV 74)
- January 26 – Memorial of St. Timothy (with St. Titus), young companion of St. Paul
- January 28 – Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas, patron of scholars and students
- January 31 – Memorial of St. John Bosco, patron of youth ministry and young people
- Last Week of January – Catholic Schools Week (inclusive of high schools and colleges) (see CV 221-223)



FEBRUARY

- (Entire month) - Black History Month (USA)
- Sunday following February 2 – World Day for Consecrated Life (see CV 274-277)
- Forty days before Easter (between February 4 and March 10) - Ash Wednesday
- February 7-14 – National Marriage Week USA (see CV 259-267)
- February 8 – Memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita, patron of young people suffering human trafficking (and World Day of Prayer Against Human Trafficking) (see CV 72)
- February 11 – World Day of the Sick
- February 14 – Observance of St. Valentine, patron of young couples and marriages
- Second Sunday of February – World Marriage Day (see CV 259-267)
- Third Monday of February – Birthday of George Washington (observed, USA)

MARCH

- (Entire month) - Women's History Month (USA)
- March 19 – Solemnity of St. Joseph, patron of the universal Church
- March 19 – Observance of Bl. Marcel Callo, patron of young people (CV 61)
- March 25 – Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord to young Mary of Nazareth (see CV 43-48)
- March 27 – Observance of St. Peter Calungsod, patron of Filipino youth and young adults
- March 31 – Anniversary of the second global celebration of youth and young adults (in 1985), in Rome, to mark the United Nations' International Year of Young People
- First Sunday after the full moon following March 21 (March 22-April 25) – Easter Sunday

APRIL

- (Entire month) - Child Abuse Prevention Month (see CV 95-102)
- April 2 – Anniversary of the death (in 2005) of St. John Paul II, patron of young people
- April 2 – Anniversary of the public release (in 2019) of *Christus Vivit*
- April 6 – Anniversary of the birthday (in 1901) of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, patron of young people (CV 60)
- April 11 – Observance of St. Gemma Galgani, patron of college students
- April 12 – Anniversary of the first official World Youth Day (in 1986) in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- April 15 – Anniversary of the first global celebration of youth and young adults (in 1984), in Rome, in the Holy Year of Redemption (1983-1984), with St. John Paul II and young people from around the world.
- April 22 – Anniversary when St. John Paul II first entrusted the World Youth Day Cross to all young people (in 1984), in Rome, at the conclusion of the Holy Year of Redemption (1983-1984).
- Fourth Sunday of Easter – World Day of Prayer for Vocations (see CV 274-277)



MAY

- (Entire month) - Dedicated to the Blessed Mother (see CV 43-48)
- (Entire month) - Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (USA)
- May 1 – Memorial of St. Joseph the Worker, patron of young people at work (see CV 268-273)
- May 6 – Observance of St. Dominic Savio, patron of young people (CV 56)
- Second Sunday in May – Mother’s Day (USA)
- May 18 – Anniversary of the birthday (in 1920) of St. John Paul II, patron of young people
- May 22 – National Day of Prayers and Remembrance for Mariners and People of the Sea (USA)
- May 30 – Observance of St. Joan of Arc, patron of young people (CV 53)
- Seventh Sunday of Easter – World Communications Day (see CV 86-90)
- Last Monday in May – Memorial Day (USA)



JUNE

- Third Sunday in June – Father’s Day (USA)
- June 8-11 – Anniversary of the *First National Encuentro of Pastoral Juvenil Hispana* (in 2006), at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, which developed the national Conclusions for Catholic ministry with Hispanic/Latino youth and young adults in the United States.
- June 19 – Juneteenth National Independence Day (USA)
- June 20 – Anniversary of the formal approval (in 1997) of *Renewing the Vision*, a framework for Catholic youth ministry, by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (now USCCB)
- June 21 – Memorial of St. Aloysius Gonzaga, patron of young people and students
- June 22-29 – Religious Freedom Week (USA)
- June 29 – Solemnity of Sts. Peter and Paul, patrons of the universal Church

JULY

- July 4 – Independence Day (USA)
- July 4 – Observance of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, patron of young people (CV 60)
- July 9 – Anniversary of the death (in 1897) of Ven. Augustus Tolton, first African American priest in the United States, who established St. Monica Church in Chicago in his late 30s
- July 14 – Memorial of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, patron of young people (CV 55)
- July 25 – Observance of St. James, patron of pilgrimages and pilgrim travelers
- Week of July 25 – Natural Family Planning Awareness Week (see CV 81-82)
- July 26 – Observance of Bl. Andrew Phû Yên, patron of young people (CV 54)
- July 29 – Memorial of Sts. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus patrons of siblings and families (see CV 242)
- Last Sunday of July – World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly (see CV 179-201)

AUGUST

- August 6 – Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
- August 12 – United Nations International Day for Young People
- August 10-15 – Anniversary of the first World Youth Day in the United States (in 1993), in Denver, Colorado
- August 15 – Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- August 15 – Observance of Bl. Isidore Bakanja, patron of young people (CV 59)
- August 15 – Anniversary of the promulgation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (in 1990), an apostolic constitution on Catholic universities by St. John Paul II.
- August 26 – Observance of Bl. Ceferino Namuncurá, patron of young people (CV 58)

SEPTEMBER

- First Monday in September – Labor Day (USA)
- September 1 – World Day of Prayer for Creation (see CV 228)
- September 9 – World Day of Prayer for Peace in our Communities (see CV 72-80)
- September 15-October 15 – National Hispanic American Heritage Month (USA)
- Third Sunday in September – Catechetical Sunday, to celebrate catechists of all ages (see CV 244)
- September 29 – Observance of St. Raphael (with Sts. Michael and Gabriel), patron of single young people
- Last Sunday in September – World Day for Migrants and Refugees (see CV 91-94)
- Last Week in September – National Migration Week (see CV 91-94)

In addition, Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent (in February, March, and/or April), as well as Our Lady of Guadalupe, Advent, Christmas, Palm Sunday, Easter, and Pentecost, often mark key moments of return for many young people, including those otherwise disaffiliated from the practice of the Christian faith. As Pope Francis noted, “It is important to make the most of the great moments of the liturgical year... (these) festive occasions can provide a welcome break in their routine and help them experience the joy of faith.” (CV 224)

Be aware that these dates (along with many others not listed here) are opportunities to further the celebration of young people in the local community, beyond (or in some cases, in place of) Christ the King Sunday – and remind youth and young adults that they are essential members of the Body of Christ, regardless of the season.

Mapping the Timeline

As with any significant project, a timeline (and budget) might need to be addressed early on. It is important to get as early a start as possible in order to properly develop the efforts and promote them well in advance of Christ the King Sunday (or whatever timeframe is established by the community).

Example Parish Timeline

Five Months Away *(or whenever planning can begin)*

- Begin in prayer and continue in prayer throughout the planning process.
- Form a core team (starting with the co-leaders) and seek out collaborators
- Begin regular meetings of the core team and collaborators.
- Identify the vision, target audience, objectives, and budget (if needed).
- Set the date and tentative schedule of events and/or the weekend liturgies.
- Create a detailed publicity and marketing plan.

Four Months Away *(if doing additional or off-site activities related to this celebration)*

- Visit and secure any event sites.
- Book talent for the celebration (musicians, speakers, panelists, guest artists, etc.)
- Identify and begin to secure logistics: food, sound, lighting, technology, security, etc.

Three Months Away

- Request the pastor and/or other Church leader(s) to participate.
- Recruit lead volunteers and managers.
- Increase publicity measures, especially on social media.
- *(if doing any major related events)* Open event registration.

Two Months Away

- Recruit additional needed volunteers to assist.
- Begin planning for post-celebration follow-up measures.
- Continue publicity measures, especially on social media.
- *(If doing any major related events)* Purchase supplies.

One Month Away

- Review logistical elements and perform any needed rehearsals or event tests.
- Meet with volunteers to go over details of celebration.
- Create printed materials (worship aids, prayer cards, program books, promotions, etc.)
- Meet with pastor or parish administrator to review final details for the celebration.
- Make personal invitations for the celebration: to young people and to parishioners in general.

Specific Timelines for Campus Ministries

August – Welcome to Campus!

- At the beginning of the academic year, Campus Ministry invites student leaders, faculty, and professional staff to brainstorm together how to celebrate Christ the King. Through prayer, group reflection on the WYD message for this year, and dialogue about the needs of the campus community, the group defines goals and expected outcomes for this year.
- Define any intercollegiate, diocesan, and regional opportunities for collaboration taking into consideration needs, budget, personnel, and resources available for the current semester. Reach out to other campus ministries and diocesan offices to establish necessary partnerships.
- Develop a communications plan and implementation calendar to include campus, diocesan, and local news. Make sure the social media calendar for the ministry covers all necessary events during the semester while creating momentum towards the Christ the King Celebration.

September – Student Engagement

- Establish a campus ministry CTK committee, with sub-committees or teams as needed, to organize specific events, delegate tasks, and timelines. Agree on meetings and collaboration times; even an online collaboration platform to keep everyone in the loop.
- Sign up volunteers needed for liturgy and events according to goals and expected outcomes.
- Secure all campus space reservations, book all college resources needed for November. The earlier the better when collaborating with different entities on campus and beyond.
- Meet with campus communications, the student newspaper, and other resources to get the word out. Check with diocesan means of social communication to include your campus events in their coverage. Same with local news, and social media.

October – Midterms and More

- Celebrate St. Newman, Patron of Campus Ministry, to gather momentum for CTK.
- Promote and distribute Pope's WYD message and create opportunities for dialogue among students, faculty, and staff about this year's theme.
- Call for additional volunteers needed for events according to plans developed by the different teams. Remember to confirm more people than strictly needed and be flexible as many who initially sign up might not be able to assist as they expected: life happens and exams too!
- Follow up with key collaborators and other groups included in the plan, to make sure they have what they need to help you execute all events envisioned.
- Keep prayerful out there! As the time approaches, many more tasks will surface, and requests might start to pile up. As always, communication is key to keep everyone informed of progress, setbacks, and new conditions that arise throughout the semester.

November – Christ the King

- Increase promotion of the Christ the King celebration during National Vocations Awareness Week. Same with additional opportunities like the International Day of the Poor just the week before Christ the King.
- Throughout the month, give prominence to Christ the King in the campus ministry website, including schedule of events. Refine the social media calendar for posts, stories, and other interactive ways to engage with students and the broader campus community.
- Follow up with unpaid expenses, last minute details, new requests for supplies, and other unplanned minutiae that might arise.
- Follow through with all events prior to the Solemnity of Christ the King, including any collaboration, intercollegiate or diocesan events this year.
- Secure rehearsals for Christ the King liturgy, including sound, music ministry, prayer aides, gestures, movements, lectors, acolytes, and others involved.

December – Finals and Appreciation

- Thank all people involved in creating the Christ the King Celebration of Young People events and liturgy through notes or emails. Small tokens of appreciation for key student leaders, faculty and staff will go a long way!
- Keep records of evaluations, surveys, and other feedback to fine tune next year's celebrations. Compile a brief report on initiatives that worked, those that did not work, and possibilities for the future. Share your report with other campus ministries and diocesan offices, as well as donors and others interested in initiative outcomes.
- Write an article about the Christ the King experience on campus to distribute to different news and platforms. Show off great pictures and captions through the campus ministry social media!

****Special attention should be paid to any child protection aspects, including adhering to all diocesan or institutional child protection policies when minors are involved. Examples may include permission forms, screening and background checks for all adults working with minors. Additionally, risk management and insurance needs should also be addressed to access liability issues and the possible need for additional insurance or waivers. Be sure to check with your diocese or campus offices in these areas.*



Forming a Coordination Team

The local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People will be best coordinated by a team under the co-leadership of two or more individuals appointed by the pastor, pastoral staff, chaplain, or primary Catholic leader(s) within the community (such as the campus ministry director, principal, or administrator). The co-leaders' central roles are:

- to assemble and nurture a diverse** coordination team in which each team member uses his or her gifts to contribute to the overall effort
- to carry the vision of the effort and ensure that those efforts continue to meet the established vision
- to guide, direct, and coordinate the work of the team
- to keep the team members accountable to the project timeline and milestones

The person or persons who coordinate the youth, young adult, or campus ministry efforts may be the best co-leaders of the coordination team, especially if that person has strong leadership and project management skills. In some cases, someone else (including volunteers, catechists, teachers, and/or young people within the community) may be best to lead and manage the effort while the pastoral ministry leader(s) serve as subject matter expert(s) for the overall Global Celebration of Young People effort.

(**) by “diverse,” it is important that this team be reflective of the entire community, mindful of cultural family, race and ethnicity, generation and age, sex, socio-economic status (inclusive of those on the margins of society in the local area), varying abilities (inclusive of those persons with disabilities and the deaf community), geography (within the local area), and ministry experience (inclusive of those of various faith commitment and engagement levels).

In considering who to invite to serve on the celebration coordination team, be sure that young people (youth and/or young adults, depending on the focus of the local community) are invited onto the team. As the protagonists and focus of the Christ the King celebration, the input and energy of young people are key to a successful celebration. Remember that the celebration “has great significance and value, not only for the young people who live in that particular region, but for the entire local ecclesial community.”¹⁹ Thus, it is important not to limit team members to participants and leaders in the youth, young adult, or campus ministry efforts, but to include other key Catholic leaders (for instance, who are involved in other ministries) to truly make the celebration into a parish- or diocesan-wide effort that helps to “raise awareness among the ecclesial community as a whole – laity, priests, consecrated persons, families, adults and the elderly – of their mission to transmit the faith to the younger generations.”²⁰

This could include the parish or campus faith formation director, liturgy director, marriage and family life coordinators, parish council members, parents, religious sisters and brothers, and other key parishioners whose expertise or influence could aid in the planning efforts.

The sooner one gets started on planning the local celebration of young people in your parish or school, the more time that is available in order to plan and advocate efforts. Remember that the Global Celebration of Young People is much more than events or programs specifically aimed at youth and/or young adults. It is also an opportunity to advocate and educate every person within the local Catholic community of the gifts of young people and their significant and essential role in the life of the Church and in society.

19 Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life (DLFL), *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches*, page 6.

20 Ibid.

Developing the Scope and Focus

One of the first decisions that will need to be made is the scope of the parish’s “celebration of young people.” This occasion is centered around a singular day (often Christ the King Sunday) and aimed at both youth and young adults. However, for pastoral reasons, a community should feel free to extend their celebration period and aim the focus toward several different groupings of young people.



The components of the celebration can include:

- The Sunday Masses during the Solemnity of Christ the King (or an alternate date)
 - Featuring young people taking prominent liturgical roles, at one or several Masses
 - Featuring young people leading music, at one or several Masses
 - Featuring young people invited to give testimony/witness, at one or several Masses (i.e., during the announcements, or immediately before or after the liturgy)
 - Closing with a special blessing over young people, at one or several Masses
- Pre- or post-Mass promotion for or about young people in the vestibule or narthex of the church
- Pre- or post-Mass activities and events for or about young people at the church or campus
- Increased ministerial activities for young people in the week or weeks leading up to Christ the King Sunday (inclusive of spirituality, social mission, formation, pastoral care, and community-building)
- Increased community awareness activities (about or with young people) for adult parishioners in the week or weeks leading up to Christ the King Sunday
- Increased communications and evangelization efforts carried out (toward adult parishioners and toward young people) in the week or weeks leading up to Christ the King Sunday
- Enhanced engagement with young people in the weeks after Christ the King Sunday (inclusive of ministerial outreach, community awareness, communications, and evangelization)

In addition, for all these components, a decision will need to be made regarding which “young people” are being focused on, whether that be youth and young adults together or separately. One idea for some communities to consider is focusing in on one age group (either youth or young adults) on the weekend prior to Christ the King Sunday and the other age group during the weekend of Christ the King Sunday. Another idea is to feature a different age group at different Masses during Christ the King Sunday, inclusive of the Anticipated Mass. By coordinating it in one of these ways, the measures can remind adult churchgoers that there are two or more distinct developmental demographics within the broad category of “young people.”

Age Specific Celebrations

While the international day for young people on Christ the King is intended for all youth and young adults, communities may decide to develop or target their celebrations for specific populations within the broad category of “young people.” Pastoral leaders may also choose to celebrate one group of young people on one weekend and another group on the following weekend (or at a frequency fitting to the local community).

The specific populations can include:

- **Adolescents** (“youth”), ages 12 to 18, in junior high or high school

- For high school ministries, consider holding a special celebration during academic week on a day prior to the Thanksgiving holiday.
- For those communities with a significant amount of young people who are attending the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), usually held around this time of year, consider an alternative date (perhaps the weekend prior to NCYC) to celebrate adolescents with the parish.
- For those in scouting programs, consider doing something special. Great resources can be found through the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS), <http://nccs-bsa.org>, sources can be found through the National Catholic Committee on Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (NCCGSCF), <http://nfcym.org/programs/nccgscf/>.
- **Collegians** and collegiate-age young adults, ages 18 to 24, in university and higher education settings
 - For collegiate ministries,
 - consider holding this celebration on a weekend prior to them departing campus for the Thanksgiving holiday.
 - partner with faculty and staff interested in supporting Catholic campus ministry
 - survey student organizations that might be able to assist with the celebration
 - For parish communities, be mindful of the timing of the celebration so that it can be held when they are back home for the Thanksgiving holiday.
 - When hosting this celebration, be inclusive of all those in collegiate settings: those away on a university campus, those attending local community colleges, those attending school part-time, graduate and doctorate students, and those ages 18 to 24 who do not attend college.
- **Young adults**, ages 18 to 39, who are single, engaged, or married
 - This can be broken down further into young adults in their 20s (18 to 29) or 30s (30-39); communities may wish to celebrate these various sub-groups on different days, if appropriate.
 - Another distinction can include separate celebrations for singles, for dating or engaged couples, for young married couples, and/or for parents.
 - When focused on this population, especially for young parents, consider childcare options.
- **Intergenerational families** with young people ranging from junior high through young adulthood
 - Pope Francis noted “The family should be the first place of accompaniment” (CV 242); with that in mind, it may be helpful to keep in mind the celebration of families as the nexus of formation and accompaniment of youth and young adults.
 - Since some families have children who are both adolescents and young adults (who may be together again for the Thanksgiving holiday), this type of celebration can be helpful for them.
 - However, be mindful of the distinction between youth and young adults in developing activities, programs, or liturgical celebrations around these groupings.



Recognizing the great **racial and cultural diversity** that exists among young people, it may be helpful for parishes, campuses, dioceses, or movements to outreach specifically to communities of diverse cultural families, especially those that are less represented in the active roster of regular churchgoers. Those cultural communities often used within the Catholic Church in the United States include:

- The Asian and Pacific Islander cultural family
- The Black and African American cultural family
- The Hispanic and Latino cultural family
- The Native American and Alaska Native cultural family
- The White and European American cultural family
- The cultural families of migrants, refugees, and travelers (or people on the move), including recent immigrants to the United States

More information about these cultural families can be found with the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church (<https://www.usccb.org/committees/cultural-diversity-church>), as well as specific apostolates and organizations focused on these groups (including the Tekakwitha Conference, the National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana, the National Black Catholic Congress, the National African American Catholic Youth and Young Adult Ministry Network, among others).

Additional consideration should be made for outreach to **young persons with disabilities**, mental health issues, and youth and young adults within the deaf community. Special celebrations can be held for young people of these groups or intentional care should be made to include them in the community's Christ the King celebrations. More information about persons with disabilities and the deaf community can be found with the National Catholic Partnership on Disabilities (<https://ncpd.org>).

Catholic High Schools and Colleges

Coordination of these efforts takes on a particular focus in settings where the primary population is young people: high schools, university and college campuses, and workplaces or vocational experiences where most people are within the age ranges defined as “young people” (such as military installations or seminaries).

Each high school, for instance, has its prescribed ways of handling this type of celebration, including but not limited to getting students from the audiovisual, theater, music, and other organizations involved. These celebrations are great opportunities to invite students who are not active in the Church to assist with Christ the King events, and maybe get curious about what the Church has to offer after all.

Any person over 18 years old that will work directly, even as volunteers, with under 18-year-olds setting up or assisting with intercollegiate or diocesan celebrations will need to complete a child safety and welfare training approved by the diocese if they have yet to do so. Planning for this safeguard is critical, particularly when deciding for last minute substitutions that may occur.

Catholic ministry on college campuses “offers the members of the University community an opportunity to integrate religious and moral principles with their academic study and non-academic activities, thus integrating faith with life.”²¹ With that in mind, coordination teams can collaborate in advance with all departments and offices that could help with the Christ the King celebration, if that took place as a campus-wide liturgy, presentation, service project, or spiritual activity. Many institutions with specialized offices, like audio-visual, information technology, student activities, campus recreation, and other support services may be of assistance so that any efforts by the campus ministry office becomes an opportunity to involve a wider net of staff willing to help.

21 St. John Paul II, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae: Apostolic Constitution of the Supreme Pontiff on Catholic Universities*, 38.

In these instances, it is recommended to include faculty in advance for any communications, as they can also help to spread the word and may offer insights to the planning process. Students also pay attention when faculty announce, invite, encourage, and nudge students to participate in spiritual events that are beneficial for their growth and community building. Furthermore, faculty members and staff can be integrated in an intergenerational way within the celebration or the development of the Christ the King-related activities.

Reflecting on the experience afterwards is also part of the process. Invite the theology department (on Catholic campuses), as well as other faculty members and staff, to help lead a follow-up reflection session with those who helped organize Christ the King Sunday events on campus. Including faculty and professional staff will ensure a deeper understanding of the importance of activities that bring the campus together, even more to pray and reflect together.

Any opportunity to reflect on the mission and identity of the institution is always welcome. Keep in mind that in secular or non-Catholic colleges and universities (with a Newman Center), this type of celebration will most likely be held at the Catholic center or at a nearby parish working directly with campus, collegiate, or young adult outreach. Diocesan offices for young adult and campus ministry, together with professional staff and campus missionaries, have a great opportunity to collaborate in a common project that will give a sense of unity, if there is no common project yet

Parishes near community colleges are also invited to seize the opportunity to generate outreach efforts that are needed to connect young people with the broader Catholic Church, especially with various cultural populations in the area. In a way, the Global Celebration of Young People provides a yearly opportunity to develop a robust communication and outreach plan specifically for community colleges, as well as public and private campuses where the presence of the Church is not as strong. This is an urgent area of missionary creativity where parish congregations can excel and use the annual celebration as a launchpad for additional engagement.

Depending on the characteristics of the campus population, make sure that most students feel welcomed to attend. Paying extra attention to commuter students will help them feel more connected to a more residential campus. The inverse is true when dealing with a predominantly commuter campus. Transfer students who are new to campus are another group to invite as a way of building community. Above all, the suggestions in this guide are intended to stimulate the creativity and resourcefulness of young people involved in ministry, as Christ the King Sunday offers a unique opportunity to cap the outreach efforts that started at the beginning of the semester.



Expanding the Ministries

While Christ the King Sunday (or the Sunday of your community's choosing) is the centerpiece of the occasion, local parishes, campuses, and apostolates can also plan ministry activities in the week(s) prior to or following the community's liturgical celebration of young people.

If a parish or campus engages in year-round ministerial engagement with youth and/or young adults, this timeframe can be an opportunity to highlight, accentuate, or promote the regular work, as more people in the community will be attentive and alert for such things. The annual celebration can also be the moment each passing year when the leaders and ministers can be challenged to increase its investment, vibrancy, and extent of their existing pastoral outreach efforts, potentially broadening the audience, or drawing more people into the community.

The theme of servant leadership is often central to the formation in faith offered in ministries with youth and young adults. Around the Solemnity of Christ the King, the ultimate servant leader, it can be especially helpful to invite young people to reflect on their understanding of the faith and foster their best disposition to serve others and contribute to advancing the common good. Celebrating youth and young adults at this time of year is a great opportunity to inspire young people to serve Jesus through loving their neighbors and those most in need – “whatever you did with these you did with me” (Mt. 25). These measures can help young people emulate Christ as the servant leader celebrated through this solemnity.

On the other hand, if a parish, campus, or apostolate does not have much for young people, the Global Celebration of Young People can be an opportunity for that community to kick start a fresh approach, begin activities, or support services for youth, collegians, and/or young adults.

Examples include:

- **Special Events**

In the lead-up or following Christ the King Sunday, parishes can host dedicated events such as “missions” aimed at youth and/or young adults (with guest presenters), rallies, concerts, speaker series, or online programs centered around Christ the King and/or the annual theme for the celebration that year. ***

- **Catechetical Sessions**

These would be sessions for youth and/or young adults, sharing insights about the person of Jesus Christ, and how to strengthen our relationship with him. The sessions can also be formation moments around the annual theme for the celebration, *** saints, and holy men and women relevant to young people (for a starting list, see Pope Francis' reflection on young saints in *Christus Vivit* 49-63)

- **Family Activities at Home**

These can be take-home activities, especially aimed at adolescents and youth in high school settings, where families can explore together the meaning of Christ the King, and the annual theme for young people, *** which is often grounded in Scripture - and home Bibles can be used on these occasions.



- **Social Action and Justice**

Young people can engage in social action and justice activities in the community, recognizing Christ alive in the poor and marginalized in society. Specific projects can be organized with young people from other Catholic or Christian churches and in collaboration with the diocesan peace and justice office, respect life ministry, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, or any local initiatives connected to the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

- **Prayer and Devotions**

The Church community can organize additional experiences of Catholic prayer and devotion in the weeks leading up to or following Christ the King Sunday, which can amplify the annual theme*** or the relationship of young people with Jesus Christ. These prayers could include Eucharistic adoration, lectio divina, Stations of the Cross, rosary, pilgrimage to local Catholic sites, Liturgy of the Hours, and more.

- **Retreats or Days of Prayer**

The community can host or offer a special retreat or day of prayer for young people (either youth or young adults; preferably not together due to differences in spiritual development) around Christ the King Sunday. This retreat or day of prayer could focus on the annual theme*** or the person of Jesus Christ. The program can be led or facilitated by a guest retreat director or by someone in the pastoral leadership of the parish, campus, or ministry, and can be held on-site or at a location beyond the local community.

- **Sports and Social Events**

In addition to the spiritual, justice, and formational components, the occasion of National Youth and Young Adult Sunday can be a chance for young people to meet one another and build community. This can be done through the launching of a sports league, hosting or traveling to social events, and allowing time for social interaction (which can vary depending upon a focus on youth, collegians, or young adults in their 20s or 30s).

**** The annual theme is prepared by the Holy See and released with a special message from the Vatican each year. The USCCB will provide links to those materials each year, and diocesan offices working with youth, college students, or young adults will often be mindful of the themes and can offer further guidance and ideas around that theme.*

Furthermore, it can be helpful to use the Church's commemorations and celebrations throughout October and November to amplify the local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People. The weeks leading to this celebration include the National Week for Vocations and the World Day of the Poor, a special day instituted by Pope Francis to mobilize parishes to reach out to poor in their midst. Relating these dates before celebrating young people will help build up momentum with the overarching theme of spiritual growth expressed through servant leadership.

The celebration of Christ the King can also be an opportune time to invite young people into leadership roles within the faith community (beyond leadership of youth and/or young adult ministries). Youth and young adults are often open and eager to assist and take a protagonist role if they have the proper support including necessary training, clear expectations, and positive reinforcement.

These are just a few ideas for celebrating young people as components of the Christ the King festivities. Creatively explore other ways to celebrate your young people and to personalize the community's response to Pope Francis' call to celebrate young people according to local needs, resources, and situations.

A tool for organizing some of these aforementioned activities, and the people who are involved therein, can be found in the appendix of this guidebook.

Building Community Awareness

The Global Celebration of Young People is a wonderful moment when Catholics of all generations can learn more about young people, their cultures, and the best ways to approach and accompany them. Prior to the annual celebration, consider hosting live sessions, webinars, or presentations on youth and/or young adults, either facilitated by the Coordination Team or by bringing in outside experts on ministry and young people.

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis reminded us, “realities are greater than ideas” (EG 231). Preconceptions and assumptions, not to mention generalizations and conjecture, about youth and young adults are not helpful in advancing the Church’s mission in accompanying younger generations. Rather, what is needed is greater exposure to the realities facing young people today and understanding how best to patiently approach one another in love. In exploring these situations, Pope Francis also said:

We adults can often be tempted to list all the problems and failings of today’s young people. Perhaps some will find it praiseworthy that we seem so expert in discerning difficulties and dangers. But what would be the result of such an attitude? Greater distance, less closeness, less mutual assistance. Anyone called to be a parent, pastor, or guide to young people must have the farsightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken. The ability to discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognize potential where others only see peril. (CV 66-67)

The weeks leading up to Christ the King Sunday, throughout October and November (or at whatever time a community has chosen to celebrate), can provide ample opportunities to learn more about realities and to lean less upon assumptions and ideas. The Coordination Team can use this annual moment to help all Catholics, young and old alike, learn about one another and look ahead to journeying together as an intergenerational community of faith.

Examples include:

- **Formation Sessions**
These can be carried out as in-person workshops or online webinars, held on one or several occasions, to give churchgoers insight about youth and/or young adults: generational attributes, cultural trends, details about the realities young people are facing, and best practices in accompanying them. In addition, sessions can be held around *Christus Vivit*, the Church’s 2019 landmark document on young people by Pope Francis.
- **Intergenerational Dialogue**
Churches can host intergenerational dialogue sessions, where youth and/or young adults (including both active and less-active churchgoers) can engage in conversation on current topics and realities with adults in the community. These sessions can allow people hear directly from young people. Some potential discussion questions can be found on the National Dialogue website, <http://nationaldialogue.info>.
- **Church Communications**
In regular church communications (website, emails, social media, bulletin, announcements at Mass, etc.), the community leaders can post information about young people – trends, studies, and testimonies – in the weeks leading up to the Global Celebration of Young People. This can be done to raise awareness of those of younger generations and build anticipation among active churchgoers for the forthcoming celebration.
- **Community-Wide Projects**
In October and November (or in two months leading up to the alternative celebration date), churches can engage in intergenerational and parish-wide projects in the local community and within the church itself. This can allow young people and older adults to work side by side, learning from and listening to each other and build more comradery within the assembly.

Be mindful of cultural diversity and physical and mental abilities in the planning of these projects, recognizing the engagement of all members of the community in these efforts.

Engaging Youth and Young Adults

The annual celebration “is an opportunity to motivate and welcome all those young people who may be looking for their place in the Church and who have not yet found it.”²² In addition to celebrating the young people who are already involved in the life of the Church on Global Celebration of Young People, this occasion is a time to draw greater attention to and intentionally approach with renewed vigor those youth and young adults on the margins and peripheries of Catholic engagement.

This can include self-identified Catholic young people who come to church once or twice per year, who feel hurt or maligned by Christian leaders, whose work or family realities have eclipsed their commitment to a faith community, and who are new to an area (either recently moved, or new students in high school, college, or graduate programs). It can also include those youth and young adults without a religious affiliation of any kind (known in some circles as the “nones” or the “disaffiliated”), but who are seeking meaning and purpose in life. Regardless of the reason or backstory of an individual, the Global Celebration of Young People is a time for Catholic leaders to renew their commitment to better accompany these young men and women in their journey towards Christ.

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis promotes broad lines of action, so all who minister with young people should plan for both “*outreach*, the way we attract new young people to an experience of the Lord... (and) *growth*, the way we help those who have already had that experience to mature in it” (see CV 209-215) in their approach to youth and/or young adults. However, this kind of work goes beyond marketing or instruction, but relies on “the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational, and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life, and awakens hope and desires” (CV 211). This is also a time to promote “the foundational experience of encounter with God” and “growth in fraternal love, community life, and service” (CV 213).

Evangelization at these moments can be means to help “young people who are suffering feel the closeness of a Christian community... by its actions, its embrace, and its concrete help” (CV 77) and to patiently walk with them along a “path to interior healing and peace of heart.” (CV 83) The Global Celebration of Young People can be an opportunity for every person in the community to renew their call to reach out in these gentle ways.

It is important that, in advance, as many young people as possible in each Catholic community are made aware of the local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People. They should be invited not only to participate in the activities of the celebration, but they should also have a significant role in planning, forming, and developing this celebration. As Pope Francis noted, youth and young adults themselves are agents of the Church’s ministry with them and their peers, “left free to develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity” (CV 203).

Planning Tip:

Offering child-care for the duration of the Christ the King celebration (at Masses or other planned events) will show support for and increases the participation of young adult parents.

The voices of young people should be clearly reflected in the celebration. If a parish or organization does not already have an effective communication strategy with young people, this event is an opportune time to set one up for both this celebration and for future ministry efforts as well.

22 DFLC, *Pastoral Guidelines*, part 5, paragraph 4.

Beyond merely focusing on an audience of youth (ages 13-18) or young adults (ages 18-39), there are many subgroups within these broad categories that are worthy of individual consideration.

Middle school youth and high school youth are at distinct stages of development, yet nearly all of them share the common experience of attending middle or high school.

Young adults are even more diverse in their life situations: collegians, either undergraduates, graduate students, or commuter/community college students; working adults and those who are unemployed, seeking employment, or on certain vocational pathways; single young adults; dating, engaged, and married couples; separated or divorced individuals; those with or without children; those in military service; those on the margins of society, among other sub-groups. Approximately 40% of post-high school young adults go onto college, and about 60% go straight into the workforce or follow other vocational pathways. Some live in the town they grew up in, while others move far away from their hometown. Young adults in their 20s and 30s who marry and start families are still considered “young adults,” albeit with different responsibilities and challenges than their peers who are not married. It is important that the planning team takes these varieties of life situations into account as the event is developed.

In addition to the life situations of youth and young adults, special attention should be made to inclusivity of the various ethnic and racial cultures of the community in the celebration of young people. All the cultural families present in the community should be represented in the planning of and in the participation at the celebration. In fact, the invitational process for this intercultural approach begins early, as restored trust is often needed to bridge gaps and move people toward engagement. This does not happen overnight but is a journey of mutual discovery, learning, and sharing across cultures and communities. If a parish or community struggles with intercultural relations, extra time will be needed in the advance planning to ensure this can happen appropriately.

Similarly, special attention should be made to be intentionally inclusive of young persons with physical and developmental disabilities, the deaf community, and those facing mobility issues. It is recommended that engaging with diocesan offices dedicated to ministry with these populations can be helpful in being as inclusive as possible.

Prior to the Solemnity of Christ the King, the parish, campus, or local church can engage in robust outreach efforts within the community, which can have the following impact:

- Raise awareness to youth and young adults that the Church has set aside a day to celebrate them.
- Raise awareness to older generations that the Church values and cares for youth and young adults to such a degree that it has designated the solemnity of Christ the King as an international day for young people.
- Alert already-active Catholic young people of upcoming opportunities at their local church or diocese.
- Invite young people who are less connected with the Church into a welcoming community of faith.
- Encourage families to engage in healthy intergenerational dialogue around this time of year.
- Churches should begin this communications campaign **four to six weeks prior** to the annual celebration.

These measures can include, but are not limited to:

- Posting details or information about the celebration on the website, in social media posts, in the bulletin, weekly announcements, or within newsletters on a regular basis prior to Christ the King Sundays.
- Advertising the church’s annual celebration information in Catholic and secular publications (such as the diocesan newspaper or other media outline in the area), as well as websites and other social media that would be seen by young people.

- Providing talking points (see below) for active parishioners, families, and older generations in the community to better dialogue with and engage young people.
- Integrating information about young people or regarding the upcoming celebrations in regular parish or community activities such as Bible studies, prayer or small groups, service efforts, or after-mass socials.
- Encouraging actively practicing Catholic family members or friends of young people to invite the youth and/or young adults they know or interact with regularly to join them at the annual celebration or related activities at or within their church, campus, diocese, or movement.
- Hosting preparatory sessions or webinars for active parishioners to learn about the realities facing youth and/or young adults in their area, and creative ideas for accompanying, supporting, and engaging them.
- Discovering and meeting with families and/or young adults who may have recently moved into the local area and extending a special invitation to the youth or young adults for Christ the King Sunday.
- Through any of the above measures, tie the church's promotion of their Thanksgiving or Advent efforts with the annual celebration of young people, reminding people of the connection between them.

This is not an exhaustive list but a few ideas to get started. The key value is to be able to raise awareness and extend invitations, especially to youth and young adults who are less connected to the community of faith. In whatever way that can happen, given the resources available, is dependent on each parish, campus, or apostolate.

Suggested Talking Points

Pastoral leaders can pass along the following suggested talking points for engaging young people in their families, neighborhoods, communities, and social networks.

The first step is engaging the young person, getting to know them and their current realities. These questions or conversation starters are adapted from the guides from the *National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministries with Youth and Young Adults* (see <https://nationaldialogue.info/conversation/>).

- What brings you joy in your life right now?
- What challenges are you facing in your life right now?
- What can the Church (or what can I) do to support you in your life and/or your Catholic faith?
- Describe a time when your Catholic faith made a difference in your life.
- What are three words that describe your experience of the Catholic faith or the Church?

After some quality dialogue and discussion on these points, the following can be shared:

- First, we thank you for sharing your realities.
- Every year, the Catholic Church sets aside one of its most important feasts (Christ the King Sunday) to focus and celebrate young people like you - no matter what your realities are.
- We call this the *International Day for Youth and Young Adults*.
- Pope Francis tells young people around the world: "(Christ) is in you, he is with you, and he never abandons you. However far you may wander, he is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and he waits for you to return to him and start over again. When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear, doubt, or failure, he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope" (*Christus Vivit* 2).
- In other words, the Church wants to be close to you just as Jesus is close to you, reflected in our word reflected in our words, in our actions, our embrace, and our concrete help (cf. *Christus Vivit* 77).
- We would like to invite you to join us at our next Christ the King Sunday celebration of young people.
- There, we would like to celebrate you, and let you know of our support as a global community of faith.

Connecting Faithful Citizenship

The USCCB'S Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty has also designated the Solemnity of Christ the King, “be a day specifically employed by bishops and priests to preach about religious liberty, both here and abroad, as this feast was “born out of resistance to totalitarian incursions against religious liberty.”²³ Faithful citizenship and religious liberty can be seamlessly interwoven into the celebration of young people.

A strong point of connection can be found in the example of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati (1901-1925), known as an avid sportsman and a patron for young people (see *Christus Vivit* 60), whose “Christ-centered charity and social activism...serve as a particularly enlightening example as we seek peace and Justice in our nation.”²⁴ He was a teenager during World War I and believed that war “was the result of the Christian spirit disappearing from the culture...so he considered his involvement in politics an act of, or extension of, his faith.”²⁵ In the 1920s, as Benito Mussolini came to power in Italy, Frassati (at this time, a college student and young adult) took an active part in public processions of protest and was arrested on more than one occasion at a time when the Church in his native country was being openly persecuted and subjugated by the fascists.

Discussing or incorporating Frassati into the homily on Christ the King Sunday, as well as in other formational components of the celebration, can easily connect the concepts of faithful citizenship and the celebration of young people. Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati was a young person who had ordinary hobbies, interests, and friends, and yet, lived totally for Christ through his sacramental life, service to others, and dedication to faithful citizenship.

Ideas for this celebration can be found on the USCCB Religious Liberty web pages, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/religious-liberty>.

Collaboration Beyond the Local Community

Although the local focus is on the parish and campus, this celebration of young people is an excellent opportunity to collaborate and partner with other organizations and institutions that serve young people.

Care must be taken to ensure that partnering organizations and institutions share a common goal of serving youth and young adults so be sure to consult with your pastor and the appropriate diocesan staff.

In addition, look for ways to connect with the universal Church, including diocesan, national, and global efforts to celebrate young people each year. Some dioceses may hold diocesan-wide celebrations around Christ the King Sunday, while others may hold regional events. These can complement the efforts being made on the local level. Check with the diocesan offices for ministries with youth and young adults and campus ministry, or explore what is taking place at nearby high schools, colleges, and universities for ways to tie into these collaborations.

23 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, “Our First, Most Cherished Liberty: A Statement on Religious Liberty.” Washington, DC, 2012). https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/religious-liberty/upload/Our_First_Most_Cherished_Liberty.pdf.

24 Dugan Wood, Rachel, “‘Revolution of Charity:’ What Blessed Frassati Can Teach Us About Working for Peace and Justice,” *We Are Salt and Light*, 2 July 2020, <https://www.wearsaltandlight.org/blog/2020/revolution-charity-what-blessed-frassati-can-teach-us-about-working-peace-and-justice>.

25 “His Political Involvement,” Frassati USA, <https://frassatiusa.org/his-political-involvement>, assessed 1 July 2021.

- For engaging adolescents and youth, and youth ministry, on a national level, check with the [National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry \(NFCYM\)](#) and the [National Catholic Education Association \(NCEA\)](#). This could also include participation in NFCYM's [National Catholic Youth Conference \(NCYC\)](#), which often takes place around the Solemnity of Christ the King.
- For engaging college students, and campus ministry, on a national level, check with the [Catholic Campus Ministry Association \(CCMA\)](#) or the [Fellowship of Catholic University Students \(FOCUS\)](#).
- For engaging young adults (in their 20s and 30s), and ministry with young adults, on a national level, check with the USCCB [National Advisory Team for Young Adult Ministry \(NATYAM\)](#).
- Additional support can be found through the [United States Conference of Catholic Bishops \(USCCB\) Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth \(LMFLY\)](#), with its work with [youth and young adults](#), and the Secretariat of [Catholic Education \(CE\)](#), with its work in [higher education](#), as well as the U.S. Bishops' work with areas of church life including: [Cultural Diversity in the Church](#); [Evangelization and Catechesis](#); [Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations](#); [Justice, Peace, and Human Development](#); [Pro-Life Activities, Religious Liberty](#); [Child and Youth Protection](#); [Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs](#); [Migration](#); and [Divine Worship](#).
 - To stay connected to the U.S. Bishops' work for young people, the USCCB offers a free monthly newsletter about national activities related to the Church's ministries with youth and young adults. [Individuals may sign up at the embedded link for this regular communications resource.](#)

The international component of Global Celebration of Young People is coordinated with the Vatican Dicastery on [Laity, Family and Life \(LFL\)](#), which has oversight of the Holy See's [work with youth and young adults](#) on a global scale. The Dicastery assists the Holy Father with resources and support for his work with young people, in particular the annual global celebration of young people and the international World Youth Day events.

Local communities and young people may wish to read and reflect upon the LFL Dicastery's [Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches](#), which outlines the pastoral, spiritual, and theological foundation of the focus on youth and young adults on Christ the King Sunday.

In addition, the Holy Father writes a message specifically to young people each year, often released in the months prior to the Solemnity of Christ the King. Those who accompany young people can read this message and offer reflection sessions for youth and/or young adults in the community in the weeks leading up to or following Christ the King Sunday (or whenever the local parish or campus has opted to celebrate young people).

Consider how to work together with other parishes, schools, dioceses, apostolates, movements, or countries before, during, or after the Global Celebration of Young People, since communities around the world are celebrating young people at this time of year. If a parish or school has a "sister parish" or "sister school" in another location, reaching out to the ministry leaders accompanying young people there could be a blessing to both groups.

- On the international scene, be mindful of the word "youth" as it is used to connote different things in various countries. For instance, it can refer to those in their twenties in one nation, but to teenagers in another. This is important to clarify in advance, to avoid child and youth protection issues that might arise with different age groups potentially interacting and to provide a peer-to-peer connection.

Pointing towards the Source and Summit

The Solemnity of Christ the King, the final Sunday of the liturgical calendar (on the weekend before the First Sunday of Advent), falls between November 20 and 26 in any given year. With the Eucharist as the “source and summit” of Christian life, and the liturgical celebration as the unifying element in any Eucharistic assembly, the liturgical focus of the local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People should be given primary attention in the planning efforts.

Young people (youth and/or young adults, depending on the scope and direction chosen by the community) should be considered as elemental to the full complement of liturgical ministers: planners, art and environment ministers, hospitality ministers, ushers, sacristans, music ministers, readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and any other liturgical role available to them within the parish, campus ministry, or apostolate.

Pastoral ministers, campus ministers, teachers, school administrators and parish staff would benefit from an initial planning meeting to discuss the celebration of Christ the King with young people. (cf. FAA, 49). Preparation and decisions for liturgical preparation and planning should be solidified several months prior to Christ the King Sunday. The month prior (October), it would be critical to gather with young people to bring in their perspectives and experiences (not only to provide input for planning, but also to provide formation for them as well).

In the early planning stages, it would also be a fitting tribute to include a note of thanks in your parish communications about the contributions of youth and/or young adults to the larger community during the development of the Global Celebration of Young People. Consider interviews via social media for community members to get to know the young people who are working alongside the pastoral ministers in planning this effort.

Considering all the practicalities and details, prayer should be an important thread in the preparation process. The USCCB’s book, *Catholic Household Blessing & Prayers*, offers an abundance of prayers and blessings that can be useful in this time of preparation; these include, but are not limited to:

- Blessings “Beginning Each Days’ Work
- Blessings During Childhood
- Prayers for School, Work and Other Endeavors
- Consider using the following prayers to begin and/or end planning meetings:
 - “Prayer For Strength” (197)
 - “Prayer When Planning a Special Project” (322)
 - “Prayer for Openness” (379)

The Second Vatican Council noted that “Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.”²⁶ Consequently, the local implementation of the Global Celebration of Young People should have robust participation of the entire community during the liturgical celebration. A welcoming environment, beautiful music, encouraging preaching, a thoughtful ritual, and genuine fellowship after the liturgical celebration can be an avenue to further deepening the connection of young people with the Church, creating a sense of belonging and a caring community of faith that is supportive and loving. In all these, everything should lead “to another level of liturgical participation: living the liturgy” (FAU, 34). Fostering a sense of belonging for young people, especially in the Church, can create an environment where the dignity of their baptism can be respected.

26 Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. 4 Dec. 1963. Vatican. (14). https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

The celebration of the Eucharist, whether on Christ the King or the days around it, highlights what the Holy See spoke of in its *Pastoral Guidelines*, namely, that “the core message is always that the full stature of humankind stems from love that gives itself to others “right to the end” (13). If we believe that the Eucharist is formative, then we must celebrate Mass, especially Sunday Mass, as best as we are able and allow our rituals to touch old and young alike.

- **Liturgical Environment** – Develop a team of young people to assist with art and environment for these Masses, which can be set up under the direction of the liturgy coordinator for this celebration.
- **Music** – Identify young people who are talented vocalists and instrumentalists. Coordinate with the music director to involve young people in providing the music for the liturgy, including the selecting of liturgically appropriate music. When considering selections: as a group, read through the readings for the liturgy and give time for reflection reflect on the readings for the liturgy and then the songs being chosen.
- **Lectors and Readers** – Identify young people who are skilled at reading in public to proclaim the Word. Coordinate with the liturgical director or the ministry leader coordinating lectors to ensure they are scheduled and receive any necessary training on reading at Mass in your community.
- **Homily** – The homily for Christ the King Sunday is at the discretion of the presider; however, care should be taken to incorporate the celebration of young people, the Holy Father’s annual theme, or other elements into the message. Homily ideas can be found below.
- **Prayer of the Faithful** – Invite young people to write or assist in writing the prayer of the faithful for the liturgy. Examples of the prayer of the faithful can be found below.
- **The Preparation of the Gifts** – Select young people (youth, college students, and young adults) that represent the diversity of the community to bring the gifts to the altar.
- **Collection** – This is an opportunity to ask the community to invest in young people through their generous support during the collection. Work with the parish finance council or pastoral council to ensure this is permissible to allocate all or a portion of that weekend’s gifts to ministries with youth and/or young adults in the community or at the diocesan level (via the diocesan appeal campaign or similar fundraising). A second collection can also be taken for this specific purpose, depending on the permission from parish leadership.
- **Witness** – At the discretion of the pastor, parish leadership, or liturgical director, a young person may offer witness or testimony at an appropriate time before, during, or after the Mass. During the Mass, this reflection never replaces the homily but takes place during the announcements following the Prayer after Communion. This youth and/or young adult should be comfortable with public speaking and keep their reflection brief and on point. This can be a great chance for the community to hear their story and better appreciate the gift of young people in the Church.
- **Blessing** – Also at the discretion of the pastor, parish leadership, or liturgical director, a special blessing may be offered to all youth and/or young adults present at the Mass (or at all Masses that weekend). Examples of this can be found later in this guidebook.
- **Special Prayer** – Consider using “A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults,” found at the beginning of this guidebook, at some point during the liturgy. One suggestion is using this prayer after the Prayer of the Faithful; however, at the discretion of the pastor, parish leaders, or liturgical director, this prayer can also be read at another part of the Mass. Ideally, it should be read by all present in the assembly.

See the next section of this guidebook for a special liturgy guide on planning and executing the liturgical plans for the Solemnity of Christ the King as it connects to the global celebration of youth and young adults. A helpful tool for planning the liturgy can be found in the appendices of this guidebook.

SECTION 3

CHRIST THE KING SUNDAY LITURGICAL GUIDE

Celebrating Youth and Young Adults on the Solemnity of Christ the King

NOTE: When “young people” is used in the text below, it refers generally to both youth (13-18) and young adults (18-39); however, for pastoral reasons, the local community may wish to designate or differentiate between these age groups. It may be helpful, at the beginning of the Mass or in materials available to the assembly (such as a worship aid, screens, or bulletins), to explain to worshippers what “young people” mean when this term is used, as well as what “youth” or “young adult” specifically refers to in this context.

ENTRANCE AND GREETING: WELCOMING AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Typically, celebrants will want to provide a brief welcome that connects the celebration of the day with a taste of the readings that will momentarily be proclaimed. Celebrants can introduce the liturgy using the main theme or Scripture passage from the Pope’s annual message for young people.

Invite the congregation to look around and realize the beauty and the goodness of bringing young people together in this wonderful occasion to celebrate in spiritual communion with the Church and the young around the world.

The Vatican Dicastery for Family, Laity and Life provided the following words that can be included in the greeting, as a lens of celebration for young people and Christ the King:

Receive Christ! Welcome him as King into your lives! He is a King who came to save! Without him there is no true peace, no true inner reconciliation, and no true reconciliation with others! Without his Kingdom, society too loses its human face. Without the Kingdom of Christ, all true fraternity and all genuine proximity to those who suffer will disappear. (12)

What is important is to set the tone in a pastoral manner, modeling the approach the Church should take in engaging young people throughout the year. As Pope Francis notes, “We need to make all our institutions better equipped to be more welcoming of young people” (CV 216) and “young people need to be approached with the grammar of love, not by being preached at. The language that young people understand is spoken by those who radiate life, by those who are there for them and with them.” (CV 211).

A pastoral tone should infuse the spirit of the welcoming and introductory remarks on Christ the King Sunday, not to mention the other Sundays of the year.

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

The Word of God is essential to the liturgy, and therefore special care should be employed in identifying and training young people to step into the role of the proclamation of the Word, “the richness of the sacred Scriptures” which “often speak of young people and of how the Lord draws near to encounter them.” (CV 5)

If there are young people (youth or young adults) who are properly trained and comfortable with proclamation of the Word, it is ideal to schedule them for the liturgies on Christ the King Sunday. Other churches may wish to use a mentoring model (encouraging an older individual, trained in lecturing, to accompany and support a young person who has been identified to read for the Mass). Another model is having seasoned young people (other youth or young adults) walk with their peers in training them to proclaim Scripture.

Prior to Christ the King Sunday, it is advisable for pastoral leaders to help young people in liturgical roles, especially lectors, understand the context of the readings through Bible Study or small group discussions about the passages. It is best to use the lectio divina resources available, in English and in Spanish, at <https://catholic.bible/>.

The readings for Christ the King Sunday are as follows:

YEAR A: (2023, 2026, 2029, 2032, 2035, 2038, 2041, 2044)

- Ez 34:11-12, 15-17 (“The lost I will seek out, the strayed I will bring back, the injured I will bind up...”)
- Ps 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6 (“The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.”)
- 1 Cor 15:20-26, 28 (“Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.”)
- Mt 25:31-46 (“Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?”)

YEAR B: (2021, 2024, 2027, 2030, 2033, 2036, 2039, 2042)

- Dn 7:13-14 (“I saw one like a Son of Man coming, on the clouds of heaven.”)
- Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5 (“The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.”)
- Rv 1:5-8 (“I am the Alpha and the Omega... the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty.”)
- Jn 18:33b-37 (“Pilate said to Jesus, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’”)

YEAR C: (2022, 2025, 2028, 2031, 2034, 2037, 2040, 2043)

- 2 Sm 5:1-3 (“King David made an agreement with them before the Lord, and they anointed him king...”)
- Ps 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5 (“Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.”)
- Col 1:12-20 (“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”)
- Lk 23:35-43 (“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”)

HOMILY AND SMALL GROUP NOTES (YEAR A, YEAR B, YEAR C)

The following may be used as a guide for presiders in preparing homilies in how they might fit to the universal celebration of youth and young adults throughout the Church. Further integration of the specific theme of the year (provided by the Holy See prior to Christ the King Sunday) is also recommended. What follows are ideas with a more general approach between the solemnity and young people.

As the final Sunday of the liturgical year celebrates the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, we are given us a nuanced image of Christ the King with each passing year, but all contain images that can attract the hearts of young people.

The idea of a “king” does not readily connect with our contemporary ears, especially in the United States, and yet on this day, we celebrate the kingship of Christ over the universe. The key to connecting the readings of Christ the King with this day for youth and young adults, is the same as others: it is all about relationships. Thus, what we are presented with in the Gospels is Jesus, the king, who does not lord his position over creation, but rather, inspires us to follow him in a spirit of servant leadership.

YEAR A

EZ 34:11-12, 15-17

PS 23: 1-2, 2-3, 5-6

1 COR 15:20-26, 28

MT 25:31-46

The first reading from Ezekiel (Ez 34:11-12, 15-17) focuses on the “scattered sheep” (Ez 34:12), noting how God will pasture his flock and give them rest, seek those who are lost, injured, or sick, and, ultimately, hold them accountable. The Psalm response (Ps 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6) continues that theme, as the Psalmist reflects on the experience of the one protected and guided by the Lord as a shepherd, and the Gospel reading (Mt 25:31-46) is an account of Jesus’ words in which he describes his kingly role “as a shepherd” (Mt 25:32) separating the sheep and goats.

The imagery of the shepherd and the sheep is one that can connect to young people. Youth and young adults today can often feel lost, hurt, or suffering, akin to the sheep Ezekiel describes. Loneliness, physical and mental health concerns, past and present pains inflicted by older generations and religious authorities, and the experiences of searching for identity, purpose, and meaning are all elements of the journey for many young people.

By helping youth and young adults better know and feel loved by Christ the King, who like the shepherd “will give them rest” (Ez 34:15) and gives repose, leading them to restful waters (cf. Ps 23:2), we can offer young people a sense of hope in the midst of their struggles and daily realities. This is a powerful message to offer on the solemnity, echoed by Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*: “May all young people who are suffering feel the closeness of a Christian community that can reflect (Jesus’) words by its actions, its embrace, and its concrete help.” (CV 77)

In addition, the Gospel also speaks of the accountability that Jesus demands: “For I was hungry, and you gave me food, I was thirsty, and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me.” (Mt 25:35) This passage invites listeners, including young people, to think of their own participation in the royal priesthood of believers, with a call to serve all humanity, particularly the most humble and lowly.

In some respects, the message is also a challenge to all generations to consider how they approach youth and young adults, especially those we do not yet know (like the “stranger” that Jesus speaks about in Mt 25:35). Have we welcomed them, given them rest and refuge like the shepherd (cf. Ez 34)? Or have we neglected or ignored them?

The focus on outreach to those impoverished, alone, and afraid is a call to old and young alike to consider how they live out their baptismal calling as participants in Christ as “priest, prophet, and king” in service to the world. This can be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on ambition and power, and what it truly means to be “in charge” like a king; the Gospel points to a king that calls for radical compassion and action towards those on the peripheries of society, when “in Christ shall all be brought to life,” as St. Paul notes (1 Cor 15:22) in this week’s second reading.

In each cycle, the Solemnity of Christ the King upends our expectations of ambition, power, and authority. This set of readings point to the compassionate work of the shepherd king, and our work at following the Lord’s lead in humbly listening and serving one another, and in a particular way to youth and young adults in our midst.

YEAR B

DN 7:13-14

Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5

REV 1:5-8

JN 18:33B-37

The central focus of these readings for the Solemnity of Christ the King is the notion of identity. In the Gospel (Jn 18:33b-37), Pontius Pilate asks Jesus about his identity: “Are you the King of the Jews?” (Jn 18:33) and in the other readings, the authors of those texts offer testimony about the Lord’s identity as a king.

For young people, the quest for self-discovery is particularly important. The U.S. Bishops noted in their pastoral plan on ministry with young adults that “while individuals continue to mature throughout life, various new experiences influence the development of personal identity.”²⁷ These are significant years of growth and decision-making, as they develop physically, socially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually - becoming who God made them to be. Yet social media, cultural colonization, various pressures, and life among their peers can influence them to mask their true selves, hide or neglect their cultural heritage, create illusions of self-control, or revert to negative habits.

²⁷ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Ministry with Young Adults*. Washington DC: USCCB Publishing, 1996. Part One, Section 1, “Tasks of Young Adulthood,” paragraph 2.

A homily can reflect on Jesus' identity as a servant king and connect that with the journey that youth and young adults are taking as they reflect on their own identity. Jesus' kingship is not one of earthly power and authority, but one of humility and meekness, as he says "My kingdom does not belong to this world" in Jn 18:35). Christ's kingship goes beyond human understanding of the word and his identity is greater than reputation, assumption, or projection could ever envision. In much the same way, our identity as a beloved son or daughter of God is greater than human words can describe. Young people may worry about the way they are perceived, or that the actions of their past will define them, yet God's kingdom and his definition of "identity" is greater than these worldly conditions.

The prophet Daniel (in Dn 7:13-14) and the Psalmist (in Ps 93:1, 1-2, 5) describe the Lord as "one like a Son of Man coming, on the clouds of heaven" (Dn 7:13) or as "in splendor robed... girt about with strength" (Ps 93:1). The author of Revelation (in Rv 1:5-8) shares his experience seeing Christ in his heavenly kingdom who proclaims his universal identity: "I am the Alpha and the Omega... the one who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty" (Rv 1:8). Yet, as the Gospel reminds us, this power and might is at the service of those who are most lowly, the most hurt, and the most afraid.

When youth or young adults themselves feel downtrodden and weak, uncertain of themselves (as many do feel), it is helpful for homilists to share the news that they indeed have a savior who is powerful beyond imagination, who wants to help them out of their depths. As Pope noted, "if you have lost your inner vitality, your dreams, your enthusiasm, your optimism, and your generosity, Jesus stands before you as once he stood before the dead son of the widow, and with all the power of his resurrection, he urges you: 'Young man, I say to you, arise!' (Lk 7:14)" (CV 20). Homilists can project a similar encouragement to the young people in their midst, inviting them to see Christ as the king who raises them up from their lowliness and gives them a renewed identity and purpose for life.

Homilists can invite young people to consider the most integral part of their own identity; one that challenges cultural norms: their identity as a Christian. It brings with it rights and responsibilities. To embrace one's identity as a Christian is to go against norms and expectations of others, and consider first the poor and those suffering, putting the needs of others before oneself, and seeing Christ present in all people.

To follow in the footsteps of Christ the King, we must look to his identity as a servant leader and embrace the attitudes of his sacred heart: compassion, respect, forgiveness, generosity, courage, confidence, and integrity. And when we do so, we "put on Christ" (cf. Rm 13:14) for the life of the world.

YEAR C

2 SM 5:1-3

PS 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5

COL 1:12-20

LK 23:35-43

Once again upending expectations, the readings for this cycle of Christ the King Sunday give us insight around vulnerability, an interesting perspective on a feast celebrating the power and might of the Almighty.

In the first reading (2 Sm 5:1-3), the elders of the tribes of Israel admitted their vulnerability as a nation, saw God at work in a young man (David), and anointed him their king (cf. 2 Sm 5:3).

In the second reading (Col 1:12-20), St. Paul admits our vulnerability as humans, as we need God to deliver us “from the power of darkness” (1 Col 1:13) and provide us with forgiveness and redemption (cf. 1 Col 1:14).

In the Gospel reading (Lk 23:35-43), Jesus is at his most vulnerable moment: on the cross, stripped and hanging for all the world to see, including his executioners and the criminals beside him. He endures taunting from the passers-by who sneer “He saved others, let him save himself the chosen one, the Christ of God” (Lk 23:35).

Vulnerability is not something many people revel in, and yet on the Solemnity of Christ, king of the universe, we are invited to reflect on this concept. We are asked to sit in uncomfortable situations and admit or face our weaknesses. The most common Christian image is the cross, a symbol of death and dying, the epitome of vulnerability.

Youth and young adults (and those of any age group) can often fear moments of vulnerability. We want to assert our power and control over any given situation, for fear of going someplace uncomfortable and painful. Yet on the Solemnity of Christ the King, we are shown that true power and control is about relinquishing it and growing from that, no matter where it takes us. This is a very challenging message for homilists to share with anyone, let alone young people who are navigating their vulnerability in their developmental journey of life.

The criminal on the cross next to Jesus faces his powerlessness head on, saying to those who would ridicule the Lord, “Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes... Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Lk 23:40,42). His vulnerability shines forth in the midst of the storm on Calvary.

Young people are more vulnerable than we may see on the surface or than they are comfortable admitting. They may be masking something painful or embarrassing with confidence, deflection, or indifference. However, as Pope Francis noted, “We adults can often be tempted to list all the problems and failings of today’s young people... (but) anyone called to be a parent, pastor, or guide to young people must have the farsightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken (cf. Is 42:3) ... Each young person’s heart should thus be considered ‘holy ground,’ a bearer of the seeds of divine life, before which we must ‘take off our shoes’ in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery” (CV 66, 67).

The homilist can invite the community to be patient with youth and young adults, recognizing that they may have vulnerabilities we cannot immediately see on the surface. Yet like Christ the King on the cross, we can offer them our support and renewed hope. Likewise, the homilist can encourage the young people of the community to look to Jesus who shares in their suffering and pain, as he did on the cross.

NOTE: These homily and small group reflections can be a starting point for communities in unpacking the readings for a given liturgical cycle. They are not meant to be exhaustive or complete, but ideas for connecting the Word of God with the experience of youth and young adults and the Church's ministerial accompaniment of them. Further homily supports for the Global Celebration of Young People will be available each year through the USCCB website.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

As the Prayer of the Faithful (also known as the “Universal Prayer” or the “petitions”) is a response of the People of God, it would be helpful to have those prayers given by one or several young people (youth and/or young adults), as well as those who mentor and accompany them.

In the weeks leading up to Christ the King Sunday (or the date of the community's choosing), it would also be fitting to include petitions that connect to young people, raising the consciousness of the assembly to consider the role and protagonism of youth and young adults in their midst (as well as those disaffiliated from the faith community).

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL FOR SUNDAYS LEADING UP TO THE SOLEMNITY OF CHRIST THE KING

NOTE: These are examples and ideas for what can be included during those liturgies.

For the Church, as she prepares to celebrate young people on the Solemnity of Christ the King, that all people understand more deeply the love Christ has for the young, we pray to the Lord.

For all those participating in the global celebration of young people on Christ the King Sunday, that the Lord move their hearts to a closer relationship with him, we pray to the Lord.

For young people in the Church, that they may be welcomed as an integral part of the Body of Christ by all God's faithful, we pray to the Lord.

For youth and young adults searching for meaning, that they may discern God's unique role for them in building up his Kingdom, we pray to the Lord.

For young people on the margins of society, for those suffering in body and mind, and for those who are lost and alone, may they find compassion and accompaniment from the Church and her members, we pray to the Lord.

For youth and young adults who are distant from the Church, that the upcoming universal celebration of young people may be an opportunity for renewal and connection, we pray to the Lord.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL FOR THE SOLEMNITY
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE

NOTE: *There should be no more than four or five petitions for the Universal Prayer during the Mass. Below are options from which to choose within the different categories of prayer (for the needs of the Church; for public authorities and the salvation of the whole world; for those burdened by any kind of difficulty; for the local community; for the faithful departed). One or two prayers can be chosen from each of those categories.*

Priest/Presider:

**Christ the King is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven.
Let us approach him in humility and confidence as God's sons and daughters
to pray for the needs of the Church and the world.**

Deacon/Reader(s):

FOR THE NEEDS OF THE CHURCH

**For the Holy Father and all leaders of the Church, that they may genuinely accompany
the faithful, especially youth and young adults, in service to Christ the King,
we pray to the Lord.**

**For the baptized of all generations, that they may live out their priestly, prophetic,
and kingly roles in bringing about the Kingdom of God, especially in the company
of young people,
we pray to the Lord.**

**For Catholics around the world today who, in solidarity with us, are celebrating
youth and young adults, that we may continue to advocate and support young
people in our communities,
we pray to the Lord.**

**For the young people of the Church who will gather together at the next
international World Youth Day in *(the next WYD host country)* in *(the next
international WYD year)*, that this global encounter will be a moment of
transformation and grace for all pilgrims and leaders who participate,
we pray to the Lord.**

FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AND THE SALVATION OF THE WHOLE WORLD

**For leaders of communities, especially the young, that, inspired by the Prince of
Peace, they strive to defend the dignity of all human life and foster peace and
harmony across cultures and peoples,
we pray to the Lord.**

**For all those who are denied religious freedom around the world, in particular
young people, that we may work together to bring about the kingdom envisioned by
Christ, our eternal king,
we pray to the Lord.**

**For youth and young adults of all nations, cultures, and races, that under the
guidance of Christ, King of the Universe, they may aspire to become protagonists of
transformation and peace,
we pray to the Lord.**

For young people serving in public office, the military, law enforcement, public service, and all who are in any position of authority, that Christ the King may always guide their servant leadership,
we pray to the Lord.

FOR THOSE BURDENED BY ANY KIND OF DIFFICULTY

For young people on the margins of society, for those suffering in body and mind, and for those who are lost and alone, that they may find the concrete support of a loving community of faith,
we pray to the Lord.

For young people who have been hurt by or feel marginalized from religious institutions, that they may find peace and healing, in particular through the loving embrace of a Christian community,
we pray to the Lord.

For young people who are struggling with job loss, economic uncertainty, or anxiety in their work, that they may find strength and direction along their vocational path,
we pray to the Lord.

For young people who are sick and suffering from any health concerns and for those who are challenged by mental or physical disabilities, that they may experience the healing of Christ the King,
we pray to the Lord.

FOR THE COMMUNITY

For all youth and young adults in this community, for the younger generations in our own families, and for those who remain distant from us, that they may all grow closer to Christ the King,
we pray to the Lord.

For all those who accompany youth and young adults on their faith journey in the Church, that they may be strengthened and supported for the invaluable work they do in Christ's name,
we pray to the Lord.

For youth and young adults who teach, witness, and share their faith and accompany their peers along the journey towards Christ the King, that they may be strengthened in their vocation,
we pray to the Lord.

For young people who are serving our communities through their work and labor, that they may be guided in their vocational pathway in service to others and to the whole world,
we pray to the Lord.

For young people who are students, those in apprenticeships and trade schools, and young men and women in formation, that their minds may always be open to wisdom and transformation,
we pray to the Lord.

For this community and for parishes, missions, campus ministries, organizations, and schools around the world, that we may continue to engage and accompany the young people we encounter,
we pray to the Lord.

FOR THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

For all who have died, in a particular way those young people who died at an early age, that they may find rest in the arms of Christ the Lord in his heavenly Kingdom,
we pray to the Lord.

For the faithful departed who are beloved by young people in our community, that their memory may be a guide and blessing for all generations that follow them,
we pray to the Lord.

For all who have died in the light of Christ the King, especially those from our community and those close to the heart of our young people, that they may walk with the Lord for eternity,
we pray to the Lord.

Priest/Presider:

Lord, our God, we bring to you our fervent prayers, those voiced and those in the silence of our hearts.

We join them to young Mary of Nazareth
and all the prophets and loved ones gone before us. Hear the prayers of your people gathered

and grant them in your wisdom and mercy.

To Christ the King, robed in majesty and justice,
be glory and power for ever and ever. R:/ Amen.

Alternatively, or in addition to the above, “A Prayer for Youth and Young Adults” (found at the beginning of this guidebook) can be provided for the assembly (on prayer cards or included with the worship aid, etc.), which can be recited by all people right after the Prayer of the Faithful.

SPECIAL BLESSING OPTIONS

Consider offering a blessing over young people present in the assembly, either as a conclusion to the Prayer of the Faithful (Universal Prayer) in lieu of the concluding prayer or as a closing blessing for the Mass. This may be done at the discretion of the pastor / presider, in light of the norms and customs of the local community. The following blessing prayers are provided here for your consideration; however, liturgical planners and celebrants may wish to use one of the options found within the *Book of Blessings* or from the *Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers*.

Prior to the blessing, celebrants can invite young people forward, or to invite them to stand up or step out into the aisle of their church, so that they can be recognized and prayed over by the assembly.

Option 1:

God of infinite majesty,

We ask your blessing upon these young people.

May they come to know you and witness to your saving power.

Bless and keep them always, strengthen them for the journey ahead, challenge them to be faithful to your Word and to live lives of integrity, and grant them a prophetic spirit to transform the world by your love.

Help all of us, also, to accompany these young men and women, through the joys, struggles, and experiences of their everyday lives, and grant us the humility to learn from and be inspired by the young.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

R:/ *Amen.*

Option 2:

God of power and might,

We ask your blessing upon these young people.

May they continue to grow in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding.

Bless their endeavors and actions, that they may be a blessing to their peers.

Open their minds to your wisdom, open their hearts to your love, and open their hands to transform their world toward the Kingdom of God.

And for all of us, O Lord, grant a willing spirit to walk with them.

Fill us with the words to say as we teach and guide them, and give us the ears to hear as we listen and learn from them, too.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

God, for ever and ever.

R:/ *Amen.*

Option 3:

Good and gracious God, King of the universe, we ask your blessing upon the young people gathered here, and for all youth and young adults beyond our community.

Bless and keep them,

so that they may know they are infinitely loved (cf. CV 112).

Pour out your great mercy upon them,

so that they may know they are saved (cf. CV 118).

Give them newfound hope,

so that they may know your presence at every moment (cf. CV 125).

Accompany us, Lord, young and old,

as we accompany one another on this “journey together” (CV 199).

Fill us with humility to learn from each other,
 and enkindle in us a passion for truth, beauty, and goodness.
 Inspire us to go out to encounter you in these young people,
 “to accompany and encourage them, trusting a little more in the genius of the
 Holy Spirit, who acts as he wills” (CV 230).
 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
 God for ever and ever.
 R:/ *Amen.*

OTHER LITURGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Consider these additional liturgical elements to further enhance the celebration of the Global Celebration of Young People on the Solemnity of Christ the King. Local communities may wish to establish a small committee or task group of young people (depending on the scope, this can include youth, college students, and/or young adults) who can plan and organize the liturgies on this weekend. This committee can also create a fitting liturgical environment, offer suggestions for music, and identify young people to serve in various liturgical roles (including ushers and greeters).

LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

- Consider ways to emphasize Christ the King within the worship space (images, icons, banners, statues, etc.).
- Decorate the sanctuary area (banners, liturgical colors, greenery and flowers, symbols, etc.) in a way that reminds people of the special nature of this solemnity, draws people towards Christ, and connects the assembly with the Church’s ministry with young people.
- Display flags of the nations that represent the cultural communities and nationalities of the young people within that given community; this can also help remind people of the global nature of this celebration.
- Be mindful of the cultural diversity present among young people in your local area when considering liturgical environments.
- Use a sprinkling rite (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 51; Appendix II of *The Roman Missal*) or incense (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, nos. 276-277) in the blessing prayer or ritual for the young people present in the assembly.

SONG AND MUSIC

- Music is an opportunity to bring together young instrumentalists and vocalists from the community and highlight their gifts with various styles and lyrics, as well as bilingual (or multi-lingual) music, especially in culturally diverse environments.
- In a high school or college campus settings, work with the music department to assist with this unique celebration and encourage participation of young people engaged in the school’s musical ensembles, etc.
- When considering selections, reflect on songs that emphasize the Sunday readings and the Solemnity of Christ the King, as well as the Church’s focus on accompaniment, evangelization, pastoral care, and formation of young people.

- Look to Catholic publishers and companies that have specialized in liturgical or Christian music that is popular or well-known among youth and/or young adults.
- As this is the final Sunday of the liturgical year, consider music selections that are celebratory and inspiring.
- Be mindful of the cultural diversity among young people in the local area, and consider featuring a variety of music styles, forms, and languages present in Catholic musical expression today. In this same spirit, do not assume that all youth and young adults prefer one form of music or another.

PROCESSIONS

- Young people serving as liturgical ministers (and those with visible roles during the Mass) may be part of the processional and recessional during the liturgy on the Global Celebration of Young People.
- In addition, local communities may wish to incorporate other youth or young adults in the processions.
- For the offertory procession, consider the diversity of young people present in the community to bring up the gifts to the altar.

WITNESS OR TESTIMONY

- At a specified time, determined by the pastor and/or liturgical coordinator for the community (before, during, or after the Mass), a young person (or several young people) may make a brief witness or testimony. During the Mass, this reflection never replaces the homily but takes place during the announcements following the Prayer after Communion.
- This witness should be a well-spoken young person, comfortable speaking before crowds, with a compelling story or message to share. They should represent the diversity of youth and/or young adults in the community (this should certainly be taken into consideration if more than one individual speaks).
- The message conveyed should tie into the Solemnity of Christ the King, the Holy Father's annual message or theme for young people, or the Church's global focus on youth and young adults on this special day.
- Brevity is encouraged. Speakers should avoid overt promotion of any kind.
- The witness presentation should be written out and the text should be shared with the pastor or member of the parish staff beforehand.
- The tone should be positive and inspiring, compelling people to know more about young people, their cultures and situations, and the Church's pastoral ministry with them.
- An alternative (or in addition) to giving spoken witness or testimony could include handouts featuring the stories of young people or information about the Church's work with youth and/or young adults. However, in the spirit of ecological awareness, consider offering digital versions of these handouts/promotions.

MYSTAGOGY

- Mystagogy is the integration of the sacramental life beyond the liturgical moment, deepening one's journey of discipleship and prayer. This life-giving circle is strengthened by reflection and contemplation. It is "discovering the new life we have received in the People of God through the Sacraments, and continually rediscovering

the beauty of renewing it.”²⁸

- Pastoral leaders can connect with youth and/or young adults in the day or week following the liturgy to ask them questions such as
 - What was your favorite moment in the liturgy?
 - What, when, or where did you feel the presence of God in the liturgy?
 - How do these moments make you feel now?
 - What change can you make in your life with these realizations?
- There are no right or wrong responses to questions like these but having moments to reflect on the liturgy can help young people discover how worship can lead to an encounter with the living God.
- Additionally, consider ways to incorporate the lessons received on the Global Celebration of Young People throughout the rest of the year, especially in the weeks of Advent that will immediately follow.

POST-LITURGY OPPORTUNITIES

After one or more of the Masses on the Global Celebration of Young People, there can be opportunities to gather and connect with one another. Consider how the invitational process (as well as the logistics of getting from one space to another) for these post-liturgy activities will take place in the local community.

MEET AND GREET

- A “meet and greet” social can be held after Mass in an area accessible to the worship space.
- Young people and their families can specifically be invited to attend this gathering, or the “meet and greet” can be an opportunity for the entire assembly to connect with young people who are active in the Church or who are leaders within the faith community.
- Be mindful of signage, greeters/ushers, and clear directions for moving to the gathering location.
- Tables or displays can be set up in the vestibule or narthex of the worship space, highlighting the Church’s work with youth and/or young adults, or in the gathering location of the social event.
- Be mindful of accessibility for those with disabilities.

FORMATION SESSIONS

- After Mass, the young people or the entire assembly can be invited to attend a short formation session, either about Christ the King, the annual message or theme from the Holy Father, or around issues and topics important to young people and the local

²⁸ Francis, “To Participants at the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments,” 14 Feb 2019. http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2019/february/documents/papa-francesco_20190214_cong-culto-divino.html.

community – or (if aimed at all people) about youth and/or young adults and the Church’s pastoral ministry with them.

- These formation sessions can include food and drink, as well as social and spiritual components.
- Due to the busy nature of people’s lives, consider the amount of time these sessions might take.
- Hold these formation activities in a location proximate to the worship space (making it convenient to move from Mass to these programs), being mindful of accessibility for those with disabilities.

SERVICE ACTIVITIES

- After Mass, gather young people together for a special service/justice activity within the local community.
- Provide transportation or help participants navigate to the location of these activities, being mindful of accessibility issues (in transportation or at the event site) for those with disabilities.
- The service/justice work should be relevant to the young people in the community and help them see the integration of the Gospel with the work they are undertaking.
- These service activities can include food, drink, and social and spiritual components.
- Due to the busy nature of people’s lives, consider the amount of time these activities might take.
- Consider having a time for the participants to reflect upon their experiences of service and justice, through prayer and group dialogue (incorporating the teaching of the Church from documents such as *Fratelli Tutti*, *Laudato Si*, and *Christus Vivit*).

COMMUNICATIONS AND GRATITUDE

- Keep in touch with young people who were present for the Global Celebration of Young People through emails, texts, WhatsApp, social media, or written letters, etc.
- Post pictures and testimony from the liturgy in parish communications (website, emails, social media, etc.).
- Send notes of gratitude to the young people who participated, as well as those who collaborated and supported the activities (including the pastor, parish council, leadership teams, among others).
- Look for ways to continue the relationship with young people beyond Christ the King Sunday, using Advent and Christmas (immediately following the celebration) as ways to engage and deepen the connection.

Please consult the appendix for a helpful tool in planning the liturgical celebration of young people, and ensuring all roles are accounted for, within your community on the Solemnity of Christ the King.

Section 4: Universal Church Celebrations

Celebrating Youth and Young Adults in the Diocese, Eparchy, Region, or Nationally

While the central focus of the Global Celebration of Young People should be centered on the local community (the parish, high school or college campus, or local association or movement), there can be occasions to celebrate young people on the diocesan, regional, and national level.

Each year, the Holy Father joins with young people from the Diocese of Rome (and from around the world) at the Christ the King Sunday Mass at the Vatican. Since the 1980s, when St. John Paul II instituted the annual celebration on Palm Sunday, the pope has marked the annual event with words directed to youth and young adults – in his homily, during his Angelus message following the Mass, and with a written message to young people of the world released weeks or months in advance. Pope Francis continues that tradition for the Solemnity of Christ the King.

It is fitting, therefore, that celebrations take place on or around Christ the King Sunday in diocesan, regional**, or national settings across the United States. Such moments draw even greater attention to the youth and young adults who are celebrated on this occasion and to the ministries that serve and accompany them.

(**) NOTE: *The USCCB is divided into fourteen geographical regions across the United States, with a fifteenth region focused on Eastern Rite Churches; the list of those regions can be found here: <http://www.usccb.org/about/bishops-and-dioceses#tab--episcopal-regions-archdioceses-and-dioceses-in-the-us>.*

Diocesan/Eparchial Celebrations

The diocese/eparchy is the “particular Church” overseen by the bishop, and as such, the diocese/eparchy can be a place where youth and/or young adults encounter their bishop – and where the bishop encounters young people. Moments of encounter like this should be the central focus of a diocesan celebration. It can be a time when the Church on a diocesan or eparchial level proclaims that its mission with young people is “a pastoral priority of epoch-making significance in which to invest time, energy, and resources.”²⁹

29 General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, *Final Document of the XV Ordinary Synod of Bishops on Young People, Faith, and Vocational Discernment*, 4.

The celebration should be an experience “for young people” and “with young people.”³⁰ That said, it is critical that diocesan and eparchial celebrations involve youth and young adults in the planning, development, and execution of the planned activities or liturgy. A diocesan coordination team should also be diverse and include representatives from parish communities, diocesan offices, ecclesial movements, various youth- and young adult-serving apostolates, academic institutions, religious communities, and other groups across the diocese in a spirit of synodality.

Examples of diocesan/eparchial (or regional) celebrations can include:

- Special Mass or Liturgical/Prayer Experience
- Diocesan Youth Rally (for adolescents/teens)
- Diocesan Young Adult Event (for collegians and young adults in their 20s and 30s)
- Media Campaign (i.e., communications over several weeks on young people)
- Speaker Series (for either youth and/or young adults)
- Service/Justice Project or Mission (for either youth and/or young adults)
- Diocesan Training for Pastoral Leaders (on engaging and accompanying young people)

Whatever is done should be an intentional project (or series of projects) that is mindful of the six cornerstones of these annual celebrations: that they provide youth and/or young adults a festival of faith, an experience of Church, a missionary experience, an opportunity for vocational discernment and a call to holiness, an experience of pilgrimage, and an experience of universal fraternity (cf. DFLF, *Pastoral Guidelines*).

One of the benefits of a diocesan, eparchial, or regional celebration is being able to bring people together from across a larger geographical area to encounter one another and Christ. In addition, diocesan-wide or region-wide efforts can potentially draw in those who are not members or find community within a local parish, as well as those on the margins of society or the Church (including those who have disaffiliated from the practice of the faith).

Additionally, special consideration should be given to the involvement and participation of the bishop(s) of a diocese, eparchy, or region. These celebrations, especially on a larger scale, can be opportunities for bishops, youth and young adults, and ministry leaders to encounter, listen to, and learn from one another.

Communication and Collaboration

Communication for the diocesan/eparchial programs or events can be coordinated with the diocesan/eparchial communications offices, departments, or officials, to share the news as wide as possible across the diocesan landscape. Potential avenues of communication include:

- Diocesan/eparchial media (newspaper, website, magazine, blog, social media, etc.).
- Developing a press release for media in the communities.
- Sharing information directly with each parish and mission within the diocese/eparchy.
- Creating a bulletin announcement for each parish and mission within the diocese/eparchy.
- Recording a video, podcast, or broadcast that can be shared via social media.
- In the months leading up to Christ the King, dropping short promotions (social media posts, videos, audio recordings, announcements for bulletins or websites, emails, etc.) about youth and/or young adults.

30 Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Pastoral Guidelines*, part 2, paragraph 4.

The annual celebration of youth and young adults is also an excellent opportunity to encourage all the various diocesan offices to engage with young people and contribute to the diocesan efforts for the Global Celebration of Young People. The expertise of these offices can add to the richness of the celebration(s) and show that the entire diocese and its respective offices value young people.

The following are a few examples of ways to incorporate various offices into a diocesan celebration of young people.

The diocesan office of marriage and/or family life should be sought out in coordination efforts. In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis states, that “the family should be the first place of accompaniment” and that “ministry [with young people] and the pastoral care of families should be coordinated and integrated... (242)” The family life office can assist in the promotion of the celebration of young people among the other generations across the diocese: parents, grandparents, siblings, etc. These other generations can be included in the celebration of young people as well.

The diocesan office of vocations (to priesthood and religious life) can coordinate the involvement of diocesan seminarians, priests, and consecrated religious men and women in the celebration, particularly those who are young people themselves.

The diocesan office of catechesis and/or evangelization (or lifelong faith formation, missionary discipleship, etc.) can be a source of support in the development of catechetical content for the Global Celebration of Young People initiative and assist in the composition of any materials to be distributed on a diocesan or local level.

The diocesan office of stewardship and/or development can be particularly helpful in the planning of any collections to be taken up during the Global Celebration of Young People liturgies, especially if the funds collected will be used (in full or in part) to support ongoing efforts for the diocese’s ministries with youth and young adults. Dioceses/eparchies may also consider setting up scholarships either for educational purposes or to assist young people in offsetting the costs to attend the forthcoming international World Youth Day events.

The diocesan office of ecumenism and/or interfaith affairs can assist in reaching out to other communities of young people outside of the Catholic Church. Since the Holy Father has specifically pointed out that the celebration of youth and young adults is meant for all young people, not just Catholics, the diocesan/eparchial office of ecumenism can assist in the invitation of and be a best practices resource for including all young people into the celebration.

The diocesan office of justice and peace (or mission), as well as Catholic Charities, can help in planning a component of missionary service into the celebration with young people on the diocesan/eparchial level, as well as supporting service and justice initiatives in local Global Celebration of Young People activities.

If one of the primary ways to celebrate regionally is a Mass, then you may want to include the diocesan Office of Worship among those listed above.



Diocesan, Eparchial, or Regional Liturgies

One of the primary and public ways to celebrate young people is to host a special Mass or liturgy at the diocesan, eparchial, or regional level. Since the primary focus of the Global Celebration of Young People is the local parish, campus, or community, a diocesan, eparchial, or regional liturgy should be developed as a complementary effort to those activities.

The liturgy outline in this guidebook (see previous chapter), developed to be used in the local community, can be adapted to be used for diocesan, eparchial, or regional Masses.

Some additional considerations at this level include:

- **Location** – The Mass can be held at the Cathedral, which is the seat of the diocesan/eparchial ordinary, at a location of great significance or importance to an area (such as a basilica, shrine, or historic landmark), at a location central to the area(s) from which people may be traveling, or at a venue in the region that can accommodate the potential number of participants. Care should be taken to choose a location that will elicit a sense of sacredness and inspiration, as well as a place where young people will feel welcomed. Be mindful of situations such as navigating directions, parking, weather, and accessibility, especially for those with physical disabilities and mobility issues.
- **Timing** – The date and time of the Mass will be dependent on the purpose of hosting a diocesan, eparchial, or regional liturgy. If it is intended to complement or point young people towards the annual celebration in their local parishes, campuses, or communities, the time and date of this Mass should be in the week(s) or weekend(s) prior to Christ the King Sunday (or whatever date is designated by one's diocese for local celebrations). If there are no local celebrations taking place, this liturgy can serve in its place and be held on the Solemnity of Christ the King. Additional considerations in the timing include the time of day when the Mass occurs, to ensure maximum participation, being mindful of the distance and time that are involved in people traveling to or from the liturgy's location.
- **Bishops** – As noted earlier, the principal celebrant for a diocesan or eparchial Mass should be the Ordinary of the given diocese or eparchy. It is important to invite him with enough anticipation, even considering offering a standing invitation from year to year. If there are coadjutor bishops, auxiliary bishops, or retired bishops in the diocese or eparchy, consider inviting them as well as concelebrants or in the case that the Ordinary is unavailable. On a regional level, since this involves several dioceses, it is proper to invite the Metropolitans (archbishops) of the region, with the most senior prelate as principal celebrant.
- **Liturgy** – The planning team for the diocesan, eparchial, or regional celebration should work with the liturgical director, office, or committee from the hosting diocese/eparchy or church location (such as the Cathedral, shrine, campus, or church where the Mass is taking place). Working together, the team(s) will need to decide upon: art and environment, involvement of young people in the liturgy and as liturgical ministers, music, acolytes and servers, and the addition of any special elements (including Prayer of the Faithful, witness or testimony, presentation of the gifts, and other processions, etc.).
- **Music** – The music should ideally reflect the diversity of young people who will be participating in the liturgy or who are represented throughout the diocese, eparchy, or region. This could be an opportunity to bring together music ministries and choirs from different parishes, missions, or apostolates, pending the approval of the diocesan or local liturgical office. The direction of any joint music ensemble can be carried out by the diocesan or local liturgy coordinator, by a rotating roster (from year to year) of music directors from around the diocese, eparchy, or region, or by a special music director for the occasion.

- **Solidarity** – Throughout the liturgy, consider ways to incorporate the universal celebration that is taking place around the world. Examples on ways to do this include integrating the Holy Father’s annual message for young people during the entrance greeting, or showing videos of other dioceses or countries, or from the Vatican or a previous World Youth Day.
- **Young People** – Be sure to include as many youth and/or young adults as possible (and as allowed by local custom) in the Mass, as liturgical ministers (lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, acolytes, etc.), as music ministers (in the choir, ensembles, etc.), as ushers and greeters, and so on. It is also very important to be mindful of the cultural diversity in the involvement of young people in the liturgy.
- **Collection** – Consider how any funds collected during the Mass can be used to benefit the Church’s ministries with youth and/or young adults in the diocese, eparchy, or region. Work with the diocesan offices or the host location of the liturgy to discuss options in the collection monition.

Major Events and Experiences

In addition to a Mass, the diocese, eparchy, or region can host other special events connected to the cornerstones of the annual celebration of young people. Like the timing and location of the Mass (noted above), the organizers should be mindful of the date, time, and place of these activities, to ensure maximum engagement.

A Festival of Faith

Catholic institutions, colleges or universities, or parishes within a diocese, eparchy, or region could offer to host a special celebration of faith for all young people (either youth or young adults or both) in the area.

For example, a college campus could welcome participants of parish youth ministries and high school campus ministries to an occasion like this. The event could feature music, praise and worship, adoration, presentations, games and sports, and other opportunities for young people the share the joy of their faith. An activity like this could also allow the educational institution to share with the youth the value of Catholic higher education through their hospitality, assistance, and campus resources.

Another example could include a major festival at one of the larger churches in the area, where young adults in their 20s and 30s could come to meet one another in a casual, social settings. An event like this could also feature music, praise and worship, adoration, presentations, sporting activities, or other opportunities for the young adults to share the joy of their faith. Additionally, childcare should be taken into consideration for young couples with children.

The “Festival of Faith” model is one that “offers young people a lively and joyful experience of faith and communion, a space to experience the beauty of the face of God.”³¹ The example of the international World Youth Day events can be a guide for developing a festival experience for young people in the diocese, eparchy, or region.

A Missionary Experience

Pope Francis encourages youth and young adults “to go beyond their small groups and to build ‘social friendship, where everyone works for the common good’” (CV 169) and “to be fearless missionaries wherever we are in whatever company we find ourselves: in our neighborhoods, in school or sports or social life, in volunteer service, or in the workplace. Wherever we are, we always have an opportunity to share the joy of the Gospel” (CV 177).

31 DLFL, *Pastoral Guidelines*, Part 4, Section A, paragraph 1.

Part of the diocesan, eparchial, or regional effort is to provide young people with these opportunities to reach out to the peripheries, organizing a special event or experience where youth and/or young adults conduct volunteer work, provide outreach to various communities around the diocese or eparchy, and engaged with marginalized youth and/or young adults, especially those living in poverty.

An example of this can be the organization of one or more days in the weeks prior to, the weekend of, or in the weeks following Christ the King Sunday that would be dedicated to missionary service. This option requires strategic planning and accompaniment, as well as assembling volunteers and participants. Ideally it would be best to include several generations of families and active Catholics across the diocese/eparchy/region to emphasize an intergenerational “journeying together” (cf. CV 199) where young people serve as protagonists, but do not go alone.

Another option would be partnering at the diocesan or eparchial level with region-wide social service ministries including Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) or the outreach efforts coordinated by Catholic colleges or universities, religious congregations and communities, or diocesan or eparchial peace and justice offices, among others. These collaborators can offer resources for youth and/or young adults to get more connected to the missionary work of the Church at this time of year.

Vocational Discernment

As one of the cornerstones of World Youth Day is “opportunity for vocational discernment” and a “call to holiness,”³² having representatives of a variety of states in life to be a part of the celebration is a wonderful way to get young people thinking about their own vocation. As the Vatican’s *Pastoral Guidelines* state,

“The involvement of seminarians, consecrated persons, married couples and families can be of great help. By their presence and witness, they can help to prompt young people to ask the right vocational questions and to desire to set out in search of the “great plan” that God has in mind for them.”³³

Work in collaboration with the diocesan or eparchial offices and leaders for vocations ministry for priesthood and religious life (and/or the liaison to consecrated religious communities) and for marriage and family ministry, to incorporate them into the diocesan/eparchial planning for moments of vocational discernment around the Solemnity of Christ the King. Together, the diocesan/eparchial teams can work together to incorporate seminarians, consecrated religious, married couples, and families into the local and regional Christ the King celebrations.

Additional consideration should also be given to vocation in the workplace, as outlined in *Christus Vivit* (paragraphs 253-258 and 268-273) helping youth and young adults across the diocese or eparchy remember that “when we discover that God is calling us to something, that this or that is what we were made for – whether it be nursing, carpentry, communication, engineering, teaching, art, or any other kind of work – then we will be able to summon up our best capacities for sacrifice, generosity, and dedication” (CV 273).

For example, a diocese or eparchy can host evenings of discernment throughout a region/area, with panels or guest speakers representing several of the vocational paths. Young people can engage in

32 Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, “Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches.” Vatican. 2021. (22).

33 *ibid.* (23).

dialogue with those who are speaking or sharing their stories. Saints, in particular those noted in *Christus Vivit*, can be interwoven into the program as examples of the vocational journey, as their stories “confirm to us that the path to holiness is not only possible and practicable, but that it brings great joy.”³⁴

It should also be noted that National Vocations Awareness Week is celebrated the first full week of November annually in the United States. Dioceses and eparchies might consider coordinating promotions and events with those working on that initiative to promote continuity between that and the Global Celebration of Young People.

A Pilgrimage Experience

Since its inception, the annual universal celebration of young people has related to the idea of pilgrimage. Dioceses, eparchies, and regions are well positioned to provide pilgrim opportunities since their scope is broadly geographical, where several pilgrimage sites might be found. As the Pastoral Guidelines note, the “pilgrim experience”

asks young people to leave behind empty comforts and certainties, to adopt a style of travel that is sober and welcoming and open to Providence and to “God’s surprises,” a style that teaches them to go beyond themselves and to face the challenges that arise along the way.³⁵

Weather permitting, ministry leaders in dioceses, eparchies, or regions could collaborate to organize a one-day travel experience that involves a well-known shrine, historic Catholic or Christian site, and/or place of pilgrimage in the vicinity. The prayerful atmosphere, combined with joyful fellowship, will deepen the bonds between young people from diverse schools, backgrounds, and geographic areas as they all walk or journey together.

Travel and transportation methods, distance, costs, and safety matters (including any insurance protocols, child and youth protection measures, etc.) should be considered in the planning for the experience, as well as options for helping young people interact with one another in prayer, song, and socialization. Travel guides may need to be developed to assist participants in this endeavor, inclusive of themes and the annual message of the Holy Father. Be mindful of the cultural and geographical diversity of the young people participating and the location(s) visited.

The pilgrimage could include a service/justice component to connect with the marginalized communities around the pilgrim site and could conclude with a Mass of Thanksgiving for the graces received during this event.

An Experience of Fraternity

The annual celebration of young people “is not restricted to just young Catholics” and “every young person must feel invited to take part and be welcomed as a brother or sister.”³⁶ Across any given diocese, eparchy, or region in the United States, there are young people who can be connected who are at varying levels of engagement with the Catholic community of faith and its practices. These moments can be opportunities to bring everyone together.

34 *ibid.* (24).

35 DLFL, *Pastoral Guidelines*, Part 4, Section E, paragraph 1.

36 DLFL, *Pastoral Guidelines*, Part 4, Section F, paragraphs 1 and 2.

The diocese, eparchy, or region can host special area-wide activities in the weeks before or after Christ the King Sunday that could be appealing to those who are disaffiliated from the practice of the faith, as well as more active and engaged Catholic young people. In fact, these experiences can foster a welcoming environment that exudes hospitality, camaraderie, and joyful moments, using “above all the language of closeness, the language of generous, relational, and existential love” (CV 211).

Some examples of this could include:

- Sports and sporting events, tournaments, or games, that allow all young people to participate, regardless of their religious affiliation or engagement, as well as excursions or trips to see local sporting events.
- Arts and music-related activities that encourage the creative skills of young people in the area, such as painting, theater, musical performances, concerts, poetry, dance, or excursions and trips to see arts, music, museum(s), film/movies, entertainment venues, or cultural expression within the community or region.
- Ecumenical or interfaith activities, in collaboration with area faith communities, to learn from one another through dialogue, presentations, sharing, or joint projects (especially around service and justice).
- Ecological justice and nature programs that bring young people together across an area, in response to environmental concerns and abuses, inclusive of reflections on Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*.
- Social events such as area festivals, carnivals, potluck dinners and picnics, concerts, parades, book clubs, groups for specific populations (mothers or fathers, cyclists, bikers, commuters, among others), shopping, among other possible options. These social events would often involve food and drink.
- Holiday-themed activities, especially since the Solemnity of Christ the King takes place around the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons; ideas can include turkey runs, parades, caroling, light shows, decorations, tree trimming, holiday movies, and community nights.

In whatever fraternal experience is carried out, it is important that organizers be mindful of cultural diversity (as different communities have different understandings and experiences of socialization), socio-economic status (as some of these aforementioned ideas involve financial ability), and physical and mental abilities, as well as safety and legal issues. All participants should experience the wide-reaching love God has for all humanity – that can draw youth and young adults into an experience of fraternal communion with those already engaged in the faith.



Options for Specific Populations

Catholic High Schools

It is a gift and a privilege to have and to celebrate Catholic identity in a Catholic high school setting. Even though not all students and families are Catholic, it is still appropriate to celebrate the young people entrusted to the care of the school. In Catholic high schools, there are two main avenues to celebrate Christ the King and, through that celebration, encourage and recognize young people:

- Theology Department and Courses
 - Department chairs can include mention of the Christ the King celebration in their meetings and/or communications in the months and weeks leading up to the Global Celebration of Young People. The department can discuss the unique way the school lives out its Catholic identity, especially in its accompaniment of young people.
 - Teachers can create moments of instruction or lesson plans in the days leading up to the Solemnity of Christ the King, including formation around Jesus Christ as King of the universe, and around the Holy Father's exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, written to and about young people.
 - Lead the students in a prayer reading (*lectio divina*) of the upcoming readings for Christ the King Sunday.
 - Discuss young saints (especially those mentioned throughout *Christus Vivit*, especially paragraphs 49 to 63) or examine Mary as a young person (see *Christus Vivit* paragraphs 43 to 48).
 - Beyond academics, theology classes can offer opportunities for discussion and reflection around the message of the Holy Father for young people in advance of Christ the King Sunday. Lead students in a guided meditation or have them journal on the richness of God's love for them as his beloved, especially using the fourth chapter of *Christus Vivit* ("A Great Message for Young People").
 - Give students time to affirm one another, to recognize each other's dignity and worth as royal sons and daughters of God. In the days or weeks prior to Christ the King, have a jar or basket in the classroom people can leave little notes of affirmation to one another. Notes can be distributed just before the celebration of Christ the King.
 - Assign or read together *Christus Vivit*, paragraphs 22 to 33 about "the young Jesus," and engage in small and large group discussions on what the young people of today can learn from Jesus in his own youth and young adulthood.
 - In the days following Christ the King Sunday, discuss – in class or in another appropriate venue – what took place at their parish or community related to young people, and what lessons or insights they gained because of that experience.
 - As the semester nears its completion, the power of prayer before final exams could be discussed and implemented. Ways to have cross curriculum lessons around Christ the King and young people could be examined between the theology department and other academic departments.
- Schoolwide, through the Administration or the Campus Ministry Program:
 - If there are diocesan or eparchial-wide celebrations of young people, effort should be made to engage or connect with these events, particularly in diocesan high schools.
 - For schools with a unique charism or connection to a religious order, care should be taken that the celebration of Christ the King is celebrated through that lens.
 - Highlighting vocations, both in a general sense and for the religious order(s) present in the school or diocese is appropriate during these festivities.
 - Incorporating Christ the King, young saints, and the contributions of young people into daily announcements and daily prayer. This information could also be distributed on schoolwide emails to parents, social media posts, bulletin boards, etc.

- Small tokens, such as holy cards or medals, could be blessed and distributed to all students.
- Holding a schoolwide Mass near the date of Christ the King Sunday. Themes of gratitude can be incorporated as well, since there is a timely connection to the U.S. holiday of Thanksgiving.
- If the school has long standing traditions at this time of year, consider the ways to include Christ the King Sunday and the celebration of young people into those traditions as appropriate.
- Serving the community, especially near Thanksgiving and Christmas, can be implemented as part of the celebration of Christ the King Sunday. Some friendly competition between classes can add to the fun. Examples include canned food drives, blanket and coat collections for the homeless, etc.
- Consider the ways to reach out to young alumni, parents, and supporters of the school, especially those who are in their young adult years or who have children who are in that age demographic (as the Global Celebration of Young People also celebrates those in their 20s and 30s).

Catholic Universities

Catholic institutions of higher learning have a rich diversity in its students and its faculties. Young adults studying at Catholic colleges and universities are ideally formed to become leaders (“protagonists” cf. CV 174) in the community, ones that have an ability and a capacity to reason, to challenge preconceptions, and to transform society.

Before celebrating Christ the King Sunday and young people, the Catholic college or university should understand its unique identity and challenges. Christ the King Sunday celebrations will vary depending on institution size, campus size, residential, or commuter students, as well as its academic schedule.

Consider ways to mark Christ the King Sunday within the university, including posting signs or flyers around campus and featuring related festivities on the university’s web page or social media channels.

Examine ways for students to lead and to plan the Global Celebration of Young People celebrations on campus. Investing in young leaders is an important undertaking for both the Church and the Catholic university.

- Students may be inspired and create campus specific and appropriate ways to celebrate Christ the King.
- Campus programs, theology classes, or other appropriate venues may use some of the ideas listed in the high school section above for their own classrooms, especially in using Pope Francis’ *Christus Vivit* as a foundation to the formation and sharing that can take place there.
- Collaboration with nearby parish young adult groups, Catholic ministries on non-Catholic universities (such as FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students), and other groups should be considered).
- There may be opportunities for student groups, fraternity/sorority organizations, service groups, etc. to celebrate and to encourage young people in their particular manner.
- There may be appropriate outreach to the local community from the university during this time. It may take the form as student participation in service, a night of reflection for students and/or the community, a lecture series, an engagement with a nearby parish community, and other ideas.

For Masses held on campus that are framed around the Global Celebration of Young People, it is appropriate for students to be involved in the liturgy, that the homily be focused on young people as connected to the Solemnity of Christ the King. Depending on the campus size and weather, a Eucharistic procession or rosary walk may be possible. Eucharistic adoration can also be incorporated into the liturgical life of the campus community at this time.

Recognizing that some students may be a great distance from home, with the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas approaching, it may be prudent to examine ways for families and friends to connect with young people. The university and/or campus ministry may encourage letters or care packages, ones that affirm and uplift their young person. This effort could be branded and distributed through the lens of Christ the King Sunday.

Prospective students may be visiting campus at this time of year. It is imperative that they be encouraged and affirmed as young people. If Catholic, these young people can be inspired to continue their formation at a Catholic university, so care should be taken to highlight the Catholic identity and faith formation opportunities on campus; this can be led by a mission identity office or the admissions department.

Catholic universities that are operated by a religious order can celebrate Christ the King Sunday through their charism. The university administration or campus ministry office can examine ways to incorporate their unique spiritual gifts into their celebration.

Young People with Disabilities and the Deaf Community

All young people have a giftedness to be shared with the Church. To celebrate Christ the King Sunday with young people with physical and mental disabilities, planning should be taken that respects their human dignity and allows for flexibility for them and their families. Young people with disabilities and the deaf community should be invited and included in parish and diocesan/eparchial celebrations of Christ the King Sunday. An inclusive environment can be planned and present at the parish or diocese. Parents and caregivers are excellent resources to contact as planning of Christ the King celebrations move forward.

General tips for inclusion include:

- Giving a significant amount of notice to and personally invite young people with disabilities and the deaf community to the event.
- Invite caregivers or family members to attend with their young person.
- For those who are sensitive to sensory stimulation, have a quiet room available where young people and/or their caregivers can take the necessary break(s).
- For young people in the deaf community, have printed materials available, utilize art, and have a sign language interpreter at liturgies and talks.

Additionally, communities may consider hosting a special event just for celebrating youth and/or young adults with physical or mental disabilities and their families and caregivers. This could be a Mass, a shared meal, or dance that celebrates young people, etc. Flexibility and adaptability are integrated to the planning and implementation.



Young People in Military Communities

In celebrating Christ the King with young people in military communities, it is important to incorporate the sense of belonging in the Church as a member of the Body of Christ. As military families and young people in the military move frequently due to new assignments, it can be helpful to remind them, particularly through celebrating young people, that wherever they go, they have a place that can be home, familiar, safe, and warm in the Church.

- Mass on base or in the nearby parish can incorporate this sense of belonging through the homily, music, etc.
- Faith formation on base can focus on Christ the King Sunday and the contributions young people make to the Church and the community.
- Encourage respected and trusted adults to make personal and appropriate connections to these young people through meaningful conversations, cards, a meal, etc. Care and sensitivity ought to be shown towards young people whose parents are currently deployed, who are preparing for deployment, or who have lost a family member while serving.
- Young people in the military community can be invited and included in Christ the King celebrations and youth and young adult gatherings at nearby parishes.
- Care packages or letters can be sent from the community to those young adults serving in the military for Christ the King Sunday. Pay attention to regulations and time it may take for these to arrive and plan accordingly. If making care packages are to be a part of the Christ the King Sunday celebrations, know that it will take some time for them to arrive to those serving in the military.

Incarcerated Youth and Young Adults

In celebrating Christ the King with incarcerated youth and young adults, it is important to emphasize the unity and the connectedness that Christ offers to all believers. Incarcerated youth and young adults may experience separation, isolation, and loneliness in more profound ways than their peers. When one part of the body suffers, the whole body suffers. It is important to encourage and to affirm these young people, to infuse and to recognize the hope in seemingly hopeless situations.

- Get the greater community involved in reaching out to incarcerated youth and young adults for Christ the King Sunday. Visits, letters, calls, or care packages can be uplifting. Note, regulations should be consulted on what is permissible for each facility.
- When possible, priests and ministry leaders should time their regular visit to their young people in local jails and prisons around Christ the King Sunday.
- Those trusted adults in regular contact, including family members and those in prison ministry, should be alerted to the celebration of young people on Christ the King Sunday and given ways to encourage young people.
- Mass celebrated on Christ the King Sunday is preferred, though if not possible, other accommodations should be investigated. This may include participating in Mass through broadcast or live stream, reading and discussing the readings for the day, etc.

Recognizing humanity and dignity are crucial elements to ministry with incarcerated youth and young adults. These young people may have experienced judgments from the community, family, or friends. These young people may not feel worthy to experience God's love. The parish and diocese have a tremendous opportunity to affirm, to encourage, and to remind incarcerated youth and young adults that they are still loved by God and the Church, that they are unique and unrepeatably sons and daughters of God, and that God is rich in mercy.

Young People in Hospital Care or with Special Needs

Young people experience pain and hurt in many ways - spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It is important for young people to be invited into a relationship with Christ, the divine physician and healing. It is crucial that young people experiencing medical, or health challenges feel remembered, seen, and loved. These young people can be reminded that they are still called to and being formed as a saint, even in the face of suffering.

- Alert chaplains and other ministry leaders to the upcoming celebration and the ways to affirm young people. Hospital chaplains play a vital role and can be invited to see themselves as youth ministers in addition to their ministry to the sick and suffering. When possible, visits from pastors, priests, or other trusted adults can be scheduled near Christ the King Sunday.
- Partner with families, friends, and supporters in affirming young people in hospital care. Those who accompany young people can be supported in the ways that they walk with their young person.
- Those in the greater community can write letters, send care packages, offer a spiritual bouquet, etc. These notes should be affirming, hopeful, and encouraging.
- Arrange for the Mass or other celebrations to be broadcast or streamed for those who cannot attend for medical reasons.
- If a surgery or medical procedure is scheduled near Christ the King Sunday, include those young people in the Prayer of the Faithful or the parish list of intentions. Pray with these young people before their surgeries and visit with them at an appropriate time after the procedure.



National and Regional Collaborations

Ministry leaders can learn a great deal from communicating and collaborating with their counterparts in other dioceses and eparchies. Episcopal regions in the United States have an opportunity to dialogue and to work together for Christ the King Sunday and its celebration of young people.

Provinces, regions, and sometimes multiple regions meet regularly throughout the calendar year.

Bishops or diocesan/eparchial administrators in an episcopal region or province can discuss the Christ the King celebrations in their respective dioceses and eparchies during the scheduled meetings or gatherings in the weeks or months leading up to the Solemnity if the occasion presents itself. By discussing plans or what has worked in the past, the bishops of the region can cultivate best practices and dynamic endeavors for Christ the King Sunday. They can consider how “the presence of the local Bishop and his willingness to be among the young people” can “show them a clear sign of love and closeness” in “this pastoral style of proximity.”³⁷

37 DLFL, *Pastoral Guidelines*, Part 4, Section B, paragraph 3.

Pastors and various ministry leaders within an episcopal region may meet regularly, or at least annually. These gatherings may include leaders in youth and young adult ministries, vocations and family life ministries, Catholic education and schools, evangelization or religious education, cultural-specific and multicultural ministries, stewardship and development liturgical ministries, among others. In the weeks or months leading up to Christ the King Sunday, the solemnity and its focused celebration of young people should be an agenda item for discussion during these regional gatherings.

These conversations can potentially lead to a regional event for youth and/or young adults.

Regional events which draw young people from a large geographic area may already be well established. A region can draw on its talent within the region for speakers, musicians, vendors, etc. These regional events may not fall near Christ the King Sunday; however, these events can draw themes from and point back to the celebration of young people around that time of year. Technology may also assist in gathering ministry leaders and young leaders in planning and implementing a regional event for young people. If a regional event for young people does not yet exist, the region may consider Christ the King Sunday, or near proximity to it, as a starting point for the event.

In addition, these conversations can lead to regional gatherings of pastoral ministers and leaders that are well established in a particular area working with youth and/or young adults. These can include formation events for adults across a region, discussion about Christ the King Sunday and its connection to young people, the Holy Father's message for youth and young adults in a given year, among other related topics.

Existing national or regional conferences or events (inclusive of summer camps, retreats, and mission trips) for youth and/or young adults and/or pastoral leaders, regardless of the time of year in which they are held, can acknowledge the annual celebration of young people and integrate its message into the program. In addition, the local, diocesan, or regional Christ the King celebration activities can acknowledge and point to these national or regional events.

- For example, national or regional conference organizers can integrate the Holy Father's annual theme or message into its efforts, as well as point towards the next Solemnity of Christ the King. These events can also set time aside for dialogue and discussion among young people to discuss, plan, and evaluate the annual celebrations on the local level, and provide a forum for organizers and young people to learn from one another and share best practices.
- It is important to be mindful of the existing national events for or about young people that take place around the Solemnity of Christ the King, including the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC), coordinated by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), the SEEK Conference, coordinated by the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS), and the National Leadership Forum on Ministry with Young Adults, coordinated by the National Advisory Team on Young Adult Ministry (NATYAM), as well as the annual meetings and conferences for the National Catholic Network de Pastoral Juvenil Hispana (LaRED), the Catholic Campus Ministry Association (CCMA), and NFCYM, among others.

There may be cases when two or three dioceses that are in geographic proximity, but not in the same episcopal region, may also meet and collaborate regularly. If possible, these dioceses may choose to partner for a Christ the King celebration. It is also possible that multiple dioceses within a particular province collaborate on other ministry events in a productive fashion. It may be prudent for multiple dioceses to partner on large-scale Christ the King celebrations. Travel and hosting an event could be alternated between dioceses so that participants from one diocese are not always expected to travel a great distance.

Again, it should be emphasized that the locus of the annual celebration of young people is the parish, campus, or local community or apostolate; however, these large events and efforts are important to complement that work.

Outside of events, national or regional entities, including apostolates, organizations, and movements, can (and do) offer ecclesial recognition such as awards (for example, the NFCYM offers several awards for young people and ministry leaders), as well as national art or poetry contests (for example the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development hosts an annual “Creating on the Margins” arts contest for junior high and high school students), service opportunities, and formation, all that can be related to the annual celebration of the young.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) can also provide support and networking on a national level for the annual celebration of young people in the United States. The USCCB, through its Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth features a special web page dedicated to the Global Celebration of Young People on Christ the King Sunday: www.usccb.org/topics/world-youth-day/annual-celebration

Connections to World Youth Days

The international World Youth Day (WYD) event occurs approximately every three years. This global occasion, convened and attended by the pope, is an opportunity for hundreds of thousands or millions of youth and young adults from around the world to converge in a host country and, there, encounter Christ and their peers from other countries – to learn, to grow, and to serve others, to celebrate their shared faith, and to be equipped for mission in living out the vocation to holiness within the Church and in society. The USCCB has a special resource manual for pastoral leaders who are coordinating trips to these global experiences.

Since not everyone can travel to these international celebrations, the USCCB has also regularly put together a special resource manual for dioceses, eparchies, movements, and organizations to host a “stateside” celebration in their local community that can take place concurrent with the World Youth Day events. There are several of these stateside gatherings that take place during each WYD cycle across the United States.

The annual occasions, then (what we are calling the “Global Celebration of Young People” in the United States), become an extension of those special “mountaintop” moments and a continuation of the Church’s focus on young people. The annual celebration can also foster an excitement for the next major WYD, whether that be experienced stateside or internationally. They can spark interest for those who have not yet been to WYD or can serve as a renewal of the missionary fervor experienced at a past WYD. Connecting the annual moment to the global WYD moments can promote and strengthen the impact of each.

Some specific ways to connect WYD to the annual Christ the King celebration of young people include:

- Having past WYD (international and stateside) participants share their experiences during the annual celebration in a local (parish, campus, or apostolate), diocesan/eparchial, or regional setting.
- Identifying the various cultures represented in your faith community. Have an international festival as part of the annual celebration around Christ the King Sunday. Invite members of these different cultural groups to share their culture at the annual celebration through food, music, dance, local saints’ stories, art, games, etc. Include the flags of different nations in the décor for the celebration as well.
- Having the collection taken up at the annual Christ the King Sunday Mass go towards scholarships for those who, for financial reasons, would otherwise be unable to attend the next international WYD.
- Featuring information about the upcoming World Youth Day available during or as a follow-up to the local, diocesan, eparchial, or regional celebration around Christ the King Sunday.
- Playing video/audio or a reading the text of the Holy Father’s homily or speeches at the most recent

WYD during the local, diocesan, eparchial, or regional celebration on or around Christ the King Sunday. These addresses can be found on the website of the Vatican Dicastery of Laity, Family and Life here: www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/giovani/gmg.html.

- During the weeks surrounding or the weekend of the Solemnity of Christ the King, hosting a special reunion or special/social event for WYD alumni, that is those who have participated in an international or stateside WYDs, or a WYD-related event in Rome, over the past several decades (since 1984) - and offer an encounter between these alumni and the youth and/or young adults of the community today.

Regardless of the specific activity, what is important is helping the Church and young people know that:

There are no borders, no limits: (Jesus) sends us everywhere. The Gospel is for everyone, not just some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. (CV 177)

The engagement of young people is something that is celebrated in various ways and across the world. The international gathering is a visible sign of that solidarity, but the annual celebration reminds us of the constant presence of Christ in our midst and the never-ending love of God for his people, in particular the young. Seeing the connection between these two important components of the Church's mission to youth and young adults can be a blessing to both occasions and those who participate.

In a sense, all those who actively participate in the annual Christ the King celebrations in the community or on a diocesan, eparchial, regional, or national level are united in spirit with the generations of youth and young adults who have traveled with the Church at WYD. There is a strong line that firmly connects St. John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis – and all the young people they encountered since 1984 – with the young men and women, and those who are accompanying them in parishes, high schools and colleges, apostolates and movements, dioceses and eparchies, and national organizations, every single Christ the King Sunday henceforth.

Making the connections will be an essential way to bridge the gaps and look ahead with confidence at the “journey together” we are making and so doing, “we can be firmly rooted in the present, and from here, revisit the past and look to the future.” (CV 199)



Section 5: Going Forward

Celebrating Youth and Young Adults Starting Today

Pope Francis concluded his apostolic exhortation on young people with a wish, noting “my joyful hope is to see you keep running the race before you, outstripping all those who are slow or fearful, Keep running, ‘attracted by the face of Christ, whom we love so much...’” (CV 299). The face of Christ the King is present in Word and Sacrament, in youth and young adults, and in the heart of every person doing God’s work in the Church and in society.

For local communities, these annual festive celebrations of young people on Christ the King Sunday “can provide a welcome break in their routine and help them experience the joy of faith” (CV 224). They give every parish, campus, diocese, eparchy, apostolate, and organization which hosts these celebratory moments an opportunity to thank God for the gift of young people in their lives, to remind all generations of their importance and worth, and to motivate and renew youth and young adults for their mission and vocation in the world.

The Holy Father and the bishops of the United States, therefore, encourage every Catholic community to set aside one moment each year to honor and celebrate young people.

It can be done on or around the Solemnity of Christ the King, in solidarity with dioceses and eparchies across the country and around the world, or for pastoral reasons, at another suitable time. It can be done simply or extensively, for a day or a week or longer. It can be aimed at youth or young adults or (ideally) both groups – either together or at distinct and separate times. It should certainly involve the liturgical life of a Eucharistic community, but can also include elements of formation, networking, dialogue, social justice, and the common good.

Regardless of its structure or breadth, these occasions should always involve the entire community as much as possible and be a public witness of the Church about, for, and with youth and young adults.

This guidebook has offered some initial suggestions as to the possibilities and considerations for parishes, campuses, apostolates, dioceses, eparchies, and other groups in their annual celebrations, and the USCCB will provide supplementary materials each year that correspond to the current theme and other national and international developments. In addition, dioceses, and eparchies, along with national and regional ministry organizations focused on the accompaniment and engagement of young people, may also provide further support and resources.

However, the application of those ideas is dependent on the needs and realities of the community and is at the primary discretion of the local pastors and/or pastoral leaders and teams accompanying young people.

With this in mind, the final tip contained in this guidebook is that we constantly pray for one another in this work – for guidance and vision to make this endeavor fruitful and holy. There are pastoral ministers around the globe who, in their own ways, are celebrating youth and young adults, and our joint prayer (for the young and for each other) is critical to this effort. This universal prayer, then, is to Jesus Christ, king of the universe, whose feast we honor with this particular celebration and who keeps us always in his sacred heart.

Let us entrust the path of this ministry to Mary, the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the United States, of whom the Holy Father says, “under the gaze of our Mother, there is room only for the silence of hope.” (CV 48).

Appendix A: Resources and FAQs

Celebrating and Accompanying Young People Year Round

As you go about your planning for the celebration of youth and young adults in your diocese, eparchy, parish, school, campus, apostolate, movement, or organization, we want to offer to you the following additional resources. This compilation of resources is not meant to be comprehensive and complete, can offer further inspiration or new creative connections for the experience.

Links to external websites are provided solely for the user's convenience. USCCB assumes no responsibility for these websites, their content, and/or their sponsoring organizations. References to these sites do not imply and are not to be used as official endorsement by the USCCB of the site or those associated with it. They are solely intended as a resource that might be of interest to USCCB visitors.

Additional information on the origin of the Solemnity of Christ the King

You can read all about it right here: [*Quas Primas*](#), the encyclical from Pope Pius XI that instituted the feast day. You can also read [this bulletin insert](#) from the USCCB Religious Liberty Committee with reflections on how to understand the Solemnity of Christ the King in our modern context. This more conversational take from the website [Church Pop](#) may be an enlightening take, with eight things you might not know about this feast.

What resources and organizations are available at the national level?

The [USCCB Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth](#) is here to serve you and advocate on behalf of youth- and young adult-serving ministers and organizations. As part of the USCCB structure, there is now also a [Bishops Working Group on Youth and Young Adult Ministry](#). There are also many national organizations that serve specific ministry audiences. We have sections below that highlight youth ministry, young adult ministry, and college and university campus ministry, along with specific cultural groups and Catholic schools, among others.

Where should I get started if I am new to the work of accompanying young people?

First, welcome! The Church is so glad that you are present for and eager to serve young people. If you have not had the opportunity to do so we encourage you to read Pope Francis' [Christus Vivit](#). *Christus Vivit*, or [Christ is Alive](#), is the foundational document for ministry with young people. It is the apostolic exhortation that followed the 2017-2018 process of the [XV Ordinary Synod on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment](#). There were a few [other texts from the Synod process](#) that are immensely helpful as well, and they can be found here. A helpful [study guide to Christus Vivit](#) can be found here, produced by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) in collaboration with the USCCB Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth.



At the same time there have been other processes and studies that have looked at ministry with young people that would be helpful for any person new to the ministry field.

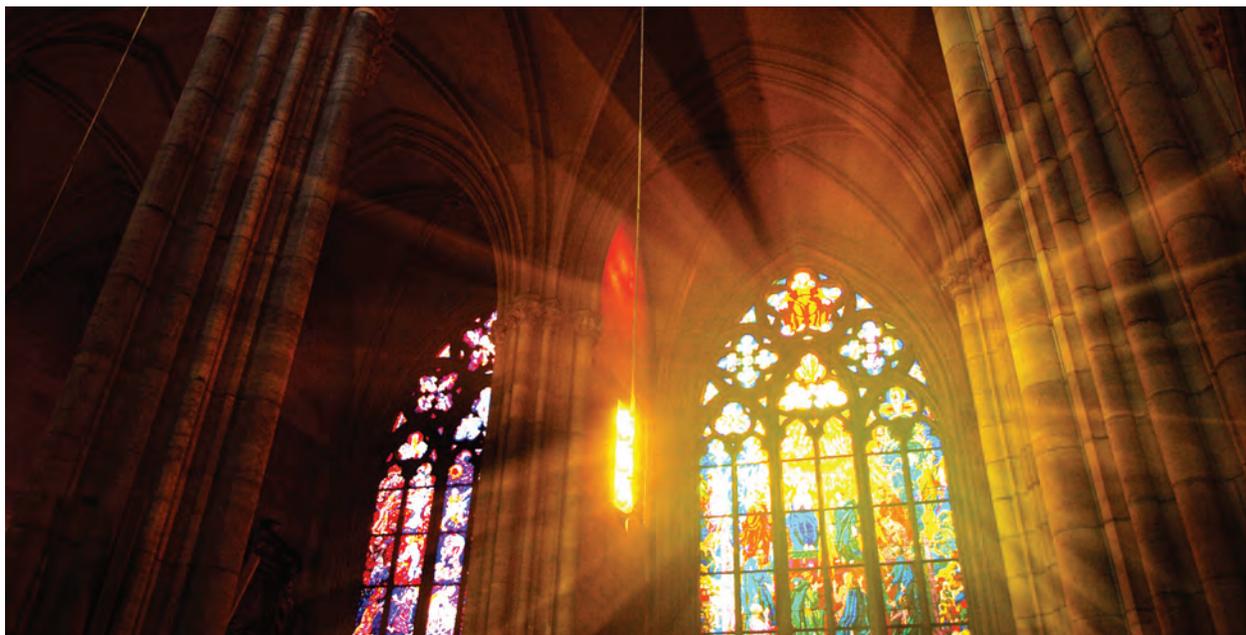
- The [*National Dialogue on Catholic Pastoral Ministry with Youth and Young Adults Final Report*](#) has several important findings and recommendations based on conversations with over 10,000 young people, parents, and ministers from across the United States in an interactive synodal process that took place 2017-2021.
- The [*V Encuentro*](#) and its resulting documents (especially its [*Proceedings and Conclusions*](#)) are the result of a years-long process (from 2013 to 2019 and beyond) to better understand and respond to the state of ministry with Hispanic/Latino Catholics in the United States and includes [*specific action items for youth and young adults*](#), as the young people were a major focus area of the *Encuentro*.
- The [*Journeying Together*](#) experience (from 2019 to 2022), convened by the USCCB Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church, is synodal process that looks at the realities and ministries for young people in the United States from an intercultural perspective and involving bishops, youth, and young adults (and those who accompany them) from every cultural community and family.

These resources and processes give those new to the work an excellent overview of the realities and challenges, as well as the best practices, that are part of the ministerial landscape today.

So, I am planning a liturgy for Christ the King Sunday, and I am still stuck, where else can I look for help?

Beyond contacting your local diocesan offices for divine worship and/or youth, campus, and/or young adult ministries (which we recommend starting with), the following groups and resources may provide greater understanding of the liturgical elements that are part of this celebration.

The [USCCB Committee on Divine Worship](#) and the [Subcommittee on Divine Worship in Spanish](#), the [Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions](#), the [National Hispanic Institute of Liturgy](#), and the [National Association of Pastoral Musicians](#) all have national resources on liturgy. There are also several [publishers](#) that offer planning guides for Masses with young people and music companies that have specialty resources in this area.



I have a diversity of cultures and ethnicities and abilities present in my parish/organization; how can I make sure I am serving them well? What can we do better to be more inclusive and diverse?

Reaching out to the following organizations for advice or help is a great place to start. For resources for **Hispanic/Latino** young people (in English or Spanish) please see: [LaRED](#), the National Network for Pastoral Juvenil Hispana, the [National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry](#), the [National Catholic Association for Diocesan Directors of Hispanic Ministry](#), the [Instituto Fe y Vida](#), or [SEPI](#) (Southeast Pastoral Institute).

For resources for **African American** young people please see: The [National African-American Catholic Youth and Young Adult Ministry Network](#), [African Catholic Association](#), [Institute for Black Catholic Studies](#), and the [Knights of Peter Claver and Ladies Auxiliary](#).

For resources for **Native American/Native Alaskan** young people please see: the [Tekakwitha Conference](#), the [Kateri Northwest Ministry Institute](#), the [Sioux Spiritual Center](#), and the [Black and Indian Mission Office](#).

For resources for **Asian American and Pacific Islander** young people please see: [National Conference of Burmese-American Catholics](#), [Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement](#), the [Federation Of Vietnamese Catholics in the USA](#), [Hmong American National Catholic Association](#), [Indian American Catholic Association](#), and the [Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences](#).

For resources for serving **young people with a wide range of disabilities** please see: The [National Catholic Partnership on Disability](#).

Not seeing your cultural community on this list? There are also many other cultural communities and organizations for you to explore at [Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees, and Travelers](#) on the USCCB website.

My young people love to incorporate service opportunities into their celebrations. Where can I find more ideas about how to do this for Christ the King Sunday?

Beyond your local organizations there are several Catholic entities that are full of ideas, including: [Catholic Relief Services](#), [Catholic Charities USA](#), the [Catholic Volunteer Network](#), [Education for Justice](#), and the [Ignatian Solidarity Network](#), [USCCB Office of Justice, Peace, and Human Development](#), [Catholic Extension](#), and the [National Catholic Rural Life Conference](#). There are also organizations like [Project Rachel](#), the [Knights of Columbus](#), [40 Days for Life](#), and others that would love to have your help.

Our young people love to be artistic and creative, and they love sports. Any ideas?

Absolutely! Do not forget to be in touch with your local CYO for [sports](#) if you have one in the diocese. [Play Like a Champion: Following the Vatican's Lead to Elevate the Culture of American Sport](#) is a good read for anyone serious about incorporating sports in an intentional way, and the [Play Like a Champion Sport as Ministry Initiative](#) has several ideas for you that are ready to go! Additionally, both the [Catholic Creatives](#) collaboration and the [OSV Innovation Challenge](#) are full of cool ideas for the creative young people you are working with.





Additional resources for incorporating vocations into the Celebration of Young People

The [National Religious Vocation Conference](#) has ideas and contacts for promoting consecrated life as a sister, brother, or religious order priest. The [National Conference of Diocesan Vocation Directors](#) has many ways to incorporate the promotion of vocations to Holy Orders into your celebrations as well. Of course, the promotion of [the sacrament of marriage](#) is a beautiful tie-in for this feast and resources can be found on the following USCCB pages: [National Marriage Week](#), foryourmarriage.org, and portumatrimonio.org. The [Catholic Volunteer Network](#) has been helping young people find their way into rewarding long and short-term volunteer opportunities around the country that often end up shaping their careers for years to come.

I am looking for help with specifically middle and high school youth ministry... Where should I turn?

[National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry](#) (NFCYM) has a wealth of resources and connections. Additionally, the [Scouting movement](#) that is often active in our parishes and communities. The [National Catholic Committee on Girl Scouts and Camp Fire USA](#) and the [National Catholic Committee on Scouting for Scouts BSA](#) (Boy Scouts of America) are available resources for connecting with the Catholic scouts in your area.

The [National Association of Catholic Family Life Ministers](#) can also be of assistance in working with adolescents, as can [In Word and Witness](#), (Formerly the National Conference for Catechetical Leadership) in terms of resources for the teaching components of this ministry.

I am looking for help with specifically ministry with young adults... Where should I turn?

The [USCCB National Advisory Team on Young Adult Ministry](#) is full of resources and networking for serving the population of Catholics between the ages of 18-39. The new National Institute for Ministry with Young Adults is another place to find training and accompaniment as you accompany this critical population.

I am looking for help with college campus ministry... Where should I turn?

The [Catholic Campus Ministry Association \(CCMA\)](#) has been serving campus ministers at the nation's colleges and universities for many years and has connections and a wealth of expertise when it comes to this specialized ministry setting. Other helpful groups include the [Fellowship of Catholic University Students \(FOCUS\)](#) and [ESTEEM](#), a partnership of the Leadership Roundtable organization.

I am looking for help with ministry at a Catholic elementary or high school... Where should I turn?

You might want to start by reading [Cultivating Faith: A Guide to Building Catholic High School](#). You will also find [an active discussion board](#) for timely topics here. Of course, the [National Catholic Educational Association](#) is always there to help as well. The McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame has some wonderful opportunities to explore, especially their [Vision](#) program. Loyola New Orleans [FaithActs](#) program is another cool resource as well.

We want to do an ecumenical event with our young people. What other Christian denominations and traditions celebrate the Feast of Christ the King?

The following Christian denominations all belong to the Revised Common Lectionary and therefore celebrate the feast of Christ the King on the same Sunday as Catholics do: American Baptist Churches/USA, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Reformed Church in North America, Church of the Brethren, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Liturgy and Life: American Baptist Fellowship of Liturgical Renewal, Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, Mennonite Church, North American Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in America, Unitarian Universalist Christian Fellowship, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

[NOTE: one tradition in the Anglican Church is the celebration of "[Stir-Up Sunday](#)" on the Sunday before Advent with [recipes](#) that can be a potential collaborative activity with local churches of the Anglican communion.]

There may be opportunities to develop a joint activity with young people of one of those faith communities in your local area, especially around service and justice and social networking. For the best advice on how best to approach those communities, we encourage you to reach out to your local diocesan ecumenical officer at the diocesan office. They can offer ideas or assistance in planning such an event. Additionally, resources on ecumenical questions can be found at [the website for the USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs](#).

Keeping young people safe is always our most important job. What resources are there to make sure we are doing all we can to keep them safe?

We encourage you to explore all the [resources](#) offered on the USCCB's website related to the protection of young people (and coordinated by the USCCB [Committee on the Protection of Children and Young People](#)). The Church is committed to prevention, protection, and accountability in creating a safe environment for all. Together we can confront the evils of sexual abuse and hold all individuals accountable. With additional reforms, building upon the [Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People](#), and in union with Pope Francis's motu proprio, *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, the Church in the United States stands united against the scourge of sexual abuse as we forge a path of reconciliation and healing. Thank you for all you do to keep our young people safe.

Appendix B: A Brief History of the Global Celebration

Celebrating Youth and Young Adults through the Centuries

The origin of the Catholic Church’s integration of and connection with young people is found in Sacred Scripture. Immediately following St. Matthew’s account of Jesus’ triumphant entrance into Jerusalem and His subsequent cleansing of the Temple, the Gospel continues:

When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wondrous things he was doing, and the children (παῖδας) crying out in the temple area, “Hosanna to the Son of David,” they were indignant and said to him, “Do you hear what they are saying?” Jesus said to them, “Yes, and have you never read the text, ‘Out of the mouths of infants and nurslings you have brought forth praise?’” (Mt. 21:15-16).

St. Matthew’s use of Greek word παῖδας (*paidas*) indicates that “young people” (or “children”) were indeed present on that first Palm Sunday and were vocal in their adulation of Jesus as Messiah and King. Young people were among the first people to proclaim their faith publicly and proudly in Jesus Christ, the universal king.

In the early Church in Jerusalem, “[T]he Palm Sunday procession was turned into a kind of children’s feast.”³⁸ As the Church’s liturgy was being formed, Jerusalem’s tradition of youth participation on Palm Sunday developed into the *Pueri Hebraeorum* (“The Hebrew Youth”) antiphons:³⁹

Latin Antiphon 1

Pueri Hebraeorum, portantes ramos olivarum, obviaverunt Domino, clamantes et dicentes: Hosanna in excelsis.⁴⁰

English Translation

The children of the Hebrews, carrying olive branches, went to meet the Lord, crying out and saying: Hosanna in the highest.⁴¹

Latin Antiphon 2

Pueri Hebraeorum vestimenta prosternebant in via, et clamabant dicentes: Hosanna filio David; benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.⁴²

English Translation

The children of the Hebrews spread their garments on the road, crying out and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.⁴³

38 Nocent, Adrien, OSB. *The Liturgical Year: Volume Two – Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum, Easter Time*. Trans. Matthew J. O’Connell. Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014. (163).

39 Ibid. (162-163).

40 *Graduale Romanum*: First Antiphon for the Passion (Palm) Sunday Procession.

41 *Roman Missal*: Antiphon 1 for Palm Sunday Procession, First Form.

42 *Graduale Romanum*: Second Antiphon for the Passion (Palm) Sunday Procession.

43 *Roman Missal*: Antiphon 2 for Palm Sunday Procession, First Form.

During the first millennium of Christianity, the bishops of the East and those from Spain and Gaul imitated the Holy Week rites in Jerusalem in their churches and kept alive certain traditions such as the youth procession and singing the *Pueri Hebraeorum* hymns for Palm Sunday.⁴⁴ In Rome, however, the popes (and the populace there) did not adopt these customs until much later, in the twelfth century.⁴⁵

Making pilgrimage to the Eternal City, particularly to the catacombs of the martyrs and the tombs of Sts. Peter and Paul had been a part of Catholic tradition since the earliest days of Christianity. Even at the height of the Middle Ages, when Rome had fallen into disrepair, pilgrims flocked to the city – most especially during the Jubilee Years.⁴⁶ The crowds in Rome were at their highest during Holy Week and Easter, which were often filled with ornate processions and medieval pageantry.

This tradition of making pilgrimage to Rome during Holy Week continued into the 20th century, with increasing numbers of youth and young adults. Pope St. John XXIII addressed the crowds of young people present in St. Peter’s Square on Palm Sunday in 1960, referencing the ancient antiphons, “You, *Pueri Hebraeorum*, resume your singing Hosanna to the Son of David!”⁴⁷

In both 1966 and 1968, Pope Paul VI likewise made note of the presence of large numbers of young people in Rome during in his Palm Sunday homilies. During the 1975 Jubilee Year, He intentionally invited young people of various Catholic groups and movements to Rome on Palm Sunday, likely because this day was already popular among the youth and young adults who already made pilgrimage annually to Rome that day. Approximately 17,000 young people responded to the Holy Father’s Jubilee Year invitation.⁴⁸

With the 1975 jubilee gathering in his mind, the new pope, John Paul II, decided to attempt a large-scale gathering of youth. The Pope extended a formal invitation to young people for a gathering near the conclusion of the next Churchwide jubilee celebration, the Holy Year of Redemption (1983-1984). He asked the youth of the world to gather with him for a special “festival of hope” in Rome from April 11 to 15, 1984, culminating with the Palm Sunday Mass. During the homily for Pope John Paul II’s first youth gathering on April 15, 1984, in front of over the 300,000 young people who descended on Rome that spring, he said:

Among the enthusiastic pilgrims who came to Jerusalem with Christ, there was a special group of youth: children, young people, and the *Pueri Hebraeorum*. This also explains the special participation of young people in the liturgy of Palm Sunday in St. Peter’s Square, as it is every year... You join your youth pilgrimage to the young people of Jerusalem, who, following Jesus of Nazareth, exclaimed, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,’ thus expressing a messianic enthusiasm...Young people surround Jesus Christ in the liturgy of Palm Sunday, to express the enthusiasm which Christ’s presence stirs up in each successive generation.⁴⁹

44 Klauser, Theodor. *A Short History of the Western Liturgy: An Account and Some Reflections*. Trans. John Halliburton. London: Oxford University Press, 1969. (81).

45 The 1967 edition of *Catholic Encyclopedia* notes “the procession of the palms apparently was introduced into Rome only in the 12th century.” O’Shea, W.J. “Palm Sunday.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia (1967 ed.)*, Vol. 10. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967.

46 Sumption, Jonathan. *The Age of Pilgrimage: The Medieval Journey to God*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Hidden Spring/Paulist Press, 1975. (308-368).

47 John XXIII, Palm Sunday Homily, 10 Apr. 1960 (our translation).

48 Zalonski, Paul. “Msgr. Luigi Giussani Speaks About Pope Paul: When Paul VI Saved the Church from Disaster: An interview with Fr. Luigi Giussani.” *Communio Blog* (<http://communio.stblogs.org>). 14 Oct. 2008.

49 John Paul II, Palm Sunday Homily. 15 Apr. 1984 (our translation).

After the success of Pope John Paul II's invitation to young people to Palm Sunday for the Holy Year of Redemption, the Holy Father expressed a desire to re-gather with youth one year later. Upon hearing of the United Nations' resolution that 1985 would be dedicated to young people, he told the leadership of the PCL (Pontifical Council for the Laity): "The United Nations has proclaimed next year the *Year of Youth*. Should we not invite the world's youth to Rome again?"⁵⁰ Another youth gathering was then organized for Palm Sunday 1985, and again, about 300,000 young people joined Pope John Paul II at St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome for the second "festival of hope" event. The following week, during his Easter *Urbi et Orbi* message, the pope unexpectedly announced,

Last Sunday, I met with hundreds of thousands of young people; the festive image of their enthusiasm remains imprinted on my heart. It is my hope that this wonderful experience may be repeated in the future years and that Palm Sunday may become World Youth Day.⁵¹

During the first officially designated "World Youth Day" on March 23, 1986, Pope John Paul II reflected on the connection between the Palm Sunday celebration and young people:

According to liturgical texts, the words we proclaimed here today are especially addressed to young people, the *Pueri Hebraeorum*. The participation of young people on Palm Sunday is set in tradition...Therefore, I greet all young people everywhere, in any country of the five continents as you celebrate this Youth Day. The reference point for this day continues, as it has every year, on Palm Sunday... And so[,] we celebrate this day as our youth day. In fact, it is tied to a hope that does not disappoint. Every generation will need you to help renew this hope. We need it ever more and more.⁵²

World Youth Day was celebrated in Rome each Palm Sunday thereafter. Due to the example and urging of Pope John Paul II, as well as historical and cultural precedent, several countries followed suit and established a special day for youth and/or young adults on Palm Sunday. A few other countries' episcopal conferences designated the feast of Christ the King as their national youth Sunday, as this day (like Palm Sunday) points towards the celebration of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings, first voiced by the young people of Jerusalem (Matt. 21:15-16).

Pope Francis, aware of the liturgical needs of Palm Sunday and the Holy Week, at the conclusion of Mass on the feast of Christ the King on November 22, 2020, called for a re-launching of the celebration of young people (which was officially called "World Youth Day in the particular churches," which ties into the original notion of WYD as an annual festival) for the Solemnity of Christ the King. It should be noted that, from the perspective of the Holy See, the phrase "particular churches" means dioceses and local communities (as opposed to Church in the global sense).

The Holy Father asked that it be celebrated annually on that day, saying:

I would also like to renew [World Youth Day's] celebration in the local Churches. Thirty-five years after the establishment of WYD, after listening to various opinions and consulting the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, which is responsible for ministry [with young people], I have decided, beginning next year, to transfer the diocesan celebration of WYD from Palm Sunday to Christ the King Sunday. [The center] of the celebration remains the Mystery of Jesus Christ the Redeemer of Man, as Saint John Paul II, the initiator and patron of WYD, always emphasized.⁵³

50 Cordes, Cardinal Paul Josef. "World Youth Day's First Steps." Zenit (<http://www.zenit.org/>). 15 Jul. 2008.

51 John Paul II, *Urbi et Orbi* message on Easter Sunday. 7 Apr. 1985 (our translation).

52 John Paul II, Palm Sunday Homily. 23 Mar. 1986 (our translation).

53 Francis, Christ the King Homily. 22 Nov. 2020. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201122_omelia-passaggiocroce-gmg.html

Pope Francis’s choice of moving the annual celebration of young people is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Church and indeed the history of the celebration of World Youth Day itself.

In the Palm Sunday celebration, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is commemorated as that of a “king, gentle and riding on a donkey” (Mt 21:5) and lauded as Messiah by the crowd: “Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mt 21:9). St. Luke explicitly adds the title “king” to the crowd’s acclamation of “the one who comes,” emphasizing that the Messiah is also a king, and that his entry into Jerusalem is in a certain sense a royal enthronement: “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord” (Lk 19:38).⁵⁴

The Solemnity of Christ the King also connects to Pope Francis’ 2019 apostolic exhortation on young people, *Christus Vivit* (meaning “Christ is alive!”). This landmark document, written following the XV Ordinary Synod of Bishops on “Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment” that took place in 2017 and 2018, is the Church’s framework for approaching youth and young adults. By its very title, the exhortation is Christocentric, encouraging young people to gravitate towards Jesus Christ.

“He is in you, he is with you, and he never abandons you,” declares *Christus Vivit*. “However far you may wander, he is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and he waits for you to return to him and start over again.” (CV 2)

Thus, the journey of the Church with young people reaches another milestone with the fusion of *Christus Vivit* and the annual global celebration around the Solemnity of Christ the King. Jesus is at the center, as he has always been since the youth and young adults of Jerusalem first proclaimed him as their one true king and leader.



54 Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, *Pastoral Guidelines for the Celebration of World Youth Day in the Particular Churches*. Vatican. 2021. (11).

Appendix C: Planning Worksheets

Christ the King Sunday Liturgy Planner

Date:

Time:

Location:

Liturgical Ministers:

Presider:

Lectors:

Music:

**Extraordinary Ministers
of Holy Communion:**

Acolytes:

Gift Bearers:

Hospitality:

Sacristy:

Worship Aid:

Environment:

Altar:

Ambo:

Banners:

Other:

Movement: Names

Procession:

Presentation of Gifts:

Other:

The Order of Mass

The Introductory Rites

Entrance Song:

Penitential Act:

Gloria:

Collect:

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading:

Lector:

Responsorial Psalm:

Cantor:

Second Reading:

Lector:

Gospel Acclamation (sung):

Gospel:

Homily:

Prayer of the Faithful:

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts:

Gift Bearers:

Prayer over the Offerings:

The Eucharistic Prayer and Acclamations:

Preface:

Holy, Holy, Holy (sung):

Eucharistic Prayer:

Memorial Acclamation (sung):

Great Amen (sung):

The Communion Rite

Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace

Lamb of God:

Communion Song:

Hymn of Praise (optional):

Prayer after Communion:

The Concluding Rite:

Blessing

Dismissal

Recessional Song:



Christ the King Vigil Prayer Service

Date:

Time:

Location:

Liturgical Ministers:

Presider:

Lectors:

Music:

Hospitality:

Sacristy:

Worship Aid:

Environment:

Altar area:

Art:

Banners:

Other:

Movement:

Gestures:

Other:

The Order of Service

Opening

Call to Prayer:

Song:

Opening Prayer:

Readings

First Reading:

Lector:

Responsorial Psalm:

Cantor:

Second Reading:

Lector:

Reflection on the Readings:

Ritual Actions

Symbolic Action:

Music:

Prayers

Intercessions

Lord's Prayer

Sign of Peace

Closing

Blessing

Send Forth / Commissioning

Song:

Service Project for Young People

Focus:

Goals:

Expected Outcomes:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Service Team:

Project Coordinators:

Assistant for Prayer and Reflection:

Assistant for Logistics and Transportation:

Assistant for On Site Duties:

Advisors:

Checklist

- Define service project and reasons behind this option**
- Advance preparation with service organization and partnerships**
- Schedule specific date, times, location**
- Application process, waivers, and release forms**
- Transportation options**
- Supplies and materials required**
- Rendezvous point and check in process**

Schedule

Welcome:

Opening Prayer:

Message of Encouragement:

Instructions and send off:

Service Hours – define how to record time, duties, completed tasks:

- **breaks**
- **water, snacks, refreshments as needed**

Gathering and Thanks:

Reflection on the Experience:

Closing Prayer:

Dismissal:

Retreat Day for Young People

Focus:

Goals:

Expected Outcome:

Date:

Time:

Location:

Retreat Team:

Project Coordinators:

Assistant for Prayer and Music:

Assistant for Program and Content:

Assistant for Hospitality:

Advisors:

Checklist

- Define retreat theme and reasons behind this option**
- Advance preparation with retreat center and partnerships**
- Schedule specific date, times, location**
- Application process, waivers, and release forms**
- Transportation options**
- Supplies and materials required**
- Rendezvous point and check in process**

Schedule

Welcome:

Opening Prayer:

Instructions and location rules:

Retreat Experience – define how to distribute appropriate times for:

- **Personal prayer**
- **Silent meditation**
- **Talks and large group activities**
- **Small group discussions**
- **Communal prayer**
- **Breaks with water, snacks, refreshments as needed**
- **Meals before, on site, after as needed**

Sacraments – if offered, define appropriate times and secure ordained ministers:

- **Penance**
- **Eucharist**

Gathering and Thanks:

Reflection on the Experience:

Closing Prayer:

Dismissal:

