

ON THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

World Youth Day 2023
(Lisbon, Portugal)



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I do not think it is a stretch to say that there are many distractions that are constantly vying for one's attention. Especially in the cultural landscape today, it can be hard to hear God's voice. We are bombarded by societal half-truths that can lead us to become spiritually desolate.

One can end up as the famous Catholic writer and poet Dante Alighieri warned, "within a dark woods where the straightway was lost." The question then becomes, how do we respond to the dark woods of life when we may feel lost or isolated? Often we need to experience a re-awakening of our hearts to the God who gave everything for us and still calls, regardless of age, to love and serve him. One way this reawakening can happen is on a pilgrimage.

Several young adults from our diocese and I have felt called to go on a pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Lisbon, Portugal from July 28 until August 7, 2023. We will sacrifice time, money, and comfort to deepen our relationship with God on this journey. World Youth Day (WYD) was started by St. John Paul the Great in 1986. He saw a need to bring young people from around the world together in solidarity and to provide an opportunity for them to encounter the Lord. It is a unique way to deepen one's faith and grow closer to Christ through prayer and the sacraments. It is also a unique experience because attendees will pray with Pope Francis along with 500,000 to 1,000,000 other young adults.

During our pilgrimage, we will travel to both Santarém and Fatima.

Fatima is where Our Lady appeared to three young children in 1917. Not only are their miracles attributed to the apparition, which is incredible, but Fatima ultimately is a great reminder that God calls each of us to a life that is extraordinary, regardless of occupation or background if we are open to His will. In Santarém we will see the eucharistic miracle that occurred there. The Eucharistic Miracle of Santarém involved the transformation of the host into bleeding flesh and blood in the 13th century. Numerous studies and canonical analyses were carried out on the relics, and they have been preserved to this day in the Church of St. Stephen in Santarém.

Please pray for all of the WYD attendees, especially for myself and the young adults from our diocese. Prayer is the most important action that you can take. However, if you feel so moved to financially support attendees from our Diocese, that will be greatly appreciated. The cost per person is \$4,700.00, which is quite the expense for a young adult. If you are interested in making a financial contribution, please email David Willems at davidw@catholicreno.org or call him at (775) 372-6456. Thank you again for your prayers, and know that we are praying for you as we journey to Lisbon. †



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