AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR EVANGELISATION, LAITY AND MINISTRY

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World Youth Day 2026

World Youth Day (November 22) is an opportunity to discover the gift and joy of knowing Jesus.

Bishop delegate for youth George Kolodziej has penned an open letter to Australia's young people following a series of "listening sessions" around the country.

"You've shared with us questions about faith, about life and about the future," Bishop George said in his letter.

"You are asking, 'Does my life have meaning?', 'Where do I belong?', 'Who can I trust?', 'What is God calling me to do?'

"You shared about the joy you have when your gifts and contribution to the Church and world are honoured and celebrated.

"We also recognise you are navigating many pathways and there can be uncertainty, pressures and loneliness on the way. We understand your desire for people who know and love you just because you are you."

Bishop George pointed to Pope Leo XIV's message for the 41st World Youth Day in which the Holy Father reflected on the words of Jesus in John's Gospel: "Take courage! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

"Receive these words as a promise addressed personally to each of you and to the brothers and sisters with whom you share your journey," the Pope wrote in his message.

"This courage does not come from your own determination or strength of character.

"It comes from trusting in the One who goes before you; it is born of faith in Jesus Christ … Christian courage is not courage *against* something or someone, but courage *for* something: for life, for truth, for freedom, and for justice."

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Bishop George said the Pope's message carried a "powerful invitation" ahead of the South Korean capital Seoul hosting thousands of young Australian Catholics and hundreds of thousands more from many nations for World Youth Day activities in 2027.

"My prayer for you in the year ahead, is that you discover the gift and joy of knowing Jesus personally. May you find communities where you truly belong and have the courage to follow wherever Christ leads," Bishop George said.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference young people and formation facilitator Qwayne Guevara said: "The encouragement of Pope Leo XIV and Bishop George is a witness to the hope and faith the Church places in young people."

"There is incredible work happening across Australia to strengthen youth ministry, and my hope is that, as we continue this work together, every young person will grow in their sense of belonging in the life of the Church and deepen their friendship with Jesus," she said.

World Youth Day is held on the Solemnity of Christ the King.

The full letter can be found **here**

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