

# Dream big, don't settle for less, pope tells young people

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Young people today should not waste their lives dreaming of obtaining trivial things that provide only a fleeting moment of joy but aspire to the greatness God wants for them, Pope Francis said.

Celebrating Mass on the feast of Christ the King Nov. 22, the pope told young people that God “does not want us to narrow our horizons or to remain parked on the roadside of life,” but instead he “wants us to race boldly and joyfully toward lofty goals.”

“We were not created to dream about vacations or the weekend, but to make God’s dreams come true in this world,” he said. “God made us capable of dreaming, so that we could embrace the beauty of life.”

At the end of the Mass, young people from Panama, the host country of World Youth Day 2019, handed over the World Youth Day cross to young people from Lisbon, Portugal, where the next international gathering is expected to take place in August 2023.

The handoff originally was scheduled for April 5, Palm Sunday, but was postponed because of the lockdowns and travel bans in place to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

In his homily, the pope reflected on the day’s Gospel reading from St. Matthew, in which Jesus tells his disciples that the good done to the least ones are done to him.

Pope Francis said that works of mercy such as feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger and visiting the sick or imprisoned are Jesus’ “‘gift list’ for the eternal wedding feast he will share with us in heaven.”

This reminder, he said, is especially for young people as “you strive to realize your dreams in life.”

He also explained that if young people today dream “about real glory and not the glory of this passing world,” the works of mercy are the path to follow because those works “give glory to God more than anything else.”

“Life, we come to see, is a time for making robust, decisive, eternal choices,” the pope said. “Trivial choices lead to a trivial life; great choices to a life of greatness. Indeed, we become what we choose, for better or for worse.”

By choosing God, young people can grow in love and happiness, he said. But one can possess a full life “only by giving it away.”

“Jesus knows that if we are self-absorbed and indifferent, we remain paralyzed, but if we give ourselves to others, we become free,” he said.

Pope Francis also warned of the obstacles one faces in giving his or her life for others, especially “feverish consumerism,” which can “overwhelm our hearts with superfluous things.”

“An obsession with pleasure may seem the only way to escape problems, yet it simply postpones them,” the pope said. “A fixation with our rights can lead us to neglect our responsibilities to others. Then, there is the great misunderstanding about love, which is more than powerful emotions, but primarily a gift, a choice and a sacrifice.”