Jubilee of Youth: Pope answers questions from pilgrims

Around a million young pilgrims gathered in Tor Vergata, on the outskirts of Rome, for the Jubilee of Youth on Saturday evening.

As night fell, Pope Leo led the pilgrims in a prayer vigil, feauturing singing, Scripture readings, and Eucharistic Adoration.

The centrepiece of the event was a question-and-answer session in which **the Pope responded** to three questions posed by young pilgrims in Spanish, Italian, and English.

Friendship, life choices, and encountering Jesus

The first question was asked by Dulce Maria, 23, from Mexico. Given the "fleeting and often illusory" nature of online connections, she asked, how can we "we find true friendship and genuine love that will lead us to true hope"?

In his reply, the Pope stressed that although social media offers an "extraordinary opportunity" for dialogue, it can "be used to lull us, to make us addicted to consumerism". He stressed that friendships can only be truly lasting if they are founded in God, and, quoting St Augustine, emphasised that "It is the one who loves God in his friend who truly loves his friend."

The second question came from Gaia, 19, from Italy, She asked about the "climate of uncertainty" which "paralyses" many young people, and prevents them from making important life choices.

In his reply, Pope Leo emphasised that these choices are not "a matter of choosing something, but of choosing someone." When we make a choice, the Pope said, we decide "who we want to become".

The final question was posed in English, by Will, 20 years old and from the US. How can we "truly encounter" Jesus, he asked, and be sure of his presence "even in the midst of trials and uncertainties?"

In his response, Pope Leo urged the young pilgrims to "reflect on your way of

living", "seek justice", "serve the poor", and "adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament".

Prayers for Maria and Pascale

In his answers to the pilgrims' questions, Pope Leo also mentioned the two young women – Maria, 20, from Spain, and Pascale, 18, from Egypt – who have died while taking part in Jubilee of Youth events in recent days.

"Let us pray together for them, pilgrims of hope," said the Pope. "Let us pray for their families, their friends and their communities. May the Risen Jesus welcome them into the peace and joy of his Kingdom."

The vigil then came to an end with roughly an hour of Eucharistic adoration, accompanied by chanting and prayers in French, English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, Polish and Latin.

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