**We, Your Young, Loyal, and Traditional Catholics**



Reflections by the Bureau of the Juventutem International Federation on the motu proprio *Traditionis Custodes*

29 July 2021

*I will go in to the altar of God; to God who gives joy to my youth.* The youth evoked here in Psalm 42 is not a matter of age. Rather, it is the spiritual youth of souls rejuvenated by divine grace given by Jesus Christ in the Holy Church. The name *Juventutem* is the Latin for *youth*.[[1]](#footnote-1) *Juventutem* is an international Catholic movement for the sanctification of young people through the Roman traditions of the Church. *Juventutem* was founded in the context of the *Year of the Eucharist* inaugurated by Pope John Paul II in October 2004 and concluded by Pope Benedict XVI in October 2005. The emblem of *Juventutem* is a Eucharistic monstrance. For the past seventeen years, *Juventutem* has illustrated this unexpected combination: one can be an average teenager, a loyal Catholic, and a lover of Latin traditions.

In his Letter to the Bishops on *Traditionis Custodes* (TC),[[2]](#footnote-2) Pope Francis refers to the words of Pope Benedict XVI about the *usus antiquior*: “*young persons too have discovered this liturgical form, felt its attraction and found in it a form of encounter with the Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist, particularly suited to them.*”[[3]](#footnote-3)*Juventutem* recognises itself in this portrayal by the Vicars of Christ. For over seventeen years, *Juventutem* has supported hundreds of young Catholics worldwide in their aspiration to holiness. This goal was sought through the traditional Latin Mass offered always in full communion with the pope and the bishops. Notably, at World Youth Days, dozens of cardinals and bishops offered the traditional Latin Mass for the *Juventutem* young adults and gave catecheses as part of the official WYD schedule, as formally approved by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. World Youth Day is the largest recurrent Catholic event in the world, bringing together one million young adults or more around the Vicar of Christ on various continents every few years. WYDs provide a colourful assessment of the modern Church. Since [2005](http://juventutem.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2005-09-29-WYD-Germany-Press-Review-Juventutem.pdf), having the traditional Roman liturgy officially included in the WYD schedule has fostered unity in diversity. It has provided inspiration to the younger generation who encountered these beautiful traditions with *Juventutem* in [Cologne](http://juventutem.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2008-02-01-Official-Report-JUVENTUTEM-2005.pdf) (2005), [Sydney](http://juventutem.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2008-07-21-Official-report-on-the-participation-of-Juventutem-at-WYD-2008-in-Australia.pdf) (2008), [Madrid](http://juventutem.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2011-09-21-WYD-Spain-Juventutem-Report.pdf) (2011), [Rio de Janeiro](http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2013/07/juventutem-in-rio.html#.VDvZ3vldV8E%20http://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2013/07/juventutem-images-of-pontifical-mass-in.html) (2013), [Krakow](http://juventutem.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/2016-08-12-JUVENTUTEM-WYD-2016-Report.pdf) (2016), [Panama](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAebukAlhm4) (2019).

By now, the young adults involved with *Juventutem* in its early years have answered God’s call to sanctity in married life and in consecrated life within Holy Church. Many are now spouses, parents, nuns, monks, and priests. In their parishes and dioceses, in their movements and communities, these young Catholics are active members of the Church of today and of tomorrow. The many cardinals, bishops and priests who met them at WYDs and on other occasions have found them to be cheerful, prayerful, kind, and generous. For many prelates, encountering traditional Catholic young people was a happy surprise. Since WYDs occur only every three years, they called for local initiatives to foster the sanctification of the young all year long. In response, *Juventutem* soon established itself as an international federation[[4]](#footnote-4) of small youth groups, spread all over the world.[[5]](#footnote-5) Nearly all chaplains to the *Juventutem* groups are diocesan priests. All activities are supported by the parish or diocese. As an official participant in the 2017 Youth Conference in Rome organized by the new dicastery of the Vatican for the Laity, Family, and Life, and in the 2018 Youth Synod at the Vatican, *Juventutem* reported on the activities and aspirations of young traditional Catholics worldwide.

Even without formal *Juventutem* membership, thousands of young adults have attended traditional Latin liturgies and activities as visitors at *Juventutem* events, or have watched them online. Many adults as well among the clergy and the laity have been interested to see the favourable impact of the traditional liturgy on young people. To all it was clear that the doctrine preached and the spirituality fostered were simply Catholic. *Juventutem* chose St. John Bosco as its special patron. The great apostle of the youths once dreamed of three whitenesses, the Holy Eucharist, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Roman Pontiff. The more those three are honoured together, the more *Juventutem* young people feel at home. Like their fellow Catholics all around the world, young traditional Catholics read recent Magisterial documents, including Vatican II. As a lay organisation dedicated to the sanctification of youth, they wholeheartedly support the universal call to holiness stated by the latest council. Since many of them are converts, they praise religious freedom and deplore any prejudice and coercion which would deter God’s children from finding Him in Jesus Christ through His Holy Church. They also welcome ecumenism as a genuine invitation to all fellow Christians to avail themselves of the means of salvation appointed by God in His Holy Church. Lastly, they favour the openness of the Church to the modern world – like “*A city seated on a mountain [that] cannot be hid*” (Matt 5:14) – displaying God’s truth and love for the benefit of society at every level. They know that the guidance offered by Holy Church earlier is still valid for today’s Catholics, whom Pope Francis called to be made “*fully conscious of all the fruits derived from this Council [of Trent], and that they may unite themselves in bringing these fruits to others and in propagating them in every way*”.[[6]](#footnote-6)

We, the young, loyal, and traditional Catholics, pray that our Holy Father Pope Francis and all our bishops will allow us further to seek sanctification from the liturgical and spiritual traditions of the Church of Rome, in keeping with the encouragements received over the past seventeen years from the Church Hierarchy and in thanksgiving to God for the good fruits bore. May we conclude with this wise statement by Pope Francis at the end of his *Post-Synodal Exhortation* Christus Vincit *to Young People and to the Entire People of God* on 25 March 2019:

“229. *These and various other opportunities for evangelizing the young should not make us forget that, despite the changing times and sensibilities of young people, there are gifts of God that never grow old, for they contain a power transcending all times and places. There is the word of the Lord, ever living and effective, the nourishing presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Reconciliation, which brings us freedom and strength. We can also mention the inexhaustible spiritual riches preserved by the Church in the witness of her saints and the teaching of the great spiritual masters. Although we have to respect different stages of growth, and at times need to wait patiently for the right moment, we cannot fail to invite young people to drink from these wellsprings of new life. We have no right to deprive them of this great good.*”[[7]](#footnote-7)

Signed: Bureau of the International Juventutem Federation

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1. Here in the accusative form, as a quote from Psalm 42 recited at traditional Holy Masses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cf. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2021/documents/20210716-lettera-vescovi-liturgia.html#\_ftn5 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Letter to the Bishops on Summorum Pontificum: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2007/documents/hf\_ben-xvi\_let\_20070707\_lettera-vescovi.html [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cf. http://juventutem.org/. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Youth groups normally don’t last longer than five years. *Juventutem* chapters are currently active in Austria, Canada, Spain, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, England and America. Formerly active chapters were in Brazil, France, Switzerland, Germany, Kenya, Slovenia, Poland, Argentina, Hong Kong, Lithuania, New Zealand, Nigeria, Chile, Colombia, Scotland and Spain. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Letter to Card. Walter Brandmüller, Special Envoy to the celebrations for the 450th anniversary of the closing of the Ecumenical Council of Trent [Trent, 1st December 2013] (19 November 2013) cf. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/la/letters/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20131119_brandmuller-450-chiusura-concilio-trento.html>, accessed 29 July 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cf. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html>, accessed 29 July 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)