Message for World Youth Day
22 November 2026
His Eminence Frank Cardinal Leo
Metropolitan Archbishop of Toronto

My Dear Brothers and Sisters, especially the Youth of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

May Jesus and Mary be in your soul.

World Youth Day 2027 is coming fast, gathering hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from every continent in Seoul, South Korea. It is my hope and prayer that young people from across the archdiocese will consider participating in this beautiful experience. The theme: "Take courage! I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33), reminds us that our hope and confidence rest not in ourselves, but in Jesus, who brings us together, and who sends us into the world as his witnesses.

The World Youth Day theme brings us back to the Last Supper where Jesus speaks to his disciples on the night before his suffering and death. Amid the uncertainty, misunderstanding, and search for meaning of the disciples (Jn 13:6–9,21-25,27-29; 14:1-5, 8-9; 16:5,16-18,29-32), Jesus prepares them for his departure, teaches them to abide in his love, promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit, and assures them that his victory is greater than anything they will face in the world. World Youth Day mirrors this movement by gathering young people, helping them to deepen their encounter with Christ, strengthening their belonging in the Universal Church, and sending them forth as witnesses of God's love.

Christian courage is not self-confidence or fearlessness, rather it comes from knowing Christ and trusting him. It is the inner strength to believe when faith is questioned, to hope when the future seems uncertain, and to love generously in a world often marked by division and indifference. Christian courage is "constancy in the pursuit of the good" (CCC 1808), and is experienced especially as a family of faith that spans every nation, language, and culture, united by the same faith and the same Lord.

The choice of Seoul, South Korea is significant because it is the first World Youth Day to be held in a country where Christians are a minority. This setting also reminds us that the Gospel flourishes wherever courageous disciples bear witness to Christ with humility, joy, and perseverance. The history of the Church in Korea, born largely through the witness of lay faithful and strengthened by the sacrifice of its martyrs, offers a powerful example of faith lived with conviction and courage.

I warmly encourage our young people to make this pilgrimage. It is not uncommon for pilgrims to return home with renewed faith, lasting friendships, and a greater desire to serve Christ and his Church in their families, parishes, schools, and communities. May the words of Jesus echo in every heart: "Take courage! I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33) and inspire a new generation of missionary disciples who place their trust not in themselves, not the secular agenda, nor in empty promises that regrettably our culture makes us - but in the One who has already won the victory and who continues to lead his Church with hope: JESUS.

Be sure to contact your parish office or the Archdiocese's **Office of Catholic Youth** https://ocytoronto.org/wyd-seoul-2027 for more information.