



ARCHDIOCESE OF ANCHORAGE-JUNEAU
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

**GUIDANCE FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF
ANCHORAGE-JUNEAU IN WORLD YOUTH DAY 2023 IN LISBON, PORTUGAL**

Archbishop Andrew E. Bellisario, C.M.
August 18, 2021

For many years, Alaskan Catholics from the former Archdiocese of Anchorage and Diocese of Juneau have participated in World Youth Day (WYD), a massive gathering of young Catholics and their ministers with the Holy Father that has taken place every few years in a rotating series of locations throughout the world. In some years, the two former dioceses coordinated their efforts very closely, while in others they acted independently of each other. In all cases, dedicated ministers of each former diocese and of many parishes throughout Southern Alaska made it possible for many young Alaskan Catholics—numbering in the hundreds over the years—to participate in an event designed to guide and strengthen them in their journey of faith. They have also had the opportunity to experience the universality and diversity of the global Catholic Church, culminating in a direct encounter with the Vicar of Christ.

It is now time for our new Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau to prepare for WYD 2023, which will take place in August of that year. This offers us the opportunity for fresh approaches to the participation of young people from throughout our vast Archdiocese, developed in light of the wealth of experience that has been gained by both former dioceses over the years.

This experience has demonstrated that WYD is participated in most fruitfully by young people between the ages of 16 and 35—the age group for which the major WYD activities are designed. A major purpose of WYD is to help young people explore various approaches to worship and spirituality in an attempt to develop their own independent means of growth in faith in a structured environment. For these reasons, participation by our Archdiocese in WYD 2023 is limited to young people who will then be between the ages of 16 and 35, as well as those who will be 15 and about to enter their junior year of high school. Participation by older persons is limited to those who will be actively involved in official ministry to the young people on behalf of the Archdiocese during the pilgrimage, and who have met all archdiocesan safe environment standards and training requirements that apply to those engaged in ministry to minors.

In order to direct the extensive planning and fundraising processes that will be necessary, I have appointed a World Youth Day Planning Committee whose members are Father Mike Galbraith, the Pastor of Saint Paul's Parish in Juneau and the Director of Seminarians for the Archdiocese; Ms. Kimber Watt, the Director of Religious Education at Saint Paul's Parish; and Ms. Anna Schulten, the Faith Formation Director at Holy Cross Parish in Anchorage. This Committee is responsible for all WYD 2023 activities within the Archdiocese, and all such efforts by parishes, organizations, and individuals must take place under its direction. In addition, Mr. Robert

McMorrow, who has directed past WYD participation, has been asked to serve as a consultant to the Committee.

The Planning Committee will begin its work in September 2021 by asking each parish and mission community throughout the Archdiocese to assess realistically the level of interest in participation in WYD 2023 among its young people and the level of financial support that might be feasible from them, from their families, and from fundraising, designating an adult parish or mission contact person for communication with the Committee. This will initiate the archdiocesan WYD 2023 planning process, which will necessarily rely heavily on the use of Zoom and other means of electronic communication to ensure the broadest possible level of consultation throughout the entire Archdiocese. Until this occurs, youth ministers are asked not to undertake WYD 2023 planning efforts other than preliminary fundraising and assessment of youth interest within their respective parishes and missions. The form that the planning process and the WYD 2023 pilgrimage will ultimately take will depend greatly on this initial organizational and information gathering effort. We will also explore possibilities for coordinating our WYD 2023 planning efforts with those of the Diocese of Fairbanks.

I encourage pastors and pastoral ministers throughout the Archdiocese to publicize and promote WYD 2023 as a major initiative in the service of our young people for the strengthening of their union with Christ and the Church and the benefit of our entire Catholic community of Southern Alaska. With the intercession of the young person who is our archdiocesan Patroness, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, may the Lord bless this WYD pilgrimage.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Andrew E. Bellisario, C.M.
Archbishop of Anchorage-Juneau