



## Youth Day in Paris

**Benedict XVI addressed an estimated 10,000 young people - gathered for a prayer vigil near Notre Dame Cathedral, on the evening of Friday 12th September, the first day of his four-day trip to France, marking the 150th anniversary of the Blessed Virgin's apparitions at Lourdes - and entrusted them with two "treasures."**



After Vespers in the cathedral, the Holy Father met the youth, gathered in the plaza and thousands more gathered along the banks of the Seine, who watched the Pope on video screens.

The Holy Father said the encounter reminded him of World Youth Day in Sydney last July.

### The First Treasure: The Holy Spirit

Referring to the theme in Australia, he spoke to them of how the event helped many youth to rediscover the importance of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

*"The Spirit, who is Love, can open your hearts to accept the gift of genuine love . . . All of you are seeking the truth; and all of you want to live in truth, to truly live in it! This truth is Christ. He is the only Way, the one Truth and the true Life.*

*"Surrender yourselves to the Holy Spirit in order to find Christ. The Spirit is our indispensable guide in prayer, he animates our hope and he is the source of true joy ."*

The Pope then went on to invite the young *"to meditate on the importance of the Sacrament of Confirmation ... which leads you into a mature faith life. It is vital for you to understand this Sacrament more and more in order to evaluate the quality and depth of your faith and to reinforce it. The Holy Spirit enables you to approach the mystery of God; He makes you understand Who God is. He invites you to see in your neighbours the brothers and sisters whom God has given you, in order to live with them in human and spiritual fellowship - in other words, to live within the Church. By revealing Who the crucified and risen Lord is for us, He impels you to bear witness to Christ"*.

### Becoming witnesses to God

Benedict XVI encouraged the young people to have an apostolic spirit.

*"Bring the Good News to the young people of your age, and to others as well . . . They know what it means to experience difficulty in relationships, worry and uncertainty in the face of work and study. They have experienced suffering, but they have also known unique moments of joy. Be witnesses of God, for, as young people, you are fully a part of the Catholic community through your baptism and our common profession of faith. The Church has confidence in you, and I want to tell you so ."*

### The Second Treasure

He then "entrusted" the youth with a second "treasure"

- the mystery of the cross.



*"Many of you", he said, "wear a cross on a chain around your neck. I too wear one. ... It is not a mere decoration or a piece of jewellery. It is the precious symbol of our faith, the visible and material sign that we belong to Christ*

*"For Christians, the cross signifies God's wisdom and His infinite love revealed in the saving gift of Christ, crucified and risen for the life of the world, and in particular for the life of each and every one of you . . . May this amazing realization that God was made man for love, lead you to respect and venerate the cross*

*"I know that venerating the cross can sometimes bring mockery and even persecution. The cross in some way seems to threaten our human security. Yet, above all else, it also proclaims God's grace and confirms our salvation. This evening, I entrust you with the cross of Christ. The Holy Spirit will enable you to understand its mysteries of love ."*

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