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Pope Francis speaks to young people in a video message published May 4, ahead of World Youth Day. (CNS screengrab/Courtesy of Holy See Press Office)



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Just under three months before World Youth Day gets underway in Lisbon, Portugal, Pope Francis said young people should consult their grandparents about how to prepare.

In a two-minute video message recorded in Spanish and published May 4, the pope urged young people preparing for World Youth Day to "look toward your roots."

"Try to spend time with the elderly. Many of you have grandparents; visit your grandparents," he said, and ask them, "What do you think I must do?" to prepare for World Youth Day.

"Talk a little with your grandparents. They'll give you wisdom, but always go forward," said the pope.

Francis is expected to attend part of the weeklong international meeting, which will take place Aug. 1-6.

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Despite the many things young people have on their mind to prepare for the international gathering — such as requesting vacation or getting what they need in order before making a long trip — they must look to World Youth Day with hope, Francis said.

"Have hope, because one grows a lot at an event like World Youth Day," he said. "We don't realize it, but things remain inside us. The values we find within us remain, the relationships we form with other young people from other countries, the encounters, it all remains inside."

"Above all," he said, "seeing the strength of young people. The church has the strength of the youth."

A spokesperson for World Youth Day said that as of May 4 more than 550,000 young people already were registered for the event in Lisbon. The pope, on camera and live in front of thousands of people gathered to pray the Angelus with him, registered in October with the help of some Portuguese young people.

The theme for this year's World Youth Day is "Mary arose and went in haste," a passage from the Gospel of Luke.