



## World Children's Day 25-26 May 2024

*"Behold, I make all things new"*

Dear friends,  
Peace and goodness to you all.

As you know, last 8 December 2023, the Holy Father Francis announced the first World Children's Day, to be held next 25 and 26 May, entrusting the organization to the Dicastery for Culture and Education and, at the same time, appointing me Coordinator. A demanding but exciting task, in which I will be assisted by the *Sant'Egidio* Community and the *Auxilium* Cooperative.

I like to quote the Holy Father's words at the Angelus on 8 December: "What type of world do we want to transmit to the children who are growing up? Like Jesus, we want to put children at the centre and take care of them". As Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça reminds us, in his Letter to the Brothers in the Episcopate: "As a new event, prepared in a short time, the first Day will resemble the rehearsal of a concert rather than the concert itself, a seed rather than a tree".

I come to you to respond to some significant questions:

### **To whom?**

World Children's Day is addressed to boys and girls between 5 and 12 years of age, and their adult companions. As an indicative criterion, we have assumed 3 adults for every 7 children.

### **Where?**

In the letter sent on 6 February by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça to the Episcopal Conferences, it is indicated that the Day be lived at a dual level: universal, based in Rome, and local. This latter may be diocesan, interdiocesan, or national, depending on expediency and convenience.

### *Universal level*

The Roman event comprises two moments: **Saturday 25 May, from 15.00 to 18.30**. The venue has yet to be defined for a moment of celebration and proclamation, with the presence of the Holy Father; and on **Sunday 26 May, at 10.00**, in Saint Peter's Square, the Celebration of Holy Mass presided over by the Holy Father. Given the minor age of the protagonists, the maximum number of participants expected is around 100,000, including accompanying adults. Every local Church is guaranteed the possibility of a representation.

### *Local level*

The design and organisation of the local World Children's Day is left to the creativity of the individual Dioceses and Bishops' Conferences, bearing in mind the short preparation time for the 2024 edition. The programme should at least include a moment of proclamation and celebration, and the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration. It is useful to send to this Committee the programme produced and the material produced locally; it would be a valuable contribution to the planning of future editions.

### **Registration**

- Registration for the event in Rome – subject to availability – may be sent by Dioceses, Parishes, Movements, Schools and Associations.
- In the planning of local events, respect for the civil and ecclesiastical rules for the “Protection of minors” is deemed obligatory.
- To register, it will be necessary to follow the procedure indicated at the following link <https://www.worldchildrenday.org/it/prenota> of the dedicated website <https://www.worldchildrenday.org>. You will also find the Italian version: [www.giornatamondialedeibambini.org](http://www.giornatamondialedeibambini.org)
- For further and personalized information, it is possible to write to [direzione@gmb24.org](mailto:direzione@gmb24.org)
- Registration will involve a payment of 5 Euros per person which, besides representing confirmation of registration, will be paid to a solidarity fund to support the poorest among the participants.

### **Twinning**

We have launched a twinning initiative to raise awareness and encourage Dioceses, Federations, Movements, Groups and Associations to welcome and host children from the poorest and most disadvantaged countries. To simplify this procedure, we have created a dedicated mailbox: [gemellaggi@gmb24.org](mailto:gemellaggi@gmb24.org). You can use this address for any necessary communication, information or assistance.

### **Suggestions**

I would like to say to you that any suggestion or proposal is truly valuable to us, so as to be able to work better and in synergy.

May the Virgin Mary and mutual prayer accompany us.

### **Father Enzo Fortunato**

*Coordinator, World Children's Day*