

## Pope Francis

Dear young people,

It is on the shores of the Baltic, in Tallinn, that you are meeting this year for the 47th European Meeting led by the Taizé Community. Pope Francis sends his warmest greetings to you, to the brothers of the Community, to the leaders of the various Christian confessions in Estonia and to all the people of goodwill who are welcoming you at the end of this year.

During his Apostolic Journey to the three Baltic States in 2018, the Holy Father met young people in the Kaarli Lutheran Church in Tallinn, and he had these words that also describe what you are experiencing these days: “It is always good to meet, to share our life stories, and to share with one another our thoughts and hopes; it is wonderful, too, for us to come together as believers in Jesus Christ.” (Ecumenical meeting with young people, 25 September 2018)

Coming together in a spirit of sharing and fellowship: this is all the more important in today's context, when our world is going through serious trials. Many countries are marked by violence and war, many people are victims of inhumane treatment, and still others are disorientated by the inequalities in our societies and the grave ecological dangers.

These days in Tallinn, you want to “hope beyond all hope”, according to the title of the letter that Brother Matthew, Prior of Taizé, has written for the coming year. This appeal, in tune with the theme of the Jubilee Year that will mark the year of 2025, is also addressed to each and every one of you: “Walk in hope! Hope overcomes all weariness, every crisis and every worry. It gives us a powerful incentive to press forward, for it is a gift received from God himself, who fills our life with meaning, sheds light on our path and shows us its ultimate direction and goal” (Message for the 39th World Youth Day, 24 November 2024)

Dear young people, the Holy Father is counting on you and reaffirms the trust that the Church has in you, because the universal Church needs all of you to proclaim the good news of God's love today. This is also the meaning of the synodal process undertaken by the Catholic Church, which has led to a fine advance in ecumenical friendship with our brothers and sisters of different Christian confessions.

Entrusting each one of you and your families to the Lord, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, Pope Francis wholeheartedly bestows his apostolic blessing on you and entrusts himself to your prayers.

*Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State*

## Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Dear young people,

It is with great joy and deep affection that we send you this message on the occasion of the European Meeting organised by the Taizé Community in the beautiful city of Tallinn. This event, which brings together young people from different nations and Christian traditions, is a living testimony to unity in Christ and to our common call to live as disciples of the Risen Lord.

The theme chosen for this meeting, “Hope beyond all hope”, invites us to deepen our faith in God, who is the ultimate source of hope. This hope, rooted in the resurrection of Christ, calls us to look beyond the challenges of our time. As the apostle Paul wrote: “Hoping against hope, he believed” (Romans 4:18). This message reminds us that faith opens up a path where there seems to be none.

In a world marked by divisions, conflicts and uncertainties, you are the bearers of new hope. By coming together to pray, share and reflect, you demonstrate the reality of God's love, which transcends borders and unites hearts in genuine communion. By your example, you show that the Christian faith is a transforming force capable of bringing peace and hope even in the darkest of times. We therefore invite you to pray in particular for the countries and regions ravaged by war and conflict, especially Ukraine and the Middle East.

The city of Tallinn, with its rich spiritual and cultural history, becomes in these days a sign of light for Europe and the world. By your presence here, you are witnesses to that light which is Christ, “the true light that enlightens every person” (John 1:9). This light calls you to be peacemakers, servants of God's justice and ambassadors of reconciliation. In a world often clouded by indifference and misunderstanding, your commitment is a spark of hope.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Taizé Community, and in particular to Brother Matthew, for their unceasing commitment to Christian unity. Your witness reminds us that unity is not a distant dream, but a reality that we can taste here and now, in humility and mutual love. The work of the Taizé Community inspires thousands of people around the world and reminds us that we are all called to work for lasting reconciliation.

Dear young people, we encourage you to deepen your faith, to constantly seek God's will and to live according to the teachings of the Gospel. Be messengers of Christian hope in your families, communities and societies. As the apostle Paul wrote: “Let everything you do be done with love” (1 Corinthians 16:14). This passage reminds us that love must be at the centre of everything we do, because it is through love that we reflect the face of Christ in the world.

In this spirit, we invite you to cultivate relationships based on listening and mutual respect. Every encounter, every dialogue, is an opportunity to discover the richness of others and to bear witness to the beauty of God's creation. You are called to be builders of communion, to build bridges where there are walls, and to enlighten the world by your actions and your words.

We pray that this European Meeting will be a source of inspiration, spiritual renewal and abundant graces for each of you. May the Lord guide and strengthen you in your journey of faith and witness. We trust that this experience will strengthen your desire to serve the Church and society with generosity and dedication in the new year ahead.

Your fervent intercessor before God

## The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is with great joy that I send greetings as you gather in Tallinn for this International Meeting for Young Europeans, hosted by Taizé. This gathering is a wonderful opportunity for young participants and their hosts to begin the new year united in prayer, fellowship, and hope.

I encourage each of you to embrace this chance to be pilgrims of hope and peace. As we embark on this journey together, let us carry within us the spirit of Taizé, a spirit that calls us to unity, reconciliation, and love.

When I first came to Taizé over thirty years ago, I was struck by the church where we gather to worship three times a day. It has multiple entrances and exits, reminding us that we can approach—or even leave—in many ways as we are gathered and sent out by Christ in different ways and in different directions. But at the centre is Christ, and his invitation that we come to him to find hope and peace for our lives and for the world.

If you find yourself here unsure of what it means or why you've come, know that you are in good company. Like Peter, we often stand with a mix of joy and trepidation before Jesus, but there is no better place to stand—for here we find the words of eternal life. May they guide you in the days to come. And may Christ direct your life.

As we seek God's blessing for the new year, I pray that this journey will inspire each of you to return home with a renewed commitment to building unity and working for reconciliation. These are the gifts our world and church so deeply need.

With peace and hope

## The Secretary General of the World Lutheran Federation, Rev. Dr Anne Burghardt

Dear young people gathered by the Taizé community in Tallinn,  
Dear pilgrims of hope and peace!

Many greetings to all of you on behalf of the Lutheran World Federation, a worldwide communion of Lutheran churches, as you gather during this Christmas time, during the time where we celebrate the light that comes to the world through Jesus Christ. It is so important to gather in person, to listen attentively, to be in dialogue, to be transformed through the encounters. When we gather in God's name, it is ultimately God who transforms us through the encounters. We can't transform ourselves. Transformation is God's work, the Holy Spirit, always shaping us, molding us into persons of peace, persons of hope, and into communities of reconciliation and justice.

Transformation takes time and requires persistence and patience. As followers of Christ, we are not to be conformed to this world but, as Paul says in Romans 12, we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The Holy Spirit calls us to this ongoing transformation of our own minds, hearts, and attitudes which then impacts the communities we belong to so that they too become communities of hope in our world.

A community of hope sees a sibling in every human being. It takes seriously what Scripture teaches about encountering Jesus Christ in every person in need (Mt 25:31-40). It speaks out against injustice, so that righteousness may roll down like an ever-flowing stream (Am 5:24). It supports the gifts of all its members regardless of ethnicity or gender (Gal 3:28). And, it takes seriously the task to nurture God's creation (Gen 2:15).

All this is the work of the Holy Spirit in and through us, in and through our communities. We are witnesses to that hope beyond all hope, a hope that transforms the world.

May you be richly blessed so that you may be a blessing to others.

In Christ

## **The President of the World Methodist Council, Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett**

Dear Brother Matthew and European Young People,

I greet you on behalf of the World Methodist Council as you gather by the Baltic Sea in Tallinn, Estonia, for your European Youth Meeting.

I am inspired by your decision to enter the New Year in prayer and fellowship with other Christians. Know that I will join you in heart and spirit by praying 2024 out and 2025 in from 11:30 pm to midnight EST on New Year's Eve.

It is a difficult time in our world due to wars, famines, climate change and more. In addition, many people suffer personal health, relational, spiritual, emotional and economic challenges. Yet Christians are people of hope due to our faith in Jesus Christ. Our hope lies in the Resurrected Christ who offers us new life that begins now and continues forever. As stated in II Corinthians 5:17, "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being."

The theme "hoping beyond all hope" captures the spirit of Christians as we journey through this life. In addition to being people of hope, we are instruments of God's peace through our words and actions. May you grow in your identity of "pilgrims of hope, pilgrims of peace" through this experience of prayer and fellowship.

My prayers are with you as you meet, pray and enjoy each other's company on this important occasion. Blessings to you as you "hope beyond all hope" now and always. In Christ,

## **The Secretary General of the Baptist World Alliance, Rev. Dr. Elijah Brown**

As the Baptist World Alliance family, we come together to celebrate and share in the joy of your gathering this winter, where you will begin the New Year in prayer and Christian fellowship. We see this gathering as a profound expression of unity in Christ.

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) is a Christian World Communion that was founded in 1905 and draws on over 400 years of shared history and is today found in 134 countries and represents over 51 million baptized believers. Extending to every part of the world, the BWA exists as an expression of the essential oneness of Baptists in the Lord Jesus Christ. Together we share a common confession of faith in Jesus Christ and are bonded together by God's love to support, encourage, and strengthen one another while proclaiming and living the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit before a lost and hurting world.

Your dedication and commitment to our shared faith is truly inspiring. As you gather together, we see your efforts as a testament to the values central to the BWA – values of passionately living the Gospel and supporting the spiritual lives of the Next Generation of Christians. The Christian community is united by a common faith across diverse cultures in a covenant of shared transformation in Jesus Christ, shared relationship, and shared participation in the mission of God.

In this season, amidst the trials and tragedies that burden humanity, we offer a message of hope to everyone who is taking part in this meeting, young participants and hosts. We echo the efforts of encouragement so that you will be “pilgrims of hope, pilgrims of peace.” As you reflect on the challenges facing our world, may you also be emboldened by the promises of Christ, who calls us to be peacemakers and bearers of His hope. May this time renew your strength and conviction to embody this hope in every corner of your lives, communities, and beyond.

May you find renewed inspiration and strength. The BWA is here to support and stand alongside you as we journey alongside our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray God's grace continues to guide your path.

## The Ecumenical Officer of the World Evangelical Alliance, Rev. Samuel van der Maas

*“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain” (1Cor. 15:58)*

Dear friends,

In these dark days one could easily be tempted to become discouraged, seeing what humankind does to each other and to creation.

Yet our Lord Jesus came into this world to mend what is broken, to give perspective instead of hopeless, to teach and enable those who follow Him to live Love instead of selfishness and hate – to make peace possible.

You are such an encouragement to us all, by investing time, finances and energy from this most important motivation: to be ever more “pilgrims of hope, pilgrims of peace”.

Thank you for not giving up, but rather spreading this perspective and this reality that the world needs today.

Seeing everything that is going on, seeing so much pain everywhere, you may think that your effort cannot change much.

But be encouraged: your investment is never in vain, in the Lord!

Thankful greetings, in His Grace and grip,

## **The Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres**

I send my warmest greetings to all of you at the 47th European Meeting of Young Adults.

When I attended a Taizé gathering as a student, I was inspired by your community's values of peace, compassion and solidarity.

This year's message of 'hoping beyond all hope' is needed more than ever.

Around the world, conflicts are raging, inequalities are deepening, hate speech is tearing at the fabric of society and climate breakdown is all around us.

But I see hope in the young people around the globe leading the way in calling for change. As custodians of tomorrow, no one has a greater stake in forging a path to a better future. And the United Nations strives each day to grow and nurture that hope.

That is precisely why the Pact for the Future and the Declaration on Future Generations, adopted by the Member States of the United Nations in September, include commitments to strengthen the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making at the national and global levels.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing peace, sustainable development and human rights around the world. The United Nations stands with you and all people striving to build a more just, healthy and inclusive world. I wish you the very best for this year's meeting.



## The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen

Dear Brother Matthew,  
Dear friends of Taizé,

I am sure that this Annual Meeting will leave a lasting impression in you – just like it did with me when I attended two years ago. I still cherish the memory of those days. The faith and passion of the young people I met. The moments of silence and the moments of song. But also the words of wisdom of Brother Alois and many others. Back then, the theme you had chosen was “Becoming creators of unity”. It was perfect for a moment of rising polarisation. This year, once again, the theme chosen by Brother Matthew is the mirror of the times we live in. Times of war and sorrow, but also times when hope resists against all odds – hope beyond all hope.

Think about the events unfolding in Syria – a country that your community has a special connection to. After fourteen years of civil war and half a million victims, there is now the possibility of a new beginning. A new beginning like the one imagined by Father Paolo Dall’Oglio – who just like you dedicated his entire life to dialogue between faiths, and was kidnapped by the terrorists of Daesh for this. Some of you know his story: Father Paolo believed that the unity of all Syrians could not be achieved through repression – but only through reconciliation. He believed that beyond dictatorship, a new democratic Syria could rise. Achieving this dream will not be easy. Many Syrians – including those in Christian communities – are preoccupied about the future. We must be vigilant that all minorities are protected, and all religions respected. But after so much time and so much pain, hope is back to Syria.

As Brother Matthew wrote, there is no passivity in hope. In fact, hope is an active struggle against resignation. Nowhere is this clearer than in Ukraine. Every day, the bombs keep falling on Ukrainian cities, and every day, the people of Ukraine get up and keep on resisting against the aggressor. They know that giving up would not lead to peace, only to losing their freedom. And they need our support to keep the flame of hope alive. Resistance – not resignation – is the only road towards a just and lasting peace.

At this time of the year, Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Hope. May this Annual Meeting provide all of you with the strength to keep “hoping beyond all hope”. And may you and your families enjoy a peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours sincerely

## Mr Alar Karis, President of Estonia

Dear Taizé youth!

I am delighted that you have gathered in Tallinn, the northernmost capital city ever to host a Taizé New Year's meeting of young adults in Europe. This year's gathering will also go down in history as the largest gathering of young Christians ever held in Estonia.

The motto of the meeting – A Pilgrimage of Trust – refers to what is often lacking in today's world, which is trust between people, countries and nations. You, young people, can make a significant contribution to ensuring that there is more trust in the future than there is today. Trust is the foundation of everything, so it is important that we not only talk about it, but also act on it, everyone according to their possibilities. Trust also nurtures the self-confidence and courage that children, young people and adults need. By trusting each other and working together, we can also hope that the Europe of the future will have your face and be designed by you. And it will be united and strong.

In hope that in addition to the programme of the meeting, you will also find time to explore Tallinn and the attractions offered by the former Hanseatic city that has brought together people from different corners of the world over the centuries. Estonia is known in the world as a digital state and the land of unicorns, but there are still many things we are yet to see and experience.

Welcome to Tallinn, welcome to Estonia!

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*Head Taizé-noored!*

*Mul on väga hea meel, et olete eelolevaks aastavahetuseks kogunenud Tallinna, põhjapoolseimasse pealinna, kus Taizé aastavahetuse kohtumine on kunagi toimunud. Tänavune kohtumine kirjutatakse ajalikku ka sellega, et on suurim noorte kristlaste kokkutulek, mis Eestis on aset leidnud.*

*Kokkutuleku päevade moto – Usalduse palverännak – osundab sellele, millest tänases maailmas on sageli puudus ehk usaldusest inimeste, riikide ja rahvaste vahel. Teie, noored, saate väga oluliselt kaasa aidata sellele, et usaldust oleks tulevikus rohkem kui on täna. Usaldus on kõige alus. Seepärast on tähtis, et me sellest mitte üksnes ei räägi, vaid selle nimel igaüks vastavalt oma võimalustele ka tegutseme. Usaldusest kasvab ka enesekindlus ja julgus, mida on vaja nii lapsel, noorel kui täiskasvanul. Üksteist usaldades ja koos tegutsedes võime ka loota, et tuleviku Euroopa on teie nägu ja teie kujundatud. Ühte hoidev ja tugev.*

*Soovin, et lisaks kokkutuleku programmile leiate aega tutvuda ka Tallinna ja huviväärsustega, mida pakub kunagine hansalinn, mis on läbi aastasadade toonud kokku inimesi erinevatest ilmakaartest. Eesti on maailmas tuntud digiriigina ja üks sarvikute maana, kuid meil on siiski ka palju seda, mida oma silmaga näha ja oma käega katsuda.*

*Tere tulemast Tallinna, tere tulemast Eestisse!*

*Alar Karis, Eesti Vabariigi president*