

Why should the old care about the young?



Why should the young draw near to the old?

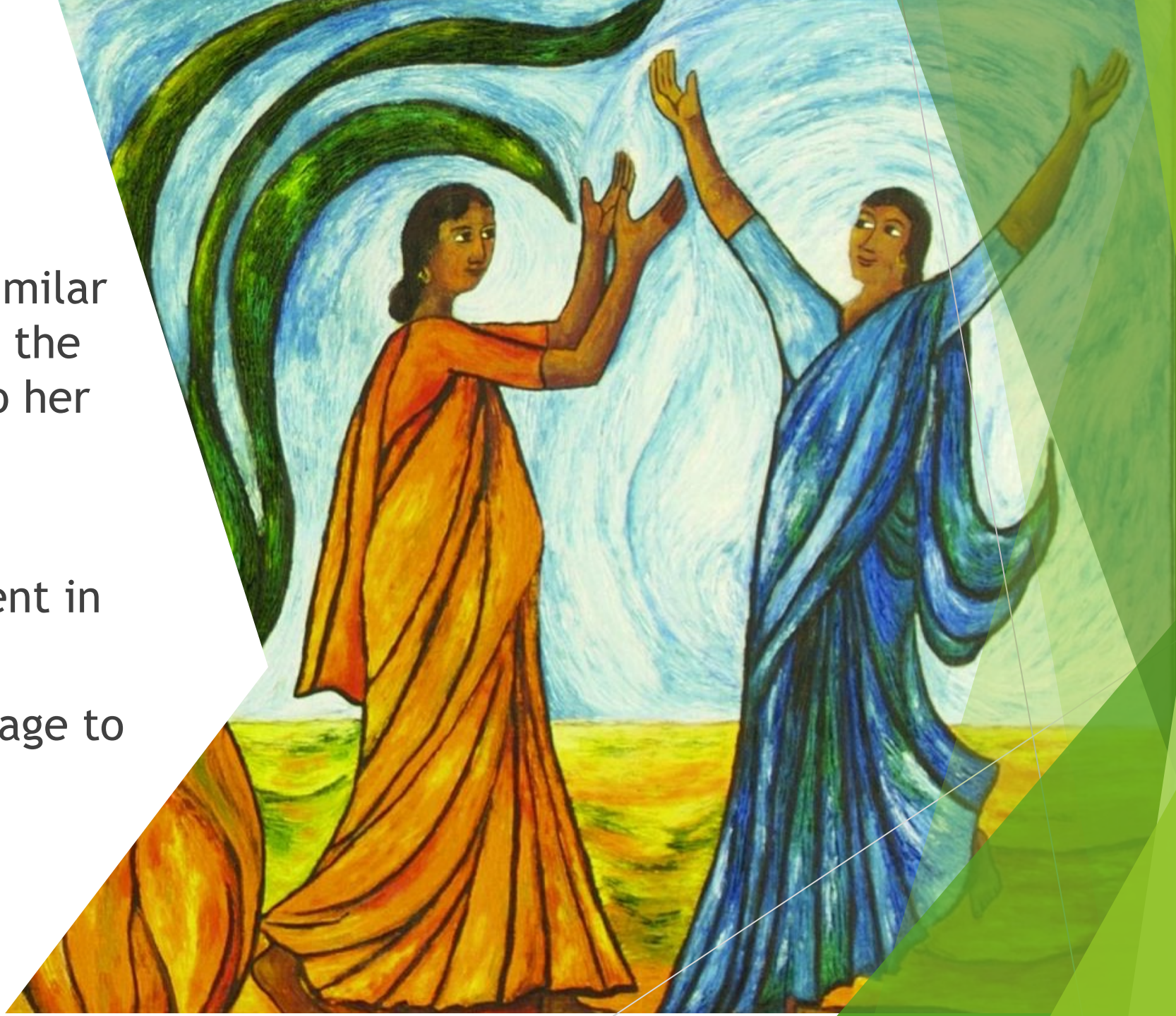


World Youth Day
was established in 1985
by Pope John Paul II
and the first international
celebration took place in Buenos
Aires, Argentina in 1986.

The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly
was established by Pope Francis in 2021.

This year the two celebrations have similar themes, taken from the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth ...

- ▶ Mary arose and went in haste.
- ▶ His mercy is from age to age.



Pope Francis chose these two themes to link the two events, just one more way that he is trying to foster a covenant between the generations!



Why should the old care about the young?

- The elderly have the gift of being “full of joy in the action of the Holy Spirit.”
- The elderly are like the roots of a tree.
- Elders have a specific mission in the Church as memory keepers.

“Elizabeth, though older, is the one who speaks of the future and, “filled with the Holy Spirit” (v. 41), prophesies in words that foreshadow the last of the Gospel beatitudes:

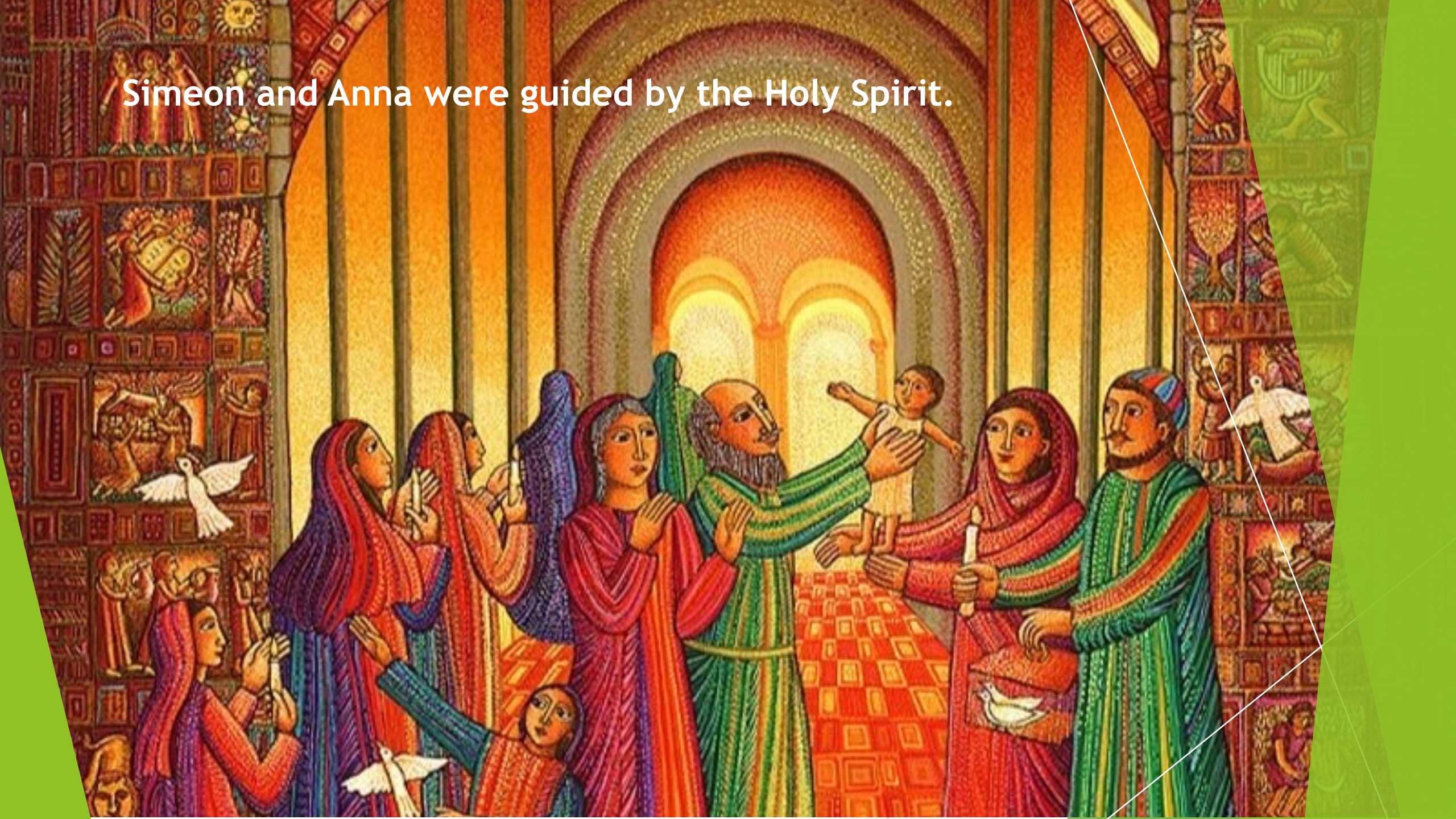
“Blessed are those who believe.”

Remarkably, the younger woman goes to meet the older one, seeking her roots, while the older woman is reborn and prophetically foretells the future of the younger one.

Here, young and old meet, embrace and awaken the best of each.”



Simeon and Anna were guided by the Holy Spirit.



Pope Francis wrote,

“In short, these two elders are full of life!

They are full of life because they are enlivened
by the Holy Spirit, obedient to his action,
sensitive to his calls....”



Simeon and Anna rejoice in the Holy Spirit and immediately recognize the Messiah. They are capable of recognizing God's presence in their lives, even though he comes in an unexpected way as a little baby.



Without the influence of their elders, young people are not able to envision the future, they end up stuck.

Without the witness of their elders' lives, the plans of young people will have neither roots nor wisdom.

Only the testimony of their elders will help young people look above the horizon to see the stars.
Just learning that it is worth fighting for something will help young people face the future with hope.



The elderly are like the roots of a tree: they have all the history there, and the young are like the flowers and the fruit.



“The blossoms on the tree/Draw life from what lies buried beneath”, (Francisco Luis Bernárdez). Everything beautiful that a society has is related to the roots of the elderly... The elderly are not throwaway material: they are a blessing for society.”



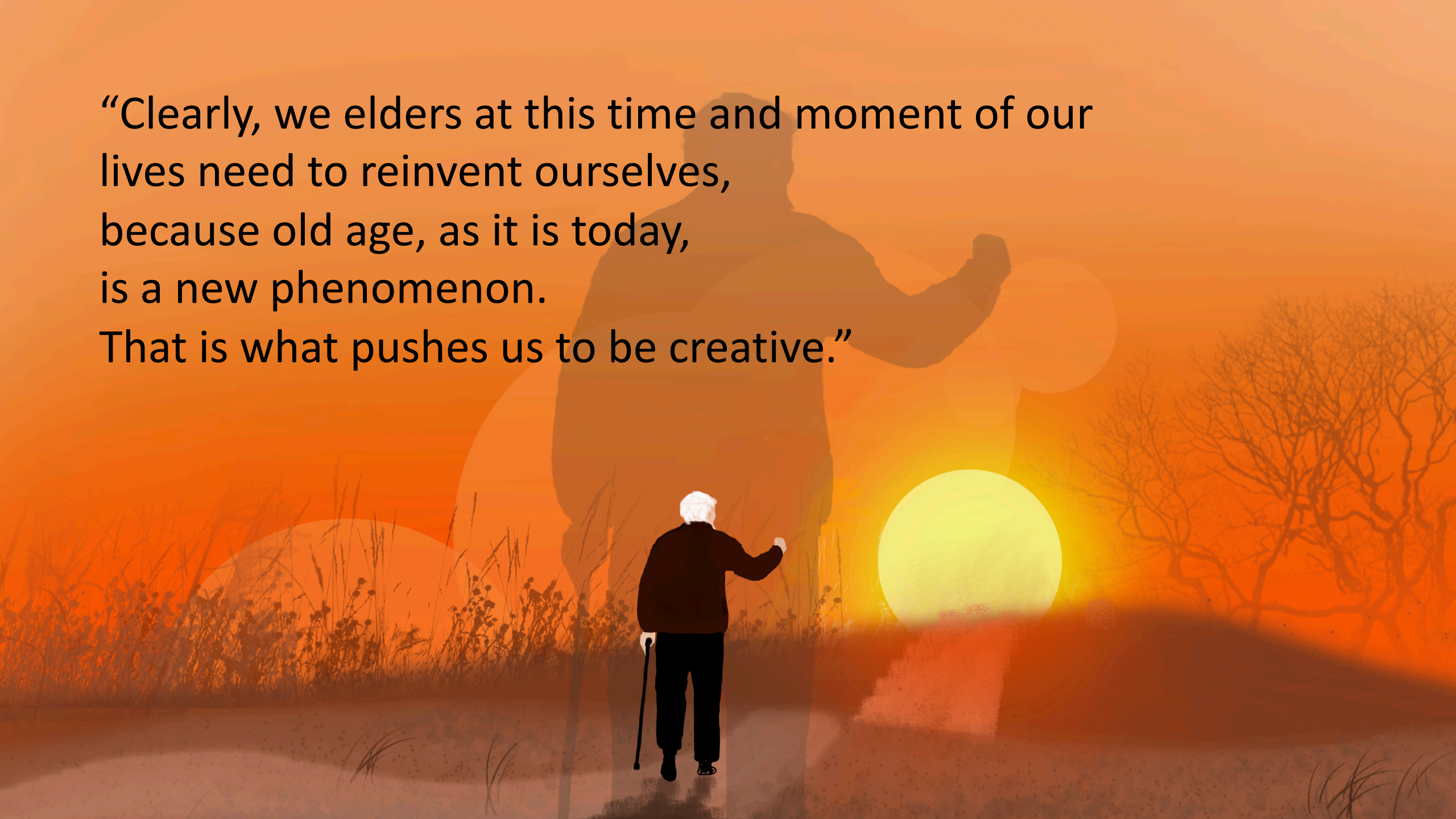
Pope Francis
asks elders to be
“memory keepers.”



“I envision elders as a permanent choir of a great spiritual sanctuary, where prayers of supplication and songs of praise support the larger community that works and struggles in the field of life.”



“Clearly, we elders at this time and moment of our lives need to reinvent ourselves, because old age, as it is today, is a new phenomenon. That is what pushes us to be creative.”



Why should the young draw near to the old?

“Mary was motivated by the needs of her elderly cousin. She did not hold back, or remain indifferent. She thought more of others than of herself.”



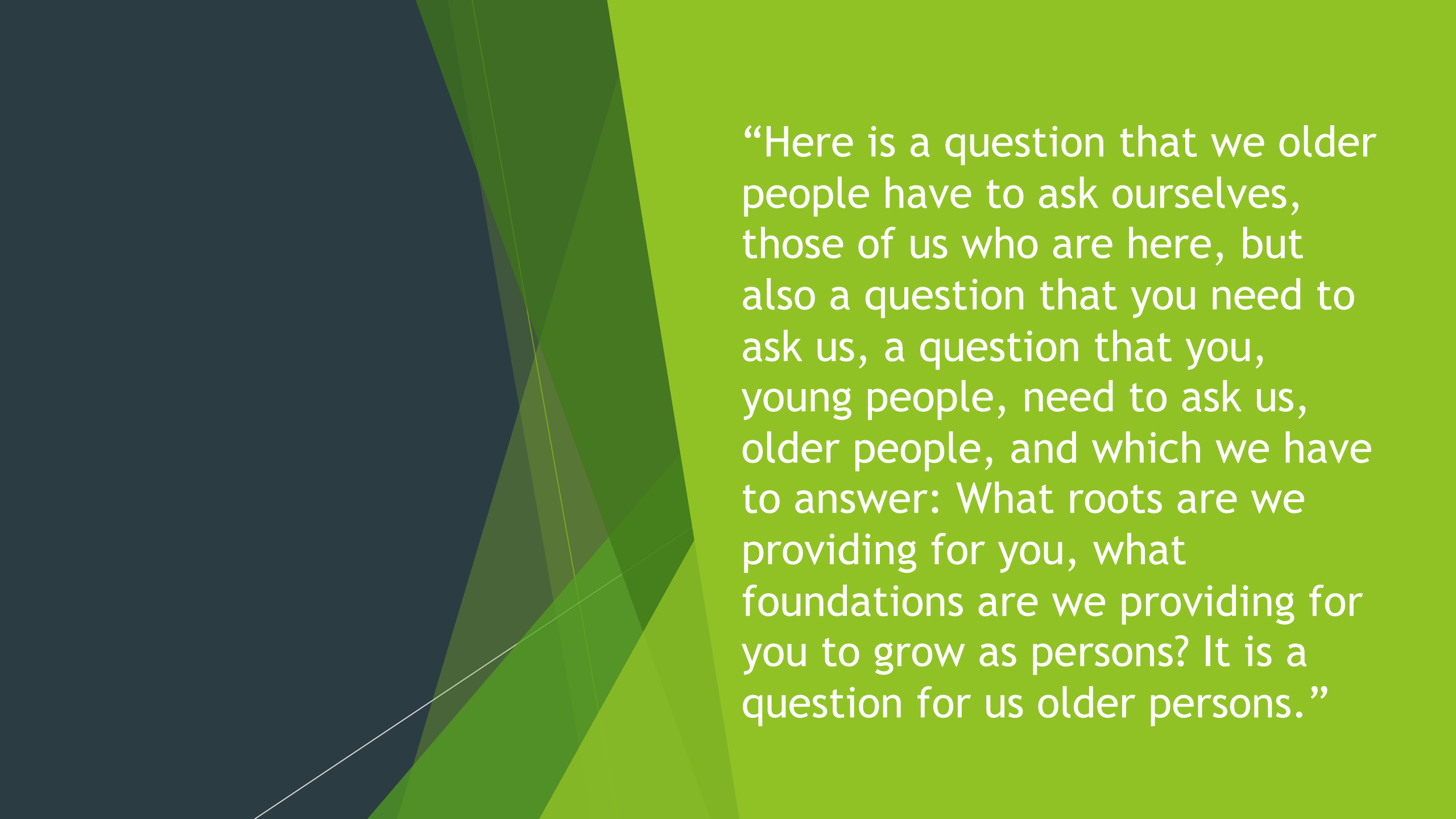
“The Mother of the Lord is a model for young people on the move, who refuse to stand in front of a mirror to contemplate themselves or to get caught up in the ‘net.’ Mary’s focus is always directed outwards. She is the woman of Easter, in a permanent state of exodus, going forth from herself towards that great Other who is God and towards others, her brothers and sisters, especially those in greatest need, like her cousin Elizabeth.”

“The word of God encourages us to remain close to the elderly, so that we can benefit from their experience: ‘Stand in the assembly of the elders. Who is wise? Cling to him... If you see an intelligent man, visit him; let your foot wear out his doorstep’ (*Sir* 6:34.36).”



“It is impossible for us to grow unless we have strong roots to support us and to keep us firmly grounded. It is easy to drift off, when there is nothing to clutch onto, to hold onto.”





“Here is a question that we older people have to ask ourselves, those of us who are here, but also a question that you need to ask us, a question that you, young people, need to ask us, older people, and which we have to answer: What roots are we providing for you, what foundations are we providing for you to grow as persons? It is a question for us older persons.”

“The Lord trusts that young people, through their relationships with the elderly, will realize that they are called to cultivate memory and recognize the beauty of being part of a much larger history.”



“Friendship with an older person can help the young to see life not only in terms of the present and realize that not everything depends on them and their abilities. For the elderly, the presence of a young person in their lives can give them hope that their experience will not be lost and that their dreams can find fulfilment.”

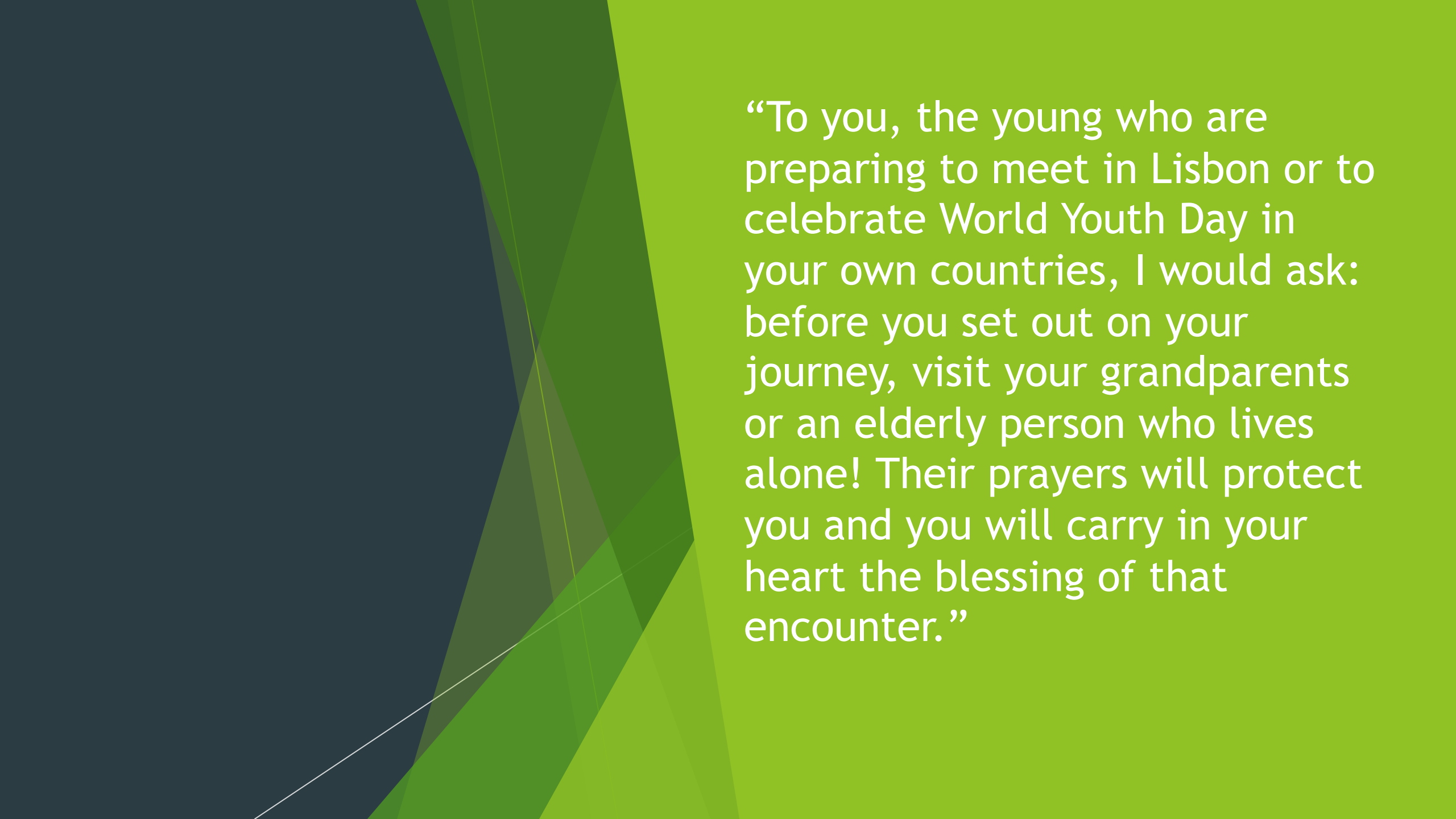




“Mary’s visit to Elizabeth and their shared awareness that the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation remind us that, alone, we cannot move forward, much less save ourselves, and that God’s presence and activity are always part of something greater, the history of a people.”



“In the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth, between young and old, God points us towards the future that he is opening up before us. Indeed, Mary’s visit and Elizabeth’s greeting open our eyes to the dawn of salvation: in their embrace, God’s mercy quietly breaks into human history amid abundant joy.”



“To you, the young who are preparing to meet in Lisbon or to celebrate World Youth Day in your own countries, I would ask: before you set out on your journey, visit your grandparents or an elderly person who lives alone! Their prayers will protect you and you will carry in your heart the blessing of that encounter.”

“I ask you, the elderly among us, to accompany by your prayers the young people about to celebrate World Youth Day. Those young people are God’s answer to your prayers, the fruits of all that you have sown, the sign that God does not abandon his people, but always rejuvenates them with the creativity of the Holy Spirit.”

“Dear grandparents,
dear elderly brothers
and sisters, may the
blessing of the
embrace between
Mary and Elizabeth
come upon you and fill
your hearts with
peace. With great
affection, I give you
my blessing. And I ask
you, please, to pray
for me.”

