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The Philippine Cardinal urges young people not to be afraid to present themselves to God as they are, without cosmetics or aesthetics.

Today, Cardinal Antonio Tagle of the Philippines urged young people not to be afraid to show their faces to God, because God's merciful gaze will transform them and make them radiant, like Moses when he saw the Lord.

In his homily at the Mass celebrated this afternoon at the altar in the prayer area of the Shrine of Fatima, Archbishop Antonio Tagle expressed the hope that the parents and friends of the young people coming to Portugal for World Youth Day Lisbon 2023 will recognise that they return transformed and changed.

Not because of what they ate in Portugal or because of the sun they caught during the days of WYD, he commented, but because they showed their faces and were transformed by the mercy and goodness of God, he said, recalling that God is rich in

mercy and slow to anger.

Based on the first reading (Ex 33:7-11, 34:5b-9, 28), the Cardinal focused his homily on the all the concerns about one's face that affect young people today, with their obsession with appearance: "How do I look to others?".

"They even try to change their face to please others, society, fashion," he said with a sigh, adding that this form of social pressure is "tiring".

"Don't worry, God looks at you directly, sees your face as it is. Don't be afraid to show your face. When God looks at your face, it will also be transformed, it will be radiant, like Moses'. You do not need cosmetics, aesthetic surgery, take from here, take from there, move here," he stressed.

The Cardinal, Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelisation, hoped that when the young pilgrims return home, they will be able to explain to their families and friends what had motivated the change in their faces: "I saw the face of God, I showed my face and I was transformed".

Referring to the Gospel of the day (Mt 13:36-43), in which Jesus explains to the disciples the parable of the chaff in the field, Mgr. Antonio Tagle said that we all have a good side, the wheat, but also a bad side, the tares.

"Like the owner of the field in the parable, God is patient, he waits for us. But let's not waste this time given God has given us. It's not a time for complacency, it's a time for repentance. I will always be better like the wheat than the tares," he emphasised.

"Young people, look at the companions around you. Let us pray that their faces will be radiant when they return from their encounter with God and the Blessed Mother", he concluded.

Mgr. Antonio Tagle, Cardinal since June 2022, presided at this afternoon's Mass at the altar of the prayer centre of the Shrine, concelebrated by five bishops and 81 priests, and attended by groups of young pilgrims from different countries, such as Spain, Canada, the United States, France, Italy, Germany, Venezuela, Chile and the Philippines.

He had already been in Fatima to preside over the International Anniversary Pilgrimage of May 2019.

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