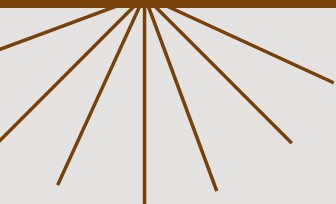


“PILGRIMS OF HOPE”

Program of Spiritual Formation
of Ukrainian Youth for the Jubilee Year



4. THE GUIDE



Meeting 2
February 2025

2. Clothing

Pilgrimage and Confession of Faith



2.1 Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
O Heavenly King. The Lord's Prayer. Hail Mary.



2.2 Patron Saint

Saint Francis of Assisi

Saint Francis of Assisi was born into a wealthy family in Italy at the end of the 12th century. His youth was filled with fun, entertainment, and extravagance. He wore luxurious clothes, sought fame and respect, and dreamed of becoming a great warrior. But Francis's life changed after a difficult experience of war and captivity. At that time, he began to think more deeply about the meaning of life and his relationship with God.

One day, Francis was praying in a half-destroyed church and heard the voice of Christ: "Rebuild My house, which you see is falling into ruin." At first, he literally began to rebuild the temple, but he soon realized that this was a call to rebuild the Church through simplicity and love.



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2.2 Patron Saint

Saint Francis of Assisi

To fulfill this calling, Francis made a radical choice: he renounced his wealth, his luxurious clothes, and even his family inheritance. Instead of his magnificent attire, he wore a simple garment of coarse cloth tied with a rope. This garment became a symbol of his trust in God and his desire to be close to ordinary people.

Francis sought to live authentically, without hiding his true nature behind masks of status or wealth. He became a symbol of freedom from material things and encouraged others to see their uniqueness in the eyes of God, not through outward appearances.

How does this relate to the topic of clothing? Saint Francis reminds us that clothing is only external. It should not become a mask that hides our identity or a way to gain acceptance from others. His choice of simplicity teaches us:

Be yourself. Clothes and status do not define us – our uniqueness is who we are before God.

Live meaningfully. Don't burden yourself with unnecessary things that can distract you from what's important.

Trust in God. Like Saint Francis, believe that God cares for you even in the simplest things.

Saint Francis shows us how to free ourselves from the need to “appear” to be someone else and how to become open to God's Providence. His example inspires young people to bravely go against the flow, valuing the inner more than the outer.



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2.3 God's Word

Gospel of
Matthew 10:9-10

Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts – no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep.

Reflections:

How to dress properly for a trip or pilgrimage? What to pack and what to leave at home? Today we are used to traveling with wheeled suitcases or roomy backpacks. But once upon a time, travel was completely different – much more complicated and demanding.

Jesus gives his disciples specific instructions, addressing the twelve apostles who are to go before him to proclaim the Kingdom of God. He urges them to take with them only the bare necessities. In our time, on the contrary, we often take with us things that ultimately turn out to be unnecessary and only weigh us down. Sometimes, when we return home, we realize that we could do without most of the things.

Jesus draws attention to several important aspects:

1. Money. Money is necessary, but it can distort or even destroy relationships. Jesus asks us to trust in God's providence. Even if today it is difficult to imagine traveling without money (tickets, accommodation, etc.), trusting in Providence means leaving room for God's surprises – for example, in the form of new encounters, friendships or support that money cannot buy.



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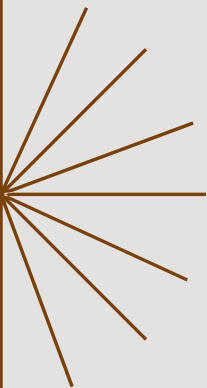
2.3 God's Word

Reflections

2. Luggage. Luggage should be light. Setting out on a journey with the belief that you must take everything you have is a sign of self-confidence and an unwillingness to be open to new lessons and gifts. Light luggage helps you remain flexible and open to change.

3. Clothing. Jesus says, “Do not take two coats.” This is a call to trust in God, who provides the necessities for those who love Him. Clothing is also a symbol of how we present ourselves to others. Jesus invites his disciples to be themselves, not to burden themselves with unnecessary things, not to hide their true nature behind masks.

Jesus also warns against over-planning. He does not want the apostles to think through every last detail: the perfect sandals, the protective clothing, or the staff for defense. Instead, he reminds them that the proclamation of the Gospel should be simple, modest, and free from excess – just as Jesus himself lived.



These instructions are not only for the apostles, but for each of us. A pilgrimage or any journey in life is an opportunity to live lightly, without unnecessary burdens. It means trusting those who travel alongside you, trusting life, and trusting God.



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2.4 Subject block



Clothing: This is how we present ourselves to others. It is a conscious choice of a certain “mask” that makes others see us through a certain filter. Clothing becomes a tool to either hide ourselves or show who we really are.

Like John the Baptist, who wore camel hair, or pilgrims who carry a shell with them as a symbol of their journey.

In today's world, appearance is increasingly becoming a way to express one's uniqueness. It demonstrates that the body is not something separate from the individual, but an integral part of our identity. How we choose to present ourselves to others defines who we are.

However, clothing can also become a mask that hides our true identity, or a way to simply “appear” to be someone, which actually weakens our inner being.

That is why it is important to free this sphere from unnecessary artificial elements that do not correspond to the truth about us. But at the same time, it is worth leaving what helps to show our depth, our inner world.

For the pilgrim, his or her attire becomes a practice of finding simplicity and true essence. This essence is not about what we should wear physically, but how we should “clothe” our soul. Finding the right “clothes” for life is a question of where we “dwell,” how we can feel at home, or even on a journey.

During a pilgrimage, it is important to find your true essence, even if you are physically far from home.



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2.5 Personal reflections

- Do your clothes hide you or reveal you?
- Are you aware of your uniqueness? Do you feel that others perceive you as unique?
- On a pilgrimage, clothing and equipment should be as simple as possible and only the necessary. Do you know how to live a substantial life, discarding the extra?
- Does what you wear usually say something about who you are, or is it more of a way to gain acceptance from those around you?
- Was there a time when you felt uncomfortable even in your “clothes”?
- Do you have a habit of judging people by their appearance, or can you look deeper to get to know them for who they really are, having spent part of your life’s journey with them?



2.6 Work in groups

“Clothing as a Symbol: Who Are You Really? ”

Duration: 30 minutes

Purpose: to help youth discover how clothing and appearance reflect or hide their inner essence, and learn to see themselves and others through the prism of spiritual depth.

Instructions for conducting

1. Moderator's opening remarks (5 min).

The moderator explains to the participants:

- Clothes are often part of our identity: they show who we want to be, but can sometimes hide who we really are.



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2.6 Work in groups

- Jesus called his disciples in the Gospel of Matthew (10:9-10) to be simple and not to be overly concerned with external things, but to focus on the spiritual.
- Today we will explore how clothing helps or hinders us from showing our true essence, and consider what “true clothing of the soul” means to us.

2. Group tasks (20 min)

Step 1: Game “Dress the story” (10 min)

- Each group (6-8 people) receives a set of cards with different clothing styles (e.g., sports, business, festive, historical, poor pilgrim clothing, etc.) or symbols (pilgrim's shell, St. Francis' belt, rosary, etc.).
- Task: choose one card and make up a short story (up to 2 minutes) about the person wearing that clothing.
- Participants should think about:
 - What does this clothing say about the person?
 - Does this clothing help the individual show their true nature or does it hide it?
 - Can this person be real in these clothes?

Step 2: Group discussion (10 min)

Invite the youth to answer a few questions:

- Are the clothes you wear part of your personality or just a mask?
- How can clothing affect the way people perceive you?
- What does “clothing of the soul” mean to you? How would you describe your spiritual “uniqueness”?
- Imagine yourself as a pilgrim. What would you put in your spiritual “luggage,” and what would you give up, as Jesus advised the apostles?



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2.6 Work in groups

3. Summary and reflection (5 minutes)

The moderator brings all the groups together and invites several participants to speak:

- What new things did you learn about clothing as a symbol?
- How can you “dress” your soul to show your true essence?
- What is your unique spiritual “outfit” that you could show the world?

The moderator concludes with the words: “As pilgrims, we must dress in simplicity, sincerity, and faith, leaving behind the extra. Our true clothing is that which reflects our inner beauty and connection with God.”

Result: Participants will not only entertain, but also reflect on how they present themselves and whether their outward appearance matches their inner being. They will also understand that true pilgrimage begins with simplicity and openness of heart.



2.7 Testimony

#pilgrimsofhope
#jubileeofyouth
#jubileeyear2025

We encourage young people to post the hashtags during the month:
#pilgrimsofhope #jubileeofyouth #jubileeyear2025

Every day, when we choose our clothes, we decide how we present ourselves to the world. But there is an outfit that is more important than any fashionable image – the “armor of God,” which the Apostle Paul speaks of in Ephesians 6:11-18. Just as clothing protects us from cold or heat, spiritual armor protects our souls from trials and temptations. Read this passage and think: what do you “clothe” your soul with every day? These tasks will help you “clothe” your soul with faith, truth, and justice so that you are ready for any challenges of life. So, open the Holy Scriptures and embark on this spiritual stylish journey!



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2.7 Testimony

#pilgrimsofhope
#jubileeofyouth
#jubileeyear2025

1. “Family Circle” - Read this passage together as a family and share what these images (helmet of salvation, shield of faith, sword of the spirit, etc.) mean to you in life.
2. “Strong Faith Challenge” - Take a piece of paper and write down all the situations when you have had a hard time standing firm in your faith or doing what is right. Then, next to each situation, find in the passage (Eph. 6:11-18) a piece of God's armor that will help you in this fight. Invite your friends to do the same and share your thoughts.
3. “Armor for the Day” - Every morning before you leave the house, symbolically “put on” your spiritual armor by saying a short prayer or mentally recalling each piece of God's armor. At the end of the week, discuss with friends how this affected your day.
4. “Who is your spiritual warrior?” - Write a post or make a video about a person who is an example of spiritual resilience for you, and explain how they wear their “armor of God” in life.



2.8 Final prayer

Completion of spiritual work, prayer of choice:
Jesus prayer / Rosary / Thesis / Prayer in silence.

Yet, I would like to tell you that we do not radiate light by putting ourselves in the spotlight, for that type of light is blinding. No, we cannot illumine others by projecting a perfect, well-ordered, refined image of ourselves, or by appearing to be powerful and successful, strong but without light. No, we radiate light - we shine - by welcoming Jesus into our hearts and learning to love as he does. To love like Jesus: that is what makes us shine, makes us do works of love. Friends, I am telling you the truth: whenever you do works of love, you become light. But the moment you stop loving others and become self-centered, you extinguish your light.”

From Pope Francis' homily during the Eucharistic celebration on
06.08.2023 at the XXXVII World Youth Day in Parque Tejo, Lisbon



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Books:

Annex

“A Pilgrim’s Journey to Heaven” - John Bunyan

In this allegorical work, John Bunyan presents the spiritual journey of man as a journey, during which the traveler’s clothing symbolizes his inner state. The pilgrim, beginning his journey, takes off his old clothes, which weigh him down with sins, and receives new ones - a symbol of purification and faith. Like the pilgrim who wears a conch shell as a sign of his journey, the Pilgrim shows through his clothing and attributes who he is and where he is going. This reminds us that our clothing is not just a covering for the body, but can be a sign of our identity and spiritual choice.

“Walden, or Life in the Woods” - Henry David Thoreau

Thoreau sees clothing as a mirror of society, dictating how we should look in order to meet expectations. He rejects fashion trends, considering them false “masks” that distance a person from their true essence. His choice of simple, practical clothing is a rejection of social roles and a return to naturalness. For Thoreau, clothing is not a way to hide oneself, but rather an affirmation of unity with nature and one’s own freedom.

“The Little Prince” - Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

This fairy tale-parable reveals the theme of clothing through the images of characters who hide their true essence behind external attributes. A king who has no subjects, or an ambitious man who seeks admiration, both are “clothed” in the illusion of their own importance. The Little Prince, on the contrary, does not need external symbols, because his true essence is manifested in openness, sincerity and love. This reminds us that clothing is only a shell, and what is important is what is hidden behind it.



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Books:

Annex

“The Alchemist” - Paulo Coelho

In this novel, the traveler Santiago also goes through a change of “clothes” as part of his spiritual quest. He begins as a simple shepherd, but, rejecting comfort and familiar things, he dresses in the simple clothes of a seeker of truth. Like an alchemist who transforms matter, he also transforms his own image, getting closer to his true essence. This book teaches that true identity is not in clothes, but in how a person walks his path and discovers his soul.

“The Picture of Dorian Gray” - Oscar Wilde

This novel illustrates how clothes can become a mask that hides the true essence. Dorian Gray remains outwardly beautiful, but his portrait, reflecting the inner state, becomes uglier every year. His elegant clothes only create the illusion of purity, while the soul deteriorates. This is a warning that appearances can be deceptive, and the true essence of a person is revealed not in how he looks, but in what he carries in his heart.



Movies:

“Francesco” (1989)

The film tells the story of the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, who consciously renounces luxurious clothing as a symbol of social status and chooses the simple attire of humility. His clothing becomes a reflection of inner transformation, the desire for spiritual progress and knowledge of God, and the rejection of the illusions of the material world.



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Movies:

Annex

“The Way” (2010)

In this film, the protagonist goes on a pilgrimage, and his clothing changes with him, reflecting a physical and spiritual transformation. The pilgrim's outfit symbolizes the gradual liberation from superfluity, reminding us that true identity lies not in the outward appearance, but in the heart of the traveler.

“Pilgrimage” (2017)

This historical film depicts the journey of monks, for whom clothing is not only a protection but also a sign of their calling. The monastic robe symbolizes fidelity to vows and spiritual discipline, and the changes in it show the tests of faith.

“The Devil Wears Prada” (2006)

In this film, clothing acts as a means of social status and success, as well as a trap. The main character, by changing her wardrobe, gains a new status, but loses part of her own essence, until she realizes that true identity is not defined by brands.

“Barbie” (2023)

Barbie, the iconic Mattel doll that always looks perfect, is confronted with her limitations. She, the embodiment of ideal beauty, discovers cellulite, flat feet and is forced to accept the fact of death. How do you define yourself now? Continue to wear the mask of the perfect but unrealistic Barbie, or accept yourself as a “regular” Barbie - with flaws, but alive, not plastic? The choice of clothes becomes a metaphor for the choice: who to be and how to accept your limitations. This is a painful journey that opens up a deeper understanding of yourself and the beauty of life.

“Howl's Moving Castle” (2004)

This animated film by Hayao Miyazaki uses clothing as a metaphor for change. The main character, Sophie, initially hides behind the image of an old woman, but her inner beauty and strength are revealed through the changes in her appearance. Here, clothing symbolizes identity and the freedom to be yourself.

