

Thursday, February 12, 2026

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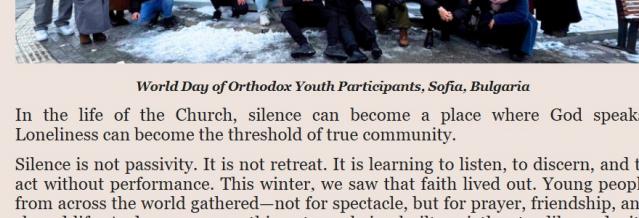
SUPRASL hosts World Day of Orthodox Youth in Sofia, Bulgaria, broadening its work. Plus

- [Loneliness and / in Community: A Reflection on St Sophrony and Loneliness](#)
- [From the Continuum Series: A New Model for Youth Ministry](#)
- [Celebrating Archbishop Anastasios](#)

Fr Joseph Matusiak
Director, **SUPRASL**

Our world is loud—filled with notifications, opinions, demands, and noise. Beneath it all, many young people are suffering from something deeper: loneliness.

And yet, over the past two months, SUPRASL witnessed something extraordinary. At two gatherings—one in the snowy quiet of the Monastery of the Annunciation in Supršl, and one at Kremikovtsi Monastery in Sofia, Bulgaria—we saw that silence is not emptiness. And loneliness is not always despair.



World Day of Orthodox Youth Participants, Sofia, Bulgaria

In the life of the Church, silence can become a place where God speaks. Loneliness can become the threshold of true community.

Silence is not passivity. It is not retreat. It is learning to listen, to discern, and to act without performance. This winter, we saw that faith lived out. Young people from across the world gathered—not for spectacle, but for prayer, friendship, and shared life. And we saw something strong being built: quietly, steadily, and with great hope.

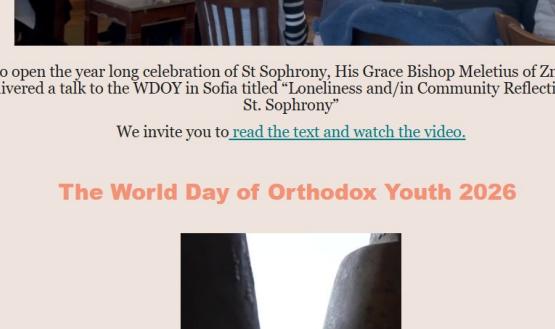
At our New Year's Eve event and our celebration of the World Day of Orthodox Youth, one truth became clear:

Young people are longing for a Church that is not online performance, not ideology, not conflict—but real life, together.

In an age of “influencer culture,” SUPRASL offers something stronger than argument: a space where people can simply belong.

The answer is not more polemics. The answer is a community strong enough to welcome them. That is what SUPRASL is quietly building.

Thank you for making this possible.



To open the year long celebration of St Sophrony, His Grace Bishop Meletius of Zniepol delivered a talk to the WDOY in Sofia titled “Loneliness and/in Community Reflections on St. Sophrony”

We invite you to [read the text and watch the video](#).

The World Day of Orthodox Youth 2026



Prayer:

The foundation of

SUPRASL



January 30 – February 3, 2026

Kremikovtsi Monastery (near Sofia)

Organised with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Danil.

65 Young People. 15+ Countries. One Church.

[View the full story and a photo gallery of the WDOY here](#)

Prayer. Formation. Community. Service.

The liturgical life of the gathering was its heart:

Vespers with the Jesus Prayer offered 100 times each in seven languages, as popularized by St Sophrony.

Multilingual Divine Liturgies with The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord celebrated by **His Grace Bishop Meletius**

The unity of the Church was not discussed — it was experienced.

Voices from Participants

After the gathering, young people began writing to us:

“I have never felt such peace or experienced my soul being so filled with God’s grace as I did during my time at the monastery.”

“SUPRASL didn’t end for me when we parted ways... I want to volunteer and contribute.”

“I really thought that the Orthodox Church doesn’t have such activities... Now I know that wasn’t true.”

One participant wrote about the presence of Fr Paul Dinkov, his wife Lorice and their children:

“Even only seeing it sets an example: the love between a husband and wife grounded in faith is truly transforming.”

And another said simply:

“I felt accepted, loved and in the right place. It was an incomparable experience for me.”

Prayer Must Become Mercy

Participants also visited the monastery’s social rehabilitation center for children and individuals with disabilities—reminding everyone that Orthodox youth ministry cannot remain theoretical.

Faith must become action.

Prayer must become love.

What Is Already Bearing Fruit

This gathering strengthened the newly formed Bulgarian Orthodox Youth Community, deepened international friendships, and inspired new volunteers.

One Bulgarian leader said at the end:

“For many of us, this gathering was a turning point.”

And that is precisely what SUPRASL exists to cultivate: turning points.

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