

My name is Anna, I am 22 and I study history and journalism at University. I come from Czech Republic and I have 4 younger siblings.

Czech Republic belongs to states with the largest irreligious population in the world. It is especially caused by the Communist dictatorship, but also by the consumerist lifestyle at present. In my country every believer is a little bit strange person. Despite all these problems our Church has lots of amazing activities for young people. I will speak just about few of them, only about activities that affected me, showed me a right direction and helped me to become a good Christian in every situation and in every place.

I grew up in a Christian family, I have four younger siblings and absolutely amazing parents, they taught us how to live, without theorems. They showed us everything in their own lives. They didn't teach us theories, they showed us Christianity in a real live. In primary school I started to sing in the parish children choir. The best time in my life was in high school, I visited great church high school and this time I started to lead a children choir in our parish with my friend Mary . (Today these children are 18 and they are going to study University). When we started with them to sing in the church sometimes we made a mistake. They were really young and we weren't professional.

But in our parish there are a lot of professional musicians, so we were a little bit worried. One Sunday, after the Mass one from the musicians came to us, he is also a composer of many songs that we sing with young people. We were afraid, what musical mistake we made, but he didn't come to blame anything to us. He came to say thank you, he thanked us for working with children and he said to me: "It doesn't matter that you sing with mistakes. We all have to learn to see God in people around us, to see God's plans in everything around us." And I am trying to do it from that time.

When I started studying at University, I knew that I couldn't stay at home often, therefore I handed over leading of children church choir to one younger member. In the first year at University I didn't have any specific activity in church for the first time after a long time, after five years I didn't have to prepare program for children every week. I definitely wasn't bored at my school and particular Christian events took me enough time.

At that time I started to visit diocesan center for young people. I have known our diocesan center for young people for a long time, but I didn't come there very often, because I had many things to do in my high school and parish. In the Czech Republic we have a very good system of pastoral care for young people.

Every diocese has on its own territory one house, we call this house centers of permanent life of youth. In these houses priest with a team of young people live permanently and they create community. Youth from all parts of diocese come to these centers. These centers organize different spiritual events. In these centers it is also possible to visit a two-year animator course. Young people who have attended this course usually work like volunteers

in parishes. These centers also organize the Czech groups for World Youth Day and every five years all the Czech centers make a National meeting for young people.

In the end of the first year at University I decided to go for one weekend to our center. There was an event - weekend for animators who took charge of youth events in different deaneries of our diocese. As in these houses there are priest and young people living, we became immediately after arrival a part of a very nice community. On that weekend I met a lot of great young people and I met there again one friend of mine whom I have known from our National Meeting a year before.

A few days after this event this boy called me, because he was in the city, where I study, and he had a time for a walk. He asked me to go with him. So I decided to go. I didn't want drag it out, this walk certainly wasn't the last one. And today after two years we are engaged and we are going to marry in summer. If there weren't our centers for young people, we couldn't have met. We are from the different cities, he is 6 years older and he works, I still study etc.

I think, that every young person needs to have a community and a friend near them. The community of young people in the parish or in the center for youth taught me understanding, tolerance, listening, taught us all to help each other and foremost to see God in everyone. I want to do this in the coming years.