



**World Youth Day Krakow 2016
At-A-Glance
14th International World Youth Day**

What is World Youth Day?

World Youth Day (WYD) is an international gathering of young people organized and celebrated by the Catholic Church, specifically the Holy See (Vatican). It draws together pilgrims and young people from all over the world with the hope of praying, celebrating and sharing in each other's cultures, traditions and life journey. Over the course of the week-long celebration, pilgrims gather for worship, song, teaching and faith sharing. The highlights of every international WYD celebration are the Vigil & Closing Mass with the Pope.

Where did World Youth Day originate?

In 1984, then Pope John Paul II invited the youth of the world to an International Jubilee celebration in Rome on Palm Sunday, the week prior to Easter. Nearly 300,000 young people responded to the Pope's invitation by gathering at St. Peter's Square. Coinciding with the United Nations' International Year of the Youth in 1985, it was Pope John Paul II's inspiration and decision that ultimately led to the creation of World Youth Day. Since then, the global event has been hosted every two to three years in countries around the world, including North and South America, Europe, Australia and parts of Asia. In 2013, at the close of WYD in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Pope Francis invited the youth of the world to the 2016 celebration to be held in Krakow, Poland this July.

What will World Youth Day Krakow 2016 look like?

- Host city:* Krakow, Poland as well as neighbouring cities and towns.
- Dates:* July 25-31, 2016
- Special guest(s):* Pope Francis; 800-1,200 Cardinals and Bishops and 13,000 priests from around the world.
- Event motto:* "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy."
(Matthew 5:7)
- Estimated pilgrims:* 2+ million



Major events during WYD week:

- Opening Mass, Tuesday, July 26
- Welcome ceremony for Pope Francis, Thursday, July 28
- Stations of the Cross service, Friday, July 29
- Vigil with Pope Francis, Saturday, July 30
- Holy Mass and Closing Ceremony celebrated by Pope Francis. Pope Francis will also announce the host city for the next WYD celebration at the close of the Mass.

** Blonia Park is close to the historic center of Krakow and will be the main site for the opening mass, the welcoming ceremony for Pope Francis and the Stations of the Cross.

'Field of Mercy' is the name that was given to the site of the Vigil, Mass & closing celebration.

Why is this WYD particularly significant?

According to papal biographer, George Weigel, World Youth Day is '[coming home](#)' since the city had such an important influence on the life and priesthood of St. John Paul II.

For that reason – and due to the love that the Polish people have for Saint Pope John Paul II, it is expected that the entire country will reverberate with pride, enthusiasm and the warmest of welcomes to its visitors.

It was in July 1958 that Pope Pius XII first named Karol Wojtyla as Auxillary Bishop of Krakow. He would then go on to become the Archbishop of Krakow in January of 1964 and was elected Pope in 1978. Today, the Archdiocese of Krakow is led by Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, who served as Pope John Paul II's personal secretary.

The WYD 2016 Opening Mass will be celebrated by Cardinal Dziwisz who will honour and pay tribute to his late friend and colleague.



Over the years

- 1986 Rome, Italy
- 1987 Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 1989 Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- 1991 Czestochowa, Poland
- 1993 Denver, U.S.A.
- 1995 Manila, Phillipines
- 1997 Paris, France
- 2000 Rome, Italy
- 2002 Toronto, Canada*
- 2005 Cologne, Germany
- 2008 Sydney, Australia
- 2011 Madrid, Spain
- 2013 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- 2016 Krakow, Poland

** The last WYD attended by His Holiness John Paul II*