

Pope announces that Mary will be the focus of WYD 2017



The Pontiff said that the Mother of Jesus is 'a role model to be imitated'

Pope Francis has chosen a focus on Mary for the next World Youth Day celebrations, which will be held in dioceses in 2017 and 2018 and with an international gathering in Panama in 2019.

The Pope has highlighted the way the Mother of Jesus was always open to the Lord's will and has described her "as a role model to be imitated," said the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life in a press release on November 22.

The themes "are intended to give a clear Marian tone to the spiritual journey" of the next three World Youth Days as well as to "give a picture of young people on a journey between the past (2017), present (2018) and future (2019), inspired by the three theological virtues of faith, charity and hope."

World Youth Day is celebrated annually on a local level, and every two or three years with an international gathering with the Pope. At the end of the World Youth Day celebration in July in Krakow, Poland, Pope Francis announced the next international gathering would be held in Panama in 2019.

The annual Rome diocesan celebration with the Pope is held on Palm Sunday each year; the date of the celebration in other dioceses varies.

The themes chosen by the Pope, the dicastery said, were:

- For 2017: "The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name." (Lk 1:49).
- For 2018: "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." (Lk 1:30).
- For 2019: "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Lk 1:38).

This journey the Pope is proposing to young people coincides with the reflection the Pope "has entrusted to the next Synod of Bishops: Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment," the press release said.

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