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# World Youth Day Krakow 2016. Background\*

## 1. Origins

When discussing the origins of World Youth Day, the first celebrations in Rome and the intention of building a community of young Catholics are usually brought up. However, to see the sources of the idea for WYD we have to go back to events which took place much earlier than John Paul II's pontificate, back to Karol Wojtyła's priestly activity in Krakow, starting with the Light – Life Movement “Oaza,” the meetings and trips with students that he organized until the so-called “Milieu” (Polish: Środowisko) was formed. “Cardinal Wojtyła transferred his vast experience of working with youth to the Holy See, which largely enriched the Catholic Church.”<sup>1</sup> After being elected Pope and moving to Rome in 1978, Karol Wojtyła promptly took steps to launch regular meetings for young people. He often called out to the young: “You are the hope of the Church!

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1 S. Dziwisz, *The „Genesis” of World Youth Day*, in: *World Youth Days. A Testimony to the Hope of Young People*, eds. J. Stala, A. Porebski, Krakow 2016, p. 18.

You are the hope of the world!”<sup>2</sup> It is worth remembering that it was John Paul II, who in a conversation with George Weigel, stated that the idea of WYD originated “among his young friends from the Milieu and their interest in the personal and professional dynamics of teenage years and early adulthood.”<sup>3</sup>

It should also be remembered that a similar idea was put forward in the first half of the 1980s among people gathered around the Pontifical Council for Laity. Bishop Paul Josef Cordes and Rev. Józef Michalik, in particular, were considering the organization of such meetings, at the same time admitting that the idea of a meeting for young people from different parts of the world was also put forward by the young who met in Rocca di Papa in the spring of 1980. When Pope John Paul II found out about the plans, he offered his support and later turned them into an actual project.<sup>4</sup>

According to the words of Bishop P.J. Cordes and Rev. J. Michalik, members of the religious movements they were in touch with were thrilled at the idea. Many of them offered to work shifts at the centre that was being set up. The “San Lorenzo” International Youth Centre, under the patronage of St. Lawrence of Roma and Pier Giorgio Frassati, was set up in a small church at via Pfeiffer, close to the Vatican. The centre was opened on 13 March 1983. Pope John Paul II presided over the Holy Mass, during which he expressed a wish that bishops from all over the world tell the young about the place and encourage them to visit. Referring to the San Damian Cross, hanging in the church presbytery, the Pope called on the young to make the cross a central point of their lives since “The Cross

2 S. Dziwisz, *The „Genesis” of World Youth Day*, op. cit., p. 19; cf. S. Ryłko, *The Word Youth Day Generation*, in: *World Youth Days. A Testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., pp. 27–34.

3 G. Weigel, *Świadek nadziei. Biografia Jana Pawła II* [A Witness of Hope. John Paul II's Biography], tłum. M. Tarnowska, Kraków 1999, p. 624; cf. G. Weigel, *Kres i początek. Papież Jan Paweł II – zwycięstwo wolności, ostatnie lata, dziedzictwo* [Beginning and end. Pope John Paul II – Victory of Freedom, Last Years, Heritage], tłum. M. Romanek, Kraków 2012

4 Cf. T. Krzyżak, *The Difficult Beginnings. World Youth Day as the Laity's Response to the call of the Second Vatican Council*, in: *World Youth Days. A Testimony to the Hope of Young People*, p. cit., p. 438; J. Michalik, *Nowe miejsce spotkania i modlitwy dla młodzieży w Rzymie* [New Place for Youth Meetings and Prayers in Rome], „L'Osservatore Romano” – Polish edition (1986) No 3.

takes on itself the whole poverty of the world which is caused by sin. The Cross appears as a sign of grace.”<sup>5</sup> When Pope John Paul II inaugurated the extraordinary Holy Year of the Redemption in 1983, he received a wooden cross from the young people from the San Lorenzo Centre in the Vatican, which was later to become a symbol of the Holy Year. The cross was returned to the young on the last day of the Holy Year, on Palm Sunday 22 April 1984. When giving the cross back to the young people, Holy Father John Paul II asked them to take this cross around the whole world.<sup>6</sup> Since that moment, the cross, together with the image of St. Mary, *Salus Populi Romani*, has travelled to all the dioceses in each country hosting WYD. The youth took up the Pope’s challenge and have continued to do so until today.

In the beginning, the meetings at the “San Lorenzo” International Youth Centre were arranged by fourteen youth groups from different religious movements. A group from Poland, from the Light-Life Movement, also did a shift twice a month. However, it was decided later that the change of groups was too frequent and a French community, Emmanuel, was entrusted with running the centre. The opening of “San Lorenzo,” the participation of young people in the inauguration of the Holy Year and the European youth meeting organized by the Taizé community provided a direct impulse for WYD. Of particular importance was the European youth meeting, organized by the Taizé community, which took place in Rome at the end of 1983 and beginning of 1984. The event showed the value of international meetings of young people. It was decided that the world youth meeting would begin on 11 April 1984 and would close on Palm Sunday, 15 April 1984, one week before the end of the Holy Year. Palm Sunday was chosen to provide a clear sign. Traditionally, this is the *Pueri Hebraeorum* day, when Israeli boys and girls recognized Jesus. This was a day of Christ’s triumph, when he arrived in Jerusalem, accompanied by large numbers of people, including the young.<sup>7</sup>

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5 John Paul II, *Międzynarodowe Centrum Młodzieżowe „S. Lorenzo”* [The “San Lorenzo” International Youth Centre,], „L’Osservatore Romano” – Polish edition 7 (1986) No 3, p. 14; cf. T. Krzyżak, *The Difficult Beginnings...*, op. cit., p. 442.

6 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/wyd-history> (26.10.2016).

7 Cf. T. Krzyżak, *The Difficult Beginnings...*, op. cit., pp. 442–444.

The formula of World Youth Day, as we know it today, when the youth first gather for prayers and vigils in station churches, and then meet the Pope, was developed during the preparations for the 1984 Jubilee, despite strong resistance mounted by Curia staff. The Jubilee of the young was fully supported by religious movements and groups and the celebrations were prepared on a large scale. The Taizé community, Focolare, Opus Dei and the Neocatechumenate were in charge of the organization, and they initiated and led prayer meetings and meditations in five basilicas in Rome, which were station churches. There were two meetings with the Pope: at the beginning and closing of the event. The administration of the meeting was run by the “Comunione e Liberazione” movement.<sup>8</sup>

A penitential service, attended by over 15,000 worshippers, and the Way of the Cross in the Colosseum, attended by around 40,000, were both important elements of the meeting. Around 200,000 people participated in a Saturday rosary prayer led by John Paul II on St. Peter’s square. Finally, the number of participants in the Palm Sunday liturgy on 15 April was around 350,000. The meeting was a remarkable success. On the following Sunday, during the Angelus, the Pope invited the young to Rome for another meeting in a year’s time.

The 1985 meeting, organized as part of the International Youth Year proclaimed by the UN, was slightly more modest than the 1984 meeting. The event lasted two days only, but the formula of station churches was kept. Around 300,000 young people gathered at 9:30 at St. Peter’s Square and via della Conciliazione for a Holy Mass with the Pope. It was also decided that the meetings should “go beyond” Rome and be held every two years (currently they are held every three years). Consequently, the subsequent meeting was held in Buenos Aires in Argentina. Local churches became more involved in the organization and at the same time more young people were given an opportunity to participate.

The International Youth Year and the meeting of the young in Rome prompted John Paul II to write an apostolic letter to the young, in which he called out to them: “So your youth is not just your own property, your

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. T. Krzyżak, *The Difficult Beginnings. World Youth Day as the Laity’s Response to the call of the Second Vatican Council*, op. cit., p. 444.

personal property or the property of a generation: it belongs to the whole of that space that every man traverses in his life's journey, and at the same time it is a special possession belonging to everyone. It is a possession of humanity itself."<sup>9</sup> Holy Father John Paul II cared deeply about young people in the Church and understood perfectly that young people asked existential questions about their futures and that other young worshippers could help to find the answer: "All young people should feel that the Church follows them. That is why the church, in unity with Saint Peter's successor, feels a growing commitment worldwide towards the young: their worries, questions, openness and hope, a commitment to meeting their expectations, to giving them confidence whose name is Jesus Christ. The truth that is Christ. The love that is Christ. And within this special attention that the Church is focusing on the young they must find proof that they are very important because they are worth so much. Their life is precious for the Church."<sup>10</sup>

The first formalized meeting with the youth of the world, held at the diocese level, took place in Rome in 1986 under the slogan: "Always be prepared to make defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you."<sup>11</sup>

Every year diocese celebrations of Youth Day take place on Palm Sunday, while every two to three years youth days become an international event. After the meeting in 1987 in Buenos Aires in Argentina, World Youth Days were held in the following years and places: 1989 – Santiago de Compostela, 1991 – Częstochowa, 1993 – Denver, 1995 – Manila, 1997 – Paris, 2000 (Great Jubilee year) – Rome, 2002 – Toronto. During his two last meetings with the youth of the world in Rome and Toronto, Pope

<sup>9</sup> [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1985/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_31031985\\_dilecti-amici.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1985/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_31031985_dilecti-amici.html) (26.10.2016).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1645992,Swiatowe-Dni-Mlodziezy-wynik-troski-Jana-Pawla-II-o-mlodych> (26.10.2016); cf. J. Moskwa, *Kalendarium pontyfikatu Jana Pawła II [Chronology of John Paul II Pontificate]*, Kraków 2014; M. Duda, *Papież i młodzi w dziele ewangelizacji świata [The Pope and the Young in the Evangelization of the World]*, Częstochowa 1991; *Wartości Polaków a dziedzictwo Jana Pawła II [Poles' Values and John Paul II's Heritage]*, red. T. Żukowski, Warszawa 2009; *Spór o człowieka – spór o przyszłość świata. Od bł. Jana XXIII do Jana Pawła II [Dispute over Man – Dispute over the World's Future. From Blessed John XXIII to John Paul II]*, red. J. Nagórny, J. Gocko [b.w.], Lublin 2004, pp. 19–36.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/wyd-history> (26.10.2016).

John Paul II called on young people to be saints: “Young people of every continent, do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium!”<sup>12</sup> His thoughts and teachings accompanied the young during the subsequent World Youth Days taking place after his death. Although the formula of World Youth Days was later slightly modified, its foundations still remain close to the idea put forward by John Paul II.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of the Polish Pope was upheld by Benedict XVI, who participated in two meetings with the young: in Cologne in 2005 and in Madrid in 2011. Pope Francis’ first WYD was in Rio de Janeiro in 2013 (it was also the Pope’s first apostolic visitation) and the second one was the event in Krakow in 2016.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Programme of World Youth Day Krakow 2016

The WYD held in Krakow in 2016 was a symbolic summary of the three decades of the tradition of World Youth Days. The theme for WYD Krakow 2016 was announced three months after WYD had been held in Rio de Ja-

<sup>12</sup> [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/youth/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_29061999\\_xv-world-youth-day.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/youth/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_29061999_xv-world-youth-day.html) (26.10.2016).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. A. Kiciński, *Historia Światowych Dni Młodzieży [History of World Youth Days]*, [http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/Z/ZD/ak\\_sdm2002.html](http://www.opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/Z/ZD/ak_sdm2002.html) (26.10.2016); P. Salamon, *Co Chrystus daje dzisiaj młodym? Nauczanie Jana Pawła II do młodzieży [What Does Christ Give to the Young Today? John Paul II Teaching for the Young]*, Kraków 1998; M. Muolo, *Pokolenie Światowych Dni Młodzieży [WYD Generation]*, Kraków 2015; E. Tkocz, *Chrześcijańska formacja młodzieży w świetle orędzi Jana Pawła II na Światowe Dni Młodzieży [Christian Youth Groups in Light of John Paul II’s Messages to WYD]*, Katowice 2005; *Pokolenie JP2. Przeszość i przyszłość zjawiska religijnego [JP2 Generation. The Past and the Future of the Religious Phenomenon]*, red. T. Szawiel, Warszawa 2008; J. Dyduch, *Papieska Rada Świeckich i Papieska Komisja Iustitia et Pax [Pontifical Council for the Laity and Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace]*, „Prawo Kanoniczne” 25 (1982) No 1-2; J. Dyduch, *Udział kardynała Karola Wojtyły w racach Rady Świeckich [Cardinal Karol Wojtyła’s Participation in the Proceedings of the Council for the Laity]*, „Prawo Kanoniczne” 39 (1996) No 1-2; Ł. Kamykowski, *Jubileusz młodych w Rzymie [Jubilee of the Young in Rome]*, „L’Osservatore Romano” (1984) No 3.

<sup>14</sup> Por. Franciszek, *Między kanapą a odwagą. Wszystko, co powiedział Papież podczas Światowych Dni Młodzieży w Krakowie [Francis. Between the Sofa and Courage. All that the Pope Said during World Youth Day in Cracow]*, red. A. Gutkowski, Kraków 2016; *Światowe Dni Młodzieży i Wizyta Apostolska Ojca Świętego Franciszka w Polsce [World Youth Day and Pope Francis’ Visitation in Poland]*, red. J. Woleńska-Operacz, Warszawa 2016.

neiro: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.”<sup>15</sup> Each World Youth Day, including the ones celebrated in dioceses, had a motto from the Gospel, connected with the circumstances and the place of the event.

Usually, WYD lasts for a few days and covers the five most important mass meetings, referred to as the Central Events (the Opening Mass, the Papal Welcome, the Way of the Cross, the Saturday Vigil and the Final Mass) as well as a series of catechetical sessions led by bishops from different parts of the world, and the Festival of the Young, which is a series of concerts held on stages in the host city. The Vocations Centre is also an important part of WYD. For practical reasons, WYD usually takes place in summer, in July or August, as high school and university students find it easier to plan their participation in WYD during summer months. WYD in Panama will be an exception as it is to be held in February 2019 because of the country’s location and climate.

The WYD programme always includes the Holy Father’s visit to the host country. In 2016 in Krakow, the programme covered a number of additional events<sup>16</sup> connected with Poland, such as the Holy Mass at Jasna Góra Monastery to celebrate the 1050th anniversary of Poland’s Baptism, Pope Francis’ visit to Auschwitz and a visit to the Children’s Hospital in Krakow-Prokocim.<sup>17</sup>

In 1997 in Paris, the so-called Days in the Dioceses were introduced, which enable young visitors to come to the host country around a week before the Central Events and to learn about a given region of the country, its culture, tradition, wildlife and to meet its inhabitants. Close meetings between youth from different parts of the world and people from a given state, region and town help to establish direct contacts and to share faith. The inhabitants who host pilgrims in their homes show openness, friendliness, hospitality, i.e. they show Christian values in practice, and at the same time they learn about various traditions, customs and behavior patterns of their guests. The Days in the Dioceses in Poland focused on

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15 <http://www.romereports.com/2013/11/09/pope-announces-theme-for-wyd-2016-in-krakow> (26.10.2016).

16 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/program-en> (26.10.2016).

17 Detailed programme of WYD Krakow 2016 in Cracow: <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/program-en> (26.10.2016).

showing Poland's Christian tradition and emphasizing the 1050th anniversary of the Baptism of Poland.

In Poland, the Days in the Dioceses started on 20 July 2016 and lasted for five days. On 25 July the young arrived in Krakow to participate in a meeting with Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz on 26 July. The preparations had lasted for over 30 months. A total of 44 local WYD centres participated in the diocese week. They were given biblical names, such as Bethany, the Mount of Beatitudes or Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> Altogether, over the three years in all the dioceses, one million participants took part in spiritual preparations. A total of 115,000 pilgrims from 135 countries in the world arrived in Polish dioceses to experience Polish hospitality and learn about Poland's culture, in particular the religious aspect. In some towns mass concerts for pilgrims were held, connected with the mercy theme, as well as meetings with the elderly, residents of care homes, hospice patients, children brought up in orphanages and prisoners. The cultural programme in the dioceses also comprised visits to museums, many of which were free of charge for WYD pilgrims on showing a pilgrim ID. These included famous Polish museums such as the National Museum (Warsaw), the Artus Court and the European Solidarity centre (Gdańsk), the Warsaw Rising Museum, Fryderyk Chopin Museum, Copernicus Science Centre and the museum located at the site of a former Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Some regions, especially in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podkarpackie or Małopolskie Provinces, placed emphasis on contact with nature. The Final Mass was also celebrated in the dioceses by respective bishops and visiting hierarchs. After the Days in the Dioceses the young went to Krakow to experience a spiritual meeting in the city of saints.<sup>19</sup>

World Youth Day in Krakow opened on 26 July 2016 at 17:30 with the Opening Mass celebrated at Błonia Park by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, Krakow Metropolitan Bishop. The choice of Błonia Park was motivated by the fact that previous meetings with Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI were held there, as well as for logistical reasons, as the Park was a con-

<sup>18</sup> Information on WYD Krakow 2016 in Cracow for the press from the meeting for state television journalists in June 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. <http://pope2016.com/sdm2016/dni-w-diecezjach/news,495896,dni-w-diecezjach--czegos-takiego-polska-jeszcze-nie-widziala.html> (26.10.2016).

venient location. With the park being close to the Main Square and the Press Centre on the AGH University of Science and Technology campus, both pilgrims and journalists could easily get to the locations of three of the five Central Events.

In the afternoon of Wednesday 27 July 2016, Holy Father Francis arrived in Krakow. For young people it was a day of catechetical sessions and cultural meetings. No Central Event took place on that day, but the Pope did hold official meetings. At the Balice airport the Pope was welcomed by Polish bishops, Poland's president and members of parliament. In his first speech Holy Father Francis said: "This is the first time I have been to Central and Eastern Europe and I am happy that I start with Poland, the home country of the unforgettable St. John Paul II, initiator and promoter of World Youth Day."<sup>20</sup> The Pope also highlighted that he wanted to carry out a mission of talking about and spreading Divine Mercy.

Following in St. Pope John II's tradition, on the first day of his visitation, Pope Francis appeared in the Papal Window in the Bishops' Palace in Krakow, at Franciszkańska 3, to greet young people. The Holy Father talked about 27-year-old Maciek, a graphic designer for WYD and a WYD volunteer, who died after a few months of fighting cancer. Francis remembered his heroic attitude, making young listeners aware that praying for the dead is a work of mercy.<sup>21</sup> The Vatican Pilgrim also appeared in the Papal Window on Thursday and Friday. The main topic on 28 July was marriage and marital dialogue.<sup>22</sup> On Friday, in turn, Francis talked about his impressions of Auschwitz-Birkenau.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.krakow2016.com/ofcjalne-powitanie-papieza-franciszka> (26.10.2016).

<sup>21</sup> Cf. P. Guzik et al., *Communicating Mercy during World Youth Day Krakow 2016. A Case Study on how to Make Young People Practice Christian Values*, in: *Participation and Sharing: Managing Church Communication in a Digital Environment* – proceedings from X Professional Seminar for Church Communications Offices, April 2016, Santa Croce University Rome; *Przemówienie w czasie wieczornego spotkania z młodymi w oknie papieskim [Speech from the Evening Meeting with Young People in the Papal Window]*, in: Franciszek, *Między kanapką a odwagą...*, op. cit., pp. 66–68.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Przemówienie w czasie wieczornego spotkania z młodymi w oknie papieskim [Speech from the Evening Meeting with Young People in the Papal Window]*, in: Franciszek, *Między kanapką a odwagą...*, op. cit., pp. 92–95.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. [http://www.deon.pl/religia/serwis-papieski/dokumenty/przemowienia-papieskie/art,148,wszystkie-wystapienia-papieza-francisz-ka-w-polsce,strona,9.html?utm\\_source=deon&utm\\_medium=link\\_artykul](http://www.deon.pl/religia/serwis-papieski/dokumenty/przemowienia-papieskie/art,148,wszystkie-wystapienia-papieza-francisz-ka-w-polsce,strona,9.html?utm_source=deon&utm_medium=link_artykul) (26.10.2016 *Przemówienie w czasie wieczor-*

Five main events were fundamental elements of World Youth Day in Krakow. The first one was the Opening Mass celebrated by Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz. The second one was the meeting between the Pope and the young on Thursday afternoon. Holy Father Francis arrived at Błonia Park by tram, together with a group of disabled people, to put himself in their position, but also to feel like an average student in Krakow, getting around the city by tram. The Papal Welcome at Błonia Park on 28 July was his first meeting with young people. He asked: „Can things change? I know the passion with which you embark on a mission and I dare to say that mercy always has a young face. The merciful heart has the courage to give up comfort; the merciful heart can open itself to others, it can embrace everyone.”<sup>24</sup> A total of 600,000 young people participated in the welcome ceremony.<sup>25</sup> The number increased in the subsequent days: 800,000 pilgrims participated on Friday in the Way of the Cross, whose artistic value was described both in the Polish and foreign press.<sup>26</sup> During the Way of the Cross, Pope Francis said that Jesus was the first one to identify himself with poverty, suffering and pain.<sup>27</sup>

The day when Francis celebrated the Way of the Cross was also the day when he visited the Nazi concentration camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The whole visit was shrouded in silence.<sup>28</sup> The date of the visit, 29 July, had a profound meaning, as it was exactly on that day, 75 years earlier, that St Maximilian Maria Kolbe volunteered to die in place of another prisoner. Pope Francis prayed in silence in his cell. The visit to the former concentration camp was not an official part of WYD, rather it was an accompanying event. A similar event was a service celebrated at Jasna Góra Monastery as a Mass of Thanksgiving for the 1050th anniversary

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*nego spotkania z młodymi w oknie papieskim [Speech from the Evening Meeting with Young People in the Papal Window]*, in: Franciszek, *Między kanapą a odwagą...*, op. cit., 115–116.

24 <http://www.krakow2016.com/papiez-franciszek-kosciol-dzis-na-was-patrzy-i-chcesz-od-was-uczyc> (26.10.2016); cf. *Przemówienie w czasie ceremonii powitania [Speech during the Welcome Ceremony]*, in: Franciszek, *Między kanapą a odwagą...*, op. cit., p. 85.

25 Cf. Information from the Organizing Committee of WYD Krakow 2016.

26 Cf. <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/follow-jesus-way-of-the-cross-through-works-of-mercy-pope-says.cfm> (26.10.2016).

27 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/droga-krzyzowa-jest-droga-zycia-i-stylu-boga> (26.10.2016).

28 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/program-en> (26.10.2016).

of the Baptism of Poland (it took place on Thursday 28 July, at 10:30). All Poles were invited to participate.

Saturday 30 July, in turn, was an intensive day. The Pope started the day with a visit to the Divine Mercy Sanctuary in Łagiewniki, where he confessed eight young people to show the meaning of the penance and reconciliation sacrament.<sup>29</sup> Then the Holy Father went to John Paul II Sanctuary, where he celebrated a mass for priests, consecrated persons and seminarians.<sup>30</sup> Next, at the Bishops' Palace at Franciszkańska Street, the Pope had dinner with young people. The dinner was attended by representatives of all continents: Anna Szargiej (Poland/Germany), Uliana Żurawczak (Ukraine), Alessio Vu Hoang (Vietnam), Łukasz Bankiel (Poland), Thomas Harbeck (Canada), Jean-Marc Kone (Ivory Coast), Marco Bulgarelli (Costarica), Fatima Leung-Wai (New Zealand), Jose Pasternak (Brasil), Paula Mora (Colombia), Małgorzata Krupnik (Poland), Raviro Tinotena Kakidza (Zimbabwe) and Jekatierina Baumann (Russia).<sup>31</sup>

On Saturday in the afternoon, Pope Francis also visited St. Francis' Basilica in Krakow, where he kissed the reliquary of Fathers Zbigniew Strzałkowski and Michał Tomaszek, murdered in Peru in 1999 by the Shining Path terrorists.<sup>32</sup> Then he went to the Campus Misericordiae, where the Małopolska Caritas set up the House of Mercy and the House of Bread. The former will host workshops for seniors and the latter will be used for storing food. During the Saturday Vigil the Holy Father, together with representatives of youth from the whole world, passed through the Gate of Mercy, and then invited them to join him in the Popemobile.

The Saturday Vigil invoked the words of the official prayer of Krakow WYD: "Teach us how to convey the faith to those in doubt, hope to those who are discouraged, love to those who feel indifferent, forgiveness to those who have done wrong, and joy to those who are unhappy. Allow the spark of merciful love that you have enkindled within us become

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29 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/program-en> (26.10.2016).

30 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/program-en> (26.10.2016).

31 Cf. [https://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/ostatnia\\_chwila/x102301/mlodzi-wolontariusze-sdm-zjed-li-obiad-z-papieżem/?print=1](https://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/ostatnia_chwila/x102301/mlodzi-wolontariusze-sdm-zjed-li-obiad-z-papieżem/?print=1) (26.10.2016).

32 Cf. <http://www.polskieradio.pl/5/3/Artykul/1649434,Papież-Franciszek-znowu-zaskoczył-Odwiedził-ojców-franciszkanów> (26.10.2016).

a fire that can transform hearts and renew the face of the earth.”<sup>33</sup> The meaning of the prayer was highlighted by the testimonies of those who regained hope thanks to Divine Grace.<sup>34</sup> During the vigil in the Field of Mercy, Pope Francis called on the young people to get up from a comfortable sofa and put on high-performance shoes: “Thinking that in this world, in our cities and our communities, there is no longer any room to grow, to dream, to create, to gaze at new horizons – in a word to live – is one of the worst things that can happen to us in life. When we are paralyzed, we miss the magic of encountering others, making friends, sharing dreams, walking at the side of others. But in life there is another, even more dangerous, kind of paralysis. It is not easy to put our finger on it. I like to describe it as the paralysis that comes from confusing happiness with a sofa.”<sup>35</sup> After the vigil young people listened to a concert of Polish and foreign artists and prayed long into the night.

The young stayed at the Campus Misericordiae for the night in order to welcome Pope Francis at the Final Mass. Referring to the biblical story of Zacchaeus, the Pope encouraged youth to show courage every day: “People may laugh at you because you believe in the gentle and unassuming power of mercy. But do not be afraid. Think of the motto of these days: ‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy’ (Mt 5:7). People may judge you to be dreamers, because you believe in a new humanity, one that rejects hatred between peoples, one that refuses to see borders as barriers and can cherish its own traditions without being self-centred or small-minded. Don’t be discouraged: with a smile and open arms, you proclaim hope and you are a blessing for our one human family, which here you represent so beautifully!”<sup>36</sup> During the Final Mass the Pope also

33 <http://www.krakow2016.com/en/program-en> (26.10.2016).

34 Cf. <http://www.krakow2016.com/opis-idei-czuwania-z-ojcem-swiety> (26.10.2016).

35 <https://www.krakow2016.com/przemowienie-papieza-franciszka-z-brzegow> (26.10.2016); cf. *Przemówienie podczas czuwania modlitewnego z młodzieżą na Campusie Misericordiae* [Speech during the Prayer Vigil with Young People in the Campus Misericordiae], in: Franciszek, *Między kanapką a odwagą...*, op. cit., p. 136.

36 [http://www.deon.pl/religia/serwis-papieski/dokumenty/przemowienia-papieskie/art,148,wszystkie-wystapienia-papieza-francisz-ka-w-polsce,strona,13.html?utm\\_source=deon&utm\\_medium=link\\_artykul](http://www.deon.pl/religia/serwis-papieski/dokumenty/przemowienia-papieskie/art,148,wszystkie-wystapienia-papieza-francisz-ka-w-polsce,strona,13.html?utm_source=deon&utm_medium=link_artykul) (26.10.2016); cf. *Homilia w czasie mszy świętej pośłania na zakończenie Światowych Dni Młodzieży na Campusie Misericordiae* [Homily

announced the date and place of the next World Youth Day, to be held in Panama in 2019.

The itinerary of the Pope's pilgrimage also included a meeting with WYD volunteers in the Tauron Arena to thank them for their contribution. A total of 25,000 volunteers working for a short period and around 50 volunteers involved for a longer time helped during WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow. Holy Father Francis did not give a speech from notes, but engaged in a dialogue with young people. The meeting closed WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow and the Pope drove to the Balice airport. Onboard the plane to the Vatican, the Pope not only praised the enthusiasm of Poles and the beauty of Krakow, but also explained the basis for successful communication with young people.

World Youth Day and its programme provided not only an opportunity for the young to meet Holy Father Francis, but first and foremost an opportunity to meet God. For this reason, in the towns hosting pilgrims the WYD organizers prepared catechetical sessions in visitors' mother tongues. Almost 1,000 catechetical sessions were held in Krakow. Pilgrims could also confess in the language of catechesis. In Krakow, one of the Reconciliation Zones was set up in Divine Mercy Sanctuary in Łagiewniki (as mercy is experienced in a special way in the penitence and reconciliation sacrament).

Catechetical sessions in Krakow were held between 27 and 29 July at 260 locations, in 33 languages with the participation of 314 catechists. The largest number of locations (as many as 50) offered sessions in Italian, 44 in Polish, 41 in French, 32 in Spanish and 27 in English. Catechesis was also offered in other, less popular languages, e.g. Norwegian, Korean, Cambodian and Armenian. The sessions took place in churches (240), in assembly halls (8) but also on sports fields, in parks and on squares (12 locations).<sup>37</sup> The largest location was the Tauron Arena, where sessions in English were held, organized by the Mercy Centre of the Knights of Columbus. A total of 20,000 pilgrims took part. At the Cracovia sta-

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*during the Final Mass of WYD at the Campus Misericordiae*, in: Franciszek, *Między kanapą a odwagą...*, op. cit., p. 151.

37 Cf. Internal materials of the Catechesis Division of WYD Organization Committee.

dium, hosting sessions in Polish, 14,500 people arrived on Friday 29 July. Catechesis was attended by both registered and non-registered young pilgrims. Each day had a similar schedule: between 9 and 12 a group initiated singing and praying, then a bishop addressed teaching to participants, next there was time for questions, followed by a mass with a short homily. The topics for catechesis were focused on the message of WYD Krakow 2016: “Blessed are the merciful.” On 27 July the theme was “Now is the time of mercy,” the Thursday sessions were entitled “Let us allow ourselves to be touched by Christ’s mercy,” and finally the Friday topic was “Lord, make me an instrument of your mercy.”<sup>38</sup>

An important Cracovian catechesis was the Pilgrimage of Mercy. Between 26 and 29 July 2016, thousands of pilgrims journeyed to two sanctuaries: Divine Mercy Sanctuary and St. John Paul II Sanctuary. During the Pilgrimage of Mercy as many as 250,000 young people visited the two shrines.<sup>39</sup>

For young people the participation in WYD was an opportunity to be part of an international community of being and acting. This participation, grounded in the dignity of every single person, irrespective of their skin colour, sex, country of origin, may change a young person and make him or her more dynamic. The common good of human community cannot be actualized in a way which dismisses personal freedom and responsibility.<sup>40</sup>

### 3. World Youth Day Krakow 2016 in numbers

It is very difficult to present figures on World Youth Day. The data on the registered participants is evident, but in the case of other figures we must exercise caution, as we are referring to hundreds of thousands of people arriving for individual WYD events. Unfortunately, it is often the figures that the media are most interested in. Journalist break down, report and compare numbers of participants, countries, registered journalists and

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38 Cf. Internal materials of the Catechesis Division of WYD Organization Committee.

39 Cf. Information from WYD Krakow 2016 Organization Committee.

40 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn [Person and Deed]*, Lublin 2000, pp. 319–330.

commentators. The figures quoted by the media, in particular in the period leading up to WYD, quite often obscured the main idea behind the event, while at the same time confirming that WYD is a mass event, gathering crowds of young people from around the world.

Since the very first World Youth Day, held in Rome, the popularity of the meetings has remained at a steady level, sometimes showing an upward trend.

Table 1 – Locations of World Youth Day and numbers of participants (1985–2013)

| Year | Duration of Central Events | Number | Location                      | Number of participants [mln] |
|------|----------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1985 | 30–31 March                | I      | Rome, Italy                   | 0.25–0.35                    |
| 1987 | 11–12 April                | II     | Buenos Aires, Argentina       | 0.90–1.00                    |
| 1989 | 15–20 August               | IV     | Santiago de Compostela, Spain | 0.40–0.60                    |
| 1991 | 10–15 August               | VI     | Częstochowa, Poland           | 1.50–1.80                    |
| 1993 | 10–15 August               | VIII   | Denver, USA                   | 0.50–1.00                    |
| 1995 | 10–15 August               | X      | Manila, Philippines           | 4.00–5.00                    |
| 1997 | 19–24 August               | XII    | Paris, France                 | 1.10–1.20                    |
| 2000 | 15–20 August               | XV     | Rome, Italy                   | 2.00–2.50                    |
| 2002 | 23–28 July                 | XVII   | Toronto, Canada               | 0.40–0.80                    |
| 2005 | 16–21 August               | XX     | Kiel, Germany                 | 1.20                         |
| 2008 | 15–20 July                 | XXIII  | Sydney, Australia             | 0.35–0.50                    |
| 2011 | 15–21 August               | XXVI   | Madrid, Spain                 | 1.50–2.00                    |
| 2013 | 23–28 July                 | XXVIII | Rio de Janeiro, Brasil        | 3.00–3.70                    |

Source: own compilation on the basis of the figures released by the organizers.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Cf. A. Jackowski, I. Sołjan, E. Bilska-Wodecka, J. Liro, M. Trojnar, E. Kostrzewa, *World Youth Day in Cracow in the Light of Experiences from Around the World*, in: *World Youth Days. A Testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., p. 136.

The number of young pilgrims has oscillated between 350,000 and 5,000,000, which was largely determined by the location (see Table 1). The largest numbers of pilgrims arrived for the event in Manila (5,000,000 in 1995) and Rio de Janeiro (3,000,000 in 2015), which may be linked with the higher religious involvement of the Asian and South American populations. At the same time, the financial security of pilgrims from these continents is statistically smaller, which may prevent them from coming to Europe. The international character of the event is also visible. While at the beginning participants came from 40 countries, in 2005 Cologne was visited by youth representing almost 200 states. World Youth Days have been organized in Europe, four times in the Americas, once in Australia and once in Asia. Rome is the only place to have hosted WYD twice, in 1985 and later in 2000 in the Great Jubilee year. The fact that the event has been held for over 30 years and the keen interest of young people, as reflected in the numbers of pilgrims, demonstrates that the young find the event important, interesting and indispensable, especially in the context of immense civilizational, cultural, social and religious changes. The participants may freely give testimony to their faith, while those who are still searching may obtain solid foundations or at least valuable guidelines.<sup>42</sup>

The number of young people registering for WYD is usually between 300,000 and 500,000, but the actual number of WYD pilgrims is significantly higher (sometimes as many as four times). A total of 356,294 pilgrims from 187 countries registered for the 2016 meeting in Krakow,<sup>43</sup> with Poles being the largest group (around 80,000), followed by Italians (around 64,000), French (around 33,000) and Spanish (around 30,000).<sup>44</sup> The final number was increasing day by day. Many participants decided not to come due to a growing terrorist threat in Europe. However, the safety, peace and good organization of the event,

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42 Cf. A. Jackowski, I. Sołjan, E. Bilska-Wodecka, J. Liro, M. Trojnar, E. Kostrzewa, *World Youth Day in Cracow in the Light of Experiences from Around the World*, op. cit., pp. 136–137.

43 Cf. *Materials of the Press Office of WYD Krakow 2016 in Cracow*, <https://www.krakow2016.com/biuro-prasowe> (26.10.2016).

44 Cf. *Materials of the Press Office of WYD Krakow 2016 in Cracow*, <https://www.krakow2016.com/biuro-prasowe> (26.10.2016).

evident from the very first Holy Mass at Błonia Park, changed the mind of many pilgrims and they came at the last minute. At a press conference closing the event, held on 1 August 2016, Bishop Damian Muskus, General Coordinator of WYD Krakow 2016, said that as many 3,000,000 people could have participated in the Final Mass, though the number reported in the media was around 2,500,000 (most likely it was based on unofficial police estimates). Consequently, the number of participants of WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow is slightly higher than it was in Madrid.<sup>45</sup>

The organization of World Youth Day also means financial dealings involving millions of euro. A proportion of the organizational costs is borne by pilgrims<sup>46</sup> Fundraising to support pilgrims from less affluent countries is a commendable idea. The funds from the so-called participation contribution were used to prepare pilgrims' backpacks and meeting venues, which also had an educational dimension.

Each World Youth Day is an enormous logistical challenge. Participants in Krakow WYD were provided with different forms of accommodation in the city: hotels, hostels, camping sites and places in private homes. There were four pilgrim accommodation zones. The first included the city of Krakow and the neighbouring area (around 300,000 to 400,000 participants). The second zone covered the area of the Krakow Archdiocese (100,000 to 150,000). The third zone was the Tarnów diocese (30,000 to 100,000) and the fourth one was the Kielce and Katowice dioceses (50,000 to 100,000). Young pilgrims who were registered as participants were offered accommodation in private homes (around 150,000 pilgrims), tent cities, schools (around 40,000), dormitories (around 15,000) and other facilities. Those who came to Krakow as unregistered partic-

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45 Cf. <http://www.gazetakrakowska.pl/swiatowe-dni-mlodziezy-2016/a/sdm-organizatorzy-na-mszy-w-brzegach-bylo-25-mln-wiernych-zdjecia,10463928/> (26.10.2016).

46 Some bishops, for example Tarnów bishop Andrzej Jeż, provided financial support for young people from their parishes to enable their participation in WYD Krakow 2016 in Cracow Cf. *Biskup Tarnowski wspiera młodych, którzy przez cały tydzień będą uczestniczyć w ŚDM* [Tarnów Bishop Supports Young Pilgrims Going to WYD] <http://www.diecezja.tarnow.pl/index.php/wiadomosci/item/3617-biskup-tarnowski-wspiera-mlodych-ktorzy-przez-caly-ty-dzien-beda-uczestniczyc-w-sdm> (26.10.2016).

ipants stayed in hotels and hostels (around 28,000). Some pilgrims were hosted by monasteries and convents.<sup>47</sup>

Approximately 17,000 police officers and 11,000 border guards kept order during the meeting in Krakow.<sup>48</sup> Almost 6,000 journalists were accredited to cover WYD,<sup>49</sup> including almost 2,000 from abroad. A total of 5,000,000 pieces of Communion bread and the same number of water bottles were prepared for WYD in Krakow.<sup>50</sup> The numbers suggest that WYD in Krakow was a huge international event, involving not only representatives of the Roman-Catholic Church, but also the government and the state administration.

#### 4. The organization of World Youth Day Krakow 2016

World Youth Day is one of the largest international events in the world. Its preparation, organization and implementation require a professional set-up and regular activities. Since the very beginning the unit responsible for the organization on behalf of the Vatican was the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The Council was dissolved in 2016 and its responsibilities were taken over by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, which came into being on 1 September 2016.<sup>51</sup>

The main organizer of WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow was the Krakow Archdiocese. The local Organizing Committee was in charge of organizational, logistic and spiritual preparations for WYD Krakow 2016, and cooperated with Vatican institutions, in particular the pontifical Council for the Laity, a guarantor of the consistency of the WYD project with the Holy Father's intentions. The local committee is always set up for the

<sup>47</sup> Cf. A. Jackowski, I. Sołtan, E. Bilka-Wodecka, J. Liro, M. Trojnar, E. Kostrzewa, *World Youth Day in Cracow in the Light of Experiences from Around the World*, op. cit., pp. 146–148.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. <https://www.mswia.gov.pl/pl/bezpieczenstwo-sdm/przygotowania-sluzb/14441,Przygotowania-sluzb.html> (26.10.2016).

<sup>49</sup> Cf. [https://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/temat\\_dnia/x101256/ponad-tys-dziennikarzy-akredytowanych-na-wizyte-papieza-i-swiatowe-dni-mlodziezy/](https://ekai.pl/wydarzenia/temat_dnia/x101256/ponad-tys-dziennikarzy-akredytowanych-na-wizyte-papieza-i-swiatowe-dni-mlodziezy/) (26.10.2016).

<sup>50</sup> Internal materials of WYD Krakow 2016 Organization Committee.

<sup>51</sup> Cf. [http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/08/17/pope\\_francis\\_sets\\_up\\_dicastery\\_for\\_laity\\_family\\_and\\_life/1251813](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/08/17/pope_francis_sets_up_dicastery_for_laity_family_and_life/1251813) (26.10.2016).

period of preparation and implementation after the location of the next WYD is announced. It is usually composed of representatives of the host diocese and the Episcopal Conference of a host country and is chaired by the Bishop of the host location.<sup>52</sup> In Krakow, the WYD Organizing Committee had 120 full-time employees, but the total number of people involved was considerably higher. A total of 50 volunteers were engaged for a longer period and worked for the Committee, being part of every Division of the WYD Organizing Committee. The Committee had the following departments: General Administration, Pilgrim Registration and Reception Department, Volunteer Department, Central Events Department, Logistics Department, Communication Department, Pastoral Department, Catechesis Department and Festival of the Young Department. The Financial Section (employees of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow), in turn, was in charge of finances. The Chairman of the Organizing Committee for WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow was Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the General Coordinator was Bishop Damian Muskus OFM, while Rev. Grzegorz Suchodolski was the Secretary General.<sup>53</sup> Since the Holy Father's visit during WYD was also a Papal Visitation and a visit of the Head of the Vatican State, the Episcopal Conference was also involved in the organization of the event. The Conference set up the Organizing Committee for the visit of Holy Father Pope Francis with Bishop Artur Miziński as Secretary General.

The preparation of such a large international event also meant the involvement of the Polish authorities and the Małopolska and Krakow authorities. A special legal act was passed, which set out all WYD-related issues, described the extent of support to be provided to the organizers by the Republic of Poland (from central level administration, such as the Government Protection Bureau and Border Guards to province administration and units reporting to the provincial governor, such as the police and healthcare services, and finally local administration). The Polish government appointed Mr Paweł Majewski as Government Representative for the Preparation of WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow, while Ms Beata Kempa,

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. [http://www.krakow2016.com/organizatorzy\\_testowa](http://www.krakow2016.com/organizatorzy_testowa) (26.10.2016).

<sup>53</sup> Based on: [http://www.krakow2016.com/organizatorzy\\_testowa](http://www.krakow2016.com/organizatorzy_testowa) (26.10.2016).

Member of the Council of Ministers, was nominated Head of the Government Group for the Preparation of the visit of His Holiness Pope Francis.<sup>54</sup>

City and local government administration also joined in the preparation and implementation of WYD Krakow 2016 in Krakow.<sup>55</sup> We cannot forget about volunteers, both those involved in long-term volunteering, who most often arrived six months before the beginning of WYD, and those involved for a short time, whose number in Krakow reached around 25,000. They were easily recognizable by their blue backpacks. Short-term volunteers helped in the organization stage and during the event itself. Their tasks involved greeting pilgrims, providing information and helping young people as well as keeping order at the venue of the Central Events.

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The pilgrimage to Krakow for WYD Krakow 2016 involved different groups of young pilgrims, representing all inhabited continents and the majority of countries in the world. Some of them arrived with a specific motivation to deepen their faith, to give a public testimony, and to confirm hope. Other pilgrims came to experience the community of friendship, brotherly love, youthfulness, peace and joy. Still others came in search of answers to their existential questions and to look for solutions to serious problems in their life. Some pilgrims came with a desire to undergo a transformation and to pray for themselves or their nearest and dearest. Yet there were also people who did not know why they came or who were motivated by Krakow's tourist attractions or saw the event as an interesting way to pass their time.<sup>56</sup> Most likely all these groups discovered more than they were

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54 Cf. <https://bip.kprm.gov.pl/kpr/bip-rady-ministrow/organy-pomocnicze/organy-pomocnicze-rady/2992.Zespol-do-spraw-przygotowania-wizyty-Jego-Swiatobliwosci-Papieza-Franciszka-w-Rz.html> (26.10.2016).

55 Cf. A. Jackowski, I. Sołjan, *Światowe Dni Młodzieży Cracow 2016 – raport prognozowanych korzyści z organizacji imprezy* [World Youth Day Krakow 2016 in Cracow: a Report on the Forecasted Benefits of the Event. Internal Materials of WYD Krakow 2016 Organization Committee.]

56 Cf. C. Migliore, *World Youth Day Krakow 2016 in Cracow – Pilgrimage and Mercy*, in: *World Youth Days. A Testimony to the Hope of Young People*, op. cit., pp. 35–36.

looking for since WYD is a mass event gathering millions of participants, but at the same time creating space for individual meetings. It is an event of a predominantly religious character, touching each participant to the very core. And finally, it is an event which is the Church's 21st century way to evangelize young people and to shape their spirituality.

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