



Press release

5,000 Canadian Youth Join Pope Francis in Portugal
World Youth Day, from 2 to 6 August, is Expected to Draw Over 1 Million Pilgrims

19 July 2023 – More than 5,000 Canadian Youth are making their way to Lisbon, Portugal to be with Pope Francis, from 2 to 6 August 2023. The Holy Father will join more than one million young people for World Youth Day (WYD), an international gathering of youth, organized by the Catholic Church. The first international World Youth Day was held in 1986, [and the event was hosted by Canada in 2002](#), with Pope Saint John Paul II making the pilgrimage to Toronto.

“This is an opportunity for young people to celebrate their faith, meet other youth from around the world and to have a special encounter with Pope Francis,” said Isabel Correa, National Coordinator of the Canadian delegation to the World Youth Day 2023. “Over time, we have heard and seen the powerful experience that World Youth Day has been in the lives of so many Canadian youth and we expect that this year’s pilgrimage will be no different. It is a transformative and inspiring moment that they will cherish for years to come.”

Michelle Pacheco, a 26-year-old Canadian delegate from Toronto, currently works as a missionary with the Archdiocese of Toronto’s Youth Office and says that she has devoted all her preparation time to prayer. “Above all else, I have been asking people to pray for me and have also asked them how I can pray for them during my pilgrimage to World Youth Day,” she said.

“Since this is my first World Youth Day, it is difficult to say exactly what I will be able to take away from it,” said Justin Nguyen, a 28-year-old Canadian from Vancouver. “But what I do know is that it is a journey of faith – it is my first time attending WYD, my first time in Portugal and in Spain. I just hope and pray that it will be a time that allows me to focus on my relationship with God, then return home, and continue the mission that God has entrusted to me in service to my local community.”

World Youth Day is an opportunity to hear talks from leading Catholic speakers, and notably, including Bishops from every continent. In addition to catechetical sessions, there are opportunities for prayer and divine worship. A special element of World Youth Day also includes a cultural festival with music, dance, and creative expression, drawing on talented young people from around the world.

Pope Francis will spend five days in Portugal, most of them in Lisbon, where he will meet university students, enjoy lunch with young people, pray with them and preside at Mass, while also making a stop in Fatima, one of the most popular pilgrimage sites in the world.

The Canadian pilgrims travelling to Portugal represent our provinces, with the largest delegation coming from Ontario, followed closely by the group of Quebec pilgrims from Montreal. Thirteen Bishops will also be making their way to Portugal:

1. The Most Rev. Bryan **BAYDA**, C.Ss.R., Bishop of the Eparchy of Toronto and Eastern Canada in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
2. The Most Rev. Marcel **DAMPHOUSSE**, Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall
3. The Most Rev. Richard **GAGNON**, Archbishop of Winnipeg
4. The Most Rev. Pierre **GOUDREAU**L, Bishop of Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière

5. The Most Rev. Jose **KALLUVELIL**, Bishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Eparchy of Mississauga
6. Cardinal Gérald C. **LACROIX**, Archbishop of Quebec and Primate of Canada
7. The Most Rev. Martin **LALIBERTÉ**, P.M.É., Bishop of Trois-Rivières
8. The Most Rev. Christian **LÉPINE**, Archbishop of Montreal
9. The Most Rev. Yvan **MATHIEU**, S.M., Auxiliary Bishop of Ottawa-Cornwall
10. The Most Rev. Scott **McCAIG**, C.C., Bishop of the Military Ordinariate of Canada
11. The Most Rev. Christian **RODEMBOURG** M.S.A., Bishop of Saint-Hyacinthe
12. The Most Rev. Pierre Olivier **TREMBLAY**, O.M.I., Bishop of Hearst-Moosonee
13. The Most Rev. Héctor **VILA**, Bishop of Whitehorse.

“We are proud to see that a large Canadian delegation will be present at World Youth Day in Lisbon,” declared the Most Reverend Raymond Poisson, Bishop of Saint-Jérôme-Mont-Laurier and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “This great international pilgrimage is a source of hope for present generations of young Catholics and for the future of the Church. It brings together thousands of young Catholics from all around the world in order to experience the joy of encountering God together and to deepen their faith.”

A special gathering for Canadian pilgrims will be held in Lisbon on Tuesday, 1 August, organized by a group of young adult volunteers from WYD CANADA on behalf of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Canadian delegation also includes Indigenous youth following Pope Francis' historic 2022 Apostolic Visit to Canada, which served as an important step in the process of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples of this land.

In advance of their journey to Lisbon, many of the Canadian delegates will participate in the “Diocesan Days,” which will enable them to get acquainted with communities outside of Lisbon, to participate in service projects, and to meet Portuguese families, thus strengthening the bonds of faith between the countries.

The Canadian delegation is composed of young pilgrims from Ontario (42%), Quebec (18%), British-Columbia (12%), Alberta (10%), Saskatchewan (2%) and Manitoba (1%). Some 26 volunteers from British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and Yukon will also be present to help with the festivities in Lisbon.

More than 750,000 people attended the final Mass of the World Youth Day in Toronto, in 2002, and up to two million are expected to attend the final Mass in Lisbon with Pope Francis. Those interested in learning more about Canadians traveling to Portugal for World Youth Day 2023 can visit: www.wydcanada.org.

For more information concerning WYD Lisbon, please review the [press kit](#).

About the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) is the national assembly of the Bishops of Canada. It was founded in 1943 and officially recognized by the Holy See in 1948.

For further media inquiries on the World Youth Day 2023 Canadian Delegation:

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