



WYD cross coming to Chicago



(CNS photo/Paul Haring)

The World Youth Day icon and cross will be making a stop in five dioceses in the United States on the journey back to Panama for World Youth Day 2019. Youths from Panama (left) received the WYD cross from representatives in Poland in 2017.

The closest stop to the Rockford Diocese will be Aug. 20 at Holy Name Cathedral, 730 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago, in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

There will be several Masses, an outdoor luncheon and an evening prayer service that day.

Info: <https://pvm.archchicago.org/events/wyd-symbols>

WYD — Six months and counting!

By MANUEL RUEDA | Catholic News Service

The Church of Christ the Redeemer in Panama City was built with Panama's hot and humid weather in mind.

There are no walls on the building. Its tall, round roof is supported by cement columns spread far apart so that a good amount of breeze can make its way down the church's aisles.

But last April, plenty of organizers gathered there for prayer and planning for World Youth Day 2019.

Panama will host the 16th World Youth Day Jan. 22-27. It will be the first Central American nation to host the massive event, which will include a music festival, dozens of seminars for youth and an expected four-day visit by Pope Francis.

"I think that World Youth Day will help us to grow spiritually," said Ivan Lopez, 20, who attended the April prayer service. "There are many young people who have drifted away from the Church, but this will help us to strengthen our parishes."

"We have people coming from places like Brazil, Haiti and the Philippines," said Carolina Vivas, 23, a volunteer who is helping large groups of pilgrims to register for World Youth Day through the event's official internet site, <https://panama2019.pa>.

"I've never been to those places. But when these people come here, I will be able to see the world through their eyes," said Vivas, who is originally from Venezuela.

Organizers said that, by mid-May, 155,000 pilgrims had registered for World Youth Day. These include about 5,000 young adults from the United States. Most pilgrims come from the host nation and from Latin American countries such as Colombia, Argentina and Brazil.



(CNS photo/courtesy World Youth Day USA)

The WYD logo (left) depicting symbols for Mary, Panama and the Panama Canal was selected as the winning design to promote World Youth Day 2019. The design by Amber Calvo, 20, a Panamanian student

studying architecture, was chosen from 103 entries.

In Panama, organizers are hopeful Pope Francis' visit will encourage the nation's poor to come back to the Church.

Yitzhak Gonzales, a local leader for the youth committee, said young people in the poorest parts of Colon, an impoverished port city about an hour from Panama's capital, feel the Church is irrelevant in their lives.

Gonzalez, 26, said one way to fix that is by creating spaces for youths to "reflect on what they want to do with their lives."

He said young people go about life mostly thinking about



(CNS photo/Bob Roller)

World Youth Day volunteer Carolina Vivas of Venezuela, 23, works on her computer April 23 in Panama City. World Youth Day 2019 will be celebrated Jan. 22-27 in Panama City.

how to make money to support their families. Some even turn to crime.

These day-to-day concerns hurt the chances of anyone seeking a career in the Church, he said. The diocese is notoriously short on priests, which means some rural areas only get Mass once every three months.

"There is not much thought given to what God wants from us, or even if we may have a religious vocation," Gonzalez said. "That is why we need more spaces to talk about our vocation and career options."

Neyci Romero, a World

Youth Day volunteer at Colon's Jesus Pan de Vida Parish, said part of the problem her parish faces is that the faithful have a habit of keeping to themselves. She is hoping World Youth Day will become an excuse for churchgoers to "reach out" to the rest of the community.

"We are going door to door, encouraging people to learn about World Youth Day and get involved," said Romero, 24. "We also have a car with big speakers that we take into the streets to get noticed and make some noise."

The Colon Diocese is aiming to take 3,000 pilgrims to World

Youth Day. Some young Catholic leaders in the city have quit their jobs or taken months of leave to help the diocese prepare for the event.

Gonzalez took a one-year leave from his job at the local port. He said he has found the preparations to be rewarding and he hopes Pope Francis, who is famous for seeking those on the margins, visits Colon while he is in Panama.

"A papal visit would renew our hope in the future," Gonzalez said. "We don't just need new infrastructure here, our people also need spiritual renovation."

VOCATION CORNER

Hi, everyone

As summer moves along I would simply like to introduce myself. I'm Father Kyle Manno, and I am the new vocation director for the Diocese of Rockford.

I was ordained June 4, 2016, and have been assigned to St. Patrick Parish in St. Charles for the last two years. I have just recently moved into my new assignment as director of vocations as well as associate pastor at the Newman Catholic Student Center at Northern Illinois University at Christ the

Teacher University Parish.

I am truly excited to begin this new journey to help inspire vocations to the priesthood and religious life as well as forming men to become priests after the heart of Christ.

I want to begin this new role by encouraging all those reading this article not to be afraid to take up the task of daily prayer for at least 20 minutes a day. This is the most crucial aspect of discovering what

God desires for us in our lives. He is the creator of our very souls and therefore He is the one who will reveal to us why we exist and how to perform His will on a daily basis.

When we come to Him daily in prayer He does incredible things and will transform our hearts, minds, and lives! So do not be afraid to spend that time with Him daily!



By FATHER KYLE MANNO | Vocations Director