

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## **SYDNEY YOUTH BOUND FOR PANAMA TO CELEBRATE WORLD YOUTH DAY WITH POPE FRANCIS**

More than 200 young people from the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney will depart tomorrow on a two-week pilgrimage to the USA, Mexico and Panama for World Youth Day.

The Catholic youth festival, now in its 35<sup>th</sup> year, will attract hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from around the world to Panama City from 22-29 January. Sydney hosted the event in 2008, with the closing Mass attended by 300,000 people.

The Sydney pilgrims aged from 16-35 will be accompanied by the Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP and Auxiliary Bishop, Most Rev Richard Umbers. In all, about 700 pilgrims from across Australia will attend the WYD celebrations.

“For many of the pilgrims, World Youth Day marks a turning point in their lives, the inspiration for a life-long pondering and a closer relationship with Christ”, Archbishop Fisher said.

“It really is a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet and network with other young Catholics from across the world in a faith-filled environment.”

The pilgrims will spend five days in Washington DC participating in the March for Life on 18 January – the annual pro-life rally, which is attended by 100,000 people, before heading to Panama for WYD.

The three-day festival concludes with a Final Mass, celebrated by Pope Francis, on 27 January and during which he will announce which city will host the next World Youth Day.

ENDS

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