


PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LOS ANGELES WILL BE THE LAST STOP OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY CROSS
AND MARIAN ICON ON ITS WAY TO PANAMA TO BE PART OF
WORLD YOUTH DAY 2019**

---A Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gomez on August 26 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels will feature the seven-foot-tall cross and the icon and a blessing of pilgrims participating in Panama's event that Pope Francis will attend---

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles will be the final stop on a multi-city pilgrimage of the official World Youth Day Cross and an icon of the Virgin Mary traveling across the United States from Aug. 19-27, on its way to Panama, where young people will join Pope Francis at World Youth Day 2019. The cross will be welcomed by hundreds of young adult Catholics and World Youth Day pilgrims at a Mass on August 26 celebrated by Archbishop José H. Gomez at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

“When we receive these symbolic pilgrims, we receive everyone who has met them on the way and the prayers they bear to us,” said Father Chris Bazyouros, director of the Archdiocese’s Office of Religious Education, event organizers. “When this cross and icon leave us to continue the journey, they will carry us, our prayers and our hopes, so that they are lifted up to meet Christ Jesus. We hope that you will join us in prayer for all those on the journey.”

Local young adults and youth with their guardians who are planning to travel to Panama to the event held on January 22-27, 2019 are invited to participate in the Mass at Cathedral, wearing WYD t-shirts, where they will be blessed by Archbishop Gomez. The Mass will also feature testimonials by two of the pilgrims.

The Cross has been part of every World Youth Day celebration since 1986, the first official WYD in Rome, established by Pope Saint John Paul II. The Marian icon has accompanied the Cross for the last 15 years, under the title Salus Populi Romani. This is the first time the icon visits the U.S.

The Cross has traveled worldwide since 1984, when St. John Paul II gave it to young people. In 2002, it visited Ground Zero in New York City to bring comfort to the nation’s young people in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks. Prior to that, it had traveled to the U.S. in 1993 in advance of WYD in Denver, Colorado.

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The Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels will start at 3:30 p.m. and will be followed by a prayer rally on the Cathedral's Plaza. The Cross and the Marian icon will be available in the Cathedral for public viewing and veneration after the Mass.

The other cities included in the U.S. journey are Chicago, Miami (Florida), Houston, and Washington, D.C.

For more information about the World Youth Day Cross and Marian Icon U.S. tour, visit <http://www.usccb.org/about/world-youth-day/visit-of-the-world-youth-day-cross.cfm>. For information about World Youth Day 2019 in Panama, visit <http://worldyouthday.com/panama-2019>.

Photos of the World Youth Day Cross and Marian Icon can be found here: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1S_oZPOQCFWom3MPMtNczeqOLYEE_EzxS

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