



Diocese of Gary  
dcgary.org

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**World Youth Day:  
Young Catholics share hope for the future with Pope Francis  
- MEDIA RELEASE -  
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LISBON, PORTUGAL – More than 1.5 million young Catholics celebrated World Youth Day with Pope Francis in early August, including 16 Diocese of Gary pilgrims led by Bishop Robert J. McClory, and another 29 led by Father Jaime Perea, pastor of St. Francis Xavier parish in Lake Station.

“The Portuguese people have a rich Catholic faith and theirs is a historically overwhelmingly Catholic country,” said Bishop McClory. “To be able to so visibly lift up Jesus Christ and the faith for World Youth Day was a true privilege.”

The Diocese of Gary pilgrims began their WYD journey with a visit to Fatima, where they walked the Stations of the Cross to the home village of the three children to whom the Blessed Mother appeared.

The bishop acknowledged the contributions of the Diocese of Gary pilgrims organized by diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministry consultant Vicky Hathaway. “I enjoyed helping to lead and preach at two catechetical sessions,” he noted. “I led an English-language session of about 250 young people from Uganda, Tanzania, Australia and Kuwait, and Chinese Catholics from California, Namibia and Portugal. (On Aug. 3) we had more than 500 Indian, Australian, Indonesian, Canadian, American and Filipino pilgrims led by a team from the Diocese of Gary.

“The sessions were beautiful and young people were able to share their own thoughts on the theme of the day. At these and other sessions, our Gary young adult leaders did an amazing job serving and sharing the faith,” he added.

Hathaway called the Rise Up catechetical sessions a joyful experience. “They were really beautiful and made me so proud of our pilgrims. For three mornings, our pilgrims led more than 600 others from around the world in prayer and reflection.”

Paul Jarzembowski, associate director for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and a Diocese of Gary native, was also impressed by the Northwest Indiana youth and adults, “not just as pilgrims, but as leaders of pilgrims, as young protagonists, as active parts of the program. What they (engaged in) touched the lives of not only pilgrims from the U.S., but from all over the world,” he said.

World Youth Day began in 1986 as an initiative of St. John Paul II to encourage youth worldwide to use their God-given gifts to bring Christ to their communities.

Pope Francis joined the WYD pilgrims on Aug. 3 for a Welcome Ceremony, presided at a Way of the Cross on Aug. 4 and a prayer vigil on Aug. 5, and celebrated the WYD Closing Mass on Aug. 6, which Bishop McClory concelebrated along with bishops from around the world.

Hathaway called WYD “a time when the global Church recognizes the gifts of young people, young people who are not the future of the Church, but who are the Church now.”

Bishop McClory called WYD “a truly remarkable event in the life of the Church. Young people desire authenticity and deep experiences of the faith. WYD provides that on a global scale.”

For the full story as it appears in the Northwest Indiana Catholic, see <https://dcgary.org/news/young-catholics-share-their-hope-and-faith-pope-francis>.

For more information, contact staff writer Marlene A. Zloza at [mzloza@dcgary.org](mailto:mzloza@dcgary.org) or (219) 769-9292, ext. 249.

Photos can be accessed [here](#).

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## **About the Diocese of Gary**

*The Diocese of Gary serves an estimated 170,000 Catholics in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke counties through 59 parishes, two missions and one Catholic student center, three diocesan high schools, one private high school and 17 parish elementary schools serving 4,397 students. An additional 11,342 students are enrolled in parish Catholic formation programs. More than two million are served by Catholic affiliated agencies including seven Catholic hospitals, residential and day care facilities for adults and children, and centers for Social Services.*