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PRESS RELEASE

At least 225 young Quebecers will take part in the 34th World Youth Day in Panama

Montréal, January 16, 2019 – The next international edition of World Youth Day (WYD) will be held in Panama from January 22 to 27, 2019, with up to 225 young Quebecers participating. A delegation from Montreal's Mission Jeunesse–Youth Ministry will include representatives from the dioceses of Montréal, Québec, Gatineau, Rimouski, Sherbrooke, Baie-Comeau, Nicolet, Saint-Hyacinthe, Saint-Jérôme, and Valleyfield.

“Participating in a WYD, is an opportunity to experience an encounter with Christ together with Pope Francis and other young people from around the world, in a festive and prayerful environment,” said Archbishop Christian Lépine. “WYD is an ideal time to cast aside any sense of feeling alone in one’s faith, and to share one’s journey with other young people from across continents,” he added.

WYD is a worldwide gathering of young people, accompanied by and celebrated with the Pope. It is held in a spirit of celebration, faith and culture that testify to the vitality of the Church and of the Good News of Jesus’ message. “It is much more than an event. It is a time of deep spiritual renewal, the fruits of which benefit the whole of society.” (Benedict XVI). WYD takes place every three years. The last international edition was celebrated in Krakow, July of 2016.

Since its creation, WYDs has been lived out by many as a pilgrimage. The word “pilgrim” originates from the Latin word “*peregrinus*”, which means traveler. This term suggests embarking on a journey, and in doing so, leaving behind one’s home, habits, daily life, friends and family from some rest and renewal. It is in a spirit of simplicity and fellowship that young people are called to live the experience of WYD; even lodging and meals are modest. Patience and solidarity often become an important part of the experience, and sometimes for long hours.

The average age of participants in the delegation, of which 88 per cent are laity, 56 per cent women, and 44 per cent men, is 29 years old.

Located in Central America, Panama has a population of 3.8 million (including 40 per cent in the capital), of which about 75 per cent are Catholics.

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