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Pope's video message to Poland: World Youth Day, sign of harmony and mosaic of races, peoples and cultures united in the name of Jesus

Vatican City, 20 July 2016 – Yesterday afternoon the Holy Father sent a video message to Poland, for the upcoming celebration of the 31st World Youth Day, which will offer him the occasion to meet in Krakow with young people from all over the world and with the "beloved Polish people", in the context of the Jubilee Year of Mercy, and in "grateful and devoted memory of St. John Paul II, who was the initiator of the WYD, and the guide of the Polish people in their recent historical journey towards freedom".

Pope Francis thanked young Polish people for preparing for this event, especially in prayer, and conveyed to them his embrace and his blessing, which he extended to the young of all Europe, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania, and to their countries, their desires and their steps towards Krakow, so that it may be "a pilgrimage of faith and fraternity". He asked the Lord Jesus to grant them the grace of experiencing in themselves His words, "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy".

"I am very anxious to meet you and to offer to the world a new sign of harmony, a mosaic of different faces, from many races, languages, peoples and cultures, but all united in the name of Jesus, Who is the face of Mercy".

Addressing the sons and daughters of Poland, the Pope continued: "For me it is a great gift of the Lord to visit you. You are a nation that throughout its history has experienced so many trials, some particularly difficult, and has persevered through the power of faith, upheld by the maternal hands of the Virgin Mary. I am certain that my pilgrimage to the shrine of Czestochowa will immerse me in this proven faith and do me so much good. I thank you for your prayers in preparation for my visit. I thank the bishops and priests, the men and women religious, and the lay faithful, especially families, to whom I will symbolically bring the post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. The moral and spiritual 'health' of a nation is seen in its families. That is why St. John Paul II showed such concern for engaged couples, young married couples and families. Continue along this road!"

"Dear brothers and sisters", he concluded, "I send you this message as a pledge of my affection. Let us keep close to one another in prayer. I look forward to seeing you in Poland".

