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Em. Arcybiskup Metropolita Krakowski

Kraków, July 22, 2017

Your Eminence Cardinal Donald Wuerl,
Worthy Supreme Knight Carl Anderson,
Pilgrims to World Youth Day Unite,

It is with great joy that I greet you and all my Christian friends, especially the young people gathered at the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C. to celebrate the anniversary of the very important event of World Youth Day held a year ago in Kraków, the world capital of Mercy.

It was a special event because of the fact that the initiative of this international encounter of our young people resulted from the vision of one who used to be the Archbishop of Kraków, who thereafter became our Pope. Organizing World Youth Day in Kraków was like coming home, like looking back to the people, places and events which shaped the spirituality of Karol Wojtyła, Pope John Paul II.

On this occasion of its first anniversary, let us call to mind, once again, the joyful atmosphere of those grace-filled days.

It was created, first of all, by the personal presence and influence of the successor of Peter, Pope Francis. The enthusiasm of his faith and obvious love for young people helped us all to experience the irrevocable and eternal love of God. Pope Francis is a great witness of this merciful love which can transform all our hearts. We are very grateful for his presence and personal testimony and for his message given in words, deeds and simple human gestures.

One has to emphasize in a very special way your impact, my dear young friends, to World Youth Day 2016. You made it! Your love, friendship, faith, enthusiasm, openness and eagerness to share everything created a unique, truly sacred space. You have made known to the world a different, alternative attitude and way of life.

From this perspective we should ask about our tasks for the future. World Youth Day in Kraków has clearly pointed them out to the world.

The first task is that we must re-enforce and strengthen our personal relationship with Jesus. The ethos of World Youth Day urges each of us to search for Him always and everywhere. Jesus is the only one who has the words of eternal life. Only in Him can one discover the fullness of life and understand the ultimate purpose of existence.

The second task is the rebuilding of our human society on the basis of our experience of being one Church. The ecclesiastical community has many things to offer to our wounded culture. The global world we are living in is characterized by many fractures and discontinuities. Our fragmented society is going through what could be described as one of its most critical moments. You, the young Church, which was made so visible in Kraków, are the true sign of hope in the world today that is so tormented by anguish, war and social instability.



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Our third and essential task is the implementation of the principle of Mercy. Let us recall the motto of World Youth Day 2016 which was: *Blessed are the merciful*. We must say that this invitation to do mercy is a very ambitious precept of our Lord Jesus. He knows that without the receiving and giving of His mercy in our hearts, we would be unable to believe, hope and love. Mercy is our Christian mission. It should not be confused with human philanthropy. Jesus measures mercy by His Divine measure: we are to be merciful as our Father is merciful. That means many things, but one meaning must be emphasized in a very special way. We must offer to each other the love which is not our own, but which comes from God the Father. Being merciful means, in the ultimate instance, to introduce people into the very heart of His Divine Life, which offers them a broader horizon for their existence.

In conclusion, I want to assure you of my prayers for you through the intercession of St. John Paul II, the founder and patron of World Youth Day. May God enrich you all with His abundant blessings!

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