

WYD 2023. Up to 65,000 from Italy. Falabretti (CEI): “Bring home the experience and rekindle the enthusiasm”

Approximately 65,000 Italian young people from more than 180 dioceses, accompanied by 106 bishops and dozens of priests, men and women religious, are currently travelling by car, boat, bus, plane and train to Lisbon to take part in the World Youth Day (1-6 August) and to meet Pope Francis, along with hundreds of thousands of their peers from all over the world. It is one of the most numerous, if not the largest, group of young people that will arrive in the Portuguese capital, reinforcing the tradition that Italians are always among the largest groups at international WYD events.



. From 26 to 31 July, Portuguese and Spanish parishes will host the Days in the Dioceses, which will precede the official programme of the Day, an experience of twinning with local communities thanks to a calendar of activities centred on "welcome, discovery, mission, culture and outreach". The dioceses of Lombardy and Triveneto will be twinned with the diocese of Porto, those of Umbria with Aveiro, the dioceses of Piedmont and Valle d'Aosta with Coimbra, while young people from Campania and Sicily will be in Fatima. The young people from Lazio will stop in Barcelona (Spain) before going to Lisbon, and those from Abruzzo will go to Lourdes (France). They will all be hosted by foster families, parishes, public institutions, schools, parishes and associations. They will also have the opportunity to meet other young people from Europe, Africa, America, Asia and Oceania. In total, around 70,000 pilgrims from all over the world will take part in the Days in the Dioceses.



. in charge of the National Youth Ministry (SNPG). "The experience of Casa Italia," said the priest, "was born many years ago: at the beginning it was a service for staff only, but over the years it has become a meeting place for many people." Casa Italia will serve a number of concrete needs, such as "a collecting point of materials for those in charge, a Secretariat that is also an information point", and a centre for the coordination of youth ministry offices and, above all, for the coordination of the General Secretariat of the Italian Bishops' Conference, "a concrete resource for bishops and dioceses." Casa Italia will have a courtyard where young people can spend time "talking, singing or playing football." There will also be refreshments. "In Casa Italia we will invite a representative of the Italian Embassy in Lisbon to accompany us," adds Father Falabretti. "There will be a doctor for first aid, a church for those who wish to pray and a conference room for meetings. About thirty volunteers will work in the structure for the duration of the WYD."



As in previous editions of the World Youth Day, Lisbon will host the Festival of Italians, which will bring together all the Italian pilgrims. The event will take place on Wednesday August 2 (20:00 Portuguese time) at the Passeio Marítimo de Algés. A message from the President of the Republic, Sergio Mattarella, will welcome the participants. The theme of the festival is 'Protagonists', the programme includes musical performances, entertainment, reflection and prayer. "The idea was to focus on young people, who are the true protagonists of the WYD," states a note from the National Youth Service (SNPG), "starting with the issues that concern them, such as failure, love, the future, their dreams, and the lack of trust in government institutions. Testimonies will be given by Father Luigi Ciotti, founder of Gruppo Abele and the anti-mafia organisation Libera, actor Giusy Buscemi, professor Enrico Galiano, volleyball player Cristina Chirichella and humanitarian worker Gennaro Giudetti, among others. Artists popular with young people such as LDA, Fiat 131, Carlo Amleto (comedian and singer-songwriter), Dany Cabras and Mr Pallotta with his DJ set will also be present. The event will be presented by Carolina di Domenico and Gabriele Vagnato. The festival will end with a prayer service and the exchange of gifts: the icon of Our Lady of Loreto and the cross of St Damian to the Diocese of Lisbon. The President and Secretary of the Italian Bishops' Conference, Card. Matteo Zuppi, and Monsignor Giuseppe Baturi, will be present. They will be joined by the newly appointed Cardinal Américo Aguiar, Auxiliary Bishop of Lisbon and President of the Lisbon 2023 WYD Foundation. The Festival will be broadcast live by Tv2000 at 21:00 Italian time.

