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## **DNI MŁODYCH W (ARCHI)DIECEZJI SZCZECIŃSKO-KAMIEŃSKIEJ W LATACH 1990–2022**

## **YOUTH DAYS IN THE (ARCHI)DIOCESE OF SZCZECIN-KAMIEŃ IN THE YEARS 1990–2022**

### **Streszczenie**

Diecezjalne obchody Światowego Dnia Młodzieży są celebrowane w Kościele szczecińsko-kamięńskim od 1990 roku. W ciągu ponad trzydziestu lat zmieniała się forma tego spotkania, ale zasadnicze elementy programu nieprzerwanie towarzyszą świętowaniu młodych archidiecezji szczecińsko-kamięńskiej. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie historii Dni Młodych, które początkowo gromadziły młodych w stolicy diecezji, w Szczecinie, a od 2003 roku odbywają się w różnych miejscowościach na terenie całej archidiecezji. W tym celu przeprowadzono kwerendę w Archiwum Wydziału Duszpasterskiego Kurii Metropolitalnej oraz skorzystano z relacji prasowych zamieszczonych w diecezjalnym czasopiśmie Kościoł nad Odrą i Bałtykiem.

Podjęte badania miały na celu opisanie fenomenu Archidiecezjalnych Dni Młodych nie tylko od strony historycznej, ale również teologiczno-pastoralnej. Święto młodych gromadzi każdego roku setki osób, które biorą udział w bogatym programie religijnym, duchowym, kulturalnym, artystycznym, rekreacyjnym. Program ten jest zorientowany ewangelizacyjnie, ale treści, które proponuje się młodym, są podane w przystępnej i zrozumiałej dla nich formie. Podstawowym założeniem, które towarzyszy opracowywaniu programu kolejnych edycji Dni Młodych, jest stworzenie takiej przestrzeni, w której młodzi ludzie doświadczą osobistego spotkania z Bogiem, pogłębią swoją wiarę, doświadczą piękna wspólnoty Kościoła, spotkają się z rówieśnikami, z którymi spędzając wspólnie czas, na różne sposoby będą mieli okazję dzielić się wiarą i poszukiwać odpowiedzi na najważniejsze egzystencjalne pytania.

Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych są świadectwem zaangażowania Kościoła szczecińsko-kamięńskiego w dzieło towarzyszenia młodym ludziom na drogach wiary oraz oznaką tego, że Kościół chce słuchać ich głosu i doceniać wkład, jaki wnoszą w życie lokalnej wspólnoty.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych, Światowy Dzień Młodzieży, archidiecezja szczecińsko-kamięńska, młodzież, ewangelizacja, duszpasterstwo młodzieży

### **Abstract**

The diocesan commemoration of World Youth Day has been observed within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Szczecin-Kamien (Kamień) since 1990. Across an expansive span exceeding thirty years, the configuration of this assembly has evolved, yet the fundamental components of its program have consistently accompanied the festivities of the youthful archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamien (Kamień). This article endeavors to chronicle the history of Youth Days, initially convening young individuals in the diocesan capital, Szczecin, and subsequently diversifying to various locations within the archdiocese from 2003 onwards. To achieve this objective, a comprehensive inquiry was conducted utilizing records from the Archives of the Pastoral Department of the Metropolitan Curia, supplemented by information gleaned from press reports featured in the diocesan periodical *Kościół nad Odrą i Bałtykiem*.

The undertaken research was aimed at describing the phenomenon of the Archdiocesan Youth Days not only from the historical point of view, but also from the theological and pastoral point of view. Every year, the festival of young people gathers hundreds of people who take part in a rich religious, spiritual, cultural, artistic and recreational program. This program is evangelistic oriented, but the content that is offered to young people is presented in an accessible and understandable form for them. The basic assumption that accompanies the development of the program of the next editions of the Youth Days is to create a space where young people will experience a personal meeting with God, deepen their faith, experience the beauty of the Church community, meet peers with whom they will spend time together in various ways they had the opportunity to share their faith and seek answers to the most important existential questions.

The Archdiocesan Youth Days are a testimony to the involvement of the Szczecin-Kamien (Kamień) Church in the work of accompanying young people on the path of faith and a sign that the Church wants to listen to their voice and appreciate the contribution they make to the life of the local community.

**Keywords:** Archdiocesan Youth Days, World Youth Day, Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień, youth, evangelization, youth ministry

## Introduction

Pope John Paul II marked the Jubilee of Redemption with a special celebration alongside the youth on Palm Sunday in 1984<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, in 1985, he extended another invitation to young individuals to gather in Rome for Palm Sunday, aligning with the United Nations' declared Year of Youth. Accompanying this gesture, the Pope authored a dedicated letter addressed to the youth<sup>2</sup>. These significant occurrences substantially influenced John Paul II in the establishment of World Youth Day, an event intricately connected with the Sunday of the Lord's Passion universally observed in the Church, namely, Palm Sunday<sup>3</sup>. In 2020, Pope

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<sup>1</sup> The Jubilee Year of Redemption was proclaimed by Pope John Paul II on January 6, 1983, through the papal bull *Aperite Portas Redemptori*, commemorating the 1950th anniversary of the redemption of humanity by Jesus Christ through His death on the cross and glorious resurrection. It lasted from March 25, 1983, to April 22, 1984. A special celebration of the Jubilee Year with the participation of young people took place in sine sign. on Palm Sunday, April 15, 1984. John Paul II, *Bolla d'indizione del Giubileo per il 1950° anniversario della Redenzione „Aperite Portas Redemptori”*, sine sign., 6.01.1983, access 10.12.2022, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/bulls/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_doc\\_19830106\\_bolla-redenzione.htm](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/bulls/documents/hf_jp-ii_doc_19830106_bolla-redenzione.htm).

<sup>2</sup> John Paul II, *List do młodych całego świata „Parati semper” z okazji Międzynarodowego Roku Młodości* ( sine sign., 1985).

<sup>3</sup> In his homily on Palm Sunday in 1986, when World Youth Day was celebrated for the first time, John Paul II emphasized that these celebrations could also take place at a different time, depending on local conditions and

Francis moved the celebration of World Youth Day to the Solemnity of Christ the King, which the Church celebrates on the last Sunday of the liturgical year, at the end of November<sup>4</sup>. The intention of John Paul II was that each year young people in their local Churches would experience a special holiday, looking at Christ - the Redeemer of man, entrusting their lives to Him and experiencing the beauty of being in the community of the Church. Pope Wojtyła also decided that every two or three years, World Youth Day will be celebrated additionally on an international scale, in different parts of the world, during the holidays. These meetings were always presided over by the Holy Father<sup>5</sup>.

The phenomenon of World Youth Day<sup>6</sup> has become the focal point of numerous studies, analyses, and scholarly investigations. Functioning as an international event that assembles millions of young participants from diverse global regions under the auspices of the Pope, it has garnered widespread commentary across various media platforms, including television, print media, and the internet. The celebrations of the World Youth Day in the local and diocesan dimension arouse much less interest. This subject has not yet received deeper studies and scientific studies in the field of theology.

The aim of this article is to show the forms of experiencing the World Youth Day in the diocesan dimension in the Church of Szczecin-Kamień over three decades, in the years 1990–2022. For this purpose, an in-depth query was carried out in the Archives of the Pastoral

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circumstances. John Paul II, *Santa Messa nella Domenica delle Palme. Omelia di Giovanni Paolo II*, sine sign., 23.03.1986, access 10.12.2022, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1986/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_19860323\\_domenica-palme.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/homilies/1986/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19860323_domenica-palme.html).

<sup>4</sup> The Pope justified this change as follows: "Thirty-five years after the establishment of World Youth Days, after hearing various opinions and consulting the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, competent in the field of youth pastoral care, I have decided to move the diocesan celebrations of World Youth Days from Palm Sunday to Christ the King Sunday, starting from the coming year. At the center remains the mystery of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Man, as always emphasized by St. John Paul II, the initiator and patron of World Youth Days" (Francis, "Holy Mass with the handing over of the World Youth Day Cross. Words of the Holy Father at the end of the Holy Mass, sine sign. 22.11.2020", access 10.12.2022, [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pl/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201122\\_omelia-passaggiocroce-gmg.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/pl/homilies/2020/documents/papa-francesco_20201122_omelia-passaggiocroce-gmg.html))

<sup>5</sup> Up to the year 2022, 37 World Youth Days have taken place, with 14 having an international dimension: 1987 – Buenos Aires, Argentina; 1989 – Santiago de Compostela, Spain; 1991 – Częstochowa, Poland; 1993 – Denver, USA; 1995 – Manila, Philippines; 1997 – Paris, France; 2000 – sine sign., Italy; 2002 – Toronto, Canada; 2005 – Cologne, Germany; 2008 – Sydney, Australia; 2011 – Madrid, Spain; 2013 – Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; 2016 – Krakow, Poland; 2019 – Panama, Panama. Pope John Paul II presided over eight of these meetings, Pope Benedict XVI participated in three, and Pope Francis was present at the last three. The originally planned international meeting in Lisbon for 2022 was postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, for the first time, there will be a gap of over four years between consecutive World Youth Days on an international scale.

<sup>6</sup> In the Polish language, a semantic distinction can be observed: when referring to a youth event at the diocesan level, the formula "Światowy Dzień Młodzieży" (World Youth Day) is used, while international meetings with the Pope are referred to as "Światowe Dni Młodzieży" (World Youth Days). This distinction is not noticed in the official languages of the event (Italian, English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, German) and in official Vatican documents, where the unified term "World Youth Day" is used.

Department of the Metropolitan Curia and the local press was analyzed, mainly the diocesan magazine *Kościół nad Odrą i Bałtykiem*<sup>7</sup>.

The undertaken research was aimed at describing the phenomenon of the Archdiocesan Youth Days not only from the historical point of view, but also from the theological and pastoral point of view. From the very beginning, the youth festival was not limited only to a liturgical celebration, but it created a space for meetings on various levels: spiritual, cultural, sports, social, volunteering. After more than thirty years, can the Archdiocesan Youth Days be described as an evangelization proposal addressed to the young generation of Catholics on the Oder and the Baltic Sea?

### **1. The Chronology of Archdiocesan Youth Days: A Historical Overview**

The inaugural reference to the organization of World Youth Day at the local Church level in Szczecin-Kamień dates back to the year 1990. In the draft program of the World Youth Day developed by the Pastoral Department of the Diocesan Curia, we find guidelines for priests who were to prepare young people to participate in this event. The invitation was addressed to academic, post-secondary, working, oasis youth, from secondary and secondary schools, scouts, young people associated in various movements and circles, in sports teams, lectors and senior altar boys<sup>8</sup>. During Lent, it was necessary to familiarize young people with the message of the Holy Father, recall the speeches of John Paul II, which he gave in Szczecin during his pilgrimage to Poland in 1987, and conduct catechesis on the universal Church and the local Church. The solemn celebration of the World Youth Day under the leadership of the bishops was planned for Palm Sunday in several places in the diocese (individual deaneries were assigned to a specific town): in Szczecin, in the cathedral basilica at 12:00, in Stargard, Choszczno and Świnoujście in the morning and in Nowogard, Dębno and Gryfice in the afternoon. The central point of the event was the Holy Mass with the blessing of palms presided over by one of the bishops. After the Eucharist, an academy with a conference and prayer was planned, which ended with the bishop's pastoral blessing<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> *Kościół nad Odrą i Bałtykiem* (hereafter KOB) is a diocesan magazine that has been published since 1989 as a biweekly, and since 1998, it has been issued as a supplement to *Tygodnik Katolicki Niedziela*.

<sup>8</sup> Archiwum Kurii Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej (Archive of the Curia of Szczecin-Kamień), Wydział Duszpasterski (hereafter AKSK-WD), Duszpasterstwo Młodzieży 1989–1993 C3a, bez. sygn., *Światowy Dzień Młodzieży. Niedziela Palmowa 1990*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> AKSK-WD, Duszpasterstwo Młodzieży 1989–1993 C3a, bez. sygn., *Światowy Dzień Młodzieży. Niedziela Palmowa 1990*, 3–5.

The commemoration of World Youth Day at the local level within the Szczecin-Kamień diocese commenced in 1990. Subsequently, in the succeeding year, designations such as 'Diocesan Youth Day' or simply 'Youth Day' emerged, persisting over the ensuing years as enduring appellations, symbolizing the celebration of the youth within the Church on the Oder and the Baltic Sea. In 1992, the Szczecin-Kamień diocese was raised to the rank of a metropolis. Since 1993, the term "Archdiocesan Young People Day" or "Archdiocesan Youth Days" started to appear in curial documents<sup>10</sup>. For the next few years, these names appear interchangeably in circulation when referring to the diocesan celebrations of the World Youth Day (WYD) in Szczecin. Since 2003, when the diocesan WYD celebrations were moved to another date and it was decided that they would be held in different places in the archdiocese, the final and official name of this event was established as "Archdiocesan Days of Youth", abbreviated as "AYD". In some materials, we can find other, interchangeable terms, such as: "Youth Festival of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień"<sup>11</sup> or "Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień"<sup>12</sup>.

In the years 1990–2002, the diocesan celebration of the World Youth Day took place in the capital of the diocese (later the archdiocese), in Szczecin. Between 1,000 and 4,000 people participated in them. participants<sup>13</sup>. In 1990 it was one day – Palm Sunday. Since 1991, the youth festival lasted two or three days, starting on Saturday or Friday evening and ending on Palm Sunday. In Lent, during catechesis and Lenten retreats, young people prepared for this event in their home parishes.

In 2000, the celebration of the World Youth Day in the archdiocese took place in two stages: in addition to the Archdiocesan Youth Day traditionally celebrated in Lent in Szczecin, a special youth meeting was also organized outside the capital of the archdiocese, in Trzęsacz, on 13-15 August. In this way, the young people of the Church on the Oder and the

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<sup>10</sup> The name "Archdiocesan Youth Day (Archidiecezjalny Dzień Młodych)" first appears in the communication of the Archdiocesan Youth Pastor dated January 20, 1993 (AKSK–WD, Youth Ministry 1989–1993 C3a, Code: C3a–2/93, Youth Ministry in the second semester of 1993 Pro memoria). However, in the communication dated February 25, 1993, the name "Diocesan Youth Day (Diecezjalny Dzień Młodzieży)" is used (AKSK–WD, Youth Ministry 1989–1993 C3a, Code: C3a–7/93, *Diecezjalny Dzień Młodzieży 3–4 kwietnia 1993 r.*).

<sup>11</sup> AKSK–WD, *Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodzieży 2002-2003 r., bez. sygn., Wy jesteście mężczyznami i kobietami jutra. Święto Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej.*

<sup>12</sup> *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej. Myślibórz 23–25 maja 2008 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba (Szczecin, 2008).

<sup>13</sup> The number of participants was determined based on data found in the Archives of the Pastoral Department of the Metropolitan Curia and presented in Table 1. However, it was not possible to find information about the number of participants in all editions of Youth Days. See also: Katarzyna Lemek, "Troska o katechezę pierwszego metropolity szczecińsko-kamińskiego abp. Mariana Przykuckiego" (Concern for the catechesis of the first metropolitan archbishop of Szczecin-Kamień, Archbishop Marian Przykucki), *Studia Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeskie* 27 (2020): 378. The author mistakenly stated that the first Youth Day was initiated by Archbishop Marian Przykucki in 1993.

Baltic Sea joined spiritually with the youth from all over the world gathered in Rome for the World Youth Day, celebrating the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 under the leadership of John Paul II. The meeting in Trzęsacz was the first diocesan youth festival held outside Szczecin.

In the year 2003, a transformative shift occurred in the format of the Youth Days. Drawing inspiration from international gatherings with the Pope hosted in diverse global locations, the central celebration of the diocesan youth festival underwent a paradigm shift, henceforth becoming a perennially organized event held at various locations within the archdiocese. The first, after Trzęsacz, "away" Youth Days took place in Lipiany<sup>14</sup>. The date was also changed – it was decided that on Palm Sunday young people would celebrate their holiday in their family parishes (or in deaneries), while in 2003 the so-called May weekend (April 30-May 3), and in 2004 – a long weekend from the celebration of Corpus Christi to Sunday (June 10-13)<sup>15</sup>. In 2005, the Archdiocesan Youth Days came to Kamień Pomorski. In 2006, no "away" Youth Days were organized, young people experienced the World Youth Day in Szczecin on Palm Sunday. Since 2007, the Archdiocesan Youth Days have been held continuously in various places throughout the archdiocese. In 2008, the youth returned to Kamień Pomorski, then two years in a row the youth visited: Myślibórz (2008 and 2009), Choszczno (2010 and 2011) and Gryfice (2012 and 2013). In the following years, the Archdiocesan Youth Days had three editions in the following cities: Barlinek (2014, 2015 and 2016), Goleniów (2017, 2018 and 2019) and Chojna (2020, 2021, 2022). Usually from 700 to 1.6 thousand people participated in the "away" Youth Days. participants. In the years 2004–2008, AYDs began on the feast of Corpus Christi and ended on Sunday. From 2009, for the next eleven years, the regular date of the youth meeting was the beginning of May - the Archdiocesan Youth Days lasted from 1 to 3 May. In 2020, also on this date, it was planned to organize AYDs in another town, in Chojna. However, the plans were thwarted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The date of the youth festival has been moved to autumn (October 3-4). A similar situation took place in 2021 (October 2).

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<sup>14</sup> In the year 2000, the central celebrations of the Archdiocesan Youth Day took place in Szczecin on Palm Sunday. In August, the youth were invited to Trzęsacz for the second part of the Archdiocesan Youth Days (AYD) and to participate in the World Youth Day in communion with the Pope and young people from around the world, who had gathered in *sine sign.* at that time for the celebrations of the Great Jubilee of the year 2000. However, the central celebrations of AYDs permanently moved out of Szczecin starting from Lipiany. The only exception was in 2006 when AYDs were once again organized in Szczecin on Palm Sunday.

<sup>15</sup> In the following years, until 2010, celebrations of World Youth Day for the youth from the Szczecin deaneries were organized on Palm Sunday in Szczecin. However, the program was more modest compared to the earlier years, and on this occasion, the youth were invited to participate in the Archdiocesan Youth Days. From 2011 to 2020, World Youth Day on Palm Sunday took on a predominantly parish character, with no additional gatherings organized for the youth in Szczecin on Palm Sunday.

In 2022, we managed to organize the Archdiocesan Youth Days according to the pre-pandemic formula, from June 16-18 (from Corpus Christi to Saturday).

The preparation of such a large event requires the involvement of many people, services and institutions. In order for young people to celebrate during the Youth Day, organizational work begins many months before the event. It is attended by representatives of the Szczecin-Kamień Metropolitan Curia, local priests with parishioners, municipal authorities and institutions, and the local community. All work is coordinated by the Pastoral Department of the Metropolitan Curia<sup>16</sup>.

Over the course of over thirty years, the Church in Szczecin-Kamień has developed an original way of celebrating the Archdiocesan Youth Days, modeled on the international World Youth Days. A constant point of reference was the celebration of Palm Sunday (from 2021, the celebration of Christ the King) - the day when the Pope celebrated their feast with young people and addressed a special message to them every year. Since 1990, on this day, young people from the Szczecin-Kamień diocese have gathered in Szczecin for the World Youth Day celebrations under the leadership of the diocesan bishop. Establishing WYD on Palm Sunday, Pope John Paul II also decided that every two or three years the celebration of this holiday should be extended with an international meeting of young people in various corners of the world. This is how the pilgrimage of the World Youth Day through the continents began. Following the example of these international meetings, the tradition of a kind of pilgrimage of young people throughout the archdiocese has developed over the years in the Church on the Oder and the Baltic Sea. Just as the pope meets young people in various parts of the world, the bishop of the Szczecin-Kamień Church has been meeting young people in various places of the archdiocese since 2003 at the Archdiocesan Youth Days. Just as young people from all over the world have the opportunity to experience the universality of the Church during World Youth Day, the same young people from the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień have the opportunity to experience the beauty and vitality of the local Church.

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<sup>16</sup> Since 1990, the organization of the Diocesan Youth Days in Szczecin was overseen by the diocesan youth pastor, Father Mariusz Koluczek. Subsequently, in 1997, this responsibility was assumed by Father Piotr Superlak, who, as the pastoral care officer for youth, worked in the Department of Catholic Education. The organization of the Archdiocesan Youth Days in Lipiany and Kamień Pomorski was led by another diocesan youth pastor, Father Cezary Korzec. Starting from 2008, the coordination of the work on Youth Days was directed by the director of the Pastoral Department, Father Piotr Skiba. From 2018, the person responsible for preparations for the Archdiocesan Youth Days was the diocesan youth pastor, Father Marcin Szczodry. Since 2008, organizational matters, cooperation with volunteers and the media, and the preparation of formational materials were handled by Paulina Fryszka, an employee of the Metropolitan Curia and the *Szczecińska* Foundation.

**Table 1.** Chronology of World Youth Days (WYD) and Diocesan/Archdiocesan Youth Days (DYD/AYD): Dates and Locations<sup>17</sup>

World Youth Day Edition	Year	Date of World Youth Day (Diocesan Level)	Date and Venue of World Youth Day (International Level)	Diocesan/Archdiocesan Youth Day (DYD/AYD) Date	DYD/AYD Location	Number of DYD/AYD Participants
<b>I</b>	1986	23.03.1986	---	---	---	---
<b>II</b>	1987	12.04.1987	11–12.04.1987 Buenos Aires, Argentina	---	---	---
<b>III</b>	1988	27.03.1988	---	---	---	---
<b>IV</b>	1989	19.03.1989	15–20.08.1989 Santiago de Compostela, Spain	---	---	---
<b>V</b>	1990	8.04.1990	---	8.04.1990	Szczecin, Stargard, Choszczno, Świnoujście, Nowogard, Dębno, Gryfice	no data
<b>VI</b>	1991	24.03.1991	10–15.08.1991 Częstochowa, Poland	23–24.03.1991	Szczecin	4207
<b>VII</b>	1992	12.04.1992	---	11–12.04.1992	Szczecin	1900
<b>VIII</b>	1993	4.04.1993	10–15.08.1993 Denver, USA	3–4.04.1993	Szczecin	2150
<b>IX</b>	1994	27.03.1994	---	26–27.03.1994	Szczecin	no data
<b>X</b>	1995	9.04.1995	10–15.01.1995 Manila, Philippines	8–9.04.1995	Szczecin	no data
<b>XI</b>	1996	31.03.1996	---	29–31.03.1996	Szczecin	3000
<b>XII</b>	1997	23.03.1997	19–24.08.1997 Paris, France	22–23.03.1997	Szczecin	no data
<b>XIII</b>	1998	5.04.1998	---	4–5.04.1998	Szczecin	2000
<b>XIV</b>	1999	28.03.1999	---	27–28.03.1999	Szczecin	no data
<b>XV</b>	2000	16.04.2000	15–20.08.2000 Rome, Italy	14–16.04.2000 13–15.08.2000	Szczecin Trzęsacz	2700 no data
<b>XVI</b>	2001	8.04.2001	---	6–8.04.2001	Szczecin	no data
<b>XVII</b>	2002	24.03.2002	23–28.07.2002 Toronto, Canada	22–24.03.2002	Szczecin	no data
<b>XVIII</b>	2003	13.04.2003	---	11 i 13.04.2003 30.04–3.05.2003	Szczecin Lipiany	no data 700

<sup>17</sup> The table presents the dates of successive editions of World Youth Day on the diocesan level from 1986, celebrated until 2020 in the Universal Church on Palm Sunday and from 2021 on the Solemnity of Christ the King. It also includes the dates and locations of World Youth Day on the international level and the dates and locations of Diocesan (Archdiocesan) Youth Days, first celebrated in the Szczecin-Kamień Diocese in 1990. In the year 2000, the youth gathering took place in two stages: initially, diocesan celebrations of World Youth Day were observed in Szczecin on Palm Sunday, and in August, a meeting was organized in Trzęsacz in communion with the Pope and the youth gathered at the international celebrations of World Youth Day in sine sign.. In the years 2003–2005 and 2007–2010, diocesan World Youth Day celebrations had two stages: on Palm Sunday, local celebrations were organized in Szczecin for the youth, while the main celebrations of the Archdiocesan Youth Days with the participation of youth from the entire archdiocese took place in locations outside Szczecin on different dates. Where possible, the number of participants in DYD/AYD is provided.



<b>XIX</b>	2004	4.04.2004	---	2 i 4.04.2004 10–13.06.2004	Szczecin Lipiany	no data 1000
<b>XX</b>	2005	20.03.2005	16–21.08.2005 Cologne, Germany	18 i 20.03.2005 26–29.05.2005	Szczecin Kamień Pomorski	no data 1003
<b>XXI</b>	2006	9.04.2006	---	7–9.04.2006	Szczecin	no data
<b>XXII</b>	2007	1.04.2007	---	31.03–1.04.2007 8-10.06.2007	Szczecin Kamień Pomorski	no data 400
<b>XXIII</b>	2008	16.03.2008	15–20.07.2008 Sydney, Australia	16.03.2008 23–25.05.2008	Szczecin Myślubórz	no data 700
<b>XXIV</b>	2009	5.04.2009	---	5.04.2009 1–3.05.2009	Szczecin Myślubórz	no data 1000
<b>XXV</b>	2010	28.03.2010	---	28.03.2010 1–3.05.2010	Szczecin Choszczno	no data 1100
<b>XXVI</b>	2011	17.04.2011	15–21.08.2011 Madrid, Spain	30.04–3.05.2011	Choszczno	1200
<b>XXVII</b>	2012	1.04.2012	---	1–3.05.2012	Gryfice	1374
<b>XXVIII</b>	2013	24.03.2013	23–28.07.2013 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	1–3.05.2013	Gryfice	1523
<b>XXIX</b>	2014	13.04.2014	---	1–3.05.2014	Barlinek	1618
<b>XXX</b>	2015	29.03.2015	---	1–3.05.2015	Barlinek	1500
<b>XXXI</b>	2016	20.03.2016	26–31.07.2016 Cracow, Polska	1–3.05.2016	Barlinek	1400
<b>XXXII</b>	2017	9.04.2017	---	1–3.05.2017	Goleniów	1346
<b>XXXIII</b>	2018	25.03.2018	---	1–3.05.2018	Goleniów	1007
<b>XXXIV</b>	2019	14.04.2019	22–27.01.2019 Panama, Panama	1–3.05.2019	Goleniów	857
<b>XXXV</b>	2020	5.04.2020	---	3–4.10.2020	Chojna	280
<b>XXXVI</b>	2021	21.11.2021	---	2.10.2021	Chojna	800
<b>XXXVII</b>	2022– 2023	20.11.2022	1–6.08.2023 Lisbon, Portugal	16–18.06.2022	Chojna	300

## 2. Diocesan Celebrations of the World Youth Day: Theological and Pastoral Foundations

In 2021, the *Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life* issued *Pastoral Guidelines for the celebration of World Youth Day in particular Churches*<sup>18</sup>. This document collects more than thirty years of experience in the celebration of World Youth Day in local churches, explains the theological and pastoral basis of this event and provides some guidelines to be applied at the local church level so that the youth festival can bear good fruit in the life of the community and in the lives of individual young people. "World Youth Day, celebrated in every particular Church, is of great importance and value not only for the young people who live in this particular region, but for the entire local community."<sup>19</sup> It is an opportunity for

<sup>18</sup> Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life, "Pastoral Guidelines Regarding the Celebration of World Youth Day in Particular Churches, Vatican, 22.04.2021" (hereinafter referred to as WD), accessed on May 18, 2021, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2021/05/18/0305/00673.html>.

<sup>19</sup> WD, no. 2.

young people to live a "festival of faith", to take part in an event that is a powerful experience of witness, communion and prayer, analogous to the international youth meetings that have deeply marked the lives of many young people from all over the world. The festival of young people at the local level serves to sensitize and shape the awareness of the entire diocesan community (laity, priests, consecrated persons, families, adults and the elderly) in the mission of passing on the faith to new generations, in the need to walk with young people, accepting and listening to them with patience, sharing deal with them with the Word of God with tenderness and energy<sup>20</sup>.

Diocesan celebrations of the World Youth Day should be organized and experienced not only as a celebration "for young people", but above all "with young people"<sup>21</sup>, during which young people are not only the passive recipient of the planned pastoral program, but are an involved subject at all stages of pastoral preparations WYD, thus experiencing in practice that he is a co-author of the life and mission of the Church<sup>22</sup>. Young people should be entrusted with active tasks, and they should be courageously included in the process of preparing and conducting WYD. This applies not only to those who are involved in various pastoral groups and movements, but also to those who are just looking for their place in the Church and have not yet found it. Creativity, language and ways of acting appropriate to the age of young people should be appreciated. After all, they know the problems of their peers well and are able to effectively communicate with them through art and social media<sup>23</sup>.

At the center of the message of each World Youth Day is the mystery of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Man<sup>24</sup>. The content of this message is very personal and existential: "Receive Christ! Receive Him as King in your life! He is the King who came to save! Without Him there is no true peace, no true interior reconciliation, no true reconciliation with others! Without his Kingdom, society too loses its human face. Without the Kingdom of Christ, every true fraternity, every genuine closeness to those who suffer disappears<sup>25</sup>. This is the message that the Church has the task of proclaiming with strength and hope to the young generation. This fundamental message guides all the other initiatives that spring up each year as part of the diocesan WYD celebrations.

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<sup>20</sup> WD, no. 2.

<sup>21</sup> WD, no. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Sinodo dei Vescovi – XV Assemblea Generale Ordinaria, „Documento finale del Sinodo dei Vescovi sui Giovani, la Fede ed il Discernimento Vocazionale, sine sign., 27.10.2018”, access 29.10.2018, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2018/10/27/0789/01722.html>.

<sup>23</sup> WD, no. 5.

<sup>24</sup> Holy Mass with the Handover of the WYD Cross. Words of the Holy Father at the Conclusion of the Holy Mass, sine sign., November 22, 2020.

<sup>25</sup> WD, no. 3.

The dicastery points to some "key elements" that should be at the heart of the diocesan WYD celebrations due to their high programmatic value. Thanks to this, the youth festival can be experienced as: a) a feast of faith; b) the experience of the Church; c) missionary experience; d) an opportunity for vocational discernment and a call to holiness; e) pilgrimage experience; f) the experience of universal brotherhood<sup>26</sup>.

Youth Day is a "festival of faith" because it gives young people a lively and joyful experience of faith and community, and is a space where they can experience a personal encounter with God. This is done primarily in moments of personal prayer, during silent Eucharistic adoration and during the penitential liturgy, which is a privileged space for encountering God's Mercy. The diocesan WYD celebrations are an opportunity for young people to experience the Church as a community and to realize that they are an integral part of it. The richness of the Church is expressed in the diversity of its charisms, so it is worth organizing the diocesan WYD celebrations in a "choral" manner, so that it involves representatives of various groups and states by proposing synodal work, where the voice of young people will be heard. An important element of the "experience of the Church" is the opportunity to meet "one's" bishop, to experience this feast with the shepherd of the local Church<sup>27</sup>.

Youth Days are also an opportunity to experience "missionaryness", because "youth ministry must always be missionary"<sup>28</sup>. To this end, the program of diocesan WYD celebrations should include moments in which young people can share their faith experience with others, they can become "active promoters of public evangelization with singing, prayer and testimonies" for their peers, "because young people are the best evangelizers young people". It is worth using this day to promote various forms of volunteering, voluntary service and activities that introduce young people to the experience of giving themselves to others<sup>29</sup>.

Youth Days are also "an opportunity to discern one's vocation". Young people then have the opportunity to hear about "fundamental vocations": to life, to happiness, to know God, to accept Jesus as Savior in life, to holiness. Serious treatment of these basic God's calls allows a young person to open up to the process of discerning his own vocation. On this journey, the commitment and accompaniment of "seminarians, consecrated persons, married couples and families, who by their presence and witness help to raise in young people the

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<sup>26</sup> WD, no. 4.

<sup>27</sup> WD, no. 4.

<sup>28</sup> Francis, Apostolic Exhortation "Christus Vivit". To Young People and to the Entire People of God, Loreto, March 25, 2019 (Krakow: Wydawnictwo M, 2019), no. 240.

<sup>29</sup> WD, no. 4.

right questions about vocation and the desire to begin to seek the "great plan" that God has for them, is an invaluable help on this journey. in your mind. (...) And when the time of election is ripe, then they should be encouraged to make their personal choice decisively, trusting in God's help, not remaining in endless indecision".<sup>30</sup>

The international dimension of WYD has been a pilgrimage from the very beginning. Once every few years, young people from different cities, countries and continents come to a chosen place to meet the Pope and other young people. It is a pilgrimage in space – to subsequent places, and a pilgrimage in time – from one generation of young people to the next, which "gathers testimonies" of its predecessors. "The youth of WYD is a people of pilgrims. Not wanderers who travel aimlessly, but a united people, pilgrims who "walk together", towards the goal, towards the meeting with the One who alone can give meaning to their lives, towards God who has become man, who calls every young person to become his disciple, to leave everything and follow him"<sup>31</sup>. To undertake the effort of pilgrimage means to abandon what is superfluous and what hinders the journey, and to be ready to take on the challenges that will appear on the trail. A pilgrim is open to other people and to God and His "surprises". The diocesan WYD celebrations are an opportunity to offer young people the experience of a real and personal pilgrimage. Along the way, new friends are discovered and people look towards the same goal, sharing common ideals and supporting each other in difficulties. Local sanctuaries and pilgrimage sites can help in experiencing the "experience of pilgrimage", whose history and spiritual heritage can be learned and discovered by the young generation on the occasion of the diocesan WYD celebrations<sup>32</sup>.

Dzień młodych to święto, do przeżywania którego zaproszeni są nie tylko wierzący, ale wszyscy młodzi mieszkający na danym terytorium, niezależnie od ich wiary, wyznawanych przekonań i prezentowanej wizji świata. ŚDM jest okazją do wyjścia w kierunku tych, którzy nie znaleźli jeszcze swojego miejsca w Kościele, jest szansą, aby w sposobie celebracji tego dnia ludzie ujrzeli oblicze Kościoła o otwartych drzwiach, wspólnotę, w której można doświadczyć powszechnego braterstwa<sup>33</sup>.

### **3. Inspired by the Word of God: Motifs, Symbols, and Anthem of the Archdiocesan Youth Days**

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<sup>30</sup> WD, no. 4.

<sup>31</sup> WD, no. 4.

<sup>32</sup> WD, no. 4.

<sup>33</sup> WD, no. 4.

Each subsequent edition of the Youth Days is accompanied by a theme, most often inspired by a biblical passage proposed by the Pope in the annual message for the World Youth Day (WYD). Each World Youth Day has its distinctive theme, and on multiple occasions, the same theme has accompanied the Archdiocesan Youth Days (AYD). This continuity was observed in the years 1991–1994, 1996–2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, 2013, 2017, and 2018. Occasionally, the content of the WYD theme underwent slight modifications (in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2019), while in certain years, there was more substantial intervention, leading to a paraphrasing of the WYD theme (in 2007–2010, 2020–2022). Several times, the AYD theme differed entirely from the WYD theme (in 1990, 1995, 2001, 2003, and 2004).

**Table 2.** Themes of World Youth Day (WYD) and Diocesan/Archdiocesan Youth Day (DYD/AYD)<sup>34</sup>

Year	Theme of World Youth Day (WYD)	Theme of DYD/AYD
1986	"Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope." (1 Peter 3:15)	---
1987	"So we have come to know and to believe in the love that God has for us." (1 John 4:16)	---
1988	"Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)	---
1989	"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6)	---
1990	The English translation of the quotation is: "I am the vine; you are the branches." (John 15:5)	"Young people discover (anew) the mystery of the Church."
1991	The English translation of the quotation is: "You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons." (Romans 8:15)	
1992	"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel." (Mark 16:15)	
1993	The English translation of the quotation is: "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." (John 10:10)	
1994	"As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)	
1995	"As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." (John 20:21)	"Here am I, Lord; send me."
1996	The English translation of the quotation is: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." (John 6:68)	
1997	"Teacher, where are you staying? Come and see." (John 1:38–39)	
1998	"The Holy Spirit will teach you all things." (cf. John 14:26)	
1999	"The Father loves you." (cf. John 16:27)	
2000	"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14)	"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." (John 1:14) – Szczecin "Youth and the Pope. Together." –

<sup>34</sup> The table presents the themes of successive editions of World Youth Day. If Diocesan Youth Days had a different theme or if it was modified, it is included in the adjacent column. It should be noted that WYD in 1994 and 1995 had the same theme. This was due to the fact that the international youth meeting took place in January 1995 in Manila, Philippines, and John Paul II decided to issue only one message at that time and propose a common theme for diocesan celebrations of WYD on Palm Sunday in both 1994 and 1995. In 2000, the August youth meeting in Trzemeszów had a different theme than on Palm Sunday, emphasizing the spiritual connection with participants in the Roman celebrations of WYD. In 2020 and 2021, the Archdiocesan Youth Days had the same theme. The reason was the change in the date of diocesan celebrations of WYD from Palm Sunday to the Solemnity of Christ the King, made by Pope Francis. The organizers of the Archdiocesan Youth Days decided that the celebration of the youth of the Szczecin-Kamień Archdiocese (held in the spring) would refer to the papal message and the theme of the diocesan celebrations of WYD on the Solemnity of Christ the King from the previous year. Thus, the theme of the Archdiocesan Youth Days in 2022 refers to the theme of WYD in 2021.

		Trzęsacz
2001	"If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)	"Young people as guardians of the Dawn of the Third Millennium."
2002	"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:13–14)	
2003	"Behold, your mother!" (John 19:27)	"You are the men and women of tomorrow."
2004	"We wish to see Jesus." (John 12:21)	"You are the men and women of tomorrow."
2005	"We have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:2)	
2006	"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)	
2007	"Love one another as I have loved you." (John 13:34)	"Unleash Love."
2008	"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses." (Acts 1:8)	"Unleash the Power of Testimony."
2009	"We have set our hope on the living God." (1 Timothy 4:10)	"Hope in God."
2010	"Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Mark 10:17)	"Discover a better life."
2011	"Rooted and built up in Christ, strengthened in the faith." (cf. Colossians 2:7)	"Strong in faith."
2012	"Rejoice in the Lord always." (Philippians 4:4)	"Rejoice in the Lord." (Philippians 4:4)
2013	"Go and make disciples of all nations!" (cf. Matthew 28:19)	
2014	"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:3)	"Blessed are the poor in spirit." (Matthew 5:3)
2015	"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)	"Blessed are the pure in heart." (Matthew 5:8)
2016	"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." (Matthew 5:7)	"Blessed are the merciful." (Matthew 5:7)
2017	"The Almighty has done great things for me." (Luke 1:49)	
2018	"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God." (Luke 1:30)	
2019	"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)	"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord." (Luke 1:38)
2020	"Young man, I say to you, arise!" (Luke 7:14)	"Young man, arise." (cf. Luke 7:14)
2021	"Arise! I appoint you as a witness of what you have seen!" (cf. Acts 26:16)	"Young man, arise." (cf. Luke 7:14)
2022	"Mary arose and went in haste." (Luke 1:39)	"Arise. Be a witness!" (cf. Acts 26:16)

The fragment that the Pope proposes each year as the motto of the next WYD is developed in the message in which the Holy Father addresses young people, considers the word of God and touches on current problems of the young generation. The content of the papal message was printed in the materials for the participants of the Diocesan Youth Days in Szczecin and in the *Guidebook for Participants of the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień (Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej)*. In subsequent "away" editions of AYDs, starting from 2003, the Youth Days program often included a catechesis referring to the WYD motto, and in some years work was also carried out in small groups based on the papal message<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> AKSK–WD (Archive of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień – World Youth Day), N3a 2000–2007, Reference: N3a–6/2005, Annex 3; *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej (Participant's Guide for the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień)*. Myślubórz, May 23–25, 2008, edited by Piotr Skiba (Szczecin, 2008), I 30–I 40; *Participant's Guide for the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of*

Considering the content of the message addressed to young people by the Holy Father, referring to it in catechesis and homilies during the Youth Days, allows you to enter into a specific dialogue conducted by the shepherd of the universal Church with the young generation, and at the same time encourages young people to enter into dialogue among themselves on serious topics of faith and their daily life, aware that the same words inspire young people all over the world, revealing to them the mystery of Christ, the Redeemer of man.

World Youth Day is accompanied by two special signs: the cross and the *Salus Populi Romani* icon. The WYD Cross is a memorial and a witness to the Holy Year of the Jubilee of Redemption, announced by John Paul II and celebrated by the Church from March 25, 1983 to April 22, 1984. During the inauguration of the Jubilee, representatives of young people brought to the Basilica of St. Peter, a simple wooden cross that remained in the temple throughout the Holy Year, witnessing all the events related to the Jubilee of Redemption. At the end of the Jubilee Year, the Pope presented the Holy Year Cross to young people and invited them to carry it throughout the world as a sign of redemption and a witness to their faith<sup>36</sup>.

The icon of *Our Lady Salus Populi Romani* was present for the first time during the World Youth Day held in Rome during the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. On Palm Sunday 2003, Pope John Paul II gave a copy of this icon to a delegation of German youth preparing the next meeting of young people in their homeland. Since then, the icon has become the second sign of WYD and, together with the cross, it accompanies subsequent meetings of young people from all over the world<sup>37</sup>.

The Archdiocesan Youth Days, like the World Youth Days, also have their own signs, around which the youth of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień gathers at annual meetings. A simple, wooden cross is always at the center of celebrations and services during the youth festival. On the cross there are plates with all the dates, places and passwords of the previously organized AYDs.

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Szczecin-Kamień. Myślibórz, May 1–3, 2009, edited by Piotr Skiba and others (Szczecin, 2009), 36–44; Participant's Guide for the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień. Goleniów, May 1–3, 2017, edited by Paulina Fryszka (Szczecin, 2017), 11.

<sup>36</sup> Marcin Szczodry, „Program formacyjny polskiej młodzieży w kontekście przygotowań do Światowych Dni Młodzieży Kraków 2016”, *Studia Paradyskie* 26 (2016): 229.

<sup>37</sup> Marcin Szczodry, „Program formacyjny polskiej młodzieży w kontekście przygotowań do Światowych Dni Młodzieży Kraków 2016”, 230.

Next to the cross, the second sign of the Youth Days is the icon<sup>38</sup> of the Mother of the Church – the main patroness of the Szczecin-Kamień Archdiocese – measuring 1.3 m x 1.9 m. It depicts Mary holding a mantle with one hand, under which people of various classes gather.

Among them are clergy: the pope, a bishop, a priest, a monk, and lay people: adults, youth and children. The Mother of the Church takes care of all who come to her, which is expressed by her maternal mantle under which her children are sheltered. The two white lilies are a symbol of Mary's virginity. The Mother of God is dressed in a white robe covered with a blue and gold mantle. In the upper left part of the picture, the cathedral basilica in Szczecin is depicted, and on the right, a boat sailing on the sea. These two elements symbolize the local Church on the Oder and the Baltic Sea. The cathedral is a church where the faithful of the archdiocese gather around the bishop, just as young people gather around their shepherd during the Youth Day. The boat is a symbol of the Church that sails the seas of the world to the port of salvation. In Mary, each of the baptized has a mother who fulfills the mission entrusted to her by Christ on the cross (cf. Jn 19:27)<sup>39</sup>.

During the Eucharist ending the Youth Day celebrations (when they are held for the last time in a given town), the Archbishop announces the host of the next Archdiocesan Youth Day. Then, the cross and the image of the Mother of God are symbolically handed over by the youth from the village that organized this year's AYDs to the young people who will host this event next year. Throughout the next year, the signs of the Youth Day accompany the spiritual preparations for the next AYDs. The pilgrimage of the cross and the image of the Mother of God takes place in the parishes of the deanery, and prayer vigils are organized for young people, volunteers and organizers of the Youth Days<sup>40</sup>.

The Archdiocesan Youth Days have their anthem. These are words taken from John Paul II's address to young people, which he delivered on July 27, 2002 during World Youth

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<sup>38</sup> The creator of the image is Father Marek Czeźnin. The term "icon" appears in the Participant's Guides for the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień and other pastoral materials. However, the representation of the Mother of the Church is not an image created according to the techniques and principles of iconography. Therefore, strictly speaking, it cannot be referred to as an icon. In the further part of the work, the term "image" will be used.

<sup>39</sup> *Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych. Dzień Służby Liturgicznej Chojna 2020*, ed. Paulina Fryszka et alii (Szczecin, 2020), 6–7.

<sup>40</sup> Katarzyna Stankiewicz, „Peregrynacja Krzyża ADM po dekanacie Choszczno”, access 28.12.2022, <https://ichtis.info/peregrynacja-krzyza-adm-po-dekanacie-choszczno/1903>; „Krzyż Dni Młodych przekazany”, access 28.12.2022, <https://ichtis.info/krzyz-dni-mlodych-przekazany/1905>; „Nocne czuwanie przed ADM 2010 w Choszcznie”, access 28.12.2022, <https://ichtis.info/nocne-czuwanie-przed-adm-2010-w-choszcznie/1904>; „Zakończenie peregrynacji Krzyża Dni Młodych po dekanacie gryfickim”, access 28.12.2022, <https://ichtis.info/zakonczenie-peregrynacji-krzyza-dni-mlodych-po-dekanacie-gry/3737>.



Day in Toronto: "You are the men and women of tomorrow."<sup>41</sup> This was the motto of the Archdiocesan Youth Days in 2003 and 2004 in Lipiany.

Since 2008, each subsequent edition of the Archdiocesan Youth Days has its own logo, which refers to the slogan and the place of the meeting. Its symbolism is explained in the *Guidebook for Participants of the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień (Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej)*<sup>42</sup>.

#### **4. The evangelizing and formative dimension of the Archdiocesan Youth Days**

The document of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, which presents guidelines for the celebration of World Youth Day in particular Churches, is not only a help for the organizers of subsequent editions of WYD at the level of local Churches, but also summarizes the experience from previous years and indicates a solid theological and pastoral foundation on which the implementation of the entire event has been based from the beginning. Were similar assumptions guiding the organizers of the Youth Days in the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień? A detailed analysis of the programs of the subsequent editions of the Archdiocesan Youth Days will allow you to capture the most important intentions and goals that were at the basis of this pastoral project.

The first documented diocesan WYD celebrations took place in 1990 in Szczecin, Stargard, Choszczno, Świnoujście, Nowogard, Dębno and Gryfice. Since 1991, young people have been celebrating their holiday in the capital of the diocese, in Szczecin. Since 2003, the Archdiocesan Youth Days have been held in various locations throughout the archdiocese. Over the course of over thirty years, the venues and formula of the Youth Days have changed, but the essential elements are present in all subsequent editions of the diocesan WYD celebrations.

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<sup>41</sup> John Paul II, „Discorso del Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II. XVII Giornata Mondiale della Gioventù Veglia con I giovani, Toronto, 27.07.2002”, no. 4, access 28.12.2022, [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/2002/july/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20020727\\_wyd-vigil-address.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/2002/july/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020727_wyd-vigil-address.html). The music for the Pope's words was composed by Father Lucjan Chronchol.

<sup>42</sup> Poradniki uczestnika Archidiecezjalnych Dni Młodych z lat 2008–2022 (Participant's Guides for the Archdiocesan Youth Days from 2008 to 2022.). Eg.: *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Myślibórz 1–3 maja 2009 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba i in. (Szczecin, 2009), 45–46; *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Choszczno 30 kwietnia-3 maja 2011 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba, Kamila Kępińska, Marta Olczak (Szczecin, 2011), 48–49; *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Gryfice 1–3 maja 2012 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba (Szczecin, 2012), 18–19; *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Barlinek 1–3 maja 2015 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba (Szczecin, 2015), 24.

The central and culminating point of the Diocesan Youth Day celebrations, which took place in Szczecin in the years 1990–2010, was the Holy Mass. led by the bishop in the cathedral basilica on Palm Sunday, preceded by a solemn procession with palms from the sanctuary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the cathedral<sup>43</sup>.

Since 1991, young people from the diocese have been coming to the Youth Day celebrations on Saturday. A rich evangelistic, artistic and cultural program was prepared for her. Meetings were held many times at the Archbishop's Major Seminary, and seminarians were strongly involved in the preparation and organization of the Youth Day. Young people were hosted in Szczecin parishes and participated in prayer meetings in smaller groups. In addition to church services, young people took part in concerts, theatrical performances, and mysteries of the Lord's Passion.

A rich cultural program was offered to young people in 1994. On Saturday, the participants of the Archdiocesan Youth Days could get acquainted with various movements and pastoral groups operating in the Church, which presented their charism and spirituality, then they could choose one of many thematic meetings (music, poetry, theater, evangelization, prayer, discussion meeting with the bishop, visit to the Archdiocesan Museum, presentation of youth work, discussion meeting on the political and social involvement of Catholic youth). In the evening, young people gathered in the courtyard of the Pomeranian Dukes' Castle for a prayer service and catechesis<sup>44</sup>.

In 1995, a new point appeared in the Youth Day program, the so-called Youth Assembly, where participants (delegates from each parish of the archdiocese) took part in a testimonial session and discussion<sup>45</sup>. In 1996, the delegates to the Youth Assembly arrived on Friday evening and debated until noon the next day on the topic: "Cooperation and responsibility of the clergy and the laity for the work of the New Evangelization". In order to activate young people to be actively involved in the preparation and conduct of the Youth Day, several workshops were proposed, in which participants could join the choir and orchestra rehearsal, take part in the preparation of palms and decorations for Palm Sunday, prepare to take part in evangelistic animation while going out to the courtyards and squares of the city. Young people could also visit a senior citizen's home, a single mother's home, a

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<sup>43</sup> In the solemn celebrations during the Youth Days from 1990 to 2022, successive diocesan bishops participated: Archbishop Kazimierz Majdański, Archbishop Marian Przykucki, Archbishop Zygmunt Kamiński, Archbishop Andrzej Dzięga, and auxiliary bishops: Bishop Jan Gałęcki, Bishop Stanisław Stefanek, Bishop Marian Błażej Kruszyłowicz, Bishop Henryk Wejman.

<sup>44</sup> „Program Diecezjalnego Dnia Młodzieży”, KOB 6 (1994): 23; AKSK–WD. Duszpasterstwo Młodzieży 1989–1993 C3a, Znak: C3a–2/94, *Diecezjalny Dzień Młodzieży „Oto jestem Panie, poślij mnie”*, 1–4.

<sup>45</sup> „Program Diecezjalnego Dnia Młodzieży”, KOB 7 (1995): 17.

school and care center run by the Missionaries of Charity sisters, meet seminarians at the seminary and missionaries, and take part in the Samaritan run.

In the afternoon, participants of the Youth Days went in groups to the backyards of Szczecin housing estates to evangelize and invite their peers to participate in the further program<sup>46</sup>.

Since 2001, the program of the Youth Days has featured the Stations of the Cross through the streets of the city on Friday evening, prepared and conducted by the academic chaplaincies of Szczecin.

In 2002, it was decided to organize an afternoon evangelistic meeting for young people at the Kosmos Cinema<sup>47</sup>. In 2006, the Saturday meeting of young people took place at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Szczecin. The program included lectures, music workshops, a prayer meeting, a scientific session and a concert<sup>48</sup>.

Since 2003, when the Archdiocesan Youth Days began to be organized outside Szczecin on a different date, young people from the archdiocese have participated in the celebration of the World Youth Day on Palm Sunday in their parishes. In Szczecin there was a traditional procession with palms from the sanctuary of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to the cathedral, where at the end Fr. the archbishop celebrated a solemn mass. Candidates for the sacrament of confirmation from Szczecin parishes were especially invited to participate in this event. In 2008 and 2009 liturgical celebrations of Palm Sunday were organized for the Szczecin parishes both on the Left and Right Bank of Szczecin. From 2011, the organization of WYD on Palm Sunday at the supra-parish level was discontinued and the focus was on preparations for the Archdiocesan Youth Day, to which young people from the entire archdiocese were invited.

In 2000, in addition to the meeting of young people on Palm Sunday in Szczecin, the Archdiocesan Youth Days were also held in Trzęsacz on August 13-15. Each day was dedicated to the next Persons of the Holy Trinity. The centerpiece was the St. Special services were held on particular days: On the "Day of the Holy Spirit" – liturgy of fire; on the "Day of God the Father" - the liturgy of water; on the "Day of Jesus Christ" – the liturgy of bread. At the end, the young people made a pilgrimage on foot to the co-cathedral in Kamień Pomorski,

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<sup>46</sup> „Program Diecezjalnego Dnia Młodzieży”, KOB 6 (1996): 23; AKSK–WD, CK 1996–2002, sine sign., *Program Diecezjalnych Dni Młodzieży*.

<sup>47</sup> AKSK–WD, Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodzieży 2002–2003, sine sign., *Święto Młodych: Katecheza (Cinema Kosmos) 23 marca 2002 r.*

<sup>48</sup> AKSK–WD, CK 2003–2009, Znak: N3a–7/2006.

where a solemn mass was held, presided over by Archbishop Zygmunt Kamiński. During the Youth Days, concerts of Eleni and the band Deus Meus were also held<sup>49</sup>.

We had to wait until 2003 for the next Archdiocesan Youth Days organized outside Szczecin. During the first editions of AYDs, the basic framework of the program was formed, which accompanied the meetings of young people for the next years. The highlight of each day is the solemn Holy Mass, usually performed by an archbishop or one of the auxiliary bishops. Bishops from other dioceses visited the Youth Days several times: in 2004, Archbishop Ludwik Schick from Bamberg; in 2008, Bishop Edward Dajczak from Koszalin; in 2014, Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz from Minsk; in 2017 Archbishop Mieczysław Mokrzycki from Lviv; in 2020 Bishop Bronisław Bernacki of Odessa<sup>50</sup>. The presence of the bishops emphasizes the importance of the diocesan meeting of young people and the care with which the Church accompanies young people on their paths of life. Young people during the Youth Day can not only listen to homilies and catechesis of bishops, but also have the opportunity to meet them in less formal circumstances and establish closer contact with their shepherds. The visits of foreign bishops emphasize the universal dimension of the Church and allow young people to get to know the realities of life of Catholic communities in other parts of the world. Since the meeting in Lipiany in 2003, representatives of young people from the partner archdiocese of Bamberg participate in AYDs every year. The delegation from Poland participates in the Youth Days organized in Bamberg. Some editions of AYDs were also attended by young people from other countries: in 2007 from Belarus, in 2010 from Sweden, in 2014–2016 from Germany (Berlin, Kassel), in 2017 from France, in 2022 from Ukraine<sup>51</sup>.

Another permanent point of the Youth Day program is the celebration of the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, combined with a penitential service and a prayer of thanksgiving and joyful worship after confession. This usually takes place at the end of the first day of the youth festival. Priests who come with their groups serve young people as confessors. It is a time of reconciliation, a time of "God's Amnesty", an opportunity to "rise

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<sup>49</sup> AKSK–WD, N3a 2000–2007, sine sign., *Jubileuszowe Dni Młodzieży Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej Trzęsacz 13–15.05.2000*; AKSK–WD, N3a 2000–2007, Znak: N3a-7/2000.

<sup>50</sup> Bartosz Rajewski, „Święto Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej”, KOB 28 (2004): 1–2; Łukasz Kazimierzczak, „Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych”, KOB 23 (2008): 1, 3; Marcin Miczkuła, „Błogosławieni ubodzy w duchu”, KOB 20 (2014): 3; Marcin Miczkuła, „Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych w Barlinku”, KOB 20 (2015): 2; Marcin Miczkuła, „Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych w Barlinku”, KOB 20 (2016): 2; *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamińskiej. Goleniów 1–3 maja 2017*, ed. Paulina Fryszka (Szczecin, 2017), 10; Maria Palica, „Dni, które dał Pan”, KOB 20 (2017): 4; *Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych. Dzień Służby Liturgicznej Chojna 2020*, ed. Paulina Fryszka i in. (Szczecin 2020), 5.

<sup>50</sup> Łukasz Kazimierzczak, „Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych”, KOB 27 (2007): 1, 3; Maciej Wagner, „Młodzi, radość i modlitwa”, KOB 20 (2010): 7.

<sup>51</sup> Łukasz Kazimierzczak, „Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych”, KOB 27 (2007): 1, 3; Maciej Wagner, „Młodzi, radość i modlitwa”, KOB 20 (2010): 7.

from sin"<sup>52</sup>. In order to encourage young people to take advantage of the gift of forgiveness of sins, the penitential service is preceded by appropriate catechesis and testimonies of young people who share their experience of experiencing this sacrament. On the following days there is an opportunity to participate in various prayers and services: matins, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet together. Many times, during AYDs, young people went out into the streets of the city, doing the Way of the Cross or the Way of Light<sup>53</sup>. In 2022, a solemn Eucharist procession took place. During the Papal March (Papal Way) in 2011–2013, the participants of the Youth Days considered the messages of the Holy Father. to the youth. In 2014, the March for Jesus took place.

In 2019, in Goleniów, for the first time, young people could support missionary works by making offerings during the holy mass for children from the orphanage in Wamba in central Kenya and for equipping the school in Kipsing<sup>54</sup>. During the Youth Days, participants could listen to the testimonies of people involved in helping missions and learn about their stay in the areas where aid from the archdiocese is received. In the years 2020-2022, during AYDs in Chojna, young people could support further works carried out by the archdiocese in Madagascar and help refugees from Ukraine.

There were years when AYDs had a special celebration. In 2009, for the celebration of the youth of the Archdiocese of Szczecin and Kamień, the signs of the World Youth Day, the cross and the icon of Our Lady *Salus Populi Romani*, came to Myślibórz, peregrinating at that time in all dioceses in Poland<sup>55</sup>. The celebration of the Archdiocesan Youth Day in 2011 in Choszczno had a special character, when young people joined spiritually with Rome, where the beatification ceremony of John Paul II took place on May 1. During the Youth Days, a lot of space was devoted to the person of the Pope from Poland and his various speeches to young people were recalled<sup>56</sup>. In 2016, a solemn sending of young people from the

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<sup>52</sup> *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Choszczno 1–3 maja 2010 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba i in. (Szczecin 2010), 6; *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Goleniów 1-3 maja 2017 r.*, ed. Paulina Fryszka (Szczecin, 2017), 10; *Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych. Dzień Służby Liturgicznej Chojna 2020*, 5.

<sup>53</sup> The Stations of the Cross were included in the program of the Archdiocesan Youth Days in the following years: 2003, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2014. In 2012, a Passion Play was presented during the Youth Days. The Way of Light was proposed in the following years: 2005, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012.

<sup>54</sup> pk/Szczecin (KAI). „Młodzież pomaga dzieciom w Kenii”, access 28.12.2022, <https://m.niedziela.pl/artykul/42457/Mlodziez-pomaga-dzieciom-w-Kenii>.

<sup>55</sup> Tomasz Romantowski, „Dni Młodych”, KOB 20 (2009): 10.

<sup>56</sup> *Poradnik Uczestnika Dni Młodych Archidiecezji Szczecińsko-Kamieńskiej. Choszczno 30 kwietnia-3 maja 2011 r.*, ed. Piotr Skiba, Kamila Kępińska, Marta Olczak (Szczecin, 2011), 6–7.

Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień to the World Youth Day in Krakow took place in Barlinek. Archbishop Andrzej Dzięga presided over a special service on the last day of AYDs<sup>57</sup>.

In addition to the prayer and formation elements, the program of the Youth Days also includes a rich cultural and artistic offer. Every year, AYD concerts feature Christian artists and musicians well-known in Poland, as well as local music bands<sup>58</sup>. Theatrical performances were held several times. Many times young people took part in the Review of Christian Culture<sup>59</sup>. Since 2008, workshop classes, which young people sign up for during the registration process, have been a permanent point of AYD's program. The number and form of the workshops depend on the town where the Youth Days are held. Local community centers and local volunteers are involved in their preparation and implementation<sup>60</sup>. The program of the Youth Days also included a place for learning about the tourist attractions of the towns that hosted AYDs, as part of the so-called "City Tour"<sup>61</sup> or during a city game<sup>62</sup>.

For many years, the Archdiocesan Youth Days were held during the so-called picnic, when national holidays fall out in the calendar: Flag Day (May 2) and the Constitution Day of May 3rd. The patriotic accent of celebrating these holidays during the Youth Days was the White and Red March in 2015–2019<sup>63</sup>.

During the Archdiocesan Youth Days, there is plenty of time for young people to meet in small groups for conversations, discussions, meeting new friends and sharing the

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<sup>57</sup> Marcin Miczkuła, „Archidiecezjalne Dni Młodych w Barlinku”, KOB 20 (2016): 1–2.

<sup>58</sup> In successive editions of the Archdiocesan Youth Days, various performers appeared, including: Eleni (2000), Deus Meus (2000, 2004), Clerboyz – a band of seminarians from AWS in Szczecin (2003, 2007, 2010, 2011), Kadosz – a band from Belarus (2007), Jesienni Przyjaciele (2008, 2011), Siewcy Lednicy (2009, 2013), Drabina Jakuba – a band from Dolic (2009, 2012, 2018), Jestem – a band from Świnoujście (2010), Łobuzy Jezusa – a band from Dębno (2011, 2012), Full Power Spirit (2011, 2013, 2014, 2015), Zespół Porozumienie (2013), Maleo Reggae Rockers (2014), Propaganda Dei (2014), Som Gorski (2015, 2016, 2022), Strona B (2015), Wyrwani z Niewoli (2016), TGD (2017), Arkadio (2017), Sound'n'Grace (2019), Per Musicam – a band from Goleniów (2019), TAU (2020), niemaGOtu (2021), Muode Koty (2022), Fr. Kuba Bartczak (2022).

<sup>59</sup> Przegląd Kultury Chrześcijańskiej – The Review of Christian Culture (in the years 2004, 2007, 2018, 2019, 2022) included proposals for various meetings, exhibitions, artistic performances, theatrical presentations, film screenings, and sports competitions.

<sup>60</sup> In 2008, 23 workshops were offered in Myślibórz. The highest number – 67 workshops – was available in 2014 in Barlinek. These included, among others, biblical, breviary, carving, decoupage, journalistic, evangelization, philosophical, photographic, graffiti, board games, hippotherapy, geographical, culinary, liturgical, painting, medical, origami, pantomime, first aid, beekeeping, sculptural, shooting, dance, theatrical, fishing, vocal, and other workshops. The complete list of workshops with their descriptions can be found in the participant's guide: Participant's Guide for the Youth Days of the Archdiocese of Szczecin-Kamień. Barlinek, May 1–3, 2014, edited by Piotr Skiba (Szczecin, 2014), 10–20.

<sup>61</sup> As part of the "City Tour" (a traditional program element since 2008), participants could choose from several attractions such as guided tours of the town, visits to museums, sailing trips, water biking, kayaking, sports activities at the stadium or pool, water rescue demonstrations, concerts, a chess match with the mayor of Myślibórz, meetings with firefighters and police officers, sumo or zumba classes, etc.

<sup>62</sup> Urban games were organized in Gryfice in 2012, in Goleniów in 2018 and 2019, and in Chojna in 2020 and 2021.

<sup>63</sup> In Barlinek, the White-Red March took place on May 3 in 2015 and 2016. In Goleniów, it occurred on May 2 in 2017, 2018, and 2019.

experience of their faith. The Youth Forum, meetings in thematic groups or Time of Testimony are points of the program that allow young people to exchange their observations, engage in dialogue with their peers on important topics and share the fruits of the meeting with the participants of this event.

## Conclusion

The history of the Archdiocesan Youth Days shows that this is an event that has become a permanent part of the youth ministry program in the Szczecin-Kamień Church. From the very beginning, the Youth Days were conceived as an opportunity to meet young people on various levels: religious, spiritual, community, cultural and artistic. The Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life emphasizes that the diocesan celebration of World Youth Day is an important stage in the life of each particular Church, it is a privileged time of meeting with young generations, a tool for evangelizing the world of young people and dialogue with them. Young people also have a lot to say to the Church and the diocesan community should be open to their voice<sup>64</sup>. The experience of the Szczecin-Kamień Church shows that AYDs are a good space for dialogue with the young generation. Young people appreciate the specific pedagogy of these days: it is a time of solemn celebration of faith, live liturgy, compact teachings, but also an intense moment of communion and discovery of the universal Church in its local dimension, a time of getting to know your "little homeland", an opportunity for enriching meetings and opening up to other people. Youth Days become a stimulus to Christian life<sup>65</sup>. During these days, the participants can make a kind of journey to the source of Christian life, following a path of love, friendship, prayer and contemplation within the community of disciples<sup>66</sup>.

Archdiocesan Youth Days were never conceived as an independent, one-off, annual youth *event*, but were always treated as one stage of a pastoral program that should continue with young people in their daily lives<sup>67</sup>. Just like the international celebrations of World

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<sup>64</sup> WD, no. 7.

<sup>65</sup> Francis Kohn, „Światowe Dni Młodzieży w Paryżu. Olbrzymie zaskoczenie postawą młodzieży francuskiej”, in: *Młodość nadzieją Kościoła i świata*, ed. Lucjan Balter (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), 302.

<sup>66</sup> James Francis Stafford, „Młody Kościół z młodymi”, in: *Młodość nadzieją Kościoła i świata*, ed. Lucjan Balter (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), 176.

<sup>67</sup> Similarly, the popes have expressed their thoughts on the experience of World Youth Days. In his Message to the Youth on the occasion of the V World Youth Day in 1990, Pope John Paul II wrote: "World Youth Day is not only a celebration but also a serious spiritual task. For it to be fruitful, preparation is needed under the guidance of pastors in dioceses and parishes, in associations, movements, and Church youth communities" (John Paul II, "Message to the youth of the whole world on the occasion of the V World Youth Day," L'Osservatore

Youth Day, AYDs are also marked by a large dose of emotions and impressions; they are something that can "ignite" young people to act, to engage in the life of faith and the community of the Church and in activities for the benefit of society. However, staying on the level of emotions very quickly ends up burning out the original enthusiasm, so it is necessary to take care of further formation and accompanying young people when they return to their homes<sup>68</sup>. In this context, it is worth using a kind of "catechism for youth", which was created over the course of almost forty years, along with the development of World Youth Day, and which consists of messages, homilies, catechesis and other speeches of popes addressed to young people<sup>69</sup>. It is worth drawing on the richness of this teaching in the preparation of the program of the next Archdiocesan Youth Days and in the development of formation materials for young people. Youth ministry leaders in the diocese should also be instructed to use these materials in their work with young people. This "youth catechism" is a solid evangelizing tool and can be a source of much inspiration for all those who accompany young people on their paths of life.

The decision of Pope Francis to move the World Youth Day in the diocese to the celebration of Christ the King meant that the time distance between the celebration of this day in the calendar of the universal Church and in the calendar of the archdiocese is now more than half a year. It is therefore worth considering whether the pastoral program should also include the celebration of Christ the King (or the day preceding this celebration) for the preparation of some form of diocesan celebration of the World Youth Day. The program of this day will not have such an extensive form as the spring meeting, but it will be an opportunity to experience the festival of young people in unity with the universal Church. It can also be an opportunity to inspire young people and their priests to prepare spiritually in the coming months for the celebration of the Archdiocesan Youth Day.

In the organization and conduct of the Archdiocesan Youth Days, all those involved in this work should be accompanied by the postulate formulated by Pope Francis in the exhortation *Christus vivit*: "young people themselves are the creators of youth ministry,

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Romano (Polish edition) 10–11 (1989): 32). His successor, Pope Benedict, in his speech to the Cardinals of the Roman Curia on December 22, 2008, observed that World Youth Days are not limited to just one week when they are noticeable in the media and described as a spectacular gathering of young Catholics under the leadership of the Pope. Before such a meeting takes place, a long external and internal journey must be undertaken. Benedict XVI, "Events of the past year point the way to the future," *L'Osservatore Romano* (Polish edition) 2 (2009): 10.

<sup>68</sup> Marcin Szczodry, „Światowe Dni Młodzieży jako wydarzenie kształtujące sprawności moralne młodego pokolenia”, in: *Sprawności moralne jako przedmiot refleksji wychowawczej*, ed. Iwona Jazukiewicz, Ewa Rojewska (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2018), 137.

<sup>69</sup> Renato Boccardo, „Światowe Dni Młodzieży”, in: *Młodzież nadzieją Kościoła i świata*, ed. Lucjan Balter (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 2008), 467–468.



supported by the accompaniment and guidance of pastors and adults, but free in constantly finding new ways from creativity and boldness. It is therefore necessary to take advantage of their cleverness, ingenuity and knowledge of the sensitivity, language and problems of other young people<sup>70</sup>. The best tool for evangelizing young people is another young person, and the one who experiences a personal encounter with Christ will be his witness every day, in the place of residence, work, study, entertainment and rest, among relatives and strangers, to the farthest geographical periphery and existential contemporaries<sup>71</sup>.

The Archdiocesan Youth Days are a testimony to the commitment of the community of the Szczecin-Kamień Church in the work of accompanying young people on the paths of faith and creating a convenient space for them to meet God in person. A detailed analysis of the Youth Day programs allows us to see their kerygmatic, evangelizing and formative dimension. Thanks to this, one can hope that also in the coming years the Church on the Oder and the Baltic will pay special attention to the celebration of the diocesan Youth Day and will "invest" in young people. It means investing in the future of the Church, promoting vocations, preparing future families. Investing in the young in various ways is a vital task for each local church, not just an activity that connects with others<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>70</sup> Francis, *Posynodalna adhortacja apostolska „Christus vivit”*, no. 203.

<sup>71</sup> Marcin Szczodry, „Młodzi w Kościele Franciszka”, *Colloquia Theologica Ottoniana* 1 (2018): 224.

<sup>72</sup> WD, no. 7.

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