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# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Knights to Host International Site for English-Speaking Pilgrims at World Youth Day 2016** *"Mercy Centre" at Tauron Arena Kraków will be among sites visited by Pope Francis*

(NEW HAVEN, Conn.) – The Knights of Columbus will host the international English-language catechetical and youth festival site at World Youth Day from July 26-31. Tauron Arena Kraków will be the site of "Mercy Centre," which will offer pilgrims an inspirational program of events in English as part of their World Youth Day 2016 experience in Poland.

Particularly catering to those who speak English as a first or second language, Mercy Centre will be open to all World Youth Day pilgrims, and will feature catechetical sessions led by Vatican-assigned bishops, concerts featuring globally-renowned musicians, talks by prominent Catholic speakers, witnesses to persecution of the Church in the Middle East, and a series of exhibits and liturgical celebrations.

"Pope Francis has declared mercy a key theme both for this year and for World Youth Day," said Supreme Knight Carl Anderson. "This is especially appropriate given the selection of Kraków as host city, since this is where devotion to Divine Mercy was born, and where St. John Paul II during his time there grew in this devotion, which became a major theme of his pontificate as well. Mercy Centre is thus perfectly situated to help pilgrims understand that Christian life must be an experience of receiving mercy from God, and giving it also to our neighbors in the form of love, charity and forgiveness."

On Wednesday, July 27, programming will include a "Night of Mercy" Youth Festival with performances by eight-time Grammy nominee Matt Maher, Dove Award nominee Audrey Assad as well as talks by Bishop Robert Barron of Word on Fire Ministries and LifeTeen's Joel Stepanek. The evening will conclude with the musical performance "I Believe in Mercy" by the Cenacolo Community.

Mercy Centre pilgrims will also have the opportunity to encounter holiness through Kraków's own saints who inspired a young Karol Wojtyła, the future Pope John Paul II, to pursue his vocations. Relics of several Polish saints, beloved by John Paul II, will be available for veneration. Throughout the week, the centre will feature a "Vocations Café" and exhibit on the diocesan priesthood, as well as other exhibits on topics such as Divine Mercy, Poland's Road to Freedom, St. John Paul II and the Solidarity Movement, and Auschwitz.

Joining the Knights of Columbus as co-sponsors of the Mercy Centre are the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, the religious congregation best known for promoting the message of Divine Mercy received by the 20th-century Polish nun of the same order St. Faustina Kowalska; the Saint John Paul II National Shrine in Washington, D.C.; and the Sisters of Life, a New York-based religious community of women that works to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life.

Also partnering with the Knights at the Mercy Centre are Salt + Light Television, Holy Cross Family Ministries, the Dominican Liturgical Institute, the National Religious Vocations Conference (NRVC) and the National Council of Diocesan Vocations Directors (NCDVD). The bishops' conferences of the United States, Canada and Australia will also host their national gatherings at the Mercy Centre.

Tauron Arena Kraków is located adjacent to the Polish Aviators Park five kilometers east of Kraków's Main Square. It is one of the largest entertainment and sports venues in Poland, with seating for more than 20,000. Pope Francis will hold his final meeting in Kraków with World Youth Day Volunteers at the Mercy Centre at Tauron Arena Kraków on Sunday, July 31.

For more information and a complete listing of programming, visit [www.wydenGLISHsite.org](http://www.wydenGLISHsite.org) or follow #WYDMercyCentre #kofcwithfrancis on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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