

# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL



• MELBOURNE, VICTORIA •

30 NOVEMBER – 2 DECEMBER 2025 •

## Media release

3 July 2025

### World Youth Day Cross and Icon to inspire youth at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival

In a special celebration of faith and unity, the official World Youth Day Cross and Icon will arrive in Melbourne as a highlight of the 2025 Australian Catholic Youth Festival.

Established by the Australian Bishops, the Festival is a national event that offers young people the opportunity to come together in fellowship, strengthen their relationship with Jesus and be inspired to live out their faith in everyday life. Thousands of young people from across Australia are expected to attend the 2025 Festival, held in Melbourne this November.

This significant event in the life of the Church will be marked by the presence of the internationally recognised symbols of World Youth Day—the pilgrim Cross and the Icon of Our Lady Salus Populi Romani. Originally gifted by St John Paul II to young people of the world in 1984, the World Youth Day Cross and Icon have travelled the globe, uniting millions of young Catholics in prayer and reflection over the past 40 years.

Known affectionately as the "Pilgrim Cross", the simple wooden cross, standing at nearly four metres tall, and the Icon of Mary, a copy of the ancient Marian image housed in Rome, are profound reminders of God's eternal presence and love.

Following a special agreement with the World Youth Day Seoul 2027 organisers, the Cross and Icon will journey to Melbourne, gracing the Festival with their presence. It will be only the second time the WYD Cross and Icon have travelled to Australia, following their visit ahead of WYD 2008.

One of the most anticipated highlights of the Festival is the Pilgrimage Walk on Sunday 30 November, which will see thousands of pilgrims, journey from Melbourne's St Patrick's Cathedral to the Festival venue – the Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre. The Cross and Icon will lead this powerful procession, symbolising a unified pilgrimage toward Christ and encouraging young pilgrims to embrace their calling as disciples in the world.

Festival Director Teresa Rhynehart expressed her excitement for the upcoming event.

"Welcoming the World Youth Day Cross and Icon to Melbourne for ACYF 2025 is a profound moment for the youth of our nation. It will be an inspiring reminder that we are part of something much larger—the universal Church journeying together in faith," she said.

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With its theme "Pilgrims of Hope", the Festival provide participants with a powerful encounter of Christ through prayer, music, workshops and dynamic speakers. The inclusion of the Cross and Icon will significantly enhance the Festival and enrich the experience of thousands of young pilgrims.

Registrations for the Australian Catholic Youth Festival are now open.

*For more information about registration, program and ways to engage with the Festival, visit:*

[www.acyf.org.au](http://www.acyf.org.au).

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