

Pilgrims pack Copacabana Beach for the World Youth Day closing Mass in Rio de Janeiro July 28. In attendance were an estimated 3 million people—one of the largest crowds in the history of World Youth Day.

WITNESSES TO THE FAITH

During the closing Mass of World Youth Day, Pope Francis instructed youths to “Go and make disciples of all nations.” The Mass was offered July 28 at Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro to a crowd of 3 million.

“Faith is a flame that grows stronger the more it is shared and passed on, so that everyone may know, love and confess Jesus Christ, the Lord of life and history (cf. Rom 10:9).”

“Careful, though! Jesus did not say: ‘go, if you would like to, if you have the time’, but he said: ‘Go and make



disciples of all nations.’ Sharing the experience of faith, bearing witness to the

faith, proclaiming the Gospel: this is a command that the Lord entrusts to the whole Church, and that includes you; but it is a command that is born not from a desire for domination, from the desire for power, but from the force of love, from the fact that Jesus first came into our midst and did not give us just a part of himself, but he gave us the whole of himself, he gave his life in order to save us and to show us the love and mercy of God. Jesus does not treat us as slaves, but as people who are free, as friends, as brothers and sisters; and he not only sends us, he accompanies us, he is always beside us in our mission of love.

“Where does Jesus send us? There are no borders, no limits: he sends us to everyone. The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and to bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent. The Lord seeks all, he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love.”

Clockwise from top: Stefano Rellandini, Reuters; Sergio Moraes, Reuters; Reuters; L'Osservatore Romano. All via CNS.



The Words of Pope Francis

A World Youth Day Meditation

LOVE AND COURAGE

Pope Francis participated in the Way of the Cross on Copacabana Beach with young people July 26. He spoke of the cross in everyone's life, and particularly how the cross is a symbol of Christ's love, and as such, gives us courage as Catholics.

“But the Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action; the Cross invites us to step outside ourselves to meet them and to extend a hand to them. How many times have we seen them in the Way of the Cross, how many times have they accompanied Jesus on the way to Calvary: Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, Mary, the women...Today I ask you: which of them do you want to be? Do you want to be like Pilate, who did not have the cour-

age to go against the tide to save Jesus' life, and instead washed his hands? Tell me: are you one of those who wash their hands, who feign ignorance and look the other way? Or are you like Simon of Cyrene, who helped Jesus to carry that heavy wood, or like Mary and the other women, who were not afraid to accompany Jesus all the way to the end, with love and tenderness? And you, who do you want to be? Like Pilate? Like Simon? Like Mary? Jesus is looking at you now and is asking you: do you want to help me carry the Cross? Brothers and sisters, with all the strength of your youth, how will you respond to him?

“Dear friends, let us bring to Christ's Cross our joys, our sufferings and our failures. There we will find a Heart that is open to us and understands us, forgives us, loves us and calls us to bear this love in our lives, to love each person, each brother and sister, with the same love.”



Pilgrims carry a cross during the Stations of the Cross on Copacabana beach in Rio de Janeiro July 26.

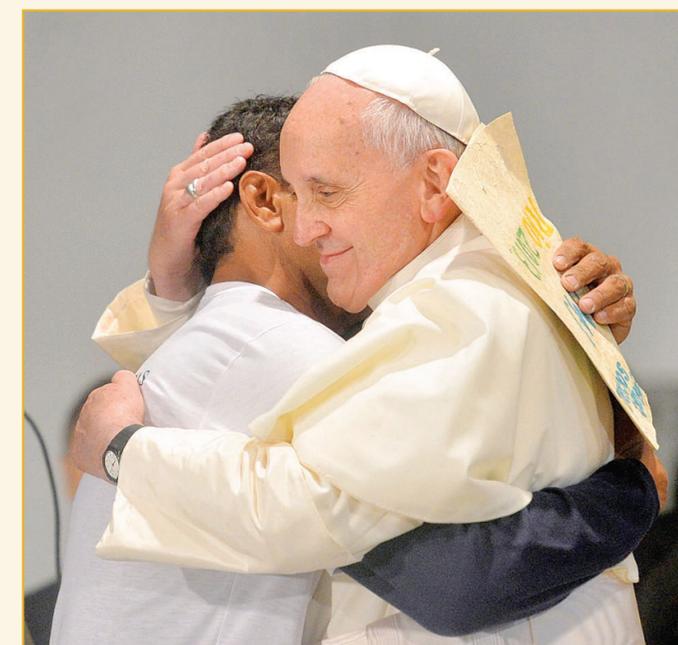
HOPE AND JOY

During his homily in the Basilica of the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida in Rio de Janeiro July 24, Pope Francis discussed three attitudes that Catholics should have in abundance, “hopefulness, openness to being surprised by God, and living in joy.”

“How many difficulties are present in the life of every individual, among our people, in the communities; yet as great as these may seem, God never allows us to be overwhelmed by them. In the face of those moments of discouragement we experience in life, in our efforts to evangelize or to embody our faith as parents within the family, I would like to say forcefully: Always know in your hearts that God is by your side; he never abandons you! Let us never lose hope! Let us never allow it to die in our hearts! ...

“Dear friends, we have come to knock at the door of Mary's house. She has opened it for us, she has let us in and she shows us her Son. Now she asks us to ‘do whatever he tells you’ (Jn 2:5). Yes, Mother, we are committed to doing whatever Jesus tells us! And we will do it with hope, trusting in God's surprises and full of joy.”

Pope Francis looks to a statue of Our Lady of Aparecida as he greets the crowd outside the shrine dedicated to her in Aparecida, Brazil, July 24.



SUFFERING AND RENEWAL

Pope Francis visited the St. Francis of Assisi Hospital in Rio de Janeiro July 24. During his visit, he met with recovering addicts and shared a message of renewal and strength in times of suffering.

“We must hold the hand of the one in need, of the one who has fallen into the darkness of dependency perhaps without even knowing how, and we must say to him or her: You can get up, you can stand up. It is difficult, but it is possible if you want to. Dear friends, I wish to say to each of you, but especially to all those others who have not

Pope Francis embraces a patient at St. Francis of Assisi Hospital in Rio de Janeiro July 24. The pope addressed a group of recovering drug addicts, offering them a message of compassion and hope as well as a call to self-determination.

had the courage to embark on our journey: You have to want to stand up; this is the indispensable condition! You will find an outstretched hand ready to help you, but no one is able to stand up in your place. But you are never alone!

“The Church and so many people are close to you. Look ahead with confidence. Yours is a long and difficult journey, but look ahead, there is ‘a sure future, set against a different horizon with regard to the illusory enticements of the idols of this world, yet granting new momentum and strength to our daily lives’ (Lumen Fidei, 57). To all of you, I repeat: Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! And not only that, but I say to us all: let us not rob others of hope, let us become bearers of hope!”