



Office for Evangelization
Catholic Diocese of Richmond

Diocesan World Youth Day Pilgrimage 2019
Panama City, Panama | January 19 - 28, 2019

Updated August 1, 2018

What is World Youth Day?

Starting in 1985 in Rome by Pope John Paul II, the Holy Father has invited youth and young adults to gather periodically with him across the world in an epic event known as World Youth Day. Though the title indicates a “day,” it is really a week long life changing experience of the diversity and richness of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis has invited youth and young adults from across the world to the 15th World Youth Day in Panama City, Panama. Once again the Diocese of Richmond will be forming a pilgrimage, along will millions of other Catholics from around the world. The official website for WYD Panama has been released (<https://panama2019.pa/en/home/>)

Who can attend?

The pilgrimage is for both youth and young adults. For the purpose of this pilgrimage, we are defining youth and young adults somewhat differently than in the past:

Youth...

- generally between 16-18 years old
- at least 16-years-old by time of departure (January 1, 2019)
- currently enrolled in high school or is in home school
- graduating from high school in the spring/summer of 2019

Young Adult...

- generally between 18-29 years old
- graduating from high school on or before the spring/summer of 2019

What about chaperones for youth?

We will be traveling as a diocesan delegation throughout this pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Panama. For every parish sending youth, the pastor (if attending) or his designee will be the main point of contact for each parish. All parishes sending youth must have at least one chaperone (at least 21 years old) for every eight youth on the pilgrimage. Parishes can work together on this as long as the 1:8 ratio of chaperone to youth is in place. No chaperone is required for young adult pilgrims.

How do I register and when is the deadline?

Visit www.evangelizerichmond.org to download and print your application and other pertinent information. An initial deposit of \$250 and signed contract is required to secure a spot on the pilgrimage. Space is limited and can be closed off without prior notification, after slots are filled we cannot guarantee there will be availability to join the pilgrimage. All pilgrims must have obtained or at least begun the application process for a passport.

All pilgrims are eligible for a discount off the total cost of the pilgrimage as follows:

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| • Initial deposit and signed contracted postmarked by August 31, 2018 | \$500 discount |
| • Initial deposit and signed contracted postmarked on or after September 1, 2018 | No discount |

What about travel in Panama and safety concerns?

Safety is obviously a concern whenever one travels abroad. The Office for Evangelization is partnering with organizations that have years of experience in international travel.

Weather in January is average for Panama which is typically 80 degrees and low precipitation. The official language of Panama is Spanish, although you will find English spoken fairly well in most parts of the city. While the official currency in Panama is the Balboa, the country uses US dollars so there will be no need to exchange money.

Our diocesan delegation is focused on the safety of all the pilgrims involved with the group. We want everyone to have a grace-filled pilgrimage and return home safely. Because of the valid concerns regarding a pilgrimage to any foreign country, we will be focused on group activities and traveling as a group as much as possible.

Make sure you are up-to-date on routine vaccines before every trip. These vaccines include measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, varicella (chickenpox) vaccine, polio vaccine, and your yearly flu shot. In addition, the CDC recommends getting the Hepatitis A and Typhoid vaccinations. More information can be found at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>

How do I get my Passport and Visa (if required)?

All US Citizens must have a valid Passport for travel abroad. Passport must be valid over six months following the date of your return to the United States. The cost for obtaining a passport is roughly \$135 and takes approximately 4-6 weeks to issue. The State Department has more information on how to apply for or renew a passport (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>). You can also apply for your passport at your local Post Office.

Panama does not require US citizens to have a Visa. (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Panama.html>).

What will be the total cost of the pilgrimage?

The cost can change depending on several factors. The package includes air travel, ground transportation, lodging, most meals, and World Youth Day event registration. The cost is \$2,999.00

Pilgrims are encouraged to bring spending money in addition to the cost of the pilgrimage. Parishes and individuals can organize fundraising efforts to cover most or all of the cost. The Office for Evangelization will help with fundraising ideas and support.

How do I pay?

Pilgrims can pay either by check or credit card in one lump sum or in installments. More information on payments is located within the contract agreement which can be downloaded (along with the credit card authorization form) at our website: www.evangelizerichmond.org.

What does the itinerary look like?

The 9-day pilgrimage will take place Saturday, January 19 to Monday, January 28, 2019.

The delegation will spend the first part of the pilgrimage in Panama City and the Gamboa Rainforest. The core WYD events are scheduled for January 22 to 27, 2019 and will be in Panama.

Where will I be staying?

While in Panama and during the WYD activities, the diocesan delegation will be staying at a 4-star hotel located in the heart of Panama. Our itinerary is still being finalized at this point so information on accommodations will be forthcoming.

Questions?

Contact the Office for Evangelization at evangelization@richmonddiocese.org or 804-622-5159.