





WORLD YOUTH DAY 2016

A FAMILY'S GREAT GATHERING

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Family. Most people think that it simply refers to the members of his immediate family – the people whom we live with. We often seek the comfort of being with our families in our own homes yet what we fail to realize is that each of us is also a member of a greater community - the family of God.

The San Beda Law delegates, led by Fr. Rembert Tumbali, OSB, went on a journey to participate in this year's World Youth Day in Krakow, Poland. Bringing with them not only the name of the school but also of the country, the group participated in a series of activities prepared by the World Youth Day committee designed to enable the youth of all nations to pray, worship and give praise together as one community for the glory of God.

Although miles away from their very own families back in the Philippines, the delegates felt little to no homesickness as they were warmly and heartily welcomed by there they can call their families from another country. The student delegates were assigned to various foster families who treated them as their own – preparing breakfast for the energy they needed for the big day ahead and providing snacks for the long and challenging trip to the venue. "It was hard to feel home sick! I never felt so at home away from home. Lucyna and Wojtek made sure we had everything we needed

and guided us throughout our stay in Wadowice. Tommen and Kasia, our little brother and sister are the sweetest balls of sunshine! We were blessed to experience God's love through our foster family. It was an affirmation that faith truly brings people together.", Zazza Simbulan, a junior law student, recollected.

Stationed in Wadowice, an hour ride away from Krakow, the trips to Krakow had always been an experience – from riding a jam-packed tram to getting lost along the way. True, the arrangements were never convenient, but it was this very circumstance that made the pilgrimage worthwhile.

Attending the events every day in a far location was a challenge. Dubbed as the longest walkathon in their lives, the delegates walked and walked until they reached their destination for the day. One would think, that under the scorching summer heat in Europe, the delegates would have felt nothing but dread for the next day's event. Quite the contrary, everyone anticipated the next day's events with excitement and eagerness. The delegates shouted and chanted and gave high fives and exchanging mementos with groups coming from various countries all over the world. And despite the weariness after a day's worth of prayer and work, the delegates, always found relief and comfort from

the sweet and thoughtful gestures of their foster families.

The walk around the city was long, the trips exhausting, but all these were nothing to the joy and delight in meeting new people and learning more on various cultures. Yes, there may be some differences, and the language barrier was nothing but easy to overcome, but the youth of all nations were gathered for one great purpose, that is, to celebrate the wonders and love of God. And the understanding of that love was something not even the language barrier can hinder.

The World Youth Day officially ended through the celebration of the mass by Pope Francis where he urged the youth to continue believing in mercy – *misericordia* – the very theme of this year's World Youth Day and affirmed the great love Jesus has for each and every one of us. "...[L]et us remember this encounter, let us preserve the memory of the presence of God and his word, and let us listen once more to the voice of Jesus as he calls us by name," Pope Francis reminded the youth.

Going back home to their families in the Philippines, the delegates did not only bring material gifts but also memories and stories to tell of their experience from the gathering in communion with the other members of a great family created for us by God.