

Pope's visit: 'Hope Happening' has thousands of young people experience small-scale World Youth Day at Brussels' Heysel

Starting today, young people can register for unique celebration with Pope Francis at King Baudouin Stadium

On the occasion of the long-awaited papal visit, thousands of young people from Belgium and abroad will gather at the Heysel in Brussels on Saturday 28 September for the 'Hope Happening' event. This is a celebration in the spirit of the World Youth Day, including pilgrimages, creative workshops on faith and spirituality, a music festival and a magical overnight stay in the shadow of the King Baudouin Stadium. Starting today, participants can also register for the Eucharistic celebration with Pope Francis on Sunday 29 September at the stadium.

The 'Hope Happening' event is all about - of course - hope. A message Pope Francis already gave to young people around the world last autumn. "Try to sow seeds of hope in the lives of your friends and everyone around you," he said. And everybody - religious, non-religious and the seeking - is also welcome in Brussels at the end of September, to attend 'Hope Happening'. The event will also prepare for the Jubilee of the Youth in Rome at the end of July 2025, in the context of the Jubilee 2025, and for the World Youth Day of 2027 in Seoul.

Festival atmosphere with indoor camping

The large-scale event at the Heysel Palaces will consist of six parts. For instance, you can take part in 'Walk of Hope', where you will walk the last stretch to the Heysel, and where you will have spiritual encounters around three themes (unity, climate and refugees) during the walk. There is also 'City of Hope': in the Heysel Palaces, you can take part in workshops around faith, hope and other themes that young people are working on. With 'Circle of Hope', some powerful thought leaders try to inspire young people, based on the connection between their social engagement and (searching) faith. Other highlights are 'Music of Hope' and 'Night of Hope'.

Sofi Van Ussel of 'Hope Happening': *"With 'Music of Hope', we are organising a full-fledged music festival featuring contemporary Christian music groups (pop, rock, worship, hip-hop, electro). World-renowned DJ priest Padre Guilherme will close the festivities with a smashing dance set. After the party, another 'Night of Hope' is scheduled. Participants will have the chance to spend the night in a magical atmosphere on a specially decorated indoor campsite in the Heysel Palaces."*

Finally, on Saturday there will of course also be room for various prayer moments throughout the day - 'Prayers of Hope' - including a collective prayer moment at dusk. The following morning then follows the apotheosis: the Eucharistic celebration with Pope Francis in the King Baudouin Stadium.

Registrations for Hope Happening open on August 6th

Young people aged between 12 and 30 from Belgium and abroad can register for the event at www.hopehappening.be as of Tuesday August 6th. Through the registration for Hope

Happening, they can indicate if they also want to attend the mass. This way, young people do not need to register separately for the mass. The celebration is free, those who want to take part in the event pay 20 euros. Those who want to include a bed and breakfast pay 25 euros in total. For young people aged between 12 and 16, and their supervisors, there is an adapted programme.

About 'Hope Happening'

'Hope Happening' is an event aimed at young people aged between 12 and 30 in the context of the Pope's visit. The event is organised by some 40 catholic youth associations in Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels, with the support of the Bishops' Conference of Belgium. 'Hope Happening' is for all young people and youth associations in Belgium and Europe.

Interested to apply as a leader, ambassador or volunteer?

If you're a leader of a youth group, active within the Christian community, and want to be an ambassador or volunteer, sign up via www.hopehappening.be.

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