



Pope Francis dies. He visited Kraków in 2016

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On 21 April 2025, Easter Monday, Pope Francis passed away at the age of 88. In 2016, he came to Kraków for World Youth Day. He stayed in the city from July 27 to 31. It was his only pilgrimage to Poland and his first visit to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe at the beginning of his pontificate.

For Poles and pilgrims from around the world, World Youth Day in Kraków was an important event and a spiritual experience, but it also contributed to an increase in tourism, including religious tourism.

During his five-day stay in Poland, Pope Francis met with young people; thousands of pilgrims welcomed him with singing and music in various parts of Kraków: at Błonia Park, by the window on Franciszkańska Street, and accompanied him as he traveled through the streets of the city.

On 28 July 2016, a welcoming ceremony for the Pope was held at Kraków's Błonia. The then-Mayor of Kraków, Jacek Majchrowski, handed Pope Francis the key to the city in front of the main entrance to the Metropolitan Curia. On the same day, Francis took a ride in the white-and-yellow "Krakowiak" tram to the Mass at Błonia. With this gesture, the author of the so-called green encyclical "Laudato si" wanted to show how deeply he cared about issues of ecology, climate, and environmental protection. The papal tram still runs through the streets of Kraków to this day.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell announced Pope Francis' death at 7.35 am in a statement released by the Vatican press office. Only a day earlier, on Easter Sunday, he gave the Urbi et Orbi blessing to the faithful.

The Sigismund Bell — one of Poland's most important national symbols — tolled at noon to pay tribute to the late pope.