



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Travel Safety Media Statement 16 July 2016

In advance of World Youth Day 2016, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is closely following the recent violent events in France and Turkey.

Over the past 48 hours, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has monitored the situation by checking the safety of Australian pilgrimage groups travelling throughout Europe prior to World Youth Day.

Communication is ongoing between the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade regarding the latest travel advice updates. A high degree of caution must be exercised if travelling to France, Israel and Turkey.

<http://smartraveller.gov.au/Countries/europe/western/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://smartraveller.gov.au/Countries/europe/southern/Pages/turkey.aspx>

There are no Australian pilgrimage groups in Nice or Istanbul at this time. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is in regular contact with Australian pilgrimage groups visiting border countries and nearby cities.

Over the past two years, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has liaised with and trained Church leaders in preparation for World Youth Day and the associated European pilgrimages prior to and post World Youth Day.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is supported by Cosmos, the official World Youth Day tour operator, who prepared 39 different pilgrimage itineraries across Europe. Cosmos has trained staff to support Australian pilgrimage groups at each location.

At this time of instability in Europe, we pray for those who have been affected by the recent events and in the words of Pope Francis, we continue to ask God for the gift of peace and harmony.

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