



The attendance of Pope John Paul II for World Youth Day 2002 in Toronto was the third official visit of the Holy Father to Canada. More than 800,000 people crowded Downsview Park for the closing papal Mass on July 28, 2002. The Pope spent six days in and around Toronto, meeting with young people from the four corners of the globe. The event was heavily covered by media from around the world, allowing millions of people to follow the main celebrations in many languages.

In 1984, John Paul II became the first Pope to step foot on Canadian soil when he launched a 12-day pastoral visit. When he arrived on September 9 in the Quebec City suburb of Ste. Foy, the Holy Father began a 15,000-kilometre marathon that took him from the Atlantic to the Pacific. When the visit ended on September 20, he had visited Quebec City, Trois-Rivières, Montreal, St. John's, Moncton, Halifax, Toronto, Midland, Winnipeg/St. Boniface, Edmonton, Yellowknife, Vancouver and Ottawa-Hull. Millions of Canadians turned out to greet him, to pray with him and to celebrate. Speaking to crowds in English and in French, the two official languages of Canada, the Holy Father made more than 30 major addresses as well as many other statements. Gathered with tens of thousands of young people in Montreal's Olympic Stadium, the Pope used the World Youth Day theme of light to address his audience: "I wish to speak to you about the light of Christ, because it is as a witness of the Redeemer that I have come before you ... Listen to what I tell you: I am the light of the world. He who comes after me will not be walking in the shadows, there will be light to lead him to life."

In June 1987, John Paul II returned to Canada to meet with the people of Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories. During his first visit in 1984, severe weather conditions had prevented him from meeting with Aboriginal Peoples from the North. However, he had promised to return, which he did in 1987.

### **Addresses, Speeches and Homilies of John Paul II during his visits to Canada**

- [John Paul II's First Visit to Canada \(9 - 20 September 1984\)](#)
- [John Paul II's Second Visit to Canada \(June 1987\)](#)
- [John Paul II's Third Visit to Canada \(23 - 28 July 2002\)](#)