

# WORLD APOSTOLIC CONGRESS ON MERCY



Fragment of the Divine Mercy image, painted in 1934 in Vilnius by Eugeniusz Kazimirowski.  
The image is venerated at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Vilnius, Lithuania.

## World Apostolic Congress on Mercy 2026

Vilnius, 7–12 June 2026  
Saviour Hill, Rasių g. 6, Vilnius, Lithuania

The motto for the World Apostolic Congress on Mercy 2026, “Building the City of Mercy”, presents itself not only as an opportunity to reflect on the theme of mercy and to experience once again in our own lives how merciful God is toward each one of us, but also as a call to renew our commitment and dedication to building a city that is ever more credible.

While urban life can be for many a unique opportunity to open themselves to new perspectives, to fraternal sharing, and to the fulfillment of their lives, it not infrequently becomes, paradoxically, the place of the greatest loneliness, disillusionment, and mistrust, as well as a space in which different social groups end up living side by side, ignoring or even despising one another.

This is therefore an opportunity to offer communal contexts of faith in which, by overcoming anonymity, the value of each person is recognized and to all is offered the balm of an Easter faith to soothe wounds; contexts which, by enabling an experience of genuine fraternal closeness, reveal the motherhood of the Church and provide a concrete witness of mercy and tenderness, generating direction and meaning for the very life of the city.

**“Let us once again  
experience in our lives  
how merciful God is toward  
each of us, and let us renew  
our commitment to building  
cities that are, more than ever,  
places of mercy. See you  
in Vilnius!”**

Archbishop Rino Fisichella,  
Pro-Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization

### Registration

Advance registration is required via the official website: [www.wacomvilnius.org](http://www.wacomvilnius.org)

Participation is subject to a fee, which is allocated to organisational costs.



## World Apostolic Congress on Mercy 2026

7-12 June 2026  
Saviour Hill, Rasų g. 6, Vilnius, Lithuania

The World Apostolic Congress on Mercy 2026 will take place in Vilnius. This international event of the Catholic Church is intended for people from all over the world. The Congress is organised every three years, each time in a different country.

The Sixth World Congress will welcome participants and delegations from across the globe.

### Theme: Building the City of Mercy

**Duration:** 5 days. The Congress will be held from the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ to the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus.

**"God is the architect of the City of Mercy, and we are His co-workers. I invite everyone to come to Vilnius, to experience God's mercy and to become its witnesses."**

Gintaras Grušas, Archbishop of Vilnius

### Programme includes:

- Conferences, workshops and testimonies from participants;
- Holy Masses, penitential services with the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer and praise gatherings;
- Pilgrimages and thematic excursions in Vilnius;
- Charitable initiatives (works of mercy) in the city.
- Youth festival on June 6

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Participation is subject to a fee, which is allocated to organisational costs.

### Vilnius – the City of Divine Mercy

In this city, through Saint Faustina Kowalska and with the help of Fr. Michael Sopocko, the message of Divine Mercy was newly proclaimed to the world. During the interwar period, the artist Eugeniusz Kazimirowski, who lived in Vilnius, painted the first image of the Merciful Jesus, following the visions of Saint Faustina. Today this image is known throughout the world. The original painting is housed and venerated at the Shrine of Divine Mercy in Vilnius.

It was also in Vilnius that Jesus dictated the prayer of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy to Saint Faustina.



## Preliminary programme

Vilnius, 2026

### 7 June | SUNDAY THE CHURCH

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body  
and Blood of Christ  
Father's Day in Lithuania

#### MORNING

9.00 Registration (*Cathedral Sq.*)

#### AFTERNOON

12.30 Holy Mass, Vilnius Cathedral

2.00 Eucharistic Procession

(*Cathedral, Chapel of the Gate of Dawn,  
Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus*)

5.00 Early dinner

#### EVENING

6.00 Opening of WACOM6

### 8 June | MONDAY MEMORY

How does God's  
mercy work in my life?

#### MORNING

9.00 Praising

9.30 Talk: Card. Grzegorz Ryś

10.20 Testimony: John Pridmore

10.45 Break

11.30 Holy Mass

#### AFTERNOON

1.00 Lunch break

3.00 Hour of Mercy and meetings

(*Churches in Vilnius Old Town*)

#### EVENING

6.00 Dinner

7.00 Reconciliation Service

### 9 June | TUESDAY WORD

How can God's mercy be proclaimed  
convincingly  
to the people of our time and to give  
a reason for the hope that lives within  
me?

#### MORNING

9.00 Praising

9.30 Talk and testimony:

Nicky Gumbel

10.45 Break

11.15 Talk: Matt Fradd

12.00 Testimony

#### AFTERNOON

1.00 Lunch break and  
dinner food package

3.00 Hour of Mercy and meetings

(*Churches in Vilnius Old Town*)

#### EVENING

6.00 Holy Mass (*Vilnius Churches*)

8.00 Evening program (*Vilnius City*)

### 10 June | WEDNESDAY PRAYER

Prayer as a way to remain faithful and  
seek God's mercy

#### MORNING

9.00 Praising

9.30 Talk

10.15 Testimony: the Kissel family

10.45 Break

11.15 Talk: Fr Chris Alar, MIC

12.00 Testimony: John Canavan

#### AFTERNOON

1.00 Lunch break and  
dinner food package

3.00 Hour of Mercy and meetings

(*Churches in Vilnius Old Town*)

#### EVENING

6.00 Holy Mass (*Vilnius Churches*)

8.00 Evening program (*Vilnius City*)

### 11 June THURSDAY ACTION

Saint Barnabas, Apostle  
How to act guided by mercy?

#### MORNING

9.00 Praising

9.30 Talk

10.15 Testimony

10.45 Break

11.15 Talk: Fr James Mallon

12.00 Testimony: Kevin Hyland

#### AFTERNOON

1.00 Lunch break

3.00 Hour of Mercy and meetings

(*Churches in Vilnius Old Town*)

#### EVENING

6.00 Holy Mass

8.00 Evening program

### June 12 | FRIDAY HEART

Solemnity of the Most Sacred  
Heart of Jesus

How could meditation on the Heart of  
Jesus become a source of peace  
and a hope for tranquility for all  
humanity?

#### MORNING

9.00 Praising

9.30 Talk: Fr Patrice Chochołski

10.15 Closing remarks,  
venue of WACOM7

11.00 Holy Mass

#### AFTERNOON

12.30 Lunch

## Cardinal Grzegorz Rys

**The voice of dialogue  
in the Church in Europe.**

Born in 1964 in Kraków, Poland, he was created a cardinal in 2023, and in 2025 led the renewal of the European Ecumenical Charter. A historian and theologian who has researched medieval spirituality, he now helps to shape a "Church without walls".

## Nicky Gumbel

**Through his simple words,  
millions have discovered faith.**

A former barrister, Anglican priest and creator of the Alpha course, now present in more than 100 countries. He also developed the Bible in One Year programme, used by millions worldwide.

## Fr. Chris Alar, MIC

**A preacher of Divine  
Mercy to millions.**

Provincial of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception in the United States, author of *After Suicide* and *Understanding Divine Mercy*. His message reaches the world through EWTN television and live events.

## Fr. James Mallon

**The initiator of a revolution  
in parish renewal.**

Born in Glasgow and ministering in Canada, he is the author of *Divine Renovation*. His vision has sparked a global movement calling the Church to become missionary and alive.

## Fr. Patrice Chocholski

**A bridge of dialogue and mercy in  
the Mediterranean region.**

A French theologian, Director of the Institut Catholique de la Méditerranée in Marseille, and former Secretary General of the World Apostolic Congresses on Mercy, as well as Rector of the Shrine of Saint Jean Marie Vianney in Ars.

## Matt Fradd

**One of the most influential Catholic  
voices online today.**

Creator of the popular podcast *Pints with Aquinas*, speaking on faith, philosophy and human dignity. A Master of Philosophy, reaching millions through his podcast and talks around the world.

## Kevin Hyland

**A global leader in the fight against  
human trafficking, advocating for the  
most vulnerable.**

An Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and one of the world's leading voices on combating human trafficking, Kevin Hyland was the first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner for the United Kingdom and is now Strategic Director of the Santa Marta Group, which brings together law enforcement, the Church and civil society to combat exploitation.

## The Kissell Family (Carson Kissell and his family)

**A family witnessing hope in every-  
day life through the strength of God's  
mercy.**

A family from Ohio, USA, raising three boys, two of whom live with a rare genetic condition. Carson Kissell prays the Chaplet of Divine Mercy live every day on his Facebook page *Praying with Carson*, inspiring people through his testimony of faith and hope.



## Vilnius to Host the Sixth World Apostolic Congress on Mercy



Pope Francis prays at the Chapel of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy at the Gate of Dawn, 2018. Photograph by Laima Penek.

From 7 to 12 June 2026, Vilnius will host the 6th World Apostolic Congress on Mercy (WACOM). This will be a major international event of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, bringing together around 5,000 participants from countries across the world. The Congress will invite believers and people of good will to come together for prayer, reflection, encounters and dialogue, seeking a renewed understanding of how to bear effective witness to God's mercy in the contemporary world.

The Congress is organised by the Dicastery for Evangelisation of the Holy See in cooperation with the Archdiocese of Vilnius. Participants will include bishops, priests, members of consecrated life, community leaders, lay people, families and young people who wish to engage in fostering a culture of mercy in their own communities.

The theme of the Congress, "Building the City of Mercy", invites reflection on the mission of the faithful to create

communities that live by the spirit of the Gospel, where indifference and individualism give way to attentiveness to others through concrete works of love, the spoken word and prayer.

"God is the architect of the City of Mercy, and we are His co-workers. I invite everyone to come to Vilnius, to experience God's mercy and to become its witnesses," said Gintaras Grušas, Archbishop of Vilnius.

The programme will include the celebration of the Eucharist, communal prayer, talks and testimonies, thematic sessions throughout the city, exhibitions, film screenings and a cultural programme. The Congress will open with the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ and a Eucharistic procession to the main venue, and will conclude with the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and a prayer for peace and fraternity among nations and states.

Archbishop Gintaras Grušas notes that the Congress will take place in a city

that holds a unique place in the history of Divine Mercy: it was in Vilnius that Saint Faustina Kowalska lived and was guided by her confessor, Blessed Michał Sopoćko; here the first image of the Merciful Jesus was painted, and here the prayer of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy was dictated.

The main events of the Congress will take place on the Saviour Hill, near the Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. For more than three centuries, the message of mercy has been proclaimed at this site: missionary, Visitation and Vincentian religious communities worked here, carrying out numerous works of charity for the city's inhabitants; in 1934, the first image of Divine Mercy was painted here. During the Soviet period, the Visitation convent and the Church of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus were converted into a prison. Today, through the Congress on Mercy, this place once again becomes a space of prayer, reconciliation and hope.

