

Diocesan young people enjoy 'once-in-a-lifetime' trip to Europe, Vatican

By Teresa A. Parsons

Although to some people a two-week tour in Europe with 23 teenagers might sound like a combination dream and nightmare, for Father Dave Mura it was the realization of something he'd hoped to do for a long time.

"I studied there for four years and did previous tours," he said. "But I always wanted to go with a young group like this ... Most had never been out of the United States before. Hearing and watching their reactions made it a whole new experience."

"Pilgrimage '85" embarked from Toronto on August 18, traveling to Rome, Florence, Assisi, Lourdes, Paris and Amsterdam before returning to Toronto on September 2. The group, which in addition to 23 teens included 10 young adults and nine adults, was organized and escorted by Father Mura, diocesan assistant director of youth ministry for youth retreats and family camp.

Most of the travelers knew him from prior retreats, but one person remarked that he saw a new side of Father Mura in those two weeks. "He made it all come together ... getting people on and off trains and planes. At the same time he gave everyone enough freedom and treated us like adults."

Assisi was the highlight of the trip for several travelers. "The whole town is on a big hill with an incredible scene of the countryside," explained Steve Cassella, a high-school junior from Holy Ghost parish in Gates. "It was really peaceful after Rome

... kind of homey." He noted that near their hotel was the garden chapel where bells supposedly rang at the death of St. Francis of Assisi. Tammy Netti, an Auburn junior, said she felt close to God seeing the streets St. Francis walked during his lifetime.

Netti and others cited the papal audience the group attended as another highlight — "the experience of a lifetime" in her words. "He seemed just like a regular guy believe it or not," remarked Janet Sroda of Pope John Paul II. The Penfield high school senior was most impressed by the turnout of more than 10,000. "I can't believe so many people showed up," she said.

"He (the pope) isn't aloof from the people," added Walter Roscello, a Dryden resident. "He circled the audience a couple times in his jeep — he was very responsive to people."

Netti had a different impression of the pope. "I almost touched his hand when he came by," she noted. "I thought he was cute."

Roscello also found a candlelight procession at the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes a memorable sight. "You could see people's faith in their faces, in the singing and praying," he recalled.

Sroda, on the other hand, was fascinated by the church buildings and appointments. "I love to see old-fashioned churches ... I'm into the artwork. I liked the Cistine Chapel

very much," she noted.

Like most trips, this one also had its share of inconveniences. Scheduled to travel from Florence to Lourdes on an overnight train with sleeping accommodations, the group

arrived to find that no sleepers were available and had to sit up all night. With a trace of irony in his voice, Father Mura recalled the next day, spent with 42 sleepless companions, in one word — "wonderful."

Young-at-heart traveler happily surprised

Helen Mura was one of the travelers on Pilgrimage '85 last month, organized and led by her son, Father Dave Mura. She wrote to share her experience, not only of the trip, but also of her companions.

Want to have the time of your life?

If you're over 40 and you've never been part of taking 23 teenagers on a trip to Europe, you've missed the experience of a lifetime!

Forty-three of us from the Diocese — 23 teenagers, 10 not-to-long-ago teenagers, nine "people" and one priest went on a 16-day pilgrimage to Italy and France last month.

I have a favorite term for anyone under 30 — "rotten kids." Well, I want to tell you about these 23 "rotten kids." They are thoughtful, devout, gentle, considerate, adaptable, appreciative, kind to each other, respectful to their elders and very loving

people.

We celebrated Mass at the tomb of St. Peter, the catacombs, the North American College, the Basilica in Assisi and the modest hotel we stayed at in Rome. Some of us bathed in the waters at Lourdes and we were among thousands of people from many nations who took part in a magnificent candlelit procession honoring Our Lady of Lourdes. We crowned it all by celebrating Mass in the crypt of Sacre Couer in Paris on the eve of our return.

It was a privilege to spend that time with those kids and see the exchange of respect and love that took place between them and Father Dave, who has worked with them on retreats over the past several years.

Yes, with all that, they are still teenagers. But isn't that what they are supposed to be?

Obituary:

Father Bernard L. Hickey, native of Waverly

Father Bernard L. Hickey, native of Waverly and pastor emeritus of St. Lucie Church, Port St. Lucie, Fla., died of Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS) in Florida on Sunday, Oct. 14.

Father Hickey, born in Binghamton the son of Lawrence Hickey and Virginia Murphy Hickey, attended Waverly public schools, St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's

seminaries. After ordination to the priesthood by Bishop James E. Kearney in Sacred Heart Cathedral on June 7, 1941, Father Hickey served as associate pastor at St. Anthony, Elmira, and subsequently at St. Francis, Auburn and St. Margaret Mary, Rochester.

Father Hickey also served as a Marine Corps chaplain, receiving the Bronze Star with "V" emblem for valor, as well as citations for Marine Corps battle action from the presidents of the United States and Korea.

After his incardination into the Miami Archdiocese, he served as pastor of Port St. Lucie Church, where his Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated this week.

Father Hickey is survived by his brother, Gerald, and sister, Philomena,



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