

# Pope picks Denver as site for youth-day rally

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II announced during Palm Sunday Mass April 12 that he will celebrate World Youth Day 1993 in Denver, Colo., and that he wants the rally to be a "spiritual pilgrimage" for young people worldwide.

The announcement ended weeks of speculation about the site for the event. Other cities under consideration were Buffalo, N.Y., and St. Paul-Minneapolis, Minn.

"I have chosen the city of Denver in the famous Rocky Mountains and in the state of Colorado, which has never been included in my previous apostolic trips," the pope said.

He will spend Aug. 12-15 with participants of the youth day rally, which U.S. church officials hope will attract up to 100,000 people.

Vatican planners would not rule out additional stops on the visit, and sources said the pope may take advantage of the Colorado site to squeeze in a brief mountainside vacation.

Standing on the steps of a sun-drenched St. Peter's Square, the pope said the theme of the youth day celebration would be the life-giving power of the Christian vision.

"In the midst of great historic changes, faced with epochal breakdowns and grave new uncertainties, there is so much need for your emerging strength," the pope told young people.

The pope's announcement was

cheered by three Denver youths attending the Mass, while delegations from Buffalo and St. Paul-Minneapolis downplayed their disappointment.

"Sure, it's too bad he's not coming to Buffalo. But it's still an honor for us that he's coming to the United States," said Amy Robinson of Buffalo.

Said a beaming Phillip Avante of Denver: "I can't believe it. I'm so happy."

As the pope watched from the altar, the group of 12 U.S. youths was handed a large wooden cross from young people of Czestochowa, Poland, where the last youth day rally was held in 1991. The cross will be carried in pilgrimage across the United States dur-

ing the coming year.

The pope's trip will be his third major visit to the United States, but it is expected to be quite different from his cross-country pastoral journeys in 1979 and 1987. The Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Laity wants to keep the focus on the youth-day event and hopes to avoid additional stops.

But one Vatican official involved in trip planning said he did not expect the pope to travel all the way to Denver and then head straight back to Rome. The official said he thought other U.S. bishops would be lobbying for a papal stopover.

Already there is talk of a prerally mini-vacation for the pope in the

Rocky Mountains, where the Denver archdiocese has a retreat house. The 71-year-old pontiff, an avid hiker and onetime skier, usually tries to relax in the mountains over the summer.

Denver was chosen after a lengthy selection process, including visits from Vatican officials and feasibility studies conducted by a committee of U.S. bishops. In the end, the pope and the Vatican received summary evaluations of each city and made their choice.

During a meeting with the U.S. delegation April 11, Vatican officials went out of their way to praise all the finalist sites.

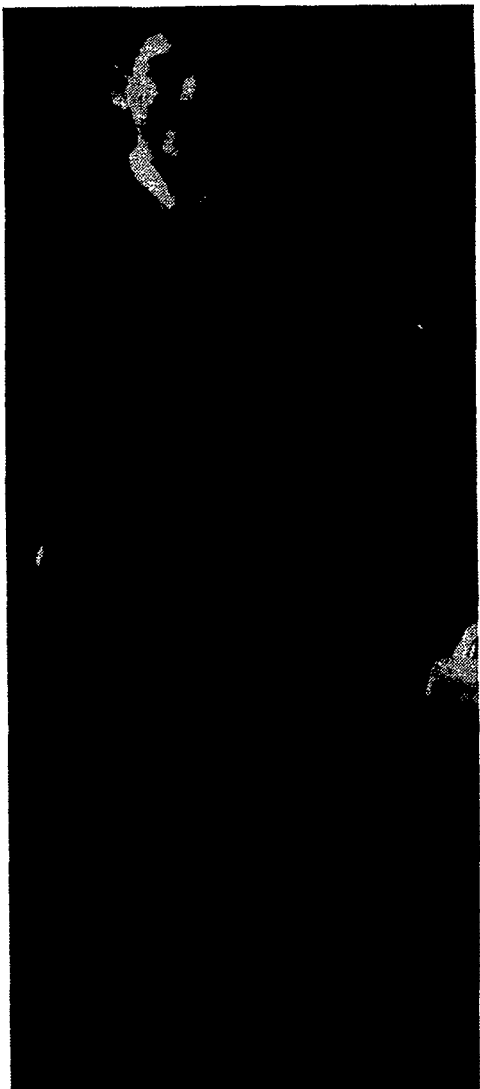
"We couldn't decide which city it should be, because each one was so beautiful and so welcoming. All three cities are very much in our hearts," said Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, president of the laity council.

According to a statement from the U.S. Catholic Conference, Denver's strengths were that it "understands the tremendous potential" a papal visit offers for evangelization; its convenient facilities; its attractive location to U.S. Hispanic communities and Central America; because as a mountain state it "conveys the image of youth and vitality"; and because the pope has never visited the Rocky Mountain region.

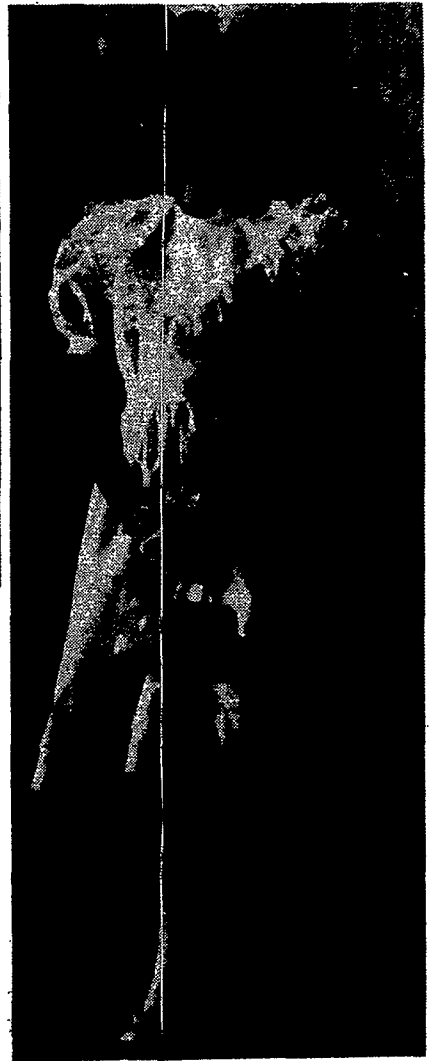
Vatican officials said they wanted to hold the 1993 youth-day meeting away from Europe and in other than Italian- and Spanish-speaking countries. In addition to Poland, previous meeting sites have included Argentina, Italy and Spain.



AP/Wide World Photos  
**MEXICAN POLLUTION** — During Mexico City's April 1 pollution emergency, Maria Glavan gives her daughter, Judith, a goodbye kiss through a surgical mask. The child attends school in the San Pedro Barrientos neighborhood, a block away from what the government calls the worst polluting plant in the valley of Mexico.



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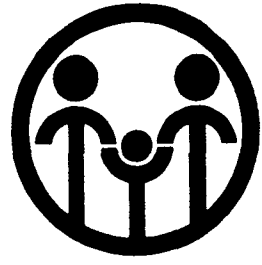
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