

# Creativity pays off for World Youth Day teens

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

People spent 15 straight hours on the dance floor at one parish.

The practice of sponsoring a church festival was rejuvenated at another.

And there is even a pastor who has vowed to kiss a cow.

These unique and sometimes bizarre events are happening as the result of fundraising efforts in various parts of the diocese. Although the approaches are radically different, the cause is the same: sending parish teenagers to World Youth Day.

The gathering is being held Aug. 11-15 in Denver. Highlighting World Youth Day activities is a scheduled appearance by Pope John Paul II.

According to Michael Theisen, diocesan youth coordinator, approximately 500 youths and chaperones from the Rochester diocese are scheduled to be part of the celebration. The event is expected to draw a record crowd of more than 200,000 people, the great majority of which are youth and young adults. This is the first time that the event, begun in 1985 and held every two years, is taking place in the United States.

Although this week of fellowship is a unique opportunity, it is also costly for diocesan youths. Approximate travel and accommodation expenses for a package offered through the diocese totals \$650.

A large number of parishes have tapped their creative juices to overcome the big price tag.

A dance marathon last weekend at St. Louis Church, 60 S. Main St., Pittsford, served a dual purpose. Not only were the proceeds put toward World Youth Day, but they also will be donated to St. Louis' sister parish of St. Bridget's, 175 St. Bridget's Drive, Rochester.

"This kind of brings about the



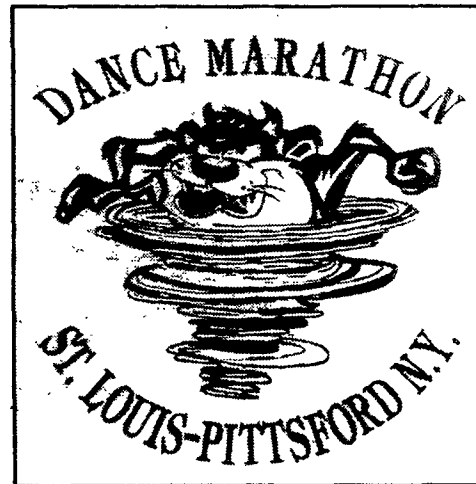
S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
**Renata Berno takes a breather during a May 8 dance marathon at Pittsford's St. Louis Church. The event helped raise money to send youths to World Youth Day in Denver.**

evangelization between our parishes. Now the kids will be taking that evangelization to Denver," noted Carmen Quinones, St. Louis' youth minister.

In Caledonia, a recent May Day festival was held to benefit World Youth Day participants from St. Columba Church, 198 North St. Parish youth coordinator Julie Flanagan noted that this was the first parish festival "in a number of years."

Perhaps the most humorous fundraiser is occurring at St. Patrick's Church, 97 W. Bayard St., Seneca Falls. Father David N. Gramkee and two parishioners have solicited World Youth Day donations by promising to plant their lips on some unsuspecting cow within the next few weeks.

Father Gramkee actually thought up the "Kiss a Cow" idea, admitting, "I'm not known for doing what other peo-



In addition to helping send St. Louis youths to Denver, proceeds from the sale of T-shirts with the dance marathon's logo will assist St. Louis' sister parish of St. Bridget in Rochester.

ple normally do."

At the Church of St. Mary Our Mother, 816 W. Broad St., Horseheads, a slew of money-raising efforts are taking place.

Lisa Wheeler, who will act as a chaperone for the parish's youth contingent in Denver, reported that \$1,000 was recently raised at a rummage sale. She also listed the sale of candy, raffle tickets and Avon products, a car wash and house-painting as other means for making it to Denver.

Although Wheeler noted that the fundraising events have been fun, they've also proven to be rather exhausting.

"We definitely are not going to be doing this every year, that's for sure," she laughed.

The youth group from St. Mary of the Assumption Church, 99 Main St., Scottsville, has organized a theme auction for May 22 at the church. Youth coordinator Theresa Fantone noted that warm-weather items will be auctioned during the "Day at the Beach" portion, and overnight-hotel packages along with sporting-event tickets will be up for grabs during the "Entertainment Tonight" segment.

While fun has been a prevailing theme at many of these diocesan events, Fantone is also keeping in sight the long-term spiritual benefits of the entire fundraising process.

"(World Youth Day) becomes another element of faith development for our youth. We're forming a base for years to come," Fantone commented.

Flanagan agreed, saying, "This isn't about taking a trip. It's about growing closer to God."

**EDITORS' NOTE:** Applications are still being accepted for those people wishing to travel with the diocesan contingent to World Youth Day. A limited number of packages remain. Those interested should call Theisen at 716/328-3210, ext. 241.

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