

Pontiff

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Most of those attending the Saturday service — including approximately 600 youths and adults from the Rochester diocese — remained in the park to sleep overnight. Several thousand World Youth Day participants began this weekend vigil by making a 14-mile pilgrimage on Saturday from downtown Denver to the park, located on the city's outskirts.

The events at Cherry Creek were preceded by three days of extensive World Youth Day activities for the 170,000 officially registered youths. Many of the events featured appearances by the pope.

In a welcoming ceremony at Denver's Mile High Stadium on the evening of Aug. 12, the pontiff greeted 90,000 wildly cheering people in a multitude of languages.

He arrived at the stadium via helicopter, directly from a private conference with Clinton at Jesuit-run Regis University in Denver. The two leaders' discussion, which lasted nearly an hour, touched upon such troubled areas as Bosnia and the Middle East.

However, in contrast to the reports about the amicable nature of this conversation, the pope was more blunt in his remarks during his first-ever meeting with Clinton at Denver's Stapleton International Airport earlier that afternoon.

Clinton thanked the pope for coming to the "historical gathering of young people from around the world" and told him that all Americans are grateful for his moral leadership.

While the president's speech steered clear of controversy, the pope did not attempt to mask his disdain for Clinton's support of abortion rights and birth control.

"If you want equal justice for all, and true freedom and lasting peace, then, America, defend life. All the great causes that are yours today will have meaning only to the extent that you guarantee the right to life and protect the human person," the pope told the airport gathering as Clinton stood behind him. The pontiff was quoting from a 1987 speech he had made at the end of his last previous U.S. stay.

In addition to the scheduled meeting with Clinton, Pope John Paul closed out his trip to Denver by meeting unexpectedly for 25 minutes with U.S. Vice President Albert Gore at Stapleton Airport Aug. 15. He thanked Gore, who saw him off after their private meeting at the airport.

Upon his departure from Denver, the pope urged the United States to use its freedom "to cherish and support, with all your strength and capacity, the dignity of every human person."

He sounded a final, broad note for life as he prepared to wing back to Italy.

"The culture of life means respect for nature and protection of God's work of creation," Pope John Paul said.

"In a special way, it means respect for human life from the moment of conception until its natural end."

It means serving the poor, the underprivileged and the oppressed, he said, and thanking God daily "for his gift of life."

This marked the first time that a World Youth Day has been held in the United States. The pope, who established these celebrations in 1985 and has attended each gathering, announced at his Aug. 15 Mass that the next World Youth Day will take place in 1995 in Manila, Philippines.

In addition to functions with Pope John Paul, youths from around the world enjoyed last week by greeting

each other in the Denver streets and filling the Rocky Mountain air with boisterous chants, cheers and songs.

Still, despite the wide range of activity comprising World Youth Day, it was unquestionably the pope's grace and charisma which made the most lasting impressions.

During the Aug. 15 Mass, many were moved to tears in the limited group which received the sign of peace and holy Eucharist from the pope.

Jennifer Curatolo, who represented the Rochester diocese in a 500-member contingent which greeted the pope at Stapleton Airport on Aug. 12, recalled the reaction of a fellow delegate that day.

"He said the pope touched his cheek, and he fell backwards and almost fainted," said the 15-year-old Curatolo, a parishioner at Spencerport's St. John the Evangelist Church.

EDITORS' NOTE: Next week's issue will feature more of Mike Latona's stories and pictures from World Youth Day.



AP/Wide World Photos

Mass in Mexico

Pope John Paul II waves to a crowd of nearly one million people during an Aug. 11 Mass in Merida, Mexico, one day before he embarked on his third visit to the United States to celebrate World Youth Day '93.

Black Catholics meet to fete contributions

By Roy J. Horner
Catholic News Service

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Some 250 African-American church people gathered in Louisville July 25-31 to celebrate their blackness, Catholicity and contributions to the church on the 25th anniversary of the founding of two black Catholic organizations.

Several bishops and scores of priests, women religious, seminarians, permanent deacons and deacons' wives attended the joint conference of the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, the National Black Sisters' Conference and the National Black Catholic Seminarians Association. The clergy caucus and sisters' conference both were founded 25 years ago.

Conference delegates represented education, parish work, youth ministry, inner-city outreach and various other church ministries.

"This is almost for us like a homecoming," said Father Don Sterling, clergy caucus president, who is from the Baltimore archdiocese. "This is the one opportunity when nationally we come together on an annual basis, which makes it less work and more of a celebration for us."

"It's a time of growth and trying to renew our faith and togetherness that we teach," said Blessed Sacrament Sister Amedee Maxwell, a Louisville native who has been at Xavier University in New Orleans but is leaving to work with Haitian refugees in Florida.

"It's a time to share the gifts that we have and also to hear the needs of the people, make sure we are tuned to the needs of the people in various ministries," she added.

Many of the black priests, sisters, seminarians and deacon couples in the United States feel they are alone in their respective dioceses, said Monsignor Wallace Harris, pastor of a parish in central Harlem in the New York archdiocese.

Each organization was to handle initial business items and issues separately, with a joint agenda and possible joint resolutions expected later in the meeting.

"Visioning the future" was one item of business that all three groups considered, said Blessed Sacrament Sister Beatrice Jeffries, also from Xavier University in New Orleans.

She said issues for the sisters' conference included formation, the black family, education of the black child and financial needs of Catholic schools.

One business item completed early in the conference was creation of a new National Association of African-American Catholic Deacons. Deacon Frederick Mason of the Chicago archdiocese was elected president of the association. Deacon John W. Holmes of Rochester was elected secretary. Both are two-year terms.

Previously, the approximately 400 African-American deacons were included in the National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus, said Deacon Mason, who was already serving as the diocesan representative on the caucus board.

Deacon Mason said the association's goals are to "collaborate with the leadership" of the church and the African-American Catholic community.

"Our particular charism is to promote the African-American family and particularly the African-American male" as a role model, he added.

MISSION NEWS

When a devastating earthquake, and the towering, raging waves that came with it, struck the island of Flores, the most Catholic island in predominantly Muslim Indonesia, this past December, an estimated 2,500 people were killed and churches, seminaries, clinics and schools destroyed. An American missionary

priest serving there told of a village where not a single house remained standing. "But the first thing the people wanted from their bishop," recalled Father Sepp

Hollweck, S.V.D., "were not relief supplies, but a cross, a picture of Our Lady and a book to use for Services of the Word when a priest cannot be present." They wanted what was needed to celebrate Christmas.



Chapel at Ende, Indonesia, after the earthquake

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