

# Pope attracts millions to Manila

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

MANILA, Philippines — Despite his halting steps, a playful Pope John Paul II seemed to find new energy as well as new uses for his cane during a five-day stay in the Philippines.

At the Jan. 14 prayer vigil for World Youth Day, the pope used the cane to wave to the more than 1 million young people stretched far beyond his sight.

He conducted a song with the silver-handled cane, then began twirling it to the delight of the teens.

The main focus of the pope's Jan. 12-16 Manila stay was the young people and their mission in the world, but the visit also included a special message broadcast to Catholics in China and praise for the faith of Filipinos, 83 percent of whom are Catholic.

The faith of Filipinos and the popularity of Pope John Paul combined to set a record for crowd size at a papal event. Police estimated up to 4 million people gathered for the Jan. 15 Mass closing World Youth Day.

The densely packed crowd forced Philippine officials to fly the pope by helicopter to the Mass instead of having him ride in a popemobile the two miles from the apostolic nunciature.

With hundreds of thousands of people lining the streets of the papal motorcades and the very spontaneous mood of Pope John Paul, security quickly became a major concern.

When the pope waded into a crowd of child dancers at the airport arrival ceremony, "there was chaos, but it was a healthy chaos," said Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the papal spokesman.

He said Jan. 14 that the Philippine government had informed the Vatican about reports of threats against the pope's life during the visit.

"But the Philippine authorities have not asked us to make changes in the Holy Father's schedule," he said. And, "he will not stop his close contacts with people."

Earlier, Navarro-Valls denied news reports that the Vatican had furnished the government with a list of 109 names of foreigners who might try to enter the country to disrupt the trip.



AP/Wide World Photos

Pope John Paul II holds up a native hat as he greets the crowd upon his arrival in Manila, Philippines.

The pope made no allusions to the security issues, but he did admit he was aging.

When young people at the vigil started chanting "Lolek," his childhood Polish nickname, the pope told them, "Lolek was a child; John Paul II is an old man."

The youths' groans showed they did not agree, so the pope said, "just call me Karol," explaining his given name was what people called him once he became a young man.

In another departure from his prepared text, the pope announced the 1997 world youth gathering would be in Paris — an announcement he was expected to make the following day.

After an aide whispered something in his ear, the pope said, "Oh, I have revealed a top secret."

In his first meeting with the youths Jan. 13, the pope said young Catholics have a responsibility to join "the church's never-ending mission to proclaim the Gospel of salvation to the ends of the earth."

At the vigil he said they must face "the challenge of having a purpose, a destiny and of striving for it."

He urged them to reject the "false teachers" in science, culture and the media who try to convince them there is no definite truth and no sure path to happiness.

All are called to "the vocation of love," he said, love of God and one's neighbors shown in solidarity and in sharing with others the good news of God's love.

During his Jan. 15 Mass homily, the pope asked young people to work to close the generation gap and help heal the "immense frustration and suffering" found in many families.

"I am asking you to build bridges of dialogue and communication with your parents," he said.

"Be a healthy influence on society to help break down the barriers which have been raised between generations," the pope said.

"Be a sign of hope for the church, for your countries and all humanity," he told them. "May your light spread out from Manila to the farthest corners of the world."

## Denver trip spurred Livonia teen's faith

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

LIVONIA — With his appearance in the Philippines this past week, Pope John Paul II again used World Youth Day as a direct way of reaching millions of young Catholics.

As one diocesan teenager realized two summers ago, this personalized approach can have far-reaching effects on one's faith journey.

Brian Beecher, a parishioner at St. Joseph's Church, 14 Washington St., attended World Youth Day in August of 1993. Brian and his sisters, Becky and Winanne, were among a 15-member contingent from St. Joseph's which journeyed to Denver, Colo., along with approximately 600 other diocesan Catholics as World Youth Day was held in the United States for the first time.

"I wasn't active in youth group before then. Now I go to youth group, have been on retreats and have been more active in the church," said Brian, 16, a junior at McQuaid Jesuit High School.

One of Brian's most vivid memories was being present in Mile High Stadium when he saw the pope for the first time.

"When I watched him come in, it hit me — this is actually the pope, not someone you see on TV or in the newspaper," Brian recalled.

The Mile High experience was also special for Therese Mack, who had recently been hired as St. Joseph Church's

youth minister and was on her very first outing with the parish youth group.

"I could see the bonds forming together when we were waiting for the pope to arrive," said Mack. During the pope's address, "everybody had their arms around each other. I just felt really, really close to them — we had this common bond."

Another unique experience for the youth group occurred two days later when members walked two miles to Cherry Creek Park to participate in an overnight vigil with hundreds of thousands of other youths from around the world. This event was followed by a concluding Mass celebrated by the pope the next morning.

"We were just going around at 1 a.m. and meeting people from all over the

country," Brian recalled.

Brian added that the pope's dedication to holding World Youth Day every two years is crucial in keeping teens active in their Catholic faith.

"I'm really glad that he comes; it's really important. There are a lot of old people and really young people involved in the church, but not too many teens," Brian commented.

Mack acknowledged that the World Youth Day experience remained with her youth group long after they returned to Livonia. In October of 1993, on World Youth Sunday, the teens gave profound accounts of their Denver experiences to the adult parishioners at St. Joseph's Church.

"You could just feel a really deep sense of faith and sharing," Mack said.

## Penfield girl to be featured on national TV

PENFIELD — Stories in the *Catholic Courier* reach all corners of the Rochester diocese.

Leah Tarantino's story, on the other hand, will be seen all over the country this coming Saturday, Jan. 21.

Not bad for someone who's only in the fifth grade!

Leah, a student at St. Joseph's School, 39 Gebhardt Road, will be featured on *U to U*, a weekly children's program on the Nickelodeon cable network. The show is scheduled to air at 6 p.m. Sat-

urday.

A story which Leah wrote back in the third grade, titled "The Neon Witch," was sent to Nickelodeon last fall after Leah saw an advertisement asking for contributions to the program. Her tale, based on a witch who dresses differently from those around her and is subsequently rejected, will be acted out with clay objects. A Nickelodeon interview with Leah will also be included in the upcoming segment.

## Extra Credit!

Ten recent Bishop Kearney High School graduates were named AP Scholars in recognition of their results on Advanced Placement examinations last spring.

AP Scholar with Honor winners were Monica Bradbury, Terri Denchey, Michael Johnson, Keith Wandtke and Anne Wolpiuk. They all earned grades of 3.0 or above on four or more AP exams, with an average grade of at least 3.25.

AP Scholar recipients were Joanna Coyle, Bethany Davis, Holly Freitas, Michelle Gorski and Laura Stockslader. They completed three or more exams with average grades of at least 3.0.

Two graduates of Nazareth Academy also received AP Scholar recognition: Caren Barth, who achieved AP Scholar with Honor status; and Catherine Camille, who was named an AP Scholar.

In addition, James Stevens, currently a senior at Aquinas Institute, has already qualified for an AP Scholar award.

BK's "Master Minds" group recently defeated Irondequoit High School in the Catholic high school's debut match.

This competition among Rochester-area schools combines the games of Trivial Pursuit, Jeopardy and College Bowl. BK's first-year squad is coached by Paul Coppini and includes seniors Liz DeMatteis, Becky Adams, Bernie Smith, Dave Jones, Mike DeWind and Armand Widjaja; and juniors Mike Blinn and Jeff Dooley.

Aquinas Institute displayed high participation in the American Red Cross Fall Blood Drive.

Forty-eight AQ students donated 53 pints of blood. This puts the school on a pace to surpass last year's total of 95 pints donated, with the spring blood drive still to come.

Holy Cross School in Rochester raised approximately \$16,000 from its marathon held in October.

Students, faculty and staff raised donations from parents, families, and other sponsors in the Charlotte area. Proceeds will be used for a tuition fund as well as field trips and classroom supplies.

St. Mary's School in Waterloo also conducted an October marathon, raising \$6,500. Several awards were given for top student fundraisers in various grade levels:

Pre-K — Ashley Spina, Michael Dendis, Jeffrey Wadhams, Stephanie Luce, Elena Augustus, Eric Coryell, Amanda Constable, Joshua Cahill, Todd Smith.

Grades K-3 — Jessica Bruce, Andy Riegel, Shannon Markel, Samantha Smith, Lindsey Luce.

Grades 4-8 — Kelly O'Connor, James Skinner, Daniel Muller, Andrea Morganti, Brooke Beniamino.

First-place class finishers were the St. Mary's first grade in the "Little Marathon" (grades K-3); and the eighth-grade class in the "Big Marathon" (grades 4-8).

AQ's student body held a food drive which provided Thanksgiving meals for 15 families.

This drive was sponsored by the school's 62-student Peer Ministry Program. Peer ministers encouraged donations from the students, and they also delivered the collected items to each family.