

WORLD & NATION

Pope: Toronto is site for World Youth Day 2002

By **Benedicta Cipolla**
Catholic News Service

ROME — As Pope John Paul II drew World Youth Day 2000 to a clamorous close in Rome, he announced the next site for the biannual gathering would be in Toronto, Ontario, in 2002.

"Right from now I invite the young people of the world to set out for Toronto," the pope told a 2-million-strong crowd that convened on a university campus on Rome's outskirts for the climax of this year's youth day observance.

"I offer a special greeting to the Canadian delegation, who wanted to be here at this celebration to accept the task which will be theirs," he said Aug. 20 as Canadian flags began waving furiously.

One homemade flag bore a chalice and communion host in the center of the pope's maple-leaf symbol, with the slogan "The Cup is Coming to Canada" written above.

"I feel like a kid with a new toy," Cardinal Anselmo M. Ambrozic of Toronto said in a televised meeting with the press that included a live audio link-up with journalists in Toronto.

"One anticipates the toy for a while, but one is still uncertain until it's given to him," said the cardinal, who was part of Canada's delegation to Rome.

While Toronto's name was widely expected for more than a year as the host of the next World Youth Day, the Vatican's decision was made official only Aug. 20 with the pope's announcement.

Cardinal Ambrozic said the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which oversees World Youth Day celebrations, chose Toronto based on a bid submitted by

Canadian church officials.

He said the final word, however, rested with the pope.

Noting that Toronto is a "highly secularized city," Cardinal Ambrozic said Canada as a whole would "do well to be exposed to ... hundreds of thousands of young people who are enthusiastic about God."

Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, national director of Canada's World Youth Day 2002 council, listed Toronto's Exhibition Place and Downsview Air Force Base as two potential venues for events.

After spending two months in Rome studying Italian plans for World Youth Day 2000 and calling the experience "dazzling, daunting (and) frightening," Father Rosica said he would return home refocused.

"If I thought I was able to think big before, I have to think much, much bigger right now," he said. Father Rosica, a graduate of Aquinas Institute and St. John Fisher College in Rochester, was ordained by Bishop Matthew H. Clark in 1986 at his home parish, St. Ambrose, Rochester.

At a news conference in Toronto, Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Meagher of Toronto, president of the bishops' World Youth Day 2002 council, said a theme for World Youth Day 2002 will probably be "commitment" and what this means to human friendship, love, family, peace, justice, the environment and, above all, faith and trust in God.

He added, it is hoped that the event will have "a distinctive Canadian flavor and spirit and will also reflect Pope John Paul's wish that the Catholic Church of Canada, the United States, Central and South America show its basic solidarity as the church of America."



CNS

A World Youth Day pilgrim sits behind a barricade listening to Pope John Paul II address more than 2 million young people at an evening prayer vigil on the outskirts of Rome Aug. 19.

New study shows promise for use of adult stem cells

By **Nancy Frazier O'Brien**
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — An official of the U.S. bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities hailed newly published research on adult stem cells as further proof that experimentation involving discarded embryos and aborted fetuses is unnecessary.

Richard M. Doerflinger, associate director for policy development in the pro-life office, said the information published Aug. 15 in the *Journal of Neuroscience Research* is "the latest in a long line of studies that show that adult stem cells are far more promising than once thought."

"This confirms that embryonic stem cell research is unnecessary, besides being unethical," he added.

The study described efforts to convert rat and human adult bone marrow stem cells into neuron cells that could be used to treat patients with Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease and spinal cord injuries.

Dr. Ira Black, chairman of the department of neuroscience and cell biology at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in Piscataway, N.J., told *The New York Times* that the cells changed "over the course literally of minutes ... from rather pedestrian, flat, undistinguished stem cells into absolutely typical neuron-looking cells."

Black's collaborators in the study included Dale Woodbury of the neuroscience department at the New Jersey university and Emily J. Schwarz and Darwin J. Prockop of Medical College of Pennsylvania Hahnemann University in Philadelphia.

The report in the neuroscience journal said adult bone marrow cells "may constitute an abundant and accessible cellular reservoir for the treatment of a variety of

neurologic diseases."

In addition, the researchers said, transplantation involving one's own stem cells "overcomes the ethical and immunologic concerns associated with the use of fetal tissue."

Doerflinger said he found it particularly interesting that the research was funded in part by a grant from the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation. At an April 26 hearing in Congress on the proposed Stem Cell Research Act of 2000, Reeve called for quick approval of the legislation which would permit direct federal funding for research involving the destruction of human embryos.

Reeve, who was paralyzed in a 1995 horseback-riding accident, said in his testimony that "for the true biological miracles," researchers must use embryonic and fetal stem cells, not adult stem cells, which he said were incapable of forming other cell types.

A month before that testimony, Reeve's own foundation's researchers had submitted the article describing success with adult stem cells to the medical journal, Doerflinger noted.

"It's hard to believe those who wrote Mr. Reeve's testimony were not aware of what the foundation's researchers were saying," he said.

"It's another example of politics falsifying science," he added. "Many scientists are committed to opposing any morally based restrictions on their work, and they will twist the scientific evidence to that agenda."

Calling the Black-led study "extremely promising scientifically and medically," Doerflinger said it was an "extra benefit" that the research was released "in time to raise questions about the need for embryonic research" before Congress took action on the Stem Cell Research Act.

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