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Local ties key to World Youth Day

Story by Mike Latona

The Rochester Diocese will have a distinct leadership presence at World Youth Day 2002. That's no small accomplishment for an event that's expected to draw several hundred thousand people to Toronto — including Pope John Paul II.

The local hook begins with Father Thomas Rosica, CSB, who grew up in Rochester's St. Ambrose Parish and attended Aquinas Institute prior to becoming a Basilian priest in 1986. Father Rosica, 42, was appointed in 1999 as national director and chief executive officer for World Youth Day by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Father Rosica has big plans to involve young adults from the Rochester Diocese in this event, a full year before it even begins. Beginning this summer, a select number of young adults will serve internships at the World Youth Day office in Toronto.

Working with the department heads, the interns will gain experience that should prove valuable when they return next summer in leadership roles on a volunteer staff of — get this — 25,000 people.

"They will have known the ropes and we will be relying on them heavily," Father Rosica said of the interns.

Father Rosica said he's inviting volunteers "particularly with the Rochester connection" because of his own ties to the area. They will work alongside young-adult interns from Italy, France, Germany, Lebanon, Canada and the United States.

"The World Youth Day is for young people, by young people. That's something I've been insisting on," Father Rosica said.

World Youth Day will be held in Toronto July 22-28, 2002. This international celebration, which normally occurs every two years, was begun by Pope John Paul in 1985 to unite young Catholics worldwide. Father Rosica said 150 countries are expected to take part next year.

Nora Bradbury-Haehl, diocesan program specialist for youth and young-adult ministry, said she's searching for approximately 10 people to serve internships of at least three weeks — longer, if desired — during the upcoming year. Intern candidates can come from anywhere in the diocese, and must be between the ages of 18 and 35. Applications can be obtained by calling Bradbury-Haehl at 716/328-3210, or 800/388-7177, ext. 218; or e-mailing her at bradbury-haehl@dor.org.

The interns, Bradbury-Haehl emphasized, will be counted on to promote participation in World Youth Day at their own parishes. Additionally, she hopes parish leaders in the diocese will "surface young adults to send to World Youth Day and organize small faith-sharing groups."

Bradbury-Haehl expects 500 to 1,000



Photo courtesy of Father Rosica

Pope John Paul II greets Rochester native Father Thomas Rosica, CSB, in Rome on Palm Sunday, April 8. The two have met several times over World Youth Day.

young adults and older teens from the Rochester Diocese to attend World Youth Day. Approximately 600 traveled to Denver in 1993, the last time World Youth Day took place in North America. Because of Rochester's proximity to Toronto, Bradbury-Haehl said, the numbers will likely be higher this time around.

World Youth Day's target audience has changed, Bradbury-Haehl and Father Rosica noted. Whereas the diocesan contingent in Denver was mostly high-schoolers, the 2002 version is aimed at the 16-to-35 age range. In fact, organizers hesitated at first to allow participants under age 18. Father Rosica explained that World Youth Day 2002 will offer adult-level catechesis as well as "a very strong vocational dimension."

"It's for young adults who very definitely need to hear about Jesus Christ," Father Rosica added. "We offer many wonderful

programs for youth ministry in the United States and Canada, but the group that often slips through the cracks is past high school and college. Young adults in the work force — there's nothing, really, for them."

In addition to the many programs being planned for World Youth Day 2002, participants also hope to be graced by the presence of Pope John Paul. He has attended every World Youth Day thus far, and expects to be in Toronto next summer if health allows. Father Rosica, as part of his duties as chief organizer of World Youth Day, has already traveled to Rome several times in the last two years to confer with the pope.

"He lights up when the subject of World Youth Day comes up," Father Rosica said.

EDITORS' NOTE: Further details about World Youth Day 2002 can be found on the official WYD Web site: www.wyd2002.org.

Events

For information on these events, call the hotline for Odyssey, the diocesan-sponsored young adult network for 20s and 30s, at 716/328-3228, ext. 375 or 1-800-388-7177, ext. 375, or visit the Odyssey Web site at <http://www.ggw.org/odyssey>.

☉ **Saturday, May 26:** Bowling fundraiser for American Diabetes Association at Dewey Garden Lanes, 4470 Dewey Ave., Greece. 7:30 p.m. In memory of Cara Cassata, an Odyssey member who died in January. Open to all ages. Cost is \$8 per person and includes two games of bowling plus shoe rental. There will also be a 50/50 raffle and Chinese Auction.

☉ **June 1-3:** Fourth annual Odyssey Weekend Retreat at Camp Casowasco, south of Auburn. Theme, "Have You Ever Seen the Wind?" explores role of the Holy Spirit and celebrates Pentecost. Fee \$95. Registration deadline May 28.

☉ **Saturday, June 2:** Volunteers needed for Special Olympics at Rochester Institute of Technology, 1 Lomb Memorial Dr., Henrietta. 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

☉ **Saturday, June 16:** Fifth annual Odyssey Summer Picnic. Mendon Ponds Park, Hopkins Point Lodge. 2 to 10 p.m. Activities: volleyball, hiking, softball, board game and music. Late-afternoon prayer service will be followed by dinner. Price is \$10 per person plus a beverage, salad, snack or dessert to pass. Advance registration required by June 10. Volunteers for set-up also requested.

☉ **Thursday June 21:** Dinner at Woody's II, 2758 West Henrietta Road, Brighton. 7 p.m. RSVP by June 20. Dinners are held on the third Thursday of every month.

☉ **Saturday, June 30:** Catamaran cruise on Lake Erie with Quest, Buffalo's diocesan young-adult coalition. 8:15 to 10:15 p.m. Seating limited. Cost \$25.

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