

# WORLD & NATION

## World Youth Day cross will be brought to NYC

By Art Babych  
Catholic News Service

TORONTO — As World Youth Day preparations continue, the cross that symbolizes the six-day event next summer will be taken to ground zero of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York City.

On Feb. 24-25, the pilgrimage cross will be placed for ecumenical services at the site of the World Trade Center, the twin towers leveled after terrorists flew two commercial jetliners into the structures.

Canadian organizers hosted a Jan. 10-13 forum to prepare for World Youth Day, scheduled July 23-28 in Toronto. Some 400 people from 51 countries participated, including U.S. Cardinal J. Francis Stafford, president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity.

Pope John Paul II is expected to preside over events July 26-28, during the final days of World Youth Day activities, including an evening vigil celebration and a closing Mass.

Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, a Rochester native and Canadian national director of World Youth Day, said youth ministers from across New York state will participate in the ground zero services.

Father Rosica said New Yorkers told organizers at a mid-December meeting that the ground zero prayer service was something for which their youth had been hoping.

"There was a great meeting of minds and hearts, and since then something won-

derful is afoot, particularly in the Archdiocese of New York and in areas around New York City," he said.

The four-meter cross has traveled more than 15,000 miles across Canada since it arrived in Ottawa last April. The cross will be carried on foot from Montreal to Toronto in the days before World Youth Day's July 23 opening Mass.

Cardinal Stafford, speaking Jan. 11 at the Toronto forum, said World Youth Day will provide "a great epiphany" for its participants, and young people should heed its message.

The cardinal said young people have become preoccupied with "suffering humanity."

"The lonely teenager in Tampa, Fla., needed to hear some words of friendship and did not hear them. The two isolated young men in Columbine High School in Denver needed to hear these words during World Youth Day in Denver in 1993 and did not hear them," said the cardinal, former archbishop of Denver.

He was referring to the cases of Charles Bishop, 15, who recently committed suicide by flying a small plane into an office tower in Tampa, and to the two youths who, in April 1999, shot and killed 12 fellow classmates and a teacher in a Denver suburb, then turned their guns on themselves.

"The World Youth Day pilgrimage to Toronto will teach young North Americans that the enclosed, isolated, fearful self is not part of human identity," Cardinal



Catholic Press Photo/CNS

## 'I baptize you'

Pope John Paul II smiles at a baby during an annual baptism liturgy in the Sistine Chapel Jan. 13. The pontiff baptized 20 infants from Italy, France, Spain and the United States.

Stafford said.

But World Youth Day organizers expressed concern that registrations, particularly from Canadian youths, are not coming in fast enough.

"Our young people have to register and be part of the catechesis, and right now the registration from Canadians is very, very slow," said Auxiliary Bishop Anthony Meagher of Toronto, who heads the Canadian bishops' World Youth Day committee.

Since Oct. 21, fewer than 80,000 people have registered, and only about 5 percent of them are Canadians.

Bishop Meagher said he was hoping for 500,000 registrations, although he was told that 300,000 was a more realistic figure. Originally, Canadian organizers anticipated 750,000 registrants.

Most of the costs of hosting World Youth Day are paid through registrations,

expected to average about \$200 each.

"Based on registration, finances are not a very happy picture right now," Bishop Meagher said.

At the Vatican Jan. 13, Pope John Paul said he was looking forward to World Youth Day and that he hoped the celebrations in Toronto would match the enthusiasm of the last international youth encounter in Rome.

The pope made his remarks at a Sunday blessing at the Vatican Jan. 13, as he sent greetings to a planning session of bishops and lay leaders meeting in Canada.

"I hope the world youth event in Canada renews the magnificent experience in Rome during the year 2000," he said.

"I am eager to meet you once again in great numbers."

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Includes reporting by John Thavis.

## Top officials to hit retirement age

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The winds of change were blowing at the Vatican early this year — a year in which several leading officials will reach the normal retirement age of 75.

The potential vacancies give Pope John Paul II an opportunity to bring new personalities into his papacy as it proceeds through its 24th year — in March, it will become the sixth longest pontificate in history.

At stake are top positions in Vatican agencies that deal with doctrine, liturgy and sacraments, religious orders, Vatican investments and the Vatican City State.

The current secretary of state, Italian Cardinal Angelo Sodano, also turns 75 in November, raising the possibility that his 10-year tenure may come to an end. His job is considered by many as the second-most powerful position in the church.

The pope, who turns 82 in May, often has allowed his top aides to continue in office past their 75th birthday, and there is nothing to prevent him from doing so

again. But several of the officials quietly have made it clear that they are ready to leave their Vatican assignments.

The retirement rumors have centered on, for one, German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith since 1981, who will be 75 in April. He has said he would like to dedicate his remaining years to theological scholarship, but has also emphasized that the decision is up to the pope.

Also being discussed are Spanish Cardinal Eduardo Martínez Somalo, head of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life; Chilean Cardinal Jorge Medina Estvez, head of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments since 1998; Italian Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, who heads the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, which deals with investment and other financial affairs; and U.S. Cardinal Edmund C. Szoka, since 1997 president of the commission that governs the Vatican City State.

## Sex abuse norms affect order priests

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The Vatican's new norms dealing with clergy sex abuse of minors are not expected to be applied in cases of U.S. diocesan priests, but will be used if the accusation involves a U.S. religious-order priest, an informed Vatican source said.

If finalized, that decision means that most U.S. cases of clergy sex abuse against minors would continue to be handled without direct Vatican oversight under previously approved procedures.

"In the United States, the new norms will be valid for all religious priests, and not diocesan priests, who will continue to

be regulated by a special law approved earlier," the source said Jan. 11.

The Vatican recently published an apostolic letter from Pope John Paul II announcing that the church's handling of several "graver crimes," including sex abuse of minors by priests, would now fall under the authority of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Civil law deals with the crime separately.

The new norms, which were not published, called for local bishops to report all probable cases of such abuse to the Vatican's doctrinal congregation.

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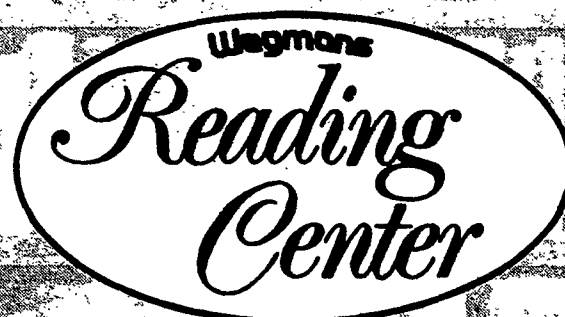
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