

NEWS

Deadline is March 1 for World Youth Day

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

World Youth Day 2002 — which is expected to include the participation of Pope John Paul II — will be right in the Diocese of Rochester's backyard, relatively speaking, when it comes to Toronto July 18-28.

Yet in spite of its proximity and the fact that it's still a few months away, prospective participants must act by March 1 to join the diocesan contingent traveling to the event by bus.

Nora Bradbury-Haehl, diocesan program specialist for young adult ministry, said that registrations must be turned in early in order to secure bus transportation. She urges anyone considering World Youth Day to attend the last in a series of informational meetings on Tuesday, Feb. 26, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at St. Thomas More Church, 2617 East Ave., Brighton. Bradbury-Haehl said the meeting is designed "to give people the information they need to decide if they're going to go."

The diocesan pilgrimages are broken down into two parts: one for young adults (ages 18-39) and another for high school-aged youths (must have completed eighth grade). Bradbury-Haehl is coordinating the young-adult pilgrimage, which offers four different travel options from July 18-29. For teens, Michael Theisen, diocesan director of youth ministry, is coordinating a one-night pilgrimage July 27-28.

Bradbury-Haehl suggested that people who cannot attend the Feb. 26 meeting check with their parish leaders to see if a group is being formed to attend World Youth Day. Details can also be obtained by clicking on the WYD2002 icon on the diocesan Web site (www.dor.org) or by calling 585/328-3210, ext. 279, or 1-800-388-7177, ext. 279 (outside Monroe County). Interested parties may also e-mail to bradbury-haehl@dor.org or theisen@dor.org.

Acknowledging that it's still too early for many people to commit to attending, Bradbury-Haehl suggested that parishes reserve spaces before March 1 — assuming the financial obligation at that point — and de-



side later how to fill those spots. She said she is also asking every diocesan parish to sponsor two young adults.

Bradbury-Haehl emphasized that people who don't make the March 1 cutoff can still register through the World Youth Day offices, but would have to secure their own transportation and lodgings. The WYD Web site is www.wyd2002.org.

World Youth Day 2002 will mark the event's first return to North America since 1993, when it took place in Denver. Pope John Paul began World Youth Day in 1984, calling for an annual worldwide observance of this day along with an international gathering such as the one in Toronto approximately every two years.

Events will include workshops; an array of service projects aiding the sick and poor in the Toronto area; a large reconciliation service; and several Masses, including a closing outdoor liturgy with the pope July 28.

Thus far, Bradbury-Haehl said, she has received "lots of questions, lots of interest" about attending World Youth Day from parishes, campus ministries, young-adult groups and individuals.

World Youth Day 1993 drew 600 participants from the Diocese of Rochester to Denver and was seen as a galvanizing force for teenage youth ministry in this diocese. This summer, the diocese's focus will be on young adults ages 18 (or high-school graduate) to 39. Bradbury-Haehl explained that World Youth Day has always been intended for this age group, but that the minimum age was lowered in 1993 at the request of the U.S. bishops. She also noted that World Youth Day sets the upper age limit at 35, but she is expanding that limit because young-adult offerings in this diocese go up to age 39.

Bradbury-Haehl said the diocese is planning a number of activities, such as faith-sharing sessions, for diocesan registrants in the months leading up to World Youth Day.

"It's not just about that day. The work we do prior to the pilgrimage is crucial," Bradbury-Haehl said.

Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, World Youth Day's chief executive officer, said he has met several times with Pope John Paul II and that the pontiff repeatedly has assured him that he plans to be in Toronto.

Father Rosica — a native of Rochester — estimates that World Youth Day will draw nearly 500,000 registered pilgrims from 150 countries and terms it the largest event in Canada's history.



Reuters/CNS

A new bride looks away after she and her husband were blessed by Pope John Paul II during his general audience Jan. 30 at the Vatican. Earlier in the week, the pope asked Catholic lawyers to avoid taking divorce cases.

Pope's comments draw outcry

By John Norton
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — For years, Pope John Paul II has urged Catholic professionals to reject involvement in practices — most notably, abortion — that are contrary to church teaching.

But when he said in January that Catholic civil lawyers must refuse to take divorce cases, he sparked an unusually vociferous public outcry, even drawing accusations in Italy that he was no different from Afghanistan's former Islamic Taliban leaders.

The controversy apparently caught Vatican and Italian church officials by surprise. In interviews they emphasized that the pope was not adding anything to church teaching and that his words were more a "call to conscience" about the importance of marriage's permanence than specific instructions on how lawyers should go about their work.

"In this case, he is speaking to the moral conscience of people," said Joaquin Navarro-Valls, papal spokesman. "It's obvious. He is not imposing a juridical law."

The pope made his remarks Jan. 28 in two paragraphs of a four-page annual speech to the Roman Rota, a Vatican tribunal that handles marriage annulment appeals.

In the text, he called divorce a plague that had devastating consequences for society. He said marriage was a fundamental building block of society and was indissoluble by definition and by God's plan.

Catholic judges and lawyers, he said, "must avoid being personally involved in anything that might imply cooperation

with divorce."

While judges might find it impossible not to take divorce cases, "lawyers, as independent professionals, must always decline the use of their profession for an end that is counter to justice, like divorce," he said.

But, he added, some divorce cases are not off-limits. Lawyers may "collaborate in such an activity when it, in the client's intent, is not aimed at the breaking of the marriage, but to other legitimate effects."

According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, separated couples are permitted to obtain a civil divorce if it is "the only possible way of ensuring certain legal rights, the care of the children, or the protection of inheritance." For the church, the civil divorce does not break the marriage bond. So while divorced Catholics remain in good standing, they are not free to remarry.

Given his immediate audience — church law officials whose working language is Latin — the pope didn't need to fill in the blanks between his blanket condemnation of divorce and the church's acceptance of it in certain circumstances. But the distinction was lost in much of the reporting on the speech.

Nor, said Navarro-Valls, was it unusual that the pope did not balance his condemnation with the pastoral concern he has expressed on numerous other occasions for people who divorce or separate.

"Here he is talking about the problem's legal aspect, which is different" from its pastoral implications, the spokesman said.

Navarro-Valls also said the pope's request to lawyers could not be compared

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