

# Young adults

## World Youth Day attendees commissioned

**T**ina McAuliffe, 29, had to go all the way to Colorado before deciding to travel to Toronto for World Youth Day, July 22-28.

In 1993, McAuliffe, currently a parishioner at St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Churchville, attended World Youth Day in Denver, and the experience made her want to go to another international Catholic event. The Toronto event is expected to draw more than a quarter-million people from 150 countries, and is designed primarily for young adults.

"One of the biggest things I got from Denver was the awesome range of nationalities and cultures all worshipping in the same space," she said. "Sometimes in life we get stuck in our spheres of influence. When you get there among thousands of people, you realize that we could be a strong moving force in the world."

McAuliffe was one of 27 young adults who attended a diocesan-sponsored commissioning celebration at Rochester's Crowne Plaza Hotel June 8. About 150 young adults from the Diocese of Rochester are expected to attend a week's worth of events at World Youth Day, according to Nora Bradbury-Haehl, diocesan coordinator for young-adult ministry. In addition, about 1,000 teenagers are expected to participate in a World Youth Day weekend retreat.

The commissioning ceremony consisted of prayers, discussions and singing by the young adults. They also received "pilgrimage crosses" or necklaces to wear in Toronto.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark joined the young adults at the Crowne Plaza Hotel to bless them as they prepared for a visit from the Bishop of Rome, Pope John Paul II. Despite the pope's frail health, the Vatican has stated he is determined to make it to Toronto for World Youth Day.

"The pope is just such an inspiring preacher," said McAuliffe, who



Shannon Loughlin of the Newman Catholic Community at SUNY Geneseo puts a pilgrim cross around the neck of Bishop Matthew H. Clark during the June 8 commissioning celebration for diocesan World Youth Day participants.

STORY BY ROB CULLIVAN

pursuing a master's degree in divinity at St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry in Rochester. "He just makes you want to come alive in faith."

Pat McAuliffe, 30, said he wanted to go to World Youth Day because it was a good chance to renew a lot of stuff, and because it was "just across the pond." Lake Ontario.

"It's a good opportunity to take a break from everything that's going on and just get refreshed," he added.

Nick DeLuce, 19, a parishioner at Holy Cross Parish in Charlotte, also

hopes to experience different cultures by going to World Youth Day. A volunteer in his parish's religious-education program, he added that he also can't wait to "actually see Toronto."

Ladlene Rasquinha, 21, a parishioner at St. Anne's Parish in Rochester, is a senior at the University of Buffalo. Majoring in science, Rasquinha said many of her peers in the science program are skeptical of religious belief, and she said that she hopes to find some answers in Toronto to her own questions about her Catholic beliefs.

"I think it will give me a chance to learn more about who I am, and where my faith is in the community," she said. She added that World Youth Day is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the pope.

"He's just such a world figure, what he's doing and what he's stood up to," she said, explaining her admiration.

Lynette DeJesus, 29, diocesan coordinator for urban youth ministry, gave a presentation at the ceremony. She likened the experience the young adults will have in Toronto to the experience the disciples had on the road to Emmaus when they encountered the risen Jesus. She noted that everything that seemed senseless made sense to the disciples when Jesus explained it to them, even the terrible events of his crucifixion.

"In which one of these people are you going to recognize Jesus?" she asked rhetorically, as she looked around at the participants.

Bishop Clark said that since the Second Vatican Council, the church has emphasized its status as a pilgrim, adding that attending World Youth Day is another in the many pilgrimages Christians have taken over the centuries to bolster their faith. Like DeJesus, he urged the young adults to make an effort to become more aware of their faith lives as they prepare for and go to Toronto.

"It's one thing to live life, to go through the actions of life," he said. "It's another thing to understand them."

Anne Kidera, youth minister at Good Shepherd in Henrietta, concluded the day by noting that Toronto was going to be a "mountaintop experience," but that participants would eventually have to come back to their communities and share what they had experienced.

"We can get our energy from this mountaintop experience to fuel us to be the ordinary experience of God for the people we meet in our lives," she said.

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