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Diocesan young-adult pilgrims hit the highway for Toronto

HENRIETTA — Aristotle Escuera had the right church but the wrong road. Tim Santo had the right road but the wrong church.

Nevertheless, everyone found Church of the Good Shepherd in Henrietta in time to board a charter bus for Toronto and World Youth Day. The group of approximately 30 diocesan young adults and chaperons left Good Shepherd just past noon on Monday, July 23, to spend six days north of the border.

The bus began collecting World Youth Day pilgrims in Ithaca, where people from Cornell University, Ithaca College and other parts of the Southern Tier got on board. Then it traveled two hours northwest to Good Shepherd to pick up the remaining travelers, and from there, on to Canada. The group will be joined later this week by an additional 850 diocesan pilgrims who will bus to Toronto for Pope John Paul II's vigil service on Saturday, July 27, and his closing Mass the next morning.

Escuera, a member of the Cornell Catholic Community, said he drove to Henrietta from Geneva. He may have been better off taking the bus with his Cornell cohorts: He initially drove to West Henrietta Road rather than East Henrietta Road, where Church of the Good Shepherd is located.

"Now we know where the (Marketplace)



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer
Cindy Beiter of St. Christopher Parish, North Chili, gives some last-minute mothering to her son, Matt, as he prepares July 22 to board a bus from Henrietta's Church of the Good Shepherd to World Youth Day in Toronto.

Mall is," he remarked cheerfully.

Santo, meanwhile, mistakenly went to Guardian Angels Church, which is on the same road as Good Shepherd but about two miles north.

"I looked in the parking lot and thought, 'Nobody's here,'" said Santo, who then called the Pastoral Center for help and

quickly got down to Good Shepherd. Santo is representing St. Leo in Hilton and St. Thomas More in Brighton.

Before the bus departed, Good Shepherd's pastor, Father Doug DellaPietra, blessed the pilgrims as they embarked on "a journey that will bring together young people from all corners of the world."

The event will also unite people from many corners of the Rochester Diocese. For instance, Nancy Leis and her son John, 18, are representing St. Joseph Parish in Campbell, Steuben County. Nancy, 50, who is serving as a chaperon, said she first became interested in World Youth Day after her daughter Sharon, 24, attended the World Youth Days in Denver in 1993 and Manila in 1995. "When we heard Toronto, I was like, 'Yes!'" Nancy said.

John Leis said he's looking forward to what others may find a chore: a required three-mile hike this weekend to attend the papal vigil and closing Mass: "I'm good at walking, what can I say?" John added that he's also looking forward to meeting Catholics from other countries and having a chance to see the pope.

Meanwhile, one of the young-adult pilgrims, Anne Kidera, was designated to see the pontiff up close on Tuesday, July 24. She was among a select group of 75 people invited by World Youth Day organizers to greet the pope when he arrived at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

Kidera, who serves as youth minister at Good Shepherd, said she was invited to be on the greeting committee just a few days before she left for Toronto. Her reaction? "I said, 'I'll see if I can pencil it in,'" she joked.

— Mike Latona

Island

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ities and our staff," he said.

Father Kauffman added that the pope, a renowned outdoorsman, has a variety of recreational and religious activities from which to choose on Strawberry Island. A special golf cart was being ordered for the pontiff so that he could make full use of the island's numerous trails and religious sites. There is also the opportunity for boat rides if he so wishes. The island is in a no-fly zone and its shores are being patrolled tightly by security.

Father Murphy, who just finished his assignment at Christ the King, is in his fifth summer of helping out on Strawberry Island. As part of the management team, he explained that he became involved with the pope's visit because he knows the island's buildings and grounds so well.

Although Father Murphy said there's an air of electricity among those who get to see the pope up close, it is quiet excitement. "I try and look at it as this is mainly a person who lives a very, very hectic and crazy life, and we're given the opportunity to help ease that," he said.

However, Father Murphy observed, others are not quite as calm about Pope John Paul's stay on Strawberry Island.

"People are trying to get a glimpse of the

island, and calling to see if they can book time on the island this summer," he said. "People are coming out of the woodwork."

And Father Kauffman said that — surprise! — he's had no shortage of folks offering their services for the week.

"Basilians and otherwise, everybody wants to volunteer now," acknowledged Father Kauffman, who currently serves as vocations director for the Basilian order.

Father Murphy, following his time on Strawberry Island, will return very briefly to Rochester before heading off to Oakland, Calif., for a new assignment.

"It's kind of crazy; I've been living out of my suitcase for a month. But it's worth it," he said.

Seconds, Your Holiness?

As this week's sole cook on Strawberry Island, Helen Lopuchowycz is the envy of chefs the world over. But she, also, puts duty over being star-struck.

"I don't do anything for recognition. I am there to provide a service," she said.

Lopuchowycz, a long-time member of Rochester's Holy Rosary Parish, was the cook at Aquinas' Basilian house for nearly 25 years before the building closed in 2000. She has been charged with preparing all of the pope's meals — as well as those of everyone else on the island — from the pontiff's Tuesday arrival until he departs after lunch Saturday. Lopuchowycz isn't

concerned about the workload, saying she has cooked for up to 60 people at the Basilian residence.

Several months ago she had been required to plan a menu, which was subject to Vatican approval. Yet that posed little difficulty: "He has no dislikes, no likes, no dieting restrictions. He's so easy to cook for," she said of the 82-year-old pontiff.

Among Lopuchowycz's offerings are foods of the pope's Polish homeland, along with such Canadian staples as butter tarts, salmon and bacon. She had considered serving steak one night, but forget about caviar, lobster tails and the like.

"That's as exotic as it gets — steak on a grill," she said. "The whole week's menu is just good, homemade food."

Lopuchowycz, who is herself a Canadian citizen (she's lived in the United States since 1962), said the chance to cook for the pope arose last fall when Father Kauffman approached her during a visit to Rochester. Asked if she had thought his offer was a joke, she replied, "Of course. Wouldn't you?" When she learned he was serious, she quickly committed to the project: "How could you say no?"

She added that for security reasons, she's been told she'll have to remain on the island during the pope's entire stay — something she hasn't exactly protested.

"I said, 'Twist my arm, twist my arm,'" she remarked with a laugh.

Performers lend talents

Music is an essential portion of all World Youth Days, and the Rochester area is making vital contributions in that department this year.

The "Wheels in Motion" dance company and "Celebration of Youth" musical group, representing the Catholic Arts Center, were to perform together in downtown Toronto on Tuesday and Wednesday, July 23-24.

That ensemble includes 20 people who dance in a contemporary style, as well as 10 who perform musicals. The groups, directed by Father Kauffman, are the only ones to be performing in Toronto during the World Youth Day event.

The groups will be performing at the Toronto Convention Center, which is the main venue for the event.

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