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Capuchin Vocation Update Province of St. Joseph

The Journey

by Stephen Greco, Capuchin Candidate



(Stephen is in his second year as a Capuchin Candidate. He's also in his second year at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, MI. Stephen is active in his home parish in Dearborn. He attended World Youth Day this summer with his brother and other members of the parish youth group.)

“We are one body, one body in Christ; and we do not stand alone. We are one body, one body in Christ; and he came that we might have life.” So goes the theme song of World Youth Day 1993 in Denver, Colorado by Dana Scallon. When this song was played before The Great Pope John Paul II in Denver it brought tears to his eyes. The word catholic means universal. What better way to show just how universal our faith is, just how true it is that we are one body of Christ then for us to gather youth from all over the world in a single city to celebrate our faith? In July 2008 there was one of these celebrations, as myself, and nearly 500,000 others from around the globe converged on Sydney, Australia!

The theme for the 23rd WYD was selected as "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you will be my witnesses". (Acts 1:8) On the final day of WYD '08, after we had spent the night under the stars with our fellow pilgrims, we celebrated mass with Pope Benedict XVI. During his homily His Holiness provoked our minds with images of the first Pentecost, of Jesus' followers locked away in their upper room. How after the Spirit descended upon them the disciples left, filled with grace and began to preach to the masses. We were told how we must do the same as the founders of our faith had. We must be willing to leave our own upper rooms and go forth into the world and spread the Good News. Our Pope evoked us to go forth into the world and be Christ's witnesses to the masses.

We did not come to see His Holiness, we came to worship The Lord with our many brothers and sisters from all over the world! It may have been because we came for the same reasons and for that I found a certain connection with the Pope,



but for

whatever reason I saw him in a new light I had never seen before. I had always seen him as a slightly cold human being, who ruled over Catholic doctrine deciding what was and was not heresy. This may have been something that had carried over from his days as a college professor. My chance to see him up close this past summer all but solidified it for me that this was the image I would take around with me of Benedict. The group I traveled with waited outside, standing around a fence by the side of the road, for five and a half hours waiting for his motorcade to come through the day he officially arrived in Sydney. My radio was not working well and no one in my group was able to hear much of his speeches before he took to the streets. We



waited for what seemed like forever pressed up against a fence across the street from the cathedral until finally he turned the corner. When he finally did we all tried our best to get a picture of him, but he was moving so fast that the best we got were blurs in our pictures. After waiting for so long for him we all left rather disappointed that day. However as my luck would have it, just before our mass with the Pope I decided to use the restroom. When I left I tried looking around to see where the Pope was as he made his way up to the stage for mass. As I scanned over the horizon I found him, and he was passing right next to me! I quickly forgot about any negative thoughts I had had from a few days prior, raised my camera, took as many pictures as I could from where I stood, and then proceeded to chase after the Popemobile through the crowd to get closer to him. My heart was racing so much, I thought it was going to explode! After my chance Pope-sighting there was one thing that really solidified how I now see the Pope. On the way home my brother and I sat next to a priest as he told us of stories

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of how much Benedict loves his cats. He made sure that he would be able to still take care of his beloved pets in his old apartment, while still being able to carry out his duties as the world's pastor when he refused to take his pets into the Papal apartments when one of the workers there was allergic to the cats. Due to the experiences I had gained from World Youth Day of His Holiness I now see our Pope as a very human person. At times he makes mistakes, like me, but at times he does the right thing, also like myself. It was a really humbling experience for me to be able to look at my highest religious leader and be able to relate to him in my own small way, because like him, I'm human, I'm far from perfect. I was also able to see during that week more than ever, a leader who truly does care, about me, and about all of his flock.

I found my time in Sydney, Australia for the 23rd World Youth Day to be truly and amazing spiritual journey. I got to be apart of many adventures and events during those 10 days. We slept in a school room on the cold floor, attended workshops, concerts, ate foreign foods, meet lots of people, and went to lots of masses, including to one specifically for all the pilgrims from the United States. Of all the things I experienced during the week the standout one I think I got the most out of was talking with one of my roommates. She was an adult leader from a different parish who was far my senior, and through the evening the two of us stayed up and shared our faith stories, and despite our many differences, we were able to connect on many levels. In many ways I think that's what I feel World Youth Day is all about, getting to meet many people you wouldn't normally be able to, and see just how universal our church, and our faith truly is by how much you can find yourself connecting with those around you.



ST. LAWRENCE SEMINARY ALUMNI AND CANDIDATE WEEKEND

**JANUARY 16-18, 2009
MT. CALVARY, WI**

Wisconsin Ministry Weekend for Candidates and Inquirers

**February 20-22, 2009
Milwaukee and Mt. Calvary
Wisconsin**

Reservations are required to attend
the weekends.

New inquirers are welcome!

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