



Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry

Date: July 14, 2009
To: Pastors, Parish Administrators, and Pastoral Ministers
From: Michal T. Horace
RE: **Age Policy & Group Policy for 2011 WYD-Madrid**

World Youth Day (WYD), a week-long international gathering held every three years, is the largest regular gathering of young people in the world. Originated by Pope John Paul II and continued by Pope Benedict XVI, WYDs include Masses, catechesis, and festivals.

The Holy Father has again invited the young adults of the world to join him for the next WYD in Madrid, Spain in August of 2011. Archbishop Vlazny, working with the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, will lead the Archdiocese of Portland Young Adult Pilgrimage to WYD with a pre-trip to several pilgrimage sites including Lourdes, France and Barcelona, Spain before arriving in Madrid for the WYD activities.

Although called “World Youth Day”, the content and programming of this international event is designed for young Catholics in their late teens, twenties, and thirties, i.e., “young adults” as defined by the US bishops in *Sons and Daughters of the Light*. **Therefore, with the recommendation of USCCB, the Archdiocese of Portland is again requiring that WYD participants be at least 18 years of age by August 8, 2011.** A pilgrim who is 16 years of age or 17 years of age by August 8, 2011 may attend only if his or her parent or permanent legal guardian accompanies him or her to WYD. The additional risks of taking minors overseas also factors into this recommendation.

The Catholic young adults of western Oregon are asked to join Archbishop Vlazny in forming a single and unified delegation to WYD-Madrid rather than organizing separate pilgrimages. A parish, vicariate, campus ministry, or other group must petition the archdiocese to request an exemption to attend WYD separate from the archdiocesan delegation. The group will need to present compelling reasons for not participating in the archdiocesan pilgrimage. Before any arrangements or contracts are signed, the group organizer must contact the Archdiocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry to discuss such an exemption. In the rare case an exemption is granted, that group must, nonetheless, comply with archdiocesan WYD age policy explained above as well as all applicable archdiocesan travel policies.

Catholic teenagers of high school age are encouraged to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in lieu of WYD. The activities and the structures of NCYC are geared specifically for the high school age cohort. The risks and costs involved in NCYC are far less than those of an overseas event and therefore a better fit for a trip involving minors. The next biennial NCYC is November 2009 in Kansas City and then again in November 2011 NCYC in Indianapolis.

For more information on either WYD or NCYC, please contact me at the Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, mhorace@archdpx.org, 503-233-8310, or visit <http://ym.archdpx.org>.