

News Release
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11,000 Delegates Show Up at WYD Manila

More than 11,000 delegates attended the World Youth Day (WYD) Madrid to Manila Overnight Vigil, making it one of the biggest local youth gatherings since 1995. Held at the Ateneo de Manila University campus, the event lasted from 4pm of August 20 to 6:30am of August 21. Organized by the Archdiocese of Manila's Campus Ministry-Archdiocesan Commission on Youth and the **Jesuit Communications Foundation**, the vigil had three segments: the youth festival, inspired catechesis and a liturgical celebration. Carrying the theme, "Planted and Built in Jesus Christ, Firm in the Faith," the event closely followed the international celebration of the 26th WYD in Madrid.



School clubs and youth leaders roused the participants to sing and dance in the youth festival. Celebrities Jimmy Bondoc and Chris Tiu shared their personal thoughts and experiences on how they lived their faith. Recording artist Toto Sorioso sang the WYD Madrid theme song, "Firmes en la Fe." And youth-oriented music organizations Bukas Palad, Hangad, and the Taize community performed signature classics but also gave words of reflection to the audience.

Former ambassador Tita de Villa related her conversations with Blessed Pope John Paul II and his love for the Filipinos. While Monsignor Vic Bauson revealed that his life changed during the 1995 WYD in Manila, which remains the largest gathering of people in history with five million in attendance.



Catechetical speakers headed by Archbishop Cardinal Gaudencio Rosales deepened the delegates' understanding of the current WYD theme. Provincial Superior of the Society of Jesus Fr. Jojo Magadia, SJ and Loyola Schools President Fr. Jett Villarin, SJ congratulated the delegates who were celebrating as one with those in Madrid. Finally, Bishop Chito Tagle emphasized the value of charity by recounting his experiences as a youth.

The delegates watched a visual presentation of the religious and patriotic fervor of late national heroes, President Corazon Aquino and Benigno Aquino, Jr. Following an Atenean tradition, their daughter Viel Aquino-Dee, who is also a sister of the current president, led the rosary with the delegates. Priests, nuns and religious brothers offered spiritual services such as confession and counselling throughout the vigil.

A highlight of the event included Pope Benedict XVI's broadcasted message, which the Manila delegates received with claps and cheers. The Pope encouraged the youth to

fearlessly embrace Jesus' cross as the consolation to their sorrows and the source of a fulfilled life.

“To suffer out of love and in order to be a person who truly loves. These are the fundamental elements of humanity, and to abandon them would destroy man himself,” said the Pope, who ended his message by giving his apostolic blessing.

Pope Benedict XVI concluded the WYD celebration by consecrating all young people to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in union with the world's bishops. Locally, Bishop Honesto Ongtioco of the Archdiocese of Cubao prayed the consecration of the youth during the concelebrated mass.

The delegates that flocked to the Ateneo came not only from Manila and Northern Luzon, but also from as far as Cebu, Davao and Cotabato. Most are members of schools, catholic parishes and other catholic organizations all over the country. Other nationalities from China, India, Korea and the continent of Europe also attended.

The organizers expected a turnout of not more than 10,000 people based on the number of registered participants. However, many walk-ins who heard of the event from media showed up on the actual day. Older delegates who were not part of the youth bracket went to the vigil to show their support.

The event was covered by ABS-CBN, GMA-7, TV5 and Radio Veritas.

Now in its 26th year, the WYD was initiated by Blessed John Paul II for young people to share and experience their journey of faith together. The next WYD will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 2013.