

World Youth Day Madrid 2011

The Theme for World Youth Day this year was “Firm in the Faith”

Saturday 13th August 2011

We left Dublin Airport at 1.50pm to arrive in Madrid for 4pm Irish time. Which is 5pm in Madrid. Our 1st impressions were that the weather was certainly warmer by about 20 degrees. We headed to our hotel to get settled in and found to our delight that it was right in the centre of town with lots of shops, tourist attractions and metro lines close at hand it felt like we were on O'Connell Street except everyone spoke Spanish and the weather was so much nicer. This was to be our base for the next 2 nights. We went out to sample the local restaurants and nightlife and even came across an Irish Bar or 2 where we met some young people from England and Northern Ireland who were also over for World Youth Day.

Sunday 14th August 2011

We had breakfast in our Hotel, the local church was very near our Hotel so we went to mass, although it was all in Spanish we could understand most of what was happening with the exception of the homily which thankfully didn't last too long after mass then we set off to explore our surroundings. Consulted with our metro map and found out there was a Bull Fighting Stadium nearby which gave a tour and then you had the opportunity to go to a bull fight as it was on at 7 we had our dinner early in a restaurant not too far away so that we could be back for the fight. Afterwards we met up with some Irish people and had a few drinks in the Irish bar.

Monday 15th August

We checked out of our hotel and then headed to our accommodation in a small town called Fuencarral where we would spend in our bags on the floor other Irish pilgrims. We 8pm outside the college our rooms which were in gymnasiums. All of a of people coming towards the floor all trying to find We managed to get a door which meant we facilities and the small the door was left open.

At 9pm the local people performed some dancing for us with a few performing some traditional Irish music. The atmosphere was amazing; Afterwards



pizzas and refreshments for everyone so we didn't go hungry that night.

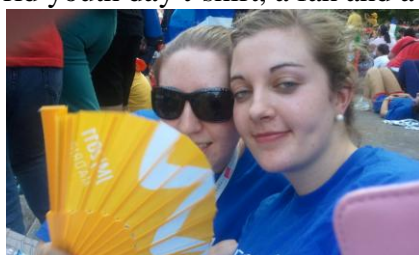
the next week sleeping with a few hundred met up with everyone at and were then assigned fact 2 small sudden there was a rush us with crash mats for a place to set up camp. space quite close to the were nearer to the breeze that came when

from the village traditional Spanish of the Irish pilgrims also CYC had organized

Tuesday 16th August

Breakfast was served from 8 till 9 am for those who could drag themselves out of bed. At 10 am we joined the crew to receive our pilgrim packs which consisted of a pilgrim booklet, a copy of St. Matthews Gospel, a copy of YouCat a personal gift from the Holy Father, a Guide Book of everything that was happening over the next week, a pilgrims cross, a world youth day t-shirt, a fan and a hat. We also received out travel pass and food vouchers for the week.

packs we all proceeded to the road from the college where we lead by Bishop Ray Field. We had went and got some lunch and got our group. Afterwards the group of Madrid to meet up with the



After everyone had received there church which was at the top of the had our opening mass which was some free time from 1 till 4.30 so we talking to some of the pilgrims from headed to a big church in the centre other 1,500 Irish Pilgrims to share a

few experiences of past World Youth Day's and some songs. Then we all headed onto the streets to find a spot in front of the big screens to enjoy our 1st outdoor mass with the Archbishop of Madrid. The crowds and the atmosphere were electric.

Wednesday 17th August

We had breakfast then took the Metro to our 1st of 3 Catechises sessions.

Cardinal Keith O' Brien was our speaker of the day and told us all about how he became a Cardinal and his stories were very fascinating after his talk there was a half an hour slot for questions and answers followed by songs from our

Afterwards we met up with a few pilgrims from our group who had come on their own and we went to the Del Prado museum the man in front of us told us that he had been in the queue for over 2 hours and it had barely moved so we decided to go to an exhibition just down the street instead and said we'd try and go to the museum during the week if time allowed. The exhibition was called Persecuted and

Christians oppressed for their faith. Which we found interesting but upsetting in some parts.



Forgotten – A report on

Thursday 18th August

We had our breakfast then at 10am we headed to our 2nd Catechises session which was with Archbishop Dermot Martin. Who told us all about when he entered the priesthood and how he became an Archbishop we really enjoyed his talk. Then we had our questions and answers and then we had mass. We went to lunch then we all headed down to the main square in Plaza Castilla to try and get to see the Pope but unfortunately he didn't come down our road. The closest we got to him was seeing him on the big screens that they had up all over the streets.

Friday 19th August

We had Breakfast then we left for our final Catechises session with Archbishop Robert Remus from the Caribbean his talk was very interesting then we had our last mass after the catechises. Then we all headed down to the main street to be a part of the Stations of the Cross. We also had a smaller stations of the cross on at 9pm in our local church in Fuencarral.

Saturday 20th August

We had our breakfast and packed up our sleeping bags etc to bring with us to the overnight vigil. We met up in the local church, celebrated mass then at 12 O' Clock we all gathered our bags and started the walk to the metro which was absolutely packed with pilgrims all heading down to the vigil the atmosphere on the metro was thrilling pilgrims from all over the world were chanting songs from their countries 15 stops later we finally arrived at Cuatro Vientos Metro station where we had a 2 and a half hour walk to the section where we were to set up camp. At 9pm the Pope came out to concelebrate mass and during mass we had a minor hurricane with torrential winds and rain with lightning overhead but after about a half an hour it died down and the weather was lovely again.

Sunday 21st August

The morning after we all got up to see the Pope say mass at 9am shortly after the mass he announced that the next World Youth Day would be in Rio De Janeiro in 2013. The roars of the crowds and the excitement was amazing. We were all asked to wear our International Eucharistic Congress T-Shirts to encourage and invite as many young people as possible to come to Dublin to share in the celebrations next June, we also passed out stickers and badges to remind people to come. We packed up all our belongings and headed back on the long walk back to the metro station which we took back to the college. We were to have a final celebration mass in our local church so we all got our best outfits on and headed up to the church. The mass was very emotional as it would be the last time we all spent together. Afterwards we all headed to the local bar for some farewell drinks.

Monday 22nd August

Today was a sad day as we had to say goodbye to the many friends we made over the past week but we all exchanged numbers and social network names and said we would keep in contact we also found out that there would be a reunion on the 10th September where we would all see each other again. We got the metro to our hotel just off Gran Via and spent the rest of the day sightseeing and we also went to a theme park that night.

Tuesday 23rd August

We went down for breakfast, packed up our belongings and headed out to do some last minute shopping as we hadn't much time to shop over the week. We then headed out to the airport and got on the Airplane to Dublin where we were met with the Wind and Rain what a warm welcome we received.

On behalf of myself, Aisling & Rachel we would like to thank Fr. Gregory O' Brien our Parish Priest, Fr. Denis Ryan, Fr. Tom Kiernan and all the parishioners of St. Jude's who helped to fund our World Youth Day experience which certainly helped to affirm our faith and to help us realise that there is a place for young people in the Catholic Church. We hope to make the journey to Rio in 2013 and to bring more young people from our parish with us to experience and take part in what promises to be a life changing experience. We hope to encourage as many of our young parishioners as possible to join us at the IEC next June which will be part of our preparation for Rio in 2013

Thank you from
Amanda Speller, Aisling Lally & Rachel Haverty