

MEDIA ALERT Contact: Teresa Peterson 407-432-1974

Sacred Journey: Bishop John Noonan and 48 Young Adults from Central Florida to Attend World Youth Day in Madrid *First Time Diocese of Orlando to Bring Together Young Adults for World Youth Day International Event*

WHO: Bishop John Noonan, young adults, priests and employees of the Diocese of Orlando

WHAT: A pilgrimage to Madrid, Spain for the 2011 World Youth Day with Pope Benedict XVI and one million other pilgrims from around the world. Details of the Orlando pilgrimage will be announced and an informational video will be shown during a news conference. **Now for the first time ever**, youth and young adults not able to be physically present at World Youth Day can be virtually present. A new Facebook App allows you to create an avatar and then send it on a virtual journey to Madrid, Spain for the largest youth event in the world. Through the site you can gather with the thousands who will be taking this pilgrimage. There will be a demonstration of this App at the news conference.

WHEN: July 26, 2011 beginning at 11:00 a.m.
Reporters/camera crews should arrive by 10:45 a.m.
Reserved parking will be provided if news personnel RSVP two hours before event.

WHERE: Diocese of Orlando Offices
50 East Robinson Street
Orlando, FL 32801

WHY: Young adults from the Diocese of Orlando are showing great enthusiasm for their Catholic faith by participating in this pilgrimage. The Orlando contingency is larger than expected and is a great affirmation that young adults are embracing their faith, especially given the new emphasis placed on young adult ministry at the Diocese of Orlando. World Youth Day is an unbelievable weeklong spiritual journey where pilgrims from all over the world unite to share their faith. The week includes prayer, song, concerts, faith sharing, liturgy, catechesis, and an unforgettable vigil and closing Mass with the Holy Father.

During the news conference, the following will be speaking:

- **Bishop John Noonan** will be one of sixty US bishops who will be attending World Youth Day and he will be spending his days with the young adults – walking alongside their journey of faith. As a former high school principal and seminary rector, Bishop Noonan has a great interest in helping young people develop their faith life and grow in relationship to Christ.
- Nine seminarians will be part of the Orlando contingency. These young men are discerning the call to priesthood and this sacred journey is expected to have a deep impact on their lives. Seminarian **Dominic Buckley** is attending his third World Youth Day. He experienced his call to the priesthood during World Youth Day in Germany.

- Recent high school graduate **Alexis Gonzalez** of Lakeland will also be attending. The 18 year old, soon to be college freshman, will be arriving at the campus of Florida State University just days after returning from the pilgrimage on August 23.
- **Cheryl Schaefer** is traveling with her husband. She has attended several World Youth Days before. What is she expecting this time?

Additional Information:

The group of young adults will be accompanied by 8 group leaders, which includes parents, priests and diocesan employees bringing the total number of people attending this pilgrimage to 57. While World Youth Day is the highlight of the trip, the pilgrims will also visit important sites in Rome and Assisi.