

ZE09040311 - 2009-04-03

Permalink: <http://www.zenit.org/article-25568?l=english>

Youth Ministry Can't Be Mediocre, Says Cardinal

Says It Requires a "Pastoral Passion"

ROME, APRIL 3, 2009 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Those who work in youth ministry must throw off mediocrity and be filled with a "pastoral passion" to announce the message of Christ to young people, says Cardinal Stanislaw Rylko.

The president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity said this today upon opening the three-day "International Meeting of Youth Ministers: From Sydney 2008 to Madrid 2011."

The organizational leaders of the 2008 World Youth Day in Sydney are participating through Sunday in an evaluation of the fruits of World Youth Day in their country, with talks by Cardinal George Pell and Bishop Anthony Fisher, archbishop and auxiliary of Sydney.

The meeting will include youth ministry leaders from Madrid, Spain, host of World Youth Day 2011, as well as delegates from 70 countries, and representatives from 35 international Catholic communities, associations and movements. The meeting is the first step in preparing for the 2011 youth day.

Cardinal Rylko called the youth events "youth ministry workshops," and reminded those present that youth ministry "is not an appendage to the ordinary ministry work of the Church, but it is its core, its heart."

Youth ministry can't be "ordinary or mediocre," he affirmed. "It requires the ongoing conversion of the heart and the ongoing pursuit of ever-new ways to announce Christ. And it requires a veritable pastoral passion for young people."

"And it is an extremely exacting task," he added, "since the young have extremely exacting expectations of adults, in whom they want to find not just teachers but above all genuine and consistent witnesses."

Underlining the importance of the youth events, Cardinal Rylko said they "have become providential catalysts of the pastoral work of the Church for the young generations. They play a valuable role as guidance, inspiration and encouragement."

Observatory

The cardinal said the meetings have also turned out to be "an extraordinary observatory of the world's youth," in which one is able to note the trends among youth, and which are "hardly ever covered by the media."

The president of the Pontifical Council for the Laity credited the world days with the birth of a "new generation of youth pastoral workers, who know how to respond to the real problems of the youth."

Cardinal Rylko said the youth events have also "given rise to a new generation of young people who know how to oppose the general trends of the prevalent post-modern culture. These are the young who say 'yes' to

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Christ and to His Church, the young who pursue the true meaning of life.”

"They are a minority," he noted, "but a 'creative' one, one of those minorities that are decisive for the future of mankind."

World Youth Day is an annual event, which is celebrated every 2-3 years on an international level in various locations. When it is not celebrated internationally, World Youth Day is celebrated on a diocesan level on Palm Sunday.

The theme for World Youth Day 2009, which will be observed Sunday, is "We Have Set Our Hope on the Living God" (1 Timothy 4:10).

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