



World Youth Day was both physically and spiritually demanding, yet it was truly exciting and enriching. It was a pilgrimage through and through.

- Ana Jahuey, Administrative Assistant Intercultural Ministry/ Lay Pastoral Ministry Institute

2023 WORLD YOUTH DAY

Dating back to 1986, World Youth Day was introduced by Pope John Paul II as a way for the Holy Father to hear from our Church's youth from around the world, and for participants to encounter God and celebrate their faith.

In 2019, Pope Francis announced from Panama City, Panama the next World Youth Day would be in 2022 in Lisbon, Portugal. However, due to the increasing concern for COVID-19, the global event was pushed back to 2023. With an extra year to prepare, the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry gathered 118 pilgrims from around the Diocese of St. Petersburg to embark on this journey.

Ana Jahuey, a young parishioner at St. Cecelia Catholic Church and Administrative Assistant for Intercultural Ministries and the Lay Pastoral Ministry Institute of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, made the pilgrimage to Lisbon with her brother. **"Being able to experience World Youth Day with my brother has brought us closer,"** Jahuey stated, **"We grew up in a Marian household and Our Blessed Mother has been an inspiration for this trip. I'm glad we have this wonderful opportunity to journey**

together and to live our faith at this moment of our lives."

Having grown up Catholic, she recently began learning more about her faith. World Youth Day presented an opportunity to deepen her love for Jesus. The first stop of the 10 day journey through Portugal was in Fatima. The venue offered peacefulness for many, including Ana. **"Fatima was my favorite spot, getting to the house of Our Mother,"** she shared. **"It was a very special moment. She has shown me a lot and has brought me closer to the Lord. I believe I felt her maternal love in the breeze of the wind."**

World Youth Day may take place every few years, but the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry work hard at providing young Catholics in the Diocese of St. Petersburg with events and gatherings to meet others seeking a relationship with the Lord, no matter where they are on their spiritual journey. For more information about our youth and young adult ministry, visit dosp.org/young-church.

