



A 13-member group of Assumption College community members will be among the approximately two million pilgrims at World Youth Day (WYD) July 23-28 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. WYD is the largest gathering of Catholic and other youth from around the world, and the Assumption contingent is expected to be the only Worcester Diocese-based group at the event. This will be the third WYD trip the college has participated in. The first was in 2002, in Toronto, Canada. The second, in 2011, was in Madrid, Spain.

"It is a profound experience for the Assumption College group to interact with so many young Catholics from around the globe and to be close to Pope Francis," said Assumption College President Francesco Cesareo, who is an internationally recognized authority on the history of the Catholic Church. "World Youth Day allows young people who are deeply committed to their faith and to the Church to recognize that they are not alone in centering their lives each day on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Literally millions of youth coming together from every corner of the globe in communion with the Holy Father not only re-invigorates the participants, but re-energizes the Church. The witness of these young people is a sign of hope for the Church's future. As a college committed to the faith development of its students as an integral part of their education, Assumption provides opportunities such as World Youth Day to its students knowing this powerful experience will transform their lives and deepen their commitment to their faith and to the Church."

WYD's theme this year is evangelization, and the scheduled activities -- prayers, service, catechesis, among others -- are meant to help participants grow in faith.

"World Youth Day will be a community-building experience on many levels," said James Rizza, Assumption's director of campus ministry. "We'll have three weeks to bond as a group and to join the international Assumption community in many of the pilgrimage activities. The WYD events will unite us with other Catholic youth from around the world."

The first week of the group's stay is "Mission Week." The Brazilian Assumptionists will host all the Assumptionist WYD pilgrims for a week of service in the city of Eugenopolis. There, the Worcester group will help restore an old minor seminary building into a parish center.

The second is the "official" week of World Youth Day and will feature prayer and meetings with Pope Francis, catechetical sessions, and liturgies with bishops from around the world.

For the third week, the Worcester group will rejoin the international Assumptionists for a pilgrimage to the Shrine of Aparecida.

The following Assumption community members will attend WYD: Campus Ministry Director James Rizza of Worcester; Amy Logue '01, assistant director of alumni relations, of Worcester; Cross Cultural Center Director Bea Patino; 2012 alumna Lauren Murphy of Taunton; 2013 alumna Julianne Elouadih of North Kingston, R.I.; incoming seniors William Rein of Marshfield and Sarah Rogers of Simsbury, Conn.; incoming juniors Andrea Kolodziej of Orange, Arianna McLynch of Providence, and Alyssa Neslusan of Dover, N.H.; and incoming sophomores Lucas LaRoche of Gardner, Caitlin Schofield of Foxboro, and Molly Sweeney of Hebron.

Four of the Assumption College participants from WYD '11 are returning this year: Rizza, Logue, Murphy, and Elouadih.