



Media Release - October 16, 2009

Harvest Pilgrimages chosen as Official Tour Operator for WYD Madrid 2011.

Following a competitive process, Catholic tour operator Harvest Pilgrimages has been chosen as the official tour operator to support Australian groups attending World Youth Day in Madrid, 2011.

The Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life invited expressions of interest in July, and yesterday appointed Harvest Pilgrimages, a company with experience of the last three World Youth Days as the Official Tour Operator.

“I am happy with the appointment and happy to know that Australian pilgrims will be in experienced and safe hands as we make our journey together to World Youth Day in Madrid,” said Bishop Joseph Grech, the Bishops Delegate for Youth.

“Harvest Pilgrimages have been taking pilgrims to World Youth Day since 1991 and have demonstrated a clear ability to prepare and support pilgrim groups”

Bishop Grech said that many more pilgrims from Australia were likely to make the trip to Spain after the very positive experience of the WYD celebrations in Sydney.

“It is expected that Australia will send its largest delegation of pilgrims to WYD Madrid so we have appointed Harvest Pilgrimages to facilitate and manage the required logistical support,” he said.

Managing director of Harvest Pilgrimages Mr Philip Ryall also expressed his enthusiasm at the announcement.

“I am delighted that our company can play such a significant role in Australia’s journey to World Youth Day Madrid,” he said. “We remain committed to working with Australian Bishops and Catholic organisations by providing pilgrimage options.”

Harvest Pilgrimages organised Australia’s pilgrimages for 2002, 2005 and 2008 World Youth Days. The company also specialises in journeys to the Holy Land and sites of religious significance across Europe. Spain in particular is famous for religious sites such as shrines of Avila, Montserrat and Loyola, and the pilgrim path to Santiago de Compostela. It is anticipated that pilgrims from Australia will take advantage of these sites along the way to Madrid.

Senior Youth Ministry Projects Officer with the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life Malcolm Hart said Harvest was a good choice, and would give pilgrims a support network of experienced professionals.

“For many Australian pilgrims and leaders attending World Youth Day in Madrid, this will be their first European World Youth Day,” he said. “By appointing a Tour Operator we can coordinate registration, airline travel and on the ground support while in Madrid. This enables us to provide support to pilgrim groups at each step and in case of special circumstances or emergencies.”

The Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life will work with Harvest Pilgrimages to support Australian Groups making the pilgrimage to World Youth Day Madrid in 2011.

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