

# Pilgrimage spreads faith through Baltimore

As nearly 1,000 young Catholics take to the streets of Baltimore March 31 to celebrate the coming of Easter – a time of new life and new beginnings – the 14th annual Archdiocesan Youth and Young Adult Pilgrimage will be undergoing a conversion of its own.

For the first time in two years, the youth and young adult participants will visit the recently restored Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore. The 2.8-mile route itself is also different, now beginning with a rally in Canton at 11:30 a.m. at O'Donnell Street Park, next to St. Casimir. After eucharistic adoration at St. Casimir, the procession will kick off at 1:30 p.m. with pilgrims carrying a 10-foot wooden cross through the streets.

Bearing the theme “Encountering Christ,” the pilgrimage will continue on to Holy Rosary, Fells Point, and then to the War Memorial Plaza in front of City Hall before concluding at the basilica. The pilgrims also will visit other historical spots along the journey. A blessing of palms will be held on the steps of the newly restored cathedral before Cardinal William H. Keeler celebrates Mass with the young people at 6:45 p.m.

Bishop W. Francis Malooly, western vicar, Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski, eastern vicar and Bishop Denis J. Madden, urban vicar, will also participate in the pilgrimage.

Kristin Witte, coordinator of pastoral care for the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry for the archdiocese, which sponsors the event, said the pilgrimage encourages youths to look for Christ in the sacraments, the rosary, through the Blessed Virgin Mary and in the faces of the people in Baltimore City.

Mrs. Witte said one of her favorite parts of the pilgrimage is eucharistic adoration. “The reverence of those young people for that moment just mesmerizes me,” said Mrs. Witte. “It exemplifies the deep desire our young people have for Christ.

“I hope this pilgrimage helps them understand in a special way this year that they

are a significant part of the history and they are valued for the witnesses they are.”

Mark Pacione, director of the Division of Youth and Young Adult Ministry, said the pilgrimage allows participants to experience the larger church and is a great way to usher in Holy Week and to celebrate Easter.

The cost of the pilgrimage is \$12, which includes a giveaway and a performance by Catholic comedian Bob Perron. Food will not be provided; pilgrims are asked to eat lunch before the rally and pack a light evening meal and water.

Participants are also asked to bring unused toiletries to donate to Catholic Charities’ My Sister’s Place in Baltimore.

For more information on the pilgrimage or for a registration form, visit [www.archbalt.org](http://www.archbalt.org).