

Pope sends e-mail to more than 30,000 World Youth Day participants

VATICAN CITY - Pope Benedict XVI sent a brief e-mail to more than 30,000 young people who attended World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, or have expressed interest in knowing more about the experience.

In the Sept. 8 message, the pope greeted the young people, offered his prayers for them and asked them to pray for the young people of France as he prepared to visit their country Sept. 12-15.

The message was sent through www.Xt3.com, a social networking Web site established to help World Youth Day participants keep in touch, converse with one another online and meet others who were in Sydney.

The text of the papal message read:

"Fifty days ago we were together for the celebration of Mass. Today I greet you on the birthday of Mary, Mother of the Church. Empowered by the Spirit and courageous like Mary, your pilgrimage of faith fills the church with life! Soon I am to visit France. I ask you all to join me in praying for the young people of France. May we all be rejuvenated in hope!"

In addition to putting the English-language message into the inbox of each registered Xt3 member, the site provided links to translations in Italian, German, Spanish and French.

The site claimed that by Aug. 28 it had 30,000 registered users.