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# To See the Love, to Share the Joy: World Youth Day

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# To See the Love, to Share the Joy

## World Youth Day

By Erin Verdi

**A**s a young Catholic living in a markedly secularized and materialistic society, it is sometimes a struggle to express or even to remember my spiritual identity. “Catholic” means universal, and yet even at a Jesuit institution I could feel isolated from my faith and by my faith. My decision to go to Brazil stemmed not only from a desire for culture and an altered perspective but also from an unspoken need to reaffirm my membership in the global Catholic community. So often my Catholicism is repressed as a secondary aspect of my person simply because it is easier to do so, and I felt something vital was missing from my life. Though it took me a few days to adjust to the lack of warm water and warm beds, my Brazilian experience was ultimately invaluable. It let me view my faith and my religious community from a different angle, to see the love there, to share the joy.

One scene in particular stands out in my memory – the day Pope Francis was rumored to drive by the high school the MAGIS participants were calling home for the duration of World Youth Day. Everyone was rigid with excitement and made hasty plans to line the streets until they glimpsed the Holy Father. No one could cite the source of the rumor or tell if the rumor was anything more than a popular wish, but everyone filed outside early that morning anyway, just in case. As young Catholics, none of us could pass up the chance to see the pope, who represented not only the tradition of the Church but change within the Church as well. We were willing to brave the elements, to risk wasting our time and our hopes.

The weather in Rio, being unpredictable, was often inconvenient. Winter rain poured down on our heads, which were shielded with everything from plastic ponchos to backpacks to a neighbor’s

outstretched arm. It seemed like there were hundreds of us out there, enthusiastically anticipating the arrival of Pope Francis even though we were cold, and wet, and suddenly deprived of every semblance of personal space. We clustered around each other like family, anxiously asking when the pope was allegedly driving by.

At this point, I took a mental step back and observed my peers. All of them looked like they should have been miserable, but they weren’t. They were infectiously enthusiastic. And after three hours, when Pope Francis sped by in his gray sedan and waved, the entire crowd erupted in joyful shrieks and applause as if there had been no wait, no uncertainty. All of us had traveled to Brazil and then to the streets not only to express our faith in God but also to express our faith in the Church and its ability to overcome recent challenges through Pope Francis. We were all hopeful for the future of the Church, just as the Church is hopeful for our futures.

My experience in Brazil was like a shot of adrenaline. It reawakened my passion for Christ and reaffirmed that I was not alone in my faith. There are many in my faith community, all of them willing to share their love with me. ■

*Erin Verdi, from Las Vegas, is a senior at Seattle University with a double major in psychology and creative writing.*

## The Fathers Who Founded Us: Reflections on the Jesuits Reborn

By Nicholas Sawicki

**I**f you take a short walk just beyond the University Church at Fordham’s Rose Hill Campus, you will find a cemetery in which 124 sons of St. Ignatius are interred. Amongst the tombstones, all of which list the place of birth and death of the individual they mark, one finds an astounding array of ethnicities and cul-

tures represented. There are, for example, 6 Canadians, 7 Germans, 5 Italians, 4 Belgians, 24 Frenchmen, 46 Irishmen, 27 Americans, and one Czechoslovakian, an Austrian, a Swiss, a Scotsman, and an Englishman. Upon closer inspection, you find that many of the men from Europe entered the Society prior to 1850, and almost no Americans are found as mem-

bers of the Society in the cemetery before that point. It is fascinating that, in what was still generally a parochial time for most people, this bustling international community of Jesuits made it to Fordham, and one cannot help but wonder how this came to be.

Let us rewind to the significant year of 1814. It was a world which witnessed