

## A lot of Art for World Youth Day



*The Entombment of Christ by Caravaggio,  
Vatican Museums*

Madrid, April 12, 2011. Today, the cultural program for World Youth Day (WYD) has officially been unveiled. There will be over 300 activities from 37 countries from every continent, of all artistic categories: movies, music, exhibitions, theater, and cultural tours of Madrid. The Spanish capital will thus become a leading cultural center. All the program activities will be held throughout the entire day and into part of the night, in order to take full advantage of the space available in Madrid.

"The cultural program is one of the main pillars of WYD, second only to the acts with the Pope and the Catechesis Sessions," said Carla Diez de Rivera, Technical Director of the Department of Culture at WYD. "All these activities are an example of Christian cultural wealth in its most universal display," she added.

With a pilgrim's accreditation, which is obtained by registering for World Youth Day, all youth will have free access to the cultural program to be held from Monday, August 15 to Saturday, August 20.

### **A street theater**

Wednesday, August 17th, will be film day at World Youth Day. Calle Fuencarral, one of the streets with the highest concentration of theaters in the Spanish capital, will become the scene for the Seventh Art of WYD. Film screenings, accompanied by events with the producers, directors, and actors will be hosted. Among the films that will form a part of the showings are: *Of Gods and Men*, *There Be Dragons*, *Letters to God...* plus a few surprises. The same area will also host a concert of movie

soundtracks, introduced with words of John Paul II and Benedict XVI on the world of culture.



*A work from the exhibit "Art and Faith" by Wilem Ziilstra*

### **Art that leads to God**

Beauty and faith are not mutually exclusive, as demonstrated in the life and work of Antonio Gaudí, architect of Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, the church consecrated by Pope Benedict XVI in November. The exhibition “Moved by Beauty” will show just where Gaudí found his inspiration: in nature. In addition, the cast of one of the pinnacles that crown the Sagrada Familia will be taken to Madrid to have its mosaic mounted tile by tile by WYD pilgrims.

Other exhibits will include: “El Pórtico de la Gloria”, on the monumental entrance to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, the end of the Camino de Santiago walking pilgrimage; “Contemporary Art and Faith”, featuring works from the National Museum of Catholic Art and History in Washington DC; and a photographic exhibition on persecuted Christians, organized by Aid to the Church in Need.

There are also exhibitions that will reflect the Spanish missionary spirit: through the story of the Spanish missionary in Peru, Saint Toribio de Mogrovejo, or “Las Reducciones” of Paraguay, Jesuit missions that still exist today.

The major art galleries will complement the cultural program. The Prado Museum has created an itinerary on the image of Christ with its own paintings as well as a visiting work: “The Entombment” by Caravaggio, on special loan for the occasion from the Vatican Museums. This itinerary will be available for two months prior to WYD, for all those who visit the gallery in Madrid. The Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum has created a special exhibition entitled “Encounters”, making reference

to the various encounters Christ held at different moments in His public life. In addition, the WYD pilgrims will also have free access to the Royal Sites, the residences of the Spanish Royal Family.

### **Spanish-Madrid flavor**

One of the highlights known for its particularly Spanish flavor, is a representation of “The Holy Year in Madrid”, a “sacramental play” – similar to the old English morality plays – by Calderón de la Barca, a renowned Spanish playwright of the seventeenth century.

There will also be guided tours of Madrid, which reflect the Christian presence throughout the city’s history, both in artistic expressions as well as in traditions. These tours will visit the different churches in Madrid (Church of San Ginés, Basilica of San Francisco el Grande, the Collegiate Church of San Isidro...etc), highlighting not only the artistic wealth, but also the evangelical message they represent within Madrid’s history.

### **John Paul II, Patron of WYD**

John Paul II, the creator of World Youth Day, will play a special role in the cultural program, which will feature a musical about his life, an exposition of photos, one with his poetry, and another on the subject of the theology of the body, the title under which he gave 129 reflections on love, human sexuality, and marriage between September 1979 and November 1984. The place chosen to host all these initiatives is a landmark of downtown Madrid.