

## **Development Goals Find Allies at Youth Day**

Pilgrims Urged to Join Fight Against Global Poverty

By Catherine Smibert

SYDNEY, Australia, JULY 14, 2008 (Zenit.org <http://www.zenit.org>) World Youth Day is not just about celebration and festivities. It also needs to be a call to action to bring Christ's message to a socially unjust world, says the president of Caritas Internationalis.

Cardinal Oscar Rodríguez talked to ZENIT about bringing the Church's social doctrine to the fore at the Sydney youth event.

Caritas Australia organized a multimedia exhibition on the Millennium Development Goals at Customs House in Circular Quay. The exhibit titled "Blueprint for Better World" officially opened in a ceremony at Sydney Harbor on Monday evening local time in Australia.

Cardinal Rodríguez opened the site after spending a week speaking to youth ! at Melbourne's Days in the Diocese.

He told ZENIT, "It's great to have [World Youth Day] and all of the festivals, singing, dancing and celebration that go with it, but it's also important to use it as a point of reference to taste the reality around the world, hear the call to action and respond."

"I'm concerned that at the speed we are going, we may not reach the [Millennium Development Goals]," the cardinal lamented.

He said he is not only appealing to the leaders of the Group of Eight nations, but, "I appeal to the G-8 nations and the youth themselves to take action in assisting the political will to alleviate poverty [...] as without social justice there is no peace and that is what Caritas and its partners are all about."

More than tourists

Evan Ellis, World Youth Day coordinator of Caritas Australia, told ZENIT that the exhibit was designed to provide young people with the opportunity to reflect on social justice issues

and to challenge widespread global inequalities.

"This will be a space for young people to reflect, discuss, muse, argue, plan, listen and tear apart questions of social justice and the demands of human dignity," he said.

The interactive exhibit includes the use of installations, cabinet displays, street art, and videos, plus a "pledge wall" for each pilgrim to commit to active steps toward building a more just world, starting in their own community.

Ellis added, "We are trying to put the spotlight on things you won't find in the tourist brochures."

The concept is to allow the wider public to learn more about the Millennium Development Goals as well as what organizations such as Caritas are doing.

Caritas Australia has been a strategic partner in the preparations for World Youth Day 2008. According to the group's secretary-general, Duncan McLaren, it is important to remind youth that social justice is at the center of the Catholic faith.

"The Catholic faith is comprised of three things -- one is worship and liturgy, the other is the preaching of the word and the third is social justice at the very heart of all of that," he said.

The exhibit will run through Aug. 9.