



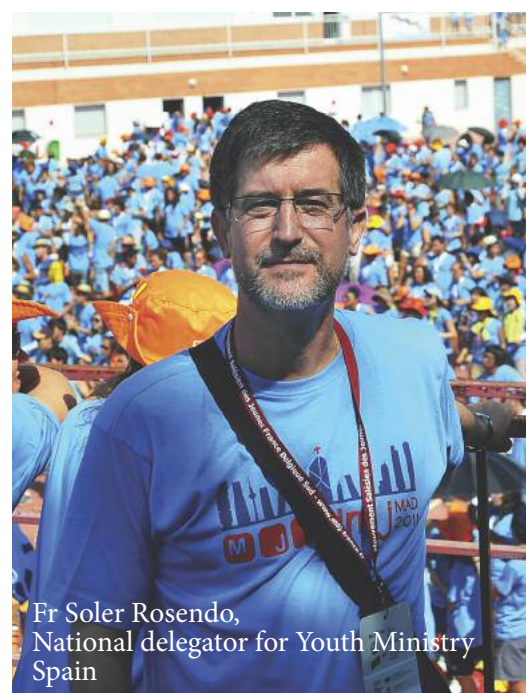
the variety of people and traditions, songs and dances, stories and art, and in the evening program – centred on the Gospel passage of the house built on rock – and in the words of Fr Chávez and Mother Yvonne – they acknowledged their concerns and responses to them; in Eucharistic adoration and prayer they found the true reason for their pilgrimage.

Something similar happened on Saturday 20 August, before and during the prayer vigil held at Cuatro Vientos. In the morning the SYM youth from all around the world gathered at the College at Carabanchel to make the pilgrimage together to the former Madrid airport. It was an opportunity to have fun again with organised dances, but mostly it was time for thinking about commitment, pledges made by the young people before returning to their countries: to go out and meet other young people, support them in their difficulties and walk with them on their journey of faith, foster opportunities for volunteer activity, create strong bonds and a sense of belonging, give witness, evangelise and show what it means to be happy as a young Catholic.

Later in the day the 'steadfastness in faith' of all young people – not just the SYM, but all those present at Cuatro Vientos – emerged in pure form, in its entirety and for the world to see on television. Without faith, in fact, one could not explain what happened. What could urge half a million or more young people to remain several hours under the scorching sun to



listen to an 84 year old man, except for the firm faith and conviction that this man would lead them to Jesus? And what else could provide the strength to sing for the Pope and pray through a raging storm, kneeling in the mud that ruined their sleeping bags and clothes? Only the enthusiasm and the joy of being so many and so different, yet united by the same faith. And how does one understand why hundreds of thousands of young people, almost as one, suddenly knelt for Eucharistic adoration, forgetting all the context and practical difficulties around them, unless one imputes a firm faith? There is no doubt that World Youth Day in Madrid was a true celebration of faith.



Fr Soler Rosendo,
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