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Oregon teens carry 8-foot cross across Portland in pilgrimage

by Dan Morris-Young

NCR Today

Using the "Good Shepherd" Gospel readings of April 29 for inspiration, almost 600 teenagers from western Oregon carried an 8-foot cross across the city of Portland on an all-day pilgrimage April 28 -- and along the way heard inspirational messages, enjoyed upbeat music and carried out works of charity, according to a May 1 story in the *Catholic Sentinel*, the newspaper serving the Portland Archdiocese.

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With a theme of "Jesus, the Good Shepherd," the 6.2-mile pilgrimage began

at The National Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother (known as The Grotto) and culminated with Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, celebrated by Auxiliary Bishop (emeritus) Kenneth Steiner, reported Ed Langlois, staff writer at the *Catholic Sentinel*.

The event was the second Archdiocese of Portland Pilgrimage Walk. The first one in 2010 drew about 450 young people.

Langlois' story carries quotes from several young participants, including Mary Vasquez, a 15-year-old member of St. Anne Parish in Gresham, who wore a headband featuring big red letters: "CATOLICO."

"Vasquez, who 'just started getting closer to God,' is excited to profess her faith publicly. She defends it often at her school, Centennial Learning Center, and she shared it during the pilgrimage," Langlois wrote.

"This day is going to change my life," she told Langlois. "We walked and saw so many people who need help, and I'm just always going to remember that and keep helping."

At St. André Bessette Catholic Church in Portland's Old Town, the pilgrims delivered packages of socks that will be distributed to the homeless, mentally ill and low-income served by the parish.

Click here for more from the *Catholic Sentinel*.

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