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**MATT MAHER TO PLAY MAJOR MUSICAL ROLE DURING  
WORLD YOUTH DAY 2008 IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA; EVENT  
MARKS FIRST VISIT OF POPE BENEDICT XVI TO AUSTRALIA**

*Following the Release of His Essential Records Debut Album, **Empty & Beautiful** (4/8/08),  
Maher Prepares to Bring His Music to the Largest Youth Event in the World*

(Nashville, Tenn.) June 11, 2008 – Singer/Songwriter/Worship Leader **Matt Maher**, whose Essential Records debut album, ***Empty & Beautiful***, released on April 8, 2008, and whose current radio single “Your Grace Is Enough” is in the Top 5 at Christian AC radio, will play a major, musical role during the upcoming **World Youth Day 2008** event in Sydney, Australia in front of over 125,000 people. The event will mark the first visit of **Pope Benedict XVI** to Australia.

World Youth Day is the largest youth event in the world, and will be held in Sydney, with pre-World Youth Day events taking place all over the world. Organized by the Catholic Church, World Youth Day brings together young people from around the globe to celebrate and learn about their faith on a more regular basis. World Youth Day 2008 will be the largest event Australia has ever hosted. It will attract over 125,000 international visitors - more than the 2000 Olympics. Through the World Youth Day 2008 experience, young people from throughout the world will make a pilgrimage in faith, meet, and experience the love of God. World Youth Day is an invitation from the Pope to the youth of the world to celebrate their faith around a particular theme. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Maher is no stranger to events involving the Pope, or World Youth Day. When the Pope came to St. Louis, Mo. in 1999, Matt performed as part of the event. In 2000, Matt played at the steps of the World Youth Day in Rome, and in 2002, Matt’s “Litany of the Saints” was played at World Youth Day, in Toronto, Canada. On April 19 of 2008, Maher played as part of the Papal Rally in Yonkers, N.Y.

During World Youth Day 2008, Maher will be a part of nine events as part of the pre-World Youth Day pilgrimage, and the main World Youth Day festivities. Those performances are as follows: Thursday, July 10 at a Youth Arise youth rally in Brisbane, Australia; Friday, July 11 at a Youth Arise mass performance, also in Brisbane; Saturday, July 12 at DID08 Festival in Melbourne, Australia; Sunday, July 13 at Youth Arise with Rexband, in Brisbane; Wednesday, July 16 at both the Franciscan Friars’ “Come to the Water Youth Festival” at Bondi Beach, and a Sisters of Life Event called “Festival of Life,” in Sydney; Thursday, July 17 at a Life Teen Event, in Sydney; Friday, July 18 at Receive the Power Live, with Hillsong United and Darlene Zschech, in Sydney; and Saturday, July 19, Concert Park Series, also in Sydney.

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Matt Maher is still involved in local church ministry at **St. Timothy Catholic Community**, as well as working closely with two national Catholic ministries, *Life Teen*, a worldwide Catholic youth ministry, and *Adore Ministries*, based out of Houma, La. Maher shares his heart about what it means to be a part of such an impactful event, for youth worldwide. “To be part of World Youth Day is to be part of a movement of the Holy Spirit in the young church Universal; a chance for youth and young adults from every tribe and tongue to gather in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s a chance to realize the full potential of the gospel in our own hearts, and to be empowered by the love of God to bring the message of the risen Jesus Christ to every corner of the earth. It’s a chance to proclaim to the world this message, written over and over in the scriptures – ‘Be not afraid! God loves you!’ Never before in the history of the global family of man, do we need a vision of a life that is greater than our suffering. People are linked in our longing for meaning, purpose, and identity. It’s an honor to serve the vision the Holy Spirit gives to the Pope, as He prays for wisdom and lays out the vision for each World Youth Day. It was that way with Pope John Paul II, and it still is that way with Pope Benedict XVI.”

On Maher’s 12-track album, *Empty & Beautiful*, he breaks open the two simple words in the title, through songs that are both corporate and reflective; driving and soft; each one telling the story from a different perspective. *Empty & Beautiful* was co-produced by Matt Maher and Jeff Thomas, except for, “As It Is In Heaven,” which was produced by Ed Cash (Chris Tomlin, Bebo Norman, Bethany Dillon).

Maher describes the heart behind his Essential Records debut, “The realization of our own emptiness without God is both a moment of sadness, and a window to joy, which opens to something so much bigger and more beautiful than ourselves. To lay down one’s life for the Gospel in service of God and neighbor, is a reflection of the beauty of God. That is our charge as Christians, and that is where these songs came from.”

*Empty & Beautiful*, primarily written by Maher, comprises the following 12 tracks (track sequence subject to change): “Your Grace Is Enough,” “Look Like A Fool,” “For Your Glory,” “As It Is In Heaven,” “I Rejoice,” “Maranatha (Come Again),” “Great Things,” “Leave A Light On,” “Shine Like the Son,” “Unwavering,” “Lay It Down” (co-written with worship leader / songwriter, Brenton Brown) and “Empty & Beautiful.”

For upcoming tour dates and additional information on Matt Maher, visit [www.mattmahermusic.com](http://www.mattmahermusic.com).

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