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MATT MAHER TO PERFORM DURING POPE'S VISIT TO NEW YORK, ON SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 2008

Maher also to Perform during World Youth Day 2008, in Sydney, Australia; an Event that Will Mark Pope Benedict XVI's First Visit to Australia

(Nashville, Tenn.) April 16, 2008 – Singer/Songwriter/Worship Leader **Matt Maher**, who just released his Essential Records debut album, *Empty & Beautiful* (4/8/08), will perform when **Pope Benedict XVI** visits New York, on April 19. Maher, who is Catholic, will share his music in conjunction with the Pope's visit to **St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers, N.Y.**, where the Pope will preside over a youth rally; encouraging youth to seek vocations within the church. Maher is no stranger to events involving the Pope. In 1999, when the Pope came to St. Louis, Mo., Maher performed as part of the visit.

"I am extremely humbled, excited and honored to be invited to be a part of this event," shares Maher. "I think this visit is a significant turning point for the life of the youth of our Church, and a chance for young people to connect with the vision of Christian life that the Holy Spirit is breathing through the pontificate of Benedict XVI."

Maher is still involved in local church ministry at **St. Timothy Catholic Community**, in Mesa, Ariz., 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. With an incredible love for Jesus, and a heart to reach people for Christ, Maher seeks to meet people where they are.

In addition to being a part of the Pope's historic visit to the United States, Maher will play a major, musical role during the upcoming **World Youth Day 2008** event in Sydney, Australia. This year marks the first visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Australia. In 2000, Matt played at an event with Life Teen in the Piazza D'España (The Spanish Steps) during World Youth Day in Rome. In 2002, Matt's "Litany of the Saints" was played at World Youth Day, in Toronto, Canada.

During World Youth Day 2008, Maher will perform at the following events: 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, at Youth Festival Outdoor Concert Series, also in Sydney.

"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 nations all over the world 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* (released 4/4/08), 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.”

Born and raised in Newfoundland, Canada, Maher grew up in a strong culture comprised of two elements: music and tradition. Maher continues, “Music is part of the fabric of the culture there, similar to places like Louisiana or the Appalachian mountains; and over the years, not just Celtic music, but music of every kind. During his college years, Matt received a scholarship from the Jazz Department at Arizona State University, where he studied Jazz Piano.

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.

For a hi-res image of Matt Maher (photo credit, Micah Kandros), click:

http://www.essentialrecords.com/mattmaher/images/mattmaher_mainpress_hi.jpg

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