

WYD08 PILGRIMS' PROGRESS

world youth day sydney 2008



“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8)

Pilgrimage Saint

The Pilgrimage Saint this newsletter is St Nicholas of Myra, (also known as Santa Claus). Nicholas is the primary inspiration for the Christian figure of Santa Claus. He was a 4th century Christian bishop of Myra in Lycia, in present day Turkey. Nicholas had a reputation for secret gift-giving, hence being now commonly identified with Santa Claus. He was very religious from an early age and devoted his life entirely to Christianity. In Europe (more precisely the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria) he is still portrayed as a bearded bishop in canonical robes. The relics of St. Nicholas were transported to Bari in southern Italy by some enterprising Italian merchants and a basilica was constructed in 1087 to house them and the area became a pilgrimage site for the devout. There are many stories associated with his generosity to the poor and protector of the innocent. Upon hearing that a local man had fallen on such hard times that he was planning to sell his daughters into prostitution, Nicholas went by night to the house and threw three bags of gold in through the window, saving the girls from an evil life. These three golden bags, generously given in time of trouble, became the three golden balls that indicate a pawn broker's shop. Another example was during a voyage to the Holy Lands, a fierce storm blew up, threatening the ship. He prayed over it, and the storm calmed - hence his patronage of sailors and pilgrims. St Nicholas has been claimed as a patron saint of other groups, including archers, children, unmarried girls, brides, students, pawnbrokers, lawsuits lost unjustly and thieves. He is also the patron saint of Russia. He is represented by three golden balls on a book, and wearing a red cloak. His feast day is 6 December.

Over 550 from Chch going to WYD

At the time of writing, 556 people from the Diocese of Christchurch have registered online to attend World Youth Day in Sydney next year. (500 has been the goal for our diocese).

Those going from the diocese are members of the following pilgrimage groups:

Parish Groups: Papanui, Dallington, Burnside, Mairehau, Christchurch North and Halswell

College Groups: Villa Maria, Marian, St Bede's, St Thomas's and Roncalli.

Pastoral Area Groups: North Canterbury, Christchurch West, Mid Canterbury, South Canterbury (within Roncalli Group) and Westland (including John Paul II High School).

Other Groups: Diocesan Youth Team (2), Korean Community, and 15 family groups.

These pilgrims have paid a \$250 deposit to their group leader in October and are guaranteed a flight to Sydney. A total of almost 580 seats have been purchased by groups flying to Sydney, so there are still a few seats available within some groups. Once any remaining seats have been allocated late individuals can still attempt to find a seat independently—at market prices.

Group Leaders are currently informing members of their group about the remaining fee to the national travel agent which is due at the end of February. The fee to the Sydney organizers is due at the end of April. The total cost will come to about NZ\$1700.

To assist pilgrims from Christchurch Diocese get ready for WYD, practical and spiritual preparation sessions are planned. Both the Sydney and national WYD offices have prepared resources for this pastoral preparation.

Included in the pastoral preparation is a day trip to Temuka, the site where Blessed Mary MacKillop spent much of her time in New Zealand. The Temuka Pilgrimage will take place on Sunday 6 April 2008. The Diocese is subsidizing the cost of busses from Christchurch and Grey-mouth. Those not going to Sydney for WYD are also welcome to take part in this day. Mark this in your diaries now!



Partnership Programme

World Youth Day is an international event open to young people of every nation, race and economic status. Australia and NZ want as many young people as possible from our neighbours in the Pacific to take up the invitation from Pope Benedict XVI and attend WYD08 in Sydney.

Hosted in Oceania for the first time, WYD08 may be the only opportunity for young people from this region to attend such a gathering.

So, Christchurch Diocese is sponsoring 10 young Catholics from New Caledonia. They will participate in 'Days in the Diocese' in Chch before travelling to Sydney. We need about \$20,000 to cover airfares and registration fees. Parishes and individuals are encouraged to contribute to this worthy cause.

Sydney holds WYD International Preparatory Meeting

In mid October I attended the World Youth Day International Preparatory Meeting (IPM) in Sydney. Over 200 delegates from about 80 countries participated in this conference. Seven New Zealanders were in attendance.

Not only was the meeting an opportunity to learn more about WYD08, but it also assisted the organizers with their planning. I also used the IPM to promote Christchurch as a venue for Days in the Diocese.

The Pontifical Council for the Laity explained the Pope's Message for WYD and also the WYD08 theme. Also outlined were logistics and pilgrim services such as registration, transport, accommodation, food, and the programme of events. Catechesis and spiritually preparing pilgrims were both emphasized.

Representatives of the federal and state government explained security, immigration and health services.

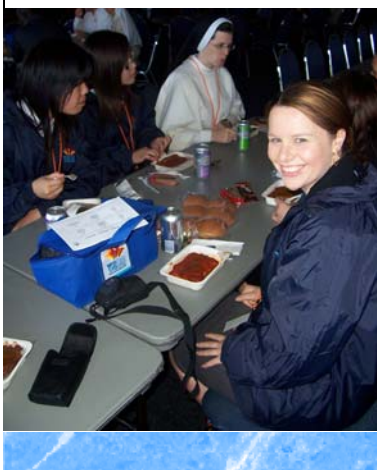
Delegates also visited WYD venues including Randwick Racecourse (site of the final Mass), Barangaroo in Darling Harbour (where the opening Mass and Papal welcome will occur), and the route of the Stations of the Cross around central Sydney. The conference dinner was held on a boat which cruised up Sydney Harbour - the same boat which the Pope will use during WYD. During the conference, a number of Masses and liturgies took place in the central city at St Mary's Cathedral, St Patrick's Church, and at the shrine of Blessed Mary MacKillop.

The international aspect of the Catholic Church was apparent in the use of the four official languages of WYD: English, Italian, Spanish and French, being used throughout the IPM. (Headsets and interpreters made communication easier).

I came away from the meeting confident that Sydney will organise a great World Youth Day.

Edmund.

Pictured below is Chelsea Pelham (of Chch, who is currently working in the WYD Office in Sydney), sampling one of the Pilgrim Meals during the IPM.



Other Notes:

Days in the Diocese is the part of WYD where overseas pilgrims are given the opportunity to experience something of life with the people in the church of the host country. This gives us Kiwis the opportunity to share our unique country and our warm hospitality by hosting pilgrims from various countries travelling to World Youth Day 2008. The programme for DiD may vary according to each parish/pastoral area but usually includes visits to local attractions and religious sites, celebrations of faith, social justice activities and hosting by local people. Hospitality and simplicity are central themes. The dates for Christchurch's Days in the Diocese are between 7 and 13 July 2008. The proposed spiritual theme for Days in the Dioceses is 'Together under the Southern Cross'. Recently, the number of overseas pilgrimage groups coming to Christchurch for Days in the Diocese has dropped to about 400. At the time of publication, parishes were being informed which overseas group they will be hosting. See your WYD Parish Contact Person if you want to get involved at a local level.

CDF grant notification: Over 100 people recently applied for a WYD subsidy from the Catholic Development Fund (CDF). In early December successful applicants were notified, as were their pilgrimage group leaders, parish contact people and parish priests. Over \$70,000 in funding will be forwarded by the CDF to recipients' group leaders in February. The CDF is to be congratulated for generously funding and supporting young people who would not otherwise have been able to attend WYD.

Did you know Joseph Houghton, Chch Diocese's WYD 'Kiwi Ambassador' has a blog at <http://www.worldyouthday.org.nz/?sid=81>. Joseph wants to introduce him and his blog to the pilgrims in your group and to generate more interest in WYD. Please feel free to email Joseph any WYD-related photos or any interesting news that could go on the blog.

At the final Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Mass of 2007, the WYD Adoration programme was launched in the Cathedral on 2 December. A very sacred time of adoration was followed by a Eucharistic procession. Parishes and colleges have now been distributed the WYD Adoration Kit, *The Holy Hour of Power*, and are now planning their own local adoration sessions.

The Journey of the WYD Cross and Icon continues around Australia. A detour of the Cross and Icon to Antarctica in January would bring to life the WYD theme of witnessing 'to the ends of the earth'.

Recently the new WYD08 Album was launched. Brooke Fraser and Hayley Westenra have tracks on the compilation. Please contact Edmund in the Diocesan WYD Office or your pilgrimage group leader for information in obtaining a copy of the CD. The diocese is keen to place a bulk order. Pilgrimage groups could also use this as a fundraiser.

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