



World Youth Day gathers thousands of young people from around the world to celebrate and learn about the Catholic faith and to build bridges of friendship and hope between continents, peoples and cultures. Initiated by Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day has been held every year since 1986 when the first event was held in Rome. Sydney will host the 10th international WYD and XXIII WYD overall. International World Youth Day has been held in Buenos Aires (1987), Santiago de Compostela (1989), Czestochowa (1991), Denver (1993), Manila (1995), Paris (1997), Rome (2000 Jubilee), Toronto (2002), and Cologne (2005).

While the Sydney program is still to be finalised, it will follow the pattern of previous World Youth Days. It will include the Arrival of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon of Our Lady on 1 July 2007 for a 12-month journey around Australia. The Cross and Icon will have travelled through Africa, south-east Asia and Oceania by this time.

During "Days in the Dioceses", from approximately 10-14 July 2008, pilgrims will visit Dioceses outside Sydney for events hosted by local church communities. The pilgrims from East Anglia will be visiting the Diocese of Townsville, in the northern part of the State of Queensland. Activities of the days, organised by the dioceses, will include:

- Meaningful encounters with the local Church community
- Cultural activities and visits to local sites of interest
- Prayer and visits to shrines
- Social service projects

World Youth Day week will then commence on Tuesday 15 July and will include:

Tuesday 15 July 08

Opening Mass, celebrated by Sydney Archbishop Cardinal George Pell followed by concert

Wednesday 16 - Friday 18 July 08

Catechesis (teaching) sessions every morning and Youth Festival events afternoon / evening

Thursday 17 July 08

Arrival and welcome of the Holy Father

Friday 18 July 08 - evening

Stations of the Cross - a re-enactment of Our Lord's Passion and Death

Saturday 19 July 08

Pilgrimage walk to Randwick Racecourse the site of the Closing Mass, evening Vigil with the Holy Father and sleep out "under the stars"

Sunday 20 July 08

Closing Mass with the Holy Father and concluding events

We have five pilgrims from our parish attending WYD in Sydney next year, they are, Caitlin Linthwaite, Katrina Darbyshire, Adam Pearson, Charlotte Dore and Benthania Dann. All five have been busy since Christmas 2006 raising funds to help attend WYD08 and wish to thank the parish for their generous support in buying, sponsoring or attending events.

The WYD08 theme, received from The Holy Father is:

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

This passage occurs after the death and resurrection of Jesus, just before his ascension to the Father. It represents the birth of the Church. The power Jesus promises to give is the very Spirit of God, the dynamic potential for transformation, the very condition of living according to the manner of Jesus' life. Only with the reception of the Spirit of Jesus can we exercise the authentic passion of the Heart of Christ, and hence by being set on fire with it do we as persons become witnesses to Him and everything for which He stands.