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World Youth Day Pilgrimage: evaluation report

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World Youth Day Pilgrimage

Evaluation Report

(September 2005)

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A SONG WRITTEN BY ONE OF THE WYD PILGRIMS

Gracie Senoir Jezu

You think that I don't know you, but you don't have a clue, we're closer then you think we are, we're closer, me and you.

Today I learnt a new thing, a funny fact or two who'd think we'd come together, just the way we do. It's hard to miss out Rory, but there's more then what you see and Greg don't beat around no bush, but will tell you blatantly.

Linda's the quite careful type, while Ange's bright and loud and with Harry belting out guitar, there's sure to be a crowd.

Jo enjoys all company, while Leah likes to sleep and if Kate can't have her gelati you know she's fit to weep. Donna's touched by simple things, and inspires me to sing, whereas Ben's so good he shows me up so I go to shop with Bing.

Tim's a legend with languages and Michelle's an awesome guide, Luke's become the trained masseuse, and with a trolley Joe can drive.

Liddy's a very honest type, with a smile plastered to his face, and Jacob's long distance running means he's never 2nd place.

Grace has amazing strength and Ashleigh C's got packing skill.

Crispo's famous whacking stick makes us subject to his will.

Laura's gorgeous fashion advice always hits the spot and take a seat with Fr Joe, you're sure to laugh a lot. The Bish always knows just what to say, but he'd better watch out for Pete. Pope Valentine the Second is a title hard to beat.

Jeremy really knows his stuff with fabric, needle and thread, whilst Hannah's covered by the bruises from her bed.

Mother Mary-Anne McShane's always looking after Grace and Nicholas's eye spy skill leaves us all with a lost face.

John and Anne just tag along, when Tiana's in the thick.

Fr Michael's witty calls, have got us thinking quick.

Fr Colin's dryest humour is always greeted by Sheleen, who's a guru on guitar, whereas Daniel prefers Queen.

Ashleigh's bag sure weighs a lot, but it's all in control.

Gabby's all for singing up when Edda's being a troll. Mark's all keen to share a joke, with Kim 'bout Francis and Clare.

James laughs quietly to himself, while David's falling out of his chair And as for me I wrote this song for a very simple reason.

You guys are the bomb, thanks for EVERYTHING!!!

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BACKGROUND

Importance of Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is important for Christians. It was a central feature of both the Old and New Testaments. It is practised by many of the great religions of the world. Pilgrimage is based on a strong attachment to place in the spiritual lives of people. It fulfils a human desire to see and feel a person's faith origins. Pilgrimage sites offer stories both of saints and of God interacting with ordinary people. It also draws the pilgrim into an atmosphere of corporate spirituality, while allowing scope for individual response to God. At a pilgrimage site, a grace is encountered which can transform and enrich a person's assumptions, leading to new knowledge and friendship with God.

Pilgrimage Program for Secondary Students in the Diocese of Lismore

The Catholic Education Office provides several pilgrimage opportunities for senior students in parish secondary schools. The pilgrimage program is a significant part of a comprehensive student faith leadership program currently being developed for parish secondary students in the Diocese of Lismore. It is hoped that offering these pilgrimage opportunities will enrich students' faith lives.

World Youth Day Pilgrimage Program

The World Youth Day pilgrimage program was first held in Rome during 1984. It involves travelling to a number of sites of religious significance and meeting the Pope.

In 2002, the Catholic Education Office was asked, by the Most Rev. G. Jarrett, Bishop of Lismore, to ensure that students from parish secondary schools were able to participate in this experience, which was held in Toronto, Canada.

In 2005, the Catholic Education Office again supported 24 students from parish secondary schools to participate in the next World Youth Day pilgrimage, which was held in Cologne, Germany.

Evaluation Process

This report summarises the results from activities undertaken to evaluate students' feedback about participating in the 2005 World Youth Day pilgrimage. These evaluation activities explored the following:

- The impact of participating on students' attitudes towards various aspects of being a Catholic;
- Students' feedback about the preparations for their WYD pilgrimage;
- Students' feedback about their experiences during the WYD pilgrimage; and
- Students' perceptions about how participating helped them with various aspects of being a Catholic.

METHODS

Sample

Eleven young men and 13 young women from Lismore parish secondary schools participated in the 2005 WYD pilgrimage.

Evaluation Tools & Procedures

Baseline Attitude Survey

Before beginning their WYD pilgrimage, the students attended a formal workshop to help them prepare for their travels. As part of this workshop, they were asked to complete a survey (see Appendix A) about their attitudes regarding the importance of various aspects of life as a Catholic. Most of the survey questions were divided between four themes, each of which comprised a number of subscales, as outlined in the table below. Each subscale comprised four items that students rated on a 1-10 scale, where 1 represented “Not Important” and 10 represented “Very Important”.

Themes	Subscales
The Church community in the Diocese of Lismore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of the Bishop and priests in the Diocese• Involvement with young people in the Diocese• Sense of belonging to the Diocese
Living a life of faith as a Catholic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Importance placed on being a Catholic• Understanding of the importance of the sacrament of penance/reconciliation in the life of a Catholic• Understanding of the Eucharist in the life of a Catholic• Importance of Saints in your life• Relationship with Jesus Christ• Knowledge of what Catholics believe
Belonging to the universal Catholic Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of being connected to the Catholic Church in Australia and around the world• Knowledge of the role of the Pope in the Church• Willingness to get involved in social justice and/or service in the Church• Knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church
Belonging to a Catholic school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of what makes a school Catholic• Commitment to strengthen your school as a Catholic community• Confidence to speak up for Catholic beliefs when with your peers

Two final open-ended questions asked the students about the importance of their Catholicism to them and how they would explain a WYD pilgrimage to a friend.

Post Attitude Survey

Following the completion of their WYD pilgrimage activities, the students attended a three-day debriefing workshop. As part of this workshop, they were asked to complete the above survey for a second time.

Pilgrimage Feedback Survey

Also as part of this workshop, the students were asked to complete another survey (see Appendix B), inviting them to reflect on their WYD Pilgrimage experience and the impact it had on them. This survey began with eight open-ended questions seeking students' reflections on:

- What they liked most about participating in the WYD Pilgrimage;
- What they liked least about participating in the WYD Pilgrimage;
- What was most helpful in the preparation activities leading up to the WYD Pilgrimage;
- What they liked least about the preparation activities leading up to the WYD Pilgrimage;
- What they learned through participating in the WYD Pilgrimage;
- What they would do or think about differently as a result of being a WYD Pilgrim;
- Things that would make the WYD Pilgrim program better; and
- Any other aspects on which they wished to comment.

The next two questions asked students to rate their overall WYD experience and the support they received in preparing for it. Students rated these items on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represented “Terrible”, 5 represented “OK” and 10 represented “Fantastic”.

The final question asked students to rate how much they felt their WYD pilgrimage had helped them with the following issues – on a 1-4 scale, where 1 represented “Not much” and 4 represented “Lots”:

- Becoming stronger about being a Catholic;
- Sharing your faith with peers;
- A feeling of belonging to the bigger Catholic Church;
- Recognising the presence of Christ in your life;
- The importance of participating in the sacraments of reconciliation and Eucharist;
- Gaining more self-confidence in yourself as a young adult;
- Being a faith leader in your school; and
- Appreciation of being part of the Diocese of Lismore.

During the WYD activities, Sydney was announced as the location for the next WYD pilgrimage. Therefore, at the end of this Pilgrimage Feedback Survey, the students were also asked to record any suggestions they had for the Sydney organisers – based on their recent experiences.

Analyses

Baseline and Post Attitude Surveys

Quantitative Questions

Students’ ratings for the four questions within each subscale were averaged to give a single rating for each subscale within each theme. Students’ baseline and post ratings for each subscale were compared using paired t-tests.

Qualitative Questions

Students’ responses to the open-ended questions were coded into themes, with patterns and numbers in each theme compared between the two surveys.

Pilgrimage Feedback Survey

Quantitative Questions

Descriptive analyses were conducted on the students’ ratings.

Qualitative Questions

Students’ responses to the open-ended questions were coded into themes.

RESULTS

Response Rate

All three surveys were completed by all 24 students participating in the WYD pilgrimage, giving a 100% response rates on all the evaluation instruments.

Sample Characteristics

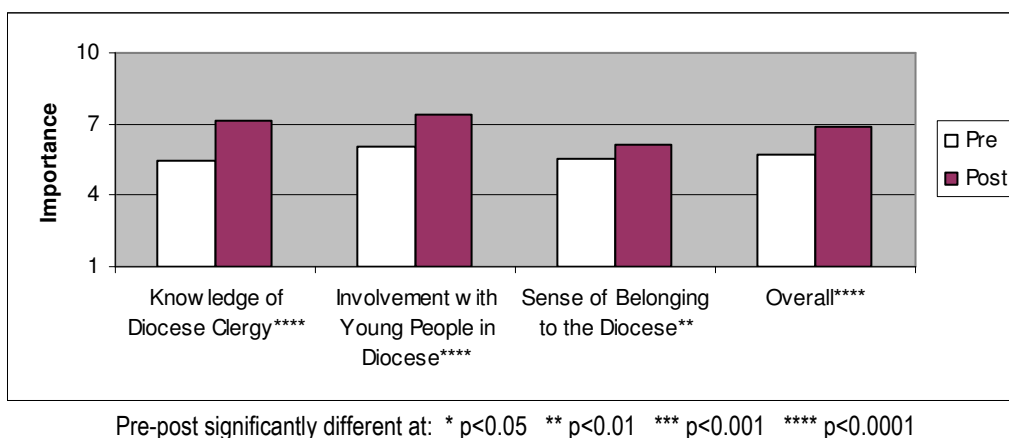
The 24 students included 13 females and 11 males. Most students were aged 16 years, although ages ranged from 14 to 17 years, with an average of 16.2 years.

Impact on Students' Attitudes Towards being a Catholic

Attitudes towards the Church Community in the Diocese of Lismore

As shown in Graph 1, students showed consistent increases in their ratings of importance on all three subscales relating to the church community in the Diocese of Lismore. The greatest increases were in students' knowledge of the Bishop and priests and their involvement with other young people in the Diocese. There were no significant differences between male and female students' ratings in either survey.

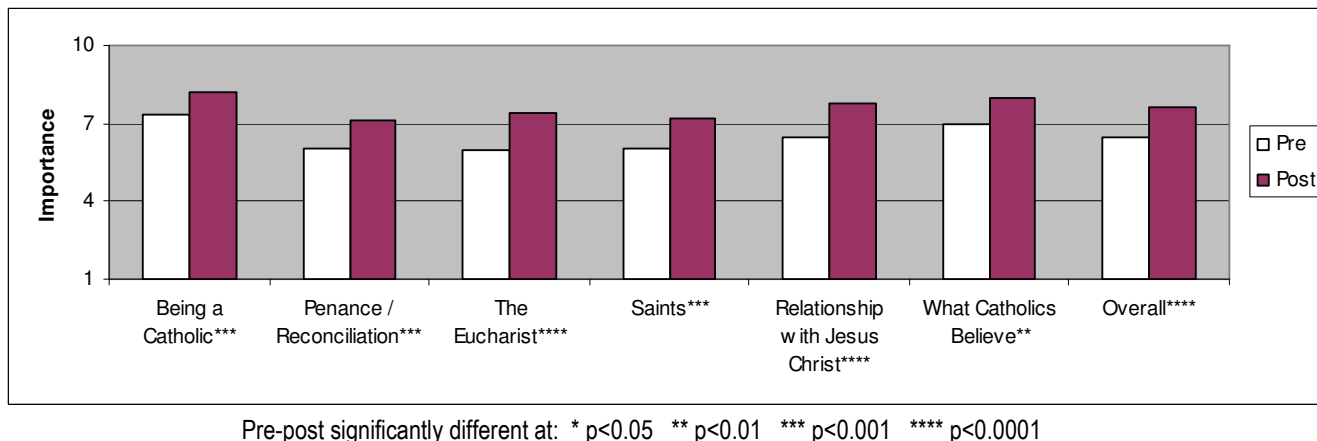
Graph 1: Students' ratings of subscales in the "Church Community in the Diocese of Lismore" theme



Attitudes towards Living a Life of Faith as a Catholic

As shown in Graph 2, students showed consistent increases in their ratings of the importance of all six subscales relating to living a life of faith as a Catholic. The greatest increases were in students' understanding of the Eucharist in the life of a Catholic and their relationship with Jesus Christ. There were no significant differences between male and female students' ratings in either survey.

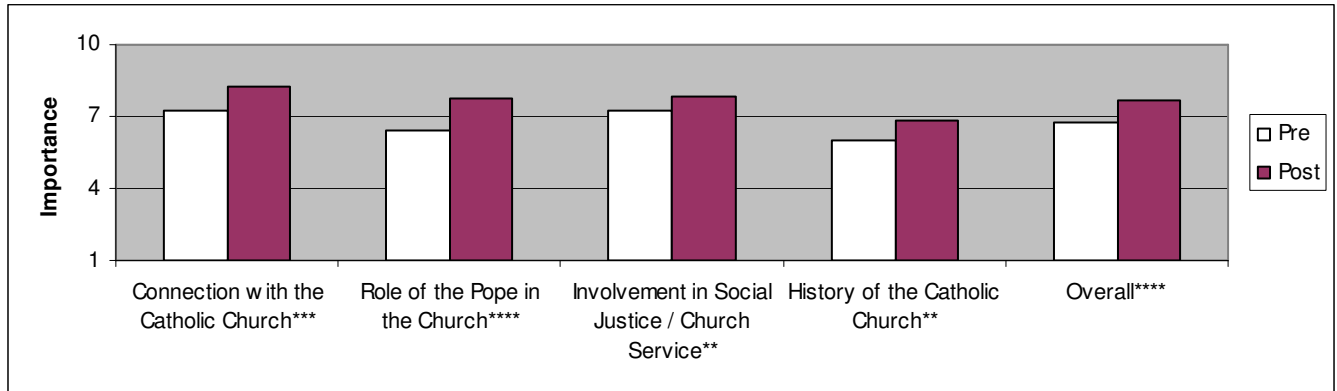
Graph 2: Students' ratings of subscales in the "Living a Life of Faith as a Catholic" theme



Attitudes towards Belonging to the Universal Catholic Church

As shown in Graph 3, students showed consistent increases in their ratings of the importance of all four subscales relating to belonging to the universal Catholic Church. The greatest increases were in students' knowledge of the role of the Pope in the Church and their level of connection with the Catholic Church in Australia and around the world. There were no significant differences between male and female students' ratings in either survey.

Graph 3: Students' ratings of subscales in the "Belonging to the Universal Catholic Church" theme

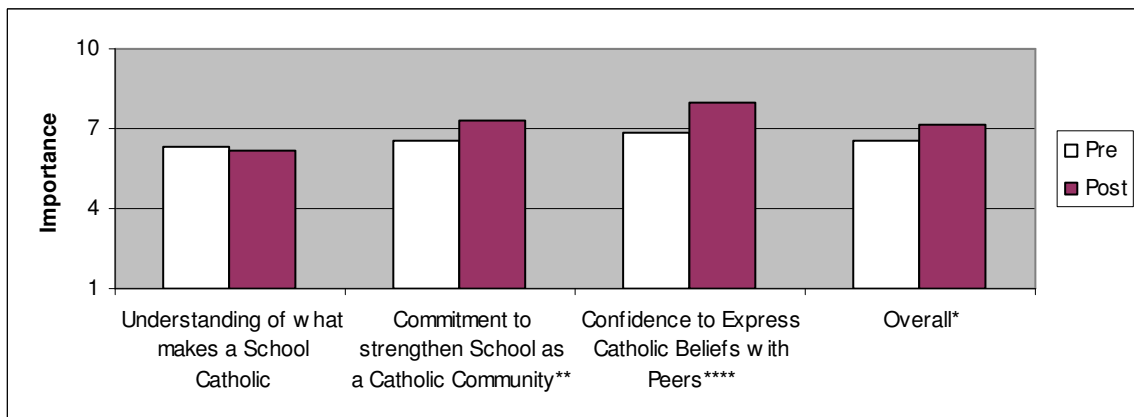


Pre-post significantly different at: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001 **** p<0.0001

Attitudes towards Belonging to a Catholic School

As shown in Graph 4, students showed consistent increases in their ratings of importance on two of the three subscales relating to belonging to a Catholic school: regarding their commitment to strengthen their school as a Catholic community and especially their confidence to speak up for Catholic beliefs when with their peers. There were no significant differences between male and female students' ratings in either survey.

Graph 4: Student ratings of the three subscales in the "Belonging to a Catholic School" theme



Pre-post significantly different at: * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001 **** p<0.0001

Perceived Importance of Being a Catholic

Thematic analyses of students' responses to the question "How is being a Catholic important to you?" identified 10 themes that were evident, in similar proportions, in both the baseline and post survey responses. As shown in the table below, the main ways in which students' faith was important to them were providing a sense of belonging and security, enriching their lives and providing moral guidance. There were no significant differences between male and female students' responses in either survey.

Theme	N responses		Example Response
	Baseline	Post	
Sense of belonging	16	13	<i>It gives me strength and purpose to know that I am part of a universal Church, of something bigger than myself.</i>
Sense of security or support	14	17	<i>It gives me stability in my life knowing that there is someone up there who loves me and will guide me through life so one day I can meet him in heaven with my dad and other loved ones.</i>
Life enrichment	14	12	<i>Having a relationship with Jesus makes me stronger and wiser person as I always think about Jesus before I make a decision.</i>
Moral guidance	14	13	<i>Catholicism gives people a rock; a basic morality that is aimed at aiding humanity, not just themselves.</i>
Self-Reflection	7	6	<i>It provides me with time-out every week.</i>
Expression of belief system	5	12	<i>To be able to express my faith comfortably with other young people in different ways is very important.</i>
Obligation to family	3	3	<i>My parents are also Catholic.</i>
Provides opportunities	3	6	<i>Gives me great opportunities such as World Youth Day.</i>
Learning	3	5	<i>I enjoy learning about its history.</i>
Enables individuality	2	0	<i>It makes me unique.</i>

Understanding of the World Youth Day Pilgrimage

Thematic analyses of students' responses to the question "How would you explain to a friend what a World Youth Day pilgrimage is about?" identified 12 themes that were evident, in different proportions, in both the baseline and post survey responses. There were no significant differences between male and female students' responses in either survey.

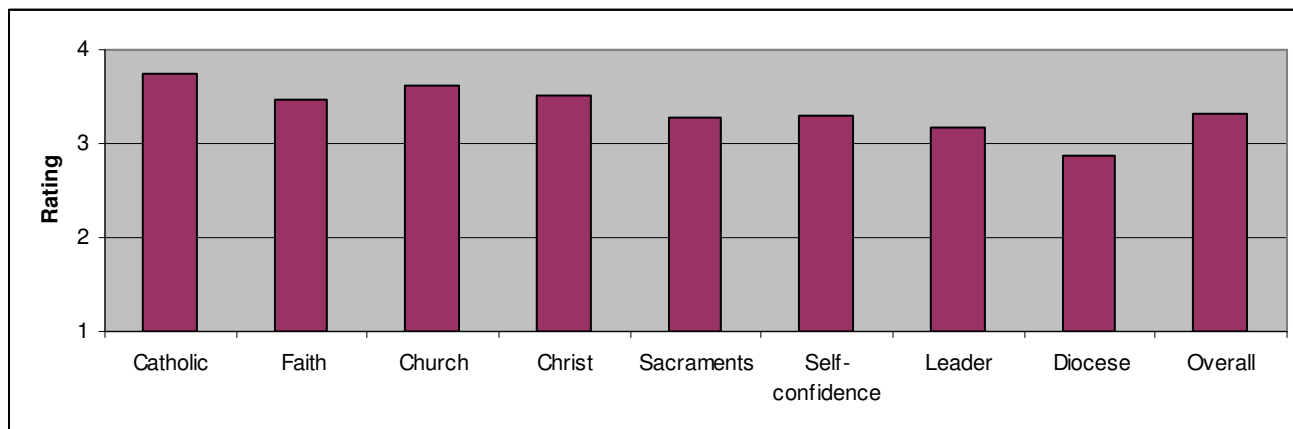
Theme	N responses		Example Response
	Baseline	Post	
Celebrating & strengthening faith	17	16	<i>The WYD is a journey that strengthens young people's faith, understanding and relationship with God.</i>
Togetherness & sharing	15	14	<i>It is about millions of young people uniting and witnessing the strength of the universal Church.</i>
Meeting other people	12	8	<i>It is a great opportunity to meet many other young people of Australia and the rest of the world who share the same beliefs as you.</i>
Deeper understanding of faith	10	16	<i>A pilgrimage made by young people to strengthen their faith and understanding of the Catholic Church and religion.</i>
Cross-culturalisation	9	9	<i>The experience of all the different cultures and witnessing other ways of worship has provided me with an insight on how people celebrate the Catholic religion and Jesus.</i>
A journey	7	9	<i>A journey, not only a physical journey but a spiritual and self-searching journey...to find out about and experience other cultures.</i>
Self- development	6	11	<i>To find one's true self, true beliefs, true morals, true faith...to accept oneself and others.</i>
Places of significance	5	5	<i>A group of young people travel to various areas in the world where we celebrate being a Catholic.</i>
Mass with the Pope	4	6	<i>To attend a gathering lead by the Pope.</i>
Practising faith	4	10	<i>Learning the different ways to praise God whilst teaching others at the same time.</i>
Significant impact	3	7	<i>It's about a million Catholic youths getting together.</i>
Dealing with challenges	1	4	<i>It's not just for those strong and confident in their Catholic faith, but for those seeking answers or questioning their faith.</i>

Perceived Impact on Students

Help with being a Catholic

As shown in Graph 5, students consistently felt that the WYD pilgrimage had helped them “A Fair Bit” or “Lots” with various aspects of their Catholicism. Aspects the pilgrimage helped most with were “Becoming stronger about being a Catholic” and “A feeling of belonging to the bigger Catholic Church”, whereas the aspect least helped by the pilgrimage was “Appreciation of being part of the Diocese of Lismore”.

Graph 5: Students’ ratings of how the WYD Pilgrimage helped on eight aspects of Catholicism



Things learned through participating in the WYD Pilgrimage

The students reported having learned a number of things as a result of participating in the WYD pilgrimage – with a total of 51 comments written (see Appendix C for actual comments).

Change in thoughts and actions as a result of being a WYD Pilgrim

The students reported many ways in which being a WYD pilgrim had changed their thoughts and actions – with a total of 44 comments written (see Appendix C for actual comments).

Feedback about the Preparations

Overall, students were very positive about the support they received in preparing for the pilgrimage – with an average rating of 8.2, out of a possible 10.

Thematic analyses of students’ responses to the question “What was most helpful for you in the activities leading up to the WYD pilgrimage?” identified five themes (see Appendix C for actual comments):

- Getting to know others (16 responses)
- Knowing what to expect (10 responses)
- Support group (3 responses)
- Particular meetings (3 responses)
- Learning (2 responses)

Thematic analyses of students’ responses to the question “What did you like least about the preparation and activities leading up to the WYD pilgrimage?” identified seven themes (see Appendix C for actual comments):

- Expectations (6 responses)
- Regularity of meetings (6 responses)
- Length of meetings (5 responses)
- Number of meetings (2 responses)
- Outsiders (2 responses)

Feedback about Students' WYD Pilgrimage Experiences

Overall, students were very positive about their WYD Pilgrimage experiences – with an average rating of 8.6, out of a possible 10.

Thematic analyses of students' responses to the question "What did you like most about participating in the WYD pilgrimage?" identified seven themes (see Appendix C for actual comments):

- Sense of belonging (17 responses)
- Support (9 responses)
- Mass (9 responses)
- Destinations (8 responses)
- Cross-culturalisation (8 responses)
- Faith deepening (5 responses)

However, students also made 42 comments in response to the question "What did you like least about participating in the WYD pilgrimage?" and 43 comments in response to the question "What would make the WYD pilgrimage better?" (see Appendix C for actual comments). The majority of these comments are covered in the suggestions for the Sydney WYD organisers, as detailed in the section below.

Advice for Sydney WYD Organisers

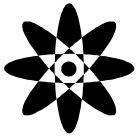
Thematic analyses of students' responses to the question "What advice would you give the Sydney WYD organisers?" identified seven themes, relating to a total of 68 comments (see Appendix C for actual comments):

- General organisation (20 responses)
- Food (14 responses)
- Transport (12 responses)
- Events (8 responses)
- Security (6 responses)
- The Pope (5 responses)
- Accommodation (3 responses)

CONCLUSION

The results described above clearly demonstrate that the students involved found the WYD pilgrimage to be a very enjoyable and rewarding activity. Participating in the pilgrimage had a significant and positive impact on a wide range of students' attitudes towards their lives as Catholics and was perceived to have helped them with most aspects of understanding their faith. Students have also provided feedback on a range of aspects of their pilgrimage which will be helpful for organisers in the preparation and orchestration of the Sydney WYD.

APPENDIX A: BASELINE & POST ATTITUDE SURVEY



WORLD YOUTH DAY

Pre/Post Student Survey

Birthday
 School Day Month
 ID Code - /

I am: Female Male

Age: _____

Dear Pilgrims,

Please think carefully about this questionnaire. It is not a test and nobody is able to be identified. What it gives us is a chance to know realistically your thoughts and experiences on a number of things that are important to us as Catholics.

We will invite you to fill the questionnaire in again at the end of the pilgrimage. This will offer us another way of understanding what sort of an impact the pilgrimage has on your lives as Catholics.

So please answer the questions truthfully with regard to what you think and feel at the moment.

In the boxes beside the following questions, please assign a rating to each statement using this scale:									
RATING SCALE									
Not Important		Moderately Important						Very Important	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

1. ABOUT THE CHURCH COMMUNITY IN THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE

Using the 0 – 10 rating scale above, how would you rate your:

(a) Knowledge of the Bishop and priests in the Diocese

- i) I would like to talk with the Bishop about things that are important to me
- ii) I would like have some worthwhile discussions with my parish priest
- iii) I want to know more about the Diocese
- iv) I want to be more involved in working with youth in the Diocese

- (b) Involvement with young people in the Diocese
 - i) Genuine discussions about faith matters with other young Catholics is important to me
 - ii) I want more social activities with other committed young Catholics
 - iii) I want more faith related activities with other young people in the Diocese
 - iv) I try to mix with others who love their faith like I do

- (c) Sense of belonging to the Diocese of Lismore
 - i) I would like to know more about the Diocese and its parishes
 - ii) My family understands a lot about the Diocese and its people
 - iii) It means a lot to me that the Diocesan leaders care about me and my faith growth
 - iv) My schools have taught me about the Diocese

2. ABOUT LIVING A LIFE OF FAITH AS A CATHOLIC

On the same scale, how would you rate yourself on the following? (write a number for each)

- (a) The importance you place on being a Catholic
 - i) I have spoken up for Catholic beliefs with my peers
 - ii) Being a Catholic is a central part of my life
 - iii) I am prepared to make sacrifices for my Catholic faith
 - iv) I am proud to be a Catholic

- (b) Your understanding of the importance of the sacrament of penance/reconciliation in the life of a Catholic
 - i) We need to talk more about sin in our lives
 - ii) I need to feel forgiven and accepted by God
 - iii) It is important for me to go to the sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation
 - iv) I want to understand more about the sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation

- (c) Your understanding of the Eucharist in the life of a Catholic
 - i) I go to Mass because it helps me feel closer to Jesus
 - ii) I want to know more about the Mass
 - iii) Catholics need to appreciate the Eucharist
 - iv) It helps my faith to pray with the Bible

- (d) The importance of Saints in your life
- i) People need saints to be inspired in their faith
 - ii) I ask that saint for support quite often
 - iii) I like reading about saints
 - iv) Saints are important in my school

- (e) Your relationship with Jesus Christ
- i) I find strength in knowing that Jesus loves me
 - ii) Talking with Jesus makes me happy
 - iii) I feel close to Jesus in the Eucharist
 - iv) I like to read bible stories of Jesus

- (f) Your knowledge of what Catholics believe
- i) I want to know more about what Catholics believe
 - ii) Jesus Christ is truly the redeemer of the world
 - iii) It is important to know how to live a Catholic way of life
 - iv) Living in the Holy Spirit is spiritually life giving

3. ABOUT BELONGING TO THE UNIVERSAL CATHOLIC CHURCH

- (a) Your sense of being connected to the Catholic Church in Australia and around the world?
- i) Catholics around Australia have a unique bond of unity
 - ii) I like the fact that I belong to a world wide Church
 - iii) I believe that I should do things to support Catholics who are persecuted or in poverty
 - iv) Faith is strengthened by being part of wider Church gatherings

- (b) Your knowledge of the role of the Pope in the Church
- i) The primacy of the Pope's authority in the Church keeps us faithful to Jesus Christ
 - ii) We need to listen to the Pope because he has divine assistance to lead the Church
 - iii) I would like to know more about Pope Benedict XVI
 - iv) The Pope inspires and guides me

(c) Your willingness to get involved in social justice and/or service in the Church

- i) I like being involved in social justice and service to others
- ii) I enjoy caring for others, even kids I don't like in my school
- iii) We need to see Christ in each other
- iv) I like the opportunities given to me at school to work for marginalised, impoverished or poorly treated

(d) Your knowledge of the history of the Catholic Church

- i) I understand how the Irish have shaped Australian Catholicism
- ii) Church history is important to me
- iii) The Church is the body of Christ
- iv) I am proud of the history of the Church

4. ABOUT BELONGING TO A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

(a) Understanding of what makes a school Catholic

- i) Religious education classes help you to be a strong Catholic
- ii) Jesus Christ and his church are important in my school
- iii) Prayer and the sacrament are the life blood of Catholic schools
- iv) Catholic schools teach you to live your faith in daily life

(b) Commitment to strengthen your school as a Catholic community

- i) It is important for me to be involved in faith activities that strengthen my school as a Catholic community
- ii) I know what should be done to make my school more Catholic
- iii) I am comfortable in leading prayers and participating in school liturgies
- iv) I am confident to discuss my faith at school

(c) Your confidence to speak up for Catholic beliefs when with your peers

- i) I think it is important to challenge my peers if they have speak against Catholic beliefs
- ii) I would like to better understand what the Catholic church believes and teaches
- iii) I trust that my peers accept me when I share my beliefs
- iv) My friendship with Jesus Christ gives me strength to speak the truth

We would like you to take your time and think carefully about your answers to these questions. In doing so you can learn a lot about your own experiences and what you believe. From our point of view it helps us to learn what difference the Pilgrimage has had on your life.

1. How is being a Catholic important for you?

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2. How would you explain to a friend what a World Youth Day pilgrimage is about?

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APPENDIX B: PILGRIMAGE FEEDBACK SURVEY

ID Code

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Birthday
Day Month



WORLD YOUTH DAY (WYD)

Student Evaluation

I am Female Male Age: _____

1. What did you like most about participating in the World Youth Day Pilgrimage?

2. What did you like least about participating in the WYD pilgrimage?

3. What was most helpful for you in the activities leading up to WYD?

4. What did you like least about the preparation activities and lead up to the WYD pilgrimage?

5. What did you learn through participating in the World Youth Day Pilgrimage?

6. What will you do or think about differently as a result of being a World Youth Day Pilgrim?

7. What would make the World Youth Day Pilgrim program better?

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8. Any other comments you'd like included?

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9. Overall, how would you rate the World Youth Day experience? *(circle one number)*

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Terrible			Was OK					Fantastic		

10. Overall, how would you rate the support you received in preparing for and participating in the World Youth Day pilgrimage? *(circle one number)*

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Terrible			OK					Fantastic		

11. Overall, how much do you think the World Youth Day Pilgrimage helped you with each of the following? *(circle one number for each)*

	Not much	A little	A fair bit	Lots
Becoming stronger about being a Catholic	1	2	3	4
Sharing your faith with peers	1	2	3	4
A feeling of belonging to the bigger Catholic Church	1	2	3	4
Recognising the presence of Christ in you life	1	2	3	4
The importance of participating in the sacraments of reconciliation & Eucharist	1	2	3	4
Gaining more self confidence in yourself as a young adult	1	2	3	4
Being a faith leader in your school	1	2	3	4
Appreciation of being part of the Diocese of Lismore	1	2	3	4

Thanks very much for your time and feedback

APPENDIX C: QUALITATIVE RESPONSES FROM PILGRIMAGE FEEDBACK SURVEY

1. What did you like most about participating in the WYD pilgrimage?

Sense of Belonging (17)

- Meeting as many fellow Catholics along the way.
- The sense of belonging to something bigger.
- The friendships we made.
- Knowing that there are many young Aussies who love God as I do, not only in Australia but across the world.
- Feeling part of a universal belonging to a religion.
- Being able to share something so big with so many different people.
- Connecting with youth around the world and within my group.
- Growing bonds in religious and also non-religious ways.
- Meeting other people.
- The sense of unity and diversity in our church was absolutely mind-blowing.
- Meeting both local and international Catholics.
- Being on a pilgrimage with so many beautiful people.
- Being with a group of like minded people.
- I met new people who shared the same faith that I have.
- Meeting so many other young people who share our faith.
- The universality of the Church was an eye-opener.
- The ability to communicate and see people from Australia and around the world united in the name of Jesus.

Support (9)

- The support and care from fellow students and carers.
- Knowing I have a lot of support in our Supervisors and peers on the journey.
- The group from Lismore was wonderful, with different personalities coming together.
- Strengthening the relationships within the group.
- Encountering the hardships and being able to know you had the support of peers.
- Meeting other people from our group, Australia and the world - getting to know people on a more personal level.
- Being with such a good yet diverse range of people that you got to know really well.
- The experience of meeting new people and participating in the major events.
- The people involved and the people who came on the trip highlighted my experience.

Mass (9)

- The final vigil and Mass with the Pope – seeing the head of our church standing in front of me was really amazing, and sometimes even a bit emotional.
- Listening to Pope's homily during Final Mass.
- Mass in St Peters.
- Spending time with the Bishop.
- Mass at the Vatican.
- The atmosphere was unbelievable at the Papal Mass.
- Experiencing Mass in the beautiful and very unique churches in Italy, Vatican City and Germany.
- Having the Holy Father reinforce the unity was special.
- Getting so close to the Pope was amazing.

Destinations (8)

- The places I've seen.
- Just being overseas.
- The time spent in Assisi was so peaceful and relaxing...the churches were magnificent...the whole place had an air of spirituality about it.
- Catechesis in Koln and Essen.
- Saw parts of the world I may never have been able to see.
- Assisi because of the calm environment, it helped me reflect on being a Catholic and strengthened my faith.
- Looking at all the churches.
- Seeing famous churches first hand was great.

Cross-culturalisation (8)

- The experience of hundreds of thousands of people from different cultures and languages coming together in faith and unity was inspiring.
- The variety of cultures.
- Experiencing different views of faith.
- Being able to celebrate my faith with heaps of different people from all over the world.
- Experiencing different ways of living.
- It was interesting exploring the cultural differences.
- Experiencing new cultures and values.
- Meeting other cultures and seeing how they act differently to us.

Faith deepening (5)

- The journey of faith and discovery.
- Exploring my faith through various types of worship.
- My faith deepened.
- Learning about Church, history, architecture, beliefs and procedures.
- Because it strengthened my faith.

The Journey (2)

- The journey, not just the destination, that offered so many wonders.
- Unforgettable memories.

2. What did you like least about participating in the WYD pilgrimage?

- The restrictions placed upon the group – understandably precautions though they were, I felt the lack of freedom somewhat hindered our full enjoyment of the journey.
- I didn't really like Essen at the time but faith brought us all closer together.
- The miscommunication and lack of organisation in Koln.
- How we had to move from C2 to Ely in Pope Benedict's mass.
- The general hurry of the trip was irritating.
- Often I felt rushed and forever on a tight schedule.
- We didn't get enough sleep.
- We missed out on heaps of activities (especially in Cologne), which could have enabled us to meet people from different countries.
- Lack of sleep.
- Distances we sometimes had to walk.
- The schedule being changed due to people being late or problems from the WYD organisers (i.e. missing out on opening Mass).
- The basic living conditions – meals, showers and lack of privacy.
- The lack of sleep – it was challenging to be so tired but still participate keenly and without snapping at people.
- The lack of freedom - not being able to go and meet other countries.
- Lack of organisation of events.
- There was no freedom for 'responsible adults', as the Supervisors tried to call us.
- Being part of a large group sometimes made me feel like I had no 'me time', to reflect for myself and really take in what I had experienced.
- Rushing around Rome and not being able to see more sessions during WYD week.
- Having to stick to such a tight schedule and move on too quickly sometimes.
- The crowds were a bit of a shock but you get used to it.
- The showering in some places was hard, a big culture shock.
- The strict timeline of things to do became extremely tiring and then I couldn't enjoy and appreciate the places we went to.
- Not enough of getting to know each other.
- The lack of organisation.
- The disgusting variety of food – no fruit, all sausage.
- Being constantly tired and worn out.
- The infrequency of food – the amount and type of food.
- Lack of sleeping space and comfort.

- Some Supervisors, e.g. older crowd were not as in-touch or helpful.
- The lack of privacy.
- The amount of travelling and heavy schedule on such a small time scale left me feeling drained and not able to enjoy some parts to the fullest.
- The people getting annoyed with each other – it was always going to happen.
- Excessive waiting – for food we didn't get and events we didn't get into.
- Being too rushed – didn't get time to take it all in.
- The feeling of exhaustion and being rushed around
- Not being able to reflect on where we had been and what I had seen, e.g. at St Peter's Basilica we were rushed so quickly I couldn't soak up the different atmosphere.
- Often being tired, especially from jet lag, therefore not being able to enjoy things as much.
- Inadequate ability to cater for the amount of people.
- The lack of personal space and choice.
- Difficulty in travelling as a group because we don't actually get what we want, e.g. moving to the back during WYD Mass when I didn't want to.
- Staying in Essen was a big low-light for me.
- The food was very disappointing.

3. What was most helpful for you in activities leading up to the WYD pilgrimage?

Getting to Know Others (16)

- Getting to know the group
- Getting to know everyone – as close as you get on the pilgrimage, you have to know the others at least a little before you go anyway.
- Getting to know everybody
- Being able to recognise the friendly faces at the airport and before we left.
- Meeting everyone – if we were all thrown in on this trip with a bunch of randoms it would have made it very uncomfortable.
- We met each other before which was very beneficial - it meant that you weren't travelling overseas with strangers.
- Being able to spend time with the people I would be travelling with...and get to know them before leaving.
- The activities of getting to know the other people within the group.
- Getting to know everyone that was going before we took off, gave me a sense of closeness in the group and made me feel I could share my inner most thoughts and feelings with them.
- Being able to meet people who are going on the pilgrimage...wasn't so hard getting to know them while on the pilgrimage.
- The 'get to know you' weekend – without that, it would have been extremely awkward and uncomfortable at the airport and the beginning of the trip.
- Getting to know everyone was exceptionally good because it led to a closer relationship with each other on pilgrimage.
- Knowing the group beforehand enabled for a stronger bond.
- Getting to know people.
- Getting to know everybody's names and their personality traits.
- Knowing everyone's name and what they are like.

Knowing What to Expect (10)

- Being told about people's personal space and how we need to be mindful of others.
- We got a lot of information which prepared us for what was to come.
- The final gathering in July really got us ready and prepared us for what we were going to experience with 40 other people.
- Preparing you on what to bring and expect.
- Having meetings and knowing what to expect.
- The packing/preparing night.
- The travelling hints – they really helped you in advance of what to expect and pack, etc.
- The description of WYD and preparation was great.
- Travel tips.
- It was important to know what to expect from everyone.

Support Group (3)

- Constant contact with a Leader.
- Getting parents involved.
- What a Leader said at every meeting helped me think about this trip, and will make me think about it for the rest of my life.

Particular Meetings (2)

- Night prayer and team building activities on Palm Sunday weekend.
- The first meeting – the Palm Sunday gathering – I met the other pilgrims.

Learning (2)

- Learning about the aim of the WYDs and previous WYDs.
- Learning to help and trust each other.

4. What did you like least about the preparation and activities leading up to the WYD pilgrimage?

Regularity of Meetings (6)

- Waiting!
- I think we had an overdose of community building activities.
- The big gap between meetings.
- Didn't get to see much of each other.
- The preparation was quite long over many, many months...it was hard to remember events/names/faces from previous activities and days.
- Maybe seeing each other more?

Expectations (6)

- Everyone saying how terrible it's going to be and how hard it is, and so on – the hard times bring you closer.
- Couldn't quite prepare us properly as they weren't sure of what the plans and conditions were.
- We should have done more things on faith, different types of worshiping and preparing oneself for the inconveniences of travelling as a pilgrim.
- The group sessions – good in terms of getting to know everyone but, no matter what you did spiritually, you couldn't have prepared us for what to come.
- Getting to know people and their names was difficult.
- The lack of specific details, especially regarding Essen because this was a big shock for most of us.

Length of Meetings (5)

- The short amount of time we saw each other for.
- The information night was a bit frustrating for me after the Palm Sunday weekend – not enough time to interact with the others on the same sort of level as the previous time.
- They were very cramped.
- Not being able to talk more about faith matters; seemed very bound up in technicalities.
- Possibly an extra day could have been better, just because we didn't have enough time to get to know everyone.

Number of Meetings (2)

- There weren't enough of them.
- There weren't enough preparation weekends, considering we had all never met before and were about to go to many foreign countries together.

Outsiders (2)

- The first meeting at Woodlawn when we had just got to know each other, then all these other kids joined the group who weren't coming...made me feel a little uncomfortable.
- People joining the group the whole way along.

Travel to Meetings (1)

- Sometimes having to travel to Lismore, but I now realise that it was important.

Repetition (1)

- Some of the preparation activities were a bit repetitive.

5. What did you learn through participating in the WYD pilgrimage?

- The universality of the Church – its widespread influence around the world, through many cultures.
- That I'm not alone as a youth in my faith; I am one of many and I will never be alone so I should never deny my faith and I shall be proud!
- About my faith – that God is truly present within me and although at times it can be challenging, it's worth it in the end.
- That it's OK to show your faith
- That I can lean on Jesus when I'm not strong.
- More about the history of Catholicism.
- I am not alone in my faith and beliefs.
- There is more to being a Catholic than going to Mass every week.
- Mainly about how strong I am as a person, but also of my weaknesses.
- How to tolerate others for a prolonged period of time.
- Church history and the universality of the Catholic Church.
- Realising that we take basic living conditions for granted at home.
- The youth are the core of the Church.
- We must become more involved in our faith to get more out of it in the future.
- To find strength, control my anger and develop better people skills.
- That a common faith can bring together any number of people from any number of different backgrounds.
- That the Church is truly universal.
- More about myself, my friends and people in general.
- That you have to love.
- How other Catholics worship, which strengthened my faith.
- Catholics are all around the world.
- About myself and how much I don't know about anything – I realised just how much there is out there to learn about and I think that will forever drive me to learn more.
- That our Church and faith is so diverse and huge, and that many people praise and worship God in many ways...it really opened my eyes and deepened my faith.
- Faith can be expressed in a number of ways, yet all are acceptable to God.
- The Church is not dying.
- The youth are a large part of the Church.
- I'm very appreciative of my faith.
- Learning about history of my faith and knowing what saints went through to get to where we are today.
- You really have to stick together in situations as we experienced because it gets very stressful.
- I discovered how many young people around the world are so dedicated to the Catholic faith and Jesus' teachings.
- That the Church is a lot bigger than what I had originally anticipated.
- That the Eucharist is a lot more than just bread and wine, it is symbolic of God's love and sacrifice.
- That there is more to Mass than just Mass.
- That I am God's child and he loves me for that.
- There are millions of people/youth out there that love God.
- Independence, stronger faith, patience and maturity.
- Faith can be a powerful tool.
- That I can survive on minimal sleep.
- The universality of the Church.
- Using the Bible and scriptures for prayer.
- History of the Church.
- That I am part of the universal Church which is a good feeling.
- That everyone on this pilgrimage all thinks about and loves the same god.
- My faith.
- How Catholics from around the world express their faith differently to ours.

- To be myself.
- Profess my faith.
- Stick to my beliefs.
- Be confident and lead others in the name of the Lord.
- A lot more about my faith.
- More historic background of the Church – makes me understand things a lot clearer.

6. What will you do or think about differently as a result of being a WYD pilgrim?

- The nature of the Catholic Church – have a greater respect for it and better understanding of its origins.
- I shall be a lot stronger in defending my faith to others and I will be a lot prouder to share my faith with others.
- Being a Catholic is cool – as corny as it sounds, I'm proud to be a part of such a history, tradition and culture.
- My faith in general – it has increased enormously.
- I feel more spiritual and a little wiser about different nationalities.
- I will become more actively involved in youth gatherings in my Parish and the nearby churches.
- I will defend my faith and beliefs.
- I will stand by my morals and against the crowd.
- How to live my life in a more righteous way.
- My outlook on the Mass has changed in a positive way.
- The different ways people worship around the world and how I am still united with them in faith.
- How I can strengthen my faith.
- Try to give other young people in the Parish an opportunity to experience the strengthening I have felt.
- Everyday challenges – I know that I have the strength and faith to get through anything.
- I am learning to look for the good in people, to admire their strengths and have patience with their weaknesses.
- My loved ones – I'm beginning to appreciate their support and value what I've missed whilst I've been away.
- Be more spiritual – more giving and not receiving.
- Try to help others to be more giving and not receiving.
- I will definitely appreciate and understand Masses better.
- I will become more involved in my church and be able to speak more easily about my faith to others.
- Presenting my faith more openly to those around me.
- Trying to make a more regular effort with prayer and participation in youth activities around my area, e.g. workshops and camps.
- I have a stronger faith in my religion.
- I'm much more appreciative of my religion.
- I know that being a pilgrim, you do encounter highs and lows but still it is all a part of the experience.
- I have become a much more prouder Catholic as I now know there are so many others out there who believe in the same things as me.
- I have a better understanding of the world, cultures, ways of life, so I can more appreciate the 'vast spectrum'.
- An increase in faith and belief.
- The way I appreciate my faith.
- Church and Eucharist.
- Other cultures.
- Look at my faith in a whole new way – before I used to think of Mass as a chore but now I will go because I want to, not because I'm forced.
- I will try to stop and enjoy life more and work hard at my goals.
- I don't think I will change a great deal.
- Using the Bible as a source for prayer.
- Different types of prayer and worship.
- Opening of future possibilities.
- I will be more of a leader of our faith with my mates and teachers.
- Going to Mass will have much more meaning to me now, especially the Eucharist.
- Forms of prayer and worship – use Taize.
- More tolerance of other cultures.
- Confidence in leading.
- I can go home and understand fully what goes on in the Mass.
- Seeing the Pope & listening to his Mass will really make me think about the Church in a more deeper meaning.

7. What would make the WYD pilgrim program better?

- More freedom to mix among the young of the world, rather than spending the majority of time with the group.
- Less rushing – the rushing all the time made it stressful.
- More mingling with other cultures.
- If all wasn't so rushed – people need sleep...to 'soak' in places...to stay in a good spot when they've got it.
- Being able to meet more people from different countries.
- Having time to discuss my faith one-on-one with people from the group.
- More time to stop, reflect and have some personal time.
- Better activities that connect young people with others of different culture and country.
- More participation in sessions dealing with the moral issues of being a Catholic.
- Attendance of sessions on things like value of human life, sexuality, etc.
- Organisation – making sure there is enough room for people before allocating spots.
- Letting people know what is going on – knowing all the options that are available.
- If we had known each other a bit more beforehand.
- A bit more time to reflect on your own faith journey.
- More time to see and experience the places you go to.
- Everyone should prepare together from the beginning.
- Perhaps a smaller group.
- More flexible timetable.
- More organisation by host country.
- More organisation.
- Having more time to experience certain places, i.e. Rome.
- The food needs to be improved – the Essen and WYD packed lunches were not fulfilling enough to get us through the large amount of activities we had to do.
- Much better organisational skills.
- More and better food.
- Smaller groups.
- More emphasis on the Church.
- No politics.
- Younger Supervisors.
- Rest or free days.
- More time in each place to really admire it, especially in Rome.
- A more set program and laid out activities rather than leaving too many options.
- More links with other nations.
- More time to do nothing in, i.e. 'spaced out program'.
- Options of relaxed event or high paced event.
- Have better facilities.
- Stay in Rome for more than one night so future pilgrims can at least soak up the atmosphere of the great city.
- Organisation and structure.
- Better/edible food options.
- Events located closer together.
- The leaders should reinforce why youth are on the pilgrimage.
- Try different types of worship beforehand in preparation.
- Better seats at the actual Mass.
- Better accommodation – actual beds.

8. Other comments: -

- It was awesome!
- An amazing experience. I am so grateful I was given the opportunity to go!
- Because of this pilgrimage I have strengthened as a person.
- I have strengthened my faith and love for Jesus and the Trinity.
- Great organising.
- Credit goes to the Supervisors for being really supportive and encouraging leaders.
- Everything was so commercialised.
- People whinged and ragged and forgot they were on a pilgrimage.
- The WYD pilgrimage has allowed me to feel closer to God in my everyday prayer.

- The WYD pilgrimage has been the most awesome event of my life so far. It has changed my perspective on life, faith, people and many other things. It has left me satisfied but with a drive to learn more, to search for more from life and religion. I'm so grateful, truly thankful for this opportunity. Thank you so much.
- Hopefully I will get a chance to go to WYD in Australia!!!
- I would like to thank all those involved as this experience has meant so much to me, and I think has changed my life and the way I look at things for a very long time.
- Kate did an awesome job organising.
- This pilgrimage has been fantastic and I commend the organisers and leaders. This experience has brought me closer to my faith. Thank you.
- It has been a fantastic experience. I feel so privileged to be a part of it.
- What a great experience! Thank you to all who supported me and made this journey possible.
- The WYD experience was one I will never forget.
- Thank you for the opportunity.
- I really enjoyed the opportunity to attend this pilgrimage.
- It would be a real loss if the Diocese did not continue in the current pilgrimage program.
- Thank you!
- Those who organise the preparation gatherings should be congratulated.
- I believe it was important to remind everyone why we were here so I continually did that.

Advice for Sydney WYD organisers:-

General organisation (20)

- Better organisation on a wider scale.
- Assume an extra one-third on your final estimation.
- Be better prepared for large crowds.
- Having more time to experience places and enjoying them more.
- Having a program that is more understandable.
- Let pilgrims know what's happening, i.e. food, activities and events.
- Be sure venues for specific events can fit everyone – it's a shame when pilgrims miss out on gatherings.
- Be prepared for lots and lots of people.
- Make and plan all activities with a large number of people in mind.
- Prepare a long time in advance for events.
- Be as prepared for WYD as you were for the Olympics, otherwise it will be a flop.
- Keep the people busy!
- To have the facilities to cater for 1-2 million people.
- Must be able to deal with huge numbers.
- Have volunteers who can help everyone.
- More availability of priests that speak different languages at various churches – I would like to have gone to confession and been understood.
- Adequate sized venue for Mass and celebration.
- Be prepared for a million or more people.
- Get more organised.
- Expand – get as many things to do as possible.

Food (14)

- More organised distribution of food, and more of it.
- Distribute food to accommodation site via volunteers.
- Much of the food in Cologne went wasted because people didn't like it.
- Improvements in food – provides energy and tastes good.
- Food needs to actually be provided.
- Better queuing lines for food – entries and exits from collecting areas.
- Make sure there is enough food for pilgrims and see that it is edible.
- Catering system – more food pick-up points or dropping food day-packs off at accommodation.
- Have enough food to be dispensed and water stations everywhere.
- More meal stations with more sustaining food.
- Better system of distributing food.
- Have massive BBQs for lunches or something that keeps a line moving.
- Food – options for different cultures, more areas for pick-up.
- Improve on food.

Transport (12)

- Plenty of transport to the various venues.
- Organise transport for larger amounts of people.
- Have lots of buses and trains.
- Make sure transport is reliable and not overcrowded.
- Lots of trains and buses need to be operating.
- Transport must run smoothly and on-time.
- Transport needs to run a lot smoother.
- See that public transport is free for pilgrims and make it frequent – Koln couldn't cope with it!
- Public transport improvement.
- An efficient rail, bus and ferry service which will cope with a huge quantity of people mobbing it.
- Public transport system for a million or more people.
- More accessible transport stations.

Events (8)

- A clearer program of events, with details of exactly what is going on.
- Lots of sessions on the moral issues of being a Catholic – value of life, sexuality, women within the Church, etc.
- Have more festivals and fun activities with music and dance for the youth.
- Australia has lots of talent, so entertainment should reflect this.
- More cultural activities so we can mix directly with other young people around the world.
- Try to put events closer to each other, eg. different venues at Homebush.
- More structure for events.
- More WYD souvenirs.

Security (6)

- Increase security, especially around transport centres.
- Having someone control the amount of people on trains/transport.
- Sectioned and roped paths through sleeping sections in the field with the Pope.
- The police and hospitals need to be on a higher security and code level to cope with thieves and injuries.
- More strict seating arrangement.
- Enforce the seating plan at the Papal Mass.

The Pope (5)

- Public accessibility to the Pope – specific crowd meeting events, big screens.
- Have the Pope do the rounds through the crowd in his Pope mobile.
- Let the Pope say hello in person to the people at the front of the crowd.
- Let some people have a private mass with the Pope.
- Let the Pope be involved a lot more.

Accommodation (3)

- Sleeping mats!
- Better showering arrangements.
- Improve on accommodation.