

# Gatherings

Newsletter of Dominican Associates in Australia  
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## World Youth Day, Sydney 2008

‘As a piece of spectacle, it was magnificent. Culminating in a huge open-air Mass attended by 400 000 people, day after day of perfect winter sunshine saw joyful flag-waving pilgrims from 170 countries careening around Sydney’s streets and railway stations. When it was time to leave, Pope Benedict pronounced it an ‘unforgettable experience’. So wrote the Australian journalist, Stephen Crittenden, in *The Tablet*, 26 July. Lawrence Freeman OSB, Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation, in *The Tablet*, 9 August, followed up with: ‘World Youth Day has become a kind of post-modern fiesta as well as an enriching global catechesis... The infinite connectivity of the Internet becomes “flesh” in this urban confluence of cultures and languages.’



Happy pilgrims!  
Photo from *Ein Kareem*,  
St. John’s parish  
magazine, Ferntree  
Gully.

Aspects of the World Youth Day fiesta were evident in a special edition of *Aurora*, the paper of the diocese of Maitland-Newcastle, with its vignettes of young pilgrims from overseas enjoying: dolphin watching and koala patting, the dances of the Pacific Islanders, sheep shearing, didgeridoo playing, making mosaics, planting trees and wetland reeds, coaxing kangaroos, mastering milking, painting boomerangs, morning prayer on

the beach, daily Mass; not to mention 'bicycling with a breviary' on a sponsored ride from Perth to Sydney; and elderly nuns sleeping out on Randwick racecourse ...

There was time for prayer, fellowship, exploration of life and times, ritual and reverence for cross and icons, action together for justice and peace.

What might have been simply a World Pope Day was transformed in Australia, largely by the preparatory work of parishes, teachers and religious orders, into a rich experience of church. Australian Catholics might have a certain reputation in Rome for being over democratic, lacking in reverence for authority and lax in liturgy. But, although the secular media did not let anyone forget the paradox of triumphalism along with the scandals of abuse of the powerless, no one could fail to be inspired by so much generosity, enthusiasm for community and hope for the future.

Pope Benedict summed up the message in his opening address: 'Our hearts and minds are yearning for a vision of life where love endures, where gifts are shared, where unity is built, where freedom finds meaning in truth, and where identity is found in respectful communion. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the hope held out by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is to bear witness to this reality that you were created new at Baptism and strengthened through the gifts of the Spirit at Confirmation. Let this be the message that you bring from Sydney to the world.'

#### **Pope Benedict and TV**

'I ask myself could anyone standing face-to-face with people who actually do suffer violence and sexual exploitation "explain" that these tragedies, portrayed in virtual form, are considered merely 'entertainment'?

For pictures and information see websites:

[www.wyd2008.org](http://www.wyd2008.org)

[www.mn.catholic.org.au/newsroom/aurora.htm](http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/newsroom/aurora.htm);

[www.opeast.org/](http://www.opeast.org/)

Follow links to Latest News and World Youth Day and Dominican welcome

#### **Tales from Tamworth**

The invitation to our August gathering for a review of WYD08 was very well attended. Our special guests were the two Religious Education Co-ordinators of McCarthy Catholic College, Cate Allen and Carol Wheaton, who had organised the local events when the pilgrims, mainly Belgian, visited Tamworth and who arranged for and accompanied our local pilgrims to Sydney, staying at Santa Sabina. Another visitor at our meeting was Fr Ross O'Brien, PP of West Tamworth, who shared interesting reports on activities not covered by the media, eg the group work each morning. We are delighted efforts

are now being made locally to establish an on-going Pier Giorgio Frassati group for the pilgrims. In September we welcomed Sr Ann Keys to a group, receptive of her input re Dominican Associates. We appreciated and enjoyed her visit. This was followed a fortnight later by a gathering of about seventy to hear Sr Ann Willits. Many have told us how they were helped by Ann's preaching.

Our topic for October is "Jesus Christ Today", covering *The Challenge of modern scholarship; Who do you say I am?; Insights from today's scholars* and *The mission of Jesus goes on*.

Our Associate year will conclude with the November meeting with a topic yet to be decided.

**Kath Maher OP**

## **Hobart Happenings**

Our Tasmanian group was delighted to welcome Ann Keys to one of our recent gatherings to hear of the activities of other Associate Groups and to be appraised of the development of documents to describe the intent of the Dominican Associates. We enjoyed sharing a wonderfully heartfelt conversation about the importance of the connection we felt with the story of the Dominicans in Tasmania.

The group represented long-standing Associates and more recent members of our local group. Throughout, there was a common theme of affection, appreciation and an acknowledgement of how the Dominican spirit, articulated and lived by the Dominicans we had come to know, had made a profound difference in our lives. For those of us who had been taught by the Dominicans, there was a real want to develop further a deeper understanding of Dominican spirituality. Some expressed the belief that our gathering provided an opportunity to reconnect with Church in a welcoming and supportive way. We were able to provide Ann with some feedback on the Draft Associates flyer and are delighted to see the final product describing who we are and the journey we are making, so well.

Our celebration of Dominic's Feast Day took place at Pam and Mary's home in Glenorchy. Our tradition has been to invite the Salesians, neighbours and long time friends of the Dominicans in Tasmania, to celebrate Eucharist with us. This year Father Phil Gleeson, Principal of Dominic College, was our celebrant. It was a small and joyful time and gave us opportunity to name and acknowledge our local story and those sisters who had helped to form our Associates group by leading us in reflection and prayer and

nurturing the ongoing strong connection within our group. We particularly remembered those Dominicans and Associates no longer with us. We continued to celebrate by sharing a lovely meal together.

Towards Christmas we will gather again to share and reflect and plan for ways in which we might grow our group as we move towards 2009!

**Bobby Court**

## Melbourne Matters



Once again the feast days of St Catherine and St Dominic were highlights of our year. In April we met at Siena College to listen to a presentation from Sr Frances Caine about the history and present day life of the Sisters and to share an evening meal. In August we attended the midday Mass at St Dominic's on the feast day and went on to a restaurant for lunch – see photos!

In May Sr Ann Keys visited Melbourne to pick up on some of the themes of past consultations about Associates and to involve us in preparing a new brochure. We are happy to have this attractive summary of our aspirations and appreciate Ann Keys' energy in bringing it about. We hope it will help attract new members.

In September many of us were at St Dominic's parish centre to listen to Sr Ann Willits, an inspired retreat and mission preacher from the USA. Also in September we enjoyed a Sunday Mass and outdoor lunch in the beautiful surroundings of Kerith, the house of prayer run by Sr Kathleen Murphy OP and Fr Ken Petersen O Carm. The day was a celebration of several anniversaries: Ken's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as well as 30 years of the Carmelites ownership of the house which over the last 11 years has become an important inter-faith venture in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.



Our final gathering for the year will be an afternoon tea at my place in December.

**Anne Boyd**

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