

# " for it is in giving that we receive "

*Diocesan WYD Co-ordinator Luke Edwards reflects on it all.*

For me, the word that seems to capture the experience of Days in the Diocese (DID) and World Youth Day Week (WYD) is infusion: an infusion of life, love, hope and joy!

Locally, there are two key ingredients of this infusion...the pilgrims and us, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and the communities that inhabit it.

Whether you were an active participant or merely an observer, it was impossible not to be swept up in the tide of joy and laughter that ebbed and flowed in the hearts and homes of our diocese and, later, the city of Sydney.

By the time we bade our tearful farewells to our new found friends, they had become brothers and sisters whose sheer joy and enthusiasm had crept under our skin. For ages they were faceless names on a page; now they had each become story-tellers of the rich tapestry of our globe, and more importantly, they were beacons of hope who reminded us so beautifully of what it is to be truly human. Perhaps that's why it was so hard to say goodbye? While our pilgrims reminded us of the goodness of humanity by their stay, an injection of life, energy, team spirit and collaboration has emanated most powerfully from our own diocese. At Kilaben Bay, where most of my time was spent during DID, one of the most tangible and positive experiences was the rapport that was

established amongst volunteers from the Catholic Schools Office, our schools and other diocesan agencies. The goodwill of all who worked at Kilaben Bay ensured that no problem was too difficult. Most significant, however, was the attitude of these individuals and their sheer enjoyment in contributing at Kilaben Bay. I have heard an abundance of similar tales from across the diocese. This experience is a wonderful legacy of WYD08.

Great thanks must also be offered to local councils, community groups, transport authorities and politicians. Their expert support and advice ensured that the day to day logistics were managed and the conditions were ideal for the infusion of faith, love, joy and hope to occur!

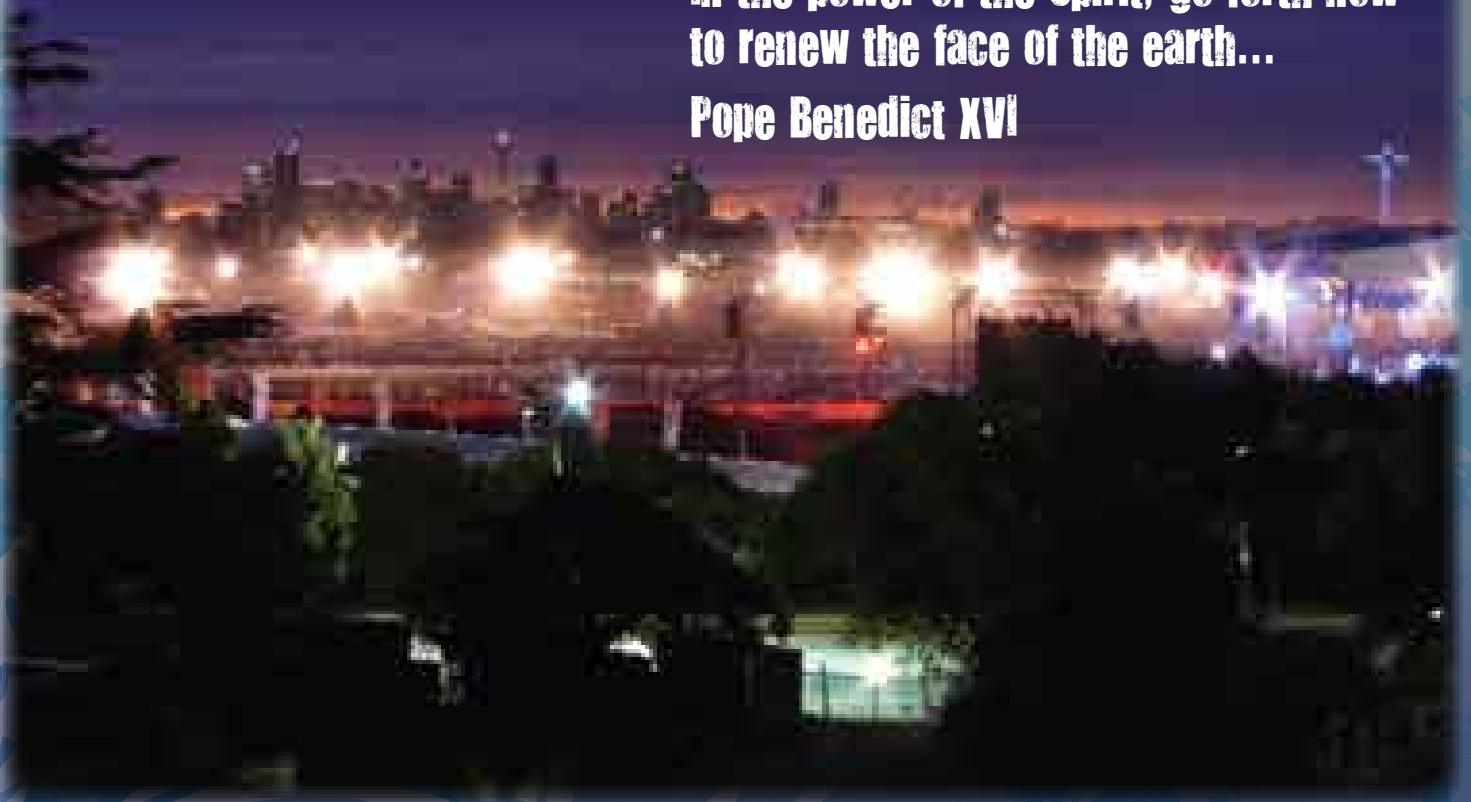
Then, following DID, WYD Week only served to heighten the joy and fervour. I was fortunate enough to spend the week with my diocesan colleagues as part of the Diocesan Care Team. Thanks no doubt to the care, guidance and organisation of our Pilgrim Group Leaders, we were able to fully participate in the spirit and festivity of WYD week.

One of the highlights of the week from the diocesan perspective was the gathering of all of our local pilgrims at Milsons Point prior to the pilgrim walk on Saturday 19 July. It was a truly special and unique occasion as we all gathered to be blessed by Bishop Michael and begin the walk together.

We have so much to celebrate and to appreciate. For all who had a hand in flavouring this infusion, a huge 'thank you'. All of our efforts have created a rich experience. We are on sacred and fertile ground. May the many gifts of DID and WYD continue to pervade our lives as individuals, parishioners and members of the diocesan community.

**It has truly been a week to remember.  
In the power of the Spirit, go forth now  
to renew the face of the earth...**

**Pope Benedict XVI**



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