



australian
CATHOLIC YOUTH
FESTIVAL

MELBOURNE 2013
5 - 7 DECEMBER

Reflections



The Australian Catholic Youth Festival logo is made up of six coloured lines and the title of the event. Five lines (burnt orange, green, yellow, orange and red) represents the stories and lives of young people in the Catholic Church of Australia coming from parishes, movements and communities, schools, religious orders and universities. Only together do these lines create a vibrant and exciting image of Australia.

This vibrant image of Australia reflects the energy and enthusiasm of young people, demonstrating the type of gathering the Festival hopes to be. This image also identifies that the Festival is a time of celebration of the full communion of the universal Church in Australia. The title of the event is marked by the Cross. It demonstrates that Christ is at the centre of the Festival and who we are as Catholics.

A sixth line of cyan blue (the same colour as the cross) identifies the Holy Spirit at work in Australian and in the lives of young people. This colour also links to WYD 2008 (logo) where the young people of Australia were called to be disciples and receive the power of the Holy Spirit – a key moment of grace in the life of the Church in Australia.

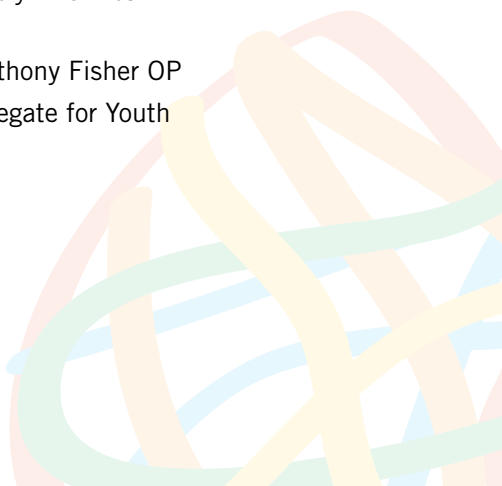
Dear friends,

Over 3,400 people attended the Festival, making it the largest national gathering of Catholic young people in Australia since World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. The diversity of experiences and atmosphere celebrated young people and the Church here in Australia. We have received comments from our young people such as “amazing”, “awakening”, “redemptive” and “the experience of a lifetime”.

I would like to thank everyone for their contributions to the Festival. You have made this one of the most significant Church events in Australia in recent years.

Yours Sincerely in Christ

Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP
Bishops' Delegate for Youth



Overview

Attendees as identified by geographical location

Archdiocese of Adelaide	142
Archdiocese of Brisbane	173
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn	110
Archdiocese of Hobart	49
Archdiocese of Melbourne	958
Archdiocese of Perth	168
Archdiocese of Sydney	385
Diocese of Armidale	3
Diocese of Ballarat	86
Diocese of Bathurst	10
Diocese of Broken Bay	191
Diocese of Broome	5
Diocese of Bunbury	21
Diocese of Cairns	23
Diocese of Darwin	77
Diocese of Geraldton	8
Diocese of Lismore	79
Diocese of Maitland – Newcastle	79
Diocese of Parramatta	303
Diocese of Port Pirie	13
Diocese of Rockhampton	11
Diocese of Sale	164
Diocese of Sandhurst	110
Diocese of Toowoomba	9
Diocese of Townsville	51
Diocese of Wagga Wagga	38
Diocese of Wilcannia Forbes	1
Diocese of Wollongong	119
International	21
Total Registrations	3407





Attendees as identified by their role:

Bishops	16
Exhibitors	170
Exhibitor Coordinators (41)	
Exhibitor Team members (129)	
Group Attendees	2774
Group Coordinators (176)	
Participants (2172)	
Adult Leaders (426)	
Individual Attendees	156
Guests	57
Media	10
Presenters/musicians	70
Workforce	154

Religious participation:

Priests	82
Deacons	7
Religious Sisters	65
Religious Brothers	29
Bishops	16
<i>Total</i>	<i>199</i>

The whole experience was so precious and important to me it was truly amazing to see the youth gathered and rallied together to support our God and Church and faith. It is an experience that I will never forget.

– Participant

Social Media

Facebook

Post engagement average 3000 per post
Reach during Festival approx 80,000

Twitter

Tweets by ACBCYouthMIn approx 230
Use of #ACYF more than 1000

Instagram

Use of #ACYF more than 1400
Mentions more than 800



XT3 Live Webcast

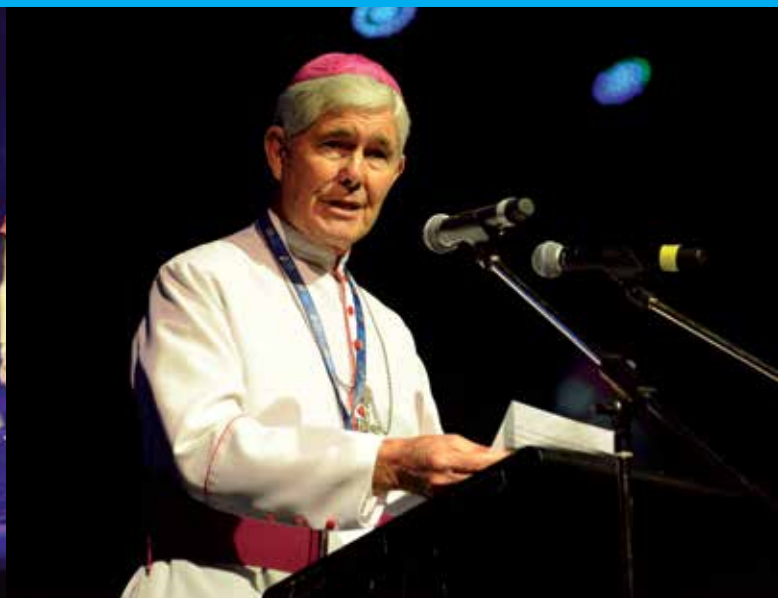
Thursday Plenary at 1pm Total viewers 1592
Friday Plenary 7pm Total viewers 2196
Saturday Plenary 7pm (closing Mass) Total viewers 3480



My group came
away saying
“there are so
many different
ways to be
a Catholic!”
I think this shows
the Festival really
opened their eyes
to all the amazing
parts of our faith.

– Leader





Never have I seen so many young people sharing the same passion in the same room before I attended the Festival!

– Participant



The opportunity for young people to interact with Bishops and other leaders of our Church was incredible and has had an invaluable effect on my 32 young people.

- Leader



St Mary of the Cross Square



Melbourne came alive. Young people walked around the city in small groups with smiles on their faces, engaging in conversation with anyone they met along the way.

– Participant



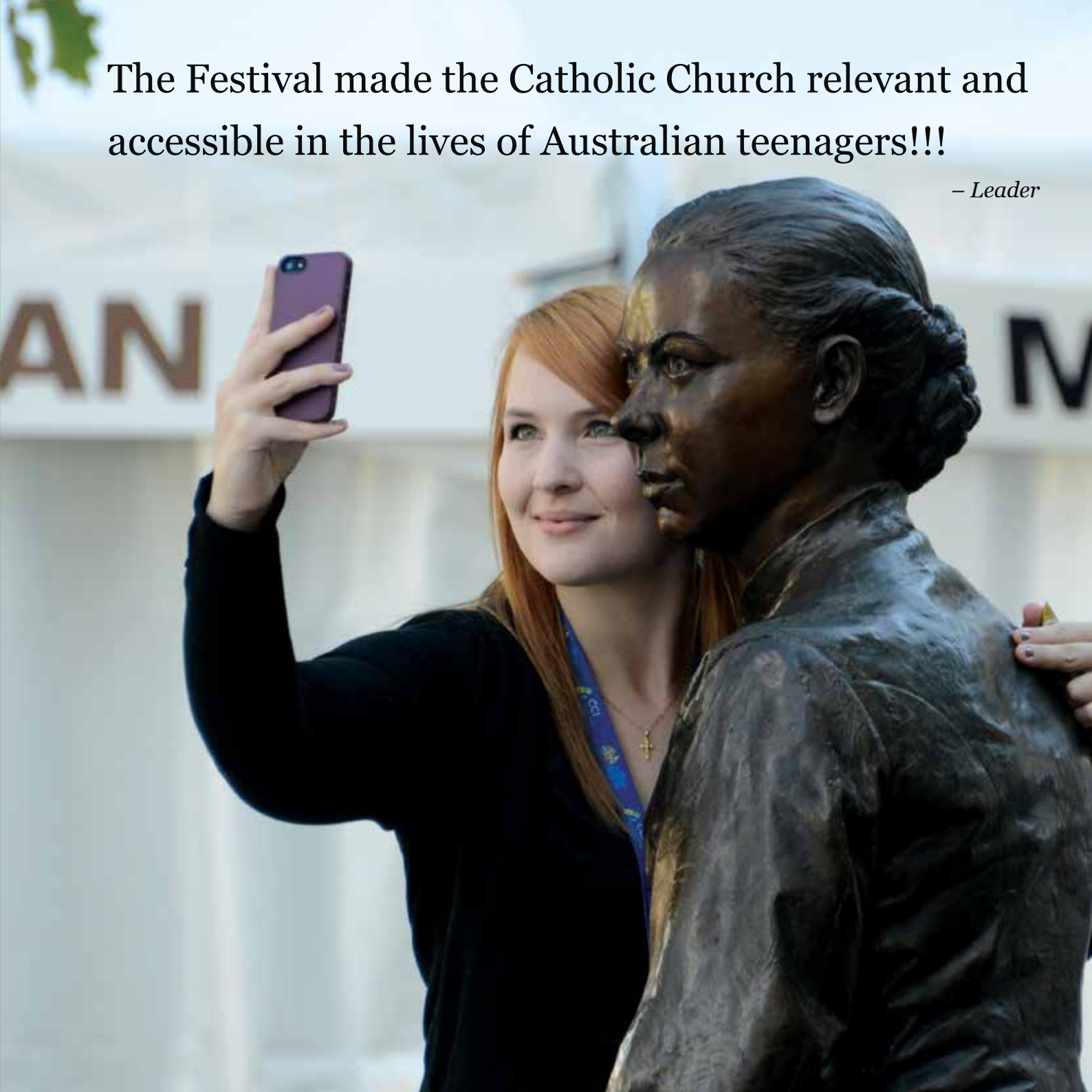


It was a brilliant choice of venues, set in the heart of Melbourne's Catholic history. Mary MacKillop tours and St Patrick's Cathedral were so inspiring to my faith journey.

- Leader

The Festival made the Catholic Church relevant and accessible in the lives of Australian teenagers!!!

- Leader



Praise and Worship Centre

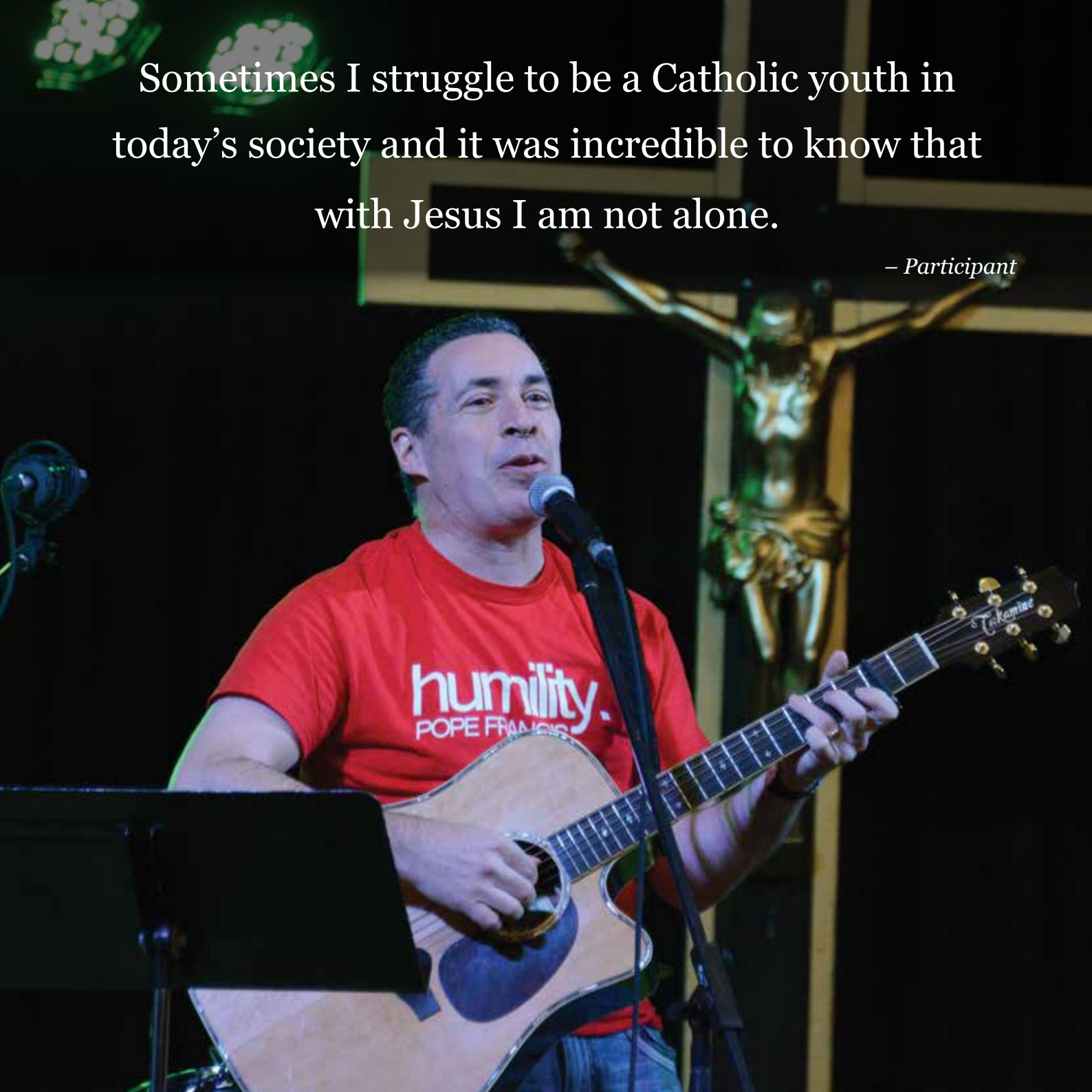


The combination of pop music with worship music by several of the musicians and in the plenary sessions was vital in making our young people feel at home.

– Leader

Sometimes I struggle to be a Catholic youth in today's society and it was incredible to know that with Jesus I am not alone.

– Participant



Social Justice Centre

Inspirational workshop leaders showed us how we can make a difference by getting involved in our local communities and helping those in need.

– Participant



Rooftop Garden





It was a privilege to
share my story of
becoming a Catholic
last year. I felt moved
by the Holy Spirit
during the experience
and it made me more
proud of my faith.

– Participant



The Festival allowed everyone to express the Catholic faith in a loving accepting environment.

- Participant



My favourite moment
was speaking to
people at INcounter
stalls, being able to be
open about my faith,
and having an honest
conversation with
them without being
embarrassed about
my faith.

– Participant





In the Friday plenary the worshiping atmosphere was so thick and wonderful it was easy to have an encounter with God, it made the experience whole for me.

– Participant



Everybody was silent for a moment of prayer and
it was just so amazing to feel the Holy Spirit
among 3500 people in one room.

– Participant

Chapel and Reconciliation



Receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation was probably the most moving experience for me.

– Participant



So many times
I heard young
people say
“I didn’t know
a Catholic event
could be cool!”

– Leader



Student Leadership Centre



As a secondary school RE teacher, my favourite moment at ACYF was watching the dramatic development of spiritual confidence in my students. The environment created at ACYF empowered the students to feel more connected to the Australian Church than ever before.

– Leader

We saw marked growth in every one of our participants for every day of the Festival. Being country kids, they were a little overwhelmed by the number of people gathered in one place, but by Friday they had found their feet and were off and running.

– Leader



Mega Workshops



The atmosphere
and workshops
provided
opportunities
for youth
with varying
levels of faith
development.

– *Leader*

With all the different topics, there was something to suit everyone's different interests.

– Participant



Discussion Forums

Following are a sample of comments made by young people during discussion forums across the Festival:

- **Global Poverty:** Poverty is about going without, and this does not always mean just going without material necessities; sometimes it means that people are going without friendship, faith or happiness.
- **Mental Health:** Connectedness and healthy relationships are vital for good mental health and wellbeing.
- **Environment:** It's easy to become desensitised to the severity of this problem, as the effects we are having on our environment are not always apparent in our everyday lives.
- **Indigenous Reconciliation:** There is no way to peace without first achieving justice, and there is still a significant disparity between the quality of life of Indigenous Australians and non-Indigenous Australians in relation to many issues.
- **Liturgy:** Sometimes young people can feel excluded or pushed away by older members of the community who feel as though the parish is 'theirs'.
- **Schools:** Interaction and cooperation between schools and their parish can lead to a deeper faith experience for students.
- **Vocations:** There can be many paths a person travels before finding their true vocation, yet the pressures of their environment can influence discernment.
- **Family:** There is no 'right' or 'wrong' family, and it is important that non-traditional families are able to find acceptance and support from the Church.





I think the best part of the Festival was the willingness of both speakers and participants to get involved and be open about all subjects. It made it a better learning environment for all.

– Participant



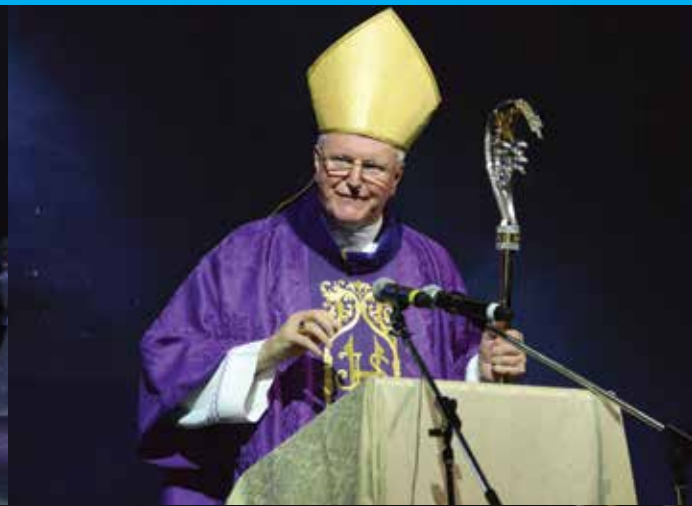
Saturday Plenary

The final Mass was awesome!
The feeling in the room was
so peaceful.

– Participant



The closing Mass collection raised \$8,749.75 for the Caritas Philippines Super Typhoon Haiyan Appeal.



I enjoyed the plenary sessions as I could see the Holy Spirit and the Church more clearly. It made me understand I am a part of a thriving Church.

– Participant

Volunteers

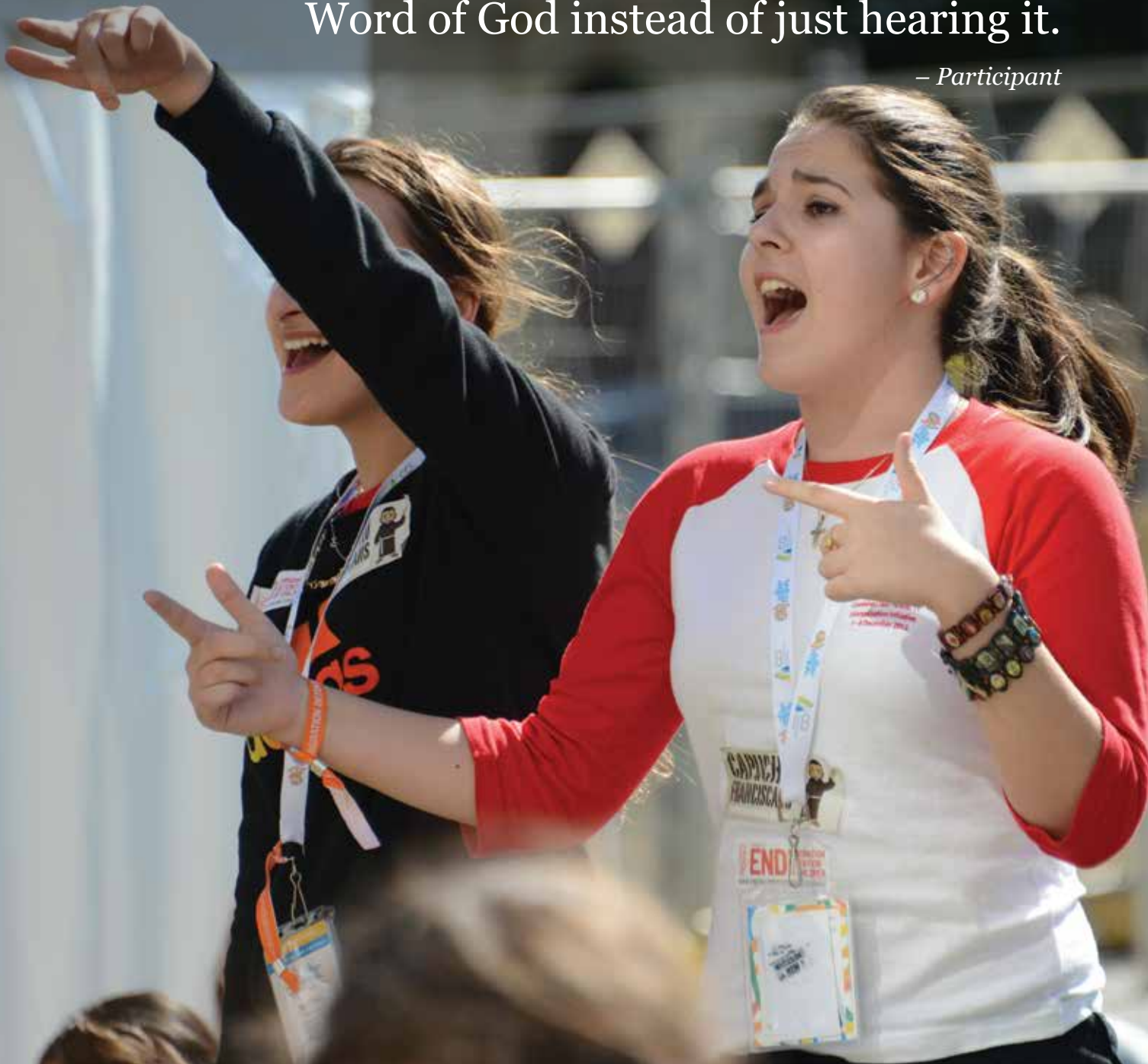


Everything was so well organised, with transport, timetables, the mobile app etc. I was incredibly impressed by the event!

– Leader

The Festival allowed us to experience the
Word of God instead of just hearing it.

– Participant



Sponsors and partners

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Australian Catholic Bishop's Commission



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE
OF MELBOURNE

Archdiocese of Melbourne



Australian Catholic University



Archdiocesan Office for Youth

Gold Partners



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Catholic Church Insurance



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Thank you

An Australian Catholic youth gathering has been a work in progress since the establishment of the Australian Catholic Youth Council in July 2007. There have been many conversations, proposals and plans that culminated last December when over 3400 people came together for the inaugural Australian Catholic Youth Festival. The Festival could not have occurred without the contributions, support and work of the following people and organisations. Special thanks goes to:

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference: its commissions, councils, offices and staff. Particular thanks to the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life, its Chairperson Bishop Eugene Hurley and the Delegate for Youth, Bishop Anthony Fisher OP.

Archdiocese of Melbourne: Office for Youth, Youth Festival Office, Office for Evangelisation, Catholic Education Office, Vocations Office, Catholic Communications Melbourne, St Patrick's Cathedral staff, Diocesan Building Management Advisory Services.

Australian Catholic University St Patrick's Campus Melbourne: Pro Vice Chancellor and Associate Vice Chancellor, Campus Operations, Library staff, Security, IT staff, Cleaning staff, Lecturers, Campus ministry.

Festival Partners: Australian Catholics Magazine, XT3, Catholic Super, Catholic Church Insurance.

Australian Catholic Youth Council: (Current) Bishop Anthony Fisher OP, Benita De Vincentiis, Fr Christian Fini OMI, Elise Ganley, Michael Hart, Shawn van der Linden, Anita Parker, Fr Chris Ryan MGL, Yvette Nehme, Teresa Rhynehart, Malcolm Hart, Gabrielle Sinclair. (Previous) Late Bishop Joseph Grech, Archbishop Christopher Prowse, Lyndon Cox, Steven Lawrence, Maryanne Hacker, Erica Bernard, Vicky Burrows, Paul Salmon.

Australian Catholic Youth Festival Steering Committee: Fr Christian Fini OMI (Chairperson), Malcolm Hart, Gabrielle Sinclair, Brendan Lindsay, Annaliese Ros, John Rhynehart, Jess Denehy, Paul Fumei, David Cloran, Joshua Rajasingam, Elise Ganley, Fr Binh Le, Sr Rita Malavisi RSJ, Fr Chris Ryan MGL, Bruce Ryan.

Sub Committee and Team Members: Llewellyn Berchy, Sr Melanie Edwards MGL, Br Isuru Welliwatte MGL, Teresa Rhynehart, Phil Billington, Katherine Spencer, Leeanne Grima, Alana O'Reilly, Tara O'Toole, Dan Serratore, Anne Frawley-Mangan, Michael Mangan, Tiffany Orbien, James Edwards, Melissa Mewburn, Lisa Bright, Lucy Carroll.

Thank you to all those organisations who contributed to the Festival by offering presenters, were involved in the INcounter Expo, and who offered staff and time to make the Festival a success. Thank you also to all volunteers for their hard work, dedication and effort to help to make the event a huge success.

Finally thank you to all those young people and their group leaders who attended the inaugural Australian Catholic Youth Festival. Thank you for believing in this event and coming in such large numbers. We look forward to welcoming you to the next Youth Festival.

Malcolm Hart
Secretariat for Pastoral Life
Festival Director



At the conclusion of the Youth Festival closing Mass, Bishop Eugene Hurley read out a message from the Australian Bishops Delegate for Youth, Bishop Anthony Fisher OP. This message included a special announcement:

"I am very pleased to announce that at their recent conference the Australian Catholic Bishops agreed to establish a National Office for Youth. This is yet another sign that of how highly the Australian Bishops prioritise young people and want to respond to their hopes and needs."

Bishop Anthony Fisher OP
Closing Mass of the inaugural Australian Catholic Youth Festival
7th December 2013

The ACBC Office for Youth will be established as part of the Secretariat for Pastoral Life. It will incorporate the current youth ministry projects and initiatives of the ACBC including Australia's participation in WYDs, the Youth Festival, the Youth Ministry Convention, national website and resource development. Further development of the Office will be announced throughout 2014.

For further information please contact:

Australian Catholic Bishop Conference
Office for Youth
youthministry@catholic.org.au
www.youthministry.catholic.org.au



@ACBCYouthMin



It was just so fantabulous and I've never
thought that evangelisation could be
so much fun!!!

- Participant

From 5th – 7th December 2013 over 3400 young people, leaders and teachers, religious and bishops gathered in Melbourne for the inaugural Australian Catholic Youth Festival. It was the largest national gathering of Catholic young people since World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney.

The Festival was a celebration of the vibrant and life giving place of young people within the Catholic Church in Australia.

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival is an initiative of the



Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
facilitated by the Bishop Commission for Pastoral Life
through the Office for Youth.

