

Now I'm
breathing in
and breathing
out

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out



australian
CATHOLIC YOUTH
FESTIVAL
SYDNEY 2017



REFLECTIONS

As I promised you at the beginning, a lot has happened in just three days of faith and fun. 21,000 of you have participated in prayer and worship of many kinds. You've sung and danced and praised God. You've conversed with some really switched-on lay evangelists, musicians, artists, sportspeople, journos, nuns and pastors. You've discussed topics ranging from sexuality, rural life, mental health, drugs, disability and the digital world, to faith and reason, love and leadership, spirituality and discernment. You've had practical experiences of helping the poor, homeless and refugees, promoting fair trade and sound ecology, and campaigning against evils like modern slavery. You've spoken your minds in X-Changes with Bishops, been heard respectfully and contributed your ideas for the future direction of the Church.





Thank you, young Church of Australia, for your participation, your leadership and service here and now. This Festival was for you but also largely done by you. Thank you for the energy, passion and wisdom. I pray that your horizons were broadened and your joy deepened by a renewed relationship with Christ and His Church this week. Take this excitement home and share it with your families, friends and parishioners. And keep doing all you can to see Christ more clearly. Show your peers and the world how to say a big Marian YES to God with your life. Be the spiritual heroes our world needs.

Anthony Fisher, OP

Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP

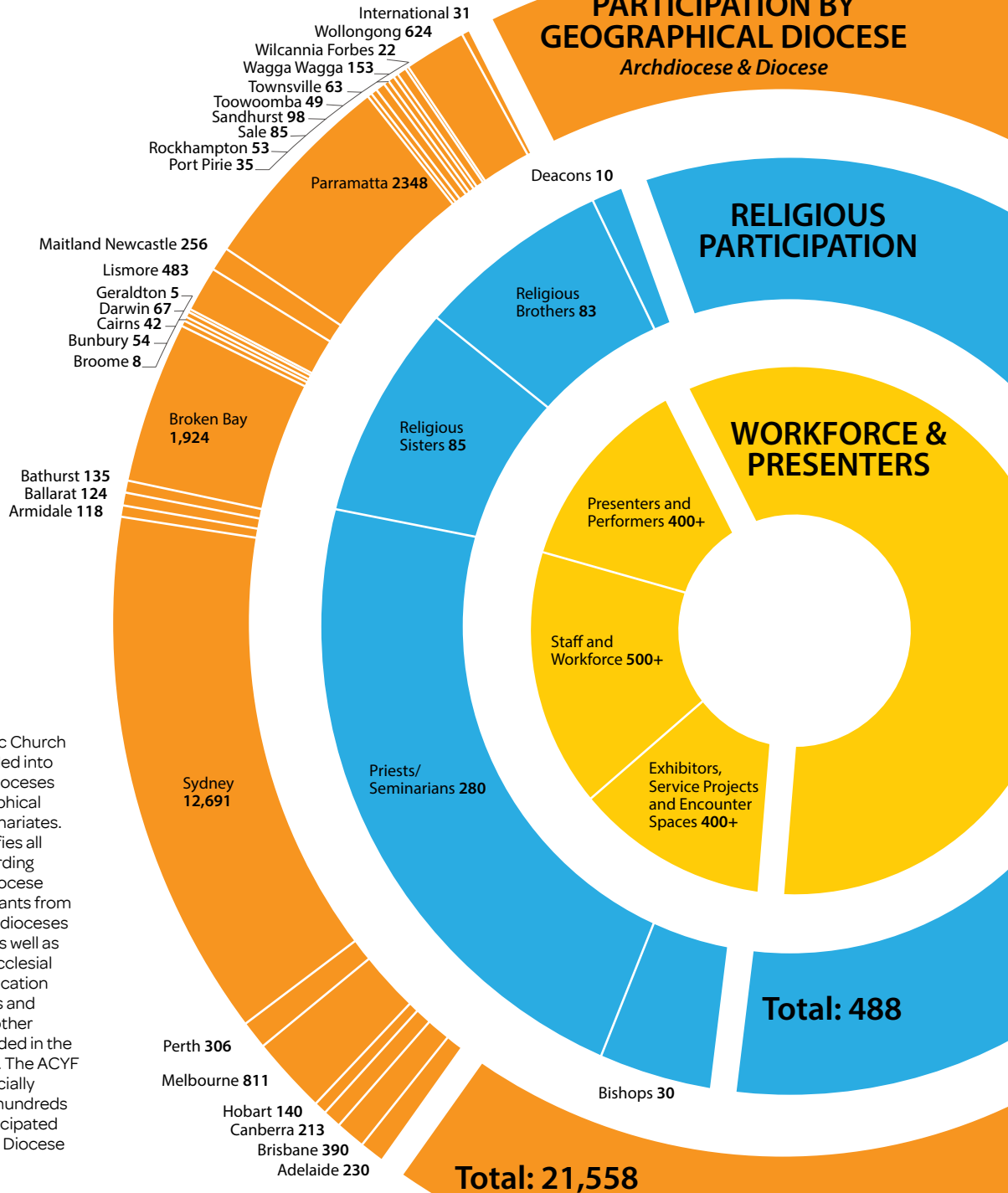
Archbishop of Sydney,

Australian Bishops Delegate
for Youth

Closing Mass address, 9 Dec 2017

OVERVIEW

Note: The Catholic Church in Australia is divided into 28 geographical dioceses and 7 non-geographical dioceses and ordinariates. This record identifies all participants according to geographical diocese locations. Participants from non-geographical dioceses and ordinariates as well as religious orders, ecclesial communities, education institutes (schools and universities) and other contexts are included in the geographical data. The ACYF would like to especially acknowledge the hundreds of youth who participated from the Maronite Diocese of St Maroun.





The opening Plenary ignited the Festival, from the stirring Welcome to Country and Matt Maher's first appearance to Archbishop Fisher's welcome and the empowering song "You will be Found", setting the scene for all that was to follow.



"My best experience was in the first plenary being invited to open hearts and minds to experience the event to its greatest potential. I think it was a fantastic opening and made me feel like I was starting on a renewal of sorts."



PRESENTERS & PANELS

Specialist presenters spoke on a wide range of topics from relationships and body image to social justice, gaming and prayer.





Eight different panel discussions addressed topics relevant to young people, from interfaith and sports to vocations and mental health.

PRESENTERS & PANELS

EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOPS

Festival-goers witnessed presenters, performers, drama, dance and music in experiential workshops, bringing to life topics including the first Australians, refugees, anti-slavery and homelessness.



“Some of the sessions were very inspiring and helped me understand the many disadvantaged people and how I could help them.”



PERFORMERS

The Justice Activity Centre hosted some of Australia's leading mission and outreach organisations, offering engaging activities and workshops. St Vincent de Paul, Caritas and Catholic Mission hosted permanent features throughout the Festival.





“The Caritas exhibit was awesome coz my eyes were opened to the needs of the poor.”

JUSTICE ACTIVITY CENTRE





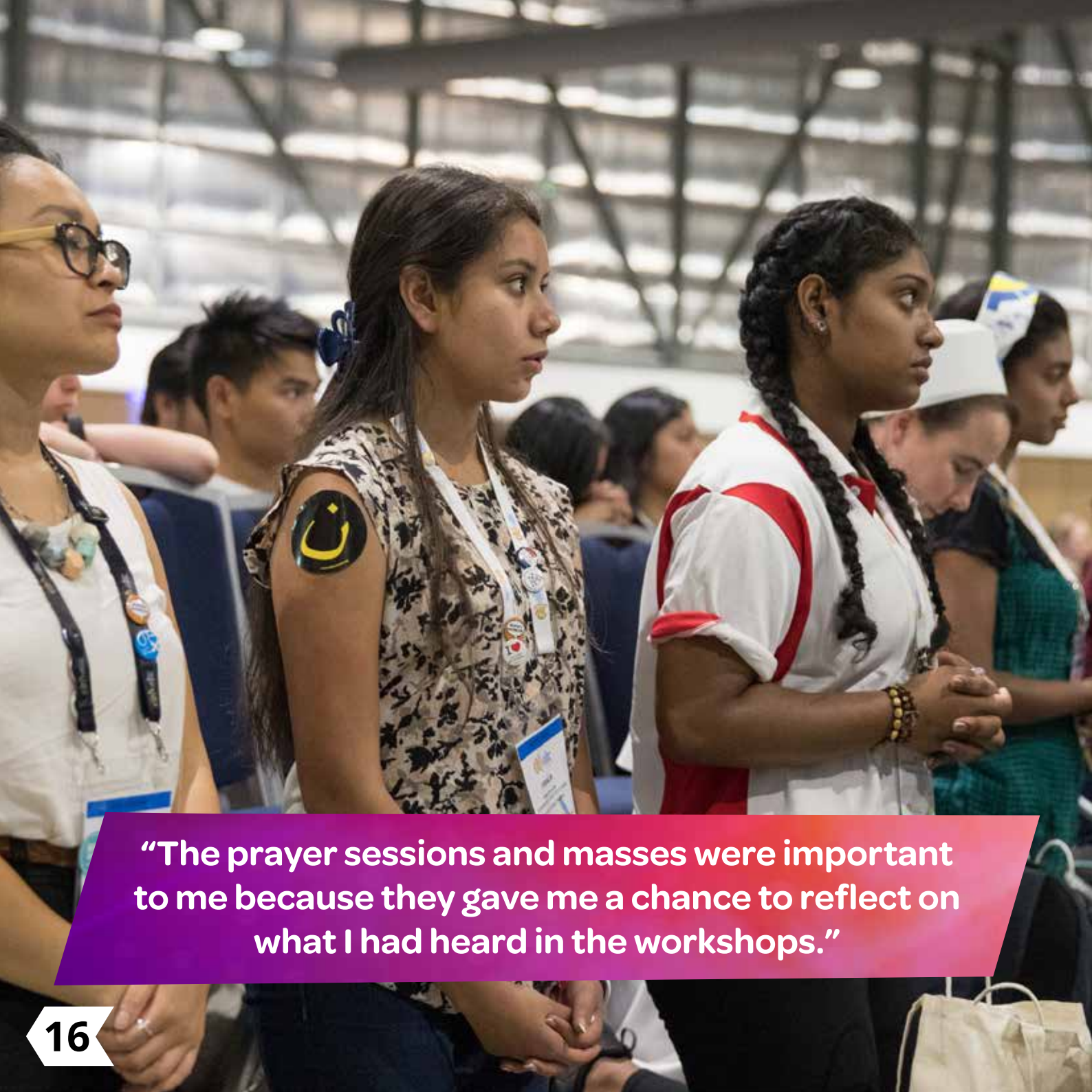
“Loved getting the chance to be involved with helping others through helping Vinnie’s make care packs for the homeless.”



“Hangin’ with Hilda was a highlight because every person who shared their testimony was able to touch someone with their story. Each of their stories was life giving to me and I know to others who are struggling.”



Archbishop Coleridge and Hangin' with Hilda helped participants to understand "joy" in ways relevant to all their lives, no matter who they are.



“The prayer sessions and masses were important to me because they gave me a chance to reflect on what I had heard in the workshops.”



The Worship Centre and Reconciliation spaces provided an oasis of calm in the midst of the Festival activity.

WORSHIP CENTRE

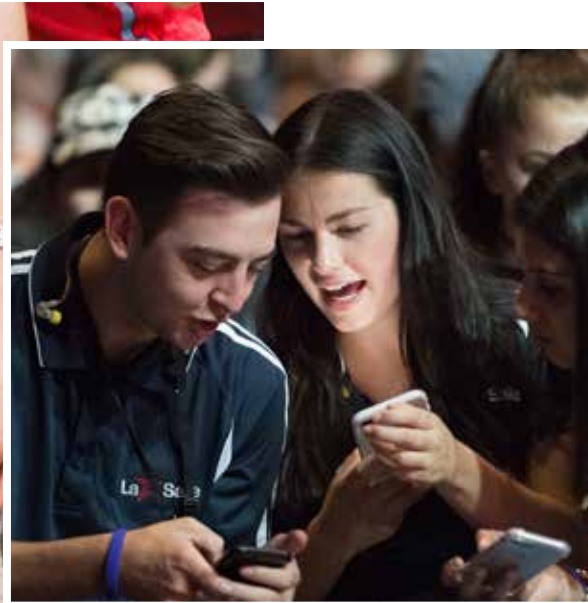


“The most important part of ACYF was discovering who I am as a person and choosing to follow up on the rest of my sacraments.”



“It is inspiring seeing the youth being unafraid to show and share their faith, and have the courage to want to learn more.”



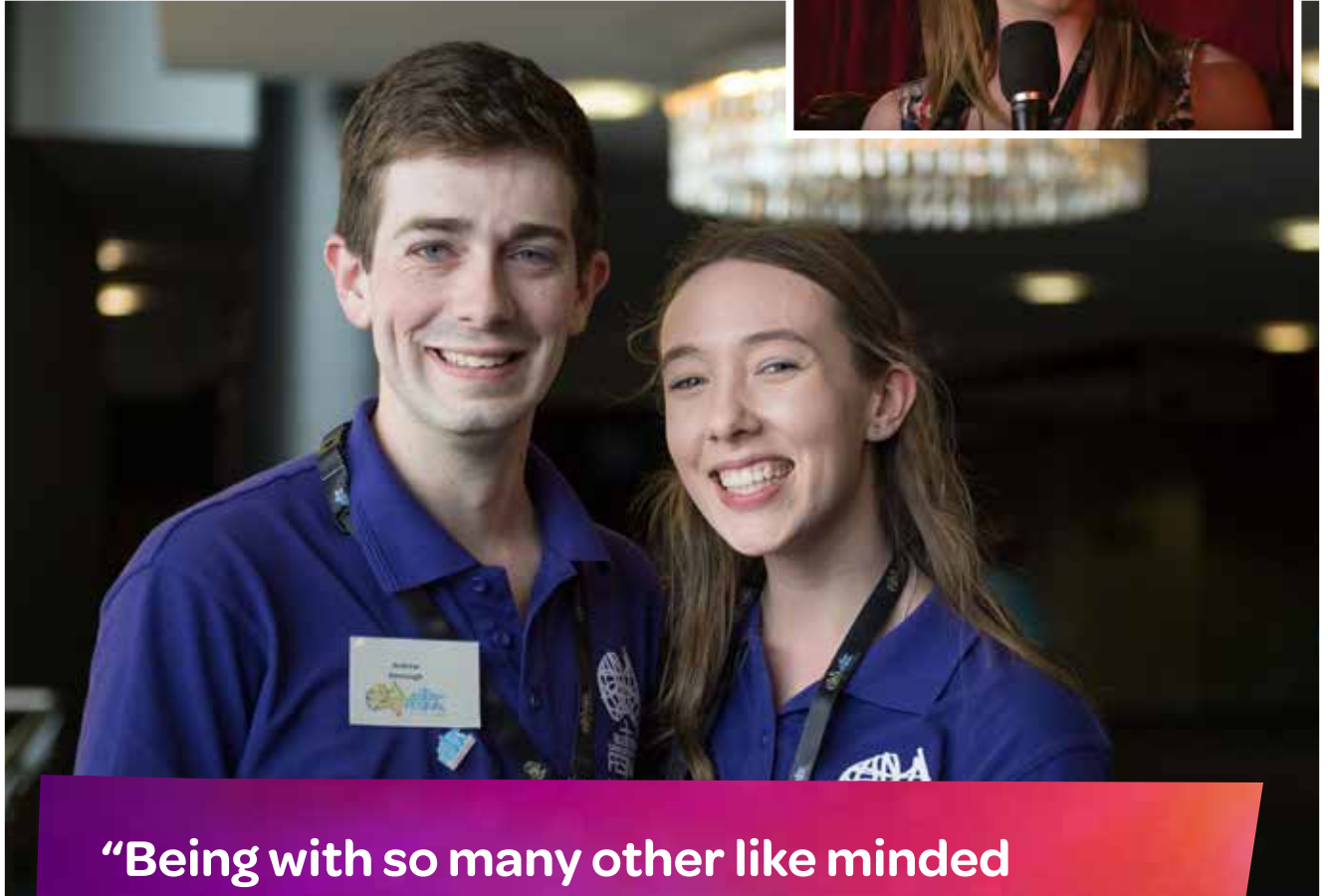


“Dream Big through faith and action, in the context of the Year of Youth” was the challenge given to those visiting the Leadership Centre.

LEADERSHIP CENTRE

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Bringing fresh faces and a young perspective to the Festival, the Youth Ambassadors delighted all with their willingness and courage to share their faith.



“Being with so many other like minded people really opened my eyes to the number of passionate Catholic youths in our society. It made me very comfortable to fully open up and express my faith.”



YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Bishop Mark Edwards OMI,
Nic and Lucas from
Orange Sky Laundry and
Emily Wilson inspired those
gathered with their words on
how to live out God's plan for
our lives.





“The Orange Sky talk inspired me, I want to be like them and do something more to help disadvantaged or less fortunate people.”

Over 100 exhibitors allowed participants insights into the wonderful work these groups are doing around Australia and beyond.





CARMELITES

Go deep - in prayer, community and action.

BLESSED SACRAMENT CONGREGATION

"Enjoy the soul that knows how to find Jesus in the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in all things!"
- St. Peter Julian Eymard

PASSIONISTS

"The Passion of Christ is the strength and soul-enriching work of God's love."
- St. Ignace of Loyola

CARMELITES

Be still... in prayer, community and action.

BLESSED SACRAMENT CONGREGATION

"Happy the soul that knows how to find Jesus in the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in all things!"
- St. Peter Julian Eymard

BISHOPS X-CHANGE

The young people and our Bishops came together to engage on ten X-Change “conversations” including mental wellbeing, the digital world, the Australian Church, secularism, same sex attraction, the environment and rural and remote Catholic life.





“The presence of the Bishops was so important! It’s good to know that they do care for the youth, and are offering their prayers and advice.”



Archbishop Christopher Prowse rallied the crowd to share the joy, while Steve Angrisano and Matt Maher led an Adoration so beautiful many were lost for words.



“Adoration at the plenary was incredible. I had never experienced such a strong sense of faith and spirituality in the room and had never engaged in adoration before.”



The energy and spirit of the Festival was alive and pumping, with live music, inflatable activities and video games.



“Singing songs with strangers on the way home on the train was amazing, because we connected even though we had no idea what anyone’s name was or where they came from.”



YOUTH FESTIVAL SPIRIT

VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORT

Leading in the spirit of joy at ACYF were the staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly for the young people. Thankyou to every one of you!

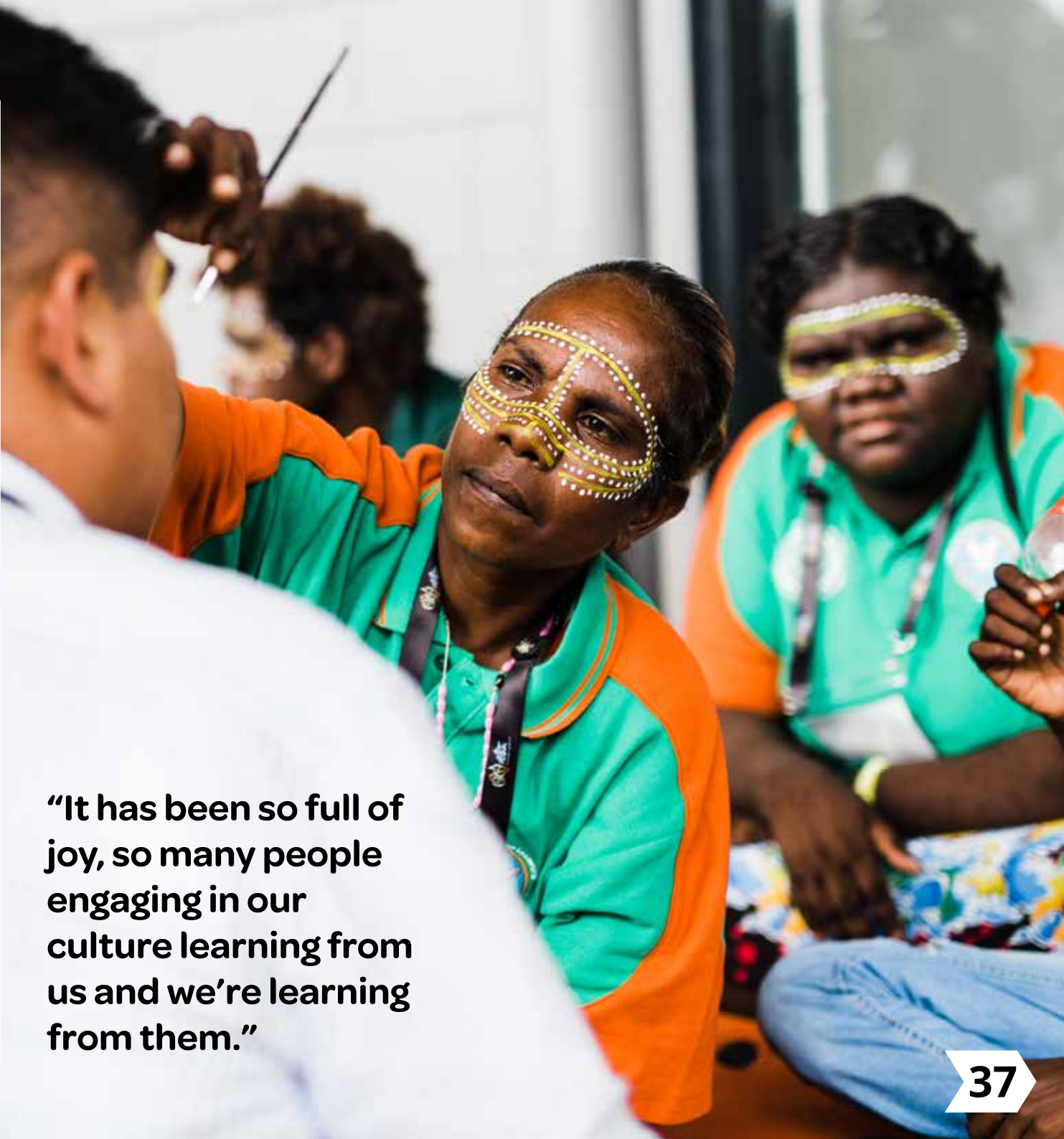


**“That sense of community
was one of the best aspects
of ACYF for me.”**



NATSICC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic Council) hosted a Cultural Space to share stories, culture and faith.





“It has been so full of joy, so many people engaging in our culture learning from us and we’re learning from them.”





With echoes of WYD08, ACYF pilgrims walked joyfully across the Sydney Harbour Bridge to the Domain.



“The Saturday pilgrimages were a highlight; to witness the young people so full of joy and energy on their way to the Closing Mass was very special. They were singing, chanting and praying the Rosary.”

CONCERT IN THE DOMAIN

The concert in the Domain saw the Festival's top performers entertaining the crowds before the Closing Mass.



“Matt Maher was one of the most inspirational voices of the church I’ve ever listened to. His music has played a massive role in my faith journey to date and it was so special to praise God with him and other young people.”



“The Final Mass was a testament to the validity of faith of the Catholic youth of Australia...it was such an honour to receive such blessings from all the Bishops of Australia.”





The close of the Festival was celebrated in a magnificent public Mass in the Domain, next to Sydney's Royal Botanic Garden.

“Normally large gatherings and loud places are not my thing, but to witness such a large crowd all kneel down in silence at Mass, made me feel I’m a part of a Church that is much bigger than myself, and yet I don’t have to pretend to be charismatic or energetic, I can perfectly glorify God with who I am, and that’s how He calls me to be in His Church of so many different charisms and spiritualities.”





CLOSING MASS

PARTNERS AND THANK YOU



Thank you

The Australian Catholic Youth Festival could not occur 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 Family, Youth and Life, the Office for Youth, the Australian Catholic Youth Council and the Bishops Delegate for Youth, Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP.

Archdiocese of Sydney (Host 2017): Youth Festival Office, Sydney Catholic Schools, Communications & News Media, Catholic Creative, Xt3, Sydney Catholic Youth, Vocations Office, Chancery Staff, University Chaplaincy, Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity, Legal counsel, St Mary's Cathedral and staff of the Archdiocese. Special thanks to Sydney Catholic Schools, their Religious Education and Evangelisation Office, CaSPA (Catholic Schools Performing Arts) and the schools, staff and students of the Archdiocese.

Diocese of Parramatta: Bishop Vincent Long OFM, Catholic Youth Parramatta, Catholic Education Parramatta, Parramatta Communications and all staff and parishes.

Diocese of Broken Bay: Bishop Peter Comensoli, Catholic Youth Broken Bay, Catholic Schools Office, Office for Communications and all staff and parishes.

Diocese of Wollongong: Bishop Peter Ingham, Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong, Catholic

Education Office, Media and Communications Office and all staff and parishes.

All Bishops, schools and parishes across Australia who supported young people to prepare for and attend the Youth Festival.

Australian Catholic Youth Festival Steering Committee: Bishop Richard Umbers (Chair), Malcolm Hart (Festival Director), Kathy Campbell (Festival Coordinator), Anthony Hill, James Camden, Lee Chandler, Kelly Paget, David Cloran, Mark Smith, Carolyn Hadley, Selina Hasham, Msgr Shora Maree, Fr Michael McLean, Fr Daniel McCaughan, Ian Steigrad and Gabrielle Sinclair.

ACYF Management Committees: Event Management & Human Resources, Encounter, Promotions and Partnerships, Plenary, Program and their teams. Thanks for the dedication and faith of committee members (too many to name), who dreamed and worked to bring about ACYF17.

Thank you to all the organisations, partners, presenters, exhibitors and guests who helped make the Festival a success. Thank you also to the tireless volunteers for their hard work during the Festival.

Finally thank you to the young people and their leaders for setting out in faith to attend the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney in such large numbers. The witness of your faith, energy and vitality is what the Festival is all about. We hope to see you again in Perth, December 2019.

Malcolm Hart

Director, Office for Youth
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference.

Photographic Acknowledgement: Daniel Hopper, Giovanni Portelli, Cyron Sobrevinas, Alphonsus Fok, Nicole Clements, Kitty Beale, Anthony Milic and Mark Tuffy.



Finally, to mark the decade since World Youth Day was celebrated here in Sydney and the forthcoming world Synod of Bishops on Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment, the Australian Bishops have dedicated the forthcoming year, from tonight until December 2018, as a Year for Youth. This is a year for the whole Church to hear, reflect with and draw inspiration from our young people, to renew our service to them, and to draw them ever more closely into the life and outreach of the Church. And so, my young friends: be attentive to the voice of Jesus in your life and identify ways of spreading the joy you have found with Him. Do not be afraid: know that the Church, that God Himself, is always here for you! I will now consecrate you, the young people of Australia, to Christ and His Blessed Mother.

Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP

ACYF Closing Mass, 9 December 2017

The Domain, Sydney

Left: The Year of Youth image, **Christ our Joy**, was painted by artist Amunda Gorey in Alice Springs.



To begin celebrations of 10 years since WYD08, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in partnership with the Archdiocese of Sydney hosted the Australian Catholic Youth Festival 2017. From 7-9 December over 20,000 young people, Bishops, religious, teachers, youth ministers and organisations came together to highlight and celebrate the vibrant life and importance of young people in the Catholic Church in Australia. It was the largest gathering of the Catholic Church in Australia since WYD08.



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