

World Youth Day – Tim Davies

G'day there, After traveling Thousands of miles around the globe from Melbourne, Australia to the UK via numerous international cities it was a blessing to arrive in Gloucester on a brilliantly, sunny, July morning.....and the locals tell me the weather is Always this good in Gloucester!

My name is Tim Davis and I am a Project Officers from the Melbourne World Youth Day Office in Australia. In just over 12 months, Australia will be hosting thousands of young pilgrims who are venturing 'Down Under' to celebrate the World Youth Days in Sydney 2008. My diocese of Melbourne (800km south of Sydney) are preparing to host 25,000 of these young pilgrims during the Days In the Dioceses (July 10-14th 2008) prior to the World Youth Days in Sydney (July 15-20th 2008).

Australia is very excited about hosting the World Youth Day gathering and in total we anticipate around 120,000 international pilgrims will make the pilgrimage to share this amazing experience with the young people of Australia. It will be a journey of a life time and culminates in Sydney with the young Catholics from all over the world coming together with the Holy Father Pope Benedict for a celebration of our faith, life and unity over 5 days.

The Archbishop of Melbourne, Dennis Hart, together with the people of Melbourne, wish to open our hearts and homes to young pilgrims from all corners of the world who make this exciting journey.

We are planning an exciting 4 day program for pilgrim groups who stay with us on their journey towards Sydney for the WYD. (July 15th -20th, 2008)

The Days In the Diocese in Melbourne (July 10th – 14th, 2008) will be an opportunity for young people to receive renowned Australian hospitality as they rest and prepare to continue their pilgrimage. In Melbourne we are organizing a program of events which will expose visitors to the living church in our diocese. The days will include the opportunity to explore our beautiful city and get to really know the Australian people through the opportunity of staying with local families.

Australians are familiar with traveling as we often have to cover vast distances, especially when traveling abroad. Because of this, we understand the importance of hospitality and that is why our Archbishop, Denis Hart asked me to make personal contact with as many international diocese as possible and offer your young people and pilgrim leaders the warmest invite to come and stay with us in Melbourne on their way to Sydney.

This work has taken me to all corners of the globe, sometimes traveling for months on end. Last Christmas I visited 37 cities in two months, traversing across North America, Europe and South-East Asia. This current journey has taken me through South Africa and up to Europe where I have been meeting with various WYD pilgrimage organizers from the UK dioceses. I enjoyed the

opportunity to meet Fr Hennessy and Lizzy in Gloucester last Tuesday. Hopefully I assist them by answering their questions about the pilgrimage. It's young people like Liz who we are really excited about visiting us in Australia. It will be an experience that I am sure will not only nourish the spiritual growth of the young international pilgrims that make the journey, but, it's people like Lizzy that will be a witness to young Catholics in Australia, a shining reminder that they are part of the Universal Church, a living church. It will provide opportunities for young people from different countries and cultures to celebrate their common faith and have a lot of fun along the way.

I look forward to meeting up with Fr Kevin, Liz and the other pilgrims who venture down our way from the United Kingdom, I have been received with warmth and friendliness wherever I have visited and in Australia we are looking forward to reciprocating this when your young people visit us next year. I encourage as many of you as possible to contact your parish priests and diocesan youth co-ordinators and start planning to get yourself to the World Youth Days. It will be an amazing opportunity that you will not want to miss! For further information you can look at our website, www.did08.com or e-mail me on tdavis@did08.com God Bless you and we hope to see you in Melbourne next July on your way to Sydney.

Kindest Regards,

Tim Davis,
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Melbourne,
Australia