

The Road to Sydney

Report on Stage One of the
World Youth Day 2008 Research Project

May, 2008



Michael Mason

Andrew Singleton

Ruth Webber

The Road to Sydney

Report on Stage One of the
World Youth Day 2008 Research Project
May, 2008

Michael Mason
Andrew Singleton
Ruth Webber

Acknowledgements

The research team wishes to thank the pilgrims of all ages who generously gave their time to be interviewed, and the many thousands who filled out the internet survey.

We are grateful to the Principals and Religious Education coordinators in the schools we visited, who organised the interviews and told us about their schools' preparation for WYD08.

We acknowledge our research assistants Terezia Kalkbrenner, Audra Kunciunas, Diana McKinley, Antoinette Novak and Sr. Beatriz Santos for helping the team conduct the interviews.

We thank our colleague Arrigo Dorissa for assisting with his creative skills in the presentation of this report.

The WYD08 Research Committee and especially its Chair Dr. Michael Casey have provided helpful advice and support in the planning and conduct of the research project from its beginning; and the WYD08 Registration Department and its Director Mr. John Sweeting deserve our thanks for their indispensable and generous collaboration.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the following project sponsors:

World Youth Day Sydney 2008 Administration
The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
Australian Catholic University
Monash University

© Copyright 2008 M. Mason, A. Singleton, R. Webber

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| List of Tables | iii |
| List of Figures | iii |
| Executive Summary | iv |
| | |
| Chapter 1 Four Pilgrims | 1 |
| Meet Corey, Grace, Annabelle and Roger | |
| | |
| Chapter 2 The Pilgrim Band | 8 |
| The survey of English-speaking pilgrims | |
| | |
| Chapter 3 The Pilgrim Quest | 12 |
| Pilgrims' hopes for their WYD experience & for what they will gain from it; How they have prepared for the journey | |
| | |
| Chapter 4 The Pilgrim Spirit | 30 |
| The spirituality & values underlying pilgrims' orientations to WYD | |
| | |
| Chapter 5 Where Pilgrimage Begins | 41 |
| Home and family shaping pilgrims' spirituality and intentions | |
| | |
| Chapter 6 Possibilities for Pilgrims | 44 |
| Opportunities and challenges of each group | |
| | |
| Appendix I. Outline of the research project | 46 |
| Appendix II. The personal interviews | 50 |
| Appendix III. Questions about WYD in the survey questionnaire | 52 |
| Appendix IV. Survey procedures and response rates | 55 |
| | |
| About the Authors | 58 |

List of Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 2.1: Survey respondents: Country of residence | 9 |
| Table 2.2: Survey respondents: Age groups | 10 |
| Table 3.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Frequency of pilgrim type..... | 13 |
| Table 3.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Age group by pilgrim type | 13 |
| Table 3.3: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):‘What are you most looking forward to experiencing at WYD?’ by pilgrim type | 14 |
| Table 3.4: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): What helped decision:‘People at school or parish encouraged you to go’ by pilgrim type | 23 |
| Table 3.5: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): What helped decision:‘Your friends are going’ by pilgrim type | 24 |
| Table 3.6: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): What helped decision:‘ Parents / relatives encouraged you to go’ by pilgrim type | 25 |
| Table 3.7: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Preparatory activities: ‘Attended a WYD information session at your school, university or parish’ by pilgrim type | 26 |
| Table 3.8: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Attendance at a previous WYD | 27 |
| Table 4.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Belief in God by pilgrim type | 30 |
| Table 4.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): OK to pick and choose your religious beliefs’ by pilgrim type | 32 |
| Table 4.3: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):Acceptance of Catholic moral teachings by pilgrim type | 34 |
| Table 4.4: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Belief in Reincarnation by pilgrim type..... | 35 |
| Table 4.5: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):‘My life fits in as part of God’s plan’ by pilgrim type . | 39 |
| Table 5.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):Pilgrim type by country of residence | 42 |
| Table 5.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):Pilgrim type by secondary school type | 43 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 3.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for:‘Getting your faith and your life more together – living what you believe’ by pilgrim type | 19 |
| Figure 3.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: ‘A deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings’ by pilgrim type | 20 |
| Figure 3.3: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: ‘A stronger sense of Catholic identity’ by pilgrim type | 21 |
| Figure 3.4: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: ‘Feeling the energy to get more involved in your parish’ by pilgrim type | 22 |
| Figure 4.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Moral relativism by pilgrim type | 33 |

Executive Summary

'Pilgrims' Progress 2008' is a research project being conducted at Australian Catholic University, with the support of World Youth Day Administration, focussing on the pilgrims attending World Youth Day in Sydney in July.

This 'Road to Sydney' report marks the conclusion of the first, pre-WYD phase of the project. The report's purpose is primarily to enrich the information base available to WYD administrators so as to enable whatever fine-tuning of program details is still possible, and to benefit the conduct of operations involving pilgrims by informing them about pilgrims' attitudes and background. This report deals exclusively with WYD08's target group: Catholic pilgrims aged 15-35. The method of the report is one of rich description. The tasks of analysing, probing, exploring, explaining variations, relating to other contexts and to other research, are deferred to our comprehensive report.

In Phase One of the project, interviews and a survey were conducted to discover what pilgrims hope for from WYD2008, how they have been preparing for it, and many other aspects of their spirituality and background. Four different types of pilgrims were found, and named Devoted, Involved, Open and Social. They have some characteristics in common; in others, they differ markedly from each other in their hopes and expectations for WYD08, and in their spirituality, background and interests. They represent four at least partly different 'constituencies' among the youthful participants at WYD08.

The main body of the report is devoted to a detailed profile of these four types of pilgrims, focussing, in Chapter 3, on their hopes for WYD08, and in Chapters 4-5, on their spirituality and family background.

Some practical applications are suggested in a concluding section.

1.

Four Pilgrims

This report summarises the first stage of an exploration among the pilgrims attending WYD08 in Sydney in July. To start, we would like to introduce four of the forty-nine pilgrims we interviewed personally. Meet Corey, Grace, Annabelle and Roger.¹ They each have their own hopes for what they will find at WYD, and what they will gain from it.

Corey

Corey is 27 and lives in a major city. At the time of the interview he was working for a non-government organisation. He was also keen to point out to his interviewer that a good deal of his time was spent organising Catholic youth events, a task he first volunteered for when he was just 14. Corey is a member of a Catholic movement and is making his World Youth Day pilgrimage as a group leader within that movement. He is attending his third World Youth Day, having been to Rome in 2000 and Toronto in 2002.

Corey is a very religious young man. Both his parents are practising Catholics and members of the same religious movement as himself. He attends Mass weekly, sometimes more often. Why so often? He says:

You know what I mean, I hear all these reports. People say 'Oh Mass is boring', or this or that, but is that really what it's about, you know? It's not about me going to this place for an hour and getting entertained. So I just ... I have kept attending because pretty much that's what we're meant to do. Like it's not 'cause it's a rule ... I believe it's the right thing.

What do you get out of it? How do you find it helpful?

I like listening to the gospels. And we've got very good preachers at our church as well which probably ... like I can understand why people would stop going if they lived in the middle of nowhere, where you know, you don't get much except for the readings and that stuff. So I think a big thing for me is that we've got very good priests, and they're young as well. So that's ... I get that out of it. And it's good also. We have a music ministry that we have a lot of worship as well in the musical sense.

He told us that he prays every day, and talks to God 'all the time'. So what does he talk to God about?

Every single thing.

All the different aspects of your life?... of what's going on?

I don't just, you know, say, 'Oh please get me a new car'. No. Or just anything. 'What should I do tomorrow?' 'Should I apply for a new job?' You know what I mean? Everything.

¹ Throughout this report, all of the informants have been assigned a pseudonym, and any other potentially identifying details have been altered.

Being Catholic is very important to Corey; it is an integral part of his identity. He told us:

I'm a Catholic, I'm a Catholic all the way and don't apologise for it ... Like if people say something at work ... like these guys at my work the other day were laughing and saying oh, 'cause they obviously, I don't know what they do but they're obviously laughing, and they were laughing at Catholics and how they worship Mary. And they go oh, 'They worship the dead mother of Jesus'. And I just stood up and looked over the partition and I said ... 'You do realise I'm Catholic?' Like I'm not going to sit there and go oh, 'That's OK'.

Corey was looking forward to WYD08 immensely. He is a group leader, and is heavily involved in the Pilgrim Partnership Support Program, having raised \$10,000 to help support overseas pilgrims to make the journey to Sydney.

His past two WYD experiences had been enormously beneficial to his faith development. When asked if going to these WYDs had helped him come to a fuller acceptance of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings he said:

I think you'd have to say yeah, because obviously you wouldn't continue on if you didn't, do you know what I mean? So obviously, otherwise the last eight years of my life, seven years of my life would be a big waste of time.

It was after the Rome WYD in 2000 that he joined the movement to which he belongs. What were the most valuable experiences he had at these WYDs?

Actually do you know what was fantastic? Now that I'm thinking about it, was having Cardinals give teachings.

catechesis sessions?

Yes. And for your normal Catholic, they would never meet a Cardinal. And to be taught directly by a Cardinal was really, really good. Cardinal [Name] gave our catechesis for English people, English speakers. And I was just really, like just even the fact like wow, this is a Cardinal teaching us directly. And that was really a big thing that I can remember.

Corey is equally enthusiastic about the outcomes that will result from going to Sydney, not just for himself, but for the Catholic Church as a whole:

I reckon there is a lot of like school kids who are going who think they're going to go on a big holiday. And I reckon that it'll really, like for people who go to these things and think oh, 'It's just going to be a holiday', I think that they, a lot of the time come back and go wow, that was so much more than a holiday. And I think it's going, as a trickle-down effect from that, people will start to go to church and stuff. I'm not saying it's the answer to all the problems in the world, but I think it's a very good injection of spirituality and everything.

Corey is a keen Catholic, looking forward particularly to the devotional, teaching and religious elements of WYD08. For him, WYD08 is an opportunity to gather with other like-minded Catholics, share faith and worship together.

Grace

Next, meet Grace. She is 19, and is going to University. She is travelling to WYD08 with other youth from her parish. She is Australian-born but both her parents were born overseas. She comes from a working-class background and lives on the outskirts of a large city. She was raised Catholic and both her mother and father are practising Catholics. She told us that:

We have a Virgin Mary statue at our house, we always do the rosary and I think that's important as well, you know, to make ... or to have prayers to the Virgin Mary for giving us the life that we have and for Jesus. So yeah, I think that's important.

Grace went to both Catholic primary and secondary schools. These days, she attends Mass about twice a month. Like Corey, she gets something special out of going to Mass:

I guess going to Mass is like my ... allows me to go to my own place and I guess be grateful to God and to say thank you for what I have today, and for what You have given me. I think that's the main reason why I go to church. Although I can do it at home, I think going to church where you're with the priest and you're accepting your bread and wine, I think that ... it kind of gives me a greater ... like a greater bond to God.

Being Catholic is an important part of her identity. When asked what it means to her to be a Catholic, she told us:

I think being a Catholic is being able to interact in a good way with all your friends and your family, being open to everyone, not having really any prejudices against anyone, accepting people for who they are despite, you know, even if they do have different beliefs to you are, but you have to be open to that. And I guess just being, like you know, being grateful for what you have. Yeah, I think that's what being a Catholic is to me.

Grace is going to WYD08, but has not been to any previous WYDs. The decision to make the pilgrimage to Sydney was not a hard one:

Well, because of ... I guess it's because it's close to home, it's in Sydney so we thought, my friends and I thought well it's not going to be ... it won't be in Australia for a long, long time so we might as well take advantage of the fact that it's going to be in Sydney.

She was looking forward particularly to meeting the Pope, sharing about faith with other young people and feeling part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs. She said she was hoping to 'I guess bond, over, you know, the faith that we have, yeah'.

Although looking forward to the event, she is different from Corey, more equivocal about what benefits making the pilgrimage might have for her:

I think it's just an opportunity for us to go there, I guess do all the activities that they've planned and just, like what I'm really there for is just to meet people, that's the only

reason I want to really go. And just to meet people from all the other nations who are coming, that's what I expect from World Youth Day.

Unlike many of the other pilgrims about her age or younger, Grace did not mention the more youth-oriented aspects of the event – the large crowd, the excitement. She is religious, and will participate enthusiastically in the WYD Masses and catecheses, though she is not expecting the event to strengthen her faith any further.

Annabelle

Annabelle, aged 16, is in Year 10 at a Catholic secondary college, and lives in an ethnically diverse, working-class suburb of a major Australian city. Her father is a tradesman and her mother works as an attendant in a nursing home. Her parents were born in Eastern Europe and migrated when Annabelle was a little child. Annabelle attends a parish where the services are conducted in her parents' first language. Many other young Catholics also attend her parish and she is friends with many of these youth. Life has been pretty good for Annabelle: the only crisis she reported to us was the death of her grandmother.

Family, culture and friends are all important to Annabelle. She said: 'I grew up with people from the same culture and nationality as me so they all went to church every Sunday as well.' She feels close to both parents and they are emotionally supportive of her. Both are religious: the family regularly prays together and attend Mass together. Her parents have had a major influence on the way she looks at the world: 'It's Mum's warmth and help I think, that's taught me to love others as well, to show others the same thing that she shows me.'

Not surprisingly, both parents encouraged her to attend WYD:

My Mum's like 'Go for it'. She was really happy. She's like 'Yes, you got in! That's awesome, that's great'.

During the interview, we showed pilgrims a small selection of evocative pictures and asked them to choose the one that said the most about their life. Annabelle chose a picture of a stained glass window because it reminded her of the importance of religion:

[The picture] reminds me of my religious background, like my Grandma was very religious and my parents and I go to church every Sunday. And the church setting just reminds me of who we are and we also light candles for the passed away, so that just kind of reminds me of part of my life.

Pilgrims were asked their views about Catholic practices and Catholic beliefs, and which of these are essential for Catholics. Annabelle agreed that in order to be a good Catholic you needed to give time and money to help the poor and to follow the church's teaching on birth control. However, like many other youth we interviewed, she felt she was also able to 'pick and choose' on some other matters of Catholic teaching, telling us that she did not agree that a good Catholic had to 'go to church pretty much every Sunday' or 'follow the church's teaching on not having sex before marriage'.

As might be expected, Annabelle is enthusiastic about going to World Youth Day. She is interested in getting together with other like-minded youth, feeling part of a crowd united by shared beliefs at a large youth event:

I remember watching some shows about it, like with John Paul II, doing World Youth Day, and it looked really interesting. And also when we had the meeting with our teacher at school, it just, I don't know, seemed like a place where everyone just gets together and celebrates the religion and just meets, you know, you meet everyone from other cultures and everything and just amazing to ... Yeah, it just looks like something I can be part of ... And so here you can be together with all those things and everyone you love and friends and yeah, just meet everyone. And it looks interesting.

Pilgrims were asked what they are most looking forward to at WYD. She again emphasised her desire to meet people with whom she could share her faith and to learn more about her religion, as well as seeing the Pope:

As I said before, just spending time with people my age and learning about them, and while being with your friends, I mean that's going to be an amazing experience, you know. And meeting new people like, yeah, basically that. And also meeting the Pope. That's ... I can't wait for that. It's going to be fantastic.

She also hoped that WYD would have a positive impact on her life and her faith:

I think it's going to make me a better person because you'll have to learn more about others and treat others better than just yourself. So I want to learn to do that and I think that's what I'll get out of it. So I'll be better spiritually.

Annabelle also hoped that WYD will have a long-lasting impact on her, other pilgrims and the wider church, especially in encouraging other youth in their faith:

I think it'll make it stronger because I'll experience something amazing ... So by having things like World Youth Day where all these teenagers around the world get together, I think it's going to make a difference to the way you view church. It's not going to be for the old grannies in the hats, it's going to be for ... it's all for everyone. And so it's going to help you understand that God's for everyone. And just going to help you, yeah, with all the teenagers.

Annabelle is younger than Corey and Grace, and as we can see from her comments, is far more attracted to the 'youth culture' aspects of the WYD experience – being part of a huge crowd of youth holds greater attraction perhaps than things like the Masses, catecheses and devotional activities than it might for Corey or Grace. But she is also open to having more than just a 'fun' time in Sydney. She is open to the ways in which WYD08 will strengthen her faith.

Roger

Roger was 16 when we interviewed him, in year 10 at a Catholic secondary college. He has a part-time job making hamburgers at a family restaurant. His parents are separated and he lives with his mother and his older sister. Roger has irregular contact with his father and does not talk about personal matters with his Dad: 'he's not really the type.' At the time of

the interview Roger had not told his father he is going to WYD. Roger comes from a middle-class family; his father works in management and his mother in the finance industry.

Roger is quite sociable and enjoys hanging out with his friends at shopping centres and going to the movies. When asked to describe an experience that made a difference to his life, he nominated two: the death of his grandfather, with whom he was very close, and the ongoing ill-health of his grandmother. These two events made him think about his life and it helped him focus on making the most of each day:

Probably my grandfather dying. He died last year in August. That was pretty hard because he was always there, always laughing and joking, so, yeah, I miss him a lot. It made me think about where my life was going and how I should really try to do more things with it. Yeah, just like live my life as much as I can.

Roger is not particularly religious. He did not attend Mass regularly, even when he was at primary school. He prays sometimes and these days goes to Mass less than once a month. He believes there is some sort of higher being, but is not sure about God:

Yeah, I think, 'cause like we're all unique and somehow we have ... we've just become in this world so like if we weren't all unique and just the same, it'd be pretty boring so there has to be some higher power that's helped us to be unique and ... yeah.

At present, Roger's Mum attends Mass less than once a month; he is unsure about his father. He considered his mother to be highly religious, but religion is not something he had talked about much with his dad.

Roger saw himself as moderately close to God, but religion just didn't seem that important to him and he could not articulate much of what he believed. He was somewhat eclectic: he adopts some Catholic teachings, some beliefs from elsewhere. Asked about what happens to someone when they die he said:

I believe that they are watching over us in some way, like whether it's up in heaven or whether they've been reincarnated or something like that. But yeah, I believe that they're watching over us trying to guide us and protect us.

Nonetheless he claimed that being a Catholic was important to him. He was pleased to identify with the Catholic tradition and to have been raised Catholic:

Just because it's good to have faith, 'cause if you don't have faith you can't really have just something to believe in when everything else is going wrong. And my family has been Catholic all their lives so it's good to see that they can do it. So, yeah, they put me on the right path.

He agreed with some church teachings – even that on sex before marriage, but not with the Catholic opposition to same-sex relationships. He thought that people should use their own conscience to make decisions about certain moral issues.

Roger was vague about the aims and purpose of WYD. Why was he going? WYD seemed like fun, with lots of different people from different countries being there.

And as for outcomes? Roger hoped that being with a large group of Catholics from around the world might somehow provide him with a more optimistic view of the world and its future:

Just a sense of what the world would look like if it was like all multicultural instead of all divided and with wars and everything. So just a sense of people coming together just to be happy and celebrate something instead of just war and killing and stuff.

Roger is young, and seemed especially attracted to everything about WYD that most appeals to youth; the vibe of being part of a huge group of young people, making new friends. It did not seem to matter much to him as an opportunity to strengthen his faith.

In the process of sharing something of their journeys towards Sydney, these four pilgrims have illuminated for us some important characteristics of the larger pilgrim group. Their voices set the scene for what follows.

2.

The Pilgrim Band

These four pilgrims were chosen, out of the dozens interviewed at length, because the recent survey reveals that they are representative of four significantly different groups of pilgrims on the road to Sydney from English-speaking countries.² Exploring the characteristics of this pilgrim band is the focus of this report.

The report brings to a conclusion the first, pre-WYD phase of the research project. Earlier reports and updates will be posted on the limited-access section of the project website.³ The purpose of this account is primarily to enrich the information base available to WYD administrators. Even minute details of the program will have been set long ago, but some degree of fine-tuning may still be possible, and the actual conduct of all operations directly involving pilgrims will benefit from the fullest information available on pilgrims' attitudes and background.

The report is presented in a simple, non-academic style, without technical terminology or the usual apparatus of theoretical background, documentation and references. There has not been time, in the two weeks since the survey closed, for a full analysis of the data. That can wait. This is a first look.

In the following chapters we will examine, first, the pilgrims' varied hopes for what they will experience at WYD08, and for what they will take away from it, and how they have prepared for it (Chapter 3 The Pilgrim Quest). Then we will show the different emphases in spirituality underlying pilgrims' orientations to WYD (Chapter 4 The Pilgrim Spirit), and how various forms of spirituality, in turn, are rooted in family and inherited traditions (Chapter 6 Pilgrims at home). In conclusion, we endeavour to turn these insights to practical advantage by applying them to the opportunities and challenges for different types of pilgrims (Chapter 6 Possibilities for Pilgrims). Appendices I-IV contain background information on the research project, its design and activities; on the series of lengthy personal interviews with intending pilgrims, on the questions about WYD which were asked in the recent survey, and on the survey procedures and response rates.

The present chapter will introduce the survey on which this report is based, and draw attention to a few important features of this pilgrim group as a whole.

Estimates of the number of pilgrims expected to attend WYD08 change daily; weekly updates are issued by the WYD Registration section. At the start of May there were 55,649 pilgrims registered for catechesis in English.

² Constraints of time and funding did not permit the extension of the project to other language groups among the pilgrims.

³ <http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/wyd/adm/>

Representativeness of the survey sample

Normal research procedure would have been to draw a random sample of a few thousand of these and administer the survey to them; however, World Youth Day's administrators and its Research Committee considered that the process of reflection involved in completing the survey would be beneficial to all pilgrims, and that all should be invited to take part. With the generous collaboration of the WYD Registration department, all of those registered for English-language catechesis who were able to be contacted were invited to take part, and a remarkably high proportion of those contacted did so (see the full report of contact procedures and response rates in Appendix IV). The researchers are confident that the survey sample of 12,275 responses is solidly representative, in most respects, of the likely eventual body of English-speaking pilgrims.

Country of origin

47% of the respondents were Australian, 53% replied from overseas. Table 2.1 shows the range of countries with over 50 respondents who registered for catechesis in English; the remaining 1,240 respondents were from 149 different nations. For many of these, English was a second or third language, but was their best option among the official languages of WYD08.

Table 2.1: Survey respondents: Country of residence

| Country of residence | No. of respondents | % of sample |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Australia | 5,741 | 46.8 |
| United States | 1,833 | 14.9 |
| New Zealand | 649 | 5.3 |
| Canada | 605 | 4.9 |
| Philippines | 531 | 4.3 |
| United Kingdom | 364 | 3.0 |
| Singapore | 222 | 1.8 |
| Malaysia | 202 | 1.6 |
| Germany | 176 | 1.4 |
| Ireland | 172 | 1.4 |
| Indonesia | 154 | 1.3 |
| Nigeria | 152 | 1.2 |
| Poland | 104 | .8 |
| India | 65 | .5 |
| South Africa | 65 | .5 |
| Other | 1,240 | 10.3 |
| TOTAL | 12,275 | 100.0 |

Although the main English-speaking countries are all strongly represented, the sample percentages are not a definitive guide to the eventual mix of pilgrim nationalities. Varying proportions from different nations were registered and able to be contacted at the beginning of May, and this determined the mix of nationalities in the sample. There is no way of knowing who will decide to register after that point; however WYD's 'forward estimates' appear to point towards a similar mix of nationalities.

Although attenders from Australia will be of greatest interest to many readers, this report deals with the entire English-speaking group, as this is most likely to be most relevant to WYD staff at this point. We have not discussed the differences between the Australians and the rest, or created special tables and commentaries on this theme. But in the later report, after the post-WYD survey, we will certainly give major attention to the Australian contingent; as information concerning them will be of great relevance for the future of youth ministry in Australia.

Religious identification and age

As expected, nearly all respondents were Catholic (95%). Anglicans and Orthodox were prominent among the remainder, who were mainly Protestant. There were small numbers from other world religions. Given that the proportion of respondents who were not Catholic was so small, and given that the primary WYD08 target group consists of *Catholics aged 15-35, this report will deal only with that group.*⁴ Although age 35 is well above the range of what is usually considered youthful, for convenience, we will refer to the target group as 'Catholic youth'. There were a small number of respondents under the age of 15, and a surprisingly small proportion over 35.

Table 2.2: Survey respondents: Age groups

| Age | N | Percent |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 10-14 | 104 | .8 |
| 15-18 | 3878 | 31.6 |
| 19-24 | 3562 | 29.0 |
| 25-29 | 1759 | 14.3 |
| 30-35 | 1092 | 8.9 |
| 36-39 | 403 | 3.3 |
| 40-49 | 806 | 6.6 |
| 50+ | 671 | 5.5 |
| Total | 12275 | 100.0 |

Gender

Almost two-thirds of the Catholic youth in the sample were female, one third male. The Australian contingent is even more predominantly female: 68% women to 32% men. This is very different from the male/female proportion in most Catholic populations. For instance, in the 2006 Australian census, Catholics aged 15-35 were 51.1% female, 48.9% male.

It does not seem likely that more girls and women have registered earlier, and so are more prominent in the survey sample than they will be among the actual attenders. Rather, WYD08 attracts women much more strongly than men. We will explore the reasons for this difference later in the report.

⁴ We are informed that registration as an individual pilgrim is permitted if the person will reach the required age of 16 by the end of 2008.

Fixed-choice rather than open-ended questions

We received a few emailed comments from survey respondents who wished that there were space on the questionnaire to express a view on some issue in their own words, instead of having to choose between pre-set responses. We replied to all such contacts explaining that in large-scale surveys, when many thousands of responses are received, it is too time-consuming and expensive to employ researchers to read and analyse very large quantities of free-form comments. Responsible researchers believe that if we invite such comments, we have an obligation to read and process them. So prior to the survey, we spend a long time doing interviews in which people respond to everything in their own words. Through this process, researchers try to gain an understanding of how a particular age-group understand an issue, and of the range of views they hold on it. The survey questions and answer options are formulated against that background, and ideally, provide answer choices that suit most respondents.⁵ Then the survey is pre-tested, and comments are asked of those who respond to it. The WYD survey was pretested in March, receiving 180 responses from pilgrims chosen at random, and on the basis of their feedback, was extensively revised.

We turn next to the topic of greatest relevance to preparing for World Youth Day: what are the pilgrims hoping for?

⁵ Details of the interview stage of this project will be found in Appendix II.

3.

The Pilgrim Quest

Today, as in Chaucer's time, people go on pilgrimage seeking many different things, serious or superficial, religious or secular.

Among other questions about WYD, our respondents were asked the following: 'What are you most looking forward to experiencing at WYD?' The answer options offered were widely varied, from things like 'Experiencing the presence of God' to 'Making new friends' and respondents were asked to place the list of possible experiences in rank order.

Another question asked: 'When World Youth Day is all over, what benefits do you hope for as a result of attending?' The response options included items as different as: 'A closer relationship with God / with Jesus' and 'I just hope I will have enjoyed a good time.' For this question, people could check any item corresponding to a hoped-for outcome.

These two questions expressed the core of the pilgrims' orientations towards WYD, and their responses to them were analysed using a technique called 'cluster analysis', which examined all the different rankings given in the first question, and all the different items selected in the second, and arranged the pilgrims into groups on the basis of answers being similar to others in the group, and markedly different from those of other groups. Four clusters of pilgrims emerged from this analysis, indicating that there are four different types of pilgrims.

We call them the *Devoted*, the *Involved*, the *Open* and the *Social*. Table 3.1 shows their relative size. The Social are the smallest group at 11%, the Open and the Involved are of intermediate size, and the Devoted the largest group at almost 40% of all Catholic, English-speaking pilgrims aged between 15 and 35. Are we claiming that they will also be the largest group among the whole crowd who actually attend? We believe they will be.

Of course, the most we can strictly claim for the survey is that it is representative of those who were individually registered at the beginning of May. We can't possibly know for certain who may decide to attend between May and mid-July. But we have some information on which to base predictions. Many from overseas are not yet registered. But when we look at the overseas travellers who are already registered, we find that a large proportion of them are in the Devoted group. Given the work and expense involved in getting to WYD, especially in such a remote venue as Australia, overseas attenders tend to be older and more highly committed. On the other hand, younger Australians, more easily able to attend, but possibly less enthusiastic or slower to decide, may register late in large numbers. This could increase the weight of both the Open and Social groups, since both are predominantly still at school.

Table 3.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Frequency of pilgrim type (N and % of each type)

| Pilgrim types | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|
| Pilgrim type | N | % |
| Devoted | 3607 | 39 |
| Involved | 2172 | 24 |
| Open | 2432 | 26 |
| Social | 1016 | 11 |
| Total | 9227 | 100 |

The presence of so many highly committed young Catholics immediately alerts us to a major difference between our WYD pilgrims and a group of ‘average’ Catholic youth from our own country or similar Western societies. *The whole pilgrim group are an elite.* Mixed back into the societies from which they come, they would almost disappear among the large number of their fellow-Catholics who did not choose to attend WYD. We know from previous research in many of those countries that the proportion of young Catholics who are highly committed to their faith is quite small. But naturally, World Youth Day appeals disproportionately to them, and they are coming!

The character of each pilgrim type will gradually become more clearly defined as we walk with them through the survey; however it will greatly help the reader’s understanding if we reveal at the outset that there are significant differences in the age range of the four groups, as shown the next table.

Table 3.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Age group by pilgrim type (% within each type)⁶

| Age Groups | Pilgrim type | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| 15-18 | 29* | 23 | 54 | 60 | 37 |
| 19-24 | 38 | 38 | 32 | 29 | 35 |
| 25-29 | 20 | 24 | 10 | 8 | 17 |
| 30-35 | 13 | 16 | 4 | 4 | 10 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

⁶ **How to read the tables in this report.** The commonest type of table is like Table 3.2 above, where the caption above the table contains ‘(something) by (something)’ – in this case ‘Age Group by Pilgrim Type’. The numbers in these tables are *column percentages*, so the 29* on the top row of numbers means: 29% of pilgrims of the Devoted type were aged 15 to 18. It does *not* mean 29% of the 15-18 year-olds belonged to the Devoted type.

Despite a fair amount of overlap, we see at a glance that the Devoted and Involved are much more likely to be aged 19-29 or older, while the Open and Social groups both have more than half their members aged 15 to 18. In many ways, the two pairs of groups ‘act their age’.

On the other hand, there is little difference among the four clusters by gender: they are all about two-thirds female and a third male, with only slightly more women among the Devoted, and men among the Social. So the reason for the much higher proportion of women than men in the whole sample is *not* that women are more likely to be Devoted! WYD attracts women more than men across all types.

What Pilgrims are looking forward to experiencing at WYD08

In this section we explore in detail pilgrims’ orientations towards WYD, supplementing data analysis with excerpts from interviews. As already noted, we asked our survey respondents to rank in order of preference ten WYD experiences such as seeing the Pope, participating in the Masses and prayer services, or just feeling the support of a large crowd of fellow-believers. They ranked these items from 1 – what they most hoped to experience, down to 10 – what they were least interested in experiencing.

Table 3.3 lists the *average* rank that each pilgrim group gave to each of the ten statements. 1 is the highest possible rank, so when the Devoted give an average rank of 2.3 to ‘Experiencing the presence of God’, they are putting it much closer to their ‘number one priority’ than the Social group, who rank it 6.8.

**Table 3.3: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):
‘What are you most looking forward to experiencing at WYD?’
by pilgrim type (average ranks)**

| Looking forward to: | Pilgrim type: Average rank for each item | | | | |
|--|--|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Experiencing the presence of God | 2.3 | 3.0 | 5.0 | 6.8 | 3.7 |
| Seeing the Pope, listening to him | 3.1 | 3.0 | 4.7 | 5.3 | 3.7 |
| The Masses and prayer services | 4.2 | 4.3 | 7.2 | 8.1 | 5.5 |
| The catechesis sessions / learning more about my own faith | 4.4 | 4.8 | 6.9 | 7.8 | 5.5 |
| Feeling part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.3 | 4.9 | 4.6 |
| Sharing about faith with other young people | 4.7 | 4.7 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 5.2 |
| Making new friends | 6.8 | 6.6 | 4.3 | 3.2 | 5.7 |
| Just the buzz of being part of a huge youth event | 7.5 | 6.9 | 4.4 | 3.4 | 6.1 |
| Having fun, sightseeing, partying | 8.1 | 7.6 | 4.9 | 3.1 | 6.5 |
| Perhaps meeting someone I really like | 9.2 | 9.0 | 7.4 | 5.8 | 8.3 |

The items ranked have been rearranged in the order assigned to them by the Devoted group. Here we see the characteristics of each pilgrim type. The Devoted clearly prioritise the religious, devotional and teaching aspects of WYD: the average rank the group gave to

‘experiencing the presence of God’ was 2.3; the Masses and prayer services received an average rank of 4.2, and the catecheses 4.4. Next in order of priority for these Devoted pilgrims are the aspects of WYD that provide opportunities for connecting with other young Catholics: sharing about faith and being part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs. The items they rank lowest are the social aspects of WYD: the thrill of being part of a huge gathering of youth, ‘having fun, sightseeing, partying’ and last of all, ‘meeting someone I really like’.

One of our interviewees, 28-year-old Belita, is typical of the Devoted. A member of a Catholic movement, she is leading a group of pilgrims to Sydney. She was looking forward to the teaching in Sydney, and was even leading her group through some catechesis classes prior to making the pilgrimage:

I’ve just worked out on the weekend a time plan between now and World Youth Day, what we’re going to do to prepare our participants that are coming. So we’re going to have doctrine classes for people who are going to come, so we’ll probably go through things like the sacraments, infallibility of the Pope, the Bible.

When asked if ‘meeting someone special’ was a priority for him at WYD08, Corey, a 27-year-old Devoted Pilgrim, said, most emphatically: ‘I run enough [Catholic youth] things to know that you don’t go there to hook up.’

The next group in the table, the Involved, are almost identical to the Devoted in what they hope to experience at WYD. Their average ranking for each item is very similar: first are the religious and devotional aspects, then connecting with other Catholic youth, and the social aspects of WYD come last. As we will explain below, the main difference between these two groups is in the benefits they hope for as a result of attending WYD08.

Among the Involved pilgrims we interviewed, and as one might expect among a group of Australian Catholics, seeing the Pope was a very high priority. 19-year-old university student Grace prays daily and attends Mass regularly. She said she was really looking forward to seeing the Pope:

The Pope’s going to be coming, that’s going to be a really ... you know, the fact that you’ll see him, that’s like a big kind of, a big event in your life. So I thought, you know, why not. I think that was the main driving point, just to see the Pope and to meet so many other people as well. Yeah.

And here is 16-year-old school student Daniela, who also prays every day and attends Mass weekly:

And what are you looking forward to?

Well my friends are all going, so we’re all like hanging out there. And the whole world coming here. That’s going to be a humungous event in Sydney and it’s held here in Australia, like that is way cool. And everyone’s here and I had a look at like the promotional videos and like everyone just gathers, like this one mass of youth. And then

Pope Benedict would be there and others as well. So then it's like united as one. It's pretty good, it's a really good event.

Are you excited to see the Pope and go to the Mass and do the march?

Yeah, that will be cool. Because you only see him on TV, so if you're actually there, it's a bigger, better experience.

Looking again at Table 3.4, it is obvious the Open and Social groups have vastly different priorities for WYD from the two older groups. Low on their list of priorities are the things that matter most for the Devoted and Involved pilgrims. The average ranking among the Social group for the catechesis sessions is a low 7.8, and for the Open group, 6.9. Masses and prayer services were also low priorities: 7.2 for the Open pilgrims, 8.1 for the Social group.

So what are these young Catholics seeking to experience at WYD08? Among the Open pilgrims, the top three priorities are 'feeling part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs', the 'buzz of the event' and making new friends. For them, WYD is more about the relational and social elements, although, as we will see below, many of the Open and a few of the Social also hope to have faith benefits as a result of attending.

18-year-old Richard is typical of the Open pilgrims. He attends Mass regularly, but during his interview emphasised the social aspects of WYD as the main attraction for him. He said:

There will be people there from the same age group, so we can all bond together and have a great occasion, a great time at the event.

What are you expecting to actually do at World Youth Day?

Participate in as many activities in the area, get to know people I'm staying with and I know some of the other people coming from the school I haven't gotten to know very well, so I can bond with them some more and meet heaps of new friends from around the world.

So basically participating in the activities and just also getting to know people.

Yeah ... yeah.

And 16-year-old Cecelia told us:

Well I think WYD will be amazing how, like, so many people, yeah, and I think that through just the week, I think that you'll learn a lot about like not only yourselves, but the people around you and, yeah, and just interacting with other people and things like that.

What do you hope to get out of World Youth Day for yourself?

Well I hope to meet a lot of new people, a lot of people who kind of share the same faith and ideas as I do. And I hope to learn a lot more about my faith and sort of maybe find out more about myself and things like that.

Like the Open pilgrims, the Social group have an orientation to WYD that is mainly about 'being there': their top three priorities are 'having fun, sightseeing, partying', the 'buzz' of

the youth event, and 'making new friends'. They rank 'meeting someone I really like' higher than any group – just below seeing the Pope. When asked what she was most looking forward to, 16-year-old Marie, who attends a Catholic school and goes to Mass just a few times a year, told us:

Getting there, seeing the Pope, meeting new people, just getting the whole grasp of having that many people in one place at one time for such a good reason. That's what I'm looking forward to ... I know that we will be attending sort of Masses and stuff. I'm also hoping that we travel around and visit places and that I learn some stuff that I don't already know. And seeing the Pope will be cool ... And meeting new people.

Meet Dylan, a 16-year-old Catholic schoolboy, another Social pilgrim, who just wanted to feel the 'buzz' of being at a large youth event:

I figured I'd just be part of something, you know, joining in with people with the song and dance or meet people, talk to people, just enjoy the time... I just want to be a part of something bright and happy, something not pulled down by the everyday stress and that kind of stuff and then if you have to go in a crowd to do that, I'd be very happy to and that would be the idea I guess, to go there, be happy.

Before the two younger groups are judged too unfavourably, it is good to recall that all four groups are part of an elite. If the younger ones seem lower in commitment, it is largely because the two older groups are so highly motivated. When we come to describe the spiritual profile of the pilgrims in the next chapter, we will see that many of the Open and Social pilgrims are quite religious. More than half of the Social group, and about 70 per cent of the Open group, attend Mass every week. Most Open and Social pilgrims are aged 15-18. At this age and life-stage, it is not surprising that these groups prioritise meeting new people and making friends.

Each of the four Pilgrim types has a similar average ranking for the item 'feeling part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs'. No matter what else one might want from WYD, seeing so many young Catholics gathered together is something to which all pilgrims are keenly looking forward. Corey attended the Rome WYD in 2000, and was struck particularly by the numbers at the Papal Mass:

Just looking out at the final Mass and thinking, they reckoned there was two million people there. I'm not just this guy in Australia who's trying to be Catholic. There's ... you just can't imagine how many, you know, over a billion people are. It sort of brings us together and you realise, oh my gosh, this Church is massive.

The average rankings shown in Table 3.3 provide a clear indication of the relative priorities of each Pilgrim group. The Devoted and Involved are looking forward most to the devotional, teaching and religious elements and are less concerned with the purely social aspects of the event. WYD08 is an opportunity to gather with other like-minded Catholics, share their faith and worship together. For the Open and Social groups, WYD08 is mainly about 'being there', feeling the sheer rush of gathering with so many others, and making friends with people from around the world. As we will see in the next section, however, the

Open are close behind the Devoted in their hopes for ways in which WYD08 may benefit their faith.

Benefits hoped for from WYD

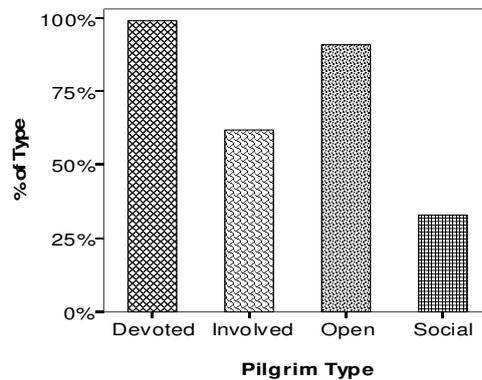
Another key set of questions we asked of survey respondents were about the benefits they hoped for as a result of attending WYD08. The respondents were asked 'When World Youth Day is all over, what benefits do you hope for as a result of attending?' Then followed a list of benefits from which they could select any they felt were applicable to them. The benefits were:

- *Getting your faith and your life more together: living what you believe;*
- *A closer relationship with God, with Jesus;*
- *A deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings;*
- *A fuller acceptance of these beliefs and moral teachings;*
- *A stronger sense of Catholic identity;*
- *A greater commitment to social justice;*
- *Feeling the energy to get more involved in your parish.*

Each of the bar charts in this section shows the percentage of each Pilgrim type who nominated a particular item as something they hoped for as a result of attending WYD. In these items, we will see a somewhat different pattern emerge: the Devoted and Open pilgrims are more enthusiastic about the potential benefits stemming from WYD08, compared to either the Involved or Social pilgrims.

WYD is a primarily a religious event, an opportunity for Catholic Youth to learn more about their faith and have an opportunity, through the Masses, catecheses, and sharing with other like-minded peers, to grow stronger in their faith. The first chart, Figure 3.1, shows the percentage of each of the four Pilgrim types who nominated 'Getting your faith and your life more together' as a benefit they hoped as a result of attending WYD08.

Figure 3.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: 'Getting your faith and your life more together – living what you believe' by pilgrim type (% of type)



99% of Devoted pilgrims hoped to 'get their life and faith more together'. Next highest were the Open at 91%. Only 62% of the Involved selected this option. Lagging far behind are the social at 33%.

We have not included a chart for the next item in the list, 'a closer relationship with God/with Jesus'. The pattern is essentially the same as noted in Figure 3.1; the Devoted and Open are more enthusiastic about growth in this area of their faith. 100% of the Devoted hope for a closer relationship with God or with Jesus, as do 81% of the Open, compared to 72% of the Involved and just 24% of the Social pilgrims.

We noted in the previous section that both the Involved and Devoted groups had almost identical average rankings when it came to the WYD experiences to which they were most looking forward. For both groups this was the religious, devotional and teaching aspects of the event. However the Involved seem a good deal less enthusiastic about the benefits WYD might have for their faith. Many in this group feel that they are already doing enough, or are content with their present level of faith development. This was apparent from the comments made in the interviews. One such person is 17-year-old Renee, attending a Catholic secondary girls' college. She prays every day, and attends Mass weekly. When asked whether WYD will make any difference to her faith, she said:

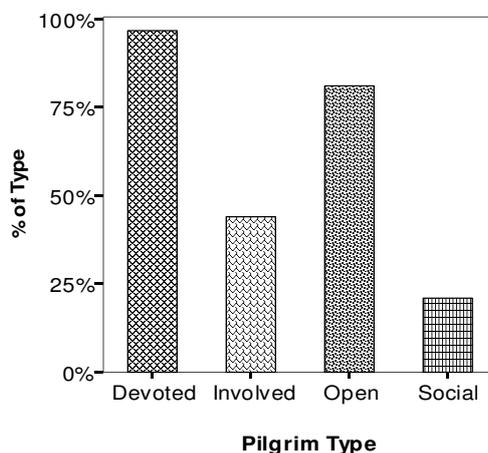
I'm a pretty strong Catholic, like I defend my faith so...
 OK.
 I don't need too much [from WYD].
So you're already quite firm?
 Yes.
Yeah? So what are you most looking forward to at World Youth Day?
 Probably meeting people. Just, yeah, just meeting people, I'd say.

Compared to the Devoted, a substantially greater proportion of the Involved feel that attending WYD08 will not help them 'get their life and faith more together' or have a closer relationship with God.

At WYD pilgrims will have abundant opportunities to *learn* more about aspects of the Catholic faith, though many of the programs, events and activities. Do pilgrims hope that

attending WYD08 will help them better understand, and accept more fully, Catholic beliefs and moral teachings? Figure 3.2 shows the percentage of each Pilgrim type who selected 'a deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings' as an outcome they hope for from WYD08.

Figure 3.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: 'A deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings' by pilgrim type (% of type)



Here the differences between types noted above are again apparent. The Devoted almost certainly have a deep understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings already, and yet 98% of them hope for more of this for themselves and for others. 28-year-old Belita told us:

There's going to be a catechesis, a lot of catechesis, so people can learn why the Church teaches what it does, because a lot of us know what, oh, the Church says this, the Church says that, but we don't know why. So hopefully it will be a big springtime in the Church of people knowing their faith but also coming back to the sacraments. And thank goodness that means also confession, the importance of marriage, all these things. I'm sure that will be a lot more popular after World Youth Day because people will see, oh, I do need the sacraments in my life, they're a wonderful help. They're not meant to be a hindrance. And again through learning about their faith so they understand why. And I'm hoping very much that World Youth Day will attract people who wouldn't normally go to Mass.

A strong marker of the distinctiveness of the Open group of pilgrims is that 81% of them selected a 'deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings'. In contrast, only 44% of the Involved group selected this benefit, as did 21% of the Social type. Not shown in a table is the percentage of each type who hope to come to a *fuller acceptance* of these beliefs and teachings. Only 15% of the Involved hoped this for themselves, compared to 65% of the Open, and 90% of the Devoted. Later in this report we discuss why there appear to be such marked differences between two older groups – the Devoted and Involved.

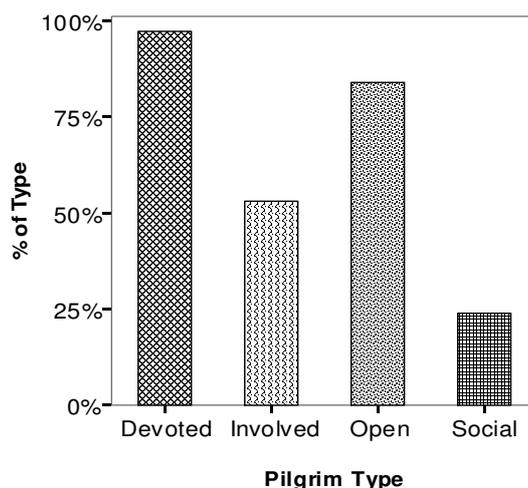
Among our interviewees were some who had been to a previous WYD. All of these youth told us that the experience had strengthened their sense of Catholic identity. We also found that many of the Open pilgrims in our interview cohort were hopeful that making the

pilgrimage to Sydney would give them a stronger sense of Catholic identity. For example, 17-year-old Rachael told us:

And I hope to learn a lot more about my faith and sort of maybe find out more about myself and things like that, yeah. Personally I hope to meet new people, I'm hoping to branch out and meet new people who are like myself, who embrace the fact that they are Catholic and like, you know, they don't mind going to church every now and again. But also just because of school and things like that, you tend to get a bit distracted. And I'm hoping by going to World Youth Day and by participating in all these activities and things like that, you might, I don't know, somewhat reignite the fact that you are happy to be a Catholic, something like that.

We see this positive view of Catholic identity among Open pilgrims reflected in the survey question which asked pilgrims if attending WYD would result in them developing a 'stronger sense of Catholic identity'. Answers are shown in Figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: 'A stronger sense of Catholic identity' by pilgrim type (% of type)

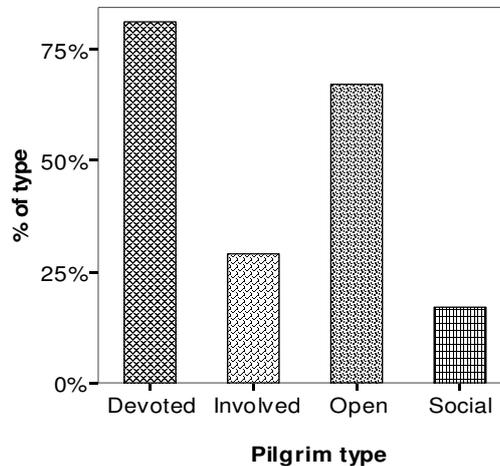


84% of the Open group were optimistic that they would develop a stronger sense of Catholic identity from attending. Discussion of this by our interviewees suggests that they see this as a result of gathering together with other Catholic youth, and to a lesser degree, as a consequence of some of the WYD activities, such as the Papal Mass. But many among the Involved (about half) apparently feel that attending WYD will not make a difference to their religious identity. Only a quarter of the Social group selected 'a stronger sense of Catholic identity' as a benefit they hoped for from their pilgrimage; being Catholic may be quite a resilient part of their identity, but it is not salient for them.

The next item is about whether pilgrims think that going to WYD will make a difference to their involvement in parish life. Many in the Catholic church, particularly in Australia, are extremely hopeful that Catholic youth who attend WYD will become more involved in their parishes upon returning from Sydney. The next figure shows the percentage of each pilgrim

type who are hoping to feel ‘the energy to get more involved in your parish’ as a consequence of attending WYD08.

Figure 3.4: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): WYD Benefits hoped for: ‘Feeling the energy to get more involved in your parish’ by pilgrim type (% of type)



Pilgrims did not give as much emphasis to this benefit as to others. But the item serves nicely to dramatise the difference in religious temperament between the Devoted and the Involved. 90% of the Devoted already attend Mass weekly or more often and many participate in other ways as well, yet 81% of them hoped that they would be energised to get even more involved. For them, one can never do enough for God, or give over enough of one’s life to activities stemming from faith. The Involved, by contrast, are almost as regular in their attendance – 83% of them already attend Mass weekly or more often; but only 29% of them aspire to greater involvement. It’s as if they see religion as contributing to life, but don’t live primarily for religion. For them, WYD is more about what they will be doing in Sydney rather than what happens afterwards. This is what one Involved pilgrim, 17-year-old Jane, told us during her interview:

I’m already ... like I’m really for the church and stuff and what they’re doing. I think it’ll just confirm that I like being in the parish and I like being Catholic and stuff. So pretty much it’ll just confirm it and probably get more involved in doing other stuff and going out and seeing different places.

67% – two-thirds – of the Open pilgrims indicated that they hoped attending WYD might result in greater involvement in their parish. Bianca attends Mass weekly at her parish. We asked whether she was involved in a parish youth group or something similar. She said:

No, we don’t have any parish youth groups or anything. But we’re ... going to try and get a few youth groups happening and things like that. So I’d be keen to get involved in them if they started up.

Attending WYD might just be the catalyst she needs; this is certainly a sentiment common among Open pilgrims. Only 17% of the Social type selected the item; not because they are

remote from their local church – half of them claim to attend weekly or more often – but in their lives at this time, they do not see this as a priority.

Our four pilgrim types were defined on the basis of their hopes for what they would experience at WYD, and the benefits they could derive from it. Summarising the differences between them on this basis, we have seen that the Devoted are enthusiastic about the religious elements of WYD, and hope for every benefit possible for the growth of their faith. The Involved are seeking to experience fully the religious aspects of the event, but are less enthusiastic about any major change in their lives as a result of it. The Open pilgrims are seeking to experience the social aspects first and foremost, but are hopeful that WYD will assist their faith development. The Social want to experience the excitement of the event and make new friends, and are not much interested in strengthening either their knowledge of their faith nor their involvement in the Church. In chapter 4, we will explore more fully the spiritual background of each type and how this informs their desires and hopes for WYD08. But first, we look at pilgrims' preparations for Sydney: attendance at previous WYDs, the process of deciding to come, and the preparatory activities in which they have been involved.

Steps along the Road: Deciding to attend WYD08

How is it that a young Catholic decides to go WYD? Because friends from school or the parish are going? Because their parents encouraged them to go? We asked each of the 49 pilgrims we interviewed: 'Can you remember the point at which you decided you definitely wanted to go to WYD? What most helped you decide to go?'. Some answers were complex; others said simply: 'my friends are going.' Exploring this issue further in the survey, we asked: 'Besides your own attraction to the idea of going, which of the following really helped you decide to attend WYD in 2008.' Up to 10 reasons could be selected, from a list including: 'Your friends are going'; 'People at school or parish encouraged you to go'; 'Talking personally to someone who had attended a previous WYD'; 'Seeing a DVD about WYD'; 'Hearing a presentation from a previous attender' or 'Information on the WYD Website'. Making a decision is a complex process; survey participants were able to select as many of these influences as they liked.

Three items stand out particularly from the list of ten. The first of these is 'people at school or parish encouraged you to go'. The percentage of each pilgrim type who selected this item, along with that for pilgrims as a whole, is shown in Table 3.4 below:

Table 3.4: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): What helped decision: 'People at school or parish encouraged you to go' by pilgrim type (% of type)

| | Pilgrim Type | | | | |
|---|--------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| People at school or parish encouraged you to go | 49 | 32 | 58 | 44 | 47 |

For the Devoted (49%) and Open (58%) pilgrims, this was the most commonly selected factor which really helped them make their decision about WYD08. The Involved and Social types selected it as the second strongest influence. Compared to the other types, substantially

fewer among the Involved selected this item – just 32%. More of the Involved feel their own attraction to the idea of going is sufficient reason to attend WYD08.

Among the interviewees, many mentioned that it was personal encouragement from a respected leader, teacher or past pilgrim that helped them make their decision to go, rather than simply watching the WYD promotional DVD or seeing a presentation. 19-year-old university student Grace described the encouragement she received from a woman in her parish:

Jane, who’s the organiser with [parish], constantly sends emails out, yeah, and yeah so there’s always information like and research and there’s also the website that I’ve logged on to like look on, yeah ... so she really wants us three to attend ‘cause we’re part of the older group. The others who are attending are a bit younger so they really want us to kind of, I don’t know, like become the older sisters I guess within the group.

The second factor that stood out as helping pilgrims decide was ‘your friends are going’. This is shown in Table 3.5 below.

Table 3.5: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): What helped decision: ‘Your friends are going’ by pilgrim type (% of type)

| | Pilgrim Type | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Friends are going | 44 | 33 | 56 | 54 | 46 |

33% of the Involved and 54% of the Social selected this as a factor that helped them decide – for them it was what helped most. 44% of the Devoted and 56% of the Open also selected ‘your friends are going’, in second place. The more social orientation of the Social and Open groups towards WYD is shown in the much higher percentages of these two groups who cited the item.

Almost all of the school-age Pilgrims we interviewed talked about friends going as something that really helped them decide to go. Annabelle mentioned that it was her friends who first drew her attention to WYD08:

Well I came to decide because, let’s see, first of all my friends are like going on about the World Youth Day thing ... But then my home room teacher, she ... I didn’t know she was organising the whole thing and she promoted it. So most of my friends told me there was this meeting. So I checked out the meeting and since I saw the promotion video clips and all, and information that came out with it, and my home teacher was talking about it and yeah, everyone got excited. So yeah, me and my friends joined up.

16-year-old Dean, a student at an Catholic secondary boys school was asked:

Are your close friends going?

There’s a couple, but they’re on the border of going and I was ... they were, like, going to go if I was going to go, so ... (chuckles).

The third main factor helping pilgrims make the decision to attend WYD is encouragement from parents or relatives. This is shown in Table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): What helped decision: 'Parents / relatives encouraged you to go' by pilgrim type (% of type)

| | Pilgrim Type | | | | |
|---|--------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Parents etc encouraged you to go | 42 | 30 | 50 | 44 | 42 |

Here we see that about the same proportion of Devoted and Social pilgrims nominated parental encouragement, compared to about 50% of the Open and 30% of the Involved. Why the difference? Was it because the parents of the Devoted, Social and Open are more religious than the parents of the Involved, and are thus more likely to encourage their child to go to WYD? Certainly not, as it turns out – the religious activity and enthusiasm of the Involved group’s parents were very high – a fraction higher than for parents of the Open and Social pilgrims. So what is it about the Involved? They are a curious group – less enthusiastic than the Open and Devoted pilgrims about the benefits WYD08 might have for their faith, less likely to credit various factors as influences on their decision to attend WYD08. Very likely, part of their laid-back style is an insistence on autonomy: they decide freely; other factors don’t really have much influence on their decision. This is a strong theme in this age-group.

We have not included tables for the other items on the list. ‘Talking personally to someone who had attended a previous WYD’ was rated much more influential than just ‘Hearing a presentation from a previous attender’. ‘Seeing a DVD about WYD’ scored higher than ‘Attending an information session’ or ‘Information on the WYD website’. These factors were nominated by 25%-40% of pilgrims as things that helped them decide to go to WYD08.

Preparatory Activities

When visiting schools to conduct interviews, we found out that many of the school-age pilgrims had seen a WYD promotional DVD and heard a presentation from a previous attender, while quite a few had done some RE classes helping them to prepare for WYD. At the time of these visits, fewer had participated in other activities such as fundraising events, and because it had yet to arrive in Australia, none had seen the WYD Cross and Icon. Pilgrims had enjoyed watching the DVD and many noted it had been helpful in knowing what to expect from their pilgrimage. However, many mentioned that the preparatory activities had not necessarily been the thing that had most helped them decide to go. Quinn, a 17-year-old Catholic schoolboy, was asked:

What kind of information have the school given you for World Youth Day?

Pamphlets, brochures and my RE teacher, he gave us the World Youth Day site for us to have a look at.

OK. So you've had talks by anyone? Did someone come in and give talks?

Oh, not yet.

What about a DVD? Have you seen that?

Yeah, we've seen that.

OK. What about in RE classes. Has there been anything for World Youth Day?

Yeah, there has been, but not in great detail.

So did that what help you decide to go to World Youth Day?

I'd already decided.

We also asked in the survey about the range of preparatory activities pilgrims had undertaken. This could include: watching the WYD promotional DVD, undertaking a fundraising or awareness activity, signing up as a volunteer for WYD or Days in the Diocese, or participating in a 'Holy Hour of Power'. Pilgrims could nominate all of the activities they had undertaken; the average number of activities for all pilgrims is almost five.

The three most commonly undertaken preparatory activities, by far, are:

- Seeing a DVD about WYD (62% of all pilgrims surveyed had done this preparatory activity);
- Talking personally to someone who had attended a previous WYD (61% of pilgrims surveyed); and
- Attending a WYD information session at school, university or parish (61% of pilgrims surveyed).

Clearly, the best source of information about, and preparation for what to expect from WYD08, are first-hand accounts of the event itself; either hearing from a past pilgrim or watching the DVD. 42% of pilgrims surveyed had participated in something to do with the WYD Cross and Icon, and 46% had undertaken some kind of fund-raising activity.

In terms of pilgrim types, the familiar pattern emerges for all of the preparatory activities about which we asked: those most likely to have done any of the preparatory activities are the Open and Devoted pilgrims, followed by either the Involved or the Social. For example, Table 3.7 shows the percentage of each type who had attended a WYD information session at their school, university or parish:

Table 3.7: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Preparatory activities: 'Attended a WYD information session at your school, university or parish' by pilgrim type (% of type)

| | Pilgrim Type | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Attended a WYD session etc. | 64 | 51 | 68 | 57 | 61 |

Approximately two-thirds of the Devoted or Open had attended an information session, compared to half of the Involved. Again, this typifies the more positive orientation these two pilgrim types have towards WYD08. They are the two Pilgrim groups most keen to be involved *and* get something out of the event.

Attendance at previous WYDs

Finally, we look at attendance at previous WYDs, and how past pilgrims feel about their experiences on this pilgrimage. The table below shows the percentage of WYD08 pilgrims surveyed who have attended a previous WYD.

Table 3.8: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Attendance at a previous WYD by WYD pilgrim type (% of type)

| Been to a previous WYD | Pilgrim Type | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Yes | 14 | 21 | 11 | 10 | 15 |
| No | 86 | 79 | 89 | 90 | 85 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Only 15% of those surveyed had been to a previous WYD. The group most likely to have done so are the Involved – 21%, compared to 14% of the Devoted, 11% of the Open and 10% of the Social.

We asked past pilgrims which WYDs they had attended. Most had only been to one – Cologne in 2005, although a substantial proportion had been to Rome in 2000. (We had respondents from every WYD except Rome 1984 and Buenos Aires 1987.) We asked pilgrims to reflect back on the most recent WYD they had attended: ‘Looking back at the most recent WYD you attended, which experiences were the most valuable?’ The answer options were identical with those in the later question on what people were hoping to experience at WYD08: ‘Experiencing the presence of God’, ‘Seeing the Pope’, ‘Sharing about faith with other young people’, ‘the Masses and prayer services’ and ‘Making new friends’. Again, respondents ranked the items. Among all past pilgrims, ‘seeing the Pope’ and ‘experiencing the presence of God’ were ranked as the most valuable experiences, while ‘having fun, sightseeing’ and ‘just the buzz of being part of a huge youth event’ were ranked as the least valuable. Involved and Devoted pilgrims were significantly more likely than Open and Social pilgrims to rate the religious and devotional aspects of their last WYD as valuable.

This is reflected in the interviews we did with past pilgrims, all of whom are classified as Devoted. Belita went to Rome WYD in 2000, and told us the highlights of her pilgrimage there:

It was fantastic to see the Holy Father, was the highlight, and to be able to ... I was a leader there as well in Rome. And I had the great opportunity to be able to share my faith with the people in my group and other people I met and also through friendship, help them to learn more about their faith and to encourage them and get them back to the sacraments because a lot of them weren't practising at the time, or they didn't know anything about their faith. So it was a wonderful opportunity for me to give and also to enjoy the church that we have. It's a wonderful, you know, to enjoy my faith.

What outcomes did attending a previous WYD have on pilgrims? Among past pilgrims, the most commonly cited outcomes were a 'stronger sense of Catholic identity', a 'closer relationship with God/with Jesus' and a feeling that participation resulted in 'getting their faith and their life more together'. Charlotte was 17 when she went to WYD Cologne in 2005. This is what she said about the impact it had on her:

Everybody's faith is different. It's a dynamic thing. That's the most important thing that I found. But also friendships that hopefully I'll have for a long time. And also kind of a deeper understanding of what religion is or what faith is about, what spirituality is about. I'm not necessarily saying that my faith was deepened or whatever and certainly when I ... immediately after I got back from World Youth Day I really did have ... you know, I was like, oh I can do this religious thing and then it kind of just went ... I suppose as you just get back into routine it sort of disappeared. So yeah, not so much a change in my faith but just a deeper understanding of what it's about. So, which is good. That's ... and it's been something that I've been able to focus on a bit more.

The Devoted and Open pilgrims were those most likely to affirm these three major outcomes. Did making a WYD pilgrimage result in pilgrims attending Mass more frequently, or joining a parish group? 36% of past pilgrims claimed that they attended Mass more frequently after the event, while 44% said that they joined some kind of parish group.

Conclusion: The Four Pilgrim Types

We have discussed what WYD08 pilgrims are most looking forward to experiencing, the benefits they hope for as a result of attending, and their preparation, decision-making and past pilgrimages. A fuller picture of the characteristics of each cluster has emerged.

The *Devoted* are passionately committed, wholehearted, enthusiastic; for them, there can never be enough of God or of faith; theirs is 'hot religion'. They are slightly younger than the Involved. They seek above all the experience of God at WYD08 and hope to grow even stronger in their faith.

The *Involved* are also looking forward to WYD experiences that are highly religious – identical with those ranked by the Devoted; they are the oldest group; more likely to have been to a previous WYD; but their style is cool, more laid-back, low temperature, less passionately committed than the Devoted. They didn't indicate many improved outcomes that they hoped for as a result of WYD, as if they were saying: 'Been there, done that. I'm already doing most of this stuff. It's enough.' There's a deal of truth in that; as we will see, they are indeed living faith-filled lives – that's why we called them 'Involved'. Their low-key approach contrasts amusingly with the younger group next to them – the Opens. These younger pilgrims are actually far less involved in the life of faith, but as we have just seen, their hopes are high – as a result of attending, they want much more; to know, to love, to be committed, involved. Or so they say, filled with a lovely enthusiasm. Beside them, the Involved look a mite jaded.

The *Open* are younger – their average age is 19, so naturally, like the Social pilgrims, they are attracted to the 'youth culture' aspects of the WYD experience – being part of a huge crowd of youth. But there's also an important difference between these two groups: this group are

open to faith development; in fact they say they want lots of it; perhaps they think it will come easily as a by-product of their pilgrimage; it's not clear whether it would retain its attraction for them if it required great personal effort. It is with this group that WYD could potentially make the greatest contribution.

And last, the **Social**, the youngest group, attracted to everything about WYD that most appeals to youth; looking forward to revelling in the vibe of being part of a huge group of young people, making new friends, perhaps meeting someone special. But as the next chapter will show, even this group are a good deal more tuned-in to faith than the hundreds of thousands of purely nominal Catholics of their age who are not at all attracted to attending WYD. Although their survey responses show little interest in the development of their faith or in experiences at WYD that would promote that, more than a few of them may be 'surprised by grace'.

4.

The Pilgrim Spirit

Our pilgrims have not adopted their attitudes to WYD – their hopes for what it will be like for them and what they will bring home from it – merely on impulse, or the passing appeal of some phrase in a question. On the contrary, there is very clear evidence from the survey that attitudes to WYD flow from each person’s spirituality. Why did the Devoted so consistently express the highest and most serious spiritual hopes for their time at WYD? Because that’s who they are! That’s what they are very profoundly like in their whole spiritual constitution. In this chapter, the spirituality underlying different pilgrim stances will be described, and in Chapter 5, the roots of individual spirituality in family and life-situation.

Religious Beliefs

Our attention now turns to what the pilgrims believe about God, and where they stand on other traditional Christian teachings. They were asked, first: ‘Do you believe in God or not, or are you unsure?’

Table 4.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Belief in God by pilgrim type (% of type)

| | Pilgrim type | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Believe in God | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| No | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Unsure | 2 | 3 | 8 | 25 | 6 |
| Yes | 98 | 97 | 92 | 71 | 93 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Following the familiar pattern, 98% of the Devoted and 97% of the Involved believe. Unbelief is non-existent except among a very small proportion of the Social. A quarter of them, but very small proportions of the others, are ‘Unsure’. Those who said they were unsure about God, were asked: ‘Was there ever a time in your life when you did believe in God, without feeling unsure about it?’. 70% of the ‘unsure’ Social pilgrims answered ‘Yes’ to this follow-up question.

How close to God do they feel? 61% of the Devoted and 57% of the Involved feel ‘close’ or ‘very close’ to God most of the time, compared to 40% of the Open and 27% of the Social. Two-thirds of the Devoted and half of the Involved feel that their faith ‘influences almost everything I do’, whereas among the Open and Social pilgrims, the percentages are considerably smaller (33% and 13% respectively).

Do the pilgrims affirm orthodox Catholic doctrine on other basic issues? For the Devoted and Involved pilgrims, the answer is a resounding ‘yes’. Nine out of ten Devoted pilgrims ‘definitely believe’ that ‘Jesus is truly present in the consecrated bread and wine at Mass’, that ‘Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus’, that ‘God works miracles on earth’, and

that 'Jesus was truly God and truly human and was raised bodily from the dead'. About 80% of the Involved and 75% of the Open also 'definitely believe' all these teachings. The Social follow their usual script: only about 50% definitely affirm these doctrines, the rest are unsure or don't believe.

Catholic identity

All of the pilgrims in the groups we have been exploring are Catholics, but how important to them is being Catholic? Has the sense of ecumenical solidarity with other Christians grown so strong that being and remaining Catholic does not matter much to them? In a secular society, is Catholic identity something of an embarrassment to today's young Catholics? Do they wear the badge on their lapel, or slip it discreetly into a pocket?

Pilgrims were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about how important it was to them to be a Catholic.

The first was a strong denial of the significance of Catholic identity: 'How a person lives is the only thing that matters; being Catholic or not doesn't really matter at all.' Obviously, this is a popular view in the secular environment, and even in some Catholic circles, and it divided our four pilgrim groups right down the middle. The Social found it very appealing: more than a third of them strongly agreed with it, and another third less strongly; only 18% were opposed to the view; the Open group were nearly as enthusiastic in their agreement. On the other hand, a majority of the Devoted disagreed, as did 44% of the Involved. It is tempting to try to explain the difference between the two groups by their age difference, but even when we control for age (i.e. when we 'hold age constant' by comparing, for example, the Devoted and the Social who are the same age), the differences remain.

Less challenging statements of Catholic identity and solidarity elicited a high measure of agreement across all four types of pilgrims; most were comfortable (with variations in the usual direction across the four types) with affirmations like:

'Being a Catholic is a very important part of who I am'

'The sacraments of the Church are essential to my relationship with God'

'It is important to me that the younger generations of my family grow up as Catholics'

'I cannot imagine being any religion other than Catholic'.

There was more difference in the responses to: 'Catholic devotions such as Eucharistic adoration or praying the Rosary are important to me.' The Devoted were most comfortable with these indicators of traditional Catholic piety: 87% of them agreed, as did 78% of the Involved; however, just over half of the Open agreed, and only one third of the Social. Devotions are not one of their preferred activities; so they may have some difficulty entering into this kind of activity at WYD08.

Pope Benedict has repeatedly alerted Catholics to the danger of *relativism*, dissolving objective religious truth and values into mere floating personal preferences. The two final questions in the 'being Catholic' scale, and two other questions, bear directly on this issue.

The statement ‘Catholicism contains a greater share of truth than other religions do’ confronted pilgrims with another difficult decision. Any form of religious particularism runs counter to very strong current of religious relativism in the culture of secularised societies – the dark side, if you like, of religious tolerance: it is commonly seen among youth as very incorrect, arrogant and oppressive, to assert that one’s own religious view is closer to the truth than the view of others. They are deeply sceptical of all truth claims in such matters. All four groups feel the pull of the culture here. The Socials mostly can’t come at such an assertion; only a third of them agree; but two thirds of the Devoted accept the statement, with the other groups in between. Which prompts us to wonder: do many of the Devoted perhaps come from countries where the culture is less secularised than it is here? Does Catholic identity, for the Socials, actually imply that one is some kind of religious believer and practises a faith, or is it more like belonging to a big, friendly, tolerant drinking club? We shall see.

We added one final statement to this scale: ‘The Pope and the bishops have the authority to guide Catholics in what we should believe and do in order to follow the teachings of Jesus.’ Surprisingly, although the Social group were far behind the 86% agreement of the Devoted, half of them did agree – in some tension with their views on whether being Catholic matters, and on the ‘true faith’. The personal charisma of the Pope must have some influence here – most of those who choose to come on pilgrimage to meet him perceive him as someone who has the authority to guide them.

In many Western countries, contemporary youth feel the right to believe whatever they choose in the sphere of religion, without any need to accept a *set* of beliefs, whether on the grounds of coherence of belief or of conformity with any external authority. So young people are often asked in surveys whether they agree with the statement: ‘It’s okay to pick and choose your religious beliefs without having to accept the teachings of your religion as a whole’. In Australia in 2005, 71% of young Catholics aged 13-24 agreed.

We asked the same question of WYD08 pilgrims. The response was markedly different.

**Table 4.2 Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):
‘OK to pick and choose your religious beliefs’ by pilgrim type (% of type)**

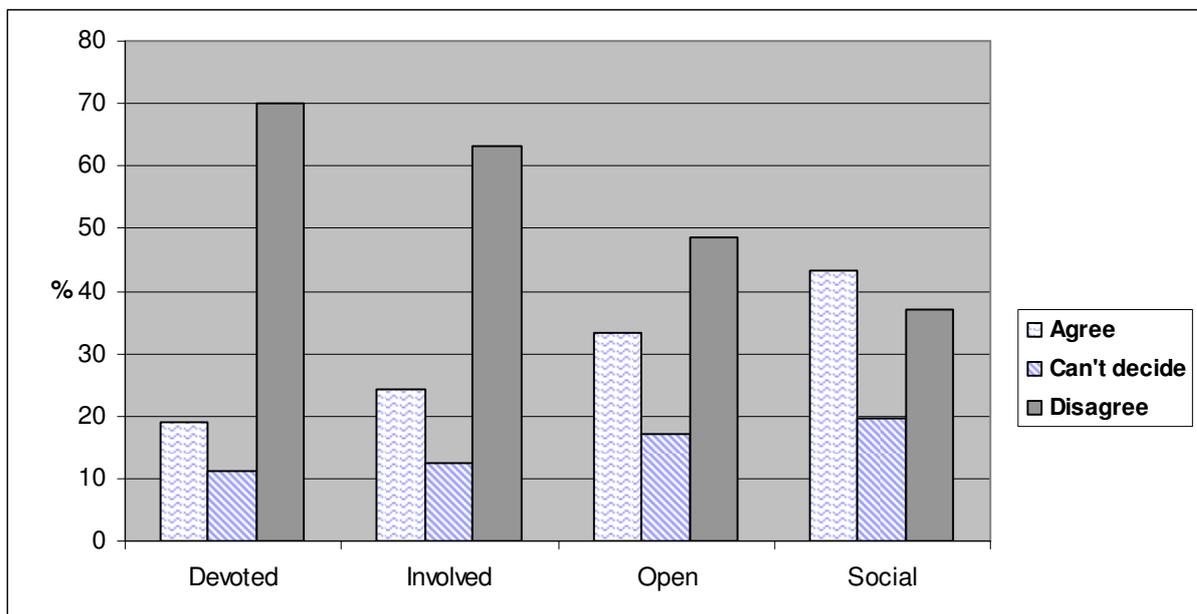
| | Pilgrim type | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| OK to pick and choose | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Disagree | 72 | 62 | 45 | 25 | 58 |
| Agree | 20 | 27 | 42 | 60 | 32 |
| Can't decide | 8 | 10 | 13 | 15 | 10 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Overall, only 32% agreed. Strong majorities of both the Devoted and Involved disagreed, which is of course the orthodox position; but even they were not immune from the pull of the cultural tide, with a fifth of each group agreeing with the statement. The Open pilgrims

are evenly divided, and a majority of the Social agree that it is 'OK to pick and choose' – but they are still somewhat more conservative than young Catholics generally. Among the majority of pilgrims, the strong and widespread ideology of religious individualism and relativism does not prevail.

Alongside 'cognitive relativism' affecting what you believe or think you know, is moral relativism, affecting values and attitudes towards action. It is often found that among youth, the sense of moral values is governed by the same insistence on an absolute form of 'personal freedom' as matters of belief. On the other hand, for those who embrace a religious tradition, particularly in the manner of the WYD08 pilgrims, moral values are grounded in faith. We asked pilgrims: 'Some people say that morals are relative: that there are no definite rights and wrongs for everybody. Do you agree?'

Figure 4.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Moral relativism by pilgrim type (% of type)



The responses were very similar to those given to the previous question: far less relativistic than Catholics in general, yet differing considerably among themselves. On this issue, both of the younger groups were closer to an orthodox stance than in the previous question: half of the Open and a third of the Social disagreed with the statement. Younger pilgrims and females are more morally relativistic than older pilgrims and males. Devoted or Involved pilgrims are less likely to be morally relativistic than the other types.

Catholic moral teachings

Pilgrims' views were sought on a range of specific Catholic teachings on moral issues, especially those on which the Church takes a position opposing the majority liberal consensus in secularised societies.

**Table 4.3: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):
Acceptance of Catholic moral teachings by pilgrim type (% Agree in each type)⁷**

| Catholic moral teaching: | Pilgrim type | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------|------|--------|-----|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Opposing the death penalty | 87 | 84 | 79 | 76 | 83 |
| Supporting workers' rights | 73 | 68 | 62 | 57 | 67 |
| Against abortion | 91 | 83 | 72 | 53 | 81 |
| On premarital sex | 83 | 70 | 52 | 27 | 67 |
| Opposing euthanasia | 82 | 75 | 60 | 45 | 71 |
| Opposing same-sex marriage | 74 | 67 | 47 | 34 | 62 |

It was a simple matter for pilgrims of all types to come to consensus with the Church on its opposition to the death penalty, since this is a popular liberal view. Catholic social teaching on the rights of workers to unionise and to withdraw their labour was less unanimously supported; the teaching on abortion was still accepted by a majority of all groups, but the gap between groups was wider. On the last three difficult and controversial issues, the consensus quite dissolved; the two older groups retained strong majorities accepting Church teaching on premarital sex, euthanasia and same-sex marriage, but the Open group were divided in half and only a minority of the Social pilgrims could accept these teachings – down to about a quarter in the case of premarital sex.

Pilgrims were also asked about the Western Church discipline requiring celibate male clergy. Only two-thirds of even the Devoted agreed, whereas on all the moral issues at least three quarters of them had supported official church positions. There was similar support from the Involved, but only from a minority of the Open and a small proportion of the Social pilgrims.

While considering pilgrims' beliefs, it will be instructive to see how many of them also take on board beliefs stemming from 'alternative spiritualities' which are widely publicised.

New Age Beliefs

Many New Age beliefs have currency among youth. For example, about a third of 13-24 year-old Australians definitely believe in reincarnation. The majority of WYD08 pilgrims reject a belief in astrology, the possibility of communicating with the dead and the power of psychics and clairvoyants. The belief in reincarnation has little currency among them. Here is how participants responded to the question: 'Do you believe in reincarnation – that people have lived previous lives?'

⁷ Note that this is a different kind of table from those used so far; it is a 'compressed' table: containing one line from each of 6 separate tables, so columns do not add to 100%. Only the percentage Agreeing is reported. Percentages are still *column percentages* as usual: the figure '87' at top left means that 87% of the Devoted agreed with Church teaching opposing the death penalty.

Table 4.4: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35): Belief in Reincarnation by pilgrim type (% of type)

| | Pilgrim type | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Reincarnation | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Definitely | 5 | 6 | 10 | 17 | 8 |
| Unsure | 27 | 28 | 40 | 42 | 32 |
| Definitely not | 68 | 65 | 50 | 41 | 60 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

17% of Social pilgrims believe in reincarnation, and they were also the group most likely to accept the other New Age beliefs. More interesting is the substantial percentage of all types who are 'unsure'. Given the very religious and orthodox character of the Devoted and Involved pilgrims, it is remarkable that more than a quarter of them can't decide whether they believe in reincarnation or not. Devout as they are, they are still part of their culture, where this idea has very strong currency. On balance, however, the eclectic, mix-and-match approach to spirituality characteristic of New Age believers is not at all typical of WYD08 pilgrims.

As is now abundantly clear, the majority of pilgrims are a faithful group, experiencing God in their lives, holding traditional beliefs and rejecting religious individualism. But those from the major English-speaking countries live in increasingly secular societies. What kind of tensions are they aware of between their faith and the surrounding cultural environment?

They were asked: 'These days everyone comes across things that make it hard at times to keep on believing and living as a Christian, and staying involved in the church. Do any of the following make this difficult at times for you?'. There followed a set of nine different obstacles to faith, including: 'things that you have learned in science', 'hearing about bad things associated with religion', 'issues about the church: beliefs, rules about morality'. No item on the list was selected by more than half the pilgrims. The three most commonly cited 'obstacles to faith' were: 'Living in a secular society where most people seem not to care about religion, or think it is irrational or a hangover from childhood' (44% of pilgrims agreed that this made faith more difficult); 'Hypocrisy: religious people not living what they supposedly believe' (44%) and 'Some of your friends not being into religion or church' (39%).

It was very common in interviews for intending pilgrims to remark on a particular attraction of WYD: how great it would be to be at this huge celebration with lots of people *their age* who were very positive about being Catholic. It was rather touching to hear this sentiment sometimes voiced by quite young people who were not very involved with the church. They sense, accurately, that believers are in a 'cognitive minority'. Neither parish nor school is experienced as a safe haven for young believers. If they go to their parish church, they find that 'everyone' is, by their pitiless standard, 'old'. Regarding schools, interviewers often heard: 'This is supposed to be a Catholic school, but ...' and once, memorably: 'It's social suicide to speak up in R.E. class!'.

This simple attraction to being with one's own (spiritual) kind is probably the strongest basis for World Youth Day's extraordinary appeal in the late modern world.

Religious practices

Completing the profile of pilgrims' spirituality, the interviews and survey examined a range of religious practices. Unless beliefs impact on life, and flow out into the shaping of attitudes and action, they should not be taken too seriously – they inhabit the realm of mere opinions on matters religious, acquired without much consideration and changed readily as fashion dictates. Here we will consider only a few of the more important religious practices that shape our pilgrims' lives.

Attendance at Mass

As emphasised earlier, the whole group are much more 'church-oriented' than is typical for Catholics of their age. In discussing whether they hoped that WYD would result in more parish involvement, we saw that they claim to be already very regular attenders at Mass in their local churches, weekly or more often: Devoted 90%, Involved 84% Open 73% Social 51%.⁸ We say 'claim to be' not because we are sceptical about their honesty, but because research in this field shows that people's estimate of the frequency of their own church attendance always produces higher figures than headcounts of attenders. Without any real intention to deceive, it seems that people's judgement of their attendance pattern is influenced by their aspiration towards a certain level of attendance. So these self-reported levels are probably a little high, but even if we allow for that, they underline the elite character of the whole group.

Given that so many are regular attenders at Mass, it was only to be expected that a high proportion would be involved in music groups or liturgy groups at church, or would take the role of reader for the First or Second Reading of the liturgy. And so it was, but without much difference between pilgrim types: about half of all groups were currently involved in these ways – only slightly more of the Devoted and slightly fewer of the Social.

Reconciliation

The sacrament of Reconciliation (known simply as 'Confession' in an earlier era) is so little frequented by Catholics in some countries that it is close to falling into desuetude. Not among groups such as the pilgrims, however. When they were asked about this practice, (in its 'First Rite' or individual form) one of the responses they could choose was 'Haven't been for years', indicating that this particular spiritual discipline no longer had a place in their lives. While this turned out to be the case for half of the Social group and a third of the Open, only a small minority of the Devoted (16%) had abandoned the practice. The

⁸ The consistency of this pattern across the four groups, which is rather tedious to report, may have led the reader to wonder whether it is really news at all, or worth saying – were not the groups, after all, chosen on the basis of their levels of religious belief and practice? No, they were not. As was explained on the first page of Chapter 3, the cluster analysis which assigned pilgrims into these four groups was based solely on their responses to two sets of questions about *pilgrimage*: what they hoped to experience at WYD, and to take away from it. It is remarkable evidence of how carefully they responded to those questions about pilgrimage that every aspect of their spirituality that we have examined is consistent with how they described their hopes for WYD08.

proportion of each group who went to Reconciliation once a year or more often were: Devoted: 84%, Involved: 78%, Open: 70% and Social: 51%.

Personal prayer

After attendance at Mass and sacraments, personal prayer is the primary indicator of the vigour of a person's interior spiritual life. The first question on this topic was: 'How often do you pray just by yourself (not with others or at a religious service)?' The reader will by now anticipate responses to such a question indicating a high level of activity, but may still be surprised. Daily prayer is the norm among pilgrims. The proportions of the four types of pilgrims who prayed at least once a day (and many prayed several times each day) were: Devoted: 73%, Involved: 62%, Open: 43% and Social: 25%.⁹

Further questions revealed much more about the prayer-life of the different kinds of pilgrims, but a more detailed discussion of the forms and content of pilgrims' prayer is deferred until a later report.

Membership in groups and movements

The last item to be considered among religious practices is whether pilgrims participate in a prayer group, a youth group, or some other kind of Church-related group activity. Apart from exceptional cases of people called to lead solitary lives, spirituality of any form is, like most things human, a communal venture, requiring social support if it is to be sustained by an individual. This is all the more true if the form of spirituality is not that of the cultural stream in which the individual is immersed. Once, Catholics in Western countries, even where they were not in the majority, lived snug within an enveloping Catholic subculture, and the larger cultural environment was generally Christian. In many of those countries this is now no longer the case: the larger public culture is aggressively secular and perhaps anti-religious, and Catholic structures are so diminished that they no longer sustain a widely shared subculture. In this environment, the support of a specifically Catholic social network is now critical – completely indispensable for the survival of an individual's faith.

The foundation of this network is the family, to be considered in the next chapter. The local church community is obviously of prime importance, but has been largely deserted by those under sixty years of age or so: the postwar Baby-Boomers and their children. Catholic schools were once an extremely effective extension of that faith community into the daily life of the school-age Catholic, providing a supportive and formative cocoon from five years of age till eighteen. Now, students at Catholic schools, along with their parents, are there for purposes largely other than the nurture of their faith, and only a small minority of them practise the faith or are involved in their local church.

Hence, in addition to their weekly participation in worship, the regular involvement of young Catholics in various kinds of church-related small-group activities is much more

⁹ How can daily prayer be 'the norm for the entire group' if only 25% of Social Pilgrims prayed that often? The Social type is the smallest cluster of pilgrims, only 11% of the sample, so there is no conflict between the lower frequency of prayer in this group and the fact that 58% of the whole population of pilgrims prayed at least once a day. But a surge of later registrations of, say, school-age Australians, would increase the weight of this type within the pilgrim population.

important for the support of their faith than was formerly the case. In addition to the prayer groups or youth groups mentioned, there are a large number of groups for particular purposes, most of them aiming at the development of a high level of personal piety and faith-commitment. Some are school-based, as is the case with many of the 'Young Vinnies' groups – the youth arm of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul – which have so successfully involved school-age and older Catholic youth in work for the poor and for justice. Then there are large, nationally-organised Catholic *movements*, transcending the boundaries of individual parishes or schools: the charismatic movement, the Focolare, the Neo-Catechumenate, the various organisations within the personal prelature Opus Dei, local branches of still-predominantly-European movements such as Communion and Liberation, and so on. One of the factors which makes the Devoted pilgrims so unusually devout is that they are particularly likely to belong to one of these movements.

For now, just considering together these widely different forms of involvement in groups or movements, we note that the following proportions of pilgrims from different groups responded positively to the general question on whether they currently regularly take part in a prayer group, a youth group, or some other kind of Church-related group activity; and in brackets after each are the larger proportions which result when we add those who are not now, but were in the recent past, involved in these ways: Devoted: 72% (80%), Involved: 62% (72%), Open: 54% (68%) and Social: 38% (54%).

These are very high levels of what we might call 'extra-curricular' church involvement – over and above what is considered obligatory, and far beyond what is typical for their age group – and we have surely uncovered here one of the secrets of our pilgrims' strong Catholicity: they have strong social support networks beyond the family base. *WYD08 begins to appear, to a considerable extent, as a meeting of Catholic movements and groups!*

Purpose in life

In our interviews, most young pilgrims came across as happy, confident, loving life and optimistic about their future. The same was true of the survey respondents, who registered high on measures of satisfaction with life.

Sense of purpose and meaning

Although it is common for youth to say, whether they are religious or not, that they feel as if their lives have a purpose, there was quite a considerable difference in the *strength* of this sense of purpose according to type of pilgrim. Among the Devoted, two thirds strongly agreed with the statement 'my life has a purpose'; among the Involved and the Open, the proportion was just over half, and just under half, respectively. Only a third of Social pilgrims felt a strong sense of purpose.

By far the strongest sense of a purpose and meaning for life is felt by those who believe that their life 'fits into God's plan'.

**Table 4.5: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):
'My life fits in as part of God's plan' by pilgrim type (% of type)**

| Life part of God's plan | Pilgrim type | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Devoted | Involved | Open | Social | All |
| Disagree | 2 | 4 | 5 | 18 | 5 |
| Can't decide | 9 | 15 | 25 | 41 | 18 |
| Agree | 89 | 81 | 71 | 41 | 77 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

The Devoted clearly felt this sense of meaning: 89% of them agreed that they believed their lives fitted in as part of God's plan, vs. only 41% of the Social group.

Looking more closely, just at those who '*strongly*' agreed with the statement, an even greater contrast between pilgrim types is evident: only 16% of the social type had a strong sense of their lives fitting into a divine plan, whereas this was true for 62% of the Devoted (a difference of 4:1 between the two groups). 51% of the Involved and 35% of the Open shared this stronger sense of meaning of life.

Further analysis shows that this sense of meaning appears to be fundamental to a person's whole spirituality, and made a big difference to their attitude to WYD08. We will return to study it more thoroughly in a later report.

Social compassion

Spirituality is not an isolated characteristic, manifested only in a narrow range of 'spiritual' practices and pursuits; it defines a person's entire worldview and value system, their attitudes and practices. It pervades the whole of life, so its influence extends into the person's sense of themselves and into their relationships with others.

Youth are often considered to be self-absorbed, to lack interest in and involvement with others. Christianity, especially in its Catholic form, contains strong spiritual imperatives towards concern for the poor and social justice for all. Previous research has found that those who are more religiously committed are also more socially compassionate.

A pilgrim we interviewed, Chelsea, aged 19, was clear about the values that underpin the way she relates to others in the community. Her response was typical of post school-age Devoted pilgrims who recognise that they are required to take the initiative in helping those who are disadvantaged:

Respecting other people, treating them the way you want to be treated, not lying, being honest, yeah, just being a good person, treating them with respect and care and helping them out when they need it and listening if they need you, being polite I guess. I think this country is so lucky that it masks the fact that we have so many homeless people and we should really be helping them because we're so blessed hereLike we've got to share that and help others.

To gauge the compassion of survey respondents towards those in need we asked them to rate themselves on a 1 to 5 scale from 'Don't care at all about these' to 'Care very much' in regard to: The needs of poor / homeless / unemployed / elderly people in their own country; re people's right to equal treatment, whatever their race, religion or culture, and finally, re living conditions and quality of life in developing nations.

The pilgrims showed generally high levels of social concern. There was also some difference in responses across the pilgrim types – Devoted being in most cases more compassionate and Social less so, with Involved and Open falling between; however, the differences on most issues were not very large, and on equal treatment for all pilgrims of all four types showed high levels of concern and negligible difference. This reminds us that egalitarianism is a very strong theme in contemporary youth culture.

The survey contained a much wider exploration of pilgrims' civic engagement: their giving to religious and social causes, and their giving of time and effort as volunteers in a variety of organisations. These are of less immediate relevance for this report, but will be fully explored in our next report.

The next chapter takes us back to where everyone's pilgrimage begins – home.

5.

Where Pilgrimage Begins

Life itself is a journey, and for Christians, a pilgrimage, to the ultimate destination – not just the shrine of a Saint, but the kingdom of God. Every other pilgrimage, such as that to Sydney for World Youth Day 2008, takes its shape and meaning from that life-long one.

The pilgrimage of life sets out from one's childhood home, and we learn to walk, gain strength for the journey, and take our provisions for the road from parents, grandparents and other key figures in that scene.

Most of our pilgrims, in all groups, have not yet left home for the first time! Bearing in mind that we only surveyed English-speaking pilgrims, and that we are dealing in this report only with Catholic pilgrims aged 15-35, it still comes as a shock to find that just over 70% of them are still living at home, until we recall that 72% are under age 24, and they *do* tend to stay on these days.¹⁰ The social and Involved groups are mostly still at school; both have 82% of their members still at home. 61% of the Involved, and 69% of Devoted pilgrims also still live in the same house as their mother.

74% of pilgrims came from families in which both parents were Catholic. Three-quarters of pilgrims in the Devoted and Involved groups had both parents Catholic; just over two-thirds in the other two groups. 90% of pilgrims, regardless of type, had Catholic mothers.

Given what has long been established in research – that the church attendance pattern of mothers when children are growing up is a strong predictor of those children's religiosity early in their lives, it is not surprising that pilgrims come from families in which, they recall, their mothers were very regular church attenders when they were growing up. In both the Devoted and Involved groups, 84% of pilgrims recalled their mothers as attending usually every weekend. The percentages in the two younger groups were not far behind: 80% and 73% respectively.

Pilgrims were asked to recall another feature of their religious landscape from that 'growing up' time: 'How enthusiastic about her religion would you say your mother was then?'. This aspect of parents' religiosity has also been noted for its effect on children's faith. The percentages of pilgrims who rated their mother's enthusiasm as high or very high were: Devoted 72%, Involved 70%, Open 66%, Social 59%.

The reader will have noticed that the considerable differences in WYD hopes and spirituality between the four pilgrim types described in chapters 3 and 4 are less strongly reflected in their family background. The differences in mothers' religiosity seem generally smaller than those between the children. This evidence strengthens our contention that a very high

¹⁰ Pilgrims were not asked where they were living, but with whom; and 72% noted that they were living with their mother (64% with their father). For most, that will mean that they are still at home; in some cases, their mother may have come to live with them elsewhere than the family home after being widowed or divorced. 60% are living with brother(s) or sister(s).

proportion of the pilgrims of *all* types come from families of strong faith, and this fact probably has a great deal to do with why they are pilgrims at all. This is particularly worth keeping in mind in relation to the Social pilgrims, who at this point, have the least serious, the least spiritual hopes for what they want to experience at WYD and gain from it. They come from good stock. As we have constantly stressed, all these pilgrims are an elite. They are very different from the many young Catholics of today who come from only nominally Catholic families. True, they do not present themselves as open even to learning more about their faith, let alone coming to a conversion of heart appropriate to their age, but a foundation exists in them that could support this kind of outcome for some.

Given that the parents differ less in religiosity than the children, it is tempting to attribute the remaining difference in the orientation of pilgrim types just to the age differences between the groups of pilgrims. We don't think that is an adequate explanation; for one thing, the average age of the Devoted is slightly younger than that of the Involved but they rank consistently higher on nearly all the spiritual indicators we have looked at. Age undoubtedly plays a part, but it will take quite a complex analysis, not attempted here, to track down all the main roots of the differences among pilgrim types.

Of course, many other features of life in the family besides parental religiosity influence children's spirituality, but we leave them aside for further study and later reports.

The homes and families in which children grow up are situated within particular nations, and of course greatly influenced by the national and Catholic culture and its unique history as well as, increasingly, by global cultural forces and movements. Certainly, when we locate our pilgrim groups within their countries of origin, some striking differences are seen.

**Table 5.1: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):
Pilgrim type by country of residence (% of Country)**

| | Aust | USA | NZ | Canada | Philippines | UK/Ireland | Other | All |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| Devoted | 34 | 45 | 41 | 40 | 68 | 22 | 43 | 39 |
| Involved | 22 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 15 | 22 | 34 | 24 |
| Open | 30 | 27 | 31 | 27 | 14 | 36 | 16 | 26 |
| Social | 14 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 3 | 19 | 7 | 11 |

68% of pilgrims from the Philippines were classified as Devoted, compared with 45% of those from the USA, 34% of those from Australia, and only 22% of those from the UK and Ireland. Social pilgrims were the smallest group, so were also only a small percentage of each country's nationals; however, 19% of UK/Irish pilgrims¹¹ were of the Social type, compared with only 3% of pilgrims from the Philippines. Australia has the lowest proportion of Devoted pilgrims, but this is only to be expected – as the host country, it has

¹¹ Nobody mention soccer hooligans!

the largest number of attenders, and it is much easier for less strongly-motivated pilgrims from a host country to attend. When WYDs are staged elsewhere, attenders from Australia would presumably be a much more elite group. There is a great deal more information in this table, but for our present purposes, we have highlighted sufficient of its main points.

School is an obvious source of influence on young people's growth in faith. Because of the many different countries from which our groups of English-speaking pilgrims come, the schools and school systems involved are very varied, even when we are talking of Catholic schools. On this topic, we must be content to note that about 53% of intending pilgrims are attending (or attended in the past), Catholic secondary schools, and the percentage who attended Catholic primary schools is about the same.

**Table 5.2: Catholic WYD Pilgrims (aged 15-35):
Pilgrim type by secondary school type (% of SS type)**

| Pilgrim type | Secondary school type | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------|-----|
| | Non Catholic | Catholic | All |
| Devoted | 43 | 39 | 41 |
| Involved | 25 | 21 | 23 |
| Open | 24 | 29 | 26 |
| Social | 8 | 12 | 10 |

The relationship between secondary school type is shown in Table 5.1: 39% of pilgrims who attended Catholic secondary schools were classified as Devoted, while 43% of those who did not attend such schools are of the Devoted type – i.e. Devoted pilgrims came from both Catholic and non-Catholic secondary schools, and were marginally more likely to come from the latter type of school.

Our purpose in this chapter has been to show how personal characteristics like people's orientations to WYD and the spirituality underlying such orientations, are in turn shaped by the powerful environments of home, family, school and culture – national, regional, Catholic, secular – in which people's human existence has its roots. These are areas of group life in which some patterned regularities can be discerned. Through this warp flash the shuttles of each person's unique biography and choices, and so their story is woven. Such is the context for the new WYD08 episode in all our stories.

6.

Possibilities for Pilgrims

What recommendations arise from the descriptions above which could be of assistance to World Youth Day Administration as they fine-tune the details of the week of events?

Pilgrims of each type will find opportunities for participation, and challenges threatening to limit their involvement and its benefit, varying according to their orientation to the event; and similarly, the WYD08 Directors and Administration, whose task it is to structure the event and guide participants, are presented with a complex set of opportunities and challenges arising from the distinctive characteristics of each type of pilgrim.

The wide diversity of pilgrims itself has potential advantages and disadvantages for the organisers. The challenge is: how to meet the expectations of such a variety of groups, and provide opportunities for them to realise their hopes? The planners have long realised that no one size fits all, and have at their disposal a whole week of time and a wealth of talent and resources, enabling a multi-levelled ministry to pilgrims who are at different stages of faith-development. Those we have called Devoted will be the largest of the groups of pilgrims, but not a majority. A program designed exclusively for them would fail at some points to engage pilgrims at other levels of commitment. Over the course of the week, their disappointment would turn to frustration and make unresponsive and inappropriate behaviour on their part more likely.

Even given a program with something for everyone, there remains the challenge of communicating opportunities to pilgrims and assisting each to access what will best nourish them. *How will each type find what they need, what's there for them?* Planners and administrators can only do so much along this line; it is group leaders who will in practice make or break the flexibility of the program. Even small groups will contain pilgrims with quite diverse needs. The leaders will require instruction and support to be able, on the one hand, to hold their group together, and on the other, to guide individual members to forms of participation best suited to them. If the leaders are not ingenious and adaptable, the most wonderfully diverse program can still be experienced by the pilgrims as a narrow range of options rigidly imposed on groups by their leaders.

No doubt everyone takes it for granted that the Devoted will have a most fruitful WYD experience. They appear the most suited to profit from this type of event, and the program offers ample opportunities for them to realise the hopes they have expressed for their time at WYD and for the benefits to be reaped from it. There are indications, however, from research on previous WYDs that the occasion can involve some difficult challenges for them:

- they will sense that they are different from the majority of pilgrims;
- they may be scandalised by the attitudes and / or behaviour of other individuals and groups;
- they may be tempted to display some resentment towards the less devout groups;
- and perhaps in some way to rebuke them, which will in turn be resented;

- and so the seeds of some divisiveness, some unwholesome rivalry, can be sown; and
- it will be important for movement and group leaders to assist Devoted groups to take a tolerant and non-judgmental stance towards much of the diversity they encounter at WYD.

The Involved have been to previous WYDs and are not expecting so much for themselves; these low-temperature participants will be 'turned off' by what they perceive as hype, or style without substance, but are likely to be stimulated if their contact with the Devoted is graceful, and in their own way, move to a fuller level of commitment; receive a grace they have not been expecting.

The Open provide the greatest challenge and opportunity and probably the best test of the worthwhileness of WYD. They will initially appear indistinguishable from the Social group, and may be drawn to emulate them in some circumstances; they won't be sure or decided on how seriously they want to take WYD. As a rule of thumb, two thirds of apparent mere 'tourists' are actually likely to be Open. They differ from the determinedly Social by being open to conviction, without initially being willing to work towards it. They will not find the most intense hi-temperature style appealing. They need subtle approaches; cleverly baited hooks – for example, perhaps a short but appealing testimony from a younger person in the middle of a Youth Festival event?

The Social: despite appearances, they too are part of the Catholic elite. They are from good stock, or they would not be at WYD at all. Devotions are not one of their preferred activities; so they will probably seek to avoid them at WYD08. Or perhaps WYD's way of celebrating these will be new for them and something into which they can enter. Given their background, some of them can and likely will make the transition to the Open type. Others will present the challenge of having to be 'coped with'; kept on board without 'breaking out'; spoiling the event for others or giving it bad publicity. Although in such a huge assembly they may be quite numerous, they will be a minority compared with the others. Perhaps the most constructive way of thinking of them is as the youngest / most immature children in a class. They are there, which creates possibilities for them, even as it creates some challenges for the organisers. At a public event, the approach of the facilitator / upfront person is critical in regard to handling groups of people of the Social type: if the leaders push, talk down, use sarcasm or show disrespect, a group who are initially just 'on the fringe' can become quite disruptive. It seems advisable to be tolerant of people 'lurking' rather than require lock-step participation. There are people in the teaching and helping professions who have special skills in understanding and helping this type among young people.

Appendix I

The 'Pilgrims' Progress' World Youth Day 2008 Research Project - a brief outline

Introduction: Development of the project

In response to an initial proposal from the research team (Rev. Dr. Michael Mason and Prof Ruth Webber from ACU and Dr. Andrew Singleton from Monash) for a sponsored research project, Dr. Michael Casey of the Archdiocese of Sydney replied indicating a desire to proceed on the part of WYD Administration (WYDA); a WYD Research Committee was formed and met initially on 20/12/2006 with Dr. Mason; there was agreement on the general lines of the project and budget.

Relationship between WYDA as sponsor, and the ACU-Monash research team

Under the proposed model of sponsored research, WYDA contributes part of the expenses, its interests are accommodated in the research design, and it receives reports; the Universities subsidise the project by contributing the services of the researchers and providing much of its infrastructure, and the research team retain ultimate control of the project and ownership of the data with rights to publish. The mutual obligations of the sponsor and research team are expressed in the contract. The Core Program of Research Activities (n. 3 below) specifies in general terms the research that the team will accomplish and the reports it will provide to the sponsor, and the Project Budget indicates the support that the sponsor will provide and how the funds will be expended; both are part of the contractual agreement. They allow the research team the necessary flexibility to develop the research in detail in a way that will meet their own objectives as well as those of the sponsor.

Objectives and method of the research project on WYD08

- To discover 'What WYD08 means for its youth participants'. This was our earliest formulation of the fundamental research question and remains central to the project. The 'impact' of an event such as WYD on the faith or spirituality of an attender cannot be directly measured: effects may be more subtle than can be discerned through techniques such as a survey, or an interview by a stranger. Effects may occur at any point over a long period, may not be manifested in any easily measurable way, may be due to other causes, may not be consciously recognised by the person him/herself, or may not be accurately reported. There is therefore no easy or simple answer to the question: 'what difference did WYD make to this person, or to groups of attenders generally?'. The closest we can come is a partial and indirect measurement of 'impact', via the following:
 - discovering through interviews and a survey, prior to WYD, the 'pastoral profile' of a variety of intending participants: that is: where they stand in faith: their identification as Catholic (or other); their beliefs, moral attitudes, worship and other practices, their involvements in Christian communities (family, (especially faith and practice of parents, siblings, friends), local church, school, other); and elements of their outlook on life and their values more generally; their personal well-being; also their hopes and expectations regarding WYD;

- discovering, during WYD week, what activities the attenders participate in, and their experience of these events, (what they think and feel about them), by means of participant observation and interviews;
 - discovering, after WYD, by means of a large-scale quantitative web-based survey of participants, and also by followup interviews, their recollections and reflections on the event and their associated experiences; any changes in their 'pastoral profile' of which they are aware, and which they attribute to WYD: i.e. achieved or intended changes in beliefs, moral attitudes, practice, community involvements; also any developments in their more general outlook and values, and in measures of well-being. And would they be inclined to attend a future WYD, or recommend friends to do so?
 - measuring the attendance of young people and others at weekend parish Masses in all parishes throughout Australia on a chosen weekend after any 'spike' in attendance immediately following WYD has had time to subside; using the existing mechanism for the National Count of Mass Attendance usually conducted in census years and administered by the ACBC Office of Pastoral Projects;
- To identify, as far as possible, the significant positive (or in some cases, perhaps negative) outcomes of WYD for different kinds of participants, and the factors contributing to these outcomes:
 - by distinguishing the various levels of religious commitment of attenders prior to WYD and relating the outcomes of WYD participation to these levels. Previous research indicates that those highly committed before WYD generally report that the experience strongly strengthens their faith; those with a low prior level of commitment often gain little from the event. The high proportion of participants whose prior commitment is at a medium level are perhaps of greatest interest ('medium' implying that they are not regular weekend church attenders, and/or have varying levels of adherence to basic Catholic beliefs and moral prescriptions, and/or have issues that place them in some tension with the Church; typically they come from families of faith, were raised Catholic and had 'familial' faith as children, and retain a sense of Catholic identity, but in the transition through adolescence, have neither adopted a more mature faith nor completely abandoned the faith of their childhood): some of these reportedly move to a significantly higher level of faith commitment. Which ones? What appears to contribute to this result? What role, if any, is played by:
 - background factors such as age, sex, family religiosity, school type etc.;
 - ordinary development over time, and experiences unrelated to WYD which lead them to a more mature faith;
 - the type of preparation for WYD in which they engage;
 - the group with whom they attend; involvement with that group during the week, or with a host family; or with friends, or participating in the week in a more solitary mode;
 - the events of the week in which they take part;
 - the followup activities in which they engage on returning home;
 - the groups/communities in which they find ongoing support;

- how their peers and family respond to WYD; what difficulties or encouragements they experience;
 - re others' understanding what they have experienced;
 - re trying to do some things differently;
 - do they get teased at school or among peers re things they now want to do: e.g. more involvement with church; changes in patterns of consumption: spending less on themselves, their appearance, on entertainment; engaging in activities of social concern;
 - re trying not to do some things they did with their friends before: e.g. re drinking, drugs, sex, dangerous or anti-social activities.
- To explore the Christian-community-building effect of WYD: the findings of the 'Spirit of Generation Y' project indicate that one of the principal negative factors affecting the faith of young people is the weakness of structures of communal support for their faith; most are not involved in local church communities, but depend on family and friendship networks which prove fragile over time; the research project on the Cologne WYD focussed especially on the experience of community during the WYD event, and in the communal structures which are formed and endure afterwards. The formation and endurance of such structures after WYD, and their linking-in to local parishes or to some other permanent ecclesial structures, will be crucial to securing enduring effects from WYD.
- To share pastorally relevant findings of the research with the Australian Catholic church through popular publications and forums, and assist in their implementation (in addition to academic publications arising from the research).

Core program of research activities

- Stage 1: Pre-WYD (April, 2007 – June, 2008)
 - Preparation of interviews and surveys
 - Prepare schedules for interviews before and during event (May, 2007);
 - Prepare pre-WYD internet-based survey: design survey schedule and tracking, and implement on a separate survey website (by Feb 2008);
 - Interviews with intending participants (purposive sample) (Oct 2007 – Jan, 2008)
 - Identified in selected schools: face-to-face interviews;
 - Identified from registration: interviews by telephone;
 - Survey via the internet of all registered English-speaking intending participants (pre-test March 2008, Survey May 2008).
 - Progress report: 'The Road to Sydney' (May, 2008).
- Stage 2: During the week culminating in WYD (July 15-20, 2008)
 - Participant observation of event activities by expanded research team, and interviews with selected participants;
 - Project briefing to Research Committee (August-Sept, 2008).

- Stage 3: Post-WYD (July, 2008 – December, 2009)
 - Survey via the internet of all registered English-speaking participants (Feb or March 2009);
 - Followup interviews with selected participants to supplement the survey;
 - Initial data analysis & project briefing to Research Committee.
 - Final report (due 6 months after date of post-WYD survey).

World Youth Day Research Committee

Dr. Michael Casey (Chair)

Professor Hayden Ramsay (Deputy Chair)

Mr. Chris Meney

Mr. Geoff Morris

Dr. Michael Sexton

Appendix II

The Personal Interviews

The first component of the pre-WYD phase of the research was a series of personal interviews with pilgrims in the school and post-school age groups. The aim of the interviews was to draw the 'pastoral profile' of a variety of intending pilgrims, that is, where they stand in faith: their identification as Catholic (or other); their beliefs, moral attitudes, worship and other practices, their involvements in Christian communities (family – especially the faith and practice of parents, siblings, friends – local church, school, other); and also to discover elements of their outlook on life and their values more generally; their personal well-being; their hopes and expectations regarding WYD.

As in all qualitative research, it was not our aim to profile the whole population of WYD attenders, but to explore in depth a selection of cases chosen to manifest the range and variety of those planning to attend WYD08.

Target sample. The sample comprises two main groups: school-age youth and post-school adults. Among school-age youth we sought to have similar numbers of male and female informants, and an appropriate mix of school type (co-educational and single sex) and geographic location. Interviews were facilitated by RE coordinators in each of the schools. We specifically requested that coordinators not select the most religiously committed from those who volunteered to be interviewed, but rather that they choose a selection who would reflect the range of pilgrims going to Sydney from that particular school. Among the older adults, we selected interviewees so as to further our understanding of specific 'types' of WYD08 attenders, including: those registered to attend with their local metropolitan parish; attenders at previous World Youth Days (e.g. Cologne or Rome) who were going again; members of movements (e.g. Focolare); those who live outside the capital cities; and those who are too old to be considered 'youth', but are attending WYD08 nonetheless. We recruited most of these interviewees from our own local or interstate contacts.

Achieved sample. A total of 49 interviews were conducted; 36 were attending school in 2007, and 13 were post-school age, either in the workforce or at university. 31 were female and 18 were male.

| Cohort | No. | % |
|------------------|------------|------------|
| School Attenders | 36 | 74 |
| Post School | 13 | 26 |
| Total | 49 | 100 |

Students in the school-age cohort were attending one of six Catholic secondary schools from the following regions in Melbourne: east; outer south east; inner city; north; west; far north west. Among the post-school group, three were members of Catholic movements, four were registered to go to WYD08 with their local metropolitan parish; four lived in a rural centre

and two were aged over 50. Of the post-school-age pilgrims, four had been to a previous WYD.

After a time, we were no longer hearing new stories, or different motives for attending WYD from those we interviewed, try as we might to broaden our selection and vary our sources of interviewees, so we brought the interview series to a close.

The interviews we had heard helped us to get in tune with the thoughts and feelings of those who would be attending WYD08, and so to formulate suitable questions for the survey.

Appendix III

Questions about WYD in the survey questionnaire

1. Have you been to any of the previous World Youth Days – e.g. Cologne in 2005, Toronto in 2002, Rome in 2000 or one before that?

Yes

No

2. Which previous World Youth Days have you attended? Please check all the ones you've been to.

Cologne, Germany, 2005

Toronto, Canada, 2002

Rome, Italy, 2000

Paris, France, 1997

Manila, Philippines, 1995

Denver, United States, 1993

Częstochowa, Poland, 1991

Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 1989

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1987

Rome, Italy, 1985

Rome, Italy, 1984

None of the above

3. Looking back to the most recent WYD you attended, please rank the following experiences in terms of how valuable they were to you. Enter a number between 1 and 9 beside each one, 1 meaning 'this was the most valuable', and 9 meaning 'this was least valuable to me'. Use each number only once.

The Masses and prayer services

Having fun, sightseeing, partying

The catechesis sessions / learning more about your own faith

Just the buzz of being part of a huge youth event

Seeing the Pope, listening to him

Feeling part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs

Experiencing the presence of God

Making new friends

Sharing about faith with other young people

4. Did your participation at that WYD result in any of the following? Please check all that apply.

Getting your faith and your life more together: living what you believe

A closer relationship with God / with Jesus

A deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings

A fuller acceptance of these beliefs and moral teachings

A stronger sense of Catholic identity

A greater commitment to social justice
No, none of these

5. After returning from that WYD, did you do any of the following? Check all that apply.

Attended followup gathering(s)
Stayed in regular contact with friend(s) you made (eg getting together, email, Facebook)
Began attending Mass more frequently
Assisted in preparations for WYD in Sydney 2008
Joined a parish group (e.g. a youth group, prayer group, helping group etc.)
Got involved in a social justice activity or group
No, none of these

6. Are you definitely going to World Youth Day in Sydney in July?

Yes, definitely
Undecided
No

7. Are you individually registered – i.e. have your personal details been entered into WYD registration?

Yes
I'm not sure
No

8. What kind of group are you going with to WYD Sydney 2008?

Parish group
School group
A group within a community or movement (e.g. Focolare; Charismatic, St. Vincent de Paul / Young Vinnies etc.)
I'm going with my family / relatives / friends
Some other type of group
Not attending with a group

9. Are you a group leader?

No
Yes

10. What are you most looking forward to experiencing at WYD? Please rank the following in order by entering a number between 1 and 10 beside each one, 1 meaning 'most looking forward to this'. Use each number only once.

The Masses and prayer services
Having fun, sightseeing, partying
The catechesis sessions / learning more about my own faith
Just the buzz of being part of a huge youth event
Seeing the Pope, listening to him
Feeling part of a large crowd united by shared beliefs
Experiencing the presence of God
Making new friends

Sharing about faith with other young people
Perhaps meeting someone I really like

11. Have you done any of these preparatory activities for WYD? Check all that apply.

Seen a DVD about WYD
Talked personally to someone who had attended a previous WYD
Heard a presentation from a previous attender
Attended a WYD information session at school, university or parish
Participated in something to do with the Journey of the Cross and Icon
Participated in a 'Holy Hour of Power'
Undertaken a fundraising or awareness activity, (eg a BBQ, hot cross bun drive)
Decided to take part in Days in the Diocese activities in July
Signed up as a volunteer for WYD in Sydney or Days in the Diocese in your own diocese
Acted as a 'WYD ambassador'
Had RE classes at school related to preparing for WYD
None of these

12. Which of the following really helped you decide to attend WYD in 2008? Check all that apply.

Your friends are going
People at school or parish encouraged you to go
Parents / relatives encouraged you to go
Talking personally to someone who had attended a previous WYD
Information sessions about WYD at school, parish or university
Seeing a DVD about WYD
Hearing a presentation from a previous attender
Information on the WYD Website (www.wyd2008.org) or other websites
It was a chance to visit Australia, with financial assistance
You got so much out of the last WYD you attended
None of these

13. Out of your three closest friends, how many are going to WYD?

None
One
Two
All three

14. When World Youth Day is all over, what benefits do you hope for as a result of attending? Please check all that apply.

Getting your faith and your life more together: living what you believe
A closer relationship with God / with Jesus
A deeper understanding of Catholic beliefs and moral teachings
A fuller acceptance of these beliefs and moral teachings
A stronger sense of Catholic identity
A greater commitment to social justice
Feeling the energy to get more involved in your parish
None of these; I just hope I will have enjoyed a good time

Appendix IV

Survey procedures and response rates

- 1) 56,765 pilgrims, volunteers and group leaders were registered as English-speaking.
- 2) 1,116 file entries were duplicates, leaving 55,649 valid registrations
- 3) 5,257 had not given permission, when registering, to be contacted with further WYD info
- 4) 608 entries had blank email addresses, leaving (56765–1116–5257–608 =) 49,784
- 5) 31,956 of these had unique personal email addresses not shared with anyone else. WYD Registration provided these addresses to Australian Survey Research Ltd., (ASR) the company hosting the internet-based survey, and ASR sent out individual email invitations.

- 6) 17,828 people (the remainder of the 49,784) had *shared* email addresses (3,580 addresses). ASR sent emails to these addresses inviting those sharing them to complete the ‘open’ version of the survey at <http://wyds.com.au>. This version was identical to that accessed by clicking the link in a personal email invitation. The personal invitation method was preferred because it enabled the respondent to come and go from the survey without having to put in a username and password to re-enter and continue.

- 7) 5,402 mobile phone numbers were in the file sent to ASR. These were sent SMS messages inviting them to look for an email from WYD containing a link, or go to the public version of the survey.

- 8) WYD Registration sent a special email to all group leaders (of English-speaking groups) asking them to contact their group members and get them either to check their email for an individual link to the survey (if they were individually registered), or to go to the open version.

- 9) The survey opened at 5.04 pm Friday May 2 and closed at 9am on Friday 16th.

- 10) Reminders sent during the survey period: between Thursday May 8th and Sat 10th, reminder emails were sent to all who had not completed the survey; also reminder SMS messages, and on Tuesday 13th, a reminder email was sent by WYD Registration to group leaders.

- 11) Response to **individual** survey invitation emails:
31,956 individual email invitations were sent
1,894 of these ‘bounced’ (were undeliverable because of invalid addresses)
17,895 were not opened over the following 2 weeks before the survey closed
12,167 emails were opened (38% of emails sent; 21.86% of valid registrations)
10,703 followed the link to the survey site
1,215 entered the site but answered no questions
2,148 answered some questions but did not complete the entire survey
7,340 completed the whole survey
9,488 answered all or part of the survey – 77.98% of the 12,167 who were able to be contacted by email (i.e. who opened the invitation).

- 12) Response to the **open version** of the survey – the emailed group invitations
3,580 email invitations were sent
138 of these bounced (undeliverable because of invalid addresses)
2,171 (60.64%) were not opened over the following 2 weeks before the survey closed
1,271 (35.50%) emails were opened

In addition,

- group leaders were emailed and asked to notify their members;
- 5,402 SMS messages were sent to registered pilgrims who had provided mobile phone numbers
- advertisements for the open survey were placed on the WYD site's home page
- and in a press release sent to the Catholic press.

As a result of these multiple forms of publicity for the open survey,
3,486 went to the 'open' survey site <http://wyds.com.au>
699 looked at the survey but answered no questions
936 answered some questions but did not complete
1,851 completed the survey
2,787 answered all or part of the survey on this open site.

- 13) Totalling the responses obtained by all methods to the personal and open surveys:
9,191 completed the entire survey (7,340 personal + 1,851 open)
12,275 answered all or part of the survey (9,488 personal & 2,787 open)

14) Responses from pilgrims not yet registered

The survey could only contact directly those who were individually registered, but publicity (probably through group leaders) drew 319 survey responses from pilgrims who were not yet registered.

15) Incomplete responses

These are often discarded in survey research; however, recognising that some respondents were quite young, and anticipating that a proportion would find the task of responding to the questionnaire tedious and not persevere with it to the end, the research team placed a set of crucial questions about WYD close to the start of the survey, together with age, denomination and country of residence. A high proportion of those respondents who did not complete the survey all the way to the end, nonetheless answered these important questions adequately, and so provided significant usable additional data.

16) Representativeness of the survey

The total of 12,275 responses (some of them incomplete) is unusually high for a survey of any kind, and permits very detailed analysis. It is far from fulfilling WYDA's hope that all pilgrims would participate, since the 11,956 responses from registered respondents represents only 21.5% of the 55,649 valid entries in the registration file at May 1, and only 319 replies were received from the unknown number of intending pilgrims who are not yet registered.

However, although only 12,167 pilgrims could be contacted via email, 78% of these – an extraordinarily high proportion for a survey of this kind – provided a response (cf. n. 11 above). This result vindicates the research team’s early conviction that, if we could reach them, young people planning to attend an event such as WYD08 would be most willing to enter into the reflective process entailed in responding to the survey, and would find it most profitable.

In February, when the proportion of estimated attenders who were individually registered was much lower, we were concerned that the survey response might be biased: that those who were from overseas, or had enrolled earlier, would be disproportionately from among the most serious, dedicated and enthusiastic pilgrims. By mid-May, the numbers registered were rising steeply, and estimates were also being reduced to figures judged more realistic. The proportion of expected Australian pilgrims registered was approaching half, and our concern about bias abated. While it is likely that late registrants may be more Australian, younger, and less devoted than average, **we are confident that the survey sample is solidly representative, in most respects,¹² of the likely eventual body of English-speaking pilgrims.**

¹² As mentioned in the main text, the sample may not be exactly representative of the proportions from different countries in the eventual group of attenders: large numbers of later registrations may come in from particular overseas countries, or from Australia.

About the Authors

Michael Mason PhD is an Associate Professor and Principal Research Fellow at Australian Catholic University's Quality of Life and Social Justice Research Centre in Melbourne. He has been a principal investigator in several national sociological surveys on religion and spirituality, and has a particular interest in multidisciplinary and mixed-methods research. He has postgraduate qualifications in sociology, religion studies and theology. His research interests are in sociology of religion, religion in Australia, and religious experience. He is a Catholic priest of the Redemptorist order.

Andrew Singleton PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Sociology Program, School of Political and Social Inquiry, Monash University. His research interests include youth spirituality, alternative religions, fatherhood, men's health and men's domestic lives. Andrew has published extensively in these areas both nationally and internationally. He teaches units on men and gender issues, contemporary religion and spirituality and social research methods.

Ruth Webber PhD Ruth Webber PhD is a Professor in the School of Arts and Sciences, and Director, Quality of Life and Social Justice Flagship research centre at Australian Catholic University. Her research has focussed on youth spirituality, youth violence and substance abuse, intellectual disability, family breakdown, and social policy. She has published extensively on 'at risk' youth and social policy both nationally and internationally. Social justice is of paramount importance, especially to her research activities and community service. She is on the editorial board of two journals, is a board member of two large welfare organisations and has postgraduate qualifications in education, psychology and sociology.

Prior to embarking on this study, the authors completed in 2007 a 5-year collaboration on a study of the spirituality of Generation Y, published as:

The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia by Michael Mason, Andrew Singleton and Ruth Webber (John Garratt Publishing, Melbourne, 2007).

The book is available from:

John Garratt Publishing, 32 Glenvale Crescent, Mulgrave VIC 3170

Ph: 1300 650 878 Fax: 03 9545 3222; Email: sales@johngarratt.com.au

Web: <http://www.johngarratt.com.au>