



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life

### **Aussies visit Rio De Janeiro for WYD 2013 Preparation**

A group of Australian pilgrimage coordinators have recently returned from Rio de Janeiro with a heightened enthusiasm to encourage pilgrims to attend WYD in Rio2013. The group of 15 pilgrimage coordinators spent several days in Rio visiting the sites for major events, possible accommodation options and getting a feel for this vibrant and exciting city.

Approximately 2000 Australian pilgrims are expected to go to Rio for next year's WYD, to be held from July 23rd to 28<sup>th</sup>.

On a familiarisation tour facilitated by the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life and lead by Harvest Pilgrimages, Australia's Official Tour Operator for WYD 2013, the group met with the World Youth Day 2013 Office and was updated on planning, preparations and locations for WYD.

"I am excited about the main events such as the Opening Mass and Welcome of the Pope which will be held along the very famous Copacabana Beach. With the amazing city of Rio de Janeiro to one side and the backdrop of sand and sea to the other it will be the perfect setting for a Brazilian World Youth Day" said Brendan Lindsay, Coordinator of the Victorian Dioceses Pilgrimage.

The tour was also a chance for leaders to see firsthand how the city has been resourced and developed in recent years in preparation for World Youth Day 2013, the Soccer World Cup 2014, the Olympics 2016 and the recent Rio+ 20 Summit.

"Rio was not as frightening as some made it out to be. I found it safe and entertaining, and think that it is great for the WYD event." said Tina Salome, Coordinator for the Maronite Diocese.

The setting of the city of Rio is extremely beautiful with its incredible mountains and the sea; from the amazing views from the Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking the city, and the 'favelas' surrounding the city. Rio is a diverse city which has a very relaxed feel and it will provide a unique and powerful backdrop for WYD 2013.

Building upon the encounter in Rio, the group then travelled to Peru to experience some of the mission opportunities being offered to pilgrims from Australia. Gabrielle Sinclair, Youth Ministry Projects Officer for the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life, expressed great enthusiasm in sharing her experience in Peru and her hope that Australian pilgrims have an immersion of this nature.

"The national pilgrimage will have a renewed focus on mission and encounter which is a significant part of the South American faith story" said Gabrielle.

"Connections have been made with local communities and religious orders so that there is a positive impact made by visiting Australian pilgrims. It is hoped that groups and pilgrims build long term relationships with the communities they encounter to continue to make a difference."

Many Dioceses and groups are currently launching their pilgrimage opportunities in conjunction with celebrating one year out from the big event, marked on Saturday July 28<sup>th</sup>. The Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life has recently released a short promotional video to celebrate and assist with promotion. The clip shares some of the highlights from WYD 2011 in Madrid and explores some of the wonderful opportunities of a WYD in Rio and the mission encounters in South America. The clip can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/acbcyouth>.

**For further information about the familiarisation tour or Australia's participation in WYD 2013 Rio, please contact: Gabrielle Sinclair Mob: 0448464491**

You can also visit [www.wyd.org.au](http://www.wyd.org.au) for updates and planning information.

Photo: [Rio WYD 2013 Office](#) Visit