

A Journey to the Centre

L'Arche Geneserat (ACT)

Our 2006 Pilgrimage to Central Australia provided opportunities for spiritual involvement:

- Becoming attuned to the mystique of the landscape;
- Learning Aboriginal creation-time stories;
- Praying with all pilgrims;
- Experiencing the wonders of God's creation.



Beyond description was the manner in which everyone helped someone less able. It was a privilege to be surrounded by the loving and caring, and acceptance of everyone, one for another. The magnificence of Uluru, Kata Juta and other geographical features were dwarfed by the immensity of God's love glowing from, and inviting us all, as one.

An unforgettable element of the pilgrimage was the obvious enjoyment of all participants and the radiant joy on so many faces. The involvement of members in the singing, music and

dancing typified the happiness pervading the group. The way L'Arche was showcasing itself to outsiders, without intending to do so, evoked smiles, conversation and impromptu participation from people who probably surprised even themselves. A bed/chair and wheelchair gyrating with dancers in gay abandon brought smiles, praise and acceptance from many an observer.

The proof that the pilgrimage was an overwhelming success was that no one was looking forward to the conclusion, and many friendships were made, renewed and cemented.

Here are some reflections from the pilgrims.

High points of 'The Pilgrimage' were going to Uluru, Kata Juta and Mount Connor, seeing local Aborigines and admiring their arts and crafts. We loved meeting new and old L'Arche friends. 'Campfire of the Heart' was very welcoming and there was a good view from Anzac Hill.

Liz Archer

It was a really good time to meet and share the prayer and campfire and many fun things at Alice Springs. I especially enjoyed talking with core members from different places. They are very special and friendly to me! It was very impressive to be there and walk at Uluru under clear blue sky and red sands on the huge landscape.

Masako Saito

Ron best enjoyed the long walks at Uluru with members. He also enjoyed seeing birds flying very sharply at the desert park in Alice Springs. He had a very good time talking and sharing with people from different communities. He said "Now I get good many buddies!"

Ron Graham

Uluru was really good: Seeing the Aboriginal people at the Cultural Centre; seeing the sunrise and sunset and the special prayer for Pat Harper; liked seeing the Flying Doctor Service in Alice Springs; enjoyed the plane flights and the Emu Run Bus trips and especially Dingo Jack who was the driver. He had a good sense of humour and told good stories; felt that my Mum and Aunty and Uncle were with me there in spirit.

Anne Walsh

I enjoyed the: BBQ picnic at Uluru; playing soccer; making new friends; singing around the campfire; John Coleman's singing (A+)

Louise Carrigan

As a new Assistant, this pilgrimage has reinforced what a wonderful and loving family L'Arche is. I quickly made many new friends and I know that these friendships will last a lifetime, because we saw and did so many things together: Uluru in the sunset; camel rides; impromptu soccer games in the evening and we walked so many kilometres side by side.

Elaine Lollback

I'm bringing home from the Pilgrimage for Geneserat: hope for the future; excitement about new possibilities for Core Members; a new "sense" of L'Arche; a feeling of solidarity with other Australian communities; a little more of the stories and wisdom of the "elders". I'm bringing home from the Pilgrimage for me: affirmation as an Assistant and part of L'Arche Community; more connection with Louise, my Prayer Companion; more freedom to be myself; reconnection with Jesus' presence in pilgrims, especially the Core Members; some confirmation around vocation in L'Arche.

Marianne Crane

It was a great experience to gather with and get to know other members of the L'Arche Community, and to share the pilgrimage to Uluru, the heart of our country. It was a special time of sharing, celebration, sadness and joy, and we will hold it close to our hearts forever.

Scott Andrea and Frank Van Halderen

It was a privilege and an inspiration to be on the L'Arche Pilgrimage to Central Australia; a privilege to share the time with such a wonderful, loving bunch of people and to discover with them some of the beauty of our country and the culture of our Aboriginal people; an inspiration to witness the love and the care that members of L'Arche have for each other and the zest for life that all have, but especially those such as Joseph, Jason, Anthony and Sean. May we all move forward with a renewed love and compassion for each other and a determination to step outside of our comfort zones as we grow and celebrate our lives together.

John O'Connor

