

# 7 Days in Menai / aka WYD

“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country.”

I went along to WYD, not knowing why, and came back filled with joy and humility.

Part of getting ready to go to WYD involved two major activities. One was being a part of a small bible discussion group, in which I learnt that the Bible continues today, particularly when we share with one another about our journey with God/Jesus/Holy Spirit. The other activity was being part of a group learning Auslan, the Australian Deaf Sign Language. What glorious treasures God had in store for me – the wonderful opportunity to be with a terrific bunch of young people filled with love for God and an openness to learn a new language so that our stories could be exchanged more openly.



And that was only the beginning! The 500<sup>th</sup> day (countdown) finally arrived, and we flew to the other side of this vast continent. and trekked off to Aquinas Catholic College in Menai – where again another living example ... “They will know we are Christians by our love” - the Deputy Principal and colleagues of this college slept onsite for the whole week, so that the 700 or so young people staying there could be assured of security and help. Let alone the bright and cheery faces that served us breakfast and lunch in this school; the school kids and their parents, and other members of the parish that the school belonged to.

I watched the Pope’s arrival from a coffee lounge in a local Catholic club in Sydney with the pinging of gaming machines in the background, and then shared in the Final Mass with the Pope at the local racing course – was God trying to tell me something about the odds in taking risks in being led by the disciple Peter’s successor? Win/win situations?

Then there were the memorable experiences of meeting other pilgrims, from 164 countries. I had the opportunity to personally meet deaf pilgrims and their hearing companions, from the United States of America, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Many people shared their stories on trains, buses, key points in Sydney – Aussies from Thursday Island, Kiwi’s from Aotoreoa, Canadians/Alaskans (?) from Yukon, Syrians, Cook Islanders, even a fellow with the flashiest electric wheelchair I have yet seen who was actually from Cologne (the venue of the previous WYD). I learnt something new from everyone I met, about the love of God for us all.

Joy and humility. These are the treasures that I gained, found, remember, and treasure, from this journey. And it was not so much as what I could do for our God, but what our God does for us. The quote on the first line of this article was what an American president put to the American people in a time of need. How blessed are we to have the keys to a Kingdom where we receive far more than what we give?

If you ask yourself if God is calling YOU to go the next World Youth Day, and you find the answer is Yes, GO! no matter what obstacles cross your path. To those of you who asked, thank you.







**FIVE PEOPLE FROM  
EMMANUEL CENTRE  
JOINED CATHOLIC YOUTH  
MINISTRY ON A  
PILGRIMAGE TO SYDNEY  
FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY.**

