

2016 ANNUAL REPORT CAIRNS CYM

By Anne Chellingworth



The launch of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan *'Encountering Christ, Sharing Our Joy'* this year has provided a life-giving vision for youth ministry across Cairns and surrounds. Its focus is on recognising that our communities need to reach out to young people in "new and creative ways". The CYM Reference Group, which offers oversight of youth ministry in the diocese, has identified 4 key priorities based on this pastoral vision.

These are: to encourage and support the engagement of young people in parish life; to promote awareness of Cairns CYM and connect schools with youth ministry opportunities; to support those already involved in youth ministry and provide suitable formation for young leaders across the Diocese; and to provide opportunities for youth and young adult fellowship and encounter with Christ and manage pre-existing diocesan events.

The Reference Group has begun to build a database of youth ministry activities across the diocese, a process that will continue into next year. The database will further enable the Reference Group to achieve these priorities.

The two stand-out events for local youth ministry in 2016 were participation in World Youth Day, Krakow and the Muddy Soles Youth Festival. Other highlights on the calendar included the continuation of regular Jesus@theJack events, a young adults' networking dinner held in May, sponsorship of students to attend Movers & Shakers Youth Leadership Training in Toowoomba and the facilitation of a three-week visit by the national NET team.

2017 promises to be both busy and exciting with a range of local ministry events, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney and preparations for a nation-wide Year of Youth launching in December.

In closing, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the many people who have supported local youth ministry in various ways throughout the year, including clergy, parishioners, teachers and school staff, parish personnel and diocesan staff.

Photos from top:

Cairns WYD Pilgrims boarding the plane to Warsaw. Clockwise from left: Brent Mitchell, Anna Harris, Jamaal Sugars, Fr Kerry Crowley, Natalie Jensen and Kate Watson.

Fun in-between sessions at the Muddy Soles Youth Festival.

Youth Ministry Coordinators from around Australia gather in Newcastle for their Annual Networking Meeting.



MUDDY SOLES YOUTH FESTIVAL 2016



Mary from the Mareeba Islamic Society shows how to make sleeping mats out of plastic bags.

Why 'Muddy Soles'? Because throughout the Year of Mercy that has just concluded, Pope Francis' message has been one of encouragement to "get amongst it", even if your shoes get soiled in the process. Francis has challenged us all to recognise the poor and disadvantaged as our brothers and sisters and to care for them, even if it means moving out of our comfort zones.

The Muddy Soles Youth Festival gave participants an opportunity to explore some of the injustices faced in both our local and wider community, as well as time to discuss and reflect upon our own personal response in light of the example shown by Christ.

The group of 40 young people who attended the weekend was comprised of students and teachers from 4 of our secondary colleges, young adults from the Cairns and Townsville dioceses and members of the FNQ Saint Vincent de Paul Youth Conference. Feedback from the weekend was highly positive. St Stephen's APRE Laura Gilbert commented: *"It really was a fantastic weekend and all of my students were very appreciative of the opportunity to be sponsored to attend. They really enjoyed the practical social justice action, the house band, and hearing from numerous young adults about their experience of God and ministry."*

Sarah Dixon and Waylon Kennedy pack Christmas hampers for St Vinnies, in the Social Justice Action Room.



The success of the weekend was made possible by the collaborative efforts of Cairns CYM, the St Vincent de Paul Society of Queensland, Mercy Ministries FNQ and a wonderful group of teachers and young adults from across our diocese, who all volunteered their time to create an enriching event. We were treated to awesome music throughout the weekend with thanks to the house band headed by Jamaal and Janai Sugars. Our sincere thanks go to Fr Nathan McKay and Fr Frank Gordon for their presence during the weekend and also to OLHOC parish for the scrumptious breakfast they provided after Sunday morning mass.

We were also appreciative of the displays and activities in our Social Justice Action Room provided by Rosies, Cairns Pregnancy Help, Catholic Missions, SVDP, Young Christian Students Townsville, Friends of Himilayan Children and Mercy Partners.

The different input from each of these groups made the weekend truly vibrant and provided an excellent showcase of what the Cairns community has to offer young people.



Cairns Mascot 'Stevo' making some new friends at the overnight vigil with Pope Francis.



Spirits were high during the 20km walk to Campus Misericordiae

World Youth Days are a truly ingenious idea from Saint Pope John Paul II.

A rich piece of his legacy, they are a gift for future generations. The experience of parish life can be tough for a young person today. Sitting in church any given Sunday one can usually count on a single hand the other young people present. For a cohort whose every day is infused with music, there are times when the church organ and its hymns that belong to an older generation just don't resonate with the story of 'you'. And it can be all too easy to slip out quietly at the end of mass without a greeting or warm smile from the worshippers seated at the next pew.

Enter the experience of World Youth Day. Picture millions of young people full of smiles and songs, each one coming from a different place and way of being catholic, yet all celebrating a common faith with hope and excitement for the future.

Spending a week here was good for the soul. There were opportunities to attend catechesis sessions presented by world renowned bishops, concerts featuring the best Christian artists the world has to offer, a beautifully choreographed Way of the Cross and several occasions to hear addresses from the Holy Father himself.

The camaraderie was tangible. And Pope Francis spoke about real life; about the war in Syria and refugees who are our brothers and sisters, about digital technology, about leading lives that will make a difference and always, always about mercy. His warnings about the subtle lure of comfort and complacency struck a chord with everyone who has spent time being a 'couch potato'.

Celebrating Eucharist here, with the Pope, your travelling companions and new friends, and a sea of priests, bishops, cardinals and fellow pilgrims was an uplifting and unrepeatable experience of being Catholic.

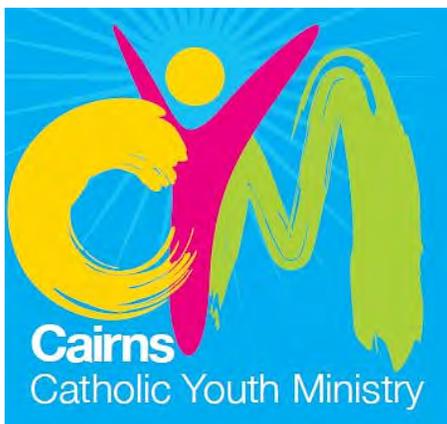
And now, there is a sustaining

'why' when turning up at mass again on Sundays, with an added glimmer of hope for the future of our living, spirited Church.

- Anne Chellingworth

St Andrew's teacher Anna Harris writes: "Since returning to our communities and everyday lives, we've endeavoured to keep the inspiration and spirit we gained in Poland alive... through a variety of presentations, to students, staff and parents." Colin Harvey, Assistant Executive Director Identity and Mission, reflects on his conversations with local WYD pilgrims: "Feedback from teachers who attended World Youth Day has been overwhelmingly positive. They commented that it was a privilege to be in the presence of Pope Francis and listen to his preaching, which they found very relevant to young people today. This faith experience has added significantly to their formation, enabling them to be better positioned to teach in a Catholic school."

See photos and stories from the Cairns pilgrims on their WYD blog: <http://cairnswyd16.weebly.com>



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facebook.com/[cairnscym](https://www.facebook.com/cairnscym)
www.cairns.catholic.org.au/documents/youth.html



Jesus@theJack evenings have showcased a number of local personalities this year, each with a unique story. 2016 presenters have included two newly ordained deacons, Tony Moore and Mark Cavvichiolo, as well as Catholic Missions' Anna Jimenez and Notre Dame graduate Alyssa Crawford. Many thanks to each of these speakers, as well as to the young adults who continue to support this networking initiative. We hope to see you again in 2017!



Looking ahead to the YEAR OF YOUTH

The Catholic Bishops of Australia invite Catholics across the country to join in celebrating a Year of Youth from the beginning of Advent 2017 to the end of 2018. The Year of Youth celebrates ten years since World Youth Day was hosted in Sydney during 2008. It will focus on the theme, '**Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy: Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment**'.

The Year of Youth will be part of a journey of dialogue and discernment as the Church in Australia contributes to the next Synod of Bishops in Rome during 2018, with its focus on 'Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment'. The Year of Youth will be launched at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival in Sydney. The festival will be held from 7 to 9 December at Sydney Olympic Park and at other key locations in the city. It is expected to attract 15,000 young people.

Information about the Year of Youth is available on the official website, www.youth.catholic.org.au

