

## Message Of Hope



Who can forget those marvellous days in Rome last month as sixty young Australians received the WYD Cross and Icon of Our Lady from their German brothers and sisters. It will forever be etched in my memory. One **testimony** from an Australian delegate to Rome included in this eDITION expresses beautifully her realisation of the significance of now having received the WYD Cross. You will also be able to read an extract of my **homily** to the delegates at the International Gathering of WYD Coordinators, 'From Cologne to Sydney', held in Rome in the days leading up to Palm Sunday. In it I exhorted them as I exhort you now, 'come youth of the world' to Sydney in July 2008.

In the first eDITION (April 06) of our ePILGRIMAGE towards July 08 in Sydney, we set out in the company of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. She was the one through whom the Eternal Word came to us. In this next step of spiritual preparation we continue to consider the theme given by the Holy Father for the 2006 WYD,

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Ps 119:105)

In particular, we will consider the ways that God speaks to us through the Church and calls us, like the earliest Christians, to 'remain faithful to the teaching of the Apostles' (Acts 2:42), relying on **Scripture, Tradition and the Church's Magisterium**, or teaching authority. The Word of God is never spoken into a vacuum. The **Creed** that we profess from the Apostles becomes for us a prayer of thanksgiving to God for providing a lamp to our feet and ought to be expressed as a big 'yes, I believe in you.'

Dear young people, the Apostle John was a teenager when he encountered Jesus and set out to follow him. It was '**Four in the Afternoon.**' We will accompany him from Galilee to **Patmos** as we seek to meet Jesus, and we will see that the simplest drive for God can ultimately lead to authentic greatness.

Take the time to continue with your ePILGRIMAGE and bring a friend along inviting them to register at [www.wyd2008.org](http://www.wyd2008.org)

+ Anthony Fisher OP,  
Coordinator World Youth Day 2008



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# “These remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles”

[Acts 2:42]

## Faith Foundations

### Scripture, Tradition and Magisterium

Why do the Scriptures say the early Christians remain ‘faithful to the teachings of the Apostles’ (Acts 2:42) rather than saying the ‘teaching of Jesus?’ Why does St Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles, write it this way? Clearly, he equates one with the other. The teaching of the Apostles **IS** the teaching of Jesus.



Christians believe that although God is so great and mysterious that he lies beyond our complete understanding. God desires to be close to us so that we can know his truth and be touched by his saving love. God communicates who he is and what he wants us to know about ourselves in a specially personal and important way which we call **Revelation**.

Over many hundreds of years, God taught humanity in this way by forming a particular bond or **Covenant** with the people of Israel, his “chosen people”. A great variety of sacred writings of this people witness to this revelation. These writings form the large first section of the **Bible** we now call the **Old Testament**.

In “the fullness of time”, God revealed Himself completely, in person, in the life and actions of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s revealing: to see and know Jesus Christ is to see and know God made man. The accounts and teachings about him and his saving life, death and Resurrection are contained in the second part of the Scriptures – **The New Testament**.

The Good News of Jesus Christ needed to be spread out to the rest of the world. God therefore sent down his Holy Spirit upon his hand-picked leader, the Twelve Apostles and upon his new Chosen People: The Church, so that after Jesus returned to God the Father they would have the strength, wisdom and passion to carry his saving activity and presence around the world and down through history.



Christ Handing the Keys to St Peter  
Pietro Perugino (1481-82)  
Web Gallery of Art [www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu)

They were called to compile and discern the writings contained in the **Old and New Testament** and to hand on the “living Christ” through **Tradition** (which comes from the Latin word tradere: to hand on) – that is in the prayers, reflections, teachings, gifts (charismas), liturgical practices and sacraments of the Church.

In order to remain faithful to the truth of the Gospel and to remain united as a “people”, a special teaching authority was given by Jesus Christ to the Apostles to be passed on directly and in an unbroken line to the anointed successors of the Apostles known as **bishops**.

This special “apostolic” office of ensuring the correct and authentic interpretation of the Gospel and Tradition continues at work in our own times in the bishops in communion with the successor to the apostle Peter, **The Pope**, “who holds the keys of Peter” [See Jesus’ words in Matthew 18:18].

This teaching authority “is called the **Magisterium** (from the Latin word magister: teacher). Its task is to be a “servant” of God’s **Revelation** so that people may hear and understand what the Church teaches with clarity and real authority even amidst disagreement and confusion inside and outside the Church.

“These remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles”

[Acts 2:42]

## Pilgrim Prayer



The Apostles' Creed is an early version of the more developed Nicene-Constantinople Creed that we usually profess at Sunday Mass. The Apostles' Creed, like the more developed version, is a statement of what we believe and preach, but also it is a prayer that we might know and live our faith.



## The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day He rose again;  
He ascended into heaven,  
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and He will come again  
to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
AMEN.

Image used with permission  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
[www.goarch.org](http://www.goarch.org)

## “These remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles”

[Acts 2:42]

### Inspired Writings

#### A reflection on the first encounter between John the Evangelist and Jesus

John leaned back in his chair. He was tired. His eyes and hands ached after a whole day hunched over the desk writing.

That would have to do for today.

If he could, he'd continue tomorrow. He rolled up the scroll and wiped his stylus.

“I'm not as young as I used to be,” he said to himself. His old age was daily more obvious, not only to him, but also to the whole community of Christians at Ephesus. Miriam, a poor but good woman, had taken to cooking his meals. Cephas, her son, had taken to accompanying him wherever he needed to go. They insisted on doing it, although John tried to discourage them. And John was grateful.

He pushed the door and eased himself onto the doorstep. The sunset was more than worth the poor area where he lived: it blazed over the sky, its glory heralding the first notes of chill in the evening. Winter was slowly creeping its way into Ephesus. The sun slid further and further down the mountainside, until all was blanketed in a deep purple, broken only by the stars above and the lamplight from houses.

Thoughts – prayers filled his mind. No number of years could ever erase his memories. They were as vivid in his mind as hot coals, and he tended them carefully. He must write. He knew he must write. God asked it of him, as did the Christians. Nonetheless, how could he describe in words what Jesus was like to those who had never known him, seen him, heard him preach? All those years he had spent with Christ as a young man – walking from town to town, sleeping in open fields, talking into the late hours of the night – he never thought he'd have to tell anyone about them. Him? John? The youngest fisherman of the Sea of Tiberias, and the youngest disciple in that band that had followed Jesus? The goodness, the bravery, the uprightness, the gentleness, the wit which made up Jesus' personality all seemed nearly impossible to convey in their fullness.

“God is love.”

That was the only accurate and complete description that came to John's mind.

It was late and the chill had settled into the hills, but John would stay a while more before turning in. The lights below dimmed as those in the heavens shone the higher.

“God, you are love for me, you have always been here for me, since the beginning.”

Since the beginning... It was that first moment John was thinking about now. It was that first moment he had been writing about before he came outside.



Portrait of St John in the Holy Cave,  
Diego Rodríguez Velázquez (1618)  
Web Gallery of Art [www.wga.hu](http://www.wga.hu)

## “These remained faithful to the teaching of the Apostles”

[Acts 2:42]

### Inspired Writings (continued)

#### A reflection on the first encounter between John the Evangelist and Jesus



He remembered Andrew, his friend, and James his brother; they had long since gone to rest with God. It was with Andrew that he had met the Christ for the first time, that day they were with John the Baptist at the river. “Behold the Lamb of God,” John had said, as a man passed by. The Lamb of God? The Promised One of Israel? They had both looked at each other, and without really knowing why, rose up and began to follow the figure to whom the Baptist pointed.

The elderly John chuckled. Oh, he and Andrew had tried to be discreet as they argued in whispers about who would speak first to him. Yet if he didn’t ask quickly, the Christ would be lost in the crowd. John broke stride with Andrew and walked swiftly to catch up with Jesus, trying to think of something to say. It was the Lamb himself who turned around and addressed his young pursuer:

“What do you seek?”

The eyes that met John’s carried the universe, the voice echoed experience and wisdom, and the question caught John completely off-guard. Fumbling for an answer, he replied not fully aware of the words that came out:

“Sir – where do you live?”

John felt like striking himself on the forehead. ‘Idiot!’ he’d scolded himself. ‘What kind of a stupid question is that?’ He was about to open his mouth again, when he saw the face of the Christ. Jesus smiled at John and then at Andrew, now beside him. He smiled at the both, and the smile was love.

“Come and see.”

They followed him. They spent the whole day with him; they spent their whole lives with him; they would spend eternity with him.

It was late. The old man grasped the door post to pull himself up. Come morning he would regret having stayed out for so long in the night air. Inside, dinner awaited him on the table. Miriam had come in and left it without him noticing. It would wait for tomorrow. The letters? They would wait for tomorrow as well? But one thing wouldn’t wait for tomorrow.

He walked over to his desk and pulled out his scroll. There was a detail missing. Some would think it was insignificant, but to him it had value beyond compare. Holding the paper up to the oil lamp’s fine flame, he found the place he was looking for. John uncapped the inkwell, took up the stylus in his stiff hands and added this brief note to his text:

...they came and saw where he was staying; and they stayed with him that day; it was about four in the afternoon. (John 1:35-40)

‘Four in the Afternoon’ Circle Press Hamden, CT USA 2003

### Testimony Of Faith

Veronica, aged 25



Being part of the delegation of Australian youth sent to Rome to receive the World Youth Day Cross and Icon of Our Lady on the occasion of the XXI WYD celebration was an incredible experience. Although there were a number of significant spiritual moments for me, most notable was a testimony given by a young German man during a night of prayer hosted by the German youth at San Ignazio Church in Rome. He spoke about the experience of carrying the Cross throughout Germany, and I was deeply moved by one comment he made: “We thought that we had carried the Cross around Germany, but really it was the Cross that carried us”.

I was reminded that the Cross of Jesus is so powerful that it can (and does) change lives. The emotion of sadness expressed by the German Youth when they handed over the Cross at the Palm Sunday celebration at St Peter’s Square was very moving. However, it also reminded me of the awesome opportunity we have been given to offer the gift of Jesus to the youth of Australia and the world. As we carry the World Youth Day Cross throughout our nation, Jesus carries us through all the difficulties and hurdles we will face in doing so. “...know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.” [Mt 28:20]

Veronica works in youth ministry



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### Saints And Witnesses

#### St John the Evangelist – also known as St John “The Divine” or St John the Apostle or “The Beloved Disciple”



The very earliest Christian writings (around 140 A.D), state that “the beloved disciple” of the **Fourth Gospel** is John, the brother of St James (sometimes called “the Greater”). They were born near Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and Salome (who were also followers of Jesus). James and John began their adult lives as fishermen before being called by Jesus to be “among the Twelve”- **The Apostles**.

In the Gospel, Jesus names the two brothers, with some humour, “the sons of thunder” (see Mark 3:17), and we can imagine that this might have been because of their fierce loyalty to him and perhaps because they were sometimes too hot tempered, impatient or noisy (see Luke 9:54).

John is present at the most important and challenging moments of Jesus’ ministry. He is with Jesus at his Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-2), during Jesus’ terrible suffering in the Garden at Gethsemane before his execution on the Cross (Mark 14:33), and during the Last Supper (Luke 22:8, John 13:22 etc).

St John is also closely linked to the Church’s **devotion to Mary**, the Mother of Jesus Christ - since it is Jesus Christ who in his dying and painful moments on the Cross, instructs John to take her “into his house.” (John 19:26-27).

John’s life is dramatically touched by the appearances of the Risen Lord after the Resurrection and we see that he accompanies St Peter the Apostle in the days after the Ascension of Jesus to the Father and after the sending of the Holy Spirit upon the Church at Pentecost.

In the New Testament book called the Acts of the Apostles, we hear again of John’s close companionship with St Peter in the tasks of preaching, healing, leading in prayers and liturgy, and teaching the “good news”. John was imprisoned with Peter by angry authorities (Acts 4). St Paul describes meeting John at the first Church Council in Jerusalem in 50 AD (see Paul’s Letter to Galatians 2:9).

Other writers in the early years of the new Church leave behind strong clues that as the Roman persecution of the Christians grew and when Jerusalem was destroyed (70 AD) St John travelled outside of his home country into the lands of Asia Minor and perhaps to Rome itself. At one stage he was exiled as a type of slave to the Greek island of Patmos (in about 95 AD) where according to tradition he received his visions which are recorded in the last book in the New Testament: **The Book of Revelation** (or the Apocalypse).

After the death of the very cruel Roman Emperor, Domitian (95 AD) John returned to Ephesus (now in modern Turkey) where he was a leader and teacher of the new Christians there. Here he became the highly revered last surviving apostle, standing up to the challenges of the pagan priests and people promoting misleading and false teachings. His three letters or **Epistles** (which can be found in the New Testament) contain his teaching that “God is love” and “truth”.

**Patron Saint of:** the country of Turkey; theologians; protection against poison.

**Feast Day:** December 27th

**His Symbol in Religious Art:** The Eagle (because his Gospel is so beautiful and rich that Saint Augustine said that it “soars beyond the sun and moon”). St John is usually depicted without a beard and as a young man, often with the Gospel book in his hand.

### Place Of Pilgrimage

#### Patmos Greece

**Patmos** has been described as “The Jerusalem of the Aegean” and the “Island of the Apocalypse”, a place of pilgrimage significance for Christians through the ages. It was on this Greek island that St John the Beloved Apostle was inspired to write the Book of Revelation. The 365 churches in the three villages of Patmos are testimony to its reputation as the holy island of Aegean.

#### The Cave of the Apocalypse

The exiled John, with a deep need for isolation and contemplation, found refuge in a humble cave on the desolate island of Patmos. Here in this holy cave, he became the instrument of God and enlightened by divine inspiration, dictated the Book of Revelation to his disciple Prochoros. Today, the cave is enclosed by the Monastery of the Apocalypse and the visiting pilgrim can descend through the monastery down to the rocky cave. Visible is the crevice where John was believed to have rested his head, the ledge upon which the text was inscribed and the cleft in the rock through which, according to tradition, John heard the voice of God.

#### The Monastery of St John

An impressive castle-like monastery of St John sits atop a mountainous peak and is an important landmark for visiting pilgrims. The Byzantine monastery was built in the year 1088 over the ruins of the ancient Temple of goddess Diane (Artemis) and is in the form of a mediaeval citadel with exceptional artistic and architectural value. The presence of the imposing monastery on the island has bolstered the reputation of Patmos as a pilgrimage destination for the past 1000 years.



**Monastery of St John at Patmos**  
Images used with permission, Harvest Pilgrim Travel



**“I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos to preach the word of God and give testimony to Jesus. I was caught up in the Spirit on the Lord’s day and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: ‘Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches..’”**  
(Revelation 1:9-11)

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[Acts 2:42]

### Towards WYD 2008

**Homily of Bishop Anthony Fisher OP  
to the International World Youth Day Delegates  
Conference of the Pontifical Council for the Laity  
'From Cologne to Sydney'  
Rome, 8 April 2006**



“....You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.” (Acts 1:8) This is the theme Pope Benedict has chosen for us for World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney Australia. The words are the last recorded words of Our Lord before his ascension into heaven. In a sense, then, they are his last will and testament. They tell us exactly what he wanted from us and for us.

The words come from the time of the birth of the Church. After Jesus said these things and ascended to the Father the early Church in the form of Our Lady and the Apostles and a few other disciples waited in prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The theme for WYD08 draws our minds back, then, to the days when the Church was still very young. The days when bishops like St John were only teenagers! In recalling the Church at her most youthful, Pope Benedict is inviting us to return to our youthful origins and experience renewal through the World Youth Day to come.

Australia, of course, is a young nation. Younger indeed than any other nation that has ever hosted a World Youth Day. So is the Church in Australia. Of course that is not the whole story. There were indigenous peoples in the Australian continent for many thousands of years before the European explorers found it. They lived in a very ancient land. And high in the sky, already preaching to those Aborigines as they awaited the arrival of the Gospel, was the Southern Cross. It is the closest constellation of stars to our planet earth but one only seen by those who live in or visit the Southern Hemisphere. As Pope John Paul II said, Australia was like a giant natural cathedral, with the cross raised high, awaiting the arrival of the first Christians.

When at last they came those first explorers called it the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit. So our theme is especially apposite for the first World Youth Day in Oceania. To the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit Christ says today: You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you.

What is this power Christ promises us? When we hear that word we might think of energy, electricity, creativity, manpower, godpower, grace. But there might also be some negative connotations. Power corrupts. Power controls. Power manipulates, exploits, tyrannizes. Instead of bringing life and energy, it can snuff them out. In the struggle for power over our own lives, over resources, over others, people can do violence, engage in terrorism, take drugs, even harm themselves; they will lie and cheat. They will do like Caiaphas does in today's Gospel reading: deciding to kill an innocent man to shore up his position (Jn 11:45-56). That is not Christ's kind of power. Caiaphas unwittingly got it right. Christ would rather die than harm us. Christ would rather die that lose even one of us. Christ willingly dies that we might have life, life to the full, eternal life.

So the power Christ offers us does not come through violence or lies but as pure gift from God. We call that power “grace” and that grace-bringer “the Holy Spirit”. He is the fire in the heart of God. He is a power which never enslaves, never damages, never lies. He brings freedom, healing, insight. For that Spirit to come upon you with power is to be filled with wisdom and understanding, with right judgment and courage, with knowledge and reverence, with wonder and awe.

All for what? Jesus says: You will receive power from the Holy Spirit to be my witnesses. Not just for the heck of it. Not just because he wants to leave us something like an old jacket in his last will and testament. No, Jesus wants witnesses. People who will testify. Who will speak up. Of course there are plenty of witnesses around today, plenty of words and images. They stand for all sorts of things. For what, for whom, does Jesus want us inspired to stand up? For him. You will be my witnesses.

The trial of Jesus Christ before the Sanhedrin begins today in our Gospel passage. He is not even present for his arraignment. Already the Chief Judge has decided the verdict: this man must die for the sake of the people. In the week ahead, we will be witnesses at the trial. In tomorrow's Passion Gospel we will have to take our part. We will join his executioners or the bloody-thirsty mob or the hangers-on or the runners-away or the betrayers. Or we will join the few true witnesses who stay close. The word in our text for witnesses is martyrion. Witness is from the same word as martyr. You will be my martyrs, Jesus says. You will give testimony to me whatever it costs, even unto death. Just as I have done for you! That takes courage. That takes real power. Holy Spirit power.

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[Acts 2:42]

### Towards WYD 2008

The trial of Jesus Christ continues in our day, in every age. The Sanhedrin is still sitting. We are called as witnesses. We are called to give testimony. What will we say? What do we say with our every word and deed, every day of our lives?

And where is it that we are called to give this testimony? You will be my witnesses, Jesus says, to the ends of the earth, to everyone, everywhere, wherever you are, wherever they are, in every nook and cranny of every human heart. But especially at the very ends of the earth. Going from Milan to Cologne or from Los Angeles to Toronto is great, especially if it is for something as life-changing as World Youth Day. It is going to give witness. But it is not really going to the end of the earth. For most of you to go to the end of the earth to give witness would require that you came to Australia! To Sydney! There you will be answering Our Lord's call geographically and psychologically. It requires courage and determination, like all true witness. It might seem far and dangerous, like going to Jerusalem or Compostella or Cologne must have seemed to our forefathers. In fact it only takes a day. And the kangaroos do not bite!

But Christ is calling you forth from today, to come to an unfamiliar land, as far away as you can go. To come to the ends of the earth and bring with you the youth of your land. To give witness. To receive the Holy Spirit in the Great South Land of the Holy Spirit. And to be united. Hear again the words of the Prophet Ezekiel in our First Reading: “Thus says the Lord your God: I will gather you from among all the nations and bring you together... under one shepherd... in one sanctuary... You shall be my people and I shall be your God.”

We thank God for the gift of the previous World Youth Days. Especially this weekend we thank God for the gift of Cologne 2005. And the future, Archbishop Rylko said to us yesterday, the future has a name. Its name is Sydney. We thank God for that too. But we in Sydney cannot do it alone. We need God's power. So we need your prayers that Sydney 2008 may be a New Pentecost where the young people of the world, gathered from every nation, speaking every tongue, will sing together the praises of our God. We need your efforts to raise in the hearts of your young people a desire to be courageous for Christ, to take on a big thing, something as big as taking the Gospel to the end of the earth. We need your best efforts to dissolve any misconceptions and communicate the good news about the future. We need your spirited witness to draw hundreds of thousands to Sydney. Come Holy Spirit! Come Holy Spirit! Come Holy Spirit! Come Youth of the World!



**Sydney, the host city of the XXIII WYD celebrations  
July 15-20, 2008 Image courtesy of Tourism NSW**