

“One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” [Mt 4:4]

## Message Of Hope



We are, we hope, on our way to heaven (see September eDITION), but our life on earth can often be a struggle. Our choice for heaven, our decision to follow God's way, promises us all sorts of graces and joys along the way and total fulfillment in the end. But it brings its own special challenges in addition to those of every human being.

There will be internal tussles with temptations, confusion and desire. Sometimes we can feel like there is a tug-o-war going on inside us! Then there are all the contradictory pressures and influences from outside us. Sometimes there are differences of opinion and even hostility from others, even at times from our friends – let alone our enemies and 'the Enemy', the Devil. As people mature and advance in the spiritual life, they often experience these internal and external stresses all the more strongly. This has sometimes been called 'the spiritual combat'.

The principal effect of 'the Fall', of that hereditary brokenness which we see all around us and within us despite our essential goodness, is this internal and external tension and breakdown. We fight with each other, with God, with creation, with ourselves. People and things don't work together in harmony as they should.

But we are not alone. God, his angels and saints and his Church are there at our side to protect us, heal us, give us direction and strength. Whatever our struggles, we need never be overwhelmed. As Jesus taught us, God's grace is so great he can dispel our difficulties with a flick: "by the finger of God I cast out demons" (Lk 11:20).

+Anthony Fisher OP  
Coordinator of World Youth Day 2008



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## Faith Foundations

### Spiritual struggle and the Word of God

From the first pages of the Scriptures to the last - from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation - we see unfolded, within human history and beyond it, the epic drama of the Universe.

Each one of us is very much part of this great drama too. We believe that God made the whole of our wonderful creation and gave Himself in Jesus Christ out of His overflowing love, goodness and wisdom. He also gave us the opportunity to say “yes” or “no” to him and his gifts.



Angels in 'The Sistine Madonna'  
by Raffaello (1513-1514)

God so loves his intelligent and spiritual creatures (us and the angels) that he gives them something of his own freedom. In large and small ways we can decide to follow the path of goodness or that of sin, between what is spiritual life or spiritual death.

We know from the New Testament, that Jesus Christ himself chose to experience what we face, by allowing

himself “to be tempted” by the deceptive voice of the “evil one” (see Gospel of Mark 1:12-13). At every level He too felt the emotional strain and the physical pain of the battle of good against darkness and sin. On going to the tomb of his dear friend Lazarus, Christ wept tears of sadness (Jn 11:35). As he waited and prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, the terror at his Agony was so overwhelming that Christ perspired drops of blood (Lk 22:44). Such excruciating pain felt by Christ during his torture and crucifixion was a great spiritual and physical battle. Yet in the very face of sin, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity rather than despair or order to fight back in revenge chose to fill the world with more goodness, truth and love.

As Christians we know that we are “baptised in Christ.” That means in a very real way we not only try to be like him, but we enter into and share his life. The closer we are to following him, the more we will “take up our cross” (Mk 8:34-35). We know that being a Christian involves a great struggle against sin and lies in ourselves and in the world in order to live by the truth and to love in greater ways. That is why we are given in baptism the weapons for the fight - of **‘super’ natural faith, hope and love** - and why we need constant prayer and the **sacraments** to renew the great “newness” of Baptism (see Ephesians 6:10-20).

Our best “weapon” along with the “sword of God’s word” (see Eph 6), is the humble realisation that if we truly place our hearts in Christ’s love and hope, even our weaknesses will be turned into strengths. Like St Paul we can say “we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him” (Romans 8:28).



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## Pilgrim Prayer

### Prayer of protection to St Michael the Archangel by Pope Leo XIII

St. Michael the Archangel,  
defend us in battle.  
Be our defence against the  
wickedness and snares of the Devil.  
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,  
and do you,  
O Prince of the heavenly hosts,  
by the power of God,  
thrust into hell Satan,  
and all the evil spirits,  
who prowl about the world  
seeking the ruin of souls.  
Amen.



### Daily Prayer to St Michael

Saint Michael the Archangel,  
Powerful Spirit of Truth.  
Take my hand and lead me to  
Divine Truth.  
Protect me from all the evil of  
the world.  
Guard me and compensate for  
all my weaknesses.  
Change, bless and restore  
the consequences of all my  
mistakes.  
Carry me on the wings of your  
love and might to the Throne of  
God  
and pray to Him with me forever.  
Amen

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## Inspired Writings



“May prayer strengthen us for the spiritual battle we are told about in the Letter to the Ephesians: “Draw strength from the Lord and from His mighty power” (Ephesians 6:10). The Book of Revelation refers to this same battle, recalling before our eyes the image of St. Michael the Archangel (Revelation 12:7). Pope Leo XIII certainly had a very vivid recollection of this scene when, at the end of the last century, he introduced a special prayer to St Michael throughout the Church. Although this prayer is no longer recited at the end of Mass, I ask everyone not to forget it and to recite it to obtain help in the battle against forces of darkness and against the spirit of this world.”

Pope John Paul II  
(Rome, 24 April 1994)

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## Testimony Of Faith

**Bernadette**



At the Marienfeld Vigil WYD 2005

I recall in June 2000 experiencing doubt about whether or not to take off on this World Youth Day pilgrimage to the Holy Land and then onto the Eternal City of Rome to meet Pope John Paul II. Friends from the Confraternity of St Michael the Archangel in Melbourne, where I'd experienced my faith conversion some five years earlier, were so filled with enthusiasm and excitement and yet I was so full of apprehension. I asked myself why, especially since I knew deep in my heart that I loved God and was totally committed to Him. I began praying more earnestly, asking for guidance from priests and increasing my visits to Mass but somehow the closer I seemed to get to God, the more distant and detached I felt.

It was an isolating and lonely experience which accompanied me on part of my WYD journey but one I understood afterwards as necessary to enrich my relationship with and dependence solely on God. I remember vividly in the Holy Land, an occasion where God removed this period of dryness in my experience of faith and allowed me to feel totally consumed by His love and more closely united to Him. He sent a priest to minister to me through confession in a moment that could only have been divine because I just happened to be alone in the chamber beneath the place where Jesus hung on the Cross. Our spiritual journeys are never transient – more often than not, they're arduous and fraught with struggle and conflict, although we can be blessed with moments of real passion and enthusiasm.

God only asks that we surrender to Him and believe that we are never abandoned.

From this time of Pilgrimage of WYD 2000 in Rome, following Christ in his footsteps has been a real challenge. So much has happened in the last few years in my journey in faith – including another WYD experience in Cologne in 2005 as a leader for the Archdiocese of Melbourne's pilgrimage. For these steps closer towards the true path of holiness, I thank Him.

Bernadette is from Melbourne and is now living in London.





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## Saints and Witnesses

### St Michael the Archangel

St Michael is an unusual saint since he has no birth or death dates, nor a native land. In fact he is not a human person at all but an **angelic one**.

Angels in our faith are purely spiritual beings who have powerful intellects and wills but are like us in that they are given the freedom to serve God or to disobey Him. The angels who have chosen to serve God work as go-betweens, protectors and announcers in human history.



St Michael the Archangel by Guido Reni, Church of the Immaculate Conception, Rome

St Michael is also associated with a range of “healing appearances” and with other stories in various places throughout the world. There are churches and mountain summits throughout Europe, Egypt and Asia Minor dedicated to him after his apparent intervention as a mighty protector in battle and healer of those suffering from plague and disease.

**Feast Day:** September 29th (Ancient name **Michaelmas**)

**The name ‘Michael’ means** “Who is like God”

**Patron Saint** of soldiers, the Jewish People, police officers, physicians & healers, emergency workers.

**Represented in art** as a winged warrior with sword and armour, often seen crushing Satan or evil represented as a serpent or dragon.



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## Place of Pilgrimage

### Mont St Michel, France



Emblem of Pilgrims: the cockle shell and the fleur-de-lis.

Despite our world of special effects and skyscrapers, the amazing monastery and church of St Michael the Archangel built on the coast off Normandy in France over a thousand years ago, remains one of the most spectacular sights in the world.



The Monastery was begun in 708 AD after St Aubert, the Bishop of Avranches, had three dreams in which the **Archangel Michael** appeared to him requesting that he build a shrine to the Archangel. The first monastery was then constructed.

In 966 the monks of St Benedict (the Benedictines) arrived to revive the life of the monastery in dark times. In 1017, Abbot Hildebert II decided to extend the earlier vision of Bishop Aubert by beginning the construction of a massive platform 84 metres above sea level on which he planned to build a new monastery and church to St Michael.

When it was completed, the cluster of massive granite rooms, constructed in the soaring Gothic style, appeared to be so miraculously and organically grown out of the wild rock and suspended over the cliff faces of the island, that people called it “**la merveille**” – the marvel. It was as if the Archangel himself had built it.

For most hours of the day, the monastery was cut off from the outside world by quicksand and the tide. Its fame and mystery spread around the world and drew many pilgrims.

Through its thousand years, “la merveille” has survived wars, fires and revolutions. Today it is counted among the “wonders of the world” and still attracts thousands of pilgrims each year. A small monastic community has returned to Mont-St-Michel to dedicate their lives to prayer and contemplation, while scientists and engineers work together with organisations such as UNESCO to preserve the buildings and island.



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## **Towards WYD 2008**

### **Visit by the PCL, WYD08 Song Contest Launched and more!**

G'day! October!!! By now we hope that your spiritual preparation and planning is well underway. Check the website [www.wyd2008.org](http://www.wyd2008.org) for some ideas and great opportunities for WYD08 products you can sell for fundraising. In other preparation news:

#### **The WYD08 Song**

The WYD08 Song Contest was launched on 1 October by Archbishop Rylko, President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, and Bishop Anthony Fisher OP, Auxillary Bishop of Sydney. The World Youth Day song is a defining element each and every WYD. Entries close November 30. Interested? Full details are on the website at [www.wyd2008.org](http://www.wyd2008.org).

#### **Days in the Dioceses**

We have been receiving a lot of hits on the website for information about Days in the Dioceses. Reports from around Australia indicate a large number of groups are already making commitments to join with dioceses for this wonderful outcome in the early part of their pilgrimage. Contact details are on the website at [www.wyd2008.org](http://www.wyd2008.org).

#### **Visit of the Pontifical Council of the Laity**

Senior members of the Pontifical Council for the Laity are in the final stages of their inspection of Sydney. During their time with the Local Organising Committee and the Management Team, the members - led by the President Archbishop Rylko - inspected the sites for the major events, met with senior members of government, including the Premier and Deputy Premier of New South Wales, and discussed many of the spiritual and logistical plans for WYD08.

#### **Registration System – Introducing Egeria**

It's time to start thinking about registering for WYD08. Egeria can help. 'Who?' You may ask.

Egeria was a nun who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land around 381–384 AD. She documented her travels for her beloved community of nuns at home, near the Rhone River in modern France. Her letters are some of the first writings of a pilgrim. The core reservation and operation system for WYD08 has been named after her.

Many details of the registration process will be announced next month. We are looking forward to your feedback.

#### **See you in Sydney in 21 months!!**

