

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

Message Of Hope



Time is short and eternity is, well, eternal.

We can't actually say that eternity is long because it can't be measured by time. Still, we can say it won't end. And if you can call to mind all the best and happiest experiences of your life and purify and distil them down to all that is best about them, and then multiply that by one zillion you are only beginning to appreciate what life in heaven will be like. There will be no loneliness and no sadness.

St Paul said it will be “infinitely more than we can ask or imagine” (Eph 3:20)!

This month Heaven is our focus and it is closer today than it was yesterday. Let us choose it today.

+Anthony Fisher OP
Coordinator of World Youth Day 2008



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Faith Foundations

On a Pilgrimage to Heaven

Pope John Paul II in his writings about the Jubilee Year of 2000 likened the life of a Christian to a pilgrimage not to some remote or exotic place on this earth, but to God the Father and to “His House” which we call Heaven.

Christians believe that not only does God live in Heaven, but that out of his love he calls every single human being to make his or her home in God’s Home. We are called to an intimate and loving **communion**, caught up in God – who is an unimaginably wonderful communion of loving Persons - we call the **Blessed Trinity** - God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



Saint Augustine says that all human beings are “restless” for this homeland with God and that all our deepest desires, our freedom and our hopes are directed to this destination.

Just as a pilgrim freely chooses to take on the hardships and adventure to travel out of his or her comfort zone on the road to a holy shrine, so too God allows us to choose either to come to Him or to choose against the life and love that He offers. God calls us but never forces us to become pilgrims.

This call or **vocation** is heard within each human heart. However we all know that we are affected by selfishness, ignorance, stubbornness and self-pity. Like the prodigal son in the Gospel parable, we throw away our inheritance of God’s love. There is something broken in our hearts and this leads us to sin, to stray from the path to Heaven.

For that reason God not only calls us to our Home, He actually wants to repair our shattered hearts - and he does this by becoming the man - Jesus Christ. By His life, death and Resurrection, Jesus not only shows us how to travel on the road back to God the Father; He, as God and Man, takes the human heart into the infinite love of God.



“The whole of the Christian life is like a great pilgrimage to the house of the Father, whose unconditional love for every human creature and in particular for the prodigal son we discover anew each day”

**Pope John Paul II
Apostolic Letter –
Tertio Millennio
Adveniente, 1994**

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Pilgrim Prayer

Deliver us



Deliver me, O Jesus,
From the desire of being loved,
From the desire of being extolled,
From the desire to being honored,
From the desire of being praised,
From the desire of being preferred,
From the desire of being consulted,
From the desire of being approved,
From the desire of being popular,
From the fear of being humiliated,
From the fear of being despised,
From the fear of suffering rebukes,
From the fear of being calumniated,
From the fear of being forgotten,
From the fear of being wronged,
From the fear of being ridiculed,
From the fear of being suspected.
Amen.

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

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Inspired Writings

Heaven!

by Peter Kreeft, 'Fundamentals of Faith',
Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1988.

The big, blazing, terrible truth about man is that he has a heaven-sized hole in his heart, and nothing else can fill it. We pass our lives trying to fill the Grand Canyon with marbles. As Augustine said: “Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in thee.” That’s the greatest sentence ever written outside Scripture because it tells us the secret of our destiny, our happiness—and our unhappiness. It is, however, not only unfashionable but terribly threatening. It tears the band-aid off our wound. It shows up our false gods for the tiny things they are compared with our own hearts. People do not take kindly to idol smashing. Look what they did to the prophets.

But we should be encouraged. Even the sceptic who does not believe in heaven has a heaven-shaped heart. The deck is stacked and the dice are loaded, loaded with the love of heaven. Amor meus, pondus meum, said Augustine: “My love is my weight.” The gravity of his own heart pulls the skeptic in heaven’s direction, even while the antigravity of sin pulls him away.

But the head must often be outwitted, for it is entangled in verbal prejudices. Talk about heaven and you’ll get sneers. But talk about a mysterious dissatisfaction with life even when things go well—especially when things go well—and you’ll get a hearing from man’s heart, even if his lips will not agree.

No one longs for fluffy clouds and sexless cherubs, but **everyone** longs for heaven. No one longs for any of the heavens that we have ever imagined, but everyone longs for “something no eye has seen, no ear has heard, something that has not entered into the imagination of man, something God has prepared for those who love him.”

We are still children, however hard we try to cover that up. There are no “grown-ups”. When we get old, we only exchange our toys: business for bats, sex for sleds, power for popguns. At death our Father calls: “Come, little one. Time to put away your toys and come home.”

Home—that’s what heaven is. It won’t appear strange and faraway and “supernatural”, but utterly natural. Heaven is what we were designed for. All our epics seek it: It is the “home” of Odysseus, of Aeneas, of Frodo, of E.T. Heaven is not escapist. Worldliness is escapist. Heaven is home.



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Testimony Of Faith

Michael, 22, Archdiocese of Adelaide



Palm Sunday this year was an important milestone in the life of the Catholic Church in Australia and in particular, the exciting journey towards World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. It was on this day that the symbols of the World Youth Day Pilgrim Cross and Marian Icon were entrusted to the young people of Australia by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI.

Michael with other South Australian delegates in Rome for WYD 2006

During the 'handing over' of the Cross to the Australian youth, it struck me that we were receiving something more than just a token religious symbol. This was a symbol which carried a name and a life-changing message which we were being called upon to proclaim to the young people of Australia. Pope Benedict XVI in his Inaugural Homily reminded the young people of the world that, "If we let Christ into our lives, we lose nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of what makes life free, beautiful and great. Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything." It is true to say that very often we are afraid to engage with the message that is captured in the symbol of the Cross in fear that once we realise what we have discovered, that our lives are never the same.

The Cross is an integral symbol of Christ's conquering of death in which our lives are made "free, beautiful and great!" The pilgrimage of the World Youth Day Cross will be an opportunity for all Australians to confront what the Cross represents and to be empowered by its message. When we welcome the tangible symbol of the Pilgrim Cross in our communities, we are proclaiming Christ in our lives. This is the challenge which has been given to the young Catholics of Australia and to all Christians; that this encounter with the Cross calls us to be the living witnesses of Jesus Christ. We are to show the people of Australia the joy of being Christian through how we live our lives in order that others will come to know, to love and to worship the One who "came that we may have life and have it in all abundance."



The World Youth Day Cross and Icon are presently being carried through Africa. In February 2007 they will arrive in Oceania and travel throughout the Pacific and some of South East Asia. From July 2007 they will journey throughout Australia!

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Saints And Witnesses

St Perpetua (Vibia Perpetua), Young Woman, Saint and Martyr

Born: probably in North Africa, 180 A.D.

Died: Carthage, North Africa, 203 A.D.

Patron Saint: of cattle

Feast Day: March 6th

Represented in Icons and Religious Art as a veiled young woman with either a sword or a cow. Sometimes portrayed with a scroll of her writing or with her companion in death, the servant girl **St Felicity**.



St Perpetua is one of the most popular saints of the early Church. Her name is found in the **1st Eucharistic Prayer**. We have a vivid picture of Perpetua's strong faith and personality because her last days are described in her own words in an ancient text called **The Acts (or Passion) of Ss Felicity and Perpetua**. It is believed to be the earliest surviving first hand account by a Christian woman. Perpetua was only twenty-two when she was martyred for her faith during a campaign of violent persecution initiated by Severus the Roman Emperor.

She was a well-educated young mother who was preparing for baptism (a **catechumen**) when she was arrested by the Roman guards and thrown with her fellow catechumens into a hot, dark and crowded prison. She describes very movingly how terrified she felt and how anxious she was separated from her little child.

Her father, a successful society pagan, pleaded with her repeatedly to save her



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Saints And Witnesses [cont]



life by renouncing her faith in Jesus Christ. She refused but writes: “I confess, I was pierced with sharp sorrow for my father”. She begs him to have faith in God’s goodness.

Perpetua was baptized in prison and experienced a number of mystical dreams which gave her courage to face her death and in which she sees other martyrs who have died rejoicing in a garden with the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

From her account, we sense how the Christians cared and hoped for each other. The deacons bring Perpetua her baby for breastfeeding and then organize his adoption, others come to bring comfort, and others invite pagans to witness to their prayers and preaching. By their example even the prison guard is converted to Christ.

The five newly baptized are condemned by the Roman courts to be thrown to wild beasts for the amusement of bloodthirsty crowds in the amphitheatre at Carthage.

An eyewitness writes that Perpetua arrived at the site of the brutality with her eyes “sparkling” with peace and joy. She and Felicity are strong and dignified while being whipped and beaten in the face in front of the wild crowds. In the arena a wild bull charges the two young women and tosses them over its horns. Frightened soldiers are then ordered to hack off their heads. Both died exchanging a kiss of peace and holding hands in the centre of arena- the noble lady and the slave girl united in their faith.

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Place of Pilgrimage

Jerusalem



Jerusalem is the capital city of modern Israel and is, in many senses, the birthplace of the faith in the One God revealed in the Bible.

To Jews, Muslims and Christians it is one of the most venerated and ancient of pilgrimage destinations and it remains a living museum of cultural treasures.

Jeru-salem means the city of peace. There is a terrible irony in this since in human terms the city has a history of endless strife, destruction and dispute, particularly and tragically between the very people that hold the city sacred. “City of peace” is an aspiration, a hope, a prayer rather than a description.

It was on Temple Mountain in Jerusalem that Jews believe **Abraham** offered sacrifice to the Lord God.

Later in this same place King David established the united Kingdom of Israel and here King Solomon built the

first glorious Temple of the Chosen People. For Jews, Jerusalem is the holy capital of their faith. The great Jewish prophets associated the city with the Lord God’s **covenant** and they envisaged the promised Messiah returning to establish God’s justice and mercy in the **new Jerusalem**.

Moslems hold the city to be second only to Mecca in importance. There are important mosques built around the great mosque of the **Dome of the Rock**, on Temple Mountain.

For Christians, Jerusalem is the Holy City not only because of these associations but especially because Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God came to fulfil the promise of the world’s salvation and the words of the Hebrew scriptures and prophecies. The gospels of the New Testament reveal that Jesus describes his mission as a travelling to the heart of Jewish faith in Jerusalem. Jesus himself was brought to the temple as a baby and returned there as a young pilgrim when he was 12. He announces that he will replace the Old Temple with the offering up of his own Body on the Cross at **Golgotha (Calvary)** (eg Mark 15:25). Jerusalem houses the very sacred locations in which Christians down through ages could themselves retrace and relive the final hours of Jesus Christ during his arrest, his trial, his suffering and torture by the Roman officials (**His Passion**) and Death on the Cross.



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Place of Pilgrimage

Christians still visit the site of Jesus’ crucifixion and tomb, The **Church of the Holy Sepulchre** and his Resurrection. Christians also believe that it was in an upper room (**The Cenacle**) in Jerusalem that the Holy Spirit descended upon those professing Jesus, uniting them and inspiring them to take the Gospel go out “to all nations”- the event of **Pentecost**.



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Towards WYD 2008

Presentations, Speaking Tours, the WYD08 Song Contest and the Shop is Open!

G'day! As predicted last month, the time is flying by and to all our international ePILGRIMS, spring has arrived in Australia. It's the season of rebirth, new life and regeneration – exactly what we hope World Youth Day will do for the Church in Australia and all over the world.

During August, members of the WYD08 team were privileged to meet with youth and Church groups in many parts of Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Hong Kong, the Pacific and the United States. In every location, the team members were inspired and humbled by the enthusiasm, support and prayer that was evident. Team members all reported how excited people were about the impact that the planning for WYD08 was having on their local parishes, communities and movements and galvanising people to plan for involvement and attendance at WYD08. In the next few months, some of the WYD08 team will be in the US, Canada and Europe continuing the communication to groups large and small, about the details of WYD08.

As expected, many detailed questions are now emerging – when can I register? What type of accommodation can I book? Who should I speak to about Days in the Diocese... and many more. A lot of this information is on the website www.wyd2008.org but if not please contact us through the feedback link.

We are also aware that many groups are already well underway with their fundraising and, over the next few weeks, we will be adding ideas on traditional and some more interesting ways to raise the money necessary to come to Sydney. If you would like to share your ideas, please let us know through the feedback link on the website.

So – what else is happening??

First, it's time to warm up the tonsils. One of the great legacies from World Youth Days is the WYD song. Sydney will be no different and we will be releasing details of the song contest next month. While there will be prizes for the winners, the real reward will be in the contribution you can make to the atmosphere and legacy of WYD08. Some of the songs from past World Youth Days still bring a great deal of meaning to many people and trigger a flood of great memories about the experience of attending WYD as well as the commitment made by people to each other and the Church. The official launch of the contest will be next month, so – it's time to start thinking.

And lastly for this eDITION of the ePILGRIMAGE is the invitation to look at the WYD08 Shop which has opened through the website www.wyd2008.org. There is a wide and growing number of items that you can purchase now with the proceeds helping to support WYD08. There is also a special section for parishes, Dioceses, Communities and Movements to help with fund raising. Take a couple of minutes to browse. Again, your suggestions for additional items are welcome through the website.

