

Message Of Hope



My dear young friends,

I have been recently reflecting upon just how beautiful our Catholic faith is - the inspired prayers of the saints, the music and hymns over the ages that have accompanied liturgies and the hundreds of faith filled Christian artists that have placed masterpieces onto canvas, as into sculpture buildings. Through imagination, aesthetics, sensitivity, reflection and judgment, beauty allows us to come to a deeper appreciation of our faith and the knowledge that God's love for us is infinite. This can be tested and confirmed by the Truth found in the Scriptures and the living Tradition of the Church – the way that God communicates to us, the **'living Word.'**

This ePILGRIMAGE allows you to reflect upon this understanding of faith and reason through the **writings of Pope John Paul II** in his encyclical letter Fides et Ratio, as well as through the inspired life and writings of scholar-saints such as the patroness of WYD Cologne, Benedicta of the Cross (**Edith Stein**). The experience of WYD 2005 can be relived through the **Testimony of faith** as well as the excerpt on the **Place of Pilgrimage**. In this edition the **Towards WYD08** section will focus on some local diocesan WYD08 preparations of which you may be interested in becoming a part.

As you read, reflect and pray about the many elements that are presented in this June 2006 eDITION and ask yourself how the Lord is deepening your faith as you make your personal pilgrimage towards WYD08.

Our beloved Pope John Paul II wrote the first letter ever by a Pope to youth in 1984 titled Dilecti Amici. In this letter, he quoted the verse from St Peter's first letter **'Always be prepared to make a defence to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you'** (**1 Peter 3:15**). Having faith and being able to express to others why you have faith must go hand in hand. Only when faith and reason are together can you undertake the special mission that the first Pope, Peter, and the popes ever since have given you – to be witnesses of hope to the world.

+Anthony Fisher OP
Coordinator of World Youth Day 2008



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“I am the light of the world.”

[Jn 8:12]

Faith Foundations

Finding truth and understanding through faith and reason

Always be prepared to make a defence to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you. (1 Peter 3:15)

Catholics believe not only that God created the whole universe and continues to hold it in being, but that it is possible to discover many things about this God by carefully studying and contemplating the wonders of the created universe.

For Catholics one of the most precious realities in this great cosmos is the way that all men and women can come to understand the world around them by using their minds and imaginations. We believe that what we call “**human reason**” has the capacity to know the truth and to come to real understanding. In fact we believe we have been made by God to find the truth, and will not be happy until we find it.

Over its two thousand years the Catholic Church has nurtured and encouraged many great **philosophers**, men and women who have grounded their great intelligence and wisdom in their faith in God, and who have combined powerful reason with holiness: figures such as St Augustine, St Anselm, St Thomas Aquinas, **St Edith Stein** and Pope John Paul II.

Philosophy is the systematic and focused attempt, using our intelligence, understanding, judgment and reflection, to find out at the deepest and most fundamental level, what it means to be a human and what the world around is all about.

Catholics also believe that we need more than powerful intellects to appreciate the truth and to know God personally. Our weaknesses and the social influences around us can “darken our reason” and keep us ignorant of the really great truths in life. We need another form of enlightenment as well.

The second way of knowing about God is through God’s own communication – his “living” Word. This is called “**Revelation**”.

Over hundreds of years this communication of God was revealed through the lives and imaginations of certain chosen people – firstly through the patriarchs, prophets and holy men and women of Israel. This is recorded in the Old Testament books.

Out of love for humanity, God finally spoke in a total and complete true way by becoming man as Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 1:1-2). The evangelists, the Apostle Paul and others record and reflect upon what is revealed to us through the words, actions, signs and person of Jesus Christ in the books of the New Testament, especially the four Gospels.



“I am the light of the world.”

[Jn 8:12]

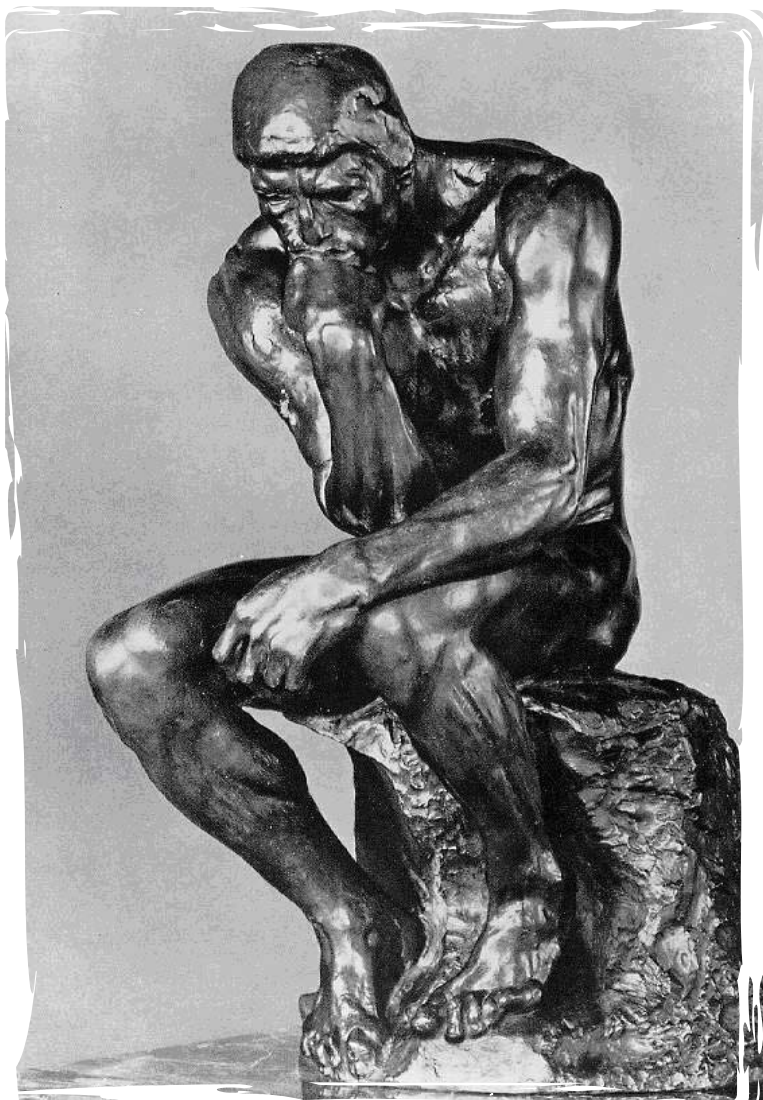
Faith Foundations

Finding truth and understanding through faith and reason

The Church continues to meditate on this fullness of Revelation in Christ, and to pass on to every age God’s revelation through her sacraments, prayers, liturgy and theology and through the lives of her saints and faithful people.

We can grasp God’s Revelation in the person of Jesus through belief and faith in Him. However faith in Jesus does not mean that our knowledge and reason are to be abandoned. Our faith seeks understanding and to work with our power to grasp the truth. What we believe needs to be exported for our own enrichment and presented reasonably to those around us.

Pope John Paul II wrote in his teaching Letter called Faith and Reason that **“faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth”**. This beautiful image captures the vital partnership that should exist between the power of reason and the gift of faith.



August Rodin
The Thinker
Web Gallery of Art

Pilgrim Prayer

**Prayer from the Roman Missal
The Common of Virgins or Martyrs - 9 August
Feast day St Benedicta of the Cross
(Edith Stein) Co-Patroness of Europe**

Lord, God of our fathers,
you brought Saint Teresa Benedicta
to the fullness of the science of the cross
at the hour of her martyrdom.
Fill us with that same knowledge;
and, through her intercession,
allow us always to seek after you, the supreme truth,
and to remain faithful until death to the covenant of
love
ratified in the blood of your Son
for the salvation of all men and women.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.



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Inspired Writings

Encyclical Letter - Faith and Reason - Fides et Ratio

Pope John Paul II wrote this Encyclical Letter "**Fides et Ratio**" to the Church and world on September 14th, 1998.

This important teaching document is considered to be one of the finest of this great philoso-popes's works. In the Letter, Pope John Paul II aims to remind the Church and the world that the drive of the human mind to grasp truth and meaning is a noble, God-given gift which works **with** and not against faith. In the Letter, the Pope highlights the importance of the study of philosophy for culture, human development and society and a vital partner to Catholic theology.

Excerpts from Fides et Ratio

Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth- in a word, to know himself- so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.

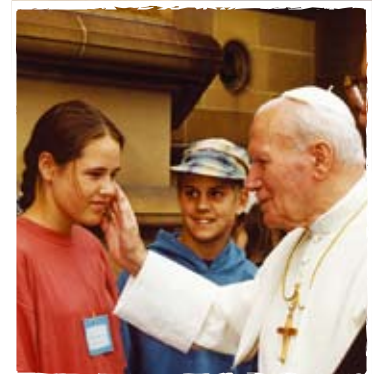
"All human beings desire to know", and truth is the proper object of desire. Everyday life shows how concerned each of us is to discover for ourselves, beyond mere opinions, how things really are.

Within visible creation, man is the only creature who not only is capable of knowing but who knows that he knows, and is therefore interested in the real truth of what he perceives. People cannot be genuinely indifferent to the question of whether what they know is true or not.

For all that I have said to this point it emerges that men and women are on a journey of discovery which is humanly unstoppable- a search for the truth and a search for a person to whom they can entrust themselves.

Christian faith comes to meet them, offering the concrete possibility of reaching the goal which they seek. Moving beyond the stage of simple believing, Christian faith immerses human beings in the order of grace, which enables them to share in the mystery of Christ, which in turn offers them a true and coherent knowledge of the Triune God.

In Jesus Christ, who is the Truth, faith recognizes the ultimate appeal to humanity, an appeal made in order that what we experience as desire and nostalgia may come to its fulfillment.



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Testimony Of Faith

Rian, aged 23, artist.

I have been fortunate enough to have attended two World Youth days. I didn't always love my faith, but here's where I started.

I was a typical teen; I wasn't too interested in the Mass. I really don't know why I was going to Mass and I felt that everyone was just going through the motions. I knew there was something more there, something deeper, but I didn't know what it was.

I finally asked myself "Why do I go to Mass? Why is it that every Sunday I bring myself there? I should do things because I believe in them, not for the sake of it".

So I turned to God and said "Alright, if you'll have me, lead me... teach me." At that moment, my mum knocked on my door and asked me if I still wanted to go to WYD. God sure has a sense of humour.

I said "Yes" to my mum and somehow we managed to raise enough money to send me over to Rome in 2000.

When I finally arrived in Rome I was wowed by the universality of the Church. It was bigger that I realised. I was inspired by the number of youth in love with God and also by the depth of their faith. Above all I was awakened from my sleepy awareness by Pope John Paul's WYD 2000 message; "**Do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium.**" Coming back from WYD I wanted to share my awareness with others. I wanted to feed my new found thirst for Christ's living water. I started attending youth groups and getting involved with running them.

At WYD 2005 in Cologne I was once again humbled by the size of the Church. I realised that it is a Church based on humility and service. Of all the places that God has taken me through WYD (Rome, Greece, Turkey, Poland, Prague, Cologne and Frankfurt), they do not compare to how far I have traveled in my heart, and more importantly, in my faith.

My World Youth Day experiences not only awakened me but also taught me to love the faith. I've never forgotten the personal challenge that John Paul II issued in 2000: "Do not be afraid to be the saints of the new millennium."



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Saints And Witnesses

Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Edith was born on October 12th 1891, on the great Jewish feast day of the Atonement. She was the youngest child of a large, successful and devout Jewish family who ran a timber business in the German town of Breslau (modern Poland).

Edith's mother, Auguste, was a major influence in shaping her life. She was widowed when Edith was three and she managed to run the timber business, to study, to care for her family of seven and to actively live her Jewish faith.

Edith grew into a very intellectually gifted, sensitive, strong spirited young woman with an intense interest in studying and reflecting upon life and truth. To her mother's dismay however, Edith did not believe that there was a God.

At university, Edith was a star student and became the close confidante and assistant to the leading German philosopher, Edmund Husserl. She suspended her studies for two years to work with the Red Cross with the injured and dying soldiers returning from the horrific carnage of World War One.

After the war, Edith was impressed by the courage and joy of her friends who were Christian students and professors. A huge turning point came for her when one night she picked up a friend's copy of **St Teresa of Avila's** autobiography. She found herself amazed and read through the mystical insights of the great Carmelite saint all night. She says, "As I closed the book I said: **That is the Truth**".

From this moment of conversion, Edith realised she wanted to be baptised, and even more that she wanted to become a contemplative nun like St Teresa in complete contemplation and prayer.

By the 1920s Edith passionately learned everything she could about the Catholic faith, to pray, attend Mass and to prepare to receive Baptism and Confirmation. Her conversion caused much pain to her faithful Jewish mother.

However Edith always identified herself with her Jewish "people" even while she was burning to enter a Carmelite monastery. She spent years preparing herself spiritually to become a nun. During this time, she became famous for her teaching about the "dignity of woman" and her brilliant lectures throughout Germany and Switzerland.

When Edith finally entered the Carmelite monastery in Cologne in 1934, Hitler and his Nazi forces were taking



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Saints And Witnesses (cont)

Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

control of Germany and beginning their vicious and paranoid campaign against the Jewish people. She became Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross - because she sensed she would suffer the Cross with Jesus for her people.

By 1939, as the Nazis intensified their atrocities against Jews and other minority groups, Edith noted that she felt called to enter the Heart of Jesus and offer her life as a “sacrifice for (world) peace”. The nuns moved Edith and Rosa, her sister who also became a Catholic and a Carmelite, to Holland in an attempt to protect them from the Nazi secret police.

In 1942, in a raid to punish the Dutch Catholic bishops for speaking out against Hitler, Nazi soldiers invaded every religious house in Holland, taking away every ‘non-pure-blood’ priest, brother and nun.

Sister Teresa Benedicta and her sister Rosa were captured and sent to the gas chambers of Auschwitz concentration camp, where they with millions of other people were gassed to death and their bodies burned in mass trenches. The sisters died on 9th August, 1942.

On October 11, 1998 Pope John Paul II canonised St Benedicta of the Cross in the Cologne Cathedral. In this same city in 2005, this remarkable woman became a patron of the Cologne WYD celebrations.



Place Of Pilgrimage

Cologne

"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him'." (Matthew 2: 1-2)

In August 2005 the German city of Cologne played host to the 20th World Youth Day and became a pilgrimage destination for a million young people from around the world. For many centuries before this, Cologne had been a significant pilgrimage destination for a steady flow of pilgrims all year round who come to see its magnificent Cathedral and what it contains.

Wherever you look in Cologne city, the splendid Cathedral dominates the skyline. Of all the cathedrals of the world, the shrine in Cologne is one of the purest and most perfect examples of the High Gothic style of architecture. Medieval master builders toiled away at the enormous structure from 1248 until 1560 completing only half the building. It was not until the late 19th century that the construction was finally finished. In total, the Cathedral took 632 years to complete, all the while dominating the townscape with its distinctive silhouette. In 1880 when the finishing touches were put on the façade and the towers set in place, Cologne Cathedral was the tallest structure in the world.

Cologne Cathedral has become known for its brilliant architecture, but also because it holds the relics of the Magi (Three Kings) who came bearing gifts for the Christ Child. The relics were brought to Cologne in 1164 for Emperor Friedrich I Barbarossa and kept in the original cathedral that stood on the site since 870. The presence of the relics inspired plans for a larger and more magnificent building to welcome the pilgrims who were coming to visit the shrine. The relics are now kept behind the High Altar of the present Cathedral in an impressive Romanesque reliquary and the Magi have become the patron saints of the city.

The Second World War, which destroyed most of the city of Cologne, left the Cathedral with only minor damage. The new dangers that threaten the Cathedral in our present day are caused by the corrosive effect of modern air pollution and weather.

Young pilgrims came to visit Cologne Cathedral for the 2005 World Youth Day inspired by the theme **"We Have Come to Worship Him"** (Mt 2:2) and remembered the mission of the Magi to follow the signs that lead to Jesus, to find Him and to worship Him there.



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Towards WYD 2008

We're getting ready!

An important part of the planning for WYD08 is ensuring effective communication of pastoral and logistical preparations for the hosting of the biggest Catholic gathering in Australian history. The planning is going well. The links to Federal and State Government are proving to be of great assistance to it. We have started auditing accommodation throughout Sydney as well as other practical elements for hosting you, to maximize our ability to be hospitable.



In May 2006, a major step in this planning commenced with the convening of the first WYD08 Diocesan and Youth Ministry Committee meeting in Sydney.

At this meeting, representatives from Dioceses and Youth Ministry groups from around Australia gathered to find out what the latest news from the WYD08 Team. Areas such as the Days in the Dioceses preparations, the national journey of the **WYD Cross and Icon of Our Lady** were outlined and finally, the short and long term pastoral goals of hosting WYD08 were discussed.

At this meeting, Bishop Anthony Fisher OP, Coordinator of WYD08, presented to the 40 member Committee the vision of a new evangelisation for Australia as one of the highly anticipated outcomes of being the host nation for the youth of the world to celebrate faith in 2008. What was evident among the group was a great sense of excitement and hope for the future of youth ministry in the lead up to and beyond WYD08.

So what does this mean for you as you plan your pilgrim journey towards WYD08? Well, first of all if you are an Aussie, you now have a contact person in your Diocese that has been appointed by your Bishop to be the local liaison for the diocesan WYD08 planning and preparations. This person will receive from the WYD08 office update about what's new 'hot off the press!' They will also receive promotional materials such as prayer cards and posters from WYD08 aimed at getting the message out in your local community about the amazing celebration of faith in July 2008.

It would be great if you could contact your local diocesan coordinator and offer to volunteer to help with the promotion of WYD08. Consider being the contact person in your local Parish, faith community or school. Why not plan for a weekly prayer session in your parish or school for the intentions of the WYD08 team and the youth of the world making their plans to come to Sydney in July 2008, as well as for the future of our Church, our country and your generation?

The Holy Father chose the theme for WYD08 “**You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses**” (Acts 1:8). From this moment, you can be witnesses by supporting your local diocesan and youth ministry plans and preparations for WYD08.



The Diocesan and Youth Ministry Committee