



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO THE BELOVED PEOPLE OF AUSTRALIA
AND TO THE YOUNG PILGRIMS TAKING PART
IN WORLD YOUTH DAY 2008**

*“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you:
and you will be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8)*

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you! In a few days from now, I shall begin my [Apostolic Visit to your country](#), in order to celebrate the [Twenty-Third World Youth Day in Sydney](#). I very much look forward to the days that I shall spend with you, and especially to the opportunities for prayer and reflection with young people from all over the world.

First of all, I want to express my appreciation to all those who have offered so much of their time, their resources and their prayers in support of this celebration. The Australian Government and the State Government of New South Wales, the organizers of all the events, and members of the business community who have provided sponsorship – all of you have willingly supported this event, and on behalf of the young people taking part in [World Youth Day](#), I thank you most sincerely. Many of the young people have made great sacrifices in order to undertake the [journey to Australia](#), and I pray that they will be rewarded abundantly. The parishes, schools and host families have been most generous in welcoming these young visitors, and they too deserve our thanks and our appreciation.

“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 of the [Twenty-Third World Youth Day](#). How much our world needs a renewed outpouring of the Holy Spirit! There are still many who have not heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, while many others, for whatever reason, have not recognized in this Good News the saving truth that alone can satisfy the deepest longings of their hearts. The Psalmist prays: “when you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth” (Ps 104:30). It is my firm belief that young people are called to be instruments of that renewal, communicating to

their peers the joy they have experienced through knowing and following Christ, and sharing with others the love that the Spirit pours into their hearts, so that they too will be filled with hope and with thanksgiving for all the good things they have received from God our heavenly Father.

Many young people today lack hope. They are perplexed by the questions that present themselves ever more urgently in a confusing world, and they are often uncertain which way to turn for answers. They see poverty and injustice and they long to find solutions. They are challenged by the arguments of those who deny the existence of God and they wonder how to respond. They see great damage done to the natural environment through human greed and they struggle to find ways to live in greater harmony with nature and with one another.

Where can we look for answers? The Spirit points us towards the way that leads to life, to love and to truth. The Spirit points us towards Jesus Christ. There is a saying attributed to Saint Augustine: "If you wish to remain young, seek Christ". In him we find the answers that we are seeking, we find the goals that are truly worth living for, we find the strength to pursue the path that will bring about a better world. Our hearts find no rest until they rest in the Lord, as Saint Augustine says at the beginning of the Confessions, the famous account of his own youth. My prayer is that the hearts of the young people who gather in [Sydney](#) for the celebration of [World Youth Day](#) will truly find rest in the Lord, and that they will be filled with joy and fervour for spreading the Good News among their friends, their families, and all whom they meet.

Dear Australian friends, although I will only be able to spend a few days in your country, and I will not be able to travel outside Sydney, my heart reaches out to all of you, including those who are sick or in difficulties of any kind. On behalf of all the young people, I thank you again for your support of my mission and I ask you to continue praying for them especially. It remains only for me to renew my invitation to the young people from all over the world to join me in Australia, the great "southern land of the Holy Spirit". I look forward to seeing you there! May God bless you all.

From the Vatican, 4 July 2008

BENEDICTUS PP. XVI