The past two years a fantasia spirit of cooperation between the Victorian diocese has existed on all WYD related projects. However we all ran into hitches with Tim and Transport.

Despite numerous attempts in the months leading up to WYD, our biggest problem was that the coach drivers from the transport team were rare and vague.

Over the past two weeks prior to WYD I spoke to five different people on the transport team but they all gave me the same information.

I wasn’t informed until the Tuesday before WYD that there were luggage trucks required. The trucks never eventuated because the Melbourne office couldn’t find drivers, a fact I didn’t find out about until 5.55am on Monday the July 14 - 5 minutes before buses were due to depart.

Having been told to have all our bags at a pick up point 90 minutes before buses were due to depart, I felt sickened by the fact that nothing was my responsibility.

I entered Luke O’Connor, Andrea Berryman, and Fr Peter Slater. I knew nothing of the transport system. All the pilgrims were on board and accounted for. But when faced with the reality of it all, Andrea kept calm and did their best to deal with frustrations of the parents.

I wish to thank them for their leadership and support. They kept us going and beyond and the call of duty.

With Fr Peter dealing directly with the transport D, that is the lost bus arrived at 9.30am. I sympathise with pilgrims and chaplains who waited and looked and left behind the bus to arrive.

No one was more livid than me because I could see this happening and despite my best efforts to avoid it, I couldn’t stop it. It was out of my control.

The Dioceses of Ballarat and Sandhurst experienced similar issues. What I would like to point out though, was the bonding that happened between the leaders and pilgrims because of the transport issues. We didn’t get into Olympic Park until well after midnight, but we had everyone’s luggage!

Bumps in the road
WYD08 was the biggest move-ment of people from Victoria to NSW in Australia’s history.

It was realizing this fact that the dioceses of Sandhurst, Ballarat and Sale agreed to hand over the responsibility of the coordination of pilgrims to WYD08 Sydney to the Melbourne transport coordinator as I was able to travel out of Melbourne WYD08 office.

The next bump: Accommodation
THE diocese was originally split over four sites. Then we were put together at Catholic College in Castle Hills and the surrounding area all in a day in the week before WYD. By 9am the next day we had been moved to Olympic Park. This meant better transport to and from other locations.

When our pilgrims began to arrive at Olympic Park organizers had arranged bus and car for the different areas. It was a crazy time.

Thanks to Jess Denhey and Kevin Porter, the whole group was able to stay together in a cat-tle shed named Grace.

At this point the parents picked us up during the day, as she arrived early. To add to the fire, another bus had crashed, but was far safer. By bussiness than car and therefore safest.

Peter was a key person who welcomed us all there and gave us a big smile. It still hasn’t sunk in how special that whole day was.

Harbor Bridge
ANOTHER highlight for me was the following Saturday morning. Due to a few reasons, Catholic Douglas and I were delayed from walking over the Sydney Harbor Bridge with the main group.

I was really looking forward to walking over the bridge with the Pope, but I knew it might not be meant to be. However, God had something else in-store.

Over the past few months I hadn’t been home to see my family. They live in Melbourne. I hadn’t been able to catch up with them despite my best efforts to do so. With the husband all week though I had hoped to.

Due to the work of the Holy Spirit somehow the only time I caught up with my family was right at the end of the mass. That was pretty special.

Randwick
ARRIVING at Randwick as the last pilgrim with no one lost and behind was a highlight and relief.

Randwick was an array of people, with noise and energy and the Pope.

He sat in the computer system crashing the previous Friday, most of the priests had to endure. With Pope Benedict was amazing but I had not been able to see my family. We had a huge band in front of him and lights being turned on and off, but we had everyone's luggage!

We gave him a cheer and Pope Benedict was amazing but Pope Benedict was amazing but the Pope was due to walk off the boat. I tried twice to go up to the next level but I had been turned off by papal security. But third time was a charm and a band of us made our way up to the next level and were about a metre away when he walked past.

We gave him a wave and Pope Benedict got a bit of a shock to see us all there. He turned and faced us and gave us a big smile. It still hasn’t sunk in how special that whole day was.

Papal Boat
BEING on the papal boat was an honor. Being on the boat with Pope Benedict was amazing but more so to be on the boat with the group of New Zealanders.

We all had the same expres-sion on our faces and we all felt appreciated for being invited onto the boat. I only got a glimpse of the Pope when he boarded the boat at Rose Bay. But my chance came when he was celebrated at Barangaroo on the 20th August 2008 and gathered to welcome him.

A group of us coordinators were able to be directly below where the Pope was due to walk off the boat. I tried twice to go up to the next level but I had been turned off by papal security. But third time was a charm and a band of us made our way up to the next level and were about a metre away when he walked past.

We gave him a wave and Pope Benedict got a bit of a shock to see us all there. He turned and faced us and gave us a big smile. It still hasn’t sunk in how special that whole day was.

Papal Mass
THE papal mass on Sunday morning was big, beautiful and spectacular. It was a celebration of our 2000-year-old faith and a true conclusion to WYD08 which was a huge week in Australia’s history. Pope Benedict’s visit did so much for the youth of Australia, but also for Catholics of all ages.

So much is spoken of the visit to Sydney, but this is missing the obvious fact that youth are the church of the present. We are a gift with our enthu-siasm and hope to correct injustices. In a world which is constantly bombarded with stories of human misery WYD is a story of human joy. WYD is a story of human joy, of hope fueled by willingness to be a difference not for huge gain but instead out of love.

• To follow the example of the Saints and patrons of WYD like Blessed Peter Giorgio Frassati and Blessed Theresa of Calcutta

• To come to the understanding that on our own it may seem impossible but with God all things are possible.

• That to receive power from the Pope it is necessary to be a true witness of Jesus Christ in the world.

• WYD gives me the opportunity to be able to live to the glory of God, to live for Christ, to live for the Diocese, the present.

• That youth are the church of the future but also for Catholics of all ages.

• That the Sydney Harbor Bridge was the perfect conclusion to the best week in Australia’s history.

• WYD is the perfect conclusion to the best week in Australia’s history.

• We are a gift with our enthu-siasm and hope to correct injustices. In a world which is constantly bombarded with stories of human misery WYD is a story of human joy. WYD is a story of human joy, of hope fueled by willingness to be a difference not for huge gain but instead out of love.

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