Pilgrim’s thanks for experience

By Tim Hamm, 23
St Agatha’s, Cranbourne

I WOULD like to thank the entire diocese for all your financial support and many prayers for myself and the other Sale Diocese pilgrims that attended World Youth Day in Sydney. Without this financial support many of us would not have been able to make this once in a lifetime journey.

World Youth Day for me was a sensational experience, very fast and extremely hectic but well worth the effort put in by all pilgrims and the Sale Diocese WYD organisers.

Most mornings were spent in catechism sessions near our accommodation in Sydney showgrounds and were then followed by a full day by Youth Festival scattered all over Sydney CBD and surrounding suburbs.

Some main events that the entire Sale Diocese attended as a group were the opening Mass, Pope Benedict’s arrival, a visit to Mary Mackillop’s tomb, Stations of the Cross, the overnight vigil at Randwick and the Papal Mass.

Other events that I attended in my small group included the Vocation Expo at the Sydney Convention Centre, the Vinnies Youth Concert at Barrangroo. I hope and pray that everyone who attended World Youth Day, including myself, saw the strength and excitement that the Catholic faith has to offer. I also hope that WYD08 was witness to the world of the freedom and energy that overflows when pilgrims from all over the world come together with the one purpose; to learn and grow closer to our Lord Jesus.

I would recommend anybody who witnessed the joy and faith of WYD Sydney 08 and is thinking about Spain WYD 2011 to start saving!

It was amazing and I really hope to see everybody who attended WYD08 in Spain and more. I would have to say that WYD SYD has been my best week ever.

Thank you all and God Bless.

TIM Hamm, Simon Nieuwesteeg and Daniel Nieuwesteeg claim their patch of turf at Randwick Racecourse.

Surprise theology lesson

SARAH Hughes from Iona Parish was dragged along to a talk after the Papal arrival and found it changed her perspective on herself and her relationship with God.

I went to the Christopher West talk on the Theology of the Body which really got me thinking. I’m glad a member of our group dragged us along.

The biggest surprise for me is the people here; I can’t get over how many people are here for the same event. I knew other countries had the same faith but it is great to see them and come together as one.

I hope to continue my strong faith that has grown over the week and to touch other people back home when I tell them of my journey and to stay strong when others are not.

WYD has been the best thing that has happened to me. I’m glad I’m here making friends that I hope will stay my friends after this. I’ve really enjoyed being with my group and become friends with them.

Everything was the best from start to finish.

Papal arrival impresses

AMABEL Rodda from St Patrick’s Pakenham became a big fan of the Pope Benedict XVI after seeing him for the first time.

I enjoyed the Pope coming. I was so touched to be in his presence and to see him up close. I was surprised with how I felt about the experience. I enjoyed listening to his words.

I have enjoyed being with the other Sale pilgrims and meeting some international pilgrims especially those from my Mum’s country, the Philippines.

I feel this journey is bringing the Lord Jesus closer to me.

Enjoying Mass hysteria

SARAH Hughes, Iona, and Amabel Rodda, Pakenham, examine the contents of a typical pilgrim’s lunch pack.

It’s a cultural exchange

By Ben Munro, 19
St Michael’s, Berwick

I HAVE really enjoyed the youth festivities; I have been using an Australian Flag to collect signatures from various pilgrims of different nationalities as well as exchanging merchandise.

I find people to be very friendly and many have deep spiritual experiences which shape not only their faith by the experience of those with whom they share interactions.

By exchanging merchandise I find in the chat we share representations of our faith as well as our nations. I find this to be a deeply moving and pleasurable part of my WYD08 experience.

EIGHTEEN year old Santy Bajao from St Colman’s Parish, Orbost, really enjoyed the celebration of Masses throughout the World Youth Day week.

You really feel the holiness of the masses. With great and holy people leading the masses, you feel like you’re really close to GOD. I also really enjoyed the talk by Christopher West.