

## SYDNEY part 3

DAY 21 – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2008

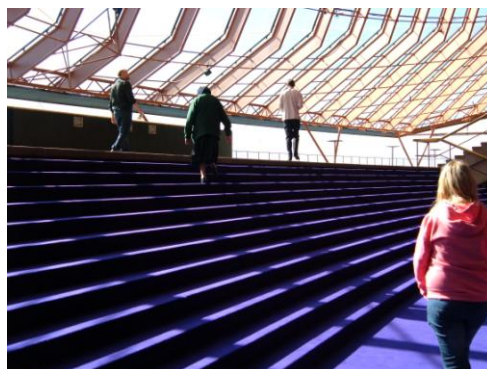
Today started reasonably early again with Mass at 7.30 am, followed by breakfast. The World Youth Day authorities had meanwhile delivered our proper tickets with meal allocations and reserved places in the various venues for the week. Previously they had delivered us the wrong tickets. However, they also delivered back-packs for each of us, even though we already had one each. So, while others drifted off into the city a few of us gathered up the new deliveries and carried them back to the distribution centre.



The first planned part of the day was to meet at 11.00 am outside the Sydney Opera House for a guided tour of the building.



The tour took us round the various concert halls in the lower part of the building before taking us into the main Concert Hall, where a rehearsal on the organ was taking place. Just to be able to listen in perfect conditions was a heaven-sent gift in such busy circumstances.



On Friday most of the group will be attending a performance of Beethoven's "Missa Solemnis" – though yours truly has been allocated a session hearing confessions at the time, and will miss the concert!

We then moved on to see the Opera Theatre – passing the bars and restaurants and various other parts of this incredible building. We were also told of the history and the trouble that the architect, Jørn Utzon had in determining how the present building should be. Indeed, back in the 1960's, he was forced to resign, and it is only in 1999 that the Australian Government made peace with him and managed to persuade him and his son to take on some renovations to upgrade the Sydney Opera House.



We then had a hearty lunch in the beautiful Australian Winter sunshine, which meant Sister Angela needed a hat over her veil to keep the sun out of her eyes (see above)!! Over lunch, however, we suddenly realised that there were several phenomena that happen here in the southern hemisphere. For example, we all agreed that the water went down the plug the "wrong way" – in other words in an anti-clockwise direction. Then there was the problem with the sun moving across the sky – it seemed to be going the opposite way to what we are used to at home. However, when we sit out at home, the sun is in the southern sky, and if we are facing south, then it passes from east to west, i.e. from right to left. But in Australia, the sun is in the northern sky, and so we would face north. That means that even though the sun passes from east to west, it seems to pass from right to left!! That leaves the problem about what happens at the equator!



In the afternoon we were booked onto a harbour cruise. This reinforced the guided tour that we had taken on our first day, but this time from the view-point of the water. The cruise lasted for two and a half hours, and we ended up sailing into the Tasman Sea for a short while. If we had continued, then we would probably have spotted some whales – the annual migration of hump-back whales from the Antarctic takes place at this time – but we saw nothing this time.

On the way back we passed Manly, a popular suburb of Sydney, and followed the line of the north part of the harbour, dipping into several of the bays that are to be found there. The views are wonderful, and it is hard to believe that just over the ridge the busy city can be found.



We arrived back just after 4.30 pm, and divided into two. Those of us who decided to walk back through the city towards our hotel went one way, the rest of the group, who were going to climb the Sydney Harbour Bridge went the other way. The climb takes about three and a half hours (which includes a safety briefing). Needless to say, yours truly decided to walk back through the city and leave the bridge climbing to his nephew and the others. No doubt we will hear all about it later!



The walk back was leisurely, and we called into the “domain” outside St Mary’s Cathedral, which proudly displayed the “1 day to go to World Youth Day” sign.



However, there is no need for that publicity now. Everywhere we went today, there were more and more pilgrims from all parts of the world gathering. Some had clearly just arrived and were very much jet-lagged, others were singing in groups, others were keen to try out the free transport passes that the city has given to all pilgrims. The locals have to continue to pay for their bus fares – we just get on, show our pilgrim badges, and pay nothing! And of course, everyone has the orange and yellow back-packs!