

## WYD08 – WORLD YOUTH DAY, part 2

DAY 24 – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2008

Today we were a little bit naughty!!

We started by having breakfast with the group, and then set off for our Catechesis session in the same parish where we were yesterday. However, Father Neil informed us that the Pope would be visiting the Prime Minister just around the corner (well almost) from the Church. So, instead of going of to Catechesis, we ended up outside Admiralty House, and waited there for just over an hour.

Some of the group positioned themselves on the other side of the road, but a few remained with me – a well accustomed Pope follower – and just after 10.00 am the Papal Cavalcade arrived, slowed down as it passed us (it had to in order to negotiate the gates of Admiralty House), the Pope waved to us as he passed – and, of course, he was seated on our side of the car! Those with me were delighted; those on the other side of the street were a little disappointed that he did not see them, but at least they could boast that they had been less than a meter from the Pope!



Those on the other side of the road then accompanied Father Neil to the parish church for Catechesis, but those with me stayed with me. If the Pope arrived, he would also have to leave!! So, we moved to the neighbouring street and took up positions there. Again, we split into two groups. This time we would not be on the Pope's side, but we positioned ourselves next to an old lady sitting in a chair!! That meant that when the Pope came out just under an hour later, he looked at the old lady, and then at us, and gave us his blessing!! Two time in one day!! Sadly the photograph I took this time just picked up the boot (trunk) of his car!!



Finally, we made it to the parish church, but by the time we arrived the morning had finished and so we were just in time for lunch!!

There was not much to do then until the middle of the afternoon when the Pope would make his formal arrival in Sydney by boat and greet the people gathered there. We were assigned the area of Barangaroo again, but instead of going there we went towards the Cathedral, had a rest in Hyde Park, and then made our way to the Sydney Opera House, where we joined the thousands of Sydneysiders who had turned out to see the Pope arrive. Although the media had tried their best to dissuade people from supporting World Youth Day and the presence of the Pope, they failed dismally! It seemed that everyone was there – and all office windows were also full of people looking out!

At about 3.00 pm he arrived on a large ferry (the one we had taken around the harbour a few days earlier), and swept quickly around Circular Quay, where we had positioned ourselves. Getting a photograph this time was more difficult, since there were many people on the boat with the Pope, but he was visible at the front, wearing his red cape!



Three times!!

We then went off for something to eat, knowing that he was meeting some of the youth (and all of the bishops) at Barangaroo! However, at 4.45 pm, he set off in the Popemobile to go through the street of Sydney. So, after we had eaten, we moved to another good vantage point and waited – not very long – until his cavalcade passed. As the Pope passed this time he looked a very lonely figure – on his own at the back of the Popemobile, and he looked as though he was hanging on for dear life, as it moved at speed around a corner!



Sadly, hands raised and other obstacles have blocked him in my photos again – but there are other better ones around! Never mind! Four times in one day!!

By now, it was getting dark and I was scheduled for confessions again. Dominic had gone off with the others, and so I took a ferry round to the Convention Centre in Darling Harbour and took my place ready to hear confessions. Imagine my delight, when Sister Angela appeared in the line for confessions – of all the times and places to choose to go to confession – but she refused to go to me!! Almost two and a half hours later I finished and walked back to the hotel.

Once again, I feel so uplifted and encouraged at hearing the confessions of the young people. Once again there was laughter (and of course tears), and everyone left smiling. I'm not sure about numbers, but there must have been about 30 confessors there, and each of them dealt with several hundred confessions. That in itself should speak volumes!! Anyway, I am now exhausted. I have left Dominic with the others on the rooftop of the hotel knocking back a few beers and bottles of wine! I only hope that they will be in a fit state to attend the last Catechesis session tomorrow!!