

Receive The Power Live

by Pat Keady

On the Friday night of WYD my wife and I found ourselves in the midst of thousands of people for 'Receive The Power Live', a huge worship and outreach event held on the banks of Sydney's harbour hosted by the Australian charismatic renewal. Headlining the night was US worship leader Matt Maher and Australia's own Hills United. I had no idea of what the night would entail, apart from some preaching, great music and an opportunity for one-on-one prayer. As we began the air blowing in from the harbour was freezing to the bone but the atmosphere of worship that followed soon helped me forget all about the temperature of the air.

A few years ago in the book Walk With You I wrote a dream I'd always had for a thing I call 'the Australian Catholic Youth Church';

"I have a dream. It is of a place, of hundreds of places, of a whole generation, a future moment in history waiting to be written, where there is contemporary worship, powerful preaching and a height of spiritual revival unseen before in the Catholic Church. Where flocks, hordes of young people gather together under one roof to worship the living God with utter abandon and without restraint. Hey, forget the roof: under the stars! because the building will be too small."

At one point Darlene Zschech from Hillsong was leading everyone in singing her world famous song 'Shout to the Lord' and I opened my eyes to turn and take a sneak peak around. What I saw was a sea of people as far as the eye could see "from every tribe, nation and tongue" with banners flying and arms raised to the heavens singing a united song of praise to Jesus Christ with all their heart and soul. It was an overwhelming sight. Right at that moment I felt the Lord lean down and whisper in my ear; "the Australian Catholic Youth Church..." Tears sprang to my eyes as I continued to watch the worship of God continue so openly and unashamedly by his faithful young people. It was true! "Forget the roof! It will be under the stars, because a building will be too small". I had no idea that WYD would be where I would see that vision fulfilled; it was years ago and I had completely forgotten about it.

The night continued as Matt Maher led the crowd into deep and powerful worship before a massive Blessed Sacrament on the stage. My wife and I prayed for individuals who came up to us to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. At one stage a bunch of teenagers from Western Australia asked us to pray with them as a group to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit together, something I will never forget. What faith! What openness! What hope and inspiration they gave to me.

God is renewing his Church. He is reaching hearts. And he using the awesome gift of worship to unlock and open up the doors of people's hearts "that the King of glory may enter in" (Psalm 24). King of Glory, I praise You for what You have done and are doing in our nation and world. All I can say is 'Enter in'!

Youth Arise

by Bec Crouch

Youth Arise is an international conference held the week prior to WYD – and this year we were blessed to have it in Brisbane. For me, the main thing I encountered at Youth Arise was a great FEAST of Worship - a feast with a LOT of variety! There were young people there from 20 different nations – all of us coming together for four days of praise, worship, fellowship, formation and prayer....the scene was set for the Holy Spirit move in a powerful way!

One thing I really loved was the opportunity to experience a wide range of different worship styles. Two in particular – Rexband from India and Matt Maher from the United States – are both so different in style from what we do in emmanuelworship; but what I saw were men and women in ministry whose hearts were the same as ours – whose mission is Christ and whose eyes are firmly fixed on Jesus – and to my surprise, I found that the differences in style and culture didn't matter at all! As part of the crowd in many of those worship times it was so exciting to see us all embracing the differences – personal preferences were put aside with wild abandon as we danced and did actions with Rexband, answered the call to be “revolutionaries” with emmanuelworship or were drawn into intimate worship with Matt Maher!

I experienced this unity most tangibly at one of the night rallies when Matt Maher was leading us in worship. He is an incredibly gifted Worship Leader and this night he humbly and gently led us into the very throne room of God. I remember standing with our Worship Team towards the front of the hall – with hundreds of young people from all around the world – all of us calling out to the Lord to send His Spirit upon us. We were, with ONE VOICE, crying out to the ONE TRUE GOD – we were CATHOLIC and UNIFIED – expressing our love and need for Jesus with passion and energy and joy! What an amazing experience – every nation and tongue – coming before the Lord with ONE HEART!

As a result of Youth Arise and World Youth Day, I have a new appreciation for the UNIVERSAL church! We are not all the same – we are made up of many different cultures and preferences and likes and dislikes. Sometimes in the Church it feels like our differences are all that we see – that they are in competition with each other or are barriers that need to be overcome. But I discovered that the thing that unites us – our love for JESUS and His Church – is so much stronger than those differences! And I learned that if our eyes are fixed on Jesus our differences can come together in one awesome act of Worship to our incredible Creator!

Mostly I now know without a doubt that Jesus' prayer in the garden “that they may be one” is possible...and not just in some distant future utopia, or in eternity – but today – NOW. I saw it tangibly at Youth Arise and in Sydney – I know it is possible! We can bring about on the earth in THIS GENERATION – at this time – one Holy Catholic UNIFIED Church! How powerful that is! Because if we are ONE, then all will know that Jesus lives and loves and saves – and the world will never be the same!

Youth Festival

by Roby Curtis

Where do I start? WYD was incredible! A highlight for me amongst all the amazing events and celebrations was the 'Youth Festival'. It was a crazy week of live music, speakers, displays, expos, and much more, but most importantly it was a week of amazing spirit-filled worship experiences!

I would like to share one main experience that I had at the emmanuelworship performance on the Thursday night. I was fortunate enough to be a part of the 'festival band' which played at several events throughout the week and capped it off with a final performance at Tumbalong Park. There were about 2500 young people at the event and they were all packed in tight ready to sing and worship God! (and keep warm too!)

As we began playing through the set of songs it was really obvious to me that the crowd was really getting into it and that they were firstly; familiar with the words and secondly; singing the words with complete conviction. I was so inspired by what was happening and I had a moment where it felt as though time stood still and I could see that this was more than just young people singing along to some songs, but that we were standing together proclaiming our faith with 2500 young people. It became so apparent to me that this wasn't about music or a band playing live, but about unity and about young people expressing their love and commitment to Jesus without fear or shame in an environment where they felt they could!

We finished of the worship with WYD anthem 'my witness you'll be'. It was then that I could see the ownership and the conviction of these young people explode. As we sang the words 'you will receive power when the Holy Spirit falls upon you...' the whole WYD thing was made complete for me. I realized that it's moments like these that make events like WYD so important for young people and for the future of the Church. In this time of worship and proclamation I could see hope for the world and hope for the future generations of the Church.

This reminded me that this is what it is all about, and that WYD is about young people united together in their faith to worship Jesus, and take this experience into this broken world. It emphasized for me the importance of using our gifts for Jesus and nothing else. It reinforced for me the value of our Church and that it is still valid. It reminded me that we are not alone and we need each other for inspiration and for support. It reminded me that we are called to worship and to be open to Jesus working through us. It was an incredible experience and I saw the Church was fully alive this night! Glory to God!