

## ACYMC GATHERING

Youth ministers from across Australia and New Zealand came together in Sydney recently to attend the Australian Catholic Youth Ministers Convention (ACYMC). The Convention gathers youth ministers from a variety of backgrounds to offer training and support for local ministry across Australia. It is the largest networking opportunity for Catholic youth ministry in Australia.

Youth and Young Adult Project Managers for the Ballarat Diocese, Noeline Hogan and Patrick Kennedy, were privileged to attend this three day conference. The message from the convention centred on the Year of Youth refrain, “Open new horizons for spreading joy”.



Nick Perkins, Isobel Stewart, Noeline Hogan, Josh Angrisano, Genevieve Bryant, Patrick Kennedy, Cody Cardwell

Noeline Hogan said, “It was an amazing opportunity to connect with like-minded people, to learn from others and to reconnect with my own faith.”

Our host was Bishop Vincent Long from the Diocese of Parramatta whose message was “the greatest thing a youth minister can do is be a travelling companion to the young.” Bishop Vincent also went on to say “at times, you may think that the Church is led by a bunch of old men in dresses and that it is not relevant to your lives and relationships, your hopes and dreams, your challenges and struggles. Think again, because Pope Francis wants to change that misconception. So do the Church leaders in Australia, particularly with the Plenary Council 2020.”

Daily Mass was offered at the convention centre plus there were a range of keynote speakers and workshops aimed at providing catholic formation, training and education to those ministering to young people. A chapel space was available at all times for reflection.

Patrick Kennedy from the Ballarat Diocese said, “the enthusiasm on display from over four hundred young Catholics was infectious from the very start! I don’t think I’ve ever been to a Mass pulsing with so much love of Christ.”

The idea for ACYMC came off the back of World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference saw a need to host a regular youth convention aimed at youth and young adult leaders, youth ministry workers and staff, with a focus on networking and spiritual growth for participants. This bi-annual conference is open for anyone involved in engaging youth in church life.

*“Youth are our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity.” (Dr Deborah Sayce, ACYMC 2018)*

*Noeline Hogan, Youth and Young Adult Project Managers for the Ballarat Diocese*



Photos above courtesy of the Diocese of Parramata