

Less than two weeks to go now before the fourth Australian Catholic Youth Festival kicks off in Perth (December 8-10) and pilgrims have been busy preparing for a trip of a lifetime. Around five thousand young people are expected to attend this year's celebrations, with the "Melbourne Collective" - combining pilgrims from the four Dioceses of Victoria - contributing one thousand of that total! In addition to those Ballarat parishioners travelling within the Collective, Fr James Kerr will also be leading a small contingent from St Joseph's College, Mildura. Bishop Paul Bird will be heading across with fellow Redemptorist priests Fr Son Nguyen (Ararat), Fr Vincensius Lolo (Redan) and Fr Vincent Pham (Cathedral) to participate in the festivities.

A commissioning Mass was held Sunday, November 24 at St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne to officially send out the pilgrims. We wish them and all the young people a safe and blessed trip as they make their way across the country and experience the young heart of the Catholic Church in Australia.

A national prayer for the pilgrims is below:



Australian Catholic Youth Festival

2019 PRAYER

Holy Spirit, Breath of God,
you come to us in the stillness and
silence of this Great South Land.

Give us the courage to open our hearts and ears,
to listen to your voice as we seek to
foster the growth of Your Church in Australia.

Grant us the desire to know Jesus and say
our 'Yes' to his invitation to spread the joy of the Gospel.

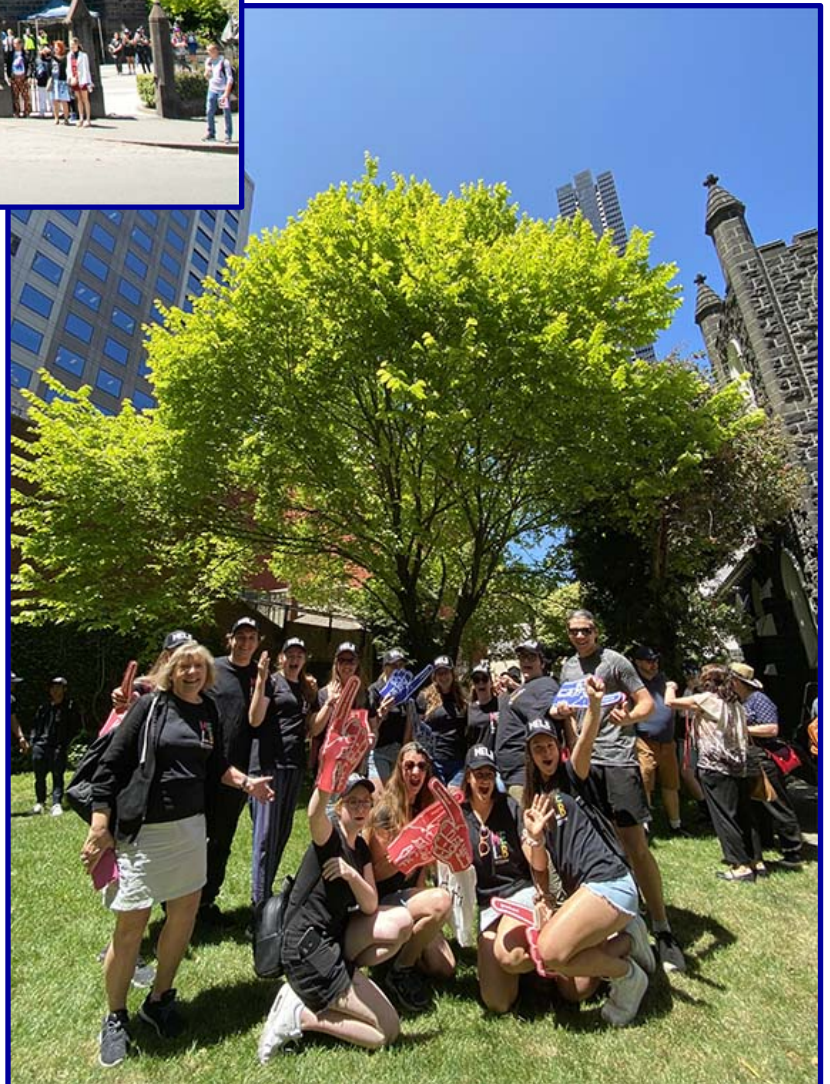
We ask for the gift of hope as you guide us
in our search for purpose and meaning in our lives.

We pray together as young people that
we may love and care for all of creation.

We make this prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord,
our brother and our companion,
who lives with You and the Father forever and ever.

Amen.





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Photos: courtesy of <https://melbournecatholic.org.au/News/pilgrims-take-to-the-streets-for-acyf-commissioning-event>