

World Youth Day: An Australian Perspective

PhD Thesis

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

This thesis is my own original work and contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other institution.

To the best of my knowledge, the thesis does not contain material previously published or written by another person, except where due acknowledgement is made in the text of the thesis.



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This research project was borne out of a genuine personal curiosity about the impact of World Youth Day on young people. Like many Australians, my awareness and knowledge of World Youth Day was primarily a result of Sydney's hosting of the event in July 2008. I would like to pay particular thanks to Cardinal George Pell and Archbishop Anthony Fisher OP, for making this gathering possible and for their steadfast belief in and passion for World Youth Day.

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ABSTRACT

World Youth Day has become the largest regular gathering of young people in the world, attracting hundreds of thousands, and on occasions, millions of participants. The size and scale of this Catholic religious event, and its generation of tourism and mass media coverage, help define the gathering as a mega-event with international significance.

Since its inception, Australians have participated in each of the international World Youth Days, and this participation has grown and diversified. Perhaps the most significant factor in this period, described by some as a ‘watershed moment’, was the influence and impact of an Australian city hosting World Youth Day in 2008. With the occasion of World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Australians had unrestricted access to an international mega-event, and to one of the hallmark events of the Catholic Church around the world.

As a result of the Sydney experience, World Youth Day became a popular cultural reference point for many young Catholics. It was no longer an experience restricted to a relatively small number of very religious pilgrims, or an event to be learned of and experienced vicariously. Teenagers in particular had a growing interest in the event and this was evident in the increased numbers of school-aged pilgrims who attended World Youth Day in Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013).

The first part of this research – a documentary, analytical study - explored the origins, purpose, history and development of World Youth Day, investigating the perceptions and understandings of religious leaders, especially organizing authorities, as well as examining the reactions and views of the wider Catholic community and the mass media. It examined the event in the context of the ‘new evangelisation’, and considered how the international gatherings were an ecclesial response to the social, cultural and religious realities associated with cultural postmodernity.

In addition, it investigated the psychological and sociological literature related to ‘large events’ to see what theories were relevant for interpreting the psychological and religious/spiritual dynamics of pilgrims’ experience of World Youth Day. For example, it found that studies of ‘pilgrimage events’ and of the construct ‘*communitas*’ were pertinent to World Youth Day. Also applicable were the theories of ‘collective effervescence’ and ‘social identity’. Collins’ (2004) theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains*, which details a cause and effect relationship, provided an insightful construct for interpreting pilgrims’ engagement in and experience of World Youth Day.

The second part of the research - an empirical study - used a ‘mixed methods’ approach, with both pre and post-World Youth Day surveys to investigate firstly, why people were drawn to World Youth Day and what were their expectations, and secondly, how they experienced the event and what they perceived were its most beneficial aspects. The empirical study was conducted prior to and following World Youth Day XXVI, in Madrid Spain (16 – 21 August, 2011) and World Youth Day XXVII, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (23-28 July, 2013).

A delegation from Sydney Catholic Schools, which comprised both school-aged and adult pilgrims, was a *purposive sample*. In addition, a *snowball sample* consisted of pilgrims, both adult and school-aged, from the broader Australian delegation. Usually, those in this latter group travelled to World Youth Day with either, a parish group, diocesan group, ethnic group, university group, youth movement (charism related) or ecclesial movement.

Typically, the Australian pilgrims indicated a higher level of religious commitment than occurs within the wider Australian Catholic community. But there was also diversity in religiosity, particularly in the student pilgrims who were drawn from across the religio- spiritual spectrum.

While many of the young pilgrims indicated that they found personal meaning and fulfilment through their active involvement in a parish community and through religious practice, others said they did not. Some of the younger pilgrims were comfortable with spiritualities that were

secular, individualistic, eclectic, subjective and self-reliant. In contrast, the adult pilgrims generally exhibited a more developed sense of religious socialisation and commitment. In addition to their affiliation with a parish community, many belonged to an ecclesial group or movement.

The contrasting dispositions of adult and school aged pilgrims were borne out in what they considered to be the anticipated benefits of attending World Youth Day. Students highlighted the appeal of: meeting new people from around the world; making new friends; visiting places only ever read or heard about; bonding with fellow pilgrims and deepening their relationship with God. By contrast, adult pilgrims highlighted the significance of: a personal experience of the transcendent; deepening their relationship with God; experiencing moments of personal and spiritual reflection; experiencing the 'sacred' in the places visited while on pilgrimage, and feeling a part of the wider Church.

The empirical study identified a number of salient and recurring themes: World Youth Day was considered to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, characterised by heightened levels of affective intensity; some of the religious experiences were affirmed as being particularly powerful and as moments of encounter with the transcendent; the event's structure and atmosphere were conducive to social bonding and a spirit of solidarity between pilgrims, and the strengthening and validation of pilgrims' religious identity. Many found the experience gave them a sense of meaning, purpose and fulfilment.

Australian pilgrims' perception and evaluation of the World Youth Day experience were influenced by a range of factors, including: gender, age and religious disposition. The results showed that the World Youth Day phenomenon has two critical dimensions, a social dimension and a religious dimension. A dichotomy does not exist between the two. Rather, there is a strong inter-relationship between them which creates a powerful cumulative effect.

For many pilgrims, World Youth Day is not just a peak 'religious experience'; it is a peak 'life experience'

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES & GRAPHS.....	xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xvii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 World Youth Day.....	2
1.2.1 The Socio-Religious Context of World Youth Day	2
1.2.2 The Structure of World Youth Day	3
1.2.3 Australians and World Youth Day	4
1.2.4 Perceptions of World Youth Day and Interpretations of its Spiritual and Psychological Dynamics	7
1.3 Issues for Research Related to the Nature, Purpose, Spiritual/Psychological Dynamics and Religious Significance of World Youth Day.....	8
1.3.1 The History and Place of World Youth Day as an Expression of the ‘New Evangelisation’	8
1.3.2 The Place of ‘Pilgrimage’ in Forging Religious and Social Identity	10
1.3.3 The Experience of ‘God’ by World Youth Day Pilgrims... ..	11
1.3.4 The Experience of ‘Collective Effervescence’ and ‘Communitas’ by World Youth Day Pilgrims: The Relevance of Psychological/Sociological Theories for Interpreting the Dynamics of World Youth Day	12
1.4 Scope and Purpose of this Research Study.....	14
1.4.1 Documentary Analytical Study	14
1.4.2 Empirical Study	15
1.4.3 Key Research Questions and Areas for Investigation.....	15
1.4.4 Potential Significance of this Research.....	16
1.5 Structure of the Remaining Chapters of the Thesis.....	18
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY	
2.1 Introduction.....	20
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	21
2.2.1 Epistemology of Constructionism.....	22
2.2.2 Theoretical Perspective of Interpretivism.....	23
2.3 Research Design.....	24
2.3.1 Documentary Analytical Study.....	24
2.3.2 Empirical Study.....	29
2.4 Data Collection.....	32
2.4.1 Participants.....	32
2.4.2 Questionnaires.....	41
2.4.3 Instrumentation: The Design and Development of the Questionnaires.....	42

2.4.4	Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaires.....	43
2.4.5	Post-World Youth Day Questionnaires.....	46
2.4.6	Interviews.....	49
2.4.7	The Design and Conduct of Interviews.....	49
2.5	Data Analysis.....	53
2.5.1	Questionnaires (Quantitative data) – Analysis of Descriptive Statistics.....	53
2.5.2	Higher Order Statistical Analyses.....	53
2.5.3	Questionnaires (Qualitative Data).....	55
2.5.4	Interviews.....	56
2.6	Legitimisation of Research.....	58
2.6.1	Quantitative Methods.....	59
2.6.2	Qualitative Methods.....	60
2.6.3	The Role of the Researcher.....	62
2.7	Possible Limitations of the Research Study.....	62
2.7.1	Sample Participation.....	62
2.7.2	Timing of Data Collection.....	63
2.8	Ethical Considerations.....	64
2.9	Summary.....	64

PART ONE

HISTORICAL / DOCUMENTARY / ANALYTICAL RESEARCH

CHAPTER 3: AN EXAMINATION OF THE EMERGENCE & DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY PHENOMENON

3.1	Introduction.....	68
3.2	The Social, Cultural and Religious Dynamics of the Postmodern Era: The Background Context for World Youth Day.....	70
3.2.1	Introduction... ..	70
3.2.2	The Perspective of Cultural Postmodernity: An Interpretation of the Socio-Cultural Situation into which World Youth Day was Introduced.....	71
3.2.3	The Range of Contemporary Spiritualities in Young People: A Lens for Interpreting the Religious Typologies of World Youth Day Pilgrims... ..	77
3.2.4	Changes in Religion and Religious Practice	80
3.2.5	The Relationship Between the Media and Religion	86
3.3	The New Evangelisation.....	88
3.3.1	The Call for a ‘New Evangelisation’.....	88
3.3.2	The Nature of the ‘New Evangelisation’.....	90
3.3.3	Characteristics of the ‘New Evangelisation’... ..	92
3.3.4	The ‘New Evangelisation’ and the Emergence of ‘Evangelical Catholicism’.....	97
3.3.5	World Youth Day and the ‘New Evangelisation’.....	99
3.4	The Origins and Historical Development of World Youth Day	101
3.4.1	The Origins of World Youth Day.....	101
3.4.2	The Principal Objectives of World Youth Day	104

3.5	Australian Participation in World Youth Day.....	113
3.6	Wider Perceptions of and Reactions to World Youth Day.....	122
3.6.1	Review of the Findings of Previous Empirical Research on World Youth Day	122
3.6.2	The Response of the Catholic Community	132
3.6.3	The Wider Media Coverage of World Youth Day	136
3.7	Conclusion.....	143
CHAPTER 4: AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH TO INFORM INTERPRETATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY		
4.1	Introduction.....	145
4.2	The Social, Emotional and Psychological Dynamics of Religious Experiences.....	146
4.2.1	Introduction.....	146
4.2.2	‘Collective Effervescence’ and Religious Gatherings.....	147
4.2.3	The Desire to Belong and the Development of Social Identity.....	149
4.2.4	The Emotional Dynamics of Religious Gatherings	152
4.2.5	The Theory of Interaction Ritual Chains.....	154
4.2.6	Applying Collins’ Theory of Interaction Ritual Chains (2004) to the World Youth Day Phenomenon.....	158
4.2.7	The Impact and Influence of ‘Celebrity Figures’ at Mega-Events... ..	166
4.3	Conclusion.....	168
CHAPTER 5: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF THE PILGRIMAGE PHENOMENON		
5.1	Introduction.....	169
5.2	Pilgrimage.....	170
5.2.1	A Pilgrim’s Quest... ..	171
5.2.2	The Popularity of Pilgrimage	174
5.2.3	Pilgrim or Tourist.....	180
5.2.4	Journey or Destination... ..	184
5.2.5	Contested Meanings and Feelings or ‘Communitas’... ..	190
5.2.6	Mission Trips and the Search for Meaning.....	198
5.3	World Youth Day as a Pilgrimage in Faith.....	201
5.3.1	The Dimensions of Pilgrimage	201
5.3.2	World Youth Day: Encountering the Sacred and the Secular.....	203
5.3.3	Journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon: A Pilgrimage of the ‘New Evangelisation’	205
5.4	Summary.....	207
5.5	Conclusion.....	210

PART TWO
EMPIRICAL RESEARCH WITH BOTH QUANTITATIVE & QUALITATIVE
COMPONENTS

Study of the Perceptions of the World Youth Day Experience by Cohorts of
Australian Pilgrims at the World Youth Days at Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro
(2013)

CHAPTER 6: PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS OF BOTH THE PRE &
POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH DATA

6.1	Introduction.....	213
Section 1: Analysis of Pre-World Youth Day Research Data for Sydney Catholic Schools' Cohorts..... 215		
6.2	Demographic Data for Sydney Catholic Schools' Cohorts... ..	215
6.2.1	Madrid Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools	215
6.2.2	Rio de Janeiro Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools... ..	217
6.3	Religiosity Profile Measures of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Cohorts... ..	219
6.3.1	Religiosity: Religious Attitudes of Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools.....	219
6.3.2	Religiosity: Religious Practices of Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools.....	225
6.4	Pilgrims' Perceptions of Religious Experiences – Sydney Catholic Schools	228
6.5	Why People Attend World Youth Day – the Motivations of Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrims... ..	231
6.6	The Anticipated Benefits of World Youth Day – the Perspectives of Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrims... ..	236
6.6.1	Presentation of Pilgrims' Pre-World Youth Day Response Data.....	236
6.7	The Anticipated Value of World Youth Day Events – the Perspectives of Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrims... ..	244
6.8	Pilgrim Hopes for World Youth Day	247
Section 2: Analysis of Post-World Youth Day Research Data... .. 252		
6.9	The Demographic Profiles of All World Youth Day Pilgrim Cohorts: Sydney Catholic Schools' Groups & General Australian Population Groups	252
6.9.1	Demographics of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Groups (2011 & 2013).....	252
6.9.2	Demographics of a Sample of the General Australian Population Cohorts (2011 & 2013).....	255
6.9.2.1	Age Range, Religious Identification and Cultural Background of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population.....	256
6.9.2.2	General Australian Population Pilgrims' Mode of Participation in World Youth Day	258

6.10	The Religiosity Measures of All World Youth Day Pilgrim Cohorts: Sydney Catholic Schools' Groups & General Australian Population Groups	259
6.10.1	Religiosity Profile Measures of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrim Cohorts.....	259
6.10.2	Religiosity Profile Measures of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population.....	260
6.10.2.1	Religiosity: Religious Attitudes of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population.....	260
6.10.2.2	Religiosity: Religious Practices of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population.....	262
6.10.3	Comparisons Between the Religiosity Profiles of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Groups and the General Australian Population Groups.....	264
6.11	The Development of a Religiosity Typology for Analysis of Pilgrims' Perceptions of World Youth Day According to a 'Total Religion Score'	267
6.11.1	The Religious Typology of Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools.....	269
6.11.2	The Religious Typology of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population.....	270
6.12	Analysis of the Religious Typology Data: Evidence for the Homogeneous Quality of Each of the Two Groups - Younger and Older Pilgrims... ..	270
6.12.1	Comparisons of the Religiosity Measures for the Core Sub-Groups at the Different World Youth Days.....	271
6.13	Analysis of Pilgrims' Perceptions of the World Youth Day Experience.....	274
6.13.1	Introduction... ..	274
6.13.2	Presentation of Pilgrims' Response Data.....	274
6.13.3	Pilgrims' Responses to the Social/Emotional Dynamics Cluster... ..	276
6.13.4	Pilgrims' Responses to the Spiritual/Religious Dynamics Cluster.....	283
6.13.5	Pilgrims' Responses to the Pilgrimage Experience Cluster... ..	290
6.13.6	Pilgrims' Responses to the Key Elements of World Youth Day Cluster... ..	298
6.13.7	Pilgrims' Responses to the World Youth Day Events and Activities Cluster	306
6.14	Higher Order Statistical Analyses: The Investigation of the Associations Between Demographic Factors and Pilgrims' Perceptions of the World Youth Day Experience.....	313
6.14.1	Differences in Pilgrims' Perceptions and Evaluations of World Youth Day According to Gender and Age	314
6.14.2	Differences in Student Pilgrims' Perceptions and Evaluations of World Youth Day According to their Religious Background/Level of Religiosity.....	318
6.14.3	Differences in Pilgrims' Perceptions and Evaluations of World Youth Day According to Their Place of Birth.....	320
6.15	Key Psychological Dimensions of the Quantitative Data as Highlighted By Factor Analysis.....	322
6.16	Qualitative Data from Pilgrims' Responses to the World Youth Day Experience.....	324
6.16.1	Introduction... ..	324

6.16.2	Significant and Memorable Experiences for World Youth Day Pilgrims...	325
6.16.3	Pilgrims' Evaluations of the World Youth Day Experience	333
6.16.4	Describing the World Youth Day Experience.....	336
6.16.5	Pilgrims' Areas of Concern.....	341
6.17	Conclusion.....	342

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF THE MEANING & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRE & POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1	Introduction.....	343
Section 1: Meaning and Significance of Pre-World Youth Day Research Data.....		344
7.2	Sydney Catholic Schools' Participation in World Youth Day.....	344
7.3	A Profile of Sydney Catholic Schools' World Youth Day Pilgrims.....	347
7.3.1	Student Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools.....	347
7.3.2	Adult Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools.....	351
7.4	Why People Attend World Youth Day – the Motivations & Expectations of Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrims.....	352
7.4.1	Introduction	352
7.4.2	A Desire to Belong	354
7.4.3	In Search of God.....	356
7.4.4	Pilgrim or Tourist.....	360
7.4.5	The Appeal of Mega-Events.....	363
7.4.6	The Experience of a 'Lifetime'	365
Section 2: Meaning and Significance of Post-World Youth Day Research Data.....		367
7.5	The Demographic Profile of World Youth Day Pilgrims.....	367
7.5.1	Background.....	367
7.5.2	Age Profile	367
7.5.3	Gender Profile	370
7.5.4	Cultural Background.....	372
7.6	A Religious Typology of World Youth Day Pilgrims.....	376
7.6.1	Introduction.....	376
7.6.2	Devoted Pilgrims.....	376
7.6.3	Religious Believers.....	379
7.6.4	Meaning Seekers.....	382
7.6.5	Social Tourists.....	384
7.7	Pilgrims' Experience of Pilgrimage	387
7.8	Pilgrims' Experience of the Social & Emotional Dynamics of World Youth Day.....	389
7.9	Pilgrims' Experience of the Spiritual/Religious Dynamics of World Youth Day.....	392
7.10	Pilgrims' Experience of the Key Elements of World Youth Day	396
7.11	Pilgrims' Experience of the World Youth Day Events and Activities.....	399
7.12	Pilgrims' Perceptions and Evaluations of the World Youth Day Experience: An Analysis of the Qualitative Data.....	403
7.12.1	Highlights of the World Youth Day Experience	403
7.12.2	Logistical and Organizational Concerns.....	406

7.12.3	The Impact of the World Youth Day Experience.....	410
7.13	Comparisons & Contrasts Between the Findings of the Pre-World Youth Day & Post-World Youth Day Surveys of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Contingents.....	411
7.14	Conclusion.....	414

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1	Introduction.....	416
8.2	The Changing Religious Profile of Australian World Youth Day Pilgrims...	416
8.3	The Mega-Event Characteristics of World Youth Day.....	421
8.4	The Convergence of the Emotional & Spiritual Dynamics.....	424
8.5	Pilgrims' Search For Meaning.....	427
8.6	The Multi-Dimensional Nature of the World Youth Day Experience & the Significance of Pilgrimage.....	428
8.7	Reviewing the Strategic Place of World Youth Day Within the Broader Context of Catholic Youth Ministry.....	431
8.8	Recommendations.....	433
	8.8.1 Recommendations for the Catholic Church Community in Australia.....	
	8.8.2 Recommendations for Catholic Education Authorities.....	
8.9	Conclusion.....	440
	REFERENCES.....	442
	APPENDICES.....	492

LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES & GRAPHS

Table 2.1	<i>Theoretical Framework</i>	21
Figure 2.1	<i>The 'Concurrent Triangulation Approach'</i>	31
Table 2.2	<i>World Youth Day Delegations from Sydney Catholic Schools</i>	33
Table 2.3	<i>Australian World Youth Day Pilgrims, Madrid 2011</i>	37
Table 2.4	<i>Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrim Contingent, Madrid</i>	38
Table 2.5	<i>World Youth Day Research Participants, Madrid</i>	39
Table 2.6	<i>Australian World Youth Day Pilgrims, Rio de Janeiro 2013</i>	39
Table 2.7	<i>Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrim Contingent, Rio de Janeiro</i>	40
Table 2.8	<i>World Youth Day Research Participants, Rio de Janeiro</i>	40
Table 2.9	<i>Summary of the Stages of the Research Study Process</i>	65
Table 3.1	<i>The Characteristics and Influences of 'Cultural Postmodernity' on Individuals' Spiritual/Religious Identification</i>	75
Table 3.2	<i>Number of Australian Pilgrims Attending World Youth Day</i>	117
Table 3.3	<i>The Most Enjoyable Aspects of World Youth Day, 2008</i>	127
Figure 3.4	<i>Dimensions of Religious Identification (Hervieu-Leger, 1998)</i>	129
Table 3.4	<i>The Impact of World Youth Day on Individual Religiosity (Rymarz, 2008)</i>	130
Table 4.1	<i>An Overview of the Key Elements of the Theory of Interaction Ritual Chains</i>	155
Table 6.1	<i>Participants Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire, Madrid (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	216

Table 6.2	<i>Participants Pre-World Youth Day Interviews, Madrid (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	216
Table 6.3	<i>Q.5. Religion: Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Madrid), Students</i>	216
Table 6.4	<i>Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims: Pre-World Youth Day (Madrid)</i>	217
Table 6.5	<i>Participants Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire, Rio de Janeiro (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	218
Table 6.6	<i>Participants Pre-World Youth Day Interviews, Rio de Janeiro (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	218
Table 6.7	<i>Q.5. Religion: Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Rio de Janeiro) - Students</i>	218
Table 6.8	<i>Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims: Pre-World Youth Day (Rio de Janeiro)</i>	219
Table 6.9	<i>Q.6. How Important is Religion in your Life? Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	219
Table 6.10	<i>How Important is Religion in your Life? Pre-World Youth Day Interviews (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	221
Table 6.11	<i>How do your Close Friends View Religion? Pre-World Youth Day Interviews (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	222
Table 6.12	<i>Q.7. Which Term Best Describes your Attitude Towards your Faith... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	223
Table 6.13	<i>Q.8. I Normally Attend Mass... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	226
Table 6.14	<i>Q.9. I Normally Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	227
Table 6.15	<i>Q.10. I Normally Pray ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	228
Table 6.16	<i>What has been your most Positive Religious Experience? Pre-World Youth Day Interviews (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	229
Table 6.17	<i>Q.17. What has Motivated you to Register for World Youth Day... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire – Students (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	232
Table 6.18	<i>Q.17. What has Motivated you to Register for World Youth Day... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire – Adults (Sydney Catholic Schools)</i>	233
Table 6.19	<i>Q.12. Which Group had the Greatest Influence on your Decision to Attend World Youth Day? Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	236
Table 6.20	<i>Student Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.14. World Youth Day will Provide me with an Opportunity to... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	238
Table 6.21	<i>Adult Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.14. World Youth Day will Provide me with an Opportunity to... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	239
Table 6.22	<i>The Top Five Anticipated Benefits of World Youth Day – Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrims ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	241
Table 6.23	<i>The Level of Importance Attributed to the Various World Youth Day Events - Students (Sydney Catholic Schools) ... Q.15 Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	244

Table 6.24	<i>The Level of Importance Attributed to the Various World Youth Day Events - Adults (Sydney Catholic Schools) ... Q.15 Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	245
Table 6.25	<i>The Top Five Hopes of World Youth Day – Sydney Catholic Schools’ Pilgrims ... Q.18. Identify and Describe your Greatest Hope for your Upcoming Experience at World Youth Day... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	247
Table 6.26	<i>The Five Most Frequently Used Words by Student Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools) in response to Q.18 ... Q.18 Identify and Describe your Greatest Hope for your Upcoming Experience at World Youth Day... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	249
Table 6.27	<i>Number of Sydney Catholic Schools’ World Youth Day Research Participants (2011 & 2013).....</i>	252
Table 6.28	<i>Participants’ Post-World Youth Day Research Study (Sydney Catholic Schools).....</i>	253
Table 6.29	<i>Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools).....</i>	254
Table 6.30	<i>Religious Background of Student Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools) Q.5. Religion: Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	254
Table 6.31	<i>Participants’ Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Australian Pilgrims - General Population).....</i>	256
Table 6.32	<i>Participants’ Post-World Youth Day Interviews (Australian Pilgrims – General Population).....</i>	256
Table 6.33	<i>Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims (Australian Pilgrims – General Population).....</i>	256
Table 6.34	<i>Language Spoken at Home (Australian Pilgrims – General Population).....</i>	257
Table 6.35	<i>Q.5. Religion: Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Madrid) Australian Pilgrims.....</i>	258
Table 6.36	<i>Australian Pilgrims - General Population: Modes of World Youth Day Attendance.....</i>	259
Table 6.37	<i>The Importance of Religion for Pilgrims from the General Australian Population Q.6. How Important is Religion in your Life? Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	260
Table 6.38	<i>Descriptors of ‘Personal Faith’ used by Pilgrims from the General Australian Population Q.7. Which Term Best Describes your Attitude Towards your Faith ... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	262
Table 6.39	<i>Patterns of Mass Attendance for Pilgrims from the Wider Australian Contingent Q.8. I Normally Attend Mass ... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	263
Table 6.40	<i>Prayer Practices of Pilgrims from the Wider Australian Contingent Q.10. I Normally Pray ... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....</i>	264
Table 6.41	<i>Framework of the Total Religion Score.....</i>	268
Table 6.42	<i>Religious Typologies of Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools.....</i>	269
Table 6.43	<i>Religious Typologies of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population.....</i>	270
Table 6.44	<i>Homogeneous Subsets of World Youth Day Pilgrims (Tukey HSD Test).....</i>	272
Table 6.45	<i>The Homogeneous Subsets of Younger World Youth Day Pilgrims</i>	272

	<i>(Ryan-Einot-Gabriel-Welsh Range Test)</i>	
Table 6.46	<i>The Religious Typologies of Young and Adult Pilgrims</i>	273
Table 6.47	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.13 – Emotional/Social Dynamics</i>	276
Table 6.48	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.13 – Emotional/Social Dynamics</i>	277
Table 6.49	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.14. – Spiritual Dynamics</i>	283
Table 6.50	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.14. – Spiritual Dynamics</i>	284
Table 6.51	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.15. – Pilgrimage Experience</i>	290
Table 6.52	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.15. – Pilgrimage Experience</i>	292
Table 6.53	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.16. – Key Elements of World Youth Day</i>	298
Table 6.54	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.16. – Key Elements of World Youth</i>	299
Table 6.55	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.17. – World Youth Day Events and Activities</i>	306
Table 6.56	<i>Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.17. – World Youth Day Events and Activities</i>	307
Table 6.57	<i>'Age Related' Ranking of Group Means for the Total Population Sample Response Data to Q.13f. 'Meeting so many People from Around the World was a Great Experience'</i>	316
Table 6.58	<i>'Gender Related' Ranking of Group Means Response Data to Q.13d. 'I Enjoyed being able to Share Openly and Talk with my Friends'</i>	316
Table 6.59	<i>Homogenous Subsets of Adult World Youth Day Pilgrims by Age (Scheffe Post Hoc Test) Q.13h. World Youth Day was one of the best Experiences of my Life</i>	317
Table 6.60	<i>Homogenous Subsets of Student World Youth Day Pilgrims by Religion (Scheffe Post Hoc Test) Q.15e. I Appreciated Exploring New Places</i>	320
Graph 6.1	<i>Religious Typologies of World Youth Day Pilgrims According to Place of Birth</i>	321
Table 6.61	<i>Final Factor Analysis: Pattern Matrix</i>	323
Table 6.62	<i>Post-World Youth Day Interviews</i>	325
Table 6.63	<i>The Top Five Experiences of World Youth Day According to Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools. Response Data for Q.18. Identify and Describe your most Memorable Experience at World Youth Day... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	326
Table 6.64	<i>The Top Five Experiences of World Youth Day According to Pilgrims from The Australian Contingent. Response Data for Q.18. Identify and Describe your most Memorable Experience at World Youth Day... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire</i>	327
Table 6.65	<i>What was the Highlight of your World Youth Day Experience? Post-World Youth Day Interviews</i>	329
Table 6.66	<i>What Factors Contributed to your Sense of 'Bonding' with your Fellow Pilgrims? Post-World Youth Day Interviews</i>	332

Table 6.67	<i>What was the Impact of your World Youth Day Experience? Post-World Youth Day Interviews.....</i>	333
Table 6.68	<i>Overview of Pilgrim Response Data to Q.19. of Post-World Youth Day Questionnaires. Q.19. How would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been.....</i>	337
Table 6.69	<i>Key Words by Younger Pilgrims in Response to ... Q.19. How Would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been</i>	337
Table 6.70	<i>Key Words by Adult Pilgrims in Response to ... Q.19. How Would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been</i>	338
Table 6.71	<i>How would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been ... Post-World Youth Day Interviews.....</i>	340
Table 6.72	<i>Pilgrims' Areas of Concern – Post-World Youth Day Interviews.....</i>	341
Table 7.1	<i>Pattern of Student Pilgrim Registration – By School (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro).....</i>	347

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Ethics Approval (Australian Catholic University)	492
Appendix B	Research Study Approval (Sydney Catholic Schools)	493
Appendix C	Information Letter to Parents	496
Appendix D	Information Letter to Students.....	498
Appendix E	Research Study Consent Forms	500
Appendix F	Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....	502
Appendix G	Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire.....	506
Appendix H	Pre and Post-World Youth Day Interview Questions	510
Appendix I	The Religious Attitudes and Practices Data of Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools (Post-World Youth Day)	513

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION & SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

An initiative of the late Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day has become the largest regular gathering of young people in the world, attracting hundreds of thousands, and on occasions, millions of participants. The size and scale of the event have necessitated significant organisational and logistical effort and financial support (Norman & Johnson, 2011). The need for a corporate approach to World Youth Day has led to criticism of the event, with some questioning its overall value, asserting that human and financial resources might be better utilised by the Catholic Church.

On occasions, a number of the host cities have failed to adequately prepare for and cope with the large numbers of World Youth Day pilgrims, and the international gathering has been marked by a range of organizational problems which have impacted upon the pastoral objectives of the organisers, and pilgrims' perceptions of the event.

Accordingly, the views of and attitudes towards World Youth Day are mixed, both within the Catholic Church and the wider society, and they require further examination.

While this research study does not attempt to resolve evaluative questions about the pastoral and financial value of this religious event, what it sets out to do is provide the most comprehensive investigation of its nature, development, and psychological and spiritual dynamics – that in turn could inform appraisals of its religious and social impact. Also pertinent, is its systematic analysis of the perceptions of the event by cohorts of Australian pilgrims to World Youth Day in 2011 and 2013.

1.2 WORLD YOUTH DAY

1.2.1 The Socio-Religious Context of World Youth Day

The World Youth Day phenomenon evolved out of and developed from the writings of Pope John Paul II, and his meetings with young people in the early years of his pontificate (Rylko, 2016). In detailing the inception of the event the pope explained, “no one invented the World Youth Days. It was the young people themselves who created them. Those days, those encounters, then became something desired by young people throughout the world” (1994, p.124).

The encounters that the pope referred to were two significant youth gatherings held in Rome in 1984 and 1985, each attended by several hundred thousand people. The numbers, and people’s responsiveness to the events, exceeded the expectations of Church leaders and this motivated Pope John Paul II to formally establish World Youth Day as an annual celebration.

The pope hoped that World Youth Day would strengthen young people’s involvement in the life of the Church, and in particular that they would have an encounter with the “person of Jesus Christ” (John Paul II, 1996, n.1).

A recurring theme of the pope’s writings was the impact of characterised on religious belief and practice. The pope used his pastoral letter *Dilecti Amici*, and his various homilies and addresses, both at World Youth Day, and on other occasions with young people, to warn about ‘secularism’, ‘materialism’ and ‘relativism’ and to encourage them to be people of hope and virtue, who take their Christian responsibilities seriously. These themes have also characterised the principal World Youth Day messages of Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

Many young people appear to be comfortable with the coexistence of faith

and secular culture and do not see them as competing ideologies. Parts of this study will provide an opportunity to explore with World Youth Day pilgrims their perception of the relationship between faith and secular culture and to gauge their response to the principal messages of the pope and other Church leaders.

1.2.2 The Structure of World Youth Day

World Youth Day is celebrated, at a diocesan level, on Palm Sunday each year. Every two to three years an international gathering is held in a different host city. These international gatherings follow a similar structure and are marked by a week- long series of events which include:

- major liturgical celebrations with the pope;
- catechesis with bishops from around the world. Typically this consists of; educative and spiritual input on a selected theme, time for Q & A, and testimonials from young people;
- a public re-enactment or artistic representation of the Stations of the Cross;
- youth festivals;
- the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and
- Eucharistic Adoration.

The event combines, and to a degree synergises, religious and social elements, and for many people it could then become an important cultural and religious reference point for their lives. The degree to which this occurs needs to be explored.

Observers have spoken both of the ‘festivity’ and ‘reverence’ of the event, and in the past descriptions have included: ‘Catholic Woodstock’; ‘Catholic jamboree’, and ‘a great open air-cathedral’ (Bacik, 1996, pp.76-77). World Youth Day combines social and cultural events in a ‘festival’ atmosphere (Taylor, 2007) with publically staged liturgical events and opportunities for private prayer, reflection and meditation. The World Youth Day literature notes that many pilgrims do not distinguish between the religious and the ‘psycho-social’ dynamics of the event, but speak of

the various elements interchangeably and see each of them contributing to the overall experience (Mason, Webber & Singleton, 2008a).

Another feature of the international World Youth Days is that of *pilgrimage*, for it is a pilgrimage event (Norman & Johnson, 2011) as young people from around the world journey to the host city to participate in the event. Sometimes this involves great distances and often includes travel to sacred and significant places within the Christian Tradition. This pilgrimage of youth according to Pope John Paul II, was not just for a deepening of faith, but to build “bridges of fellowship and hope between continents, peoples, and cultures” (1996, n.2).

The diverse structure and elements of World Youth Day hold different levels of appeal and provide different levels of satisfaction to individual pilgrims. Many World Youth Day events are considered to be ‘iconic’ in the collective experience and collective memory of past pilgrims, often constructing a communal Catholic memory (Hervieu-Leger, 1994). The diverse testimonies of past pilgrims also showed that the experience of World Youth Day and the perception of its major events are very personal (Murray, 2005).

Notwithstanding the previous empirical research, there is a need to explore which World Youth Day events are deemed by pilgrims to be of the most personal/spiritual value and have the greatest impact. There is also a need to assess the level of importance that participants attribute to the ‘pilgrimage’ element of World Youth Day.

1.2.3 Australians and World Youth Day

Young Australians have participated in each of the international World Youth Days (1987-2013). During the early history of the event, this often involved fewer than fifty pilgrims, mostly drawn from the youth group Antioch, local parish youth groups, and the ecclesial movement – the Neocatechumenal Way.

As awareness of the event grew among Australian Catholics, so too did their level of participation. With the public encouragement and support of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and local diocesan authorities, there has been a significant increase in the number of Australian pilgrims attending World Youth Day, especially from the year 2000 onwards (see Table 3.2).

The increase of pilgrim numbers resulted in a diversification of the pilgrims and groups attending World Youth Day. Smaller youth and parish groups, and ecclesial movements continued to attend, but they were joined by larger diocesan contingents, as well as some school and university groups. Many of the Church's ethnic communities, as well as lay movements associated with religious orders, also attended. Even with the increase of pilgrim numbers and the diversification of groups, research suggested the Australians attending international World Youth Days had a high level of religiosity, characterised by a strong commitment to religious beliefs and practices (Rymarz 2007a; 2008a).

World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney in July 2008 gave many Australians a first-hand experience of the international gathering and brought the event greater prominence amongst Australian Catholics and the wider public. With a smaller number of attendees, it did not face many of the logistical and organisational problems of other World Youth Days and pilgrims had "a far broader experience of the week" (Rymarz, 2008b, p.465) helping to achieve the event's pastoral objectives. The event was reviewed favourably by pilgrims (Mason et al., 2008a) and also by the local residents of Sydney.

Following Sydney 2008, Australians have participated in a further three international World Youth Days, Madrid (2011), Rio de Janeiro (2013) and Krakow (2016). In each instance, the size of the Australian delegation was in part influenced by the destination of the host city.

In 2011, Australia's largest ever overseas delegation attended World Youth Day XXVI in Madrid, Spain. Historically, European destinations had

drawn the largest numbers of Australian pilgrims. The size of the 2011 contingent was influenced by the enthusiasm and ongoing momentum generated by Sydney 2008. Many Australian dioceses had committed to greater involvement in World Youth Days as part of their pastoral planning, and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Commission for Pastoral Life had prioritised Youth Ministry and a national approach to World Youth Day.

In 2013, a smaller delegation of Australians attended World Youth Day XXVIII in Rio de Janeiro. The drop in pilgrim numbers was due to the reduced 'two year turnaround' between World Youth Days and the fewer and more expensive travel options for a South American destination.

The demographic profile of the Australian contingents to World Youth Day has changed post Sydney 2008. The two delegations (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro) have included a significant number of school-age pilgrims, constituting a greater percentage of the overall group when compared to previous World Youth Days. In 2011 and 2013 the largest group within the Australian delegation was a school group, a delegation from Sydney Catholic Schools – the main cohort studied in the empirical part of this research (see Tables 2.3 & 2.6).

The changing profile of Australian pilgrims, especially with the emergence of significant numbers of school-age pilgrims, requires investigation. While there is recognition that there are various sub-groups of World Youth Day pilgrims (Allen, 2005a; Garelli & Camoletto, 2003; Mason, Singleton & Webber, 2008b), Australian pilgrims have historically been characterised as having strong levels of religious commitment and practice (Rymarz, 2008a). These views need to be tested with the school-age pilgrims, whose religious attitudes and practices may not reflect the same level of religiosity. The reasons for the significant growth in numbers of younger pilgrims attracted to World Youth Day also need to be explored, as do their experiences of the event, especially when

compared to adult pilgrims.

1.2.4 Perceptions of World Youth Day and Interpretations of its Spiritual and Psychological Dynamics

Following Sydney 2008 Ang (2008) noted that people were divided in their appraisal of the international gathering. Ang asserted that some considered World Youth Day was “the long-awaited watershed in the life of the Australian Church and had sparked a new era of vigour and confidence”, whereas others regarded it as “an expensive and empty exercise, a passing jamboree that will prove of little lasting significance or ultimate effect” (2008, p.403).

Within the Catholic Church, both in Australia and in other parts of the world, there are different estimates of the value of World Youth Day. Some tend to see it as a new way of engaging young people into the life of the Church, an expression of the ‘new evangelisation’ (Pope John Paul II, 1996), whereas others would prefer for the logistical efforts and financial resources to be committed to broader youth ministry initiatives, and to supporting local parishes.

Empirical research suggests that pilgrims attested to the value of the World Youth Day experience, many having identified it as ‘life-changing’ (Mason et al., 2008a). The complex spiritual and psychological dynamics of World Youth Day, however, may make it difficult to assess which aspects of the event were of personal value and significance for pilgrims. It may not be possible to differentiate between the social/psychological and spiritual/religious dynamics. Rather, it may be the synergy between the two which provides pilgrims with an affirming experience characterised by heightened levels of emotional energy, prompting many of them to attend World Youth Day again.

Questions remain about the benefits of participation in the event, especially with respect to the ‘long-term’ impact on pilgrims. Some also question whether the mega event, or ‘peak’ religious experience Ang, (2008) of a large international gathering can actually connect people to a

local parish, and engage them in regular and active participation. This situation warrants research to clarify how the event is perceived and experienced by participants and to explore whether it has influenced their perception of ‘Church’. Given that a stated goal of local Church authorities is that World Youth Day may rejuvenate the Church and lead to greater participation by young people, there is a need to explore whether the experience of World Youth Day has influenced their commitment to participate in the life of the Church, especially in local parishes.

What has been missing in the World Youth Day research literature, and also in the area of youth spirituality, has been a detailed investigation of how psychological and sociological theories might be helpful for interpreting the psychological and spiritual dynamics underlying religious experience and religious events, particularly large scale events. This study has given special, systematic attention to this question.

1.3 ISSUES FOR RESEARCH RELATED TO THE NATURE, PURPOSE, SPIRITUAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS AND RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

1.3.1 The History and Place of World Youth Day as an Expression of the ‘New Evangelisation’

According to Rymarz (2010a, p.24) the ‘new evangelisation’ was to become a leitmotif of John Paul II’s pontificate, and it was a very prominent theme in the pope’s apostolic writings. In speaking of the Church’s missionary activity in his encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, Pope John Paul II proposed the context of and rationale for the ‘new evangelisation’ when he identified the need to reach Christians who have lost their sense of faith and, “live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel” (1990, n. 33).

This challenge, he believed, was particularly prevalent within Western, secular societies, especially among young people.

Research showed that many young people in Western nations like

Australia do not engage in regular religious practice and feel disconnected from 'institutional religion' (Frame, 2009; Rymarz, 2010; Savage, Collins-Mayo, Savage & Cray 2006; Smith & Denton, 2005). There is a need, however, for further research to explore whether young people have actually lost their 'sense of faith' or live lives with a spiritual dimension which is apparently not influenced by formal religion.

The World Youth Day phenomenon grew out of the Church's vision and understanding of the 'new evangelisation', and some suggest that it represents the particular missionary approach that was called for (McSheffrey, 1996; Walldorf, 2004). In an effort to rejuvenate the faith practice and Christian identity of Western societies, World Youth Day was intended to be a systematic approach to reach out to and actively engage young people in the life of the Church, especially amongst those who were disconnected. The long-term effectiveness of this approach, which is *event* rather than *program* based evangelisation is debatable, and some have also expressed concerns that local parishes do not have the resources, nor the social dynamic, to cater for pilgrims upon their return from World Youth Day and their experience of the 'mass gatherings' (Ang, 2008).

Evidence also suggests that many of the Australian participants who attended World Youth Day were already committed to their faith and religious practice. The 'new faithful', as they have been described, (Carroll, 2004) are not the target group of the 'new evangelisation'. There is a need therefore to gather more data on who is drawn to World Youth Day and why. Furthermore, there is a need to ascertain whether the experience of World Youth Day influences religious attitudes and practices, especially amongst those who are uncommitted or indifferent to matters of faith and religious practice.

Central to the 'new evangelisation' is the Church's effort to challenge the cultural milieu (Gibbs, 1999), which is widely regarded as increasingly indifferent, and at times hostile, to Christian life and values. To this end the writings of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis,

including the World Youth Day homilies, have consistently warned against ‘secularism’, ‘relativism’ and ‘materialism’ and affirm the contribution that young people can and do make a difference to the Church and society.

1.3.2 The Place of ‘Pilgrimage’ in Forging Religious and Social Identity

While the term ‘pilgrimage’ is increasingly used in a metaphorical sense, there is also evidence to suggest that the ancient practice of ‘pilgrimage’ is also on the rise in contemporary society, especially as a means of forging national, cultural, social and religious identity (Digance, 2003; Reader, 2007).

The motivations for going on pilgrimage are many and varied. It has been suggested by some sociologists that given the increasing number of people who experience feelings of dislocation and rootlessness in post-modern society, pilgrimage can enable an opportunity to search for personal consciousness, meaning in life and connectedness with others (Graham & Murray, 1997; Lowenthal, 1997; Timothy & Olsen, 2006).

Often described as the ‘Pilgrim Pope’, John Paul II was aware that practice of pilgrimage could be a source of deep spiritual significance. At World Youth Day IV in Santiago de Compostela he encouraged young people to experience pilgrimage “as a way to interior renewal, to a deepening of faith, a strengthening of the sense of communion and solidarity with your brothers and sisters and as a help in discovering your personal vocation” (John Paul II, 1988a, n.3).

The very structure and nature of World Youth Day is underpinned by the practice of pilgrimage and since its inception participants have been described as pilgrims. As with all pilgrimages, both religious and secular, the journey to World Youth Day has no ‘typical pilgrim’. Rather, evidence suggests that there are number of distinct groupings, each in turn motivated by an amalgam of factors. How this diversity is expressed in Australian pilgrims warrants further investigation.

Australians, as noted earlier in section 1.1.3, have made the journey so as to participate in every international World Youth Day. As noted by Rymarz (2008a), when compared to their European and North American counterparts, the sacrifices of their pilgrimage were far greater, especially with regard to the cost and duration of their travel. It may well be that in overcoming the inconveniences associated with Australia's geographical isolation and in meeting hardships along the way, that a common bond and identity is forged between Australian pilgrims. Research has also suggested that these shared experiences may have helped the young Australians in the development of their religious social identity and in their sense of connectedness with others, and for many the true significance of World Youth Day lies in the pilgrimage experience, not in the key events of World Youth Day week (Cleary, 2011). The value and personal/spiritual significance of pilgrimage as a core element of World Youth Day require further investigation.

1.3.3 The Experience of 'God' by World Youth Day Pilgrims

Despite much research which showed that a growing number of young people were abandoning 'institutional religion', rejecting the core principles and teachings of religious traditions (Hughes, 2007; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006) and questioning the existence of God, Pope John Paul II believed that they were in fact yearning for the transcendent, desiring a relationship with God. His successor, Pope Benedict XVI, expressed similar views, speaking of young peoples' 'hungering for God':

There are times when we might be tempted to seek a certain fulfilment apart from God ... but where does this lead? ... God is with us in the reality of life, not the fantasy! It is embrace, not escape, we seek! (2008a)

Young peoples' concept of God is changing, as is their sense and experience of the transcendent. The assertion that they 'yearn' for God is likely to be true for some, but not for others. Hence it is debatable as to how significant this trend of 'yearning' may be, and ongoing research is

needed to explore this question.

One might hypothesise however that those who register as pilgrims for World Youth Day are proactively seeking an opportunity to experience the transcendent or further deepen their relationship with God. It is, according to Pope Benedict XVI, a time of deep spiritual renewal when “young pilgrims are filled with the desire to pray, to be nourished by Word and Sacrament, to be transformed by the Holy Spirit” (Benedict XVI, 2007). This view could be tested by surveying the pilgrims at World Youth Day.

While research suggests that young peoples’ perception and image of God is diverse and personalised (Maroney, 2008), the Church hopes that the experience of the transcendent at World Youth Day might be an ‘encounter’ with Christ. Pope John Paul II (1996) proposed that “the principal objective of World Youth Day is to focus the faith and life of every young person on the person of Jesus Christ so that Jesus may their constant point of reference” (n.1).

Whether the pilgrims have a sense of an encounter with Christ, or rather an experience of the transcendent which is less easily defined, requires further exploration.

1.3.4 The Experience of ‘collective effervescence’ and ‘communitas’ by World Youth Day Pilgrims: The Relevance of Psychological/ Sociological Theories for Interpreting the Dynamics of World Youth Day

As already illustrated above in the section on pilgrimage, psychological and sociological theories can be used for interpreting both the personal and spiritual/religious dynamics of religious experience and religious events. The following section signposts other theories that could well be found useful for such interpretation.

Sociologist Emile Durkheim (1995/1912) proposed that ‘collective effervescence’ is generated at religious assemblies and gatherings because of the shared rituals, activities and values of those in attendance. Once generated, this powerful group emotion alters the energies and motivations

of participating individuals, raising their consciousness to a higher level. Durkheim's observations and insights have been endorsed by Maffesoli (1996), and Shilling & Mellor (1998), and are extended in Collins' 'Interaction Ritual Theory' (2004). Collins asserted that religious interaction often involves very strong emotional experiences, where intense feelings are aroused. This 'emotional energy' (EE) "has a powerful motivating effect upon the individual; whoever has experienced this kind of moment wants to repeat it" (Collins, 2004, p.38). This was, he believed, especially true of experiences which are considered to be transformative, and which evoke a sense of meaning and fulfilment in life.

World Youth Day literature suggests that pilgrims considered their experience of the international gathering to be enjoyable, rewarding and fulfilling. Some even regarded the time as 'life-changing' (Mason et al., 2008a; Murray, 2005; Novalis, 2002). The research however does not pinpoint any single or dominant reason for the feelings of positivity. It is apparent that many experienced feelings of euphoria, and they spoke of a heightened awareness of and sensitivity to others. It may well be that many of the pilgrims experience the high of 'collective effervescence', when they gather with hundreds of thousands of others at the major events of World Youth Day. There is a need for research to investigate this further and to explore the ways in which the atmosphere of World Youth Day can influence the 'emotional energy' levels of pilgrims and their perception of the events. Furthermore, research could test Collins' view about peoples' desire to repeat and relive 'positive experiences' by gathering data to explore what motivates some people to attend multiple World Youth Days, and therefore be considered 'World Youth Day tragiics'.

Sociologists generally consider that connectedness and solidarity with others are deeply satisfying and fulfil an innermost human need. The anthropologist Victor Turner (1972) identified that this experience of *communitas*, as he termed it, can emerge at large gatherings, especially those which are religious in nature or are underpinned by ritual. Such gatherings can often be inherently communal and can be characterised by

high levels of enthusiasm, feelings of euphoria and the strong sensation of interpersonal connection between participants. Given the nature and dynamics of World Youth Day, there is a need to ascertain whether pilgrims sense and experience *communitas* and to identify the triggers of this feeling.

1.4 SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY

In trying to address comprehensively the research issues noted above, it was considered essential to have two major points of focus in this study, and to bring these foci into dialogue – a documentary/analytical investigation and an empirical study of pilgrims’ perceptions of World Youth Day.

1.4.1 Documentary Analytical Study

Firstly, a documentary analytical study will examine the nature, purposes and historical development of the World Youth Day phenomenon, investigating the perceptions and understandings of religious leaders, especially organizing authorities, as well as examining the reactions and views of the wider Catholic community and the mass media. It will examine the event in the context of the ‘new evangelisation’ and consider how the international gatherings have been shaped by the papal ideologies of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. This involves an analysis of their apostolic writings on evangelisation, and their homilies and speeches at the various World Youth Days.

In addition, it will search the literature in psychology and sociology to identify and bring into the research discourse of World Youth Day, elements of theories considered by the researcher to be useful for interpreting the psychological and spiritual/religious dynamics of the event – especially for studying pilgrims’ accounts of their experience of World Youth Day. It gives special attention to theories of ‘emotional energy’, ‘collective effervescence’ and ‘connectivity’. This section will also examine World Youth Day as a ‘pilgrimage event’ and pilgrims’ experience of the transcendent at the international gathering.

1.4.2 Empirical Study

Secondly, an empirical ‘mixed methods’ study, with both qualitative and quantitative components, will analyse the perceptions, reflections and reactions of Australian cohorts of World Youth Day pilgrims at both the 2011 and 2013 World Youth Days. It will explore why young Australians were drawn to World Youth Day and how the events of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages were viewed by participants, and thus how this might impact their understandings of spirituality, religious practice, community and self. It will identify the level of ‘religiosity’ of World Youth Day pilgrims and explore how they consider the potential influence of the international gathering on their beliefs, attitudes and practices.

The empirical study was conducted prior to (Pre WYD survey) and following (Post WYD survey) World Youth Day XXVI, in Madrid Spain (16 – 21 August, 2011) and World Youth Day XXVII, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (23-28 July, 2013). The data was collected through questionnaires, and through semi structured interviews with selected pilgrims.

1.4.3 Key Research Questions and Areas for Investigation

Distilled from the research issues and questions signposted above, core research questions and areas/issues to be investigated were formulated to guide and underpin both the analytical/documentary and the empirical parts of the study.

Purposes, history and context

1. An investigation of the origins, purposes and development of World Youth Day in its religious–cultural context.

Psychological dimensions of the World Youth Day experience

2. What elements in psychological and sociological theories related to large group events have currency for interpreting the psychological and spiritual dynamics of World Youth Day?

Empirical study of pilgrims' perceptions of 'World Youth Day

3. What are the both the initial expectations and the perceptions of the World Youth Day experience of Australian cohorts of pilgrims at two World Youth Days and how do these align with the key findings that emerge in response to 1 and 2 above?

1.4.4 Potential Significance of this Research

Since its inception in 1986 there have been relatively few attempts to research, document and assess the reasons why young people go to World Youth Day, or the impact the experience had on them (Hervieu-Leger, 1994; Garelli & Camoletto, 2003; Gebhardt, 2007; Rymarz, 2007b & 2008a,b; Mason et al., 2008a,b). In addition to these studies, the Pontifical Council for the Laity has conducted some limited research following the Toronto (2002), Cologne (2005) and Sydney (2008) World Youth Days, but each of these surveyed fewer than one hundred pilgrims.

Given the size and scale of the World Youth Day phenomenon, more extensive research is necessary, especially with regard to the participation of young Australians. This research gave particular attention to 'school-age pilgrims', who have become a significant grouping within the overall Australian delegation since 2008.

The participation of young Australians in international World Youth Days is costly and time-consuming. This research study has the potential to assess the pilgrims' overall valuation of an overseas World Youth Day experience for young Australians and to identify which sub-groups of pilgrims appear to benefit most from the experience.

There is also a need for research that puts this relatively new 'modern pilgrimage' phenomenon into historical perspective – to show how the initial and ongoing purposes of World Youth Day developed and evolved and how the Catholic Church understands the religious and social value of the event.

While a precise determination of the 'value' and 'effectiveness' of the

events of World Youth Day would be problematic, because of the complex interactions among the personal, social, spiritual and religious dimensions of peoples' experience of World Youth Day, it remains important for organizing authorities, and the Catholic Church as a whole, to get a sense of both the psychological and spiritual dynamics.

The significance of this research project is also evidenced in the potential outcomes, which include:

- descriptions of how World Youth Day is experienced by young people;
- an understanding of the way in which the World Youth Day experience is considered by the pilgrims to impact on their spirituality and religious practice, and on their understandings of community and self;
- a more strategic approach to the promotion of World Youth Day, and
- a more strategic approach to the preparation and follow up for World Youth Day pilgrims.

This research is of significance for those working within the Catholic Church, especially diocesan authorities and parish priests, and those employed in areas related to Youth Ministry and education.

Locally, the findings of the research will be made available to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and to various diocesan authorities. The research will also be supplied to the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which is responsible for the organization and conduct of World Youth Day.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THE REMAINING CHAPTERS OF THE THESIS

Chapter 2 (Research design and Methodology) will detail the approaches taken in both parts of the research study, the documentary analytical study and the empirical study. The chapter will outline the research framework and empirical research methodology. It will also describe both the sample of participants and the development of the research instruments as well as discuss issues related to the ethical conduct of the study.

PART 1. Historical/documentary/analytical research

Across three chapters, this part of the thesis investigates the historical origins and purposes of world youth Day. This includes an account of the socio-religious milieu in response to which Pope John Paul II made the idea of "new evangelisation" a central theme and purpose for world youth Day. Complementing the account of religious and ecclesial purposes, this part will also study the research literature in psychology and sociology concerned with large group events and pilgrimage to identify and explicate elements in these theories that are judged to have currency for interpreting the psychological and spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day.

Chapter 3 (Origins, purposes and development of World Youth Day) will provide an overview of the historical context and development of World Youth Day. It will review various apostolic writings as well a range of materials from the mass media in their coverage of World Youth Day. A principal focus of the chapter will be to review literature relating to the 'new evangelisation', and its relationship with the World Youth Day phenomenon.

Chapter 4 (Relevant interpretive insights from psychological and sociological theories related to large events) will examine the psychological and sociological literature to identify and bring into the discourse of religious education elements of theory judged to be pertinent

to interpreting the social, emotional and psychological dynamics associated with large group and religious experiences. It will also provide a relevant background for interpreting pilgrims' expectations and experiences of World Youth Day. Theories analysed include *collective effervescence* (Durkheim, 1912), *social identity theory* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and the theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Collins, 2004, 2010). This chapter will also discuss empirical research conducted at previous World Youth Days.

Chapter 5 (Insights from the literature of pilgrimage) will analyse the spiritual and psychological dynamics of 'pilgrimage', and its centrality to the World Youth Day phenomenon. Through a review of relevant literature, the chapter will examine the place of 'pilgrimage' in forging religious identity, pilgrims' experience of God and 'communitas', the emergence of 'volunteer tourism', and the nature of World Youth Day as a pilgrimage in faith.

Part 2: Empirical study of the perceptions of world youth Day from different cohorts of Australian pilgrims at World Youth Days 2011 and 2013.

The first chapter reports the data from the surveys and the second discusses the meaning and significance of the findings.

Chapter 6 (Analysis of pre- and post-World Youth Day survey data) will report the data collected from both the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi- structured interviews. The chapter will highlight the key findings.

Chapter 7 (Interpretation of Survey data) will analyse the meaning and significance of the pre and post-World Youth Day data reported in Chapter 6, especially in light of the issues raised in Chapters 3-5.

Chapter 8 (Conclusions and recommendations) will present a final summary and the conclusions of the study. It will propose implications for the ongoing organization and conduct of World Youth Day as well as recommendations regarding further research.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design intended to address three significant lacunae in previous research on world youth Day.

- The need for a comprehensive account of the origins, purposes and structuring of World Youth Day, particularly in the light of ecclesial and theological expectations for the event stemming from its introduction by Pope John II in 1984. (Research Question 1, Chapter 1)
- Identifying and judging which elements in psychological and sociological theories of large group events are pertinent to interpreting the personal and spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day (Research Question 2, Chapter 1)
- What attracts Australian pilgrims to World Youth Day and what types of religiosity are ‘typical’ of pilgrims? How do Australian pilgrims perceive the experiences of World Youth Day? (Research Question 3, Chapter 1)

Documentary / historical / analytical research methods were used to address the first and second areas. **And a mixed methods empirical study**, with both pre and post-World Youth Day surveys, was used to address the third area.

Firstly, the chapter explains the overall theoretical framework underpinning the study. Then, after discussing the approach taken in the documentary/analytical study, it attends to research design and methodology in a mixed-methods empirical study of Australian pilgrims perceptions of World Youth Day. The pre-World Youth Day surveys sought to identify expectations and motivations for attending while the post- World Youth Day surveys reported on pilgrims actual experience of the events.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

All research is essentially concerned with understanding the world in which we live. It is “informed by how we view our world(s), what we take that understanding to be, and what we see as the purpose of understanding” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000, p.3). Theory underpins research for it frames our perception of a subject, “it gives us concepts, provides basic assumptions, directs us to important questions, and suggests ways to make important use of data” (Neuman, 2003, p.60). By informing research design, the theoretical framework helps achieve consistency between the problem being investigated, the nature of the data sought, the methods of data collection, and the interpretation of the meaning and significance of the data (Crotty, 1998).

In this investigation of participants’ perceptions of and responses to World Youth Day, a theoretical framework was needed that could accommodate both a Likert scale questionnaire (quantitative data) and open ended questions (qualitative data). This research was likely to elicit their personal views of religion, and also explore the ways in which their views might have been influenced by beliefs, values and attitudes.

The theoretical framework judged to be most suitable with such data included three main elements: an epistemology of constructionism, a theoretical perspective of interpretivism, and a mixed methods approach. This is summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Theoretical Framework

Epistemology	Constructionism
Theoretical perspective	Interpretivism
Research Methods	Document analysis Likert scale questionnaire Open ended questions

2.2.1 Epistemology of Constructionism

This study drew on the epistemology of constructionism, an approach based on relativist ontology where individuals construct understandings from their experiences within, and relationships with the world around them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Social constructionists propose that individuals develop meanings of their experiences, and these meanings are both multiple and varied (Cresswell, 2009). Knowledge is not just passively received through the senses (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) or discovered, but it is actively constructed through an individual's engagement with the world and with others, and influenced by their personal, cultural, social and historical experiences (Crotty, 1998).

Epistemology is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature of human knowledge, its origins, modes of communication and limits (Strauss & Corbin, 2005). The epistemological position of constructionism was considered the most appropriate for this research study for it views human knowledge as subjective, and influenced by, and formed through, social interaction (Cherryholmes, 1993). In this paradigm, knowledge is essentially developed and transmitted within a social context (Crotty, 1998), and meaning is relational.

Constructionism is a well-documented worldview of epistemology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Crotty, 1998; Fosnet, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Neuman, 2003; Schwandt, 2007). Knowledge and social reality develop as a result of human interaction, experience and reflection. This construction arises from internal processing, either alone or in relationship with others. As noted by Crotty (1998), constructionism is concerned with the "collective generation of meaning" (p.58). This 'social constructionism', as it is termed, involves reflection on shared experiences and a sharing of individual knowledge. The meanings that people develop are not simply imprinted on them "but are formed through interaction with others and through the historical and cultural norms that operate in their lives" (Cresswell, 2009, p.8).

While the constructionist approach is typically aligned towards a qualitative methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 2005) it also often includes quantitative methods, especially questionnaires which are concerned with investigating respondents' personal views and feelings. This paradigm was appropriate to the mixed-methods approach of this study which explores why young Australians are drawn to World Youth Day and how the events of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages are perceived by participants, and thus how they might impact their understandings of spirituality, religious practice, community and self.

Within the field of social constructionism recognition is given to the importance of historical and cultural influences. Crotty, (1998) asserted, we are all born into a world of meaning ... we inherit a 'system of significant symbols'. For each of us, when we first see the world in a meaningful fashion, we are inevitably viewing it through lenses bestowed on us by our culture. (p.54)

The significance of these influences on the construction of the social reality of World Youth Day pilgrims will be examined during this study.

2.2.2 Theoretical Perspective of Interpretivism

Within the constructionist approach to epistemology, interpretivism is the most appropriate theoretical perspective for this study which focuses on participants' understandings of World Youth Day. The core assumption of this perspective is that reality is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities. The principal aim of interpretivism is to "understand the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 22), and it "looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world" (Crotty, 1998, p. 22).

Interpretative research seeks to investigate the understandings, attitudes, beliefs and values that influence peoples' behaviour. Researchers become interested in the "meanings, symbols, beliefs, ideas and feelings given to objects, events, activities and others by participants in the setting" (Bailey,

2007, p.53). Individuals will arrive at their own subjective interpretation of their experience and social interaction, and the reporting of this experience will be influenced by social, cultural and historical conditioning. Typically, individuals make value judgements about the core issues.

With an “empathetic understanding of participants day-to-day experiences and an increased awareness of the multiple realities given to the ... events by those in the setting” (Bailey, 2007, p.53) the interpretative paradigm enables researchers to gain access to the meaning behind participants’ experiences (Crotty, 1998). Theory emerges from the research rather than being external or imposed. This emergent theory develops “sets of meanings which yield insight and understanding of people’s behaviour” (Cohen et al., 2000, p.23). It identifies patterns created out of evolving meaning systems, and the social conventions that people generate as they interact (Crotty, 1998). The theory generally provides a descriptive analysis that interprets the social phenomenon being studied.

Although the interpretative approach is generally associated with qualitative methodologies, it is becoming more commonly used in mixed methods research (Hesse- Biber, 2010). What distinguishes an interpretative approach is not which methods are deployed, but rather “the ontological and epistemological standpoint the researcher brings to bear in his or her social inquiry” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p.104).

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

2.3.1 Documentary Analytical Study

Although documentary research methods are considered to be a highly credible and valid form of sociological investigation (Glasner & Strauss, 1967) they are generally used to “supplement information collected through social surveys and in-depth interviews” (Moglaakwe, 2006, p.222), not to be the sole or principal research method. Document analysis was used in this research study to supplement the data gathered through the qualitative and quantitative approaches of the mixed methods empirical study.

An acknowledged attraction and advantage of documentary research is the accessibility of document sources, which has been strengthened by the internet through its multiple search engines (Denscombe, 2010). Notwithstanding the unprecedented access to documents, not all reside within the public domain. Documents, which are central to sociological investigation sometimes have restricted or limited access.

In October 2010 this researcher visited the offices of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome and was able to access restricted archival information on each of the international World Youth Day gatherings. The researcher was able to review organisational and logistical information, event evaluations, and an archive of local and international media coverage for each World Youth Day. The researcher was also able to attain a range of multilingual publications which were the formal and public record of each World Youth Day.

Although documents are a key source of data, there is a need for “content to be screened, counted and coded for appropriate evidence in support of or refutation of relevant hypothesis” (Prior, 2011, p.95). Counting and coding were used in the documentary and analytical study for a number of purposes, especially in the identification of the key objectives of World Youth Day and the principal themes of each pope’s writings and World Youth Day addresses. Counting and coding was also used in the documentary analysis to track and assess reactions to the World Youth Day experience and to gauge whether there was a triangulation of data between different stakeholders, including pilgrims, Church authorities, the wider Catholic community and the media.

One of the significant challenges of documentary research methods is establishing the validity and relevance of the document source (Denscombe, 2010). Scott (1990) outlined four basic criteria for evaluating documents, including: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. These criteria were applied to each of the document sources analysed.

The documents were found to be both authentic and representative. The credibility and meaning of the documents however needed to be assessed in relation to their authorship, context and purpose. While many of the documents, including meeting records, longitudinal data, formal publications and scholarly literature were both credible and written unambiguously, some of the other texts needed to be evaluated on the basis of their 'recipient design' (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011).

As noted by Atkinson and Coffey (2011) many documents are "not neutral, transparent reflections of ... what they purport to describe" (p.77), rather they actively construct a version of organisations and events. This construction of meaning and social reality can be associated with many document sources, particularly those which are generated by the media.

The researcher examined a range of document sources from the media's coverage of World Youth Day. These documents were both from the mainstream media as well as from a range of Catholic newspapers and websites. The analysis of the document sources gave particular attention to the tone, language and content balance of articles. Counting and coding was undertaken during this process.

Scott (1990) identified that the primary purpose of documentary analysis was to understand the meaning and significance of the document's content. While many of the documents were analysed for their literal meaning and value, the apostolic writings, messages and homilies of Popes, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis needed to be considered for their interpretative meaning.

Document sources are rarely single entities, they refer "however tangentially, to other realities and domains ... to other documents" (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p.86). This intertextuality can assist in the refinement of the interpretative meaning of a source. Intertextuality guided the analysis of the individual papal documents relating to World Youth Day, evangelisation and the Church's engagement with young people. Through a process of cross-referencing and coding, commonalities,

differences and patterns were identified.

The papal documents were also analysed for their inclusion of discursive devices which are used in the development of compelling stories, and are central to the persuasion of readers and listeners (Edwards & Potter, 1992). Such an analysis was important because documents “can drive and fashion episodes of human interaction” (Prior, 2011, p.104).

A factor which complicated the analysis of the papal writings and speeches, especially for the effectiveness of their discursive devices, was the diversity of the intended recipients. Green (1983) suggested the content and nature of texts is often shaped by an assumed knowledge of the social and cultural background of the receiver. Within the context of World Youth Day such assumptions are problematic, as the papal texts were received by a diverse audience across the religious-spiritual spectrum.

The documentary analytical study included the approach of ‘method triangulation’ so as to avoid some of the problems that can arise from the use of a single method. In the context of this research study, in-depth interviews were conducted with a number of ‘key informants’ (Mogalakwe, 2006). Mogalakwe identified key informants as,

people who are familiar with and or knowledgeable about the social phenomenon under investigation. Such interviews can help capture certain perceptions, attitudes, views and feelings, and the meaning and the interpretations that people have given to certain events and situations. (2006, p.229)

Origins, purposes and development of World Youth Day

The documentary analytical study involved the gathering, examining and classifying of a range of primary documents, which provided a significant source of data on World Youth Day and contributed to ‘theory building’ about the nature, purposes and intended impact of the event.

The documentary study involved an examination of a range of primary documents relating to the origins, development and conduct of World Youth Day. These documents included:

- the apostolic writings, messages and homilies of Popes, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis;
- formal publications and meeting records of the Pontifical Council of the Laity;
- newspaper articles and multi-media sources, (both mainstream and those affiliated with the Catholic Church);
- formal publications and longitudinal data from Harvest Australia, and
- scholarly literature relating to World Youth Day, evangelisation and the Church's missionary activity with young people.

The documentary study also involved the analysis of literature on the research related issues identified in Chapter 1.

The documents were analysed with specific reference to:

- the Catholic Church's understanding of the nature, purpose and outcomes of the World Youth Day experience, and its place as an expression of the 'new evangelisation';
- the religious and psycho-social dynamics of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages;
- the perceptions of World Youth Day in the wider Catholic community and the broader society, and
- the historical participation of Australians in World Youth Day.

For the purpose of method triangulation the researcher interviewed:

- Bishop Dom Paulo Costa, Coordinator of World Youth Day XXVIII in Rio de Janeiro (6 February, 2012);
- Fr Tom Rosica, Chief Executive Officer and National Director of World Youth Day XVII in Toronto (20 August, 2012);
- Bishop Anthony Fisher, Coordinator of World Youth Day XXIII

in Sydney (23 September, 2014);

- Mr Malcolm Hart, Director, Office for Youth, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (27 October, 2014);
- Mr Philip Ryall, Managing Director, Harvest Australia (30 October, 2014); and
- Mr Ron and Mrs Mavis Pirola, former National Coordinators of the Australian Antioch Movement (25 November, 2014).

2.3.2 Empirical Study

The empirical study was designed to investigate the views, perceptions and reactions of World Youth Day pilgrims to these international gatherings. This research not only sought to clarify why young people may be drawn to World Youth Day but to investigate what they perceive as the most influential aspects of the event and to explore how these experiences might influence their religious attitudes and practices.

The empirical study was conducted with the approval of the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix A) and it followed the ethical protocols established by the university.

The empirical study used a mixed methods approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, p. ix) which combined both quantitative and qualitative methods (Cresswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The data collection, which was conducted between 28 April 2011 and 31 December 2013, was gathered through questionnaire surveys and individual interviews. The use of the mixed methods approach allowed for triangulation and validation.

This distinct methodology of inquiry is “more than simply collecting and analysing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research” (Creswell, 2009, p.4).

The mixed methods approach has been used frequently by social researchers, especially during the last decade. It has grown in prominence

as a research model as evidenced by the wide range of supporting literature (Bryman, 2006; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzi, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie 1998).

Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) detailed five major reasons as to why researchers should consider the use of the mixed methods approach. These reasons, which have been cited extensively in other literature (Creswell, 2009; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Johnson, Onwuegbuzi & Turner, 2007) included; triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion.

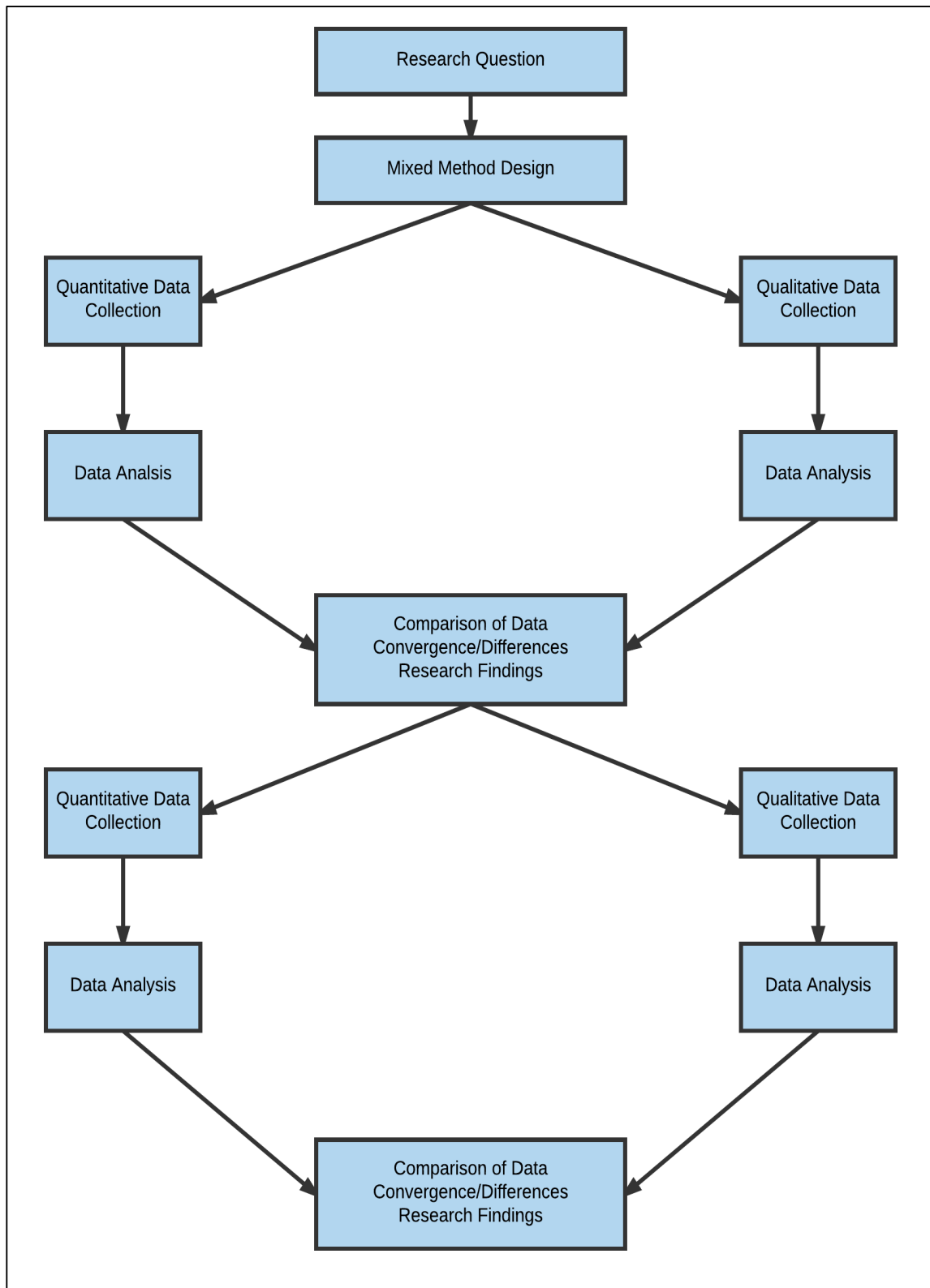
The most commonly cited reason for the adoption of the mixed methods approach is that of triangulation (Jick, 1979) which “ultimately fortifies and enriches a study’s conclusions” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p.3). The convergence of data from multiple sources enhances the credibility and validity of the research findings.

The ‘concurrent triangulation approach’ is the most well-known of the six major mixed methods models. In this approach the researcher gathers data through the simultaneous use of both quantitative and qualitative methods, which typically are both given an equal weighting (Creswell, 2009, p.14). Once collected, the data is analysed for aspects of convergence and difference.

The ‘concurrent triangulation approach’ was used in this research study.

Figure 2.1

The 'Concurrent Triangulation Approach'



2.4 DATA COLLECTION

2.4.1 Participants

Participants in the empirical research study were Australian pilgrims who attended either World Youth Day XXVI in Madrid (August, 2011) or World Youth Day XXVIII in Rio de Janeiro (July, 2013), or both.

World Youth Day pilgrims had various options in which to participate. These included:

- pre-World Youth Day interview;
- pre-World Youth Day questionnaire;
- post-World Youth Day interview and
- post-World Youth Day questionnaire.

The World Youth Day pilgrims were not limited in the number of research options that they wished to participate in.

The empirical research was designed to get an *exploratory sample* of the population as a means of generating new ideas and attaining new information about World Youth Day. *Exploratory samples* are commonly used in sociological research in areas which are relatively unexplored and they have the specific purpose of generating new theories and insights (Denscombe, 2010). Although it is not the objective, an exploratory sample can have the same cross-section and proportions of the population as a representative sample.

Non-probability sampling was used throughout the empirical study. Although the primary objective of non-sampling was to produce an exploratory sample, this approach, which is not based on mathematical theory, can still generate a representative sample (Denscombe, 2010) and produce accurate generalizations about a larger group, although this is often not the principle aim.

Social researchers use non-probability sampling because the people selected

are chosen on the basis of “their expertise, their experience or the fact that they might be unusual or different from the norm; their selection is not a matter of chance” (Denscombe, 2010, p.25). Rather, they are selected on the basis of their relevance to the research area (Flick, 1998).

In order to produce an exploratory sample of the population, two types of non- probability sampling were used during the course of the empirical research, *purposive sampling* and *snowball sampling* (Neuman, 2003). Both sampling methods were adopted in light of the changing demographic profile of Australians who attended World Youth Day post-Sydney, 2008.

As noted in Chapter 1, there had been a significant increase in the participation of school-aged pilgrims in World Youth Day (Madrid, 2011; Rio de Janeiro, 2013) since Sydney 2008. This participation changed the overall demographic composition of Australian pilgrims attending World Youth Day. The reasons for this required investigation, and this influenced the design of the non-probability sampling.

Table 2.2

World Youth Day Delegations from Sydney Catholic Schools

Year	Host City	# of Pilgrims
2002	Toronto	59
2005	Cologne	61
2011	Madrid	524
2013	Rio de Janeiro	328

A delegation from Sydney Catholic Schools, which comprised both school-aged and adult pilgrims, was selected for *purposive sampling*. Denscombe (2010) noted *purposive samples* are “handpicked for research on the basis of their relevance to the issue being investigated” (p.35). *Purposive samples* are often unique cases which are particularly informative, and they require in-depth investigation so that a deeper understanding can be gained of particular ‘types’ within the larger population (Neuman, 2003).

The delegation from Sydney Catholic Schools was selected as the *purposive*

sampling for the empirical study because:

- as a school group, it was representative of the most significant change in the demographic profile of Australian pilgrims post-2008;
- it consisted of both school aged pilgrims and adult pilgrims;
- it was the largest single group in Australia intending to travel to World Youth Day in Madrid and Rio de Janeiro (see tables 2.3 and 2.6), and
- it was considered that it was representative of the survey population in relation to gender, place of birth, language spoken at home and religion.

From a practical perspective, there were very few difficulties in facilitating the *purposive sampling* as:

- the contact details of all individuals within the sample were able to be accessed by the researcher
- all individuals lived within close geographical proximity to one another (metropolitan Sydney).

The *purposive sample* would participate in both the pre and post-World Youth Day research.

The primary motivation for *purposive sampling* was that it was an *exploratory sample* (Grosf & Sardy, 1985). For this empirical research the researcher wished to explore:

- the reasons underpinning the significant growth in school-aged pilgrim numbers post-2008 (see Table 2.2);
- the religiosity of the school-aged pilgrims compared to the profile of ‘pilgrim types’ developed through past research (Allen, 2005a; Mason et al., 2008b);
- the primary reasons why young people are drawn to World Youth Day;
- the (religious, social, emotional) impact of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages, identifying which experiences were

perceived to have had the greatest effect, and

- how the reactions of the school-aged and teacher pilgrims to World Youth Day compared with those of a *snowball sample* from the broader Australian delegation.

The conduct of empirical research with the *purposive sample* required the approval of the Catholic Education Office, Sydney (Appendix B). Once approval for the research study was granted, contact was made with each of the secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney and the student pilgrims were invited to participate. Information letters regarding the research study were sent to both the student pilgrims and their parent/guardian (Appendix C & D). Participation in the research study for school-aged pilgrims was confirmed with the completion of a consent form (Appendix E). Pilgrims were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Adult pilgrims, including: chaplains, teachers, support staff, school and system leaders were also invited to participate in the empirical research.

Participation in the *purposive sample* followed the same process for both World Youth Day Madrid and Rio de Janeiro.

In addition to the *purposive sample* the researcher identified the need for a *snowball sample*. The *snowball sample* consisted of pilgrims, both adult and school-aged, from the broader Australian delegation. Typically, these pilgrims travelled to World Youth Day with either, a parish group, diocesan group, ethnic group, university group, youth movement (charism related) or ecclesial movement. Historically, this reflected the demographic profile of Australian participation at World Youth Day.

Snowball sampling, sometimes referred to as *network* or *chain referral sampling* is a multistage technique that relies upon the multiplier effect (Neuman, 2003). The *snowball sampling* allows people who have been contacted directly by the researcher to nominate other people to be included in the sample for the research project. Typically, they would nominate people who meet conditions related to the research or who they feel could contribute meaningfully (Denscombe, 2010).

The researcher found that the *snowball sampling* was very appropriate for the World Youth Day context as strong social networks were developed during the experience of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages. Group Leaders, who were the initial point of contact, soon became aware of people who could contribute meaningfully to the research.

Although many of the Australian pilgrims were clustered in major metropolitan cities, the delegation consisted of people from every state and territory, including extremely remote parts of Australia. *Snowball sampling* was used by the researcher to involve a broad cross-section of pilgrims. This included:

- pilgrim group leaders;
- pilgrims who had been to multiple World Youth Days;
- pilgrims who had never been to an international World Youth Day;
- pilgrims from a range of the groups, and
- pilgrims from a range of locations, including rural and remote parts of Australia.

Snowball sampling was only used during the post-World Youth Day research. The researcher commenced the sample with a small number of group coordinators from across Australia, who in turn referred potential participants back to the researcher. The new participants were then asked to nominate further people who might be included in the sample. The multiplier effect was very successful and the number of participants accumulated very quickly.

Although often used in qualitative research, the researcher utilised the *snowball sampling* in both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Given the diverse localities of the participants, the interviews were limited in number. The *snowball sampling* was used effectively to engage participants in the quantitative research method. After the initial contact, the researcher provided each potential participant with a weblink to a web-based questionnaire. On occasions the researcher was contacted independently by pilgrims who had become aware of the research and wished to participate.

As with the *purposive sample*, the *snowball sample* was exploratory in nature and served to test assumptions and generate new insights. With the *snowball sample* the researcher wished to explore:

- the (religious, social, emotional) impact of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages, identifying which experiences were perceived to have had the greatest effect and
- the degree of convergence and difference between its data set and that of the *purposive sample*.

Table 2.3

Australian World Youth Day Pilgrims, Madrid 2011

* The table represents pilgrims who travelled with Harvest Australia only. It is estimated that total pilgrim numbers were approximately 3,500 with the inclusion of the Neocatechumenal Way and groups who travelled to World Youth Day independently.

STATE	DIOCESE/ GROUP	# PILGRIMS
ACT	Canberra-Goulburn	38
NSW	Armidale/ Lismore	43
NSW	Bathurst	25
NSW	Broken Bay	116
NSW	Lismore	46
NSW	Maitland-Newcastle	31
NSW	Parramatta	286
NSW	Sydney	475
NSW	Wagga Wagga	74
NSW	Wollongong	58
NSW	Sydney Catholic Schools	524
QLD	Brisbane	52
QLD	Queensland Combined	95
QLD	Rockhampton	15
QLD	Townsville	53
SA	Adelaide	27
VIC	Ballarat	33

STATE	DIOCESE/ GROUP	# PILGRIMS
VIC	Melbourne	224
VIC	Sale	41
VIC	Sandhurst	56
WA	Broome/ NATSIC	28
WA	Bunbury	46
WA	Perth	145
NT	Darwin	54
TAS	Hobart	38
National	ACU	87
National	Antioch Youth Movement	35
National	Augustinian Youth NSW	21
National	Dominican Schools	34
National	Emmanuel Community	29
National	Families Group	17
National	Immaculata Community	32
National	MAGIS/Jesuit	28
National	Oblate Schools	24
National	Oblates	27
National	Pan Aust Chinese Community	26
National	Salvatorians	47
National	Vincentians NSW	25
National	TOTAL PILGRIM NUMBERS	3055

Table 2.4

Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrim Contingent, Madrid

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percentage
Male	44	207	251	47.9
Female	45	228	273	52.1
Total	89	435	524	
Percent	17.0	83.0		100.0

Table 2.5*World Youth Day Research Participants, Madrid*

Sydney Catholic Schools: <i>Purposive Sample</i>		
Method	Timeframe	# of participants
Pre-World Youth Day questionnaire	June 2011 – July 2011	454
Pre-World Youth Day interview	June 2011 – August 2011	61
Post-World Youth Day questionnaire	August 2011 – December 2011	282
Post-World Youth Day interview	August 2011 – December 2011	101
General Population: <i>Snowball Sample</i>		
Method	Timeframe	# of participants
Post-World Youth Day questionnaire	August 2011 – December 2011	380
Post-World Youth Day interview	August 2011 – December 2011	10

Table 2.6*Australian World Youth Day Pilgrims, Rio de Janeiro 2013*

* The table represents pilgrims who travelled with Harvest Australia only. It is estimated that total pilgrim numbers were approx. 1,750 with the inclusion of the Neocatechumenal Way, the Catholic Education Office Melbourne and groups who travelled to World Youth Day independently.*

STATE	DIOCESE/ GROUP	# PILGRIMS
ACT	Canberra-Goulburn	14
NSW	Bathurst	11
NSW	Broken Bay	32
NSW	Maitland-Newcastle	28
NSW	Parramatta & Armidale	21
NSW	Parramatta	224
NSW	Sydney	198
NSW	Wollongong	21
NSW	Sydney Catholic Schools	328

STATE	DIOCESE/ GROUP	# PILGRIMS
QLD	Brisbane	34
QLD	Brisbane Catholic Schools	22
QLD	Mt Isa Catholic Schools	23
SA	Adelaide/Port Pirie	17
SA	Vietnamese Community	28
VIC	Victoria Combined	157
WA	Perth	71
NT	Darwin	16
TAS	Hobart	11
National	ACU	41
National	Antioch	19
National	Oblates	13
National	Maronites	26
National	TOTAL PILGRIM NUMBERS	1,355

Table 2.7

Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrim Contingent, Rio de Janeiro

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percentage
Male	40	124	164	50.0
Female	29	135	164	50.0
Total	69	259	328	
Percent	21.0	79.0		100.0

Table 2.8

World Youth Day Research Participants, Rio de Janeiro

Sydney Catholic Schools: Purposive Sample		
Method	Timeframe	# of participants
Pre-World Youth Day questionnaire	May 2013 – June 2013	306
Pre-World Youth Day interview	May 2013 – August 2013	29

Post-World Youth Day questionnaire	July 2013 – December 2013	292
Post-World Youth Day interview	July 2013 – December 2013	54
General Population: <i>Snowball Sample</i>		
Method	Timeframe	# of participants
Post-World Youth Day questionnaire	July 2013 – December 2013	185
Post-World Youth Day interview	July 2013 – December 2013	10

2.4.2 Questionnaires

Questionnaires have been widely used by researchers to gather a range of data from a large number of respondents. Questionnaires are well suited to the collection of mass data and have the potential to provide a panoramic view as well as detailed and specific information. As a research tool, they can gather both quantitative and qualitative data and are “are frequently used in educational research to describe attitudes, beliefs, opinions” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.36). Historically, questionnaires were designed with an emphasis on quantitative data which could be analysed in numerically adjusted formats (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1984). For this purpose, questionnaire items typically use a scale such as the Likert scale (Walliman, 2006). This method was traditionally preferred by social researchers who wanted factual information as it was considered that data analysis and interpretation could be made with a high level of reliability.

Research methods have diversified in recent years, and this has largely been a result of the growing acceptance and use of qualitative methods as a legitimate research model (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Charmaz, 1994). Increasingly, questionnaires are now designed to include the qualitative approach through the use of open ended questions which call for extended responses.

The questionnaires used in this research study were designed to gather both

quantitative and qualitative data.

2.4.3 Instrumentation: The Design and Development of the Questionnaires

Questionnaires were chosen as a method for this research study because it potentially involved large numbers of people in many different locations across Australia. The advantages of this method are highlighted by Denscombe (2010), and include: the relatively low cost in terms of materials, money and time; the ease of arrangement when compared to other ‘time intensive’ methods; the use of standardized questions; the use of pre-coded answers and data accuracy (p.169).

Careful consideration was given to the design and development of the questionnaires. Johnson and Christensen (2004) identified fifteen principles of questionnaire construction that assist in the validity of the instrument and the reliability of the data obtained (pp. 165-178). These principles were followed, as was the checklist developed by Denscombe (2010, p.171).

There are a number of issues that can impact on the validity of data gathered through questionnaires. Some issues specifically relate to the clarity of the survey items and their interpretation by respondents. Questionnaires should avoid ambiguous wording, technical jargon, vague or leading questions, and phrases which might cause offence.

Precision in the use of language is important because an underlying assumption of the questionnaire is that respondents will be able read and understand the items. A further assumption is that “respondents will answer the questions honestly” (Wolf, 1997, p.422). The reliability of the data can be challenged if the social climate does not allow full and honest answers or where there is a likelihood of non-response bias in the population sample.

As a way of addressing the issue of clarity and suitability of language, a preliminary draft of each of the questionnaires used in this research study was reviewed by several academics familiar with the research field and by Educational Assessment Australia at the University of New South Wales.

Refinements were made to the ordering of the questions, as well as to the language used. Following this process, a trial of each of the questionnaires was conducted with a group of school-aged students and a group of young adults. Each trial involved approximately 25 people and helped identify potential problems and issues with administration, length and language. Following this preliminary testing, and the subsequent feedback, each questionnaire was modified in order to enhance its design – including question ordering, style and overall clarity of expression.

Both the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires were designed to be self-administered (Robson, 1993). The majority of items in each questionnaire required respondents to select from a five point summated or Likert scale (de Vaus, 1990; Robson, 1993). Although three different continuous scales were used in the questionnaires it was considered that the standardised format would assist respondents in being familiar with the mode of selecting their responses and in interpreting and completing the requirements of the questions. The repeated use of the five point summated scale could also potentially reduce the strain felt by respondents, especially in completing a lengthy questionnaire.

Each of the questionnaires also included items that sought personal factual information as well as some items relating to opinions and practices. Open-ended questions were included at the end of each questionnaire, allowing “participants to respond in any way they please[d]” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 168), and to express themselves in their own words. It is considered that the use of use of open-ended questions can gather richer and more in-depth data from the participants.

2.4.4 Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaires

Both pre-World Youth Day questionnaires (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro) were distributed as postal surveys (Appendix F). The method of self-administered questionnaires (Robson, 1993; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) was used as a means of gathering data in a very short period of time. The questionnaires were designed in light of the *Total Design Method* (Dillman, 1978), with

particular attention given to suggested approaches for increasing participation (Babbie, 1990; Sudman & Bradburn, 1983). Careful consideration was given to the length of the questionnaires. Although social researchers often prefer longer questionnaires because they are more cost effective and can allow for the triangulation of data, it was decided that both questionnaires would be restricted to 4 pages, which is considered appropriate for a sample population where the characteristics of respondents are unknown (Neuman, 2000).

The pre-World Youth Day questionnaires (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro) were distributed to the *purposive sample* via Catholic secondary schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney. Each of the registered pilgrims received an information letter and a pre-addressed and pre-paid return envelope with the questionnaire. School-aged pilgrims also received an information letter for their parent/guardian and the relevant consent forms. Completed questionnaires were to be returned the researcher. Pilgrims who had questions about the questionnaire or the research study itself were encouraged to contact the researcher or the principal supervisor. Each pilgrim was provided with the relevant contact details.

Both pre-World Youth Day questionnaires were structured to include:

- section one: personal information;
- section two: background information regarding World Youth Day and general religious practice;
- section three: feelings about going to World Youth Day;
- section four: levels of importance attributed to World Youth Day events;
- section five: open ended questions.

The information gathered in sections 1-2 of both questionnaires was collected by the use of tick boxes, or space for a written response. A five point Likert rating scale was used for each stem-item in sections 3-4. In section 3, the most commonly used scale of 'strongly disagree – strongly agree' was used by participants in response to individual stem items,

whereas in section 4 respondents used a variant of the scale to indicate the level of importance they attached to the individual events of World Youth Day, (most unimportant, unimportant, neutral, important, very important).

The use of the Likert Scales was appropriate for the questionnaires because they are commonly used by researchers wanting to measure how individuals think or feel about something. This is sometimes referred to as the “hardness or potency of feelings” (Neuman, 2000, p.180).

Careful consideration was given to the stem items and the particular scales used in the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires, both during the design and trial phases. The creation of rating scales and attitude measures is according to Grosf and Sardy (1985) “a particularly difficult and delicate enterprise and requires a great deal of careful thought” (p.163).

Both pre-World Youth Day questionnaires (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro) were distributed with the intention of gathering data from the *purposive sample* within a relatively short period of time. Neuman (2000) suggests that with postal surveys “most questionnaires are returned within two weeks but others trickle in up to two months later” (p.272). In an attempt to maximise the response rate and to have a short turnaround time the researcher utilised and adapted the four-phase administration process suggested by Salant and Dillman (1994). This process involves advance notice to the sample population prior to the distribution of the survey, the questionnaire itself, a simple reminder to the entire population sample within the first week and a personalised follow-up with all non-respondents (Cresswell, 2009).

Although the proportion of people who respond to postal surveys is generally quite low (Denscombe, 2010; Bailey, 1987), this was not the case with either of the pre-World Youth Day questionnaires. The high rate of return may well have resulted from the use of the four-phase administration process, which according to Dillman (2007) can raise the response rate to as high as 70 per cent.

2.4.5 Post-World Youth Day Questionnaires

The post-World Youth Day surveys (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro) were designed to be web-based questionnaires administered online. This was the preferred mode of delivery over other internet options, which included an email questionnaire or questionnaire by attachment, as well as traditional survey modes including; postal surveys, telephone surveys and face to face surveys. Although postal surveys and internet questionnaires have similar response rates research suggests that the online mode is the preferred option for respondents (Dillman, 2007), especially with younger generations who are increasingly familiar with online survey instruments (Sue & Ritter, 2007). It was felt that this might minimise the non-response bias of the *purposive sample*.

The web-based questionnaire was the preferred mode of delivery for a number of reasons, which included:

- the questionnaires were custom made, designed as a web page and located on a host site;
- the questionnaires were attractive and incorporated features generally associated with a web page (buttons, dropdown options, frames);
- data was able to be gathered and recorded instantly and accurately upon the 'submit' directive by respondents;
- as the questionnaires were located on a host site potential participants generally had unrestricted access, only requiring access to the internet, and
- the respondents had the option of saving responses and returning to the questionnaire at a later time.

The web-based questionnaire was a particularly appropriate mode of delivery for the *snowball sample*, as participants were located throughout Australia. It was considered that the web-based questionnaire was the most cost-effective and time efficient way of gathering the data and of assuring wide and inclusive coverage.

The technical design and development of the web-based questionnaires was co-ordinated by the Staff ICT/Web Projects consultant at the Australian Catholic University, who gave particular attention to the visual appeal of the questionnaire, as well as to the ease with which it was to be administered (accessed, completed and returned). According to Denscombe (2010), these factors can have a significant bearing on the response rates to internet surveys, as does the nature and frequency of communication with potential respondents (p.21).

Both the *purposive* and *snowball samples* received detailed information about the web-based questionnaires, especially within the context of this research project. This information was distributed well in advance of the launch of the web-based questionnaire and was communicated through:

- Catholic Secondary Schools in the Archdiocese of Sydney;
- publications developed by the National World Youth Day Projects Officer and the National Youth Ministry Projects Officer (Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life);
- publications developed by Harvest Australia, the official World Youth Day Tour Operator, and
- the National Briefing Days for Pilgrim Group Coordinators.

The *purposive sample* and the *snowball sample* were advised of the nature, purpose, timeline and scope of the research project and provided with a hypertext link to the web-based questionnaire. As participation in the research project was both voluntary and anonymous, there was no avenue of systematic follow-up to non-respondents. Instead, both sample groups were given periodic reminders about the research project and invited to participate prior to the deadline.

Although Dillman (2007) suggested that younger people preferred online modes for the completion of surveys, the researcher found that this was generally not the case with the completion of the post-World Youth Day questionnaire by the *purposive sample*. 49.8% of student pilgrims completed the web-based questionnaire post-Madrid. This compared to a

return rate of 92.2% of student pilgrims for the pre-Madrid questionnaire. In light of the response rate of student pilgrims, the researcher decided to use postal surveys with the *purposive sample* for the post-Rio de Janeiro research.

Although both of the post-World Youth Day questionnaires (Appendix G) were lengthy survey instruments, each was divided into distinct sections to make the questionnaire more manageable and less psychologically burdensome for participants. Each of the questionnaires was structured to include:

- section one: personal information;
- section two: World Youth Day, background information;
- section three: feelings about the World Youth day experience;
- section four: Spiritual and Religious aspects of the World Youth day experience;
- section five: the experience of pilgrimage;
- section six: elements of World Youth Day;
- section seven: levels of personal satisfaction with the World Youth Day events;
- section eight: two open ended questions;
- section nine: optional section for respondents who have been pilgrims at previous World Youth Days. This section included questions which used a rating scale and an open ended question.

The information gathered in sections 1-2 was collected by the use of tick boxes, or space for a written response. A five point Likert rating scale was used for each stem- item in sections 3-6 in which respondents reported “on their agreement or disagreement with the statement provided by the researcher in the item stem” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p.171). Opportunity was given in section 7 for respondents to indicate their level of personal satisfaction with the various events at World Youth Day using the five point scale of; most unrewarding, unrewarding, neutral, rewarding and very rewarding.

2.4.6 Interviews

Although interviews can be used for the purpose of collecting factual information they are more typically suited to and used for the exploration of complex or multilayered matters. “When researchers need to gain into such things as people’s opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences, then interviews will almost certainly provide a method that is attuned to the intricacy of the subject matter” (Denscombe , 2010, p.174).

Interviews were appropriate for this research study which used a mixed methods approach. Qualitative researchers are interested in the meaning individuals attach to their experiences. As a method commonly used in qualitative research (Mason, 2002) interviews allow interviewees to describe events as part of the process of meaning- making and change (Martella, Marchand-Martella & Nelson, 1999) and they “provide access to the meanings that people attribute to their experiences and social worlds” (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p.133).

2.4.7 The Design and Conduct of Interviews

Both the pre and post-World Youth Day interviews were planned and conducted as semi-structured one to one interviews (Berg, 1989; Leech, 2002; Robson, 1993). While following a suggested pattern of questions and issues, the semi structured model allows flexibility, both to the interviewer and interviewee. The interviewer may add further questions or seek clarification, whereas the interviewee may choose to elaborate in detail in response to some questions and even raise other points of interest.

The interviews (ix H) were designed to include questions which would depth the information available to the researcher from the questionnaires, and allow for the possibility of triangulation through the convergence of data through the mixed methods approach (interviews & questionnaires). The questions were selected in light of the principal aims of the research study. Maxwell (2005) noted that “your research questions formulate what you want to understand; your interview questions are what you ask people in order to gain that understanding” (Maxwell, 2005, p.92).

The selection of interviewees corresponded to the population samples used with the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires, except on a smaller scale. Interviews were conducted with the *purposive sample* both pre and post-World Youth Day but only with the *snowball sample* post-World Youth Day.

The interviews with the *purposive sample* were generally conducted in schools. Organisationally, this was facilitated by an authority of the particular school coordinating the schedule of interviews beforehand. Some interviews were conducted at the Leichhardt office of Sydney Catholic Schools.

The interviews with the *snowball sample* were conducted in a number of locations, including: universities, seminaries, parish and diocesan offices. Alternatively, they were arranged for a time and place of mutual convenience. Some of the interviews with the *snowball sample* were conducted over the phone and several were conducted in Melbourne.

Bailey (2007) suggests that where possible it is important to pre-screen the location of interviews. Given the large number of interviewees, and the diversity of locations, this was not always possible. In many instances the researcher was in contact with the relevant institution beforehand so as to arrange a suitable location, one which would be free of, or have low level background noise. Suitable locations were places which were less likely to have the interruption of telephones, or the movement or gathering of people.

Prior to the conduct of the semi-structured interview, time was allowed for a general introduction in which the nature and purpose of the interview and the research study was explained to the interviewee. Additionally, an important aspect of this introduction was the researcher's effort to establish an initial rapport with the interviewee. This often took the form of the interviewer asking general questions relating to the interviewee's work or study. The questions were unrelated to World Youth Day. On occasions the interviewer shared information about himself, mindful that "a good

interview begins not with questions, but with the care and nurturance of the relationship between the researcher and the person being interviewed” (Bailey, 2007, p.104).

The researcher endeavoured to maintain a positive social relationship throughout the interviews, one marked by common courtesies, trust and openness (Mason, 2002; Marhsall & Rossman, 2006), aware that this can influence the responses given by interviewees, “who are under no obligation to talk” (Bailey, 2007, p.105).

Interviewees were free to ask for a break, thinking time, or a question to be repeated. Generally, this did not occur and most interviews ran uninterrupted.

The interviews were conducted from an interpretivist perspective whereby the researcher listened to the responses of the interviewees, noting their particular perceptions of World Youth Day in light of their own life circumstances, including their personal values and religious practice. While the semi-structured interview process allows “both parties to explore the meaning of the questions and answers involved” (Brenner, Brown and Canter, 1985, p. 3), the interviews were largely directed by the researcher (Oppenheim, 1992), who is central to the success or weakness of the interview process (Patton, 2002). In guiding the direction of the interview, the researcher was conscious that he “leads the subject towards certain themes but not to certain opinions about these themes” (Kvale, 1996, p.34).

The interviewer was responsible for the direction and tempo of the interview, controlling the time given to particular questions and determining whether follow up questions were required for clarification or greater detail. The interviewer had to remain focused and attentive, skills which can influence the richness of the data which is collected (Gillham, 2000). Rubin and Rubin (1995) note that while the intensity of listening will vary from interview to interview, it is particularly important to “pay attention to the symbols and metaphors with which people describe their worlds” (p.8).

The interviews were recorded on a mini-digital recorder and then transferred to a private computer of the researcher, from which they would be transcribed. The recordings were also transferred to disk in case this sound-file was corrupted. These disks were securely stored in the office of the principal supervisor. Once this double copy had been made, all interviews held on the digital recorder were deleted in order to make space for further interviews.

In keeping with the parallel mixed methods design, the interviews were conducted concurrently with both the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires. An aim of these interviews was to follow up a range of issues raised in the previous qualitative and quantitative data analysis. These interviews therefore were an example of explanatory research (de Vaus, 1990).

The principal aim for conducting the interviews three-six months after the event was to assess whether the feelings generated by World Youth Day dissipated over time or remained constant. The ‘time factor’ would also help create a “pure interview – enacted in a sterilized environment” (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p.131). Silverman (2011) proposed that a sense of romanticism can itself negate objectivity. In relation to this particular study, the researcher concluded that the time between the event and the interview may reduce the likelihood of a romanticised view of the event by the interviewee and may generate “data which gives an authentic insight into people’s experiences” (Silverman, 2011, p.xx).

The pre and post-World Youth Day interviews were designed and conducted so that when the qualitative data was analysed there would be evidence of “the nature of the phenomenon under investigation ... as well insights into the cultural frames people use to make sense of these experiences” (Miller & Glassner, 2011, p.137). Combined, these offer important insights for the interpretivist paradigm

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

2.5.1 Questionnaires (Quantitative Data) – Analysis of Descriptive Statistics

The statistical and stem-item data of the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires were entered into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) database (Norusis, 2011; Argyrous, 2011). All questionnaires were coded, giving order to the raw data and enabling the grouping and synthesis of similar responses.

The tools of the SPSS package were used to produce a range of statistical tables and cross-tabulations of the numerical data. The package was used to produce descriptive statistics and to enable higher order statistical analysis.

The descriptive statistics provided the first level of interpretation of the empirical data from the questionnaires. These statistics, which include frequency distribution, mean, median, standard deviation and percentages, enable researchers to not only check reliability of the data, but to “describe, summarise or make sense” of it (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p. 434). General conclusions were drawn from these descriptive statistics, which highlighted key areas requiring further and higher order analysis.

2.5.2 Higher Order Statistical Analyses

T-tests and cross-tabulations were performed on the 30 pre-World Youth Day questionnaire items and the 44 post-World Youth Day questionnaire items, testing for significant differences in mean scores according to age (17 years of age and below & 18 years of age and above), gender, and the particular World Youth Day in question (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro). Levene’s Test of Equality of Variances tested the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

After initially using the five cell options to analyse the data, Fisher’s collapsed ‘2 x 2 T-test’ was then applied. This process created tables with only the two categories of Agree and Disagree. Crosstabulations were used to show the relationship between the pairs’ variables.

With the post-World Youth Day questionnaire, differences in responses of multiple subgroups related to age, religiosity and travel cohorts were investigated through one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). In instances where statistically significant mean differences were identified, a Scheffe post hoc test was used for examining differences between the sub-groups. Scheffe is the most conservative of the post hoc tests (Rafter, Abell & Braselton, 2002). The Turkey HSD post hoc test was used when the sample sizes were not equal.

A Factor Analysis was used to investigate coherent patterns of response to the post-World Youth Day questionnaire. Through data reduction it sought to identify “patterns of correlation among items to generate a new set of variables called factors” (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p.316).

Factor analysis is considered to be an appropriate method for analysing and interpreting self-reporting questionnaires (Bryant, Yarnold & Nicholson, 1999), such as the ones deployed in the research study. While researchers do not have a consistent view about the sample size required, Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) suggested that a minimum of 300 was necessary. Comfrey and Lee (1992, p.217) suggested that 300 was good, 500 – very good and 1,000 or more was excellent. The post-World Youth Day research involved 1,139 participants.

Principal Components Analysis (PCA), a default method of extraction in SPSS was used. Some researchers and statisticians have suggested that it is conceptually different to factor analysis (Floyd & Widaman, 1995), because in their view it fails to accurately identify latent variables, and “doesn’t discriminate between shared and unique variance” (Costello & Osborne, 2005, p.2).

Other statisticians have attested to the validity of Principal Components Analysis as a statistical methodology (Velicer & Jackson, 1990), consistent with its extensive use in social research.

As a statistical method, the Principal Components Analysis summarises “the underlying patterns of correlation and [looks] for clumps or groups of

closely related items” (Pallant, 2007, p.102). Through this process, it can help test and validate the assumptions and theoretical constructs that informed the design of the research questionnaire. As noted by McIver and Carmines (1981, p.15) “it is very unlikely that a single item can fully represent a complex theoretical concept or any specific attribute for that matter ... their degree of validity, accuracy, and reliability is often unknowable”

To assess the validity and reliability of the post-World Youth Day questionnaire, as clusters of items not as individual items, the Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each of the five clusters (social/emotional dynamics; spiritual/religious dynamics; pilgrimage; key elements of World Youth Day; World Youth Day events and activities). Cronbach's Alpha is a coefficient of reliability. As a measure of internal consistency it measured how closely related each set of items were as a group (cluster), not as individual items.

The guidelines for interpretation of the results were taken from George and Mallery (2003, p.231) in appraising the Cronbach alpha as registered in fractions of 1. Their guide is as follows: “ $\alpha > .9$ – Excellent, $\alpha > .8$ – Good, $\alpha > .7$ – Acceptable, $\alpha > .6$ – Questionable, $\alpha > .5$ – Poor and $\alpha < .5$ – Unacceptable”.

2.5.3 Questionnaires (Qualitative Data)

The responses to the question items requiring comments were typed up as a word document and then placed within a table for analysis. In addition to information relating to age, gender and the particular World Youth Day, the table consisted of the three columns. The first column contained the verbatim text. The second column was used to record key words and phrases, and the third was used for coding and category analysis. As the purpose of the third column was for axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2005) it was modified throughout the period of data analysis. By its very nature, focused coding creates broader, higher order categories that subsume multiple initial codes (Bailey, 2007).

The qualitative data detailed in the third column was analysed statistically to provide quantitative data. The coded categories were totalled and attributed as a percentage, enabling the researcher to obtain a measure of frequency for each category.

This information is included in the tables in Chapter Six. The tables detail the category, number of responses, and the percentage of total responses.

2.5.4 Interviews

Both the pre and post-World Youth Day interviews were subject to content and conceptual analysis (Mayring, 2000; Weber, 1990). This process involved transcribing all interviews, and within each, noting and classifying particular concepts/themes and their frequency within the text. Although the process was time consuming and difficult to automate, it provided a rich source of data in which patterns and themes were identified on an individual and collective basis (Glesne, 2006; Holloway & Jefferson, 2013).

Two specific processes were used in the analysis of the qualitative data; coding and memoing, which have been described by Bailey (2007) as “iterative processes to remind the researcher about impressions and intuitions developed during the data collection” (p.133).

Coding, which has a principal aim of categorizing data (Flick, 2006), was necessary given the very large amount of data that had to be analysed. The creation of categories means that data can be easily retrieved (Bailey, 2007) and interpreted (Mason, 2002).

The process of coding began with the very first interviews. This initial consideration of the data has been described Layder (1998) as a process of ‘pre-coding’, where researchers become aware of the potential of the data they have gathered. In making analytical choices about what material to note and use, segmenting the data and applying codes for the first time researchers “begin inductively to create a local coding schema, a specific way to see and understand the phenomena” (Silverman, 2011, p.280). As noted by Silverman, the coding schema which involves data selection, categorization and labelling, changes constantly during the life of a research

study as ongoing modifications and refinements are made.

Miles and Huberman (1994) assert that ‘data reduction’ is a critical aspect in the refinement of the coding schema as it “sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and organises data in such a way that ‘final’ conclusions can be drawn and verified” (p.10). The process of data reduction was necessary in the analysis of the interview transcripts.

Two forms of coding were used to analyse the qualitative data: initial (open) and focused (axial) (Bailey, 2007). Given the significant number of interviews being analysed, each at different stages of the World Youth Day experience, open coding was used extensively, especially in the preliminary stages of each series of interviews:

- pre-World Youth Day;
- post-World Youth Day (immediate – 6 months).

Open coding, which is a literal form of coding, was a time consuming process which involved word by word and line by line analysis (Silverman, 2011). The codes used in this process were single words or short sequences of words. The frequency of the codes helped in identifying commonalities and recurring themes, thus open-coding allowed for the segmentation of the data in the form of basic concepts (Flick, 2006).

Following the initial segmentation of the qualitative data the researcher, “developed progressively more abstract conceptual categories to synthesise, to explain and to understand the data” (Charmaz, 1995, p.28). The process of axial coding was used to sort the many literal codes into broader, more abstract categories. Literal codes were grouped according to general themes and issues, and the researcher established overarching connections and relationships between the different categories. The process of axial coding was necessary for an effective reporting of the qualitative data which had been collected.

The process of memoing was used to complement that of coding in gathering and analysing the data. The memos helped in identifying and refining the

major conceptual categories and drawing links between categories (Kamberalis & Dimitriadis 2005; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Memoing was a particularly useful method during the period of data collection for identifying emerging themes and ideas, some that required further clarification with participants. Memoing assisted in the process of developing open codes into the more abstract categories associated with axial coding. A key function of memoing was also to note concepts not mentioned during individual interviews and to highlight recurring themes in this regard for further analysis. The researcher made frequent use of all of the memos written during the research study, knowing that some of the memos did not have sufficient data to be validated at the time of writing and that with others information is only revealed “on a second or third look back” (Hesse-Biber, 2010, p.193).

2.6 LEGITIMISATION OF RESEARCH

The credibility of a research study is closely aligned to the verification of the research findings. This verification is generally associated with the concepts of validity and reliability (Neuman, 2003), which need to be assessed differently in each facet of a mixed methods approach (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

Denscombe (2011) suggested empirical studies needed to “demonstrate in some way or another that the findings are based on practices that are acknowledged to be the bases of good research” (p.297) in order to be viewed credibly. Just as the findings of a research project will be subject to scrutiny, so too will the role of the ‘researcher’ (Cresswell & Miller, 2000), who must “place a high premium on objectivity throughout the research process” (Hesse-200923Biber, 2010, p.85). This objectivity involves both the recording of observations and the interpretation of their meaning.

As noted by Lincoln and Guba (2000) the legitimation of research, and its ultimate trustworthiness, relates to the believability of the findings, which need to be plausible, credible and defensible (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Ultimately, “validity is not an inherent property of a particular

method, but pertains to the data, accounts or conclusions reached by using that method” (Maxwell, 1992, p.284). Throughout the research process priority was given to data triangulation. This process was enhanced by the fact that there were two collection periods and the data findings of the first period, both areas of convergence and difference, were able to inform the process used for the second data collection period.

Throughout the research period the researcher was aware that legitimisation did not result from a single measure but was a result of the many phases and activities of the entire research process (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). This research did not just involve

the mixed-methods empirical study but a detailed documentary analytical study, which provided further sources and data for the purpose of triangulation.

2.6.1 Quantitative Methods

Various strategies can be deployed to maximise the validity of data. Within the context of quantitative methodology it has been suggested by Denscombe (2010) that this can be achieved by ensuring that the data:

- has been recorded accurately;
- is appropriate for the purposes of the research investigations, and
- the explanations derived from the analysis are accurate (p.267).

Within this empirical study a number of measures were taken to strengthen the trustworthiness of the data. The researcher was mindful of a number of the internal and external threats (Creswell, 2008; Reichardt & Mark, 1998), and sought to minimise these through the instrument design, and the process of data collection. A priority of the data collection process was the anonymity of participants, which Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggested results in greater honesty, and therefore enhances the validity of the survey instrument.

Both the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires were trialled with an independent sample group to assess the administration, length and language of the survey. The questionnaire was also reviewed by people with

expert knowledge in the research field which supported the ‘theoretical validity’ (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) of the survey instruments. Each survey instrument was comprised of questions which represented well established ideas in the relevant literature as a means of establishing ‘interpretative validity’ (Wanden, 2010).

Johnson and Christensen (2004) identified a number of approaches to the maximisation of validity, including: construct validity; descriptive validity; interpretative validity and theoretical validity (p.249). These are applicable to both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

In 2012, the researcher sought to test the construct validity, descriptive validity, interpretative validity and theoretical validity of the quantitative data through a presentation on stage one (Madrid) of the research findings at the Annual Conference for the Association of the Sociology of Religion in Denver. A number of the international participants affirmed the view that the theoretical and interpretative schema aligned with the data, and was therefore “credible and defensible” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p.252).

2.6.2 Qualitative Methods

Although qualitative research can never be verified in the same way as quantitative research, the need for legitimisation is equally as significant (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Qualitative methods were used in the documentary analytical study, in the structured interviews and the open ended questions of the survey instruments. Within each context, the researcher endeavoured to minimise any bias in the data collection or analysis as the trustworthiness of a study relates to the validity of the processes that have been deployed to reach the conclusions made (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher was mindful of and followed the reliability steps suggested by Gibbs (2007) and a range of strategies recommended by Creswell (2009).

Kvale (1996) likened the interview to ‘prospecting’, where the interviewer is endeavouring to uncover the true facts and feelings residing within the

interviewee, and create an environment in which the interviewee would give the same reflections, even if in a different situation (Perakyla, 2011). The priority of the interviews was to listen to “the voice”, as the “meanings of the experiences are best given by the person who experienced them” (Denzin, 1989, p.25) and the stories themselves represent “how people create meaning out of events in their lives” (Chase, 2005, p.651).

The interviews were underpinned by interpretative and constructive processes. To this end, the researcher would often clarify the ‘intended meaning’ with the interviewee both during and after the end of the interview. While having transcriptions of all interviews the researcher would also regularly listen to the audio file, as each interview provided a re-immersion into each individual story. The time was taken to listen to “their tones, their words and in many cases their silences, for each of these also told a story” (Hatchman, 2013, p.45).

Mindful that interpretative and constructive processes are central to many qualitative methodologies, including interviews (Ely, Vinz, Anzul & Downing, 1997), the researcher endeavoured to ensure that there was a ‘clear chain of evidence’ between data collection and data interpretation so as to contribute to the overall trustworthiness of the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Such ‘audit trails’ use as much process information as possible to show how conclusions are reached (Seale, Gobo & Gubrium, 1999). This involved a detailed process of transcription, memoing and coding. The researcher also utilised the ‘words’ and ‘phrases’ of the interviewees themselves so as to contribute to a “rich, thick description to convey the findings” (Creswell, 2009).

Creswell (2009) identified the importance of presenting negative or discrepant information which may run counter to the theoretical construct of the research study or may contradict the prevailing findings, a view supported by Seale, Gobo and Gubrium (1999). Throughout the empirical study the researcher encountered ‘outliers’, who it has been argued test the generality of research findings (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Once ‘outliers’ have been identified, Miles & Huberman (1984) suggested the need to

verify “whether what is present in them is absent or different in other, more mainstream examples” (p.237). Through the data presentation and analysis, the researcher highlighted discrepant views within the *purposive sample*, between the *purposive sample* and the *snowball sample*, and between the *purposive sample* and data from the documentary, analytical study.

2.6.3 The Role of the Researcher

The legitimisation of research can be undermined by perceptions of researcher bias (Glesne, 2006). It has been argued that all researchers have pre-existing assumptions (Elliot, 2005) and that there is a tendency to find evidence in the data that confirms the researcher’s opinions (Wanden, 2010). The researcher had a personal and professional interest in the field of study and was mindful of adopting a strategy of ‘reflexivity’, whereby there was regular “self-reflection about ... potential biases and predispositions” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p.249).

Kvale (1996) suggested the principal role of the researcher was to assist the participants to explore their experiences without imposing personal biases and interpretations. This was particularly relevant to the interpretative and constructive processes of the qualitative methodology where the researcher regularly cross-checked with the interviewee about the interpretation of the pilgrim’s voice.

2.7 POSSIBLE LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

Within the overall scope of the research design and methodology a number of potential limiting factors were identified by the researcher.

2.7.1 Sample Participation

One limitation of this research study arose from the research design. The *snowball sample* was only used in the post-World Youth Day research. It was not able to be used in the pre-World Youth Day research because many of the pilgrim groups were not finalised until just prior to departure. As a

result, the *purposive sample* cannot be compared to another sample group in regards to why people are motivated to go to World Youth Day. This also means that no ‘before and after’ comparisons can be made with the *snowball sample*.

2.7.2 Timing of Data Collection

Qualitative research is sometimes associated with the intensive study of a relatively small number of subjects, which often results in questions about the representative nature of the study (Denscombe, 2010). Although *purposive samples* and *snowball samples* are not intended to be representative, the researcher had hoped to interview a significant number of World Youth Day pilgrims as a means of strengthening the overall data triangulation.

The pre-World Youth Day interviews were conducted in the three months prior to departure. The post-World Youth Day interviews were conducted in the six months after pilgrims returned to Australia. This time-frame was necessary to accommodate the interviewees. In some circumstances, the time-frame may have influenced the re-telling of the experience. Some pilgrims had just arrived back in Australia and may still have been emotionally charged by the experience, whereas others may have had time for reflection and de-briefing. Prior to World Youth Day the researcher noticed that the level of excitement and interest was more intense in the interviews close to departure. The researcher monitored the tone of interviews and was able to track when they occurred in the overall time frame via the numeric coding system that was applied. All transcripts were dated also.

The extensive time-frame highlighted the question of reliability outlined by Denscombe (2010), i.e. “would the research instrument produce the same results on different occasions” (p.298)?

In addition to the interviews, the web-based questionnaire, which was used for the post- World Youth Day quantitative research, could also be accessed for a period of five-six months. Notwithstanding the extended time-period,

over 90% of participants completed the survey within the first 21 days of its availability.

During the period of data analysis the researcher was mindful of how ‘timing’ may influence the nature of the response.

2.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research study adhered to all of the ethical protocols required by the Australian Catholic University. Ethics approval was obtained from the Australian Catholic University Research Project Ethics Committee. As noted in 2.1, approval for the empirical study was also granted by the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. The involvement of individual school-aged pilgrims also required the permission parents and/or guardians.

All research participants, whether in the *purposive sample* or *snowball sample*, received detailed information regarding the nature and purposes of the project and were advised that their participation was totally voluntary, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. All participants were guaranteed privacy and confidentiality and the process of data collection safeguarded individual anonymity (Berg, 2004; Glesne, 2006). Questionnaire responses and audio files were coded numerically. All empirical research data, including audio files and transcripts, have been securely stored at the university.

Involvement in the research study provided participants with an opportunity to reflect on their perceptions, understandings and experiences of World Youth Day. The process may well have enabled personal growth and a development of insights for some as a result of their involvement. This ‘reciprocity’ is consistent the epistemological framework which underpinned the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Glesne, 2006).

2.9 SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the epistemological and theoretical perspectives that underpinned the design and methodological considerations of this study. It also provided an overview of the documentary analytical study and the

empirical research. Within the context of the empirical research, the chapter described the process for identifying the research samples, the development of the research instruments, and the processes for data collection.

While detailing the strategies that were implemented to strengthen the validity and reliability of the data, the chapter also identifies the known limitations within the research study.

Table 2.9

Summary of the Stages of the Research Study Process

Exploratory phase	Step 1	Initial inquiry and development of the research questions	
	Step 2	Mapping of the theoretical framework	
	Step 3	Scoping of the literature	
Document analysis phase	Step 4	Review of literature and research related to World Youth Day	
	Step 5	Identification of key themes to be explored in the research project	
Research design phase	Step 6	Development and trial of pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires (Madrid)	Development of questions for the semi-structured interviews (pre and post-World Youth Day, Madrid)
Data collection phase	Step 8	Distribution and collection of questionnaire pre-World Youth Day (Madrid)	Conduct of pre-World Youth Day interviews (Madrid)
	Step 9	Completion of online questionnaire post-World Youth Day (Madrid)	Conduct of post-World Youth Day interviews (Madrid)
Data analysis phase (initial)	Step 10	Recording and analysis of the quantitative data from the pre and post questionnaires using SPSS (v.13). Higher order statistical and factor analysis.	Content and conceptual analysis of the pre and post interviews using through coding and memoing. Coding and analysis of qualitative data from the written responses to the questionnaires.

Research design review	Step 11	Review the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires (Rio de Janeiro) in light of the quantitative data from Madrid.	Review the questions for the semi-structured interviews (pre and post-World Youth Day, Rio de Janeiro) in light of the qualitative data from Madrid.
Data collection phase	Step 12	Distribution and collection of questionnaire pre-World Youth Day (Rio de Janeiro)	Conduct of pre-World Youth Day interviews (Rio de Janeiro)
Data analysis and reporting phase	Step 13	Recording and analysis of the quantitative data from the pre and post questionnaires (Rio de Janeiro) using SPSS (v.13). Higher order statistical and factor analysis.	Content and conceptual analysis of the pre and post interviews (Rio de Janeiro) using through coding and memoing. Coding and analysis of qualitative data from the written responses to the questionnaires.
	Step 14	Analysis of all quantitative data (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro)	Synthesis and analysis of all qualitative data (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro)
	Step 15	Comparison of quantitative and qualitative data Identification of key areas of convergence and difference	
	Step 16	Discussion and analysis of the research findings	
Concluding Phase	Step 17	Major conclusions regarding World Youth Day pilgrims' views, perceptions and reactions of the international gatherings. Recommendations for future research on World Youth Day.	

PART ONE

HISTORICAL / DOCUMENTARY / ANALYTICAL RESEARCH

This analytical/documentary part of the research study investigates the origins, purposes, development and history of World youth Day in its religious-cultural context. In addition, it reports a search of the research literature in psychology and sociology concerned with large group events to identify and bring into the discourse of religious education and World Youth Day elements that were judged to be relevant for interpreting the psychological and spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day.

The investigation and use of psychological and sociological theory for interpreting World Youth Day is consistent with the academic discipline of Religious Education, and the subset area of Youth Spirituality – where this research is located. A prominent feature of research in these areas is its inter-disciplinary focus.

This part of the study addresses the first two research questions/ areas of investigation noted in chapter 1 concerned with **Purposes, history and context** (chapter 3) and with the **Psychological dimensions of the World Youth Day experience** (Chapters 4 and 5)

In addition to its substantive contribution to World Youth Day research in its own right, the insights developed in this part provided a background that informed the development of the interview and questionnaire schedules for the empirical study in Part 2. In turn, the discourse developed in this part also informed the interpretation of the findings from Australian pilgrims' perceptions of World Youth Days in 2011 and 2013.

CHAPTER 3

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EMERGENCE & DEVELOPMENT OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY PHENOMENON

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Purposes, history and context

This chapter addresses specifically the first research question on **purposes, history and context** as noted in Chapter 1. Complementing and extending beyond the writings that have provided ‘piecemeal’ accounts of World Youth Day, this chapter sets out to develop a comprehensive account of its origins and purposes, with special attention given to the ecclesial/theological perspective, as well as to the socio-cultural-religious context. It examines the introduction, aims and historical development of World Youth Day, with a particular focus on the social and religious contexts underlying its establishment. Norman & Johnson (2011), suggested World Youth Day was “conceived through the prism of the so-called new evangelism” in an attempt to address “perceived problems within contemporary life ... materialism, relativism, and secularism” (p.372), and to counter the religious indifference of young people. World Youth Day was a response to a perceived growing religious vacuum in which faith was increasingly privatised, and a culture where individuals “could pick and choose from a wide arrangement of meaning systems” (Casanova, 2006, p.18).

Hence, the origins, purposes and expectations for World Youth Day can be understood within what Rossiter (2010, p.129) described as the “changing landscape of contemporary spirituality”. For this reason, the account of the origins of World Youth Day will be prefaced by an examination of the socio-cultural context that the international gathering

was supposed to address. In particular, the construct ‘cultural postmodernity’, and its impact on peoples’ religious beliefs and practices, especially in western societies, will be explored as a useful way of identifying and interpreting the socio-cultural background to the origins of World Youth Day.

This chapter will investigate how World Youth Day, as an expression of what Pope John Paul II called the ‘new evangelisation’, characterised an ‘evangelical renewal’ within the Catholic Church, and how it endeavoured to respond to the new social, cultural and religious realities of postmodernity. It will outline the core structure and history of the international gathering and it will analyse various perceptions of the event.

The last part of the chapter investigates what has been previously written about World Youth Day. It reviews earlier research on World Youth Day as well as the views of Church leaders. It also looks into the image of World Youth Day projected by the mainstream media.

Subsets of the principal research question 1 that are addressed in this chapter include:-

1. What is the core religious purpose of World Youth Day?
2. To what extent is World Youth Day an expression of the ‘new evangelisation’?
3. How has World Youth Day evolved and developed its key elements?
4. How does the wider Catholic Church view the objectives and outcomes of World Youth Day?
5. What are the core findings of previous research on World Youth Day?
6. How does the wider society, especially the media, view and represent World Youth Day?

3.2 THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS OF THE POSTMODERN ERA: THE BACKGROUND CONTEXT FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY

3.2.1 Introduction

The emergence of what has been termed ‘postmodernity’ in the latter half of the twentieth century (Lyotard, 1984/1979) has been used to help interpret and explain marked changes in religious beliefs and practices, especially in developed western societies. While there is no agreement between sociologists, philosophers and anthropologists as to the time of transition between modernity and postmodernity, some have pointed to the complex cultural shift and ‘revolution’ of the 1960’s as a defining moment (Arbuckle, 2013). According to Wuthnow (1976) the sharp decline in levels of religious commitment was connected to the “general counter-cultural unrest that preceded and accompanied it” (p.854).

World Youth Day was established in part as a response to the social, cultural and religious dynamics which came to characterise postmodernity. The event was “created to provide Catholic youth with an opportunity not only to explore the Catholic faith, but also to receive answers to the uncertainty and moral ambiguity that aspects of postmodernity are deemed to present” (Norman & Johnson, 2011, p.381).

This section does not provide an analysis of postmodernist philosophy. Rather, it briefly details the social and cultural characteristics of postmodernity so as to highlight the context within which World Youth Day was established and provide a background to the papal writings and messages associated with the event.

This section gives particular attention to the way in which cultural postmodernity has conditioned and influenced peoples’ religio-spiritual identity and outlook. This has been borne out in the emergence of a range of spiritualities, from what might be called a traditional religious spirituality through to what can be described as a secular, individualistic, subjective and self-reliant spirituality.

The examination of contemporary spiritualities is central to an informed understanding of World Youth Day as it provides a broad framework for identifying the religious/spiritual dispositions of pilgrims, understanding their motivations to attend the international gathering, and their interpretation of the event.

3.2.2 The Perspective of Cultural Postmodernity: An Interpretation of the Socio- Cultural Situation into which World Youth Day was Introduced

Cultural postmodernity has been associated with a range of ideologies, ‘isms’, and socio-cultural trends that have impacted upon the place and practice of religion. This impact has arisen from the “fragmentation, indeterminacy and intense distrust of all universal and ‘totalising’ discourses, [which] are the hallmark of postmodernist thought” (Harvey, 1989, p.9). Postmodernity is associated with the rejection of metanarratives, and the view that, “if universal and eternal truths exist at all, they cannot be specified” (Watson, 2014, p.508).

It was within this context that Pope John Paul II articulated the need for a ‘new evangelisation’, (1983) and conceptualised World Youth Day. In formally establishing World Youth Day, Pope John Paul II recognised that the Church faced significant challenges in respect to the inculturation of the Gospel, with multiple problems in terms of ideas, [a] cultural upsurge of pseudo-secularism and a growing suspicion within society that religion restricted personal freedom and identity (1985b).

Many of the challenges that Pope John Paul II referred to were socio-cultural, others religious, as postmodernity came to be characterised by relativism, nihilism, a fragmentation of “families and communities ... pluralistic social norms and beliefs ... and rampant individualism and consumerism”, especially in Western nations (Hodge, 2014, p.32). As with his predecessor, Pope Paul VI (1975, n.3), Pope John Paul II felt that evangelisation must not only seek to engage individuals but be directed towards cultures in order to regenerate them, and he believed evangelisation

could potentially “penetrate deeply into the social and cultural reality” (1988c, p.14).

A particular concern for Church leaders was that cultural postmodernity gave rise to uncertainties in personal knowledge and created doubts about the claims of religious truth. This tended to favour the construct ‘spiritual’ rather than ‘religious’, and this was evidenced in the “proliferation of any number of spiritualities” (Weigel, 2013, p.26). While this generally represented a number of variations on the human search for God, a number of the emerging spiritualities were secular in nature.

Cultural postmodernity’s inclination towards questioning and discontinuity inclined some people to dismiss tradition and history, and peoples’ hopes for the future were sometimes replaced by an acceptance of ephemerality. In turn, this can reinforce a pragmatic, existential ‘here-and-nowism’ that concentrates on a consumerist lifestyle and tends to eclipse any interest in the spiritual or religious. Church leaders have tried to use World Youth Day as a counter to many of the ideas that are considered to be characteristics of postmodernist thinking, especially the rejection of religious truths.

At World Youth Day XXIII, Pope Benedict challenged young people, “do not be fooled by those who see you as just another consumer in a market of undifferentiated possibilities, where choice itself becomes the good, novelty usurps beauty, and subjective experience displaces truth” (2008b).

In addition to promoting religious truths as ‘absolute truths’, Church leaders have also considered that there is a need to counter the rising secularism of postmodernity, which according to Pope Francis has tended to “reduce the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal” and given rise to an increase in relativism (2013d, n.64).

Although secularisation is multi-faceted in nature (Wallis & Bruce, 1992), its impact on western nations is associated with the diminishment of religion in public discourse and debate (Yamane, 1997); a looser affiliation with religious traditions and a weakening of adherence to religious authorities

(Crawford & Rossiter, 2006); the privatisation of religious beliefs (Maroney, 2008), and the reinterpretation of religious doctrine and dogma (Hill, 2004). Research suggests that the religiosity of young people in particular has been influenced by secularisation (Hughes, 2007; Mason, Singleton & Webber, 2007; Smith & Denton, 2005) and the relativism associated with it.

A number of sociologists have associated the overall decline in religiosity with the ‘secular paradigm’, arguing that religion “diminishes in social significance, becomes increasingly privatized and loses personal salience” (Bruce, 2002, p.30). The ‘secular paradigm’ in its purest form was premised on the notion of the eventual extinction of religion, a view that was contested (Martin, 1991, 2005; Stark, 1999; Stark & Finke, 2000). Perhaps the most significant critic of the ‘secular paradigm’ was Peter Berger, who had once been a strong advocate. Berger commented, “the world today, with some exceptions ... is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever” (1999, p.2).

In rejecting the ‘secular paradigm’, Berger (1999) argued that the secularisation of nations and cultures would not go uncontested but “provoke powerful movements of counter-secularisation” (1999, p.3), movements concerned with “re-sacralising the social world” (Dobbelaere, 2004, p.173). The emergence of the World Youth Day phenomenon can be considered an example of counter-secularisation. While each World Youth Day has been based on a scriptural theme, the papal messages have highlighted the problems associated with cultural postmodernity and have consistently promoted counter-cultural attitudes and behaviours amongst pilgrims. In his formal message for World Youth Day II in Buenos Aires, Pope John Paul II commented,

You know very well ... that the satisfactions afforded by a superficial hedonism are ephemeral and leave nothing but emptiness ... it is illusory to enclose ourselves in the shell of our own egoism; that all indifference and scepticism contradict noble aspirations ... and that the temptations of ... ideologies which deny God can only lead to a

dead end. (1986, n.2)

Although secularisation had not resulted in the extinction of religion, it had according to Church leaders been aggressively ideological against religion, especially Christianity. In a newspaper interview in the months prior to his election as pope, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger commented,

Secularism is no longer that element of neutrality ... it is beginning to change into an ideology ... which is being imposed. It concedes no public space to the Catholic and Christian vision, which as a result runs the risk of turning into a purely private matter, so that deep down it is no longer the same. In this sense a struggle exists ... (Johnston & Petre, 2004)

Secularisation has been one of a number of challenges facing the mainstream Christian Churches in the period of postmodernity, a time characterised by a confusion of identities (Arbuckle, 2013, p.54) and a sense of uncertainty and ambivalence (Bauman, 2000). In light of these circumstances, religious movements, which have emphasised the ‘appeal of certainty’ and the authority of religion, have emerged (Bauman, 1998a).

According to Allen (2011), the emergence of ‘evangelical Catholicism’ can also be related to the social and cultural dynamics of postmodernity, especially the rejection of continuity and tradition and uncertainty in identity. The term ‘evangelical Catholicism’ refers to a significant trend within the Catholic Church that gives priority to the religious identity of the tradition. The concept is explored in detail in section 3.4.4.

Coinciding with the early years of the papacy of Pope John Paul II, ‘evangelical Catholicism’ was described by Allen (2011) as “a hunger for identity in a fragmented world”. The movement has been especially common amongst young people, whom Allen (2011) had suggested, are “rebelling against a rootless secular world, making them eager to embrace clear markers of identity and sources of meaning”.

While many young people find personal meaning and fulfilment through

their active involvement in a religious tradition and religious practice, many others do not. Cultural postmodernity gave rise to, and influenced, a broad range of spiritualities, a number of which did not involve the traditional search for the divine, but were purely secular in nature.

Table 3.1 lists some of the characteristics of cultural postmodernity and details how these appear to have informed various contemporary spiritualities and identifies their potential relevance to the experience of World Youth Day. The table represents a synthesis of the relevant literature, and drew especially from Crawford & Rossiter (2006).

Table 3.1

The Characteristics and Influences of 'Cultural Postmodernity' on Individuals' Spiritual/Religious Identification.

Characteristics of cultural postmodernity	Apparent influence on spirituality, especially secular spirituality	Potential relevance to the perception of and response to the WYD experience.
A nominalist or subjectivist epistemology as opposed to realism.	Reinforces the authority of the individual in deciding what to believe in, what is true etc.	Can be perceived as a valuable experience for a variety of religious as well as non-religious reasons.
Presumes a constructivist and contextualist view of personal knowledge.	That knowledge is thought of as being constructed by individuals and influenced by cultural meanings strengthens the importance of the individual's own subjective views; and it more readily questions ideas such as revelation and religious authority.	Can be valued for the subjective experience of the events no matter what the individuals' religious identification.
Tends to question all absolutes and metanarratives like religions and ideologies.	Questions the validity and utility of religious views of life. Tends to promote self-reliance with respect to beliefs	The experience can have different complex relationships with individuals' religious beliefs. It can confirm religious belief; it may.

Characteristics of cultural postmodernity	Apparent influence on spirituality, especially secular spirituality	Potential relevance to the perception of and response to the WYD experience.
	and less dependence on authorities for validation.	have little or no influence on religious belief – depending on the individual.
Acknowledges a natural level of uncertainty in all personal knowledge and readily questions cultural beliefs.	Tends to promote a sense of relativism about religious beliefs. Consequently, it gives more weight to the individual's own personal views – individuals tend to acquire more responsibility for their own 'ontological security' with less connection with and dependence on a community of faith or shared beliefs.	Distinctively religious elements may or may not be central aspects of individuals' valuation of experiences.
The construction of meaning and purpose in life is a very individual task, and it depends on the particular context of the individual.	Meaning in life and spirituality are understood as subjective, and individualistic; and they also vary according to the context and social conditions. In a sense, the individual becomes the 'divine authority' in place of the traditional sense of God.	What the individual 'gets out of the experience', or what they enjoy, may be a principal criterion for individuals' valuations of the experience.
A strong existential focus.	Spirituality is focused on the here-and-now, and not on ideas about an afterlife. An interest in contemporary lifestyle may eclipse attention given to the idea of personal spirituality.	Enjoyment, exuberance, friendship, 'collective effervescence', travel, destination, pilgrimage experience, spiritual/religious experience are all likely to make valuable contributions to young people's overall experience and valuation of the events.

Characteristics of cultural postmodernity	Apparent influence on spirituality, especially secular spirituality	Potential relevance to the perception of and response to the WYD experience.
Individuality is more prominent than community.	A strong individualistic style of spirituality where the needs and interests of individuals tend to take precedence over concerns about others and community.	The event readily fosters a sense of community and friendship, even at an international and global level.

3.2.3 The Range of Contemporary Spiritualities in Young People: A Lens for Interpreting the Religious Typologies of World Youth Day Pilgrims

The sociocultural environment not only influences peoples' thinking, attitudes, values and behaviours, it also informs and shapes their spirituality and religious identity. Rossiter (2010) proposed an explanatory perspective that attempted to show how and why there have been changes away from traditional Christian religious spirituality towards a range of contemporary spiritualities that are relatively secular, individualistic, eclectic, subjective and self-reliant. The key element of influence in this change in spirituality has been cultural postmodernity, (Weigel, 2013). Table 3.1 provides an overview of some of the spiritualities which have emerged in postmodernity and it details the possible implications for interpreting pilgrim engagement in and reactions to World Youth Day.

Cultural postmodernity has been largely driven by the "massive subjective turn in modern culture" (Taylor, 1991, p.26) through which people's own experiences, emotions and feelings have become the primary source of their sense of meaning and the rationale for their decision making. With a widespread questioning of the value of meta-narratives, including religion, many people were less inclined to be guided by external norms and expectations in constructing their meaning and purpose in life – hence they developed a personal spirituality which rarely drew upon religious traditions. Instead, their own subjective experiences became a unique source of meaning, and ultimately, their ethical and moral point of

reference. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) referred to this as DIY (Do It Yourself) spirituality.

The 'subjective turn', described as "the defining cultural development of modern western culture" (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005, p.5), was an underlying dynamic of the changing relationship between religion and spirituality. While the period of post- modernity has witnessed a decline in the public status and social prominence of religion, and its regular practice by adherents, there has been a significant growth in the number of people who describe themselves as 'spiritual' rather than 'religious' (Crawford & Rossiter, 2006). Campbell (1999) suggested the growing trend towards 'spirituality' represented an eclipse of religion.

While multiple factors have contributed to these changes, many people appear to have been motivated by the perceived autonomous nature of spirituality, which includes,

The 'practice of experience' rather than the practice of belief systems; the cultivation rather than the repression of the unique; then freedom to explore and express the truth of one's being rather than adhering to the truth of a tradition. (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005, p.83)

While the concept of 'spirituality' had long been associated with conventional religious practices (Rossiter, 2005), the questioning, and in some cases rejection of the meta- narratives, resulted in the emergence of personalised spiritualities often unrelated to mainstream religious traditions (Rossiter, 2005; Tacey, 2003). Notwithstanding this trend, Taylor (2007) claimed that this pointed, not to an absence of religion in society, but to an ever increasing and diversifying range of religio-spiritual options from which meaning people could draw meaning and authenticity.

The marked shift in religious practice in the era of postmodernity, especially amongst those labelled Generation X and Generation Y, reflected a desire for the individuality and personal freedom that characterized the time (Rossiter, 2005) as well as a societal shift in understandings of the sacred (Wuthnow, 1998). Hayes (2007) suggested that Millennials, more than any

other generation, were drawn to an individualistic spirituality. Sacralisation for many involved an interior renewal through private practices and a personal encounter with the transcendent rather than exterior modes of worship. As noted by Taylor (2007) and Wuthnow (1998) the emergence of 'sacralisation' outside of the domain of 'religion' was largely unanticipated by both secularists and Church authorities.

While many of those who ascribe themselves as 'spiritual' do not profess any particular religious beliefs, others draw together an eclectic mix of beliefs and practices from a range of religious and cultural influences. Ammerman (2007) suggested that it was misleading to assume that people "who choose or who mix and match are inherently 'less' religious" (p.13).

A number of sociologists have attested to the prevalence of this mix and match approach. Wuthnow (1998) described the trend as a 'patchwork quilt' and Hervieu- Leger termed it a bricolage (1998a, 2000). This bricolage is generally accumulated in accord with an individual's personal values and perceived needs, and as a result the religio-spiritual identity of many younger people is diffused and idiosyncratic (Rymarz, 2010c). According to Roof (1999) this diffusion was a result of a spiritual quest culture, a 'spiritual marketplace' in which many young people became consumers of religion and spirituality (Bauman, 1991; Crawford & Rossiter, 2006).

The proliferation and diffusion of spiritualities does not mean that people, especially the youth, have totally abandoned the traditional form of 'religious' spirituality. Often young people draw upon religious tradition in developing their bricolage of belief and practice, a trend noted by Hervieu-Leger (2006), who suggested the religious traditions "increasingly serve as symbolic repositories of meaning, available for individuals to subjectively use and reuse in different ways."

In addition to this process of appropriation and adaptation, research has also pointed to the growing number of adolescents and young adults who accept the 'total package' of traditional religious spiritualities (Johnstone, 2013). This is evidenced in the growth of various ecclesial groups and movements,

many of which form strong 'emotional communities' (Champion & Hervieu-Leger, 1990), and the advent of World Youth Day. This intense commitment to their faith differentiates these young people from the majority of youth, who tend not to participate in organised religion nor express their existential needs and questions in religious terms Sengers (2008).

An informed understanding of the range of spiritualities exhibited by young people is central to interpreting the gamut of personal/spiritual perceptions of, and responses to the World Youth Day experience. While World Youth Day attracts large numbers of 'evangelical Catholics' (Allen, 2011) and the 'new faithful' (Carroll, 2004), many of the pilgrims are meaning seekers, representing a diverse range of spiritualities, including the secular.

When interviewed during World Youth Day XII in Paris, French sociologist Hervieu- Léger argued that the devoted and traditional World Youth Day pilgrims "were a minority at the heart of a generation that is detached from this event ... young people interested in spiritual questions want to explore the diversity of possibilities of faith, of hope and of action and only a tiny minority considers that only one religion is true." According to Hervieu-Léger the prevailing view of most young people, including many of the World Youth Day pilgrims is, "I believe in something, but I don't know what it is" (cited in Trueheart, 1997a).

3.2.4 Changes in Religion and Religious Practice

In recent decades, extensive research has been conducted to investigate the changing nature of religious identification and practice in Western societies, the causal factors, and the extent of the shift away from the mainstream Christian Churches (Bibby, 1993 & 2009; Brierley, 2000). Particular attention was given to the perceptions of young people (Hoge, Dinges, Johnson & Gonzales, 2001; Mason et al., 2007; Smith & Denton, 2005) who appeared to be less committed in their religious affiliations and inclined to self-identify as 'spiritual' rather than religious.

A number of recurring themes and trends were identified. Two of these trends were:

- **a growth in the self-identification of having ‘no religion’.** The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported that 22.3% of Australians indicated ‘no religion’ in the 2011 national census, and a further 8.55% did not state their religion. In *The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People’s Spirituality in a Changing Australia* report, 48% of the respondents indicated no religion (Mason et al., 2007, pp.71-75), and
- **a decline in regular religious worship.** In examining data from the 2011 *National Church Life Survey*, the Pastoral Research Office for the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference found that the downward trajectory for ‘Mass attendance’ continued amongst all age groupings, with an overall decline of 23% between 1996 and 2011 (Dixon, Reid & Chee, 2013, p4). This trajectory was reflective of the overall decline in Mass attendance since the 1950’s (Dixon & Powell, 2012, p.302) and highlighted the growing absence of young people from regular worship, a trend identified by Flynn & Mok (2002).

The trends were not restricted to the Australian context. Rather, Australia possibly represented a middle-point in the religio-spiritual spectrum between England and continental Europe on the one hand, and the United States on the other. Christianity has witnessed unprecedented decline in Great Britain (Brown, 2001; Brierley, 2000), not just in regards to the widespread dissociation from religious congregations and the marked decline in regular worship but in the steady rise in ‘unbelief’, where fewer people report that they believe in a personal God (Heald, 2000).

By contrast, Christian Churches within the United States have generally not experienced the same ‘trajectory of decline’ in regular worship as has been the case in Australia, Great Britain and Western Europe. Furthermore, belief in a ‘personal God is attested to by three-quarters of the population (Barna, 2001), and research has identified higher levels of religious affiliation and commitment amongst adherents when compared to other Western nations (Pearce & Denton, 2011). Notwithstanding this, Smith, Longest, Hill & Christofferson (2014) considered that a range of generational challenges

exist regarding Catholic identity and belonging among younger people.

In examining the changing nature of religious practice in the post-Conciliar period, Rymarz (2010c) highlighted the significance of 'loose affiliation', not only from the perspective of it being the prevailing religious outlook of many Christians, but its place as a - "harbinger to long lasting [religious] disconnection" (p.5). This loose affiliation, or religious nominalism, has resulted in a drift from the mainstream Christian churches because religious associations which can help sustain and strengthen faith and which can foster a sense of communal membership have not been adequately developed, and there is a lack of longstanding commitment. Loose affiliation can result in congregational decline, and this "decline begets decline" (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005, p.140).

Loose affiliation and religious nominalism have also typified the religious psyche of Australians according to Hogan (1987),

the majority of Australians have not been particularly religious or irreligious. As far as individuals are concerned the norm has been the nominal adherence to one of the main denominations and a studied indifference to all but the most private aspects of religion. (p.287)

Mackay suggested this 'indifference' was especially common amongst non-churchgoers, who seemed to have benign attitudes towards the Church, and were "content to stick with a relatively unformed idea of God" (1999, p.231). Not all non-believers have benign attitudes towards religion however, instead many are avowed 'anti-theists'. Frame (2009) noted,

Although unbelievers declare the importance of free speech ... it is plain ... that anti-theists think religious beliefs are among the least tolerable in society ... there appears to be a widely held belief that it is acceptable to ridicule religious believers and disparage religious beliefs because the right of free speech is inviolable.

Cultural postmodernity has given rise to individualization and 'detraditionalisation' (Boeve, 2005), both of which have impacted upon

religious beliefs and practices throughout the Western world. As with many other social institutions, the authority of the Christian churches, and the plausibility of their narrative has been challenged. Increasingly, people have constructed their own social norms and values. The drift away from many Churches has not arisen from people's lack of belief, but a perceived incompatibility between the individual's values and those espoused by a church (Hoge & Roozen, 1979). The points of disconnection often do vary according to the generational grouping, and for many there is a sense of 'believing without belonging' (Davie, 2002).

Notwithstanding the growing sense of estrangement identified by Davie (2002), *The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia* report found 83% of young people who attended Church services at least once a year felt welcomed (Mason et al., 2007). The problem with belonging does not relate to the perceived sense of welcome but to the affective appeal of the experience and the perceived relevance of the message.

In recent decades there has been a marked decline in Catholic Mass attendance across the Western world, a diminishment of religion in the public sphere and a trend towards private expressions of spirituality. Rymarz (2010c, p.262) argued such trends challenged the very nature of religious identity.

If a person claims to be Catholic but rejects this communal understanding of faith in favour of a private personal and eclectic set of beliefs and practices then there is a serious rupture between the views of the individual and the Tradition.

In light of this rupture, the Catholic Church has in some instances adopted a more 'evangelical' approach in its efforts to provide opportunities for religious socialisation and to strengthen the religious commitment and identity of adherents. World Youth Day was an example of this renewed commitment to evangelisation.

In light of the many challenges associated with cultural post-modernity,

Allen (2009) suggested the Church now perceived itself as an embattled cultural minority and has responded by “reaffirming traditional beliefs and practices ... [and] sharpening the borders between itself and the surrounding culture” (p.55). Whether the revival of traditional markers of Catholic identity is able to expand and strengthen the religious affiliation and commitment of Catholics is subject to debate. In a sense, this research study will be able to explore the issue by examining the World Youth Day experience. Despite the documented decline in religious practice and the rise in unbelief (Frame, 2009; Gill, 2003), some sociologists and social commentators have pointed to a revival of religion in some parts of the Western world (Habermas, 2008; Henderson, 2006). This trend of ‘anatheism’ (Kearney, 2010) has been common amongst some groups of young people, and it suggests caution about making ‘generational generalizations’, a concern identified by Mannheim (1928/2013).

According to Taylor (2007), many avowed ‘secularists’ eventually engage in forms of spiritual searching, or return to religion itself because “life is fuller, richer, deeper [and] more worthwhile” (p.5). The religio-spiritual dimension can bring a sense of wholeness and fullness of meaning. This search for meaning was also attested to by Kung,

All those with almost no religious upbringing are engaged in a permanent quest for themselves, for identity, security and meaning, and at the same time ... are looking for religious experiences. If they often fail to find them, this is largely the fault of theology and preaching which is still too much in the head. (1980, p.86)

Young people’s engagement in World Youth Day may well be a sign of their search for identity and meaning. While it is likely that many World Youth Day pilgrims have a developed sense of religiosity, high levels of religious commitment and opportunities for religious socialisation, others may be drawn from across the religio-spiritual spectrum, and/or describe themselves as ‘searching’.

In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor (2007) also described young people’s search for personal meaning and a ‘spiritual home’. He gave particular

attention to the model of the Taizé community. Taylor (2007) suggested the great appeal of Taizé is that young people “are received as searchers ... who want to meet their counterparts from other lands, and explore Christian faith without any preconditions as to the outcome” (p.517). The Taizé model influenced in part the structure and elements of World Youth Day, and like World Youth Day, it is intended to be “a departure from the everyday, and the contact with something greater, a sense of universal brotherhood” (Taylor, 2007, p.517).

It is the departure from the everyday, such as the advent of World Youth Day, which seems to have created a new religious geography in which many young people “no longer attend Mass or participate in their parish but on occasions will travel many kilometres ... to participate in peak religious moments” (Hervieu-Léger, 1998b, p.28). This transformation in religious practice and expression has further affirmed the need to distinguish between the various sub-groups of each generation.

In his seminal work, *The Problem of Generations*, Karl Mannheim (1928/2013) highlighted the dangers of applying universal theories to individual generations and argued that such generational stereotyping resulted in flawed sociological perspectives. His views have been supported by sociologists who have rejected the notion of homogenous generations (Craig & Bennett, 1997; Ladd, 1994; Lovell, 2007).

Mannheim argued that while each generation may have distinctive characteristics, these are not uniform. Rather, each generation is influenced by factors and processes of ‘stratification’, including social status, gender, race, religion and common experiences, and consists of ‘generational units’, i.e. various sub-groups with a developed sense of shared identity. While “the generation unit represents a much more concrete bond than the actual generation [itself]”, Mannheim (1928/2013, p.304) suggested that this did not result in a uniform worldview but that generational units were characterised by divergent views and practices.

Given the diversity within a generation, and even ‘generational units’, “the

salience of significant social, cultural and political events will have different meanings and interpretations as they interact with one's personal experience and social situatedness, [especially] during one's formative years" (Johnstone, 2013, p.5).

While sociological research has pointed to some trends in religious adherence and practice amongst Generation X and Generation Y, it is apparent that some sub-groups do not fit the prevailing pattern of decline. The empirical part of the research study sought to examine the demographic profile of World Youth Day pilgrims, giving particular attention to whether or not there was a level of religious homogeneity in the cohorts and it explored how variances in religiosity and spirituality might influence individual interpretations of the event.

3.2.5 The Relationship Between the Media and Religion

The growth of secularization and a prevailing cultural postmodernity have contributed to the declining influence of religion in various sectors of western societies (Chaves, 1994). Some have suggested that the mass media has contributed to the decline in the status of religion (Cupp, 2010), whereas others have claimed that religion, like other facets of society, has experienced 'mediatisation', a process through which it has been influenced by, and in part become dependent upon the mass media (Hjarvard, 2011).

In assessing the decline in the status of religion Cupp, (2010) and Lichter, Amunsden and Lichter (1991) suggested there was an imbalance in media reports on religion and that Christianity in particular has in the past been depicted with a bias of "hostile subjectivity". In a public lecture on religious freedom, the Australian Attorney General George Brandis (2014) claimed the media not only shows an indifference to religious beliefs and the authority of religious leaders, but "open scorn ... where clergy and congregations have been derided". Journalists have often countered such claims arguing that there is "no evidence of media prejudice" (Holmes, 2014).

In examining the role and function of the mainstream media in society, and its particular relationship with religion, Hjarvard (2011) suggested the media did not give preference to a particular religion or propagate a particular set of beliefs, rather it generally “adhered to a secular worldview” (p.126). At the same time, the Danish academic acknowledged the tension points which sometimes existed with the ‘strong religions’, which included Islam and the major Christian denominations. The ‘strong religions’ are characterized by the existence of formal structures, a significant commitment to religious organization, and less individualization. According to Hjarvard (2011), the ‘strong religions, which includes Catholicism, are often in the news cycle, but in “some cases they have become politicized and ... dominate the news ... in highly polarized ways” (pp.120-121).

The ubiquitous nature of the media has had a significant impact on religion, as well as religious life and practice. According to Granholm, Moberg & Sjö

the ways in which media shape views on religion, how religion and religious practice are being affected by media and mass-mediated popular , and how the increasingly pervasive media environment has grown into an important resource for ... the construction of religious identities and worldviews (2014, p.1).

The media has long been acknowledged as being largely responsible for the construction of social and cultural identity (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2007). In more recent times it has come to be recognized that both “individual faith and collective religious imagination are created and maintained by a series of experiences and representations in the media” (Hjarvard, 2011, p.128). As noted by Lynch (2007) these representations bear little or no connection to ‘strong’ or institutionalized religions.

The media’s influence on religion is a consequence of both its volume and intensity (Hoover, 2006; Stollow; 2010). Such is the degree of saturation and influence of the media that sociologists speak of the ‘mediatisation’ of religion’ (Hepp & Kronert, 2008; Hjarvard, 2011), a sociological phenomenon which is especially common in developed western societies.

Hepp and Couldry (2010) and Hepp and Kronert (2010) have suggested that by virtue of its structure and key elements, World Youth Day typifies the ‘mediatisation’ of religion. To this end, the role of the media, and its coverage of World Youth Day, is an important element of the research study.

3.3 THE NEW EVANGELISATION

3.3.1 The Call for a ‘New Evangelisation’

Addressing the bishops of Latin America in 1983, Pope John Paul II called on Church leaders to reconceptualise and renew their approaches to evangelisation. According to the pope, this commitment to renewal was necessary, especially in light of changing social and cultural contexts and a growing indifference to the Gospel message. For the Church to adequately respond to the emerging challenges and to be truly effective in her missionary activity, Pope John Paul II felt the Church needed an approach to evangelisation which was “new in its ardour, its methods and its expression” (1983).

Within weeks of his call for a ‘new evangelisation’, which was to be characterised by ‘new energy’, and a style and language adapted to different cultural contexts (Dulles, 2006), Pope John Paul II extended an invitation to the young people of the world to join him for a special Youth Jubilee in Rome to mark the end of the Holy Year of Redemption the following year. Thus, the origins of World Youth Day coincided with the beginnings of the ‘new evangelisation’, a concept which was to become central to the pontificate of Pope John Paul II (Weigel, 1999).

While regarded as the ‘father of the new evangelisation’ (Wuerl, 2013, p.17), Pope John Paul II’s commitment to responding to peoples’ indifference to religion in countries “where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing” (1988b, n.34) has been shared by his successors, Pope Benedict XVI (2010a; 2010b) and Pope Francis (2013c; 2013d). While Rymarz (2010a) and Rylko (2011) both suggested the ‘new evangelisation’ was the *leitmotif* of Pope John Paul’s pontificate, Fisher (2013) cited the

prominence given to it by a number of popes and suggested that it was in fact the *leitmotif* of the post-Conciliar Church (p.2).

Pope John Paul II's understanding of evangelisation and his conceptualisation of the 'new evangelisation' were largely influenced by both the Second Vatican Council and the writings of his predecessor, Pope Paul VI (Rymarz, 2010d), especially the exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975). The missionary approach of the 'new evangelisation' was a progression of the historical continuum that emerged with the Council (Rymarz, 2010d), which itself was the constant reference point for Pope John Paul II's writings (Miller, 1996). In the post-Conciliar period however, there were often ambiguities with the Church's missionary approach as articulated in *Ad Gentes* (1965), and it seemed at times as if missionary proclamation had been replaced with 'religious dialogue' (Dulles, 2000, p.107).

Like Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II understood that the *raison d'être* of the Church was evangelisation, and this became a focal point of his writings and speeches. His 1990 encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* was Pope John Paul II's most comprehensive treatise on evangelisation and it set out the context of and rationale for the 'new evangelisation'.

Redemptoris Missio was a seminal work which refined the Church's approach to evangelisation. In speaking of its missionary activity, Pope John Paul II identified and distinguished three particular contexts: firstly, the traditional understanding of evangelisation, the primary proclamation of the Gospel and the establishment of communities of faith; secondly, the pastoral care and support of healthy, mature and fervent faith communities; and thirdly, reaching Christians who have lost their sense of faith and, "live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel" (n.33). With this third group, the pope identified a new and most significant challenge facing the Church, and thus he called for a 're-evangelisation' or a 'new evangelisation'. According to Pope John Paul II, this challenge was especially prevalent within western, secular societies which had neglected and long-since abandoned their "ancient Christian roots" (1990, n.33).

Redemptoris Missio was an appeal by the pope for the Church to commit her “energies to a new evangelisation and to the mission of *ad gentes*” (John Paul II, 1990, n.3). Much of this energy was to be specifically directed towards young people, who were considered to be the hope for the future of the Church (John Paul II, 1985a, n.15; 1994a, p.125). Just as the missionary outreach to young people became a major focus of Pope John Paul II’s papacy (Clemens, 2014), the same was true with his promotion of the ‘new evangelisation’, which became a ‘neologism’ during the years of his pontificate (Wehner, 2012, p.3).

3.3.2 The Nature of the ‘New Evangelisation’

The ‘new evangelisation’ was conceived as a missionary response to the societal changes and challenges associated with cultural postmodernity, “to the spread of religious indifference, secularism and atheism in many nations where Christian faith and life had formerly flourished ... [and] to the separation of faith and culture” (McGregor, 2010, pp.79-80). The new cultural context was described as the new *areopagus* (Dulles, 1992, p.59).

Initially, the promotion of the ‘new evangelisation’ was associated with the 500th anniversary of the first evangelisation of the America’s (John Paul II, 1983), and more significantly the Church’s preparations for the Great Jubilee and the new millennium (Dulles, 1992). In preparing for the Great Jubilee, Pope John Paul II called for a special assembly of the synod of bishops for each of the continents, each of which would be underpinned by the theme of “evangelisation, or rather, the new evangelisation” (John Paul II, 1994b, n. 21). Although the synods represented a diversity of cultural contexts they each consistently affirmed the challenges facing the Church as a result of cultural postmodernity and the need for an “authentic inculturation of the Gospel” (John Paul II, 2001a, n.16, 17).

While the societal concerns underpinning the origins of the ‘new evangelisation’ may have initially related to European countries (Dziwisz, 2008; John Paul II, 1979a) and the countries of Latin America (John Paul II, 1979b & 1983; McGregor, 2010), the ‘new evangelisation’ had a

universal scope and emphasis, where no area was outside its parameters (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.89).

Pope John Paul II (1994b, n.21) suggested the ‘new evangelisation’ developed from the foundations of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) and the vision of the Second Vatican Council. From its first articulation (John Paul II, 1979a), Church leaders have sought to define the nature, purpose and characteristics of the ‘new evangelisation’, and they have given greater prominence to it as a means of responding to the ever-changing socio-cultural environment. The establishment of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelisation (Benedict, 2010b) highlighted the importance given by the Church to her ongoing renewal of missionary impulse, and her concern with the progressive abandonment of faith and the ‘de-Christianisation’ of many societies.

Although the ‘new evangelisation’ was originally contextualized as referring to a “situation ... where entire groups of the baptized have lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church” (John Paul II, 1990, n.33), - it is now recognized as having a broader application, including that of a ‘first evangelisation’ (Benedict XVI, 2005). In effect the ‘new evangelisation’ encompasses all three models of missionary activity outlined by Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* (1990). Weigel reflected,

The new evangelisation ... involved deepening the faith where the Church was strong; the re-evangelisation of those parts of an older Christendom that had become lax in their belief, piety and witness [and] the first evangelisation of where the Gospel had never been successfully planted. (2010, p.446)

In an era of globalization, the first evangelisation named by Weigel (2010), referred not only to countries, but to facets of society, including the media, politics and popular culture.

The three situations of evangelisation identified by Pope John Paul II (1990) are not distinct contexts. Rather, there is an interrelationship between them.

This was highlighted by Pope Benedict XVI (2005) who suggested that the re-evangelisation of some countries with Christian roots involved the mission of *ad gentes*, a primary proclamation. Speaking to German bishops he reflected,

We have become mission land ... I ... believe that throughout Europe ... we should give serious thought as to how to achieve a true evangelisation in this day and age... not only a new evangelisation but ... a true and proper first evangelisation. People do not know God, they do not know Christ. (Benedict XVI, 2005, pp.2-3)

To this end, the ‘program’ of the ‘new evangelisation’ is not restricted to revitalizing the faith of regular believers but also extends to proclaiming Christ where he is not known (John Paul II, 1999a, n.74).

One of the purposes of this research study was to clarify the extent to which the paradigm of the ‘new evangelisation’ related to the experience of World Youth Day. While the event may have been formally conceptualized and viewed as an expression of the ‘new evangelisation’ the religious profile of attendees may well suggest that World Youth Day encompasses all three forms of evangelisation detailed by Pope John Paul II in *Redemptoris Missio* (n.33) and that there is fluidity between them.

3.3.3 Characteristics of the ‘New Evangelisation’

“John Paul II did not seek to prescribe in detail the methods and the modalities of the new evangelisation”, (Dulles, 2008/1991, p.6) which were generally shaped by local contexts and circumstances. However, as with his papal successors, he used his principal writings to “sketch the basic lineaments of the program” (Dulles, 2008/1991, p.6) of the ‘new evangelisation’.

In *Novo Millennio Ineunte* the pope reflected,

It is not ... a matter of inventing a "new programme". The

programme already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition ... it has its centre in Christ himself ... this is a programme which does not change with shifts of times and cultures, even though it takes account of time and culture for the sake of true dialogue and effective communication. (John Paul II, 2001b, n.29)

Church documents about the ‘new evangelisation’ indicate that it is Christocentric in nature and purpose. It seeks to create conditions which will enable an encounter with Christ, and a deepening of relationship with him. To Church authorities, the desire for an encounter with the transcendent, which may be intimate, personal, public and communal, (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.18) has anthropological roots within the human condition. Although society has been marked by a “loss of the sense of the sacred” (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.18) people cannot avoid the “profound existential questions that emerge in their search for meaning and purpose” (Rymarz, 2010c, p.3).

The Christo-centric emphasis of the ‘new evangelisation’ is not new. Rather, it characterises and is the central framework for any activity of evangelisation (Paul VI, 1975, n.22). In light of the de-Christianisation that accompanied cultural post-modernity, successive popes renewed their efforts to encourage people to seek an encounter with Christ (Benedict XVI, 2012a), and the appeal, “Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ” (John Paul II, 1978, n.5) became a maxim for the ‘new evangelisation’.

In addition to its Christo-centric emphasis, which underpins all activities associated with evangelisation, the ‘new evangelisation’ has a number of distinctive characteristics. These include:

- **the prominent role of the laity:** While the Second Vatican Council highlighted the responsibility of all Christians to participate in the Church’s evangelising activities and mission (*Apostolicam Actuostatam* n.35, 36; *Lumen Gentium* n.17) this became more pronounced with the ‘new evangelisation’ and the Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifidelis Laici* (1988b). Pope John Paul II emphasised that the mission

of the Church was the responsibility of all, not just a group of specialists, and he believed a genuine encounter with Christ would inspire people to speak of their experience (2001, n.40). A particular phenomenon widely associated with the new evangelical impulse of the Church is the emergence of new ecclesial movements (Ang, 2012; Porteous, 2010) which have been affirmed as being filled with missionary dynamism (John Paul II, 1990) and having brought newness and vitality to the task of transmitting the faith (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n15);

- **an emphasis on catechesis:** Although catechesis and evangelisation are different but related processes, they were both considered to be essential elements of the ‘new evangelisation’ (General Directory for Catechesis, 1997, n.26; John Paul II, 1999a, n.69). Catechetical instruction was viewed by Church authorities as strengthening individual faith and enabling a deeper personal knowledge of Christ (John Paul II, 1979b, n.18, 19) which in turn would enable individuals to confidently share and defend their beliefs. Wehner (2012) noted, “if Catholics do not understand the nature of their faith, they cannot be explicit in living ... [it] in practical ways. Faith will be reduced to a memory of fact, an empty discipline of habits, and a worship that has no significant meaning” (p.5). The priority given to catechesis as part of the ‘new evangelisation’ is evidenced in the Church documents which have been published during this time, including the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992, 1997), the General Directory for Catechesis (1997), the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2005) and Miller & Benedict (2011);
- **the inculturation of the Gospel:** While evangelisation has most often related to ‘individual conversion’ (Dulles, 1992), the ‘new evangelisation’ has emphasized “fostering a culture deeply grounded in the Gospel” (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.164). The importance of the intersection between faith and culture was affirmed by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975, n.20), and it has become a central concern of successive popes (Benedict,

2012a; Francis, 2013d, n.61-70; John Paul II, 1998a, n.71). Church authorities have warned against a range of cultural ideologies which have contributed to the diminishment of religious belief and practice, and the ‘eclipse of God’ (Benedict XVI, 2010a; John Paul II, 1995, n.23). The principal aim of the ‘new evangelisation’ is to effectively infuse Christian values within contemporary culture so that they become a cultural reference point, and societies are open to the message of the Gospel. “The task of inculturation ... represents the heart, the means and the goal of the new evangelisation” (John Paul II, 1992b);

- **boldness and creativity:** In responding to the socio-cultural situation facing the Church, the ‘new evangelisation’ has required Church leaders to take “bold steps in revitalizing her spiritual and missionary vocation” (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.46). Cultural postmodernity gave rise to a split between faith and culture (Paul VI, 1975, n.20) and a situation of ‘spiritual desertification’ (Benedict XVI, 2008c) in many countries. From its conceptualisation, the ‘new evangelisation’ was viewed as a ‘bold’ response to an urgent situation. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis asked people to move away from the fixed pastoral mindset of ‘we have always done it this way’ and invited them to “be bold and creative in ... [the] task of rethinking the goals, structures, style and methods of evangelisation in their respective communities” (2013, n.33). While encouraging dynamic approaches to the Church’s mission, the then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (2001), cautioned that boldness must be tempered with patience, for the ‘new evangelisation’ did not equate to “immediately attracting the large masses that have distanced themselves from the Church by using new and more refined methods”. Rather, the new evangelisation entailed bringing the Gospel to people and cultures, and being open to the Spirit without predetermined results.

Throughout its history the World Youth Day phenomenon has been

characterized by these distinctive features of the ‘new evangelisation’.

- the international gatherings have been framed as encounters or meetings with Jesus Christ, and the pilgrims have been encouraged to seek this encounter through which their lives will be transformed (John Paul II, 2004);
- World Youth Day has been described as a model and ‘powerful sign of ecclesial communion’ (Clemens, 2014) for its capacity to draw together hundreds of groups, movements and associations from around the world. These were essential to the success of the early youth gatherings that preceded the formal establishment of World Youth Day in 1985;
- the catechesis sessions at World Youth Day are considered to be opportunities for listening and dialogue, and the deepening of faith. When addressing German bishops in Cologne, Pope Benedict XVI reflected, “we must ... make them feel that faith is not merely a dogmatism complete in itself that puts an end to seeking ... but that it directs the great pilgrimage towards the infinite” (2005);
- a salient theme of the World Youth Day writings and messages is the critique of cultural postmodernity and the ideologies or ‘isms’ associated with it. The popes have affirmed the vital contribution that young people can and do make to the Church and society. They have challenged the young to critique their society and lead a life of Christian discipleship;
- In 1996 Pope John Paul II reflected, “with the passing years, World Youth Days have proved themselves to be not conventional rites, but providential events” (n.2). The international gatherings are bold and creative, and have surpassed the expectations of Church authorities (John Paul II, 1994, p.124). Throughout the history of World Youth Day, the core structure and elements of the event have been diversified so as to reflect the local context of host cities and to effectively meet new pastoral needs and realities.

3.3.4 The ‘New Evangelisation’ and the Emergence of ‘Evangelical Catholicism’

Although in continuity with the Second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975), the ‘new evangelisation’ marked a shift in Catholic thinking as it represented in part the rise of ‘evangelical Catholicism’ (Weigel, 2013). Dulles commented, “today we seem to be witnessing the birth of a new Catholicism that, without the loss of its institutional, sacramental and social dimension is authentically evangelical” (1991/2008, p.97).

The emergence of ‘evangelical Catholicism’ is considered to be a response to the social changes associated with cultural post-modernity (Weigel, 2013). Within the context of the post-Conciliar period ‘evangelical Catholicism’ is viewed “as an attempt to ensure that the weakening of religious faith and practice in the secular world is not reproduced inside the Church” (Allen, 2009, p.58).

The rise of ‘evangelical Catholicism’ is well documented (Fournier, 1990; O’Brien, 1989; Portier, 2004), and its emphasis on reclaiming Catholicism’s evangelical heritage is widely associated with the pontificates of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI (Allen, 2007 & 2009).

Allen (2009) suggested that ‘evangelical Catholicism’ had three defining features:

- a clear adherence to, and promotion of, Catholic beliefs, teachings and practices;
- a ‘dynamic’ promotion of one’s Catholic identity and the application of a Catholic worldview to various facets of society, including politics and culture, and
- a view that faith is a matter of personal choice rather than a ‘cultural inheritance’ (p.56).

The reclaiming of religious prominence in the wider society and the reassertion of Catholic identity has been a primary motivation for many

‘Catholic evangelicals’, who have prioritised their public witness to faith and religious belief. They view their evangelical impulse as both counter-cultural and culture forming (Weigel, 2013, p.81) and consider that religion plays an integral role in the ‘public square’ (Neuhaus, 1984). These views coalesced with those of Church leaders who have warned against “those who would advocate that the voice of religion be silenced, or at least relegated to the purely private sphere” (Benedict XVI, 2010c).

The post-Conciliar period has been characterised by the perceived dichotomy of ‘liberals’ and ‘conservatives’, whereby it is claimed all Catholics belong to one particular group or the other (Portier, 2004). Although the universal application of this dichotomy lacks credibility, (Allen, 2009; Casarella, 2003; Moore, 1998) ‘evangelical Catholics’ have been described as ‘neo-conservatives’ or ‘the new faithful’ (Carroll, 2004). Portier contested the view of ‘conservatism’, and argued that ‘evangelical Catholics’ were not ‘restorationists’ but “postmodern consumers of Catholicism” (2004, p.55).

A demographic feature of the ‘evangelical Catholics’ is the significant number of young people who have a strong sense of religious affiliation and commitment, and a highly developed evangelical impulse (Carroll, 2004; Portier, 2004). This group according to Allen (2009) does not fit the rigid dichotomy of liberal or conservative. While drawn to traditional religious piety and accepting of papal authority the younger evangelicals also have a commitment to social outreach and the individual expression of their religious freedom. Younger ‘evangelical Catholics’ have shown that the ‘traditional’ and ‘progressive’ elements of religious belief and practice need not be mutually exclusive. “Their hunger for identity is better understood in terms of generational dynamics, not ideology” (Allen, 2009, p.57).

The growth of the World Youth Day phenomenon is considered to be representative of the emergence and ‘triumph’ of evangelical Catholicism (Allen, 2007). This research study might be able to clarify whether the international gathering represents a broad- base of ‘grassroots Catholics’ or whether it is dominated by Evangelical Catholics, who have been described

as minority, albeit an “undeniably dynamic one” (Allen, 2007, p.7).

3.3.5 World Youth Day and the ‘New Evangelisation’

Church leaders have shown an awareness that a rejuvenation of faith and Christian identity within society is largely dependent upon the Church’s capacity to reach out to and actively engage young people in the life of the Church, who have been described as “the hope of the Church” (John Paul II, 1988b, n.46). While various studies have identified a continued weakening of their ecclesial sense and religious affiliation (Hoge, Dinges, Johnson & Gonzales, 2001) Church leaders have recognised that “young people make up an exceptional potential and a great challenge for the future of the Church” (John Paul II, 1988b, n.46). To this end, the thrust of the ‘new evangelisation’ has often been directed at young people.

Religious identity and affiliation are multilayered in their development and expression. Conscious of “an individualistic approach to belonging to the Church, [and] a decline in religious practice” (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.48) Church leaders have prioritised and diversified their efforts in evangelisation in recent decades, especially with young people. While this has not reversed the ‘trajectory of decline’ evident in many developed western nations or strengthened the ecclesial sense of all young people, many, like the ‘evangelical Catholics’, have been drawn to traditional Catholic identity markers: the Eucharist; the pope and Marian devotions (Portier, 2004, p.55). World Youth Day has become such an identity marker.

The document *Instrumentum Laboris* considered that World Youth Days were “real forms of proclamation on a global scale” (Synod of Bishops, 2012, n.141). This researcher would contend that World Youth Day not only serves as a form of primary proclamation for many pilgrims but the international gathering could strengthen the already strong religious identity and ecclesial sense of some. The World Youth Days have been associated with an increase religious vocations (Prowse, 2012) and candidates for RCIA (Venier, 2011).

While the formation of peoples' religious identity is shaped by the dynamics of a pluralist religious mix (Portier, 2004), Rymarz (2010c) found that young people are drawn to groups which offer religious plausibility, have a clear and coherent identity, and who communicate these effectively. The 'new evangelisation' sought to strengthen the ecclesial identity of the Catholic Church so that each member of the Church had "a clear sense of his or her Catholic identity, vocation and the need to live out faith in an explicit manner" (Wehner, 2012, p.2). World Youth Day is explicitly Catholic; it is underpinned by scriptural themes and it offers distinctive sacramental, liturgical and catechetical elements - which "offer a new framework and lens through which [people] look at the Church and the world" (Rosica, 2011, p.377).

From its beginnings World Youth Day was viewed as an expression of the 'new evangelisation', a point reaffirmed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011a. He described the international gathering as a "remedy against faith fatigue" and a wonderful experience which was "the new evangelisation put into practice" (Benedict, 2011b). The establishment of World Youth Day was considered to be both a bold and a grand strategy, and Church leaders were shocked by the intensity and scale of the events, and the numbers of young people who attended (Cordes, 1984, p.8). It was unprecedented and unparalleled as a missionary approach to young people in innovation and dynamism.

In *The End and the Beginning*, George Weigel reflected, "it would be naïve to suggest that everyone who attended a World Youth Day event became a thoroughly converted Christian, it would also be foolish to ignore just how much these events had ... [contributed] to the new evangelisation" (2010, p.245). This empirical part of this research study explored the effectiveness of the evangelical intent of World Youth Day and explored pilgrim responses to the core elements and principal activities of the event.

3.4 THE ORIGINS & HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

3.4.1 The Origins of World Youth Day

In detailing the inception of World Youth Day, Pope John II explained, “no one invented the World Youth Days. It was the young people themselves who created them. Those days, those encounters, then became something desired by young people throughout the world” (1994, p.124).

The encounters that the pope refers to were two significant youth gatherings held in Rome in 1984 and 1985. On each occasion hundreds of thousands of young people responded to the pope’s invitation to gather.

The Holy Year of Redemption (Lent 1983 – Easter 1984) was a Jubilee Year for the Catholic Church during which time millions of international pilgrims visited Rome (Mulligan, 1984). In May 1983 the pope invited young pilgrims from around the world to participate in the Jubilee Year through an inaugural Youth Jubilee. The pope said,

I would like ... to address my appeal to the youth of all nations and continents to take part in the Special Jubilee scheduled for them in Rome from April 11 to 15 next year ... it will be a meeting of prayer, sharing, conversation and joy. In a word it will be a meeting of truth and life (John Paul II, 1983b).

The five day program of the Youth Jubilee, which included a welcoming ceremony, catechesis, youth gatherings and cultural festivals, the Stations of the Cross, a vigil with the pope and a final Mass, attracted thousands of international pilgrims from 67 countries, including Australia (Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1984).

The Youth Jubilee drew an estimated 350,000 young people. Freelance journalist Joe Morley (1984) reflected,

He [Pope John Paul II] invited them to come to Rome in this Jubilee Year. Boy, what a response he got. Not only Italian youth but youth from every corner of the western world took up the invitation ... to share the international Jubilee with John Paul II and share it they did

... it was beyond the power of words to describe.

While identifying the gathering as ‘indescribable’, Morley’s (1984) article, *Locusts in the eternal city*, detailed the diversity of events, the high level of ‘pilgrim’ engagement and the popular appeal of the pope.

In *A Festival of Hope: Youth Jubilee in Rome* (1984), the official commemorative publication of the event, the Vice President of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, Mgr. Paul Josef Cordes, reflected on the pilgrimage elements of the event (Pontifical Council of the Laity, 1984, pp. 9-10). He suggested that unprecedented numbers of young people made often long and uncomfortable journeys for several core reasons, namely:

- they are “searching for human and spiritual values ... a living sense of community and ... the meaning of life”;
- they are attracted by the personality of Pope John Paul II;
- they have a “deep spiritual hunger, and a yearning for religious illumination and experience”, and
- they yearn to “make a success of their lives”.

Cordes also considered the important role played by many lay groups and movements in engaging young people into the life of the Church.

The Youth Jubilee was described as a “young people’s pilgrimage”, and they as ‘pilgrims’ (John Paul II, 1984). At its conclusion, the former President of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, Cardinal Opilio Rossi, commented, “these young people love to meet each other and to recognise each other as new Christian generations ... after undergoing this vital experience ... they will return home enriched and encouraged by the experience of this wonderful communion, and strengthened in their desire to be more faithful” (Pontifical Council of the Laity, 1984, p.176).

Following the success of the Youth Jubilee, described as “not the usual kind of pilgrimage but a meeting which would be the beginning of a process of conversion” (Cordes, 1984), a similar gathering of young people was held in the days before, and on Palm Sunday in 1985. Pope John Paul II used the occasion to publish his Apostolic Letter, *Dilecti Amici* (1985a).

During his *Urbi et Orbi* (From Rome to the World) message a week later, Pope John Paul II spoke of the formal institution of World Youth Day. He reflected, “I met hundreds of thousands of young people last Sunday and the festive image of their enthusiasm remains imprinted on my heart ... this wonderful experience may be repeated in future years and Palm Sunday may become World Youth Day” (Pope John Paul II, 1985b, n.10). The establishment of World Youth Day was confirmed in December of the International Year of Young People (John Paul II, 1985c).

Pope John Paul II recognised that young people were growing up and living in a very different context to that of previous generations. He believed, however, that they held aspirations no different to those of other generations for, “the young are searching for God, they are searching for the meaning of life” (1994, p.125). Within this context he established World Youth Day, both as a response to their searching and as a means of strengthening their religious convictions and identity.

When interviewed for the research study, Bishop Anthony Fisher OP (23 September, 2014), expressed the view that Pope John Paul II’s establishment of World Youth Day was not “a grand plan” but that it evolved, and that some of its principal elements also evolved over time. It was according to Fisher, reflective of Pope John Paul II’s broader pastoral creativity of getting around traditional structures within the church to engage with people and communities directly, and was “an inspiration on his part to try this experiment”.

The experiment worked, and the success of the Rome gatherings was a catalyst for the decision to conduct the event in other major cities. With the exception of Buenos Aires (1987), each World Youth Day was held over five days and typically comprised the same catechetical and liturgical elements. At the same time however, variations were made by the Pontifical Council for the Laity or by the pope himself. Many of these variations arose in response to a perceived pastoral need. Some of the developments that occurred included:

- the establishment of ‘days in the dioceses’ and ‘youth festivals’ at

World Youth Day XII in Paris (1997);

- the establishment of a ‘religious art exhibition’ at World Youth Day VIII in Denver (1993), and
- the prioritisation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation in World Youth Day XV in Rome (2000).

Furthermore, in an effort to accommodate increased pilgrim numbers and to strengthen the engagement of bishops from throughout the world, greater priority was given to catechesis and this is borne out in the significant increase in the number of catechesis sites at each host city. In 1991, there were 16 catechesis sites in Czestochowa, whereas there were 264 catechesis sites in Rio de Janeiro (2013).

By contrast, the International Youth Forum - which involved delegates from around the world and took place in the days which preceded World Youth Day - was last held at World Youth Day XV in Rome. A goal of the forum, which grew in popularity between 1987 and 2000 and was described as an integral part of World Youth Day, was to offer “young delegates a direct experience of the universality of the Church by fostering among them a lively sharing of testimonies and experiences and faith” (Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1997). The forum has been held periodically in Rome as a separate event since 2000.

3.4.2 The Principal Objectives of World Youth Day

A study of the seminal documents of World Youth Day showed that the origins and historical development of the international gathering have been underpinned and shaped by a range of principal objectives.

- **Christocentric focus**

In reflecting on the nature and purpose of the World Youth Day gatherings Pope John Paul II (1996) said that the event’s principal objective was “to focus the faith and life of every young person on the person of Jesus Christ so that Jesus may their constant point of reference” (n.1), because the young people themselves ask the Church “to lead them to Christ” (n.4). This concern, described as the maxim of the international gatherings, was the

most salient theme of Pope John Paul II's World Youth Days writings, speeches and homilies as it was with Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

Pope John Paul II considered that young people were spiritual seekers who were concerned with the existential questions in life and the search for meaning (1985a). He felt that an encounter with Christ and belief in God helped address these questions. At World Youth Day XV in Rome he reflected,

Around you, you hear all kinds of words. But only Christ speaks words that stand the test of time and remain for all eternity. The time of life that you are living calls for decisive choices on your part ... It is important to realize that among the many questions surfacing in your minds ... the basic question is ... "who" am I to follow?

Throughout the event's history, the popes and other Church leaders have used the Emmaus Story (Lk 24:) as a paradigm for the spiritual journey of pilgrims, and they have suggested that for many it is in the experiences of World Youth Day that Christ is ultimately recognised (Jacquinet, 2009).

Successive Popes, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis have highlighted World Youth Day's Christocentric emphasis. In addressing the Roman Curia (2008c Pope Benedict XVI reflected, "the pope himself is not the star around which everything revolves ... he points beyond himself to the Other who is in our midst").

- **Pilgrimage of faith**

One of the foundational elements of World Youth Day is that it is a multilayered pilgrimage of faith.

Firstly, the young people of the world are invited to periodically set out on new pilgrim paths to the different host cities so as to experience the unity in diversity of the universal Catholic Church and to forge a sense of solidarity and communion in which "frontiers between continents, cultures, races and nations disappear" (Benedict XVI, 2005). It was hoped that the event would be a cultural and religious immersion with reciprocal benefits. The

international gatherings have been uniformly characterised by mutual goodwill where the pilgrims “usher one another through their journey with singing ... greet one another with deference ... and eagerly identify themselves with strangers” (Stafford, 2008). An objective of each such pilgrimage of faith was that the experience would not just cultivate solidarity between the pilgrims but also draw out the virtue of hospitality from local communities.

The program of World Youth Day week itself, which comprises a range of sacramental, liturgical and catechetical elements, “was conceived as a pilgrimage to encourage a personal journey of conversion ... that will lead to an encounter with Christ” (Kohn, 2003). The rhythm of the World Youth Day experience was structured to incorporate prayer, spiritual reflection and a deepening of knowledge of the Catholic faith as a means of preparing for the major liturgical events with the pope. Weigel (1998, p.23) suggested the rhythm of World Youth Day, as modelled in Paris (1997), reflected the theology of Louis Bouyer, in that, “every significant Christian event in some fashion should recapitulate the Paschal Triduum, the core of Christian experience”.

As a pilgrimage of faith, World Youth Day was intended as an experience of journey and encounter. The interior journey of pilgrims was intentionally associated with their quest for personal meaning. The ultimate goal of this searching was considered to be the encounter with Christ, which could not take place without faith and a conversion of heart (Pope Benedict XVI, 2005).

The idea of journey and encounter was borne out in the official publication of the Pontifical Council of the Laity, *I CARE*, commemorating World Youth Day XV in Rome in 2000. Pilgrims were asked,

“what have you come here to find? ... Yours is just not any journey: If you have set out on pilgrimage it is not just for the sake of recreation or an interest in culture. Well then, let me ask again: What have you come in search of? Or rather, who have you come here to find (2000a, p.7)?”

- **A celebration of joy**

A salient theme of the papal reflections on World Youth Day has been the identification of the joy of the occasion. In reflecting on World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Pope Benedict XVI remarked, “those were festive days for everyone. Indeed, it was only then that the people came to realize what a celebration really is” (2008c).

While the joy of World Youth Day could be associated with new-found friendships, feelings of solidarity and unity, and the festive nature of the event, a key objective of the international gathering is that the pilgrims discover and celebrate the joy of faith, which brings a ‘dynamic energy’ (Franco, 2009). According to Pope John Paul II (1979b, n.10), this joy arises from an encounter with God and the knowledge of being loved.

Described as ‘laboratories of faith’, World Youth Day was intended to create an environment in which young people could find the answers to their searching and

experience an encounter with ‘Christ’. Successive popes believed that many young people, including the pilgrims of World Youth Day, were cynical and disillusioned, and had never experienced the true joy of knowing God.

Kohn (2003) suggested that the occasion of World Youth Day helped facilitate this encounter with God, and that as a result, they could be occasions of deep and profound joy. Pope John Paul II wrote “I have often been deeply touched by young peoples’ joyous, spontaneous love for God and the Church” (Pope John Paul II, 1996, n.4).

For Church authorities, a key element of the joy of faith was the desire of people to share their experience and faith with others.

- **An experience of the universal Church**

In an address to thank volunteers at the conclusion of World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Pope Benedict XVI (2008d) said, “in the crowds that have

assembled here ... we have seen a vivid expression of the unity-in-diversity of the universal Church.”

Properly understood, the Catholic Church consists of twenty-two sister churches within the one universal Church, which is “universal by vocation and mission” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, n.835).

From its very inception, the nature and structure of World Youth Day highlighted the diversity of rites and cultures, groups and movements. In this international gathering of the pope and the young people of the world, it was the pope’s presence which functioned as a “visible sign of the unity and communion of the Church” (Kohn, 2003). This ‘communion’ was considered as extending beyond the differences of language and culture and age, a point affirmed by Pope Francis (2013e) in his reflections on World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro:

In that immense multitude of young people on the beach of Copacabana, so many languages were heard, very different facial features were seen among them, different cultures met, yet there was a profound unity, one only Church was formed, there was unity and it was felt.

Some Church authorities have considered the structure of World Youth Day as helping facilitate this sense of unity. From its beginnings a core feature of the international gatherings has been the blended use of the principal languages (English, French, German, Italian and Spanish, as well as the language of the host country) in all major events.

The aim of having World Youth Day as an expression of the universal Church has been strengthened by the pilgrimage dynamic of the event, which “builds bridges of fellowship and hope between continents, peoples and cultures” (1996, n.2). With the exception of Africa, international gatherings have been held in each of the world’s inhabited continents. Each host city has endeavoured to provide a unique religious, cultural and social immersion, and added a unique local dimension to the World Youth Day experience, but always united within the one faith.

- **Journey, not an event**

While possibly viewed by some as a mega-event, Church authorities have emphasized that World Youth Day is a time of spiritual renewal and encounter within a faith- journey (Benedict XVI, 2007). Preceded by a time of pastoral, spiritual and practical preparation (Benedict, 2008c) the international gathering has not been viewed by Church leaders as providing an immediate panacea to a young person's spiritual questions and searching. While the World Youth Day experience may provide an epiphany moment or time of conversion (Fisher, 2014) it is regarded as being situated within a life-long faith journey.

World Youth Day was not designed as a substitute for regular approaches to Youth Ministry but "is intended to consolidate this work by offering new possibilities for ... greater involvement and participation" (John Paul II, 1996, n.3). The international gathering was felt to be both a response to and a revelation of the expectations of young people (Kohn, 2003). According to Kohn (2003), one of the great challenges was ensuring that the surge of enthusiasm associated with the event "is not just a 'flash in the pan' with no long- term effects". To this end, the papal messages associated with World Youth Day have always challenged pilgrims to seek a life of Christian witness and response beyond the week-long gathering.

- **Discovering Christian roots and heritage**

A central concern of the 'new evangelisation' and thus World Youth Day was to create a milieu which enabled young people to discover and explore their Christian roots. This objective was named by Pope John Paul II (2001c) in his message for World Youth Day XVII in Toronto. He encouraged the youth, "learn about the Church's history, deepen your knowledge of the spiritual heritage which has been passed on to you" (2001c, n.2).

While this objective was apparently achieved in part through the pilgrimage dimension of World Youth Day, it has also been the structure of the international gathering, and its key elements, which have provided pilgrims

with an immersion experience that acquaints them with their spiritual heritage. World Youth Days “offer deeply prayerful celebrations of the Eucharist ... moments of quiet prayer, adoration, communal and individual worship and ... privileged moments to experience and deepen Christian piety and devotion” (Rosica, 2011, p.376).

For many World Youth Day pilgrims, the international gathering appears to have provided their first experience of some religious devotions and practices.

In outlining the nature and purpose of World Youth Day, Pope John Paul II (1996) reflected, “the Word of God is the central point, catechetical reflection the method, prayer is the sustenance and communication and dialogue are the distinguishing style” (n.3) and the pope believed that the cumulative effect of these elements was a vivid experience of faith for young people.

- **A renewal of pastoral ministry in the host country**

As noted by Bishop Anthony Fisher (2008), Coordinator of World Youth Day in Sydney, the process of selecting an archdiocese to host World Youth Day was well considered, taking into account the viability of the event in relation to the preparedness of the city, as well as the pastoral needs of the local Church. For the selection of Sydney, these needs were identified in part by Pope John Paul II in *Ecclesia in Oceania*,

the challenges of modernity and post-modernity are experienced by all the local Churches in Oceania, but with particular force by those in societies most powerfully affected by secularization, individualism and consumerism. Many

Bishops identified the signs of a dwindling of Catholic faith and practice in the lives of some people to the point where they accept a completely secular outlook as the norm of judgment and behaviour. A new evangelisation is the first priority for the Church in Oceania. (2001a, n.18)

Similar needs were identified for many of the other host cities and countries. The selection of host cities generally reflected the emphasis of the ‘new evangelisation’ and a desire to reinvigorate the Church in “countries of long-standing Christian tradition where secularism has made greater inroads” (General Directory of Catechesis, 1997, n.26). This intention was borne out in the reflections of those involved in the organization of the Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013) World Youth Days.

In preparing for World Youth Day XXVI, Yago de la Cierva, the Director of Communications for the international gathering in Madrid, commented,

a vast majority of Spanish young people are indifferent to Christianity, either because they never received a Christian education, or their knowledge of Jesus is very superficial and what they have in their minds are a collection of clichés
... having World Youth Day in Madrid is a precious present to the church in Spain because it will create opportunities for evangelisation. (Cited in Gamber, 2010)

A similar sentiment was expressed by Bishop Dom Paulo Cezar Costa, Coordinator of the organizing committee for World Youth Day XXVIII (Rio de Janeiro), when interviewed for this research study. He was asked why the Archdiocese of Rio de Janeiro wished to host World Youth Day. He commented,

The main objective of bringing the event to Brazil and to Rio is like it is a key moment in time to revitalize, to refresh the Church and the pastoral life of Brazil. It is a key moment to improve the connection with the Catholic Church and the young.

In addition to those countries with a longstanding Christian heritage the ‘new evangelisation’ was also for the countries of the younger Churches (John Paul II, 1990), where the social and cultural contexts had made them the modern equivalents of St Paul’s Areopagus of Athens (John Paul II, 1990, n.37). In some of these developed nations the Church felt there were “those who would advocate that the voice of religion be silenced, or at least relegated to the purely private sphere” (Benedict XVI, 2010c), and as a

result, these cities were chosen to host the very public World Youth Day.

Allen (2008) claimed that the emergence of World Youth Day as an ‘evangelical’, rather than ‘classical’ pilgrimage began with the selection of Denver as a host city. This signalled a paradigm shift away from the traditional Catholic pilgrimage centres (Santiago de Compostela, 1989; Czestochowa, 1991) and instead host cities were often chosen not because they were viewed as “reservoirs of spiritual energy, but rather because they [were] suffering from spiritual drought ... without a strong Catholic culture, and with a strongly secular ethos” (Allen, 2008).

Many, including a large cross-section of people from within the Catholic Church, believed that the strategy would fail, and predicted public indifference, low pilgrim registration and limited long-term value for the local church. In each instance, (Denver, 1993; Paris, 1997; Toronto, 2002; Cologne, 2005; Sydney, 2008), international pilgrim numbers and the level of local engagement exceeded predictions and, evidence has pointed to medium and long-term gains for the local Church.

The significance of hosting World Youth Day was attested to by Bishop Anthony Fisher, two years prior to the Sydney gathering. In an interview with John Allen Jr (2006), Fisher said that he did not perceive World Youth Day as a panacea to the challenges associated with the secular nature of Australian society, but viewed the international gathering within the context of a three-phased process of renewal (the preparation, the event and the follow-up).

The sheer scale of it creates the possibility of a kind of renewal we’d hope for our church ... it could make a real difference in the religious life of the country... the young people who will be at World Youth Day will challenge the stereotypes of ‘religious youth’ ... [and] we’ll at least have a chance to tell our people what World Youth Day is all about.

3.5 AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN WORLD YOUTH DAY

Australian participation in World Youth Day has grown and diversified during the course of the event's history (see Table 3.2). Young Australians have participated in each of the international gatherings. During the early history of World Youth Day, pilgrims were often not part of a larger formal delegation, but travelled individually or with family groups. In some instances they were already in Europe as backpackers, heard about the event and attended.

Six months prior to the first international gathering for World Youth Day (Buenos Aires, 1987), Australians received a foretaste of the tone of the event, albeit on a minor scale, during Pope John Paul II's first official visit to Australia in 1986. In addition to the papal masses in several capital cities, the pope held a special youth rally at the Sydney Cricket Ground. It was attended by 30,000 young people. Reporting in the *Catholic Weekly*, journalist John Lundy (1986) wrote,

the youth gathering was the largest of its kind in Australian history. It was that rare event that promised so much and delivered. The fervor of the youth celebration has been, in my experience, unmatched ... the faces of the departing crowd said it all; these were faces of people who felt privileged, honoured and renewed. Pope John Paul II had left his indelible stamp.

The public's response to the visit of Pope John Paul II pointed to both his 'celebrity' status and his popularity with the wider community, especially young people (Gill, 2008). Media coverage of the papal visit followed a similar trajectory to that of Pope Benedict's visit to Australia in 2008, and to the pope's involvement in World Youth Day in different host cities. Typically, the pattern of media coverage shifted from one which was negative and critical prior to, and sometimes during the early stages of a papal visit, to a more positive coverage of the major public events involving the pope (see 3.7.2). At the time of the 1986 papal visit O'Connell observed, "those various critics – Catholics among them – who have been very caustic in the media in their criticism of the likely effects of the visit and who try

to put a cost/value interpretation on it have their answer in the enormous enthusiasm shown at every event.”

At the time, the major newspapers captured the enthusiastic response of the wider community (Gill, 2008). It was apparent from the papal visit that the style and words of Pope John Paul II resonated with many (Lundy, 1986), and many would be drawn to World Youth Day over the years on account of his popular appeal. According to the former Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal George Pell, Pope John Paul II was aware that mega-events like World Youth Day had the potential to create a ‘cult of personality’ around the pope, and thus he worked to ensure that the international gatherings had a strong Christocentric focus (Allen, 2005b).

The first formalized contingent of Australian pilgrims to travel to World Youth Day attended the international gathering in Santiago de Compostela in 1989. Drawn from across Australia, the group of 63 was predominately from the Neo-Catechumenate and they had chosen to accept Pope John Paul II’s (1988a) invitation to follow the ‘Santiago Trail’, journeying to a place of traditional Christian pilgrimage. Upon their return, Fr Nicholas Falzun OP (1989) commented,

before this year we had never heard of this city’s name nor its significance. We were to begin something new, adventurous and important in our lives ... it was not easy for some to get time off, then necessary money, permission to leave, or for everyone to take them seriously about a pilgrimage ... peer group pressure was a barrier for some of the youth.

The group had approached the ‘Santiago Trail’ as both a physical and spiritual pilgrimage. Falzun (1989) said that despite the long days with limited food and water, tents and make-shift toilets the group never grumbled but bonded. Not only were the group changed by their experiences of challenge, but even “the more hardened, rebellious, worldly-minded amongst the teenagers were won over by the experience of unity, harmony and joy”.

This first-ever Australian World Youth Day delegation also had the unique experience of having Mass with Pope John Paul II at his summer residence, Castel Gandolfo, on the return leg of their pilgrimage.

The challenges which faced the group prior to their departure (Falzun, 1989) were one's which have faced all prospective Australian pilgrims. In light of the distance to travel, and its associated costs, and the time away from family, work and study, World Youth Day was an expensive undertaking for Australians, especially when compared to that of European and North American pilgrims. This has impacted upon the number of Australians travelling to the international gathering. Rymarz (2008a) argued that Australian pilgrims therefore are more highly motivated to attend and generally more committed to their faith, they "are much less likely to travel on a whim" (p.139).

During the early years of World Youth Day, Australians were not only geographically distanced from the event, but the gathering received very little publicity and coverage from both the international and Australian mass media. This included the Catholic press. With the exception of a small number of ecclesial groups and movements, Australian Catholics were largely unaware of the World Youth Day phenomenon, a point affirmed by Ron and Mavis Pirola (National Antioch WYD Pilgrimage Coordinators 1991-2014) when interviewed for the research study (25 November, 2014). The Pirolas, when reflecting on the organization of the 1991 pilgrimage to Czestochowa commented, "nobody in Australia knew anything about World Youth Day ... we were trying to tell people about it but nobody paid any attention. The dioceses around the country were not into it. Nobody was into it."

Despite their own extensive involvement in the Church, through - but not restricted to- the Pontifical Council of the Family, and their support of Antioch, the Pirolas were also initially unaware of World Youth Day and only learned of it through other sources. Ron Pirola noted "it was through a coloured photo of a football stadium full of youth who were obviously on fire and had banners, and in the foreground was JP II, and we thought wow,

wouldn't it be great to be there ... isn't that what we need everywhere.”

For Mavis Pirola, it was the powerful testimony of an Antioch group leader, who had been a pilgrim to Santiago de Compostela, which gave her an awareness of the event, and motivate her to plan multiple pilgrimages to future World Youth Day gatherings. This typified peoples' 'awakening' to World Youth Day, especially during the event's early history. Experiences of the international gathering were not first-hand but vicarious, a point also noted by Bishop Anthony Fisher when interviewed for the research study (23 September, 2014), “I met again and again people who had gone to WYD on whom it had had a very big impact ... so while I had not been to oneself I was convinced that they were a very good thing. “

While those hearing about World Youth Day were generally convinced of its affective intensity and potential to deepen engagement in the life of the Church, awareness of the event was not widespread, even amongst regular Churchgoers. From an Australian perspective, World Youth Day was largely the domain of the ecclesial groups and movements, and a small number of highly committed parish youth groups and communal youth organisations. These groups formed the core of the pilgrim delegations from Australia until a national approach to World Youth Day was developed for the international gathering in Paris (1997).

Of particular significance during the early years of World Youth Day were Antioch and the Neo-Catechumenate, both of which regularly took school-aged pilgrims as part of their delegations.

Central to the ongoing and increasing participation of young Australians in World Youth Day was the role played by Harvest Australia, an organization which coordinated and supported the various World Youth Day pilgrimage options from 1991-2013. While some individuals, groups and movements travelled independently, the participation of the majority of Australia's World Youth Day pilgrims was coordinated and supported by Harvest Australia.

Table 3.2*Number of Australian Pilgrims Attending World Youth Day*

WYD #	Year	Host City	Country	Pilgrim Numbers
II	1987	Buenos Aires	Argentina	12
IV	1989	Santiago de Compostela	Spain	63
VI	1991	Czestochowa	Poland	35
VIII	1993	Denver	USA	170
X	1995	Manila	Philippines	200
XII	1997	Paris	France	500
XV	2000	Rome	Italy	1,250
XVII	2002	Toronto	Canada	1,400
XX	2005	Cologne	Germany	2,500
XXIII	2008	Sydney	Australia	N/A
XXVI	2011	Madrid	Spain	3,054
XVIII	2013	Rio de Janeiro	Brazil	1,344
XXXI	2016	Krakow	Poland	2,500

Harvest Australia's first involvement in World Youth Day was the coordination of an Antioch pilgrimage to World Youth Day VI in Czestochowa in 1991. When interviewed for the research study (30 October, 2014), Mr Philip Ryal, Managing Director of Harvest Australia said,

I had not ever heard of World Youth Day ... but I remember being swept up with the stories of those who had attended previously... after Czestochowa the potency of the World Youth Day seed began to show its evidence from those early days ... everyone got excited about Denver Colorado being the next World Youth Day.

A range of groups and movements, including Antioch, the Neo-Catechumenate, the Young Christian Workers Movement and the Confraternity of St Michael the Archangel (Metropolitan Melbourne) attended World Youth Day VIII in Denver (O'Reilly, 1993). Many of the 400 pilgrims travelled independently of Harvest Australia, as was also the case with Australian participation in World Youth Day X in Manila. While the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference had formally sent delegates to the International Youth Forums (held as part of each World Youth Day) the bishops themselves had not been involved in, nor attended, the international

gatherings. One exception was Cardinal Clancy, who attended World Youth Day in both Denver and Manila. Prior to World Youth Day in Paris (1997) he reflected, “these World Youth Days have manifested themselves as days of grace and blessing for the Church – especially for our young people.” He suggested that those who attend World Youth Day will “acquire a new sense of solidarity and of Church [and] they will be strongly motivated to share their faith with others.”

Following World Youth Day X in Manila (1995), Harvest Australia convened the first National World Youth Day Committee to help prepare for the international gathering in Paris (1997). This was a significant development in the ongoing participation of young Australians in the event and was to influence the approaches taken in the years that followed. The establishment of a national organizing committee not only helped increase the overall pilgrim representation at World Youth Day but it helped diversify the demographics of the delegation with greater numbers coming from rural and remote parts of Australia. From Paris onwards, the Australian delegation had a greater representation from parish and diocesan groups, groups affiliated with a religious order, ethnic communities, and school groups (Rome onwards). Much of this diversification resulted from the emphasis given to World Youth Day by the Australian Network of Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinators (established in 1999). Notwithstanding the increased diversification of Australian pilgrims, and the existence of a range of smaller sub-groups, the national committee helped forge a sense of national identity for the delegation.

Harvest Australia coordinated the work of the National World Youth Day Committee for three of the international gatherings (Paris, 1997; Rome, 2000; Toronto, 2002) until it came under the auspices of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. While Harvest Australia was a significant ‘driver’ of the World Youth Day phenomenon in this country, and while the event over time received increased recognition and support from local Church authorities, it was the ‘grassroots’ response of the young people themselves to the international gathering, and its associated pilgrimages,

that resulted in the event's popularity and historical trajectory of growth.

The important role played by young people was a point emphasised by Selina Hacham, past and present Chair of the National World Youth Day Committee, when interviewed for the research study (5 January, 2015).

World Youth Day wasn't registering with the hierarchy of the Church at the time it was something that was happening on a grassroots level it was very real, it was very tangible but it wasn't registering at the higher level ... it was always the young people ... it was happening at a young person's level and it wasn't until years after that the hierarchy of the Church were going wow, this is amazing, we have to get on board with this.

Hacham noted that even the concept of World Youth Day being held in Sydney originated with local young people, who had presented the newly installed Archbishop Pell with a petition of thousands of signatures, calling for World Youth Day to be held in Sydney in 2004 (The Catholic Leader, 2001; McCarthy, 2008).

The interviews conducted for this research study, and a range of documents, highlighted two particular events which changed the scope and nature of Australian participation at World Youth Day. These were

- World Youth Day XV in Rome (2000), and
- World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney (2008).

World Youth Day of the Great Jubilee Year 2000 marked a major change in the nature of Australian participation in the international gathering. Not only did Australian pilgrim numbers top 1,000 for the first time, it was also the first time that the international gathering would attract a significant number of bishops, many responding to Pope John Paul II's (1998) appeal to mark the Jubilee Year with the practice of pilgrimage. Bishops led diocesan delegations to World Youth Day for the first time and experienced the international gathering first-hand.

The significance of the increased involvement by the bishops at Rome in 2000 was attested to by Malcolm Hart, Director for the Office for Youth,

when interviewed for the research study (27 October, 2014). Hart said that, having the bishops involved was the catalyst for growth, it was the tipping point. They went back and said to their offices and parishes ‘we have to get more young people to this’... processes were put into place to make it easier for young people to get there ... also World Youth Day went from being an insider event for ecclesial communities to a broader event for the Church through the bishops.

For many of the bishops, their first-hand experience apparently made them converts to World Youth Day. Cardinal George Pell acknowledged that his conversion to the event was not just as a result of the week-long gathering in Rome, but that it also arose from the Holy Land pilgrimage which preceded it (Allen, 2005b).

It was at this time that the cumulative effect of combining a religious pilgrimage with World Youth Day week became more evident to Church leaders and coordinating authorities, and almost all groups worked to include pre or post pilgrimage options.

While greater numbers of young people attended the international gatherings in Toronto (2002) and Cologne (2005), and found the events to be rewarding as both spiritual and life experiences, it was ultimately the experience of Sydney, 2008, which was the “landscape changer for youth ministry in Australia ... where the whole country had an encounter with World Youth Day” (Hart interview, 2014).

With the occasion of World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Australians had unrestricted access to what had become “one of the signature events of the Catholic Church around the world” (Weigel, 2004, p.236). World Youth Day was no longer an experience restricted to a relatively small number of pilgrims, or an event to be learned of vicariously. Rather, the international gathering in Sydney involved thousands of grassroots Catholics from around the country, attracted a high level of community engagement, and raised the profile of World Youth Day for all Australians. As a result of the Sydney experience, World Youth Day has become a popular cultural

reference point for many young Catholics.

World Youth Day has often been associated with the challenging and difficult circumstances arising from the sheer scale of the mega-event (Ryal interview, 2014). By contrast, Rymarz (2008b, p.465) suggested that pilgrim satisfaction with and engagement in World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney arose in part from its more moderate and manageable numbers which meant that pilgrims “had a far broader experience of the week ... [and] were able to go to a range of events and not wait in long queues.” At the same time, the sense of occasion and the generation of emotional intensity that comes from participation in mega-events were not diminished.

As with many of the international experiences of World Youth Day, the nature and activity of the Sydney gathering exceeded the expectations of the local organizers (Fisher, 2008). Hosting the event “dramatically changed peoples’ aspirations for the Church’s ministry to youth and engagement by youth in the life of the Church” (Fisher interview, 2014). The prioritisation of youth ministry in the post-World Youth Day period was borne out in the formal release of a national Catholic vision statement, *Anointed and Sent: An Australian Vision for Catholic Youth Ministry* (2009) and the establishment of an Office for Youth by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (2014). Furthermore, a range of local and diocesan initiatives arose as a result of World Youth Day XXIII (Fisher, 2014).

Sydney 2008 had a significant impact on peoples’ general interest in, and the Church’s strategic approach to World Youth Day. With empirical research pointing to pilgrims deriving significant benefits from the experience of World Youth Day (Mason et al., 2008a), the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference sought to maximise Australian participation and establish a range of support mechanisms. This not only increased pilgrim numbers, especially amongst young people of school-age, but led to a more clearly defined national approach. Through the work of the National World Youth Day Committee “this has had the benefit of sharing resources between city and rural dioceses, streamlining pastoral preparations and building a body of experience and knowledge to improve

World Youth Day planning for the future” (Hacham, 2014, p.349).

3.6 WIDER PERCEPTIONS OF AND REACTIONS TO WORLD YOUTH DAY

3.6.1 Review of the Findings of Previous Empirical Research on World Youth Day

Previous empirical research on World Youth Day, as listed below, has been limited in its scope. It tended to concentrate on studying the personal impact of the event on pilgrims from a particular country or context. Some of the psychological interpretations of personal impact that were reported have been summarised here. Discussion of the psychological dynamics that might be operating is taken up in more detail in chapters 4 and 5 where a systematic search of the psychological and sociological literature was undertaken to identify key elements in theory that would be useful for interpretation of pilgrims’ responses.

Although some empirical data is available on the perceived personal impact of the World Youth Day experience, this is relatively limited. As with this study, previous research into the World Youth Day phenomenon has focused on a specific context:

- Danièle Hervieu-Léger (1994) examined the engagement of French pilgrims at World Youth Day VI in Czestochowa, Poland (1991);
- Winfried Gebhardt (2007) explored young people’s engagement, with a particular focus on German youth, at World Youth Day XX in Cologne (2005);
- Garelli & Camoletto (2003) conducted mixed methods research with Italian pilgrims who attended World Youth Day XV in Rome (2000) and XVII in Toronto (2002);
- Richard Rymarz (2007a,b & 2008a,b) conducted mixed methods research with Australian pilgrims, both school-aged and adults, who travelled to World Youth Day XX in Cologne

(2005), and

- Michael Mason, Andrew Singleton and Ruth Webber (2008a,b) conducted research with English speaking pilgrims prior to, during and following World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney (2008).

While each of these previous studies has provided valuable sociological data, the research of Rymarz (2007a,b & 2008a,b), and Mason et al. (2008a,b) are particularly relevant as they have detailed a ‘before and after’ analysis, and have been situated within an Australian context.

World Youth Day is a complex sociological phenomenon, and as a result, an assessment of its overall effectiveness requires an examination of various religious and psycho- social factors.

While the impact of the event may be assessed in relation to its ‘evangelical intent’ it must also consider the underlying dynamics which arose from its nature as a peak religious experience, “which can be purely and exclusively emotional” (Maslow, 1964, p.xiv).

While the religious profile of World Youth Day pilgrims is not homogeneous the event represents a demography which is significantly different to that of the general population.

Many pilgrims “enter a different reality ... forever aware that there are other young people with a similar background ... to what they believe, and who have closely aligned aspirations” (Rymarz, 2008c, pp.9-10). This new-found group and social identification might have a significant impact, not just on pilgrims’ feelings of connectedness and solidarity, but on their overall religious identity.

It is apparent that social validation strengthens religious plausibility. While “belief may seem less plausible when there are fewer who share it” (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005, p.5), plausibility can be established and strengthened through supportive social networks, and identification and interaction with

larger groups of 'like believers' (Rymarz, 2010c). To this end, the dynamics of World Youth Day intentionally provided an environment which was conducive to the promotion of religious plausibility.

The social identification experienced at World Youth Day appeared to have multiple implications which have extended beyond the enhancement of religious plausibility. The international gathering was not a conventional religious experience. Rather, its key elements were characteristic of the 'peak religious experiences' described by Maslow (1964). For many pilgrims, World Youth Day was not just a peak –religious experience' but a peak 'life experience'. This was borne out in the research of Mason et al. (2008a, p.6) where 45% of the research participants described World Youth Day as 'one of the best experiences of my life'.

A number of social researchers have pointed to the perceived benefits that accompany religious identification (Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman, 2010; Lim & Putnam, 2010). Kinnvall (2004) suggested more could be gained from the shared identity within a religious group than with other group forms of social identity, a view supported by Graham and Haidt (2010). While religious groups are generally typical of other groups in that they offer a sense of belonging (Haslam, Jetten, Postmes, & Haslam, 2009), they are often differentiated on the basis of providing highly organized support networks (Lim & Putnam, 2009). Furthermore, religious groups and networks were generally perceived by members as providing a framework for finding purpose and meaning in life (Mahoney, Pargament, Cole, Jewell, Magyar, Tarakeshwar, 2005).

The affective intensity of religious experiences and the perceived emotional value that religious group membership provides have been considered to be a significant aspect of religious socialisation. In their research study, Krueger, Kahneman, Schkade, Schwartz and Stone (2009) found that people reported their highest level of 'positive emotion' when they were engaged in religious activities. Other studies have also found that people associate religious experiences with positive feelings (Greeley & Hout, 2006; Inglehart, 2010). According to Lim and Putnam (2010) it is the

‘collective experience’ of religion which is especially significant to people’s feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction. Their research findings suggested, “in terms of life satisfaction, it is neither faith nor communities, per se, that are important, but communities of faith” (Lim & Putnam, 2010, p.927).

Rymarz (2007b) found that World Youth Day pilgrims attested to the idea that the international gathering was a ‘community of faith’, “often in contrast to the situation at home where strong expressions of religious belief and identity are frowned upon and those harbouring these views feel isolated” (p.394). Not only did this sense of community strengthen religious plausibility for many pilgrims but it provided them with an affirming and enjoyable experience. For many pilgrims, the critical factor of influence was the opportunity to publicly express and share their faith with people of the same age (Mason et al., 2008b, p.17).

While World Youth Day attracted some pilgrims who were drawn by purely social motives, the ‘faith’ element of the international gathering has been considered by some (Mason et al., 2008b; Mason, 2010b) to be a factor of influence with pilgrims from across the religious spectrum. While previous research does not show a uniform pattern of spiritual growth, it does point to a shift from nominalism to greater religious commitment and affiliation amongst some pilgrims, especially those deemed to be ‘open’ (Mason, 2008).

Mason (2010b) suggested “a significant proportion of those who were less committed did experience a kind of conversion” (p.3) in which they moved to a fuller and deeper level of religious commitment. This ‘conversion’, which involved a change of perspective and orientation, was not uniform amongst ‘nominalists’ however, but was common amongst young people who expressed religious commitment but who had a low level of church involvement (Mason, 2010b, pp.11-16). There was no evidence of a changed view of faith amongst the ‘social’ pilgrims, who were characterised by low levels of religious commitment and practice.

Mason (2010b) identified a number of elements of the World Youth Day

phenomenon which he considered influenced youth in their process of conversion towards a deeper religious commitment. These elements primarily related to the atmosphere of the event, and included:

- a sense of the sacred and presence of God;
- a fuller understanding of the universal Church and a pride in being Catholic, and
- a shared experience of faith with others the same age.

It was also found that the dramatic nature and affective intensity of the large-scale non-liturgical events influenced pilgrim attitudes towards religion (p.19).

According to Singleton (2011), many of the World Youth Day events were of particular significance because they are viewed by pilgrims as powerful moments when they experienced the presence of God (p.66). When pilgrims were asked to identify these ‘God’ moments in the post-World Youth Day research they primarily cited the major public events, liturgical and non-liturgical. The most commonly cited occasions included: the Vigil (54%); the Final Mass (42.9%); the Stations of the Cross (39.3%); the Opening Mass (34.8%), and the papal arrival (33.7%) (Mason et al., 2008a, p.12).

Rymarz (2011) suggested that World Youth Day

may represent a new structure which caters for those young Catholics, who in many ways, are craving for an experience of the transcendent ... they are in a new environment, they are with new people and their senses have become attuned due to the new reality they are experiencing. (p.22)

Rymarz’s (2011) view was that young people’s experience of the transcendent was generally manifested in experiences and expressions of communal joy.

Mason et al. (2008a) and Rymraz (2007b) found that World Youth Day was viewed as a positive and enjoyable experience by the majority of pilgrims. While some past-pilgrims have made reference to a range of concerns including, organisational and logistical issues and the behaviour of other

pilgrims (Mason et al., 2008a) these concerns are not representative of the overall feedback from the general pilgrim population.

Rymarz (2007b) conducted post-World Youth Day research with 63 school-aged pilgrims who had attended World Youth Day XX in Cologne. When asked to rate their experience on a scale of 0 (absolutely terrible) to 10 (terrific), 46.8% of the cohort rated the event as a 10. The mean score was 9.05, sd 1.595 (p.390). The school-aged pilgrims also identified four broad areas which they considered to be the most enjoyable aspects of the international gathering. These were:

- the days of encounter prior to World Youth Day week;
- the international aspect of the event, including travelling overseas, meeting new people and making new friends from around the world;
- a strengthened faith, and a developed understanding of ‘being Catholic’, and
- the key events of World Youth Day week, especially the Final Mass and Vigil (p.391).

By comparison, the research conducted by Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a) found that pilgrims generally considered the social elements of World Youth Day to be the most enjoyable (see Table 3.3).

Table 3.3

The Most Enjoyable Aspects of World Youth Day, 2008

* This table was detailed in full in the research report Pilgrims’ Progress 2008, p.7.*

* Pilgrims were able to select up to 5 options from a set list, as well as provide their own response. This table details the five most popular responses. *

	Percentage
Walking with the big crowds through the city streets	48.3
Meeting people	47.1
The social aspects were fine, but for me it was the spiritual things that I not only got the most out of, but also actually enjoyed the most	35.9
Just being part of my small group: sleeping, eating, travelling together	30.4

Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a,b) anticipated that the social dimensions of World Youth Day would hold particular appeal for younger teenage pilgrims. While this was validated by their research, they found that only a small minority of pilgrims were exclusively 'social' in their outlook. Their research indicated that the majority of pilgrims saw World Youth Day as an opportunity for religious socialisation or a time to clarify or confirm their sense of religious identity.

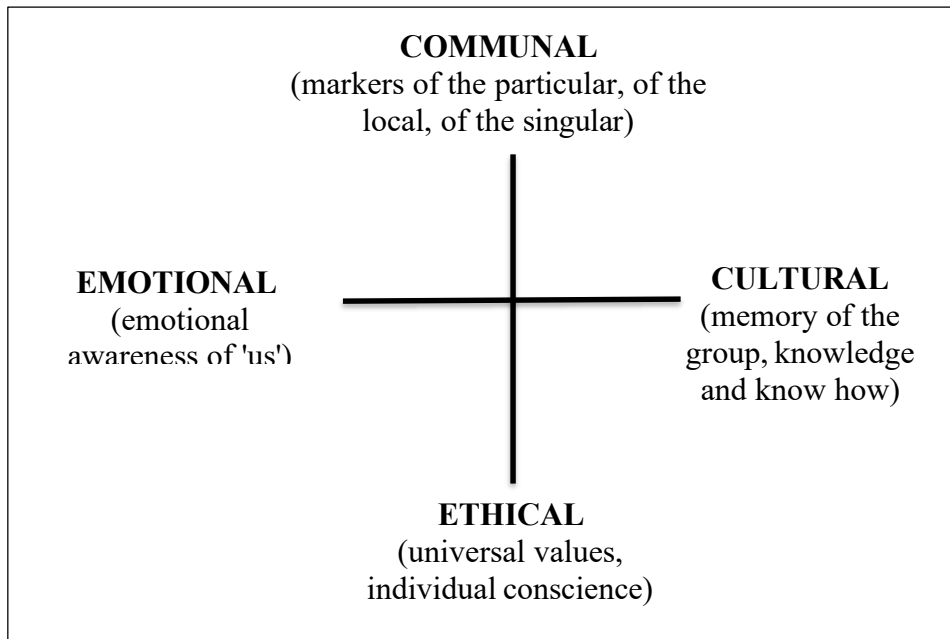
Religious identification is a complex process and sociologists have found that affectivity is directly related to people's sense of religious belonging and strengthened affiliation (Barrett, 2000). While many young people do not find "strongly affective intense experiences" (Heelas & Woodhead 2005, p.121) in their regular experiences of Church, they are drawn to the emotionality of large gatherings, and for some, it is their primary experience of belonging (Casson, 2010).

World Youth Day was characterised by experiences of affective intensity, which were in contrast to the conventional religious experiences of most pilgrims. Rymarz (2008c) found that this 'buzz factor' contributed to the event's appeal, and to pilgrim feelings of satisfaction and fulfilment.

The emotional intensity of the World Youth Day gatherings was identified by Hervieu- Leger (1994;1998a), who suggested that the 'emotional dimension' was central to a person's religious identification. According to Hervieu-Leger (1998a), the four dimensions of religious identification were; emotional, communal, cultural and ethical, which she represented diagrammatically (see Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 *Dimensions of Religious Identification.*

This figure was detailed in (Hervieu-Leger, 1998a, p.223).



The emotional dimension was considered to be the “intense experience which produces the collective feeling ‘us’ ... this experience is more and more often - particularly among the young - the moment at which the primary experience of belonging becomes established” (Hervieu-Leger, 1998a, p.220). The French sociologist regarded World Youth Day as an excellent example of an emotional experience that can lead to religious identification. This form of *‘emotional Christianity’*, as she termed it, arises from the feeling of communal belonging, and is situated within an emotional-communal context.

While World Youth Day has been found to generate an atmosphere of “enthusiasm and collective exaltation” (Hervieu-Leger, 1998a, p.224), Hervieu-Leger warned of the dangers of this being an ephemeral moment, rather than an experience which strengthens the other dimensions of religious identity. This concern was shared by Casson (2010), who identified the tension facing many Christian churches when the immediacy of the emotional experience was disconnected from the tradition, and thus became belief without tradition (p.59).

In an effort to ensure that World Youth Day was not reduced to a ‘religious

temporality' of a peak emotional moment (Hervieu-Leger, 1998b, p.28), Church authorities provided a framework for the international gathering which gave priority to the four dimensions of religious identity named by Hervieu-Leger (1998a). "Regardless of the Church's efforts to place the pilgrimage in the kind of framework which might transform this gigantic pilgrimage of youth into an accelerated program of socialisation into Catholicism" (Hervieu-Leger, 1998a, p.224), some young people appeared to remain satisfied with the brief, but intense peak-religious encounter, where they experienced an emotional high, and they did not take their religious socialisation or commitment further.

At the same time, past research (Singleton, 2009, 2011; Rymarz, 2007b) has also found that many World Youth Day pilgrims attested to changes in their religious outlook and practice.

Twelve months after World Youth Day XX in Cologne, Rymarz (2007b) conducted post-World Youth Day research with 63 school-aged pilgrims. Although the pre-World Youth Day survey had indicated the group had a high existing level of religious affiliation and commitment the follow-up research identified a further strengthening of personal faith and religious practice as a result of the experience (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4

The Impact of World Youth Day on Individual Religiosity. This table was detailed in Rymarz, 2008, p.392. The table identifies the percentage of pilgrims (n=63), who responded either 'more' or 'much more' to a series of questions relating to post- World Youth Day behaviours and practices.

Question	Percentage
Since WYD I pray	71.4
Since WYD I read the Bible	52.4
Since WYD I discuss religion with my family	63.5
Since WYD I discuss religion with my friends	60.3
Since WYD I go to reconciliation	28.6
Since WYD I go to Mass	41.3

A salient feature of Rymarz's (2007b) research was that many of the pilgrims indicated that they had moved to a deeper and more committed faith and model of religious affiliation. Rymarz expressed a cautionary note about the longevity of the perceived changes, and questioned "will this impact still be evident over a longer period of time", especially as the teenagers leave school and transition into early adulthood.

The post-World Youth Day research of Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a) was conducted five-six months after the international gathering in Sydney. As with the Rymarz findings, Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a, p.29) found that pilgrims attested to 'praying more frequently' (37%) and attending Reconciliation more often (46%). They also found that many pilgrims discussed religious issues with fellow World Youth Day pilgrims as well as with family and friends who did not attend.

In discerning the potential impact of participation in World Youth Day, Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a) noted that many of the pilgrims reported changes in religious beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. These related to influences on daily living, altruistic behaviour, and in particular, their sense of Catholic identity. Pilgrims also expressed changes in their attitudes towards faith and their understandings of God, which they attributed to the World Youth Day experience:

- 42.3% of pilgrim respondents reported, "I feel more confident in my belief in God – that is God is real", and
- 39.2% of pilgrims agreed, "I am not embarrassed now to let others see that I am a believer" (2008, p.26).

A consistent and salient theme of the research findings of Mason, Singleton & Webber (2008a) was that the 'religious' impact of World Youth Day was of particular significance for pilgrims with a moderate to developed level of religiosity (pre World Youth Day), rather than those at the extremes of religio-social spectrum. While the international gathering apparently affirmed the faith commitment of the highly devoted it did not necessarily lead to identifiable changes in religious attitudes or practices. Furthermore, those attracted to World Youth Day for purely social reasons, were unlikely

to seek forms of religious engagement or association after the event.

Singleton (2011) commented that World Youth Day,

provides a context in which the particular combination of encouragement, religious instruction, community and religious experiences can motivate already religious youth to increase their religious practice. WYD is best understood as a time of consolidation and encouragement, rather than effective evangelisation to marginal or nominal Catholics. (p.67)

Summary

These research studies identified a number of salient and recurring themes: World Youth Day is considered to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, characterised by heightened levels of affective intensity; some of the religious experiences were affirmed as being particularly powerful and as moments of encounter with the transcendent; the event's structure and atmosphere were conducive to social bonding and a spirit of solidarity between pilgrims, and the strengthening and validation of pilgrims' religious identity.

3.6.2 The Response of the Catholic Community

As a sociological phenomenon, World Youth Day is perceived and valued differently by various groups in the community. These differences of opinion are not isolated to the mainstream population, but are evident within the views of key stakeholders who have a close association with the event. Within the wider Catholic community, there are divergent views about the international gathering's overall effectiveness, especially with regards to its capacity to engage young people into the life of the Church beyond the event (Ang, 2008).

To some within the Catholic community, World Youth Day regenerates young people with enthusiasm and "over time, it will bring a mass of young committed Catholics to the pews", whereas for others, it is "an expensive and empty exercise, a passing jamboree that will prove of little lasting significance or ultimate effect" (Ang, 2008, p.403).

Mullins (2003) expressed a similar view about the divergent opinions,

Some people argue that the success of the World Youth Days over the last two decades is a sign that the Catholic faith still has significant pulling power with youth. Others are more circumspect. The events can be regarded as little more than a Catholic equivalent of a rock concert—something young people attend in order to feel a part of a collective experience—and the impressions they leave [are] just as superficial.

The most common concerns raised about World Youth Day from within the Catholic community relate to the costs of the event and the long-term effectiveness of it as a strategy of youth evangelisation. Some Catholics, including priests of host dioceses, have preferred to see the human and financial resources invested into the infrastructure of local parishes rather than the weeklong gathering. Others have expressed concern at the evangelising intent of World Youth Day and its particular target audience, suggesting it is not consistent with the original intention of Pope John II as being an expression of the ‘new evangelisation’ (McGillon, 2008). McSweeney (2008) suggested World Youth Day “appeals greatly to the more conservative elements of the Church” (p.570).

While World Youth Day gives prominence to traditional Catholic piety and devotions, this researcher considers the event to have a broad appeal. Furthermore, some of the Catholics who have consistently criticized World Youth Day would describe themselves as ‘traditionalists’. Their criticisms have not centered on financial costs or the notion of ‘event centered evangelisation’, rather they have attacked the event as trivializing religion (Ferreira & Vennari, 2005). World Youth Day is viewed by them as counter-Church rather than an expression of the ‘new evangelisation’, and the strongest criticisms have been reserved for perceived liturgical abuses, and the behaviour of young pilgrims.

In commenting on World Youth Day and on the attitudes of the young pilgrims, Ferreira and Vennari (2005) considered that, “if there is one term used to describe World Youth Day it is ‘fun’, and this reputation attracts

participants” (p.81). These authors also suggested that “not all young people are impressed with the shenanigans and pseudo- Catholicism of World Youth Day, but their voice is not usually heard” (p.69).

A review of social media responses to World Youth Day have shown that a number of blogs and forums were critical of the event. These, however, constituted a small percentage of the overall online content which was characteristically positive.

Successive popes have been aware of some of the major scepticisms held by people about World Youth Day. Addressing the Roman Curia in December 2008, Pope Benedict XVI posed the rhetorical question ‘what really happens at a World Youth Day?’, and then remarked:

Popular analyses tend to view these days as a variant of contemporary youth culture, a sort of rock festival in an ecclesial key, with the Pope as its main attraction.

Such analyses presume that, with or without faith, these festivals would be basically the same; and thus the whole question of God can be set aside. Even some Catholics would seem to agree, seeing the whole event as a huge spectacle, magnificent perhaps, but of no real significance for the question of faith and the presence of the Gospel in our time. They might be ecstatic celebrations, but in the end they would really change nothing, nor have any deeper effect on life. (2008c)

Pope Benedict XVI affirmed the event’s Christocentric emphasis and communal nature and pointed to the core pastoral objectives underpinning the international gathering (Pope John Paul II, 1996).

Scepticism about World Youth Day was not restricted to the wider society or some grassroots Catholics but it was also evidenced amongst some senior Church officials (Allen, 2004; Weigel, 2010) who believed that young people would not respond to the invitation of the pope. Allen (2004) suggested the Bishops and Church officials who were most sceptical were

those who had never attended a World Youth Day and that attitudes changed as a consequence of their experience of the event. In recalling World Youth Day XV in Rome, Allen (2004) claimed that,

World Youth Day made converts of a number of Vatican officials who had not been sold on youth ministry ... they were dazed by the vitality of these young people, by their love for the Church and for the pope ... many ... had once entertained doubts about these papal mega-events but not anymore. (pp.167- 168)

World Youth Day XV in Rome was also a turning point for the direct involvement of the Australian Catholic Bishops. Prior to 2000, only two bishops had ever attended a World Youth Day celebration, (Cardinal Edward Clancy, Denver, 1993, Manila 1995; Bishop Philip Wilson, Paris, 1997). Rome, however, attracted a number of Australian bishops and this then became the pattern for subsequent World Youth Days.

Following the Rome gathering, Bishop Eugene Hurley (Diocese of Port Pirie) noted, “my lasting impression is of the immense, genuine joy, fun and goodness which emanated from every aspect of the pilgrimage” (2000, p.ii). From this time, not only were there a greater number of Australian bishops attending World Youth Day, but a greater number of Australian pilgrims travelling in more formalized diocesan groupings. Fisher (2014) recognized it was during this time, and especially the period following World Youth Day in Sydney, that the Catholic Church in Australia “put a lot of energy into promoting the attendance of young people” (p.2).

The support of the Australian Catholic Bishops for World Youth Day has continued to grow over the last decade. This has been prompted, not just through their direct and immediate involvement, but by their perception of the impact and the long-term benefits of the event (Fisher, 2014).

As noted by Ang (2008), an area of scepticism for some within the Catholic community has been the sustainability of the event’s perceived benefits. This researcher found that Church authorities in many of the previous host cities attested to the long-term benefits and positive legacy of World Youth

Day (Aquila, 2013; Fisher, 2014; Metzloff, 2016; Rosica, 2016).

An historical and documentary analysis of materials published by various sections of the Catholic media highlighted the significance of the World Youth Day phenomenon and the priority given to it by various groups within the Catholic Church. The materials were significant to this research study as they helped identify the pastoral objectives of Church authorities and pilgrims' perceptions and appraisal of the event.

3.6.3 The Wider Media Coverage of World Youth Day

An examination of the mainstream media coverage of past World Youth Days highlighted a recurring pattern, especially in the local mainstream media of the host city and country. Prior to the visit of the pope, the media attention was almost exclusively negative: challenging aspects of Church teaching; identifying 'topical problems' within the Church and the indifference of disaffected youth; predicting disruptions to local communities, and questioning the money and resources being committed to the event (Gold, 2008). Typically, the media suggested the event was disorganized and would not attract the projected numbers.

Historically, the tone of the coverage and the nature of the stories changed with the arrival of the international pilgrims and the pope. While there continued to be some occasional stories of organizational problems, or protests against the event, an examination of the media coverage showed that stories about the pope's visit or World Youth Day were predominately positive (Fisher, 2008).

Drake (2011) argued that this 'trajectory' was the typical 'news cycle' for the media's coverage of World Youth Day. Having reported on Toronto (2002), Cologne (2005) and Sydney (2008) he considered that even during the period of the positive news cycle, isolated stories of controversy would get full and exaggerated attention. This view was supported by Hodge (2011) and A. Brown (2011) in their assessment of the attention given by the media to demonstrations and civil unrest during World Youth Day in

Madrid.

Hodge noted, “even before the protests, there did not seem to be the level of analysis worthy of such a huge youth event, particularly considering the image of WYD as youth celebrating positive value and seeking to contribute to society” (2011). Writing for *The Guardian*, Andrew Brown (2011) suggested that the preference to report on controversy was not “rooted in theological animus, but something far more cultural. The kind of young people who go on organised pilgrimages ... are quintessentially unfashionable” when compared to those who represent rivalry and conflict (Trussler & Soroka, 2013).

An examination of the media coverage of past World Youth Days showed that in addition to the pope, the pilgrims influenced the reporting of events, and the overall tone of the coverage. The influx of hundreds of thousands of international visitors, mostly young people, into the host city, created an atmosphere described as ‘joyful’, ‘carnival like’ and ‘infectious’ (Smyth, 2008).

In Sydney in 2008, journalists spoke of a return of the ‘Olympic Spirit’, and attributed this to the excitement and enthusiasm of the pilgrims (Saurine & Sikora, 2008). Fiona Connolly (2008), in her article *World Youth Day joy is infectious* wrote,

“it was pure goodwill from two strangers ... that was the first time I noticed the unprovoked, unrehearsed and utterly infectious happiness the World Youth Day pilgrims have brought to Sydney ... it’s not their religion but something about the innocence of their youthfulness and the rich culture they offer that makes this a good news story for us”.

Similar observations have been made by journalists at the other international World Youth Days.

One of the most significant changes in media perception and outlook took place at World Youth Day VIII in Denver (1993). The event received mixed levels of support from the wider Catholic community, many of whom had

misgivings about the event, very little support from local government authorities and, prior to the event, it was subject to consistent criticism from the mainstream media. Many of the criticisms were direct and systematic attacks against the visit of Pope John Paul II.

By the weeks end however, and in the months that followed, the *Denver Post* featured a series of articles recounting the success of the event (Brimberg, 1993; Culver, 1993; George, 1993). One week after the final mass journalist Ann Schrader (1993) reflected,

“but if there’s one memory that will probably linger, it’s the joy of the visitors... the joy is like a breath of fresh air ... what a difference a week can make. Everywhere young people appeared to be having fun ... it was infectious”.

The role of pilgrims in helping to change the public perception, and media coverage of the World Youth Day gatherings was also evident in the comments of Fr Tom Rosica csb, when interviewed for the research study (20 August, 2012). The Chief Executive Officer and National Director of World Youth Day XVII in Toronto, said,

A thing about World Youth Day is that it affects the running of a city and it also brings people together. I saw this in Canada. They speak about it as the only project ever, even more than the Olympics to unite people. They speak about the goodness the pilgrims brought to the city and their spirit of co-operation ... there is something contagious about it and a whole circle of friendship grows up around this event.

Fr Tom Rosica’s observations about World Youth Day XVII have also been true of some of the other international gatherings. An example of this was World Youth Day XV in Rome. Many of the Italian papers, which historically had strained relations with the Vatican, acknowledged the success of the Jubilee World Youth Day. As reported by Zenit (2000, 22 August), the leading newspaper *La Repubblica*, acknowledged, “the wall between agnostics and Catholics fell at Tor Vergata”. * Tor Vergata was the site of the World Youth Day Vigil and Final Mass, events attended by

an estimated 2 million pilgrims. *

While the trajectory of the World Youth Day media coverage provided important insights, it also pointed to a broader and more significant issue, the role of the media in constructing social, cultural and religious identity. Through the ‘mediatisation’ of religion, “religious information and experiences become moulded according to the demands of media genres. Existing religious symbols, practices and beliefs become raw material for the media’s own narration” (Hjarvard, 2011, p.124). Through this process, the media has “affected the religious literacy of increasing numbers of people” (Moberg, Sjö, Granholm, 2014, p.5) who have endeavoured to interpret and draw meaning from the media depiction of religion-related themes, issues and events. To this end, one could conclude that the media has influenced people’s perception and understanding of, and response to World Youth Day. In a sense, the media has helped shape the cultural and religious reference point that World Youth Day has become.

Throughout the history of the international gathering the mainstream media has consistently depicted World Youth Day as blending elements of the sacred and the secular and it has represented the event with a juxtaposition of images. It is likely that the media coverage of World Youth Day has had a role in the social construction of the event. It has perhaps helped shape the language that people use to describe the event, including that of the pilgrims themselves and members of the wider Catholic community. An historical and documentary analysis by this researcher of media coverage related to World Youth Day has identified a number of key media messages and themes:

- the counter-cultural nature of the event, which challenges the preconception that the majority of youth in the postmodern era are ‘areligious’;
- the ‘iconic’ nature of the event by which it is depicted as being significant to a generation of young people as per ‘Woodstock’;
- the ‘festival’ like nature of the event with a recognition of the positive and seemingly contagious goodwill of pilgrims;
- the celebrity status of the pope and the depiction of pilgrims as

being devoted fans, and

- the size and the scale of the event.

Past headlines have been included here as evidence of this conclusion.

- Love-In for 2 million youths, heartily blessed by the Pope (Stanley 2000) *The New York Times*
- One million pilgrims at Pope's Woodstock (Patterson 2005) *The Independent*
- Welcome to God's mosh pit (Morris 2008) *The Sydney Morning Herald*

The media coverage of past World Youth Days has shown that the international gathering may not be regarded as a conventional religious event, but rather a hybridisation of both religion and media (Hepp & Krönert, 2008). These authors have situated the international gathering within the context of popular culture and they have depicted it accordingly. Notwithstanding the trajectory of the coverage which included negative aspects, this researcher considered that the media helped popularise World Youth Day and make it an iconic event that attracted young people.

It has been argued that World Youth Day is a 'media event' (Hepp & Kronert, 2010). Media events are characterised by a range of elements (Dayan & Katz, 1992), a number of which correspond to the dynamics of World Youth Day. The most relevant aspect of World Youth Day was the size and scale of the international gathering, which can be regarded as a mega-event with transcultural significance (Roche 2000). In this way, World Youth Day resembled the typology of 'spectacle' (Kellner 2003), and it was considered to be of wide social and cultural significance.

In their definition and description of media-events Dayan and Katz (1992) appropriated religious language to highlight their capacity to generate collective experiences, "during the liminal moments all eyes are fixed on the ceremonial centre through which each ... is connected to all the rest" (p.15). The view of a collective experience was supported by Couldrey, who reflected "television makes possible an extraordinary shared experience of

watching events at society's centre" (2003, p.61).

World Youth Day, as a media-event, has utilised television to maximum effect in generating a collective experience. As noted by Weigel (2010), in addition to the "half a million people, walking solemnly through the centre" (p.301) of Toronto to commemorate the Stations of the Cross, one billion people shared the experience via a television feed through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

With advances in technology there has been a marked diversification and thickening of media communication (Lofgren, 2001; Hepp & Couldrey, 2010) to include the internet and other forms of digital journalism, including online blogs and forums, through which website users can co-create a representation of an event through a form of mediated interaction or quasi interaction. Online forums have been used extensively by pilgrims during recent World Youth Days to share testimonies and observations and build social networks. An example of this was the establishment of the social network site xt3 just prior to Sydney, 2008. In addition to the use of this site, the final statistics from World Youth Day 2008 (as detailed on the Salt and Light website), showed the event was watched by as many people through the internet, (500,000) as it was on television, and that a further 500,000 users visited the official website during World Youth Day week.

As a form of mass media the internet plays an increasingly significant role in sharing religious experiences and information and shaping religious identity (Lövheim & Linderman, 2005). As a medium, its functionality allows for the sharing of opinions and the co-creation of information, and as a result it is now the preferred medium of choice with the young. This is borne out in the rapid proliferation and diversification of social media. The ubiquity of technology has meant that online social networks are a significant factor of influence on how people communicate with and relate to others. There is evidence to suggest that many people not only prefer, but are increasingly dependent upon, the interactive capabilities of social media (Wang, Lee & Hua, 2015).

In reflecting upon the nature of the pilgrimage experience for Australians who have travelled to World Youth Day, Finni (2014, p.80) acknowledged the impact of this technology dependence:

Travelling with young people to World Youth Day provides many entertaining and sometimes slightly alarming experiences, such as the grounding effects of being offline or with no phone coverage. For a young person, not having a mobile phone with 24/7 internet access, is novelty and catastrophe all at once.

The mediatisation of religion, specifically in the event of World Youth Day, was subject to detailed research at World Youth Day XX in Cologne in 2005. Hepp & Krönert (2008) considered World Youth Day to be a “hybrid religious media event” (p.5) which combined and blended traditional religious rituals with popular culture. To the researchers, the international gathering was an example of ‘mediatisation’ in its purest form, and they attributed this to three core elements which they identified as a *triad structure*. This structure comprised the *popular*, the *sacred* and the *pope*.

Hepp and Krönert (2008) suggested the synergy between the three elements meant that World Youth Day was highly effective, comprehensible and sustainable, and that the event gave rise to a particular ‘branding’ of religion, one relatively unique to

Catholicism, especially given the role of the pope. The three elements of *popular*, *sacred* and *pope* were not viewed by Hepp and Krönert (2008) as separate entities, rather they were interrelated and each contributed to the overall psycho-social dynamic of the event:

- *The Sacred*: World Youth Day includes a range of ceremonial events and religious rituals. Rituals are recognized as being significant to ‘media events’ (Dayan and Katz, 1992) and they carry enormous symbolism, convey tradition, evoke a sense of pageantry and stimulate religious imagination. The rituals are typically highly structured;
- *The Popular*: World Youth Day includes opportunities for a diverse range of youth activities which are largely unstructured, celebratory and

festive in nature. World Youth Day is also a commercialized event with the sale of merchandise and memorabilia and this relates to the ‘branding of the event’, the creation of social identities and the celebrity status of the pope;

- *The Pope*: According to Hepp and Krönert (2008) the pope represents the ultimate ‘brand’ for Catholicism, and the activities of World Youth Day week revolve around the pope’s presence at the event. He is described as a “clamp linking both the sacred and the popular dimension of the event” (p.6).

In his book, *Religion in the Media Age* Stewart Hoover (2006) emphasized that religion and the media could not be viewed as separate entities, but they shared an important symbiotic relationship, and the media was often in “the driver’s seat” (p.84) of the relationship, especially in its capacity to construct social and religious identity and shape religious opinion.

World Youth Day can be interpreted as a “contemporary intersection of religion, media and mediated popular culture” (Moberg, Sjö, Granholm, 2014, p.1) and its core structure and dynamics have been largely adapted to assume a media form. There is evidence to support the view that World Youth Day is a hybrid religious media event (Hepp & Krönert, 2010). The images which form the social construction and representation of World Youth Day underpin the hopes and motivations of pilgrims, and point to the reasons for the event’s popularity. The media has enabled the collective experience of World Youth Day to extend beyond the immediacy of the gathering, whereby many people were able to experience and share the emotional intensity of the event vicariously. The emergence of online media forms, and their proliferation at recent World Youth Days, has shown that the representation of the international gathering is no longer dependent upon journalists, but is in part co-constructed by the pilgrims themselves.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter examined the nature, structure and core elements of World Youth Day. In outlining the origins and historical development of World Youth Day, the chapter presented a synthesis of seminal literature, with

particular reference to apostolic writings related to World Youth Day and to evangelisation, and it appraised the international gathering as an expression of the 'new evangelisation'.

While an 'evangelical shift' had been brought about by Vatican II and the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, Pope John Paul II is considered to have brought a particular missionary impulse to evangelisation. This was directed at cultures considered to be either hostile or indifferent to Christian values and the Gospel message (John Paul II, 1992b), and sought to maximise peoples' participation in the task of evangelisation, especially lay people (John Paul II, 1988b, n.34; 1990, n.3).

The chapter detailed the principal objectives of World Youth Day as held by Church authorities, and explored how the event was a response to cultural postmodernity. Particular attention was given to the increasingly eclectic nature of adolescent spirituality and how this might impact upon pilgrims' perception of and response to the experience of World Youth Day.

The chapter detailed the historic pattern of Australian participation in the international gathering. It also examined previous research conducted on World Youth Day and it looked at how the event has been viewed by different sections of the community and reported on in the media.

A number of the central issues identified in this chapter informed the development of the empirical research instruments and helped with the development of a conceptual framework from which to examine the research data.

Chapter 4 will search the research literature related to large group events to identify elements in psychological and sociological theories that are judged to be useful for interpreting the psychological dynamics of World Youth Day.

CHAPTER 4

AN EXAMINATION OF SOCIOLOGICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH TO INFORM INTERPRETATION OF THE DYNAMICS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter and the following chapter 5 address specifically the second research question on the **Psychological dimensions of the World Youth Day experience** as noted in chapter 1. Seeking explanatory insights from psychological and sociological theory has long been a process within research and development in the discipline of Religious Education and in the subset of Youth Spirituality.

The chapter reports a search of the research literature in psychology and sociology where it is concerned with large group experiences and rituals. It sought to identify and explicate elements in theory that were judged to be relevant for interpreting the personal and spiritual/religious dimensions of the World Youth Day experience. The theory investigated included studies of the social, emotional and psychological dynamics associated with religious experiences. Religious experiences can involve a range of powerful emotional responses, and be considered by participants to give meaning to life and transcend other experiences, especially when situated outside the routinized parts of religion (Collins, 2010). According to Maslow (1964), they often constitute a 'peak experience' which enable participants to have an awakened sense of value, purpose and meaning.

Attention will be given to the psychological dynamics of collective religious rituals, and to related theory including *collective effervescence* (Durkheim, 1912) and *social identity theory* (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Special attention will be given to the theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (Collins, 2004, 2010) as it was judged to provide a useful construct for interpreting pilgrims' engagement in and experience of World Youth Day.

The work covered in this chapter and chapter 5 sets out to identify and bring into the academic discourse for World Youth Day in particular, and into Religious Education and Youth Spirituality more generally, explanatory elements from psychology and sociology. Such a procedure is often regarded as a key inter-disciplinary aspect of the discipline of Religious Education. The research task here involved the identification and application of relevant explanatory theory. While it included some evaluative comments about this theory, it did not attempt a systematic evaluation of psychological/sociological theory.

These two chapters have also helped build up a framework for interpreting pilgrims' experiences of World Youth Day in Chapters 6 and 7 in the empirical part of the study.

4.2 THE SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

4.2.1 Introduction

Collective ritual events are a common social occurrence, and are diverse in nature. They typically include sporting events, rallies, nationalistic, holiday and religious celebrations. These occasions are generally perceived as a departure from the everyday and are usually characterised by an elevation of emotional intensity (Knottnerus, 2010).

Depending upon the nature of the ritual activity, Knottnerus observed that a range of emotional states can be generated, including “gratification,

enjoyment, delight, friendliness, joy, rapture, exhilaration, pride, reverence, triumph, hope, and awe” (2010, p.51). According to Knottnerus, the arousal and intensification of emotions results in a strengthening of group solidarity as well as an “increased commitment to the ritualised practises engaged in ... and the beliefs or symbolic themes expressed in these ritual practices” (2010, p.52).

Religious rituals, of which World Youth Day is one, seek to draw participants into a consideration of existential questions and have as an objective, a deepened awareness of, or a sense of experience of the transcendent. The religious dynamic, often perceived

as a quest for the sacred, gives potency to the experience. Participants draw satisfaction from the ritual because there is a sense of being part of something that is greater than oneself. Typically, they attribute the emotional energy of the ritual experience to a force that is beyond any one of them.

4.2.2 ‘Collective Effervescence’ and Religious Gatherings

A number of sociological theories have been developed to describe the emotional and psychological dynamics of collective rituals (Collins, 2004; Durkheim, 1912; Goffman, 1967). Emile Durkheim’s articulation of collective effervescence is considered to have been the genesis of and a predominate influence on this field of sociological inquiry. This thinking can be usefully applied to interpreting participants’ experience of and response to World Youth Day.

The concept of collective effervescence was given its most comprehensive treatment in Durkheim’s seminal work, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912). After observing an Aboriginal *corroboree* (traditional ceremony involving dance, music and costume connected with the spiritual stories of Australia’s indigenous peoples) he considered that,

when they are once come together, a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation ... the initial impulse thus proceeds, growing as it goes, as an avalanche grows in its advance. (1995/1912, p.247)

For many decades Durkheim's theory received little prominence. Sociologists have suggested that this was due in part due to the absence of a precise definition, with the term being used interchangeably with a variety of other terms, including: 'moral density', 'concentration', 'sentiments' and 'delirium' (Nielsen, 1999, Olaveson, 2004, Ramp, 1998). There has been renewed interest in the theory of collective effervescence in recent decades (Barsade & Gibson, 1998 & 2012; Collins, Lawrence, Troth, & Jordan, 2013; Kelly & Barsade, 2001) – driven in part by the work of Maffesoli (1996), Mellor (1998), and Shilling and Mellor (1999), and by the emergence of Turner's theoretical construct, *communitas* (Pickering, 1994, p.2). Above all however, the renewed focus on collective effervescence and its value as a sociological theory appears to have been influenced by the works of Goffman (1967) and Collins (2004).

Collective effervescence is a twofold phenomenon whereby a person's emotional arousal is not only intensified but is also shared with, and dependent upon the presence of others. These two dimensions underpin, and provide the etymological roots of the concept, the degree of emotion – 'effervescence' – and the degree to which this emotion is shared – 'collectivity' (Carlton-Ford, 1992).

While Durkheim's theory highlighted the prevalence of extreme expressions of emotion during collective rituals, Carlton-Ford noted that "effervescence exhibits many subtle shades of intensity" (1992, p.368). Multiple factors can impact upon this emotional intensity, and in-turn, the variations of intensity influence the overall degree of emotional contagion. While a gamut of emotions may be generated through collective rituals (Turner, 2002), collective effervescence is typically associated with heightened and mutual emotional arousal which is positive in nature, the impact of which transforms the individual psyche of participants. In describing the experience, Durkheim wrote, "vital energies become hyper-excited, the passions more intense, the sensations more powerful ... man does not recognize himself; he feels somehow transformed" (1995/1912, p.424).

The transformation of the ‘personal psyche’ and the emergence of a ‘collective conscience’ are considered to be experiences that are independent of and larger than any individual (Carlton-Ford, 1992). To this end, participants who experience these physical and psychological sensations attribute their experience to a force existing outside of themselves (May, 2010, p.7), the transcendent.

Durkheim’s theory of collective effervescence was multi-faceted in nature. While premised as a momentary state that arose from two interrelated and mutually reinforcing mechanisms, ‘shared action and awareness’ and ‘shared emotion’, collective effervescence provided foundational insights into the power of bodily co- presence and peoples’ attribution of sacrality to symbols and objects. Durkheim’s theory also helped explain the emergence of social identity and sentiments of group solidarity. The theory is particularly relevant to the analysis of a mega-event such as World Youth Day.

4.2.3 The Desire to Belong and the Development of Social Identity

The theory of collective effervescence helps interpret the role that religion can play in the development and formation of an individual’s social identity. It shows how group rituals can establish a sense of social membership and identification with a core set of moral norms, and how these can influence the way in which people think, interact and communicate. This is pertinent to interpreting the psychological dynamics of the World Youth Day experience.

Variations in the nature, shared group focus and intensity of collective rituals can lead to variations in peoples’ perception of the ritual and the value they attribute to it as well as their perception of social membership patterns.

A characteristic of collective rituals, and the state of ‘shared effervescence’ that proceeds from them, is the emergence of a common identity, termed by Durkheim (1995) as ‘solidarity’. According to Durkehiem, ‘solidarity’ involved participants moving from an individual consciousness to a collective consciousness, ultimately coming to the realization that as social

beings they have a shared identity, for “everything within us expresses something other than ourselves” (1995/1912, p.213). Collins (2004), placed Durkheim’s theory of ‘solidarity’ within the context of group belonging and membership.

Collective religious rituals are commonly associated with powerful and engaging experiences. Their nature and structure respond to core human needs and help form a specific group and social identity. In his article *Why Christianity Works: An Emotions Focused Phenomenological Account*, Christian Smith (2007) detailed how the practices and experiences of the Christian faith responded to peoples’ core social and psychological needs, and as a result, the religion continues to sustain old, and attract new believers. He asserted, “one of the deepest, primordial human needs is simply to belong, to have a place among others” (2007, p.175). Collective rituals recognise the social nature of the human person. They act as a catalyst for the forming of social relationships, and for the sense of ‘community’ that emerges among participants.

While large religious gatherings are typically heterogeneous in nature and composition, the opportunities for strengthened social ties and group bonding generally strengthen participants’ religious identification and affiliation. The social dynamics of these gatherings, and the participation of individuals in them, can be understood from the perspectives of *social identity theory*.

Within the broader field of sociological enquiry, the articulation of a specific *social identity theory* emerged during the 1970’s (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This emphasised the complex nature of peoples’ sense of self and maintained that each person has several, if not multiple ‘identities’, each determined by context. This is illustrated by each individual’s ‘personal identity’, involving idiosyncrasies, attitudes and memories as well as their ‘social identity’, formed through an interaction with others and the taking on of group norms and values. While there are clear distinctions between each of these ‘identities’, they are inextricably linked and each influences the other.

Social identity theory examined the complex relationship between the ‘individual self’ and ‘collective self’, with a particular emphasis on when and why people shift between the two. The research affirmed that the desires for individual uniqueness and group belonging were not mutually exclusive. Rather, they were common to all people and influenced by particular social and cultural contexts and circumstances (Hornsey & Jettin, 2004). Peoples’ sense of self-concept is influenced by their interaction with others.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) proposed that this interaction with others could be represented as a spectrum, ranging from the ‘interpersonal’ to the ‘intergroup’, i.e. from a position where personal autonomy and independence is highly valued (interpersonal) to a position where salience is given to group membership and the spirit of belonging affirms one’s sense of self-worth. Movement along this spectrum shifts how people see themselves and others. Invariably this involves a shift in identity, not a loss of identity (Reicher, Spears & Postmes, 1995), and people often return to their original state or move to a different perception of identity once the social circumstances have changed.

Central to an understanding of *social identity theory* is the process *self-categorisation*, which social researchers have argued constitutes a theory in its own right. The theory of *self-categorisation* was premised on the belief that during processes of group socialisation people “shift towards the perception of self as an interchangeable exemplar of some social category and away from the perception of self as a unique person” (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987, p.50).

All people belong or seek to belong to a social grouping and are generally aware of the cultural norms, values and behaviours associated with that membership. By defining themselves as members of particular social categories, people are in the process of self- stereotyping, agreeing to conform to their understanding of the social grouping, most expecting other group members to conform to the ‘norms’ also.

At the same time, it is recognised that group ‘norms’ are not immutable and

group membership is rarely homogenous (Hornsey, 2006). Even in circumstances where a strong congruence between members exists, groups largely remain heterogeneous in nature. Intragroup interactions reveal that members often have disparate views, motivations and expectations, and these differences can either be significant or subtle. These differences account for the existence of sub-groups, and in some situations, point to an ‘identity’ that is being actively constructed.

Within the context of World Youth Day pilgrim sub-groups can be identified. While a significant proportion of the pilgrims might be described as highly religious, participants appear to be drawn from across the religio-spiritual spectrum. Social identity theory provides a construct for considering the nature and development of relationships between World Youth Day pilgrims and for appraising an objective of the event, the strengthening of Catholic identity.

4.2.4 The Emotional Dynamics of Religious Gatherings

Following the pioneering work of Emile Durkheim, the place of ‘emotion’ in religious rituals and experiences has been subject to considerable sociological enquiry. As noted by Finke and Starke (2000, p.104), while emotions are central to religious experiences and the lives of religious adherents, they cannot be considered as ‘religious emotions’.

Rather, they are emotional responses to religious stimuli. These responses may vary considerably as each individual operates from a unique mindset, shaped by past experiences and a range of internal and external influences.

Emotions are a central feature of all forms of social interaction and as a result of their nature and valence, intensity, extensity, and duration, can determine the perceived success of a ritual. The optimum emotional state for communal rituals is that of collective effervescence, which is “experienced mentally and physically, and binds people to the ideals valued by their social group” (Shilling & Mellor, 1998, p.196). Collins framed collective effervescence as emotional energy, which he asserted was the social emotion *par excellence* (2004, p.xii). While having broad sociological

relevance, emotional energy is particularly relevant to the study of religious rituals like World Youth Day.

Emotional energy is intense, and generally shared, researchers have suggested, and it elicits various feelings. Drawing upon the research of Keltner & Haidt (2003), Saroglou (2011, p.1326) proposed that, “awe – the emotion of respectful admiration when facing a higher, more important, or deeper reality – may be a prototype of emotions elicited within a religious context”. The heightened emotional energy is accompanied by feelings of membership (Collins, 2004) and a strengthened commitment to the beliefs, values and norms of the group. Religious rituals can strengthen religious salience for participants. The degree to which this is achieved is dependent upon the perceived value of the ritual/s involved and the intensity and duration of the emotions generated. People want their religion to be “potent, vivid and compelling” (Finke & Starke, 1992, p.275).

Within this field of sociological enquiry there is some debate around the relationship between ‘emotions’ and ‘beliefs’, and the causal factors and consequences of both. Furthermore, the importance and value of each is viewed differently by religious adherents. The other issue is the level of persistence of the personal change that might arise from an intense experience. Is it a transitory experience with no lasting effects beyond the pleasant memory? Can it result in changes to beliefs and commitments that are more long lasting after the initial emotional experience is over? How might such questions be investigated?

In recent decades Christian Churches have witnessed the emergence of a number of new religious movements that have been charismatic in nature and which have attracted participants through the experience of emotionally charged religious rituals. These communities, which reflect the classical form of Durkheim’s ‘collective effervescence’, have been well documented (Kertzer, 1988; *Mossière, 2007*).

Many of the new religious movements reflect the wider trend in western societies to emphasise the emotional and communal dimensions of religious identity (Champion & Hervieu-Léger, 1990; Riis & Woodhead, 2010).

Both of these dimensions are based upon ‘the experience’, which has led some sociologists to argue that many people place greater value on the opportunity of having spiritual experiences than on a commitment to religious beliefs (Heelas, 1998).

Notwithstanding the value which is attributed to the ‘experience’, the generation of positive emotions generally results in a greater valuing of the beliefs and values that underpin it. Christian Smith (2007) argued the religious practices and experiences which Christians found compelling and rewarding were directly connected to the Tradition’s principal beliefs. He put forward the view that the nature and potency of peoples’ emotions is influenced by, if not a result of their beliefs. “Emotions ... are not free floating, spontaneous, self-determining subjectivities; they are nearly always causally connected to social contexts and to human beings' cognitive and volitional capacities” (Smith, 2007, p.169).

An examination of collective religious rituals highlights the existence of a complex interrelationship between the associated emotions and beliefs. A dichotomy does not exist between the two. Rather, as causal factors or factors of influence, they overlap. In ritual interactions, positive emotions can lead to religious plausibility, a strengthened commitment to religious beliefs and practices and a sense of belonging through group solidarity. At the same time, the religious beliefs underpinning the ritual can help elicit specific emotional responses and influence the intensity of participants’ feelings

4.2.5 The Theory of Interaction Ritual Chains

Within the field of sociological research, the most comprehensive examination of religious rituals was given by Randall Collins (1975, 1981, 2004, 2010), who detailed their nature and significance in the theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Drawing upon the work of Emile Durkheim (1955/1912) and Erving Goffman (1967), Collins (2004, 2010) identified ‘processual ingredients’ which help determine the success of rituals, and he outlined the positive outcomes that can occur when these ‘ingredients’ are successfully combined (see 4.1).

Collins (2010) distinguished religious rituals from other social and cultural rituals. He argued that the emotional experiences and symbolic contents of religious rituals were unique. While the emotional intensity of these rituals can vary, it is characteristically strong, sometimes extreme, especially in the context of large occasional religious gatherings, rather than those which are smaller and routine. These religious rituals are also separated from secular ones by the symbols that are used.

Symbols generally evoke emotional responses from people and they represent and communicate cultural meanings. Although symbols will be interpreted differently by participants, Collins (2010, p.5) found that religious symbols “affirm the existence of a sacred realm explicitly higher than mundane life.” Their effectiveness is due in part to the fact that they are a departure from the everyday and they lead people to a discernment of existential questions. For Tillich (1961), religious symbols represented the transcendent, and had a powerful, almost magical effect, on observers.

Table 4.1

An Overview of the Key Elements of the Theory of Interaction Ritual Chains

Ingredient		Description
1.	<i>Bodily co-presence</i>	When people gather together in one place there is a ‘physical attunement’ between the bodies. Bodies are aware of and sensitive to each other, and as a result there is a heightened sense of anticipation.
2.	<i>Barriers to outsiders</i>	The common gathering space is characterised by group norms, values and behaviours. Physical presence also involves active participation in the principal activities.
3.	<i>Mutual focus of attention</i>	Individuals give careful and shared attention to their common activity. While doing this, participants are aware of the attentiveness, actions and feelings of fellow participants.

4.	<i>Shared emotional mood</i>	The intensification of the shared experience arouses a high level of emotional energy from within and between participants. Participants' shared state of emotions and attention creates an environment which is conducive to emotional contagion.
Outcome		Description
5.	<i>Membership Feelings</i>	Participants have a strengthened collective and social identity with a heightened sense of belonging to the wider group.
6.	<i>Emotional energy</i>	Heightened levels of emotional energy give participants a sense of confidence, and enthusiasm for their ongoing participation in the religious rituals. The emotional energy has both emotional and cognitive components.
7.	<i>Symbolic emblems</i>	Successful rituals evoke a greater commitment to, respect of and belief in the religious symbols associated with the group. The emblems, which can be visual icons, words or gestures, hold greater or new-found meaning for participants.
8.	<i>Moral feelings</i>	The ritual processes give rise to sentiments whereby participants seek to adhere to the beliefs, norms and values of the group and to respect its symbols. Participants are more aware of the importance of moral reasoning and feel that the wider group provides a moral compass to help in nurturing this.

The key elements in determining the success of an interaction ritual are the 'mutual focus of attention' and the 'shared emotional mood' (Collins, 2010). The effective mutual entrainment of both ingredients will generate strong collective emotions and a state of *heightened inter-subjectivity*, which give rise to *emotional energy* (Collins, 2004). Although the nature of each individual's emotional responses may vary, the overall valence and intensity of the *emotional energy* will influence participants' perceptions of the ritual. *Emotional energy*, characterised by intense and positive feelings,

is what attracts and satisfies ritual participants, whereas rituals with low *emotional energy* are considered routine and mundane and do not strengthen group identity.

The theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* was premised on two core beliefs:

- (i) the physical co-presence of crowds of people was a necessary pre-requisite for an effective ritual. Collins considered the sociology of rituals, a sociology of “crowds, assemblies, congregations, audiences” (2004, p.34);
- (ii) interaction rituals have the capacity to transform emotions, i.e. some of the transient emotions (ingredients) become enduring emotions (outcomes) (Collins, 1990).

The theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* contributed to a strengthened sociological understanding of the complex nature and influence of emotions in social settings. In particular, Collins made reference to and explored the role of emotions in strengthening social identity, and the plausibility of religious beliefs; the inter-relationship between individual and collective emotions, and the phenomenon of emotional contagion. Successful rituals, Collins (2004) argued, rested upon *emotional energy*, which had a powerful motivating effect on individuals, was manifested both physically and psychologically, comprised emotional and cognitive elements and generated enduring emotions.

Collins’ theory came at a time when there was a paucity of research into emotions. In addition to this contribution, the theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* proceeded to influence sociological research relating to religion and religious gatherings (Baker, 2010; Wellman, Corcoran & Stockly-Meyerdirk, 2012; Wollschleger, 2012).

4.2.6 Applying Collins' Theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004) to the World Youth Day Phenomenon

Collins' theory of Interaction Ritual Chains (2004) was a detailed synthesis of collective effervescence and Goffman's situational analysis (1967). This micro- sociological approach examined the mechanisms and processes of interactions related to a broad range of social, cultural and religious phenomena, and provided a construct to analyse and interpret these interactions. Collins' construct described emotions as both the catalyst for and product of social interaction, and he provided a framework that detailed the factors necessary for successful rituals (ingredients) and the evidence of successful rituals (outcomes).

Collins' theoretical construct, which details a cause and effect relationship, is relevant to the World Youth Day phenomenon and the interpretation of pilgrims' encounters and interactions.

Ingredients

- (i) **Bodily co-presence.** Collins (2004) described ritual as a bodily process, which generated a "buzz" when bodies were close to each other. He asserted that the desire for close personal contact was a seemingly innate human characteristic and that large gatherings tended to amplify the emotions. Attendees draw their satisfaction and pleasure from "the moments when the crowd collectively builds up a sense of anticipation and shared enthusiasm over the flow of events" (p.58).

Collins' description of bodily co-presence, especially of large scale ceremonial gatherings, is borne out in the tone and activities of World Youth Day. The international gathering is synonymous with large crowds, and these crowds impact upon the nature, tone and affective intensity of the event. The 'shared enthusiasm' of World Youth Day pilgrims is not just characteristic of the gathering's major liturgical and popular culture events it also reflects the casual and social interactions of the week itself. The 'sense of anticipation'

relates especially to pilgrims' perceptions of the pope, and their hopes for close personal contact with this celebrity figure.

Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a, p.7) found that 'bodily co-presence' was deemed by pilgrims to be an enjoyable aspect of World Youth Day, both in the social atmosphere of unfocused crowds and in the moments of collective solidarity. According to Singleton (2009), the "buzz" factor associated with crowds was especially strong with the 'social' pilgrim sub-group.

- (ii) **Barriers to outsiders.** According to Collins (2004), the purpose of barriers within rituals was to ensure that "participants have a sense of who is taking part and who is excluded" (p.48). The barriers also highlighted the stratification of rituals, whereby certain roles, functions and responsibilities were allocated to specific individuals. Rituals do not necessitate universal participation, and the notion of exclusion was primarily premised on the belief that the involvement of outsiders could weaken both the mutual focus of attention and emotion intensity of a collective ritual.

Collins' theory drew upon the fact that religious rituals have some core elements which can serve as a natural barrier to outsiders, namely the use of symbols. Participants' abilities to engage in rituals can be influenced by their awareness and understanding of the symbols used (Bloch, 2004). Thus, symbols can demarcate between insiders and outsiders.

Within the context of World Youth Day, 'outsiders' are not discouraged from active participation. Rather, the international gathering explicitly promotes and nurtures their involvement. While there is a clear stratification of World Youth Day pilgrims into sub-groups, none of these groups technically constitutes a group of outsiders. While the core elements and principal activities of World Youth Day are a better cultural fit for active and committed Catholics, they do not purposefully exclude pilgrims with loose

religious affiliation. At the same time, tensions have sometimes arisen between pilgrim sub-groups over perceptions of 'insiders/outsideers' (Gebhardt, 2007).

- (iii) **Mutual focus of attention.** Central to the effectiveness of any ritual is participants' mutual entrainment of emotion and attention which can generate a shared sense of reality and momentary solidarity. While sentiments of 'group membership' can be produced in unfocused crowds, Collins argued the optimum context was one in which participants focused on a common activity, "more aware of what each other is doing and feeling, and more aware of each other's awareness" (2004, p.48).

While the events of World Youth Day give rise to heightened mutual awareness and solidarity, they also focus participants' attention on religious objects and symbols, which hold significant emotional and cognitive meaning. While past pilgrims have attested to the reverent atmosphere of various liturgical, devotional and contemplative experiences, especially the stillness and silence evident at key moments, their sense is less focused on fellow pilgrims than it is on the particular religious symbol/devotion and their experience of the transcendent (Mason et al., 2008a). The Stations of the Cross and Eucharistic Adoration at the Vigil are two events generally characterised by a heightened collective focus amongst pilgrims. Mutual attention is also generated by the presence of the pope, and in particular – his homilies.

- (iv) **Shared mood.** In addition to their mutual focus and attention, Collins (2004) argued that a necessary condition for effective interaction rituals was that of a 'shared mood' between participants. This notion of 'emotional convergence' is associated with theories relating to crowd dynamics (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1994) and underpins the concept of emotional contagion. Collins' theory is well supported by other social researchers who have argued that there is a transmission of affective states between individuals in group situations, especially when

they are in close proximity to each other or engaged in face-to face interactions (Von Scheve, 2012). According to Barsade (2002, p.667) some people served as ‘walking mood inductors’, whereby they continually influenced the moods and judgements of others within their group.

Emotions are social constructions that influence and are influenced by social exchanges and interactions (Turner & Stets). Within group situations this can result in a convergence of feeling and outlook. This should not be confused with a rigid uniformity of mood. This emotional convergence has been evident at World Youth Day, even during activities that could rightfully be considered ‘mega-events’ involving hundreds of thousands of people. In reflecting on World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Mason (2008, p.5) observed, “there was strong unity in the physical and emotional responses of different groups to the same events – every appearance of one mind and heart”.

While Mason attested to the reality of shared emotional responses at World Youth Day, this described the overarching tone and mood of the gathering, not the unanimity of all participants’ emotional responses. Even within homogenous groups, objects and events will be interpreted differently, and individual emotional responses will vary accordingly (Rappaport, 1999).

Outcomes

- (v) **Membership feelings.** In his theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* Collins (2004) highlighted the correlation between high levels of *emotional energy* and participants’ strong feelings of group solidarity. He argued people naturally seek *emotional energy* and that the success of interaction rituals can be measured in relation to the level and intensity of the collective effervescence that is generated.

While some rituals elicit a strong emotional uplift, others fall flat, and as a result there is little or no sense of group membership, and

participants view the experience as boring and mundane. While acknowledging that not all religious rituals elicited intense feelings, especially in the routine aspects of religious practice, Collins (2010) argued that many were of great significance for both individuals and communities and afforded people with a sense of meaning and purpose in life. Religious rituals could be life defining or life changing, especially in contexts that were a departure from the everyday practice of faith.

World Youth Day represents a departure from the routine of everyday religious practices and its principal activities accord with Collins' depiction of successful interaction rituals in that they have a powerful and motivating effect on individuals, many seeking to repeat the experience.

World Youth Day may be considered a formative experience which marks participants' enculturation into their religious tradition (Rymarz, 2011). This enculturation is a result of their immersion into Catholic culture through their experience of liturgy, prayer, catechesis, symbols and rituals. The rituals associated with World Youth Day are characterised by very high levels of positive emotional energy and this intense affectivity contributes directly to the validation of pilgrims' social identity and the strengthening of their sense of group solidarity. This sense of social validation amongst pilgrims was not indicative of their experience of conventional religious rituals (Rymarz, 2011).

Emotional energy. The theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* is predicated on the notion that emotions are transformed, i.e. ingredient emotions (typically ephemeral) develop into outcome emotions (typically sustained and enduring). These emergent emotions are manifested both physically and psychologically and have both physiological and cognitive components.

Emotions are an integral element of all social interactions, and

Collins (2004), with others (Lawler & Yoon, 1996), recognised that emotional states were influenced by the success or failure of social exchanges and rituals. In turn, these emotional states influenced peoples' perceptions of the social interactions and shared activities, either diminishing or strengthening the sense of social identity.

Successful interaction rituals give individuals a feeling “of confidence, elation, strength, enthusiasm, and initiative in taking action” (Collins, 2004, p49). Positive emotional energy is considered to be a motivating force and participants seek to maximise their experience of it.

Empirical research (Hervieu-Leger, 1994, 1998a; Gebhardt, 1997) has found World Youth Day pilgrims experienced the buzz and excitement associated with emotional energy. Pilgrims have also attested to changes in their religious attitudes and practices as a result of the World Youth Day experience (Rymarz, 2007b; Mason et al., 2008a). For some pilgrims, these changes are not temporary, but they reflect a new-found religious salience.

Less evident in the research however is whether the elevated sense of emotional energy has been sustained. While Collins' theory was concerned with the generation of enduring forms of emotional energy as an ideal outcome, he recognised “as one settles back into the routine of smaller and less collectively emotional church services, and then drifts away from attending, the identification and the emotional energy also fade” (2004, p.61).

Symbolic emblems. Symbols can evoke powerful emotional responses, especially those deemed as being sacred. Furthermore, they can be held with greater esteem and perceived as being infused with meaning, in social interactions which have elevated levels of emotional energy. Durkheim (1995/1912) recognised the complex connection between collective symbols and collective sentiment, a relationship elaborated upon by Collins (2004) in his theory of

Interaction Ritual Chains.

Symbols are specific to and nuanced by particular social, cultural or religious contexts. While the collective symbols of these contexts often have a long- standing efficacy, they elicit both personal and collective sentiments. Peoples' interpretation of symbols and the significance they attribute to them is shaped by their *cultural capital*, i.e. their pre-existing awareness and understanding of the symbol (Collins, 2004, pp.153-158). Without *cultural capital*, participants will be less involved in interaction rituals, and feel apart from the group rather than part of it. The cultural meaning, significance and value of particular symbols can be acquired over time however, and this in turn strengthens feelings of social solidarity.

Effective interaction rituals not only raise participants' *cultural capital* they reinforce the social significance of symbols and their explicit connection to group membership.

Collective symbols can vary in nature and form: objects; visual icons; words and gestures. People too can represent or symbolise a particular social grouping. Research has shown that symbols are given particular prominence within the context of World Youth Day and they serve to strengthen participants' understanding of Catholic identity and their sense of belonging to the Catholic Church. Furthermore, the symbols are associated with an experience of the sacred. Pilgrims' sense of experiencing the sacred at the international gathering was attested to by Mason (2008, p.6) who found 'sacredness' was attached to both people and rituals.

World Youth Day represents an intense form of Catholic life where pilgrims are introduced to and engage in the gamut of Catholic culture. Within this context, the *cultural capital* of some pilgrims is deficient as they are unfamiliar with aspects of Catholic life, especially some devotional practices. Notwithstanding the gap in

symbol stocks (Collins, 2004, p. 153), the focused attention and energy of the wider group, and the cohesion of their activity, generally draws the ‘unfamiliar’ into active participation.

The religious symbols associated with World Youth Day evoke strong emotional responses and help generate a ritual atmosphere of reverence and respect. This is illustrated, not just in the key devotional practices of World Youth Day, but in the collective response to those symbols historically linked to the gathering – the World Youth Day Cross and Icon.

- (vi) **Moral feelings.** Drawing upon Durkheim’s notion of *moral* sentiments, Collins (2004, p.39) argued interaction rituals generated a “morally suffused energy” where participants adhered to group norms, saw meaning and value in group activities and associated a sense of ‘moral rightness’ with the group. These sentiments can have a snowball effect as they consolidate participants’ beliefs in the religious symbols and strengthen their feelings of solidarity. This in turn furthers their sense of moral certitude.

Collins’ proposition regarding the emergence of feelings of morality relates to a broader aspect of sociology, namely the interrelationship between altruism, morality and social solidarity. Throughout the last decade research has focused on the synthesis and interdependence of the three phenomena, rather than a consideration of them as separate factors (Hitlin & Vaisey, 2010; Alexander, 2014; Jeffries, 2014). It is evident that they “influence, shape and direct each other” (Jeffries, 2014, p.xiv). Each serves as both a source and a consequence of the other/s.

The strengthening of moral feelings, especially within the context of the interrelationship between ‘altruism, morality and social solidarity’ is applicable to the context of World Youth Day. Engagement in the international gathering appears to strengthen the moral convictions of pilgrims, many of whom give greater credence

to the relevance and value of Church teachings, particularly in relation to personal morality. While this is not uniform across all pilgrim sub- groups, the trend is significant, especially when compared with the attitudes of the broader Catholic population. Furthermore, many pilgrims have also expressed pride in being Catholic and have associated their experiences with that of a ‘moral tribe’.

In the empirical research of Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a), pilgrims reported having a greater commitment to altruistic behaviours as a result of their World Youth Day experience. Fifty percent of those surveyed indicated they planned to undertake volunteer work. In addition to various forms of civic engagement, including a desire to be more active in social outreach pilgrims also expressed a desire to treat others differently as a result of their experience.

4.2.7 The Impact and Influence of ‘Celebrity Figures’ at Mega-Events

A key element of many interaction rituals is the presence of a charismatic leader. A focal point for large emotion producing rituals (Collins, 1981), the charismatic leader can psychologically influence and transform participants (Weber, 1978), and great credence is given to what they say by those present. This is especially true when a state of *collective effervescence* has been generated and participants’ frames of perception and reference have been altered (Mossiere, 2007). In effect, the charismatic leader is not only a representation of the sacred (Durkheim, 1995/1912), but also becomes an emblem for the group (Collins, 2004).

Collins referred to such charismatic leaders as ‘celebrities’, and he reflected “the celebrity is one of the few focal points in the modern attention space through which collective emotional energy can be revved up to a high level” (2004, p.279). Psychological, sociological and cultural influences have shaped the construction of the ‘celebrity’, and the status with which the person is regarded (McCutcheon, Lange & Houran, 2002). While the culture of ‘celebrity status’ is not new, it is viewed as characteristic of the

post-modern era (Norman, 2011), driven in part by the ubiquitous nature of the mass media.

Norman (2011) identified that the practice of ‘celebrity status’ has historically been associated with religion. He compared its modern usage to that of ‘saints’ in traditional Christianity. Many religious leaders and figures have gained the status of ‘celebrity’, some due to their prominent role within a particular religious tradition and others as a consequence of their public engagement with the wider society. While some social commentators and writers have referred to the charisma of individual popes, and the effect of this, Weber argued all popes were perceived authoritatively and as holding a “charisma of office” (1978, pp.1139-41).

While papal events have historically pointed to the charismatic leadership of the popes, it is the World Youth Day phenomenon which has epitomized their ‘celebrity status’ (Gebhardt, 2007). From its inception, the international gathering has drawn significant interest from the general public of the host country and the international media. With the pilgrims, it is the pope who has generally dominated the news-cycle for the week (Gibson & Zwartz, 2008; Totaro, Gibson & Morris, 2008). In many instances the media have been surprised by the public’s interest in and response to the pope, and in particular, his popularity with World Youth Day pilgrims. At World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, journalist Andrea Burns (2008) wrote,

“This guy eclipses the popularity of the Rolling Stones ... that’s right, Joe Rat- Z, the Papal C, was in town and the kids were going nuts for him ... could it be that we are wrong about Gen Y”.

In addition to the media’s coverage of World Youth Day, past pilgrims’ testimonies have also highlighted the effects of the pope’s ‘celebrity status’. They have pointed to a range of psycho-social effects arising from the presence of the pope, including: a sense of the transcendent, feelings of social solidarity and ‘Catholic pride’, and a strengthening of personal self-esteem.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter set out to identify and explicate elements in psychological and sociological theory that could be brought into the research discourse of World Youth Day (and the discipline of Religious Education more generally) because of their explanatory and interpretive power related to collective religious rituals/experiences, and especially for large group events (such as World Youth Day).

The emotional-communal dynamics of World Youth Day are unique, due in part to the scale and magnitude of the event. The psychological and sociological theories considered here have added to research thinking about the personal and spiritual/religious impact of the experience. They also help interpret to some limited extent the ways in which World Youth Day might affect social and religious identity.

This discussion also included insights into the group dynamics of large events. While Durkheim (collective effervescence), Collins (Interaction Ritual Chains) and Tajfel and Turner (social identity) situated their theories within a broader social and cultural context they are judged to be useful in informing understandings of religion, religious gatherings and rituals, and they collectively enhance the theoretical perspective from which the psychological dynamics of World Youth Day can be interpreted.

World Youth Day has two core dimensions: the pilgrimage, and the week-long international gathering. This discussion of psychological and sociological theories pertinent to interpreting the World Youth Day experience will be extended in the next chapter where special attention will be given to the theories that relate to the 'pilgrimage' experience. (e.g. the concepts of *liminality* and *communitas* (Turner, 1969, 1973, 1974a & b). While the World Youth Day gatherings do reflect key elements of the various theoretical constructs considered in these two chapters, they do not represent them fully, or in their purest form.

CHAPTER 5

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF THE PILGRIMAGE PHENOMENON

5.1 INTRODUCTION

From its inception, World Youth Day was conceived and developed as a pilgrimage in faith. Pope John Paul II (1988a) was aware the practice of pilgrimage was experiencing a revival in the post-modern era, especially amongst young people, and he incorporated this as a core element of the structure of the international gatherings. To the pope, this not only represented the exterior physical journey, but perhaps more importantly, the interior journey. Pope John Paul II (1988a) suggested that those drawn to World Youth Day were

among those more inclined to experience a pilgrimage as a "way" to interior renewal, to a deepening of faith, a strengthening of the sense of communion and solidarity with your [their] brothers and sisters and as a help in discovering your [their] personal vocation. (n.3).

Complementing this religious perspective on World Youth Day as pilgrimage, there is a need to search the wider psychological and sociological literature to see what elements will be pertinent to interpreting how pilgrims perceive and value this component of the experience. This chapter will examine the religious, sociological and psychological aspects of pilgrimage both as a spiritual and a secular experience, identifying where there is potential relevance for understanding and interpreting pilgrims' engagement in this part of World Youth Day.

The following aspects of the phenomenon of pilgrimage were identified for exploration:

- the growth and diversification of the pilgrimage phenomenon;
- the pilgrim – tourist dichotomy;
- the principal characteristics and motivations of pilgrims;
- the place of the ‘sacred’;
- the journey-destination dichotomy;
- pilgrimage as ‘journeys redolent with meaning’ (Digance, 2006);
- the psycho-social dynamics of pilgrimage, and
- World Youth Day: A pilgrimage in faith.

5.2 PILGRIMAGE

Traditionally, pilgrimage has been defined and associated with a journey in search of truth, and a quest for the sacred and the holy (Vukonic, 1996). In the light of its growth and diversification in the postmodern era (Digance, 2003), the meanings, experiences and perceived benefits have become increasingly contested (Eade & Sallnow, 1991).

Even with the emergence of purely ‘secular pilgrimages’, and the “shift from organised, normative religion to subjective, experiential spirituality” (Mikhaelson, 2012, p.259), religious pilgrimages have experienced a revival (Bradley, 2009) and constitute a significant part of the tourist industry. Central to these pilgrimages is the search for the meaning and the encounter with the Other (Digance, 2006).

At the First World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Pilgrimages and Shrines, Pope John Paul II (1992) reflected, “the pilgrimage is a fundamental and foundational experience of the believer's condition as 'homo viator', a person on the road to the Source of all good and towards fulfilment. In putting all of his being on the move ... man discovers himself to be a seeker of God” (n.5).

5.2.1 A Pilgrim's Quest

While multifaceted in nature, the pilgrim's 'quest' has its roots in the human condition (Dumoulin, 1977). As such, "the human person ... appears in his secular history as *homo viator*, a traveler thirsty for new horizons, hungry for justice and peace, searching for truth, longing for love, open to the absolute and the infinite" (The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, 1998, n.24).

Hume (1984) reflected, "I am a pilgrim through life, restless indeed, looking, searching all the time for that which will make me truly and fully myself" (p.39). This quest for a transcendent goal has been described as an innate human characteristic, and a universal pattern of human experience (Clift & Clift, 1996).

The Catholic Church teaches that "the desire for God is written in the human heart" (CCC, 1995, n.27) and this desire results in a restless searching for the transcendent (Pope Francis, 2013b). It is from this notion of searching that the human person is described as *homo viator*, a life-long pilgrim (John Paul II, 1998b, n.7).

Successive popes have put forward the view that despite living in an era characterized by secularism, where "God seems to have disappeared from the horizon of some people or to have become a reality that meets with indifference" there is a "reawakening of the religious sense" (Benedict XVI, 2011a), and that this reawakening has resulted from the religiosity of the human person, and their 'restless heart' (St Augustine, *Confessions*, 2001). Pope Benedict XVI suggested the human person is not just *homo sapiens* but is also *homo religiosus*, concerned with the existential questions in life, and longing for the transcendent (2011).

The image of the human person as *homo religiosus* and *homo viator*, yearning for the transcendent, is rejected by a range of sociologists, secular philosophers and psychologists, who have argued that Nietzsche's declaration 'God is Dead' (2001/1882) reflects the sociological profile of

many developed nations in the post- modern era (Bruce, 2002). Many countries have witnessed a decline in religious participation rates and a trend away from communal religious traditions and denominations to individualized forms of spirituality (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005).

This shift is a reflection of ‘cultural postmodernity’ where the value of metanarratives, including religion, are critiqued and seen by some as holding little value, and where meaning has become an individualist construct (Drane, 2000). Despite the shift, and the apparent growth in unbelief and atheism in the western world (Frame, 2009; Watson, 2014), research has highlighted that most young people believe in God (Hughes, 2007; Mason et al., 2007; Pearce & Denton, 2011; Smith & Denton, 2005).

World Youth Day was established in response to this context, both the social decline of religion, and young peoples’ belief in God. Pope John Paul II believed that young people were searching for meaning in life, and often this searching involved existential questioning (1985; 1994).

In his Apostolic Letter to young people, *Dilecti Amici*, the pope reflected,

The question about the value of life, about the meaning of life, forms part of the singular treasure of youth. It comes from the very heart ... I pray that you hear Christ’s reply ... that you take the interior path which enables you to grasp it, accept it and undertake its accomplishment. (1985, n.4)

The interior path is a pilgrim’s quest common to all people. According to Hume (1984) this quest is characteristic of the human person as *homo viator* for “what lies deepest in the heart of man, in all that he does and in the manner of his thinking, is his striving to discover meaning, to escape from the absurd” (p.49).

Within the context of a physical pilgrimage the concept of a pilgrim’s quest is made more complex, especially as pilgrimages have diversified. Traditionally, pilgrimage had been described as an “enterprise of the soul”, (Hamill, 1990, p.230), and a “thirst for communion with God”, (Br John of Taize, 1984, p.393), however the advent of ‘secular pilgrimages’ has

resulted in the search for personal meaning being dissociated from religion.

Some pilgrims find a sense of meaning through socialization, solidarity with others, or the achievement of a personal milestone, whereas others identify ‘consciousness changing events’ in which they have had a sense of the transcendent (Digance, 2006).

While some pilgrims travel for explicitly religious reasons and are imbued with “a language of miracles, of faith, of wholesome encounters with divinity” (Pfaffenberger, 1983, p.72) many others are in search of clarification. They are ‘spiritual seekers’, unsure as to what they are looking for or what they might find (Schott, 2006), hoping to be changed by the experience (Elizondo, 1996), in search of answers that they cannot find at home (Cousineau, 1998).

Clift and Clift (1996) suggested while pilgrimage involved an exterior journey, it was a ‘motif’ for the interior journey. In addition to its depiction in Church writings, the notion of an interior journey has been detailed by a number of anthropologists, including, Cohen (1992) and Turner (1972). The movement towards the center represents a journey to the sacred and “helps people to realize that the source of one’s life lies in one’s inner being and that the joy of life must come from within” (Mikaelson, 2012, p.269).

The ‘centre’ is the ultimate goal for all pilgrims (Turner, 1973). Pope Benedict XVI (2010d) equated the ‘centre’ with being the destination of a pilgrimage, and commented, “a pilgrim always has a destination, even if at times he is not explicitly aware of it. And this destination is none other than the encounter with God through Jesus Christ, in whom all our aspirations find their response”.

The pope’s reflections, like many other World Youth Day addresses and homilies, emphasised that personal meaning in life was not found in materialism, individualism and success, but through a personal encounter and relationship with Christ. This notion of the ‘quest’, an interior journey of spiritual renewal centered on a search for meaning and an ultimate

encounter with the transcendent, is a salient theme of the spiritual writings associated with World Youth Day.

This research study seeks to clarify how important the search for meaning and the search for God are for young pilgrims and to discern the degree to which this quest has motivated their decision to attend World Youth Day. Further, the research study seeks to identify whether pilgrims associate personal meaning with a relationship with God and whether they consider they felt they had experienced the transcendent while on pilgrimage or at the international gathering.

5.2.2 The Popularity of Pilgrimage

With increased global mobility and the greater affordability of transportation, tourism has grown rapidly in recent decades (Olsen & Timothy, 1999; Vukonic, 1996). Coinciding with the growth of mainstream tourism has been the continued growth of ‘religious travel’ (Jackowski, 2000; Lloyd, 1998), generally termed pilgrimage. Although religious and spiritual motives have long been associated with peoples’ desire to travel (Jackowski & Smith, 1992), the pilgrimage phenomenon is “currently experiencing resurgence throughout the world, as longstanding shrines still act as magnets to those in search of spiritual fulfilment” (Digance, 2003).

The growth in religious travel, which in itself has diversified, is well documented (Morinis, 1992; Swatos & Tomasi, 2002; Timothy & Boyd, 2003) and evidence suggests that the trend will continue into the future (Olsen & Timothy, 1999; San Filippo, 2001).

The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People identified that in a contemporary society “which is characterized by intense mobility, pilgrimages are experiencing a new impetus” (1998, n.2). This impetus and growth has occurred despite the growing privatization of religion (Kosti, 1998) and the significant decline in regular Church attendance (Nolan & Nolan, 1992).

Research has been undertaken (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Badone & Roseman,

2004; Swatos & Tomasi, 2002) to explore the nature of the relationship between religion and tourism and to examine why “pilgrimage is increasing at a rapid rate rather than diminishing ... surprising many who conjecture that religious pilgrimage is losing social and institutional significance” (Timothy & Olsen, 2006, p.3).

Travel to venerated places and sacred sites has grown, not just as a result of the spiritual motivations or obligations of religious believers but as a result of the ‘tourist consumption’ of the general public (Timothy & Boyd, 2003). The public’s demand for heritage and cultural tourism (Shoval, 2000), the improvement of transportation infrastructure (Griffin, 1994) and the increase of leisure time and disposable incomes in the developed world (Timothy & Olsen, 2006) have resulted in religious sites “being frequented more by curious tourists than by spiritual pilgrims” (Timothy & Olsen, 2006, p.2), and being marketed accordingly.

At the same time many people are drawn to ‘sacred sites’ by the ‘sense of place’ (Shackley, 2002), and believe that the pilgrimage can serve as a ‘rite of passage’ which may alter their state from simple adherent to strong believer (Utterback, 2000). For some other pilgrims, their religious convictions and motivations only develop over time (Cipolla & Cipriani, 2002).

In developing a “typology of sacred journeys” Morinis (1992) observed that many modern pilgrims were seeking authentic experiences which would transform their personal state. For them the pilgrimage was a “pursuit of ideals” (Morinis, 1992, p.14).

Although research suggests that contemporary western societies are experiencing a “spiritual turn” (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005) and “existential indifference” (Schnell, 2010) the phenomenon of pilgrimage grows (Russell, 1999; Singh, 1998). It has been argued by some (Neitz, 2005) that this growth reflects some peoples’ dissatisfaction with the nature of postmodernity and that pilgrimages are viewed as rituals with “strong meaning-making potential” (Schnell & Pali, 2013).

Pope John Paul II was aware of young people's search for meaning and it became a salient feature of his apostolic writings to young people (1985; 1994). During his homily at the World Youth Day vigil in Santiago de Compostela, he suggested the journey and encounter of pilgrimage opens up the possibilities of finding new meaning to life (1989).

The ascription of 'meaning' is highly subjective and this has diversified the pilgrimage phenomenon. Through a process of "sacralisation" (Seaton, 2002) tourist attractions, including natural landmarks, places of national significance, battlefields, cemeteries and war memorials are "marked as meaningful, quasi-religious shrines" (Collins- Kreiner, 2010, p.444). To this end Collins-Kreiner asserted that "no place is intrinsically sacred" (2010, p.14), rather its meaning, significance and sacrality are social constructions.

Pilgrimage to places of historical, cultural and natural significance has steadily increased amongst Australians (Harrigan, 2010). While many have travelled to local 'iconic destinations' and World Heritage areas known for their natural beauty, including: Uluru, the Great Barrier Reef and Kakadu National Park (Buckley, 2002), others have journeyed overseas to the major battlefields of World Wars I & II (Capper, 2014).

Traditionally, war cemeteries and battlefields have been identified as places of pilgrimage, marked and characterised by religious elements (Lloyd, 1998). The depiction of journeys made by young Australians would support this. The Australian Government website, (<http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/sacred-places-battlefield-pilgrimages>) which features material on significant battlefields, titles this section 'Sacred Places: Australian battlefield pilgrimages', and it states, "like pilgrims they come in their thousands to visit what are often remote places ... they are places where new generations of Australians learn about the generations of their forebears."

In describing the ‘annual pilgrimage’ to Gallipoli, Capper (2014) commented, “hundreds of young Australian expats and backpackers are arriving in Turkey ahead of Anzac Day commemorations, in what has become a rite of passage.” It is a pilgrimage that attracts 8,000 Australians, predominately young, every year (Crisante, 2013) and is considered by many to be a ritual of significance and transformation (Yasar, 2010; “Unravelling the Anzac Spirit”, 2011) not dissimilar to the ‘rites of passage’ detailed by Van Gennep (1909/1960) which served as rituals of transition.

While diversifying as a phenomenon from its traditional religious roots the practice of pilgrimage is now also associated with the forging and expression of national, social and cultural identity (Cleary, 2011; Reader, 2007). Much of this can be attributed to the growing social phenomenon in which individuals have sought greater connection with their heritage and ancestral roots (Nuuryanti, 1996).

The diversification of pilgrimage has divided anthropologists and social researchers. Margry (2008) argued that the concept of pilgrimage is in need of re-evaluation because “everyone could decide what they regarded as a pilgrimage destination, and sanctity and sacrality could be attributed to anyone or anything” (p.17). Margry (2008) was critical of the widening of the concept of pilgrimage, especially the notion of ‘secular pilgrimage’, which he considered to be a contradiction in terms, a view supported by Morinis (1992).

This researcher considers that an alternative is more appropriate because it suggests that the ‘sacred’ and the ‘secular’ are not mutually exclusive (Collins-Kreiner, 2010) and it avoids making a relatively exclusive dichotomy between identifying travellers as either social tourist or devoted pilgrim in their search for authentic experiences. This is the view proposed by (Shuo, Ryan & Liu, 2009).

By virtue of the process of ritualization, and the significance of the localities visited, many of those travelling on ‘secular pilgrimages’ will have cathartic

and transformative experiences. Heelas suggested that “people have what they take to be spiritual experiences without having to hold religious beliefs” (1998, p.5), a view supported by Ibrahim and Cordes (2002).

Reader, who has advocated for the broadening of the definition of pilgrimage to include touristic pursuits, commented that secular pilgrimages were an “expression of a quest toward a more autonomous, individualised and personalised spirituality” (2007, p.226).

Frey (1998) argued, even the ‘interior journeys’ associated with explicitly religious pilgrimages were not universally seen as quest for the sacred or an encounter with the transcendent. In reflecting on the experiences of Camino pilgrims she identified, “it is generally related to this idea of the uncontained, nonstructural, personalized, individual and direct relationship one has to ultimate reality” (Frey, 1998, p.31).

Pilgrimages attract pilgrims with a plurality of motives, and each constructs and ascribes meaning differently. While some desire an encounter with the Other (Digance, 2006) and consider sacred places to be the meeting of heaven and earth (Eliade, 1959), others are drawn to the emerging cultural phenomenon of secular pilgrimages, which often have a ritualistic quality that makes them part of the ancient tradition (Chu, 2004).

Although the most significant practical factor influencing the growth of modern pilgrimage has been the cumulative effect of improved economies, increased leisure time and increased travel opportunities, Reader (2007) associated the growth with the role played by religious authorities. Pilgrimages are seen by religious authorities as a way of responding to patterns of decline and falling church attendances. While the mainstream religious traditions have each emphasised the significance of pilgrimage in the modern era, Reader highlighted the pivotal role played by Pope John Paul II:

He devoted much energy to promoting pilgrimages and attempting to revive Catholicism through his travels ... His frequent visits to pilgrimage sites, such as Santiago ... helped to enhance its profile

and increase numbers there ... even in his declining years Pope John Paul II continued to promote pilgrimage as a key activity well aware that the mass media would publicise these activities. (2007, p.221)

Pope John Paul II was aware that pilgrimage took “different forms in different ages” (1999, n.2). He strategically promoted pilgrimage through his own travels, visiting sanctuaries and shrines, declaring ‘Holy Years’, the processes of beatification and canonisation, and the establishment of World Youth Day. The pope saw pilgrimages as opportunities of evangelisation and he believed that their modern revival sat within the paradigm of the ‘new evangelisation’.

Pope John Paul II promoted pilgrimages as a means of people discovering their religious heritage, not just as individuals but as groups and societies. In a visit to Santiago de Compostela the pope made an appeal to the people of Europe, “find yourself again. Be yourself. Discover your origins, revive your roots” (Pope John Paul II, 1982, p.6). This desire for a ‘revival of roots’, which took the form of connecting and reconnecting people to the history, traditions and practices of Catholicism largely underpinned Pope John Paul II’s promotion of the pilgrimage phenomenon.

The principal strategies deployed to increase pilgrim numbers were effective. This is borne out in: the renewed interest in prominent pilgrimage sites and routes, including Fatima, Lourdes and ‘the Way’ to Santiago de Compostela (Reader, 2007); the establishment of new pilgrimage sites, including, Medjugorje (Vuknoic, 2006) and San Giovanni Rotondo (Glancey, 2002); unprecedented pilgrim numbers to Rome for canonisations and the Jubilee Year (Cipolla & Cipriani, 2002), and peoples’ response to the establishment of World Youth Day, which has become the largest regular gathering of young people in the world. World Youth Day XV in Rome, which attracted more than 2 million pilgrims, is the largest pilgrimage in European history (Weigel, 2010, p.245).

Although the modern pilgrimage was promoted by Pope John Paul II as a means of strengthening ‘Christian roots’, the revival of the phenomenon, even for those pilgrimages which are solely religious in nature, does not

necessarily equate to renewed interest in the tradition or a resurgence peoples' levels of religiosity. Reader found,

One of the appeals of pilgrimage is that it provides a means through which persons can engage in spiritual practices that help them deal with the modern world and find meaning in their lives without having to be committed to organised religious traditions. (2007, p.226)

As a pilgrimage experience, World Youth Day is a very public event designed to “introduce participants to a breadth of Catholic culture” (Rymarz, 2007b, p.388) and a joyful immersion into the universal Church. The research study will clarify young peoples' affective and spiritual responses to the various expressions of Catholicism and seek to ascertain whether their religious identity and affiliation has been strengthened by the various experiences, and whether religion is viewed and valued differently.

5.2.3 Pilgrim or Tourist

In recognition of the changing nature of the pilgrimage phenomenon, Eade and Sallnow (1991) described it as an “arena of competing religious and secular discourses” (p.5). They, with other social researchers (Cohen, 1998; Kaelber, 2002), identified that pilgrimage was no longer solely “a quest for the sacred” (Morinis, 1992, p.2), nor situated within a particular religious tradition (Dubish, 1995), and that pilgrims' travels had multiple motivations (Post, Pieper & Van Uden, 1998). The previously accepted “rigid dichotomies between pilgrimage and tourism, or pilgrims or tourists” (Badone & Roseman, 2004, p.2) could no longer be applied to ‘the shifting world’ of postmodern travel.

Rather than viewing ‘pilgrims’ and ‘tourists’ as totally distinct groups, Graburn (1983) presented the view of them forming a “continuum of inseparable elements” (p.16), an idea extended and developed by Smith (1992). Smith (1992) argued that a continuum which covered the sacred-secular spectrum, with pilgrims on one end and tourists on the other, also recognised the shifts in identity that occur (Bremer, 2004, 2005), especially the transitions that occur within the traveller as a result of their experience

(Margry, 2008). Sometimes individuals are unaware of the changes themselves (De Sousa, 1993).

Many travellers, even those drawn by purely social and touristic motives will experience an unanticipated sense of the sacred at some shrines or pilgrimage localities (Digance, 2006). Badone & Roseman (2004) termed this experience, 'intersecting journeys'. Brainard (1996) identified these moments of 'spiritual awakening' as profound and extraordinary, for they enabled pilgrims to "experience something out of the ordinary that marks a transition from the secular humdrum world of our everyday existence to a special and sacred state" (Digance, 2006, p.38).

Beckstead (2010) commented that the experience of such spiritual feelings is much to the surprise of many tourists, for whom the sacred is divorced from religion (D'Agostino & Vespasiano, 2000).

Despite the trend by some social researchers and anthropologists to describe aspects of both secular and religious travel as 'pilgrimage' (Reader & Walter, 1993), others have applied traditional definitions and have made distinctions between pilgrimage and tourism, and pilgrims and tourists (Rinschede, 1992).

In an effort to distinguish pilgrimage and tourism MacCannell (1973) suggested pilgrimage was associated with a 'search for authenticity'. The 'search for authenticity', which MacCannell viewed as a religious pilgrim's mantra, has become the language associated with many 'secular pilgrimages', especially those associated with historical and cultural sites. As noted by Handler (1986) tourist literature refers to "search for authentic cultural experiences – for the unspoiled, pristine, genuine, untouched and traditional" (p.2). Wang (1999) highlighted the search for authenticity was common in touristic pilgrimages which promoted an exploration and transformation of self.

Cohen (1979) also identified tourists were searching for 'authentic experiences'. He suggested that tourists generally comprised of five sub-

groups on a spectrum from the ‘hedonistic pleasure seeker’ to that of a “modern pilgrim on a quest for meaning” (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p.447). Cohen’s (1979, p.183) subgroups were termed: recreational; diversionary; experiential; experimental and existential. With the exception of the ‘existential’, Cohen (1992) argued pilgrims were distinct from tourists on the basis of movement. Pilgrims journeyed to the ‘sacred centre of their world’, whereas tourists are drawn away from the centre to the edges of society.

While the researcher concurs with Cohen’s (1979) representation of different sub- groups the metaphorical representation of journey (1992) is problematic, as its use of language implied that only pilgrims have an interior journey to the centre. Unlike Graburn’s (1983) ‘continuum’, Cohen’s (1992) model of journey to the centre or to the periphery highlighted a dichotomy between pilgrims and tourists. The language of ‘interior’ and ‘exterior’ journeys is widely used in regards to pilgrimage (Margry, 2008; Robinson, 1997). Cohen’s use of similar terms implied that only pilgrims will have interior journeys of meaning and that the various ‘tourist’ groupings will engage in physical journeys concerned with exteriorities. Such an assertion fails to recognise that “even pleasure seeking hedonic tourists ... may feel a heightened inner awareness or connection to something beyond themselves” (Timothy & Olsen, 2006, p.271).

Margry (2008) has argued against the appropriation of the term ‘pilgrimage’, and the use of religious language in regards to secular travel. He asserted,

a pilgrimage must entail interaction between the sacred or the religious, an element of personal transition and the existence of a cult object. Without these elements there is no pilgrimage; there is thus an essential distinction between ‘pilgrimage’ and ‘secular pilgrimage’ such as recreational travel in that pilgrimage has a transformative potential to give meaning to life. (p.36)

As with Digance and Cusack (2002), and Reader and Walter (1993), this

researcher would contest Margry's argument, especially his reference to tourism and secular pilgrimage not providing experiences which give meaning to life. While religious pilgrimages are distinguished from other forms of tourism according to their principal aims, and sometimes their destinations (Liszewski, 2000), the underlying motivations of individual travellers can sometimes be the same. Both pilgrims and tourists seek personal satisfaction and reward, although this is relative and will arise in different circumstances (Turnbull, 1992). Furthermore, they often travel in an 'existential mode' whereby they are both seeking experiences which seem meaningful (Lopez, 2013), and in these 'tourists' have attested to times of growth, autonomy, development and self-discovery (Reader, 2007), and of being moved to what resides in the deepest part of self (Iyer, 1999).

While pilgrimages are often situated within the framework of a religious tradition many pilgrims find it "reasonable to describe themselves as having no link to those traditions and to present their journeys solely in the context of a personalised and individualised framework of search and self-developments" (Reader, 2007, p.227).

Meaning and sacrality are human perceptions. This personal subjectivity means that people will perceive and recall their experiences differently, even if they have shared the same collective experience. Bouldrey (1999) reflected, "every person might take the same pilgrimage and bring home another story" (p.xvi). The subjectivity of pilgrims' views therefore, especially in regards to sacrality and personal meaning, requires particular consideration throughout the duration of this research study.

As with other forms of pilgrimage, both religious and secular, World Youth Day has no 'typical' pilgrim (Allen, 2005a, 2005c; Mason et al., 2008b; Rymarz, 2008a). Rather, travellers to the international gathering represent the religious-tourist spectrum and are motivated for an amalgam of reasons. While some pilgrims are drawn to the event as an occasion to "profess and proclaim their faith ... and experience the Church as communion" (John Paul II, 1996, n.2), others are excited by the prospects of travel and making new friends.

Dann's (1977) 'push and pull factors' also apply to World Youth Day pilgrims. While many have responded to the 'push' of intrinsic motivations, others have attended World Youth Day as a result of 'pull' factors, including the attraction of the particular host city, or the pilgrimage route. Another significant pull factor, common to many other forms of pilgrimage is the 'appeal' of the celebrity (Norman, 2011; Weber, 2006), in this context, the pope.

Central to the research study is the identification of the various 'push' and 'pull' factors motivating pilgrim registrations for World Youth Day. Further, the research will clarify the degree to which previously identified 'pilgrim types' may have shifted as a result of the changing demographic of the Australian pilgrim delegation.

5.2.4 Journey or Destination

In his study of the sociological phenomenon of pilgrimage, Margry (2008) posed the question, "should the focus be on location and locality, with the sacred site as the ultimate goal, or should it be on the journey and being on the way?"

Anthropologists and social researchers are divided on the issue.

Dupront (1987) argued that without the object of a sacred place, pilgrimage does not exist and is rendered meaningless. To devout pilgrims, the place, which might be a revered site or a specific shrine, becomes the '*axis mundi*' of their faith (Turner & Turner, 1978). The notion of 'place-centered sacredness' evolved from the writings of Eliade (1959, 1963), and was developed by (Turner & Turner (1978), who asserted that the very purpose of pilgrimage was to "get out, go forth, to a far holy place approved by all" (p.7).

The sacrality of a site however is often contested as individuals will ascribe their own meaning to it. In *Contesting the Sacred: the Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, Eade and Sallnow (1991) suggested while a

particular shrine or revered place might have an intrinsic religious significance of its own it also “provides a ritual space for the expression of a diversity of perceptions and meanings which the pilgrims themselves bring to the shrine and impose upon it” (p.10). To this end pilgrimage sites are sometimes characterized by competing discourses rather than shared collective responses (Frey, 1998).

The power and centrality of ‘place’ in pilgrimage has been attested to by various leaders of the Christian Churches. At the launch of a conference on pilgrimage the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams (2012), reflected it was ‘place’, which was

the most fundamental level at which pilgrimage works ... something has happened here which has made a difference. It is a difference that has touched us and changed us. We want to make sure that we are really inhabiting that difference, understanding it, praying through it, getting our heads and our hearts around it more fully.

Not only is ‘place’ significant because it enables pilgrims to “relive the past” (Lowenthal, 1985, p.22), it also provides pilgrims with an opportunity to give personal witness to their faith and to feel a sense of unity with their fellow believers. Often this perception and feeling of unity accompanies a ‘ritual’ associated with the particular sacred place. Rituals, which are considered to have a significant psycho-social effect (Durkheim, 1912; Turner & Turner, 1978) are characteristic of the various sacred sites in Catholicism (Vukonic, 2006).

Eade and Sallnow (1991) proposed the idea that a ‘holy place’ alone was the very *raison d'être* of pilgrimage. Identifying that pilgrimage sites are “associated either with the manifestation of the divine to human beings or with the human propensity to approach the divine” (p.6), the researchers named other significant factors associated with a ‘sacred center’, namely ‘person’ and ‘text’. Their examination of pilgrimage sites throughout the world found many were associated with the perceived “inherent sanctity of a holy person” (p.6) or with a journey to a place to “verify and materialize the sacred scriptures” (p.9).

(Russell, 1999) supported the view of Eade and Sallnow (1991) and suggested that the ‘holy places’ were largely associated with either a ‘person’ or a ‘text’, and these factors influence pilgrim numbers. Lee and Nolan (1989) conducted research with pilgrim shrines and centres across Western Europe. They identified over 6,000 individual pilgrimage sites, and found 830 shrines received more than 10,000 visitors a year (Bradley, 2009). Devotion to a holy person was found to be the core focus of 98.4% of the pilgrimage sites.

Central to the pilgrimage phenomenon, and thus to World Youth Day as a pilgrimage event, is the centrality of holy places. Pope Benedict XVI (2010) affirmed the significance of holy places as giving “opportunity to discover the Lord in the shrine”, a place where pilgrims are invited “to listen to the word of God and sacramental celebration” (Pontifical Council for Migrants and Itinerant People, 1998, n.32). In *The Pilgrimage of the Great Jubilee*, this encounter is described as the goal of all pilgrimages (1998, n.40), which occurs only after a time of journeying, which “leads them to solidarity with their brothers and sisters and to the necessary preparation for their encounter with the Lord” (1998, n.32). The journey of a Christian pilgrimage is intended to be twofold, both of the exterior and the interior, “so that it would not only be a movement of the body but also an itinerary of the soul” (1998, n40).

In developing a ‘typology of sacred journeys’, Morinis (1992) suggested that a true understanding of pilgrimages focused “on the pilgrims’ journey and motivations, not on the destination shrines” (p.10). This view has been supported by a number of social researchers, including Coleman and Eade (2004).

Coleman and Elsner (1995) extended Eade and Sallnow’s (1991) ‘triad theory’ of person, place and text, and suggested a fourth coordinate of pilgrimage – ‘movement’. The authors proposed that ‘movement’ doesn’t end with the pilgrim’s arrival at the shrine or revered site as it generally characterizes the religious rituals associated with the site.

Coleman and Elsner (1995) also recognized the centrality of the exterior physical movement and the interior spiritual and psychological movement, a point supported by Harrigan (2010), who suggested that pilgrimage “involves not only movement through space but also an active process of response as the pilgrim encounters both the journey and the goal” (p.57).

In *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred*, Margry (2008) suggested that the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was the ‘most important catalyst’ in shifting peoples’ perceptions of ‘pilgrimage’, so the pilgrimage journey, not the destination, was considered as an end in itself (p.24). The significance of the *Camino*, as it is referred, in highlighting the importance of ‘movement’, physically and spiritually, was also identified by Coleman and Eade (2004).

The *Camino* pilgrimage, and its impact upon pilgrims, has been subject to extensive research (Frey, 1998; Lopez, 2013; Mullins, 2001; Slavin, 2003). Although it has been a pilgrimage route since the ninth century, the *Camino* of Santiago de Compostela, gained renewed interest and popularity in the latter decades of the twentieth century (Bradley, 2009). Some 250,000 pilgrims travelled ‘*the way*’ in 2004, a jubilee year for the pilgrimage site and the number of Australian pilgrims has increased every year (Harrigan, 2010).

Of all Christian pilgrimages, *El Camino* or *The Way* represents the concept of pilgrimage as journey. It is the longest pilgrimage trek in Europe, and can be made via various routes through Spain, France and Portugal. Many of the pilgrims see both the physical and symbolic challenges of being on ‘*the way*’ (Mikaelson, 2012) and often have an anti-climactic experience upon reaching their final destination at the Cathedral of Santiago. Bradley (2009) observed “what is striking about the pilgrims ... is the look of disappointment and sadness that often registers on their faces alongside the weariness and exaltation. Many said that the journey had been all too short, and they felt a sense of anti-climax at the end of their pilgrimage” (p.107).

Harrigan (2010) and Slavin (1997) both examined the impact of walking the *Camino* as the basis of their doctoral theses. Their research, as with that of several anthropologists (Frey, 1998; Gitlitz & Davidson, 2000), found while the pilgrims bonded together closely, especially through hardship, many approached the pilgrimage in an individualized way. Eberhart described it as a “pilgrimage to oneself” (2006, p.160).

For some pilgrims, the *Camino* has become a ‘rite of passage’ (Margry, 2008), for others it is a quest for personal and spiritual meaning (Sutcliffe 2000) and for others an opportunity to meet self-imposed challenges. “The personal, physical and mental challenges as well as the unexpected acts of kindness and patience” (Frey, 1998, p.220) from fellow pilgrims, are therapeutic moments and experiences of renewal or transformation (Mikaelson, 2012).

The *Camino*, as with other pilgrimages entailing challenging physical journeys, highlights the interrelationship between the interior and exterior journeys. Robinson (1997), in *Sacred Places Pilgrim Paths: An Anthology of Pilgrimage* pointed to the symbiotic relationship between the physical and the spiritual. Robinson suggested those who go on pilgrimage “embrace the hardships as a legitimate part of the experience and not merely as an inconvenience” (1997, p.84) and that challenging and physically demanding pilgrimages ultimately stimulate spiritual growth.

It is the nature of this interior journey, the search for both God and self (Robinson, 1997), that has resulted in some anthropologists (Morinis, 1992) arguing that the ‘movement’ of the *peregrinus* (traveler) is more important than the ‘locality’ of the destination. Margry (2008) warned however against reducing the pilgrimage phenomenon primarily to the journey element. Properly understood every pilgrimage “has its own rhythm and rituals, its ebb and flow of arriving and departing, exodus and return (Bradley, 2009, p.22) through which there is fusion of the pilgrim paths and sacred places (Robinson, 1997).

Like many other forms of pilgrimage World Youth Day is characterised by

journey and destination. Pope John Paul II used 'journey', as a motif to describe both the life of the Church and individual people, especially the young (1988a, n.3) and he identified the destination as being an encounter with Jesus Christ (1989, n.1.3).

The concepts of 'journey' and 'destination' have a particular nuance within the context of World Youth Day. The journey refers to the physical pilgrimage which is undertaken in the lead-up to the international gathering. It is the response to the invitation of Pope John Paul II to "set out on pilgrimage along the roads of the world" (1996, n.2). While the principal objective of World Youth Day is the encounter with Jesus Christ (1996, n.1), the 'destination' applies more broadly to the week-long international gathering. While the two are inextricably linked they are distinct in nature, purpose and experience. While not the subject of specific empirical research, post World Youth Day accounts have highlighted that the journey and the destination have sometimes been remembered for different reasons by pilgrims (Falzun, 1989).

While being linked as one event, and sitting within the broader pilgrimage model of departure, journey, encounter and return, the pilgrimage and week-long international gathering have distinctive, yet at times complimentary spiritual, psycho-social dynamics. These are shaped by individual and collective experiences.

Contextually, the pilgrimage to World Youth Day is different for Australian pilgrims when compared to their European and North American counterparts. The distances, the time required and the associated costs are far greater, and limit those who can attend (Rymarz, 2008a). As a consequence the 'pilgrimage' has become a highly significant component of the World Youth Day experience for Australians. Although direct options are still made available (this involves travelling to participate in World Youth Day week only), this is not the preferred mode of travel for most pilgrims.

Organizing authorities and group leaders see that the pilgrimage provides a form of spiritual and pastoral preparation for World Youth Day. Itineraries,

which change from World Youth Day to World Youth Day given the change in the host city, have reflected the priorities of Eade and Sallnow's (1991) 'triad theory' of person, place and text. In light of the changing demographic profile of Australian World Youth Day pilgrims and the known secondary motivations that many religious pilgrims hold Post, Pieper & Van Uden (1998), many of the itineraries have also included a range of destinations typically associated with tourism (Denver 1993 - The Grand Canyon; Toronto 2002 – Niagara Falls; Rio de Janeiro 2013 – Machu Picchu).

Throughout their journey the pilgrims typically travel in groups not dissimilar in size to those of mainstream tourism. This provides a time for social bonding and the strengthening of group identity. Throughout World Youth Day week however, pilgrim experiences are significantly different as they interact with individuals and groups from across Australia and around the world in what is a mega-event attracting hundreds of thousands, and on occasions millions of people. Many of these experiences are characterized by affective intensity. For some pilgrims they are cathartic, and for many others the experience of World Youth Day prompts the discernment of social and religious identity.

The research will examine the overall impact of the pilgrimage and the World Youth Day gathering as separate entities and will explore the complex inter-relatedness between the two.

5.2.5 Contested Meanings and Feelings or 'Communitas'

Pilgrimage is a diversified, multilayered phenomenon which encompasses a wide range of inner experiences (Bilu, 1988). Eade and Sallnow (1991) asserted that pilgrimages are not a uniform or homogenous phenomenon but are shaped by specific cultural and historical circumstances and are subject to a range of interpretations and responses, which they described as a "realm of competing discourses" (p.5). A salient feature of research into the pilgrimage phenomenon has been an exploration of the correlation between, and the nature of individual and collective experiences (Coleman & Eade, 2004; Reader & Walter, 1993; Turner & Turner 1978).

Research suggests pilgrimages may contribute to the forging of strong interpersonal bonds and connectedness between pilgrims (Galbraith, 2000). This has occurred for various reasons, including: shared cultural and religious ideas (de Jonge, 1993); the encountering of shared hardships and challenges (Schnell & Pali, 2013); participation in collective rituals (Fine & Speer, 1985); a sense of regular co-presence (Bowman, 1993) and social identification with a community of fellow pilgrims (Senn, 2002).

In their 1978 work *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner outlined in detail their theoretical construct '*communitas*'. The authors provided a "hermeneutical lens for interpreting pilgrimage experience" (Ross, 2011, p.xxx) by exploring the concepts of '*liminality*' and '*communitas*', notions first presented in Victor Turner's (1969) seminal text, *The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-Structure* and developed in later works (1973, 1974a, 1974b).

Turner (1969, 1973) suggested that rituals, such as pilgrimages, generated a spontaneous and strong sense of unity and cohesion between participants. During this time individual distinctions are reduced and pilgrims "temporarily transcend the hierarchical social roles that often serve to divide them in everyday life" (Di Giovine, 2011, p. 250), effectively experiencing a sense of oneness with each other. Turner named this experience, *communitas*.

Turner considered *communitas* "a spontaneously generated relationship between levelled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes" (1973, p.216). By suggesting an inversion of the external social structures whereby ritual participants related to each other as equals, *communitas* came to represent the "social modality of anti-structure" in the field of anthropological research (Coleman, 2002, p.356).

Turner (1969) suggested the mode of social relations termed *Communitas* was to be found in periods of transition, which he named '*liminal periods*'. *Liminality* relates to the middle transitional period associated with Van Gennep's (1960/1909) *rites of passage*, the three stages of which are: the

initial stage of separation; the *liminal* period where individuals are “neither here nor there, they are betwixt and between” (Turner, 1967, p.95), and the third and final stage of reaggregation where individuals assimilate back into society and their daily lives.

Turner extended and applied Van Gennep’s concept of *liminality* to a range of social, cultural and religious rituals. He identified the transition period “a realm of pure possibility” (1967, p.97) for human interrelatedness, because individuals have “nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows” (1967, p.98).

Victor and Edith Turner (1978) asserted the social phenomenon of pilgrimage consisted of three distinct stages; separation, transition and re-immersion, a view supported by Carrasco (1996). Although it was recognized that pilgrimages were “ultimately bound by the structure of the religious systems within which they are generated and persist” (Turner, 1974, pp.205-206) pilgrimages bore resemblance to ‘rites of passage’ in that they were rituals of transformation and meaning-making (Schnell & Pali, 2013).

To the Turners, the *‘liminoid’* experience was central to pilgrimage, a time in which people experience “their highest pitch of self-consciousness” (Turner, 1974, p.255). Pilgrims seek to transform their lives from the ordinary and the mundane, and be freed from “the obligatory everyday constraints of status and role” (Turner, 1973, p.221) before returning to their everyday lives renewed, and with a new sense of social status.

Turner (1974) suggested the significance of *liminality*, is that it “represents the midpoint of transition” (p.237) between separation and re-assimilation. The significance of the transitory nature of *liminality* within the context of pilgrimage was identified by Elizondo (1996), who reflected,

“pilgrimage sites are not ends in themselves, but often serve as thresholds into new stages of life. One does not go as a pilgrim to stay, but to pass through a privileged experience that will change us in unsuspected and uncontrolled ways so that we return to ordinary

life in a completely new way”.

Just as *liminality* was transitory in nature, Turner (1967) held the view that the *communitas* was only an ephemeral moment in which participants experienced a sense of connectedness and unanimity with others, not dissimilar to the fleeting sensation of *collective effervescence* (Mentore, 2009).

Turner (1974a), who equated *communitas* with Martin Buber’s (1971/1923) ‘I-Thou’ concept, expressed an awareness of the difficulties in challenging and removing social barriers. Notwithstanding this, he believed the mode of social relations associated with *communitas* would allow individuals to “engage in behaviours that are generally taboo, socially unacceptable or exceptional to some degree” (Salamone, 2010, p.96).

Although Bilu (1988) suggested the spirit of fraternity, solidarity and comradeship, which are characteristic of *communitas*, reflects the “dominant, culturally endorsed atmosphere of the pilgrimage” (p.323), the theoretical construct has not been widely accepted, especially in its purest form. Bilu (1988) himself questioned the utopian proposition of *communitas* and suggested the relationship between random strangers on pilgrimage resembled ‘sibling rivalry’ and the “removal of social barriers between densely concentrated individuals may intensify processes of social comparison, resulting in envy and competition” (p.309).

Rivalry, envy and competition were not observed by Ross during her anthropological research at pilgrimage sites in Great Britain and Western Europe. Ross (2011) found “communitas abounded regardless of the pilgrims’ ages, abilities or backgrounds” (p.xxxiv). Schnell & Pali (2013) suggested qualitative research with pilgrims who have undertaken the *Camino* also supported the presence of *communitas*.

While the ‘anti-structural’ theory of *communitas* hypothesized the removal of social boundaries, groupings and hierarchies during pilgrimages, a range of anthropologists have suggested pilgrimages are a microcosm of the wider

society (Sallnow, 1987; Werbner, 1977), not an inversion of it.

The social construct of *communitas* has been challenged by social researchers and anthropologists from the perspective of its ‘anti-structure’ (Huber, 1999; Morinis, 1984). Others too (Di Giovine, 2010; Sallnow, 1981) have critiqued the underlying premise that there is greater unity and sociality between pilgrims, or the “bonds formed among fellow initiands are of unusual depth and intimacy” (Mason, 2009, p.10), and have highlighted that on occasions pilgrims have been divided as a result of various religious, social and cultural issues.

In *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, Eade and Sallnow (1991) synthesised many of the principal objections to the theory of *communitas*, and the interpretation of pilgrimage presented by the Turners. A key argument was that pilgrimage could not be interpreted as a “homogenous phenomenon but should be deconstructed from historically and culturally specific instances” (p3), lending itself to competing dichotomies and the contestation of meaning. Furthermore, Eade and Sallnow (1991) suggested that the theory of *communitas* was ‘glossed’, and not supported by sufficient empirical research.

While the idealized view of *communitas* articulated by the Turners has been challenged by researchers (Hertz, 1983; Reader & Walter, 1993), and described as a “theoretical cul-de-sac” (Coleman & Eade, 2004, p.3), anthropologists and sociologists support the notion that the desire to connect and bond with others is an innate human characteristic, and that the relationship with others, which form the basis of ‘community’, can create a powerful ambience (Maffesoli, 1996).

In *The Secular Age*, Charles Taylor suggested “the sense of *communitas* is the intuition we all share, that, beyond the way we relate to each other through our diversified coded roles, we also are a community of many sided human beings, fundamentally equal, who are associated together” (2007, p.49). Taylor supported the notions of “fellow feeling” and “innate sociality” (Maffesoli, 1996), not the ‘anti-structural’ nature of the Turners’

(1978) theory. He argued there were moments of ‘fusion’ between individuals, and these were times when powerful and common feelings and emotions emerged. Taylor (2007) identified pilgrimages as moments of ‘fusion’, which “put us in contact with something beyond ourselves” (p.517).

Research has suggested ‘fellow feeling’ and solidarity with others is influenced by the degree of their ‘like-mindedness’ (Bond, 2014; Di Giovine, 2009) and that shared cultural, social and religious interests and convictions underpin the emergence of ‘neo tribes’ in postmodern societies (Maffesoli, 1996). Notwithstanding this, research has also pointed to the spontaneous development of friendships with total strangers (Vidal, 1990), especially in circumstances where people are removed from their normal social environment. In the light of the transitory nature of the relationship, Vidal named this phenomenon, ‘liminal solidarity’ (1990, p.45).

Bowman (2008) and Urry (2002) have both identified how the connectedness of strangers can occur during pilgrimages where people gather from across an “immense spectrum of belief and praxis” (Bowman, 2008, p.269). The bonding arises, not just as a result of the constancy of presence, but also from “moments of intense co-present fellow feeling” (Urry, 2002, p.261).

The heightened sense of solidarity and camaraderie often follows participation in a collective ritual (Fine & Speer, 1985) and the overcoming of particular hardships, especially physical challenges (Dubish, 2008; Schnell & Pali, 2013). Di Giovine (2009) suggested that friendships grow quickly, even amongst strangers who have shared an ‘intermittent co-presence’ (Bowman, 2008), but especially amongst “like-minded people undergoing the same ritual simultaneously” (p.159). Often the bonds that are established remain for years after a pilgrimage.

Just as the significance of sacred sites may be contested (Eade & Sallnow, 1991), so too can the recollections and interpretations of a pilgrimage experience. Although pilgrimage is an increasingly ‘group experience’, the

collective memories are not uniform as a “container of memories held by one group” but rather are diverse, “shaped as they are experienced in a particular place and time” (Bajc, 2006, p.125).

Research relating to social identity has highlighted the mutual influence which exists between individuals and groups (Postmes & Jetten, 2006). Hornsey (2006) reflected “individuals are shaped and influenced by group norms, but group norms are actively contested, discussed, and shaped by individuals” (p.216). This is borne out in the sociological phenomenon of pilgrimage.

An examination of the World Youth Day phenomenon suggests that pilgrims generally experience feelings of solidarity and oneness with fellow pilgrims (Mason, 2008, p.5). The week-long celebration is typically characterized by the hospitality and friendliness of hosts and a shared way of relating with fellow pilgrims. -This is due in part to the strong alignment of the religious and social values of many pilgrims.

The World Youth Day environment is not typical of a broad-based religious community. Rather, it is relatively homogenous, and is typically characterized by pilgrims who value religion, adhere to religious beliefs and regularly practice within worshipping communities when compared to the general population. While World Youth Day attracts pilgrims from across the religious-spectrum there is a greater concentration of pilgrims who are highly religious. As a consequence, the pilgrimage environment, and that of World Youth Day week is supportive, and there is the presence of like-minded people.

With the growth of Australian pilgrim numbers following Sydney 2008, especially amongst school-school-age pilgrims, there may well be a diversification of the ‘religious’ profile of Australian World Youth day pilgrims and this may result in contested meanings of the World Youth Day experience. Within the Australian delegations travelling to World Youth Day in Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013) the majority of school-school-age pilgrims travelled with school groups, not with diocesan or

parish groups, or other communities and movements. This raises questions about their primary motivation to attend World Youth Day, their existing connections with or commitments a faith community, and their ultimate level of satisfaction with the World Youth Day experience.

Research suggests that some pilgrimages experience tension and rivalry between pilgrims (Bilu, 1988), and occasionally between pilgrims and locals. World Youth Day does not appear to have had these problems, described by Di Giovine (2011) as “emotional, social and cultural fault lines (p.49). Rather the event has been characterized by a strong sense of fraternity and common purpose.

Gebherdt (2007), Mason (2008) and Singleton (2011) each attested to the positive socialization experienced at World Youth Day which resulted in affirming inter- personal and inter-group experiences and dynamics. While much of the socialization arose from the prevailing sentiments of good natured camaraderie and an atmosphere of ‘festival’, many former pilgrims have identified the sense of empowerment that arises from an experience of solidarity in faith (Murray, 2005), where pilgrims “link with others from around the world who are like them and who can support them in their religious questioning” (Rymarz, 2007b, p.395).

Compilations of World Youth Day testimonies (Mitchell, 2007; Murray, 2005; Pontifical Council for the Laity, 2000b) and testimonial extracts (Mason, 2008) identified that World Youth Day was perceived by pilgrims as an out of the ordinary experience, characterized by a strong sense of fraternity and ‘oneness’ with others.

A theoretical construct often associated with pilgrimages is that of *communitas* (Turner & Turner, 1978), which bears resemblance to some descriptions provided by past pilgrims. Singleton (2011) suggested World Youth Day “can be considered as an example of spontaneous *communitas*, a form of temporary community in which previously existing roles and status are of little importance” (p.60). Mason (2009), who with Singleton and Webber, conducted extensive research into World Youth Day 2008 in

Sydney, suggested that there was an expectation that “all pilgrims would experience a moderate degree of ‘*communitas*’ both within their group and with other individuals and groups” (p.7).

This researcher supports the view of a moderate form of *communitas* at World Youth Day, characterized by “an ease of communication, trust, [a] sense of common humanity” (Mason, 2008, p.7) and a greater openness with others, but does not concur with the ‘anti-structure’ elements of the theory, which see the dissipation of all social boundaries, groupings and hierarchies. The researcher contends that some boundaries still exist between age groupings, lay and religious, and more subtly between the different pilgrim types on the religious spiritual spectrum. Some of the boundaries, which are not diffused by the moderate *communitas*, are generated by the organizational structure required to conduct pilgrimages to World Youth Day.

5.2.6 Mission Trips and the Search for Meaning

A central aspect of the pilgrimage phenomenon is people’s search for meaning and their capacity to answer some of the existential questions in life, including ‘What is the meaning of life?’ and ‘Where does my life find meaning?’ (Olsen & Guelke, 2004). This search, described as a “search to be themselves, to be givers of sense” (Voye, 2002, p.123) is according to Sacks (2011) a defining characteristic of human beings, who have always been ‘meaning seeking’. It has become more pronounced however in post-modern western societies, where it is argued a great number of people experience feelings of dislocation and rootlessness, and a lack of social identity (Lowenthal, 1997; Timothy & Olsen, 2006).

Sacks (2012) argued that religion, while not the only source of meaning, is a key source of meaning, and that it, “sanctifies relationships, builds communities, and turns our gaze outward from self to other, giving emotional resonance to altruism and energizing the better angels of our nature ”.

For many, meaning is found in a concern with and for the other. Levinas (1998) considered, “the only absolute value is the human possibility of giving the other priority over oneself” (p.109). This concern for the other was affirmed by Pope Francis in *Lumen Fidae* (2013), “persons always live in relationship. We come from others, we belong to others, and our lives are enlarged by our encounter with others” (n.38).

Sociological research suggests that religiosity or religious capital is the most significant factor in influencing a person’s concern with and for the other (Putnam & Campbell, 2012; Wilson & Musick, 1997) for “churches and religions foster a culture of benevolence more than any other institution” (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014, p.232). Typically, religions emphasise the importance of charity, serving the needy and volunteerism (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1990; Wuthnow, 1991, 1999).

While the level and intensity of religious engagement can influence the degree and scope of voluntary activities (Brown & Ferris, 2007), even those loosely affiliated with a religious group can be actively engaged in charitable activities (Wilson & Janoski, 1995) for often they share a similar ‘worldview’ (Taniguchi & Thomas, 2011).

In accordance with ‘social identity theory’ the religious group provides a “system of orientation for *self-reference*” (Tajfel & Turner, 1986, p.16), whereby all members, including those with marginal levels of commitment, view the group and its activities positively, especially if there is an alignment with their own personal values.

Research suggests that the most strongly held values, especially amongst adolescents, relate to “altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others” (Clary et al., 1998, p.1517). As these individual values align with the overarching concerns and priorities of the major religions, there has been a significant growth in activity that allows “individuals to act out their values and demonstrate their concern for others” (Forbes & Zampelli, 2014, p.232).

Described as the ‘postmodern pilgrimage’ (Mustonen, 2006), the phenomenon of volunteer tourism has emerged and grown in recent decades. Particularly common in Europe and North America, the ‘mission trips’ are largely coordinated by religious groups who undertake projects in South East Asia, South America and Africa. Typically, the mission trips are ‘short-term’ and involve small groups of twenty or less.

Volunteer tourism is also on the rise in Australia, facilitated by a range of religious and philanthropic organizations. Of these, many are agencies of, or organizations affiliated with the Catholic Church. In recent decades a range of mission trips and immersion programs have been facilitated by Caritas, Catholic Mission, Palms Australia, and a number of the religious orders. Historically, the commitment to overseas mission trips grew out of the immersion experiences with indigenous communities in remote parts of Australia.

(Beyerlein, Adler & Trinitapoli, 2011) showed that ‘mission trips’ are generally comprised of three core elements: charitable service work; learning about cultural and social justice issues, and “engaging in evangelizing activities with the local community” (p.781). As with all forms of pilgrimage, the motivations underpinning volunteer tourism are diverse (Uriely, Reichel & Ron, 2003).

‘Mission trip’ pilgrims, like volunteers generally, are primarily motivated by altruistic concerns (Mustonen, 2006). These inner factors are “derived from the person’s values and history and somehow echo the person’s self-identity” (Mustonen, 2006, p.165), as well as underpin their search for meaning.

While recognizing the importance of ‘altruism’ as a motivating factor, Brown & Morrison (2003) and Brown & Lehto (2005) considered that some ‘mission trip’ pilgrims were motivated by social factors, others by the desire to experience another culture, and others were seeking solidarity and connectedness with fellow travelers. Without wishing to establish typologies, they suggested that there were two major groups, ‘the vacation

minded' and 'the volunteer minded'. Like Mustonen (2006), Brown & Morrison (2003) and Brown & Lehto (2005) argued that motivations, roles, behaviours and attitudes can all change during the course of a mission trip.

Volunteer tourists have attested to the 'transformative nature' of a mission trip experience (Peterson, Aeschliman & Sneed 2003). Many have cited a developed awareness of poverty and suffering, feelings of solidarity with fellow travelers and host communities, and a greater appreciation of the lifestyle they enjoy (Howell & Dorr, 2007; Ver Beek, 2008). Despite participants describing a 'changed identity' as a result of a mission trip, Ver Beek (2008) found that there was no significant change in participants' practices or behaviours.

Trinitapoli and Vaisey (2009) found that while the reflections of participants on 'changed self' may have been slightly exaggerated there was evidence to suggest that involvement in 'mission trips' strengthened religious beliefs and levels of commitment. Further to this, Beyerlein, Adler & Trinitapoli (2011) identified that participation in mission trips shaped attitudes and values and was a 'robust predictor' of various forms of civic engagement.

The research study will examine the place of a 'mission component' in a World Youth Day pilgrimage and assess its appeal and perceived value and impact.

5.3 WORLD YOUTH DAY AS A PILGRIMAGE IN FAITH

5.3.1 The Dimensions of Pilgrimage

Pope John Paul II recognised the deep spiritual significance of pilgrimages, and saw them as moments of catechesis (John Paul II, 1988a). He identified them as being a catalyst of personal renewal and a spiritual journey in faith, and recognised they "assumed different cultural forms in different ages" (1998, n.7).

Pope John Paul II associated pilgrimages with the missionary activity of the

Church and recognised them as an effective method and expression of evangelisation. Pilgrimages are effective in reviving “interest in religion, particularly among young people” (Margry, 2008, p.26) primarily because they take people out of the everyday and put them in touch with something beyond themselves (Taylor, 2007).

In *The Pilgrimage of the Great Jubilee*, the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (1998) identified the dynamics of a pilgrimage and some of the steps taken by a pilgrim. These included:

- *departure*: which reveals the decision of pilgrims to go ... to the destination and achieve the spiritual objectives;
- *walking*: which leads them to solidarity with their brothers and sisters and ... [prepares them] for the meeting with the Lord;
- the *visit to the Shrine*: which invites them to listen to the Word of God and to sacramental celebration, and
- the *return*: reminds them of their mission in the world (n.32).

This framework can be applied to pilgrim participation in World Youth Day, as can the model suggested by Novalis (2002). In reflecting establish upon World Youth Day IV in Santiago de Compostela in 1989, Novalis (2002) suggested a pilgrimage consisted of three core dimensions: ‘journey’, ‘quest’ and ‘encounter’ (p.16). Novalis (2002) outlined that:

- the *journey* invites pilgrims to balance and “harmony with the world around them”,
- the *quest* challenges pilgrims to search for meaning and to “use today to focus more clearly on the eternal tomorrow”, and
- the encounter with the transcendent, and a “new relationship with the Christ of Emmaus”.

The principal objective of World Youth Day is to enable pilgrims to encounter with Jesus Christ (John Paul II, 1996) so that he might be “the centre of the faith and life of every young person ... their constant point of reference” (n.1). This search for God situates World Youth Day within the

context of the pilgrimage phenomenon, which “is usually characterised by a journey to a named place where an encounter with God ... is the anticipated outcome” (Digance, 2006, p42).

In addition to the primary objective of an encounter with the transcendent, World Youth Day is characterised by other features and dynamics which have helped define it as a ‘pilgrimage event’ (Norman & Johnson, 2011). These include an emphasis on:

- the physical journey as a form of spiritual preparation;
- the interior journey as a means of spiritual renewal and ultimate conversion;
- travelling and gathering with both ‘like-minded people’ and strangers for the purpose of strengthening solidarity with others;
- undertaking the pilgrimage as an expression of, and witness to, faith;
- a search for personal meaning;
- the visiting of significant and sacred sites within the Christian Tradition, and
- engagement with religious symbols and rituals so that they become a cultural reference point.

5.3.2 World Youth Day: Encountering the Sacred and the Secular

The model of pilgrimage adopted for World Youth Day has encompassed both the sacred and the secular. A number of the cities chosen to host the international gathering are traditional places of pilgrimage within Catholicism. These included:

- Santiago de Compostela (1989): famous for the tomb of Saint James the Apostle, and the pilgrimage route, the *Camino*;
- Czestochowa (1991): famous for the shrine and sanctuary of the ‘Black Virgin’, titled Our Lady of Jasna Gora, and
- Cologne (2005): renowned for its Gothic cathedral and the shrine of the grand reliquary of the Maji.

Each of these cities has attracted Christian pilgrims for centuries and they remain amongst the most popular shrines in Europe today (Lee & Nolan,

1989). After Rome and Jerusalem, Santiago de Compostela is the third most popular Catholic pilgrim site in the world (Harrigan, 2010).

In 2000, Pope John Paul II used the occasion of the ‘Great Jubilee’ to focus international attention on the significance of Rome to the Christian tradition (Pope John Paul II, 1998b; 2000) and he coupled this with World Youth Day XV, which, in “a year of spectacular displays of Catholicism ... was perhaps the most stunning” (Weigel, 2010, p.244). Although it “was a massive logistical exercise, it filled Rome with life” (Allen, 2004, p167), and received extensive and positive coverage within the media (Knickmeyer, 2000).

Weigel (2010) suggested World Youth Day XV was strategic, as it was an integral part of “the re-evangelisation of Rome, which ... as the center of the Catholic world tended... to wear its Catholicism somewhat lightly, and at times even cynically” (p.245). The notion of ‘re-evangelisation’, or ‘new evangelisation’ as he termed it, was a priority of Pope John Paul II (1990, n.33), who, like his successors, affirmed the need for people to discover their Christian roots (2001c).

In contrast to the cities which had a long-standing Christian heritage, World Youth Day has also been held in various modern cities in the developed world, even cities with a relatively small, by proportion, Catholic population. In framing the various contexts for evangelisation, Pope John Paul II (1990) noted,

Today the image of mission *ad gentes* is perhaps changing: efforts should be concentrated on the big cities, where new customs and styles of living arise together with new forms of culture and communication, which then influences the wider population ... the future of the younger nations is being shaped in the cities. (n.37)

Denver (1993), Toronto (2002) and Sydney (2008) were host cities of the younger nations. They were chosen strategically with the intention of promoting Catholic culture and a form of ‘spiritual renewal’ in what was perceived as a secular environment (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008b). In

preparation for the international gatherings, the Church authorities looked to promote local examples of exemplary religious life to inspire the young, (Saint Kateri Tekakwitha – Toronto; Blessed Mary MacKillop – Sydney), and they also hoped to use the young pilgrims to inspire the wider community, especially those indifferent to religion:

Dear young friends, Toronto is waiting for all of you who can make it. In the heart of a multi-cultural and multi-faith city, we shall speak of Christ ... come and make the great avenues of Toronto resound.
(Pope John Paul II, 2001, n.5)

5.3.3 Journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon: A Pilgrimage of the ‘New Evangelisation’

A traditional perspective of pilgrimage is the focus on ‘place-centred’ sacredness (Eliade, 1959) and the multi-dimensional nature of pilgrims’ journeys (Morinis, 1992). For many Christians, the journey to the sacred site is a personal witness to their faith, “in which the feeling of union with other believers represents an important act” (Vukonic, 2006, p.245).

While mindful of the “special significance of setting out to go to sacred places” (John Paul II, 1998b, n.7), Pope John Paul II diversified approaches to pilgrimage. He called upon young people to periodically “set out along the roads of the world” (1996, n.2). This was to be an inversion of the traditional approach of pilgrimage and represented a desire of the pope to involve young people in the Church’s missionary activity and enable them to be active witnesses to their faith.

This “pilgrimage of faith” model, which represented a method of the ‘new evangelisation’, became a major theme of the pope’s World Youth Day writings and general apostolic writings. At World Youth Day VIII in Denver Pope John Paul II challenged young people,

“do not be afraid to go out on the streets and into public places ... to take up the challenge of making Christ known in the modern metropolis” (1993, n.6).

The journeys of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon have become a tangible representation of this.

At the conclusion of the Holy Year of Redemption, Pope John Paul II presented a large wooden Cross (3.8 metres high) to the young people of the world, and said to them, “I entrust to you the sign of this Jubilee Year: the Cross of Christ! Carry it throughout the world as a symbol of Christ’s love for humanity” (1984).

While the Cross, which became known as the World Youth Day Cross, has been an integral element of the international gatherings, it has also served a particular missionary and catechetical purpose (World Youth Day 2008 Office, 2008). On the twentieth anniversary of its reception, Pope John Paul II reflected, “during its pilgrimages it has crossed continents. As a torch is passed from hand to hand ... it has become a luminous sign of the trust that animates the young generations of the third millennium” (2004).

The year before, the Pope added a further element to the pilgrimage, an Icon of Our Lady, *Salus Populi Romani*, based on the original icon in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. The symbols of the Cross and the Icon were a reflection of the pope’s theological emphases, redemption and salvation through Christ, and the companionship of Mary.

The pilgrimage of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon has become an established tradition for the Catholic Church. While the pilgrimage serves as a form of pastoral preparation for World Youth Day, typically for a period of twelve months in each host country, the symbols of the Cross and Icon, are taken regularly throughout the world. The website of the Pontifical Council of the Laity (2003, 2014) details the journeys that have been made over the last thirty years, and cites a range of testimonials as to their overall effect.

Pope John Paul II was aware of the powerful symbolism of the Cross, and reflected “the cross of Christ must not be emptied of its power” (1995, n.3). Rather, he wanted to see an evangelisation of culture through which

religious symbols could become cultural reference points, and “usurp the powerful forces of cultural symbol ... to re- present the gospel as a relevant message” (Young, 2006).

As with their predecessor Pope John Paul II, popes Benedict XVI and Francis, have reiterated the cultural and spiritual significance of the journey of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon as a means of fusing faith and culture. At the Stations of Cross in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis (2013) reflected,

“the World Youth Day Cross has travelled to every continent and through a variety of human situations. It is, as it were, almost ‘steeped’ in the life experiences of the countless young people who have seen it and carried it ... no one can approach and touch the Cross of Jesus without leaving something of himself or herself there, and without bringing something of the Cross of Jesus into his or her own life.”

This contemporary pilgrimage is not a quest for the sacred but a journey with the sacred. *In the light of the Cross*, Fr Chris Ryan (2009) detailed the journey around Australia prior to World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. Ryan (2009) identified the Cross evoked strong emotional responses from people, many of whom wanted to touch, hold, kiss or embrace the Cross, and in so doing they felt “the physical action mediated a deep spiritual truth”, they were encountering Christ (p.17). For others, the symbol of the Cross brought on feelings of anguish and grief, for others, curiosity and interest. Just as the meaning and relevance of sacred sites is often contested, so too is there often contestation regarding the significance of religious symbols.

5.4 SUMMARY

As with all pilgrimages, World Youth Day involves internal and external journeys, both of which are central elements. It was conceived as a pilgrimage of faith, which through cultural immersions and encounters would strengthen the bonds of fellowship between different peoples (Pope John Paul II, 1996).

The external journey, which serves as a time of preparation for the international gathering, is considered to be of significance, for travelling “which offers us the possibility of admiring the beauty of peoples, cultures and nature, can lead to God and be the occasion of an experience of faith” (Pope Benedict XVI, 2012b). Within pilgrimages, the external journey and the internal quest are simultaneous, and through the synergy between them personal meaning is often discovered and spiritual needs fulfilled (Mullins, 2001).

Although pilgrimage involves a plurality of motivations, empirical research (Kaelber, 2006; Post, Pieper & Van Uden, 1998) has found that religious convictions are the primary reason underpinning a person’s decision to travel on a religious pilgrimage, and the pilgrims generally have a high level of religiosity. This is especially the case when it involves a destination associated with sacred texts (Russell, 1999), the travel is considered to be central to an adherent’s beliefs (Aziz, 2001), or the pilgrimage is ‘unconventional’ and relates to an extra-ordinary event, e.g. a canonization, Jubilee 2000 (Cipolla & Cipriani, 2002).

Although World Youth Day was established in 1986 and twelve international gatherings have been held to date, its definition as a pilgrimage is complex, as it combines conventional and extra-ordinary aspects of the pilgrimage phenomenon. While its pilgrim trails typically involve ‘sacred texts, people and places’ (Eade & Sallnow, 1991), its ultimate physical destination varies from gathering to gathering. It is conventional in that it involves interior and exterior journeys but it is also unconventional in its use of the World Youth Day Cross and Icon, which is an inversion of the typical structure of pilgrimage.

World Youth Day is a conventional pilgrimage in respect to the motivations of its participants. While many pilgrims have strong religious convictions, this is rarely the sole motivation for their involvement. As with other forms of pilgrimage, World Youth Day pilgrims are drawn by a range of secondary motives. For some, these alternatives may be the primary motivation. According to Post, Pieper & Van Uden (1998) this may be as many as 20,

and includes the opportunity for travel and tourism. Other motives named by Timothy and Olsen (2006) include: patriotic stirrings, a chance to admire the architectural or natural beauty of a place, curiosity about different cultures, and the opportunity for deep soul searching (p.276). As pilgrimage is often a collective experience others are also motivated by fraternal instincts and the possibility of establishing connection with fellow pilgrims (Coleman & Elsner, 1995).

French sociologist Hervieu-Léger (1999) suggested the motif of 'pilgrimage' aptly described the search for meaning and religious identity being made by young people in modern society. Hervieu-Léger identified young people as 'pilgrims' and suggested there was great fluidity in the spiritual journeys which shaped their religious identification, and their religious sociability was often "characterised by mobility and temporary association" (Zijderveld, 2008, p.15).

World Youth Day was established to respond to young peoples' search for meaning and religious identity. It was hoped that the international gathering and its associated pilgrimages would "foster ever greater involvement and participation" in the life of the Church (Pope John Paul II, 1996, n.3) rather than a temporary association.

The theoretical framework for pilgrimages suggested by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (1998) highlighted the significance of 'return'. After a process of journey and encounter it is envisaged that pilgrims have been changed by their experience for pilgrimages serve as rites of passage or consolidation involving the "transformation of one's inner state and outer status" (Coleman & Elsner, 1995, p.6).

With World Youth Day this transformation may involve a strengthening of religious identity, whereby the young "are not only evangelized, they also become evangelizers who carry the Gospel to their peers" (Pope John Paul II, 1996, n.4).

At the end of the Jubilee Year, which included World Youth Day XV, Pope John Paul II drew upon the motif of pilgrimage to encourage people to utilize and sustain their experiences of journey and encounter upon their return,

after the enthusiasm of the Jubilee, it is not to a dull everyday routine that we return. On the contrary, if ours has been a genuine pilgrimage, it will have as it were stretched our legs for the journey still ahead. (2001b, n.59).

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed both the spiritual/religious and psycho-social dynamics of the pilgrimage phenomenon, with specific reference to the context of World Youth Day. It synthesised material from seminal literature on pilgrimage and examined a range of theories pertaining to the nature, purpose and effect of pilgrimage experiences.

A number of the central issues identified here informed the development of the empirical research instruments and helped provide a theoretical and conceptual framework from which to examine the research data.

Pilgrimage was a central element in Pope Paul II's initial conception of World Youth Day. For Australian pilgrims, the geographical isolation of Australia and the extent of travel involved in attending World Youth Days in Europe or the Americas make the demands of travel into a natural substrate for seeing the journey as a pilgrimage. Hence the interpretation of the pilgrimage dimension to World Youth Day will be of great significance for Australian church authorities and for pilgrims.

PART TWO

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH WITH BOTH QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE COMPONENTS.

Study of the Perceptions of the World Youth Day Experience by Cohorts of Australian Pilgrims at the World Youth Days at Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013)

This empirical part of the research study used mixed methods for investigating participants' perceptions of the World Youth Day experience. This included both pre-event and post event data collection.

This part addressed the third of the key research questions / areas of investigation noted in chapter 1 – **Empirical study of pilgrims' perceptions of 'World Youth Day:** What are the both the initial expectations and the perceptions of the World Youth Day experience of Australian cohorts of pilgrims at two World Youth Days and how do these align with the key findings that emerged in Part 1 of the research study.

- The data sets from two World Youth Days is important for identifying potential differences that might be event and context specific.
- The pre-World Youth Day surveys explored participants' expectations of the event as well as the reasons and motivations for attending. They also provided data on the composition and religiosity characteristics of cohorts, indicating changes in the sort of Australian cohorts attending World Youth Days after the Sydney event in 2008
- The post-World Youth Day surveys studied participants' perceptions of the events and what they meant for them at a personal level.
- The analysis of descriptive statistics from

quantitative data was complemented with analysis of qualitative data from interviews.

- Higher order statistical analysis (t tests, ANOVA) helped identify differences between cohorts and between cohort subgroups – this included variability according to gender, age, cohort group (school group or other general Catholic grouping) and religiosity. A factor analysis identified what appeared to be the principal factors or themes that accounted for variance in the quantitative data.

The first chapter in this part presents and analyses the empirical data and the second chapter discusses the meaning and significance of the findings.

CHAPTER 6

PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS OF BOTH THE PRE & POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH DATA

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reports and analyses data collected through pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for each of the World Youth Days, Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013).

The surveys responded to the need for investigating the perceptions of Australian pilgrims to World Youth Days across two events to be able to account for any differences that are related specifically to the geographical and cultural contexts of different world youth days.

Also, the surveys addressed the need to investigate differences in perceptions according to cohort and type of Pilgrim because there was evidence that this has changed significantly since the great popularisation of world youth Day after it was held in Australia in 2008.

An empirical investigation was also needed which was capable of identifying and explicating some of the complexity in pilgrims experience of world youth Day, according to factors such as age, level of religiosity, gender, attendance grouping (school group or parish group, etc.) -- hence the importance of the higher order statistical analyses reported later in the chapter after presentation of the descriptive statistics

The data collection involved two population samples:

1. a *purposive sample* from Sydney Catholic Schools, which comprised both school-aged and adult pilgrims. This *purposive sample* participated in the research study before and after each World Youth Day;
2. a *snowball sample* from the general Australian population, which comprised pilgrims under 18 years of age and adult pilgrims. This *snowball sample* only participated in the research study after each

World Youth Day.

A ‘concurrent triangulation approach’ was employed in which the data was gathered through the simultaneous use of quantitative and qualitative methods. Both World Youth Day data sets were analysed separately to highlight similarities and differences. In addition, quantitative data from both events were pooled for total research population statistics.

The conduct of research both before and after World Youth Day was intended to investigate how expectations of the international gathering (Pre-World Youth Day surveys) compared and contrasted with pilgrims’ perceptions of the actual event (Post World Youth Day surveys). This is not a pre-test, post-test empirical study of the effects of a ‘treatment’ factor – but a study of motivations, expectations and perceptions. The pre-World Youth Day surveys were only used for the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts and not the cohorts from the wider Australian Catholic community pilgrims. For the Sydney Catholic Schools groups of pilgrims, the pre- World Youth Day surveys provided a second sample of the groups’ demographic data.

In addressing the third principal research question of the study, this chapter also attended to the following subset of questions:

1. Why do young people become World Youth Day pilgrims? And what were their expectations before the event?
2. What is the range in religiosity indicated by pilgrims as regards their religious beliefs and practices and how might this influence their perceptions of World Youth Day?
3. What are the differences if any between the religiosity of Catholic school group pilgrims and (non-school group) pilgrims from the general Australian Catholic community and how might this influence their perceptions of World Youth Day?
4. What elements of World Youth Day appear to have the most influence on pilgrims – spiritually, emotionally and socially?

5. What are the encounter moments with self, others and God?
6. Do pilgrims genuinely experience a sense of belonging and connectedness with others at World Youth Day?
7. Do pilgrims see their religious beliefs, attitudes and practices differently following World Youth Day? And do they believe that they have been changed by the experience of World Youth Day?

SECTION 1: ANALYSIS OF PRE-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH DATA FOR SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' COHORTS

6.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA FOR SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' COHORTS

6.2.1 Madrid Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools

The pre-World Youth Day (Madrid) research was conducted between June-August 2011. The population sample selected for this research was the pilgrim group from Sydney Catholic Schools. This delegation of 524 pilgrims was the largest single group to travel to World Youth Day, Madrid, from Australia. It consisted of 435 student pilgrims and 89 Adult pilgrims. The adult pilgrims included teachers, priests, personnel from the Catholic Education Office and support staff.

The questionnaire was distributed to all pilgrims from the Sydney Catholic Schools delegation as a postal survey. The overall return rate was 86.6%. 60.0% of adult pilgrims completed the questionnaire and 92.2% of student pilgrims completed and returned the questionnaire.

All pilgrims were also invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. 11.6% of the delegation was interviewed. These interviews represented 18.0% of adult pilgrims and 10.3% of student pilgrims.

Table 6.1

Participants Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire, Madrid (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percent age
Male	24	192	216	47.6
Female	29	209	238	52.4
Total	53	401	454	
Percent	11.7	88.3		100.0

Table 6.2

Participants Pre-World Youth Day Interviews, Madrid (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percentage
Male	8	29	37	60.7
Female	8	16	24	39.3

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percentage
Total	16	45	61	
Percent	26.2	73.8		100.0

The questionnaires completed by research participants prior to World Youth Day in Madrid provided a range of demographic data, including; gender, year of birth, place of birth, language spoken at home and religious background. This data revealed that 42 student pilgrim respondents (10.5%) were born overseas. Furthermore, 56 (14%) did not identify as being Catholic (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3

Q.5. Religion: Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Madrid), Students

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Catholic	345	86.0
Other Christian Denomination	41	10.2
Non-Christian Religion	6	1.5
No Religion	9	2.2
Total	401	100.0

Fewer adult pilgrims were born overseas (only 4, which represented 7.5%

of the adult cohort) and the adult pilgrims identified almost exclusively as being Catholic (52/53 or 98.1%).

The average age of the adult pilgrims who responded to the survey was 39years. The frequency within particular age groups (see Table 6.4) indicated that the cohort of adult pilgrims was significantly older than other ‘adult’ groups from around Australia.

Table 6.4

Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims: Pre-World Youth Day (Madrid)

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
19-24	3	5.7
25-29	15	28.3
30-35	6	11.3
36+	29	54.7
Total	53	100.0

6.2.2 Rio de Janeiro Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools

The pre-World Youth Day (Rio de Janeiro) research was conducted between May- August 2013. The population sample selected for this research was the pilgrim group from Sydney Catholic Schools. This delegation of 328 pilgrims was the largest single group to travel to World Youth Day, Rio de Janeiro, from Australia. It consisted of 259 student pilgrims and 69 Adult pilgrims. The adult pilgrims included teachers, priests, personnel from the Catholic Education Office and support staff.

The questionnaire was distributed to all pilgrims from the Sydney Catholic Schools delegation as a postal survey. The overall return rate was 93.3%. 81.2% of adult pilgrims completed the questionnaire and 96.5% of student pilgrims completed and returned the questionnaire.

All pilgrims were also invited to participate in semi-structured interviews. 8.8% of the delegation was interviewed. These interviews represented 8.7% of adult pilgrims and 8.9% of student pilgrims.

Table 6.5

Participants Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire, Rio de Janeiro (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percentage
Male	30	118	148	48.4
Female	26	132	158	51.6
Total	56	250	306	
Percent	18.3	81.7		100.0

Table 6.6

Participants Pre-World Youth Day Interviews, Rio de Janeiro (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Gender	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Total	Percentage
Male	3	9	12	41.4
Female	3	14	17	58.6
Total	6	23	29	
Percent	20.7	79.3		100.0

The demographic data showed that 22 student pilgrim participants (8.8%) were born overseas and 30 (12%) did not identify as being Catholic.

Table 6.7

Religion: Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Rio de Janeiro) – Students

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Catholic	220	88.0
Other Christian Denomination	23	9.2
Non-Christian Religion	4	1.6
No Religion	3	1.2
Total	250	100.0

A greater percentage of adult pilgrim participants were born overseas (9, which represented 15.8% of the adult cohort) and the adult pilgrims almost exclusively identified themselves as being Catholic (54/56 or 96.4%).

The average age of the adult pilgrims was 36years. Although the average age of the adult pilgrim cohort was three years younger than that of the Madrid group the frequency within particular age groups (see Table 6.8) indicated that the cohort of adult pilgrims was still generally older than other

‘adult’ groups from around Australia.

Table 6.8

Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims: Pre-World Youth Day (Rio de Janeiro)

Age Groups	Frequency	Percentage
19-24	2	3.6
25-29	16	28.6
30-35	10	17.8
36+	28	50
Total	56	100.0

6.3 RELIGIOSITY PROFILE MEASURES OF THE SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ COHORTS

6.3.1 Religiosity: Religious Attitudes of Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools

The value of religion

Both the questionnaire and interview schedule included questions to identify the level of importance that pilgrims attributed to religion, and their attitudes towards and perceptions of faith.

Table 6.9

How Important is Religion in your Life? Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)

	Madrid Frequency	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Frequency	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims				
Very important	121	30.2	64	25.6
Fairly important	177	44.1	119	47.6
Of some importance	86	21.4	60	24.0
Not very important	14	3.5	6	2.4
Of no importance	3	0.7	1	0.4
No response	-	-	-	-
Total	401	100.0	250	100.0

	Madrid Frequency	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Frequency	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Adult Pilgrims				
Very important	45	84.9	44	78.6
Fairly important	6	11.3	8	14.3
Of some importance	2	3.8	3	5.3
No response	-	-	1	1.8
Total	53	100.0	56	100.0

The results in Table 6.9 highlight the noticeable difference with which adult and student pilgrims viewed and valued religion. In both pre-World Youth Day questionnaires adult pilgrims placed far greater value on the importance of religion, with the majority (in excess of 75%) affording it the highest level of rating. At the same time no adult pilgrim used either of the two lower level categories ('not very important', 'of no importance') to describe their own view of the value of religion. In contrast, a number of student pilgrims considered that religion was 'not very important' (3.5% in 2011, 2.4% in 2013). Although the student pilgrims did not rate religion as highly as their adult counterparts, the highest proportion of respondents still considered religion to be 'fairly important' (43.9% in 2011, 47.6% in 2013).

Table 6.9 also showed that both the adult and student pilgrim groups attending World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro were less inclined to attribute maximum value to the importance of religion when compared to their Madrid counterparts.

'How important is religion in your life' was one of the key questions asked in all of the pre-World Youth Day interviews, the results of which paralleled with the trends of the questionnaire data. This triangulation of data helped increase the reliability of the data source.

Table 6.10

*How Important is Religion in your Life? Pre-World Youth Day Interviews
(Sydney Catholic Schools)*

	Madrid Frequency	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Frequency	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims				
Very important	13	28.9	6	26.1
Fairly important	18	40.0	10	43.5
Of some importance	9	20.0	6	26.1
Not very important	4	8.9	1	4.3
Of no importance	1	2.2	-	-
No response	-	-	-	-
Total	45	100.0	23	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Very important	13	81.3	5	83.3
Fairly important	3	18.7	1	16.7
Of some importance	-	-	-	-
No response	-	-	-	-
Total	16	100.0	6	100.0

Throughout the pre-World Youth Day interviews both adult and student pilgrims qualified their answer on the importance of religion by making reference to the influence of their family. Although this was particularly the case with pilgrims who cited religion as being very important, the family was also a point of reference for pilgrims who rated it as ‘not very important’.

Of the student pilgrim interviews, 35 (51.5%) made reference to the influence of their family. Of these, 8 (11.8%) made specific reference to the role of their grandparents, the same number who had commented on the influence of their mother. Student pilgrim 20 commented,

Well I come from a strong Roman Catholic background. When there were very important celebrations my grandmother would take me, like wake us up early and take us to Church and that, and when we come back we have a huge feast with all of our relatives.

Students identified that their parents saw value in religion and encouraged them to practice their faith by going to Mass. Of the 35 students who referred to the influence of their family 14 (40.0%) associated this with going to church on Sunday. Student pilgrim 19 commented,

Religion has been pretty important. Mainly because of my mum, she's a big holy person so we go to Mass every Sunday, every week on Sunday.

Not all of the students cited their parents as being a positive influence on their religious outlook. Of the total student interviewees (68), 6 specifically noted that their fathers were disinterested in religion and did not practice their faith. This did not always impact upon the student's view of religion however, with several still citing that it was important.

The student interviewees (21 or 30.1%) also identified their experiences in Catholic schools as affirming their value of religion.

As with the student pilgrims, the adult pilgrims (9 or 40.1%) also identified the role of their family in nurturing their personal value of religion. Adult pilgrims also cited a range of other factors including; cultural background, working as a Catholic school teacher, marriage and life experiences. When asked 'how do your close friends view religion?' student and adult interviewees gave significantly different responses (see Table 6.11).

Table 6.11

How do your Close Friends View Religion? Pre-World Youth Day Interviews (Sydney Catholic Schools)

* The 3 most frequent responses given by each pilgrim group only *

	Frequency	Percentage
Student Pilgrims		
Do not value religion	21	30.9
We do not discuss religion	13	19.1
Mixed views: some positive/some negative	9	13.2
Value religion but don't practice	9	13.2
Total	52/68	76.5

Adult Pilgrims		
Mixed views: some positive/some negative	7	31.8
Value Religion	7	31.8
Predominately positive view of religion	4	18.1
Total	18/22	81.7

Descriptions of faith

In both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews, pilgrims were asked to describe their attitude towards faith by selecting from the four descriptors; committed, involved, searching or disengaged. Combined with the quantitative and qualitative responses to a range of other questions, this self-identification data highlighted the existence of distinct ‘groups’ amongst the pilgrims.

Table 6.12

Q.7. Which Term Best Describes your Attitude Towards your Faith ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)

	Madrid Frequency	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Frequency	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims				
Committed	94	23.4	28	11.2
Involved	196	48.9	127	50.8
Searching	98	24.4	89	35.6
Disengaged	10	2.5	6	2.4
No response	3	0.7	-	-
Total	401	100.0	250	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Committed	44	83.0	39	69.6
Involved	7	13.2	12	21.4
Searching	2	3.8	4	7.1
No response	-	-	1	1.8
Total	53	100.0	56	100.0

As a data source, Table 6.12 indicated that the adult pilgrims, especially those in the Madrid cohort, had a deep sense of and commitment to their faith. This was further revealed in the Madrid interviews, where 8 interviewees (50%), used the terms ‘very strong’ and ‘strong’ to describe their faith. Other phrases used by the adult interviewees included, ‘a moral

compass', 'positive' and 'deep and trustful'.

A number of the adult pilgrims qualified their description of faith by explaining that it had been shaped and strengthened by various life experiences. Several made specific reference to the benefits of being pilgrims at previous World Youth Days.

In describing his faith Adult interviewee 3 commented,

It's strong and committed definitely. I wouldn't say that I was comfortable or in agreement with everything that the Church teaches, but by and large I would be definitely ... Very strong, very committed and I enjoy practising my faith.

Adult interviewee 7 reflected,

I would say that I am committed, committed definitely to the teachings of the Catholic Church, and committed to a life-long searching of their understanding and meaning in life. It's a life-long thing ... the search took me to World Youth Day five times. Five times because World Youth Days are always about growth for anyone who goes on them. It could be in a practical way by contributing to the spiritual life, or their faithful nature or their friendships ...

Although the descriptor, 'involved' was the option most frequently selected by students in the pre-World Youth Day questionnaires (48.9%-2011, 50.8%-2013), the interview processes highlighted 'searching' as the most frequently used term. Prior to World Youth Day, Madrid, twenty student pilgrims (44.4%) ascribed their faith in this way. Thirteen students (56.5%) did the same in the interviews before World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. The use of the term 'searching' by student pilgrims was not restricted to their description of personal faith but was used in response to a range of questions, especially 'what has motivated you to register for World Youth Day?'

When asked to describe his attitude towards faith, student 53 commented,

I think that we are all searching. That's my view on it. I can't speak

on behalf of everybody else but for me I think that we are always gonna be searching for that strong religion. I think it grows as you get older.

Student 42 linked the question on faith to attending World Youth Day. She reflected,

Committed but searching. Committed in that I've always been a religious person but I'm also still young and also still searching, trying to deepen it myself. So that's why I think that World Youth Day will be a good opportunity for that because I've heard that it really deepens your faith ... so in a word I am committed but searching.

World Youth Day was also referred to by student 55, who commented,

I would say that faith intertwines with my life and there are a lot of questions that I don't know the answers to but I accept them. Being young you question a lot of things and that's why I think that World Youth Day will be good because you see other people your age who are struggling through the same thing, asking the same questions as you are, and so you feel like you're not the only teenage Christian out there.

6.3.2 Religiosity: Religious Practices of Research Participants – Sydney Catholic Schools

The pre-World Youth Day questionnaires included a number of questions relating to different aspects of religious practice. Of these, question 8, which sought to identify an individual's pattern of Mass attendance, is the most commonly used in empirical research relating to Church engagement and religious identification and affiliation. The question is often used to measure for differences of religiosity between generational groups, and as an indicator of the religious commitment of individuals. As noted in the *Spirit of Generation Y* study (Mason et al., 2007, p.65) patterns of Mass attendance can assist in the classification of Catholics into profile groups on the basis of their level of active involvement in the Church.

Participant responses to question 8 showed the degree of religiosity of the

World Youth Day pilgrims and highlighted the existence of a number of distinct groupings within the cohorts. The data gives an indication as to which groups of Catholics might be drawn to the events of World Youth Day.

The results in Table 6.13 reveal high levels of Church engagement through Mass attendance. The quantitative data indicates that both the student and adult pilgrims were more committed to their faith than would be found with a random sampling of Australian Catholics of similar ages. The data reveals a disproportionate number of pilgrims who might be considered to be 'highly religious' when compared to the general population.

The data for adult pilgrims who indicated attending Mass more than once a week was influenced by the responses of priests and religious sisters. When this category was filtered for non-religious adults only, the pre-Madrid questionnaire had 1 respondent (2.2%) and the pre-Rio de Janeiro questionnaire, 5 respondents (11.4%). With the exception of this category the data of Table 6.13 reveals a higher level of religious commitment amongst the Madrid pilgrims than that of the Rio de Janeiro cohort.

Table 6.13

Q.8. I Normally Attend Mass ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)

	Madrid Frequency	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Frequency	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims				
More than once a week	9	2.2	11	4.4
Each Sunday	126	31.4	57	22.8
A few Sundays a month	88	22.0	52	20.8
Once a month	60	15.0	52	20.8
A few times a year	101	25.2	64	25.6
Rarely or never	16	4.0	14	5.6
No response	1	0.2	-	-
Total	401	100.0	250	100.0

	Madrid Frequency	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Frequency	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Adult Pilgrims				
More than once a week	8	15.1	17	30.3
Each Sunday	31	58.5	22	39.3
A few Sundays a month	11	20.7	8	14.3
Once a month	3	5.7	2	3.6
A few times a year	-	-	7	12.5
Total	53	100.0	56	100.0

Other questions were used in both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore the religious commitment of the pilgrims and to test the assumptions associated with the data relating to Mass attendance.

The questionnaires (question 9) required pilgrims to indicate how often they attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Although the response data showed patterns which resemble more closely that of a random sampling of Australian Catholics, it also indicated the presence of a core group of highly committed Catholics. The summative data (see Table 6.14) also showed greater levels of religious commitment, on this measure, from the Madrid student pilgrims when compared to those attending World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro.

Table 6.14

Q.9. I Normally Receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Sydney Catholic Schools)

* Several of the response options have been removed *

	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims		
More than once a month	3.2%	2.8%
About once a month	11.0%	7.6%
Rarely or never	29.4%	32.4%

Although the adult response data to this question, namely the categories ‘More than once a month’ and ‘About once a month’ was influenced by the presence of priests and religious sisters, the data also indicated greater levels of religious commitment from the Madrid adult pilgrims than their Rio counterparts. 18.9% of the Madrid adult pilgrims indicated that they ‘rarely or never’ received the Sacrament of Reconciliation compared 36.8% of the Rio cohort.

The distinction between adult and student pilgrims, and the Madrid and Rio cohorts in terms of personal religiosity was further evidenced in the response data of question 10, which related to prayer (see Table 6.15).

Table 6.15

*Q.10. I Normally Pray ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire
(Sydney Catholic Schools)*

* Several of the response options have been removed *

	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims		
Each day	38.7%	35.6%
Rarely or never	2.0%	4.8%
Adult Pilgrims		
Each day	81.1%	64.9%
Rarely or never	-	-

6.4 PILGRIMS’ PERCEPTIONS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES – SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

In order to better understand the religious profile and disposition of World Youth Day pilgrims, the researcher incorporated into the pre-World Youth Day interviews a question which asked pilgrims to identify their most positive religious experience. Not all interviewees cited one, and a number of the pilgrims identified several. The coding of responses revealed four categories of experiences: World Youth Day; Church; school related and personal (see Table 6.16).

Table 6.16

What has been your most Positive Religious Experience? Pre-World Youth Day Interviews (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Category of Experience	Madrid Student Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Student Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	
WORLD YOUTH DAY					TOTAL COUNT
Stations of the Cross (WYD 2008)	6	3	2	1	13
WYD Sydney 2008	3	4	1	2	10
WYD Pilgrimage	-	3	-	1	4
A previous WYD	-	4	-	2	6
The promotion of WYD	1	-	-	-	1
Host Family (Sydney '08)	-	-	1	-	1
Having seen impact of WYD on brother	-	-	1	-	1
Preparation for RIO	-	-	1	-	1
Sub Total	10	14	6	6	36
CHURCH					
Local parish involvement	1	3	-	1	5
Big Church celebrations	2	2	1	-	5
Praise & Worship	3	-	2	-	5
Parish Youth activities	2	-	2	-	4
Sacraments	3	-	1	-	4
Confession	1	-	-	1	2
Support during hard times	-	1	-	-	1

Category of Experience	Madrid Student Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Student Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	
Some parish Masses	-	-	1	-	1
Hillsong	1	-	2	-	3
Being welcomed by Parish Priest	-	1	-	-	1
Sub Total	13	7	9	2	31
SCHOOL					
Religious Education classes	5	-	1	-	6
Social Justice/Outreach	4	-	5	1	10
Retreats	4	-	1	-	5
Evangelisation Days	-	-	2	-	2
Catechesis Nights	1	-	2	-	3
Christian meditation	1	-	-	-	1
Optional prayer in Chapel	-	-	1	-	1
Sub Total	15	-	12	1	28
PERSONAL					
Family celebrations	3	3	-	-	6
Birth of children/death of loved ones	-	-	-	1	1
Knowing self-better	1	-	-	-	1
Sub Total	4	3	-	1	8
Total	42	24	27	10	103

Of the categories, the experiences of World Youth Day were referred to 36 times by 32 interviewees, representing 37.2% of the respondents to the question. The one experience most frequently referred to by the interviewees was the public staging of the Stations of the Cross at World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney. 13 pilgrims (15.1%) identified it as their most positive religious experience. Student pilgrim 55 reflected,

The thing that I thought was the most amazing was when they did the drama act of Jesus' crucifixion. It was so good, and the sun set at the same time that he was going up on the Cross, it was just so emotional and everyone was crying.

Apart from the Stations of the Cross, a further 10 pilgrims (11.6%) rated the whole of the Sydney World Youth Day week as their most positive religious experience. During the course of the interviews both student and adult pilgrims referred to the major events, especially the Vigil and the Final Mass, as well as to the positive atmosphere brought to Sydney by the presence of the international pilgrims. Adult pilgrim 5 commented,

My experience in Sydney was just so spiritual. We walked the streets with strangers ... we did the trek from North Sydney to Randwick, and I was carrying all of my stuff with me. I was bothered and I was tired. When we got there we set up camp, then the Vigil started and it was dark. There were candles everywhere and I remember standing there thinking, 'is this real, am I really experiencing this?' It's really hard to put to words.

6.5 WHY PEOPLE ATTEND WORLD YOUTH DAY – THE MOTIVATIONS OF SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' PILGRIMS

Common to both the pre-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was the question 'what motivated you to register for World Youth Day?'

As part of the pre-World Youth Day questionnaire all student pilgrims were invited to provide a written response to the question, *what has motivated you to register for World Youth Day?* 93.8% of the student pilgrims (Madrid) and 94.9% of their Rio de Janeiro counterparts responded. A quantitative summary of the written responses is provided in Table 6.17.

In addition to analysing the qualitative responses for key themes, the coding of responses allowed for the measurement of the frequency of key word indicators. The most commonly used words across all adult pilgrim responses were: experience (231 or 31%); family (164 or 26%); faith (164 or 25.5%) and friends (156 or 25.3%). The percentage figure has been

adjusted to reflect the total percentage of student pilgrims who used the word.

Table 6.17

Q.17. What has Motivated you to Register for World Youth Day ...

Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire – Students (Sydney Catholic Schools)

* Student pilgrim responses grouped according to key themes *

Key Themes	Madrid count	Rio de Janeiro count	Percentage of Respondents
World Youth Day			
Sydney 2008	41	6	7.6%
Missed Sydney '08	5	-	0.8%
To experience a World Youth Day	13	16	4.7%
The promotion of World Youth Day	10	2	1.9%
The appeal of the host country	2	-	0.3%
Religious			
Deepen faith	23	26	8.0%
Grow spiritually	4	-	0.6%
Personal faith	3	-	0.5%
Sharing faith with other young people	16	5	3.4%
Strengthen relationship with God	19	9	4.5%
The pilgrimage	3	4	1.1%
Experience a different side of the Church	2	4	1.0%
Experiencing the Universal Church	2	1	0.5%
Understand religion better	4	-	0.6%
Social			
Mission work	-	19	3.0%
The excitement of travelling & discovering	22	19	6.7%
Travelling with close friends/bonding	13	5	2.9%
Connecting with others	6	4	6.2%
Make new friends	8	2	6.2%
Encountering new cultures	9	4	2.1%
Appeal of huge event	6	1	1.1%
Personal			
Once in a lifetime opportunity	9	14	3.7%

To be taken out of comfort zone		4	0.6%
Life changing experience	2	2	0.6%
Better myself	5	3	1.3%
An amazing adventure	4	6	1.6%
Something different	3	2	0.8%
Personal interest	2	-	0.3%
Curiosity	2	-	0.3%
Not sure, spontaneous	2	-	0.3%
Influence of others			
Family and friends	22	28	8.1%
Family	37	7	7.1%
Friends	13	5	2.9%
Past pilgrims	29	29	9.4%
School	28	13	6.5%
Parish	7	-	1.1%
Total Count	376	240	100.0%

As with the student pilgrims all adult pilgrims were also invited to identify their source of motivation for registering for World Youth Day. 75.0% of the adult pilgrims (Madrid) and 92.5% of their Rio de Janeiro counterparts responded. A quantitative summary of the written responses is provided in Table 6.18.

In addition to analysing the qualitative responses for key themes, the coding of responses allowed for the measurement of the frequency of key word indicators. The three most commonly used words across all adult pilgrim responses were: experience (44 or 41.8%); faith (36 or 39.6%); pilgrim/age (17 or 18.7%) and students (17 or 15.4%). The percentage figure has been adjusted to reflect the total percentage of adult pilgrims who used the word.

Table 6.18

Q.17. What has Motivated you to Register for World Youth Day ...

Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire – Adults (Sydney Catholic Schools)

* Adult pilgrim responses grouped according to key themes *

Key Themes	Madrid count	Rio de Janeiro count	Percentage of Respondents
World Youth Day			
Previous experience of World Youth Day	4	6	11.0%

Key Themes	Madrid count	Rio de Janeiro count	Percentage of Respondents
Sydney 2008	8	-	8.8%
To experience a World Youth Day	-	2	2.2%
Religious			
Deepen faith	6	4	11.0%
Sharing faith with others	4	1	5.5%
Strengthen relationship with God	1	2	3.3%
Supporting the faith journey of young people	6	7	14.3%
Put faith in action	-	2	2.2%
The pilgrimage	2	4	6.6%
Being a pilgrim	-	1	1.1%
Experiencing the Universal Church	-	2	2.2%
The Pope	-	2	2.2%
Social			
Mission work	-	5	5.5%
Connecting with others	2	-	2.2%
Encountering new cultures	-	2	2.2%
Personal			
Once in a lifetime opportunity	2	3	5.5%
Better myself	1	-	1.1%
Work related	5	5	11.0%
Influence of others			
Family	1	1	2.2%

The research data indicates that a diversity of factors underpin people's motivation to register for World Youth Day. Irrespective of age, pilgrims register for a range of religious, spiritual, social and personal reasons. Many are influenced in their decision by different groups of people, while others are influenced by their own past experiences of World Youth Day itself. The data suggests that pilgrims see World Youth Day as a unique experience with many levels of attraction and appeal.

In identifying their motivation to register for World Youth Day, one adult pilgrim (Rio) wrote,

The whole WYD experience is such a faith adventure. Interaction between pilgrims from so many different walks of life and on so

many different levels is such a great learning experience for me personally because I have an innate interest in mentoring and evangelising young people and being with them in their faith journey.

Student 37 remarked

Well I've heard such positive feedback from everyone who's been there, saying that it really does deepen their faith and they say that it's such a good experience and the whole vibe there and the fact that 2 million other people share the same feelings as you ... I think that it's really important for a Catholic to do this.

Student 46 said,

The main reason why I wanted to go personally would be like to meet new people, just to have a good experience and to do something that's sort of a little bit out of my comfort zone.

Student 11 commented

Well I like going overseas ... I'm not going to lie. But I also want to meet all the new people and experience something new. I have heard how amazing the World Youth Day experience can be and I also just want to find my faith, I want to find like, you know, my religion again. I want to find out more about it.

The questionnaire (question 12) asked pilgrims to identify which group had the greatest influence on their decision to attend World Youth Day. The data reveals that the adult pilgrims were predominately influenced by their workplace. While this might also be true for adults in other pilgrim groups who are employed by Catholic Church agencies, the majority of adult pilgrims from around Australia cite parishes, religious groups and movements, and family as the groups which influence their decision to the greatest degree.

Table 6.19 highlights that the groups which influenced young people in their decision to attend World Youth Day were the same for both the Madrid and Rio de Janeiro cohorts.

Table 6.19

Q.12. Which Group had the Greatest Influence on your Decision to Attend World Youth Day? Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

* Several of the response options have been removed *

* The response data is detailed highest to lowest *

	Madrid Percentage	Rio de Janeiro Percentage
Student Pilgrims		
My family	37.9%	42.4%
My school	28.2%	28.8%
My friends	18.7%	12.8%

6.6 THE ANTICIPATED BENEFITS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY – THE PERSPECTIVES OF SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ PILGRIMS

In the second section of the pre-World Youth Day questionnaire (question 14 Madrid/ question 15 Rio de Janeiro), all pilgrims were asked to respond to a series of statements which represented a range of possible benefits from participation in World Youth Day. Pilgrims were to use a five point Likert scale, 1: *Strongly Disagree* to 5: *Strongly Agree* in response to statements a – s. The intention was to not only identify the most commonly held views about the perceived benefits of World Youth Day but to gain an understanding of which these had the greatest value for pilgrims, and whether this varied according to generational grouping. The data would provide further evidence as to what motivates people to register for World Youth Day.

6.6.1 Presentation of Pilgrims’ Pre-World Youth Day Response Data

A summary of pilgrims’ responses to the 18 Likert Scale items is presented in Tables 6.20 & 6.21. The example below highlights the information included in both tables, and in Tables 6.23 and 6.24.

Name of population group								
Q	I felt ...	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	Stem item	N %	N %	M %	N %	N %	M %	M %
b.	Stem item	N %	N %	M %	N %	230 %	M %	M %

- Column 1 identifies the question number.
- Column 2 identifies the stem of the Likert Scale item.

- Columns 3-5 detail information relating to World Youth Day in Madrid:
- Column 3 shows the Number (N) and Percentage (%) of respondents who Strongly Agreed (SA) with the stem item.
- Column 4 shows the Number (N) and Percentage (%) of respondents who were in Total Agreement (TA) with the stem item. This is made up of the sum of Likert Scale ratings 4 & 5, Agree and Strongly Agree.
- Column 5 shows the Mean (M) for each item.
- Columns 6-8 detail information relating to World Youth Day in Rio:
- Column 6 shows the Number (N) and Percentage (%) of respondents who Strongly Agreed (SA) with the stem item.
- Column 7 shows the Number (N) and Percentage (%) of respondents who were in Total Agreement (TA) with the stem item. This is made up of the sum of Likert Scale ratings 4 & 5, Agree and Strongly Agree.
- Column 8 shows the Mean (M) for each item.
- The final column, column 9, lists the Combined Mean (CM) for both WYDs.

As per the example, colour coding has also been used in Tables 6.20 & 6.21. The shading indicates statistically significant differences of $p < .05$ between group means, which were determined by Independent sample t tests. If $p < .001$, an asterisk (*) has been added to the shaded area.

An explanation of the colour coding is detailed below.



Green indicates statistically significant differences between the group means of

- Students **Madrid** and Catholic Schools Adults **Madrid**
- Students **Rio** and Catholic Schools Adults **Rio**



Yellow indicates statistically significant differences between the group means of

- Students **Madrid** and Students **Rio**
- Catholic Schools Adults **Madrid** and Catholic Schools Adults **Rio**



Orange indicates statistically significant differences between the cumulative group means of

- All Students **Madrid** + **Rio** and all Catholic Schools Adults **Madrid** + **Rio**

** It should be noted that a similar format was used to report pilgrims' perceived value of the key World Youth Day events in Tables 6.23 and 6.24. Tables 6.23 and 6.24 have variations in Columns 3, 4, 6 and 7. As per the five point scale used with question 15 (Madrid) and question 17 (Rio)

Strongly Agreed is replaced by Very Important (VR) and Total Agreement is replaced by Total Importance (TI).

Table 6.20

Student Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.14. World Youth Day will Provide me with an Opportunity to ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Student Pilgrims								
13		Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	Deepen my relationship with God	241 60.1	366 91.3	4.50 *	154 61.6	237 94.8	4.56	4.52
b.	Learn more about my faith	207 51.6	365 91.0	4.41	133 53.2	236 94.4	4.47	4.43
c.	Feel part of the wider Church	149 37.2	336 83.8	4.20 *	119 47.6	221 88.4	4.37 *	4.27 *
d.	Feel valued by the Church	93 23.2	275 68.6	3.89	65 26.0	182 72.8	3.96	3.92
e.	Appreciate the words of the Pope and other Church leaders	145 36.2	316 78.8	4.12	78 31.2	215 86.0	4.16	4.14
f.	Feel a strong sense of belonging	184 45.9	323 80.6	4.26	122 48.8	224 89.6	4.39	4.31
g.	Talk openly about my faith with others	147 36.7	308 76.8	4.12	80 32.0	196 78.4	4.08	4.10 *
h.	Make many new friends	261 65.1	378 94.3	4.59 *	168 67.2	240 96.0	4.65	4.61 *
i.	Meet many new people from around the world	295 73.6	388 96.8	4.70	177 70.8	241 96.4	4.68	4.69
j.	Feel a strong sense of God's presence	215 53.6	355 88.5	4.40 *	154 61.6	230 92.0	4.53	4.45 *
k.	Appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	167 41.6	333 83.0	4.22 *	106 42.4	220 88.0	4.30	4.25 *
l.	Appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	148 36.9	350 87.3	4.22	110 44.0	225 90.0	4.31	4.26

Student Pilgrims								
m.	Talk comfortably about my own religious beliefs	132 32.9	316 78.8	4.09	90 36.0	203 81.2	4.14	4.11
n.	Experience moments of personal and spiritual reflection	208 51.9	359 89.6	4.39	150 60.0	235 94.0	4.54	4.45
o.	See organised religion in a positive light	119 29.7	315 78.6	4.07	72 28.8	204 81.6	4.08	4.07
p.	Develop a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	247 61.6	377 94.0	4.56	157 62.8	242 96.8	4.60	4.57
q.	Visit places I have only ever read or heard about	261 65.1	365 91.0	4.53	194 77.6	236 94.4	4.72	4.60
r.	Appreciate the small sacrifices and hardships that are part of any pilgrimage	179 44.6	348 86.7	4.29	116 66.4	241 96.4	4.63	4.43
s.	Experience the sacred in the places I visit	221 55.1	369 92.0	4.46	152 60.8	237 94.8	4.56	4.50

Table 6.21

Adult Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.14. World Youth Day will Provide me with an Opportunity to ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Adult Pilgrims								
13		Madrid			Rio			
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	CM
a.	Deepen my relationship with God	40 75.5	53 100	4.75	40 70.2	55 96.5	4.66	4.71
b.	Learn more about my faith	26 49.1	49 92.5	4.42	36 63.2	52 91.3	4.54	4.48
c.	Feel part of the wider Church	36 67.9	52 98.1	4.64	43 75.4	53 92.9	4.74	4.69
d.	Feel valued by the Church	22 41.5	38 71.7	4.09	20 35.1	47 82.5	4.15	4.12
e.	Appreciate the words of the Pope and other Church leaders	25 47.2	51 96.3	4.43	25 43.9	49 86.0	4.29	4.36

Adult Pilgrims								
f.	Feel a strong sense of belonging	27	49	4.43	34	53	4.52	4.48
		50.9	92.4		59.6	92.9		
g.	Talk openly about my faith with others	32	48	4.49	28	54	4.43	4.46
		60.4	90.6		49.1	94.7		*
h.	Make many new friends	22	45	4.26	24	49	4.27	4.27
		41.5	84.9	*	42.1	86.0		*
i.	Meet many new people from around the world	29	49	4.47	30	51	4.43	4.45
		54.7	92.4		52.6	89.4		
j.	Feel a strong sense of God's presence	41	52	4.75	36	55	4.59	4.67
		77.4	98.2	*	63.2	96.5		*
k.	Appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	34	51	4.60	34	54	4.54	4.57
		64.2	96.3	*	59.6	94.7		*
l.	Appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	27	48	4.40	22	51	4.27	4.33
		50.9	90.5		38.6	89.5		
m.	Talk comfortably about my own religious beliefs	27	48	4.40	23	54	4.34	4.37
		50.9	90.5		40.4	94.8		
n.	Experience moments of personal and spiritual reflection	37	53	4.70	38	53	4.59	4.64
		69.8	100	*	66.7	93.0		
o.	See organised religion in a positive light	25	51	4.42	27	52	4.38	4.39
		47.2	96.3		47.4	91.3		*
p.	Develop a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	30	51	4.53	33	55	4.54	4.53
		56.6	96.2		57.9	96.5		
q.	Visit places I have only ever read or heard about	34	49	4.55	40	54	4.66	4.61
		64.2	92.5		70.2	94.8		
r.	Appreciate the small sacrifices and hardships that are part of any pilgrimage	33	49	4.51	33	55	4.54	4.52
		62.3	92.5		57.9	96.5		
s.	Experience the sacred in the places I visit	37	53	4.70	39	54	4.63	4.66
		69.8	100		68.4	94.7		

Comparisons of Means

Across the Likert scale items, statistically significant differences between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid		Items 14 a, c, e, g, h, i, j, k, m, n, o & s
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		Items 14 c, g, h, i, k & o
Students Madrid and Students Rio		Items 14 c, f, j, n, q & r
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		Nil
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio		Item 14 a, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, m, n, o & s

The data detailed in Tables 6.20 and 6.21 reveals a clear pattern of responses by both student and adult pilgrims. This pattern is outlined in Table 6.22.

Table 6.22

The Top Five Anticipated Benefits of World Youth Day – Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrims ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

* Based upon the Mean scores of items a-s in Table 6.20*

Rank	World Youth Day will provide an opportunity for me to	Madrid Students Mean
1.	Meet many new people from around the world	4.70
2.	Make many new friends	4.59
3.	Develop a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	4.56
4.	Visit places I have only ever read or heard about	4.53
5.	Deepen my relationship with God	4.50
		Rio Students Mean
1.	Visit places I have only ever read or heard about	4.72
2.	Meet many new people from around the world	4.68
3.	Make many new friends	4.65
4.	Appreciate the small sacrifices and hardships that are part of any pilgrimage	4.63
5.	Develop a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	4.60

		Madrid Adults Mean
1.	Feel a strong sense of God's presence	4.75
2.	Deepen my relationship with God	4.75
3.	Experience moments of personal and spiritual reflection	4.70
4.	Experience the sacred in the places I visit	4.70
5.	Feel part of the wider Church	4.64
		Rio Adults Percentage
1.	Feel part of the wider Church	4.74
2.	Deepen my relationship with God	4.66
3.	Visit places I have only ever read or heard about	4.66
4.	Experience the sacred in the places I visit	4.63
5.	Experience moments of personal and spiritual reflection	4.59

As shown in Table 6.22, there was a clear alignment between the responses of the two student pilgrim cohorts (Madrid and Rio de Janeiro) and further alignment between the two adult pilgrim groups. In both data sets there are marked differences between the views of student and adult pilgrims.

Table 6.22 indicated that the statements which drew the stronger levels of agreement from students were generally social in nature. The statements referred to travel, connecting with others and making new friends. By contrast, the adults gave stronger endorsement to the statements that were overtly religious in nature. The statements referred to deepening their relationship with God, feeling part of the wider Church and having time for spiritual reflection.

While examining the pattern of *strongly agreed* (Tables 6.20 and 6.21) responses provided insight into pilgrim hopes and expectations, their use of the other descriptors was also a valuable source of data. The descriptors *strongly disagree* and *disagree* were used to a limited extent, used within a range of .2% and 2.8% of the total respondent population. The descriptor *neutral* was often used.

An analysis of the questionnaire data shows that student pilgrims used the descriptor *neutral* more frequently than adult pilgrims, and that it's most

frequent use was in response to the statements relating to religion, and the Church more specifically.

In responding to statement c, '*World Youth Day will provide me with an opportunity to feel valued by the Church*', 114 student pilgrims (28.4% of the Madrid cohort) used the *neutral* descriptor as did 24.0% of the Rio de Janeiro student group. Although not used with the same frequency, the *neutral* descriptor was used by over 15% of student pilgrims in response to the statements: g) talk openly about my faith with others; m) talk comfortably about my own religious beliefs, and o) see organised religion in a positive light.

It would appear that student pilgrims used the descriptor *neutral* in response to statements where there was an element of uncertainty or where they had a lack of commitment to its principal activity. Although registering to attend an international religious gathering, the interviews revealed that many student pilgrims saw their faith as a relatively private matter, something that they rarely discussed with others. For many, this reticence to share their faith and religious beliefs may have been a result of the fact that their close friends did not value or view religion in the same way (see Table 6.11).

Student 86 reflected,

Faith is not something to be ashamed of but I think that there are circumstances when other people are so against faith that you just choose not to talk about it. Because when someone says that they don't believe in God or something it can even make you question your own views ... so sometimes there is a time and place for the discussion.

The pilgrim responses to the question '*World Youth Day will provide me with an opportunity to ...*' give an insight into their understanding of the event, their motivation to register and their ultimate hopes for what might occur.

6.7 THE ANTICIPATED VALUE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY EVENTS – THE PERSPECTIVES OF SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ PILGRIMS

In the third section of the pre-World Youth Day questionnaire (question 15 Madrid/ question 16 Rio de Janeiro), all pilgrims were asked to designate value to each of the major events associated with World Youth Day. Pilgrims were to use a five point Likert scale, 1: *Most unimportant* to 5: *Very important* in response to statements a – s. The intention was to identify which events would be likely to appeal pilgrims from the perspective of personal value and whether this varied according to generational grouping. This data would be eventually compared with the post-World Youth Day research data to help assess whether the actual experience of World Youth Day matched pilgrims’ expectations.

As noted in 6.6.1, Tables 6.23 and 6.24 details the number and percentage of pilgrims who identified the different events of World Youth Day as being *very important* to them. It also showed information relating to the level of Total Importance (*very important* plus *important*) and the Mean score for each item.

Table 6.23

The Level of Importance Attributed to the Various World Youth Day Events - Students (Sydney Catholic Schools) ... Q.15. Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Student Pilgrims								
13		Madrid			Rio			CM
		VI	TI	M	VI	TI	M	
a.	The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	254 63.3	380 94.7	4.61	177 70.8	241 96.4	4.68	4.63
b.	Days in the Diocese	75 18.7	277 69.1	3.90	43 17.2	182 72.8	3.90	3.90
c.	Papal Welcome	151 37.7	318 79.3	4.17	92 36.8	211 84.4	4.22	4.19
d.	Opening Mass	185 46.1	350 87.2	4.35	136 54.4	237 94.8	4.50	4.41
e.	Catechesis Sessions	113 28.2	291 72.6	4.00	64 25.6	228 79.2	4.06	4.02
f.	Reconciliation	152 37.9	309 77.1	4.16	95 38.0	205 82.0	4.19	4.17

g.	Eucharistic Adoration	144 35.9	301 75.1	4.12	89 35.6	208 83.2	4.18	4.14
h.	Youth Festivals	204 50.9	360 89.8	4.42	140 56.0	234 93.6	4.49	4.45
i.	Stations of the Cross	216 53.9	345 86.1	4.42	137 54.8	229 91.6	4.46	4.43
j.	The Vigil	193 48.1	339 84.5	4.35	118 47.2	233 93.2	4.41	4.37
k.	The Final Mass	309 77.1	377 94.1	4.73	206 82.4	244 97.6	4.80	4.76




Table 6.24

The Level of Importance Attributed to the Various World Youth Day Events - Adults (Sydney Catholic Schools) ... Q.15. Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Adult Pilgrims								
13		Madrid			Rio			CM
		VI	TI	M	VI	TI	M	
a.	The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	40 75.5	53 100	4.75	42 73.7	54 94.8	4.75	4.75
b.	Days in the Diocese	5 9.4	32 60.3	3.71	14 24.6	44 77.2	4.02	3.87
c.	Papal Welcome	30 56.6	45 84.9	4.40	27 47.4	49 86.0	4.39	4.40
d.	Opening Mass	38 71.7	50 94.3	4.76	32 56.1	52 91.2	4.54	4.64
e.	Catechesis Sessions	23 43.4	50 94.1	4.38	27 35.1	47 82.5	4.20	4.29
f.	Reconciliation	18 34.0	47 88.7	4.23	22 38.6	48 84.2	4.24	4.23
g.	Eucharistic Adoration	25 47.2	44 83.0	4.23	26 45.6	48 84.2	4.35	4.29
h.	Youth Festivals	15 28.3	47 88.7	4.15	21 36.8	49 85.9	4.24	4.19
i.	Stations of the Cross	38 71.7	52 98.1	4.70	19 33.3	50 87.7	4.22	4.45
j.	The Vigil	45 84.9	53 100	4.85	37 64.9	52 91.2	4.60	4.72
k.	The Final Mass	49 92.5	53 100	4.92	48 84.2	53 93.0	4.82	4.87

Comparisons of Means

Across the Likert scale items, statistically significant differences between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid		Items d, e, i, j & k
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		Items h, i, j
Students Madrid and Students Rio		Item d
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		Items d, i & j
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio		Items a, c, d, e, h, j & k

The Final Mass and the pilgrimage to World Youth Day were identified consistently by pilgrims as the two most significant events. The students also saw great potential value in the Youth Festivals and the Stations of the Cross, whereas the adult pilgrims identified great value in the Opening Mass and the Vigil. An experience of ‘days in the diocese’ in the host country was considered to be the least important event by all of the pilgrim groups.

The choice of where to go was so hard, I mean I really wanted to go to the Holy Land but I am just as happy to go to Rome, the Vatican and I just love St Francis. So you know, I’m quite excited about going on this trip, yeah – the art and the history and the Church, I think this will be just so beautiful.

Student 88 reflected,

I am really looking forward to the Final Mass. I think that it’s really nice that it is going to be outside and you prepare for it the night before and you have the

sleep-out. I think that it’s going to be a really special experience but something that I have heard also is that we go off to places along the way to see little churches. I am really looking forward to those intimate things that are sort of little reminders of where we are and why we are there.

6.8 PILGRIM HOPES FOR WORLD YOUTH DAY

In both the pre-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, pilgrims were asked to identify and describe their greatest hope for their upcoming World Youth Day experience.

96.0% of the student pilgrims (Madrid) and 93.6% of their Rio de Janeiro counterparts provided a written response to the survey question. 86.8% of adult pilgrims (Madrid) and 85.7% of Rio adult pilgrims did the same. Table 6.25 details the top five hopes of each of the respective pilgrim groups.

Table 6.25

The Top Five Hopes of World Youth Day – Sydney Catholic Schools’ Pilgrims ... Q.18. Identify and Describe your Greatest Hope for your Upcoming Experience at World Youth Day ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Rank		Madrid Students Percentage
1.	To strengthen my relationship with God	22.3
2.	To strengthen friendships and make many new friends	15.8
3.	To connect with other pilgrims through shared experiences and celebrating our faith together	15.3
4.	To discover and explore new places and cultures	10.9
4.	To deepen and nurture my personal faith	10.9
		Rio Students Percentage
1.	To strengthen my relationship with God	23.5
2.	To connect with other pilgrims through shared experiences and celebrating our faith together	13.2
3.	To deepen and nurture my personal faith	12.4
4.	To be changed as a person	11.5
5.	To make a difference in the lives of others through the mission work.	10.7
		Madrid Adults Percentage
1.	For the young people to find World Youth Day a positive and meaningful experience of faith and Church	23.9
2.	To deepen and nurture my personal faith	19.6
3.	To strengthen my relationship with God	15.2
4.	To have a time for spiritual reflection and growth	13.0
5.	To connect with and experience the wider Catholic Church	10.9

Rank		Rio Adults Percentage
1.	To deepen and nurture my personal faith	22.9
2.	For the young people to find World Youth Day a positive and meaningful experience of faith and Church	16.7
3.	To strengthen my relationship with God	14.6
4.	To connect with and experience the wider Catholic Church	10.4
5.	To share my faith with others	8.3
5.	To make a difference in the lives of others through the mission work	8.3

The hopes identified by both the student and adult pilgrims (Table 6.25) generally align with the anticipated benefits of World Youth Day detailed in Table 6.22. There are a few aspects of difference however.

Not as evident in Table 6.22 is the fact that the primary hope of the student pilgrims was to strengthen their relationship with God. This was also borne out in the semi-structured interviews where 11 Madrid pilgrims (24.4%) and 6 Rio de Janeiro pilgrims (26.05) cited the nurturing of this relationship as their ultimate hope.

In the written response (Madrid) one student wrote,

The social aspects of WYD are rather attractive but my greatest hope for my experience on pilgrimage is to find and become closer to God. I have questions for God and I hope that in the moments of reflection and prayer I may be led to the answers that I seek.

The analysis of the qualitative data from the questionnaire allowed for the identification of the key themes summarized in Table 6.25. This identification had followed a careful analysis and coding of the text, which included the frequency of key word indicators. While the frequency of key words gave some measure of the relative importance of the ‘hopes’ identified by the pilgrims, it was necessary to review the context of every response so as to correctly interpret their intended meaning.

Although there was no pattern in the frequency of the key words used by the adult pilgrims there was a consistency in those used by both student

pilgrim groups (see Table 6.26).

Table 6.26

The Five Most Frequently Used Words by Student Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools) in Response to Q.18. Identify and Describe your Greatest Hope for your Upcoming Experience at World Youth Day ... Pre-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Key Word	Madrid Word Frequency	Rio Word Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Number of pilgrims who used the word	Percentage of pilgrims who used the word
Faith	249	130	379	346	55.9
God	180	111	291	267	43.1
Experience	165	99	264	244	39.1
New	146	86	232	202	32.6
Friends	57	30	87	86	13.9

The qualitative data from both the questionnaire and the interviews revealed that many of the students hoped for a sense of belonging and connection. Many of their responses spoke of ‘connecting’, ‘bonding’ and ‘strengthening relationships’. The data consistently highlights their hope to ‘make new friends with the other pilgrims’ and ‘connect with other young people with the same beliefs’. Student 72 commented,

I hope to meet many new people and create life-long friendships with people from all over the world. My greatest hope is that I will find my sense of belonging to this world and will work out what part faith plays. I hope to meet other people who I can talk to about why they have come and where their faith is.

Of the 141 student pilgrims who identified their principal hope as ‘strengthening my relationship with God’, 27 coupled this with, ‘and my fellow pilgrims’.

A number of student pilgrims also articulated a personal hope of being changed by the experience of World Youth Day, not just from the perspective of seeing faith differently and becoming engaged in the life of the Church, but through a new found sense of self- understanding, direction and purpose in life. This ‘hope’ was named by 23 (6.0%) of the Madrid student pilgrims.

As detailed in Table 6.25, the desire to ‘be changed as a person’ was a more common response amongst the Rio student pilgrims, (11.5%). Many of the student responses connect this change with participation in mission work in South America. One student wrote,

My greatest hope is to come back a changed person knowing that I have been able to make a real difference in the mission work and that I have gained an insight into how others live.

Apart from those who made written reference to wanting to ‘be changed as a person’, a further 25 student pilgrims (10.7%) identified that their primary hope was to contribute meaningfully to the opportunities of mission work. Named by 5 student pilgrims (21.7%), the mission work was also the second most frequently cited ‘hope’ in the interviews.

The mission work, which was unique to the World Youth Day experience in Rio de Janeiro, was also held with some importance by the adult pilgrims (see Table 6.25). A number of the pilgrims expressed that this was a practical and constructive way that they could share their faith with others.

Table 6.25 shows that the adult pilgrims held hopes not just for themselves but for the young people that they journeyed with. The qualitative data from both the questionnaire and the interviews revealed that they saw themselves as guiding and supporting the student pilgrims on their spiritual journey. There was a clear hope expressed that amidst the excitement of travel, new friends and new experiences that the student pilgrims would be nurtured in their faith and see religion and the Church more positively.

One adult pilgrim responded,

I hope that the young pilgrims I travel with will be open to being challenged spiritually and that their eyes will be opened to discovering God in a foreign land. That they will experience and feel they belong to our universal Church.

Another teacher wrote,

[I hope for] a renewal in my faith – that it will be both a spiritual and physical pilgrimage, allowing me to be nurtured and nourished in my faith. And I hope to support the young people in their faith experience of WYD, faith sharing.

The hopes which were expressed by many of the adult pilgrims are reflective of the sentiments expressed by those who generally take on the responsibility of being Pilgrim Group Leaders (PGLs) at World Youth Day.

A feature of the qualitative research data was that the adult pilgrims hoped for a better connection with and experience of the Church. Some cited the desire to learn more about the Catholic Church's teachings, whereas others identified the hope of feeling a sense of belonging. A number of the adult pilgrims travelling to Rio de Janeiro expressed the hope that they would get to see and hear the pope.

A consistent theme expressed by the Madrid and Rio pilgrims was that of experiencing the Church differently through the many different cultures, groups and movements attending World Youth Day. Adult interviewee 10 reflected,

I hope to connect to the wider Church, the Universal Church, to realize the many different cultures coming together and experience faith on a new level. Sometimes we can get bogged down in our own little world in Sydney and we don't realize we are a part of something much bigger. I hope to be open to the different expressions, and to realize the influence and legacy of John Paul II and why he started World Youth Day. It was for us young people to get involved.

SECTION 2: ANALYSIS OF POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH DATA

6.9 THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF ALL WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIM COHORTS: SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' GROUPS & GENERAL AUSTRALIAN POPULATION GROUPS

6.9.1 Demographics of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Groups (2011 & 2013)

The demographic profiles of the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts were analysed earlier in this chapter (see section 6.2). As both the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires had the same questions on gender, age, country of birth, language/s spoken at home and religious affiliation, the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts yielded two data sets from the same population sample. The post-World Youth Day research was conducted in the six month period immediately following each international gathering. Full details of the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts demographics will not be repeated here, where the emphasis will be on comparisons with the other non-school group cohorts.

Table 6.27 shows comparisons between the numbers of pilgrims from the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts who participated in the pre and post-World Youth Day questionnaires and interviews.

Table 6.27

Number of Sydney Catholic Schools' World Youth Day Research Participants (2011 & 2013)

	Madrid 2011 Total Pilgrim Cohort: 524		Rio 2013 Total Pilgrim Cohort: 328	
	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims	Adult Pilgrims	Student Pilgrims
Questionnaires				
Pre-WYD	53	401	66	250
Post-WYD	66	216	42	250
Interviews				
Pre-WYD	16	45	6	23
Post-WYD	15	86	12	42

As shown in Table 6.27, the post-World Youth Day response rate of the Madrid pilgrims (53.8%) was much lower than that of the Rio pilgrims

(89.0%). Only 49.8% of the student pilgrims completed the post-World Youth Day questionnaire, while 92.2% of the students completed and returned the pre-World Youth Day questionnaire. Despite the difference in return rates between student pilgrims (pre and post) there were not major variances in student pilgrims' demographic data before and after World Youth Day.

One exception however related to the gender profile of the student research participants. Prior to World Youth Day, 52.11% of student research participants were female and 47.8% were male. After World Youth Day, 63.4% of the student pilgrims who completed the post-World Youth Day questionnaire were female and 36.5% were male.

Table 6.28 shows summative information about pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) participation in the post-World Youth Day research. With Tables 6.29 and 6.30, it provides demographic data which can be compared with that of the general Australian population cohorts.

Table 6.28

Participants' Post-World Youth Day Research Study (Sydney Catholic Schools)

POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY QUESTIONNAIRE								
	Madrid 2011 Total Pilgrim Cohort: 524 Overall response rate: 53.8%				Rio de Janeiro 2013 Total Pilgrim Cohort: 328 Overall response rate: 89.0%			
	Students	Adults	Total	%	Students	Adults	Total	%
Male	79	31	110	39.0	120	21	141	48.3
Female	137	35	172	61.0	129	21	150	51.4
Total	216	66	282		250 *	42	292	
%	76.6	23.4		100.0	85.6	14.4		100.0

POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY INTERVIEWS								
	Madrid 2011 Overall response rate: 19.3%				Rio de Janeiro 2013 Overall response rate: 16.5%			
	Students	Adults	Total	%	Students	Adults	Total	%
Male	38	8	46	45.5	22	4	26	41.4
Female	48	7	55	54.5	20	8	28	58.6
Total	86	15	101		42	12	54	
%	85.1	14.9		100.0	79.3	20.7		100.0

Pilgrims' completion of the post-World Youth Day questionnaires (2011 & 2013) provided a range of demographic data on the research participants. Data relating to age (adult pilgrims) and religious background (student pilgrims) is provided in Tables 6.29 and 6.30 respectively.

Table 6.29

Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Age Groups	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
19-24	9	13.6	2	4.8
25-29	20	30.3	10	23.8
30-35	9	13.6	10	23.8
36+	28	42.4	20	47.6
Total	66	100.0	42	100.0

The average age of the adult pilgrims: Madrid, 32years; Rio, 35years.

The average age of the student pilgrims (Madrid & Rio): 16years.

Table 6.30

Religious Background of Student Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools)

Q.5. Religion: Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Religion	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Catholic	186	86.1	220	88.0
Other Christian Denomination	25	11.6	22	8.8
Non-Christian Religion	1	.5	2	.8
No Religion	4	1.8	4	1.6
No response	-	-	2	.8
Total	216	100.0	250	100.0

The post-World Youth Day questionnaires also collected data on the religious background of participating pilgrims. As detailed in Table 6.30,

14% of the student respondents (Madrid) and 12% (Rio) identified as being non Catholic.

Data gathered on the religious background of adult pilgrims showed that both the Madrid and Rio cohorts had 1 pilgrim who identified as being non Catholic. In both instances, the pilgrims indicated that their religion was that of another Christian denomination.

In addition to demographic data on gender, age and religious background the post- World Youth Day questionnaires elicited information on the cultural background of participating pilgrims, with specific questions on place of birth and language spoken at home. The Madrid (2011) data revealed that 18 student pilgrims (8.3%) were born overseas and that 17 student pilgrims (7.9%) spoke a language other than English at home. Of the participating adult pilgrims, 9 were born overseas (13.6%) and 3 spoke a language other than English at home (4.5%).

Data collected from the Rio cohort showed 22 student pilgrims (8.8%) were born overseas and that 21 student pilgrims (8.4%) spoke a language other than English at home. A further 18 students (7.2%), indicated that they spoke a number of languages at home, one of which was English. Of the participating adult pilgrims, 7 were born overseas (16.7%) and 2 spoke a language other than English at home (4.8 %).

6.9.2 Demographics of a Sample of the General Australian Population Cohorts (2011 & 2013)

The above demographics (Section 6.9.1 and Section 6.2) for the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts can be compared with those from a different group – pilgrims (both adults and those 18years of age and under) whose participation had no connection with the Sydney Catholic Schools group – designated general Australian population.

Table 6.31

Participants' Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Australian Pilgrims – General Population)

Participants 18 years of age or younger, were indicated as 'youth'

	Madrid 2011				Rio de Janeiro 2013			
	Youth	Adults	Total	%	Youth	Adults	Total	%
Male	14	166	180	47.4	7	65	81	43.8
Female	26	174	200	52.6	16	97	104	56.2
Total	40	340	380		23	162	185	
%	10.5	89.5		100.0	12.4	87.6		100.0

Table 6.32

Participants' Post-World Youth Day Interviews (Australian Pilgrims – General Population)

	Madrid 2011			Rio de Janeiro 2013		
	Youth	Adults	Total	Youth	Adults	Total
Male	1	5	6	1	2	3
Female	1	3	4	2	5	7
Total	2	8	10	3	7	10

6.9.2.1 Age Range, Religious Identification and Cultural Background of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

Pilgrims' completion of the post-World Youth Day questionnaires (2011 & 2013) provided a range of demographic data on the research participants. Data relating to gender is detailed in Table 6.31, and information relating to the age profile of adult pilgrims is shown in Table 6.33.

Table 6.33

Age Groups of Adult Pilgrims (Australian Pilgrims – General Population)

Age Groups	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
19-24	118	34.7	67	41.3
25-29	86	25.9	27	16.7
30-35	57	16.8	23	14.2
36+	76	22.4	45	27.8
No response	3	.9		
Total	340	100.0	162	100.0

The average age of the adult pilgrims – general Australian population (Madrid) who responded to the survey was 28 years. For the Rio cohort, it was 27 years. The average age of the younger Australian pilgrims (Madrid & Rio) who responded to the survey was 17 years.

Of the pilgrims aged 18 years and younger who attended World Youth Day in Madrid, 7 were born overseas (17.5%). Seven of the younger pilgrims (17.5%) also spoke a language other than English at home. Of the adult pilgrims, 113 were born overseas (33.2%), and 64 spoke a language other than English at home (18.8%).

The demographic profile of the Australian pilgrims who attended the Rio gathering showed that 8 of the 23 pilgrims aged 18 years and younger were born overseas (34.8%). Five of the younger pilgrims (21.7%) also spoke a language other than English at home. Of the 162 adult pilgrims who participated in the research, 47 were born overseas (29.0%), and 23 spoke a language other than English at home (14.2%).

The major languages spoken at home by Australian pilgrims (general population) are detailed in Table 6.34.

Table 6.34

Language Spoken at Home (Australian Pilgrims – General Population)

Language	Madrid & Rio Pilgrims	
	N	%
English	466	82.5
Arabic	21	3.9
Vietnamese	14	2.4
Spanish	10	1.7
Filipino	7	1.2
Various Asian	16	2.8
Various Oceania	9	1.6
Other	22	3.9
Total	565	100.0

The religious background of the Australian pilgrims (general population) for Madrid had 10% of the younger pilgrims and 3% of adult pilgrims that

did not identify as being Catholic (see Table 6.35). A similar percentage was recorded with the adult pilgrims returning from World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro. Of the 162 adult research participants, four (2.5%) identified with another Christian denomination and two identified as having ‘no religion’ (1.2%). In contrast to the Madrid respondents, all of the pilgrims aged 18years and under (Rio) identified as being Catholic

Table 6.35

Q.5. Religion: Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire (Madrid) Australian Pilgrims

Religion	Youth		Adults	
	N	%	N	%
Catholic	36	90.0	330	97.0
Other Christian Denomination	3	7.5	6	1.8
Non-Christian Religion	-	-	1	.3
No Religion	1	2.5	3	.9
Total	40	100.0	340	100.0

6.9.2.2 General Australian Population Pilgrims’ Mode of Participation in World Youth Day

Participant responses to question 12 of the post-World Youth Day survey showed that Australian pilgrims (general population) attended the international gathering through a number of modes. The most common of these was as a member of a parish or diocesan group (see Table 6.36). Individual groups and movements were also a common mode, especially with the adult pilgrims. Antioch, the Neo-Catechumenate and the Australian Catholic University were commonly specified groups for both the Madrid and Rio World Youth Days. Interviewee 145, an under 18 pilgrim involved in the Neo- Catechumenate reflected,

Religion is obviously a really big thing in my life and I go to Church twice a week. I think it’s something very important which gives me a path, like a way to follow ... Being in the community in the Neo-Catechumenate Way is special because you are encouraged from other young people to join and you hear from other young people about their experiences ... it’s something that connects you

... our gathering in Madrid was incredible. Every time I go to listen to Kiko, he just inspires me to continue.

Table 6.36

Australian Pilgrims - General Population: Modes of World Youth Day Attendance

Pilgrims 18years & under				
Mode of attendance	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	Y
Group/movement	2	5.0	7	30.4
Parish/Diocesan group	32	80.0	7	30.4
School group	1	2.5	9	39.1
Family/friends	3	7.5	-	-
Individually	-	-	-	-
No response	2	5.0	-	-
Total	40	100.0	23	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Group/movement	65	19.1	46	28.4
Parish/Diocesan group	225	66.2	104	64.2
School group	19	5.6	3	1.9
Family/friends	8	2.4	3	1.9
Individually	10	2.9	6	3.7
No response	13	3.8	-	-
Total	340	100.0	162	100.0

6.10 THE RELIGIOSITY MEASURES OF ALL WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIM COHORTS: SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' GROUPS & GENERAL AUSTRALIAN POPULATION GROUPS

The quantitative data was used to develop a typology of World Youth Day pilgrims.

6.10.1 Religiosity Profile Measures of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Pilgrim Cohorts

The religiosity profile measures of the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts were reported earlier in this chapter (see Section 6.3) in the analysis of the pre-World Youth Day research data. The measures included religious attitudes (value of religion and descriptions of faith) and religious practices (Mass attendance and prayer life). A summary of the religiosity data collected in the post-World Youth Day questionnaires can be found in Appendix I.

6.10.2 Religiosity Profile Measures of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

Questions for identifying the level of importance that pilgrims attributed to religion, and their attitudes towards and practice of faith were included in both the post-World Youth questionnaires and semi-structured interview schedules.

6.10.2.1 Religiosity: Religious Attitudes of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

Table 6.37

The Importance of Religion for Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

Q.6. How Important is Religion in your Life? Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Pilgrims 18years and under				
	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Very important	23	57.5	12	52.2
Fairly important	10	25.0	11	47.8
Of some importance	4	10.0	-	-
Not very important	-	-	-	-
Of no importance	1	2.5	-	-
No response	2	5.0	-	-
Total	40	100.0	23	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Very important	52	78.8	32	76.2
Fairly important	12	18.2	8	19.0
Of some importance	2	3.0	2	4.8
Not very important	-	-	-	.-
Of no importance	-	-	-	.-
No response	-	-	-	-
Total	66	100.0	42	100.0

The post-World Youth Day interviews provided valuable qualitative data which nuanced the quantitative results for question 6 on the importance of religion. Throughout the semi-structured interviews pilgrims related their World Youth Day experiences to their perception of religion and religious practice, citing the international gathering as validating their religiosity.

Adult pilgrim 124 reflected,

More than anything else World Youth Day confirmed a lot of what I already knew and felt, and it was good to be around people that had the same level of faith and probably a stronger level of faith than I did. I travelled with a group of forty and they were all very committed, they had a lot of love for God, a lot of faith, and a lot of love for their fellow human beings. Just being part of the WYD experience in Madrid, even just seeing all these young people who were very enthusiastic about being there lifted me too. It was just so good to see and experience this.

Faith was a salient theme of the post-World Youth Day interviews, especially with the adults from the general population of Australian pilgrims. Aspects of faith were mentioned by all 15 interviewees. As with the adults from the Sydney Catholic Schools contingents, the pilgrims indicated that they had a strong sense of faith, and the majority stated that they were 'committed' to their faith. 4 adult pilgrims (26.6%) from the wider Australian contingents described their faith as 'searching' and connected their 'searching' to their participation in World Youth Day.

Adult pilgrim 101 reflected,

Sometimes I find it [faith] challenging and that's why I came on this pilgrimage. I still have got lots of questions about faith, but through the group that I am with and the experiences we have had everyday another question gets answered and I find more peace.

While the quantitative data (Table 6.38) indicated that a significant number of pilgrims aged 18 years or younger self-described as 'searching', this pattern was not reflected in the interviews with the younger pilgrims. Of the 5 interviewees, only 1 younger made reference to 'searching' and this was in relation to organized religion and a desire to know more about the tenets of the Catholic faith and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Table 6.38

Descriptors of 'Personal Faith' used by Pilgrims from the General Australian Population Q.7. Which Term Best Describes your Attitude Towards your Faith ... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Pilgrims 18years and under				
	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Committed	4	10.0	5	21.7
Involved	15	37.5	5	21.7
Searching	16	40.0	12	52.2
Disengaged	3	7.5	1	4.3
No response	2	5.0	-	-
Total	40	100.0	23	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Committed	174	51.2	67	41.4
Involved	90	26.5	60	37.0
Searching	44	12.9	24	14.8
Disengaged	19	5.6	11	6.8
No response	13	3.8	-	-
Total	340	100.0	162	100.0

6.10.2.2 Religiosity: Religious Practices of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

In addition to the questions which identified the level of importance that pilgrims attributed to religion, and their attitudes towards and perceptions of faith, the questionnaires gathered data on religious practice. Two areas of particular relevance to the research study were patterns of mass attendance and personal prayer.

The quantitative data highlighted that the World Youth Day pilgrims from the wider Australian delegations, had a developed sense of religiosity and were actively engaged in the life of the Church through regular worship. The Mass attendance patterns detailed in Table 6.39 pointed to the World Youth Day pilgrims as potentially being an 'atypical' religious grouping when compared to the profile of the wider Catholic population in Australia. In addition to the pilgrims who self-identified as attending Mass on a weekly basis, which was proportionally high when compared to other national measures of Mass attendance, there were also pilgrims who

indicated that they attended Mass more than once a week.

The results in Table 6.39 indicated that Mass attendance was even more regular and frequent amongst the Under 18 and adult pilgrims from the wider Australian contingents when compared with the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts (see Table 6.13). Typically, these pilgrims travelled to World Youth Day with ethnic, parish or Diocesan groups, or an ecclesial group or movement, and many had established connections with and involvement in worshipping communities.

When interviewed, a number of the pilgrims from the Australian groups who already attended Mass each Sunday, made reference to their experience of daily Mass during World Youth Day pilgrimages. This included adult pilgrim 116, who said,

Religion has always been an important part of my life. I'm a practicing Catholic, I go to Church each Sunday, and I serve as an acolyte when I can ... one of the things that was quite memorable was having daily Mass ... I have never done that before here but it really was a nice touch.

Table 6.39

Patterns of Mass Attendance for Pilgrims from the Wider Australian Contingent

Q.8. I Normally Attend Mass... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Pilgrims 18years and under				
	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
More than once a week	3	7.5	2	8.7
Each Sunday	17	42.5	9	39.1
A few Sundays a month	9	22.5	6	26.1
Once a month	1	2.5	1	4.3
A few times a year	7	17.5	3	13.0
Rarely or never	1	2.5	2	8.7
No response	2	5.0	-	-
Total	40	100.0	23	100.0

Adult Pilgrims				
More than once a week	80	23.5	46	28.4
Each Sunday	190	55.9	85	52.4
A few Sundays a month	27	7.9	18	11.1
Once a month	15	4.4	3	1.9
A few times a year	9	2.6	3	1.9
Rarely or never	6	1.8	7	4.3
No response	13	3.8	-	-
Total	340	100.0	162	100.0

Table 6.40

Prayer Practices of Pilgrims from the Wider Australian Contingent

Q.10. I Normally Pray... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Pilgrims 18years and under				
	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Each day	8	20.0	11	47.8
Regularly	14	35.0	3	13.0
Sometimes	14	35.0	9	39.1
A few times a year	-	-	-	-
Rarely or never	2	5.0	-	-
No response	2	5.0	-	-
Total	40	100.0	23	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Each day	157	46.2	67	41.4
Regularly	92	27.1	58	35.8
Sometimes	65	19.1	24	14.8
A few times a year	3	.9	3	1.9
Rarely or never	10	2.9	10	6.2
No response	13	3.8	-	-
Total	340	100.0	162	100.0

6.10.3 Comparisons Between the Religiosity Profiles of the Sydney Catholic Schools' Groups and the General Australian Population Groups

The quantitative data associated with the religiosity measures showed that pilgrims from the general Australian population cohorts recorded higher Mean scores for the value ascribed to religion, descriptions of faith and Mass attendance. The quantitative data also showed that student and adult pilgrims from the Sydney Catholic

Schools cohorts had a greater commitment to regular prayer than did the pilgrims from the wider Australian contingents (see Tables 6.40 & 6.15).

References were made to prayer by 26 pilgrims (16.8%) in the post-World Youth Day interviews. Typically, these referred to the quality and diversity of prayer opportunities experienced on pilgrimage and at World Youth Day. Prayer was also cited by some pilgrim interviewees in regards to the importance they attributed to religion, their practical expression of it, and the deepening of their relationship with God. Student pilgrim 138 commented,

Prayer especially is really important in my life. I think it's really difficult to not have this relationship with God, I just wouldn't find the answers. I wouldn't be able to live the same as I do because I know that for me I don't understand many things in life ... at the end of the day the only true answer that I have is God.

A number of the pilgrims from the general Australian population who were interviewed for the research study connected prayer to their sense of Catholic identity and said that World Youth Day was an opportunity to expose young people to a range of traditional prayer practices, including the Rosary.

The post-World Youth Day interviews corroborated and helped nuance the quantitative survey data. Throughout the post-World Youth Day interviews, pilgrims from both Sydney Catholic Schools and the general Australian population qualified their answer on the importance of religion by making specific reference to their experience of World Youth Day. A number of pilgrims stated that their personal experience of the international gathering had strengthened the value and importance they ascribed to 'religion'.

A consistent pattern of responses across both populations (Sydney Catholic Schools & Australian delegation) was evident in the semi structured interviews where younger pilgrims identified World Youth Day as an event which 'changed' their perception of religion. Many of the adult pilgrims felt

that the international gathering ‘consolidated’ and ‘confirmed’ their view of religion.

For example, student 148 acknowledged that religion was ‘very important’, linking this to the events of World Youth Day in Madrid.

It was definitely a positive experience. It was really life changing and I absolutely loved it ... going there and seeing things, like seeing the churches, having catechesis, and people talk to you and just seeing people on the streets expressing their faith really opened me up to God. And it brought me a lot closer to him. Yeah, just being there with everyone, and feeling his presence, really changed me a lot.

Young pilgrims who felt that religion only held ‘some importance’ or was ‘not very important’ did still attest to feeling positive about the World Youth Day experience. Student 176 commented,

It’s [Religion’s] not that important. Like, I think that it was more important to me when I was in primary school. But as I’ve gone into high school you realise you sometimes have big moments to think. It [World Youth Day] was the best experience. It was very eye opening to see the large scale of religion; and some of the talks that were given did make you think differently.

While a smaller number of interviews (54) were conducted with student pilgrims following World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro when compared to the Madrid gathering (86 student interviews), all of the Rio interviewees identified religion as being ‘very’ or ‘fairly’ important. By contrast, 10 student pilgrims (11.4%) from Madrid identified religion as being of ‘some’ importance, and a further 3 students (3.4%), as being ‘not very important’.

As with their reflections on the perceived importance of religion, both adult and young pilgrims associated their participation in World Youth Day with a strengthening of faith. This was a consistent pattern in the post-World Youth Day interviews, irrespective of the particular ‘category’ used by individual pilgrims to describe their personal faith. Student 123 reflected,

If you're looking to strengthen your faith or pursuing something within your faith, WYD is perfect for you. No matter what sense you have of the church or your faith or how far it is developed, there's always a place for you in WYD. There's a place for someone who doesn't even think about their faith, there's one who thinks incredibly highly about their faith, there's a place for everyone there.

The post-World Youth Day interviews also reinforced the pattern of pilgrims' responses when describing their faith (see Table 6.38), especially young pilgrims' sense of 'searching'. The interviewees alluded to their 'searching in faith', by making explicit reference to 'exploring', 'growing' and 'questioning'. Twenty-one (20.8%) student interviewees from Madrid, and a further nine (16.6%) students from Rio de Janeiro referred to a faith which was 'questioning'. Student 97 commented,

I think part of the reason I went to WYD is because I had all these questions before leaving you know. Coming back, not all of them have been answered but a lot of them have been because I felt closer to God ... I think it's hard to doubt sometimes, like especially when you see all those people with such strong faith.

The adult pilgrims had a strong sense of faith. While the majority described their attitude towards faith as 'committed' or 'involved' (see Table 6.38), adult interviewees from both populations also acknowledged a desire to deepen and consolidate their faith. 3 adult pilgrims (11%) from the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts described a faith which was 'searching' and with questions. This sense of 'searching' was also expressed by adults from the wider Australian groups.

6.11 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A RELIGIOSITY TYPOLOGY FOR ANALYSIS OF PILGRIMS' PERCEPTIONS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY ACCORDING TO A 'TOTAL RELIGION SCORE'

A construct called the 'Total Religion Score' was computed for all of the research population based on the results for questions 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the Post-World Youth Day questionnaire – as illustrated in Table 6.41. The response options for each question were assigned a numerical value in

accord with the level of religiosity associated with each response. Higher numerical values were assigned to responses reflecting a higher level of religiosity.

Table 6.41

Framework of the Total Religion Score

Religious Attitudes				Religious Practices			
Q6. Religion		Q.7 Faith		Q.8 Mass		Q.9 Prayer	
Very important	5	Committed	4	More than once a week	6	Each day	5
Fairly important	4	Involved	3	Each Sunday	5	Regularly	4
Of some importance	3	Searching	2	A few Sundays a month	4	Sometimes	3
Not very important	2	Disengaged	1	Once a month	3	A few times a year	2
Of no importance	1			A few times a year	2	Rarely or never	1
				Rarely or never	1		
						Total	20

Tallied together, the numerical values of the four responses resulted in a Total Religion Score. Ranging in numerical value from 4-20, the Total Religion Score was used to create four categories of pilgrim (for both young people and adults) as shown in Tables 6.42 and 6.43. A series of cut-off points were identified to segment both pilgrim cohorts into smaller sub-groups. The same cut-off points were used with each cohort. These four sub-groups each represented a particular religious type. The categories of pilgrim would then be used for meta-analysis of the research data to see how perceptions of World Youth Day might be related to the religious types – designated as *Devoted Pilgrims*, *Religious Believers*, *Meaning Seekers* and *Social Tourists*.

The same process to identify the religious typology of pilgrims was used with both the groups affiliated with Sydney Catholic Schools and those with the general Australian population. Pilgrims who did not respond to one or more questions were not included in the overall number distribution for the Total Religion Score, and thus were not identified with a particular pilgrim

sub-group or religious typology.

6.11.1 The Religious Typology of Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools

Table 6.42

Religious Typologies of Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools

Student Pilgrims					
TRS Range	Religious Typology (Pilgrim Sub-group)	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
		N	%	N	%
18-20	Devoted Pilgrims	32	14.8	29	11.6
14-17	Religious Believers	88	40.7	83	33.2
10-13	Meaning Seekers	82	38.0	116	46.4
4-9	Social Tourists	14	6.5	22	8.8
Total		216	100.0	250	100.0
Adult Pilgrims					
18-20	Devoted Pilgrims	42	63.6	26	61.9
14-17	Religious Believers	21	31.8	10	23.8
10-13	Meaning Seekers	3	4.5	6	14.3
4-9	Social Tourists	-	-	-	-
Total	No response	66	100.0	42	100.0

The Mean Total Religion Score for all student pilgrims was 13.66 (Madrid Mean = 14.01; Rio Mean = 13.35).

The Mean Total Religion Score for all adult pilgrims travelling with Sydney Catholic Schools was 17.59 (Madrid Mean = 17.75; Rio Mean = 17.33).

The *F* value for Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was 14.9 with a Sig. (*p*) value of .000 which indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups (students and adults) variances. Furthermore, a t-test for Equality of Means showed that the Mean difference of 3.93 was significant as adult pilgrims scored significantly higher on the Total Religion Score.

6.11.2 The Religious Typology of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

Table 6.43

Religious Typologies of Pilgrims from the General Australian Population

Pilgrims 18years and under					
TRS Range	Religious Typology (Pilgrim Sub-group)	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
		N	%	N	%
18-20	Devoted Pilgrims	6	15.0	4	17.4
14-17	Religious Believers	22	55.0	12	52.2
10-13	Meaning Seekers	8	20.0	7	30.4
4-9	Social Tourists	2	5.0	-	-
	No response	2	5.0	-	-
Total		40	100	23	100
Adult Pilgrims					
18-20	Devoted Pilgrims	184	54.1	76	46.9
14-17	Religious Believers	109	32.1	70	43.2
10-13	Meaning Seekers	28	8.2	10	6.2
4-9	Social Tourists	6	1.8	6	3.7
	No response	13	3.8	-	-
Total		340	100	162	100

The Mean Total Religion Score for all pilgrims 18 years and younger was 14.91 (Madrid Mean = 14.73; Rio Mean = 15.21).

The Mean Total Religion Score for all adult pilgrims travelling with the wider Australian delegation was 17.06 (Madrid Mean = 17.17; Rio Mean = 16.83).

The F value for Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was .271 with a Sig. (p) value of .603 which indicated that equal variances across the groups (adults and 18 years and under) could be assumed. A t-test for Equality of Means showed however that the Mean difference of 2.14 was significant.

6.12 ANALYSIS OF THE RELIGIOUS TYPOLOGY DATA: EVIDENCE FOR THE HOMOGENEOUS QUALITY OF EACH OF THE TWO GROUPS - YOUNGER AND OLDER PILGRIMS

The religiosity typology was used for comparing both the religious attitudes/practices, and the perceptions of World Youth Day for all subgroups in the cohorts. In addition, the results from both the Sydney

Catholic Schools and the wider Australian groups of pilgrims were pooled to allow for a meta-analysis of the total research population.

6.12.1 Comparisons of the Religiosity Measures for the Core Sub-Groups at the Different World Youth Days

A range of Independent Samples T-Tests showed that of the four groups that attended each World Youth Day, (students, adults with Sydney Catholic Schools, pilgrims 18 years of age and under, and adult pilgrims from the wider Australian community), it was only the student group which recorded a statistically significant Mean difference between its Madrid and Rio cohorts in relation to the Total Religion Score. Madrid ($M = 14.01$, $SD = 3.09$), Rio ($M = 13.35$, $SD = 3.10$), $t(464) = 2.30$, $p = .022$.

Independent Samples T-Tests showed that there was no significant Mean difference between the two adult cohorts; Sydney Catholic Schools ($M = 17.59$, $SD = 2.34$), Australian delegation ($M = 17.06$, $SD = 2.95$), $t(595) = 1.75$, $p = .080$. Furthermore, the Levene's Test showed a Sig. (p) value of .102, greater than the test's *priori alpha* of 0.05, which indicated that equal variances could be assumed across both groups of adults.

A one-way ANOVA [$F(3, 593) = 1.72$, $p = 1.61$], showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the four adult groups on the basis of the Total Religion Score; a Tukey post-hoc test showed that the four groups were an homogeneous subset (see Table 6.44).

The conduct of a one-way ANOVA with the four groups of younger pilgrims indicated that there was a statistically significant difference between the groups in relation to the Total Religion Score [$F(3, 523) = 4.88$, $p = .002$]. A Tukey post-hoc test showed that within the multiple comparisons between the four groups, a statistically significant difference was only evident between the Rio student pilgrims and the Rio pilgrims 18 years and under ($p = .029$). The test also showed the four groups of younger pilgrims constituted two overlapping homogeneous subsets (see Table 6.44).

Table 6.44

*Homogeneous Subsets of World Youth Day Pilgrims (Tukey HSD Test)
Variable: Total Religion Score*

Pilgrim Group	Number	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Students Rio	250	13.3560		
Students Madrid	216	14.0185	14.0185	
Youth Madrid	38	14.7368	14.7368	
Youth Rio	23		15.2174	
Australian Adults Rio	162			16.8333
Australian Adults Madrid	327			17.1713
SCS Adults Rio	42			17.3333
SCS Adults Madrid	66			17.7576
Sig.		.151	.310	.653

* Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

The Tukey HSD Test

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 63.183.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

An application of the Ryan-Einot-Gabriel-Welsh Range Test showed the four pilgrim groups - not as overlapping groups - but as a single homogenous subset (see Table 6.45).

Table 6.45

The Homogeneous Subsets of Younger World Youth Day Pilgrims (Ryan-Einot-Gabriel-Welsh Range Test)

Pilgrim Group	Number	1
Students Rio	250	13.3560
Students Madrid	216	14.0185
Youth Madrid	38	14.7368
Youth Rio	23	15.2174
Sig.		.116

* Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

* Subset for alpha = 0.05

The statistical analysis of all pilgrims' Total Religion Score and the application of several post-hoc tests pointed to the presence of two homogeneous subsets: one of **young** pilgrims, the other of **adult** pilgrims. The group of **young** pilgrims combined both the students from Sydney Catholic Schools and the Pilgrims aged 18years and under. The group of **adult** pilgrims included those adults with Sydney Catholic Schools and the

wider Australian contingent.

These subsets were used extensively in the interpretation of both the quantitative and qualitative data. They were also used to create sub-groups for a number of demographic factors/characteristics, including gender and religious typology so as to further investigate possible ‘age-related’ influences on perceptions of the World Youth Day experience.

Below, some data will be presented and analysed from the perspective of the two subsets, **young** and **adult** pilgrims.

Table 6.46

The Religious Typologies of Young and Adult Pilgrims

* This table summarises data on the religiosity of the four types of pilgrim (for both youth and adults) as evident in the Means of questionnaire items on religious attitudes, faith, mass attendance and prayer – as well as the Means of their total Religion scores.*

Pilgrim Typology	N	Percentage	Religion M	Faith M	Mass M	Prayer M	Total Religion Score M
Young Pilgrims							
Devoted Pilgrims	71	13.5	4.96	3.76	5.18	4.80	18.70
Religious Believers	205	38.9	4.44	2.81	4.07	4.09	15.39
Meaning Seekers	213	40.4	3.69	2.27	2.38	3.40	11.73
Social Tourists	38	7.2	2.82	1.59	1.63	1.92	7.82
Adult Pilgrims							
Devoted Pilgrims	328	54.9	5.00	3.85	5.45	4.81	19.09
Religious Believers	210	35.2	4.71	2.85	4.59	3.80	15.95
Meaning Seekers	47	7.87	4.09	1.87	3.13	2.79	11.87
Social Tourists	12	2.01	2.50	1.17	1.08	1.25	6.00

6.13 ANALYSIS OF PILGRIMS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY EXPERIENCE

6.13.1 Introduction

In addition to demographic data, the post-World Youth Day Questionnaire had 44 Likert Scale items for the purposes of gathering perceptual and evaluative data. These items were arranged as clusters of questions, each cluster related to a specific area of the World Youth Day experience. The principal areas reviewed were:

Q. 13a – h: Social/emotional dynamics

Q. 14a – h: Spiritual/religious dynamics

Q. 15a – i: Pilgrimage











Q. 16a – i: Key elements of World Youth Day (religious focus)

Q. 17a – k: World Youth Day events and activities.

A five-point Likert rating scale was used for each stem-item in the five clusters. For the purposes of quantitative analysis each descriptor was ascribed a numerical value ranging from 1 (the most negative response) through to 5 (the most positive response). In clusters 13-16, the 1-5 scale reported on the level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, (1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree). For question 17, respondents were asked to indicate their level of personal satisfaction with the various events at World Youth Day using the five-point scale of; most unrewarding, unrewarding, neutral, rewarding and very rewarding.


6.13.2 Presentation of Pilgrims' Response Data


A summary of pilgrims' responses to the 44 Likert Scale items (questions 13-17) is presented in Tables 6.47 to 6.56. As per the example below, the tables will be in a format similar to the presentation of pre-World Youth Day data (Section 6.6.1; Tables 6.20 to 6.24).


Name of population group								
Q	I felt ...	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	Stem item	N %	N %	M  	N %	N %	M    	M 
b.	Stem item	N %	N %	M 	N %	230 %	M 	M 


*It should be noted that Tables 6.47 to 6.56 have variations in Columns 3, 4, 6 and 7. As per the five point scale used with question 17, Strongly Agreed is replaced by Very Rewarding (VR) and Total Agreement is replaced by Total Rewarding (TR).

The colour coding used in Tables 6.47 to 6.56 indicates statistically significant differences of $p < .05$ between group means. In the presentation of pre-World Youth Day data this only involved student and adult pilgrims affiliated with Sydney Catholic Schools. In addition to these groups, the colour coding used in Tables 6.47 to 6.56 referred to those who travelled to World Youth Day with the wider Australian population. The codes used for these groups are identified below.

-  **Green** indicates statistically significant differences between the group means of
- Pilgrims 18years & under **Madrid** and Australian Adult pilgrims **Madrid**
 - Pilgrims 18years & under **Rio** and Australian Adult pilgrims **Rio**

-  **Yellow** indicates statistically significant differences between the group means of
- Pilgrims 18years & under **Madrid** and Pilgrims 18years & under **Rio**
 - Australian Adult pilgrims **Madrid** and Australian Adult pilgrims **Rio**

-  **Orange** indicates statistically significant differences between the group means of
- All Pilgrims 18years & under **Madrid + Rio** and all Australian Adult pilgrims **Madrid + Rio**

-  **Blue** indicates statistically significant differences between the group means of
- All Students **Madrid + Rio** and all pilgrims 18years and under **Madrid + Rio**

- b) All Catholic Schools Adults **Madrid + Rio** and all Australian Adult pilgrims **Madrid + Rio**

6.13.3 Pilgrims' Responses to the Social/Emotional Dynamics Cluster

Table 6.47

Summary of Pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.13.- Emotional/Social Dynamics

Student Pilgrims									
13		Madrid			Rio			CM	
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M		
a.	A strong sense of belonging	117 54.2	201 93.1	4.47		146 58.4	230 92.0	4.50	4.49
b.	A sense of exhilaration being part of something so big	167 77.3	214 99.1	4.76		172 68.8	236 94.4	4.63	4.70
c.	That I shared something special with the other pilgrims	140 64.8	205 94.9	4.59		153 61.2	233 93.2	4.54	4.57
d.	I enjoyed being able to share openly and talk with my friends	121 56.0	205 94.9	4.51		140 56.0	232 92.8	4.48	4.50
e.	I made many new friends	149 69.0	206 95.4	4.64		186 74.4	238 95.2	4.68	4.66
f.	Meeting so many people from around the world was a great experience	174 80.6	208 96.3	4.77		200 80.0	247 98.8	4.79	4.78
g.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day made me feel very good about myself	125 57.9	204 94.5	4.53		154 61.6	232 92.8	4.52	4.53
h.	World Youth Day was one of the best experiences of my life	167 77.3	209 96.7	4.73		210 84.0	244 97.6	4.82	4.78

Adult Pilgrims									
13		Madrid			Rio			CM	
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M		
a.	A strong sense of belonging	33 50.0	64 97.0	4.52		23 54.8	41 97.7	4.52	4.52
b.	A sense of exhilaration being part of something so big	35 53.0	60 90.9	4.47		25 59.5	41 97.7	4.57	4.52

c.	That I shared something special with the other pilgrims	34 51.5	62 93.9	4.50	23 54.8	41 97.7	4.52	4.51
d.	I enjoyed being able to share openly and talk with my friends	25 37.9	56 84.9	4.25	16 38.1	40 95.2	4.33	4.30
e.	I made many new friends	25 37.9	55 83.4	4.22	15 35.7	23 90.5	4.24	4.23
f.	Meeting so many people from around the world was a great experience	21 31.8	58 87.9	4.20	20 47.6	40 95.2	4.43	4.32
g.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day made me feel very good about myself	13 19.7	57 86.4	4.08	18 42.9	38 91.5	4.31	4.20
h.	World Youth day was one of the best experiences of my life	14 21.2	42 63.6	3.77	17 40.5	37 88.1	4.24	4.00

Table 6.48

Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.13. – Emotional/Social Dynamics

Pilgrims 18years and under								
13		Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong sense of belonging	26 65.0	35 87.5	4.58	16 69.6	23 100	4.70	4.64
b.	A sense of exhilaration being part of something so big	30 75.0	38 95.0	4.79	20 87.0	23 100	4.87	4.83
c.	That I shared something special with the other pilgrims	27 67.5	36 90.0	4.66	17 73.9	23 100	4.74	4.70
d.	I enjoyed being able to share openly and talk with my friends	23 57.5	36 90.0	4.50	17 73.9	23 100	4.74	4.62
e.	I made many new friends	28 70.0	37 92.5	4.71	17 73.9	22 95.6	4.70	4.71

Pilgrims 18years and under								
f.	Meeting so many people from around the world was a great experience	32 80.0	37 92.5	4.82 *	18 78.3	22 95.7	4.74	4.78 *
g.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day made me feel very good about myself	29 72.5	36 90.0	4.68	17 73.9	23 100	4.74 *	4.71 *
h.	World Youth day was one of the best experiences of my life	32 80.0	36 90.0	4.74 *	20 87.0	23 100	4.87 *	4.81

Adult Pilgrims								
13		Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	CM
a.	A strong sense of belonging	179 52.6	292 85.8	4.41	87 53.7	145 89.5	4.41	4.41
b.	A sense of exhilaration being part of something so big	191 56.2	292 85.9	4.47 *	98 60.5	152 93.8	4.52 *	4.50 *
c.	That I shared something special with the other pilgrims	202 59.4	304 89.4	4.53	97 59.9	155 95.7	4.55	4.54
d.	I enjoyed being able to share openly and talk with my friends	177 52.1	294 86.5	4.43	84 51.9	149 92	4.43	4.43
e.	I made many new friends	167 49.1	181 82.6	4.32 *	70 43.2	135 83.3	4.26	4.29 *
f.	Meeting so many people from around the world was a great experience	170 50.0	285 83.8	4.38 *	93 57.4	152 93.8	4.49	4.44 *
g.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day made me feel very good about myself	128 37.6	261 76.7	4.14	69 42.6	135 83.3	4.25 *	4.20 *
h.	World Youth day was one of the best experiences of my life	170 50.0	260 76.5	4.21 *	88 54.3	143 88.3	4.38 *	4.30 *

Comparisons of Means

Within the social/emotional cluster of items, statistically significant differences between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid	Items 13b, d, e, f, g & h
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio	Items 13e, f & h
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid	Items 13b, e, f, g & h
Pilgrims 18years & under Rio and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio	Items 13a, b, d, e, g & h
Students Madrid and Students Rio	Item 13b
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio	Item 13h
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Pilgrims 18years & under Rio	Nil
Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio	Nil
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio	Items 13b, d, e, f, g & h
All Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items 13a, b, e, f, g & h
All Students Madrid + Rio and all pilgrims 18years and under Madrid + Rio	Items 13b & g
All Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items d & h

Cluster analysis: Social/emotional dynamics

Both the quantitative and qualitative data sources indicated that younger pilgrims and adult pilgrims had different perceptions of, and points of emphasis regarding the social/emotional dynamics of World Youth Day. While both pilgrim groups consistently affirmed the ‘sense of exhilaration in being part of something so big’ (item 13b), there were differences between the cohorts in the other items which had elevated levels of ‘strong agreement’ and high Mean scores.

As noted in Tables 6.47 and 6.48, younger pilgrims consistently gave the higher ratings to items

- 13b A sense of exhilaration being part of something so big

- 13f Meeting so many people from around the world was a great experience, and
- 13h World Youth day was one of the best experiences of my life.

This was reflected in the Mean scores and in the pattern of participants' use of 'Strongly Agree' as a response. It was also shown in the overall levels of total agreement.

Group statistics from an Independent Samples T-Test confirmed the top three items for younger pilgrims: (13h: $M = 4.78$, $SD = .524$; 13f: $M = 4.78$, $SD = .488$; 13b: $M = 4.71$, $SD = .576$).

While the order of ranking occasionally varied according to the particular World Youth Day (Madrid or Rio de Janeiro) and /or the particular group of young pilgrims (student or 18years and under), the same three items remained consistent in their high endorsement from younger pilgrims. Similar in consistency, were the responses of the adult pilgrims. As noted in Tables 6.47 and 6.48, adult pilgrims consistently gave the higher ratings to items

- 13a A strong sense of belonging
- 13b A sense of exhilaration being part of something so big, and
- 13c I shared something special with the other pilgrims.

This was reflected in the mean scores, the percentage of pilgrims who 'Strongly Agreed, and the patterns of total agreement. An Independent Samples T-Test also confirmed these three items as having received the strongest levels of agreement from adult pilgrims: (13c: $M = 4.53$, $SD = .671$; 13b: $M = 4.49$, $SD = .727$; 13a: $M = 4.43$, $SD = .756$).

Tables 6.47 and 6.48 showed that younger pilgrims had a higher level of agreement with the various items associated with the emotional dynamics of World Youth Day (13a – h) than did the adult pilgrims. This was verified in the group statistics of an Independent Samples T-Test which compared their group means. Per item, adult pilgrims had a group Mean of 4.37 and younger pilgrims, 4.63.

A one-way ANOVA analysis also confirmed that pilgrims travelling with the wider Australian contingent typically gave a stronger endorsement to the cluster of items when compared with their counterpart pilgrim group from Sydney Catholic Schools. Across the cluster, the Mean scores for each item were Australian Youth ($M = 4.70$), Students from Sydney Catholic Schools ($M = 4.62$), Australian Adults ($M = 4.38$) and Adults from Sydney Catholic Schools (4.31). This 'descending order' pattern was reflected in the responses of 5 of the 8 items: 13c, 13d, 13e, 13g and 13h.

A one-way ANOVA analysis also examined the Mean differences between the different pilgrim groups according to religious typology. It confirmed that there was a statistically significant difference between group means with every item. This was evident with the four general typologies (Social Tourist, Meaning Seeker, Religious Believer and Devoted Pilgrim) and with the analysis on the eight typologies, when each group was subdivided into the two age related categories of younger and adult pilgrims (see Table 6.46 for overview).

When the eight typologies were analysed, young devoted pilgrims had the highest Mean score four times, and young religious believers, four times. The greatest variance in group Means for the eight typologies occurred with item 13h, with a range of 1.11. At the extremes were Younger Devoted Pilgrims ($M = 4.86$) and Adult Social Tourists ($M = 3.75$). ANOVA analysis detailed the statistically significant difference [$F(7, 1107) = 22.713, p = .000$]. A Scheffe post-hoc test showed that pilgrims' responses to item 13h reflected the presence of four separate homogeneous subsets.

ANOVA analysis of the broader group typologies combining younger and adult pilgrims showed a number of patterns. Firstly, the lowest level of item agreement was divided between the social tourists (13a-d) and devoted pilgrims (13e-h). In contrast, the meaning seekers were the most consistent group in their positive endorsement of the items (13e-h). Across the cluster, meaning seekers had the highest Mean score per item ($M = 4.55$), compared with religious believers ($M = 4.53$), devoted pilgrims ($M = 4.42$) and social

tourists ($M = 4.35$).

Complementing the quantitative data, the post-World Youth Day interviews highlighted the value that pilgrims attributed to the social & emotional dynamics of the international gathering. When asked to identify the highlight of their World Youth Day experience, pilgrims cited a range of the emotional dynamics mentioned in items 13a – h (see Table 6.65). Particular reference was made to ‘bonding with fellow pilgrims’, mentioned specifically by 25 young pilgrims (18.8% of youth interviewees). Interviewees also made reference to the emotional dynamics in identifying the impact of the World Youth Day experience (see Table 6.67) and in describing the international gathering (see Table 6.71). In each instance, the interviewees who made connections to the emotional dynamics were predominately younger pilgrims - (Table 6.67: 79% & Table 6.71: 83%).

The post-World Youth Day interviews corroborated a number of the key themes that emerged in the quantitative data. Characteristic of this were the comments offered by student pilgrim 95.

It [World Youth Day] was an incredible experience. It lived up to everything I was hoping it to be ... It was incredible – just the sheer number of people. It was hectic but they were all very friendly ... Oh I’m still on a bit of a high, on a bit of a buzz from the whole experience, it’s been pretty surreal. It’s going to be hard coming back to reality but you know I’ve always got the memories.

The pilgrim interviewees made frequent reference to friendships, of making friends with strangers and of strengthening friendships with fellow pilgrims. When asked about this, Adult pilgrim 130, a group leader, said,

In its simplest form, the awe of the experience meant that they wanted to share that experience and the response to the experience with each other ... it was such an overwhelming experience that they needed to speak about it ... this gave them something in common ... and for some I still think it was tough for them being away from home, so they provided a support structure for each other and I think that helped with the bonding.

6.13.4 Pilgrims' Responses to the Spiritual/Religious Dynamics Cluster

Table 6.49

Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.14. Spiritual Dynamics

Student Pilgrims								
14		Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong sense of God's presence	89	187	4.28	112	218	4.30	4.29
		41.2	86.6		44.8	87.2		
b.	I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	125	204	4.54	142	234	4.50	4.52
		57.9	94.5		56.8	93.6		
c.	I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	87	191	4.31	117	231	4.38	4.35
		40.3	88.4		46.8	92.4		*
d.	I was comfortable talking about my own religious beliefs	91	180	4.26	110	224	4.33	4.30
		42.1	83.3		44.0	89.6		
e.	I was comfortable in expressing my faith in front of others, including my peers	89	184	4.27	115	219	4.33	4.30
		41.2	85.2		46.0	87.6		
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith	121	193	4.46	158	228	4.52	4.49
		56.0	89.3	*	63.2	91.2		*
g.	Was a powerful spiritual experience	120	204	4.52	165	234	4.59	4.56
		55.6	94.5	*	66.0	93.6		*
h.	Enabled me to see 'organized religion' in a more positive light	75	180	4.18	111	217	4.27	4.23
		34.7	83.3		44.4	86.8		

Adult Pilgrims								
14		Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong sense of God's presence	21	56	4.16	15	39	4.29	4.23
		31.8	84.8		35.7	92.8		
b.	I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	40	61	4.55	22	40	4.48	4.52
		60.6	92.4		52.4	95.3		
c.	I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	17	53	4.05	9	36	4.02	4.04
		25.8	80.3		21.4	85.7		*
d.	I was comfortable talking about my own religious beliefs	30	59	4.39	20	38	4.36	4.38
		45.5	89.4		47.6	90.5		
e.	I was comfortable in expressing my faith in front of others, including my peers	33	58	4.42	22	41	4.50	4.46
		50.0	87.9		52.4	97.6		
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith	20	53	4.06	15	38	4.24	4.15
		30.3	80.3	*	35.7	90.5		*
g.	Was a powerful spiritual experience	16	53	4.00	18	39	4.31	4.16
		24.2	80.3	*	42.9	92.9		*
h.	Enabled me to see 'organized religion' in a more positive light	11	46	3.80	18	34	4.19	4.00
		16.7	69.7		42.9	81		

Table 6.50

Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.14. – Spiritual Dynamics

Pilgrims 18years and under								
14		Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong sense of God's presence	18	35	4.43	14	22	4.64	4.54
		45.0	87.5		60.9	95.7		
b.	I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	27	35	4.62	16	20	4.64	4.63
		67.5	87.5		69.6	87.0		
c.	I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	16	32	4.24	12	19	4.41	4.33
		40.0	80.0		52.2	82.6		
d.	I was comfortable talking about my own religious beliefs	20	35	4.41	14	21	4.59	4.50
		50.0	87.5		60.9	91.3		

Pilgrims 18years and under											
e.	I was comfortable in expressing my faith in front of others, including my peers	21	34	4.41		14	21	4.59		4.50	
		52.5	85.0			60.9	91.3				
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith	29	34	4.59		16	22	4.73		4.66	
		72.5	85.0			69.6	95.7				
g.	Was a powerful spiritual experience	28	34	4.65		19	22	4.86		4.76	
		70.0	85.0			82.6	95.6	*		*	
h.	Enabled me to see 'organized religion' in a more positive light	22	30	4.32		11	19	4.36		4.34	
		55.0	75.0			47.8	82.6				

Adult Pilgrims											
14		Madrid			Rio			CM			
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M				
a.	A strong sense of God's presence	151	279	4.29		82	146	4.38		4.34	
		44.4	82.0			50.6	90.1				
b.	I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	202	303	4.55		109	156	4.64		4.60	
		59.4	89.1			67.3	96.3				
c.	I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	109	254	4.09		50	123	4.04		4.07	
		32.1	74.7			30.9	76.0				
d.	I was comfortable talking about my own religious beliefs	196	298	4.52		82	144	4.36		4.44	
		57.6	87.6			50.6	88.9				
e.	I was comfortable in expressing my faith in front of others, including my peers	194	298	4.52		90	141	4.40		4.46	
		57.1	87.7			55.6	87.1				
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith	161	268	4.26		86	148	4.40		4.33	
		47.4	78.9			53.1	91.4				
g.	Was a powerful spiritual experience	157	275	4.28		87	143	4.38		4.33	
		46.2	80.9			53.7	88.3	*		*	
h.	Enabled me to see 'organized religion' in a more positive light	118	249	4.08		65	123	4.10		4.09	
		34.7	73.2			40.1	75.9				

Comparisons of Means

Within the spiritual/religious cluster of items, statistically significant differences between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid		Items 14c, f, g & h
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		Items 14c, f & g
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid		Items 14f & g
Pilgrims 18years & under Rio and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio		Items 14c, f & g
Students Madrid and Students Rio		Nil
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		Item 14h
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Pilgrims 18years & under Rio		Nil
Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio		Item 14d
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio		Items 14d, e, f, g & h
All Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio		Items 14f & g
All Students Madrid + Rio and all pilgrims 18years and under Madrid + Rio	Item 14a	
All Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items 14f & g	

Cluster analysis: Spiritual/religious dynamics

The Likert scale items in the 'spiritual/religious cluster', 14a – h, were tested for internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha for the 8 items was .882. The reliability analysis showed that the items had a high degree of correlation and if any were omitted, the Cronbach's Alpha value would be decreased. The items with particularly high correlation were 14f, 14g, 14a and 14h (descending order of item correlation).

As with the emotional dynamics, the quantitative and qualitative data sources indicated that younger pilgrims and adult pilgrims had different perceptions of, and points of emphasis regarding the spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day. While both pilgrim groups consistently

affirmed the ‘I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is’ (item 14b) there were differences between the cohorts in the other items which had high Mean scores and high levels of agreement. As noted in Tables 6.49 and 6.50, younger pilgrims consistently gave the higher ratings to items

- 14b I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is
- 14f The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith
- 14g Was a powerful spiritual experience

This was reflected in the mean scores, the percentage of pilgrims who ‘Strongly Agreed, and the patterns of total agreement. The top three items for younger pilgrims were: (14g: $M = 4.58$, $SD = .632$; 14b: $M = 4.53$, $SD = .653$; 14f: $M = 4.51$, $SD = .737$).

While the order of ranking occasionally varied, the same three items were consistently ranked as the top three for ‘total agreement’ from items 14a – h.

Similar in consistency, were the responses of the adult pilgrims. As noted in Tables 6.49 and 6.50, adult pilgrims consistently gave higher endorsement to items

- 14b I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is
- 14d I was comfortable talking about my own religious beliefs
- 14e I was comfortable in expressing my faith in front of others, including my peers

These three items as having received the strongest levels of agreement from adult pilgrims: (14b: $M = 4.57$, $SD = .653$; 14e: $M = 4.47$, $SD = .706$; 14d: $M = 4.45$, $SD = .712$).

Independent Samples T-Tests on the differences in ‘group Means’ for adult and younger pilgrims showed that there were statistically significant differences with six of the cluster items (14c – h). Mean scores for items in the ‘spiritual/religious cluster’ were lower than those in the ‘emotions cluster’. The overall item Mean for adult pilgrims was 4.31, and for younger pilgrims – 4.39. A one-way ANOVA analysis confirmed that the pattern of overall Mean scores per sub-group, per item, was the same for the

‘spiritual/religious cluster’ as it was for the ‘emotions cluster’: Australian Youth ($M = 4.50$), Students from Sydney Catholic Schools ($M = 4.38$), Australian Adults ($M = 4.33$) and Adults from Sydney Catholic Schools ($M = 4.23$).

A one-way ANOVA analysis also examined the Mean differences between the different pilgrim groups according to religious typology. With the exception of 14c, ‘I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others’ (4 typology analysis), there was evidence of statistically significant difference between group means with every item (both 4 and 8 group typology).

When the eight religious sub-groups were analysed, Young Devoted Pilgrims had the highest Mean score for seven of the eight items. The only exception was 14e, where they had the second highest Mean (4.51), and the Adult Devoted Pilgrims, the highest Mean score (4.63). Item 14e had a large variance between groups Means (Range: 1.08), and the Scheffe post-hoc test showed that pilgrims’ responses to the item reflected the presence of four separate homogeneous subsets. Item 14d had an even greater variance however (Range: 1.27). ANOVA analysis detailed the statistically significant difference in the group Means for the item [$F(1, 1100) = 15.251$, $p = .000$].

In relation to the ‘spiritual/religious cluster’, both devoted pilgrims and religious believers had responded similarly in their levels of agreement to individual items, both had the same Mean score per item ($M = 4.40$). The Mean score for meaning seekers was 4.27 and social tourists 3.89. With the exception of item 14c, both groups of social tourists had the lowest levels of item agreement, among the eight subgroups. Within the cluster, their Mean scores for items 14a, 14d and 14e were particularly low in comparison to their level of agreement with other items. For item 14c, ‘I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others’, the lowest level of agreement ($M = 4.04$) had come from devoted pilgrims (adult).

The qualitative data from the post-World Youth Day interviews highlighted

the value pilgrims' attributed to the spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day. While it corroborated a number of the key themes evident in the quantitative data, it also provided evidence of pilgrims' perceptions which were not explicitly detailed in the survey results.

When asked about the impact of their World Youth Day experience, pilgrims made reference to aspects of religion and spirituality (129 responses – 73.7% of interviewees). As detailed in Table 6.67, their responses were categorized into three broad categories: church (55 responses – 31.4% of interviewees), faith (43 responses – 24.6% of interviewees) and god (31 responses – 17.7% of interviewees).

Pilgrims made reference to a range of changes within their own religious disposition and outlook. These were exclusively positive. Particular reference was given to a 'changed awareness of the size and diversity of the Church' (26 responses - 14.9% of interviewees). Adult pilgrim 102 used the phrase, "I had my eyes opened to the universal Church." A further 6 pilgrims made reference to the 'universal nature' of the Church in their interviews. This corroborated the research participants' responses to questionnaire item 14b. Student interviewees made reference to the diverse worship styles of other young people. Student pilgrim 233 commented

I did see a lot of people who were practicing their faith in so many different ways. I personally prefer to be silent, you might even say reverent, whereas some of these other people they prayed their faith out loud and wore it on their shirt like a badge ... and they danced around and sang songs, which is an alternative I guess.

Fewer pilgrims from the wider Australian delegation participated in the semi-structured interviews following World Youth Day. Their twenty interviews represented 11.4% of all of the interviews conducted (175). When asked about the impact of their World Youth Day experience, pilgrims from the wider Australian delegation made more frequent reference (proportionately) to the spiritual/religious dynamics than did the pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools. Characteristic of their responses was their explicit reference to the importance of faith. Some mentioned having a

better understanding of their faith as a result of their World Youth Day experience and others referred to a new-found confidence to share their faith.

The significance of World Youth Day as an experience which nurtures pilgrims' faith was also borne out in pilgrims' descriptions of the international gathering (see Table 6.71). When asked to describe World Youth Day, 44.8% of all interviewees made reference to it by way of its spiritual/religious dynamics, the most common being - a 'faith journey', and a 'time to connect with others and God'. Adult pilgrim 118 commented,

I feel that it's changed my life, it's changed how I view my faith and more importantly it's changed my personal relationship with God, it's deepened it ... It's taken my idea of what faith is to a whole other new level ... Faith is no longer a set of moral codes that we have to follow but it's a way of life and it's something that you share and something that helps you belong to a community.

6.13.5 Pilgrims' Responses to the Pilgrimage Experience Cluster

Table 6.51

Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.15. – Pilgrimage Experience

Student Pilgrims								
15	I felt	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	128 59.3	205 94.9	4.57	174 69.6	236 94.4	4.63	4.60
b.	A sense of the sacred in the places I visited	129 59.7	205 94.9	4.57	120 48.0	229 91.6	4.39	4.48
c.	Overwhelmed to be in places I had only ever read or heard about	135 62.5	199 92.1	4.56	154 61.6	227 90.8	4.52	4.54
d.	I valued the opportunity to get away from my normal surroundings	158 73.1	206 95.3	4.72	191 76.4	243 97.2	4.76	4.74
e.	I appreciated exploring new places	174 80.6	210 97.3	4.81	190 76.0	248 99.2	4.76	4.79

Student Pilgrims										
f.	I came to appreciate that the small sacrifices and hardships bonded me with other pilgrims	112 51.9	198 91.7	4.46		161 64.4	240 96	4.61		4.54
g.	Being with so many others made my experience of pilgrimage very special	143 66.2	196 90.7	4.60		185 74.0	237 94.8	4.70		4.65
				*					*	
h.	World Youth Day was both an 'inner' as well as physical journey	137 63.4	199 92.1	4.57		155 62.0	238 95.2	4.57		4.57
i.	World Youth Day has sparked a desire in me to visit other Christian 'sacred places'	93 43.1	175 81.1	4.23		110 44.0	206 82.4	4.24		4.24

Adult Pilgrims								
15	I felt	Madrid			SA	Rio		CM
		SA	TA	M		SA	TA	
a.	A strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	32	62	4.47	24	42	4.57	4.52
		48.5	94		57.1	100		
b.	A sense of the sacred in the places I visited	44	61	4.59	15	39	4.29	4.44
		66.7	92.5		35.7	92.8		
c.	Overwhelmed to be in places I had only ever read or heard about	36	54	4.38	16	34	4.12	4.25
		54.5	81.8		38.1	81		
d.	I valued the opportunity to get away from my normal surroundings	39	60	4.52	23	39	4.45	4.49
		59.1	90.9		54.8	92.9		
e.	I appreciated exploring new places	47	62	4.70	30	42	4.71	4.71
		71.2	93.9		71.4	100		
f.	I came to appreciate that the small sacrifices and hardships bonded me with other pilgrims	32	59	4.41	28	40	4.62	4.52
		48.5	89.4		66.7	95.3		
g.	Being with so many others made my experience of pilgrimage very special	22	57	4.19	23	42	4.55	4.37
		33.3	86.3	*	54.8	100		*

h.	World Youth Day was both an 'inner' as well as physical journey	37	60	4.48	23	40	4.50	4.49
		56.1	90.9		54.8	95.3		
i.	World Youth Day has sparked a desire in me to visit other Christian 'sacred places'	31	60	4.41	14	35	4.17	4.29
		47.0	90.9		33.3	83.3		

Table 6.52

Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.15. – Pilgrimage Experience

Pilgrims 18years and under								
15	I felt	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	22	36	4.57	16	21	4.68	4.63
		55.0	90.0		69.6	91.3		
b.	A sense of the sacred in the places I visited	20	37	4.54	15	22	4.68	4.61
		50.0	92.5		65.2	95.6		
c.	Overwhelmed to be in places I had only ever read or heard about	20	33	4.41	12	20	4.45	4.43
		50.0	82.5		52.2	87.0		
d.	I valued the opportunity to get away from my normal surroundings	30	34	4.78	19	22	4.86	4.82
		75.0	85.0		82.6	95.6	*	*
e.	I appreciated exploring new places	29	36	4.81	17	22	4.77	4.79
		72.5	90.0		73.9	95.6		
f.	I came to appreciate that the small sacrifices and hardships bonded me with other pilgrims	21	33	4.47	17	22	4.77	4.62
		52.5	82.5		73.9	95.6		
g.	Being with so many others made my experience of pilgrimage very special	27	36	4.75	16	22	4.73	4.74
		67.5	90.0		69.6	95.7		*
h.	World Youth Day was both an 'inner' as well as physical journey	25	35	4.67	20	22	4.91	4.79
		62.5	87.5		87.0	95.7	*	
i.	World Youth Day has sparked a desire in me to visit other Christian 'sacred places'	25	32	4.56	11	20	4.41	4.49
		62.5	80.0		47.8	86.9		

Adult Pilgrims								
15	I felt	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	A strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	160	290	4.38	77	141	4.32	4.35
		47.1	85.3		47.5	87.0		
b.		189	288	4.46	74	134	4.24	4.35
	A sense of the sacred in the places	55.6	84.7		45.7	82.7		
c.	Overwhelmed to be in places I had only ever	147	250	4.16	66	114	4.02	4.09
		43.2	73.5		40.7	70.3		
d.	I valued the opportunity to get away from my	193	295	4.52	100	143	4.51	4.52
		56.8	86.8		61.7	88.2	*	*
e.	I appreciated	210	309	4.62	107	157	4.64	4.63
		61.8	90.9		66.0	96.9		
f.	I came to appreciate that the small sacrifices and	173	303	4.48	97	152	4.52	4.50
		50.9	89.1		59.9	93.9		
g.	Being with so many others made my experience of	184	291	4.47	92	149	4.48	4.48
		54.1	85.6		56.8	92.0		*
h.	World Youth Day was both an 'inner' as	203	304	4.57	105	150	4.56	4.57
		59.7	89.4		64.8	92.6	*	
i.	World Youth Day has sparked a desire in me to visit	174	269	4.35	68	122	4.13	4.24
		51.2	79.1		42.0	75.3		

Comparisons of Means

Within the pilgrimage cluster of items, statistically significant differences

between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid	Items 15d & g
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio	
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid	
Pilgrims 18years & under Rio and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio	
Students Madrid and Students Rio	
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio	
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Pilgrims 18years & under Rio	
Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio	
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio	
	Items 15d, e & g
	Items 15a, b, d, f, g & h
	Items 15b & f
	Items 15b & f
	Item 15h
	Items 15b & i
	Items 15c, d & g

All Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items 15a, b, c, d, g & h
All Students Madrid + Rio and all pilgrims 18years and under Madrid + Rio	Items 15h & i
All Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Item 15a

Cluster analysis: The experience of pilgrimage

As with each of the other clusters, the Likert scale items in the ‘pilgrimage cluster’, 15a – i, were tested for internal consistency. The Cronbach’s Alpha for the 9 items was .840. The reliability analysis showed that the items had a high degree of correlation and if any were omitted, the Cronbach’s Alpha value would be decreased. The items with particularly high ‘Corrected Item – Total Correlation’, and which if removed would have lowered the value of Cronbach’s Alpha were, 15g, 15h, 15b and 15f (descending order of item correlation).

Of the nine items in the ‘pilgrimage cluster’, it was item 15e, ‘I appreciated exploring new places’, that had the highest Mean score with both younger (M = 4.78, SD = .444) and adult pilgrims (M = 4.64, SD = .553). As noted in Tables 6.51 and 6.52, there was no consistent pattern between the age-related subgroups regarding strongly endorsed items.

Group statistics showed that in addition to item 15e, the top three items for younger pilgrims were: 15d (M = 4.75, SD = .496); 15g (M = 4.66, SD = .594) and 15a (M = 4.61, SD = .602). For adult pilgrims, these were: 15h (M = 4.55, SD = .678); 15d (M = 4.51, SD = .693) and 15f (M = 4.49, SD = .657). Younger pilgrims had a higher Mean score on all items, with the exception of 15i, ‘World Youth Day has sparked a desire in me to visit other Christian sacred places’.

Independent Samples T-Tests on the differences in ‘group Means’ for adult and younger pilgrims showed that there were statistically significant differences with five of the cluster items: 15a, 15c, 15d, 15e and 15g – h). The overall item Mean for adult pilgrims was 4.43, and for younger pilgrims, 4.58. Of the five clusters of questions (13- 17), the ‘pilgrimage cluster’ was where adult pilgrims recorded their highest Mean score per item.

The 'pilgrimage cluster' varied from both the 'emotions cluster' and 'spiritual religious cluster' in the order of its age related subgroups per their Mean score. A one-way ANOVA analysis confirmed that the pattern of overall Mean scores per sub-group, per item saw a reversal of order of the two adult groups: Australian Youth (M = 4.64). Students from Sydney Catholic Schools (M = 4.57), Adults from Sydney Catholic Schools (M = 4.45) and Australian Adults (M = 4.42).

A one-way ANOVA analysis also examined the Mean differences between the different pilgrim groups according to religious typology. Statistically significant differences between group means were not evident with items 15a, 15e, 15f and 15g (4 group typologies). When the ANOVA analysis was expanded to include the 8 typologies, only item 15f, 'I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others', was without significant statistical differences between the group means.

Within the context of the broad group typologies, the overall Mean scores per item were: Religious Believers (M = 4.54), Meaning Seekers (M = 4.50), Devoted Pilgrims (M = 4.48) and Social Tourists (M = 4.32). Of the four typologies, devoted pilgrims had the lowest level of agreement with items 15a, 15c, 15d and 15g. Each of these items related to the social aspects of pilgrimage.

When the typologies were analysed a number of patterns were evident. A Scheffe post- hoc analysis (both 4 group and 8 group typologies) revealed that, with the exception of items 15b, 15h and 15i, pilgrims' responses showed the existence a single homogeneous subset for the remaining items in the cluster. Items 15b, 15h and 15i related to the religious aspects of pilgrimage. Of the nine items, they had the larger variations in Mean, and in each instance social tourists indicated the lowest level agreement. By contrast the strongest endorsement came from young devoted pilgrims. These three items were the only items in the 'pilgrimage cluster' for which the young devoted pilgrims had the highest of the group means. Young religious believers had the highest Mean score for the remaining six items.

Pilgrims' affirmation of the pilgrimage experience was evidenced in their responses to question 17a of the survey where it was consistently rated the most rewarding of the World Youth Day experiences by each of the pilgrim cohorts (see Tables 6.55 and 6.56). This was true for those travelling with the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts and those with the wider Australian contingents.

The value of the pilgrimage experience was also highlighted in participants' responses to question 18 of the survey – to identify and describe their most memorable experience at World Youth Day. Tables 6.63 and 6.64 detail the five most popular experiences cited by each pilgrim cohort. In addition to the Vigil and its associated 'sleepout', aspects of the pilgrimage were mentioned consistently by each cohort. As shown in the tables, these elements were cited more frequently by younger pilgrims (av. 29.5% per cohort) than by their adult pilgrims (av. 23.4% per cohort).

The specific examples cited by pilgrims did vary according to the particular World Youth Day experience. This was borne out in the results of Independent Samples T- Tests which compared the responses of the Madrid and Rio cohorts. Four items were found to have statistically significant differences between the group means. Two of these items were rated more favourably by the Madrid cohort (13b & 13i) and two more favourably by the Rio cohort (13f & 13g). Each World Youth Day, and its associated pilgrimages, had its own particular appeal with pilgrims.

The affirmation of the pilgrimage experience was also evident in the qualitative data sources. In the post-World Youth Day interviews pilgrims were asked to identify the highlight of the World Youth Day experience. While some pilgrims identified more than one highlight, 38.5% of the total responses named aspects associated with the pilgrimage (see Table 6.65). 75% of the references to pilgrimage were made by young pilgrims. While fewer interviews were conducted with the wider Australian contingents (20 or 12.9% of all interviews), their references to pilgrimage were at a frequency consistent with that of the pilgrims who travelled with Sydney

Catholic Schools.

While interviewees typically made specific reference to the places they had visited, some pilgrims also connected the pilgrimage experience to a range of broader social, emotional and spiritual dynamics. Pilgrims made reference to the encounters with local communities, the opportunities for socializing and bonding with fellow others and times described as ‘God moments’. The interviewees also attributed great value to the diversity of experiences associated with the pilgrimages.

Student pilgrim 104 reflected,

Italy was amazing ... it was just an unbelievable experience, especially the Mass we had in the catacombs. All these places were so new to me and I thought they were just unbelievable, how is this happening to someone like me – like to all of us? How are we all here? Then we went to Assisi which was just so peaceful and then to the big Basilica in Florence ... the trip just seemed to get better and better.

When asked to describe why the pilgrimage to the Holy Land had been named as the personal highlight of World Youth Day, student pilgrim 125 responded,

Well it’s just so hard to put into words. Like, just seeing all the places, it brings out something ... like when I went to the birthplace of Jesus, I really got touched there ... I just felt the same sort of feeling – it’s not really exciting or spiritual but just a feeling of goosebumps you know.

6.13.6 Pilgrims' Responses to the Key Elements of World Youth Day Cluster

Table 6.53

Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.16. – Key Elements of World Youth Day

Student Pilgrims								
16	I felt	Madrid			SA	Rio		CM
		SA	TA	M		SA	TA	
a.	I had the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God	113 52.3	201 93	4.48	137 54.8	232 92.8	4.47	4.48
b.	I had the opportunity for personal and spiritual reflection	126 58.3	201 93	4.54 *	137 54.8	238 95.2	4.50	4.52 *
c.	That I was valued by the Church	73 33.8	168 77.8	4.11	96 38.4	219 87.6	4.24	4.18
d.	I was inspired by the words of the Pope and the other Church leaders	51 23.6	165 76.4	3.97 *	104 41.6	216 86.4	4.27 *	4.12
e.	I was challenged to think differently about my faith	76 35.2	168 77.8	4.12	116 46.4	223 89.2	4.35	4.24 *
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth were so different to my normal experience of Church	152 70.4	205 94.9	4.68 *	172 68.8	236 94.4	4.64	4.66 *
g.	World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics	117 54.2	188 87.1	4.41	147 58.8	227 90.8	4.49 *	4.45 *
h.	My experiences have sparked a desire in me to go to World Youth Day again	137 63.4	191 88.4	4.53 *	170 68.0	234 93.6	4.62 *	4.58 *

Adult Pilgrims								
16	I felt	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	I had the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God	30 45.5	57 86.4	4.34	15 35.7	38 90.5	4.24	4.29
b.	I had the opportunity for personal and spiritual reflection	22 33.3	51 77.2	4.03 *	16 38.1	33 78.6	4.12	4.08 *
c.	That I was valued by the Church	14 21.2	48 72.7	3.92	12 28.6	36 85.7	4.14	4.03
d.	I was inspired by the words of the Pope and the other Church leaders	9 13.6	37 56.0	3.58 *	25 59.5	41 97.6	4.57 *	4.58 *
e.	I was challenged to think differently about my faith	12 18.2	41 62.1	3.75	10 23.8	27 64.3	3.79	3.77 *
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth were so different to my normal experience of Church	19 28.8	56 84.9	4.14 *	21 50.0	36 85.7	4.29	4.22 *
g.	World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics	21 31.8	54 81.8	4.12	12 28.6	33 78.6	4.05	4.09 *
h.	My experiences have sparked a desire in me to go to World Youth Day again	21 31.8	44 66.6	3.94 *	13 31.0	35 83.4	4.00 *	3.97 *

Table 6.54

Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.16. – Key Elements of World Youth Day

Pilgrims 18years and under								
16	I felt	Madrid			Rio			CM
		SA	TA	M	SA	TA	M	
a.	I had the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God	24 60.0	33 82.5	4.57	16 69.6	22 95.7	4.73	4.65

Pilgrims 18years and under								
b.	I had the opportunity for personal and spiritual reflection	26	35	4.74	16	20	4.59	4.67
		65.0	87.5	*	69.6	87.0		*
c.	That I was valued by the Church	22	29	4.34	14	22	4.64	4.49
		55.0	72.5		60.9	95.7		
d.	I was inspired by the words of the Pope and the other Church leaders	17	29	4.26	13	22	4.59	4.43
		42.5	72.5		56.5	95.6		
e.	I was challenged to think differently about my faith	16	30	4.26	11	21	4.45	4.36
		40.0	75.0		47.8	91.3		
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth were so different to my normal experience of Church	22	34	4.60	12	18	4.27	4.44
		55.0	85.0		52.2	78.3		
g.	World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics	18	27	4.14	12	21	4.50	4.32
		45.0	67.5		52.2	91.3		
h.	My experiences have sparked a desire in me to go to World Youth Day again	23	30	4.46	21	22	4.95	4.71
		57.5	75.0		91.3	95.6	*	*

Adult Pilgrims								
16	I felt	Madrid			SA	Rio		CM
		SA	TA	M		SA	TA	
a.	I had the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God	172	288	4.42	88	148	4.45	4.44
		50.6	84.7		54.3	91.3		
b.	I had the opportunity for personal and spiritual reflection	151	268	4.27	78	144	4.35	4.31
		44.4	78.8	*	48.1	88.8		*
c.	That I was valued by the Church	143	259	4.23	74	142	4.32	4.28
		42.1	76.2		45.7	87.7		
d.	I was inspired by the words of the Pope and the other Church leaders	140	260	4.22	110	152	4.61	4.42
		41.2	76.5	*	67.9	93.8	*	*

e.	I was challenged to think differently about my faith	105 30.9	228 67.1	3.98	53 32.7	126 77.8	4.04	4.01
f.	The events and atmosphere of World Youth were so different to my normal experience of Church	137 40.3	266 78.2	4.23	72 44.4	129 79.6	4.16	4.20
g.	World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics	122 35.9	252 74.1	4.11	64 39.5	128 79	4.16	4.14
h.	My experiences have sparked a desire in me to go to World Youth Day again	149 43.8	245 72.0	4.16	85 52.5	138 85.2	4.31	4.24

Comparisons of Means

Within the key elements of WYD cluster of items, statistically significant differences between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid	Items 16b, d, e, f, g & h	
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid		
Pilgrims 18years & under Rio and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio		
Students Madrid and Students Rio		Items 16d & e
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio		
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Pilgrims 18years & under Rio		
Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio		
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio		Items 16a, b, c, e, f, g & h
All Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio		
All Students Madrid + Rio and all pilgrims 18years and under Madrid + Rio	Items 16c & d	
All Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items 16b, c, d, e & h	

Cluster Analysis: The Key Elements of World Youth Day

Tested for internal consistency, the Likert scale items in the ‘WYD elements cluster’, 16a – h, had a Cronbach’s Alpha of .827. The reliability analysis showed that the items had a high degree of correlation and if any were omitted, the Cronbach’s Alpha value would be decreased. The items with particularly high item correlation, and which if removed would have lowered the value of Cronbach’s Alpha were, 16c, 16a, 16b and 16e (descending order of item correlation).

The cluster of items pertaining to the key elements of World Youth Day (items 16a – h) had fewer consistent patterns of pilgrims’ levels of agreement (see Tables 6.53 and 6.54) than the ‘emotions cluster’ and the ‘spiritual/religious cluster’. Notwithstanding this, the quantitative data for items 16a – h showed that younger pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools and general population) gave a strong endorsement to items, 16b, 16h and 16f. This was substantiated by Independent Samples T-Tests which showed that these three items had received the higher levels of agreement from the younger pilgrims: 16f (M = 4.64, SD = .603); 15g (M = 4.59, SD = .684) and 15a (M = 4.54, SD = .611).

By contrast, the top three items for adult pilgrims were: 16a (M = 4.41, SD = .733); 15d (M = 4.28, SD = .848) and 15f (M = 4.26, SD = .846). Younger pilgrims had a higher Mean score on all items, with the exception of 16d, ‘I was inspired by the words of the Pope and other Church leaders’. With item 16c, ‘I felt that I was valued by the Church’, adult and younger pilgrims had the same Mean score (M = 4.21).

Independent Samples T-Tests on the differences in ‘group Means’ for adult and younger pilgrims showed that there were statistically significant differences with six of the cluster items: 16b, 16d, 16e, 16f, 16g & 16h. The overall item Mean for adult pilgrims was 4.20, and for younger pilgrims, 4.44.

A one-way ANOVA analysis confirmed that the pattern of overall Mean

scores per sub- group, per item, was the same for the ‘WYD elements cluster’ as it was the ‘spiritual/religious’ and ‘emotions’ clusters: Australian Youth (M = 4.48), Students from Sydney Catholic Schools (M = 4.41), Australian Adults (M = 4.24) and Adults from Sydney Catholic Schools (M = 4.05).

The pattern of participants’ responses reflected the order of Mean scores for six of the eight items. The two exceptions were items 16f, ‘The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day were so different to my normal experience of Church’ and 16g, ‘World Youth Day has something for everyone, not just Catholics’. For both items, students from Sydney Catholic Schools had the highest Mean score (16f: M = 4.66, 16g: M = 4.45). The overall item Mean for students in Sydney Catholic Schools was 4.41. By contrast, the item mean for adults travelling with Sydney Catholic Schools was 4.05. The quantitative data showed that a number of the items from the ‘WYD elements cluster’ had some response patterns from the adults travelling with Sydney Catholic Schools with comparatively low levels of Total Agreement. Typically, the items viewed most critically had group Mean scores below 4. Table 6.53 showed that 16d, 16e and 16h were the items with the lower levels of Total Agreement and each item had a Mean score below 4: 16d (M = 3.97), 16e (M = 3.76) and 16h (M = 3.96).

The quantitative data showed that some of the key elements of World Youth Day in Madrid were perceived negatively by some pilgrims when compared to pilgrims’ perceptions of the Rio experience. Independent Samples T-Tests on the differences in ‘group Means’ for the two total cohorts (Madrid and Rio) showed that there were statistically significant differences with five of the cluster items: 16c, 16d, 16e, 16g & 16h. The overall item Mean for all pilgrims was 4.24, and for the Rio pilgrims, 4.38. Rio pilgrims also had the higher Mean score for each individual item.

Independent Samples T-Tests found that between the two cohorts of younger pilgrims (Madrid and Rio) there were also statistically significant differences with the same items with the exception of 16e. Furthermore, the Rio youth had indicated a higher level of agreement with all of the cluster

items when compared to their Madrid counterparts.

Between the two cohorts of adult pilgrims (Madrid and Rio), an Independent Samples T-Test found that there was only one item with a statistically significant difference between the group means, 16d, 'I was inspired by the words of the Pope and the other Church leaders'. The Rio cohort gave greater endorsement to the influence Church leaders than did the pilgrims who travelled to Madrid: Madrid cohort ($M = 4.11$, $SD = .897$), Rio ($M = 4.60$, $SD = .640$); $t(534) = -7.578$, $p = .000$.

A one-way ANOVA analysis also examined the Mean differences between the different pilgrim groups according to religious typology. With the exception of item 16g, 'World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics', all items were found to have statistically significant differences between the group means. The highest Mean score for item 16g was registered by social tourists ($M = 4.44$).

Across the entire cluster of items, social tourists had the lowest Mean score ($M = 4.09$) per item, ranked behind devoted pilgrims ($M = 4.25$), meaning seekers ($M = 4.30$) and religious believers ($M = 4.38$). At the same time, only item 16b showed this pattern in the ranking of its group mean scores.

While each of the typology groups had the highest Mean score for at least one item in the cluster, only two of the groups expressed the lowest level of agreement with individual items. Social tourists had the lowest level of agreement with items 16a – d, and devoted pilgrims had the lowest level of agreement for items 16e – h. Within the typology of devoted pilgrims, pilgrim responses varied according to their subgroup. While adult devoted pilgrims had an overall Mean score of 4.18, younger devoted pilgrims had an overall Mean score of 4.56, the highest of any of the eight subgroups. Younger devoted pilgrims registered the highest mean score for five of the eight items, 16a, 16b, 16c, 16d and 16h. The quantitative data for this cluster of items showed that the differences between groups within the other typologies were not as pronounced.

The qualitative data of the post-World Youth Day interviews supported and

qualified the principal findings of the survey data. Interviewees, especially younger pilgrims, attested to World Youth Day being significantly different to their normal experience of Church (as per item 16f). Pilgrims referred to the scale of World Youth Day, the diversity of cultures and ways of worship, and the overall friendliness of their fellow pilgrims. They articulated a sense of belonging. Student pilgrim 180 commented,

It [World Youth Day] gave me a different perspective because I go to Mass every Sunday and I'm always seeing the same people because it's a small parish. Then when I went to World Youth Day I saw like millions of people ... it was just really mind blowing. We were with so many different people ... so many different cultures and everyone was so friendly.

A recurring theme of the post-World Youth Day interviews, especially with the younger pilgrims, was the desire to attend World Youth Day again. When asked whether they would attend World Youth Day in the future, 104 younger pilgrims said 'yes', unreservedly (78.8%). While expressing support for and interest in going to a future World Youth Day, 22 of the younger pilgrims said it would be contingent upon future circumstances (16.7%). 6 younger pilgrims expressed a lack of interest in going, or conveyed that their desire to attend had already been met (4.5%). While not typical of the interviewee responses, student pilgrim 262 said,

I don't feel like I am searching anymore ... I feel like I am a part of the Church properly and I understand what it is about. I don't feel the need to go to another World Youth Day. If I do it will be because I really want to go not because I feel like I am searching.

Of the adult pilgrims interviewed, 24 said 'yes' in a definitive way (55.8%); 15 were uncertain, but considered another World Youth Day to be a future possibility (34.9%); and 4 pilgrims indicated no interest in attending the international gathering again (9.3%).

6.13.7 Pilgrims' Responses to the World Youth Day Events and Activities Cluster

Table 6.55

Summary of Pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) Responses to Q.17. – World Youth Day Events and Activities

Student Pilgrims								
17		Madrid			Rio			
		VR	TR	M	VR	TR	M	
a.	The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	169 78.2	204 94.4	4.78	203 81.2	242 96.8	4.81	4.80
b.	Days in the Diocese	48 22.2	149 69.0	3.93	74 29.6	192 76.8	4.09	4.01
c.	Papal Welcome	49 22.7	133 61.6	3.82 *	127 50.8	225 90.0	4.43 *	4.13
d.	Opening Mass	43 19.9	149 69.0	3.87 *	145 58.0	233 93.2	4.52 *	4.20 *
e.	Catechesis Sessions	78 36.1	146 67.6	3.98	91 36.4	182 72.8	4.00	3.99
f.	Reconciliation	83 38.4	159 73.6	4.10	96 38.4	186 74.4	4.11	4.11 *
g.	Eucharistic Adoration	59 27.3	150 69.4	3.91	85 34.0	186 74.4	4.08	4.00
h.	Youth Festivals	112 51.9	163 75.5	4.29	138 55.2	210 84.0	4.39 *	4.34 *
i.	Stations of the Cross	49 22.7	137 63.4	3.82	80 32.0	177 70.8	3.98	3.90
j.	The Vigil	83 38.4	168 77.8	4.14 *	144 57.6	230 92.0	4.51 *	4.33 *
k.	The Final Mass	97 44.9	167 77.3	4.19 *	189 75.6	234 93.6	4.69 *	4.44 *

Adult Pilgrims								
17		Madrid			Rio			
		VR	TR	M	VR	TR	M	
a.	The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	43 65.2	59 89.4	4.67	35 83.3	41 97.6	4.81	4.74
b.	Days in the Diocese	16 24.2	30 45.4	3.75	13 31.0	29 69.1	4.00	3.88
c.	Papal Welcome	7 10.6	38 57.6	3.62 *	18 42.9	38 90.5	4.31 *	3.97
d.	Opening Mass	6 9.1	37 56.1	3.59 *	11 26.2	39 92.9	4.19 *	3.89 *

Adult Pilgrims								
e.	Catechesis Sessions	9	38	3.61	14	31	4.07	3.84
		13.6	57.6		33.3	73.8		*
f.	Reconciliation	15	35	3.79	8	19	3.64	3.72
		22.7	53.0		19.0	45.2		* *
g.	Eucharistic Adoration	19	37	3.85	12	30	4.00	3.93
		28.8	56.1		28.6	71.5		
h.	Youth Festivals	15	41	3.92	5	21	3.57	3.75
		22.7	62.1		11.9	50.0	*	*
i.	Stations of the Cross	7	33	3.43	11	32	3.98	3.71
		10.6	50.0		26.2	76.2		
j.	The Vigil	10	40	3.61	24	38	4.40	4.01
		15.2	60.7	* *	57.1	90.4	*	*
k.	The Final Mass	10	37	3.56	25	40	4.52	4.04
		15.2	56.1	* *	59.5	95.2	*	*

Table 6.56

Summary of Pilgrims' (Australian Delegation) Responses to Q.17. – World Youth Day Events and Activities

Pilgrims 18years and under								
17		Madrid			Rio			
		VR	TR	M	VR	TR	M	
a.	The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	27	34	4.79	19	20	4.95	4.87
		67.5	85.0		82.6	86.9	*	*
b.	Days in the Diocese	16	27	4.21	8	19	4.35	4.28
		40.0	67.5		34.8	82.6		
c.	Papal Welcome	15	28	4.26	13	18	4.50	4.38
		37.5	70.0		56.5	78.2		*
d.	Opening Mass	13	24	4.03	14	18	4.55	4.29
		32.5	60.0		60.9	78.2		*
e.	Catechesis Sessions	18	28	4.24	14	17	4.55	4.40
		45.0	70.0		60.9	73.9		
f.	Reconciliation	13	25	4.06	9	16	4.20	4.13
		32.5	62.5		39.1	69.5		
g.	Eucharistic Adoration	18	29	4.26	11	16	4.30	4.28
		45.0	72.5		47.8	69.5		
h.	Youth Festivals	17	29	4.32	13	17	4.50	4.41
		42.5	72.5		56.5	73.9	*	*
i.	Stations of the Cross	14	26	4.03	7	14	4.00	4.02
		35.0	65.0		30.4	60.8		
j.	The Vigil	14	25	4.03	19	20	4.95	4.49
		35.0	62.5		82.6	86.9	*	*
k.	The Final Mass	17	26	4.24	16	20	4.80	4.52
		42.5	65.0		69.6	86.9		

Adult Pilgrims								
17		Madrid			Rio			
		VR	TR	M	VR	TR	M	
a.	The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	204 60.0	297 87.4	4.58	107 66.0	154 95.0	4.64	4.61
b.	Days in the Diocese	84 24.7	149 43.8	3.71	68 42.0	111 68.5	4.09	3.90
c.	Papal Welcome	60 17.6	177 52.0	3.63	49 30.2	119 73.4	4.03	3.83
d.	Opening Mass	45 13.2	163 47.9	3.42	50 30.9	125 77.2	4.05	3.74
e.	Catechesis Sessions	124 36.5	258 75.9	4.17	67 41.4	133 82.1	4.21	4.19
f.	Reconciliation	134 39.4	232 68.4	4.15	58 35.8	104 64.2	4.01	4.08
g.	Eucharistic Adoration	149 43.8	244 71.7	4.23	73 45.1	118 72.9	4.17	4.20
h.	Youth Festivals	83 24.4	223 65.6	3.93	28 17.3	78 48.2	3.58	3.76
i.	Stations of the Cross	72 21.2	173 50.9	3.65	35 21.6	92 56.8	3.72	3.69
j.	The Vigil	115 33.8	229 67.3	3.95	91 56.2	143 88.3	4.46	4.21
k.	The Final Mass	105 30.9	214 63.0	3.86	102 63.0	146 90.2	4.55	4.21

Comparisons of Means

Within the WYD events cluster of items, statistically significant differences between means at level $p < .05$ [or $p < .001$ *] were as follows:

Students Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Madrid	Items 17d, e, f, h, i, j & k
Students Rio and Catholic Schools Adults Rio	Items 17d, f & h
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid	Items 17a, b, c, d & h
Pilgrims 18years & under Rio and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio	Items 17a, c, d, h, j & k
Students Madrid and Students Rio	Items 17b, c, d, g, j, & k
Catholic Schools Adults Madrid and Catholic Schools Adults Rio	Items 17c, d, e, h, i, j & k
Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid and Pilgrims 18years & under Rio	Items 17d, j & k

Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid and Australian Adult pilgrims Rio	Items 17b, c, d, h, j & k
All Students Madrid + Rio and all Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio	Items 17c, d, f, h, i, j & k
All Pilgrims 18years & under Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items 17a, b, c, d, h, i & k
All Students Madrid + Rio and all pilgrims 18years and under Madrid + Rio	Item 17e
All Catholic Schools Adults Madrid + Rio and all Australian Adult pilgrims Madrid + Rio	Items 17a, d, e, f & g

Cluster analysis: The principal events and activities of World Youth Day

The cluster of items relating to World Youth Day events and activities varied from the other clusters in its use of the five point Likert scale. Pilgrims were not asked to report on their level of agreement or disagreement with particular statements but to indicate their level of personal satisfaction with the various events at World Youth Day. Respondents used a five point scale, which consisted of Most Unrewarding (1), Unrewarding (2), Neutral (3), Rewarding (4) and Very Rewarding (5).

The items were tested for internal consistency and, as a cluster, had a Cronbach's Alpha of .825. The reliability analysis showed that the items had a high degree of correlation and if any of the eleven were omitted, the Cronbach's Alpha value would be decreased. The items with particularly high item correlation, and which if removed would have lowered the value of Cronbach's Alpha to the greatest level were, 17k, 17c, 17d and 17j (descending order of item correlation).

Notwithstanding the 'Corrected Item – Total Correlation' levels of 17k, 17c, 17d, and 17j, the quantitative data showed that these key events were perceived differently by the Madrid and Rio pilgrim cohorts (see Tables 6.55 and 6.56). Independent Samples T-Tests on the differences in 'group Means' for the two cohorts (Madrid and Rio) showed that there were statistically significant differences with seven of the eleven cluster items: 17a, 17b, 17c, 17d, 17i, 17j and 17k. Of these, the larger mean variances

occurred with the four aforementioned items: 17d (variance: .71), 17k (variance: .67), 17c (variance: .56) and 17j (variance: .52). Each of these items related to a major public event, or ‘hallmark’ event of the international gathering. In each instance, the Rio cohort had the higher Mean score. Within the cluster, the Rio cohort had the higher Mean score for all items, except for 17f (Reconciliation) and 17h (Youth Festivals). The overall item Mean for the Madrid pilgrims was 4.24, and for the Rio pilgrims, 4.38.

The pattern of pilgrims’ responses remained uniform when the cohorts were broken into age-related subgroups – Rio pilgrims gave a stronger endorsement to the events of World Youth Day, especially the principal liturgical events.

For younger pilgrims, the most significant difference between cohorts involved the Opening Mass. Madrid cohort ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .832$), Rio ($M = 4.52$, $SD = .639$); $t(509) = -9.831$, $p = .000$. For adult pilgrims, it involved the Final Mass. Madrid cohort ($M = 3.81$, $SD = 1.110$), Rio ($M = 4.54$, $SD = .678$); $t(571) = -8.539$, $p = .000$.

In the context of both World Youth Days, Independent Samples T-Tests on the differences in ‘group Means’ for adult and younger pilgrims showed that there were statistically significant differences with all but two of the cluster items, 17e and 17f. The overall item Mean for adult pilgrims was 3.99, and for younger pilgrims, 4.22. For both groups, this was the lowest overall Mean score of any of the clusters. The lower Means were shaped partly by the variances between the Madrid and Rio cohorts: Adult Pilgrims (Madrid: $M = 3.91$, Rio: $M = 4.14$) Younger Pilgrims (Madrid: $M = 4.09$, Rio: $M = 4.34$).

A one-way ANOVA analysis with the groups from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian contingent confirmed this pattern of response. Younger pilgrims endorsed the WYD events more positively than their adult counterparts. The analysis found that pilgrims from the Australian contingent recorded higher Mean scores per item than their equivalent schools subgroup. With the exception of the ‘pilgrimage cluster’

the pattern of overall Mean scores per sub-group was the same as the clusters, albeit the Means were lower: Australian Youth ($M = 4.31$), Students from Sydney Catholic Schools ($M = 4.21$), Australian Adults ($M = 4.00$) and Adults from Sydney Catholic Schools ($M = 3.91$).

The pattern of participants' responses reflected the order of Mean scores for six of the eleven items. For each item, a group of younger pilgrims had the highest Mean and an adult group had the lowest Mean. The group of Australian youth aged 18 years and younger had the highest Mean score for nine of the items. The two exceptions were item 17d, the Opening Mass ($M = 4.22$) and 17k, the Final Mass ($M = 4.46$). A one way ANOVA analysis found that statistically significant differences between group Means existed with every item.

A one-way ANOVA analysis also examined the Mean differences between the different pilgrim groups according to religious typology (four groups). It found that items 17a, 17b, 17c, 17i and 17j did not have statistically significant differences between the group means. For each of these items, a Scheffe post-hoc test confirmed that pilgrims' responses reflected the pattern of a single homogenous subset.

Across the entire cluster of items, social tourists had the lowest Mean score ($M = 3.88$), ranked behind devoted pilgrims ($M = 4.08$), religious believers ($M = 4.11$) and meaning seekers ($M = 4.14$). Only item 17a, 'the pilgrimage', followed this pattern in the ranking of its group mean scores.

As with the 'pilgrimage cluster' of items, when the ANOVA analysis was conducted with the eight typology subgroups, it was found that of the groups, the 'younger devoted pilgrims' had the highest overall Mean score for the cluster. The group of younger devoted pilgrims had in fact recorded the highest Mean score for each of the eleven items. By contrast, within the eight subgroups, the adult devoted pilgrims had recorded the lowest Mean score for four items: 17c, 17d, 17h and 17k.

The one-way ANOVA analysis showed that a large number of items had statistically significant differences between the group means. This was true

of the analyses with both the four group and eight group typologies. With the eight group typologies all items were found to have statistically significant mean differences. With the four groups, this was true of six items: 16d, 16e, 16f, 16g, 16h and 16k. . The larger Mean variances were found with 17j, ‘Eucharistic Adoration’ (variance: .82), 17e, ‘Catechesis’ (variance: .98) and 17f, ‘Reconciliation’ (variance: 1.04). A Scheffe post-hoc test showed the presence of three separate homogenous subsets in the pattern of pilgrims’ responses to item 17f. ANOVA analysis detailed the statistically significant difference in the group Means for the item [F (7, 1077) = 6.785, $p = .000$].

While the quantitative data for the ‘WYD events’ cluster represented the lowest group Mean scores of all the clusters, the qualitative data indicated that pilgrims had a high degree of satisfaction with the international gathering. As noted in Table 6.72, Madrid pilgrims raised concerns about the organization of some of the principal events (17 pilgrims, 15.3% of cohort) and the impact of crowds on the spiritual ambiance of them (9 pilgrims, 8.1% of cohort), but these concerns were outweighed by the positive comments about World Youth Day week. While not restricted to citing only one experience, 67 Madrid pilgrims (60.1%) and 48 Rio pilgrims (75.0%) named an event from World Youth Day week as the highlight of their time away (see Table 6.65).

Pilgrims primarily made reference to the principal events of the week, especially those involving the Pope. More than 10% of the interviewees made reference to: the Vigil (14.9%); the papal arrival (13.1%); the Opening Mass (13.1%) and the Final Mass (11.4%). A number of pilgrims merged the activities of the Vigil, sleepout and final Mass into the one.

Interviewees’ regular reference to the Vigil, and the associated ‘sleepout’ was corroborated by the qualitative responses to question 18, an open question on pilgrims’ most memorable World Youth Day experience. The Vigil was named by each of the pilgrim subgroups as among the top five experiences to be cited. For several of the groups, it was the most cited experience (Madrid student pilgrims – 18.5% respondents; Rio youth –

23.8% of respondents) – see Tables 6.63 and 6.64.

In describing the Vigil, a number of pilgrims made reference to it being a God moment, and many others described particular aspects of the spiritual ambiance, particularly the moments of unexpected silence. Speaking of the Madrid Vigil, Adult pilgrim 95 commented,

It's incredible. It's as if the storm made everything conducive to prayer. It just calmed everything, and then the Pope came forward with the Blessed Sacrament and everything just went quiet. Two million people went quiet. I'm getting goosebumps just thinking about it.

When asked for the highlight of World Youth Day, student pilgrim 253 offered a similar insight,

The sleep out for sure, and especially during the Mass when we had the moment of adoration and throughout the whole of Copacabana Beach there was complete silence. That felt amazing.

In addition to the principal events, which interviewees saw as a chance to bond with others, express their faith and experience the Church differently, pilgrims also cited a number of the other smaller World Youth Day events. Among the student pilgrims, the opportunities for catechesis were viewed positively by a number of those interviewed. Student pilgrim 146 commented,

Catechesis was really good because they go so deep, they're very deep. It was like an inner journey for me because it makes you discover your true self ... and listening to others was really good ... and the fact that later we all spoke about it with each other, and we felt comfortable in doing that is amazing. I think that's what mainly brought us together.

6.14 HIGHER ORDER STATISTICAL ANALYSES: THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS AND PILGRIMS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY EXPERIENCE

Higher order statistical analyses – t tests, ANOVA and Factor Analysis –

were used to investigate associations between sample characteristics and individual's perceptions of the World Youth Day experience.

6.14.1 Differences in Pilgrims' Perceptions and Evaluations of World Youth Day According to Gender and Age

Gender differences across the whole sample of both World Youth Days:

An Independent Samples T-Test was conducted on each of the 44 Likert scale items in the Post-World Youth Questionnaire to test for Mean differences between males and females in the total sample across both World Youth Days. Of the 44 items, 36 had a statistically significant Mean difference between the two groups, 24 items at $p = <.05$ and at $p = <.001$ for 12 items. In each instance, females had the higher Mean score. Two items, 13b and 13h had Mean differences greater than .25.

While males had a higher Mean for the Total Religion Score, Male ($M = 15.98$); Female ($M = 15.28$), they had the higher Mean score for only 1 of the 44 items, 17f 'Reconciliation at World Youth Day' ($M = 4.09$). The Mean ($M = 3.78$) for item 17i, 'Stations of the Cross at World Youth Day', was the same for both males and females.

The items without a statistically significant Mean difference were: 14d, 14f, 16g, 17b, 17c, 17f, 17i and 17k. Five of the items were World Youth Day events and activities, including: Days in the Diocese (17b), the Papal Welcome (17c), Reconciliation (17f), Stations of the Cross (17i) and the Final Mass (17k). The remaining items were: '*I was comfortable talking about my own religious beliefs*' (14d), '*The events and atmosphere strengthened my faith*' (14f) and '*World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics*' (16g).

Gender differences in perceptions among young pilgrims: T-Tests on Mean differences related to gender were conducted separately with the population samples of younger and adult pilgrims. For younger pilgrims, 19 of the 44 Likert Scale items showed a statistically significant Mean difference between males and females. Of these, 15 items were at $p = <.05$ and 4 items at $p = <.001$. Of the 19 items, 13 were concentrated in two of

the clusters, (Social/Emotional & Pilgrimage) and accounted for 76.5% of the items.

For the younger pilgrims, females had a higher Mean for the Total Religion Score: Male (M = 13.74); Female (M = 13.84). Females also recorded a higher Mean for 40 of the 44 items. The exceptions included three World Youth Day activities/events – Reconciliation, Eucharistic Adoration and Stations of the Cross, where males recorded a higher Mean score. Furthermore, the Mean (M = 4.43) for item 16g, *‘World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics’* was the same for both males and females.

Gender differences in perceptions among adult pilgrims: For the adult pilgrims, 24 items showed statistically significant differences between the Mean scores of males and females - 14 items at $p < .05$ and 8 items at $p < .001$. An Independent Sample T-Test also showed a statistically significant Mean difference between adult male and female pilgrims on the basis of the Total Religion Score ($p < .001$). Males (M = 17.75, SD = 2.66), Females (M = 16.65, SD = 2.93); $t(595) = 4.795, p < .001$. By contrast, females had the higher Mean score for all but 1 of the 44 Likert scale items. For item 14d, *‘I was comfortable in talking about my own religious beliefs’*, females and males recorded the same Mean score (M = 4.45).

ANOVA analysis of differences according to gender/age groups: A one-way ANOVA analysis of the total sample across both WYDs confirmed the statistically significant differences between groups on the basis of gender and age. It also showed then added complexity in these differences by age. In the comparison of group Means for young males, young females, adult males and adult females, the ANOVA analysis showed that for 42 of the 44 items there were statistically significant differences between the subgroups. Of these, 15 items were at $p < .05$ and 4 items at $p < .001$. The two items for which there were no statistical between the groups were 15f, *‘I came to appreciate that small sacrifices and hardships bonded me with other pilgrims’* ($p = .079$) and 17f *‘Reconciliation’* ($p = .394$). In both instances the four subgroups responded as one homogenous grouping.

Scheffe post-hoc tests within the ANOVA showed the complex interrelationship between gender, age and Mean scores, and identified several patterns in participants' responses. Typically, the ranking of group Means either followed a 'gender' related pattern or an 'age' related pattern. The ranking pattern detailed in Table 6.57 was the most frequent. It was the order of group Means for 25 of the 44 items (56.8%).

Table 6.57

'Age Related' Ranking of Group Means for the Total Population Sample Response Data to Q. 13f. 'Meeting so many People from Around the World was a Great Experience'

Gender/Group	Number	Mean
Male Adult	269	4.32
Female Adult	321	4.45
Male Youth	219	4.71
Female Youth	306	4.83

Within the 'age related' rankings of Mean scores, the Scheffe post-hoc tests showed that females consistently had the higher mean in both subgroups. In identifying homogeneous subsets, the Scheffe post-hoc tests also showed that group Means followed a pattern of 'gender related' ranking (see Table 6.58 as an example).

Table 6.58

'Gender Related' Ranking of Group Means Response Data to Q. 13d. 'I Enjoyed being able to Share Openly and Talk with my Friends'

Gender/Group	Number	Mean
Male Adult	269	4.33
Male Youth	219	4.41
Female Adult	321	4.46
Female Youth	306	4.56

The pattern of two homogeneous subsets, each based on gender, occurred with 12 of the 44 items. Of these, younger pilgrims had the higher Mean in both subgroups eight times. These were generally in relation to Likert scale items that explored the emotional and social dynamics of World Youth Day and the concept of pilgrimage. Within the same pattern, adult pilgrims recorded the higher scores in response to items: 14b, 'I came to appreciate

how big the Catholic Church is'; 16d, 'I was inspired by the words of the Pope and other Church leaders'; and 17e, the Catechesis sessions during World Youth Day week.

A salient theme of the quantitative data was the strength of item validation given by young females, especially in regards to items associated with the social/emotional dynamics of World Youth Day. A Scheffe post-hoc test showed that for a number of these items, young females were a distinct homogenous subset (13b, 15d, 15e, 15g, 17h).

ANOVA analysis of age-related differences in the adult pilgrims:

ANOVA analysis on the 44 Likert Scale items showed that there were statistically significant differences between age subgroups of adults for 26 items, 15 items were at $p < .05$ and 4 items at $p < .001$. These items were spread across the five clusters of items in the questionnaire. They were more common in the cluster of questions relating to the 'key elements of World Youth Day', where all but one item – 16g, 'World Youth Day has something for everyone not just Catholics', showed significant statistical differences between the groups.

A Scheffe post-hoc test was conducted on the 26 items that showed an overall statistically significant difference in group means so as to confirm where the differences between groups occurred. An example of a Scheffe post-hoc test is shown in Table 6.59. The test showed the presence of three separate homogenous subsets in the pattern of pilgrims' responses to item 13h.

Table 6.59

Homogenous Subsets of Adult World Youth Day Pilgrims by Age (Scheffe Post Hoc Test) Q.13h. World Youth Day was one of the best Experiences of my Life
Scheffea,b

Age Categories	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
36 Years plus	161	3.86		
30-35 Years of age	98	4.08	4.08	
25-29 Years of age	137		4.30	4.30
19-24 Years of age	194			4.51

Sig.		.277	.304	.332
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Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

- a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 138.556.
- b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

The descriptive statistics showed that the Mean of the Total Religious Score increased with each ascending age group: 19 – 24 years (M = 16.27); 25 – 29 years (M = 16.74); 30 – 35 years (M = 17.46) and 36 years plus (M = 18.34). But this pattern was not evident in any of the 44 items. For 18 of the items the pattern was the reverse, where Means descended according to age. Adult pilgrims aged 36 years plus had the highest Mean for only one item – 13a, ‘I felt a strong sense of belonging’. By contrast, the youngest group of adult pilgrims – those aged 19 – 24 years, had the highest group Mean for 30 of the items (68.2%).

6.14.2 Differences in Student Pilgrims’ Perceptions and Evaluations of World Youth Day According to their Religious Background/Level of Religiosity

As indicated earlier in the chapter in Table 6.30 (see section 6.9.1), of the student pilgrims who participated in the World Youth Day research (both Madrid and Rio), 60 (12.9%) were of a religious background other than Catholic. Of these, 47 students identified as being from another Christian denomination.

Catholic – other Christian denomination: An Independent Samples T-Test was conducted on each the 44 items to test for differences in Means between the two larger groups of student pilgrims, those who identified as being Catholic and those who identified with another Christian denomination. Of the 44 items, only one item - 16g, ‘World Youth Day has something for everyone, not just Catholics’, had a statistically significant Mean difference between the two groups ($p = <.05$). The other Christian students had a higher Mean than did the Catholic students: Catholic (M = 4.42, SD = .771), Other Christian Denomination (M = 4.67, SD = .560); $t(66.416) = -2.814, p = .006$.

Catholic, other Christian, other World Religion and No religion: A one-way ANOVA analysis showed the statistically significant differences between sub-groups in relation to item 16g [$F(3, 453) = 3.03, p = .029$]. This analysis included those students who identified as being from a non-Christian religion (n.8), and those with no religion (n.3). A Scheffe post-hoc test on the item showed that Catholics had the lowest Mean of the four groups: Catholic (M = 4.42); Other Christian Denomination (M = 4.67); No Religion (M = 4.88) and other World Religion (M = 5.00). Student pilgrims from backgrounds other than Catholic endorsed World Youth Day as an event that catered for religious diversity.

While the Independent Samples T-Test had only examined the relationship of Means for two sample groups (Catholics and Other Christian Denominations), the ANOVA analysis examined the relationship between and within all four sub-groups. It showed that 13 items had statistically significant differences between groups, with 9 items at $p < .05$ and 4 items at $p < .001$. Differences in pilgrims' valuations were more prominent for items concerned with the spiritual and religious elements of World Youth Day than with social emotional/psychological dynamics. Of the 13 items with significant statistical difference between groups, 12 were related to spiritual/religious elements and dynamics. The final item was Eucharistic Adoration.

The descriptive statistics of ANOVA analysis showed that the 'Catholic' group of students had the highest Mean score for only 2 of the 13 items - 14f, 'The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith' (M = 4.53) and 16c, 'I felt that I was valued by the Church' (M = 4.20).

With the exception of the 'No Religion' group having the lowest Mean of the four groups for 33 of the 44 items, the ANOVA analysis confirmed that there was no one distinct pattern of pilgrims' responses to the Likert Scale items. Rather, Catholics, Christians of other denominations and pilgrims of other World Religions affirmed various aspects of the World Youth Day experience. A Scheffe post-hoc analysis test showed that for 29 of the 44 items, the pattern of pilgrims' responses indicated that the presence of one

homogenous subset. An example is shown in Table 6.60.

Table 6.60

Homogenous Subsets of Student World Youth Day Pilgrims by Religion (Scheffe Post Hoc Test) Q.15e. I Appreciated Exploring New Places
Scheffe^{a,b}

		Subset for alpha = 0.05
5. Religion	N	1
Catholic	401	4.77
Other Christian denomination	46	4.85
No religion	8	4.88
Other world religion	3	5.00
Sig.		.782

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 8.289.

b. The group sizes are unequal. The harmonic mean of the group sizes is used. Type I error levels are not guaranteed.

6.14.3 Differences in Pilgrims' Perceptions and Evaluations of World Youth Day According to their Place of Birth

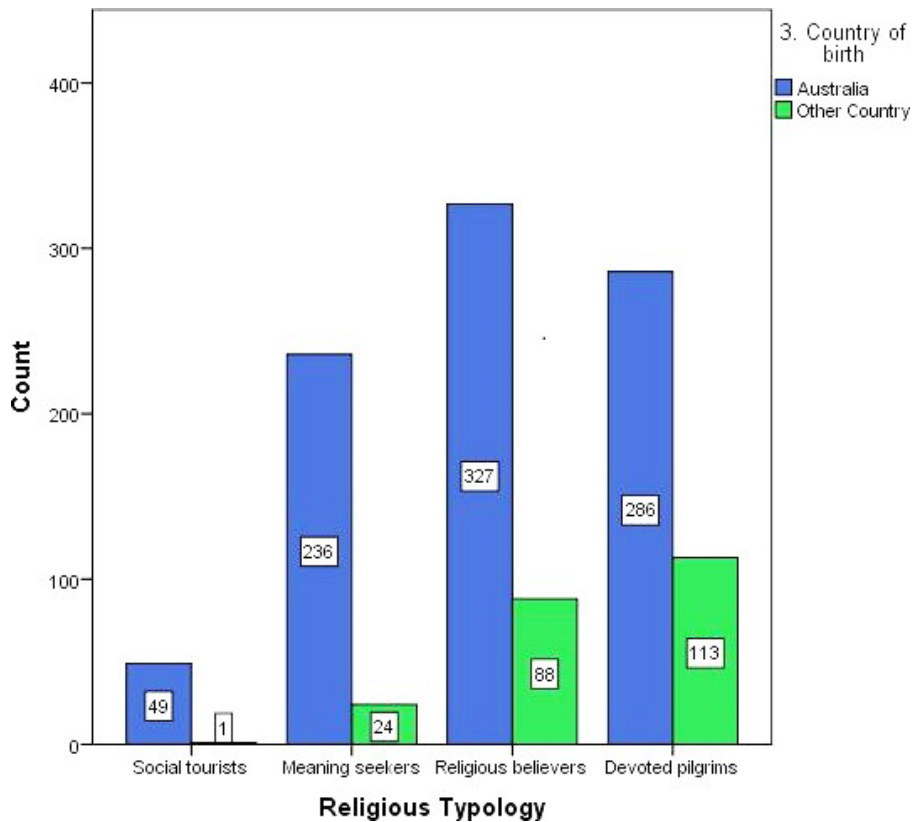
Cultural differences across the whole sample of both World Youth

Days: An Independent Samples T-Test showed that pilgrims born overseas had a higher Mean for the Total Religion Score ($M = 16.98$; $SD = 3.52$) than pilgrims born in Australia ($M = 15.24$; $SD = 2.51$). The T-Test showed a statistically significant Mean difference between the two groups for the Total Religion Score and for each of the four items used in the calculation of the TRS. For the Total Religion Score and the four items, the difference was at $p = <.001$.

As shown in Graph 6.1, those pilgrims born overseas had higher proportional representations of their total group in the religious typologies associated with a strengthened personal religiosity than did those pilgrims born in Australia.

Graph 6.1

Religious Typologies of World Youth Day Pilgrims According to Place of Birth.



Pilgrims born overseas recorded a higher Mean score for 36 of the 44 Likert scale items. Of the 8 items where pilgrims born in Australia had the higher Mean, 5 were underpinned by the social/emotional dynamics of World Youth Day and 2 were events at the international gathering (Opening Mass & Youth Festival). One item related directly to pilgrims' perception of the Church – 16f 'the events and atmosphere were so different to my normal experience of Church.'

A T-test conducted on the 44 items showed that 10 had a statistically significant Mean difference between the two groups, each at $p = <.05$. Of the 10 items, 7 were underpinned by the spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day (14a, 14e, 14f, 15h, 15i, 16a and 16d). The remaining items were World Youth events: Reconciliation (17f), Eucharistic Adoration (17g) and the Youth Festivals (17h).

6.15 KEY PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA AS HIGHLIGHTED BY FACTOR ANALYSIS

As detailed in Chapter 2 (2.5.2), a Principal Components Factor Analysis (PCA) was applied in stages to participants' responses to the 44 Likert Scale items of the post- World Youth Day questionnaire.

It was anticipated that the Factor Analysis would reduce the number of variables and explore the questionnaire data for correlation patterns. Furthermore, it was to test some of the hypotheses associated World Youth Day which had influenced the research design. Namely, it would test if the latent variables, or factors, were consistent with the 'clusters' of items within the questionnaire.

In accord with the principal aim of Factor Analysis in data reduction, the final Factor Analysis was applied to 17 items drawn from Qs 13-16 to try to identify what might the principal explanatory factors underpinning the variance in the responses to the items. This set of items had a Cronbach's Alpha of .931, which showed a high level of internal consistency in the responses to the items.

Within the Principal Components Analysis, the Kaiser-Myer-Oklin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .950, which confirmed the degree of common variance as strong. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity had a *p* value of <.001, which together with the Kaiser-Myer-Oklin measure, confirmed that the items were suitable for Factor Analysis. Given the degree of correlation between the variables, the Oblimin rotation method was chosen.

The analysis yielded two components with Eigenvalues of one or more, explaining 55.28% of the variance. Component 1 accounted for 48.49% of the variance and Component 2, 6.79%. No variable cross-loaded on both components, as in earlier stages of analysis. Each variable was loaded on a single component (see Table 6.61).

Table 6.61*Final Factor Analysis: Pattern Matrix*

*Columns three and four show the correlation between the items and the two principal factors *

Item		Component	
		1	2
16a	I had the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God	.870	
16c	I felt that I was valued by the Church	.838	
16b	I had the opportunity for personal and spiritual reflection	.777	
14a	I felt a strong sense of God's presence	.727	
14f	The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith	.725	
14h	World Youth Day enabled me to see organized religion in a more positive light	.709	
14g	World Youth Day was a powerful spiritual experience	.688	
15h	World Youth Day was both an inner as well as physical journey	.602	
16e	I was challenged to think differently about my faith	.559	
15b	I felt a sense of the sacred in the places I visited	.442	
13e	I made many new friends		.852
13c	I felt that I shared something special with the other pilgrims		.708
13b	I felt a sense of exhilaration being part of something so big		.669
13g	The events and atmosphere made me feel very good about myself		.664
13h	World Youth Day was one of the best experiences of my life		.604
15g	Being with so many others made my experience of pilgrimage very special		.573
15f	I came to appreciate that small sacrifices and hardships bonded me with other pilgrims		.569

* Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The two factors identified by the Principal Components Analysis were identified as:

Factor 1 – named the **Religious Factor**, related to explicitly spiritual/religious dynamics. It encompassed pilgrims' sense of the sacred and their relationship with God; their sense of Church; and their personal faith journey.

Factor 2 – named the **Social Factor**, related to emotional and social dynamics. It encompassed pilgrims' interaction and solidarity with others as well as their heightened sense of meaning and personal fulfillment.

The Factor Analysis results confirmed earlier judgement about the importance of both the religious and social/psychological dimensions as areas to be investigated in the first documentary/analytical part of the study and in the construction of the questionnaire.

The Factor Analysis results showed a consistency between key dimensions in the data and the psychological/religious categories investigated in the philosophical, analytical part of the study. This also suggested the appropriateness of having the religious and social dimensions therefore prominent in the interpretation of the meaning and significance of the empirical data.

6.16 QUALITATIVE DATA FROM PILGRIMS' RESPONSES TO THE WORLD YOUTH DAY EXPERIENCE

6.16.1 Introduction

Qualitative data about pilgrims' reflections on their experience of World Youth Day came from two sources. In addition to two open-ended questions included in the post- World Youth Day questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were conducted after each World Youth Day. As the *purposive sample* for the research project, a greater number of interviews were conducted with pilgrims from the Sydney Catholic Schools delegations (89%) than with pilgrims from the wider Australian contingent (see Table 6.62).

Table 6.62*Post-World Youth Day Interviews*

*Information relating to pilgrim numbers exclusively from Sydney Catholic Schools is shown in parenthesis *

Group	Madrid	Rio de Janeiro	Total	Percentage
Young Pilgrims	88 (86)	45 (42)	133 (128)	76%
Adult Pilgrims	23 (15)	19 (12)	42 (27)	24%
Total	111 (101)	64 (54)	175 (155)	
Percent	63.4%	36.6%		100%

The interviews were conducted in the six months following World Youth Day. The questionnaires were completed during the same time period as a simultaneous approach to ‘mixed methods’ had been adopted. Transcriptions of all interviews were coded, beginning with key words and proceeding to statements used to define the categories.

The qualitative data was thus converted into quantitative measures according to the frequency of participants’ references.

6.16.2 Significant and Memorable Experiences for World Youth Day Pilgrims

In both the post-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, all pilgrims were asked to identify and describe their most memorable experience at World Youth Day.

Data from the open-ended survey questions: Of the student pilgrims who completed the questionnaire, 82.4% (Madrid) and 95.6% (Rio de Janeiro) responded with written comments. Of the accompanying adult pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools, 78.8% (Madrid) and 95.5% (Rio de Janeiro) did the same. Table 6.63 lists the top five experiences as indicated by each of the respective pilgrim groups – adults and students.

Table 6.63

The Top Five Experiences of World Youth Day According to Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools

Response Data for Q.18. Identify and Describe your most Memorable Experience at World Youth Day ... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Rank		Madrid Students	
		N	%
1.	The experience of the Vigil and the 'sleepout'	33	18.5
2.	The pilgrimage through Italy	22	12.4
3.	Connect with other pilgrims and making new friends	18	10.1
4.	Exploring new places and cultures	14	7.9
5.	The pilgrimage to the Holy Land	11	6.2
		Rio Students	
		N	%
1.	The opportunity to participate in 'mission work'	53	22.2
2.	The Vigil, 'sleepout' and Final Mass	52	21.8
3.	Visiting a number of highly significant places	34	14.2
4.	Connect with other pilgrims and making new friends	24	10.0
5.	To see and listen to the Pope	18	7.5
		Madrid Adults	
		N	%
1.	The pilgrimage	10	19.2
2.	Accompanying the students and watching them grow in faith through their experiences	8	15.4
3.	The tremendous 'faith witness' of those gathered for World Youth Day	6	11.5
3.	The experience of the Vigil and the 'sleepout'	6	11.5
5.	The 'joyful' atmosphere of World Youth Day week	5	9.6
		Rio Adults	
		N	%
1.	The opportunity to participate in 'mission work'	10	25.0
2.	The experience of the Vigil and the 'sleepout'	7	17.5
3.	To see, listen to and be inspired by the Pope	6	15.0
4.	Accompanying the students and watching them grow in faith through their experiences	5	12.5
4.	The Final Mass	5	12.5

In the post-World Youth Day questionnaires pilgrims from the 'wider' Australian contingent were also asked to identify and describe their most

memorable experience at World Youth Day.

Of the pilgrims aged Under 18 who completed the questionnaire, 82.5% (Madrid) and 91.3% of their Rio de Janeiro counterparts provided a written response to the particular question. 79.4% of adult pilgrims (Madrid) and 91.4% of Rio adult pilgrims did the same. Table 6.64 details the top five experiences of each of the respective pilgrim groups who travelled with the wider Australian contingent.

Table 6.64

The Top Five Experiences of World Youth Day According to Pilgrims from the Australian Contingent

Response Data for Q.18. Identify and Describe your most Memorable Experience at World Youth Day ... Post-World Youth Day Questionnaire

Rank		Madrid 18years & under	
		N	%
1.	Discovering and experiencing sacred places through the pilgrimage	6	18.1
2.	Days in the Diocese	5	15.1
3.	Vibrant atmosphere to share and grow in faith	5	15.1
4.	The Youth Festivals	4	12.1
4.	The experience of the Vigil and the 'sleepout'	4	12.1
4.	To see and listen to the Pope	4	12.1
		Rio 18years & under	
		N	%
1.	The experience of the Vigil and the 'sleepout'	5	23.8
2.	Connecting with fellow pilgrims and making new friends	3	14.3
3.	The opportunity to participate in 'mission work'	3	14.3
4.	To see and listen to the Pope	2	9.5
4.	Visiting significant places in Brazil	2	9.5
		Madrid Adults Percentage	
		N	%
1.	The experience of the Vigil and the 'sleepout'	60	22.2
2.	Discovering and experiencing sacred places through the pilgrimage	46	17.0
3.	Listening to inspiring speakers at catechesis	26	9.6
4.	The special bonds that developed between pilgrims	24	8.9
5.	The experience of Days in the Diocese	16	5.9

		Rio Adults Percentage	
		N	%
1.	The opportunity to participate in ‘mission work’	30	20.3
2.	The experience of the Vigil and the ‘sleepout’	26	17.6
3.	To see, listen to and be inspired by the Pope	21	14.2
4.	The Final Mass	11	7.4
5.	Listening to inspiring bishops from around the world in catechesis	9	6.1
5.	The experience of Days in the Diocese	9	6.1

A number of patterns were evident in pilgrims’ identification of their most memorable World Youth Day experience. The different pilgrim groups named events associated with World Youth Day week itself, as well as a range of pilgrimage experiences. The Vigil, and its associated ‘sleepout’, was named as a highlight by each of the eight different groups (see Tables 6.63 & 6.64). While some respondents explicitly mentioned the spiritual ambiance created by the moments of silence, especially during Eucharistic Adoration, others wrote about opportunity to socialize with pilgrims from around the world during the time of the sleepout.

Each of the eight groups also made reference to elements of their pilgrimages as being their most memorable experience. For some pilgrims this was associated with the discovery and experience of the sacred, whereas for others it was connected with the opportunity to visit significant landmarks and explore new places and cultures. The four groups which travelled to Rio de Janeiro each named the opportunity to participate in ‘mission work’ as a memorable experience. Common also to the Rio pilgrims was their explicit reference to ‘seeing and listening to the Pope’.

The nature and emphasis of pilgrims’ open responses to Question 18 were supported by the responses of interviewees (see Table 6.65), who cited both religious and social dynamics as being a highlight of the World Youth Day experience. While the Vigil was named by 14.9% of interviewees, other events associated with the weeklong gathering, including the Opening Mass, the Final Mass and seeing the Pope, were cited by more than 10% of the

interviewees.

Young pilgrims, who comprised 76% of the interviewees, named a range of experiences as their personal highlight. In addition to the Vigil (14.2%), they cited the opportunity to visit a range of specific places, e.g. Assisi (11.3%), as being important. The sites mentioned were specific to each World Youth Day cohort and the pilgrimage opportunities afforded to them. The qualitative data pointed to the overall impact of the ‘mission work’ undertaken prior to the international gathering in Rio, as 64.4% of the younger interviewees (Rio) named this as a highlight of their World Youth Day experience. In reflecting on the experience, student pilgrim 222 commented,

I found that volunteering in the mission work was just really amazing ... in carrying those concrete buckets we were just in this one large production line and it was just this authentic feeling of teamwork ... and what we were doing – it was just one of them God moments.

Table 6.65

What was the Highlight of your World Youth Day Experience? Post-World Youth Day Interviews

*The categories of *Youth* and *Adult* represent the combination of pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian delegation. *

Interviewees could name more than ONE highlight.

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	
PILGRIMAGE					TOTAL COUNT
The Mission Work	-	-	29	6	35
Assisi	15	3	-	-	18
The Holy Land	9	2	-	-	11
The Vatican	10	3	-	-	13
Churches of Europe	7	3	-	-	10
Visiting new places	5	1	3	1	10

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	
PILGRIMAGE					TOTAL COUNT
Specific places	12	2	14	5	33
Sub Total	58	14	46	12	135
WORLD YOUTH DAY WEEK					
Seeing the Pope	6	1	12	4	23
The Australian Gathering	8	1	1	-	10
The Opening Mass	7	-	7	3	23
Catechesis	8	2	2	2	14
Youth Festivals	2	-	-	-	2
Stations of the Cross	1	-	-	-	1
The Vigil	15	5	4	2	26
The Final Mass	8	3	6	3	20
Copacabana events	-	-	4	-	4
Sub Total	55	12	34	14	129
SOCIAL					
Bonding with other pilgrims	15	2	10	1	28
The cultural experience	5	2	1	-	8
Making new friends	5	-	2	-	7
The hospitality & welcome	-	-	2	1	3
The atmosphere ... happy & joyfilled	5	1	3	2	11
Being a part of something so big	1	-	2	-	3
Changing as a person	2	-	1	-	3
Sub Total	33	5	21	4	55

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	
SPIRITUAL					
The religious witness of young people	3	2	1	2	8
Diversity of religious experiences	3	1	-	-	4
Opportunity to celebrate and grow in faith	-	-	3	-	3
Prayer & reflection	3	-	2	1	6
Daily Mass	-	2	1	1	4
Confession	1	-	-	-	1
Seeing the Church so differently	1	1	2	-	4
Retreat	-	-	-	1	1
Sense of belonging to the Church	1	-	1	-	2
Sub Total	22	6	10	5	43
Total	168	37	111	35	351

As shown in Table 6.65, pilgrims valued the opportunity to bond with their fellow pilgrims, and the sense of belonging that this brought. This was especially true for younger pilgrims, and it was described by 25 (18.8%) of those younger pilgrims interviewed, as a highlight of their World Youth Day experience.

In addition to these pilgrims, many interviewees spoke of ‘bonding’ more broadly. For most it involved connecting with those who were already close friends, or travelling on the same pilgrimage. For some others however it involved bonding with random strangers. Common to all of those who mentioned it, ‘bonding’ was an uplifting experience associated with positive feelings. A number of the interviewees qualified their responses by detailing the circumstances in which they had ‘bonded’ with their fellow pilgrims (see Table 6.66).

Table 6.66

What Factors Contributed to your Sense of 'Bonding' with your Fellow Pilgrims? Post- World Youth Day Interviews

The data represents the combination of pilgrim interviewees from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian delegation for each World Youth Day.

	REASONS FOR BONDING WITH OTHERS	Madrid Pilgrims Count	Madrid Pilgrims Percentage
1.	Shared experiences and memories	21	18.9%
2.	Intimate moments of prayer, reflection and sharing	14	12.6%
3.	Difficult and challenging times	11	9.9%
4.	24x7 constant presence	9	8.1%
5.	Moving beyond cliques: bonding with strangers	7	6.3%
		Rio Pilgrims Count	Rio Pilgrims Percentage
1.	24x7 constant presence	12	18.8%
2.	Shared experiences and memories	9	14.0%
3.	Difficult and challenging times	7	10.9%
4.	Intimate moments of prayer, reflection and sharing	6	9.4%
5.	The mission work	5	7.8%

In commenting about the social 'bonds' that developed with fellow Australians, pilgrim 234, an under 18 pilgrim travelling with the Australian contingent reflected,

I guess we have all been put in the same situation. So whether it has been the cold showers at 'Aussie Central,' or the 12-hour stopovers at an airport, we have all come together. We didn't really know each other very well and we've just made conversation and friendships have just begun. They have blossomed since you know the first hello or what's your name – that sort of thing – and it's just really the experiences that we have had that have brought us altogether as a group.

6.16.3 Pilgrims' Evaluations of the World Youth Day Experience

In addition to naming a highlight of World Youth Day, interviewees were also asked to evaluate the impact of their experience. Many observed that it had strengthened their religious attitudes and practices, while others commented on having changed perceptions of self and others. While the interview data showed that pilgrims held a diversity of views about the nature of the impact of World Youth Day (see Table 6.67), it also corroborated a number of the findings from the quantitative research data

As with the survey data from cluster of questions relating to the spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day (see Tables 6.49 and 6.50), the interviews showed that some pilgrims had a changed view of the Church and an appreciation of its diversity. Others indicated that their faith had been strengthened. In addition to the perceived spiritual benefits, the interviewees also attested to the World Youth Day experience being a catalyst for personal and social growth.

Table 6.67

What was the Impact of your World Youth Day Experience? Post-World Youth Day Interviews

*The categories of *Youth* and *Adult* represent a combination of pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian delegation. *

Interviewees could name more than ONE impact.

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	TOTAL COUNT
RELIGION					
Different view of the Church	5	1	4	2	13
Greater value of the importance of religion	4	-	1	-	5
Desire to practice more frequently	4	-	2	1	7
Greater awareness of the diversity within the Church	6	3	3	1	13

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	TOTAL COUNT
Value the place and practice of prayer	4	1	2	-	7
Learned more about the practices of the Catholic Church	2	-	-	-	2
A greater value of the Sacraments, especially Confession	-	-	1	-	1
A desire to give back to the Church	1	1	4	-	6
Take World Youth Day ideas back to the local Church	-	2	-	-	2
Awareness of the 'size' of the Church	3	3	1	-	7
The inspiration of the Pope	-	-	2	1	3
Sub Total	29	11	20	5	55
SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL					
Overwhelmed by the hospitality of strangers	3	3	3	1	9
The joy that comes from meeting new people and making new friends	6	1	2	-	9
Greater commitment to do more for others	-	-	4	1	5
Lifelong friends through the pilgrimage	5	-	3	-	8
Admiration of the practical witness of others	2	1	4	1	8

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	TOTAL COUNT
A genuine sense of belonging to something much bigger than myself	4	2	1	1	8
Sub Total	20	7	17	4	50
FAITH					
Strengthened my faith	5	1	5	2	13
Learned more about faith	4	2	2	1	9
Comfortable in sharing faith with others	5	2	2	2	11
Desire to share my faith	1	-	6	3	10
Proud of my faith	-	-	1	-	1
Amazed at the faith witness of others	4	1	2	1	8
Sub Total	19	6	18	9	43
PERSONAL					
Grown as a person	2	-	1	-	3
Clearer direction and purpose in life	4	-	2	1	7
Pushed beyond comfort zones	-	1	1	-	2
Emotionally uplifting	4	1	2	-	7
Gratitude for what we have in Australia	-	-	4	1	5
Life-changing	3		2	2	7
Not to be skeptical	2	-	-	-	2
Sub Total	15	2	12	4	33
GOD					
Aware of the presence of God in my life	5	-	2	2	9

Category of Experience	Madrid Youth Count	Madrid Adult Count	Rio de Janeiro Youth Count	Rio de Janeiro Adult Count	TOTAL COUNT
Strengthened my relationship with God	6	2	2	1	11
Aware of the need to allow God into my life ... to surrender to God	4	-	1	-	5
Aware of God in others	1	-	4	1	6
Sub Total	16	2	9	4	31
Total	101	28	76	26	231

6.16.4 Describing the World Youth Day Experience

In both of the post-World Youth Day questionnaires pilgrims were asked to describe World Youth Day. Not all research participants responded to the open-ended question.

As indicated in Table 6.68, the response rate was higher amongst Rio pilgrims (Young: 95.2%; Adult: 92.2%) than it was amongst Madrid Pilgrims (Young: 86.3%; Adult: 78.6%).

An analysis of the qualitative data from Question 19 showed that the language used to describe World Youth Day differed between younger pilgrims and adult pilgrims (see Tables 6.69 and 6.70). The analysis showed that there was a consistency in the words and ideas expressed by the younger pilgrims. The cohort of younger pilgrims combined both the student pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools) and those aged Under 18 who travelled with the general Australian contingent. There was also an alignment in the language and concepts used by both groups of adult pilgrims.

The data relating to Young and Adult Pilgrims provided in Tables 6.69 & 6.70 represents the combination of pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian delegation.

Table 6.68

Overview of Pilgrim Response Data to Q.19. of Post-World Youth Day Questionnaires

Q.19. How would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been ...

Young Pilgrims						
Pilgrim Group	# Madrid Pilgrims	# Q.19 Respondents	# Rio Pilgrims	# Q.19 Respondents	Total Pilgrims	Total Q.19 Respondents
Students	216	178	250	239	466	417
18 & under	40	33	23	21	63	54
Total	256	221	273	260	529	471
Adult Pilgrims						
SCS Adults	66	52	44	42	110	94
Aust Adults	340	267	162	148	502	415
Total	406	319	206	190	612	509

Table 6.69

Key Words by Younger Pilgrims in Response to ...

Q.19. How would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been ...

Young Pilgrims					
Key Word	Madrid Word Number	Rio Word Number	Cumulative Number	Number of pilgrims who used the word	Percentage of pilgrims who used the word
Amazing	58	71	129	126	26.8%
Great	29	28	57	54	11.5%
Best	16	25	41	39	8.3%
Friends	18	14	32	32	6.8%
Rewarding	8	16	24	22	4.8%
Faith					
Faith	60	62	122	118	25.0%
God					
God	29	24	53	52	11.0%
Catholic					
Catholic	24	15	39	39	8.3%
Spiritual					
Spiritual	18	16	34	31	6.6%
Church					
Church	14	4	22	22	4.7%
Christ					
Christ	3	9	12	12	2.5%

Table 6.70

Key Words by Adult Pilgrims in Response to ...

Q.19. How would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been ...

Adult Pilgrims					
Key Word	Madrid Word Number	Rio Word Number	Cumulative Number	Number of pilgrims who used the word	Percentage of pilgrims who used the word
Great	35	19	54	53	10.4%
Amazing	35	22	57	54	10.6%
Celebrate	32	13	45	41	8.1%
Friends	13	9	22	21	4.1%
Rewarding	5	16	21	18	3.5%
Best	6	4	10	10	1.9%
Faith					
Faith	147	85	232	219	43.0%
Catholic					
Catholic	79	58	136	131	25.7%
Church					
Church	65	39	104	99	19.4%
God					
God	60	37	97	94	18.5%
Spiritual					
Spiritual	39	28	67	64	12.6%
Christ					
Christ	30	8	38	37	7.3%
Universal					
Universal	24	12	36	35	6.9%
Pope					
Pope	12	12	24	20	3.9%

Both the younger pilgrims and the adult pilgrims referred to World Youth Day as an 'experience', the term most frequently used by each group. The word was used by 233 younger pilgrims (49.5% of group) and by 225 adult pilgrims (44.2%).

Both groups also used the term 'event' in their descriptions (45 younger pilgrims - 9.6%; 49 adult pilgrims - 9.6%).

In describing their 'experience' of World Youth Day, the younger pilgrims and adult pilgrims had different points of emphasis. This was evident in the description of the spiritual and religious dynamics, which were referred to more frequently and extensively by the adult pilgrims. While the younger pilgrims referred to the 'faith experience', and gave some reference to 'God', their descriptions of World Youth Day tended to refer to the social aspects and emotional dynamics of the international gathering. In addition

to the terms named in Table 6.69 the younger pilgrims used range of positive adjectives to affirm their experience, including; *awesome*, *wonderful*, *incredible* and *exciting*.

In their responses, the younger pilgrims also made reference to the impact of World Youth Day. It was described as *'life changing'* by 57 pilgrims (12.1%), and a further 32 pilgrims (6.8%) referred to World Youth Day as a *'once in a lifetime'* experience. Generally, the phrases were used in the context of personal and social growth. While both phrases were used by some adult pilgrims, these were less frequent (<5.0%).

The phrases most frequently used by the adult pilgrims were explicitly religious/spiritual in their context. World Youth Day was described as a *'spiritual journey'* by 54 pilgrims (10.6%), and a further 35 pilgrims (6.9%) referred to World Youth Day as a *'celebration of faith'*. While the adult pilgrims affirmed the psycho social dynamics of World Youth Day and made direct reference to their personal sense of *excitement* and *enjoyment*, the responses highlighted that World Youth Day was perceived as a time to *discover*, *grow* in and *share* faith.

The pattern of the qualitative data gathered from the questionnaires was consistent with the data gathered from semi-structured interviews, where young pilgrims and adult pilgrims once-again described World Youth Day differently (see Table 6.71). As with the questionnaire data, the younger pilgrims focused more on the social emotional dynamics of the gathering, and the adult pilgrims concentrated more on the religious/spiritual dynamics.

The younger pilgrims in particular attested to the significance of World Youth Day as a peak life-experience, and that they were changed by it. While some pilgrims did not qualify their answer, several others related it to their changed perceptions of self and faith, where both were viewed differently and positively.

Table 6.71

How would you Describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been ... Post- World Youth Day Interviews

*The data represents the combination of pilgrim interviewees from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian delegation for each World Youth Day sorted by age related categories *

Overarching Themes	Young Pilgrims Madrid	Young Pilgrims Rio	Adult Pilgrims Madrid	Adult Pilgrims Rio	TOTAL COUNT
Social/Emotional Dynamics					
An amazing experience	15	6	4	3	28
Indescribable	7	2	-	2	11
One of the best experience of my life	8	5	-	2	15
A 'once in a lifetime' opportunity	5	3	1	1	10
Life changing	4	7	-	1	12
Intense and memorable	3	4	2	-	9
A rewarding and enlightening experience	3	4	-	-	7
Emotionally and physically exhausting (and satisfying)	4	3	-	1	8
Sub Total	49	34	7	10	100
Religious/Spiritual Dynamics					
A huge joyful celebration of Catholic youth	5	1	3	1	10
A journey in faith	11	5	4	3	23
The universal Church in action	4	-	4	-	8
The Church young and alive	2	-	2	3	7
A time of spiritual value and reward	-	2	-	1	3
A time to connect with others and God	11	7	2	3	23
An opportunity to learn about the Church	5	-	2	-	7
Sub Total	38	15	17	11	81
Total	87	49	24	21	181

Describing World Youth Day, student 137 commented,

It's a life changing experience, which for me you need to witness with your eyes, because not many words can explain World Youth Day ... you just

have to be there to realise what it is, it's just such an amazing experience which I would recommend to anyone that asks me.

6.16.5 Pilgrims' Areas of Concern

In reflecting upon their experience of World Youth Day some interviewees expressed concern about aspects of the international gathering (see Table 6.72). These concerns primarily related to logistical and organizational aspects of the event and its associated travel. Adult pilgrims expressed approx.80% of the concerns.

Table 6.72

Pilgrims' Areas of Concern – Post-World Youth Day Interviews

The data represents the combination of pilgrim interviewees from Sydney Catholic Schools and the wider Australian delegation for each World Youth Day.

	AREAS OF CONCERN	Madrid Pilgrims Number	Madrid Pilgrims Percentage
1.	Poor organization of some major events	17	16.8%
2.	Crowds reduced access to events and ruined the spiritual nature of events	9	8.9%
3.	Tiredness results in edginess and inability to engage	8	7.9%
4.	Insufficient time for proper reflection	6	5.9%
4.	Some pilgrims spiritually indifferent	6	5.9%
		Rio Pilgrims Number	Rio Pilgrims Percentage
1.	Some travel delays and inconveniences	3	5.5%
2.	Some of the 'testimonies' and approaches to evangelization	3	5.5%

Table 6.72 showed that the Madrid World Youth Day drew greater criticism than Rio de Janeiro. In addition to the expressed safety concerns related to overcrowding, pilgrims commented specifically about how organizational problems impacted upon the spiritual dynamics and ambiance of the some of the principal events. Adult pilgrim 102 commented,

I didn't find Madrid very spiritual as an experience, it was characterized by chaos. There were many venues we couldn't get near – like the opening Mass. We were out on the fringes where it was packed ... half way through the Mass we left because we couldn't really see anything ... the same happened with other events, so I don't know if Madrid was all that fruitful.

6.17 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the results of both the pre- and the post-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Analysis of the results showed that there was a complementarity and consistency between quantitative and qualitative data, and this helped increase the validity that could be ascribed to the research findings. The findings showed that pilgrims' perceptions and evaluations of the World Youth Day experience were influenced by a range of factors, including: gender, age and religious disposition, and these gave rise to a range of pilgrim subgroups.

The results showed that pilgrims' reflections on their World Youth Day experience tended to have two principal critical dimensions, a social dimension and a religious dimension. The presence, importance and centrality of these two dimensions were confirmed in the Factor Analysis. The two dimensions do not reflect any dichotomy. Rather, as highlighted by the qualitative data, there was strong inter-relationship between them.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION OF THE MEANING & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRE & POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH FINDINGS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter, which addresses specifically the principal research question 3 (Chapter 1), will discuss the meaning and significance of both the pre- and post-World Youth Day empirical research, with a particular focus on the salient themes that emerged from the quantitative and qualitative data. Attention will be given, not just to those areas where there was a convergence in pilgrims' perceptions of the World Youth Day experience, but to the differences that existed between the various sub-groups.

The interpretation of the results, particularly with respect to the underlying psychological and spiritual/religious dynamics, will be referenced at key points back to the themes and explanatory insights derived in the analytical/documentary Part One of the study (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) and also in the light of issues that emerged in those same chapters.

A key focus in this chapter will be the interpretation of how the pilgrims themselves have expressed their understandings and valuations of the whole World Youth Day experience, and of how they think that the experience has been not only a significant cultural event, but one that might possibly have some influence on their emerging sense of personal and religious spirituality.

SECTION 1: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF PRE-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH DATA

7.2 SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' PARTICIPATION IN WORLD YOUTH DAY

As noted in Chapters 1 and 2, the demographic profile of Australian World Youth Day pilgrims changed after World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, with a marked increase in the participation of school-aged pilgrims. The most significant historical shift in pilgrim numbers was with the group from Sydney Catholic Schools (see Table 2.2). A number of factors underpinned the increase in pilgrim numbers.

In their Pastoral Letter (2007), *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads*, the Bishops of NSW/ACT expressed a core hope that Catholic schools would be 'centres of the new evangelisation', in which "every effort would be made to engage students and young teachers in preparations for, participation in and enrichment after major religious events such as World Youth Day" (2007, p.13).

For many young Catholics, the occasion of Sydney 2008 was the first time that they had heard of the international gathering. Publically staged events drew hundreds of thousands of observers and participants. The Catholic community of Sydney was also engaged through a range of smaller local events. School, parish and community halls were used to accommodate pilgrims and host catechesis sessions. Many of the international pilgrims were also accommodated by local families in 'homestays'.

World Youth Day XXIII generally received positive media coverage (Beham, 2008) and the reactions of local Catholics, especially the youth, were also typically very positive. The research data showed that the 'Sydney experience' motivated a number of students to register as World Youth Day pilgrims (see Table 6.17). This was particularly the case with the Madrid cohort, where 41 students (10%) cited Sydney '08 as the principal motivating factor. Adult pilgrims also affirmed the importance of the Sydney experience as well the influence of some of the other international gatherings they had experienced first-hand.

Some of the student pilgrims interviewed for the research study were too young to experience the Sydney gathering. However, their perceptions of this event and of World Youth Day generally, were influenced vicariously. Student pilgrim 182 reflected,

My friend and both his sisters had been to the Sydney one, and they ... would not stop talking about their experiences and I thought well, you know I haven't really been involved in something like this before. I thought that this World Youth Day could be a great way to become involved more in the church, and also just be with the people around me.

Following World Youth Day XXIII, Catholic schools were called upon to “encourage returnees to deepen their faith and practice, to share their enthusiasm with others ... and to harness the energy of WYD08 for the renewal of the Church in Australia” (Fisher, 2008, p.400). Greater levels of participation in future World Youth Days was named as a goal, both by bishops and Catholic education authorities.

Post-2008, Sydney Catholic Schools gave greater priority to its engagement in the international World Youth Days. Human and financial resources were dedicated to maximising student and adult participation, and this participation was situated within an overarching approach to Youth Ministry.

Reflecting on the occasion of the Sydney World Youth Day, Rymarz (2008b) assessed the involvement of school-aged pilgrims. Given the unique nature of the event as a faith experience he suggested that there was value in increasing and broadening student participation. He warned, “unfortunately, when WYD 2011 comes around, schools, will, for practical reasons, most likely revert to sending only a couple of students and those on the periphery of faith-based groups will miss out” (2008b, p.467). The restricted model of participation named by Rymarz had been commonplace for those dioceses that sent school-aged pilgrims to World Youth Day (pre-2008). This included the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Prior to Sydney 2008, the Catholic Education Office had only twice sent a cohort of teachers and students to an international World Youth Day. In both instances, and for perceived 'practical reasons', the numbers were much smaller than with either cohort sent to Madrid or Rio de Janeiro. 52 students and 7 teachers attended World Youth Day in Toronto, Canada (2002) and 54 students and 7 teachers attended the international gathering in Cologne, Germany (2005).

Both the Toronto and Cologne pilgrim cohorts comprised students who were selected as representatives of their schools. Typically, this involved only 2-4 students per school. The pilgrims were expected to be involved in a local parish and have the support of a parish priest, as well as being actively engaged in either faith-based, leadership and/or youth ministry activities at school and in the wider community. The process for student selection resulted in a pilgrim cohort with a relatively high degree of religiosity.

By contrast, the students who registered as pilgrims for World Youth Day Madrid and Rio de Janeiro were not subject to a similar process. Rather, Sydney Catholic Schools permitted all interested students, conditional upon the permission of their parents and support of their school, to attend the event. Students were not required to be Catholic, or to show involvement in a local parish. They were required only to participate in a program of preparation.

A practical and pastoral consideration of the revised approach to student registration for World Youth Day was to gather a critical mass of student pilgrims in each school, so as to ensure that each pilgrim had the support of like-minded peers before, during and after World Youth Day.

Table 7.1

Pattern of Student Pilgrim Registration – By School (Madrid & Rio de Janeiro)

Madrid Student Pilgrim Numbers	Number of Schools	Rio Student Pilgrim Numbers	Number of Schools
1-9	27	1-9	27
10-19	14	10-19	10
20>	5	20>	1
Total Pilgrim Numbers	Total Schools	Total Pilgrim Numbers	Total Schools
434	46	259	38

On the basis of accepting student pilgrims through expressions of interest and application rather than a criteria-based process of selection, the two cohorts had a broader cross section of pilgrims, with less of a concentration of the ‘highly religious’. This was evident in the quantitative and qualitative research data.

7.3 A PROFILE OF SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS

In addition to demographic data on gender, age and cultural background, the pre-World Youth Day questionnaires and semi-structured interviews provided a range of insights into the religious characteristics, attitudes and practices of those drawn to World Youth Day.

The research study showed World Youth Day attracts pilgrim cohorts with a proportionately higher level of ‘religiosity’ than that of the mainstream Catholic population. The pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools exhibited higher levels of religious practice when compared to people of their own age, and a large majority indicated that they regarded religion as important. As with the general population, the commitment to regular religious practice and the value ascribed to religion was higher amongst adult pilgrims than with school-aged pilgrims.

7.3.1 Student Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools

While the student pilgrims were more frequent in their pattern of Mass attendance when compared to other Catholic young people in Australia of a

similar age (Dixon, 2003; Dixon et al., 2013), the research study found they were less committed to regular religious practice than young pilgrims attending other World Youth Days (Mason et al., 2008a,b; Rymarz, 2008b). The process of self-nomination by student pilgrims meant that their cohorts had a more diffuse religious profile. Historically, school-aged pilgrims who have travelled to World Youth Day with school, parish or diocesan groups have typically demonstrated a commitment to their faith, either in their parish or school communities (Rymarz, 2008b). While this was not the case with all of the student pilgrims travelling with the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts, the research study found that the majority were 'open' to faith experiences, especially a different faith experience like World Youth Day. The data showed very few of the student pilgrims had totally disassociated themselves from religious belief and practice.

Although the student pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools attributed importance to the value of religion and showed signs of engagement in communal and private religious practices, especially a commitment to regular prayer, they did not generally represent a 'religious elite', as was described in other empirical studies of World Youth Day pilgrims (Mason et al., 2008a,b; Rymarz, 2008b).

The research data also pointed to the trend in some Western societies where young people do not regard regular religious practice as being essential to a strong religious identity (Hoge, Dinges, Johnson & Gonzales, 2001). Throughout the interviews, some of the students (9 or 13.2%) qualified their response on the importance of religion by adding 'but I don't go to Mass', or similar. The comment of student pilgrim 50 was a typical example,

It's important. I wasn't baptised when I was a child and I don't really get to Mass but like it doesn't stop me from believing. I still believe in God, I pray and I do practice my beliefs. I try not to do things wrong and it's just like not being baptised doesn't stop me from doing any religious things.

Student pilgrim 53 reflected,

Religion to me is quite important. I wouldn't say that I'm very public about my religion, obviously being in high school it's not really a cool factor. I see it as a very strong part of my life but it's very personal. I'm not really a Mass goer though I get there as much as I can, and I don't go around preaching to other people. You know it counts when things are bad. A couple of years ago I lost my grandfather and it helped a lot.

In identifying their infrequency of Mass attendance the student pilgrims were not self-questioning about their Catholic identity or expressing criticism of the Catholic Church. Rather, the students associated their lack of Mass attendance with a sense of ambivalence about its importance, or referred to it being lost amongst other priorities. Throughout the entire interview process no student from the 68 interviewed expressed any direct criticism of the Catholic Church or religion more broadly.

Sociological research has found that the religious worldview of young people is largely influenced by parental religiosity (Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008; Hoge, Petrillo & Smith, 1982). Smith and Denton (2005) argued that parents were in fact the "single most important influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents" (p.261). The importance of parental influence was highlighted in the research study. The family was cited as the group which had most influenced the decision of student pilgrims to attend World Youth Day (see Table 6.19).

A recurring theme of the interviews was also that parents not only encouraged participation at World Youth Day but also placed great importance on regular worship and the value of religion. Interviewees referred specifically to the way in which parents also influenced their religious beliefs. While sociological research has pointed to the differences in religious influence that mothers and fathers can play (Caputo, 2004; Clark, Worthington & Danser, 1988; Hayes & Pittlekow, 1993) the research study found that mother appeared to play a more significant role in their children's religious socialisation. 8 student pilgrims (11.8%) made reference to the positive religious influence of their mother.

An equal number of interviewees identified their grandparents as playing a similar positive role. The increasingly significant role of grandparents in the transmission of religious values and beliefs was explored by Copen and Silverstein (2007), and it is relevant to the research study, especially for young pilgrims who identified their parents as indifferent to religion or irreligious.

The research study found that even in instances where young pilgrims identified their parents as irreligious, the parents generally supported their participation in World Youth Day. Student pilgrim 38 commented

My mum's an atheist and although my dad was born a Catholic he doesn't really go to Church or anything ... but they're both very excited. She doesn't see the significance of it [World Youth Day] but she's excited for me, cause she's seen that I'm happy with it.

A number of the interviewees suggested that the religiosity of their parents and their personal religiosity was influenced by their cultural background. When asked '*how important is religion in your life*', 14 students (20.6%), all from non-English speaking backgrounds, referred to the influence of culture on their religious attitudes and practices. Student pilgrim 84 commented,

Religion is very important to me. My family has a huge influence on my religious views. My dad, well he is Italian and he is very Catholic. We go to Church. We use religion to ... well I know it's a bit cliché, but to make meaning in our life. We use it to explain things.

The questionnaire data showed 64 students (10.6%) were born overseas and that 7% of the student cohort spoke a language other than English at home. No individual cultural background was identified with noticeable frequency; rather a range of cultural backgrounds were mentioned by the students. The significance of pilgrims' cultural backgrounds is analysed in section 7.5.4.

7.3.2 Adult Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools

The adult pilgrim cohort for both World Youth Days included teachers, priests, religious sisters, personnel from the Catholic Education Office and support staff. The results of both the qualitative and quantitative research were by influenced by the composition of the group and in part by their role as supervisors of the student pilgrims. The data showed that the adult pilgrims were generally characterized by a high level of religiosity, with a strong and active commitment to their faith. They were regularly engaged in communal worship, placed great value on the importance of religion and cited a range of religious influences as underpinning their motivation to attend World Youth Day.

The data suggested that on a range of religious measures there was a stronger alignment between the adult pilgrims and the Pilgrim Group Leaders of other Australian delegations than there was with a random sampling of adult pilgrims from across Australia.

The research study found that while the adult pilgrims appreciated the potential value of World Youth Day for their personal spiritual enrichment they were more concerned with supporting the faith journey of the student pilgrims (see Tables 6.18 & 6.25). Many of the adult pilgrims viewed their participation in World Youth Day as an extension of their professional responsibilities as teachers and some interviewees made reference to the supervisory nature of their role. They perceived their role as dealing with organizational and logistical concerns as well engaging student pilgrims in the pastoral and spiritual dynamics of World Youth Day. Adult pilgrim 2 reflected,

My hope is that I can live up to my responsibilities ... that I will be a person who is able to give my group opportunities to feel comfortable with being Catholic ... to help bring young people closer to God and that their experiences will be carried on with them for many years to come.

7.4 WHY PEOPLE ATTEND WORLD YOUTH DAY – THE MOTIVATIONS & EXPECTATIONS OF SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ PILGRIMS

7.4.1 Introduction

The research study found that a diversity of factors underpinned peoples’ motivation to go to World Youth Day. Some responded to multiple influences, whereas others were motivated by one core purpose. World Youth Day pilgrims were motivated by personal, social, spiritual or religious reasons. Some responded to the influence of a defining human characteristic, the search for meaning, others to the influence of those closest to them. Many were drawn by the possibility of connectedness with strangers. Many gave priority to the pilgrimage and the meaning to be drawn from it, others to the events of World Youth Day week itself. The data showed various points of distinction between student and adult pilgrims, and indicated that the context of each particular World Youth Day can influence why people choose to attend.

A recurring theme in the data was that World Youth Day is perceived as an experience of great value. Described by pilgrims as potentially ‘life changing’, and an event which will offer ‘epiphany moments’, many of the pilgrims had expectations of inner fulfillment and personal growth. Although the student and adult pilgrims had divergent views regarding the perceived benefits of World Youth Day, they were consistent in naming the Final Mass and the pilgrimage as being the most important elements.

An additional attraction of World Youth Day according to Mason, Webber & Singleton (2008b) is the appeal of the pope. Prior to World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, the researchers identified that ‘seeing the pope’ was the second most anticipated experience (of ten options) for pilgrims, but especially with those who self-identified as ‘*devoted*’ and ‘*involved*’. The data from the research study did not identify the same ‘pull factor’ (Dann, 1977). A reason for this difference may well be that the Madrid and Rio de Janeiro pilgrim delegations from Sydney Catholic Schools did not have the same concentration of ‘highly committed’ religious pilgrims as is normally

the case with World Youth Day.

The notion of the pope's 'celebrity status', and his potential as an attractor of pilgrims (Norman, 2011), was identified by some adult interviewees (Rio). Student pilgrim 86 also commented,

I'm excited. I can't wait to see the new pope. I know that the crowds will be big and crazy and I just hope we get a chance to get some pictures of him.

The motivations of pilgrims were many and varied. This seemed to be consistent with varied interest in the wide range of elements and with the interplay of various underlying psychological/sociological dynamics and religiosity.

While many of the pilgrims were motivated to register for World Youth Day by a range of social factors, an even greater number responded positively to religious influences. These included: the desire to deepen one's faith and share that faith with others; to learn more about the Catholic Church and to have a sense of belonging, and to grow spiritually. The data indicated that 'families' played a crucial role in the faith journey and development of the student pilgrims and the family was the most significant 'group' in influencing their decision to attend.

While the positive influence of the family was a salient feature of the research data, the role and influence of friends was more complex. A core hope and an anticipated benefit of World Youth Day was the strengthening of friendships and the making of new friends. The student pilgrims cited a desire to connect with others who share the same faith.

The research study found that many of the pilgrims did not share their faith with others or discuss religious matters because their friends did not share the same religious beliefs or values. A number of the student pilgrims were independent in their thinking and made the decision to journey to World Youth Day with peers who were not necessarily amongst their closest friends.

7.4.2 A Desire to Belong

A recurring theme of the research study was the desire of young pilgrims to establish connectivity with others and find a sense of belonging. Tables 6.20, 6.22 and 6.25 showed that young people were not only concerned with making new social friends but hoped ‘to connect with other pilgrims through shared experiences and celebrating their faith together’.

Empirical research indicates that young people’s continued engagement in the life Church, especially their regular religious worship, is influenced by their sense of belonging and connection, and their level of satisfaction with religious services (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Smith, et al., 2014). In western societies there is a continued and significant decline in Church attendance amongst young people, including those who identify as being religious, and who place value on its importance. For many it is a matter of ‘believing without belonging’ (Davie, 1994 & 2002).

For many of the pilgrims, World Youth Day offered a contrast to their normal experience of Church. Research has suggested that they seek experiences which are strongly affective, and where they can worship in larger, younger congregations where ‘collective effervescence’ may be experienced (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005) and where they can enjoy the quality of worship. “When teens do not feel that they have any real personal connections with the people in the congregation, attending Mass is less likely to be a rewarding experience. They may feel that they are alone in a crowd” (Smith et al, 2014). Relational ties help strengthen individual religiosity.

Many young people appeared to look to World Youth Day as potentially a cathartic experience, a time when they might feel comfortable in expressing and sharing their faith with others, and in some instances, feeling proud of their faith. Young people, who might be classified as being ‘committed’ or ‘involved’ are a minority, and many feel a sense of isolation (Rymarz, 2008c).

World Youth Day provides an opportunity whereby they can be supported

by a critical mass of like-minded believers, who share the same core values. For many, this is not just reassuring and comforting, but serves to strengthen the plausibility of their beliefs and practices and their overall religiosity (Barron, Field & Schuller, 2000; Smith & Denton, 2005).

The desire to share faith in a social network of like-minded peers was a common hope articulated by the pilgrims prior to World Youth Day (see Table 6.25). This desire may in part be explained by Table 6.11 which highlighted the dilemma facing many pilgrims. For many of the student pilgrims their closest friends often had very different views of religion. 30.9% of the students reported that their friends did not value religion. Student 47 reflected,

My friends are very, not anti-religious, but they just don't do it and don't believe in it at all, which is a bit of a bummer but oh well. Cause obviously if you have your friends at the same side as you then that would make it easier. When I told them I was going to World Youth Day, they just asked heaps of questions about what I thought I would be doing. I'm so looking forward to it.

When asked what motivated him to register for World Youth Day, student 17 said,

Just the experience of being with people of the same faith, and they're my age group as well, and like knowing, that there are a lot of other kids that are in the same situation as me.

The hopes of the student pilgrims also resonated with some of the adult pilgrims who reflected on some of their own past experiences. Adult pilgrim 7 commented,

I've been to a number of World Youth Days and for me the World Youth Day in Paris in 1997 was a turning point in that I understood that I wasn't isolated. For me practising my faith or having the same sorts of questions that I realised other young people had was so affirming. I think I just really love the experience of the joy that World Youth Day is. It's just an event, but it's a great one.

The research study found that the student pilgrims not only wanted a different experience of Church, but an opportunity for bonding and connectedness with their fellow pilgrims on multiple levels. Through the interview process pilgrims showed an awareness of how they might be brought closer to each other through some of the hardships and inconveniences of the pilgrimage and World Youth Day week, and through the challenges of the mission work.

The qualitative data pointed to the emergence of a strong group identity with a shared understanding of and commitment to the purpose and vision of the World Youth Day pilgrimage. Prior to leaving Australia the interviewees reflected on their sense of social solidarity within the group, which Collins would have described as a “feeling of membership” (2004, p.49). This may well have resulted from the formation program that the pilgrims had participated in.

Student 18 commented,

I hope to meet new people that sort of go outside my bubble and experience ... and you know there will be this sense of community, with the bus and the whole group. There is always going to be someone to go back to and share that experience again, and like, it's just like that you are reliving it, that experience you've shared.

The desire for satisfying relationships accords with Maslow's articulation of 'hierarchy of needs', and in particular his identification of 'self-actualisation', which is in part enabled by fulfilling life-goals, and developed and satisfying interpersonal relations (1970). While the experience of belonging is a fundamental human need, Crawford and Rossiter proposed that it is of particular significance to young people, for group belonging gives them “reference points for exploring their place in life and helps them develop a sense of meaning and purpose” (2006, p.216).

7.4.3 In Search of God

A salient theme of the World Youth Day research data was the desire of pilgrims to strengthen their relationship with God (see Tables 6.20 & 6.25)

through the World Youth Day experience. This ‘spiritual quest’ was significant to both adult and student pilgrims. Through the qualitative data in particular, it appeared to be a priority for most pilgrims, irrespective of their religious disposition.

When asked why he registered for World Youth Day, student 51 commented,

It’s definitely the reconnection with God. I think lately when I’ve been by myself I’ve started to doubt, I’ve drifted away from faith and I want to get right back into it. I just want to see and feel God firsthand and this might be a unique opportunity to do it. It could really revamp my faith.

When describing their relationship with God in reference to their World Youth Day hopes, some pilgrims identified the desire to ‘reconnect’ and to ‘rebuild’ a relationship. Some acknowledged that they did not feel the presence of God in their lives.

In contrast, some of the self-identified ‘*committed*’ and ‘*involved*’ pilgrims wanted to take their relationship with God to a deeper level. Many of the adult pilgrims not only identified their desire to experience God during World Youth Day, but they also expressed a hope that the younger pilgrims would also share this encounter. One, highly committed student pilgrim, expressed the same hope for his peers. Student 39, who is connected with a religious movement said,

I would like for them to really see God, his presence in World Youth Day because I have experienced it. In Sydney, I saw how God was really present with us and I want them to experience what I have experienced before. It was something really beautiful.

The research data reflected in part the findings of other empirical research relating to pilgrim hopes for and expectations of World Youth Day.

Prior to World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Mason, Singleton & Webber (2008b) identified ‘experiencing the presence of God’ as the most anticipated experience (of ten options) for pilgrims. As with other options

which related to the religious, devotional and teaching aspects of World Youth Day, this was especially the case with pilgrims who self-identified as *'devoted'* and *'involved'*. Pilgrims who identified as *'open'* or *'social'* did not give the same level of importance to 'experiencing the presence of God'. *'Open'* pilgrims ranked it 6th in importance of the 10 World Youth Day experiences, and *'social'* pilgrims ranked it 8th.

The qualitative data for this research study pointed to a more uniform prioritisation of the 'strengthening of the relationship with God' across the different pilgrim sub groups.

Rymarz (2008a) explored the characteristic beliefs, practices and motivations of a group of Australian pilgrims who attended World Youth Day in Cologne in 2005. The pilgrims identified a desire for growth in personal faith and religious commitment, as well an appreciation of the social dynamics of the event. The pilgrims emphasised their commitment to engage in World Youth Day, and its associated pilgrimage, was not for "a brief and overwhelming interaction with the divine through some momentous event but a recommitment to an ongoing relationship" (Rymarz, 2008a, p.138).

In contrast to the 2005 pilgrim cohort, the interviews which were conducted as part of this research study showed that some pilgrims were seeking an 'epiphany moment', either during the pilgrimage or during World Youth Day week where they would encounter the transcendent. This was especially the case with the pilgrims who spoke of 'restarting the relationship' or 'reconnecting with God' rather than those who identified 'strengthening the relationship that existed'.

Several of the pilgrims who self-identified as *'searching'* named specific events and places where they felt such encounters might occur. These included: the Garden of Gethsemane, the Vatican, Montserrat, Iguazu Falls, the mission work in Peru, the Stations of the Cross and the Vigil. When asked to qualify their answers, pilgrims referred to the opportunity for prayer and reflection at holy places.

World Youth Day is described as a pilgrimage event (Norman & Johnson, 2011) and the essence of a pilgrimage is a “quest for the sacred” (Morinis, 1992, p.2). While travel is an inherent part of pilgrimage, the responses of the pilgrim interviewees associated their possible encounter with the transcendent with a ‘place’ not a ‘journey’. According to Eade and Sallnow a holy place or shrine is the “very raison d’être of pilgrimage” (2000, p.6). To others, the primary focus and importance of a pilgrimage is found in the journey not in the locality or shrine (Coleman & Eade, 2004; Eberhart, 2006; Morinis, 1992).

Table 6.23 highlighted the importance attributed to the pilgrimage by both students and adults and the qualitative and quantitative data suggested the pilgrims valued the duality of pilgrimage, both locality and journey.

The hope of pilgrims to strengthen their relationship with God through the experience of World Youth Day should be considered within the context of the patterns of ‘belief’ within Australian society. Like many western societies there is a growing trend of ‘unbelief’ within Australia, especially amongst teenagers and young adults (Frame, 2009; Hughes; 2007). For many, this involves the denial of the existence of God.

Despite this social trend, research has found that when compared to the national demographic, a higher proportion of Catholics believe in God (Mason et al., 2007). Maroney (2008) found senior secondary students in Sydney Catholic schools expressed a firm belief in the transcendent, with “very few of the students confident that God did not exist at all” (p.181). The 200 students surveyed by Maroney (2008) for his doctoral thesis on ‘*contemporary youth spirituality*’ were of a similar age as the World Youth Day student pilgrims.

This research study found that the pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools attested to a belief in God irrespective of the value they attributed to religion or the regularity of their Mass attendance and personal prayer. Furthermore, the absence of a perceived relationship with God did not impact their sense of belief. Student pilgrim 178 said,

I've always had a belief in God ... I know there is a divine being and I think that I am trying to build my faith ... I feel like I have to encounter an experience... if it doesn't happen there [World Youth Day], it might have happened later in life but I feel like attempting to reach out to God rather than just if it happens.

7.4.4 Pilgrim or Tourist

The research study showed that pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools were characterised by both spiritual and touristic motivations and expectations. The data suggested that this was influenced in part by the age of the pilgrims. Tables 6.20 & 6.22 showed student pilgrims had a stronger desire for travel, encountering new cultures and making new friends than their adult counterparts, who were generally looking to 'experience the sacred in the places that they travelled to' and to have 'moments of personal and spiritual reflection'. This pattern was not unique to the research study, for touristic motivations have also characterised many of the young pilgrims attending other World Youth Days.

Australian company Harvest Pilgrimages has been the primary travel provider for Australian pilgrim delegations since the 1991 World Youth Day in Czestochowa, Poland. They were formally appointed as the 'official travel provider' for both World Youth Day Madrid (2011) and Rio de Janeiro (2013) by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Historically, the effective marketing and promotion of World Youth Day, as well as itinerary options, are central to attracting the interest of pilgrims, and securing their registration.

During the time of their involvement with World Youth Day, Harvest Pilgrimages developed itinerary packages which recognised the competing inclinations of pilgrims. Itineraries included traditional pilgrimage trails and places of sacrality as well as major landmarks and places of cultural and historic interest. A review of past itineraries and the historical pattern of pilgrim registrations showed that both elements, the spiritual and the touristic, can be combined effectively in responding to and generating

pilgrim interest. This was evident in the research study.

Prior to World Youth Day in Madrid (2011) student pilgrim 41 said,

I'm a big history buff, so I'm really looking forward to like seeing the Colosseum and the Fountain and stuff like that. I also think that the Europeans will be a lot different to say the Americans and I'm really interested to find out more about their culture.

Adult pilgrim 2 also commented,

I'm going on the Shores of Galilee pilgrimage and one thing that I am really looking forward to is taking my group to the Holy Land. I think it will be such an incredible opportunity to be with my pilgrims experiencing the footsteps of Christ, literally where he walked ... to be there, despite the media negativity, and to see that this is still a safe and holy place to visit.

The Holy Land has traditionally been a popular pilgrimage stop-over for Australian groups travelling to European World Youth Days. It has generally drawn adult groups comprised of pilgrims with a strong spiritual motivation. The political instability of the region has meant however that student numbers have been limited due to parental concerns. The student pilgrims visiting the Holy Land have generally been highly motivated and have shown high levels of religiosity. This was borne out in the semi-structured interviews.

World Youth Day XXVIII was held in Rio de Janeiro. It was the fourth time that the international gathering has been held in the Southern hemisphere, the second time in Latin America. Logistically, the host city was a more complicated destination for Australians to travel to, with fewer travel and pilgrimage options. There were also some concerns about general safety and security issues in Brazil. This impacted upon Australian participation in the event.

Throughout their participation in interviews, both student and adult pilgrims made frequent reference to some of the major landmarks in South America as an anticipated highlight of their pilgrimage. Reference was given to

Machu Pichu, the Christ the Redeemer statue, Copacabana beach and Iguazu Falls.

Prior to World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro student pilgrim 81 commented,

I think that we are going to have Mass, like an open Mass on Copacabana beach... and for me I feel like nature is the reason that I do know that there is a God and having an open Mass in such a beautiful place is a really special way to get close to God. And when I saw the itinerary for this trip and saw we were going to Iguazu, well that was it for me.

A distinguishing feature of the Rio World Youth Day was that many of the Australian pilgrims, including all of the Catholic Schools (Sydney) delegation, were to participate in a 'mission' component.

Volunteer tourism, often labelled 'service' or mission trips', is on the rise in many western nations and is becoming a subject of research & review. In light of the internal motives of the participants it is considered to be an evolution of the traditional pilgrimage (Mustonen, 2006). Stebbins (1992) suggested that the volunteers of mission trips are motivated by a desire for personal fulfilment, strengthened self-identity and an opportunity for self-expression. Above all however, the volunteers are driven by altruistic motives.

Sociological research has shown that religiosity is a major predictor of individual engagement in volunteer activities (Park & Smith, 2000), and the stronger the religiosity the more likely and the more frequent the volunteerism will be. The connection between the two has been identified in relation to regular worship (Gibson, 2008; Wuthnow, 1999), private prayer (Lam, 2002) and the importance attributed to religion in one's life (Hoge, Zech, McNamara & Donohue 1998). The research study showed however that on these measures, the Madrid pilgrims not the Rio pilgrims, recorded higher levels of religiosity (see Tables 6.9, 6.13, 6.15).

While volunteersim is influenced by a person's religiosity it is also an expression of that religiosity. This was highlighted by a number of Rio

interviewees who attested to social justice and outreach activities as being their most positive religious experience and the way by which they ‘lived out’ and practiced their religion.

The research data highlighted the importance of volunteerism to many of the Rio pilgrims and also their level of interest in and anticipation for the planned mission activities in Peru and Chile. Table 6.16 showed that social justice/outreach was identified by the pilgrims (10 pilgrims or 11.6%) as a positive religious experience. Table 6.25 indicated that both student (10.7%) and adult (8.3%) pilgrims hoped to ‘make a difference in the lives of others through the mission work’. In addition to this, many of the references by student pilgrims (11.5%) to being ‘changed as a person’ related to the mission work activities.

The inclusion of ‘mission work’ within the itineraries for World Youth Day 2013 in Rio de Janeiro was a major attraction for many of the pilgrims. This was borne out in the pre-World Youth Day interviews.

Student 90 commented,

I am part of a Mercy Action Group and I am really looking forward to the volunteer work and helping people who just don’t have what we take for granted. I know that I’m meant to be going on this trip otherwise I wouldn’t have found out about it and I feel privileged to be going to a place that is like poverty stricken.

Student 90 added,

So yeah, I probably feel closest to God when I’m like in a social justice side of things.

7.4.5 The Appeal of Mega-Events

Many of the pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools were motivated to register for World Youth Day because of the iconic status and nature of the event.

World Youth Day is a mega-event, the largest regular gathering of young people in the world. It is reported that the largest gatherings in human history have occurred at the Final Mass of World Youth Day (Manila 1995, Rio de Janeiro 2013). A number of the key events of World Youth Day week, including the Vigil and the Final Mass, often attract several million people, and are televised to millions more. Other events, including the papal arrival and the Stations of the Cross, are staged publically in the centre of the host city. The size and scale of these events and the festive nature of them held great appeal for the pilgrims interviewed for the research study.

Prior to the event many pilgrims expressed excitement about being part of something so big. This excitement was evident in the interviews with both adult and student pilgrims, but especially the students.

Student 81 commented,

World Youth Day is just a must. If you're Catholic, it's on your bucket list, you can't not go. I mean the DVD said it all and I'm going to be there, right on Copacabana beach.

For some of the pilgrims, excitement was tinged with other emotions. Student 85 commented,

Nervous, excited, a tiny bit anxious, a little bit overwhelmed. I don't think that I can fully comprehend what is going to happen. It's still not hit me that we are going to be with millions of people all expressing our faith. I guess it just hasn't sunk in yet.

During the pre-World Youth Day interviews, pilgrims were asked to reflect on their experiences with large crowds, and their feelings during those times. Not all interviewees answered the question. Of those who did, reference was given to the Sydney Olympics, Sydney World Youth Day 2008, the New Year's Eve fireworks, concerts and major sporting events. The pilgrims associated these events with fun and camaraderie and a heightened sense of emotion. They related their feelings to the context of each particular event.

Getz (2005) suggested that special events were defined by their particular context. Typically, these events are not quotidian experiences and they become ‘must see’ or ‘must do’ experiences for many people. This was borne out in the research study, and many pilgrims saw both real and symbolic value in the experience of World Youth Day. Each mega event has a particular set of appeals and those drawn to them often have specific expectations, sometimes among them – the satisfaction of personal needs.

7.4.6 The Experience of a ‘Lifetime’

For the pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools, World Youth Day was a highly anticipated experience with multi-layered appeal. The research study showed that pilgrims perceived the event as affording them a range of ‘external’ opportunities as well stimulating ‘internal’ personal changes and growth. They felt the gathering would not only enable them to share and connect with others, but also offer a space for self-expression.

Some interviewees suggested that the event would help in their own search for personal meaning and would help define who they were. Adult pilgrim 15 commented, “I hope I come back a changed man ... and that there’s a little bit more strength in me than what I have at the moment”.

Without exception, the interviewees spoke of World Youth Day in positive terms. Most had high expectations and they anticipated positive outcomes as a result of their participation. The research study also pointed to pilgrims’ appreciation of the ‘unique opportunity’ they had in attending World Youth Day. For almost all of the student pilgrims, this was the very first time that they would engage in any form of significant travel without being accompanied by their parents. Many were excited by the independent nature of the World Youth Day travel.

For some of the adult pilgrims involved in the research study this was not a unique opportunity as they had already experienced World Youth Day and this motivated them to register again as pilgrims. Tables 6.16, 6.17 & 6.18 highlighted the importance of the international gathering, not just as a

positive religious experience, but as a point of influence in the decision to become a pilgrim. This was also evident in the interviews. Adult pilgrim 1 commented,

Well I went to Cologne and also to World Youth Day in Sydney and I want to go to Spain so that I can have that same sort of spiritual experience again. Although it's the same event each World Youth Day is a new and different story for me.

Adult pilgrim 27 remarked,

I registered in 2008 as a pilgrim group leader and I was in charge of 14 young people and it was a remarkable experience. It was just wonderful, it just really energised me. I don't think my faith was waning but it gave me another perspective. And I want to experience that again.

The adult interviewees who had been to a World Youth Day previously identified their past experience as highly rewarding. It was both a peak religious and life experience.

A significant appeal of the World Youth Day experience is the perceived atmosphere of the event. Gatherings are described as exciting and exhilarating (Rymarz, 2008c), ones which enable spontaneous feelings of connectedness and oneness with others.

The qualitative data highlighted the priority that the pilgrims gave to the ambiance and atmosphere of World Youth Day. Pilgrims spoke of their perceived sense of the event's 'aura', 'buzz' and 'vibe', and their desire to experience this. In their descriptions, many of the student pilgrims in particular were highly animated.

Student 49 reflected,

I've heard so much about what it's like and I can't wait. I'm just wishing the two weeks away ... If I may say, I'm just pumped. I reckon that's the best way to explain it - energised, pumped ... I'm just really excited.

SECTION 2: MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY RESEARCH DATA

7.5 THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS

7.5.1 Background

The post-World Youth Day research was conducted in the six month period immediately following each international gathering. Pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools and from the wider Australian contingents participated in the post-World Youth Day questionnaires and interviews.

Within the context of the research study, pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools participated as a *purposive sampling* whereas pilgrims from the wider Australian contingents were engaged as a *snowball sampling* (see section 2.4.1).

7.5.2 Age Profile

The research study showed that the adult pilgrims who travelled with Sydney Catholic Schools were older than those who travelled with the general Australian contingents (see Tables 6.29 & 6.34). Of the four age groupings (19-24; 25-29; 30-35; 36+), the largest proportion of schools' pilgrims was in the category 36years plus (Madrid – 42.4%; Rio – 47.6%). With the general Australian pilgrim population, the largest grouping was found in the youngest of the adult categories, 19 – 24 years of age (Madrid – 34.7%; Rio – 41.3%).

Historically, Australian participation at World Youth Day has involved large numbers of university students and this has been reflected in the demographic age-profile of past groups. The added presence of Antioch, and a number of ethnic, and parish youth groups has meant that the largest single group within Australian contingents has been an immediate (1-5 years) 'post-school' group'. By contrast, school contingents have comprised 'older adults' who have taken on specific supervisory responsibilities of their student pilgrims. Generally, these adults have come from school leadership

teams and diocesan education offices. Chaplains have traditionally accompanied school groups also. These historical patterns were reflected in age profiles of the adult pilgrims involved in the research study.

The research study pointed to a number of trends in adult pilgrims' evaluations of World Youth Day. Specifically, it showed patterns in the responses of the four age-related subgroups.

A one-way ANOVA analysis examined the Mean differences between the different adult age-related groups according to religiosity measures. With the exception of Mass attendance, Mean scores increased with each ascending age-related subgroup. Although the adult pilgrims aged 36 years or more had the highest levels of religiosity among the adult sub-groups they were the most critical group in their appraisal of World Youth Day. Of the four groups, they recorded the lowest Mean score for 29 of the 44 Likert scale items. This included Catechesis Sessions, the Vigil and the Final Mass. The interviews suggested that their appraisal of World Youth Day was influenced by range of factors. While some of the older adult pilgrims were critical of organizational and logistical concerns, many evaluated their World Youth Day experience in light of their pre-existing religious socialization.

Within the post-World Youth Day questionnaires, two clusters of questions addressed the spiritual dynamics and ecclesial dimensions of the international gathering. Of the 16 Likert scale items involved, the pilgrims aged 36 and over recorded the lowest Mean score for 14 items. The research data did not suggest that these pilgrims had little appreciation of the religious elements. Rather, it showed that other age-related subgroups perceived the religious impact of World Youth Day to have been more significant.

Some of the items gave emphasis to being challenged to think differently about faith (16e), having faith strengthened (14f) and seeing organized religion in a more positive light (14h). The older adults gave a moderate level of agreement. Many of the older pilgrims were already highly

committed to their faith and accustomed to a range of religious experiences, including World Youth Day. In this context they were less likely to indicate being changed by their experience of the international gathering.

The research study showed that among the subgroups of adult pilgrims, those aged between 19 and 24 years were the most positive in their appraisal of World Youth Day. The research data presented in Tables 6.47 – 6.56 showed a distinct pattern in adult pilgrims' responses to their World Youth Day experience. Adult pilgrims from the wider Australian contingent were generally more positive in their appraisal of the international gathering and its associated pilgrimages. The research study pointed to one exception to this – the adult pilgrims aged between 19 and 24 years from Sydney Catholic Schools.

When the ANOVA analysis of the age-related groups was expanded to include the 8 subgroups (both Australian contingent and Sydney Catholic Schools), it showed that those belonging to the 19-24 years group from Sydney Catholic Schools recorded the highest Mean score for 29 of the 44 Likert scale items. The group gave the most positive affirmation to some of the large liturgical events during World Youth Day week as well as the Catechesis Sessions and Eucharistic Adoration.

While the subgroup was comprised of only 11 teachers (the smallest of the eight groups), it was evident that the experience of World Youth Day had a significant impact on their religious socialization and their sense and expression of faith. Their assessments of World Youth Day pointed to Collins' theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004), especially the outcome of strengthened membership feelings. In response to both items 13a, *'I felt a strong sense of belonging'* and 15a, *'I felt a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims'*, the group Mean score was 4.91.

The research study showed that adult pilgrims and young pilgrims interpreted and appraised their experience of World Youth Day differently. It also indicated that within the broad category of 'adult', there were variations in pilgrims' evaluations of the international gathering according

to age. Some of these points will be considered further in Section 7.10 where pre and post-World Youth Day results are compared. The implications will be explored in the final chapter.

7.5.3 Gender Profile

Historically, Australian participation in World Youth Day has involved greater numbers of female pilgrims than male. Females have also had higher levels of participation in previous empirical research studies of World Youth Day (Rymarz, 2007b; Mason et al., 2008a,b). This pattern was also true of this research study, where 55% of all respondents were female, and 45% male. The difference in the rate of gender participation was greater among younger pilgrims (Male: 41.7%; Female: 58.3%) than with adult pilgrims (Male: 48.1%; Female: 51.9%).

The difference in the numbers of male and female pilgrims participating in World Youth Day is not unsurprising. A range of sociological studies have pointed to women being more religious than men on various measures of religiosity, including regular public worship, private devotions – especially prayer, and a personal commitment to core religious beliefs and teachings (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Walter & Davie, 1998). Proportionately, women do attribute greater value and importance to religion and they are more actively involved in its religious practices and social membership. Within the social context of Australia's Catholic community, women in every age group attend Mass in greater numbers, and attend Mass more frequently.

The ratio of male and female Australian World Youth Day pilgrims (Madrid and Rio de Janeiro) is reflective of the broader pattern of participation rates in the Church community. Notwithstanding their different participation rates in the international gathering, the variance in male and female pilgrims' responses to the World Youth Day survey also requires discussion. While gender differences on a range of religiosity measures are well accepted, and females are considered to have heightened religiosity when compared to males, the Mean for the Total Religion Score for all

pilgrims was higher for males ($M = 15.98$) than females ($M = 15.28$). As a cohort, males had higher Mean scores for the items relating to Mass attendance, prayer and descriptions of faith. Male and female pilgrims recorded the same Mean score ($M = 4.45$) when asked about the importance of religion.

The male and female pilgrims' group Means for the Total Religion Score, and the four questions underpinning its calculation, were inconsistent with sociological research on the relationship between gender and religiosity. The results can most likely be attributed to the composition of the 'adult male pilgrim group' which included priests and seminarians. It is estimated that approximately 10% to 12% of the adult male pilgrim group were priests. Their inclusion, with that of seminarians and other religious, most probably skewed the Mean of the Total Religion Score of the adult male pilgrim group ($M = 17.7$), and the Mean of the total male cohort.

When the gender groups were divided according to age (young pilgrims & adult pilgrims) young females had a higher Mean for the Total Religion Score than male pilgrims. Of the four sub-groups (Gender ÷ Age), they also gave the strongest endorsement of the World Youth Day experience and had the highest group Mean for 32 of the 44 Likert Scale items. Their overall item Mean was 4.48.

Young female pilgrims' assessment of the World Youth Day experience was especially positive in regards to the event's social and emotional dynamics. They viewed it as an exciting and enjoyable experience which provided an opportunity for religious socialization outside of the 'routine'. It was viewed by them as a spiritual experience which strengthened their personal faith and enabled them to see faith differently.

Females were more positive in their validation of the World Youth Day experience than males. This was true, not just of young female pilgrims, but of the total population sample.

In addition to affirming a number of the social and emotional dynamics

underpinning World Youth Day, the two groups of female pilgrims (young and adult) responded as one homogenous group in their validation of the Catholic Church, especially in their newfound awareness of the size and diversity of the Church (14b) and their sense of being inspired by the Pope and other Church leaders (16d). Female pilgrims were also more positive than males in their assessment of the catechesis sessions. A sense of belonging to and being valued by the Church were salient themes that characterized the interviews with the female pilgrims, more so than with the males.

Given the strength of the young female pilgrims' responses in particular, the quantitative data raised issues about what might be the appealing aspects of the World Youth Day experience and whether these can be replicated in other areas of Church life, especially parish life and approaches to youth ministry. These issues will be explored in the next chapter.

7.5.4 Cultural Background

Historically, Australian participation in World Youth Day has involved large numbers of pilgrims born overseas, and second and third generation Australians, many of whom identified strongly with their particular ethnic community. The research study found that this was also true of the Australian pilgrims who travelled to the international gatherings in Madrid and Rio de Janeiro.

While confirming the ethnic diversity of Australian pilgrims, the research study found that the cultural backgrounds of pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools varied from those travelling with the wider Australian delegation. Two identifiable differences were in relation to pilgrims' place of birth and their language spoken at home. In each instance, the data pointed to the cohorts of Australian pilgrims being more ethnically and culturally diverse.

Of the combined pilgrim groups travelling with Sydney Catholic Schools (students x 2 and adults x 2), 56 pilgrims (9.8%) were born overseas. By contrast, among the Australian groups (18years and under x 2 and adults x 2), 175 pilgrims (30.7%) were born overseas. In addition, 43 (7.5%) pilgrims

from Sydney Catholic Schools indicated that they spoke a language other than English at home. Within the wider Australian groups, 99 pilgrims (17.5%) did the same.

The ethnic and cultural mix of the combined group of all Australian pilgrims (2011 & 2013) was generally reflective of the diversity of the overall Australian Catholic population. According to the 2011 Australian census, 23.6% of the Australian Catholic population was born overseas, 17.9% of whom, were born in a non-English speaking country. A further 21.7% of the Catholic population was second generation Australian, with one or both parents born overseas (Dixon & Reid, 2013). The 2011 national census also indicated that 19% of the total Catholic population spoke a language other than English at home.

While recent Australian census figures (1996-2011) have indicated that Italy, the United Kingdom and the Philippines were the top three countries of origin for overseas born Australian Catholics (Dixon & Reid, 2013), the research study found that the main countries of origin for Australian World Youth Day pilgrims were in Asia, Oceania and the Middle East. The 231 overseas born pilgrims came from forty different countries of origin. Of these, the Philippines, Vietnam and Lebanon each accounted for over 10% of the pilgrims. The locality of each World Youth Day also had some bearing on this particular demographic. This was shown in the 2013 World Youth Day data with the attendance of pilgrims born in South and Central America.

The ethnic and cultural composition of pilgrim cohorts is relevant to the analysis and understanding of the World Youth Day phenomenon. As noted in the *Social Profile of the Catholic Community in Australia – 2011 Census*, a report of the Australian Catholic Council of Pastoral Research, “Catholics born overseas, especially those born in non- English speaking countries, are likely to have different approaches to faith and spirituality, and different experiences and expectations of Church life, from those of Catholics born in Australia” (2015, p.17).

Research has pointed to a relationship between ethnic background and religious attitudes and practices, especially Mass attendance. Specifically, within the Australian context, patterns of Mass attendance have remained stable for those born in non-English speaking countries and their rates of practice are higher than the general Catholic population (Dixon et al., 2013). Furthermore, there is evidence of heightened levels of religiosity among them, especially in regards to their perceived value of religion, and their adherence to core Catholic beliefs and moral teachings (Dixon, 2013). The presence of overseas-born pilgrims may well then have influenced the social dynamics of pilgrim groups and their overall perception and valuing of the World Youth Day experience.

In addition to the pilgrims born overseas many were second generation Australians and the issue of cultural influences and identification may have impacted upon their engagement in and reflections on the World Youth Day experience. Although, not having substantial longitudinal data, Dixon, Reid & Chee (2013) suggested “the beneficial effects on Mass attendance of immigrants from non-English speaking countries tends to last only one generation” (p.5), i.e. second generation Australians adopt the practices of third and later generations rather than continuing that of their parents. The choice of second-generation Australians to discontinue the religious practices of parents or to disassociate from ‘cultural’ expressions and observances of religion has been documented as a social reality for some of the Christian churches in Australia (Bentley, Blombery & Hughes, 1992).

While no data was available on the number of second generation pilgrims travelling with the wider Australian contingents, there were significant numbers who travelled with the Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts to World Youth Day. This demographic information was available for all of the Sydney Catholic Schools pilgrims not just the research participants. Across both World Youth Days, 271 students (39%) and 38 adults (24%) identified as second generation Australian.

The significant presence of second generation Australians in pilgrim cohorts has implications for the study of World Youth Day. While in the

wider society it would appear that a drift away from traditional religious practices and observances occurs in second and succeeding generations, the involvement of these generations, especially second, in World Youth Day, suggests that many are looking to maintain and strengthen their religious socialization and membership. Furthermore, the experience of World Youth Day appears to strengthen the religious ties and identity of second generation pilgrims.

During the conduct of the semi-structured interviews, a number of student pilgrims made reference to the cultural origins of their parents and the influence that this had on their family's religious observances and their own religious disposition. The interviews highlighted different perspectives about the relationship between culture and religion. While the second generation interviewees each affirmed the importance of religion, they were less consistent in their descriptions of personal practice.

Student pilgrim 156 said,

My parents are Croatians, so I got to experience a Croatian church and an English church ... I didn't understand much at times so I didn't go as much but I've gotten interested again after coming here ... and yeah. I really like it you know.

Student pilgrim 134 commented,

[Religion's] always been important especially coming from a South American background ... always constantly going to Church, always praying, but in terms for me, it's more a way to guide myself in terms of right and wrong and just trying to keep a close relationship with God and my family.

Given the ethnic diversity of the Australian pilgrims, and the apparent influence of cultural backgrounds on peoples' religious attitudes and practices, further attention will be given to the relationship between culture and religion in the next chapter.

7.6 A RELIGIOUS TYPOLOGY OF WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS

7.6.1 Introduction

By their very nature, large gatherings of people are heterogeneous and are generally comprised of a number of sub-groups. This remains true even when the event has a targeted audience and the participants share a common sense of purpose. While having common experiences, the various sub-groups and individual participants can interpret and value them differently. In order to distinguish between the various sub-groups, and assess the nature of their responses, elements of the quantitative data were used to develop a typology of World Youth Day pilgrims.

As with past research on and analysis of the international gathering (Mason et al., 2008b), the research study identified the existence of several pilgrim sub-groups. In his assessment of the international gatherings, John Allen Jr (2011a) suggested that World Youth Day attracted three core groups: “gung-ho inner core; a more lukewarm cohort, who don’t think about religion all that much, but who still go to Mass and see the faith as a positive thing; and those who are just along for the ride”.

The research study found that there were four key sub-groups.

7.6.2 Devoted Pilgrims

Devoted Pilgrims had a highly developed religiosity, characterized by a strong commitment to and valuing of their faith. They were actively involved in Church life, especially through regular worship, and many were associated with ecclesial groups and movements. Devoted pilgrims valued the place of personal prayer in their daily lives.

Many of the devoted pilgrims (adult) had attended World Youth Day multiple times. As with the devoted pilgrims who attended for the first time, the appeal of and satisfaction from the international gathering was primarily found in its ‘spiritual/religious dynamics’.

The majority of the devoted pilgrims were adults (82.4%). Notwithstanding

this, the Total Religion Score, and the items used in its calculation, showed that there was little variance in the religious disposition of both the young and adult devoted pilgrims. A Scheffe post-hoc test showed that they were one homogenous subset in their responses to the items.

As a group, the devoted pilgrims indicated that they were inspired by the words of the Pope and other Church leaders and felt comfortable in sharing their faith and discussing their religious beliefs with others. They felt a strong sense of belonging at World Youth Day, and during the week-long gathering found particular appeal in the catechesis sessions and the opportunities for Reconciliation and Eucharistic Adoration.

In appraising World Youth Day, the younger group of devoted pilgrims was particularly positive about the different aspects of the event and the pilgrimage that had preceded it. Of the eight religious typologies (see Table 6.46), they had the highest Mean score for 28 of the 44 items. It was apparent that World Youth Day provided the younger devoted pilgrims with a unique opportunity for religious socialization, one in which their religious identity was both validated and strengthened. The nature and strength of young devoted pilgrims' responses to the World Youth Day experience corresponded with the outcomes of Collins' *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004), namely: membership feelings and emotional energy.

While already religiously active, their feelings of group solidarity were strengthened by the strong presence of generational peers, and for many, this was not reflective of conventional religious rituals, or their experience of Church life. This was not unique to the devoted pilgrims however, but common to all young pilgrims, irrespective of their religious disposition. Ultimately, the significant co-presence of generational peers helped validate the social and religious identity of many young pilgrims and this in-turn proved to be emotionally stimulating and rewarding for them.

The adult pilgrims (devoted) were more measured in their validation of the various World Youth Day experiences. While affirming the event and its associated activities, especially the religious/spiritual elements, they did not

attribute the same degree of importance to the social elements as their younger counterparts. The responses of the adult devoted pilgrims were not marked with the same emotional intensity of the younger pilgrims. Instead of expressing enthusiasm and excitement, the interviewees spoke with pride about their 'moral tribe', and identified World Youth Day as a time that confirmed their moral and religious convictions.

The highly developed *cultural capital* (Collins, 2004) of the adult devoted pilgrims meant that some elements of World Youth Day had less overall impact on them than on some other pilgrim groups. While their pre-existing religious socialization enabled them to engage fully in the gamut of religious opportunities associated with the pilgrimage and World Youth Day week, it also meant that many of them had strong views about World Youth Day and its associated events and activities. This in turn influenced their appraisal of the international gathering.

Reflecting the religious certitude of the adult pilgrims (devoted) was their response to item 14c, 'I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others.' Their Mean item score of ($M = 4.04$) was the lowest of the eight religious typologies.

A number of the 44 Likert scale items implied growth and development, both personal and religious. Given the already developed religiosity of the adult devoted pilgrims, it can be reasonably assumed that on some items there was less scope for, and likelihood of them self-identifying a pattern of growth. To that end, the overall impact of some items was not as great with this particular sub-group.

Devoted pilgrims are well enculturated within a Religious Tradition. At a time when the "legitimization of belief is moving from religious authorities, as guarantors of the truth of belief, to individuals themselves" (Hervieu-Léger, 2006, p.60), devoted pilgrims have not followed this pattern of deregulation and individualization, but have maintained a commitment to religious beliefs, teachings and practices within the context of a Tradition. For them, the strengthening of faith and a relationship with God comes

through the social and sacramental life of the Church.

Devoted pilgrims tend to see the nature and practice of their religious identity as an authentic choice rather than conformity to a religious institution. At World Youth Day, they are accompanied by a critical mass of like-minded peers, which has served to strengthen their religio-cultural identity.

Adult 100, who was in the devoted pilgrim typology, was interviewed after World Youth Day Madrid, their third experience of the international gathering. The pilgrim said,

My faith is the most important thing in my life, it's at the heart of my identity... there would not be too many things in my life that it doesn't influence ... When you go to WYD, you see your faith is so much bigger than what you imagined ... there's a smorgasbord of different things, different ways you can participate in the church, whether it be different ecclesial groups or movements, whether it be different types of prayer ... and then there is the Holy Father and his words of encouragement. By its [World Youth Day] very nature, you're delving deeper into your faith all the time.

7.6.3 Religious Believers

The group of pilgrims classified as **Religious Believers** valued the importance of religion and recognized that involvement in Church life should characterize the living out of one's faith. Notwithstanding this, religious believers were not always regular in their religious practices, especially in their Mass attendance. The 'religious believers' were stronger on religiosity measures relating to identification with and commitment to a religious group than they were on measures associated with religious practices.

Religious believers identified strongly with the Catholic Church.

Religious believers were the largest of the four religious typologies, slightly larger in size than the devoted pilgrims. They represented approximately

37% of the total pilgrim cohort. As a group, religious believers were evenly split between adults (N = 210) and younger pilgrims (N = 205). The Total Religion Score, and the items used in its calculation, showed that there was little variance in the religious disposition of both groups of religious believers. A Scheffe post-hoc test showed that they were one homogenous subset in their responses to each of the items.

Many of the Religious believers had attended World Youth Day previously. Typically, these were pilgrims who were regularly involved in a parish community or an ecclesial group or movement. Those attending for the first time were a more disparate group. While some were active in their religious practice the majority had a looser religious affiliation. Among the young pilgrims (students and those under 18 years of age) and the younger adults, many affirmed the importance of personal prayer but were then only marginally involved in communal worship.

The research study found that religious believers drew particular satisfaction from the spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day. As a group, the religious believers indicated that they found World Youth Day a powerful spiritual experience which strengthened their faith and deepened their relationship with God. They affirmed that religion was seen in a more positive light, and of the typologies, they were the group most inclined to go to World Youth Day again.

While both groups of religious believers affirmed the potency of the spiritual dynamics of World Youth Day, the younger pilgrims also attested to the strength of the social/emotional dynamics. Of the eight religious typologies, they had the highest mean score on 10 of the items which related to the social/emotional dynamics. It was apparent that the international gathering afforded the younger religious believers a powerful sense of emotional energy, which took the form of confidence and enthusiasm, and which reinforced the value of their experiences. Corresponding with Collins' theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004), this form of emotional energy was likely to be sustained. In the months that followed each World Youth Day, young religious believers still spoke excitedly about the international

gatherings and attested to their ongoing feelings of joy and satisfaction. Many of the interviewees referred to the ‘buzz’ of their experience.

The nature and pattern of religious believers’ responses pointed to the important interrelationship between the pilgrimage and the events of World Youth Day. Religious believers affirmed different aspects of the pilgrimage experience, including: bonding with fellow pilgrims, the importance of sacrifices and hardships, and the journey of inner renewal. They recognized the spiritual value of the pilgrimage, especially from the perspective of their quest for and experience of the sacred.

In the interviews, a number of pilgrims, especially the religious believers, suggested that the pilgrimage was a natural precursor to World Youth Day. From their perspective, it not only allowed time for pilgrims to bond together as a group but to also engage in meaningful spiritual preparation for World Youth Day itself. This preparation meant that the pilgrims were able to “discover themselves through reflection, meditation, prayer, an examination of conscience [and] silence” (Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, 1998, n.40). The importance of these opportunities cannot be underscored.

Prior to World Youth Day in Madrid, Pope Benedict had reminded aspiring pilgrims that the quality of the gathering would depend, above all other things, on peoples’ spiritual preparation. For many of the religious believers this was achieved through the pilgrimage experience, for they saw that it was integral to and complemented World Youth Day, and attuned pilgrims for the gathering. Given the structure of World Youth Day as a pilgrimage in faith, and the importance of pilgrimage to the overall faith experience of pilgrims, the intersection between pilgrimages and World Youth Day week will be explored further in the next chapter.

Adult pilgrim 103, who was in the religious believer typology, was interviewed after World Youth Day Madrid. The pilgrim said,

In my family everyone’s Catholic and I think that we are very religious. But as we grew up, we kind of stopped going to Church -

it just became you know the thing of too many distractions, friends and going out on weekends, things like that. I have not changed my beliefs though, and when I got offered to go [to World Youth Day] I thought this could be good to go back to Church and restore my faith, and I was very happy to get into it again.

7.6.4 Meaning Seekers

The group referred to as **Meaning Seekers** were intermittently involved in the practice of their faith, both through communal worship and personal prayer. As a group they viewed religion as being reasonably important, and considered it to be a source of personal meaning, and influence on their daily living.

Many of the meaning seekers described their faith as ‘searching’, and they participated in World Youth Day in the hope of satisfying a diverse range of personal goals. The appeal of World Youth Day, and the satisfaction derived from it, was most strongly associated with the social /emotional dynamics of the event.

The majority of the meaning seekers were young pilgrims (82%). While the Mean of the Total Religion Score for both groups of meaning seekers (adult and young) showed that there was little variance in their overall religiosity, there were marked differences in their responses to each of the items used in the calculation of the TRS (see Table 6.46). Adult meaning seekers attributed greater importance to religion and Mass attendance, whereas meaning seekers had a greater commitment to personal prayer and described their faith in more positive terms.

As a group, the meaning seekers indicated that they particularly valued the opportunity to go on pilgrimage and explore new places, and to make new friends, many of whom were from other parts of the World. They acknowledged that their experience of World Youth Day was in contrast to their normal experience of Church, and through it they had come to appreciate the religious views of others.

In appraising the events of World Youth Day week, meaning seekers gave their strongest endorsement to the large scale gatherings, which suggests that the particular dynamics associated with large events met and satisfied their personal needs and aspirations. Of the religious typologies, meaning seekers gave the strongest affirmation of World Youth Day as an event which made them feel very good about themselves (13g), and they identified it as one of the best experiences of their lives (13h).

The nature and pattern of the meaning seekers' responses pointed to the broader issue of their religious orientation. While the concept of religious orientation (Allport & Ross, 1967), i.e. the motives that underpin peoples' religious behaviours, was relevant to all World Youth Day pilgrims, and their typologies, the research study found that it was particularly relevant to the meaning seekers.

In their development of a Religious Orientation Scale, Allport & Ross (1967) outlined a theory relating to *intrinsic religiosity* and *extrinsic religiosity*. *Intrinsic religiosity* referred to people who participated in religious activities for explicitly spiritual outcomes, especially a strengthening of their relationship with God. Religion was seen as a way of life and an end in itself, and individuals lived in accord with their beliefs. This spiritually-oriented lifestyle brought individuals a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

In contrast, *extrinsic religiosity* referred to people who participated in religious activities for a range of social and personal outcomes, especially as a means to meet new people, nurture friendships and build self-esteem. Religion was seen as a means to an ends and participation in religious activities were an antecedent to a range of secondary benefits. In turn, these secondary benefits met a range of social, emotional and psychological needs and brought individuals a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

While the research study found that many pilgrims represented either an intrinsic or extrinsic orientation to their religiosity, there were others, especially among the meaning seekers, where the motivations were more

discrete. In part, this reflected the thinking of Emmons, Cheung and Tehrani (1998), who had cautioned, “even a rudimentary distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness fails to begin capturing the complexity inherent in the construct of religiosity or spirituality” (p.404).

What is clear from the research study is that there were many World Youth Day pilgrims, especially younger pilgrims, who were involved in a search for meaning. For some, this took the form of a spiritual/religious quest, and a consideration of core existential questions. Others were motivated by psycho-social considerations and sought a greater sense of self.

Meaning seekers were very positive in their overall affirmation of the World Youth Day experience, suggesting that for many, their desired outcomes were achieved. Further attention will be given to the nature of pilgrims’ religious orientation and their intersection with the dynamics of World Youth Day in the next chapter.

Adult pilgrim 216, a meaning seeker, was interviewed after World Youth Day Rio, their fourth experience of the international gathering. The pilgrim said,

Religion is fairly important. It helps me to have a deeper understanding of my own personal identity. I feel that my faith and spirituality act as a means for me to be able to understand who I am and also who I am called to be ... finding meaning and purpose in my life ... I am actually a veteran of World Youth Day. I think that the reason why I come back is because each time I’ve had a different experience, and I come to know more about myself and my relationship with God ... each World Youth Day is just like a retreat.

7.6.5 Social Tourists

Social Tourists attributed little value to the importance of religion and considered that they were disengaged from religious beliefs and practices. They were rarely or never involved in Church life and gave little importance to the place of personal prayer in their daily lives. The social tourists who saw some value in religion avoided Mass attendance as they associated it

with 'institutional religion'.

For the social tourists, their attendance at World Youth Day was a one-off. Most became pilgrims because they had friends who were attending. Some others had heard about the event vicariously, and were attracted to the idea of travel, participating in a mega-event and making new friends. For the social tourists, the appeal of and satisfaction from the international gathering was primarily found in its 'social/emotional dynamics'.

The majority of the social tourists were young pilgrims (76%), almost exclusively students from Sydney Catholic Schools. The Total Religion Score, and the items used in its calculation, showed that the young social tourists had a stronger religious affiliation and disposition than the adults of the same religious typology. The younger group of social tourists was also more positive in their validation of the World Youth Day experience, registering a higher Mean score for 31 of the 44 Likert scale items. Notwithstanding this, the responses of both groups of social tourists generally reflected that of a single homogenous subset.

In appraising World Youth Day, the social tourists did not validate the different aspects of the event as positively as the other religious typologies. In particular, they were less moved by the spiritual/religious dynamics and the principal events of the week-long gathering. In a sense they remained 'outsiders' looking in. While the social tourists acknowledged that World Youth Day was very different to their normal experience of Church (16f), and that it had many positive aspects, they did not attest to feeling a strong sense of belonging (13a). Bonding with fellow pilgrims was not seen from a religious communal perspective but was related to the sense of enjoyment and satisfaction that came from shared social experiences.

Because of the heterogeneous nature of those drawn to religious gatherings there is inevitably a degree of social stratification. Typically, the emergence of sub-groups is a result of participants' cultural capital and their capacity to personally access and engage in the key rituals. The stratification of

participants can mean that sub-groups become hierarchical status groups (Collins, 2004), with the added distinction of ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’.

Collins observed, “interaction rituals are implicitly stratified between ... the most engaged and socially oriented, out through a layer of attention contenders and followers, and finally reaching those on the margins of the group ... the peripherals ... [they] have less EE than those nearer the group center” (2004, pp. 353-354).

The stratification of Emotional Energy (EE) referred to by Collins was evident in the social tourists’ appraisal of World Youth Day. For them, the affective intensity was not generated by the shared focus of attention and shared mood of participants. Instead, it arose from the close personal contact with fellow pilgrims, a contact that Collins called ‘bodily co-presence’ (2004, p.48). This physical closeness between pilgrims meant that many experienced a sense of interpersonal connection, a unifying with others and a ‘melding of selves’ (Tramacchi, 2001, p.174). For the social tourists, the heightened sense of satisfaction came –not from their feelings of Church membership - but from their experience of connectivity with others.

For the social tourists, the experience of pilgrimage was a highlight of their time away from Australia. For many, it was seen as an adventure. One can assume that social pilgrims’ validation of the pilgrimages above the experiences of World Youth Day week were because they were perceived as less explicitly religious in nature. While conscious of the religious contexts of their pilgrimages, it was evident that the social tourists saw their travel from the perspective of leisure, enjoyment and the achievement of personal milestones.

After World Youth Day in Rio Student pilgrim 255, a social tourist, reflected,

To be honest religion isn’t the most important part of my life ... In my life I doubt a lot, I doubt there is a God and I doubt my faith. I would like to boost my faith in God, and maybe that’s why I came to World Youth Day. But to be honest, I kind of liked the adventure aspect ... and like – hanging out with my friends half way around

the world and doing some fun stuff.

7.7 PILGRIMS' EXPERIENCE OF PILGRIMAGE

The research data showed that all pilgrim groups gave strong endorsement to the pilgrimage experience and affirmed the impact of its associated dynamics. Of the clusters of questions asked in the post- World Youth Day surveys, the one relating to 'pilgrimage' showed pilgrims' evaluations to be consistently positive. This was not the case with the other clusters.

The questions within the pilgrimage cluster made explicit reference to both the emotional/social and religious/spiritual dynamics. Pilgrims' responses showed a stronger affirmation of the emotional/social dynamics, and this in-part pointed to the relevance of past research studies on the phenomenology of tourist and pilgrim experiences.

Although peoples' perception and understanding of pilgrimage has changed in recent decades, and it is no longer considered to be an exclusively religious construct or activity, the World Youth Day pilgrimages were situated within an explicitly religious context. Notwithstanding this, pilgrimages to the international gathering drew pilgrims with an amalgam of motivations, and some represented a classic tourist archetype. While some sociologists have defended the differentiation of pilgrimage and tourism, and pilgrims and tourists (Palmer, Begley & Coe, 2012) there is broader acceptance of the view that the boundaries and distinctions between the two are "increasingly obfuscated" (Collins-Kreiner, 2010, p.440).

The research data pointed to a number of salient themes. Pilgrims valued the opportunity for experiences which were a departure from their ordinary social and cultural worlds. While many valued the spiritual dynamics, and found that their travel stimulated their awareness and sense of the sacred, pilgrims' were more inclined to affirm the recreational opportunities which impacted upon their affective states. Many reported the emergence of strong bonds and a sense of solidarity with their fellow pilgrims. Young pilgrims in particular, affirmed the presence and impact of the emotional dynamics.

The intensity and duration of these emotional dynamics may well have been influenced by the general life experience of the younger pilgrims, i.e. “seeing places and doing things for the first time generates the strongest emotions” (Robinson, 2012, p.30). The valence and strength of these emotions was borne out in young pilgrims’ interviews, and in their responses to the open-ended survey questions.

The research study showed that while many pilgrims valued the novelty of their travels, and the freedom and enjoyment associated with them, others were more influenced by the traditional quest for an encounter with the sacred. This spectrum of dispositions is not unique to World Youth Day however. Cohen (1979, p.183) suggested that within all tourist experiences there were several core subgroups or typologies. He termed these: recreational; diversionary; experiential; experimental and existential. Cohen suggested that while the five modes of touristic experiences were distinct from each other, they represented different points on the one continuum.

World Youth Day pilgrims’ place and movement on the continuum was influenced by their religious disposition and their core reasons for attending World Youth Day. It could be argued that it was also influenced in part by the nature, focus and itineraries of the different pilgrimages.

The research study showed that there was a variance in how World Youth Day pilgrims’ perceived their experience of the sacred during the respective pilgrimages. Those who attended the international gathering in Madrid affirmed a connection with the ‘sacred’ more readily than those who participated in the Rio gathering. Pilgrims’ perceptions may have arisen from the fact that the pilgrimages to Madrid involved visiting sites of particular significance to the Christian Tradition and the Catholic Church more specifically. In contrast, sites visited on the Rio pilgrimages did not hold the same level of ‘cultural significance’ for Catholics. It was apparent that the ‘religious status’ of particular places may well have influenced pilgrims’ experiences and their perceptions of the places visited.

The research study showed that pilgrims’ religious affiliation and

socialisation may have also influenced their association of places with the sacred. The typologies of devoted pilgrims and religious believers attested to their sense of the sacred, awareness of an inner journey and desire to visit other sacred places in the Christian Tradition more readily than the other typologies. From the interviews it was apparent that the pilgrims with a developed religiosity were more attuned to the significance of particular pilgrimage sites and more open to the possibilities for an encounter with the sacred. These findings corresponded with the view of Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004), who asserted that religions endow places with symbolic meaning and foster a sense of ‘place attachment’ among believers.

For many pilgrims, it was apparent that place attachment and a sense of the sacred arose from the aesthetic appeal of their experience.

Student 145 reflected

I was blown away by Assisi ... everyone was just in a line following to meet the statue, and they were singing the song Ave Maria, in a different language but everyone just knew the main chorus. And they lifted their candles up in the air. It was just really moving. And even though I wanted to take pictures and stop, I just found it disrespectful so I didn't cause it was just a very sacred moment. I would just show them photos of the other experiences.

7.8 PILGRIMS' EXPERIENCE OF THE SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

The research study showed that World Youth Day was a powerful emotional experience for pilgrims. With the exception of the pilgrimage cluster, pilgrims' assessments of the social/emotional dynamics were more positive than for the other clusters of questions. Assessments of the international gathering showed some variances in how pilgrim groups (age, religious typologies) rated particular elements of the social and emotional dynamics. Notwithstanding these variances, the data showed that World Youth Day was an effective religious ritual that generated strong membership feelings and elevated levels of emotional energy.

Not all religious rituals are successful, nor are the emotions generated by them always positive. The valence and intensity of emotions can vary according to participants' perceptions of the ritual, and those which fail, typically generate negative emotional energy among participants. By contrast, World Youth Day generated a high degree of positive emotional energy and pilgrims attested to feelings of joy, confidence and solidarity.

The intensity of these feelings was not universal among pilgrims however, and this was borne out in some of the responses of the adults from Sydney Catholic Schools, especially the cohort which travelled to the Madrid gathering. With the exception of their response to item 13a, 'I felt a strong sense of belonging' the group registered the lowest Mean score of the four principal cohorts on all Likert scale items in the social/emotional cluster (see Tables 6.47 & 6.48). Of particular note was their response to 13h, 'World Youth day was one of the best experiences of my life', where only 63.6% of pilgrims were in agreement with the statement. The group Mean of 3.77 was the lowest Mean score of any group for any item in the social/emotional cluster. These pilgrims' perceptions of the social and emotional dynamics appear to have influenced their assessment of World Youth Day as an event, and of the various events associated with the gathering (see Table 6.55).

From the research study, it was apparent that the adults travelling with Sydney Catholic Schools did not experience the same level of emotional satisfaction attested to by other pilgrims. This was especially true of those who travelled to Madrid. The qualitative data pointed to a number of underlying factors that may have contributed to this.

Firstly, many of the adults were atypical of the Australian pilgrims who travelled to World Youth Day as their participation was largely supervisory in nature. While Pilgrim Group Leaders also travelled with the wider Australian delegation the adults travelling with Sydney Catholic Schools were predominately teachers and were required to exercise a duty of care for the student pilgrims. This influenced the nature of their participation,

and the level of their engagement in the event. It was evident that their engagement was often detached, and some appeared to observe rather than participate in World Youth Day. This was borne out in many of the interviews. Adult pilgrim 122, a teacher said,

the awe of the experience meant that they [the students] wanted to share that experience with each other ... it may not be their way to openly share their faith experiences but it was such an overwhelming experience that they needed to speak about it and they needed to release that awe ... I think that really gave them something in common ... and I think that helped with the bonding. It was great.

When interviewed, many of the adult pilgrims referred not to their own emotional stimulation and satisfaction, but to that of their students. This may well have impacted upon their perceptions of the World Youth Day experience and their valuation of it as a religious ritual.

In the theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Collins (2004) outlined criterion that pointed to the success or failure of rituals. He suggested that an absence or low level of ritual ingredients (bodily co-presence, mutual focus of attention, shared emotional mood) resulted in failure on the output side, with no feelings of group solidarity, nor experience of heightened emotional energy. Such rituals fell flat and people were unaffected by them. This perspective may well account for adult pilgrims' (Sydney Catholic Schools) responses to the social/emotional cluster of questions.

From the research study, it was apparent that there was a lack of shared attention and focus among many of the adults, as well as an absence of shared emotional energy. While many of the adults were distracted from the activities of World Youth Day by the supervisory nature of their role, others were distracted by organizational and logistical concerns. These problems impacted upon the spiritual ambiance of the principal events and had an adverse impact upon pilgrims' focus and their emotional entrainment.

Adult pilgrim 89 commented,

The organization of it when you compare it to Sydney was a

letdown. It was poorly organized, we weren't assigned catechesis lessons, at times venues would get full straight away such as the opening mass and the final mass – the vigil, we were assigned areas but no-one cared ...when we got there it was pretty much first come first serve ... we had to sleep on the dirt. These things really effect the moment because you just get frustrated.

Further information regarding the logistical and organizational problems of the Madrid World Youth Day is detailed in section 7.12.2.

While some adult pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools did not appear to experience an intensification of emotional energy this was generally not reflective of other pilgrims' experiences of World Youth Day. The research study showed that the participants, especially the younger pilgrims, experienced a strong sense of emotional arousal, and emotional resonance with their fellow pilgrims. For many, it was a collective experience which strengthened their feelings of solidarity and their social identity. As indicated in their responses to the social/emotional cluster, their interaction with others was important to them, for it enabled them to make new friends and feel a sense of belonging. For many, it was apparent that the emotional satisfaction and the heightened emotional energy were not just an ephemeral 'buzz', but they provided a greater, more enduring sense of personal meaning.

7.9 PILGRIMS' EXPERIENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL/RELIGIOUS DYNAMICS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

In their appraisal of the spiritual/religious dynamics of World Youth Day, pilgrims highlighted the value of the international gathering as a 'faith experience'. For younger pilgrims it was a significant spiritual experience which strengthened their faith, whereas for the adult pilgrims it was a time to share their faith with like-minded believers. From the research study, it was apparent that adult pilgrims were sufficiently confident to share personal testimonies and speak about their religious beliefs, whereas the younger pilgrims, especially those from Sydney Catholic Schools, were more reserved in talking about their faith with their peers. Sugier-Szerga (2016)

suggested that while World Youth Day provides a good starting point, it is unrealistic to believe that young people will immediately “take on a kind of evangelizing mission” (p.296).

Situating World Youth Day within the context of Youth Ministry, Kohn (2003, n.3) said that its purpose was to

give as many young people as possible a spiritual and ecclesial experience, that is kerygmatic, sacramental and catechetical at the same time ... [it] also has a vocational and missionary dimension [and] helps young people to become aware of their Christian identity.

Pilgrims affirmed the ecclesial dimensions of World Youth Day, especially their newfound appreciation of how big and diverse the Catholic Church was (Item 14b). Pilgrims had become aware of the many different cultural expressions within the Church and the various ecclesial groups and movements.

While the major liturgical celebrations involving the pope were generally very solemn occasions within the rubrics, many of the other occasions of prayer and worship were designed specifically for young people, “for whom immediacy of encounter and the affective are of special appeal” (Ang, 2008, p.407).

The youth festivals and the animation that accompanied the catechesis sessions were in contrast to the conventional parish experiences of pilgrims. They resembled the models of ‘praise and worship’ largely associated with evangelical and Pentecostal communities, and with charismatic movements within the Catholic Church. These inclusions seemed to strengthen young pilgrims’ participation in and appraisal of their experiences and their overall perceptions of the Church.

A Scheffe post-hoc test on item 14b showed that the responses of the eight pilgrim sub- groups (religious typology) reflected the pattern of a single homogenous subset. Irrespective of age or religious disposition, pilgrims

saw the Church differently as a result of their World Youth Day experiences. The research study suggested that variances in pilgrims' religiosity didn't seem to adversely impact their capacity to engage in the various World Youth Day events.

Commenting upon the nature and effectiveness of interaction rituals, Ritzer (2005) suggested that when participants are unfamiliar with key symbols their emotional energy, capacity to engage and feelings of membership and belonging are all diminished. The research study did not corroborate this.

A number of the pilgrims interviewed attested to the fact that many of the religious practices and symbols, some of which they were unaccustomed to, evoked strong emotional responses within them and others and helped generate a ritual atmosphere of reverence and respect. Student pilgrim 185 commented,

Before I came, I actually hated going to Church and all that, but something on this trip changed me. Like, last night, I prayed the Rosary for the first time ever. I didn't even think about it, I just started praying.

Although some of the younger pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools were unfamiliar with elements of their religious heritage, they attested to a strengthened sense of social identity. Student pilgrim 165 commented,

I like the fact that everyone came together for the same reason and that all of us made connections with our Catholic faith. It was really nice. Everyone was so welcoming and everyone just felt that sense of belonging.

The research study found that these pilgrims' 'membership feelings' and strengthened sense of religious identification were primarily a result of the 'shared emotional mood' with fellow pilgrims. In light of this, some of the pilgrims expressed the intention of being more committed to the practice of their faith. Student pilgrim 254 said "when I go back I am going to have to try and push to ... prioritise my religion, to put going to Church before going to a game or whatever."

For pilgrims already steeped within the Catholic Tradition, World Youth Day consolidated their membership feelings and validated their involvement within and commitment to the Catholic faith community. Some interviewees suggested that this was a timely assurance. Student pilgrim 262 commented,

It has actually given me a kind of stability because ... I go through phases of you know really wanting to improve my like religious contributions or ... involve God more in my life, but then my big realization with World Youth Day was that ... I am truly living a Christian life ... [and] what I am doing at the moment is enough.

In their assessment of World Youth Day, pilgrims acknowledged the week long gathering and its associated pilgrimages as being a powerful spiritual experience. This was evidenced in the strength of pilgrims' responses to Item 14g (see Tables 6.49 & 6.50). A Scheffe post-hoc test showed that the responses of Religious Believers ($M = 4.50$), Meaning Seekers ($M = 4.49$) and Devoted Pilgrims ($M = 4.32$) reflected the pattern of a single homogenous subset. Social Tourists recorded a Mean score of 4.04.

For many pilgrims, the spiritual value of World Youth Day arose from their perceived experience of 'God moments'. The research study found that these occurred primarily during the pilgrimage, not during World Youth Day week itself. Student pilgrim 91 reflected,

I went into WYD expecting at the big sleep out, and the Final Mass to have this big spiritual moment. And I didn't have it. I had it the week before in Italy, when it was the quietest, quiet night in a church.

Such reflections were commonplace. 29 Madrid interviewees (28.7%) and 16 Rio interviewees (29.6) indicated there 'God moments' took place at specific places and times on pilgrimage. As with the reflection of student pilgrim 91, interviewees indicated that their 'God moments' were often experienced in quiet and intimate settings. Many suggested that these moments helped strengthen their faith and deepen their religious

commitment. However, the research study found that this was not true for all pilgrims, especially those categorized as social tourists.

Some social tourists acknowledged that there were special moments at World Youth Day and that these times were satisfying and fulfilling. They disassociated these however from the religious context of the event and from religion more broadly. Several of the interviews with social tourists pointed to Heelas' observation that "people can have what they take to be spiritual experiences without having to hold religious beliefs" (1998, p.5). Student pilgrim 175 said,

I just think ... we're kind of just becoming more spiritual, except not in a big kind of Church way ... no one really wants the whole tradition of it, if you know what I mean. Like the rules, people are a lot more liberal, like younger people, and they want to be kind of less restrained or restricted in any way.

7.10 PILGRIMS' EXPERIENCE OF THE KEY ELEMENTS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

Pilgrims' appraisal of the key elements of World Youth Day highlighted a number of salient themes related to their social identity as Catholics, and their perceptions of the Church. From the research study, it was apparent that World Youth Day not only strengthened pilgrims' understanding of the universal nature of the Church, but it also fostered a sense of 'Catholic pride' amongst many of them. As evidenced in the strength of pilgrims' responses to item 16f (see Tables 6.53 & 6.54), the international gathering was very different to pilgrims' normal experience of Church, even for those regularly engaged in the practice of their faith. The contrast was generally more pronounced for the younger pilgrims, many of whom had a loose religious affiliation.

In an interview with John Allen Jr (2005b), during World Youth Day XX in Cologne, Cardinal George Pell commented, "the substantial majority of Australian youth have no clear religious identity, and no clear understanding of our teachings ... World Youth Day shows that we have something to offer

that may be helpful ... it's clear that this event is strengthening the faith of a lot of young people". Cardinal Pell's perceptions of the possible benefits of World Youth Day were borne out in the research data which showed that young pilgrims in particular not only saw the Church differently but their own faith differently.

It was apparent from the data that the adult pilgrims had a more nuanced understanding of the impact of World Youth Day on their faith journey. For both groups of adult pilgrims (Sydney Catholic Schools and Australian contingent), Item 16e, 'I was challenged to think differently about my faith' had the lowest Mean score of all the items in the key elements cluster (see Tables 6.53 & 6.54). Rather, than seeing their faith differently, many of the pilgrims felt that the international gathering served to validate their faith.

In a similar way, many of the adult pilgrims seemed assured about their religious identity and expressed the view that World Youth Day served to validate their Catholic worldview and beliefs and further strengthen their sense of social membership. For many, World Youth Day confirmed the value and 'correctness' of their personal religiosity, and of the Catholic Tradition.

For many of the younger pilgrims, their sense of religious identity was changed by the experience of World Youth Day. Many reported having a different view of the Church and a better understanding of its core practices and teachings (see Table 6.67). Broader sociological research has suggested that the religious identity of many young Catholics is diffuse and ambiguous, and is characterized by a loose nominalism rather than a commitment to community (Hoge et al., 2001). Furthermore, "their sense of being Catholic has a minimal ecclesial dimension" (Portier, 2004, p.49). From the research study, it was apparent that many younger pilgrims were influenced by the events and activities of World Youth Day and gave greater consideration of, and value to, the ecclesial dimension. For some, especially among the 'meaning seekers', this was a significant shift in how they perceived their religio/spiritual identity.

The research data showed a number of salient trends in regards to pilgrims' perceptions of the Church. Of particular note was the variance between the Madrid and Rio cohorts. When compared to their Madrid counterparts, the Rio pilgrims (both young and adult) gave a stronger endorsement to feeling more valued by the Church (Item 16c) and of being inspired by the Pope and other Church leaders (Item 16d). The 'Francis effect' may well have contributed to or accounted for the nature and pattern of the responses.

When asked to identify the highlight of World Youth Day, both Madrid and Rio pilgrims named 'seeing the Pope'. The number who did this was proportionately much higher among the Rio pilgrims (see Tables 6.63, 6.64 & 6.65). In reflecting upon seeing Pope Francis, student pilgrim 244 said,

when he went by, he just had a presence about him, an aura or something, and I saw him and I thought oh wow, it's the Pope! And yeah it really struck me and everyone else was just as touched on seeing the Pope.

While the 'celebrity status' of the popes has long been acknowledged (Weber, 1978; Hepp and Krönert, 2008), it has in a sense been highlighted by their involvement in the international World Youth Days. Each of the popes has been perceived differently by the pilgrims, and each has created "a completely different way of experiencing [the] international youth meetings" (Dragula, 2016, p.273).

The research study showed that many of the participants, especially the younger pilgrims, were keen to attend World Youth Day again. In itself, this pointed to the addictive nature of successful interaction rituals with heightened levels of affective intensity, emotional energy and solidarity, as participants have a desire to repeat and relive these experiences.

Many of the adult pilgrims who participated in the research study had attended World Youth Day previously. While they appraised the event positively and attested to its value, many of them made specific reference to the impact of their first World Youth Day experience. While the adult

interviewees acknowledged that their ‘most recent’ World Youth Day experience had validated their sense of faith and religious identity, they described their first experience of the international gathering as ‘life changing’, some made reference to ‘conversion experiences’, and others to times when they became aware of their vocation.

The comments of Adult pilgrim 113 reflected the sentiments expressed by many of the adults. “Sydney was my first taste of World Youth Day and it made such a difference. I was just beginning to take my faith seriously and I had come to the point where I was questioning what it is that I want to do with my life ... I was just so like surprised and shocked to see how many Catholics there were ... I’ve really grown closer to some friends that I’ve made from that first World Youth Day and I’ve found that really has supported me in maintaining my faith.”

7.11 PILGRIMS’ EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The research study showed that Rio pilgrims found their experience of the World Youth Day events and activities to be more rewarding than the Madrid pilgrims. Pilgrims’ perceptions of the international gathering in Madrid were not only affected by a range logistical and organizational concerns (see 6.72), but by their pre-existing expectations and their experience of emotional energy. For some, there was a sense that the Madrid rituals fell flat, and their own participation was at times perfunctory.

In detailing his theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains*, Collins (2004) noted that, “individuals are attracted to the most intense ritual charges they can get, indifferent to lesser rituals, and repelled by others” (p.51). The staging of many key events in Madrid did not always lead to the emotional entrainment typically associated with successful rituals, and for some pilgrims, especially the adults, there was a lack of genuine enthusiasm and excitement. The emotional intensity of the Madrid events was generally weaker than that experienced and shared in Rio. While the Madrid pilgrims were more critical of their experience of the international gathering, there

were patterns in how both cohorts of pilgrims evaluated the principal events and activities.

The pilgrimages to World Youth Day were consistently rated as positive experiences, and this was affirmed in pilgrims' responses to 17a (see Tables 6.55 & 6.56), which, for all pilgrim groups, had the highest individual mean score within the cluster of items. Irrespective of gender, age, or religious typology, pilgrims' consistently affirmed their experiences of pilgrimage as rewarding and satisfying. A Scheffe post-hoc test showed that the responses of the four pilgrim groups (religious typology) reflected the pattern of a single homogenous subset.

For the greater part, there was less uniformity in pilgrims' appraisal of the activities and events associated with World Youth Day week. Of these, it was the major public gatherings; which proved to be the most popular and which held the broadest appeal for pilgrims across the religio-spiritual spectrum. While the Vigil and Final Mass had been marred by logistical concerns in Madrid, and a number of the research participants were excluded from the official site - Cuatro Vientos, the events still represented the culmination of World Youth Day. They involved "large numbers of people coming together outside of the quotidian routine" (Taylor, 2007, p.469), and for many this alone was a source of emotional stimulation and appeal.

The research study showed that the 'physical staging' of the hallmark events (Opening Mass, Papal Arrival, Vigil, Final Mass) influenced both the ritual ingredients and outcomes, and ultimately pilgrims' perception of the events. From an historical perspective, the hallmark events in both Madrid and Rio attracted very large crowds. With the exception of the smaller Opening Masses, pilgrims numbered in the millions. While the density of bodily co-presence generally contributed to the emergence and build-up of collective effervescence, some of the Madrid pilgrims complained of overcrowding and suggested that this had an adverse impact upon their focus and engagement (see 7.12.2). These concerns were raised almost exclusively by the adult pilgrims who travelled with the Sydney Catholic Schools cohort, a number of whom also expressed concerns for the safety and wellbeing of

their student pilgrims.

The research study found that the site locations and physical staging of the events impacted upon the nature and degree of pilgrims' participation in the key events. In Madrid, Plaza de Cibeles was used as the site for both the Opening Mass and Papal Arrival. It was unable to accommodate the attendees, and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims spilled over into nearby parks and streets. While some pilgrims had an unobstructed view of the stage, the majority watched the activities on 'large screens'. This separated pilgrims from the immediacy of the principal activities, and in some instances created a sense of detachment. The engagement of Australian pilgrims was further diminished by the fact that there was limited access to audio translation services, and these were not provided in the published liturgical programs.

While the site for the Vigil and Final Mass, Cuatro Vientos, had a relatively unobstructed view of the sanctuary area, Australian pilgrims were a considerable distance away, and were therefore unable to see the liturgical celebrations. With very few 'large screens' available to pilgrims, there was a detachment from the rituals. With the exception of several specific moments, including Eucharistic Adoration at the Vigil, the pilgrims often acted as an unfocused crowd. While some individuals and subgroups of pilgrims were distracted from the principal activities and had a marginal level of engagement in the events, interviewees attested to the potency of moments where there was shared attention and emotional entrainment amongst the pilgrims.

The hallmark events of World Youth Day XXVIII in Rio de Janeiro were held at Copacabana Beach. This iconic landmark proved to be an ideal site for the staging of the principal liturgical events. Unlike the Madrid sites, it accommodated all pilgrims, including an estimated 3.7 million at the Final Mass. All pilgrims had an unobstructed view of the stage/sanctuary, and 'large screens' along the beachfront. Access to and from the site was relatively problem free and its physicality meant that pilgrims experienced bodily co-presence without a sense of overcrowding.

From the research study, it was apparent that the location of Copacabana Beach, and its iconic status, contributed to pilgrims' positive perceptions of the World Youth Day events. As a place, it was specifically mentioned by 17 (26.6%) of the Rio interviewees, a number of whom referred to its iconic status. As a popular tourist destination, Copacabana Beach held particular interest and meaning for many of pilgrims and their first-hand connection with the place may have meant that some may have attributed particular significance to their experiences there.

Student pilgrim 243 reflected, "sleeping out on Copacabana with everybody was a massive highlight, and on seeing that sunrise across the beach in the morning, it was just amazing."

Just as the physical staging of the hallmark events had influenced pilgrims' perceptions and appraisal of them, the same was true of the Stations of the Cross. Across all pilgrim groups, the Stations of the Cross had the lowest individual mean score within the cluster of items relating to the key events and activities of World Youth Day. While the approaches adopted in each host city varied - Madrid involved the use of traditional pieces of art and sculpture, and Rio re-enacted the Stations in a contemporary context, both were staged in restricted spaces and required the use of 'large screens' in order to be viewed by pilgrims. These experiences were in contrast to the staging of the Stations of the Cross in Sydney in 2008, which was a point of comparison for many pilgrims.

Sydney (2008), like Toronto (2002) before it, had used its Central Business District for the staging of the Stations of the Cross. Religious symbolism dominated the public square. While similar reenactments are common in Europe, especially on Good Friday, they were unique experiences for the people of Sydney and Toronto. The pageantry of these occasions was seemingly absent from pilgrims' experiences of the Stations of the Cross in Madrid and Rio, a point highlighted by a number of interviewees.

Following World Youth Day in Madrid, student pilgrim 125 commented, “compared to the events we held here in Australia in 2008 such as the Stations of the Cross ... ours was on a larger scale and I think it was more powerful and it involved you ... the Stations of the Cross in Madrid were just 700 meters of statues ... it didn’t seem to really grab hold of you as much as you would expect.”

From the interviews, it was apparent that some pilgrims’ perceptions of the international gathering and their evaluations of the principal events were possibly influenced by their experiences of World Youth Day in Sydney. This was especially true of the Madrid pilgrims, of whom 29 (26.1%) made specific reference to the 2008 gathering.

7.12 PILGRIMS’ PERCEPTIONS AND EVALUATIONS OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY EXPERIENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE QUALITATIVE DATA

7.12.1 Highlights of the World Youth Day Experience

Pilgrims cited an amalgam of events and activities as the highlight of their World Youth Day experience. For many, this involved a particular moment on pilgrimage or during the week’s activities, whereas for others - it involved various social and emotional dynamics. From the research study, it was apparent that the reasons underpinning pilgrims’ selection of a ‘highlight’ were multifaceted in nature and often fused religious/spiritual dynamics with social/emotional dynamics. Furthermore, the physical component of the event/activity was often associated with a range of positive feelings and psychosocial benefits.

Pilgrims’ selection of World Youth Day highlights can be explained in part by Randall Collins’ theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004, 2010). Specifically, the heightened levels of emotional energy generated at many of the World Youth Day events were both satisfying and motivating for pilgrims, who then ascribed particular value and status to the affectivity of the event.

While many pilgrims cited some of the ‘hallmark events’ of the international

gathering as their highlight, others made reference to their pilgrimage experience. Many, especially the younger pilgrims, expressed a sense of 'awe' at having travelled to a range of prominent religious, cultural and historic sites. Pilgrims attested to a sense of being changed by these experiences, and that this was a highlight of their time away. Some, with only nominal religious affiliation, and who described themselves as 'searching', said that they felt they were changed by the experience of a 'sacred site', where they felt "a heightened inner awareness or connection to something beyond themselves" (Timothy & Olsen, 1996).

For many pilgrims, their religious motivation, awareness and consciousness only developed during the course of a pilgrimage. It was not the result of single experience but rather a cumulative effect. In addition to religious consciousness, the experience of pilgrimage nurtured a sense of solidarity and belonging among the Australian pilgrims, and helped them in their own search for meaning.

It has been argued by some that this search for meaning has become more pronounced in the era of 'cultural postmodernity', where the traditional sources of meaning no longer have the same authority or cogency (Bauman, 1998b; Rossiter, 2001). To this end, Rossiter (2001) wrote, "there is an urgent need for churches and religious institutions to find strategies that will resonate with young people in their search for meaning, values and identity" (p. 25). The research study would suggest that World Youth Day has been an effective strategy in supporting and engaging young pilgrims in their search.

A significant finding of the research study was the level of importance attributed to the 'mission work' undertaken by the pilgrims who travelled to Rio de Janeiro. This was the first time that mission work had featured prominently in Australian World Youth Day pilgrimages.

The research data showed that the Rio pilgrims found the mission component of the pilgrimage to be a meaningful experience, many

identifying it as the highlight of their time away (see Tables 6.63, 6.64 & 6.65). The core element of the mission work was a direct and interactive experience between the pilgrims and the local communities in which they worked (Brown & Lehto, 2005), which according to Wearing (2003), is the most significant factor in changing the values of the visitors, and influencing the lives of both groups.

When reflecting on their experience of World Youth Day, student 241 commented,

Every day I have been here has been a highlight ... but I have to say the mission work in Peru was very, very touching and I have learned a lot from that. I have learned that you have to be grateful for what you have because there's people out there who have far less, but they seemed to be happier and closer to each other ... I don't know, that just made me feel that I was lost, not them.

Pilgrims' identification of mission work as the highlight of the World Youth Day experience may be explained by a number of salient psychosocial factors, among these – the search for meaning.

While pilgrims and those who participate in mission trips generally share similar motivations, especially their search for self-actualisation, those drawn to mission work are primarily motivated by altruistic concerns, the desire to give something back to society and the desire to make a difference. This altruism, which is reinforced by religious and moral codes, (Tomazos & Butler, 2012) is a source of meaning to many. The relationship between altruism and meaning was identified by the Australian Bishops' Committee for Justice, Development and Peace in their report, *Young People and the Future* "one thing is certain: young people crave meaning in their lives. Although often surrounded by emptiness, they have a deep hunger for meaning and for justice" (1998, p.13).

For many of the World Youth Day pilgrims, it was apparent that they felt there was a distinct relationship between the two.

As noted by Smith & Aaker (2013), there is no ‘one’ meaning of life, but rather, competing discourses where meaning signifies different things to different people. Pilgrims’ testimonies pointed to this divergence and some of these areas of meaning, as did the events, activities and circumstances they cited as being the highlight of their World Youth Day experience.

7.12.1 Logistical and Organizational Concerns

The size of a World Youth Day can adversely impact upon its organization and ultimately pilgrims’ experience of the event (Rymarz, 2008b). Historically, the infrastructure of some host cities was unable to meet the needs (accommodation, transport, food distribution) of World Youth Day pilgrims and some events associated with the international gathering were affected by logistical problems arising from the scale of pilgrim numbers.

World Youth Day is a mega-event, the largest regular gathering of young people in the world. Large numbers are expected, not unanticipated. Paradoxically, while vast pilgrim numbers have been associated with and contributed to the organizational

problems of past World Youth Days they have also contributed to the affective intensity of the event and pilgrims’ psychological stimulation and sense of emotional fulfillment. In their study of the experiences of the English-speaking pilgrims who attended World Youth Day XXIII in Sydney, Mason, Singleton and Webber (2008a) found ‘walking with crowds through city streets’ was deemed to be the most enjoyable aspect of World Youth Day by pilgrims (48.3%), who also considered that ‘crowds of fellow pilgrims’ contributed to the atmosphere (15%) and the individual spiritual journey (16%). This research was conducted at one of the smaller gatherings (400,000) in the history of the event, which according to Rymarz (2008b), meant that pilgrims had a far broader experience of the week.

The largest event of a World Youth Day week is the Final Mass. In Madrid this was attended by 2 million pilgrims, and in Rio de Janeiro, 3.7 million. Prior to this, pilgrim numbers were smaller during each of the week long gatherings. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims still

participated and the principal events typically attracted crowds in excess of a million people. Crowds did have an impact on pilgrims' experience of the gatherings, and thus, their perceptions of them.

Each of the pilgrim groups involved in the research study affirmed the impact of 'crowds' on their experience of the international gathering. This was evidenced in their responses to Questionnaire Item 13b, where pilgrims responded to the statement, 'I felt a sense of exhilaration being part of something so big' using a five point Likert scale, 1: *Strongly Disagree* to 5: *Strongly Agree*. Of the 33 items using this Likert scale, item 13b was among the highest rated items (as per its mean) for each of the pilgrim groups - SCS students, SCS adults, Under 18's, General population adults. Levels of agreement were higher with younger pilgrims.

The impact of 'crowds' on pilgrims' perceptions of World Youth Day and their value of the event was especially evident in the post-World Youth Day interviews. 'Crowds' were referred to by 24 Madrid pilgrims (23.7%) and 8 Rio pilgrims (14.8%). While the reflections of the Rio pilgrims were universally positive, 37.5% of the comments made by Madrid pilgrims (9/24) were critical of the crowds. Pilgrims expressed feelings of being overwhelmed by the size of the crowds and associated the crowds with restricted access to and a diminishment of the spiritual ambiance of some of the principal events.

Furthermore, the 'crowds' were associated with a perceived lack of organization with many of the events, and for some pilgrims were considered to be the primary cause of the disorganization.

Of the 9 Madrid pilgrims who raised concerns regarding the size of the crowds involved in World Youth Day, none explicitly criticized the 'physical co-presence of others' within different the social environment of World Youth Day week, especially when mingling or travelling. As with the Rio pilgrims, the Madrid pilgrims reflected on the energy and joy of the crowds, their flag waving, singing and spontaneous chants. According to Student 65 the crowds were the most memorable feature of international

gathering,

The trains were packed, and everyone's faces were squished up against the windows, but then people started continued chanting in their own country and everyone was hot and sweaty, edgy and tired, but they were still chanting. It was beautiful.

The qualitative data highlighted that while the World Youth Day crowds were considered a concern by a small number of pilgrims (9/155 or 5.8%), the majority of pilgrims felt that they added to the excitement and atmosphere of the occasion.

The qualitative data also highlighted the degree to which pilgrims' perceptions of the international gathering were influenced by organizational and logistical concerns.

While returning pilgrims made no criticisms of the organization of World Youth Day week in Rio de Janeiro the international gathering in Madrid was viewed less favourably. In addition to the concerns about the impact of crowds on event accessibility and spiritual ambiance (9 or 8.9%), 17 pilgrims (16.8%) commented on organizational concerns with the principal events of World Youth Day week. Adult pilgrims in particular were the most critical. The comments made by Adult pilgrim 106, from the wider Australian delegation, reflected the general concerns,

The great big events were good, but they were incredibly disorganised in Madrid and this was a distracting factor for me. For instance, we were actually locked out of the Final Mass. I would say that's the biggest disappointment for this World Youth Day.

In addition to the Final Mass 'lockout' mentioned by 6 interviewees, pilgrims also raised concerns which they felt diminished the spiritual ambiance of events and effected their capacity to be fully participatory and engaged. These concerns included: site selection, with some events held in small locations, thus making attendance difficult and generating overcrowding; poor visibility of and line of sight to the central liturgical activities at key events; and the failure to distribute communion at the Final

Mass.

The failure to distribute communion was not just a problem for returning Australian pilgrims but it also received wider international attention and criticism (Rosica, 2012) as it removed a key element of the liturgical ritual and left many pilgrims dissatisfied. Adult pilgrim 100 reflected, “At the Final Mass not having the Eucharist was a bit of a letdown ... so we left early.”

Ritual processes have core symbols and activities which participants are familiar with and have expectations about. Draper (2014) warned against cutting a ritual short for it could potentially drain participants of their motivation and emotional energy, especially “if they feel robbed of their expected ritual payoff” (p.233).

The data gained from the semi-structured interviews both pointed to and corroborated the patterns in the quantitative data relating to pilgrim satisfaction with the various World Youth Day events.

In questionnaire items 17a-k, pilgrims had used a five point Likert scale, 1: *Most Unrewarding* to 5: *Very Rewarding* to indicate their level of satisfaction with the various World Youth Day events. The data showed that a number of the key events, including the Opening Mass, the Vigil and the Final Mass were viewed differently by the Madrid and Rio de Janeiro pilgrim cohorts, with a significant difference between the cohort means for each event. The principal events at Rio de Janeiro were rated more positively by the pilgrims. Furthermore, younger pilgrims rated all of the principal events more positively than the adult pilgrims.

Organizational and logistical concerns adversely influenced the ratings of adult pilgrims from Madrid to some of the principal World Youth Day events, particularly the main liturgical events.

While it is important to recognize that a net effect of manageable World Youth Day numbers can be a broader experience of the international gathering (Rymarz, 2008b), vast crowd numbers do not equate to inevitable

organizational problems. Pilgrim numbers attending World Youth Day XXVIII were the second largest in the history of the event, yet returning pilgrims did not associate the weeklong gathering in Rio de Janeiro with any significant organizational problems or concerns.

These problems arise at World Youth Day as a result of an amalgam of factors, some which may be influenced by vast pilgrim numbers. They are primarily underpinned however by inadequate logistical and pastoral preparations which result in an unsuitable infrastructure within the host city. Typically, this has been evidenced by inadequate transport and accommodation options, and at times, poor site selection and staging of World Youth Day events. Furthermore, organizational concerns have arisen as a result of communication problems, with inadequate information distribution and a failure to adequately cater for an international multi-lingual audience.

7.12.3 The Impact of the World Youth Day Experience

Pilgrims' evaluations and descriptions of World Youth Day showed that the international gathering was generally considered a positive religious experience characterized by strong feelings of emotional resonance and communal solidarity. While pilgrims' perceptions of the event were not uniform they confirmed the value of World Youth Day as a spiritual experience which strengthened their personal sense of faith and which highlighted the value of belonging to a community of believers.

World Youth Day was, however, not just a source of spiritual enrichment, but according to pilgrims, its benefits were multifaceted, evidenced in a range of social, emotional and personal experiences and changes. Interviewees universally attested to these changes being positive. The comments of student pilgrim 234 reflected this broader trend.

I definitely believe that I have changed as a person ... I have learned a lot and... I've sort of discovered who I am as a person, my values and my beliefs. I learned something new about myself and ... and the people around me.

The perceived sense of self-discovery amongst some of the younger pilgrims, may have accounted for in part, their reference to World Youth Day as a 'life changing experience'. As highlighted in tables 6.69 & 6.71, younger pilgrims referred explicitly to the potency and uniqueness of the event in their descriptions.

7.13 COMPARISONS & CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE FINDINGS OF THE PRE-WORLD YOUTH DAY & POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY SURVEYS OF THE SYDNEY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' CONTINGENTS

In their assessment of World Youth Day as 'one of the best experiences of my life' (Item 13h – Combined Mean 4.78), student pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools acknowledged that their experience of the international gathering and its associated pilgrimages largely fulfilled their hopes and expectations. In light of their experiences they affirmed a desire to 'attend World Youth Day again' (Item 16h – Combined Mean 4.58). In contrast, the research study showed that many of the adult pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools had mixed feelings about their World Youth Day experience. This was especially true of the Madrid cohort.

Prior to World Youth Day, the adult pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools affirmed the significance of World Youth Day as an opportunity to deepen their faith and their relationship with God. Many referred to their involvement in the Church through their local parish and their work in Catholic education and expressed the hope that they would experience and develop an appreciation for the wider Church – the universal Church (see Tables 6.21, 6.22 & 6.25). They believed too, that World Youth Day would offer opportunities for personal and spiritual reflection and growth.

For many of the Sydney Catholic Schools adult pilgrims, World Youth Day had a distinct 'work' orientation. A key hope was that the student pilgrims would have a positive and meaningful experience of faith and Church. A number of adult pilgrims had not applied to go to World Youth Day purely on the basis of their own personal interest, but were appointed because of their teaching and leadership experience.

Prior to World Youth Day, the research study showed that the student pilgrims were animated by their upcoming involvement in the international gathering. They hoped that it would provide an opportunity to meet new people from around the world, make new friends and visit places they had only ever read or heard about (see Tables 6.20, 6.22 & 6.25). The student pilgrims were not only concerned with making new social friends but hoped to connect with other pilgrims through shared experiences and celebrating their faith together. This was especially true for the school aged pilgrims with a developed sense of religiosity. A key hope for many of the student pilgrims was to strengthen their relationship with God.

The empirical research conducted with pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools after World Youth Day identified a number of salient and recurring themes: World Youth Day was considered to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, characterised by heightened levels of affective intensity; some of the religious experiences were affirmed as being particularly powerful and as moments of encounter with the transcendent; the event's structure and atmosphere was conducive to social bonding and a spirit of solidarity between pilgrims, and the strengthening and validation of pilgrims' religious identity. The student pilgrims were more uniform and positive in their evaluation of World Youth Day than the adult pilgrims. Of the five clusters of questions, the adult Sydney Catholic Schools pilgrims were least positive about the events and activities of World Youth Day week.

World Youth Day has long been associated with its signature events. These events have shaped peoples' memories of, and pilgrims' hopes and expectations for the event. The research study showed that Sydney '08 influenced some student and adult pilgrims from Sydney Catholic Schools to register for World Youth Day and it contributed to their understanding of what might take place. This meant that many of the pilgrims had specific expectations regarding a number of the key events, especially the Stations of the Cross.

While there were variances in how student and adult pilgrims (Sydney

Catholic Schools) appraised the principal World Youth Day activities, both groups gave strong endorsement to the value of the pilgrimage experience. Prior to World Youth Day, the pilgrimages were highly anticipated (see Tables 6.17, 6.23 & 6.24). Many interviewees suggested that it was likely to be the highlight of their time away.

The research data showed that ‘pilgrimage’ (Item 17a) was considered to be the most rewarding of the World Youth Day activities (Student Combined Mean 4.80; Adult Combined Mean 4.74). The various elements associated with it were also strongly affirmed by both student and adult pilgrims in their responses to the pilgrimage cluster (see Table 6.51). In addition to the quantitative data, interviewees spoke extensively about the value and significance of their pilgrimages to the Holy Land, Italy, Spain and South America (see Tables 6.63 & 6.65).

A central feature of the pilgrimages to Rio de Janeiro in 2013 was Mission work. Adult and student pilgrims referred to it as motivating their registration for World Youth Day (see Tables 6.17 & 6.18), and they hoped to make a difference in the lives of others through their involvement in it (see Table 6.25). Pilgrims’ references to the mission work were far more common and detailed in the post-World Youth Day research. In both the questionnaire and interview data, the ‘mission work’ was identified as the highlight of World Youth Day by both student and adult pilgrims (see Tables 6.63 & 6.65).

Historically, Australian involvement in World Youth Day has generally involved a pilgrimage which has preceded the international gathering. The research study pointed to the centrality and significance of the pilgrimage experience to Australian participation in World Youth Day. A number of interviewees made reference to their complementarity. Student pilgrim 169 said,

They are just both so different. World Youth Day was just so full on and there was so much happening all the time, there was music and dancing and festivity. And the pilgrimage was relaxed and we saw

churches and we saw amazing things. They were both just so different but I loved them both as much as the other.

While the research study showed that adult pilgrims' hopes and expectations for the pilgrimage experience were met, it highlighted that elements of World Youth Day week were less satisfying for some. The pilgrimages took place in a controlled environment. The itineraries were structured to include a wide range of 'pilgrim' and 'tourist' experiences. Pilgrims' transport was reliable and their accommodation and meals were considered to be of a reasonable standard. The timetabled nature of the pilgrimage programs satisfied the 'teacher instincts' of the adult pilgrims.

By contrast, World Youth Day week in Madrid and Rio took place in a somewhat 'uncontrolled' environment. Access to transport and venues was adversely impacted by the large crowds of international pilgrims, and this made the movement and supervision of student pilgrims difficult. Health and safety concerns were also an occasional issue, especially due to 'crowd crushes' at some of the major events. The unpredictable nature of World Youth Day week meant that some of the adult pilgrims from Sydney Catholics Schools were sceptical about the ultimate value of the events. However, those adult pilgrims who had previously experienced an international World Youth Day other than Sydney were accustomed to the frenetic nature of World Youth Day. They knew what to expect, and they appraised the events positively.

7.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the meaning and significance of both the pre and post-World Youth Day research findings. The research study found that both the overall structure and the individual elements of the World Youth Day experience contributed to the appeal it had for pilgrims, both school-aged and adults. Not only are pilgrims attracted to the fellowship and support of like-minded believers, but they are also motivated by the prospects of travel and making new friends. The mega-event has the status

of a cultural religious reference point for many Catholics and it is associated with a festive atmosphere.

Pilgrims evaluated their experience of the international gathering very positively, many describing it as ‘one of the best experiences of their life’. Of particular note, is that females affirmed World Youth Day more positively than males and younger pilgrims more positively than older pilgrims.

The experience of World Youth Day was of particular significance for those with a moderate to developed level of religiosity, rather than those at the extremes of religio- social spectrum. While the international gathering affirmed the faith commitment of the highly devoted it did not necessarily lead to identifiable changes in their religious attitudes or practices nor did it impact upon those who were motivated by purely social reasons. It did however lead many of the *religious believers* and *meaning seekers* to saying that it inclined them towards more committed forms of religious affiliation. The research study highlighted the relevance of Randall Collins’ theory of Interaction Ritual Chains (2004, 2010) to the understanding of pilgrims’ response to and assessment of their World Youth Day experience, especially the complex inter- relationship between the religious and psychosocial dynamics. It was evident in pilgrims’ responses that the presence of heightened emotional energy and feelings of group membership and social solidarity had mutually reinforcing effects.

The World Youth Day phenomenon has two critical dimensions, a social dimension and a religious dimension. The presence of and complex interrelationship between the two dimensions showed that World Youth Day had the characteristics of Maslow’s ‘peak experiences’ (1964). The research study found that for many pilgrims, World Youth Day was not just a peak ‘religious experience’ but a peak ‘life experience’.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter will address a number of the issues that emerged from this research study and make recommendations regarding the involvement of Australian pilgrims in future World Youth Days. Here the researcher will also move beyond the impartial stance of the research and reflect on recommendations from the position of an educator committed to helping make the World Youth Day experience for Australian pilgrims as meaningful and personally significant as possible – as well as one that is socially attractive and enjoyable.

The discussion will draw on the findings from the investigation of the three principal research questions (noted in Chapter 1) and it will refer to a number of conclusions drawn from the study that will inform the recommendations. It will also refer back to some of the key issues that emerged from both the documentary analytical study and from the empirical study.

8.2 THE CHANGING RELIGIOUS PROFILE OF AUSTRALIAN WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS

In an address to the Roman Curia in 2011, Pope Benedict XVI described World Youth Day as “the new evangelisation put into practice” (Benedict, 2011b). He suggested that it was a faith experience which made one happy from deep within and which enabled pilgrims to experience the Church’s universality. The pope said the gatherings were a time when, “a new, more youthful form of Christianity can be seen” (Benedict, 2011b).

World Youth Day always had a specific Catholic evangelical intent, to provide young people with a “vivid experience of faith and communion ...

which help [them] face the profound questions in life” (John Paul II, 1996, n.3) and make Christ their constant point of reference. Situated within the context of the ‘new evangelisation’, World Youth Day aimed to rejuvenate the faith life of young people, especially those who were nominal in their religious practices or who had abandoned their beliefs altogether.

Historically, the international gatherings have attracted a diversity of participants, and this has continued to diversify as the event has got larger. Drawn from across the religio-spiritual spectrum, a range of pilgrim subgroups are now attracted to and attend World Youth Day. The religious typology of pilgrims is a significant issue in the study of the World Youth Day phenomenon.

According to Zondervan (2008), events like World Youth Day show an intense level of religious commitment that differentiates participants from the majority of mainstream young people. In general populations, “most youth are not very religious, do not participate in religious organisations, and do not express their existential needs and questions in religious terms” (p.128). Their lives and their worldviews are generally far-removed from the Christian Tradition.

The research study found that the majority of the Australian pilgrims had a reasonably developed sense of religiosity; religious practices were observed, even if only periodically by some, and beliefs were generally valued. Pilgrims were not antagonistic to religion. While the majority of the adult pilgrims and some student pilgrims attributed significant value to particular markers of Catholic identity, including the Pope, Eucharistic Adoration and confession, a large number of the student pilgrims were relatively unfamiliar with their Catholic cultural heritage as well as with everyday Catholic rituals.

Australian World Youth Day pilgrims are not a homogenous group. Historically, they have moved from a smaller ‘highly religious’ group to one which is larger and more diffuse in religiosity. This shift, influenced in part by the significant increase in school- aged pilgrims, has meant that the

‘religious demographics’ of Australian pilgrims bear a greater resemblance to the profile of some pilgrim groups from the northern hemisphere (Italy, France, Germany, United States) than they once did. This changing religious profile could potentially have an impact on the cohesion within Australian pilgrim groups.

While the cultural diversity of pilgrims has long been seen as one of the appeals of World Youth Day, Gebhardt (2007) found that tensions have sometimes arisen between pilgrim sub-groups according to their religiosity.

The research study found that pilgrims were generally respectful of the divergent religious values, practices and beliefs of fellow pilgrims. While the religious culture was comparatively foreign to many of the student pilgrims, particularly for those identified as ‘social tourists’, they did not see themselves as ‘outsiders’ nor did they critique their more religious peers. A small number of ‘devoted pilgrims’ did point, however, to the social and religious stratification of their group. Adult pilgrim 75 commented,

I understand that you can have too much religion for some people who are on the fringes but I think a little more quiet time and a bit of a deeper spirituality in some of the events wouldn’t have gone astray.

A similar view was shared by Adult pilgrim 78, who said “there were some people who were caught up in the party vibe and people sleeping who missed the catechesis – that was disappointing.”

These tensions were evident within the groups of adult pilgrims from the wider Australian contingents. The research study found that many of the adult pilgrims from these wider groups had high expectations of their fellow pilgrims’ engagement. They were less concerned with the event’s social elements, and many wanted their fellow pilgrims to value the key elements as they did. For some of the adult pilgrims, World Youth Day was a time of vocational discernment.

When interviewed for the research study (20 August, 2012), Fr Tom Rosica

csb, the Chief Executive Officer and National Director of World Youth Day XVII in Toronto commented,

Young people genuinely want to come to World Youth Day so that they can experience the universal Church and discover its rich heritage ... it is a wonderful opportunity to showcase for them the best of the Catholic Church ... piety, devotion, Sacred Scripture, catechesis, liturgy, pilgrimage ... they are drawn to this because ordinarily they don't know these things, or they yearn for more.

While this interpretation would be pertinent for many young pilgrims, especially those who might be described as 'core Catholics', this research study would suggest that not all young pilgrims would give such priority to such specifically religious motivations for attending World Youth Day.

While many of the younger pilgrims, both school-aged and young adults, may have been motivated by the opportunity of an immersion into Catholic culture, the research study showed that the 'older adults' were already steeped in the Catholic Tradition and placed great value on Catholic symbols and practices. They also placed great value on the ambiance of World Youth Day's liturgical and prayer experiences.

As noted in Chapter 7 one of the significant issues impacting upon the disposition and engagement of the adult pilgrims affiliated with the Sydney Catholic Schools contingents was their dual role as pilgrim and supervisor. It is likely that for the supervisory adults in the Sydney Catholic Schools groups, this responsibility may have diminished the personal impact that World Youth Day had for them.

Historically, dioceses throughout Australia have adopted different approaches in the engagement of school-aged pilgrims in World Youth Day. Some dioceses have not sent school students to World Youth Day in school groups but have allowed them to travel independently with families, parishes or ecclesial groups and movements. Other dioceses have integrated school students into diocesan groups and mixed them with young people and adult pilgrims. Other dioceses have sent school students to World Youth

Day under the auspices of their local Catholic education authority. The cohorts from Sydney Catholic Schools were an example of this.

The composition of pilgrim groups can have an impact on the cohesiveness of the group and pilgrims' preparations for and experiences of World Youth Day.

The research study showed that the model adopted by Sydney Catholic Schools was generally effective, especially with the cohorts of student pilgrims. While there were 'role' issues for some of the adult pilgrims, and this impacted upon their engagement in and experience of World Youth Day, student pilgrims tended to appraise the event very positively. Irrespective of their particular religious typology, it was apparent that pilgrims across the religio-spiritual spectrum found value in the event. Many attested to strengthened religiosity; others affirmed their experience of solidarity and belonging; and many said they felt a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life as a result of their participation. The Sydney Catholic Schools cohorts were large and diverse.

For both the Madrid and Rio World Youth Days, the cohort from Sydney Catholic Schools was the largest single pilgrim group from Australia. Had the student pilgrims been integrated within a general diocesan group, this probably would have reduced their numbers significantly and changed the religious demographics of the group. In the past, such an approach has generally meant that the only student pilgrims to travel to World Youth Day were those with a developed sense of religiosity and who were already committed to regular religious practice. The model adopted by Sydney Catholic Schools however, meant that students across the religio-spiritual spectrum were able to attend World Youth Day. This model reflected the theological emphasis of the 'new evangelisation' and the evangelical intent of World Youth Day.

While diverse in nature, the cohorts from Sydney Catholic Schools appeared to be very cohesive and they had a developed sense of social identity and solidarity. There were no reports of tensions between pilgrims on account of

any differences in their religious attitudes.

The research study found that ‘peer modelling’ strengthened the religious outlook of a number of the student pilgrims. This pointed to broader sociological research which has found that adolescent religiosity can be positively influenced by the committed religiosity of friends and peers (Regnerus, Smith, & Smith, 2004), especially when they are engaged directly in shared conversations and activities (King, Furrow & Roth, 2002).

The influence of peers was attested to by Student pilgrim 175,

We must share from one young person to another young person. I think that’s very important because if young people always see ... older people encouraging them ... it’s not enough of a push for them. But if they see young people their own age going out there ... I think that they would have a bit more interest.

Pilgrims’ engagement in and interpretations of the World Youth Day experience were shaped in part by the depth of their religious capital and commitment, by their sense of social religious identity, and by the influence of their fellow pilgrims. Pilgrims perceptions were diverse, and even within particular pilgrim groups, and religious subgroups, there were a range of interpretations, for “not all people who come to World Youth Day see the unfolding events in a similarly reflective and spiritual way” (Sugier-Szerega, 2016, p.299).

8.3 THE MEGA-EVENT CHARACTERISTICS OF WORLD YOUTH DAY

World Youth Day is a mega event, and the dynamics of large scale events have been shown to be useful for interpreting the results of this study. Large scale events are recognised for their “dramatic character, mass popular appeal and international significance” (Roche, 2000, p.1), and they create and sustain a range of social, cultural and religious images. They are important in helping to establish and maintain particular forms of ‘identity’ within communities, and as celebrations, that help ensure the “continuity of

tradition” (Sugier-Szerega, 2016, p.294).

A range of terms have been used interchangeably to describe large scale events: signature, iconic, hallmark and mega. Each of these terms appropriately describes aspects of World Youth Day. Typically, these large scale events have significant financial, socio-cultural and psychological implications. By virtue of their size and significance, they can yield “high levels of tourism, media coverage [and] prestige” (Getz, 2007, p.25), but also can have a social and financial impact on the host community and organization.

Perceptions of World Youth Day have been influenced by its mega event status. The research study found that some within the Catholic communities of past host cities questioned the value of hosting World Youth Day, given the costs involved. They suggested that benefits were short term and that human and financial resources could be used more effectively by the Church. By contrast however, local organizing authorities have consistently affirmed the long-term benefits associated with hosting World Youth Day.

Given the high profile of World Youth Day as a mega event, the international gatherings have received widespread coverage in the mainstream media of host countries. Typically, the media coverage has followed a particular pattern. Prior to the event, the media has usually depicted World Youth Day in a negative light. It has questioned the affordability of the event, cast doubt on projected pilgrim numbers, challenged various Church teachings, especially those related to personal morality and life issues, and given a voice to critics of the event within the wider Catholic community.

In the past, the arrival of the pope and hundreds of thousands of international pilgrims has tended to change the trajectory of the media’s coverage. During World Youth Day week, the event has typically been depicted in a positive light. The media has helped shape public perceptions of the event, especially in the particular host countries where the international gathering impacted upon local tourism, a characteristic of

mega events.

The research study suggests that while the mainstream media may have had some influence on the general public's awareness and perceptions of World Youth Day, this was not the case with the Australian pilgrims. It was evident however, that Australian pilgrims were more likely to be influenced by the various forms of social media. The role of social media is increasingly important to an understanding of mega events like World Youth Day.

Social networks are central to religious faith communities and shared religious experiences like World Youth Day. The very nature of World Youth Day, which is conducive to fellowship and solidarity, is closely aligned to some of the key characteristics of social media – connection and relationship. In contrast with the mainstream media where people are recipients of information, social media prioritises, “listening to others and responding ... sharing information and being surprised by the experiences, knowledge and voices of others” (Skoler, 2009). Those who use social media are typically the creators of the information they share.

Social media is being used increasingly in the promotion of World Youth Day and in the sharing of World Youth Day experiences. It is a powerful and effective medium in both cases, made so by the ubiquity of smartphones and other technologies, and by the instantaneous nature of the medium and the message. Pilgrims are able to share ‘in the moment’ experiences, and the research study suggests that these were more powerful than their recounts several weeks after the event. The rapid growth and diversification of social media has meant that the importance given to the mainstream media's ‘narrative’ on World Youth Day has declined. The influence of the mainstream media has been superseded in part by thousands of mini-narratives from World Youth Day pilgrims. While the mini-narratives represent multiple interpretations of the World Youth Day experience, they have been predominately positive to date.

Social media posts have indicated that World Youth Day, like other mega events, has a special status. Getz (2005, p.16) suggested that the

‘specialness’ of mega-events arose from a number of attributes common to large-scale gatherings. These included: a festive spirit, uniqueness, quality, authenticity, tradition, hospitality, theme and symbolism. As such, mega events are multifaceted in nature, and appear to fulfil a range of human needs in those who participate.

8.4 THE CONVERGENCE OF THE EMOTIONAL & SPIRITUAL DYNAMICS

Religion can be a source of profound emotional experiences (Hood, 2005), a point recognized by Randall Collins in the articulation of his theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Collins (2010) asserted that religious rituals can involve “especially strong, even extreme, emotional experiences ... [which] announce themselves as of the highest significance, transcending all other experiences, and give pervasive meaning to life” (p.5). Typically, these intense feelings are less likely to be associated with the routinized aspects of religion, but for those who experience them, the ritual may provide a defining moment, or a significant cultural marker event, in their religious outlook.

The research study suggests that World Youth Day was a defining moment for many pilgrims, and many attested to changed views of religion and religious practices, others and self. The study showed that the event appeared to give rise to both ‘*communitas*’ and ‘*collective effervescence*’, and this resulted in emotionally powerful group experiences for many of the pilgrims.

These findings highlighted the relevance and significance of a number of sociological theories for interpreting pilgrims’ World Youth Day experience. In addition to Randall Collins’ theory of *Interaction Ritual Chains* (2004), these included; Durkheim’s (1995/1912) ‘*collective effervescence*’, Turner’s (1972) ‘*communitas*’ and Tajfel and Turner’s (1979) *social identity theory*. For many pilgrims, World Youth Day represented the ‘peak experience’ described by Maslow (1964).

The emotional energy associated with the events of World Youth Day was a source of psychological gratification for many pilgrims and it influenced their perception of the events, especially their value of the religious experiences. Equally, the experience of enjoyable religious rituals and a supportive community appeared to heighten pilgrims' sense of self-esteem, purpose and meaning.

The centrality of the emotional and spiritual dynamics to the World Youth Day phenomenon was borne out in the results of the Factor Analysis conducted with the empirical data. Importantly, these two principal factors cannot be viewed or treated as separate elements. Rather, a strong, mutually reinforcing relationship existed between the emotional and spiritual dynamics. This influenced pilgrims' interpretations of the international gathering and their sense of perceived impact. Importantly, it is an issue that should inform any assessment World Youth Day.

One issue that is central to understanding the convergence of the emotional and spiritual dynamics is that of duration. Typically, ritual effervescence is observed and assessed for its intensity not its duration. While heightened emotions can be empowering and rejuvenating, they tend to be ephemeral, not long lasting (Hervieu-Leger, 1998a). It is not uncommon for the sense of exaltation, and the accompanying feelings of solidarity and strengthened commitment, to diminish with time, especially when ritual participants return to their everyday routine. However, even though the emotions in a significant event will naturally dissipate, a memory of the event and its emotionality can remain important for individuals. In his discussion of what he called 'peak experience learning', Maslow (1964) suggested that such experiences can facilitate a change in dispositions, values and beliefs that will remain in individuals well after the emotions associated with the experience have subsided.

The research study found that even six months after their return to Australia, pilgrims' were animated when describing their World Youth Day experiences. It was apparent that many of them remained in an uplifted state,

especially when describing the ‘buzz’ and ‘vibe’ of the World Youth Day atmosphere, and their favourite moments.

Generally, the pilgrims were reflective when describing their spiritual experiences and many situated World Youth Day within a broader faith journey. A number of them connected changes in their religious practices and attitudes to their time away. They

considered their regular religious practices to be too mundane, and not satisfying their personal needs. It was apparent that the emotional exaltation associated with the immediacy of their peak religious experience had transitioned to a new-found religious disposition and conviction. The heightened emotional energy of World Youth Day resulted in positive religious thinking and a sense of inner fulfilment.

While the senior school retreat in Catholic schools is different in structure and size from World Youth Day, there is evidence that they share some common emotional and spiritual dynamics. As shown in the most extensive research yet done on Catholic school retreats (Australian research done by Tullio, 2010; Tullio & Rossiter, 2009, 2010; and Rossiter, 2016), the value in ‘going away and taking time out with friends’ was a prominent psychological dynamic. In addition, in the early phase of the development of ‘communitarian’ retreats conducted for volunteers from clusters of Catholic boys and girls schools in the 1970s, the psychology of the ‘acquaintance process’ was a prominent dynamic – as it is with the value in new friendships in World Youth Day. The retreats research also drew on encounter group theory to help explain the ‘peak experience learning’ that was believed to be taking place (Schein & Bennis, 1965) – already shown to be applicable in World Youth Day.

On this question, Rossiter (personal communication, June 6, 2017) noted.

Cleary’s World Youth Day research (2016) has identified and elaborated a set of psychological and sociological theories of large group events and pilgrimage that have added a significant new dimension to the interpretation of the World Youth Day experience. In addition, his discussion has introduced elements of these theories

to the discourse of Catholic school religious education providing new insights for educators for understanding the emotional/spiritual/religious dimensions of retreats. His analyses of young peoples' World Youth Day experience have also contributed significant new data on the spirituality of contemporary young people.

8.5 PILGRIMS' SEARCH FOR MEANING

Since the popularisation of Victor Frankl's book (1946), *Man's Search for Meaning*, in the 1960s, this theme has been understood as one of the defining psychological characteristics of what it means to be human. Crawford and Rossiter (2006) considered that it has become increasingly important psychologically for three reasons:

1. a decline in the traditional sources of meaning like religion and family;
2. a greater emphasis on individualism where people rely on their own resources for constructing personal meaning; and
3. that 'progress' and 'development' in Western technological societies have not always equated with increased happiness, and people are puzzled about the causes of personal and social unrest.

The search for meaning has become more pronounced in the postmodern era. It was a recurring theme in this study, evident in the desire of pilgrims to establish connectivity with others and find a sense of belonging. Fisher (2014) suggested that connectedness, solidarity and spirituality were "deep-seated human needs" which were served in an unparalleled way by large scale events like World Youth Day.

The 'search for meaning' is an important issue in the understanding of the World Youth Day phenomenon, both in its origins and development. Pope John Paul II recognised that many young people were searching for happiness, purpose and meaning in life (1994b, 1996) and he believed that this could be realised through a deepening of relationship with God and others. To this end, World Youth Day was conceived in part as a response to young peoples' spiritual and human yearnings.

Religion and religious experiences have long been associated with the ‘search for meaning’ (Emmons, 2005; Hood, Hill & Spilka, 2009) and this was borne out in the research study. Among the younger pilgrims, the largest subgroup according to religious typology, were the ‘meaning seekers. These were pilgrims with a moderate level of religiosity. Of all of the pilgrim groups, their motivations for attending World Youth Day appeared to be the most complex. While some were seeking meaning by deepening their relationship with God, others attended the international gathering so as to find answers to existential questions or to clarify their goals in life or the values by which they lived.

The search for meaning is an important issue in not only understanding the reasons why young people choose to attend World Youth Day but also in interpreting their appraisals of the gathering.

While meaning is subjective and signifies different things to different people it is generally associated with the satisfaction derived from connecting with or being part of something larger than oneself. At the same time, there are some who are only concerned with individualism, the immediacy of experience and of living in the moment. World Youth Day has an explicitly reflective dimension, and both the pilgrimages and the international gathering draw pilgrims’ into a consideration of existential questions and contribute in different ways to their personal search for meaning.

8.6 THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL NATURE OF THE WORLD YOUTH DAY EXPERIENCE & THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PILGRIMAGE

For many, World Youth Day represents a few days of frenetic activity involving the pope and millions of young people, a hybrid event which merges the festive and the sacred. It is this image that often dominates the mainstream media’s coverage of the event and also the perceptions of many Catholics. Properly understood however, World Youth Day extends beyond the mega event of ‘hyperactivity’. It should not be reduced to a brief moment

of event-based evangelisation but recognised as an experience with a number of critical phases.

Travelling to Australia for the Sydney World Youth Day, Pope Benedict XVI (2008e) reflected,

a World Youth Day is not merely a passing event ... these days are the culmination of a long previous process ... the fruit of a journey ... [it] is very important: not only to see these three or four days, but to see the entire journey that precedes them, as well as the subsequent journey.

The research study found that the structure of pilgrims' experiences of World Youth Day can have a significant impact on their readiness and capacity to engage in the principal activities, and their appraisal of the international gathering. It can also influence the intensity and duration of pilgrims' emotional responses and changes to their personal religiosity.

Historically, the majority of Australians who have attended World Youth Day have participated in a pilgrimage prior to the international gathering. Normally, the itineraries have included religious as well as touristic sites as those who travel on religious pilgrimages are motivated by both spiritual as well as practical touristic inclinations and they are "able to shift their identities based on the level of importance they attribute to the peoples, places, or practices with which they interact with at the moment" (Di Giovine, 2011, p.249).

From the research study, it was apparent that many pilgrims' religious motivation, awareness and consciousness only developed during the course of the pilgrimage. Some with little or no connection to faith, including those who described themselves as disengaged, attested to feeling changed by the experience of visiting important sites in the Christian Tradition. A number indicated that by visiting these 'sacred sites' they felt a connection something beyond themselves.

The pilgrimage experience has been used by many Australian pilgrim groups as a time of social bonding, and for preparing pilgrims pastorally

and spiritually for the international gathering. It differentiates Australian pilgrims from many other international attendees, especially from Europe, who only arrive during World Youth Day week itself. Historically, some small groups of Australian pilgrims have also followed this pattern, and have taken up the option titled, 'World Youth Day Direct'. Typically, these groups have been university students who have had financial and time constraints. The World Youth Day Direct option has only ever involved a small number of Australian pilgrims.

When interviewed for the research study (30 October, 2014), Mr Philip Ryall, Managing Director, Harvest Australia commented,

Suffering, heat, fatigue, each group needs to understand the secrets of pilgrimage in order to help their young people to have a more enriching experience and to prepare them ... they are always the moments that young people come back to and share ... they are the moments of encounter ... which is surely the whole purpose of World Youth Day.

Just as Australian pilgrim groups have given increased consideration to their preparations for World Youth Day, greater consideration has also been given to what follow-up activities are conducted. Historically, a small number of ecclesial groups and movements scheduled a retreat as part of their World Youth Day experience. This was not the norm for Australian pilgrims however. This changed with World Youth Day XXVIII in Rio de Janeiro when many Australian pilgrim groups organised a retreat to conclude their World Youth Day experience. This included the cohort from Sydney Catholic Schools. While the inclusion of a retreat was primarily driven by logistical considerations (there were insufficient flights for an immediate departure from Rio), the research study highlighted that the retreat experience was considered by pilgrims to be extremely beneficial. This provided them with an opportunity for spiritual reflection and to discuss and process the activities associated with World Youth Day.

The significance of the World Youth Day phenomenon extends beyond the affective intensity of the week-long mega-event. Australian religious

commentator, Paul Collins (Cited in Morris, 2008) observed, “I do see WYD as giving people a sense of their identity, but I do think it's got to be accompanied by something deeper than a jamboree.” From the research study, it was apparent that most Australian pilgrims’ engagement in World Youth Day involves a range of preparatory and follow-up activities tailored to the needs of individual pilgrim groups.

8.7 REVIEWING THE STRATEGIC PLACE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF CATHOLIC YOUTH MINISTRY

Central to the examination of the World Youth Day phenomenon is an understanding of its place within the broader context of youth ministry. In detailing the principal objectives of World Youth Day, Pope John Paul II had outlined, “World Youth Day is... not an alternative to ordinary youth ministry ... indeed it intends actually to consolidate this work ... [and] foster ever greater involvement and participation (1996, n.3).

A number of issues emerged from the research study. These included:

- the degree to which the international gathering informs and complements parish, school and diocesan approaches to youth ministry
- the heightened expectations that ‘returning pilgrims’ might have about their engagement in parish and wider Church life, and
- the capacity of schools, parishes and Church agencies to respond to the spiritual needs of ‘returning pilgrims’ and to provide opportunities to deepen their engagement in the life of the Church.

As World Youth Day is recognised as a quotidian faith experience, this has implications for the nature and appeal of everyday faith experiences, a point highlighted by French sociologist and religious commentator, Hervieu-Leger (cited in Trueheart, 1997b).

The problem for the pope is that the young people who came to Longchamp never set foot in the Church ... It is everything that parish life is not ... mobile rather than stable, based on the individual rather than the territory of a parish, voluntary rather than obligatory,

extraordinary rather than ordinary.

(Hervieu-Leger, 1994) identified World Youth Day as a “highly emotionalised group experience” p.136) and suggested that this not only accounted for much of the event’s appeal, but also created a sense of expectation regarding regular forms of worship.

The model of the international gatherings has been increasingly applied to the Catholic Church’s approach to youth ministry in Australia. The most tangible example of this has been the establishment of the Australian Catholic Youth Festival, a biennial youth gathering. The three day event combines liturgical and catechetical experiences with a range of opportunities related to the popular culture of young people. As with World Youth Day, a factor of appeal and ‘emotional and psychological influence’ is the scale of the event. The Australian Catholic Youth Festival has attracted a significant number of school-aged participants. For many Catholic education systems it represents a complement and an alternative to World Youth Day, especially for those students who are unable to attend World Youth Day for financial reasons, or for reasons of timing.

While a number of dioceses and schools systems have hosted youth conventions and gatherings modelled on the catechesis sessions of World Youth Day, parish life across Australia has generally maintained a more conventional approach to youth ministry. Large scale gatherings require human and financial resources that parishes do not have.

It is evident that large religious gatherings are appealing to young people as they provide a form of religious socialization that is informed by contemporary youth culture. According to Bishop Anthony Fisher OP (2014), their success depends not just on the events and the preparations involved but in the follow-up opportunities afforded to the participants. He argued that this follow-up necessitated participants being actively engaged in the life of the Church through “sharing, evangelising, worshipping, leading and serving” (p.9), for those returning may well have been animated in their desire to practice and share their faith.

The research study showed that many of the pilgrims felt the same. Adult pilgrim 71 commented,

It is all very well to send people to World Youth Day, but what do we have in place for when they come back ... if the focus is just on sending them ... that in itself has a limited shelf life ... [if] there's not a community for them to join, not somewhere where they can continue to grow, to be nurtured in their faith, then what's the point ... don't put all the resources into getting people to World Youth Day and then not have anything for them when they get back.

While many returning pilgrims maintained or increased their involvement in Church life, and others became involved for the first time, some remained on the fringes. World Youth Day is not the panacea for all religious nominalism. While framed by and characteristic of the 'new evangelisation', it was evident that the impact of World Youth Day needed to be carefully assessed, especially in regards to the small group of pilgrims who, "no longer considered themselves members of the Church" (John Paul II, 1990, n.33).

Through its parishes, agencies, groups and movements, the Catholic Church can complement and consolidate the experience of World Youth Day, and take forward the vision of the 'new evangelisation'. By catering for their different religio-spiritual dispositions, pilgrims' sense of personal commitment to the Church may well be strengthened. As noted by Fisher however, "we will not always see the fruits of our pastoral efforts – or see them any time soon – let alone be able to measure them" (2014, p.2).

8.8 RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the results from this research – from both the documentary/analytical/ philosophical analysis and the empirical investigation of the views of pilgrims – a number of recommendations will be made for the Catholic Church community in Australia and Catholic education authorities regarding the engagement of pilgrims in future World Youth Days. The researcher has made the following judgements in the light of the perceived values of World Youth Day as a significant 'cultural marker' religious experience that has been beneficial for pilgrims at both

personal and religious/spiritual levels, no matter what their position on the religious typology. The recommendations suggest how the conduct of the World Youth Day pilgrimage and events, and preparatory and follow-up activities, might be reviewed to promote maximum benefits for participants and the wider Catholic Church community.

8.8.1 Recommendations for the Catholic Church Community in Australia

1. Recognising that World Youth Day is an experience of, and belongs to, the whole Church

While Pope John Paul II has long been considered the ‘father of World Youth Day’, and the early international gatherings were largely attended by those closely affiliated with ecclesial groups and movements, World Youth Day should now be seen as an expression of and belonging to the universal Church. At the end of World Youth Day Sydney, Cardinal Pell reflected, “World Youth Days do not belong to one pope, or even one generation, but are now an ordinary part of the life of the Church” (Pell, 2008).

World Youth Days should not be perceived by Catholics as a niche event which caters only for the ‘new faithful’ (Caroll, 2004). While the international gathering is attended by many ‘evangelical Catholics’ (Allen, 2011a) with a strong commitment to the Church, the event caters for those with different religious dispositions.

While recent Australian participation in the international gathering has been largely coordinated through the Bishops Commission for Family, Youth and Life, via the Office for Youth and a National World Youth Day Committee, responsibility for the promotion of World Youth Day rests with the wider Catholic community. It is recommended that a ‘grassroots’ approach is taken for the promotion of World Youth Day, with particular attention given to sections of the Catholic community underrepresented at past World Youth Days. A particular focus should be directed to those young people with loose or nominal affiliation with the Church.

It is recommended that past World Youth Day pilgrims be actively engaged in the promotion of World Youth Day, especially with their immediate peer groups, and that opportunities are provided for them to share their personal testimonies. For a significant number of Australians, their first awareness of World Youth Day came vicariously through the testimonies of past pilgrims, and these testimonies motivated their registration for the event.

It is recommended that the promotion of, engagement in and follow-up to World Youth Day makes more effective use of the various forms of social media. As noted by Finni (2014), these technologies are no longer a novelty but an ordinary part of life, especially for young people. For many they are an essential part of life. The Church therefore, is “called to explore and understand not only the way in which the cloud is used but how we live this experience” (Finni, 2014, p.97). The dynamics of World Youth Day, which involve both individual and collective emotions, identities and memories, are highly suited to the functions of social media. Importantly, these social networks have the capacity to extend beyond core believers and to the peripheries of the Church and society so that they can discover the “beauty of faith, the beauty of encountering Christ” (Francis, 2013d).

2. The structure of the World Youth Day experience

In partnership with travel providers, local Catholic Church authorities should endeavour to structure their travel to World Youth Day to include a pilgrimage and/or a ‘Days in the Diocese’ experience prior to the international gathering, and a retreat as a follow-up activity. Where possible, ‘World Youth Day Direct’ experiences, where pilgrims only attend the international gathering, should be avoided. The planning of World Youth Day itineraries should specifically schedule regular ‘reflection’ opportunities to enable pilgrims to share, debrief, and process their experiences.

3. The inclusion of a ‘mission’ experience in World Youth Day pilgrimages

The research study showed that the ‘mission’ component offered to pilgrims prior to World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro was a highly valued experience. A significant number of Rio pilgrims assessed it as the highlight of their time away and many identified it as a ‘God moment’. In partnership with travel providers, local Catholic Church authorities should include a ‘mission’ component in itineraries which lend themselves to this inclusion. This will be more appropriate and affordable in travel to some host cities than to others.

4. Priority given to the post-World Youth Day period

Historically, Australian involvement in past World Youth Days has been characterised by careful planning and high energy, before and during the international gatherings. Often, little thought has been given to the pastoral approaches and activities that will support returning pilgrims. Furthermore, many of those who took on leadership responsibilities during their time away returned exhausted, or delayed their return so as to take a break. There has often been a type of vacuum in the period immediately following World Youth Day or a lack of strategic planning for supporting returning pilgrims in their faith journey and connecting them with the wider Church community. World Youth Day “requires well prepared organisational structures and trained leaders ... to be in place immediately afterwards” (Mason, 2010a, pp.347-348) otherwise much of what is gained can be lost.

It is recommended that the post-World Youth Day period becomes a more prominent focus of the overall planning by pilgrim groups. This will enable these groups to situate pilgrims’ experience of World Youth Day within the broader context of Youth Ministry. Importantly, Church and educational authorities, and all those who

coordinate pilgrim groups, should ensure that pilgrims are able to access a range of programs to complement and consolidate their World Youth Day experience. Re-connect occasions, which bring together all pilgrims within a group, should also be planned, and perhaps modelled on the 'Catechesis Sessions' of the international gathering. The research study found that there would also be value in offering an RCIA style catechetical program to some returning pilgrims.

As noted by Fisher (2008, p.401), the vitality and direction of the post-World Youth Day period is also shaped by the ideas and energy of the returning pilgrims themselves.

The experience of past World Youth Days is that many of the most fruitful activities that come after WYD are not planned by the event organisers or by Church leaders, but rather spring up locally, often the initiative of returnee pilgrims. We must be ready to ... listen to and discern with them, and to support them in doing some new things – or some old things in new ways.

5. Further World Youth Day research

It is proposed that Catholic Church authorities should commission research into the long-term impact of World Youth Day on Australian pilgrims. While this research study explored pilgrims' appraisal of World Youth Day in the six months immediately following the event, there was evidence from some attendees of multiple World Youth Days, that their experience of the international gathering was a peak religious experience. The research study found that some pilgrims' experience of a past World Youth Day had influenced their career choice, some chose to work for the Church and a number pursued a religious vocation. Many pilgrims' attested to having their religiosity consolidated and strengthened by the experience of World Youth Day. Research needs to be undertaken to examine the duration and extent of any

perceived changes to pilgrims' religiosity. In particular, the research might seek to ascertain what aspects of the World Youth Day experience had the most significant impact.

In addition to an examination of the long-term impact of World Youth Day, research should also focus on longitudinal trends. Catholic Church authorities could use the survey instrument from the research study with pilgrim groups attending future World Youth Days. This would identify key areas of convergence and difference between various pilgrim cohorts over an extended period of time, and point to salient historical trends. While the scope for future research is broad, it is recommended that some of the principal findings from the research study are investigated further. Specifically, future research should explore how pilgrims' perceptions and evaluations of the World Youth Day experience were influenced by gender, age, cultural background and religious disposition.

8.8.2 Recommendations for Catholic Education Authorities

1. The model of World Youth Day participation

Catholic education authorities should liaise closely with their local bishop regarding the model and scope of student participation in World Youth Day. In light of the diverse religious profile of adolescents, it is recommended that 'schools' groups are established for student participation, and that student pilgrims are accompanied by a range of adult pilgrims, including: chaplains, teachers, support staff, school and system leaders. School authorities should support students who wish to attend World Youth Day with their families, parish or diocesan group, or an ecclesial group or movement.

Catholic education authorities must ensure that their 'schools cohorts' do not become a clique, or are cocooned from a genuine engagement in the life of the Church during their World Youth Day experience. Their identity should be seen from a diocesan

perspective. The planning of World Youth Day itineraries should specifically schedule regular opportunities for schools' and diocesan, or wider Church pilgrim groups, to have shared experiences.

2. The selection of student pilgrims

Catholic education authorities should try to maximise student participation in World Youth Day. Efforts should be made to ensure that students are afforded the opportunity to self-nominate as pilgrims, and their selection should not be dependent upon the regularity of their religious practices. Students from across the religio-spiritual spectrum should be encouraged to attend World Youth Day. Importantly, all prospective student pilgrims should show a willingness to engage in the religious dynamics of the event, and its preparatory and follow-up activities. Where possible, school communities should endeavour to send small or larger groups, trying to avoid the situation where only one or very few students attend. The groups can then form the basis of a support network in the pre and post-World Youth Day periods. Depending upon the size, such groups can be an effective 'critical minority' within a local community.

3. The selection of adult pilgrims

Catholic education authorities should give careful consideration to the selection of their adult pilgrims. Above all, those selected should respect the evangelical intent of World Youth Day and the religious dynamics of the event, and be able to effectively support students in their engagement.

While complying with the required staff/student ratios for overseas excursion programs, Catholic education authorities should endeavour to choose additional staff where possible so as to reduce adult pilgrims' supervisory duties, enabling them to participate more freely as pilgrims in the event.

In addition to the chaplains, teachers, school and system leaders, chosen as adult pilgrims, Catholic education authorities should consider the selection of young adults (19 to 24 years of age) from the wider Catholic community to accompany their pilgrim groups. These adults, properly vetted, would act as volunteers, and would be free of the traditional supervisory requirements, and could take on a 'mentoring' role with the student pilgrims. A key element of the role would be that of a youthful 'faith witness', who might also help connect the student pilgrims with pilgrims from the wider Australian contingent. The role could also help consolidate links between school groups and their relevant diocesan groups.

In addition to the adult pilgrims chosen to accompany and supervise student pilgrims, Catholic education authorities should endeavour to send teachers and system personnel as pilgrims, independent of these responsibilities. Ideally, their age should correspond with the targeted age group for World Youth Day, i.e. up to 35 years of age.

8.9 CONCLUSION

World Youth Day was established in part as a response to the social, cultural and religious realities of postmodernity. Its evangelical intent was informed by the 'new evangelisation'. Through World Youth Day, the Catholic Church hoped to address the individualization of beliefs and practices, and the 'faith fatigue' that had come to characterise many western nations.

Believing that young people had a deep "religious hunger ... and yearning for religious illumination and experience" (Pontifical Council for the Laity, 1984, p.10), Pope John Paul II contextualised World Youth Day as a time of encounter in their on-going pilgrimage of faith. It was hoped that their experience of the universal Church would rejuvenate them in spirit, and help them assume a place in society and the ecclesial community (John Paul II, 1996, n.3). Furthermore, it was believed that the international gatherings would strengthen young peoples' friendships and their respect of social and

cultural diversity.

Since the first World Youth Day, Australian participation has grown and diversified. While the religious profile of Australian pilgrims is not homogeneous, it is different from that of the general population. Typically, pilgrims have relatively high levels of religious commitment, especially among the adult pilgrims. Amongst younger pilgrims, whose numbers have grown significantly since 2008, there is a broader cross-section of pilgrims. Not only do they demonstrate many of the social characteristics of contemporary youth culture, they also have a more heterogeneous religious profile.

The research study found that the dynamics of the World Youth Day experience created an environment which was conducive to the promotion of religious socialisation and plausibility. For many pilgrims, faith and life were integrated effectively. Pilgrims found the heightened levels of emotional energy satisfying, and attested to an elevated sense of self-esteem and solidarity with others. It was evident that a strong, mutually reinforcing relationship existed between the emotional and spiritual dynamics and this influenced pilgrims' appraisal of the event.

Pilgrims generally assessed World Youth Day very positively. Some considered it to be a cathartic experience, and others described it as 'life changing'. Irrespective of their religious disposition and outlook, most pilgrims attributed value to the World Youth Day experience, and many found that it gave them a sense of meaning, purpose and fulfilment. Sociologist Charles Taylor (2007, p.5) suggested,

We all see our lives ... or the space wherein we live our lives, as having a certain moral/spiritual shape. Somewhere, in some activity, or condition, lies a fullness ... that is, in that place [or] activity ... life is fuller, richer, deeper ... more what it should be.

For many Australian pilgrims, the unconventional experience of World Youth Day was such an activity.

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Human Research Ethics Committee
Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Professor Graham Rossiter Sydney Campus

Co-Investigators:

Student Researcher: Mr Anthony Cleary Sydney Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:

World Youth Day Research. (Research on the influence of World Youth Day)

for the period: 28 April 2011 to 31 December 2011

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: N2011 19

Special Condition/s of Approval

Prior to commencement of your research, the following permissions are required to be submitted to the ACU HREC:

CEO Sydney

The following **standard** conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans (2007)* apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
 - security of records
 - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
 - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
 - proposed changes to the protocol
 - unforeseen circumstances or events
 - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than low risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of negligible risk and low risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.



Signed: Date: 28.04.2011.....
(Research Services Officer, McAuley Campus)



3 May 2011

Ref: Research Application 756

Mr Anthony Cleary
 Director of Religious Education and Evangelisation
 Catholic Education Office Sydney
 38 Renwick Street
LEICHHARDT NSW 2040

Email: [REDACTED]
 Australian Catholic University National
 Supervisor: Professor Graham Rossiter

Dear Anthony

RE: RESEARCH APPLICATION REF: 756 – LETTER OF APPROVAL

Further to the agreement of the Executive Director of Catholic Schools, Dr Dan White, to approve the participation of Archdiocesan secondary systemic schools under the jurisdiction of the Catholic Education Office (CEO) Sydney in the research study:

'World Youth Day Research'

please be advised that approval is given for you to approach the Principals of all Archdiocesan secondary systemic schools. Please note that it is the prerogative of the Principal or staff member(s) whom you might approach to decline your invitation to be involved in this study or to withdraw from involvement at any time.

Please also note the following requirements carefully:

NSW CHILD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

Approval to conduct this research study in Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Secondary Schools under the jurisdiction of CEO Sydney is granted subject to the researcher's full compliance with the **'Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998'**.

As a current employee of the Catholic Education Office Sydney you comply with all requirements of the NSW Child Protection legislation in relation to any unsupervised contact with students in the course of the research study.

COMMONWEALTH PRIVACY ACT

Approval to conduct this research study in Sydney Archdiocesan Catholic Secondary Schools under the jurisdiction of CEO Sydney is granted subject to full compliance with the **Commonwealth Privacy Amendment (Private Sector) Act 2000**.

The privacy of the school and that of any school personnel or students involved in your study must, of course, be preserved at all times and comply with requirements under the legislation. In complying with this legislation, it is a requirement that students and/or school personnel are not identified by anything other than age and/or gender.

FURTHER REQUIREMENTS

- This Letter of Approval letter is available for sighting by the Principal
- When you have confirmed your participating schools, please **complete the attached form and return it** to this office
- It is noted that a **summary report of the findings and/or recommendations** of the research study will be provided to this office as soon as practicable after results are to hand
- All correspondence relating to this Research should note '**Reference: Research Application 756**'.

I wish you well with this study and look forward to reviewing the outcomes of your research.

Yours sincerely,



Ms Kathy Campbell
Head: Policy and Corporate Services
Catholic Education Office Sydney
PO Box 217
LEICHHARDT NSW 2040
Email: 

Appendix C

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARENTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: **RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY**

SUPERVISOR: Professor Graham Rossiter

CO-SUPERVISOR: Professor Richard Rymarz

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Anthony Cleary

PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: PhD

Dear Parent,

This letter respectfully seeks your permission for your son/daughter to participate briefly in research about the influence of World Youth Day on participating pilgrims. The research specifically explores how the events of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages might impact upon a pilgrim's perception of spirituality, religious practice, community and self. The research is being conducted as part of the PhD of Mr. Anthony Cleary. The research will be conducted by way of two questionnaires (one hard-copy survey and one online questionnaire). Some participants will also be invited to an interview.

The supervisor and the student researcher consider that participation in the research involves no foreseeable personal risk. Completing research questionnaires can be burdensome and some people can on occasions feel awkward during an interview. If there is any feeling of discomfort during either research process individuals can withdraw at any time. School authorities can be approached for help should there be any stress over participation.

Participation in the research involves completing a hard-copy survey (10 minutes) in the pre-World Youth Day period and an online questionnaire (15-20 minutes) in the post-World Youth Day period. The web address for the online questionnaire is <http://elearn.acu.edu.au/newsurveys/index.php/17756/lang-en>. Both the user name and the password are the word *wydpilgrim*. Additionally, in some instances participants will be invited to participate in an interview for approximately 20-30 minutes. Interviews will be digitally recorded

It is hoped that you will permit your son/daughter to participate in this research as it will be particularly valuable to access the views and perceptions of World Youth Day pilgrims about these significant international gatherings. This research not only seeks to clarify why people are drawn to World Youth Day but to investigate the most influential aspects of the event and to explore how these experiences might upon religious attitudes and practices. The research will provide a valuable opportunity for reflecting on the nature and purpose of World Youth Day. Making a contribution to the research project will possibly provide new insights about World Youth Day which will be made available to future organizing authorities. The findings of the research will be documented within the PhD of Mr. Anthony Cleary. The report may also lead to publications.

Participants are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason. Once questionnaire data has been submitted, it will not be possible to withdraw the data (after the fact) as the surveys are anonymous.

The contribution of your child is highly valued. Confidentiality for participants will be safeguarded. No name will be attached to either questionnaire or interview data so that data contributed will not be identifiable to any particular individual.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisor, Professor Graham Rossiter (02) [REDACTED], School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield NSW 2135. Alternatively you may wish to contact the Student Researcher Mr Anthony Cleary ([REDACTED]), Catholic Education Office, PO Box 217, Leichhardt NSW 2040.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that the Investigator has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney Campus
PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Tel: 02 9739 2105
Fax: 02 9739 2870

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to give your consent to your child's participation in this project, and if they too agree to participate, you should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Supervisor or Student Researcher. Signed consent forms should be given to the school Youth Ministry Coordinator for collection and submission to the Supervisor or Student Researcher. If you and your child agree for him/her to participate in the interview, and he/she is selected for this, you will be advised of the time and location of the interview in a further letter.

There are no personal benefits to be gained by your son/daughter through his/her participation in this research project. He/She will however have the opportunity to reflect upon his/her World Youth Day experiences and freely express his/her views and opinions. Your child's views on the subject of World Youth Day are valued highly and we thank you very much in anticipation for your consent.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Professor Graham Rossiter, Supervisor

[REDACTED]

Anthony Cleary, Student Researcher

Appendix D

INFORMATION LETTER TO STUDENTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: **RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY**

SUPERVISOR: Professor Graham Rossiter

CO-SUPERVISOR: Professor Richard Rymarz

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Anthony Cleary

PROGRAMME IN WHICH ENROLLED: PhD

Dear Participant,

This letter respectfully invites you to participate briefly in research about the influence of World Youth Day on participating pilgrims. The research specifically explores how the events of World Youth Day and its associated pilgrimages might impact upon a pilgrim's perception of spirituality, religious practice, community and self. The research is being conducted as part of the PhD of Mr. Anthony Cleary. The research will be conducted by way of two questionnaires (one hard-copy survey and one online questionnaire). Some participants will also be invited to an interview.

The supervisor and the student researcher consider that participation in the research involves no foreseeable personal risk. Completing research questionnaires can be burdensome and some people can on occasions feel awkward during an interview. If there is any feeling of discomfort during either research process individuals can withdraw at any time. School authorities can be approached for help should there be any stress over participation.

Participation in the research involves completing a hard-copy survey (10 minutes) in the pre-World Youth Day period and an online questionnaire (15-20 minutes) in the post-World Youth Day period. The web address for the online questionnaire is <http://e-learn.acu.edu.au/newsurveys/index.php/17756/lang-en>. Both the user name and the password are the word *wydpilgrim*. Additionally, in some instances participants will be invited to participate in an interview for approximately 20-30 minutes. Interviews will be digitally recorded

It is hoped that you will, with the consent of your parents/guardians, participate in this research as it will be particularly valuable to access the views and perceptions of World Youth Day pilgrims about these significant international gatherings. This research not only seeks to clarify why people are drawn to World Youth Day but to investigate the most influential aspects of the event and to explore how these experiences might upon religious attitudes and practices. The research will provide a valuable opportunity for reflecting on the nature and purpose of World Youth Day. Making a contribution to the research project will possibly provide new insights about World Youth Day which will be made available to future organizing authorities. The findings of the research will be documented within the PhD of Mr. Anthony Cleary. The report may also lead to publications.

Participants are free to refuse consent altogether without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue participation in the study at any time without giving a reason. Once questionnaire data has been submitted, it will not be possible to withdraw the data (after the fact) as the surveys are anonymous.

Your contribution to this research is highly valued. Anonymity and confidentiality for participants will be safeguarded. No name will be attached to either questionnaire or interview data so that data contributed will not be identifiable to any particular individual.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the Supervisor, Professor Graham Rossiter (02) 9701 4239. School of Religious Education, Australian Catholic University, Locked Bag 2002, Strathfield NSW 2135. Alternatively you may wish to contact the Student Researcher Mr Anthony Cleary (02) 9568 8433. Catholic Education Office, PO Box 217, Leichhardt NSW 2040.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University.

In the event that you have any complaint or concern, or if you have any query that the Investigator has not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee care of the nearest branch of the Research Services Office.

Chair, HREC
C/- Research Services
Australian Catholic University
North Sydney Campus
PO Box 968
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059
Tel: 02 9739 2105
Fax: 02 9739 2870

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

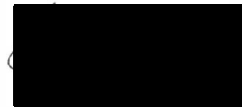
If you and your parents agree for you participate in this project, you and one of your parents should sign both copies of the Consent Form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Principal Investigator. Signed consent forms should be given to the school Youth Ministry Coordinator for collection and submission to the Supervisor or Student Researcher. If you and your parents agree for you to participate in the interview, and you are selected for this, you will be advised of the time and location of the interview in a further letter.

There are no personal benefits to be gained by your participation in this research project. You will however have the opportunity to reflect upon your World Youth Day experiences and freely express your views and opinions. As a pilgrim your views on the subject of World Youth Day are valued highly and we thank you very much in anticipation for your contribution.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Graham Rossiter, Supervisor



Anthony Cleary, Student Researcher

Appendix E

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF PROJECT: **RESEARCH ON THE INFLUENCE OF WORLD YOUTH DAY**

SUPERVISOR: Professor Graham Rossiter

CO-SUPERVISOR: Professor Richard Rymarz

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Anthony Cleary

I (parent/guardian) have read (or, where appropriate, have had read to me) and understood the information provided in the Information Letter to the Parents. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree that my child, nominated below, may participate in the following components of this research activity:

Hard-Copy Questionnaire (10 mins)

Online Questionnaire (15-20 mins)

Interview (20-30 mins)

(Please tick the component/components for which you give consent to your child's participation)

I agree that research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify my child in any way. I am aware that I can withdraw my consent at any time (without adverse consequences).

NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN:

SIGNATURE DATE:.....

NAME OF CHILD

SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR:  DATE: 01/06/2011

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER:  DATE: 01/06/2011



ASSENT OF PARTICIPANTS AGED UNDER 18 YEARS

I (*the participant aged under 18 years*) understand what this research project is designed to explore. What I will be asked to do has been explained to me. I agree to take part in

Hard-Copy Questionnaire (10 mins)

Online Questionnaire (15-20 mins)

Interview (20-30 mins)

(Please tick the component/components which you agree to participate in)

NAME OF PARTICIPANT AGED UNDER 18:

SIGNATURE: DATE:

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: [REDACTED] DATE:01/06/2011

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: [REDACTED] DATE: 01/06/2011

Appendix F

PRE-WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIM SURVEY



Please indicate your responses to the questions by blackening the selected oval () with a 2B or B pencil. 

Or use a black or blue pen. 

1. Gender

- Male
 Female

2. Year of Birth

3. Place of Birth

- Australia
 Other country
Year of Arrival:

4. Language Spoken at Home

- English
 Arabic
 Croatian
 Greek
 Italian
 Tagalog
 Mandarin
 Vietnamese
 Other

5. Religion

- Catholic
 Other Christian Denomination Specify: _____
- Non-Christian Religion Specify
 No Religion

6. How important is Religion in your life?

- Very important
 Fairly important
 Of Some importance
 Not very important
 Of no importance

EAA30051101



7. Which term best describes your attitude towards your faith:

- Committed
- Involved
- Searching
- Disengaged

8. I normally attend Mass:

- More than once a week
- Each Sunday
- A few Sundays a month
- Once a month
- A few times a year
- Rarely or never

9. I normally receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- More than once a month
- About once a month
- About once in three months
- A few times a year
- Rarely or never

10. I normally pray:

- Each day
- Regularly
- Sometimes
- A few times a year
- Rarely or never

11. Did you attend any of the World Youth Day events in Sydney (2008)?

- Yes
- No

12. Which group had the greatest influence on your decision to attend World Youth Day in Madrid?

- My family
- My friends
- My school
- My parish
- Other Specify: _____

13. Describe your level of knowledge and understanding of what World Youth Day involves:

- Very high
- High
- Average
- Low
- Very low

14. What has been the main source of your knowledge and understanding of World Youth Day to date?

- Family
- Friends
- School
- Parish
- Other Specify: _____



Strongly Disagree (SD) Disagree (D) Neutral (N) Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA)

Using the descriptors above, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

15. World Youth Day will provide an opportunity for me to:

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Deepen my relationship with God	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learn more about my faith	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel part of the wider Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel valued by the Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciate the words of the Pope and other Church leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel a strong sense of belonging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talk openly about my faith with others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make many new friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meet many new people from around the world	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feel a strong sense of God's presence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciate the religious views and opinions of others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talk comfortably about my own religious beliefs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience moments of personal and spiritual reflection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
See organised religion in a positive light	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit places I have only ever read or heard about	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appreciate the small sacrifices and hardships that are part of any pilgrimage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experience the sacred in the places I visit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Most Unimportant (MUI)	Unimportant (UI)	Neutral (N)	Important (I)	Very Important (VI)
---------------------------	---------------------	----------------	------------------	------------------------

16. Using the descriptors above, indicate the level of importance that the various events of World Youth Day hold for you.

	MUI	UI	N	I	VI
The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Days in the Diocese	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Papal Welcome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opening Mass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catechesis Sessions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reconciliation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eucharistic Adoration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stations of the Cross	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Vigil	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Final Mass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. I have travelled overseas

- Often
- Once or twice
- Never before

18. Identify and describe your greatest hope for your upcoming experience at World Youth Day.



19. What has motivated you to register for World Youth Day?



POST-WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIM SURVEY



Please indicate your responses to the questions by blackening the selected oval (○ ● ○ ○)

with a 2B or B pencil.  Or use a black or blue pen. 

1. **Gender**
 - Male
 - Female
2. **Year of Birth**
3. **Place of Birth**
 - Australia
 - Other country

Year of Arrival:
4. **Language Spoken at Home**
 - English
 - Arabic
 - Croatian
 - Greek
 - Italian
 - Tagalog
 - Mandarin
 - Vietnamese
 - Other
5. **Religion**
 - Catholic
 - Other Christian Denomination

Specify: _____

 - Non-Christian Religion

Specify: _____

 - No Religion
6. **How important is Religion in your life?**
 - Very important
 - Fairly important
 - Of Some importance
 - Not very important
 - Of no importance
7. **Which term best describes your attitude towards your faith before your experience of World Youth Day:**
 - Committed
 - Involved
 - Searching
 - Disengaged
8. **Before going to World Youth Day I normally attended Mass:**
 - More than once a week
 - Each Sunday
 - A few Sundays a month
 - Once a month
 - A few times a year
 - Rarely or never
9. **Before going to World Youth Day I normally received the Sacrament of Reconciliation:**
 - More than once a month
 - About once a month
 - About once in three months
 - A few times a year
 - Rarely or never
10. **Before going to World Youth Day I normally prayed:**
 - Each day
 - Regularly
 - Sometimes
 - A few times a year
 - Rarely or never
11. **Before going to World Youth Day I had travelled overseas:**
 - Often
 - Once or twice
 - Never before
12. **I attended World Youth Day:**
 - With a parish/diocesan group
 - With a group/movement e.g. Antioch

Specify: _____

 - With a school group
 - With family or friends
 - Individually

Strongly Disagree
(SD)Disagree
(D)Neutral
(N)Agree
(A)Strongly Agree
(SA)

Using the descriptors above, indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

13. How I felt about the World Youth Day experience:

During World Youth Day:

SD D N A SA

I felt a strong sense of belonging

I felt a sense of exhilaration (great excitement) being a part of something so big

I felt that I shared something special with the other pilgrims

I enjoyed being able to share openly and talk with my friends

I made many new friends

Meeting so many new people from around the world was a great experience

The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day made me feel very good about myself

World Youth Day was one of the best experiences of my life

14. Spiritual & Religious aspects of the World Youth Day experience:

During World Youth Day:

SD D N A SA

I felt a strong sense of God's presence

I came to appreciate how big and diverse the Catholic Church is

I came to appreciate the religious views and opinions of others

I was comfortable in talking about my own religious beliefs

I was comfortable in expressing my faith in front of others, including my peers

The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day strengthened my faith

World Youth Day was a powerful spiritual experience

World Youth Day enabled me to see 'organised religion' in a more positive light

Strongly Disagree (SD)	Disagree (D)	Neutral (N)	Agree (A)	Strongly Agree (SA)
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15. The experience of Pilgrimage:

During World Youth Day:

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I felt a strong bond with my fellow pilgrims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt a sense of the sacred in the places I visited	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt overwhelmed to be in places I had only ever read or heard about	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I valued the opportunity to get away from my normal surroundings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I appreciated exploring new places	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I came to appreciate that small sacrifices and hardships bonded me with other pilgrims	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being with so many others made my experience of pilgrimage very special	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World Youth Day was both an 'inner' as well as physical journey	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World Youth Day has sparked a desire in me to visit other Christian 'sacred places'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. The Elements of World Youth Day:

During World Youth Day:

	SD	D	N	A	SA
I had the opportunity to deepen my relationship with God	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had the opportunity for personal and spiritual reflection	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt that I was valued by the Church	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was inspired by the words of the Pope and other Church leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was challenged to think differently about my faith	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The events and atmosphere of World Youth Day were so different to my normal experience of 'Church'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
World Youth Day has something for everyone, not just Catholics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My experiences have sparked a desire in me to go to World Youth Day again	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Most Unrewarding (MUR)	Unrewarding (UR)	Neutral (N)	Rewarding (R)	Very Rewarding (VR)
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17. Using the descriptors above, indicate your level of personal satisfaction with the various events at World Youth Day.

	MUR	UR	N	R	VR
The pilgrimage to World Youth Day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Days in the Diocese	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Papal Welcome	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opening Mass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catechesis Sessions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reconciliation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eucharistic Adoration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth Festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stations of the Cross	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Vigil	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Final Mass	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Identify and describe your most memorable experience at World Youth Day.

19. How would you describe World Youth Day to someone who has never been?

Appendix H

**INTERVIEW WITH WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS
(Pre-World Youth Day)**

Gender	YOB (Year of Birth)
Male <input type="radio"/>	○○○○
Female <input type="radio"/>	

Place of Birth	Language Spoken at Home
Australia <input type="radio"/>	English <input type="radio"/>
If you were not born in Australia, please indicate your	If you also speak a language other than English at home, or only another language, please identify the language
Country of Birth:	
Year of Arrival:	

Religion	
Catholic	<input type="radio"/>
Other Christian Denomination	<input type="radio"/> Specify:
Non-Christian Religion	<input type="radio"/> Specify:
No Religion	<input type="radio"/>

How important is Religion in your life?

Do your close friends regard religion the same way?

What have been your most positive religious experiences? Can you describe one or two?

How would you describe your faith?

In what ways do you express your faith, personally or through 'organised religion'?

Do you normally feel comfortable in talking about your faith with others?

When do you normally feel closest to God?

What has motivated you to register for World Youth Day in ...?

Did you attend any of the World Youth Day events in Sydney (2008)? What were your impressions? (Dependent upon the answer of the previous question)

If you have been to any other previous World Youth Day can you describe your experiences.

What are your hopes as a World Youth Day pilgrim?

Describe any experiences that you have had at 'very big events'. **Examples may need to be provided ... New Year's Eve Fireworks etc.** How did you feel?

What events normally give you positive feelings?

Have you travelled overseas before?

Why did you choose the particular pilgrimage that you are taking?

INTERVIEW WITH WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMS
(Post-World Youth Day)

Gender		YOB (Year of Birth)
Male	<input type="radio"/>	○○○○
Female	<input type="radio"/>	

Place of Birth	Language Spoken at Home
Australia <input type="radio"/>	English <input type="radio"/>
If you were not born in Australia, please indicate your	If you also speak a language other than English at home, or only another language, please identify the language
Country of Birth:	
Year of Arrival:	

Religion	
Catholic	<input type="radio"/>
Other Christian Denomination	<input type="radio"/> Specify:
Non-Christian Religion	<input type="radio"/> Specify:
No Religion	<input type="radio"/>

How important is Religion in your life? In what ways did your World Youth Day experience influence your view of religion?

Was World Youth Day a positive experience? Can you describe why/why not?

How would you describe your faith? If this has been changed as a result of your World Youth Day experiences, can you describe how and why.

Were there times at World Youth Day when you really had a strong sense of the presence of God? If yes, can you describe them?

Can you describe your most positive experiences at World Youth Day? **These might be spiritual, personal, social etc.**

Can you describe your feelings during World Youth Day?

Can you describe any experiences that were disappointing or gave you a sense of emptiness or wanting?

What things did you learn from your World Youth Day experience?

In what ways were your hopes and expectations for World Youth Day satisfied/not satisfied by your experiences?

Has World Youth Day given you a different view of the 'Church'? Can you elaborate?

How do you think Churches should try to engage with young people?

What World Youth Day events were 'highlights' for you?

Can you describe your experience of pilgrimage as you journeyed to Madrid? What pilgrimage did you attend? How did this compare with the events of World Youth Day week itself?

Can you describe your relationship with other pilgrims, during the pilgrimage and World Youth Day week?

How do you rate World Youth Day as a 'life experience'?

How would you describe World Youth Day to other people?

Was this your first experience of World Youth Day? **If no, which others have you attended? How did Madrid compare to your previous experience/s?**

Would you go again? Please elaborate.

Appendix I

**THE RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES & PRACTICES OF PILGRIMS FROM THE SYDNEY
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS COHORTS: POST WORLD YOUTH DAY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Q.6. How important is religion in your life?

Student Pilgrims				
	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Very important	73	33.8	75	30.0
Fairly important	94	43.5	109	43.6
Of some importance	42	19.4	57	22.8
Not very important	6	2.8	7	2.8
Of no importance	1	0.5	2	0.8
Total	216	100.0	250	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Very important	52	78.8	32	76.2
Fairly important	12	18.2	8	19.0
Of some importance	2	3.0	2	4.8
Total	66	100.0	42	100.0

Q.7. Which term best describes your attitude towards your faith ...

Student Pilgrims				
	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Committed	42	19.4	36	14.4
Involved	91	42.1	84	33.6
Searching	72	33.3	108	43.2
Disengaged	11	5.1	19	7.6
No response	-	-	3	1.2
Total	216	100.0	250	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Committed	43	65.2	23	54.8
Involved	19	28.8	14	33.3
Searching	4	6.1	5	11.9
Disengaged	-	-	-	-
No response	-	-	-	-
Total	66	100.0	42	100.0

Q.8 Mass attendance

Student Pilgrims				
Mass attendance	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
More than once a week	5	2.3	11	4.4
Each Sunday	53	24.5	53	21.2
A few Sundays a month	40	18.5	37	14.8
Once a month	30	13.9	48	19.2
A few times a year	77	35.6	89	35.6
Rarely or never	11	5.1	12	4.8
No response	-	-	-	-
Total	216	100.0	250	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
More than once a week	15	22.7	12	28.6
Each Sunday	27	40.9	18	42.8
A few Sundays a month	15	22.7	3	7.1
Once a month	8	12.1	3	7.1
A few times a year	1	1.5	6	14.3
Total	66	100.0	42	100.0

Q.10 Personal Prayer

Student Pilgrims				
Regularity of prayer	Madrid 2011		Rio 2013	
	N	%	N	%
Each day	69	31.9	60	24.0
Regularly	69	31.9	71	28.4
Sometimes	68	31.5	93	37.2
A few times a year	7	3.2	12	4.8
Rarely or never	3	1.4	14	5.6
Total	216	100.0	250	100.0
Adult Pilgrims				
Each day	48	72.7	28	66.7
Regularly	16	24.2	9	21.4
Sometimes	2	3.0	5	11.9
Total	66	100.0	42	100.0