

100 Day Countdown to World Youth Day 2008

'ANZ Foyer' (top level)
Aotea Centre, Auckland 11.55am.

Tuesday 8 April 2008

*E nga mana, e nga reo e nga hau e wha,
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.*

Your Grace Archbishop John Dew, Metropolitan of New Zealand,
Hon John Tamihere,
Mayor Bob Harvey of Waitakere City,
Mayor Andrew Williams of North Shore City,
Catholic Lay leaders Maurice Boland and Nicholas O'Flaherty,
The students of Hato Petera College and James Wong and his band,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Pilgrims.

Greetings and best wishes to you all

It is an honour to be asked to speak here today and join with you in this 100 Day Countdown to the World Youth Day celebration.

The World Youth Day in Sydney I am sure will be a wonderful event and something you will remember all your lives.

Pope John Paul II and now Pope Benedict have decided these events are to be called "pilgrimages" and therefore the attendees should be known as "pilgrims". What a great honour for you.

Pilgrimages and pilgrims are venerable element of the Christian tradition.

I recall there is an old French saying which illustrates the legendary determination of the pilgrims to overcome all adversity to complete their journey. It is a saying which I am sure would have often come to Bishop Pompellier's mind during his arduous travels to New Zealand and all around the islands of New Zealand in those times.

Vent du soir ou pluie du matin, n'arretent pas le pelerin

Winds in the evening nor rain in the morning will not hold back the pilgrim

However I am sure your journey to Sydney will not be so arduous.

Like other speakers here I was privileged to be brought up in the Catholic Church and taught by the Marist Brothers and the Marist Priests. This was in the era of the Latin Rite and to be brought up a Catholic in those days was to be exposed to a liturgy and to ceremonies of extraordinary beauty and spiritual power. In those days we were taught that Latin was the language of the Universal Church – it belonged to all the people of the world and was in effect everyone's culture.

Therefore I was therefore fascinated to see Pope Benedict just after his election delivering a homily in Latin from the Sistine Chapel which was shown live on CNN (and helpfully translated in English). For me it was very impressive experience.

And I understand that the Holy Father in an apostolic letter on the Latin Mass, *Summorum Pontificum* of July last year has called for Latin to be restored in the liturgy and be considered the birthright of every young Catholic.

The Holy Father in his wisdom has afforded your generation the opportunity to rediscover your ancient cultural and spiritual traditions.

I am sure that this World Youth Day in the presence of the Holy Father where you will join in the universal brotherhood and sisterhood and meet young people like yourselves from many nations and cultures - will also be a time to reaffirm your faith and rediscover your ancient spiritual and cultural heritage.

I know you will have your own personal priorities and preoccupations in Sydney but as we in Auckland local government are going through a particularly challenging and difficult time and I am sure the Mayors here would agree with me on this - please also remember us in your prayers.

I wish you well in your pilgrimage and in closing I will say to you in Latin, the ancient salutation

Dominus Vobiscum, "The Lord be with you"