

## World Youth Day Sydney 2008

World Youth Day was an amazing experience that enabled people from all parts of the world to come together and participate in the one thing that they all had in common; their faith. For me personally, the experience was filled with many highs and many lows, but all of which I will hold dear in my heart forever. Meeting people from all different cultures and creating a melting pot in Australia for two weeks was a very humbling experience. From this opportunity I was able to open my eyes to the way other cultures act, the way different ones are perceived, and most of all, the way Americans are perceived by people of other nations.

While on the trip I was able to be apart of a very special experience that wasn't planned, it just happened. While in Brisbane, on our way back to our lodgings after the youth rally at one of the public parks, roughly 60 of us pilgrims were waiting at a bus stop for transportation. These pilgrims were from many different nations, but the bonding and friendships that took form during those 40 minutes waiting for the bus and those 15 minutes going back to the school were truly amazing. When the bus came, we all crammed ourselves on being that it was the last one for the night. Once on the bus, a group of girls began to sing Christian songs, and before you knew it the entire bus was singing. The bus was filled with people from all different cultures, languages, and economical classes and yet they were all connected by their faith and by their love of God. Watching an old brother from the Philippines, and a young female from the US singing together, both with a massive smile was a truly remarkable sight to see.

World Youth Day was a great experience and I would recommend it to anyone; not everyone can say that they had mass with the pope or that they went on a 7km trek with a couple hundred thousand others. The memories that you come back with are incredible. Being able to experience your faith with a person from almost every nation is a wonderful feeling that cannot be surpassed. As baha'u'llah stated, "So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." During WYD, the light of the united Catholic Church spread across the world and lit the hearts of many on fire. The theme of WYD ('You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.' Acts 1:8) has been reached for the hearts of many are on fire for the good of all.

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