



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Australian Catholic Youth Festival to be held in Iconic Sydney Venues

**Media Release
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The Australian Catholic Youth Festival organisers today announced preparations are well underway for the event that will draw 15,000 young people to Sydney from 7-9 December this year, and revealed some of the event details that will appeal to participants Australia wide.

The Festival will be held in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct using the Sydney Showground and Qudos Bank Arena venues and will culminate with a closing Mass on Saturday, 9 December at the Domain, not far from St Mary's Cathedral and adjacent to the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney.

The three-day Festival is a youthful and energetic celebration hosted by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in partnership with the Archdiocese of Sydney. It will feature international and national presenters and performers who will be announced in the coming weeks.

Many would be familiar with Sydney Showgrounds as the venue for the Royal Easter Show attracting 850,000 attendees and showcasing agricultural industries and Australian culture.

Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney Olympic Park is ranked in the top 10 arenas worldwide, has hosted sporting events, world class concerts and many high profile performers.

Festival organisers, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, have made arrangements with The Royal Botanic Gardens and Domain Trust to secure the harbour-side venue. The Domain is renowned for hosting iconic Sydney events such as Carols in the Domain, Symphony in The Domain and Tropfest, and will become the location for a Eucharistic celebration for tens of thousands of people in the heart of the city of Sydney. The Mass in the Domain will be an open event for families and others to join in and a highlight to the closing of the Festival.

Organisers from dioceses around Australia are invited to attend a National Briefing Day on Friday 28 April and again on 13 October in Sydney to collaborate in bringing young people from city and rural communities across the country. Registrations will be opening shortly.

The Festival exists to provide young people with opportunities to deepen their relationship with Jesus, celebrate their faith and encounter the vitality of the Church in Australia. The Festival will mark the beginning of the Year of Youth in 2018 proclaimed by the Bishops of Australia to celebrate ten years since World Youth Day was hosted in Sydney.

The theme of the Festival is: *'Open New Horizons for Spreading Joy: Young People, Faith and Vocational Discernment'*.

The Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney and Australian Catholic Bishops Delegate for Youth is looking forward to welcoming young people from every Catholic Diocese across the country.

"Who could forget the energy and the buzz when we welcomed tens of thousands of young people to our city for World Youth Day in 2008? Now, nearly a decade later, young people from across the country will join Church leaders to celebrate and pray for the young Church of Australia," Archbishop Fisher said.

For more information about the Festival, see www.acyf.org.au.

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