



WORLD YOUTH DAY (SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA)- 2008,

ALOYSIUS MAINA (F3&) STRATH MEDIA



Brian Waweru (F3&) marches with the Kenyan Flag as John Munene (F3&) looks on.

it is noteworthy to mention that Strathmoreans can now add an international classic in the form of "Receive the Power" by **Guy Sebastian and Paolini** in their list of memorable songs. The only reason this is possible in the cautious, contained and docile Strathmorean is that 8 secondary students and 1 teacher (**Mr Robert Odera**) travelled to Sydney, Australia for the 23rd World Youth Day.

The journey began on the 12th of July, after a sleep-over at Hodari Boys Club (Nobody actually slept; the excitement) 5hrs later, the Kenyan entourage touched down in Mumbai, India where they met Strathmore oldie, **Kevin De Souza**. Graciously, 'Kd' as he is fondly known, took over leadership of the group. Two of his friends, **Bharat Panicker and Sam Fernandes** (who joined us in Sydney) accompanied us. They all hail from Gulmohur, Hodari's Indian equivalent, where **Mr. De Souza** is director.

Charles Burfitt, our Australian guide, met us at the airport, along with compatriots from **Nairana** (Hodari's more posh Australian equivalent) From here, we were driven through immaculate lawns and prosperous suburbs to **Redfield College**, where we were to stay. After a brief introduction, it was on to Nairana to our first Aussie barbie (barbecue, that is).

Peter Wamburu (F3&) took on a new attitude to food.

We played at street soccer with Filipinos and Australians.

City Rail travel was free for WYD pilgrims. The Sydney Opera House, which was on the itinerary, stood brilliant in the sun, as impressive as its pictures. **Daniel Kimani (F3A)** was mesmerized by its colour scheme. Soon, however, it was time to shove off to Barangaroo, the vast site for many of the WYD gatherings. **John Munene** found himself in many photos. The Opening Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Pell, Archbishop of Sydney.

Catechesis at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School was a great opportunity to debate on issues of faith with youth from all over the world like Spaniards, Filipinos, Uruguayans and Singaporeans. **Orlale and Wamburu** got to boast of their rugby achievements. The best part was the **Bishop's Talk**. Over the next three days, 3 different Bishops came to explain the Magisterium of the Catholic Church concerning the Holy Spirit. That day, Kenyans came together to play soccer versus Australians (5-0) and Spaniards, where we lost honourably (2-1)

The Day of Days. He's wearing white vestments with a red 'top'. He seems well-rested, venerable and happy. He's young again! Our Holy Father arrived by ship across the harbour (Captain Cook Cruises), landing at Barangaroo. Amid wild hoops of joyous welcome, he entered his pope mobile, barely 5 metres from the Gulmohur group. The Pope has serious, penetrating eyes, impressing upon one his determination. We did not have Mass, but we had a service and a homily. Our Holy Father exhorted us to preserve the beauty of God's creation in ourselves and in the world

After Catechesis, the Kenya-India group made its way to Barangaroo to attend the Stations of the Cross. It was enacted in a most solemn, universal yet Australian way, with only 13 Stations. At Barangaroo, we witnessed the meeting of Jesus with the women of Jerusalem and His crucifixion and Death. Everyone shivered in cold and sorrow. During the concerts that followed, however, everyone warmed up again (plenty of motion, *ask Cauri*).



Hodari Equivalent, Nairana.

We walked across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which is COLOSSAL! We chewed the fat about 9 km. Glorious fun! Along the way, they made new friends and met old ones from Kenya (*including Kianda girls*) **Randwick Racecourse**; the vigil site was a humongous stadium. Nevertheless, it took a while before we found a place to lay our heads (Pilgrims frequented the path by our heads, quite close to the restrooms) That night, the Vigil ceremony, an intensely involving event was conducted. It aimed at invoking the Holy Spirit. The Pontiff explained that it is God who leads us to be witnesses, not our own effort. We also had Benediction and Adoration with the Bishop of Rome. With him leading us, the radiance of the Holy Eucharist was even more brilliant! Randwick became a 'starlit' field, with all the candles that were lit by the thousands of Christians gathered. This didn't drive away the cold for those of us who tried to sleep.



Kevin D'Souza (KD)



3hrs later...or less, the actual World Youth Day was feted. Having evaded a near-crisis(the restrooms had been declared out of order) everyone waited expectantly for the Final Mass. The Successor of St Peter arrived by helicopter, from which he entered his pope mobile. He was driven through the stadium to great acclaim. Cardinal Pell gave interesting introductory remarks and thanked the pilgrims after. The Final Mass was spectacular, musically and ceremonially! Communion required 4000 priests! When the Bishop of Rome left, hefting a hearty farewell, tout de monde was left with a heightened sense of peace and enlightenment. No one could wait to go out and be witnesses.

We parted with Kd in Mumbai and returned content

Of course, we cannot leave out the 'social' aspect of the World Youth Day. Half of the 400,000 pilgrims who congregated in Sydney now know Kenya well, thanks to the charismatic efforts of **Brian Waweru, John Munene, Steve Cauri, Biko Orlale, Peter Wamburu, James Ndege and Daniel Kimani**. Several live gospel-rock concerts were attended, the record being 3 in one night.

For more information on WYD, go to www.xt3.com.

P.S. St. Mary's Cathedral is a magnificent, no, CELESTIAL cathedral. It houses not only Our Lord, but also the whole body of **St. Pier Giorgio Frassati** and a memorial of **St. Mary McKillop (Australia's very own saint)**.



From left: Peter Wamburu, Biko Orlale, Steve Cauri, Briam Waweru, Daniel Kimanzi and James Ndege

Part of The Team