

AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL



SANDHURST PILGRIMAGE

MELBOURNE 2025

29 NOVEMBER – 3 DECEMBER

INFORMATION FOR PARISHES

EDITION #ONE

18 JUNE 2025

IN PARTNERSHIP



**SANDHURST
PARISHES
&
SCHOOLS**



WHAT?

Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) is a national gathering of Catholic young people. The three-day Festival provides young people from across Australia with the opportunity to come together to connect, deepen their relationship with Jesus, be empowered to live their faith in the world and experience the breadth of the Church in Australia.

The Festival will bring together thousands of young people (Year 9 – 25 years of age) from across Australia and will include opportunities for engagement with other young people, school and youth groups, bishops, priests, musicians and speakers.

Each day will include the opportunity to engage in a wide range of activities including prayer, Mass, workshops, talks, live concerts, games, justice activities and an interactive expo.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne will host ACYF at the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre (MCEC) from November 30 to December 2, 2025.

Bishop Shane Mackinlay is leading the Sandhurst pilgrimage to ACYF from November 29 to December 3.

The pilgrimage is being coordinated by Claire Spinelli (Sandhurst Youth Ministry Team Leader) and the Sandhurst Youth Ministry Team at the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst (CDOS), in partnership with priests, parishes, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd Office (CESL) and schools. Harvest Journeys will provide travel and logistical services to support the pilgrimage.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”

Matthew 28:19

The ACYF Pilgrimage experience is part of the Diocesan strategy to lead our young people to an encounter with Jesus and on a journey to missionary discipleship.

CDOS is committed to supporting our young people on this journey with formation and accompaniment, through intentional and well-planned preparation and follow up to ACYF.

ACYF provides an opportunity for students, teachers and young adults to meet and connect with one another, see that they are not alone on their journey, and that they not only belong within the Sandhurst faith community but also the much larger Catholic community of believers and followers of Jesus across Australia.



PROGRAM

SAT NOV 29

TRAVEL

from Sandhurst to
Queens College, Melbourne

GATHER AND CONNECT
as a Sandhurst Community

DINNER

SUN NOV 30

BREAKFAST

MASS

PILGRIMAGE WALK:

St Patrick's Cathedral through
the streets of the city to the
MCEC

OPENING CONCERT

live music, food and activities
and prayer experiences

MON & TUES

DEC 1 & 2

BREAKFAST

TRAVEL TO MCEC

**MAIN STAGE PLENARY
GATHERING**

keynote speakers, live music,
prayer & connection.

CHOICE

workshops, prayer spaces,
performances, forums, Mass.
Reconciliation, social justice
activities & expo.

**MAIN STAGE PLENARY
GATHERING (Mon)**

**FINAL GATHERING AND
COMMISSIONING MASS**
(Tues)

FINALE CONCERT

WED DEC 3

BREAKFAST

FAREWELL

TRAVEL

back home to Sandhurst



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL

Year 9 –
25 years
plus leaders

FR ROB
GALEA

SR MARY
GRACE SV

KATIE
PREJEAN
MCGRADY

• MELBOURNE, VICTORIA • 30 NOVEMBER – 2 DECEMBER 2025 •

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WHO?

The Sandhurst delegation will include Year 10 and 11 (16/17-year-old) students from Catholic secondary schools and F-12 colleges in our diocese as well students who may not attend a Catholic School but have connected with a Parish.

Adult pilgrims will include young adults (under 25), teachers as well as priests, Diocesan youth ministry leaders, and the guardians of young people under the age of 18, who are not attending with a school group.

HOW?

With the support of priests and parish administrators, parish-based pilgrims will communicate their interest in attending ACYF as individuals or groups to the Youth Ministry Team Leader, Claire Spinelli.

Year 10 and 11 students from parishes (not enrolled in a Catholic school) must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

With the support of the Sandhurst Youth Ministry Team, parish-based pilgrims and leaders will be responsible for their own registration through Harvest Journeys' Booking and Event Management System. Parents or guardians of pilgrims who are under 18 years old are required to register their child.

Groups of young adults from parishes may opt to register as a group under the leadership of a youth minister, priest or youth group leader.

Travel

Coaches will travel from central hubs in [Wangaratta, Shepparton and Bendigo](#) to the accommodation in Melbourne and return. Pilgrims will be responsible for getting to the hub. Schools who are further away from hubs may arrange shared transport for their students from the school to the central hubs and return to school.

Departure: Saturday, November 29

Return: Wednesday, December 3

Times and pick up/drop off points to be confirmed in a future edition of this publication.

Accommodation

All pilgrims will be housed at [Queens College University Residence](#) situated in Parkville, Melbourne. This prestigious College boasts impressive grounds and excellent dining and meeting facilities. Each pilgrim will be allocated their own private room, and our pilgrimage party will have access to multiple wings to allow for the safe housing of all our pilgrims in one location. Breakfast will be provided at the College each morning.



Cost

The cost is **\$1450/person**. This includes:

- ✓ Return deluxe coach travel from Bendigo, Shepparton or Wangaratta
- ✓ Accommodation for 4 Nights
- ✓ Breakfast daily (at accommodation)
- ✓ ACYF Melbourne Registration
- ✓ Sandhurst ACYF T-shirt
- ✓ Dinner on Saturday November 29 (at accommodation)
- ✓ Lunch on Sunday November 30 (at accommodation TBC)

This does **not** include:

- × Lunch and Dinner at Festival Sunday November 30 – Tuesday December 2

Subsidy

Affordability should not be a factor to determine whether a young person is able to attend the Sandhurst ACYF Pilgrimage. Should potential pilgrims need more financial support than is offered by the available subsidies, contact the Youth Ministry Team Leader at CDOS.

The table below outlines the subsidies available for **pilgrims not enrolled or employed in a Catholic School**.

	CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF SANDHURST	SUGGESTED PARISH SUBSIDY	SUGGESTED PILGRIM OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSE
Year 10/11 student or Young Adult (under 25)	\$750	\$250	\$450 + Meal Expenses
Parent of student not enrolled in a Catholic School	\$250	\$250	\$950 + Meal Expenses

Parishes are encouraged to support pilgrim led fundraising activities to generate further funding. This will give pilgrims a sense of ownership and be a valuable opportunity for formation and building a sense of community.

Payment

CDOS (through the Chancery) will invoice either parishes or individual pilgrims, dependant on the circumstances for the balance of funds less the Diocesan subsidy.

Per year 10/11 student or young adult (under 25)	\$700
Per Parent of student not enrolled in a Catholic School	\$950

It is crucial that parishes maintain communication with the Youth Ministry Team with regards to who their pilgrims are and how they will be invoiced.

FORMATION

An ACYF formation team has been established to support the planning and development of resources and formation opportunities to support the pathway to, and the journey beyond ACYF. This will include formation for both adult leaders and young pilgrims and involve both online and in-person gatherings, resources for schools and individual pilgrims and will be designed around a variety of purposes e.g., Community and Belonging, Faith Journey, Safeguarding, Preparation for the Pilgrimage Experience, Follow up to the Pilgrimage Experience. Formation co-ordinated by the Diocese is likely to begin in August, but locally led formation of pilgrims can start now. More information regarding formation opportunities will follow in a later edition of this publication.

SAFEGUARDING

CDOS, CESL and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne are committed to ensuring the safety of all participants in the lead-up to ACYF, at the event and all subsequent events. We will work consultatively and in partnership to support best practice in the identification and mitigation of risks for pilgrims of all ages.

Safety is everyone’s responsibility. All pilgrims, leaders and guardians are co-responsible for safety at ACYF.

All adult pilgrims and leaders are required to hold a current Working with Children Check and undergo training as part of their formation for the pilgrimage. Safeguarding matters and behaviour expectations will form part of the pilgrimage preparation and formation for ALL PILGRIMS.

WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

Pray

The Festival hosts, Diocesan co-ordinators and teams need your prayer as do the potential pilgrims, their teachers and their families as they discern their involvement in the pilgrimage experience. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will accompany us on the journey. Encourage your communities to pray for the pilgrimage.

Plan

- Consult your finance team about budget and how you are best able to support your young people to participate in the pilgrimage.
- Think about fundraising opportunities in your parish community.
- Nominate someone to co-ordinate the pilgrimage within your parish. Ensure that Claire Spinelli (details on rear cover) has their name and contact details.
- Develop an internal discernment process for selecting/inviting young people to join the pilgrimage.

Promote

Get the word out and get your parish community excited about ACYF. Promotional resources such as posters, flyers and newsletter banners will be available soon on the CDOS website. The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne have released a promo video that you are welcome to share with your parish communities to create interest. Ensure that that viewers are aware of the Sandhurst Pilgrimage so that they do not register themselves directly through ACYF.

[An invitation to the 2025 Australian Catholic Youth Festival](#)

Invite

Speak to your young people and encourage them to join the Sandhurst Pilgrimage to ACYF.

Contact

If you have not yet done so, email Claire Spinelli to let her know who the best contact is within your school. Otherwise, keep in touch with Claire and let her know how you are going, if you have any questions or if you want to suggest any way that the Youth Ministry Team can support you or young people on the journey to ACYF.

WHAT CAN WE LOOK FORWARD TO?

Resources

Resources to support promotion, registration, safeguarding and more will be released over the coming weeks and will be available on the CDOS website.

Registration

Details of how pilgrims can register will be communicated, and the bespoke Sandhurst booking portal will open **early in July**. Watch out for *ACYF Sandhurst Pilgrimage Information for Parishes Edition #2*.

The registration deadline will be in **late August/Early September**. These dates are still being finalised with our travel provider, Harvest Journeys.

Formation

Keep an eye out for key dates and resources to support the formation of our pilgrims and be open to supporting formational opportunities by hosting an event or gathering in your parish community and supporting young people in their formation.

Diocesan organised formation in the lead up to ACYF will take place **from August through to November**.

Invoices

The Sandhurst Youth Ministry Team will be in touch to discuss details regarding who your pilgrims are, the structures you have as a parish to support them and how best to go about invoicing.

You should receive invoices in **September**.

ENQUIRIES

SANDHURST YOUTH MINISTRY

CLAIRE SPINELLI

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