

# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC YOUTH FESTIVAL



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

Monday 01 December 2025

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **“Created for Love”: Day Two of ACYF unites pilgrims in truth, testimony and radical hope**

After a launch that delivered a resounding message of welcome and belonging, the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (ACYF) opened on Monday, 1 December, with an invitation for pilgrims to discover the deeper purpose of their life: that they were created by love and for love.

Recently appointed Bunbury Bishop, George Kolodziej SDS—who jokingly referred to himself as a ‘baby bishop’ who was still learning the ropes—opened the morning with a warm encouragement.

“Jesus is your friend. He loves you as you are,” Bishop George said. “Actually, he is in love with you. He delights in you.”

“God doesn’t ask you to be perfect. He asks you to trust him with your heart, your gifts, your story—even the messy parts.”

One of the Festival’s most highly anticipated international guests—though originally hailing from Sydney—was Sr Mary Grace SV, who arrived in Melbourne with a group of fellow Sisters of Life and took to the stage to thunderous applause.

She shared her own story of how she moved from aspiring to become an Olympic athlete to becoming a religious sister, realising no finite thing could fulfil the infinite and unending love she was made for.

She recalled a particular moment of prayer while driving over Sydney Harbour Bridge.

“I said: ‘God, I want to do something great with my life.’ And the answer that came into my heart wasn’t ‘Olympic gold’—it was, ‘What about becoming a great saint?’”.

That answer began a revolution in her heart. ‘The world felt like a stage I was expected to perform upon,’ she said. ‘I thought life was blessed as long as you kept God impressed ... [But] life is not a field he is waiting for you to compete in. It’s a pilgrimage he is walking beside you on.’

She reminded the audience that God is not waiting for perfection—only for our presence.

‘God asks one thing of you: to be yourself, and to take the step only you can take ... God is not asking you to figure out your future. You don’t need a vision or a 12-year plan. He is asking you to follow his Son.’

The overarching theme, “Created for Love,” was threaded throughout the day’s workshops, which included topics on learning how to pray, mental health and spirituality, cultivating authentic relationships, using technology and creativity for evangelisation, leadership in faith, truth in the modern age, the mystery of suffering, and many more.

The Justice Activity Centre provided an especially hands-on experience of faith. Young pilgrims not only learned about Catholic Social Teaching but also participated in advocacy experiences and wrote letters to people in detention.

Today also saw the official opening of Mercy Park, where a steady stream of pilgrims received the sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the day.

## **ENDS**

Photos from Day 2 can be accessed by [Clicking Here](#).  
Please credit as follows: *"Photo: ACYF/Archdiocese of Melbourne"*

### **ACYF 2025 Media Enquiries**

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