



PO Box 411  
Aireys Inlet Vic. 3231.  
Phone: (03) 5289 6607  
Fax: (03) 5289 6352

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There seems to have been a negative attitude to the Knights of the Southern Cross in recent years, even amongst many nominal members. The Order was established in another age and to meet particular problems which no longer exist. But the Knights have a very positive role to play in meeting the problems of the present time. Those who still see the Order as striving to find its identity and who think that it does not have much relevance at present would be surprised at the Reports given by various States at the National Executive meetings. There is a great deal being done by the smaller number of men willing to be active in fostering the Christian Way of Life throughout our nation.

Most recently the Knights have been involved in the World Youth Day celebrations – and what celebrations they were! World Youth Day pilgrims virtually took over Sydney and made a wonderful impression. There was no sign of the abuse of alcohol, drugs or violence. The many police about seemed to spend a lot of their time being photographed with the visitors. There was a spirit of good will evident in the way strangers spoke to each other and helped each other. Visits of pilgrims to other Dioceses before or after the Sydney celebrations gave the same Christian witness.

It will take a while to judge the lasting effect of World Youth Day in Australia. However Sydney gave us signs of great hope. If the peer-group pressure that influences so many of us can be such that it urges us to be better people rather than worse, how good will this be for the future of Australia. World Youth Day gave us all a picture of what things could be like all of the time. Let the Knights of the Southern Cross, who were a part of this celebration, “receive the power to be a light unto the world”.

Bishop Ronald A Mulkearns.  
National Chaplain.