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Brother James
Pilgrimage of Hope
Christ Church Grammar School
Claremont WA 6010

Dear Brother James,

You asked for a brief description of our experiences on the recent Pilgrimage of Hope to Alice Springs for the benefit of those who are considering participating in 2012.

The pilgrimage was meaningful and worthwhile in many ways and on many different levels.

- Along with the other men and boys, we spent 12 days together without other family members: we worked together at Yipirina school, ate meals together, travelled together and slept with our swags next to each other at the school and in the desert.
- There were no distractions: no mobiles or computers, no texts or games. The pace of our lives slowed down and the focus of our activities became one of service to others rather than self-absorption in our normal activities.
- Together, we learned about the culture of the aboriginal school children and their parents: we experienced the joy of working with these beautiful children and their teachers; we visited sacred sites and learned of the rituals and ceremonies which take place there; we saw and came to understand the very challenging circumstances in which many of the children live.
- We visited Uluru and Kings Canyon and experienced the beauty and serenity of the red centre.
- With some gentle guidance, we explored our relationship together and some of the other important relationships in our lives. As we did this, we developed more confidence to describe and articulate the importance and strength of the relationship we share.

- We made many new friends amongst the other pilgrims and shared many wonderful experiences together.

At the end of the pilgrimage, our enduring memories are of new experiences and insights and of the strengthened relationship which we now share. This was a unique opportunity, which we will always cherish.

With warm wishes,



John Akehurst



Matt Akehurst