

# Martin: the Solomons' Star

By CAROL LABBAD

Our very own Martin Patokale was the luckiest man in Sydney during World Youth Day celebrations. Martin was part of a select group chosen to accompany Pope Benedict XVI on a 45 minute cruise along Sydney's Harbour for his official World Youth Day welcome. Martin miraculously managed to get prime position with the Holy Father during the cruise and he also managed to fly the flag of the Solomon Islands on the ship's deck for all to see. Martin stood for about 15 minutes with the Holy Father talking about everything from every day life to faith and religion. He even asked the Pope if he will come to visit the Solomon Islands, and the Holy Father replied that he may visit the Solomon Islands during a trip that will include PNG, Fiji etc...



In Martin's words, "the Pope was so lovely to speak to, he was very modest and was just like you and me".

Although World Youth Day has come to an end and over 400 Solomon Island pilgrims have returned home, Martin will never forget the very special time he shared with the Pope and says "it is a memory I will cherish in my heart forever".

Martin is from Honiara's Holy Cross parish and is a teacher at Bishop Epalle Catholic School, Rove. Well done Martin on representing the Solomon Islands for all the world to see!