



# KNIGHTS OF ST COLUMBA

8<sup>th</sup> August '16

Dear Bro Youth Officers in Province 12,

Attached is a report I requested from Topkia and Chidong Dawam (Twins of Bro Benedict Dawam Council 631 Strood) who attended the Young People's Seminar in Leeds in July this year. It's a very good report in my opinion and I feel it is important to bring the report to your attention. The twins have given their permission for the report to be used in any KSC publication to promote the Seminar, especially Columba magazine. I have permission from our Provincial Grand Knight Bro Michael Akinrele to copy the report to Council Youth Officers in Province 12 hoping to encourage more participants at next year's Seminar. Many thanks and God's blessings.

Bro Ken Martenstyn  
Immediate Past GK  
Council 631 Strood  
DPGK & Minute Secretary – Province 12

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### **'...And You Did It to Me.'**

#### **KSC Young People's Seminar 2016 Tokpia Dawam & Chidong Dawam**

My brother and I attended the Knights of St Columba Young People's Seminar from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July which was held at Leeds Trinity University in Horsforth, Leeds. The programme consisted of multiple talks given by significant people of the Catholic faith and a chance to become more in touch with our faith as well as socialise with other attendees.

Our first talk was with Tony Britten which was on 'The Quality of Mercy is not strained' which was also from a line in the play The Merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare. He said that mercy has to be given freely and that you can't force somebody else to be merciful. He reminded us of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy which lead us to have a discussion of whether we have to comply with all of the works of mercy in able to be a good catholic. The group and I were confused with some of the seven spiritual works of mercy such as 'admonish sinners' and 'forgive offenses' as they conflict with each other.

The next day Fr Adrian Tomlinson did his talk on 'Mercy, take, receive and live'. He is very a funny and likeable man. He talked about how he converted from Anglicanism to Catholicism and how his parents disowned him for a short period of time due to his decision. He was amazed by how much he identified with Catholicism compared to his previous faith he grew up with. Fortunately, his parents did support him in the end but preferred to stay out of the limelight in social situations - which we laughed about. This reminded me if the faith has a significant impact to you, you would do what feels right and no one should interfere with that. Fr Adrian then talked about what is considered a sin or not for confession. This was interesting information to hear as I have never been to confession in a very long time. He also mentioned that he had heard of every sin out there but has never heard someone confess terrorism.

Later that day, we listened to Sister Jo Threlfall's talk on 'God shows Mercy to all people through the bible' and she showed us a picture 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' which is one of Rembrandt's famous paintings. The painting shows a son returning to his father's welcoming, symbolizing God's love and forgiveness in humanity's sinful behaviours will be eternal. Soon after we sang 'I Knew You Would Come Home' written by Tom McGuinness which is about those who are longing for a close one to return from war or conflict.

The next day we had a talk from Fr Christopher McBride, whose talk was on 'If the Kingdom of God is to grow in our lives, and those around us, we need to understand and practice the works of Mercy. How do the works of Mercy as practiced by St Francis, and the way he lived his life, apply to the present day?'. We then had Mass and in the homily, he discussed how he became a Friar; leaving a job to have a more interesting one as he was not happy. He decided to do voluntarily work in developing countries and then went to America where he met the Friars and adored how connected they were with their faith.

Later that day, one of the sisters talked about the issues with refugees and how the media skews information to perceive it as a negative outcome. Most refugees come from conflict areas such as; Syria, Eritrea, Sudan, and South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and more, come to Britain for a better quality of life and of those refugees, 51% are children who are less than 16 years old. The charity CAFOD helps refugees and poor communities from all over the world to bring hope as well as end poverty and injustice, no matter what their religion was.

She brought one of the Lampedusa Crosses made out of the wreckage of the boat in October 2013 by the Lampedusa coast and drowned 311 Eritrean and Somali refugees who were travelling from Libya to Europe - only 155 lives were saved. A carpenter from the island made the cross which symbolizes hope and the survivor's rescue. To remember the refugees who are no longer with us and the current refugees we kindly written our own message of hope which will be sent by CAFOD to the refugees.

On the last day we received a talk from Imogen Johnson and Phil Atkinson on 'the journey of hope and recovery from prison release to resettlement'. They were from the St John's

Ministry of Justice Approved Premises and helped people who had come out of prison to live a stable life as it is vital for recovery.

Unfortunately my brother and I had to leave due to transport back home, but overall I had a great time here. I was fascinated by the other young attendees like me who attended the seminar and how aware they were about their Catholic religion. They embraced their faith and were very intellectual about it therefore It was so refreshing to gain more knowledge and be closer to God

Topkia & Chidong Dawam  
Age 19