

Gartmore House National

Youth Event

Not to be missed

On the 14th to 15th November this year, the annual national youth event took place at Gartmore House. The weekend celebrated our faith in prayer and fun activities. It is one of the many opportunities offered to young Catholics in Scotland.

The focus of the weekend was 'Blessed are the poor in spirit', one of the beatitudes. Pope Francis has asked young people to focus on the beatitudes in preparation for WYD 2016 in Krakow – the theme of which will be 'Blessed are the pure in heart'

However the weekend was not 'poor in spirit' in the dull sense. After a lively bus journey with tasteful music we arrived at Gartmore House. During our welcome address we were given out sheets detailing poverty in Scotland. Did you know that Clarkston is a town that has one of the highest life expectancies in Scotland ? This was a real eye



opener to just how fortunate we are. We played the favourite games of youth events 'Icebreakers' in order to get to know one another.

Then, a lovely dinner was served. It was great food in the company of great people and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all. After dinner there was a break and then there was night prayer with lots of lively gospel music. Then we had a ceilidh which was a great opportunity to meet people of our age and faith and talk to them. We made new friends and renewed old ones. Then we all went to our rooms and enjoyed a good night's sleep.

In the morning there was a hearty breakfast of eggs,bacon, beans and cereal. It was fantastic and really set us up for the day. We had a challenge right after breakfast. We were split up into teams and we had to build a tower that was the exact copy of another one which was outside the room. One person had to go and memorise bits of it and then tell the rest of the team what it was like. Then we had a challenge to build the highest tower. It taught us some valuable things about working together and being a good loser. Then there were three workshops.

The first was about poverty in the world today. It was very interesting. It was led by John Dornan who has written books on poverty and works for Mission Matters.

The second was led by the Sister of Charity and they told us about Mother Theresa. It was interesting to hear of their life in a convent and they looked so happy. These nuns lived so simply and being nuns, they

owned nothing of their own and instead went to their community for anything they needed and contributed their skills in return. It would be good if we all lived a little more like them.



The final was led by the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul. The lady told us about poverty in Scotland and how we can help the poor by prayer and practical help. We were asked to imagine different situations in life and reflect upon them.

The day completed in mass which was very prayerful and lively with the great music. After that went home to our families and brought some of the joy and love of the gospel which we had received at the retreat back to them.



This account does not do the retreat justice and I would encourage everyone to go. Look out on your diocese's youth ministry site for details around this time next year.