

“Searchlight has been the best experience of Jesus in my life. I feel so happy that I was able to experience the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and in Confession. At first my intention of attending this event was to search for Jesus. But the sermon by Fr. Sebastian really changed my intention. He spoke about 'being found' and he told the story of him and his brother playing 'hide and seek'. From that day onward, I stopped searching for Jesus and made myself more open. Confession helped remove all that was blocking me and Jesus. And now I feel so close to him like never before. He has set me on fire!” – Conroy Pereira, 24



To find out more about Take A Stand, or to keep up with what's happening next.....
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“Walsingham was such an amazing experience! It has made me think so much about me and my relationship with Jesus. Over the past few months, I felt really away from him and had managed to create a distance between us, but now I feel closer to him than ever! For me, the highlight was the Reconciliation Service; never did I think I could possibly make myself so vulnerable and open to Jesus, and ask forgiveness. I feel truly blessed and happy that I went on this wonderful pilgrimage. Made so many new friends and developed a greater love for God and my Church!” - Denza Gonsalves, 21



“Ok, like everyone, the Healing Service was very powerful for me. My favourite part of the festival was when I walked the Holy Mile & made lots of new friends! The talks I also found very good; I think that now I have seen so many young Catholics, I want to be a more faithful Catholic!” – Clement DeMenezes, 16



Summer 2012

TAKE A STAND



If you look closely at the picture above, you will spot a remarkable thing. Not the sunrise (although that is undoubtedly beautiful), but a pillar of light coming from the large tent. If you had been in Walsingham, Norfolk, on the bank holiday weekend, you would have seen hundreds of young people around, passionate about their faith & about Jesus in the Eucharist. The light you can see comes from the "burning bush", a tiered wooden structure with candles all around, built as a throne for the Blessed Sacrament, so the young people can gather round and worship Jesus in a very intimate and powerful way.

Take A Stand travelled to Walsingham for the annual Youth 2000 prayer festival, with many different expectations and hopes, but what we discovered was a real renewal in our own faith & individual personal encounters with Jesus. "Searchlight @ Walsingham – The Lost are Found" was the name of this year's festival, and so many of us experienced the beauty of allowing Jesus to search for us and find us, as we can all be "lost" in some way.

The weekend was packed full of talks with inspiring speakers, such as Fr. Sam Medley, a SOLT community member and dynamic speaker, Frankie Mulgrew, an ex-comedian, now a deacon, fresh from the chaplaincy team at the Olympic Park, and Fr. Sebastian, a Franciscan Friar of the Renewal. Also there were many workshops to choose from, on topics such as evangelisation, life, community, vocation & YouCat. Each day, we had Mass, praise & worship, the Rosary.....basics! Main events that happened each evening included a beautiful Eucharistic Healing Service, Reconciliation Service & testimonies. After each main session, we headed to the dining tent for open-mic, hot drinks, games, and Jewish dancing on the final night!

At the centre of everything, though, was Adoration. The Blessed Sacrament was exposed on the "burning bush" 24/7, and there was never a shortage of young people in the main tent adoring Jesus! It was a beautiful sight, each night, as we would finish with singing, all gathered round Jesus, and it was almost like we were frozen in time, for a moment, everyone gazing at Him with love, no one wanting to break that stillness & intimacy, for at least a few minutes. One night, a few of us decided to sign up for the 3-4am adoration slot, for a "power hour". (As you can imagine, 3am is one of the hardest slots to fill, as it's right in the middle of the night.) It turned out to be an incredibly POWERFUL experience! Here's my facebook status update from 4:20am that night: "*Just had an incredible experience with about 20 other young people, most aged 16 or 17, who chose to sacrifice sleep and come pray & worship in adoration from 3-4am, or the "power hour", as we call it! I was really touched seeing these teens pouring their hearts out in prayer to God at that time of the morning - 3am has a new meaning for me, I think!*" We sang, we prayed, we interceded. And it was 4:15am before we knew it! – Maria Byrne