

A Month with YCW

Richard Joy writes about his pastoral placement with the YCW

During Advent last year, I was told by Fr Michael Kujacz, Rector of the Royal English College in Valladolid, Spain, where I'm undergoing priestly formation for the Diocese of Leeds, that my pastoral placement planned for January would be with the YCW in London. This was the first time I've heard of the YCW and due to my lack of knowledge I didn't have a clue what my placement would turn out like. You could say I was a little bit nervous but also keen to get stuck in and start. Having the chance to live and work in London seemed to me an opportunity not to be missed.



My placement lasted only four weeks, so I had to hit the ground running to allow myself to get the most from my time living and working with the national YCW team in the capital. I truly believe that when you hang out with enthusiastic and non-cynical 'can-do, think-outside-the-box' people your life can be inspired and change for the better. This is something that I experienced from my work with the YCW. I did a variety of jobs during the four-week placement, including helping put together some new Impact group resources, but my best memory would be the relationships that I made within the YCW network.

Sara Conway

The national team are sad to tell you that Sara Conway has now left the team to move on to other things. We would like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you, Sara!' for all your hard work, and that we will miss you. We wish you every success in the future and hope that you'll stay in touch with us.

As Sara moves on, we'd like to welcome Mog Harris to the team. Mog is currently our YCW National Secretary, and has been a member of YCW for four years. We look forward to working with Mog and you'll find out a little more about her in the next issue!

What did I learn from my placement? I've managed to learn and also witness how the YCW/Impact model of See, Judge, Act, Review can transform the reality of young people's lives. We can apply this to our concerns and worries, to the big issues such as gangs and violence, as well as the everyday situations and tensions that take place in our lives.

Now that I've returned back to Spain to continue my formation for the priesthood, the challenge for me now is that I need to apply See, Judge, Act, Review in my own journey with God in seminary life.

YCW Resources

We are very pleased to announce that we will shortly be launching our new YCW resource pack. This pack has been jointly produced with Ireland and Malta. It will include the DVD that was filmed by the young adults in Malta.

The pack is a set of themed enquiries to stimulate discussion on issues faced by young adults in today's society. Following YCW's method of See, Judge, Act the young adults will be encouraged to transform their lives and the lives of other young people on these issues.

Visit from Rome

During March the YCW and Impact in England and Wales was visited by Lisa Vaccarino, who is the member of the International Co-ordination of the YCW (ICYCW) for Europe. She stayed with the team at the house in Limehouse and worked with us for a week. During the week it was an opportunity for training and planning, using Lisa's experience of working for ICYCW. Lisa also had the chance to meet some of our young people in the East End of London, when she joined the Limehouse Impact group for their meeting. It was great to see her and we look forward to welcoming her back and introducing her to more of you.

Before returning to Rome Lisa said, "It is very interesting to see how the new team works and the plan for the future. In my work I visit all the national YCW movements in Europe and get the chance to meet many young people. I hope that next time I come back to the UK I will stay for a while longer and meet more of the members of YCW and Impact in England and Wales."

Fr John Marsland

We are very pleased to welcome back to England Fr John Marsland, who has been the International Chaplain to the International Coordination of the YCW for the past 8 years. He has been a big support to the YCW here in England and Wales and we welcome the opportunity to continue working with him now he is back home. In September Fr John will be taking over as the Rector at Ushaw College in Durham. We wish him every success.

New Impact Enquiries

The next set of Impact enquiries will shortly be being sent out to all registered Impact groups. These enquiry sheets will look at the topics of homelessness, inter-race, drugs alcohol and tobacco, leisure time, crime, family and relationships, and the environment.

The YCW

The newsletter of YCW & Impact!

We are the difference!

YCW Leaders' weekend 8th-11th Feb 2008

Twelve young adults came together in Birmingham to look at how they can be the difference in their own lives and the lives of their friends. They explored how YCW's method of See, Judge, Act can be used as a powerful tool to make a difference for other young people.

The weekend provided an opportunity for members of YCW from across the country to meet together, share experiences and plan a way forward. It also allowed members to get to know others and renew old friendships.

The group gathered in the Norfolk hotel in Birmingham, which for those who went on the trip to Malta last September was almost luxury! It began with us looking at what life was like in our local areas, chatting to people who we didn't necessarily know about the things that worry us in our day-to-day lives. We then looked at what life should be like and what it means when Jesus said, "I come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). This set the scene for the rest of the weekend which explored how to put the YCW method into practice.



YCW participants on the Leader Training Weekend

Saturday was spent looking in real detail at See, Judge and Act. We also considered how YCW doesn't see a leader as someone who is powerful and bossing people around, but someone who is actively living life – putting faith into action and living it out.

Members of YCW also helped to welcome the members of Impact who had their Impact day on the Saturday. It was really good to see members of Impact chatting to the members of YCW. At the end of the day the YCW members served the Impact members with 30 extremely large pizzas to help them all on their journey home!

On the Sunday there was opportunity for reflection and looking at how we could move forward. Various members of the group committed to starting new local YCW groups. The future looks very promising for YCW.

The weekend wasn't all work. There was plenty of opportunity for social time in the evenings. The night out on the Saturday turned into an impromptu pool competition in the pub!

From the President's Desk

In March I was lucky enough to take part in the Live It! conference in Manchester celebrating the *Live Simply* Campaign, a national initiative inviting us all to live simply, to live in solidarity with the poor and to live sustainably, caring for the earth and one another.

The key note speech was given by a real hero of mine, the Anglican Archbishop of York, John Sentamu. He reminded us that people like to say "I'd like to ask God why he allows poverty and injustice to continue". The Archbishop challenged us, querying why we are not worried that God may ask us the same question back - why do we allow poverty and injustice to continue? Archbishop John suggested that rather than rush into activity to solve world poverty, we first need to surrender and to stop. We need to stop the constant struggle to have more, to possess things of status and importance and to buy the latest "must have" goods. Instead, we should just surrender to a simpler life, to a life of simplicity and solidarity. If we actually just existed as the human beings God calls us to be, we would quickly realise that little else matters. We would then have no problem being generous to our poor neighbours, or living in solidarity with those who suffer injustice. So in our rush to action, let us recognise the need for simplicity. Let us commit ourselves, as members of YCW and Impact, to live simply, to live in solidarity with the poor and to live a sustainable lifestyle in respect for the world.

Live simply, live in solidarity and live sustainably.

Danny

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YCW
The Difference
is for

Memories from the Leaders' weekend

Francesca from Preston YCW sent us these thoughts:

"The YCW leader's weekend has been exactly the springboard we needed to get the wheels in motion to relaunch the Preston YCW group. After a rather slow false start last September, it was good to be able to run a few things past Father Geoff and other YCW members, to help answer questions, bounce ideas around and also give me the courage to learn from our experience and start again, albeit this time with a different tactic. It is incredibly refreshing, exciting and also comforting to meet other young Christians (not necessarily Catholics) who are 'on the same page'. I know that I can't be the only young person who wants to put Gospel values into action in my everyday life, no matter how small, and to know that I am making a difference to other people. God really does move in mysterious ways and I was amazed to get a call the following day enquiring about the YCW group from someone who had seen one of my posters at the back of church. And so my 'recruitment drive' has begun... I met this guy after church for coffee (no one had ever invited him in before so I have already made a difference there!!), and also spoke at the end of Mass at a different parish just to put the word out. I've made further contact with two people as a result of this and don't intend to stop there! I've already lined up another opportunity to 'promote' our first informal gathering and looking for more! The feedback that I've got just from these couple of encounters has been really, really encouraging, so I can't wait to see where it will take us, so watch this space!!"

Fr Geoff, one of our National Chaplains, also gave us his thoughts:

"I really enjoyed the opportunity along with Danny to do some serious training with our YCW leaders, and potential adult companions/chaplains on the theme of the Review of Life. I really got the sense that we have some good and enthusiastic leaders who will be the basis of a renaissance of the YCW Movement, and I am quite excited for the future. We were all reminded of Cardijn's words: 'Give me a young leader and I will transform the world.' Let us hope that the seeds sown at our National Event will take root, and bear much fruit."

National Impact Day



Members of Impact came together in Birmingham on Saturday 9th February to look at the ways that they can be the difference in their local communities. How could they make things better for their friends and other young people in the area?

The Impact members explored issues affecting young people by sticking their worries on one side of a five-foot cardboard cut-out of a young person (pictured). On the other side they shared some of the things they liked about being a young person. They continued by looking at maps of their own local areas. They picked out places and situations that concern them and then considered what is going on in their friends' lives. By the middle of the afternoon we had built up a picture of what it is like to be a young person in Britain today.

The Impact groups discovered how they are leaders, that is to say how they are young people committed to living an active life, linking their faith to their everyday lives. Before the day finished each group made a pledge as to how they will transform the world around them.

Fr Geoff was "very impressed at the observations, thinking and honesty of our Impact members as they mapped out (quite literally) their reality as young people today. I was equally impressed

by their enthusiasm to seek ways to transform that reality for the positive. Our Impact members were challenged to think of themselves as potential and actual leaders within their peer group, and encouraged to see that they could make a positive difference. Judging by the pledges that each of the Impact groups made, and which were brought to our closing liturgy, the message that they are indeed instruments for real transformation really hit home."

The day was also a great opportunity for members of Impact to come together and meet others from all around the country. It was a chance for the young people to share what their group is doing, meet friends from other groups and make new friends.

Chantelle from Castleton said, "Making the cardboard people was fun as we all put our ideas together to make a person in the image of how youths like us are portrayed, which made us realise that it isn't fair and something needs to be done about it."

Alastair, from Preston, added, "From the day at Birmingham we gained new social skills by working with our group as well as other Impact groups from all over the UK. We got the chance to observe other groups and learn about what they do in their communities, which we were able to take and use in our own."

News from the YCW Team

The YCW Team, living together in East London, continues to be very busy, working to build up the YCW and Impact in London, and across the country. Here are some of our memories from our work over the past few months.

London and the East End

Limehouse: We now have an Impact group in our own parish of Limehouse (where we live). We are working with some fantastic young people who are currently looking at life in their local area. They identified that the cause of some of the bigger problems in the area (such as gangs and young people getting involved in crime) are often caused by there not being enough for young people to do. In true YCW and Impact style they are not just taking their own view that there isn't enough to do. Instead they are surveying other young people by getting in touch with them through their schools and the parish.

Poplar: The YCW group in Poplar is now going strong so in January we held an evening to look at beginning an Impact group in the parish too. It was good to meet the young people and to chat ideas through with the YCW group. They will be there to help and support a new Impact group get started.

Wapping: Members of the team have joined Fr Digby on "walkabouts" round Wapping. On these walkabouts we have been reaching out to the young people of Wapping to try to help them group together in a positive way to make a difference.

Canary Wharf: The team helped the Canary Wharf Catholic Community reach out to young workers on the Wharf. The team were involved in the preparation and planning of the Ash Wednesday Mass, which was celebrated by Bishop Alan Hopes.

Training Workshop: On February 28th Bishop Bernard Longley hosted a workshop for us on "Engaging our young people". We gave parishes practical tools to use with their young people (both teenagers and young adults), in their parishes. Fifty interested adults attended from thirteen parishes across East London.

Other activities: On Thursday 21st February we went to Crewe to talk to a group of 4 parishes who are interested in setting up Impact and YCW. The people in the room were really enthusiastic about bringing this to the young people of their parishes. We are looking forward to the time when the groups start in Crewe.

Dates for your Diary - The YCW Team will be holding training events throughout the country. These are particularly aimed at inviting new people to get involved in Impact and/or YCW. For details contact the YCW office:

Cardiff - Saturday May 10th

Southampton - Saturday May 31st

Preston - Sunday June 8th

Group visits

We have not been staying in London! We have also been off on the road travelling round to meet you in your groups. If we have not been to see you yet, just get in touch and we will arrange a visit.

St Joseph's, Nechells: The team again went up to Birmingham to go and meet the YCW and Impact group in Nechells. It was really good to catch up with the young people we had met before and hear how the groups were going. It was again a pleasure to work with this keen group of young people.

Christ the King, Burnley: On 25th January we went to Burnley to meet the Impact groups at Christ the King. It was fantastic for us to take the groups the new resources, and find out how these very active groups are run by the young people. They are taking responsibility for every aspect of their activities. They are doing some fantastic things in their local community and really making a difference for the lives of young people. We look forward to seeing them again.

St Patrick's, Rochdale: On Sunday 27th January we found ourselves in Rochdale and went to visit one of our newer groups at St Patrick's. The session was led by one of the young people who took the group through a See, Judge, Act on changes in their local area. The group have invited us to come along on their next weekend away to run some training sessions with them, which we are really looking forward to doing.

Croydon Deanery YCW Group: On 27th February a new YCW group started in Croydon, south London. It promises to be a fantastic group and we know that the actions which they get involved in will be for the good of the young people of their area. Good luck to them all.

St Anne's, Rockferry, Birkenhead: On February 29th we met with an inspirational group of teenagers and small group of young adults in Birkenhead to launch a new Impact group and another new YCW group. The teenagers took to the method of See, Judge, Act quicker than most groups. There was something about their readiness to engage with the real challenges and concerns of their study, family, local community and leisure time which demonstrated just how good an Impact group they could become. The young adults are looking forward to starting a separate YCW group for themselves. We look forward to seeing them all again soon.