



WALES - ROMANIA YOUTH EXCHANGE: VISIT TO EWENNY PRIORY 26th JULY



On Sunday 26th July, following a morning workshop on racism and xenophobia, the young adults on the youth exchange visited Eweny Priory near Bridgend. The visit was to include a further workshop on feelings evoked by the theme and expressed in paint. Our afternoon was to provide a closing time of reflection in a sacred space.

"The most atmospheric Romanesque space in Wales" (T J Hughes, Wales's Best One Hundred Churches). Eweny Priory is the most complete and impressive Norman church in South Wales and one of the finest examples of a fortified church building in Europe. It was completed by 1126; in 1141 it became a Priory of the Benedictine Abbey of St Peter, Gloucester.

The nave of the Priory, with its rounded arches and thick pillars, is in use as the parish church. The Pulpitum Screen, dividing the two parts of the church, is the work of Alexander Beleschenko, and was installed in July 2006. The eastern or monastic end contains the tombs of the de Londres family, a medieval altar and a reproduction of the watercolour of the Priory painted by J.P.W. Turner in 1795.

Much of the Priory's outer defensive walls and towers remain. Not only did they protect the Priory, but played a part in the Norman subjection of South Wales. (from the Priory website)

Right: Whilst Dr Evans gave a brief history of the Priory Mrs Evans played host at the refreshment table.



Left: The participants used the whole church to paint their thoughts and feelings.



Left: Lucy's painting says: 'It doesn't matter about the colour. They can all join together.'

Right: Gabriela's painting says: 'Life is a gift from God. In the face of him we are all equal, regardless of race " Speak up - Stop racism"'

One blood: one pain: one hope: one future (Eng)

Același sânge: aceeași durere: aceeași speranță: același viitor (RO)

Yr un gwaed: yr un cur: yr un gobaith: yr un dyfodol (Cym)

words written by Ahmed, a Palestinian refugee, sung by Martin John Nicholls in his album 'Beyond Belief'



The Curate at Ewenny Priory, the freshly ordained Caroline Pascoe, was there to help lead our time of reflection that afternoon. It was Caroline who introduced us to Ahmed's words (above) and the powerful singing of Martin John Nicholls. Each participant of the exchange was given a laminated card as a keepsake with Ahmed's words in English, Romanian and Welsh (see below).

Left: this was not how it as meant to happen but the spontaneity made it even better. Caroline had set up our sacred space with blue and green fabric representing the world, and we were meant to eventually sit around 'the world' and light a candle during the singing of Ahmed's words. Instead, some of the girls had prematurely 'invaded' the space, lit a candle and sat upon the fabric, engaging in prayer. It was a lovely thing to see because of the spontaneity of this 'holy rebellion.'

Below: this is more what was in mind but the earlier 'holy rebellion' only added to the depth of feeling that there was as we sat around, lit candles, listen to the words of the song spoken in our own language and held hands.



**One blood : one pain:
one hope! one future . . .**

**Același sânge: aceeași durere:
aceeași speranță: același viitor . . .**

**Un gwaed: un cur:
un gobaith: un dyfodol . . .**

words by Ahmed, a Palestinian refugee

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anti-racism : anti-xenophobia

EC Youth in Action Programme



Above: the image on the laminated card that we each received as a reminder of the day.