

20 Young Adults made Easter Week Retreat with the Greyfriars

Canterbury (England) 18 April 2007: The Greyfriars Youth Retreat in Canterbury, 10th to 15th April, attracted 20 young adults, aged 18 to 35, from England, Scotland, and Ireland. Gathering at the Franciscan International Study Centre (FISC), the youth spent time in personal and liturgical prayer, Eucharistic adoration, conferences, spiritual direction, faith-sharing, and group discussions. Fr. James McCurry OFM Conv., General Delegate of the Greyfriars in Great Britain and Ireland, preached the retreat, focusing on the theme: “Fiat – Let it Be.” Assisting Fr. James were the local community of Greyfriars and support staff from FISC, and the Sisters Minor of Mary Immaculate, from Rome, Italy.

The youth also made a short pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral where they paid tributes at the martyrdom site of St. Thomas Becket (d.1118-1170) and the tomb of John Peckham (1223-1292) the first Franciscan Archbishop of Canterbury. They enjoyed a spiritual candlelight tour given by one of the canons of the Cathedral. The youth celebrated Eucharist at the original 13th century *Greyfriars* site, where the first band of nine Franciscans settled in England in 1224. Blessed Agnellus of Pisa, who was the first Guardian of the Greyfriars in England, is honoured in the little chapel here.

“Greyfriars” is the popular name still used by the Conventual Franciscan Friars, whose grey habit gave rise to the nickname in medieval times. The current year 2007 marks the 100th anniversary of the return to Great Britain of the Greyfriars after the Reformation. The youth retreat organised by the *Greyfriars Youth Ministry* marks the beginning of their centenary celebrations.