

St Anselm Hall Vigil 2020

In Support of Fortalice



Fortalice

Fortalice provides frontline services including a Refuge with 22 flats, training and group work for women, families, children and young people who are, or have been affected by Domestic Abuse and Violence. Women families, children and young people are supported through various activities either on a 1:1 basis or in group sessions to address the abuse they have lived with. The Vigil held at the chapel of St Anselm Hall this year was in support of Fortalice and the amazing work they do.



Figure 1: The Chapel of St Anselm Hall (*Exterior*)

Statement from the Chaplin

It was 5.30 am and three faithful Slemsmen slumbered on the Chapel floor of St Anselm Hall. Meanwhile the Chaplain who is only 37 years their senior paced about the place wrapped in his cassock and scapular; the heating had gone off and it was more than a touch chilly and he warmed himself next to the flickering flames of votive candle stand. It was second All Night Vigil that had been arranged in Hall and this year it was in support of Fortalice and the wonderful and important work that they undertake for victims of domestic violence and abuse. During the Vigil, prayers were said at intervals of about three hours culminating with a celebration of Holy Communion at 8.00am, These followed the ancient Offices of the Church that were set by St Benedict of Nursia nearly one thousand five hundred years ago. At 4.00 am in the morning seven students arrived in their gowns to say Terce (one appeared in his pyjamas and night gown). Throughout the Vigil music was played on the piano by various volunteers; one particular slemsman lifted his metaphor-

ical lamp from under its bushel and played with great sensitivity indeed. A choir of eight sang Tallis, amongst other composers quite beautifully, and in a way that had never happened in Chapel ever before; how wonderful was that. Undergraduates came in to support not only from the United Kingdom but from Spain, Poland, Lithuania, the Basque, Switzerland, France, Sweden and many other places besides. It was quite wonderful and donations, both financial and practical, were piled into the vestibule. The response was quite splendid and reflected well on the nature of the Slems community.



Figure 2: Chaplain, Fr Hugh Bearn

The next day, as I batted on with tasks that needed to be attended to in Tottingham, I suddenly realised the extent of my gap of years from the young people who so marvellously supported our efforts! Thank you to all who supported this from within and outside of Hall especially to our erstwhile Trio comprising Esperanza, equipped with her boundless enthusiasm and supplies of chocolate, Louis for battling through extreme fatigue, endeavouring to stay awake and delivering a really interesting synopsis of Aztec cultic execution rites in Mexico in the early 16th century - most comforting to mind and soul as we sat in relative darkness and the still of the night!!! And Harry, whose cloaked Benedictine form was at one point silhouetted on the top of a tree stump set against the pit sky of Victoria Park causing a certain Gallic heart to jump a beat when he suddenly leapt to life. Well done everyone and thank you so much.
Floreat Aula Sancti Anselmi
The Chaplain

Statement from the CEO of Fortalice

The vigil was a brilliant event, it helped Fortalice share their valuable work, working with victims of domestic abuse and violence. A huge thank you to all who were involved and donated, we can't do this work without you. One of our residents in the Refuge said being safe was so important for her but peoples kindness had overwhelmed her.



Figure 3: Donations made during the vigil

The things which were picked up yesterday were absolutely fantastic, they are so needed and we are so grateful
Gill Smallwood
CEO of Fortalice.



Figure 4: Gill Smallwood, CEO of Fortalice