



PHAROS

AN INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN STUDENT SOCIETY IN LEUVEN

Be not Afraid

*A reflection by
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Let's face it: Belgium is not a place where young Christians can easily meet fellow believers. Going to a Catholic school, participating in religion classes, or going to church every Sunday morning will generally not guarantee that you will meet many *young* people actively practicing their faith.

I grew up in a Christian family, but outside my home life I had few people with whom I could speak or learn about faith. By the time I started studying in Leuven, I was very eager to meet people my age who were active Christians. It was because of this that I started attending Pharos meetings. Those prayer meetings opened a new world to me, showing me how other Christian people lived their faith and teaching me a lot. Over the next two years I started accepting for myself some of the basics that seem so self-evident to my parents, but that I had been wondering about for a long time.

But after my second year of university, I was still somewhat unsatisfied. I had learned more about Christianity and through Pharos I had gained a lot of friends who supported me in my faith, but I still, however, did not have an unconditional faith and trust that there really is a God looking out for us, leading us through life, who



gave us his own Son because of His love for us. The Adelante Conference and World Youth Day in Madrid changed that. I, along with a group from Pharos, joined about 400 other young Christians for 'Adelante', an ecumenical conference in Vitoria, before going down to Madrid. On Saturday evening, we had a large prayer meeting with all 400 of us, and with the possibility of receiving prayer. There I asked two other women to help me pray for the gift of surrender, to find that trust in God that I had been longing for. However, I left Vitoria still unsatisfied and was starting to resign myself to the idea that I never would get that complete trust for which I hoped, and that I would just have to take my life as it was. I didn't really *need* perfect trust to believe in God and to try to follow His path. It would just have been nice if I never had to doubt.

I spent the next week in Madrid in that same mindset, and when I returned home, I thought that it was still my mindset. Looking back now, though, I can see that during those six days, the Lord was working in me.

Continued on the next page.

Worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth

By Marisa Peine

This last month, we hosted our Pharos Weekend. It was a great opportunity to build relationships within Pharos, to spend a concentrated amount of time learning about a particular aspect of our faith, and most importantly to grow in our relationship with the Lord.

From the very beginning, the Lord's presence was very evident. One of our prayers for the weekend was that we would have twenty participants. When we arrived on Friday evening, there were twenty of us, as well as Stevie Jordan, our guest speaker. This, you could say, was only the beginning. The Lord continued to pour out blessings on our time together throughout the weekend.

One of the biggest blessings of the weekend were the times of prayer that we were able to share. The theme for the weekend was Worship so it seems appropriate that during these times, the Lord's presence was especially visible. It was incredible to see Him working amongst the group, challenging us to grow closer to Him through worship.

Included below are some of the reflections from the weekend:

"This retreat was an amazing experience for me and I thank God for what He did for me during this weekend. The highlight for me was the prayer meeting on Saturday

Continued on the next page.

Be Not Afraid

Continued from Page One

The highlight of it all was the Saturday evening, when those millions of pilgrims all gathered on one large field, and spent the night in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament with the pope. The mass of people there was such a sharp contrast with those moments I had had when I was younger, when I couldn't quite find anyone my own age who believed, that those past feelings of loneliness became completely ridiculous in my own mind. And later, when the whole two million of us, preparing to spend the night under the starry sky, were



Come Lord Jesus!

One of my best friends had a T-shirt with this image on it. I thought it was rather funny. It does make me realize that we have been rather busy in Pharos these past few weeks: organising our weekend retreat, continuing our weekly street evangelism, organising a big prayer evening in cooperation with other student societies and continuing to build relationships with many students we meet in Leo XIII, in class and on the streets. I have to say I love this season of Advent. Not just because we have family celebrations and holidays to look forward to and Christmas markets keep us warm, but mostly because I feel that everything we do just makes more sense in Advent. Our

surprised by an enormous thunderstorm and we started singing, I remember thinking 'good God, this is the most amazing night of my life.'

It wasn't until I was back home that I fully realized that my doubts were gone. Though I hadn't noticed, the Lord had been working in my heart through receiving prayer and being with other young Christians. If God can bring that many people together to praise his name under the thunder and lightning, who am I to be afraid?



mission and service have meaning because we believe that Jesus is coming back. That is why we get up early to pray. That is why we strive for peaceful and genuine relationships with each other. That is why we are eager to tell other people about Him, so they would also be ready and not just 'look busy' when He returns. Ultimately, that is why we have hope! Come Lord Jesus!

Sam Geleyn

Worship the Lord

Continued from Page One.

evening. It really changed my life, because God spoke to me so powerfully through one of the sisters who were praying for me. His words pierced right through my heart and transformed me. I could feel His presence so strongly and God called me to experience His presence every day and to have a deeper relationship with Him. I was so deeply moved and was bubbling with joy inside of me and wanted to tell everyone what He had done for me."

- **Yolande Pleysier**, a Masters student at KUBrussel studying International Business Economics and Management

"I was really looking forward to the weekend. I've been to similar retreats in the past and I must say that they always encourage me to keep walking forward in my faith. In our current society, it is difficult to receive support for your christian faith. These retreats are an opportunity to build each other up. Besides some of my best friendships formed during these events.

For me the weekend itself was a highlight, but the spiritual highlight for me was the prayer meeting. Just being together as a close group of friends singing and worshipping the Lord is something I can never get enough of."

- **Raphael Luyts**, a first year Medical student at KULeuven

Please Pray for Us

That we would meet new students at KULeuven and show them Christ's love

That we would have many participants in our Life in the Spirit Seminar starting in February.

That the Lord would give our team courage to trust Him and hope in His promises.

That the Lord will provide us with new generous benefactors