

A *personal* REFLECTION

My journey in Mercy began at Edinburgh University when I was invited to the Mercy Hospitality and service in the form of the Mercy Homeless Project at St. Catherine's Convent where I work with many other young people from a variety of backgrounds – sixth formers, university students and some young people who come from their place of work.

Volunteering at the Mercy Homeless Project has been a very humbling experience for me. A place where the tears of the rejected and the tears of the searching meet; a place where east meets west; where boundaries of all kinds have been broken. A place where we pray together, reflect together and try to be gospel people together. A place where I am continually humbled - at the man who thanked me for helping meet his basic needs, at the woman sitting at the top table sobbing, who let me sit with her ... at the boy having a black eye and a cut lip and enduring the agony, yet smiling as I pour him a cup of tea. I was reminded that it's 2011 and people are still forgotten by the world; rejected; unwanted; unloved.

One woman in particular stands out in my memory; she had sad eyes; our lives had been so different; different languages and cultures and customs; yet as I sat beside her or served a meal or poured her a cup of tea, we were somehow united "together" in our humanity. That shared experience matters, and made me realise that touching each other's brokenness is where we find Jesus.

I've learned so much at the project both through my personal experience with the homeless and my interaction with the sisters and co-helpers. The impact this has had on my life is priceless. It was not an easy journey, I had challenges, particularly when it came to serving people who did not have a pleasant smell around them or who were rebellious even to a polite smile. At this moment the lesson learnt from the actions of the sisters and co-helpers of seeing Christ in these people is something that nurtures me further.

On similar lines the Sisters at the convent have allowed me throughout to find and nurture my own personal gifts during this journey. They have helped me along with other youth to grow with sound values as better individuals in society. I thank the sisters and Venerable Mother Catherine McCauley for giving us a chance to do, serve and show Mercy in society.

It is with these thoughts in my mind, mercy in my heart and a prayer on my lips I salute the Mercy sisters at St. Catherine's Edinburgh and thank them for the mercy they are showing to all around. To an institute that has been an inspiration I say

**'FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE BEEN...THANK YOU,
FOR ALL THAT YOU WILL BE ..AMEN'**

