

Knight of Saint Columba Brother lays tribute at Hiroshima Peace Shrine

John Collins joined the Knights of Saint Columba in 1968 and is still an active and highly committed member of both St Josephs' parish church, Hanwell and Council 163 Hanwell (KSC). John has held the offices of Grand Knight (group chairman) and Spirituality and Welfare Officer as well as being active on a Provincial level as District Deputy and Quiz Master.

Speaking to John, for the last twenty years, he has had a burning desire to visit Japan and in particular to visit Hiroshima. In early November, John ventured out to Japan, leaving his wife Anne at home and went on a tour organised by a company called "Just you."

The tour took in the traditional tourist sights of Japan and these included: Mount Fuji, a traditional Shinto wedding, a statue of Buddha bigger than the Statue of Liberty and finally on to Hiroshima. Whilst speaking with John, he said that he "was amazed at how modern the cities were, but how culturally aware they are of their history."

Once in Hiroshima and at the Peace shrine the reality struck. The shrine sits exactly under the spot the Atomic bomb detonated over and was made more poignant because of the time of year in the run up to Remembrance Sunday. John had particularly wanted to lay a banner at the shrine in memory of the children that had died. Unfortunately, John and Anne had lost one of their daughters earlier in the year and so there was a personal reason for this part of his trip.

John had been really organised and had got his Knights of Saint Columba council (Council 163 Hanwell) to sign the banner before he had departed and this was laid in respect on behalf of the Council. Johns' tour guide Sarah, had asked him to say a few words and so John was delighted to be able to tell people that "Our flag was a sign of Respect for the dead and a prayer for peace for the future."

Peter Oliver. ●



The knights of Saint Columba, is a male fraternity for any practising Catholic over the age of 16 years old.
Details of activities and membership can be obtained from:
Head office. 75 Hillington Road South, Glasgow. G52 2AE. Scotland.
+44 (0) 141 883 5700. <http://www.ksc.org.uk>
Or from Province 30 (Westminster Western) <http://www.province30.co.uk/>