

Decoding in Nairobi

Over 1200 people take part in DA VINCI CODE KNOW IT ALL SESSIONS in the capital city of Kenya. Two sessions were held at Strathmore University on 20 May and 3 June.

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Strathmore University hosted two DA VINCI CODE KNOW-IT-ALL SESSIONS on Saturday 20 May and Saturday 3 June. They were conducted at the university's auditorium. The combined attendance was more than 750 people.

The Sessions comprised a plot analysis, followed by an explanation of the "comedy of errors" contained in the book. After the Power Point presentation was complete, the panel of speakers took questions from members of the audience. A loud round of applause marked the end of both Sessions.

The *The Da Vinci Code* scenario in Nairobi has been quiet over the last few months. A small cross-section of Nairobians would be able to afford the book in the first place; secondly, it appears to have appealed mostly to young people in high school and in university, many of who say they would rather wait for the release of the movie.

Prior to the launch of the movie on 19 May, a small group of people decided to start conducting KNOW-IT-ALL SESSIONS that would help people to understand the book and

the movie for what they are: PURE FICTION.

It all started quite spontaneously with the initiative of three young Nairobians. Vincent Ongutu is a high school teacher who took a deep interest in the book after many of the young people he counsels started asking him questions about the book. He teamed up with Charles Kanjama, a friend of his who works as a lawyer in Nairobi. After going through the book they put together a presentation, that they aimed at making in schools and other educational institutions. Before Saturday 20 May, with the help of Kevin de Souza who works for the Opus Dei Information Office, they had talked to over 300 secondary school students.

For the presentations at Strathmore University, they invited Emma Oketch, a lecturer at the University of

Nairobi, to talk about the role of Mary Magdalene in the life of Jesus and role of women in the Church. Kevin de Souza, talked about the *real* Opus Dei. Dr Anne Muigai, a university lecturer, and Rosalyn Muthiora from Kibondeni College, were also on the panels. The First Session was advertised only on one notice board in the University and by email. Vincent says that he expected a turnout of between 50 and 100 people; 500 seemed way too ambitious. Following the Session, there were numerous requests for a “2nd Edition” of it.

Similar sessions have been organized in secondary schools in Nairobi. The well attended Sessions in a town that has given relatively low publicity to Dan Brown's novel is a testimony that people, nevertheless, have read it and are genuinely perplexed about its content. This is a town in which some people have been known to

renounce their Christian names or give up their Faith altogether.

The launch of the movie has inevitably stirred the press and practically all the dailies in Nairobi have had an article or two about the movie since Friday 19 May.

If you would like to receive the Power Point presentation that was made you can contact:
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