

**IHM**

# heartbeat

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## IHM is SIXTY

By MATTHEW TAY

**T**HE Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary may be relatively young when you compare it to the churches in the city area but it is one of the oldest neighbourhood churches in Singapore. It started as a chapel in 1953.

"You cannot compare our church to those like St. Peter and Paul or the Cathedral. But we have got to be one of the older churches in Singapore," said Parish Priest Fr. Adrian Yeo. "We should celebrate that we have made a difference in the area. The church has serviced St. Gabriel's School and St. Joseph's Convent and we have also seen a lot of conversions."

To mark the diamond jubilee year, the church held a series of celebratory events, like the Family Day, Food and Fun Fair and a golf tournament. The celebrations were to bring the parishioners together so that they could build friendships and grow stronger as a spiritual community.

There were spiritual events too, like the Nine Day Novena and a healing mass.

The year also saw the church undergo some major renovation. Along with it, the altar stone from the old church was placed back on the new altar. This meant that the church had to be reconsecrated and it was done by Archbishop William Goh on June 8. The ceremony began with his Grace blessing the statue of Our Lady outside the church, the altar and the 12 foundation stones of the church. The mass was followed by a Kampong Night dinner which the parish community enjoyed very much.

The Diamond Jubilee Celebrations end with a gala dinner on Dec 8. With the physical renewal of the church behind him, Fr. Adrian said the year 2014 will be devoted to the spiritual building of the parish. ♥

## Message from the Parish Priest

**O**URS is a vibrant parish. Every day of the week, there is something happening in our church. But not all know about it.

It is important that the church has good communication channels. So, in this Diamond Jubilee year, we decided to revamp our website and also publish a newsletter to keep parishioners updated of all the happenings in the church.

This is the first edition of the newsletter and it will be published quarterly. I appeal to all ministries to contribute to the newsletter with news of their activities so that their deeds will inspire others and bring them closer as a parish family. ♥

# Following Christ's call

By COREEN TAN

The IHM parish is blessed to have many church ministries. In some ways the members of these ministries are the ones who keep the parish pulse throbbing. These ministries offer parishioners an opportunity to work for the betterment of their spiritual well-being as well as extend a helping hand to others. They cater to the spiritual needs of young and old alike. On these pages we bring you snapshots of the activities of some of these ministries.



**E**piphanY group: This group's Teach and Learn volunteers work with children at Tanjung Pinang. They had a Games Day for the children to mark the end of their academic year. The children always look forward to this day with joy as it is a celebration of their academic achievements. The photograph shows Grade 7 children with their certificates of appreciation. ♥



**I**nfant Baptism Ministry: This three-year-old group helps parents and Godparents prepare for the baptism of infants. Proud parents Christopher Soh & Siew Geik and Godparents Adrian & Violet Soh are seen at the baptism of baby Matthew Soh by Fr. Adrian Yeo. ♥



**I**HM Jollies Club: Members of this club visit a church and a place of interest during their monthly outings. Look at their jolly faces when they visited Sentosa recently! ♥



**M**inistry of the Sick: A mass for the elderly and the sick was organised by the ministry with the IHM Jollies Club. They were supported by the Wardens, Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, IHM Youth & Young Adults, Legion of Mary and volunteers from the parish. ♥



**W**ardens: Every year new wardens are commissioned into the ministry and existing wardens renew their pledge. The photograph shows the commissioning of new wardens by Fr. Adrian this year. ♥





**R** **CIA:** Rite of Acceptance for the Inquirers into the Catholicatechumenate. They were received and welcomed into the Church by Fr. Adrian, accompanied by their journeying sponsors. ♥



**C** **atechists:** Primary 2 children at their First Holy Communion mass on November 10. ♥



**C** **harismatic Prayer Group:** Members of the group raise their hands to praise God at their recent Life in the Spirit Seminar. ♥



**V** **ia Christus Choir:** The group will be singing for the 9pm Christmas Eve mass together with the children from the Children's Liturgy Group. The group is seen practicing for Christmas! ♥



**I** **IHM Christian Meditation Group:** Members of this group gather weekly to meditate together. Currently there are two meditation groups and the Tuesday group organizes annual outings to meditate and share fellowship. This photograph is from their recent visit to Langkawi. ♥



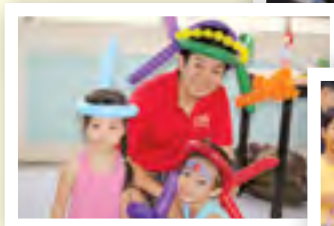
**S** **ociety of St Vincent De Paul:** Members of this group visited the Silra Home in October. They joined the Catholic residents for mass and then served them dinner. Silra Home cares for ex-leprosy victims. ♥



# A round up of the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

# GEM OF

**NOVENA, E  
& KAMPO  
31 MAY TO**



**1  
JAN  
2013**

**FAMILY DAY  
25 MAY 2013**





# A YEAR

**EAST DAY  
ONG NITE  
8 JUN 2013**



**CHARITY GOLF  
3 OCT 2013**



**FOOD & FUNFAIR  
13 JUL 2013**



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**8  
DEC  
2013**



## PPC EXCO 2010/2013

- Pierre-Paul Chua
- Anthony Seah
- Roy Kheng
- Nancy Tan
- Christian Kwan
- Jacqueline Khng
- Agnes Chua
- Celine Remedios
- Francis Tan
- Michael Thio
- Michael Lim
- Michael Vong
- James Lim
- Francis Ng
- Paul Chua

## PPC EXCO 2014/2015

- Pierre-Paul Chua
- Roy Kheng
- Michael Vong
- Agnes Chua
- Jocelyn Seow
- Bianca Chan
- Bernard Yeo
- Wesley Lye
- Paul Chan
- Christina Lim
- Felix Lim
- Patrick Jonas

ON November 17, IHM's Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) elected a new team for 2014/2015. The PPC headed by Mr Pierre-Paul Chua, popularly known as Cher Choon, had completed its term.

However, even after the new team was nominated, Cher Choon and his team were still working hard. They had to see through the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, ending with the gala dinner on Dec 8.

In between, he took time off to chat with me on the three years that he headed the PPC. Over e-mail exchanges and supper, I got to know a bit more about Cher Choon the individual, who is witty, insightful, health conscious, religious and a driven man with the best interests of IHM in his heart.

Cher Choon answered God's call in 2006. He was baptised in the Catholic faith and was given the Christian name Pierre-Paul. The following year, he took voluntary retirement. He was then the regional managing director of Dow Jones. This gave him more time to devote to the church. He was elected chairman of the PPC in December 2010. He and his team had to deal with a long crisis soon after. In the early part of 2011, then parish priest Fr. William Lim suffered a massive heart attack and had to give up his priestly duties. Fr. Stephen Yim, who stepped into his shoes in June, did not stay

## Outgoing PPC Chairman Pierre-Paul Chua on the three years gone by

long enough and stepped down in December that year.

Eventually in March 2012, Father Adrian Yeo was appointed Parish Priest. Noting that the term of office of the executive committee was ending in December that year, Fr. Adrian proposed to extend it for another year to provide stability and continuity.

The Diamond Jubilee year provided the appropriate "platform" to further strengthen the bonds of the church community and to achieve the immediate objective of the PPC, which was to "heal" a broken parish. Many liturgical and social activities were planned. A Nine-day Novena with discussions on spiritual topics kick-started the liturgical events. There was also the Consecration of the Church, a Healing Mass, and a Mass for the elderly and sick.

The Family Day, a Kampong Night, Food and Fun Fair, and a charity Golf event, made up the social

events. These activities ensured that there was something for everyone, the young, the elderly and young at heart.

Parishioners turned up in large numbers for all the events and this was testimony to the hard work put in by the organising committee drawn mainly from the PPC and other parishioners who helped them.

What kind of legacy does Pierre-Paul leave behind?

His answer: "I was reminded that when we serve the Church, we must be a servant leader. It would be unworthy for us to look at leaving behind our legacy."

He said the new committee "will have to build on the momentum already initiated". He added: "There are many talents and willing partners within the parish. We must not be afraid to tap on their expertise and support."

There were lighter moments too during the last three years. He is so used to being called Cher Choon that he forgets to respond to his baptismal name Pierre-Paul. When this happened several times, he and his church friends agreed on a bet. If he does not respond to his baptismal name and instead turns around to 'Cher Choon', he agreed to buy them coffee.

So the next time you see him in church and want to have a cup of coffee, you know what to do. ♥

## Parish Assembly

More than 60 members of the IHM congregation took part in a Parish Assembly on Nov 17. At the assembly, outgoing Parish Pastoral Council chairman Pierre-Paul Chua gave an account of the activities that his Exco was involved in during the last three years. He thanked everyone for the support that was extended to his team and wished the incoming Exco all the best. At the meeting a new PPC Exco was nominated by those present. The new PPC chairman will be elected later. Read more about the new Exco and their plans in the next issue of the IHM Heartbeat. ♥



## heART space

## The Story of Saint Nicholas

Feast Day: 06 December

Illustrations by MICHAEL GOO



A widowed merchant fell on hard times and worried that he would be unable to provide dowry for his 3 daughters.



One morning, he found a bag of gold in a shoe near the window – enough for the dowry for one daughter. The next day, a similar bag of gold appeared in the same place.



On the third night, he hid in the dark to try to discover who was helping him.



The mysterious benefactor was Saint Nicholas, who wanted to help the family in need. Thanks to this story, the custom of hanging up stockings to receive gifts came about.



## Confessions of a youth catechist

By JOYCE TAN

LOOKING back at the catechetical year that has just drawn to a close, Confirmation 3 catechist Ivy Lam laughingly says with a hint of fondness, “Every year at Confirmation, I feel like a parent giving away her kids!”

It is precisely this close friendship forged with the confirmands and the joy at seeing them grow that has kept Ivy serving in the Youth Ministry (YM) ever since she was confirmed in 2007. Currently, apart from her involvement in catechesis for Confirmation 3 students every Sunday morning, Ivy also serves as a facilitator for the Post Confirmation group that meets every Saturday afternoon, and is part of the group of YM leaders who meet regularly to plan activities and discern the future direction of the YM. Inevitably, these commitments add to Ivy’s already heavy schedule as much of her weekend is spent in church.

As a final year NUS undergraduate majoring in Food Science and Technology, Ivy juggles her time between doing her final year project, working part time in a company manufacturing traditional desserts, and pursuing her interests in music and dance. Despite having to sacrifice time with her friends, Ivy still feels the joy in serving as she recognizes the guiding hand of God. “It takes a fair amount of discipline to stick with (these commitments). But at the end of the day, when we make that conscious choice to follow God’s calling, it is very heartening to see the confirmands grow and

blossom, and to see how God works and blesses us through it all”, she says. She also adds that “God’s spirit is really quite powerful. You never know how He is working and what He is doing. When I look back on my journey so far, I realize that God has been with me every step of the way, even when it didn’t feel like it.”

It is this awareness of the presence of God in our lives that Ivy, as a catechist, hopes to instil in her charges. She sees her calling as one “to bring the confirmands to Christ”, by “creating the atmosphere for them to discover the faith”, through using engaging tools such as the media, personal sharings and self-reflection of their own faith journeys. Such a method is also in line with the new evangelization paradigm that the archdiocese is moving towards.

Ivy’s hope to bring more people to God does not apply only to the confirmands, but also extends to YM and IHM youth in general. “When I see young people, I see a lot of potential, I see a lot of hope for the church. The youths of today have so many talents that it is easy to get lost in worldly things. I want to help these people to build their relationship with God and build their house on rock (Matt 7: 24-27) so that when trials come, they can prevail”, she explains, adding that she wishes for YM to “become one big community where we pray, share, fellowship and journey together”.

Together with all other youths in IHM, such a dream is indeed worth pursuing. ♥



Interview:  
**Father Adrian Yeo**  
 by MATTHEW TAY

## Man U fan looks to promote family life

**T**HE life of a Parish Priest is never easy. The responsibilities and administrative work that comes along with the role, leaves Fr. Adrian Yeo with very little time to indulge in his other passions. He is a die-hard Manchester United fan but he hardly gets to watch all their matches.

"I try to watch their matches when I can. But the games are often played late in the night. So I do not watch any games past midnight." If the matches kick off at 10.55pm, which is often the case, he watches the first half.

"I have to get enough rest so I will be able to function the next day!" said Fr. Adrian with a smile at his office in the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

He joined the seminary in 1992 and said the seven years he spent there were amazing.

"Seminary was fun. We had a very big community. We had games and enjoyed each other's company." After his ordination in 1999, he was placed at the Church of Holy Spirit.

"It was a rather unusual situation, because I was there as a deacon before becoming a priest. So I was not actually posted there. After my ordination, I served for an additional two months before I received my first assignment. It was at the Church of the Holy Family and I was there for two years before going to the Church of the Risen Christ for five years," he recalled. "After which I spent nearly three years in Ottawa, Canada to study Canon Law."

On his return to Singapore, he spent one and a half years at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual

Succour and six months at the Church of St. Teresa before he was appointed parish priest at IHM on March 5, 2012.

### Outside the Parish

It is not common to find two priests in a family in Singapore. Fr. Adrian comes from one such family. He and his younger brother, Fr. Ignatius Yeo – an administrator at St. Joseph's Church -- make time every Sunday evening to visit their parents in the East. Together, they usually head out for dinner "wherever our stomachs takes us" and enjoy a normal family's day out. Occasionally the brothers discuss issues relating to their faith and get a better understanding of their parish life. However, Fr. Adrian said he devotes more time talking on such issues when he meets up with Father Kenson Koh on their days off on Mondays.

Fr. Adrian is also an advocate in the archdiocese's ecclesiastical tribunal which handles and processes all marriage annulments. In addition to handling local cases, he is also an appeals judge for Malaysia, and reviews their cases. "Once we are done with our cases they have to be reviewed. So our cases go to Kuala Lumpur and their cases come to us for review," he said, pointing to the two case files on his desk.

### The IHM community

Talking about the IHM parish community he said he is very impressed with the number of parishioners attending church events and giving their talents to the church. Another plus point is the involvement of youths in parish

activities, something which is not so common in Singapore. "This is something really unique. A good number of them have a strong sense of their faith. They take ownership of their faith and the church. The initiative and the zeal that they provide give additional life to our church," said Fr. Adrian.

However, he feels there is something that we are still missing. "Looking at the parish, the one area that is missing is a group which promotes family life. I am trying to get a group going to organize talks for parents on how to bring up children, organize sessions for married couples, provide financial planning advice as well as other family related stuff." While admitting this is only at the thinking phase, he is hoping to find parishioners who can help out in this. "Family is extremely important, so this ministry will be able to help me to look into all these issues."

As 2014 approaches, Fr. Adrian is looking into the spiritual building of the church.

"This year it was about the physical building of the church, with all the renovations and changes. 2014 should focus on coming together as a community of believers."

Despite his busy schedule, Fr. Adrian remains a very approachable priest. The best time parishioners can talk to him would be on weekday afternoons. He is also easily contactable through e-mail. "I call for anyone who can give their talents to plan or even simply provide ideas. Together we can build up the church together as a community."

So what are we IHM parishioners waiting for? ❤️



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