

United they celebrate

By MATTHEW TAY

MARY, Mother of Unity was the theme of this year's Triduum running up to the feast day celebrations of our church. The feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was celebrated on June 4 but not before the Redemptorist priests gave our parishioners enough to learn from Mother Mary and how she would like us to serve with humility, joy and compassion.

On the first day of the triduum, Fr. Clement Lee spoke about serving with humility. Said parishioner Sharon Chow: "Mother Mary's brand of humility is to be a doorway instead of a doormat. Our challenge is to be a channel of God's love instead of stomping all over it."

Another parishioner, Laura Lim, echoed Sharon's sentiments. "Humility literally means keeping us grounded. To practice humility



is being honest about self, and having a down to earth attitude without being stepped over by others."

Day two focused on serving with joy. Fr. Simon Tan's sermon

on building a joyful community resonated well with parishioners, especially Christina Lim. "Fr. Simon's blazing words were like a sharp knife," she said. "Full of joy!" echoed parishioner Vincent



Continued from Page 1

Lum. "Community support for Church and religious leaders are extremely important. To serve, rather than be served."

The final day's sermon was by Fr. Peter Wee, who spoke about serving with compassion. "Fr. Peter reminded me that to be compassionate is to really put myself in the shoes of the suffering person," recalled Mary Sua, who attended all three nights of the triduum. "That to me includes the difficult people I meet along the way. It also encouraged me not to be judgmental but to simply be loving to all."

Another who was present on all three days was James Tay, who summed up the triduum as being extremely enjoyable. "Through the light-hearted talks by the Redemptorist priests, they reminded us of the need to serve with humility, joy and compassion to help build the IHM community."

On the Feast Day, Fr. Simon Tan returned to remind all present on the importance of unity in the Church, saying it is like rojak (traditional fruit and vegetable salad). Rojak, with its various ingredients such as you tiao (Chinese doughnut), cucumber, pineapple, tau pok (fried tofu) and bean sprouts, are all combined to form a tasty dish with the use of Hei Kor (prawn paste sauce), the most important ingredient, to unite them. Like rojak, the community should also be represented by people from all walks of life, including youths, who Fr. Simon said were the bean sprouts which sprout from everywhere.

He also said that it is a responsibility to create a community within the parish and be responsible as a community. "Parishioners cannot afford to fight and bicker with each other," he said in his sermon.

After the mass, parishioners celebrated IHM Kampong Night, a traditional feast day celebration in the piazza and St. Gregory's Hall. The Kampong spirit represents community, and that could be seen throughout the night with parishioners patiently queuing up before six food stalls, some even in the rain, to get food without argument or being grumpy. The food was yummy too. Everyone feasted on delicacies like hot satay, prawn paste chicken,



longtong, hot dogs and bee hoon.

Entertainment was aplenty. Besides performances by the Rockerfellas band, Fr. Luke Fong belted out a number titled 'from the dead' from the Musical Wicked in dedication to his stem cell donor.

Germaine Tan and Nicole Ng sang a number of praise and worship songs. There was also entertainment for the children, with a bouncy castle set up for them. They had popcorn to munch and cotton candy to sweeten their tiny mouths as well. ♥

Understanding mercy on Day of Recollection

By JOLYN TAN



HOW often do we say “thank you, God!” for the blessings which we receive through pain and suffering? This was something that Fr. Ignatius Huan asked the 250 participants at the IHM Day of Recollection and challenged them to start practicing. Held on May 7, the Day of Recollection was centred on the theme Divine Mercy, Human Repentance. This was in line with the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy declared by His Holiness Pope Francis.

The day started off with Fr. Ignatius explaining what Divine Mercy is and its different aspects. Rather than a didactic lecture packed with doctrines and theology, Fr. Ignatius used themes close to our hearts – ranging from world hunger to the story of the prodigal son – to relate better with the participants. He even used snippets of the movie *Les Misérables* to illustrate how the main character Jean Valjean experiences mercy and how his response to this mercy develops along the way. Such a style of delivering a rather complex idea was welcomed by the youth in particular. Brittany Lee, who attended this event with fellow Youth Catechists, found it “very applicable to daily life,” and appreciated how “Fr. Ignatius makes concepts easier to understand”.

After the lunch break, Fr. Ignatius touched on our human response towards the Divine Mercy received. He explained how the sacrament of reconciliation is far from a mechanical process, but instead an experience of healing and empowerment where the penitent receives Divine forgiveness. There

is a dual movement involved – one of moving closer to God, and simultaneously moving further from sin. Fr. Ignatius also cleared up some common misunderstandings on forgiveness (like forgiveness does not entail forgetting, but rather remembering from a different perspective; and that forgiveness does not make one weak but instead “demands moral strength and courage”).



Fr. Ignatius’ talk helped Matthew Siew to realise the “disconnect between what we as Christians are taught to do, and what we actually do”. We should all aim for our experience in the confessional to be not of simply going through

the motion, but rather the sincere acceptance of Divine grace. Similarly, the idea that “forgiveness cannot be complete without restoration” was meaningful for Gabriel Chan.

At the same time, although this year’s Day of Recollection did not have a segment for group activities, it was heartening to see parishioners take the initiative to get to know each other better during the tea breaks and lunch.



For one parishioner Vanessa Ee, it was a “valuable opportunity to be able to interact with other people in the community,” and liked how the “whole church was able to learn together”. This Day of Recollection provided a good platform for community bonding.

The success of this event also required much work and planning. Since Fr. Ignatius resides in Malaysia, a trip across the border required much paperwork and planning.

Nevertheless, all the effort turned out to be fruitful, as it was definitely a fulfilling spirit-led day. ♥

Easter Joy

By JOYCE TAN



EASTER this year at IHM saw 23 candidates being baptised and confirmed, another two were confirmed, and one received into the Church and confirmed. This joyous occasion was celebrated during Easter Vigil Mass on March 26, in the presence of their families and friends, as well as parishioners.

In his homily, celebrant Fr. Adrian affirmed the candidates of their dignity as sons and daughters of God, being heirs to His kingdom, and consequently the need to live

school. He had procrastinated joining RCIA although a friend had been asking him for 30 years, and he was "happy to be finally accepted as a son of God". Ivy, who was confirmed, said: "Through God's plan, I met a friend who brought me back to Church. I had been looking to come back to Church, but did not know any Catholic friends who are strong in evangelizing. I feel that God is knocking at the door at the right time, and I feel honoured and happy."

The RCIA journey played

sentiment. "The RCIA journey kept getting better so I persisted. I look forward to going to church."

This year's RCIA batch was special, because there was a family of four who were baptised together (see Page 5 for the full story). For sisters Charlotte and Charmaine, RCIA was not just a course, but a "meaningful journey", with guidance and support from sponsors and the RCIA team. Baptism was "an experience of a lifetime and a new beginning, with a long way to go".

The RCIA journey was not only fulfilling for the newly baptised, but also for those in the RCIA team, who felt that the year-long effort is worthwhile. Wilson, one of the sponsors, felt "blessed and honored" to be a sponsor, as it was "fruitful" work "bringing people into the family". Angeline, another member of the RCIA team said: "It is rewarding to see how they transform lives in the RCIA journey. Daily happenings contribute to how they see Christ. I see a change in them, being happier, calmer, and finding peace. Knowledge helps them to understand certain things, improve their relationships with others, become more patient and caring, knowing that God has plans for them. But it is challenging because we need to keep reminding about what is right and wrong. But it helps in knowing that God is guiding them, knowing that it is not just their own efforts".

Indeed, Easter and the opportunity of rebirth and renewal it brings offers the hope of new life for all Catholics, newly baptised or otherwise. ♥



out this new dignity. For all baptised Catholics, this new dignity comes with the renewal of our baptismal promises, through our old selves dying with Christ and the rising to new life with Christ in Easter.

For many of the newly baptised, baptism was an occasion of deep emotions as it was the culmination not just of their year-long RCIA course, but also of longer life journeys filled with personal stories. One of them, Philip Lim, was from a Catholic

a crucial role in bringing the faith to the newly baptised. Explained Francis: "The journey was tough at first even though I came from a Catholic school. But RCIA opened my heart and mind to the faith. I felt God here, and was loved and accepted, so I decided to be baptised. It feels wonderful." Nathan, another newly baptised, also shared the same



A family's faith journey

By DENISE JULIA TAN



BEFORE they were baptised this Easter, the Tan family were on separate faith journeys. Although they did not subscribe to a Christian faith denomination, husband and wife Daniel and Linda had always visited churches together, even when they were overseas. Their daughters, twins Charlotte and Charmaine, also enjoyed a close and prayerful relationship with God growing up, due to their mother's advice to pray when faced with problems.

When Charlotte went for the Easter mass last year at the Church of Saint Francis Xavier, something triggered in her that made her finally take the first step to becoming a Catholic. She had been considering it for two years but was hindered by her job that did not allow her to commit to weekly RCIA sessions.

"Sometime in May or April last year, I suddenly thought that I should do something about it or I won't know when I'd start. I called the three Catholic churches in my area to check how it would be if I couldn't commit every week. Nancy Tan, who is in charge of our RCIA team, told me to come down and they'll see what could be done – that if there's a will, God will find a way," said Charlotte.

Two days before her first session, Charlotte told her sister about her plans, not knowing that she was also keen. Inseparable as they are, they then went together and insisted on being in the same group (Saint Monica).

God paved a way for Charlotte, from granting her bosses the grace to allow her to swap shifts, to

blessing her with a kind colleague who sacrificed and covered for her. His great plan continued to unravel when Charlotte was diagnosed with breast cancer last August.

"Surprisingly, it was stage zero. Of course when I found out, I was super upset, asking: Why me? But the amazing thing is that we were already a part of this journey. We had the sponsors praying over me for the entire period of time, which was really good strength," said Charlotte.

During this time as she went through multiple surgeries, she started to see things in a different perspective. By God's grace, she began to recognise her ordeal as a blessing in disguise.

"Things were very bad at first. When it got worse, I got very upset and scared. But when things got better, I realised that this was what people meant when they said you are blessed by God... I looked at myself and realised that maybe because of my character – I'm super stubborn and prideful – He had to give me something serious to scare me, but not too serious until I'd die."

Charmaine shared that God wanted her sister to slow down in her work and pace herself.

"My life was too fast. It was just work and gym – I had very bad time management. So when this happened, I had to stop work for 2-3 months... I had time in this period to think, slow down, and pray. We came to church every day and things started changing from that time onwards," said Charlotte.

It was also during this period that Daniel and Linda started going

to mass with them. One Wednesday, they decided to join their daughters for RCIA and the sponsors, recognising God's call to the entire family, asked if they wanted to join, despite it being late into August.

"We came in not because of her sickness, but because God brought us. When this happened, we left it in God's hands. He knew that we were waiting all this time – we had been praying to God to bring us to the right place. Maybe He asked our daughters to bring us here, not the other way around," said Daniel.

Today, the family embraces a new-found sense of hope, grace and unity.

"I think the entire route that God paved for us is amazing – how one problem led to everything and us being baptised as a family. The most amazing thing is that if you don't believe, you wouldn't understand that God is not judging, killing or punishing you. He is teaching you something through a different method, you just have to open your eyes and see the signs in order to truly learn from experiences," said Charmaine.

Daniel and Linda are relishing their renewed relationship with their daughters, including a seven-day cruise to Japan that they gave to them.

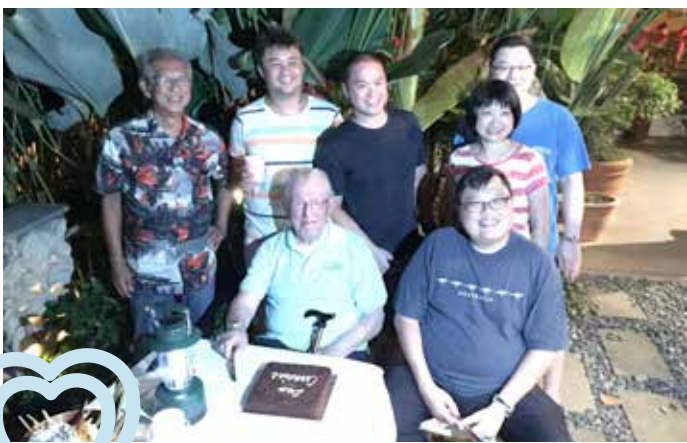
"Now we have one more wish, that our son (Lionel) who is working overseas will come back and join us – that would be perfect. He knows all that is happening, we just hope that one day God will bring him back. We leave it in God's hands. We don't have to plan. God will know and put you there," said Daniel. ♥

IHM Snapshots

By AGNES CHUA



Day of Recollection: Our ministers from the Hospitality Ministry and the Extraordinary Ministry of The Holy Communion attending a session held by Fr. Luke on May 21. ♥



SV^P: The Society of St. Vincent De Paul organized a barbecue to give thanks to its outgoing spiritual adviser Fr. Joseph Jeannequin and welcome Fr. Adrian Yeo as the new spiritual adviser. They are seen here with the Exco of the Society. ♥



RCIA: The RCIA team was commissioned on May 22. During the commissioning in the church Fr. Adrian invited parishioners to pray over the RCIA team. ♥



Hospitality Ministry: The Wardens group was renamed the Ministry of Hospitality on May 21. Six new Hospitality Ministers were commissioned that day and the rest of the ministers renewed their commitment to serve the parish and the Lord ♥



Epiphany: The group organised its annual Alpha Course for non-Catholics earlier this year. The 12-week programme introduces Jesus to the participants. This is the 15th year the group is running the programme. ♥



Dorm visit: On April 30, members from the IYM Youth Ministry joined members of IYM's SSVP to pack and distribute food to migrant workers who live at the Westlite Dormitory in Woodlands. They were joined by members from five other parishes and together they packed and distributed 2,000 bags to the workers. ♥



Divine Mercy: Members of the group attended a novena on March 26. Such novenas are held every year from Good Friday leading to the feast of the Divine Mercy, which falls on the second Sunday of Easter. ♥

Growing together in faith and friendship

By MATTHEW TAY



As part of the wider Youth Ministry (YM) in IHM, the Young Adults Community (YAC) was formed in 2012 after the merger of two former groups – Zion’s Joy and ACT 2. Their goal, to reach out to young adults who have left the church as well as adults who do not have a community to journey and to grow in faith with them. The current group members fall in the age group 21 to 35.

For spiritual growth, the community often comes together for activities like praise and worship and adoration. They also have a yearly retreat. “Growing in faith spiritually is important as we are able to have a common identity and able to support each other in terms of crisis and know each other’s faith journey and level,” said YAC core team member Aaron Monteiro. He added: “Journeying together brings us closer as a community, know each other’s strength and weakness as well

as grow spiritually and have fun together.”

The community also does occasional prayer walks. Members would meet and walk to one member’s house for prayers with the family. “Last year, we did something different and went over to Malaysia for our prayer walk,” shared core team member Benedict Long. “One of our members is from Kuala Lumpur, so we decided to spend the weekend there, did the prayer walk, before enjoying what Malaysia had to offer! It was an extremely fun and fulfilling time.”

While spiritual growth is an important part of the YAC, the group extends much further. Aside from weekly sessions, the community spends time outside the church in activities such as sports, exploration and entertainment. “While we understand the importance of spiritual growth, it is also important that, as a community, we grow together outside the church,” Benedict added. “We go



YAC members at a football match at the Singapore Sports Hub.

as a community to enjoy various activities such as cycling, trips to River Safari and game nights. Last year, we even went to watch a football match at the Singapore Sports Hub!”

Serene Goh, who was baptized in 2008 after attending IHM’s RCIA programme, mentioned that while she was actively looking for a community in 2012, she was unable to find one until she was referred to the YAC. “I was looking for a community that had members who were

in the same age group as me. So I was initially disappointed when some of the members were younger than me. However, I gave it a chance and I quickly warmed up to the other members. After a while, age did not matter because I could connect with



YAC at the Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur.

them as most were going through similar phases in life as me,” she said.

Having been part of the YAC for almost four years, she is thoroughly enjoying the experience. Said Serene: “Generally, the experience is that the YAC is relaxed and united. It is also not too intense to be scary, and yet, it still gives the support that one hopes from a community.” She added: “I like this community because it is open and honest without being intrusive and they are also extremely welcoming to new members.”

The YAC meets every Sunday at 3pm and they are happy to accept new members. If you are keen, please contact yac@ihm.sg. ❤️

Praising the Lord

by DOMINIC ABRAHAM



THE Charismatic Prayer Group (CPG) was started in the IHM parish about 15 years ago when Fr. James Yeo was the parish priest. This prayer group has grown over the years catering to the spiritual needs of the parishioners.

The charismatic movement came into existence in the 60s in an effort to enhance the spiritual experience of the people. It spread across the world, and the IHM charismatic prayer group is a part of this worldwide movement. This group is affiliated to the SACCRE – Singapore Archdiocesan Catholic Charismatic Renewal – which is the principal coordinating and service body of the charismatic movement in the country.

The IHM group is around 30 members with many others joining the various sessions when time permits. Usually to be considered a member, an individual should consistently attend the CPG sessions over a six-month period. The group is guided by a constitution and led by a committee that is headed by the Co-ordinator and supported by an assistant co-ordinator. The two are supported by a set of members that head the various sub-ministries like Praise & Worship, Intercession, Hospitality, Logistics, etc. The Secretary manages the overall

finances and administration for the CPG. The committee has a two-year term and members can be elected for two consecutive terms.

The CPG raises finances for its various activities during its Eucharistic celebration which happens on the first Thursday of every month. At this session, members make a 'love offering' which constitutes a large portion of the funds generated. Funds are also generated when the CPG runs the



Members of the CPG with spiritual director Fr. Adrian Yeo.

church canteen, and during the Holy Week when the group makes and sells refreshments in church.

The flagship event that the CPG conducts is the Life in the Spirit Seminar which takes place over a 10-week period during which speakers from many walks of life are invited to provide their insights and views, and help in the spiritual growth of the parishioners. Very often it is the participants from this seminar that

go on to join the CPG and become its members over a period of time.

As a part of its outreach programme, the CPG members visit homes for old folks and spend time with the residents and also visit orphanages. Every two months or so, the members do a social event where they indulge in a nature walk or go for an overnight trip to nearby places. All of this is done with a view to build and develop a sense of fellowship among the members.

The group meets every Thursday, except on the fifth Thursday of a month. The prayer meeting lasts for an hour and a half, and follows a structured format. The session begins with praise and worship where six to eight songs are sung, interspersed with scripture readings, spontaneous prayer and praying in tongues. This is followed by the speaker of the day who delivers a spiritual message to the group. The speaker could be a lay person or a person from the clergy. The session ends with a few more songs of praise and worship. After which the members gather for a bit of fellowship and bonding.

The current spiritual director of the CPG is Fr. Adrian Yeo. The group is always on the look-out for new members and would like to invite more young people to join them. ♥



Editorial Team: Agnes Chua, Colin Lee, Denise Julia Tan, Dominic Abraham, Jolyn Tan, Joyce Tan, Matthew Tay, Patrick Jonas

Layout: Karen d'Almeida

Contact: heartbeat@ihm.sg

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