

Feast day joy

By JANINE TAN & NICOLE LARISSA



IN recent years, we had three different priests delivering the sermon during the IHM Feast Day Triduum. This year there was only one – Fr. Valerian Cheong. His words touched the hearts of all those who made it to the church to hear him preach. As word spread, more came to hear him on the last day.

The theme for the Triduum was: Make my heart like Yours. There were three sub-themes for the three days. On June 6, Fr. Valerian spoke on the topic of A Prayerful and Docile Heart. The following day it was on a Heart Filled with Service and Compassion. And on the final day it was the feast

of the Sacred Heart and the topic was on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart.

On the fourth evening, His Grace Archbishop William Goh celebrated

the feast day mass. The focus of his homily was joy. He said that having Mother Mary as our spiritual role model, allows us to fully celebrate the amount of pure joy she was able to receive from God in her life. Mother Mary, despite her doubts and uncertainties in many situations, had always said 'yes' to God. This shows how happy our Mother was throughout her earthly life as she



Continued on Page 2...

...Continued from Page 1

never lost sight of God.

After the mass, parishioners got into the celebratory mood. The theme for this year's festivities was Hawaiian night and soon everyone soaked in the Aloha Ohana spirit.

Many parishioners were dressed in Aloha shirts with flower garlands around their necks. Some wore grass skirts, with colourful hibiscus-hairpins and flower garlands. There was an overwhelming response to the sale of the flower garlands – it was sold out in less than 10 minutes!

The Hospitality Ministry was in charge of this year's feast day celebrations and they engaged the Halau Hula Kealohilani Dance School to entertain the crowd with five Hula dances. The graceful hand movements of the dancers and the intriguing use of elements of nature as instruments paid tribute to the Hawaiian culture.

That was not the only entertainment for the evening. Trevor Nerva & Friends, our Youth Ministry and the Burmese community rocked the night with songs and dances. A group of young children also got into the Hawaiian mood and they performed a hula dance dressed in Hawaiian attire.

Continued on Page 3...



Our Lady's grotto decorated with bouquet upon bouquet of flowers for the occasion.



Trevor Nerva & Friends providing musical entertainment.



The Halau Hula Kealohilani Dance School (above and right with Archbishop) entertained the crowd with five Hula dances.

...Continued from Page 2



Our parish priests.



As in past years, the priests of the parish pitched in to make the night merrier. Fr. Luke Fong and Fr. Joseph Kace belted out songs to serenade us into the night. Fr. Adrian could not take the mike as he had a bad throat.

All these activities were held in the piazza, which allowed more people to watch and have a great time with their families and friends.

Meanwhile, at the St. Gregory's Hall, many activities catering to the younger crowd were set up. It included face painting, photo booth, popcorn, candy floss, kacang puteh and ice cream.

The Hospitality Ministry members did a great job and they were ably supported by members from other parish groups. The leader of Hospitality Ministry Andrew Ang said he was heartened by the support he got from other parish groups and thanked all of them.

As for those who took part in the celebrations, they had great fun and overall the verdict for the grand evening was a thumbs up. ❤️



The happy crowd.



Fun for the kiddies...

...and fun for the adults!



IHM's first Parish Discipleship Retreat a resounding success

By COLIN LEE

THE first edition of the IHM Parish Discipleship Retreat (PDR) saw 79 participants. They came together to strengthen their faith over two weekday evenings and a weekend – from May 10 to 13.

With the help of a service team of more than 50 members from different IHM parish groups, the retreat participants were invited to (re)encounter the love of Christ through his Church.

Parish pastoral executive Mike Arents praised God for meeting everyone where they were: "There was lots of excitement and people were just very open to receive. Some of the participants had attended other retreats while for some this was their first, yet all had a desire for more and God honoured those desires!"

Among other things, those who attended the retreat were treated to discourses and reflections by Fr. Adrian Yeo, Fr. Luke Fong and Mike Arents.

John Tan, 27, who was one of those who took part in the retreat shared his experience on how he felt God's presence that weekend.

When I registered for the retreat, I did not have the faintest idea what it was about. I signed up because several members of my community



were inclined to go for it, and because we are unable attend the next PDR due to our upcoming annual community retreat.

On the first day while considering my expectations for the PDR, I realised I did not have any, since I did not know what I had signed up for. However, I had an objective, that is to learn to be a better disciple. Little did I know, God had great things in store for me over the next few days.

Returning to the basics of our faith on the second day, we explored the images of God the Father. Through my reflection and sharing

with my group, I was reminded that God the Father is my Provider, my Forgiver. After this session I was asked, "what is the PDR supposed to be?"

Although I did not know the answer at that point, I replied, "To learn to be a better disciple, we must first know who we are following."

It was only during the third day that I discovered that it was God who would lead me to that answer. During one of the sessions, I prayed for the gifts of counsel and wisdom, so that I can grow deeper in my relationship with God. As I was praying, I had a burning in my heart to pray for the gift of discernment. After requesting my brothers in Christ to pray for me, I made my way to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament in prayer. That was when I came face-to-face with God the Holy Spirit. As I closed my eyes, all I could see was light. I was surrounded by light. Somehow, my heart knew that I was in the presence of God the Holy Spirit.

Now, I can truly say that I know who God the Holy Spirit is. He is the light within me and before me. He is the light that guides me to God. Although it was an extremely long and tiring day, grace was overflowing in all of us.

If you are thinking of reigniting your passion to follow Christ then I recommend you to attend this retreat. ♥



IHM Snapshots

By AGNES CHUA



Recent: Fr. Adrian Yeo addressing the new group of inquirers and sponsors as they started their journey on May 16. ♥



EpiphanY: The Epiphany group's volunteer teachers in Taroka, Indonesia. Classes are held in shop lots in the building in the background. ♥



Alpha Ministry: The Alpha service team and guests at the 17th Alpha course organised by IHM. ♥



Youth Catechists: IHM Youth Catechists had a day of recollection on the weekend of June 24. The theme was building Kingdom Friendships based on St. Augustine's teaching on necessity of virtue, frankness of speech, and, unity of heart and mind. ♥



IHM Jollies: Thirty-eight members from IHM Jollies went on a day trip to JB on June 5 for durian tasting and shopping. ♥



Infant Baptism: Fr. Joseph Kace with the babies he baptised on May 6. This was a first for Fr. Joseph in our parish. ♥

Movie on Mother Mary draws parishioners

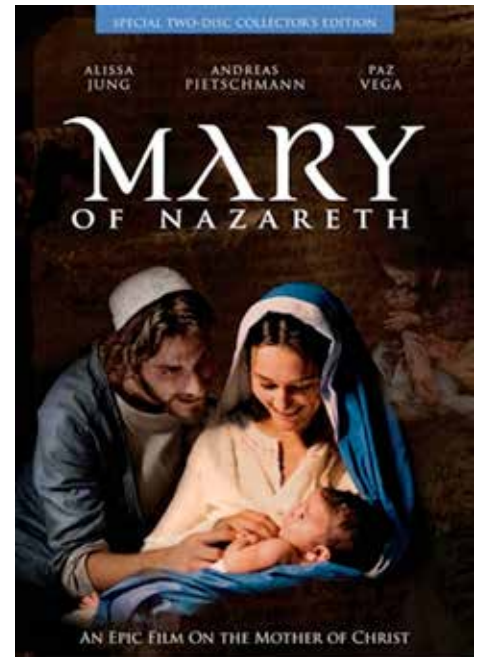
By JOYCE TAN

SINCE the month of May is dedicated to Mother Mary, the Youth Ministry organised a movie screening on May 26. The movie, *Mary of Nazareth*, was screened as part of the Youth Ministry's Come and See series and was open to all members of the parish. The evening started with dinner, followed by the movie. About 30 parishioners attended, and some came with their families as well.

The two-and-a-half hour movie traced the life of Mary, from her childhood, to the birth of Jesus, and finally to the Resurrection of Jesus. In

particular, Mary's unwavering faith in God in all circumstances of her life, especially in times of suffering and pain, resonated strongly throughout the movie. After the movie, reflection questions were given to encourage attendees to reflect deeper on aspects of the movie that had touched them.

Youth Ministry member Pamelyn Chua, who was one of the organizers, said she was heartened to see parishioners at the screening despite the heavy rain that evening. She said: "I felt the movie brought parishioners together. What struck me was how the movie portrayed the



life of Jesus through the eyes of Mary, how she was open to God's will, and was the first disciple of Jesus." ♥

A book club that enriches lives

By FIONA FOO

THE Bible Apostolate Team's (BAT) Book Club, which started in 2001 as the Little Rock Scripture Study, has come a long way. Over the years, it has enriched many by helping them to immerse themselves in the wonders of Christian literature. Members of the club get to understand scripture from a different perspective through comprehensive discussions, shedding light on how to live out their Christian lives.

The members, numbering around 25, come together every Friday morning to discuss a chapter of the book they are currently reading. This chapter by chapter method of discussion helps to facilitate the depth of sharing among members who relate what they read in the book to their personal daily lives. A designated Spiritual Director guides the members and the Book Club members have benefitted largely in understanding themselves and the crosses they carry. Apart from this, through personal sharing, the members are able to learn from each other, and ultimately forge



strong friendships. Being a part of this close-knit community has also helped members to feel that they do not face both their joys and struggles alone.

When asked to share a memorable experience while reading and discussing a particular book, Mary Sua said the book *Travelling Light*, written by Christian author Max Lucado, had opened her eyes in understanding and dealing with burdens faced in life. "People

carry a lot of crosses in their lives and sometimes, it may be difficult to let go," she shared. Mary, a member of the club, added that by discussing this book members were able to know that they are not alone, motivating them to speak up, learning to let go and not let negativity fester inside.

Though book discussions are usually a serious affair, the Book Club is not without fun too. Being self-supporting and in light of the rising cost of books these days, the members conduct yearly fundraisers like selling Chinese New Year cookies to fund themselves. At the end of each session, the group heads off to bond over lunch. The Book Club also organises community catered lunches occasionally for all members to come together and enjoy each other's company. ♥

Understanding the theology of the body

By NICOLE LARISSA

FOR three days in mid-June, around 50 Secondary 3 students from our parish took part in the Theology of the Body Retreat (TOB). The contents of the retreat encompassed the reflections of St. John Paul II on identity, love and human sexuality.

During the retreat (from June 15-17), the teens focused on topics such as discernment of vocations, dating with purpose and purity and the importance and positivity of the union of a married man and woman.

One important takeaway of the retreat was that each of us, participants as well as the members of the service team, are all beloved children of God, and that He loves us and our bodies, never intending to create anything for displeasure. Bearing this truth in mind, praise

and worship sessions focused on the theme of self-love, God's love and forgiveness of self and others. It was a good exposure for teens to learn to use song as a form of prayer and praise for God.

One of the sessions saw the boys and girls segregated and placed in different rooms. At this session the topic of chastity was discussed by both. There was also a discussion session for teens to have their questions regarding TOB to be answered, and for everyone to gain more knowledge and have their doubts clarified. Teens also had a session on free, total, faithful and fruitful (FTFF) love, and were given several topics to discuss whether the topics they were assigned possessed all FTFF requirements. Topics such



as marriage, fornication, adultery were brought up, amongst many others and each gender based group had to do a small presentation of their findings and conclude if it was a FTFF form of love or otherwise. This activity allowed teens to be more hands on while searching for knowledge.

A guest speaker, Br. Timothy from the Church of St. Francis Xavier, was also invited to speak at one of the sessions. He gave an insight on why discernment was necessary, and how to begin one's journey to do so. This was useful for the teens as they would be able to have more insight on marriage in different forms, either to God or to an earthly person.

The retreat ended with a worship session to thank God for the truths received during the three days as well as to celebrate the freedom from our sins and being reminded that He loves us unconditionally.

Said Rebecca Chan, one of the facilitators of the retreat: "Thanks to our sharing, I was reminded of how important it is to journey with a loving community. The young people around me were inspiring in our search for God and showing love to those around us." ♥



Young knights in white

By ALVIS GWA

KNIGHTWALK. That was the theme of this year's camp for the Altar Servers in our parish. It was held in June and the servers grew deeper in faith as they listened to Fr. Luke's session on effort.

The camp also brought the young servers closer through activities like trust-building and bonding games. The servers set up a Parents Night of food and performance around Biblical themes to bring the camp to a close.

With the unveiling of a new Exco team, the servers will be transitioning to a more session-based faith formation to guide servers in their journey with Christ. Sessions will include Praise and Worship, weekly check-ins and sharing.

The Altar Servers will be running the canteen in August, so please look out for them in their new ABS shirts. They will also be holding a recruitment

drive on that day. Those interested can contact Alvis (9668 6240) or Samuel (9452 0625). ♥



Listening with your eyes

by SARAH CHEW



and other awareness materials for the deaf. In this way, he said, the deaf can develop their faith formation and those who are not deaf can also learn more about the world of the hard-of-hearing.

In reaching out to the bigger community, SCDC hopes to conduct a monthly Sunday mass for the deaf to be celebrated by deaf priest, Fr. Rowland Yeo, OFM. The ministry has started its first Liturgy Sign Language class for those with normal hearing and plans to launch a print version. This is intended not only to encourage more parishioners to offer their time to interpret during mass but also to develop more understanding, communication and engagement in our parish between those who can hear and those who cannot.

IF you attend the Sunday 11.15am mass in our parish, you will see them seated in the front, attentively watching a sign language interpreter convey to them what the priest has to say. They are the members of the Singapore Catholic Deaf Community (SCDC), which was founded by the late Canossian Sisters, Sr. Angela Garavaglia and Sr. Helen Fernandez, FDCC in 1978.

Until November 1992, the ministry was known as Ephphatha (meaning "Be opened", uttered by Jesus when healing the deaf man in Mark 7:34).

Over the years, the ministry has grown to include both deaf and those who are not deaf with the objective of advocating awareness and developing programmes for the Catholic deaf community. The ministry, whose spiritual director is Fr Adrian Yeo, also serves the greater Catholic deaf community in Singapore.

Over e-mail and text messages, the president of SCDC Nathanael

Thomas Oswald explained the activities of the ministry. Nathanael, who cannot speak or hear, said: "It's amazing to have both deaf and those who are not deaf serving together."

Like other church ministries, SCDC conducts regular lunch fellowships and its members also volunteer occasionally at homes like the Gift of Love Home in Jurong. During important religious months such as May and October, members come together to share and pray the rosary.

According to Nathanael, the ministry is not without its challenges, one of them is the lack of resources for catechists. The deaf rely solely on their hands to communicate and sight to interpret the world around us. To interpret Scripture texts, the deaf community lacks modern tools, making evangelisation a difficult task. Nathanael said he is therefore exploring the possibility of working with other ministries to launch an online signed-Bible media resource

After all, said Nathanael: "True communication occurs when one's message is understood by others and they can respond in kind." He also added that signing requires one to listen with one's eyes. It is not as natural for hearing people as we tend to do the opposite but there is a certain calm and beauty in observing the world purely through one's eyes, hands and facial expressions.

One of those who interprets the liturgy during Sunday mass is Susanne Patrick. She is the daughter of two of the longest-serving deaf members of SCDC, Patrick and Barbara Lim-Anthony. They have served in this ministry since its inception in 1978.

SCDC will be marking its 40th anniversary with a mass celebrated by Archbishop William Goh at IHM on Aug 5 (11.15am).

If you would like to learn how to communicate with your hands and eyes or offer your time to help build this ministry, please contact singaporecatholicdeaf@gmail.com. ♥



Editorial Team: Agnes Chua, Colin Lee, Denise Julia Tan, Fiona Foo, Jolyn Tan, Joyce Tan, Matthew Tay, Nicole Larissa Xiao, Patrick Jonas, Sarah Chew

Layout: Karen d'Almeida

Contact: heartbeat@ihm.sg

Published by: Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 24 Highland Road, Singapore 549115

Printed by: E-Press Printing Services, Blk 3015A Ubi Road 1, #02-01, Singapore 408705