



New PPC Commissioned

By JOYCE TAN

ON February 23, the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Exco members of the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary were commissioned during the 11.15am Sunday mass. All 14 members (above, with Parish Priest Fr Adrian Yeo and Asst. Parish Priest Fr Cary Chan) of the new Exco were present at the commissioning and they pledged to serve the parish for the next two years.

Outlining his Exco's plans, the chairman of the PPC, Mr Pierre-Paul Chua (popularly known as Cher Choon), stressed the need for parishioners to come together in spiritual unity. Such a focus, he felt, is a fitting natural progression from the 60th anniversary celebrations held last year.

Last year, the focus had been on the physical renovation of the church, as well as promoting interaction among parishioners through events such as the Kampong Night and Family Day. However, during the next two years the new Exco will focus on the spiritual renovation of the parish, even while retaining the the 60th anniversary theme: "We are the Church". According to Cher Choon, this deepening of spirituality is an "overarching priority" because of what it means to be a Catholic – that it involves more than merely coming for Mass on Sundays, but instead

requiring from everyone participation in the life of the parish, in both spiritual and non-spiritual activities.

To encourage greater participation, the PPC has identified four key areas: Pastoral, Communications and Publicity, Formation of New Groups, and Inter-ministry activity.

The first area of focus is intended to facilitate the spiritual growth of parishioners.

The second aims for more effective communication with parishioners about the developments within the parish, through channels such as the IHM website and the quarterly newsletter IHM Heartbeat.

The third will be in forming new church groups in niche areas. For example, a support group for children with special needs. In forming new groups, one consideration that needs to be taken is the positioning of the new group – whether it would be a new group on its own or subsumed as a sub-group. One example of an umbrella

group is the Youth Ministry (YM), which comprises smaller groups, each having its own individual charism.

The fourth area the PPC plans to focus on will be to get the different church ministries to work with each other, thereby harnessing the synergies of the groups rather than each ministry working in silos. In line with this aim, there are plans for the different ministries to come together to organise a retreat. We may also see the return of the Parish Renewal Experience.

Cher Choon explained that these are not new areas, but a continuation and reinforcement of what is going on in the parish. He added that they are meant to "create a sense of community, that we are the church", with the "need for more new faces to come forward, not just the same people".

This is Cher Choon's second term as PPC Chairman. He described the new Exco team as "diverse, yet balanced at the same time because it represents various age groups". ♥

PPC EXCO 2014/2015

Parish Priest & President:
Fr Adrian Yeo

Assistant Parish Priest:
Fr Cary Chan

Chairperson:
Pierre-Paul Chua

Co-chairperson:
Michael Vong

Secretary:
Bernard Yeo

Asst Secretary:
Agnes Chua

EXCO Members:

Bianca Chan
Christina Lim
Felix Lim
Jocelyn Seow
Patrick Jonas

Paul Chan
Roy Kheng
Wesley Lye
Jacqueline Khng
Sharon Chow

Snapshots... Church groups at work

By COREEN TAN



Lectors: At their recent weekly “Breaking of the Word” session which is held in preparation prior to their Sunday’s proclamation of the Word at Holy Mass. ♥



SVP: On Jan 17, children of Friends in Need, who did well in their studies, were presented with cash awards by Fr. Adrian at a simple function held at the church hall. ♥



Bible Apostate Team: The BAT holds weekly bible study classes with a vision of building a community of faith founded on the Word of God, and growing in knowledge of the Catholic traditions and history. Members attend DVD based classes by popular theologians/scholars. ♥



Society of Our Lady of Sorrows: This prayer group prays for “the dearly departed” at funeral wakes of our parishioners. On All Souls’ Day every year, all their members gather to prepare the candle podium and assist with the lighting of candles for the departed souls. ♥



Catechism: Classes for 2014 recently resumed on 9 February. Here are the Kindergarten 2 students reporting for their first lesson and Primary 1 students on their first day back. ♥



Catechism Ministry: There was a parents’ briefing for the primary classes to share information on the spiritual programme the children are embarking on. ♥



Epiphany: Celebrating the 10th annual Advent Project - Praying for Conversion - in December, prayers cards were hung on Epiphany's Advent Tree. The pledge cards commit our parishioners to pray throughout the year, for the conversion of their non-Catholic loved ones and friends. ♥



St. Dominic Savio Altar Servers' Society: Our dedicated altar servers at this year's Lunar New Year Mass. Catholic boys may join the altar servers after their First Holy Communion. They will undergo weekly training for a year before they can start serving at weekday masses. ♥



Neighbourhood Christian Community: The NCC Ave 4 recently held their Thanksgiving Mass at the home of their 87-year old homebound member, Mr. Richard Pereira. The mass was celebrated by Fr. Adrian. ♥



IIHM Jollies Club: The club recently had a Chinese New Year celebration. Members gathered to pray before proceeding to a Lohei lunch that was accompanied by great music, and wrapped up with BINGO games hosted by Fr. Adrian. ♥



RCIA: This group recently organized an Advent Walk for Rice charity event that had parishioners joining in as well. A total of 117 participated in the walk. ♥



RCIA: The RCIA team held their annual retreat in January for the Catechumens, Candidates and Confirmands at MAJODI. This group photo was taken at the grotto with their retreat master Sr. Nora. Please continue to pray for them. ♥

IHM Diamond Jubilee Dinner 2013



Our guest of honour was Archbishop William Goh



Presentation of Apostolic Blessing for IHM Jubilee by His Excellency Mgr. Leopoldo Girelli, Nuncio to Singapore



Launch of IHM Website (www.ihm.sg) & Newsletter (IHM HeartBeat)



Lucky Draw



Entertainment by Matthew & the Mandarins ...and Fr. Adrian!



Part of the dinner gathering



Flower Power

Ever wondered who is behind the beautiful floral creations you see on the altar every week?

By MATTHEW TAY



CAN you point out the seven locations where flowers are placed in our church? Most of us would find it difficult to answer this question correctly. But one thing you remember and agree with all is that the arrangement of the flowers are really beautiful and amazing.

If you thought that they are the work of an outside florist that the church pays for, you are wrong. The flowers are bought but they are arranged by members of the church's Flower Ministry.

This ministry was started in the 1990s by Fr. Barthoulot. Back then, the flowers were contributed by parishioners. What resulted was an unusual, and at times, messy mix of flowers and colours. Soon Fr. Barthoulot, on the advice of the founding members of the Flower Ministry, decided to place a donation box for the purchase of the flowers. With that money, the ministry bought and arranged the flowers for the church, but these days, the flowers are paid for by the church instead. The ministry is made up of seven members, most of them retirees.

Walking into church on a warm Friday morning, I watched as the ministry members cleared the old flowers and realised how bare the church looked without the colourful flowers. The ministry members usually start their work at 7am on Fridays. Fresh flowers arrive at around 8.30am and the arrangement is usually done with three types of flowers. If there is a wedding taking place over the weekend, and there is a request from the wedding couple, their choice of flowers can be included in

the arrangement – for a cost.

The week I visited the church, the ministry members had ordered White Anthuriums, Pink Eustoma along with Green Moluccella, also known as the 'Bell of Ireland', in addition to roses and Cordyline Leaves. The stalks are first trimmed and placed on pre-soaked sponge. The sponge enables them to arrange the stalks in whatever position they want and also provide the plants with water without attracting mosquitoes.

The process of flower arrangement usually takes about an hour, with a lot of factors to consider including the height, usually for the two on each side of the tabernacle, and the design, which is changed every week. The ministry members admit they are not professionals and often search the Internet for inspiration for good floral arrangements. It is after they decide on a design that they place the order for flowers, usually a week in advance.

The members use staples and wires to bend the leaves in the position they want to give the arrangement a neat appearance. I had spent an hour with them and thought they were done with the arrangement but the members are a painstaking and patient lot. They spent another 30 minutes fine-tuning the arrangement. Their job does not end there. They return the church to water the sponges every Saturday, Monday and Wednesday.

The work of the Flower Ministry is not as simple as it sounds and the members told me they will be happy to see more helping hands come their way. If you have a gift in flower arrangement, the ministry would be delighted to accept your help.

By the way, the seven locations where flowers are placed in the church are: Both sides of the main entrance, one on each side of the altar and the tabernacle and one on the lectern. Did you guess it right? ♥



The Confirmation journey

By MATTHEW TAY



WHAT does confirmation mean to you? This was the question posed to two young parishioners after their confirmation by Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia, on January 25 this year at IHM. "Confirmation is furthering my journey in the Catholic faith," said Colin Chee.

His fellow confirmand, Petrina Tan, agreed. "Personally, confirmation means that I'm grown up in the eyes of the Church and that I have decided to be a Catholic for the rest of my life. It will be my duty to spread the good news of God to others and give back to the Church!"

These were the values imparted to them by their catechist and facilitators throughout their confirmation year. Their relationship with their facilitators went from 'professional' at the start of the year to that of a close friend after confirmation. While the friendship developed throughout the year, the catalyst was the confirmation camp held from Dec 13 to 16 last year.

"Confirmation camp definitely

has to be the best camp I ever attended!" Recalled Petrina: "Even though there were no 'high element games' or campfires, the sessions were truly enriching. The friends that I have made and the bond I have with them is something so precious that I believe it was God's plan to put me there!"

Their facilitator Atricia Chan was by their side throughout the year and was a huge source of inspiration to them, especially for Petrina. "Atricia is my role model. She is really nice, kind, warm and a very pleasant person to be associated with. I can't think of any trait of hers that is negative or anyone who wouldn't like her. She is someone



I strive to be since I'm not much of a people person," said Petrina. She also mentioned Clarissa Sih, her catechist, who often provided her with a listening ear.

Seeing her charges grow throughout the year was a very proud moment for Atricia, who has been involved in the confirmation journey for seven years. "It is very fulfilling to see them grow not just spiritually, but emotionally as well." She is also delighted that her friendship with them did not end after the camp. "We are like close friends now, we have a WhatsApp group and even meet up occasionally to hang out!" she said cheerfully.

Now, with their confirmation firmly behind them, Colin and Petrina have started the next phase of their journey. While Colin decided to join the Post-Con group to share his experiences with others of his age group, Petrina opted to be a Youth Catechist, in the hope of following her role models and sharing her experience with future confirmands. ❤️



Conversations with a catechist

By BEATRICE ONG

CATECHISM is defined as a summary of the principles of Christian religion in the form of lessons. Is catechism really all about strict curriculum and standard lesson prototypes?

We had the opportunity to take a peek into the life of catechist Christian Kwan and understand more about the work involved. What most people don't usually realise is that extensive preparation and planning are needed before a typical catechism lesson. Teaching materials such as handouts, powerpoint slides and prayer drafts have to be prepared. Curriculum is based on the Catechism of the Catholic

Church (CCC). Insights are also drawn from the US Bishops' Conference CCC and from the Catholic News.

With the Parish Priest as the chief catechist and overseeing the RCIA, it is Christian's job to help the priest run the programme.

"We serve faithfully, with our eyes and minds fixed on the catechumens so that they in the end reap the benefits of catechism," said Christian.

"It is team work, hard work, and a lot of self-sacrifice," he added.

The CCC sets the gold standard in catechesis curriculum, but the Spirit cannot be put aside in so implementing it. As Christian poetically summarises:

"Curriculum without the Spirit will be like food without salt; bland though still nutritious. We must allow the aroma of Christ to fill the hearts and minds of the catechumens, and allow them to see and taste that the Lord is good."

Of course, as with every vocation, Christian's call to the Catechetical Ministry is not one without struggles. When speaking of the challenges, he retains positivity and passion. "There is so much to learn, so little time to do it, and too few workers in the Lord's vineyard. But with whatever we have, we need to keep the faith and keep the race. For each soul to be won over to the Lord is a victory to God."

In being the bridge between those seeking the faith and the church, Christian, a former member of IHM's PPC Exco, testifies: "In our weakness, He is strongest. So we acknowledge the Master Catechist. We are His lowly partners." ❤️

Young@Immaculate Heart

By JOYCE TAN

Hey you! Have you just been confirmed? Come check this out and join all these friendly faces here at the IHM Youth Ministry (IHMYM)! Or if you have been confirmed a few years ago (or many years ago it's fine, too), you're most welcomed to join us too! We'd love to have you with us :D



Young Adults Community

We are: A community of disciples that supports and encourages personal growth through sharing our lives, praying and worshipping together, studying scripture, receiving the sacraments, serving others and loving God. "One family journeying in the faith by living in the light of Christ."

Meets: Sunday 3 - 5pm @ Youth Room

Who can join: Youths and Young Adults who seek God and Community.

Contact: Matthias Aw matthiasantonio@gmail.com



IHM Youth Catechists

We are: IHMYC. We make a difference. We focus on forming our members to be better Catholics. We deepen our faith through deeper learning, meaningful service, challenging projects and have a rocking good time while serving and experiencing God!

Meets: Saturday 4.30 - 6pm @ IHM St Peter and Paul Room (Level 3)

Who can join: Confirmed Youths and Young Adults up to age 24 who seek Community and want to help with Catechism.

Contact: Roy/Jac ihmyouthcat@gmail.com



Via Christus Choir

We are: A dynamic group that aims to collectively utilise our talents for the greater glory of God. We strive to inspire and strengthen people with God's message of Love, Peace and Faith. By working closely with the Church, we hope to reach out to people who do not know God, and bring more people closer to God through our song and music.

Meets: Sings for Sunday 8.30am Mass, followed by community breakfast. Weekly choir practice/spiritual sessions on Sunday at 11am to 1pm in St Cecilia Room (Level 3).

Who can join: Anyone between 16 and 40 who loves God and music.

Contact: Wesley Lye wesley.lye@gmail.com



RCIY

We are: A group of youths within the church of IHM whose mission is to introduce God to other non-Catholic youths. We do this through a year long process known as the RCIY journey. The journey is where we share our faith stories and experiences with the non-Catholic youths, befriending them and welcoming them into our community in the process.

Meets: Sundays 11am-1pm @ IHM St Peter and Paul Room (Level 3)

Who can join as Sponsors: Actively practicing Catholics aged 18 - 30.

Who can join as Enquirers: Non-baptised Youth aged 14 - 21 who want to know more about the Catholic Faith.

Contact: Daniel Lee/Seishen rciyihm@gmail.com



Post-Con

We are: A group of fun-loving youths who have decided to journey together as a community founded in love, faithful in prayer, and fixed on God. We do what the apostles used to do... eat, pray, share, complain, love, be loved. :)

Meets: Saturday 3.30 - 6pm @ IHM St John's Room (Level 2), followed by community dinner together.

Who can join: Post-confirmation youths.

Contact: Jocelyn Seow jocelynseow89@gmail.com

heART space

The Story of Saint Joseph

Feast Day: 19 March

Illustrations by MICHAEL GOO



Saint Joseph is a descendant of the King David. He was known as the carpenter and a righteous man in the Bible.



St Joseph was betrothed to Mary. When he discovered that Mary was pregnant with Jesus, he decided to protect her all his life and became foster father of Jesus.



Saint Joseph is a patron saint and protector of the Catholic Church.



Interview:
Father Cary Chan
 by ABRAHAM DOMINIC

He shares his birthday with Singapore

I set out to interview Fr. Cary Chan with some trepidation. It had taken me a while to fix the date and time of the interview and hence that feeling. But all that changed by the time I finished an hour long chat with him in his office on a leisurely Saturday. Fr. Cary, IHM's Assistant Parish Priest, is a friendly and kind person, blessed with a fine sense of humour.

He moved to IHM a little more than a year ago. When asked what his thoughts and feelings on his appointment were, he had this to say: "Along with the obvious excitement, there was a general sense of apprehension as I knew too many people here. I wondered if a prophet would be accepted in his own city."

Fr. Cary grew up in the IHM parish and was ordained 22 years ago in this very parish. He thinks that the neighbourhood has changed a lot from when he was a very young seminarian. Having served in various parishes, he believes the parishioners of IHM are a mature community of people, devout and generally accepting and accommodating in nature.

Fr. Cary belongs to a small family of four. His parents live independently, while his sister is settled and has three children. He makes it a point to visit his parents at least twice a week to share a meal and spend time with them.

On a typical day, he rises early to prepare for Mass. He also manages to fit in some exercise time. On days

when he has to lecture seminarians on the course on Church history – twice a week – he spends some time preparing for the classes.

Three times a month Fr. Cary helps with lunch time masses conducted for working professionals in the Central Business District Area and he is pleased by the turnout at these masses. Fr. Cary also celebrates Mass for the Italian community here when called upon.

As the diocese did not have a priest who had an in-depth grasp on the subject of Church History, Fr. Cary was asked to read Church History, so he could teach it to aspiring priests here in Singapore. He was sent to Italy (Rome) where he obtained his *Licentiate* at the Gregorian University and returning after three years of study. The first few months in Rome were a challenge as everything was taught in Italian. "By being the first Singaporean priest picked to study Church history, I made history," he said with a smile.

Growing up, Fr. Cary was inspired by a former Parish Priest Fr. Barthoulot who was "instrumental in guiding me during my formative years".

"Being a priest in today's world is not an easy task as compared to 30 or 40 years ago. To be a credible witness now is to show the way, and not just use of words," said Fr. Cary, who believes that priests cannot afford to act 'know all' because there is still plenty to learn about life, family and relationships in order to be able to

effectively journey with the faithful. Making himself available to people, being approachable, attending to the needs of his parishioners, the ability to demonstrate sensitivity is what he aspires to, and feels that these are a few essential qualities required to be a true servant of God.

"The Church is taking positive strides forward under the leadership of the current Pope Francis. In Singapore as well we see such examples in programmes such as The Alpha programme, which provides a basic understanding of Christianity for non-Catholics, and includes those Catholics who wish to refresh their faith and understanding," he said.

One of the more appealing aspects of being a Shepherd of the Flock for Fr. Cary is "the relationship with friends over the years; something valuable across parishes, where even today I make it a point to meet up with ex-parishioners".

When in the mood to relax, Fr. Cary Chan swims, reads reference material to be ready for whatever seminarians could throw at him, watches football World Cup matches when they are on, and reads periodicals like the Time magazine, that he subscribes to. He is a foodie to boot, and "will try anything that is hot and spicy".

Fr. Cary has an important connection with Singapore; he shares his birthday with the National Day. When we see him around, we can begin wishing him right away, as this year he will turn 50. ❤️



Editorial Team: Agnes Chua, Beatrice Ong, Coreen Tan, Dominic Abraham, Joyce Tan, Karen d'Almeida, Matthew Tay, Michael Goo, Patrick Jonas

Designer: Paris Wong

Contact: heartbeat@ihm.sg

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