

## A celebration of love

By SARAH CHEW



**T**HIS year, 47 couples renewed their wedding vows on Aug 9 in the presence of their loved ones and the community. At the fourth annual Milestone Wedding Anniversary mass held at IHM, Fr Adrian Yeo in his homily emphasised that a marriage requires great sacrifices by a couple, a total surrendering of one to the other. Fr Antonio Gonzalez and Fr Joseph Kace concelebrated the Mass with Fr Adrian, who was the main celebrant. During the mass couples married for 5, 10, 15 (in increments of five years) until 50 and every year after 50, renewed their vows. The mass was followed by a lunch reception where the 45th (Fr Antonio), 20th (Fr Adrian) and 10th (Fr Joseph) sacerdotal anniversaries of the priests were also celebrated.

The idea of spending the rest of our lives with our knights in shining armour or wonder maidens of steel is an incredibly romantic notion.

But as years roll by, couples face the pressures of everyday life and their marriage faces challenges. IHM Heartbeat spoke to three couples who renewed their vows on Aug 9 to know more about what keeps their marriage strong.

### Martin and Germaine Lim

Life is not a bed of roses for Martin Lim, 82, and his wife Germaine, 84. She was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease 18 years ago. Her health has deteriorated and with it comes the



accompanying challenges for both of them. Taking all that in his stride, Martin recalls with great fondness of the years gone by. How Germaine convinced him to go for confession during their days of courting. Until then he had been reluctant. He felt tremendous joy after his confession. With God at the centre of their love and life, trials became meaningful. He says: "If there is no crisis, people tend to forget God." Therefore, despite Germaine's immobility, Martin still commits to bringing her to mass on Saturday evenings, as much as her condition allows. Their secret to maintaining their loving relationship is to "never quarrel". Instead, walk away and come back to the issue in a calmer state of mind because "apologising after a quarrel is meaningless". They have been married for 57 years and are blessed with three children and 10 grandchildren.

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# IHM Feast Day and Triduum 2019

By JOYCE TAN



**R**AIN came visiting just as the IHM feast day mass, celebrated by Archbishop William Goh, was getting over. But it not dampen the spirits of the parishioners or get in the way of the festive atmosphere for the rest of the evening.

Living up to this year's Feast Day theme "Around the World", various parish groups set up food stalls serving food from a variety of cultures. Parishioners also enjoyed performances put up by Trevor Nerva, the Burmese community, Br Andrew, Fr Joseph, and Fr Luke.



It was a lively evening and many parishioners also took the chance to take selfies with the Archbishop.

Leading up to the feast day on June 29, a Triduum was held in the church for three nights. Fr Terence Pereira's theme for the three days was "Towards Evangelizing Church". Is your faith a church-y faith or a living faith? This was the main question Fr Terence asked.

Through light-hearted stories of his encounters with Catholics, Fr Terence explained what a church-y faith was – an overly inward focus on the everyday, administrative running and housekeeping of the church. This leads to a conventional faith, where Catholics blindly follow rituals, without understanding their meaning. In contrast, a living faith is an exciting and life-giving faith, which would attract others towards God. We can only have this living faith, if we have encountered God. It is this living faith that drove the Apostles to evangelize with great courage and fervour. He reminded that our primary duty as Catholics was to evangelize, for every tongue to confess that Jesus is Lord. If we truly love God, telling others about God and witnessing to Him are things we would do unceasingly.



*"Is your faith a church-y faith or a living faith?" asked Fr Terence Pereira at the Triduum.*

To have a living faith, Fr Terence stressed the need to be a community, to get to know our fellow brothers and sisters in church, and to speak with one another about God. As communities and as families, we should pray together, read and

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(L-R) Fr Adrian, Fr Antonio, Fr Joseph, Fr Luke, Archbishop William Goh and Br Andrew



The Mexican stall hosted by the Lectors



(Clockwise from top) Faith Formation team representing France. Fr Luke Fong serenading the crowd. Family Life Group representing Korea. Trevor Neroa with Br Andrew. Face painting for the kids. The IHM photo booth. Fr Joseph and the altar boys. The appreciative crowd.



discuss scripture, and to share faith.

Fr Terence's message on forming communities was thought-provoking for some. One parishioner Ivonne said: "It has not occurred to me that coming to church is about building community. It has always been about God and I."

It was also heartening to see youth coming for the Triduum. Oliver, who is going to be confirmed later this year, came with his friends. They had just attended the Sec 3 retreat and felt inspired to come for all three days as a community. He felt that the stories Fr Terence shared were funny and helped him to understand the faith better. ❤️







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Above: Everyone who had a milestone anniversary to celebrate.



**Paul and Katherine Chan**

For Paul and Katherine Chan who celebrate their 30<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary this year, marriage is “unbreakable”. When the family faced tragedies a while ago – Paul’s father, uncle and Katherine’s mother all died the same year – they said they got through it with the strength God gave them. Both help out in Food and Hosting committee at the Marriage Encounter Programme and having different opinions they often argued. However, recognising that when you “embark on a journey to do God’s work, there will always be

a challenge”, they were brought closer together by their differences. Katherine says: “You learn to listen to God’s messages in all your trials”. Now, with their three children, they look forward to traveling together, reconnecting with Christ in the churches and chapels that they plan to visit and rekindle their love for each other in God’s presence.

**Anthony and Mary Das**

Anthony and Mary Das have been married for 59 years and they share the same convictions. Anthony, who was raised in the Catholic faith since birth, grew up



in a big family with his grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts. It was not until after World War II that his big family started to form their own smaller family units and move away from one another. In spite of the physical separation, they always managed to make time for one another, attending family prayers, dinners and gatherings. Anthony says that this is something

instilled in him by his grandmother. In Anthony and Mary Das’ eyes, marriages, like family bonds, are unbreakable and praying as one helps keep them together. According to him, they hardly quarrelled. Admittedly, it sounds easier said than done but with God guiding them through their family prayers, they always strive to find ways to resolve conflicts. ❤️

**Added bonus: Celebrating our priests’ sacerdotal anniversaries**



Fr Antonio Gonzalez – 45th anniversary



Fr Adrian Yeo – 20th anniversary



Fr Joseph Kace – 10th anniversary



# IHM Snapshots

By AGNES CHUA



**IHM Jollies:** 29 members of the Jollies went on a trip to Malacca. The group visited the church of our Lady of Guadalupe (above) and attended mass celebrated by Fr Joseph Kace at Santa Cruz Chapel. ♥



**Teach N Learn:** Members of the first Teach N Learn mission trip for the new academic year on their way to Batam. The mission needs more teachers. Those interested can email [epiphany@ihm.sg](mailto:epiphany@ihm.sg) ♥



**RCIA:** 32 RCIA sponsors and helpers were commissioned on June 16. ♥



**Parish Assembly:** The parish accounts were presented and parishioners discussed the pastoral needs of our parish at the Parish Assembly on Aug 12. More than 100 parishioners took part. ♥



**Hospitality Ministers:** Four new Hospitality Ministers were commissioned on July 27 while the rest of the HMs renewed their commitment to serve in the ministry. ♥



**PR4:** Parishioners and ministry members numbering 80 attended the Parish Discipleship Retreat from July 18-21. ♥



**Lectors:** Members from this ministry pledged their commitment on Bible Sunday at the Saturday evening mass (13 July). ♥



**Alpha Course:** A record number of guests completed the 2019 Alpha Course. Many went on to join the RCIA. ♥



# The road to Confirmation

By MATTHEW TAY

**F**OR the teenagers of IHM, it is part of their confirmation journey to attend the Secondary retreats in June. It is a good and effective way to not just learn about the Catholic faith, but also bond with fellow teenagers who are on identical routes towards Confirmation. As the normal catechetical sessions are only an hour on Sundays, the time is not enough for them to engage God.

“The normal catechetical sessions are for the teens to develop a life of prayer, to encounter God in some way and to be formed in faith,” says Yvonne Tambou, the IHM Catechetical Coordinator. “These three day and two night retreats allow the teens to have a longer encounter with God, awaken their spiritual life, participate in more meaningful discussion to discover themselves and have more time to prepare themselves for the sacrament of Reconciliation.”

In IHM, teens are prepared for Confirmation based on a three-year plan. Mike Arents, the pastoral executive, plans the retreat programme for Confirmation with the theme of ‘Discovering Themselves’. It starts from Secondary One focusing on ‘Identity’ and what it means to be a child of God. In Secondary Two, the teens are called to ‘Discipleship’ and what it means to follow Christ. During Secondary Three it is encountering the Holy Trinity in a deeper way, discovering the Holy Spirit and



*The Sec 3 Theology of the body retreat*

being empowered for the work of evangelization and following Christ.

From the programme, Yvonne and the catechists work with Mike to find suitable presenters, such as the youth catechists and external speakers, to help run the various retreat programmes. Assisting as well are the youth facilitators and volunteers from the Youth Ministries who, together with the teen’s parents, come to serve and pray.

The Secondary Three retreat in June, however, should not be confused with the end of the year Confirmation camp. The June retreat, which was only started last year, is on the ‘Theology of the body’, which reflected on the teens identity as a man or a woman and how they can live their sexuality according to God’s purpose and plan. As this is an important topic, it was decided

that it was better suited for a retreat instead of cramping it with the Sunday sessions.

“We added this retreat because we wanted to focus on the ‘Theology of the body’ of Pope John Paul II, which means they reflect on their identity as man or woman and how to live their sexuality according to God’s purpose and plan,” Yvonne told Heartbeat. “We do not just want to talk about the do’s and don’ts of sexuality, but rather discover this in prayer, like who am I, what is it to be a man or a woman and how they can learn to live this gift of sexuality well. It is a place where they can discover their own identity but now as a man and a woman in a deeper way and to create a platform to discover the teaching of the church and why is it important to bring their struggles in to prayer.” ♥



**F**MM sisters: The sisters had a thanksgiving Mass at IHM before they moved out of their Kovan Road residence. ♥



**R**CIA: On registration night, Fr Adrian welcomed a new batch of inquirers to RCIA. ♥



# A new experience for the youth

by DENISE TAN

**I**F you have been attending the weekend masses you may have seen young boys and girls helping out as Hospitality Ministers or singing with the choir. They are some of the 65 confirmands who are preparing for the rite of Confirmation later in the year. They have been attached to one of the three ministries – Catechetical, Hospitality, or Choir Ministry – as part of a new Ministry Involvement Programme (MIP).

Over the course of a few months, confirmands will continue their faith formation and preparation for Confirmation with the guidance of mentors from the various ministries.

The aim of the new programme is also to inspire interest in ministry work among the youth and to “let them be part of the parish and to grow and journey with the ministries that they are attached to,” said Yvonne Tambou, the Catechetical Coordinator of IHM.

“...Imparting knowledge in catechesis is only one part of the teen’s faith formation. Catechesis is to lead a person to fullness of life which includes a relationship with God and to form the person in faith so that they can be disciples and witnesses of Christ,” added Yvonne.

The programme provides a good opportunity for youths to “experience service and inclusiveness in a larger community within the parish,” said Angela Low, a parent of a confirmand



(Above & below) Learning the ropes of the Hospitality Ministry.

currently enrolled in MIP.

“My son, Oliver, was assigned to serve in the Hospitality Ministry although it was not his first choice,” said Angela. “It turned out to be a blessing in disguise because he found joy serving during mass.

He likes to be part of the ministry and just like the ministry; his goal is to serve the Lord by making everyone who comes for mass feel important, warm and welcome.”

For confirmand Nicole Chan, being attached to the 8.30am Choir Ministry was also not her first choice. She thought that singing in the choir would have been boring, and was instead looking forward to being a



Catechist. However, she admits that God has “outdone” her once again and she now understands why “He put (her) in the choir”.

“After attending the first session with the 8.30am Choir, my mindset changed. Being in the choir has taught me interesting and meaningful things. Not only do we practise singing, we will also go through the Sunday Gospel as a group and it (gives) us more time to reflect and share,” said Nicole.

“I am thankful that I am given this opportunity to learn and grow in the MIP, to serve Jesus through singing and it is indeed a blessing to be a part of this programme even though it is just (for) two months,” said Nicole.

The catechetical team aims to continue this programme every year. ❤️



Sharing in the Catechetical Ministry.



Serving in the Choir Ministry.



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

**Layout:** Karen d’Almeida

**Contact:** [heartbeat@ihm.sg](mailto:heartbeat@ihm.sg)

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