



Shepherd visits his flock

By PATRICK JONAS

HIS Grace Archbishop William Goh has a way with words. He drives home his message using simple examples, laced with humour. On Aug 30, hours before he was to leave for the Vatican, His Grace visited the Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) parish on his first pastoral visit and listened to the presentations made by various ministry leaders. The session lasted more than three hours.

The Archbishop's visit began with His Grace celebrating the 11.15am mass, assisted by Fr. Adrian Yeo, Fr. Erbin Fernandez and Fr. Joseph Jeannequin. In his homily Archbishop Goh reminded the congregation that there are many good people in our midst but they must make themselves heard and stand up for the truth. He said that with the explosive growth of new media, minority

voices are drowning the views of the majority, who tend to remain silent.

Later, His Grace joined more than 100 members of our church ministries for lunch. After grabbing a quick bite, the Archbishop did his "walkabout" chatting with the ministry representatives and enquiring about their work.

Archbishop Goh told the gathering that in his second year in office he intends to visit all the parishes and hear for himself the work being done by the various ministries in each parish. Even though he may visit IHM again, he said his next pastoral visit to the parish may not be before three to five years. Once his pastoral rounds are over, he hopes he can hold retreats in different parishes.

Chairman of IHM's Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) Pierre-Paul

Chua (Cher Choon) welcomed the Archbishop and outlined the work being done by the PPC, which he said was in line with the Archbishop's 10-year plan for the Archdiocese.

Once the presentations were over, the Archbishop gave his inputs. He was happy with the activities of the ministries. Noting that some ministries had problems in attracting new members, he advised ministry leaders to "loosen" up and emphasised that bonding is important to retain new members.

The Archbishop also invited Fr. Erbin to share his thoughts. Fr. Erbin, who heads the Office of The New Evangelisation, felt that ministries which have similar goals should work together and synergise their efforts. All in all, it was a fruitful session for all present. ♥

IHM Feast Day 2014

By MATTHEW TAY

ON 28 June this year, our parish marked its 61st feast day. Archbishop William Goh, along with Fr. Adrian Yeo, Fr. Cary Chan, Fr. Joseph Jeannequin and Fr. Antonio Gonzalez concelebrated the feast day mass, which was preceded by the Triduum, held nightly from June 25 to 27. These three masses were celebrated by priests who either grew up in the parish or had served IHM previously.

Building a Christian Family was the theme of this year's feast day. Its aim was to encourage parishioners to recognise themselves as members of communities at various levels: From the smallest unit of the biological family, to the intermediate congregation of the parish, and ultimately to the all-encompassing universal Church. Inherent in this recognition of being part of the Christian Family is the fulfilment of the roles that membership at each level entails. Accordingly, each day of the Triduum had sub-themes titled My role in my family, My role in my parish community and My role in the universal Church.

On the first night, focusing on My role in the family, Fr. Brian de Souza reflected on what we should

be doing – be it as a child, or spouse or parent – to build God's kingdom in the family. He outlined three essential elements of a Christian life: Responding to God's call, surrendering to God's plan, and having a relationship with God and those around us.

The following night, in explaining what it meant to be part of the parish community, Fr. Erbin Fernandez highlighted the need to help one another in the community, in order to grow to become better people. Such growth occurs through learning to accept and love difficult people, encouraging each other, and being like "salt" to one another.

On the third night, Fr. Luke Fong identified the universal Church as comprising of the Church Militant (the faithful living on earth, in constant battle against temptation), the Church Penitent (the faithful in Purgatory undergoing purification), and the Church Triumphant (the faithful in Heaven with God). He also pointed out the unifying power of being joyful in suffering, through offering up suffering for those struggling in the world or those in Purgatory.

During the Feast Day Mass, Archbishop Goh rounded up the



Above: Feast Day Mass. Right: Celebrating Archbishop Goh's birthday. Below: Feast Day dinner. Bottom right: Music provided by our parishioners.



(L-R) Fr. Brian, Fr. Erbin and Fr. Luke celebrated the Triduum



Triduum themes. He spoke of the need for Christians to be a people of joy, by having faith in God's providence and emulating the contemplative heart of Mary, our Lady of Sorrows, who found joy in helping others. Archbishop Goh also crowned Our Lady's statue (above), with a crown that was specially brought in from Lourdes by Fr. Adrian to mark the occasion.

Like previous years, IHM's feast day celebration would not have been complete without a Kampong Night. There was plenty of food and children played energetically in the bouncing castle in the multi-purpose hall. Outside at the piazza under the night sky, a band made up of our very own parishioners entertained the crowd with their melodious tunes. The evening also saw the gathering celebrating Archbishop Goh's birthday. He cut a huge cake after everyone sang Happy Birthday to him, family-style. ♥

A CaFE for spiritual dining

By MATTHEW TAY



ON July 24, the Church of Immaculate Heart of Mary held the first session of the Catholic Faith Exploration (CaFE). The idea was simple, show a video based on one of the 20 modules on offer and have a light-hearted sharing session after viewing the 30-minute plus video. Yet, despite its simplicity, it generated loads of interesting conversation among those present.

CaFE was brought in by the Archdiocesan CaFE promotion team from the United Kingdom. The idea came from parishioners who had attended similar sessions elsewhere and were extremely keen to roll it out as part of our parish bonding and faith renewal. The programme is in line with Pope Francis and our Archbishop's plans to bring about renewal and re-evangelization in the Catholic community.

None of the CaFE core team expected the overwhelming response to the programme. Over 102 parishioners, both young and old, registered for CaFE. The team even had to switch the location to a bigger hall to accommodate the large number of participants, which was almost double of what the organisers had initially anticipated.

CaFE IHM coordinator Faustina Chia told IHM Heartbeat: "The CaFE Team was completely surprised and heartened by the overwhelming response. We believe God's Spirit is working in the Church and is calling out to those who are seeking to have a closer relationship with Him." Gary Huang, one of the many youths present at CaFE, agreed. "Personally I do not know much about the faith and so coming to CaFE is a way to know more about God, and I think

that is extremely important."

CaFE was a real hit with the participants. Kieran Ram Chandra, who attended CaFE not only to support his friends who are returning to the church but also to find a sharing community, was pleasantly surprised to see so many people at the session.

"The sharing was the best part of the session," said Kieran. "Anyone can sit down and watch the video, but when it comes to sharing, it requires everyone to be open to one another. Initially I thought most of them would be afraid to share but

most of them were quite forthcoming with their opinions and what struck them from the video."

With the first module done and dusted, CaFE will be moving on to the second of the seven modules, Life to the Full - Bringing the Bible Alive, in October. The first session will start on October 9 and will end on November 13.

"We encourage all who are interested to register for the next run," said Faustina. "CaFE will continue as it is a good programme for faith formation and spiritual growth." ♥



IHM Snapshots

By COREEN TAN



RCIY (Rite of Christian Initiation for Youths) held their Rite of Acceptance recently for their Enquirers. With this Rite, they Enquirers progress to the Catechumanate stage of their spiritual journey. Please continue to pray for these youths and their sponsors as they walk closer to the waters of Baptism. ❤️



Sacerdotal Celebration: Reverend Father Antonio Gonzalez celebrated his 40th Sacerdotal Ordination in July with our Parish. Fr. Antonio is one of the two Dominican priests living in Singapore. ❤️



Communion Ministers at their recent Commissioning for the Ministry. Many of these Communion Ministers assist the Parish by bringing Holy Communion to those who are sick and homebound. ❤️



St Dominic Savio Altar Servers' Society: Our Altar Servers organized a stay-in camp during the June holiday. Servers attending Camp Jordan enjoyed a myriad of activities such as fellowship, games and Praise & Worship. ❤️



The Charismatic Prayer Group visited their adopted beneficiary – Hope House in July for a fellowship session with the youths. They engaged the youths in games and brought along a sumptuous lunch for fellowship. ❤️



The Wardens' Ministry attended their yearly retreat on 28 July by Retreat Master Fr. Adrian Yeo. The discipleship retreat was aimed at deepening their fellowship with one another as well as their participation in the Parish community. ❤️



The **Lectors' Ministry** forms an integral part of the Mass Liturgy. Their participation in reading for all the Masses is aided by their regular meeting to break the Word of God. ♥



The **Infant Baptism Ministry** is a three-year-old group that helps to prepare both the parents and godparents for the baptism of infants. This joyful ministry had a bumper crop of 9 babies during the last baptism in July! ♥



IHM **Jollies** recently visited St Alphonsus Church (more popularly known as Novena Church) and was warmly invited to pray the Rosary at Our Lady' Grotto at the back of the church. Starting October this year, the church will be closed and undergo extensive rebuilding works. ♥



IHM **Mandarin Prayer Group**: Their little mission statement is to pray and intercede for others, listening to the Word of God and to bring forth evangelisation. Their weekly Thursday sessions consists of Bible study and sharing, prayer and intercessions. ♥



Our **Primary Catechism team** launched a new catechism curriculum this year. Using creative display, the classrooms are converted to *Prayer Space*. ♥



The new **Catechism Process for the Primary Catechism** takes the children through Sacred Scripture – Sacred Time – Sacred Space. More photos of the Primary Catechism can be viewed from <http://ihmsg.smugmug.com/> ♥

Meeting the Pope in Korea

JOYCE TAN and PAMELYN CHUA, two young IHM parishioners, narrate their experiences



THE sixth Asia Youth Day (AYD) was held in Daejeon, South Korea from Aug 13 to 17, with a preceding Days in the Diocese (DID) segment from Aug 10 to 13. The theme was “Asian Youth, Wake up! The Glory of the Martyrs Shines on You.” Joyce Tan and Pamelyn Chua were part of the 50-strong Singapore contingent which travelled to Korea for the event. During this memorable activity-packed trip, the two did everything from a home-stay to sight-seeing, from dancing to talks about Korea’s church history, from multiple-language Masses to meeting Catholic youth from other countries, from watching cultural concerts to a pilgrimage walk, and finally, to welcoming and meeting Pope Francis! Pope Francis was in Korea for the beatification of 124 Korean martyrs killed during the 19th century under the reigning Joseon dynasty, as well as give the welcoming address and celebrate the final Mass of AYD.

What Joyce says:

For a country commonly associated with Confucianism, learning of the Korean Catholic Church’s dramatic history was an eye-opener to me. What was more surprising, was that the church in Korea was not built by missionaries, but through the initiative of the early Catholics who travelled to China to learn the faith, some of whom later became martyrs.

In celebration of the martyrs’ beatification, Haemi Castle – where the greatest number were tortured and killed – was chosen as the site for an extravagant concert during the AYD. This was such a stark contrast to persecution that was occurring at that very place 200 years earlier,

and I wondered if the martyrs had envisioned a celebration attended not only by the Korean people, but by people from all over Asia. Truly I realised, that all is in God’s time and hands, with the knowledge of the future only known to Him alone.

AYD was also a trip filled with much friendship and generosity. For two days, we stayed with a host family, and I am very grateful for the hospitality they showered. In addition, we got to meet Catholic youth from all over Asia. During Mass, seeing people of various ethnicities, languages, and wearing traditional costumes of all colours being united in prayer showed me the universality of the Church. Speaking to youth who came from countries which banned the practice of the Catholic faith, I felt touched to hear their firm ownership of their faith and unwavering trust in God despite the trials they faced.

What was special about this event was that it was the first time a Pope was present at an Asian Youth Day, and his appearances were met with much excitement. I felt very blessed to have had this opportunity to attend AYD, to be present at this once-in-a-lifetime occasion brought together by the sacrifice of the martyrs, where Pope Francis, “the Pope from the end of the earth” met youth from the other end of the earth.

What Pamelyn says:

I am blessed to have been able to attend the Asian Youth Day and meet the pope. Throughout my time there, I was constantly shown how to serve others in a service that goes beyond the minimum, a service of love and generosity that gives without expecting anything in return. From how the Koreans graciously gave the

front seats to foreign delegates like us during the meeting with the Pope despite our arriving late, to how the Pope reached out to the people despite his tiredness and limitations, I understood the meaning of how to “love not in word or speech but in deed and truth” (1 John 3:18), realising how small gestures done out of love can touch the lives of others.

During the AYD I also experienced how our faith has allowed us to transcend differences in race, language and culture: to call each other as our brothers and sisters. This was especially apparent during the masses. Despite diversity in culture and practice – we recited the “Our Father” in our own language and took turns to contribute to the various parts of the Mass – I felt the beauty of being united as one Church and in our love of God. Further, despite the language barrier, we were able to connect and share with each other our faith journeys and struggles in life. Seeing how people from other parts of the world share some of the same struggles made me feel a sense of solidarity, with the assurance of not being alone in this journey towards God. In addition, given today’s modern context, seeing how some are still unable to freely practise their faith and are even being persecuted as current day martyrs showed me how precious our faith is, and how lucky we are to be able to freely express our faith in Singapore.

Finally, I am also reassured of God’s providence in our lives, of how He would always provide us with what we need – be it holding back the rain during the final Mass or how He allowed me to experience Him in a different way during this time in AYD. ♥

Coming together to pray

By COLIN LEE



Above: End of year retreat, Dec 2013 (with RCIY)

Below: End of year retreat, Dec 2013 (worship music practice)

It's I, it's I, it's I who build community. . . ." This classic song is commonly taught in children's classes but often neither the true meaning of community nor how it can be differentiated from other seemingly similar entities, like a ministry, is conveyed. Two youths from our parish aptly communicated the difference stating, "ministries have a specific serving focus, while communities simply journey together; sometimes, we have both concurrently".

And having both is how it has been the last couple of years for a group of young people. Having serendipitously come together in

2012, they decided to commit to helping each other love God better through the sharing of life and faith stories, reflecting on scripture and praying with and for each other. Thus was established what is known today as the Young Adults Community (YAC) of our parish.

"Coming together to pray often in community has helped my faith grow tremendously. I have become a better person through the experience of others, whether positive or negative. To me, a community is where I can find a sense of belonging and offers that pillar of strength to help me overcome my weaknesses," shares Aaron Monteiro, one of the founding members.

Having started out with only a handful of people the group, which now comprises members ranging from those in their teens to those in their early thirties, has grown in size and in the number of its initiatives. One popular initiative is the monthly movie night that serves up delicious popcorn.

In an effort to be more "present" to its members, the community initiated 'prayer visitations' to each others' houses earlier this year. During these sessions, members of the host family are invited to join in scripture reflection, music worship, intercessory prayers and the fellowship that follows.



Prayer walk at a member's house, April 2014



Celebrating Bango's birthday in the youth room during a Sunday session



The supportive nature of this community definitely comes through when speaking to its members. "The YAC helps remind me that I'm not alone in the struggles of life," shared Benedict Long, one of group's leaders. For others, like Serene Goh who joined the group recently, the community helps encourage personal accountability without which she feels she might just "slip away from the church". Above all, she treasures the relational aspects and how God reveals himself in the community. "YAG is a good and stress-free place to grow in the faith. I have found understanding and acceptance in this community - a reflection of God's generosity and grace for me," she added with affirmation.

The community gathers every Sunday at 3pm but members often meet earlier in the Youth Room on level 2 for board games, music practice or just to hangout. Young people of the parish who are seeking community or are simply curious to know more are welcome to contact Bianca (Bianca.chan@gmail.com)/ Matthias (matthiasantonio@gmail.com) or the parish office. ♥

Wanted: A helping hand

by COREEN TAN

ON Mondays and Fridays, after the morning mass is over and the worshippers go their different ways, a small group of parishioners descends on the church. They set to work, cleaning and scrubbing the floor. If you happen to step into the church when this group is at work you will not miss the smell of lavender fresh detergent.

There is a reason why they chose Mondays and Fridays to clean the church. On Mondays there is quite a bit of cleaning to do after the weekend services, when the church is full for most masses. And on Fridays they prepare the church for the weekend masses. This group is called Willing Hands.

There are not many in this group, which came into existence during Fr. Pierre Barthoulot's time as parish priest. Five of the members are from

the original group, whose mission was simple – to clean the church. Back then the church compound was not paved as it is now. Dust from the well-trodden paths made their way indoors. Remember, the church building itself was an old structure.

Ironically, Fr. Barthoulot did not allow the team to clean the church as there was a hired cleaner to do the job. However, the cleaner apparently didn't take her task seriously and this led to the Willing Hands group taking charge as they found dust everywhere in the church, including the sanctuary and the pews. Since Fr. Barthoulot was adamant not to allow the group to clean the church, they had to sneak in whenever he was not around!

The name Willing Hands was given to them by Fr. James Yeo when he was the parish priest. He felt it was an apt name after seeing

their willingness to serve with their hands. But numbers have dwindled over the years and the current team of helpers has an average age of 60. The camera-shy group wants more people to join them. A minimum of seven people are needed to clean the church and the columbarium.

They were very excited to share that in the recent recruitment drive via the bulletin, two people responded and joined their group. When asked what message they have for those reading this report, the group's coordinators replied they hoped more can come forward to serve with them. Breakfast included!

If you are interested in becoming a member of Willing Hands and would like to find out more about the group and the work they do, drop by the canteen on a Monday or a Friday morning (after the Rosary) to have a chat with its members. ❤️



Some of the members of Willing Hands hard at work.



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