

Spotlight 聚光

August 2018



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“They all ate and were satisfied”
- Luke 9:17

Submission of articles by the 12th of the month. Email your article to: **anghweeshen@gmail.com**

Please include your name, contact number and address. The editorial team reserves the right to edit any articles for publication. **Maximum article length: 450 words**

使 命 宣 言

我们，圣体堂区共融团体，愿成为基督圣体活的标记，尽力担当主基督祂舍己牺牲生命，为今日世界所付出的爱之标志与媒介。

MISSION STATEMENT

As the parish-community of the Blessed Sacrament, we want to be a living expression of the Holy Eucharist, by trying to become both a sign and an instrument of Christ's life-giving and self-sacrificial love in the world of today.

Binding Date: 30 August 2018

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Editor's Desk

Be Available

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:11

After attending the Feast day Mass of our Lady of Mount Carmel, it seemed as though God was speaking to me through the homily. I was reminded to stay in faith and love and to be available for Him.

Just two weeks ago, I was very worried when three days before the date of submission of articles for Spotlight, I only had two articles. I started asking around my contacts of friends whether they could contribute articles. Conny, my editor, reminded me have faith – it is afterall God's newsletter. Both of us were prepared to step in to write if necessary.

God indeed amazes me everytime we do Spotlight. I am very thankful for the contributions that only came in after the weekend. They range from testimonies from a married couple, a mother with two kids, a mother who has just given birth, the retreats, a cancer patient, how to apply one's faith and sharing God's presence in one's life.

For those of us who worship at BSC, the Spotlight is a regular feature, with its monthly features of church events, ministries, retreats, fellowship and testimonials of struggles and God's faithfulness and love as we journey through life. We hope that by reading these articles, you are reminded that we are not alone in this journey. We also encourage you to step forward to build up the church community by taking an active role in parish activities or joining one of the many a ministries. Place God at the centre of your life and witness His grace and power as your journey.

As chief editor, there is a responsibility to ensure that Spotlight is produced monthly and on time. Datelines are crucial as we need time to do layout, edit, print and bind. We also have to ensure that there are enough articles in Spotlight. We encourage you to come forth and contribute articles for the youths, working adults, married couples, parents, vocations, coping with sickness, and those taking care of aged parents. Let us be an instrument for God.

God Bless
Patricia Ang

Announcements

Mass with Healing Service
Every 2nd Friday of the month
Mass with Healing Session @ 8pm – Damien Hall

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***NIGHT
IS BACK
Don't miss the
Fun, Food & Fellowship
Thursday 16th August @ 7.45 pm
DAMIEN HALL
(Only for those aged above 18)***

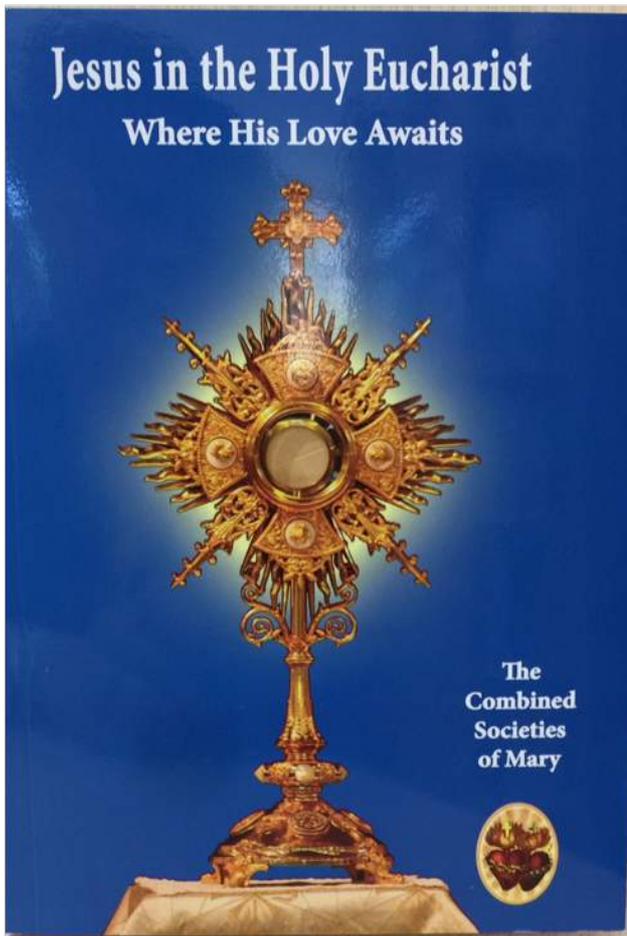
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Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary
1st Saturdays

Holy Mass : 8.30am
Followed By Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Confession
Meditation on the Mysteries of the Rosary Benediction

Book Review



This book is filled with important information regarding the reception of the Holy Eucharist.

It also has more than 50 pages of full colour illustrations.

For example, how long does Jesus remain in us after we have received Holy Communion? St Philip Neri once asked two altar boys to pursue a man in his congregation who would habitually leave the church as soon as he had received the Sacred Host. He directed the two altar boys to keep the man company as the man walked along the streets of Rome. The man returned to the church and asked the Saint the meaning behind this. The Saint replied “We have to pay respect to Our Lord, Whom you are carrying away with

you. Since you neglect to adore Him, I sent two acolytes to take your place.” The man then resolved to be more aware of God’s presence in future.

There are several saints featured. How they adored Jesus during exposition.

There are many prayers especially for Eucharistic adoration, and many others like before Holy Communion, thanksgiving after a Holy Communion, and praying for priests.

There is a chapter on Eucharistic Miracles over the centuries. Lovely book to have.

A Day of Recollection

by Stella Lee

On Tuesday 29 May 2018, more than 1000 participants from different parishes made their way to Catholic Spirituality Centre to attend a day of recollection organised by St Pio Devotion Singapore. Our spiritual master, Fr James Yeo, Rector of Catholic Theological Institute of Singapore, delivered three talks on the theme “The wages of sin is death”.

The day started at 9am with Praise and Worship which served as ice breaker for us to greet friends around us. At 9.30am, Fr James began the first session “Understanding sin”.

Sin is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible, starting with the “original” sin when Adam and Eve ate of the tree of knowledge. Sin is simply a violation of any of God’s law, including The Ten Commandments. God wanted us to recognise our sins. Even those who have not murdered or committed adultery will find themselves convicted of lying or of worshipping false gods like wealth or power ahead of God.

Tragically, sin in any amount will distance us from God. *“Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save nor His ear too dull to hear.”* Isaiah 59:1-2. We must resist the temptation to act as if we are righteous especially by leaning on our own good works. *“If you claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word has no place in our lives.”* 1 Jn 1:8-10.

As we recognise ourselves as sinners, we need only to repent and embrace the Lord Jesus to be forgiven. The Lord will forgive us because He died and rose again three days later in victory over sin and death. St Paul refers to this process of recognising sin and being responsible for it as *“godly sorrow.”* 2 Corinthians 7:10-11. Fr James outlined the seven capital or deadly sins as lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy and pride.

After tea break, we continued with session 2 “The effects of sin”. Sin has consequences. Pleasures of sin are sweet but the consequences are grievous. Sin

puts man under slavery. It holds man under captive. *“Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”* Jn 8:34.

Sin is an offense to God leading to death. *“For the wages of sin is death.”* Romans 6:23. It refers to the spiritual death as the eternal separation from God in hell. *“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”* Isaiah 59:2. In Genesis 2:17, God warned Adam that the penalty of disobedience would be death. *“You will surely die.”* When Adam disobeyed, he experience immediate spiritual death which caused him to hide *“from God among the trees of the garden.”* Genesis 3:8.

This is the foremost consequence of man’s rebellion against God. Yet many want to believe that God is so loving that He will overlook our “little” faults, lapses and indiscretions. The fact is, sin is a sin, big or small. Though God loves us, His holiness is such that He cannot live with evil. *“Your eyes are too pure to look on evil: You cannot tolerate wrong.”* Habakkuk 1:13.

God does not ignore our sins. On the contrary, *“you may be sure that your sin will find you out.”* Numbers 32:22. Even those secret sins we hide in the recesses of our hearts will one day be brought to light. *“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account.”* Hebrews 4:13. St Paul made it clear. *“Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man sows what he reaps.”* Galatians 6:7.

Another consequence of sin is more sin. There is an insatiable *“lust for more affected by the dulling of the conscience and the blindness to spiritual truth.”* 1 Corinthians 2:14. Those who habitually live their lives outside of Christ, yet whose hearts have been convicted by the Gospel, should follow the example of the first converts of the church. *“They were out of the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”* The answer was simple yet profound: *“Repent.”* Acts 2:37-38.

After lunch, we concluded with Session 3 “Hell”.

Where is hell? Scripture does not tell us the geographical location of hell. Every time hell is mentioned in the Bible, it is being referred to as “down” from the earth. The last verse from Psalm 63:9 tells us that those who are going into hell are going into *“the lowest part of the earth.”* The verse from Numbers 16:30

says that the earth literally opened up and swallowed them alive who were rejecting the Lord and from there *“they went down alive into the pit.”* It may have a physical location in this universe or it may be in an entirely different dimension. Traditional view is that hell is in the center of the earth. Whatever the case, the location of hell is far less important than the need to avoid going there.

We were presented with some fact about eternity. Everyone will exist eternally either in heaven or in hell. (Daniel 12:2, 3) Everyone has only one life in which to determine their destiny. (Hebrews 9:27) Hell was originally designed for Satan and his demons. (Mtt 25:41) Hell is conscious torment. (Mtt 13:50) *“Furnace of fire, weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* Mk 9:48 *“Where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”* Revelation 14:10 *“He will be tormented with fire and brimstone.”* Hell is eternal and irreversible. Revelation 14:10 *“The smoke of their torments goes up forever and ever and they have no day and night.”* Revelation 20:14 *“This is the second death, the lake of fire.”*

Many saints have had supernatural visions of hell which should remind us of what our faith already teaches: Hell is a real and terrible place and people can really go there. Their experiences of hell were “great torture, loss of God, I don’t know you, perpetual remorse, condition never gets better.”

St Teresa of Avila: “All was thick darkness. On fire and torn to pieces.”

Blessed Anne Catherine: “No one could behold without trembling.”

Sr Lucy of Fatima: “A vast sea of fire. Shrieks and groans of pain and despair.”

St Maria Faustina Kowalski: “A place of great torture.”

St John Bosco: “Indescribable terror. Temperature 1000 degrees.”

To avoid the punishment of hell, live a life of holiness, make confession regularly, stay close to the Lord Jesus, guide and inspire each other, parents to be good role models to their children, never make contacts with demons or sin against the Holy Spirit.

After this session, we had St Pio devotion and recitation of the Rosary. The day ended with holy Mass at 4pm. In his homily taken from Mk 10:28-31, Fr James reminded us that our Christian life is rooted in hope. By committing our lives to Christ, we are set holy. Our focus, priorities and values must reflect God’s way in all that we do and say.

Reflection

When we rebel against God's rule in our lives, we rebel against the life and experience "death", a brokenness resulting in pain. When we return to God, we are restored to spiritual life, communion with God, a sense of purpose, righteousness, freedom, etc. The rejoicing father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son said it best. "This son of mine was dead and is alive again." Lk 15:24. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. What a relief for the Lord Jesus to have forgiven our sins and delivered us from the bondage to sin. His forgiveness gives our soul freedom from all that handicaps our spiritual growth.



Retreat Weekend Made For Goodness *by Grace Lai (Youth from L8)*



The Pre-Confirmation Retreat for L7 and L8 youths took place from 8 – 10 June 2018 at the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) House. The theme for this year's retreat was ***"Made dor Goodness"***.

During this retreat, I gained a number of learning points. Firstly, I learned to accept myself for who I am and not to look on the negative but more on the positive aspect of myself. God make us all differently and we are all special in His eyes. To Him, we are unique in our own ways and He will always be by our

side, watching over us, protecting us from danger. We could also encourage those who see themselves negatively by letting them know their strengths. Secondly, I learned that God is good. It is not just what He does, it is Who He is. During our difficult moments in life, when we are stressed, no matter how much pain we are experiencing or how different the outcome is from what we pray for, God stays beside us. He does not falter, He does not quit, He does not complain and He does not let go. In Psalm 46:1, it says “*God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.*” God always forgives us, no matter how great our sins are, as long as we repent and seek forgiveness from Him through confession. He will give us a second chance, just like how He died on the cross for us. God is great and Almighty and therefore, God is full of Goodness.

This retreat was a memorable experience for me. 1 Corinthians 14:15 says “*I will sing with my Spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.*” I learnt that worshipping the Lord is to sing praises to the Holy Spirit, and to understand why we are giving thanks to the Lord for all the work that He has done for us. Furthermore, through the interaction with one another in our small discussion groups, I learnt to listen to each other and be more interdependent with one another to get closer to God. Through this, we bond as one big community in Christ, giving thanks and praying to him.

Additionally, I liked how our groups were named after the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control. These reflect how we are all a community of Christ, how Christ is living in us and transforming us. To have Christ living in us, we need to trust Him and have a closer relationship with Him. We shall lift our hearts to him through prayer, reading His words and reflecting on it.

How can we show goodness? Well, we could start at home, by being obedient and respectful to our parents or even saying a simple “thank you” to them for all their efforts in bringing us up. In school, simple things like helping teachers carry some of their things when their hands are full or teaching a friend how to solve a question are signs of goodness. Even giving up your seat is showing goodness. All little things help spread the Goodness of God which is what God wants us to do as Catholics.

My favourite part of the retreat was the Miracle Hour. This was when we calmed ourselves down, prayed and sang praises to God as one community. When we

focused on God, and invited His Holy presence in our midst, we got closer to Him. I felt that God had filled me with the Holy Spirit, and I was moved by it. All the songs that we sang during the Miracle Hour were very meaningful and it helped me to better understand how great God is to me.

All in all, this retreat has been beneficial to me. It allowed me to grow closer to God and increased my faith in Him. I realised that each one of us plays a part in building the Catholic community and helps to spread His word and love. After all, God has a plan for us and we just need to trust him.



L9 Pre-Confirmation Retreat

by Fronia

The L9 Pre-Confirmation Retreat took place from the 15th to 17th June 2018 at the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) House. One of the most memorable activity from this retreat happened on the first day. It was the Poster Activity: Personal Faith Journey. We could either write or draw something on a piece of paper to show our faith journey. Then, we had to share it with the other L9s and our catechist. I did not expect the activity to be so touching, mainly because I did not think that we would be open and truthful in the sharing of our faith journey. However, I was pleasantly surprised. We were all very open about our faith journey and my fellow L9s shared parts of their life that were very personal. We were able to talk about the low points in our lives and share about our troubles without feeling judged.

On the evening of the first day, we had a Prayer Walk where we walked in a makeshift Labyrinth. The atmosphere was very striking here. It was dark and everyone was quiet. Everyone was just focused on taking this time to reflect on life, God and everything else. Different people perceived this walk differently. Some found comfort, some were confused, happy, or even frustrated. But whatever the feeling we felt, a lot of us were able to feel God's presence during this walk. This helped to push us into seeking God and it also made us reflect on our faith.

On the second day, we had a prayer session, in which our catechists prayed for us individually. This was yet another indelible activity. Everyone was just very

open and were not scared of confiding in the catechists about their troubles. And when the catechists prayed for us, it really touched our hearts and comforted us. This helped to encourage us to pray, to confide in God and let Him comfort you. The catechists also gave us talks on different topics about our faith, such as the one on the Holy Spirit, and this allowed us to learn more about God. We were also able to do Hymn Reflections and this, too, allowed us to learn more about God.

All in all, the retreat was a fruitful one. We were able to learn more about God through the various talks. We were also encouraged to get closer to God and strengthen our faith through the activities we participated in. The retreat definitely made me feel more prepared for my confirmation.



We Believe, We Celebrate, We Remember
Alphonsus and Cyrine Gregory



30 years and more to come as ‘we believe, we celebrate and we remember.’

As all couples who have journeyed together for a period of time as husband and wife, we can all agree that it was an arduous journey of pains, hurts and more hurts. However, despite all the hurts, what made it possible for us to continue on the journey together is that we believe in the grace God has given us on our wedding day. We believe that with His grace we can believe in each other that we can love and be loved in return. As we make our daily decision to love, we

fight to keep our relationship and bring it to the next level of intimacy. We also believe that the community of believers is there to support us in our time of need. The community of sacramental couples is there to support us when things get rough, all we need to do is reach out our hands and they are there to give their all.

Bringing up six beautiful children was never easy. It definitely took its toll on our relationship as we focused on their individual needs, we forgot about our individual needs and the needs of our relationship. Things got so bad that we wanted to call it quits as we saw no point in continuing this relationship. However, in July on our twelfth year of our relationship we decided to attend the Marriage Encounter weekend and what a blast it was. I fell in love with Cyrine again, but this time it was at a much deeper level which I never experienced before. Our relationship took on a new phase of believing in each other and the grace of God.

This new phase of our relationship, was one that taught us to celebrate. With a renewed faith we could celebrate every victory over every trial hurled at us. We can only look back today and rejoice at the way God our Father has led us through our lives, we can only be thankful and be in awe of His wonderful love for us and our six children. We have come to realize that God our Father is our 'Provider' and our 'Pillar' in our relationship. We now can celebrate our love for each other and for our six children, a son-in law and two beautiful little granddaughters.

As we celebrate all that we have, we continue to create beautiful memories with each other, our children, with family members and with friends for us to remember.

We Believe in each other and the grace of God. ***We Celebrate*** every victory over evil and for every good thing God bestows on us. ***We Remember*** all the beautiful memories we create together as family.

"Many happily married couples attend the Marriage Encounter Weekend because they know a good marriage requires work and constant renewal of their commitment. When was the last time you devoted time for just you and your spouse? Enrol now! Upcoming Weekends: Nov 2-4, Dec 7-9 2018. For more information, call 9670 5390 or go to our website at www.mesg.org."

All My Fountains Are In You

By Vicki Loh

In my 20s, I wondered if I would ever start a family, especially as the years went by.

Fast-forward a decade or so, and I am the proud mother of two little ones. It never occurred to me before however, how isolating it would be to have a young family. All the things I used to take for granted like attending Mass in peace, being active in ministry, having time to go to an adoration room, reading the Bible...I have had to rethink.

There is little time for reflection or time to self. Should I need to use the washroom at home, there is either an audience or a little head popping in to ask for something. Should I attempt to play the piano, there are little hands waiting to smash the keys. Should I stay too late at work, I will be met with tears at home.

I popped into a charismatic prayer meeting the other day with my little one. Everyone smiled at the child but no one asked for my contact details or invited us to come again. Potentially noisy and disruptive children are just not welcome at their prayer meets. Concentrating at Mass is challenging and joining them for children's liturgy is just not spiritually satisfying.

We have thankfully found a (adoptive) parish, where no one has yet given us a dirty look because the children have made a noise. This must be in answer to our prayers to find a community and I can only pray that we will be able to grow roots here. It is terribly lonely otherwise.

At Mass at this adoptive parish, they have been singing a song unfamiliar to me, and a line struck me "*all my fountains are in You*". I could not imagine what this meant. But on reflection, I suppose it meant that God was the source of everything for me, and that He would be the fountain of patience, love, grace and everything else that I needed throughout the day.

God has reminded me of the fountains that He has led me to previously, and where I have drawn life-giving waters for the journey. I think back on a previous silent retreat at Seven Fountains, at Chiang Mai, Thailand and see now how aptly named it was. At this retreat, it dawned on me that God had been watching over

me since my childhood, and I began to realise with what tender loving care He had done so. While I can't go on a silent retreat anytime soon, I can retreat to the interior place inside where God can refresh me again with His waters. All my fountains are in Christ, and I thank God they will not run dry.

All my fountains are in Christ, and I thank God they will not run dry.



Faith / God's Presence

by Dorothy Chia

***“This is my Son, Whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!”
(Matthew 17)***

To have faith and experience God's presence in our lives is actually very easy. God Himself tells us, “Listen to Him (Jesus)”. To me, listening to Jesus can come in many forms and experiences of my daily life. The most direct is when I attend Sunday Mass. The word of the readings and gospel, the sermon and the music sung touches me most. My encounter with Christ at the weekly Eucharistic Celebration is my strength and food that sustains me as I go about my task for the rest of the week.

In my marriage, my husband and I make it a point to say our evening prayers together as a couple before bedtime. S, my husband, is a newly baptised Catholic when we got married 2 years ago. Hence, our bedtime prayers consist mostly of “Our Father; Hail Mary; and Glory Be” and we put forth any petitions or thanksgiving that we may have for the day that passed. Sometimes, my husband and I have had a rough day or we quarrelled. During our prayer time, we are usually able to reach an amiable peace with each other before we sleep.

But Jesus came and touched them. “Get up,” He said. “Don't be afraid.”⁸ When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.” (Matt. 17: 7)

The beauty of a prayer-filled life is Jesus's promise, “Don't be afraid”. This fearless confidence that God is in control. And when we submit to God's control, inevitably we will see no one except Jesus. But how to see Jesus? We see Jesus in the people, events and the beauty of God's creation around us.

Recently, my husband and I went on a free and easy holiday to the beautiful country of Switzerland. We did not follow any package tour and my husband did all the planning and organisation of the trip. We saved up a year ahead especially for this trip. S, who is a professional photographer, wanted to capture the beautiful Swiss mountains and lakes on photo. Hence, good weather and lighting was important. Before we left Singapore, I googled the weather forecast, which initially did not look promising as rain and thunderstorm threatened to ruin our trip. Nonetheless, we continued to lift up our prayers to Jesus that all would be well. S would describe to me, how beautiful it was to catch the sun's first ray of light as it hits the mountain peak or what photographers term it as "fire on the mountain". S even booked a hotel at Zermatt with a window view that allowed us to look at Mount Matterhorn from our room balcony. We only had one sunrise, one opportunity to catch this "fire on the mountain", for we leave Zermatt the next day. (see photo of Mt. Matterhorn taken by me on my handphone). "God is good!"



Another separate incident of encountering Jesus during our Swiss travel was how total strangers came up to help us as we travelled from city to city on the Swiss rail. One particular incident stood out at Samedan. Samedan is a small town one train station away from the glitzy St. Moritz. The reason we chose to stay at Samedan was that the hotel was a lot cheaper than the upmarket St. Moritz. When S and

I alighted from the Glacier Express at Samedan, we were the only ones that got off the train. Everybody on the train continued on to St. Moritz. From the train platform, we had to rely on google map to get us to the hotel. Then strangely out of nowhere came a young school girl with her friend who was on her way home. She must have saw how lost we looked, with our luggage and looking at google map off our handphones. And she said kindly, "Follow me." We had to cross a road junction, climb up a steep slope, walk over to the other side of the road where the main entrance to the hotel lies. This kind stranger saved us the hassle of getting lost and taking wrong turns had we tried to make our way to the hotel on our own without assistance. Even the sceptic of my husband, S, had to admit that that was the hand of God guiding us on this trip.

God can only work His power when we have faith. When we walk in faith, every moment is an encounter with Jesus. In our sadness, we walk with Jesus in His passion. In our joys, we walk with Jesus in His resurrection.



Knowing that God is Watching over Us

by Isadora Lee

I will likely remember this experience for a long time. To begin with, as any mother will attest to, birthing experiences are pretty unforgettable. They are intense, they are painful, yet amidst all that, they are also euphoric. But this particular one, apart from being all that, it was also eventful, and significant, because it was a testimony that God is watching over us, all the time, even if we may not always think of it to be the case.

In retrospect, I would consider this pregnancy to be the toughest of all. I was constantly worried, eclipsed by the earlier miscarriage. Every visit to the gynecologist was shrouded in stress - I was afraid that I will fail to see any heartbeat as my doctor performs the ultrasound. Then, unlike many mothers who had good appetites to “eat for two”, I was unable to eat much. In fact, I even lost weight towards the end of the pregnancy. To top it all, some elders had spoken nasty words to me during the pregnancy. It was very hurtful to hear people commenting that, my earlier miscarriage was a blessing from God, and that we were not being responsible to have this child with my husband's condition. I remember I had a huge argument with them - in my heart, I was thinking to myself, what did they know about what God wants for us?

So clearly, it was stress on top of stress. All I could do was to pray each and every single day, morning and night. I prayed for a healthy full-term baby. I prayed for a smooth delivery. I prayed for strength to deliver. I asked our Lady to intercede. I didn't feel I had the strength to get through 40 weeks at all. There was a lot of fear, but praying always made life better.

I was determined to deliver naturally, like my two previous labours. I didn't want a cesarean section because the recovery period was going to take longer (comparatively), and in my opinion, there was a bigger risk in undergoing a C-section considering one was going to be cut up and then stitched back. But as the day passes, the baby continued to remain breech and a C- section appeared to be

the only option available. It was fast approaching the 39th week and nothing changed even though I was diligently doing all I can to invert the baby. I even took up my gynecologist's offer to try to turn the baby via an external procedure but that too failed. Contractions have been setting in, albeit not periodically. After the failed procedure, the doctor suggested I come in for surgery the next day; he was not sure if I insisted on delivering normally, whether the baby will be safe.

I was in two minds about having the surgery. The truth is, I had read a lot about women successfully delivering breech babies vaginally. Maybe I could do it too? Deep down side, the stubborn me wanted to just push through my own agenda and disregard the doctor's recommendation. My husband chided me for being obstinate and brought me to church. That day, as I sat in Novena church, I was still praying for the baby to turn at the last hour - I have been praying for this since a few weeks back when the baby continued to remain breech even late into the pregnancy - and that I can be "spared" from going through the procedure. At this juncture, I can't help not wondering if God had heard my earlier prayers. Or, was He even listening at all?

But God always know the best for us. As I was to find out the next day.

I remember barely sleeping much as I battled fears amidst excitement, as well as the sporadic contraction pains which have started a few days back. I was up at 4am. By 7am, I was in the operating theatre and the baby was out by 7:15am! But little did I know that in 15 minutes, in order to safely take the baby out, my doctor had had to skilfully untangle the umbilical cord which was coiling round the baby's neck and body, and at the same time, delicately unwinding the baby's arms which were both resting behind the head, failing which the baby's arms may break as he pulled the baby out.

As I thought about it - especially the part about the umbilical cord twirling around the baby's neck, I realise that (a speculation later confirmed by the gynecologist), that was why the baby had stayed breech, despite whatever interventions we performed. That was how the baby stayed alive. That was how God was keeping the baby safe.

And I realise that is how God responds to us. Sometimes, it appears that He had ignored our petitions when He didn't grant us the things we pray for. Sometimes, it seems that He isn't tuning in to our requests. As mortals, we think we

understand the situation and we try to boss God through our petitions. But the truth is, God knows just what we need, and gives us that, “*for your Father knows what you have need of, before you ask Him.*” (Matthew 6:8b)



Practising the Faith as a Catechist

by Kelley D’Cruz

The term Catechist is defined as a teacher of principles of the Christian religion. In Blessed Sacrament Church, we have a number of Catechists who are teachers to the children all the way until they receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Being one of those children a couple of years ago, I always found it interesting when I was taught something new about my faith. Although admittedly, I did not pay close attention in every Catechism class, I still felt a sense of pride being a Catholic, and a part of that had to do with my Catechism classes. What makes me proud today as well is to come from a family of Catechists. Both my parents have been wonderful Catechists in our church for many years – my father was my Catechism teacher when I was in kindergarten, which made me feel all that more special. My father had been a Catechist for more than 10 years, and so has my mother, who is in charge of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) for the younger children. However, what I have come to realise is that although both my parents have had these titles as Catechists in church, they have been Catechists to me personally my whole life.

Truth be told, principles of the Christian religion cannot be taught just once a week, therefore I attribute most of my upbringing in pure and complete faith to my parents who have been teaching me about my religion and what it means to have faith. Faith is a huge aspect and I still do not understand many things about it – which is the very essence of faith – but my parents taught me three crucial things about putting my faith in God.

Firstly, they taught me to trust. Even today, as I sometimes struggle with the workload of my job, my school and church work, I hear my mother’s voice saying to me ‘trust in God, trust that He will take care of you,’ and my mother has never been wrong in this. Every time I feel I am running low on finances, or

feeling overwhelmed with all the stresses school has to offer – which I have come to find is a ton – God completely shows me that He is taking care of me, and I am always blessed beyond belief.

Secondly, they taught me to forgive. I have never met anyone more forgiving than my parents. For all the injustices they have received, they find it in their hearts to forgive, which is a battle I fight often. My father reminds me on many occasions to ‘forgive anyway’, which makes me think of Mother Theresa’s words: “People are often unreasonable, irrational and self-centred. Forgive them anyway.”

Lastly, they taught me that in faith, I must love. Loving can sometimes come easy, but can often prove to be difficult as well. With faith, however, loving becomes so much easier. Again, this is something unexplainable, but felt through the presence of God through constant prayer and practice of the teachings of our Lord.

These three seemingly little points help me get through tough days when I am puzzled by the actions and words of others, or sometimes even myself. In following these teachings from my parents, as Catechists, I too can learn to be a Catechist to others around me. What I have come to understand is that even though my father is no longer a Catechist in Blessed Sacrament Church, he can never truly stop being one if he continues to teach the principles of Christianity in good faith, which is what both my parents do to this very day, and I could not be prouder to have my very own teachers of the faith.



Grown Men Don't Cry
by Michael J Roberts

After being diagnosed and treated for two types of Cancer in 2010-2011, I wrote my own book to help others who may be going through the same struggles. In the book titled “***Grown Men Don't Cry***”, I share how I had to put on a mask to go through the emotional ups and downs, and in turning to Christ, I found an inner peace. You can read about how I would say the Lord’s Prayer over and over again during the radiation treatment (at times forgetting the words), and the

20 minutes' under the lasers would feel like 5 minutes. Looking back, the journey through aggressive chemotherapy and radiation at the same time could send anyone into a tailspin of depression. But truly **Nothing is Impossible** with God. I had my family supporting me, the priests and the Catholic community praying for me, and many friends who turned out to be my angels who lifted me up with their caring ways. Indeed, we never walk alone.

Soon it was nearing the 5-year milestone and the family was looking forward to hearing the good news that the cancer was in remission. However, in 2015, I suffered a stroke at midnight and was rushed to A&E. The doctors discovered a brain tumour which required major surgery to remove it. A metal plate had to be inserted and screwed to the back of my head. The lab tests revealed metastatic brain cancer – the cancer had travelled to the brain. Even the doctors were mystified. It was now cancer Stage 4. I had to undergo radiation treatment to the head.

The toll on the family was heavy but with God's providence, we made many decisions. We downgraded from a two-storey masionette to a smaller older HDB unit and we sold the car as I had to give up driving as the stroke caused me to lose 25% of my peripheral eyesight in both eyes. However, our move to Whampoa has been truly blessed as we experienced the amazing outreach from the Jalan Bahagia Neighbourhood Christian Communities (NCC). The family continued to participate in church ministry activities, and I carried on trying to help others with cancer and to raise funds for the Church through the sale of my books.

Fast Forward to Jan 2018

In November 2016, the cancer reared its ugly head again and I had to undergo radiation treatment for lymphnode Cancer in the chest. The latest scans in January 2018 revealed another three cancer cells in the chest. The cancer was spreading. This time no surgery or radiation was possible, it was chemotherapy or nothing.

The prognosis was not good. The chemotherapy would help extend my life but my quality of life would suffer. It was my '5th' cancer and with the Lord's help it wasn't going to defeat me.

I postponed my chemo treatment till end April with a CT Scan scheduled for mid-April. I continued to take care of my wife Karen who had two surgeries in

quick succession – a hysterectomy at end 2017 and the removal of a kidney due to a cancer tumour in March 2018. With God’s help and many prayers, she was given an early surgery date and has recovered quickly to help me should I take up the chemo treatment which may last 3 months. In early April, I witnessed my youngest son’s matrimonial vows.

During all these trials, I have never given up believing in God, in fact it has strengthened my belief. No matter what illness you have, just accept it is God’s will. Stay positive, continue to pray and trust in the Lord as He has a plan for all of us.

To help raise funds for the Church of St Michael (CSM), my book ***Grown Men Don’t Cry*** is available at the CSM religious shop. I will gladly sign a copy for you and your friends who may find comfort in my words and in my sharing.

Priced at \$20.00 per copy. 50% proceeds go to the church. Michael can be contacted at mikeroberts.care@gmail.com



The Miracles *by Fr Remi*

It is now widely known in the field of Psychology that life is conditioning¹ us. From the time of birth until the time of death, life continuously conditions us mostly without our being aware of it. It begins with our parents, who are shaped by the culture of the society they live in.

Let us take the story of a centurion who met Jesus in Capernaum and asked the Lord to heal his paralysed servant. To be honest, when I first read the account, I found the man’s response in saying, ***“Lord, I am not worthy to have You enter under my roof...”*** was counter-intuitive². Why did he refuse to receive Jesus in his house? Would any Catholic, for example, not welcome Pope Francis if the Holy Father wants to visit the person’s house? I don’t think so.

¹ Conditioning: a simple form of learning involving the formation, strengthening, or weakening of an association between a stimulus and a response. (merriam-webster.com)

² Contrary to intuition or to common-sense expectation.

You see, my reasoning is the result of what I have learned in life, and in this case, it shows that God has a different way of seeing – a more positive way, I would say. Jesus did not feel rejected, but saw faith in the man. I had better prepare myself for surprises with the Lord.

Let us continue with the centurion. Jesus says: ***“Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the Kingdom of heaven...”*** ***And Jesus said to the centurion, “You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you.”*** ***And at that very hour his servant was healed.*** (Mt. 8: 10,11,13)

It was a miracle recorded by Matthew. “Did it really happen?” some people may ask, and I would not judge anyone with such a thought. I know it from experience that faith is something personal that can never be forced, and it is best for truth to speak for itself. What a believer can do is to be a testimony to the truth.

I was visiting a religious community in Sulmona last week-end, when I was invited on Sunday to join a pilgrimage to the Shrine of the Most Holy Trinity. The Shrine is perched on a hill of the rocky-mountainous region of Appennino, 90 kilometers from Rome. According to the legend, a farmer tending his land in the region of Vallepiaetra saw two oxens with their plow fall down a 300-meter precipice. “Surely the animals have perished”, he thought. But when he came down, he saw the two oxens unharmed and were adoring a fresco of the Trinity on a rock wall of a cave.

That was the legend, but the museum shows testimonies of miracles received by many people over the centuries. Countless of pilgrims pour into the place year after year, especially on Trinity Sundays. I met an elderly Italian man who has been coming for the past 60 years since he was 16.

Jordan Peterson, a renowned Canadian Psychologist was asked in an interview if he believes in God. He responded frankly: “I think the proper response to that is No, but I'm afraid He might exist”. Faith begins with the opening of heart to let truth to enter and speak personally. Amen.

Congratulations to our winners for last month's issue: **Chiong Tinn Zun Ryan** and **Efrem Biju**. For a chance to win a special gift, please submit your entry to the church office by the 12th of this month. (For children 12 years & below - not for the Spotlight team & their families.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact No. _____

Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand



They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. Matthew 14:20 (NIV)

Based on Matthew 14:13-21 (NIV)

Q W L O A V E S P L T H J E B
 R Y T G B V G S B X O A H T A
 F I S H L A N D E D W U S Q S
 B X E E J T B Q A P N I A J K
 J B W I F K H O O I S A T W E
 F T L W T Z N A A Q L G I C T
 O U A L B K Z O N T S S S T F
 L P T Q F I P K X K P B F M U
 L F E J H E A L E D S E I Z L
 O O C Q T T M L S C L F E C S
 W O G R J E S U S C L B D W C
 E T M F O Q S F O O D D J T A
 D Q G B J W E I Y M H E H P V
 D A V B U T D C C P E O P L E
 R P G S A V K S H K I F Q K U

LEFT	BASKETFULS	LANDED	FOLLOWED	LOAVES
THANKS	CROWDS	TWELVE	HEALED	FISH
ATE	FOOD	SATISFIED	JESUS	SICK
FOOT	PEOPLE	LATE	TOWNS	BOAT