



# SPOTLIGHT TEAM

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*Please include your name, contact number and address. The editorial team reserves the right to edit any letters or articles for publication.*

# Special Highlights

~ APR 2008 ~

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### TWIN HEARTS READING ROOM (LIBRARY)

- Saturday 4-5.30pm & from 7-8pm

- Sunday from 8.30am-1.00pm & from 6.30-7.30pm

- Weekdays (Mon-Fri) from 9-11am

## 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，尽力担当主基督衲舍己牺牲生命，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.

*Rev. Anthony Hutjes (priest-in-charge)*

*Rev. Suyono Gerardus (assistant priest)*

*Rev. Remi Liando (assistant priest)*





## FROM DAVID'S DESK

I am going to talk about Theology... hey, don't turn the page yet, give me a chance ok?

Here's the formula: Philosophy + Faith = Theology. It's no rocket science right?

We all know about Faith, especially from this Sunday's reading on the "infamous" Doubting Thomas - Faith is believing in things we cannot see without the need for evidence. But does this mean our Faith is "blind"? The answer is a clear NO - because if it is a YES, all the theologians would go out of job!

The reason why some may assume Faith is blind is because they know little about the Philosophy part of the formula! Philosophy is simply about the use of human reasoning to understand reality; God certainly didn't give us an intelligent brain for nothing!

And so, all Christians need to know Theology in order to defend the Faith against new seemingly-attractive philosophies. In fact, I am sure you already knew some Theology through the RCIA or Catechism classes! Yes, those lessons are considered as Theology too!

But we all need to continually deepen our knowledge - one simple way is to read Fr Joseph Torre's "**Christian Philosophy**" (available at our bookshop), an easy introduction to Theology.

### MISSION STATEMENT

*The mission of Spotlight is to help create a closer communion of parishioners and to support faith formation through inspired articles and drawings via the Spotlight newsletter and the BSC Website.*

Take up the challenge and I personally guarantee you'll find it a most rewarding experience!

*David Woon*



## YOUR SAY

### Candles for Our Lady of Perpetual Help by Richard Lowe

Many of us like to pray at Our Lady of Perpetual Help's shrine inside the church. We often light candles and leave them in the table with a tray that is put in front of the picture. However, some of us light 3-6 candles - we forget that others would also wish to leave a lighted candle in the tray too.

Often, those who come in later, have no place to put their lighted candles and have to leave them on top of the perimeter of the table. Sometimes, these candles slip, or their wax is spilled onto the floor, making the area around the table unsightly and slippery. Please note that it takes quite an effort to scrape up the wax from the floor.

May I suggest that each person be limited to not more than 2 candles? And it should be only tea-light candles because longer/thicker candles would cause too much wax to melt onto the tray. The kind souls who help clean the tray have a hard time removing the melted wax.

Another thing, some of us like to use those candles in plastic holders with holy pictures on them. On many occasions, I have seen the plastic encasements catching fire - may I appeal to parishioners not to use such candles?

Let us be proud of what a lovely and beautiful church we have. Let's be grateful for all the facilities that God has blessed us with: be it the Church, the New Building, the Nice Garden or the Pews! Let's all be good stewards.

### *Vigil In Honour Of The Sacred Hearts*

Our monthly vigil in honour of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary will be held on the first Friday of the next month, on **4th April 2008**. It starts at 9pm on Friday and ends at 6am the next day. Mass will be held in church at **10:30pm** followed by the vigil. You are most welcome to attend part of it, even if you cannot join the whole vigil. Hope to see you there!





## INSPIRATION

### GREGORIAN CHANT IN BSC

by Boniface Lee

#### Blessed Sacrament Choir (9 am Mass)

It was in Vatican II in 1965 that vernacular (native language of a country) was universally introduced to the Roman Catholic Church. However, Latin is still the official language. Before Vatican II, Latin was said in all Low Masses while Gregorian Chant was sung in all High Masses and Requiem Masses (for the dead). Benedictions and other Rituals were also done in Latin.

In 1970, permission was obtained from the then Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Albert Renckens to sing the Gregorian Chant on every second Sunday of the month at the 8.30 am Mass. The Gregorian Chant was introduced as a result of many requests from the elderly parishioners. It has been 38 years since we introduced the Gregorian Chant and the Blessed Sacrament Church is among the very few Churches in Singapore that still sings the Gregorian Chant.

Vatican II did reaffirm that the Gregorian Chant is still the official music of the Catholic Church and the music most suitable for worship. Pope Benedict XVI, our Archdiocese Liturgy Commission and the Liturgical Music Commission had encouraged the use of Gregorian Chant in the Church to some extent. We are glad that our efforts are rightly directed as we are definitely ahead of many churches with many of our parishioners being able to sing the Gregorian Chant.

Chant was sung before the birth of Christ. It was based on songs sung in the synagogues and the Middle Eastern Countries. It was adopted by the Christian Church sometime in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and it quickly became an essential part of Christian worship. As time progressed, the Gregorian Chant fell into decline until Pope Pius X revived it on 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 1903. Then in Jan 8<sup>th</sup> 1904 the Decree of The Congregation of Sacred Rites

was issued for the restoration of the Gregorian Chant. The work for restoration fell on the shoulders of the Benedictine Monks who up to today are the standard bearers and reference for Gregorian Chant.

Gregorian Chant is also known as Plainchant. It does not mean that the music is boring. Quite the reverse? it is from the old French •gplein chant•h, meaning full singing! Gregorian Chant derives its name from Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) who was believed to have invented the Chant and unified it into one collection.

Gregorian Chant is unlike our ordinary music in notation and staff. For example, the staff for ordinary music has five horizontal lines and four spaces in between whereas the Chant has four horizontal lines and three spaces in between. In ordinary music there is a fixed number of beats per vertical bar while the Gregorian Chant has no fixed beats in a bar. The Gregorian Chant also has fewer key signatures than our music.

Gregorian Chant gives a certain breadth of sacred, divine worship, sometimes solemn and majestic and this cannot be found elsewhere. The Church also emphasizes the dignity of divine worship that must be liturgical and catholic. All these characteristics are nowhere to be found in a higher degree than in the Gregorian Chant.

The Church has never ceased to recommend the use of the Chant to prevent its decline from its pristine dignity. Songs like the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Pater Noster and the Agnus Dei in which the meaning of the lyrics is similar to the English version should at least be sung occasionally so that when we visit Rome for any Eucharistic Celebration, we will be able to participate in the masses meaningfully.

Come then and sing with us on every second Sunday of the month and experience this sacred, solemn and soothing feeling of the Gregorian Chant.

CANTATE DOMINUM CANTICUM NOVUM (Sing a new song to the Lord). **S**



## INSPIRATION

# Experiencing Intimacy With God

by Patricia Ang

Intimacy with God is a process. Many of us have become discouraged in our journey with God when we have high expectations and we expect to experience God within a short period of time. Do you know that God is consistently faithful about fulfilling us in His time and in His way? Each of us will experience Him differently. And He will respond to us differently at different seasons and intervals of our life.

God doesn't meet all of us in the same way – intellectually, emotionally or spiritually. I used to hear of my friend's experience with God and I was awed by it. Yet as much as I tried to adopt his methods, I could not experience what my friend went through. Instead God spoke to me in the books and scriptures that I read. There would always be certain lines in the books that would make me read twice and reflect. Hence when we read biographies of Christians or hear of people tell of close encounters they have had of God, we shouldn't try to force our own experience to match theirs. God meet us where we are and not where someone else is.

It is stated in scripture "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." The pursuit of intimacy is an intentional commitment to take steps toward to be more conscious, connected and confident in Him alone.

Here are some truths about intimacy with God:

- Our purpose in life is to worship Him

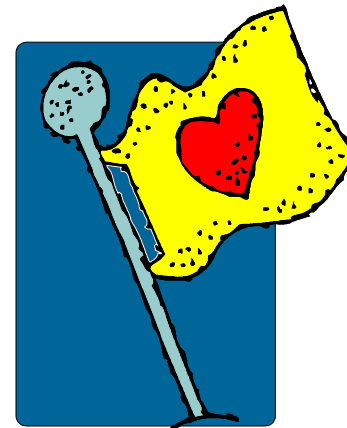
Intimacy is not about God doing things for me or making me feel good. It is about loving our God with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our strength. Intimacy begins by giving self away. It is about giving praise and worship to our God.

- God has already done more for us than we deserve

By dying on the cross, He has washed away our sins with His blood. This mere fact should make us want to make be with Him for the rest of our lives.

- God is probably doing a lot of things for us without us knowing

Romans 8:28 states "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." Start the day praying to God to bless and guide us throughout the day and give thanks at the end of each day.



- When God thinks of intimacy, He thinks in terms of a heart-to-heart relationship

Intimacy with God is about a relationship, not a gift exchange.

When we live expectantly, serve Him purely, slow down and spend time with His Word in prayer and meditation, He fills our souls with Himself.

We don't always feel emotionally or spiritually sharp all the time. Stay focus and faithful to our God and your connectedness to God will deepen and intimacy with Him will be your reward. **S**



## IN RETROSPECT

# Will suffering bring us closer to God?

by James Lau



Suffering consists of two main events:

- (1) the cause - Why am I suffering? Who did it?
- (2) our response

By instinct, most of us want to figure out the cause of our pain before we decide how to respond. Our first thought when adversity strikes is probably: "Why Lord?" "Why me?" "Am I being punished?" "What have I done wrong?"

Asking God "why" He has allowed pain, suffering or tragedy to touch our lives is a natural human reaction.



We don't ask once or twice and stop. We keep on asking Him. The reasons for adversity are as vast and different as the people who are touched by suffering. Sometimes God has to prepare our hearts to accept His purpose for allowing adversity. On the other hand, there are things God never reveals to us. But, if we are too focused and obsessed with questions about

the cause, about which we have no control, we are more likely to end up being bitter and turn away from God.

Ultimately, how we respond to suffering will make us Better or Bitter. Now that it has happened, what should our response be? If we concentrate only on "I and myself" we will wallow in self-pity and tend to become Bitter. But, if we turn to Jesus and believe that He will help us to turn it round, it is more likely that it will make us Better.

One of the ways, in which we can direct our mind away from "I, myself and my needs" is to pray more.



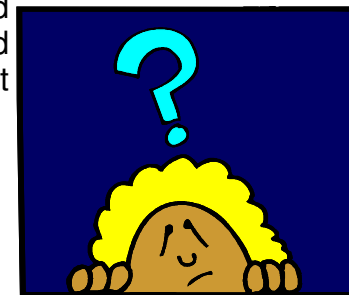
Also, when we share our suffering with the innocent suffering of Jesus we will find the going much easier and lighter. This is just like the sharing of our suffering with a sympathetic support group as there is a mutual desire to lighten each other's load.

Jesus is the compassionate God who has become a human being so that

we can approach Him for help in our suffering with no fear. When we turn to Jesus, He promises that He will help us and work WITH us to turn the suffering and pain round for our good. The external circumstances (the pain, the suffering, the hardship or the adversity) may not change BUT our internal attitude and respond to them will certainly change.

However, does God punish us with or bring us pain, adversity, trials or suffering? No, as St James says, "If we are tempted by such trials, we must not say, 'This temptation comes from God.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one." (James 1:13)

God does not will that we suffer, just as He did not will that Adam and Eve sin. But since they sinned and we inherit the weaknesses that are a result of that sin, we do and always will have something to endure. So we cannot say that God punishes us with suffering in the hope of producing something good in us, but we can safely say that God can bring good out of even the worst circumstances. **S**





## **PARISH HAPPENINGS**

### **A Special CNG Birthday Celebration**

by Louise Dias



The Tanglin Halt CNG Group 1 had a simple yet special celebration during its prayer gathering on 6th March. 18 members gathered at the home of Robert & Helena.

The stars of the night were Fr Suyono and a new member, Edward - their birthdays happened to fall in the

same month. There was good makan makan, cheery birthday songs, happy chit-chatting and one cake for each of them!

The session ended by 10:30pm and we all hope that Fr Suyono had a most memorable 40th birthday celebration through our little humble party. **S**

**Youth Section  
Vibes (see hardcopy)**



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **ALPHA MONTHLY GATHERING - APRIL 2008**

**Day/Date:** Sat 12th April 2008 **Time:** 7.15 pm **Place:** Damien Hall

**Highlight:** A LIFE WORTH LIVING - "New Purpose" (Philippians 1: 12-30)  
POTLUCK FELLOWSHIP MEAL Please bring some food to share! Do bring your friends, and relations to join us. EVERYONE IS MOST WELCOME

\*\*\*\*\*

Baby-sitting & tuition (all subjects except Chinese) services available in Stirling Road area. Interested, please call 6471 2940.

**Youth Section  
Vibes (see hardcopy)**

**Youth Section  
Vibes (see hardcopy)**



## PARISH HAPPENINGS

### Tombola Night

by anne sent-doux

The Tombola Nite was held on Sat 8th Mar 2008 as a fund raising event for the Youth Campaign for the Poor.

Alpha was asked to assist in running this event. Co-ordinating with the youths, it was decided that they take charge of the sale of the drinks while Alpha was to provide food. During our meeting, the PAG (Post Alpha Groups) Committee was quite apprehensive about the turnout as its concern was whether parishioners would come as it was Lent. So we were surprised and happy to see a full house (about 120 people) on that day!

We were pleasantly surprised with the variety of food provided by the PAG Committee and Alpha supporters. And 'Thanks be to God!' most of it were sold out. Serena, who led the session, was very professional in calling out the numbers but as usual our dear Richard added humour to some special numbers:

#### Serena's call

No. 2 – Ugly duckling  
No. 8 – sexy lady  
No. 51  
No. 11  
No 12 – 1 – 2  
No. 10 Downing Street

#### Richard's take

Quack Quack  
Wolf whistles  
Bus that comes to BSC  
Fr Rencken's legs  
Buckle my shoe  
Telor Busok (Rotten egg)

It will be great if this event was held on a quarterly basis as there were laughter and fun among our parishioners. At the end of the evening, many who attended this event were asking, "When is the next Tombola Night?" Perhaps, such fun activities are what BSC needs to bring parishioners together for an evening of Fun and Fellowship.

*Note: That evening, \$490 was raised through the sale of food*

## Youth Section Vibes (see hardcopy)

## The Little Ones

by Thomas Ng

During the debate in Catholic News' Viewpoints last year, most of the writers took the 'little ones' and 'children' in literal sense. I shall elaborate on the biblical interpretation of the 'little ones' here.



Undoubtedly, Jesus laid His hands on the children to bless them (Matt 19:15). However, there is a deeper perception in Jesus' teaching on true discipleship in Matthew's Gospel. When Jesus stipulated that 'the Kingdom of Heaven' belonged to such children, he was teaching his disciples to be truthful and humble (childlike) towards the 'little ones' who were actually members of the community (Matt 19:14).

Jesus emphasised that whoever causes the little ones having faith in Him to sin, it would be better for him to be drowned in the sea (Matt 18:6). I shall quote from the explanatory notes taken from my study on Matthew's Gospel last year.

Matthew dealt with the problem of scandal in the community. It is not clear what the scandal was. The seriousness of the scandal, however, was brought out by showing that what is done to one in the community is done to Christ (Matt 18:5-6). The transition to the members of the community is achieved by using the metaphorical term "little child" (Matt 18:3) as a catchword to refer to individual members as the "little ones who have faith in me." (Matt 18:6)

Jesus then went on to instruct his disciples to get rid of whatever imperfections and bad examples that might lead themselves and others to sin (Matt 18:8-9).

Some biblical texts use the word cause, downfall or stumbling-block. In

the first English translation of the Douay-Rheims Version, the original translated word is scandalise. Jesus concluded to his disciples that in a Christian community, there should be no competition but collaboration. "Whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave... not to be served but to serve." (Matt 20: 26-28)

Our Lord Jesus' teaching is important and useful for the Christian community that consists of the priests/pastors, leaders/elders and members. As leaders/elders, we need to respect all members.

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones..." (Matt 18:10). We have to show our care and love for our members, humble ourselves to listen to their views and appreciate their services, so as to retain their membership for the whole community. If we are self-conceited, unamiable or even authoritarian, members who see such attitude may leave the community.

My Anglican friend told me that there are different Christians coming to his Church because of unamiable elders. During my study on Matthew's Gospel at the SPI, Msgr Vaz commented that many 'little ones' were leaving the community because of scandals and competitive attitudes.

Indeed, there should be no scandal and competition, but collaboration to keep the 'little ones' who form the majority of the whole Christian community. The compassionate Lord even teaches us to take care of the 'lost sheep and bring him/her back to the community (Matt 18:12-14). **S**

*"The Blessed Sacrament is indeed the stimulus for us all, for me as it should be for you, to forsake all worldly ambitions"*

**Blessed Damien of Molokai (1840-1889)  
Apostle of the Lepers**