



June
Edition

木 THE 匠 CARPENTER

31st Edition, June 2024



SAINT JOSEPH

Pray for us

PASSING ON THE LIGHT

Knowing, Understanding and Sharing the Parish Mission and Vision

Do you know what the Mission of St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah) is? Do you know what our Parish Vision is?

As the Universal Church slowly emerged from the Covid pandemic, it was timely to revisit our Parish Mission and Vision at the beginning of 2024. Three recollections were held with leaders from the parish to deepen their understanding of the Parish Mission and Vision and to consider what steps are needed to realise it.

Beginning in January, the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) retreat focused on building a strong spiritual foundation. Members from the PPC pondered on Zechariah 4:6 "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the Lord Almighty", reflecting on how the work of building God's Kingdom can only be accomplished by God's Spirit and not by human might nor power. Spiritual renewal is essential. PPC Members were invited to consider how they can deepen their relationship with God this year, so they can better shine Christ's light to others.

Following this, a Formation Day was held for all heads of ministries and service teams in the parish. About 100 leaders gathered to reflect on the theme of the 'Peaceable Kingdom - Working Together to build a Community of Disciples'. Facilitated by Pastoral Teams Coordinator, Jane Lau, leaders were led to reflect deeper on what discipleship means and how ministries and teams can cooperate and collaborate with each other to accomplish our God-given mission to make disciples. (Matthew 28)

Leaders were also encouraged to work towards the Ministry Goals for 2024:

- **Ministry members know and understand the Parish Mission and Vision**
 - **Mission:** A vibrant, evangelising and missionary Church, under the Patronage of St Joseph.
 - **Vision:** To nourish faith in a loving community
- **Every ministry is a listening ministry** (doing check-ins and intercessory prayer)
- **Every ministry member is in a listening community**

Leaders were then divided into smaller groups where they used the synodal method to listen to each other, and then reflect and discern how to align their teams to the Parish Mission and Vision; and how their members can work together better.

Then in April, an All Ministry Members' Day of Recollection was held for all ministry and service team members. Another 150 participants gathered on the Hari Raya Puasa public holiday to consider 'Where are we? Location - Route - Destination'. In addition to introducing them to the Parish Mission, Vision and 2024 Ministry Goals, a team from Kingsmead Centre for Ignatian Spirituality and Counselling was also invited to help facilitate sessions. Fr Jerome Leon and three other lay spiritual directors introduced the Examen and other prayer practices and led participants to consider where they were in their spiritual journey, where they want to be and how to get there.

Feedback from participants from the three recollections has generally been positive. Many expressed gratitude for having quiet time to pray as well as the opportunity to interact with other ministries. A number shared that they found the talks and sharing encouraging and enlightening and looked forward to more inter-ministry events. The key message of needing to learn to truly listen to each other seemed to resonate with a number of participants.

As more leaders, ministries and parishioners come to understand and embrace our Parish Mission and Vision, it is hoped that these recollections and future collaborative events will lay a strong foundation to build a more vibrant, evangelising and missionary parish where faith can be nurtured in a loving community.

If you and/or your ministry would like to know how you can be more effective listeners and align better to the Parish Mission and Vision, please contact parish Pastoral Teams Coordinator, Jane Lau, at sjcbt.pastoral@catholic.org.sg for more information.



FOREWORD

Easter, Pentecost and Beyond

The words of the two angels on Easter morning to the astonished women, 'Jesus is risen', have resounded throughout the centuries, bringing hope, joy and peace to multiple millions of the faithful.

Christ's resurrection from the dead represents the single most astounding event in the history of humanity and the only basis upon which our hope against the forces of darkness is built and the triumph over death.

Our faith is based on a living hope and upon a living person – Jesus of Nazareth – whom God raised from the dead in vindication of Christ's atoning death on the cross through which we have forgiveness of sins, peace and reconciliation with God and hope of eternal life.

This should give us confidence in life as well as comfort and solace in death.

After Christ's ascension into heaven, He sent forth the Holy Spirit upon the apostles at Pentecost.

Jesus, the Son of God, expressed each of these attributes of the 'Spirit of the Lord' in their perfect fullness, such as wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. As participants in Christ, we share in each of these gifts of the Spirit. Jesus himself assured us of this!

"But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you." - (John 14:26).

These gifts have a variety of expressions that are unique to each individual. We can fully utilise these gifts that are given to us beyond Pentecost as we re-enter the Ordinary season.

Let us continue to reflect, give praise and thanks for the gifts that we received, discern how each of us can make full use of these gifts in our daily lives – Be it at home, at work or at the parish as we strive to build a vibrant, evangelising community here at St Joseph's.

Fr Christopher Lee
Parish Priest

THE GREAT SAINT JOSEPH CELEBRATION 2024

Every year, we joyfully celebrate the Feast Day of our protector: St Joseph the Worker. 2024 was no different. The highly anticipated series of Feast Day celebrations started with Mass and procession on 1 May.

The theme this year: St Joseph, Protector of the Holy Family, was truly something to reflect upon. St Joseph displayed determination and resilience in protecting Mary and Jesus. We, as brothers and sisters in Christ, should also recognise that we are all family, and that we should care for one another, just as St Joseph so lovingly did for the Holy Family.

Here are some of the many highlights from 2024's eventful feast day week:

ST JOSEPH THE WORKER MASS: WEDNESDAY, 1 MAY @ 5:30 PM

This year, Msgr Stephen Yim came to celebrate our feast day Mass. Unlike previous years, the annual feast day procession took place after the 1 May Mass, symbolising the importance of celebrating Mass on the true feast day of St Joseph the Worker. All the ministries, along with the whole congregation, participated in the procession, making it a spectacular sight.



HIGHLIGHTS

TRIDUUM MASSES: 2-3 MAY

We had the honour of Msgr James Yeo celebrating the Triduum Masses. He gave us much to think about when he highlighted in his homilies that each family is the domestic church, and truly inspired us to reflect on the example of St Joseph, Protector of the Holy Family. Even though his role as foster father of Jesus was a path with many thorns and challenges, it was also filled with many graces due to his perseverance and devotion to Jesus.

SUNDAY MASSES DURING FEAST DAY WEEK

The parish held various Masses on the Sunday of Feast Day Week, such as a Tamil Mass, a Mass for our dear stallholders, as well as the 11:30 am Mass, celebrated by His Eminence, Cardinal William Goh. A great showing of parishioners turned up for the Masses, and it exhibited just how vibrant our parish community truly is.

FOOD AND FUN FAIR

On Sunday, parishioners indulged in a fun day of food and games at the church's annual Food and Fun Fair. The food stalls were all tantalising and enticing as usual, filling the stomachs of many enthusiastic parishioners, who were seen feasting on their favourite dishes. The games stalls were also back in full swing this year. Hot favourites such as the Football Stall and the Dunking Station receiving lots of attention. Our dear Fr Prasanna was dunked once again this year and was all smiles throughout the Feast Day Fair. All in all, the Food and Fun Fair was a big success this year, bringing parishioners, families and friends together to enjoy the festivities.

FLOWERS FOR ST JOSEPH

Numerous bouquets were offered to St Joseph this year thanks to our floral team's hard work, creating a plethora of beautiful flower arrangements for sale. The church foyer was filled with flowers, all adorned with the parishioners' prayers and thanksgiving.

THANK YOUS

As we conclude the Feast Day celebrations, we thank everyone who has contributed to the event. It was truly a joyful and uplifting experience to have the whole parish come together to celebrate the Feast Day of our Great St Joseph – a testament to God's loving faithfulness to the church itself!

Praise and thanks be to God!





BY MARICON RECTO

COORDINATOR, SJCBT FILIPINO COMMUNITY

On the evening of 20 December 2023 (Wednesday), St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah) celebrated its first ever Simbang Gabi organised by the Parish's Filipino Community.

Simbang Gabi, which means "Night Mass" in Filipino, is a nine-day series of Novena Masses in anticipation of Christmas and to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Expectant Mother of God. According to Scripture, Mother Mary miraculously became pregnant by the Holy Spirit before giving birth after nine months of conception. Thus the nine-day Simbang Gabi gatherings represent each month of Mary carrying baby Jesus in anticipation of His birth.

A FILIPINO TRADITION

The tradition of Simbang Gabi traces back to the arrival of Spanish missionaries in the Philippines about 500 years ago. At that time, they had a tradition of celebrating pre-Christmas Novena Masses in honour

of the Annunciation. Those Masses were known as "Misa de Gallo" or "Rooster Mass," because they were celebrated at dawn. The early Masses accommodated farmers, who often began work before sunrise to escape the heat in the fields. Pope Sixtus V later declared that Mass should be celebrated before sunrise to accommodate farmers during the harvest season.

When I was young, my grandmother would wake me up at 3 am so that we could attend the Simbang Gabi at 4 am in our Baranggay (a small territorial and administrative district forming the most local level of government in the Philippines). Back then, I did not understand why it had to be held at 4 am. Although it meant that I had to sacrifice a few more hours of sleep, I enjoyed attending Simbang Gabi as most churches were decorated with colourful lights and beautiful parol (lanterns) to welcome the churchgoers.

In addition, a Nativity Scene is displayed in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. Christmas carols are being sung too before and after each Mass. Shortly after the Mass, traditional delicacies await the churchgoers, with food stalls outside the church offering popular favourites such as bibingka, puto (rice cakes), puto bumbong etc and usually served with tea or coffee. In addition, they say that when you complete the nine days of the Novena Masses, your wishes will be granted. But of course, attending Simbang Gabi is not about fulfilling wishes, but it's part of our family tradition and faith in God.

CELEBRATING AS A COMMUNITY

In Singapore, Filipino Catholics begin their Novena Masses on 15 December. It is celebrated in the evening in place of the traditional pre-dawn Masses. This is co-ordinated by the Filipino Community Parish Groups headed by Fr Romeo Yu Chang CICM and co-organised by the Archdiocesan Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Itinerant People (ACMI).



At St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah), Fr Romeo Yu Chang presided at the Mass, and it was celebrated by Fr Christopher Lee (Parish Priest) and Fr Lourdusamy Prasanna (Asst Parish Priest). The response was overwhelming and the faithful arrived from 7 pm onwards and approximately 1000 Catholics attended the first Simbang Gabi in the parish.

The Mass was recited in English to cater to non-Filipino parishioners. ACMI sponsored 800 bento sets and additional 200 bento sets were ordered for distribution after the Mass. A Food Committee was formed to ensure the smooth distribution of the refreshments.

The "Combined Choir" (comprising non-Filipino and Filipino parishioners) of St. Joseph's Church made the celebration livelier as they sung the Christmas carols before and after the Mass. The event was a huge success with the help and support of all the Liturgical Ministries and with the grace of God.



The Simbang Gabi celebration gives a feeling of unity among Filipinos and non-Filipinos as well. For overseas Filipino workers in Singapore who are unable to celebrate Christmas with their loved ones back home, it gives them a sense of "Home" and provides an opportunity for them to gather and connect with the wider church community.



If you usually enter the Church by the main staircase, you would probably have been welcomed by the Welcome Desk Team members, perhaps with a simple gesture like a smile, a handshake, or a greeting of 'Welcome to St Joseph's!' At the heart of their mission lies a sacred duty – to welcome with open arms, to embrace with genuine warmth, and to nurture a sense of belonging that transcends mere acquaintance.

Officially launched in March 2024, the Welcome Desk Team is an initiative of the Parish Office. Helmed by a team of volunteers, they help visitors and parishioners with enquiries ranging from finding the toilet to how to join a ministry. New parishioners who come to the Welcome Desk receive a welcome pack of 'goodies' and parish information.

The role of the Welcome Desk Team is to be a bridge-builder, linking individuals to the wider fabric of parish life. With every contact made, the Parish Office follows up with new parishioners and any enquiries during the week. This way, it is hoped that every member of the parish community can feel seen, valued, and embraced.

In preparation for their launch, Welcome Desk Team members underwent formation with parish Pastoral Teams Coordinator, Jane Lau, on how the Welcome Desk is a response to Jesus' Great Commission to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28); as well as aligned to the Parish Mission and Vision of a vibrant, evangelising and missionary parish where faith is nurtured in a loving community under the patronage of St Joseph.

Guest speaker and lay missionary, Edwyn de Souza, was also invited to conduct a workshop for the team on 'Evangelisation: Step 1 - Becoming Human Dialogues', focusing on how to befriend others and start conversations.



Lay missionary Edwyn de Souza conducting a workshop for Welcome Desk Team and other ministry members

In collaboration with the Parish Befrienders Group, a welcome gathering 'Come and See' was held for all new parishioners in April to meet the priests of the parish; as well as find out more about the services, communities and ministries available in our parish. It was a lively evening of 'getting-to-know-you' and conversation over light refreshments. Look out for the next 'Come and See' gatherings in July and October.

Through these and other efforts of the whole parish, St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah) hopes to offer a glimpse of the Kingdom of God – where all are welcome, all are cherished, and all are loved.

Please come by the Welcome Desk before and after the weekend Masses for any enquiries or just to say 'hello'. If you would like to join the Welcome Desk Team, please email Jane at: sjcbt.pastoral@catholic.org.sg

The Welcome Desk Team looks forward to welcoming you!



After an absence of three years, St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah)'s Divine Mercy group celebrated the Feast Day of Divine Mercy Sunday at Divine Mercy Church on 7 April 2024. Forty-five members participated in the Holy Mass at 3 pm which is the Hour of Greatest Mercy.

It was a spiritual experience for our members to celebrate this Feast Day together. On the way to Divine Mercy Church, we prayed the 3 o'clock Prayers and the Chaplets and arrived at the church at the end of the prayers. At 2:15 pm, the Divine Mercy congregation Archdiocese Divine Mercy Apostolate (ADMA) held the prayers of Divine Mercy in the church.



The Holy Mass started at 3 pm, celebrated by Cardinal William Goh. There were a large number of parishioners as well as the members of Divine Mercy Prayer groups from different churches in Singapore in the congregation. Cardinal William Goh

delivered a meaningful and reflective homily on the meaning of Divine Mercy.

On the return to St Joseph's Church after Mass, we recited the Holy Rosary to give thanks to our Eternal Father for His Infinite Mercy and joyful celebration of the Feast Day. It was indeed a spirit-filled and happy event.



Divine Mercy Devotion:
Every Friday (except First Friday of the month)
8 pm at Chapel of St Joseph
All are welcome to join us.

SINNERS to SAINTS

BY PETER LING



Martyrdom of Saint Paul

*'Every saint has a past
and every sinner has a future'*

When I first heard this quote in church, I thought of St Mary Magdalene and St Paul. Mary had seven demons driven out of her and became a faithful disciple of Jesus while Paul turned from an executioner of Christians to become a great apostle.

As I researched the quote further, I came across two books about Saints who had sinful pasts.

The first book, *Saints for Sinners*, was by Jesuit priest Fr Alban Goodier in 1959. The second book was by author Thomas J. Craughwell in 2006: *Saints Behaving Badly: The Cutthroats, Crooks, Trollops, Con Men and Devil-Worshippers Who Became Saints*. Craughwell had also authored *Saints with a Past: A Study of Conversion in the Lives of Eight Notorious Sinners*.

After reading about the 'sinful saints' described in the two books, I classified their sins under disbelief, greed, murder, pleasure and lust. As it is not possible to write about all these saints in the limited publication space, I will selectively share some of the more interesting stories.

DISBELIEF

The disbelievers were St Hippolytus, St Christopher and St Peter Claver.

St Hippolytus was a brilliant and egoistic theologian who disrespected Pope St Zephyrinus, whom Hippolytus dismissed as a person of no education, and Pope St Callixtus, whom Hippolytus criticised as corrupting the Church by forgiving sorrowful adulterers and fornicators. Hippolytus had his followers elect him as pope and broke away from the Church. Hippolytus died as a martyr during the Roman Empire's persecution of Christians.



Martyrdom of Saint Hippolytus

St Christopher was a vain man who wanted to serve only the greatest power on earth. He changed his allegiance to the Canaan King, then the devil and finally Jesus Christ. When the Roman Emperor Decius persecuted Christians, Christopher became a martyr of the Church.

St Peter Claver disbelieved in himself. He wanted to join the Society of Jesus as he was inspired by their work in hospitals, prisons and slave ships but was undecided for several years. When he became a Jesuit novice, he doubted his true calling. He dithered again when told he had to be a priest before going to the Americas as a missionary. When he worked with a Jesuit priest to look after slaves, he then became a priest and spent 44 years serving slaves.

GREED

The greedy were St Callixtus, St John of God and St Camillus de Lellis.

St Callixtus was a Christian slave who managed his employer's bank but embezzled the funds. He escaped, was caught, was sentenced to hard labour, and was released to recover lost money. He was sentenced again when he disturbed a Sabbath service to retrieve money he had invested with Jewish financiers. After his release, he looked after a Christian cemetery, became a priest, was elected Pope and was killed by an anti-Christian mob.

St John of God in Portugal adopted vices like gambling, heavy drinking and visits to prostitutes when he enlisted to fight against the French. After he was dishonourably discharged for failing to look after plundered valuables, he drifted from job to job until he opened a small shop selling holy pictures and religious books. Wishing to do something useful for God, he turned a rented house into a hospital for the poor. He also opened a shelter for the homeless, elderly, orphans and the unemployed.

St Camillus de Lellis became addicted to gambling when he joined his gambler father as a mercenary soldier. Camillus also indulged in conning and fleecing fellow soldiers as well as drinking and frequenting prostitutes.

Camillus worked for the San Giacomo Hospital in Rome so that it could treat his wounded leg. When the hospital fired Camillus for turning his colleagues into gamblers, he became a mercenary soldier and addicted gambler again. After his fighting days, he gambled and begged but a rich man sent him to work on building a Capuchin monastery.

Camillus became a priest and his congregation of priests dedicated to the service of the sick evolved into a religious order, Ministers of the Sick, popularly known as The Camillians. He died in 1614 and is a patron saint of the sick, nurses, hospitals and healthcare workers.

MURDER

The murderers were St Moses the Ethiopian, St Olga, St Vladimir and St Olaf.

St Moses the Ethiopian was a slave of a government official and stole from him. Driven out, he became vengeful and led a life of crime. As leader of a gang of 75 desert brigands, he raided villages, murdered travellers and slept with numerous women. When the governor's forces defeated the gang, Moses hid in a monastery and was transformed by the monks.

St Olga was a princess of Kiev when enemies assassinated her husband Igor. Seeking revenge, Olga had thousands of her enemies murdered or enslaved. Years later, she became a Christian and a missionary. She was the first canonised Russian saint and is venerated as guardian of widows and converts.



Olga Avenge to Drevlians

St Vladimir, St Olga's grandson, became prince of Kiev after murdering his step-brother rival. He raped his widowed sister-in-law and made her part of his harem of 800 concubines. He offered human sacrifices to consecrate new temples to his pagan gods. When Vladimir became a Christian, he gave up his numerous wives, destroyed



The Baptism of Rus'

statues of pagan gods, converted his people to Christianity and established churches in Kiev and Russian cities. He is the patron saint of Russian Catholics.

St Olaf was 12 years old when he was entrusted to a raider. Olaf learned to rape and kill during pillages. As a 16-year-old mercenary, he drowned English defenders and slaughtered civilians. In Norway, he hanged tax collectors and mutilated Norse chiefs who had plotted to kill him. When Olaf became a Christian, he destroyed pagan temples and images. He was killed in a battle with the King of Denmark and England.

PLEASURE

The pleasure-seekers were St Thomas Beckett, St Francis of Assisi, St Ignatius of Loyola and St Philip Howard.

St Thomas Beckett had a taste for the good life, such as hunting, falconry and overdressing. When he was archdeacon of Canterbury, he also engaged in dice gambling and took money from sinners in exchange for indulgences. When he joined Henry II as Chancellor, he lived like a prince and hosted lavish feasts. As military commander in a war with France, he burnt the Quercy town and slaughtered its inhabitants.



Saint Thomas of Canterbury (Master Francke ca. 1424)

On a frigid winter day, he refused to take off his fur-lined cloak for a poor shivering man until the king insisted. When Thomas became Archbishop of Canterbury, his relationship with the king deteriorated. The king wanted to rule the Church while Thomas preferred independence. The king charged Thomas for mismanagement during his days as Chancellor and then the king's men accused Thomas of treason. Four knights killed Thomas in his own cathedral.

St Francis of Assisi was a son of cloth merchants in Italy. He loved extravagant clothes, drinking and singing outside the windows of pretty girls. At aged 20, he enlisted to fight in the civil war but was imprisoned for a year. After release, he tried to return to his party life but became depressed and turned to prayers for enlightenment. He heard a voice one day to 'Rebuild my church' and a sermon on another occasion to give up material possessions. Francis then lived in poverty and helped the poor. He formed a religious order and soon after received the wounds of Christ on his hands, feet and body.

St Ignatius of Loyola lived in his father's Spanish castle and overindulged in sensual pleasures. At aged 26, he fought in a war against France but a cannonball shattered one leg and injured the other. While recovering, he read books on Christ and the saints. Ashamed of his vanity, pride, lust and violence, he decided to serve God and Our Lady. After he had a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus, he spent time with Dominican friars and studied theology at the University of Paris. He then started the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), which grew around the globe.

St Philip Howard grew up with his powerful and wealthy family in Norfolk, England. He married at the age of 12 and entered the University of Cambridge when he was 15 years old. He sought the pleasures of gambling, taverns and brothels. When he became a courtier of Queen Elizabeth I, he succumbed to sexually active young women. His conversion began when he heard Jesuit priest Edmund Campion defending the Catholic religion against a panel of Protestant theologians. Philip was placed under house arrest, imprisoned in the Tower of London and sentenced to death for treason.

LUST

The lustful were St Pelagia, St Mary of Egypt, St Augustine of Hippo and St Margaret of Cortona.

St Pelagia was a promiscuous actress from Phoenicia. She had lots of male lovers but impulsively entered a church and heard a sermon on God's mercy. She repented, became a Christian, gave away her wealth and became a hermit.



St Pelagia

St Mary of Egypt ran away to Alexandria when she was 12 years old. She had many lustful adventures in wealthy Alexandria, not for money but for sexual conquests. She was a skilled seductress during her 17 years of promiscuity, teaching young men the art of love.

On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, she was curious to see the True Cross in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre but an invisible cross kept her out. Feeling self-loathing, she wept and saw an icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary above the church entrance. She prayed and promised to repent. Then a divine force allowed her to enter the church to attend Mass and venerate the Cross. She spent 47 years in the desert and died there.

St Augustine of Hippo was born in North Africa to a violent-tempered pagan father, Patricius, and a devout Christian mother, Monica. At the University of Carthage, Augustine was obsessed with sex and had a mistress. They had a son, Adeodatus. When his mother convinced him to marry a respectable girl, Augustine had to dismiss his mistress as this was an impediment to marriage. As Augustine had to wait for two years until the girl was of marriageable age, he could not wait and took another mistress.

Augustine turned his life around at the age of 33 through the influence of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and his mother's unwavering prayers. He became a priest and a bishop in North Africa. In his classic book, Confessions of St Augustine, he regretted his immoral past and his earlier inclinations towards the Manichaeism religion and the Neoplatonist view of God.

St Margaret of Cortona was in open conflict with her step-mother when her widowed father remarried. As a teenager, Margaret found happiness and pleasure outside her home because her beauty had attracted many men.



St Margaret of Cortona

She became a servant to a young nobleman, became his mistress and mothered a son. One day after nine years as a mistress, Margaret found the dead body of her lover in the forest, mysteriously buried and suggesting foul play.

Margaret left her castle, went back to her father's cottage and sought his forgiveness. At Mass one day, she stood up before the whole congregation and confessed her sinful life. Her father and step-mother hated the public shaming and drove Margaret and her child out of the house.

The Franciscan friars at Cortona accepted Margaret and she began a life of penance. She nursed the poor, lived on alms and joined the Third Order of St Francis. Margaret established charity institutions to serve the poor and suffering. Before her death, Margaret had a vision of St Mary Magdalene, the faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

While the 'sinful saints' were disbelievers, greedy, murderers, pleasure-seekers and lustful, some were guilty of multiple sins. For example, St Vladimir was a disbeliever, a murderer, a pleasure-seeker and lustful.

Since these sinners had repented and become Saints, there is hope for us. As the saying goes, to err is human, to forgive divine. Being sinners, we all need the divine mercy of God.

Peter Ling is with the Lector Ministry



BUILDING A VIBRANT, EVANGELISING AND MISSIONARY CHURCH THROUGH INCULTURATION

“THE GOSPEL OPENS EVERY CULTURE TO GREATER FREEDOM IN CHRIST.”

- Pope Francis

In his words, “The liberation obtained through baptism enables us to acquire the full dignity of children of God, so that, while we remain firmly anchored in our cultural roots, at the same time we open ourselves to the universalism of faith that enters into every culture, recognises the kernels of truth present, and develops them, bringing to fullness the good contained in them”.

Resonating the Papal call for inculturation and the Vision of our Parish, JMJ (Jesus Mary Joseph) Tamil Apostolate of our parish has been organising various activities and events in the past year to enable spiritual growth and nourish faith in a loving community.

Christmas Caroling door to door

Christmas is a time of joy and warmth, surrounded with the love of family members and the comradery of friends. As carols bring

us together and connect us in groups of shared experience and feelings, no Christmas is complete without carol singing.

Armed with small musical instruments, adorned with Christmas hats and together with the Santa carrying treats to the kids, JMJ Tamil Apostolate walked into people’s homes upon invitation to render popular Tamil and English carols, bringing messages of hope, laughter, and joy.

Pongal (Harvest) Festival & Celebrations

Pongal is one of the most popular harvest or “Thanksgiving” festival, celebrated by the Tamil community across the globe in mid-January every year irrespective of religious differences. It is a four-day long celebration affair, each day marked by its own significance and festivities but with the sole purpose of thanking God for mother nature and abundance.

The word Pongal means ‘boiling over’. This overflowing of rice symbolises a prosperous farming season. It also connotes the sweet rice dish prepared on this special occasion.

JMJ Tamil Apostolate organised a Pongal event on Sat 13 January this year that created an environment to:

- be thankful, faithful and grateful to God the Creator for being generous in enabling us to enjoy the benefits of His creation and to realise the greatness of God in creating this unique opportunity to honour farmers in realisation of their contribution to the vitality of life
- share our joy and blessings through fellowship feast and various cultural performances
- encourage social cohesiveness by uniting people and bringing them together in a common function, beyond differences

St Joseph’s Feast Day Celebrations

St Joseph, the adoptive father of our Lord is one of the most revered saints among the Tamil speaking Catholics. Traditionally, Tamil speaking devotees from various parts of Singapore and Malaysia flock to our parish on 1 May to venerate our patron.

This year too, hundreds of Tamil speaking Catholics from all over Singapore gathered in our church on Sat 4 May at 7:30 pm to attend the Tamil Feast Day Mass in honour of our patron St Joseph.

The High Mass was celebrated by Fr Lourdusamy Prasanna together with five priests from various other parishes in Singapore. Joyful celebrations were elevated by the first-time performance of our parish’s newly formed Tamil Choir at the Mass and the blessing and inauguration of the JMJ Tamil Apostolate flag!

The devotees were treated to a fellowship dinner after Mass. They were also attracted to the food and fun fair activities at our church with the JMJ Tamil Apostolate also hosting a stall for the first time!



Parish Youth organise first-ever Tenebrae Service

TENEBRAE

Eight Youth and Young Adult groups from St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah) came together for the first time to jointly organise a Tenebrae service on Good Friday, 29 March 2024 at the Parish Community Hall. 'Tenebrae' means darkness or shadows and it is a solemn service consisting of Scripture readings, prayers, songs, silence and reflections on the Passion and Death of Jesus. During the service, 15 lighted candles are gradually extinguished until one candle, representing the Light of Christ is left.

The Tenebrae service was held after the 3 pm Service on Good Friday.

Led by the parish's youth and young adult groups, representatives participated in Scripture reading, as well as reading reflections they had written. A combined choir from the various groups also led the participants in Lenten hymns. Msgr Peter Zhang did the opening prayer, and Br Alex Chua, a fifth-year seminarian who is currently attached to our parish, led the other prayers and also gave a reflection on one of the readings.

Here are some reflections from the participants:

"The experience was nice, it was good to meet with other representatives of the youth groups together."

- Gabriella, Youth Faith & Bible Reflection

"As an Altar Server participating in the Tenebrae for the first time, I didn't know what to expect nor did I know how to appropriately serve in this service. Yet, when I walked into the hall before the service began, the atmosphere was one where the solemnity of Good Friday could be felt. Dim lights, hushed voices and 15 bright candles on an elevated table for everyone to see. I realised my privilege, given this role to be part of the service and extinguish the candles one by one and to reflect and ponder in this still, solemn environment on Good Friday.

At the end, only one candle remained lit, symbolising the light of Christ, as we exited the hall in total silence, which left a profound impression on me on how it must be like to be a follower of Jesus in his time, to witness him in all his glory and humility, and then so quickly to be 'snuffed' out without knowing about his coming again in three days' time. Serving in the Tenebrae service was really an enlightening and touching experience and one that I would definitely like to serve again."

- Michel, Altar Server

"Through this rare opportunity, I felt quite happy that I was finally able to read. Due to Covid back in 2020, I was unable to serve as the Children's Lector, making me feel disheartened. Thus, I made sure to read to the best of my abilities for the Lord this time when I got the chance."

- Julie, Junior Catechist

"It was my first time not only attending a Tenebrae service, but also leading a choir for said Tenebrae service. I felt that it really set the mood to reflect on what our Lord went through to save us from our sins, and that overall, the flow of everything went smoothly, and the atmosphere was prayerful and reflective all the way up till everyone departed in silence. I hope that this will continue annually!"

- Gerard, Tenebrae Choir

"Attending the Tenebrae prayer service was truly a meditating experience, one that left a profound impact on us at SSVP. As we are still navigating the depths of understanding surrounding Good Friday, we found the service to be immensely helpful. The structure of the service was clear and easy to follow, guiding us through the significance of that sacred day. The readings provided a clear insight into the events celebrated on Good Friday, shedding light on its spiritual importance.

However, what truly elevated the experience was the atmosphere created throughout the service. The peaceful silence enveloped the room, allowing for deep reflection and connection with the divine. The hall decorated with beautiful plants and subtle decorations added to the sense of reverence and sanctity. The deliberate pauses added throughout the service provided moments for personal reflection, allowing the significance of the day to resonate deeply within us. The darkness that enveloped the space further emphasised the solemnity of the occasion, drawing us closer to the profound mystery of Good Friday.

Overall, the Tenebrae prayer service was a testament to the power of ritual and community in nurturing spiritual growth. We left the service feeling uplifted, with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of the significance of Good Friday. We SSVPs eagerly anticipate future Tenebrae services and the opportunities they provide for further spiritual enrichment."

- Joel, Youth SSVP

Contact the Youth and Young Adult groups in our parish to find out more:



- **Altar Servers:** Michel 93372692; Milan 94230870
- **Junior Catechists:** tinyurl.com/jrcatechists
- **Junior Legion of Mary (11-17y):**
English - maryoftheway@gmail.com
Mandarin - ymlom@stjoseph-bt.org.sg
- **Kanektas Youth Community (16-25y):**
kanektas@stjoseph-bt.org.sg
- **PAVE Young Adult Community (working adults in 20s and 30s):** sjcbtyoungadults@gmail.com
- **Verso l'Alto Teen Community (12-16y):**
sjc.verso@gmail.com
- **Youth & Young Adult Faith & Bible Reflections (Sec, Tertiary & 20+):** sjcbtbible@gmail.com
- **Youth Society of St Vincent de Paul (14+):**
stjoa@ssvpsingapore.org

Look out also for the upcoming Youth Fair and Mass for Youth on Sunday 21 July:

- 9:30 - 11 am: Youth Fair (Parish Community Hall)
- 11:30 am Mass: Mass with Youth followed by fellowship in the Parish Community Hall

For any other enquiries, please contact the parish Pastoral Teams Coordinator, Jane Lau, at sjcbt.pastoral@catholic.org.sg



END OF THE YEAR THANKS GIVING

SUNDAY, 31 DECEMBER 2023

We gathered as a community to give thanks to God for His many blessings over the year. Over 200 parishioners joined in the festivities. There was food, fun and games for all who came. The evening ended with a special blessing by our three priests.





FAITH FORMATION

Br Collin Wee FSC started 2024 with a retreat for 60 catechists from the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) as well as two talks to parents of primary and secondary students.

At the retreat, Br Collin shared with catechists on ways to foster partnerships with the children and teens whom they catechise as well as their parents. Catechists were asked to examine what activities energised as well as de-spirited them in order to be self-aware of how their actions and decisions could impact others. Through guided reflections, the respective catechetical teams shared their focus for the year and specific action plans to strengthen their calling as catechists.

The talks by Br Collin for the parents were equally engaging. Br Collin shared many inspiring stories from his 30 years of experience as a counsellor and a home mentor of Hope House, a shelter for boys who are homeless, abandoned by their families or without a family. He shared tips and guidance on how parents can build better relationships with their children, practise faith in the family as well as navigate the transition period when their child becomes a teenager. Our parish is blessed and grateful indeed to start off the new year with such encouraging talks and food for thought.

In April, CGS catechists had organised a self-guided prayer and reflection for parents in the atrium. The parents experienced some of the works the children encountered in the atrium. The silent journey session ended with a sharing amongst the parents on how each came to encounter Jesus our Good Shepherd through the scriptural, liturgical, geographical and practical life works.

A group of primary, secondary and CGS catechists had ended their monthly study session on the Directory for Catechesis. The study session started on 23 February and ended on 24 April using online videos on each of the chapters in the Directory. At the end of each session, the group reflected on questions on how the Directory is guiding the catechetical ministries to evangelise creatively and effectively and carry out the mission in passing on the faith in the 'digital culture' and cultural realities of today.

Lectors COMMISSIONING

On Sunday, 21 January 2024, the Word of God Sunday, approximately 40 new and existing Lectors were commissioned during the 11.30 am Mass.

As the rite of commissioning was prayed over our Lectors, they were reminded that as lectors of the Word of God, they were accepting an important office within the people of God and are especially commissioned to serve the faith, which was grounded in the Word of God.

As lectors who proclaim God's words to others, lectors too should be ready to accept it in obedience to the Holy Spirit. To meditate on God's Word often, so that they will grow daily in God's love and by their way of life show forth to the world our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We are always looking for more Lectors to join our ministry. Those who are committed to serving the community; interested to share their talent and prepared to set aside the time for preparation and formation are welcome to join The Ministry of Lectors.

Please contact:
Jeffrey Chan at lectorssjc@gmail.com





2024 HOLY WEEK

From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, here's how the faithful in our Parish observed Holy Week

2nd DIVINE MERCY PRAYER GROUP ANNIVERSARY

St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah) Divine Mercy group celebrated its 22nd anniversary on 19 January 2024. The church commemorated this special occasion with a Thanksgiving Mass on 19 January 2024 at 7 pm.

The Mass was celebrated by Fr Christopher, who is the spiritual director for the group. A large number of parishioners as well as the members of the Divine Mercy group were present.

Before the Mass, there was the recitation of the 3 o'clock prayers and Chaplet of Divine Mercy. After the Mass there was a fellowship in the parish canteen whereby everyone shared many kinds of food as well as get to know one another. It was indeed a spirit-filled and joyful event.

The Divine Mercy Prayer Group has weekly prayer sessions at 8 pm every Friday night (except the first Friday of the month) at the Chapel of St Joseph. All are welcome to join.







Holy Saturday Pilgrimage to Church of the Holy Cross

Embarking on a pilgrimage is a sacred voyage that offers profound spiritual enrichment and deep personal growth. Each stride forward is an opportunity for reflection and prayer.

With this spirit of prayer, over 200 enthusiastic walkers showed up early on Holy Saturday morning for a first-ever pilgrimage walk to the Church of the Holy Cross. The almost 10km route would take them from St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah), through the Rail Corridor as well as the streets of Clementi, to the Church of the Holy Cross where they could venerate a relic of the True Cross of Jesus.

The morning started with opening prayer led by Fr Christopher Lee and Msgr Peter Zhang followed by a safety briefing. Each pilgrim was given a booklet with detailed instructions and prayers for their journey. Msgr Peter and Fr Prasanna also accompanied the participants on their pilgrimage.

There were four 'prayer stations' along the way for the pilgrims to stop, pray and reflect on their journey:

- St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah)
- Entrance to the Rail Corridor
- Bukit Timah Railway Station
- Church of the Holy Cross

Pilgrims were asked to walk quietly and mindfully by being aware of the sights, sounds, smells, feelings and sensations around them and within them. They were also encouraged to post photographs and reflections on a community Padlet.

On average, pilgrims took about two to three hours for the journey. While most were able to make their way smoothly, some pilgrims shared how they had lost their way and then found it again. A few pilgrims, however, were not able to complete their journey for various reasons. Here are what pilgrims shared about their journey:

"Embarking on this pilgrimage has been a great journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth... The rough and smooth paths were like the ups and downs of life, while the physical strains reminded me of the sacrifices endured by those who walked before me... Completing this pilgrimage has not only deepened my spiritual connection but has also imparted heartfelt insights into the resilience of the human spirit. May this journey serve as a reminder that no matter the obstacles we face, with unwavering faith and perseverance, we can overcome, and every step brings us closer to our ultimate destination in life's pilgrimage."

"Thankful to the Lord for this wonderful walk. I have come to embrace the Lord's suffering in the walk. The walk along the rail corridor is very uneven. The stones along the path. I find it difficult to walk. Reflecting on further, Christ's walk to Calvary is not an easy one. Carrying the cross and walking on uneven path barefooted, He must have suffered a lot. What's more for me? Who am I to complain this little uneasiness?... Despite the tiredness and the heat, I'm able to find peace during the walk. A me-time that I need. Thank you Jesus for doing all these wonderful things for me."

"So many different bridges on this pilgrimage... Beautiful truss bridges, simple bridges like the quarry bridge, the Holland Road bridge and bridges with lifts for tired feet. The bridge represents Jesus to me. Grand ones are like Jesus leading me in a grand way like the Easter Vigil Mass to a grand place. Also, without a bridge, how would I be saved? The simple and unobvious bridges remind me how Jesus is always there on difficult journeys to make it smoother without me realising it...I just need to be aware of His presence. He is always there in the big and the small."

The pilgrims were met at the Church of the Holy Cross with cold drinks before ending their journey with a time of prayer, reflection and veneration of the relic of the True Cross of Jesus. Many expressed their gratitude to God for the good weather. We are also thankful for the kind support of the priests and staff of the Church of the Holy Cross Clementi.

Please check out more of the pilgrims' beautiful photos and reflections at: tinyurl.com/2024HolySatPilgrimage

If you enjoy walking, please join our monthly Neighbourhood Prayer Walks (2-3km) on the first Saturday of the month, to pray for the families, schools, institutions and all those in the neighbourhoods that our parish serves. Please join our Neighbourhood Prayer Walk Whatsapp community to be updated on upcoming walks: tinyurl.com/SJCBTPW



通过熄灯礼仪默思耶稣受难

黄碧琴

(圣神宠照之母圣母军青年支团)

圣若瑟堂今年首次在的耶稣受难节举行了熄灯礼 (Tenebrae)。在堂区协调员刘爱明姐妹的指导下, 本堂的九个青年团体共同组织了这次熄灯礼。

熄灯礼通过逐渐熄灭蜡烛或灯光来纪念耶稣基督的受难与死亡, 并为信徒提供一个庄严肃穆的反思氛围, 以回顾和反省天主教信仰的核心事件。在拉丁语中, “Tenebrae” 的意思是“阴影”或“黑暗”, 而这一仪式正是通过逐渐熄灭蜡烛或灯光来象征耶稣被出卖、受审、受难和死亡的逐渐黑暗。

礼仪包括诵读七段经文、赞美诗和默想, 以反映耶稣受难的事件及祂牺牲的意义。礼仪结束时, 信友们跺脚, 象征耶稣死亡那一刻发生的地震; 随后是默哀, 代表耶稣下葬时的黑暗和哀伤。

这一礼仪为参与者提供了一个庄严的环境, 让大家反思耶稣基督为拯救世人而忍受的苦难、背叛和处决。

参与者的感想:

圣文生青年团 (SSVP)

耶稣受难节的熄灯礼 (Tenebrae) 结构清晰易懂, 引导我们更深入地理解耶稣受难节的意义。除了经文中对耶稣受难的详细描述外, 宁静的环境还能让我们深刻反思, 与天主交流。礼仪中特意增加的停顿为我们提供了个人反思的时刻, 使耶稣受难节的意义在我们内心产生共鸣。笼罩整个空间的黑暗进一步强调了这一时刻的庄严性, 使我们更加接近耶稣受难节的奥秘。总之, 熄灯礼证明了礼仪和团体在我们灵修中的重要性。通过熄灯礼, 我们感到神清气爽, 树立了新的目标, 对耶稣受难日的意义有了更深入的理解。我们圣文生青年团热切期待今后的熄灯礼和每一次灵性成长的机会。

要理班青年导师 (Youth Catechists)

很高兴能在熄灯礼中担任读经员。由于2020年的新冠疫情, 我错过了在儿童圣道礼仪中担任读经员的机会, 这让我感到非常沮丧。因此, 我非常珍惜这次熄灯礼提供的机会, 能够为天主宣读圣言。

辅祭员 (Altar Servers)

熄灯礼的气氛让人深刻感受到耶稣受难日的庄严肃穆。昏暗的灯光、低沉的声音和台桌上摆放的15支明亮的蜡烛让每个人都清楚地感受到了这一点。作为一名辅祭员, 能参加熄灯仪式是我的荣幸。在仪式中, 蜡烛一根根被熄灭, 让我在安静、庄严的气氛中反省和默想。最后, 只剩下象征耶稣基督之光的一支蜡烛在燃烧; 我们这才离开了礼堂。这一幕给我留下了深刻的印象, 也让我体会到耶稣时代的门徒们所经历的复杂情感 — 他们目睹了耶稣的光辉和荣耀, 然后又很快目睹了祂的离去, 却不知道祂会在三天后再次出现。参加熄灯礼确实是一次令人启迪和感动的经历, 我一定会再次参加。

熄灯礼歌咏团

这是我第一次参加熄灯礼。我觉得这礼仪真的能让我们反思天主为了把我们罪恶中拯救出来所经历的一切。我喜欢这种祈祷和反思的气氛。我希望这样的活动每年都能继续下去。

青年信仰和圣经反思团

(Youth Faith & Bible Reflections)

熄灯礼是一次很好的体验, 很高兴这次的礼仪让我们八个青年团聚集在一起, 相互了解, 并促进我们未来更多的合作。

参与熄灯礼的九个青年团:

- 1) 辅祭员 (Altar Servers)
- 2) 青年要理班 (Youth Catechists)
- 3) 圣母军青年团 (英文组) (Legion of Mary Junior Praesidium, English)
- 4) 圣母军青年团 (华文组) (Legion of Mary Junior Praesidium, Mandarin)
- 5) Kanektas 青年团
- 6) PAVE青年团 (PAVE Young Adults Community)
- 7) Verso L'alto 青年团
- 8) 信仰和圣经研读青年团 (Youth Faith & Bible Reflections)
- 9) 圣文生青年团 (SSVP Youth)





鸽子带来的希望

黄碧琴

在圣周六，当我正从苦路处那儿走去教堂附楼时，幸运地遇到一只鸽子栖息在棕榈树上，我在它飞走之前拍了一张照片。

本来，我对圣母军青年团聚会的出席率不抱任何希望，因为那天没有要理班，家长们没理由会把孩子送过来。然而，出乎我意料的是，几乎所有的孩子都出席了聚会，这让我感到非常惊喜。现在回想起来，天主其实是给了我一个信号——一只鸽子——提醒我要有信德、要投靠祂，因为祂会在一切看似渺茫的时候派圣神来干预。

在圣经中，鸽子的出现给人带来希望。例如，在大洪水期间出现的鸽子带着橄榄枝飞向诺厄方舟，象征着洪水的结束和新开始的承诺。鸽子也在耶稣受洗时出现，象征着天主对耶稣的认可，并授权耶稣公开传道，赋予祂引导复活节期间即将发生的变革事件的力量。这两个例子都强调了天主时时刻刻与我们同在。即使在混乱时期，祂的同在也会给我们带来希望。

伴随着希望，我们在面临个人挑战时会产生内在的力量和韧性，鼓励我们从逆境中变得更加坚强。我鼓励大家在面对生活的考验时，拥抱鸽子的象征意义及其希望和坚韧的信息。



31届入门圣事

韦海霞

经过40天的四旬期，我们终于满怀期待地迎来了充满喜乐的复活节。

复活节是纪念耶稣复活的日子。公元33年，耶稣像罪犯一样被钉死在十字架上。祂的死不是因为祂有罪，而是按照天父的计划为世人赎罪。3天后，正如祂自己所预言的那样，祂复活了；祂的复活给全人类带来了希望，标志着祂成功地为我们赎了罪。

天主教会特意把一年一度的洗礼圣事安排在复活主日（特殊情况除外）。非常高兴今年我们堂区有17位弟兄姐妹领受入门圣事，其中12位成人及1个小孩领洗，2位从基督教转入天主教，2位领受坚振。

天主教非常重视洗礼。领洗者不仅要完成为期10个月的课程，还必须在圣堂里以及广大教友面前宣认。之所以如此重视，是因为教会希望给慕道者足够的时间来识别，这是不是你所认可和需要的。同样，领洗对

于基督徒的灵魂有两种意义，一是洗去过去的罪孽，二是更新生命。灵魂的洁净是通过圣洗获得的，当代父母为新领洗者穿上洁白无瑕的白衣时，代表着新生命的诞生、代表着穿上基督盔甲。穿上基督的盔甲，就能面对魔鬼的各种诱惑和试探、就能全然得胜！



主耶稣说：
“人生活不只靠饼，
而也靠天主口中所发的一切言语。”
(玛 4:4)

2024年 新领洗者感



王颜霖&王泉英:



我很荣幸能有机会参加慕道班。慕道学习是很有意义的、愉快的,也是有福的!我得到慕道团成员的关爱,有他们的陪伴,有好吃的食物,特别是团长和联络员给我的鼓励和关爱,让我有时想偷懒都不好意思。我想借此机会感谢所有教导我的老师、修女和神父,他们用心制作了精美的PPT演示文稿,我记得有一张图片深深地触动了我的心。那张图片是有很多人在圣堂里参加弥撒,天使在圣堂里和我们在一起,神父的身后是耶稣。从那天起,我就非常热衷于参加弥撒。

上了慕道班后,我才知道天主教有七件圣事,即告解、圣体...;有圣母经、慈悲串经、祈祷、宽恕等等。上慕道班让我感到喜乐平安,我与主的关系更加亲密,我的灵性生命不断成长,也懂得了如何爱人。赞美天主。

陳惠香:



2024年3月31日,是我领洗的日子,是我盼望已久的好日子,这一天也是我第一次领圣体,心中的喜悦无法形容,当时就在心中默念,感谢主接纳了我。

回想一年前的慕道班,我当时还是似懂非懂的,幸好在团长的带领下,我更有信心走向主的道路。要感谢教导我们并带我们与耶稣共融的老师和神父们。感谢每周四为我们慕道班准备茶点的兄弟姐妹们,在大家的陪伴和鼓励下,我终于完成了一年的慕道课程,在圣神的引领下,我更有信心地走向未来,走向天主。一切荣耀归于主。

李贤珍:

感谢天主给了我领洗的机会,这是我人生中第一次有这样的经历,感到非常珍贵。在慕道班,我有很多有趣的经历,也学到了新知识;我感到非常高兴和感恩。



我会继续学习,培养一颗善良的心,希望能帮助他人。

高远骥:

这段信仰之旅确实非常快。转眼间,我已经领洗了。有了RCIY朋友的支持,我的信仰旅程无疑变得更加轻松。希望在未来的日子里,我能够更加坚定自己的信仰,获得更多关于基督的新知识。



郭辉:



去年(2023年),在一个风和日丽的星期天,我陪同朋友来到圣若瑟堂,观看教友们做弥撒。从那天起,我的思想发生了变化,这种变化成为了我一生的财富。环顾四周,我仿佛置身于一座宫殿,宫殿里堆满了珍宝。每天都过得充实而快乐。

期待参加每周四的慕道班

听着神父、修女和老师们的讲解,我第一次知道了《圣经》是一部什么样的书,理解了十诫、天主圣三和教会礼仪。我还了解到,最初我是一名问道者,我参加的课程是慕道班!在收录礼那天,在庄严的圣堂里,在祭台前,我拥有了一本属于自己的《圣经》。从此,我成了一名慕道者。每周慕道班的茶点时间,负责茶点的兄弟姐妹都会拿出自己精心准备的食物和饮料,每周都不一样。后来我才知道,为了给慕道朋友准备茶点,他们从下午开始就忙碌了。吃着可口的食物,看着她们的笑脸,我的心一次次被融化!

我是一名来自中国的普通上班族,没有为教会做过任何贡献,但在圣若瑟堂的慕道班里,我感受到了家庭般的温暖、亲切、宽容和宠爱!

我逐渐认识到,是天主引领我们喜乐、平安,良善、忠信和节制,是天主安排了人类和自然的秩序。我们都是天主的孩子,我们是一家人。

2024年3月31日、复活节。在大家的祝福声中,在代父的带领下,我走向祭台,当神父念出William 郭辉--我的名字;并说:我因父,及子、及圣神之名,给你授洗。哗!我成了天主的儿子了!

天主,宇宙的主宰,我赞美你,颂扬你!

彭莉:

我相信慕道班只是我信仰之旅的开始,洗礼将带给我一个新的起点。我还有很多东西要学,希望教会能慢慢引导我加深信仰。



林芳妮:



参加慕道班让我对天主教礼仪的意义有了更深入的理解,消除了误解和不解。领洗后,我很高兴终于成为了我二十多年来一直信奉的教会的一员。与家人的宗教合一对我来说也意义重大。第一次领圣体让我感受到自己真正进入了天主的家庭,给了我无限的安慰和力量,并意识到圣神已经进入了我的生命。感谢天主。

杨一:

这是一个非常偶然的的机会。去年四月底,我先生建议我寻找一个信仰。当时,我询问了身边的同事,他们恰好都是天主教徒。在网上搜索后,我发觉圣若瑟堂刚好就在我回家的路上。我登录网站查看如何报名,发现慕道课程将在两个月后开始。于是我决定报名试试。现在回想起来,当初所有的‘刚好’可能都是主的安排。



作为一个已经脱离信仰30多年的人,我在参加慕道班之前有很多顾虑。我担心会有奇怪的教义和仪式。但上了慕道班后,我意识到天主教传达的是非常生活化和富正能量的道理:良善,谦逊,正直,宽容和仁爱。不仅是慕道班,我还从身边的教友身上学到了很多,他们的关心和善意让我更真切地感受到了信仰的力量。

十个月的慕道一眨眼就过去了。领洗后,我感到心灵的重生。对内,我心平气和,懂得感恩,对未来充满希望;对外,我更愿意帮助和宽恕身边的人。感谢我的家人,他们是我坚强的后盾。感谢教友、老师和神父们,是他们帮助了我,使我更亲近天主。感谢天主时时俯听我的忏悔和祈祷,赐予我爱和平安。



LUNCH TIME MASSES



St Joseph's Church (Bukit Timah) inaugurated its first lunch time Mass on Ash Wednesday, 14 Feb 2024. It was heartening to see a strong turnout for Mass.

Moving forward, lunch time Masses will be held on all days of obligation except Christmas Day and also on Ash Wednesday.

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