

“...Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty. Anyone who has ears should listen!” Mt 13:8-9

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OF THE SINGAPORE PASTORAL INSTITUTE

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Dear Friends

People say that Catholicism is fast losing its place in the modern world as a force of influence on society. I find that difficult to believe.

Followers of the Roman Catholic tradition wield a great wisdom that can, if shared well, positively impact contemporary life. Catholics offer a richness to the world can be illustrated with four W's.

Word. The message of Jesus is called “Good News” for good reason. God answers the timeless questions of human purpose, suffering, and death with the Divine presence made man. The incarnation of God's Word among us means that God can no longer be thought of as apart from any aspect of our existence. The Gospel of John tells us the reason for Christ's coming is that “God so loved the world.” The Catholic word is one of great optimism in God's profound presence in the here and now; giving hope to all that goodness and truth can be found in every situation of human life.

Welcome. Fragmentation of modern society manifests itself in people's apathy, mutual suspicion, or even outright prejudice. Now more than ever, the distinction between the haves and have-nots are sharply felt. While Jesus did not close the gaps that lie between groups and classes of people, his inclusiveness of the poorest into the plan of God testifies to his belief that in God's Kingdom humanity as a whole is

beloved. Catholic welcome expresses this belief in the way friendship is offered to kin and stranger alike. In the imitation of their master, Catholics act against forces that promote alienation; embracing into their care those who are lonely and marginalized.

Worship. In Catholic worship of the God who is with us, specifically in the liturgy of the eucharist, Catholics receive God deeply into their being. Emerging from this weekly celebration of grace, they become agents of the Trinitarian God's power to heal brokenness wherever it is found. Catholics are sent out to proclaim to all that only in Christ's healing love can all created beings find their wholeness.

Witness. On behalf of the God of mercy and justice, Catholic witness conveys in word and deed - advocacy and social action - the proposal of right relationship for the restoration of human society. Even if these do not meet with great success, the very there-ness of loving Christian communities can be signs of God's saving presence dwelling amidst the human family.

With so much to offer to the people of our time, Catholics should take heart that God has already sown seed in good soil. Our faith has much to give this world, all it takes is a little mindfulness and application on our part for the Good News of Jesus Christ to bear fruit in the vineyard.

Arthur

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You Only Have One Teacher

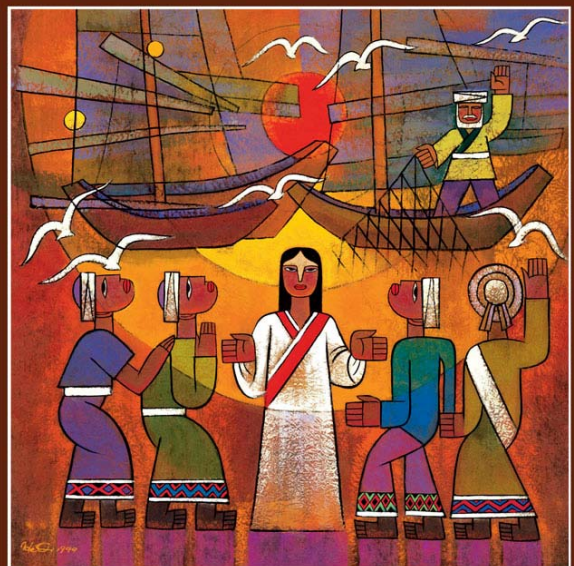
By Fr. Erbin Fernandez

Hello my dear sisters and brothers, fellow workers in the Lords vineyard! I hope you have had some good vacation time despite the H1N1 flu pandemic! As we prepare to continue our catechetical journey with our young people in July, it is good to remind ourselves that we are not alone in our endeavors. Indeed the reason that sometimes underlies our weariness with our vocation (and it truly is a vocation!) is the feeling that we struggle alone with our own efforts and ideas to ‘echo’ (Greek – *katechein*, catechesis) the faith to our young people. Upon closer reflection upon the word ‘echo’, we realize that it is a dynamic movement that originates from another. Indeed we come to realize that we are actually part of a glorious cloud of witnesses (the Church) that has been echoing this Good News from one generation to the next. If this is the case then maybe as a catechist I need to retrace my steps and consider seriously the source of the echo – in order to be in touch with the original genius of how the Faith was transmitted.

The General Directory of Catechesis speaks of the original pedagogy of faith – “the wonderful

dialogue that God undertakes with every person” (GDC 144). This loving dialogue continued with Jesus, who in the power of the Holy Spirit, established the Church with its rich creedal, liturgical and moral life. When we as catechists discover this living deposit of faith and learn to ground ourselves in it through study and prayer – the echo of Christian faith begins to resound within us. We are embraced and fortified and together with the great St. Paul we can cry out – “I live no longer I, it is Christ who lives in me!”

My dear catechists, when we catechize through the Church’s life we are not left alone. Indeed we are deeply consoled and challenged by the one True teacher – Jesus Christ! I invite all of us to rediscover the vigor of our vocation by re-discovering the Church in this coming year!



Pastoral Council Leadership Training

Holy Family Parish councillors focus on the win-win situation of Servant Leadership.

By Bailyne Sung

Musical Chairs -yes that lively game for children and adults where participants vie for the last seat - set off a workshop on Servant Leadership on Saturday, 20 June.

The twenty six participants, all members of the Parish Pastoral Council of the Church of the Holy Family, discovered through playing this game that it was possible to have a total win-win happy situation, all with a seat. How is that possible?

One participant said: "In the first round which was played in the traditional way, everyone was focused on grabbing a chair when the music stopped. There was no communication at all between participants. However in the second round where the element of competition was removed, we all looked out for each other in a way, inviting someone without a seat to share their chair. In the third round, played with neither chairs nor music, we worked together as to how to do this. We talked to one another, paid attention to other's ideas, and finally we planned a way of supporting ourselves so that all was included. Whew!

"What was great was eventually we became more aware that there need be no losers. We all had a seat, even if it meant sharing a lap!"

Mr. Arthur Goh, Director of SPI, who facilitated the game, showed how competitive and collaborative forms of religion were different from each other. He added that the PPC needs to reflect together on faith and life, and then collaborating as a group, make a response as to how to lead the parish community to continue to do Jesus' mission.

Building on the communal vision of Church and salvation, Ms. Wendy Louis continued by stressing on the importance of coming to a common understanding of the meaning of the word "pastoral."

We then went on to discuss the relationship between secular and religious kinds of leadership. Participants were asked to identify pastoral concerns in Singapore through newspapers and magazines, and using the gospels, they gathered the leadership qualities shown by Jesus. In small groups they shared on the pains and gains of balancing secular and religious wisdom.

Msgr. Eugene Vaz, the Vicar-General of the Archdiocese of Singapore, said at the workshop that a church is not broken up into ministries nor are PPC members representing their ministries. "They are church together; there is no separation between movements, groups or ministries." He also emphasized the need for mindfulness of the way the PPC is a community itself, because the right understanding of doing comes from the right understanding of being.

The workshop concluded with another educational activity where participants learned the importance of collaboration and sharing among leaders so that they can convey to their community a vision for a good and full Christian life.

Training and orientation sessions for Parish Pastoral Councillors are provided by the AsIPA team. Training is available by appointment. Please contact Daphne Leong at daphne@catholic.org.sg

Cross Cultural Dialogue

In a providential occasion of east meets west, representatives from various diocesan organizations came face-to-face with a group of young students from St. Thomas University of Houston, Texas.

Archbishop Chia had asked the Pastoral Institute to facilitate a dialogue meeting with our friends from America. Visiting Singapore was part of the cross-cultural psychology curriculum for this ethnically and religiously diverse delegation. Being a Catholic university, part of the line up in the exposure program involved contact with leaders of the local Archdiocese.

Gathered in the Solomon Hall of Caritas Singapore, the group was treated to a fascinating slideshow prepared by Alvin Tan, SPI's creative resource, that offered a glimpse into the history of the Church in our country and its current situation.

A conversation about Catholicism in Singapore ensued, with students and their teacher Prof. Elizabeth Maynard fielding questions on the state of religion in our multicultural society. On hand to engage the enquiries was a panel that included Vicar General Msgr. Eugene Vaz, Br. Adrian Danker and representatives from the Archdiocesan Commission for Catholic Schools (ACCS), and Mr. Bernard Yu from the Family Life Society (FLS).

Relations with other faiths, religious morality, and secularism were among the topics we discussed in this rich and rewarding exchange.

We wish our American friends all the best for their academic aspirations as they return home to Houston.



Christian Charity

Building the Kingdom of God

By Daphne Leong

From time to time, we have the media covering movie stars and celebrities doing works of charity. As public persons, the famous celebrities are able to lend much weight to creating awareness for the causes they support. Many Volunteer Welfare Organizations (VWO) and charities look for public figures to endorse their causes. While it is admirable for these people to use their influence to generate public interest and to extend help, we should not forget that there are also many ordinary citizens working relentlessly to help the less fortunate in society. These anonymous workers reach out to the needy week after week. What motivates them?

I would like to focus on two groups that share the general work of helping those who are in need. One group comprises of Christians and the other of non-Christians. Looking at the work that the non-Christians do, it does not seem different from the work that we Christians do.

Both groups reach out to the old, the young, the sick and the needy. Members of both groups dedicate their time so that the less fortunate in society may live better. Members of both groups travel across the globe to build schools, orphanages and homes for the poor and outcast. What makes us Christians different from non-Christians when we engage in humanitarian work?

The Christian faith recognizes that, because of sin, the world is not as intended by God as it is. The world of God's vision is one of justice and love; Jesus called this perfect condition the Kingdom of God. Jesus went about proclaiming that the Kingdom of God is at hand by curing the sick, reaching out to the outcasts, being with the marginalized and so on. He commanded his disciples to show the presence of the Kingdom by doing the same. Today, as Christian disciples, we too are called into Christ's mission of making God's Kingdom real for our world – by caring for the sick, the downtrodden, the poor, and the weak.

What makes us Christians different from non-Christians when we engage in humanitarian work?

By faith Christians act on inspiration by God's Spirit to manifest the Kingdom. It is this faith that makes Christian charity different from non-Christian good works. A non-Christian

carries out the same work but is not driven as a Christian is by the desire and responsibility to follow the commandment of Christ: to love one another as God has loved us. All Christian disciples are called into this mission for the fulfillment of God's kingdom. We may not be comfortable acting justly and lovingly, and we risk being ridiculed for being too "idealistic." But if we profess to love God and want to follow Christ, then it is our duty to respond to the weekly dismissal "Go, in peace, to love and serve the Lord" by continuing the work of making real God's Kingdom.

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Singapore Pastoral Institute

The Pastoral Institute was established in 1978 to assist the Archbishop in providing faith formation for the Catholic Archdiocese in Singapore. Today, the Institute continues to carry out this responsibility in the catechetical, biblical, and pastoral aspects of Christian life. In addition, the Institute looks to the ministerial preparation of those who serve the Church in various capacities, and identifies emerging issues that have pastoral import on the life of the nation, of which Catholics are a part.

This newsletter is published monthly for internal circulation within the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Singapore..

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BIBLICAL

1st / 2nd Book of Samuel by Fr. Ambrose Vaz

8 sessions beginning Tuesday 28th July,
9.30am–11.30am or 7.45pm– 9.45pm
Contribution: \$30. Register by 23rd July.

1st / 2nd Book of Kings by Fr. Ambrose Vaz

8 sessions beginning Tuesday 6th October,
9.30am–11.30am or 7.45pm– 9.45pm
Contribution: \$30. Register by 1st October.

PASTORAL

Workshop: Pastoral Care of the Elderly by Dr. Rilly Rai & Wendy Louis

Saturday 11th July, 2.00pm–5.00pm
CAEC@2 Highland Road

Participants are entitled to special price for the
Manual for Pastoral Care of the Elderly.
Voluntary contribution. Register by 7th July.

Mental Health First Aid (Certification Course) by Joachim Lee

Saturday 18th & 25th July,
9.30am–3.30pm, CAEC@Highland Road
Contribution: \$150. Register by 8th July.

Archdiocesan Small Christian Community Day

Saturday 10th October, 1.30pm–5.30pm,
Catholic Junior College
Training & Development Centre

CATECHETICAL

The Faith that We Hand On Fr. Timothy Radcliffe, OP

Friday 20th November,
7:30pm–9:30pm, CAEC@Highland Road
Voluntary contribution.
Register by 10th November.

**Seating is limited for all events, please
contact Melinda Reyes to register early!**

Online registration form available at

www.catholicspi.org